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Portrait of the Artist Unrealized:

A Representation of the 20th-Century Brazilian Writer in Response to U.S. Literature

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Abstract

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Benjamin M. Chaffin

In the decades following World War I, patterns of intellectual and artistic exchange between Brazil and the rest of the world experienced a paradigmatic shift. As Monteiro Lobato hoped and Eduardo Prado feared, in the coming years of the Modernist movement an intense cultural relationship with the United States established itself amidst reorganization. This included the proliferation of U.S. texts, and their translations, in-country, as the English language gradually rose to the status of global *lingua franca*. An increasing dialogue between the Brazilian writer and U.S. literature accompanied this shift, often focused on the conception and representation of the artist in relation to the collective. This monograph suggests that, as a result of this dialogue, a motif establishes itself in these years—one in which U.S. notions of the artist as hero are subverted in the Brazilian context to both celebrate local culture and effect social criticism. The texts considered here range from the 1920s to the early 1970s, drawing in particular from the work of Mário de Andrade, Fernando Sabino, Érico Veríssimo, and Lygia Fagundes Telles.

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Introduction

Monteiro Lobato and a Hope in the United States

Quando chegar o dia da arte para este país, que grande, que revolucionária os americanos a vão ter!

...na construção do definitivo, a América tirará tudo de si, e o que faz na arquitetura e está fazendo na música fará em todos os mais campos.

—Mr. Slang, crossing a New York bridge by foot to take in “America.”

Monteiro Lobato, *América* (1932).

In his 1927 *Mister Slang e o Brasil*, Monteiro Lobato first introduces readers to the book’s eponymous English observer—part erudite, part globe-trotting observer, part businessman. Inspiration for Lobato’s character and book may have come from several recent British-written travel books that aspired to national portrait through contemporary naturalism, sociology, and anthropology. Yet Lobato’s book seems primarily a deft variation on Frank Bennet’s *Forty Years in Brazil* (1914). In it, the English-born Bennet offers typical insights on flora, fauna, customs, architecture, etc. He sometimes peppers these—drawing on his personal experiences—with observations on economics, politics, bureaucracy, and the Brazilian First Republic in general, with the critique of an outside eye seemingly mitigated by diplomacy and affection. Bennet calls into question some of the same topics that Lobato will address in *Mister Slang e o Brasil*, such as taxation on paper for bookbinding (140) and

the stability of a non-backed currency (125-127). Building on the figure Bennet presents in the book, Lobato draws out these criticisms in his own work, expanding and building a fictional forum of critique from without.

Mr. Slang, then, becomes a mouthpiece for Lobato's domestic social criticisms and agenda, a figure of both insightful and deeply problematic notions (he is, among other things, like Lobato, a proponent of eugenics). When the reader meets him, Mr. Slang has, like Bennet, been living in Brazil for the last forty years and offers the narrator his concise critical observations into the way (as he perceives it) large scale problems in Brazil have come to be and, often, how they might be easily remedied. Arthur Conan Doyle was among the many English-language authors that Lobato translated in his time, and the dynamic between Slang and the book's first-person narrator, who acts as sounding board for these ideas, seems not altogether absent the dynamic between Sherlock Holmes and John Watson. Watson's continual amazement at the infallibility of the great detective seems lightly echoed (to intended effect) in the discourse between the narrator and Slang. Here, Holmesian "deductions" are substituted for Lobato's notion of common sense, as the would-be insights of the economically developed world come channeled through his fictional expatriate spokesman. While there is no shortage of work in the last few decades exploring Conan Doyle's character as cognitive phenomenon, there seems little doubt (as others have suggested or alluded to) that much of the character's impact lies less in any example of reason or intellect, and more their mystification. However compelling some of Lobato's points, he is, in part, harnessing and thereby reinforcing, a mystique of the Anglophone outsider. It is a dynamic that Brazilian writers will continue to contend with, often shaping their work across varying agendas in the coming decades.

In Chapter 16 of Lobato's book, Mr. Slang explains to the narrator that books in Brazil are all but out of reach for the poor, rendered costly gems because of a 170% tax levied on the paper—a rate higher than that of silk (110). When the narrator cannot believe his ears, Mr. Slang responds, “Que ingênuo é você, meu amigo! Todo mundo sabe a história da taxa sobre o papel, que surgiu em 1918. Um passe do Congresso. Dizem que houve um honrado senador que não resistiu à injunção de duas centenas de contos... e fez elevar a taxa do papel, bruscamente, de 10 para 300 reis” (110). The passage is a deft alignment of Lobato, the social agent, acting, in concert, across different levels of writing, editing, publishing, and translating—all leveraged through his notion of an outside Anglophone perspective. John Milton and Irene Hirsch, in particular, have done much to outline the vision of Lobato's project of U.S. influence and the groundwork that it sets for the coming years. Slang here is the mouthpiece for the Lobato who would do much to establish Brazilian publishing in the years after World War I, struggling against inertia and the powers that be, working to transplant printing in Europe to the local milieu. The moment is also Lobato as writer, using the larger literary device of the oftentimes distant invented outsider to examine domestic norms (a device perhaps most fully realized by Érico Veríssimo in Chapter 3 of this monograph). In this moment of *Mister Slang e o Brasil*, then, Lobato the writer supports Lobato, the publisher, who supports Lobato, aspiring agent of social guidance, effecting change across a variety of domains.

The passage encapsulates a campaign that Lobato had, in some sense, been waging for over a decade. Throughout his twenties, spent primarily in Areias (in the São Paulo interior), he read literature in English extensively, supplementing his regular income as public prosecutor with translations from English (Lamarão 53). As early as *Urupês* (1914),

Lobato emblematically laments the absence of Mark Twain's "sagacidade cômica" in the Brazilian countryside (287). With this first incarnation of the Jeca Tatu figure—a totalizing presentation still problematically couched in racial terms—one infers that Twain might cast some light on the regressive provincialism of the character, thereby freeing up Lobato's model of Brazilian national identity.¹ If we are to accept Wilson Martins case for Lobato as the never-realized "chefe natural do Modernismo" (an argument put forth in both the cited *A ideia modernista* 26-40 and *História da inteligência brasileira VI* 25-29), this agenda, in reality, represents more the early machinations interconnected with a Modernist project to come rather than (despite Lobato's positioning and critique of Anita Malfatti) what might be comprehensively characterized as an anti-Modernist stance. This seems true particularly in an opening up to new outside influences that challenged patterns of an intellectually elite landscape primarily aligned with the French, as well as Portuguese tradition (itself heavily French-influenced). In short, though aspects of his work are fraught with problematic social ideology, his national vision demands consideration as a point of departure, shaping reception of outside art and literature over the next decades. As Martins puts it, Lobato's "Urupês" makes Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago" (1928) seem "singularmente atrasado de quase quinze anos" (*A ideia modernista* 27). One can argue that this is primarily in its quest for a sense of nationality and national direction that arises out of a reconciliation with the national representation of Brazilian Romanticism, born (it should be pointed out) in Paris. Lobato later openly bemoans the imitation of, as he sees it, a people incapable of "individualidade" in *Ideias de Jeca Tatu* (1919) (26). Seemingly with the

¹ Various authors identify this conception in Lobato's work, which becomes more apparent over the years. In his final paper on Lobato's project, Milton offers a reading of *Histórias de Tia Nastácia* (1937) that comes to the following conclusion: "[Lobato] seems to believe that social progress, greater availability of books, and health facilities will automatically wipe out this 'backward' Brazil" (497).

lingering popularity of Symbolism and Parnassianism in mind, he reaches deep into the 16th and 17th centuries, beyond Romanticism, calling forth representative figures out of the colonial Brazilian past (again through his racialized lens):

Dentro dum salão Luís XV somos uma mentira com o rabo de fora. Porque por mais que nos falsifiquemos e nos estilizemos à francesa, Tomé de Sousa e os quatrocentos degredados berram no nosso sangue; Fernão Dias geme; Tibiriçá pinoteia e Henrique Dias revê o seu pigmentozinho de contribuição. (29)

Lobato attempts to center his critique of Malfatti's painting, which caused the initial rift with Modernism, along similar lines; that is, he accuses her of forced European imitation (*Ideias de Jeca Tatu* 55). He tries to clarify just what Brazil's intellectual relationship with the outside world should be in his first preface to the book, where he writes, "Convenhamos: a imitação é, de feito, a maior das forças criadoras. Mas imita quem assimila processos. Quem decalca não imita, furta" (19).

Though Lobato's vision lacks the power of the figure of a cannibal, there are clear parallels here to the mission Oswald attempts to cultivate in the late 1920s. Part of the difficulty in interpreting Lobato is in parsing out just what *imitation* and *assimilation of processes* might precisely entail. Yet, in general terms, Lobato does envision (from his perspective) taking what is best in outside literary and intellectual traditions, modifying them as need be, and using them to serve and draw out what he perceives to be the best of Brazil. This includes, at the same time, sometimes in problematic terms, doing away with what he sees as the worst of the country. *Mister Slang e o Brasil* and other works of the late twenties

mark a concretization of this notion of outside influence becoming increasingly focused on the United States and the Anglophone world at large.

Eduardo Prado's *A ilusão americana* (1893), on the other hand, is an example of an anti-U.S. position and sentiment coming out of the 19th century that stands in stark contrast to Lobato's enthusiasm. It in some sense predicts the context that would evolve around Lobato's project. With its foundation well-constructed around facts, the book limits itself to an almost exclusively negative case for the United States as a neighbor country in the Americas. The author catalogues U.S. efforts at 19th-century imperialism and neo-imperialism (*avant la lettre*), the country's failure to adhere to its own Monroe Doctrine, and, in general, portrays it as untrustworthy not just in the Americas but around the world. Prado, nearing the conclusion of his pro-U.K., anti-U.S. erudite vituperation, goes as far as the following generalization: "Ora os americanos têm pouco respeito pela vida humana. Não respeitam a vida de outrem e nem a própria" (101). One of his more salient insights, though he primarily limits this to the political, is the potential for the U.S. to become a new hegemonic force as a variation on the existing French model. A monarchist, four years after the fall of the Empire, he writes, "Foi em 1889 cometido no Brasil o mesmo grande erro em que os hispano-americanos tinham caído no primeiro quarto do século, isto é, quando artificialmente se quis impor ao Brasil a fórmula norte-americana" (32). Reminiscent of Lobato's themes in *Ideias de Jeca Tatu*, a political rant later in *A ilusão americana* expresses his point in artistic terms:

Copiemos, copiemos, pensaram os insensatos, copiemos e seremos grandes!

Deveríamos antes dizer: Sejamos nós mesmos, sejamos o que somos, e só assim

seremos alguma coisa. Imagine-se um indivíduo qualquer que, admirando uma tela de

Velasquez, deseje pintar como ele. De que servirá ter a tela, os pincéis, a palheta e as tintas perfeitamente iguais, em matéria prima, tamanho e dosagem às do pintor espanhol? Debalde arranjará as tintas e esforçar-se-á para pintar como Velasquez. Terá tudo quanto tinha Velasquez, menos o gênio, e mesmo tendo gênio, será outro gênio e não o gênio de Velasquez. (100)

Negotiated alongside Modernist rhetoric, the writers in Lobato's wake for the decades to come cope with and problematize this issue at the heart of outside influence, challenging just what imitation and imitation in assimilating processes might mean.

Lobato in the U.S. and an Expectation for the Brazilian Artist

It is in the previously mentioned period that Lobato also writes *O presidente negro* (1926),² while translating and writing on Henry Ford. With his appointment as commercial attaché to the Brazilian consulate in New York (1927-1931), the U.S. further becomes a focal point in his endeavor to present outside perspectives, traditions, and norms. It is using his experiences from this time that Lobato transplants his Mr. Slang and accompanying narrator to the United States, publishing *América* in 1932. While the book is not devoid of criticisms, the duo largely expresses amazement and admiration for the country, comparing Brazil to what they witness and take in as progress in Washington D.C., New York, and, briefly, Detroit.

² Lobato's futile efforts to find a U.S. publisher for an English translation of this book, a Verne/Wells-inspired social and political commentary on a futuristic U.S., speak to the complexity, multidirectionality, and potential problems of this cultural exchange—as well as issues of how countries aspire to present themselves and are perceived. An extant letter from the Palmer Literary Agency rejects the novel, outlining its marked racism. (See Lajolo 2010.)

As the book closes, it is not the first time that allusions to Walt Whitman, the great poet of New York and the U.S., appear in Lobato's work. As Milena Ribeiro Martins points out, Lobato references Whitman as early as 1920 in his fiction (23). "As fitas da vida" from *Negrinha* describes the *Hospedaria dos Imigrantes*—what is today the Museum of Immigration in the Mooca district of the city of São Paulo. The themes echo those of Whitman's, not just in the story's focus on the immigrants awaiting the promise of the Oeste Paulista, but in its consideration of the repercussions of war as a blind veteran of war in Paraguay searches out his captain. In it, Lobato bemoans the absence of Whitman's grand explorations of nation-building and humanity, partially staking out his idea of future writers that will sing Brazil, these figures begat in dialogue with outside influence. As the story surveys the immigrants, the narrator asks,

Onde pairam os nossos Walt Whitmans, que não veem estes aspectos do país? Que crônica, que poema não daria aquela casa da Esperança e do Sonho! Por ela passaram milhares de criaturas humanas, de todos os países e de todas as raças, miseráveis, sujas, com o estigma das privações impresso nas faces – mas re floridas de esperança ao calor do grande sonho da América. No fundo, heróis, porque só os heróis esperam e sonham. (29)

It is of course inaccurate to use this kernel to represent the complexity of Lobato's hope and agenda across the years for Brazilian literature in dialogue with the U.S. tradition, as well as others. This is in part because it is contextualized in the story as something of an apostrophe and in that sense more closely tied to the realm of unchecked thought rather than argument. Yet as a model, it echoes the earlier convocation of Mark Twain in the Brazilian countryside. Only in subsequent years, can one see growing complexity in Lobato's intentions as he

translates and adapts elements from Mark Twain and others to his local purposes.³ One recognizes that the use of the name Whitman is not just shorthand or placeholder, particularly given that the story draws much from the Whitmanian sensibility. And if it is a small moment of a short story that has largely faded into the past, it touches on an immensely important nexus. At its heart is a basic conceptualization of the role of the Brazilian writer, as Brazil looks outward in new ways to look inward in new ways.

A dichotomy briefly described by Paul Barolsky, taken from *The Iliad* (Ἰλιάς) (8th century BCE) seems to lend itself quite well to this notion as it is presented in “As fitas da vida.” Homer tells us that Epeios fashioned and constructed the Trojan Horse. Yet one infers—and there may be a richness in the fact that it is an inference—that it was cunning Odysseus who conceived of the scheme and the structure that would smuggle the Greek raiding party into Troy. It is one of the earliest examples in Western Literature of this dichotomy of innovator and craftsman that repeats itself in the role of the artist. As Barolsky argues, “Throughout the history of art the distinction can often be made between the inventor of a work of art and its executor” (20). In short, no matter how great and important Whitman in the context of the Americas, no matter how useful his work proves in different adaptations, Lobato’s apostrophe reveals the potential pitfall, or expectation, of the Brazilian writer playing, in part, an Epeios to outside forces. While Whitman did much to help shape great poets across the Americas (as will be touched on in Chapter 1), there is, at the heart of the idea, a kind of paradox which Prado has already addressed with his Velásquez example, in that (certainly in Bloomian terms) any poet reaching the greatness of Whitman would no

³ For a comparison in the creative works between the authors in relationship to the regional countryside, see Nunes (1960). For a general discussion of Lobato as translator of English-language texts, including Mark Twain, see Milton (2003).

longer be imitating Whitman. In effect, as one might expect, a relegation to Epeios is something that great Brazilian writers, including (as we will see) Lobato himself and others keen on innovation and the continued development of local literature, do not react to with the Watson-like amazement of the narrator of the Mr. Slang books. Instead, they tinker with it and often reject it as the century moves forward.

Lobato's artistic agenda is perhaps more fairly represented by an episode near the close of *América*, published some twelve years after "As fitas da vida." Mr. Slang and the book's narrator travel from Manhattan to Brooklyn and instead of crossing what would seemingly be the Brooklyn or Manhattan Bridge⁴ by car, they get out and cross the bridge by foot to "admirar a América," to take in and contemplate the country that they have seen so much of (3042). The narrator meditates on the flow of the river below and the future of a nation's enterprising, much like Whitman in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," as well as other poems. Yet Whitman, who is mentioned in passing earlier in the book, is not referenced here by name. Lobato seems to have backed down on his demand that Brazil produce Whitmans, or Twains, per se. The role he now offers is less suggestive of imitation or the anxiety of an *agon*, and more the open possibility of creativity, art, and a future for the taking—be it in the U.S. or Brazil (if we are to follow one of the overarching premises of *América*). He uses his Englishman, Mr. Slang, to cement the idea. The European observer—as if implicitly, to some degree, passing the baton—considers the U.S. a place with much of its art yet to be realized, a place of intoxicating promise. Even so, while this more general notion that the promise Whitman championed might readily lend itself to new literature in Brazil may seem palatable

⁴ The book *América* describes the narrator and Mr. Slang going from Manhattan to Brooklyn, seemingly where the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges would be. Yet the narrator describes the Hudson River below and a picture of the George Washington Bridge appears in the Gobo 2009 edition (3070).

enough, its contention becomes a recurrent theme in the 20th century. In effect, the idea, and possible explanation for why analogues of Whitman are not hovering over the scene (even if they are) becomes a literary conceit.

In the coming years of globalization, French gives way to English as the *lingua franca*, as the U.S. rises on the global stage and ties with Brazil strengthen—particularly driven, as Lobato predicted, through cinema and music. As Hirsch & Milton (2005) have generally mapped out up to 1970, this is initially pioneered, in large part, by Lobato’s Companhia Editora Nacional. The translation of U.S. texts increases and a dialogue carried out with the U.S. and the Anglophone world at large—expressed largely in different Modernist incarnations—takes on a growing popular context. In this setting, U.S. literary portrayals and conceptions of the artist, dating back to Whitman, as prophet and guide of the direction of society, and (one could argue) even to those before him, are transposed and altered in the Brazilian context. The individual success of the writers who explored this idea notwithstanding, the act of taking a U.S. portrayal of the artist and pervading sentiments toward them, as a point of departure to create a writer, or even purveyor of literature, who is unrealized and thwarted by local circumstances becomes a recurrent theme in Brazilian literature as it answers the rising call to negotiate a relationship with U.S. literature.

The Unrealized Artist

This dialogue has its roots in the *poet hero*, who, as Barolsky argues, moves from a space carved out by figures like Homer and Ovid into modernity as Dante Alighieri writes a representation of himself into the *Comedia* (1320), inaugurating a “cult of the artist” across

media (45). In Dante alone, one sees to what extreme the Florentine vests his character with power and glory. In the *Inferno*, both the representations of Dante and Virgil assume a cosmological importance through their journey, which, violating time and space unites them with Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan. It is this modern fascination with the glorified artist, evolved in myriad ways, that offers poignancy to the representations of the fictional figure defunct in the Brazilian space explored by the writers considered here.

In lieu of a strictly chronological, or broader representative sampling of a large, complex country with regional disparities, representations of the artist put forth by four celebrated writers—Mário de Andrade, Fernando Sabino, Érico Veríssimo, and Lygia Fagundes Telles—are explored here in depth within the context of a community of artists in communication with one another across decades and generations. This monograph takes a quick view of Mário's career, a time when reception of U.S. authors increased in Brazil and addresses the last poem of his life in 1945, when U.S. translation had already boomed. Both Sabino and Veríssimo represent authors who read U.S. texts in the original English and spent significant time in the country. While proudly *mineiro*, Sabino was someone who always wanted to belong to the Ragtime age of the U.S. This coupled with his close relationship with Mário places him in a unique position to negotiate both traditions. Érico Veríssimo is himself responsible for translating a variety of U.S. and British texts, building a relationship with the U.S. in particular, acting as a literary and cultural ambassador from Brazil and gaining a popular readership there. While Telles was inspired by U.S. writers, she is considered here as a type of capstone (loosely following the general 1920-1970 timeline that Hirsch & Milton present), a practitioner in which this trope, formed over the previous decades continues independent of more direct exchange.

The dialogue that these writers carry out appears structured around two fundamental interconnected perspectives. The first, and most dominant, attacks the optimism of U.S. representations of the artist in the Brazilian context to critique the direction of society. In this sense, an ongoing dialogue with the U.S. partly mimics the viable aspects of Lobato's own approach, as the enthusiasm and hope expressed in *Mister Slang e o Brasil*, under the Washington Luís regime, gives way to the Revolution of 1930, the rise of Getúlio Vargas, the eventual establishment of the *Estado Novo*, and the Military Dictatorship of 1964-1985. As Milton argues, Lobato saw writing and translation as a means to battle against certain regressive tendencies and throw off old latifundista models sustained by the Catholic Church and Vargas regime ("Resistant" 503). Lobato's resistance through translation, he points out, comes not through *foreignization* but a particular domesticating of select outside texts ("Resistant" 506). One can argue, in the context of creative intertextuality, Mário de Andrade's adaptation of Whitman (in Chapter 1) is a similar endeavor taken to an extreme, and, in many ways, a model for what is to come. In a parallel process, writers in the coming years will repeatedly render the U.S. artist of promise inviable in their contemporary context as a means to critique the government and social order which seeks to marginalize them. This is observed here in full force under the *Estado Novo* and Military Dictatorship, but the notion of marginalization, as is seen in Érico Veríssimo's work (considered in Chapter 3) and Fernando Sabino's (considered in Chapter 2), does not function dependent on particular political regimes. Instead, at its core, it seems to suggest a cyclical relationship in which problematic politics are also a symptom of a failure to establish a coherent dynamic that recognizes value in the role of the artist, even if that role is often pregnant with rebellion.

In *A ilusão americana*, Prado, in driving home his point about imitation offers a brief story on Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus, a Roman politician at the advent of the Empire, taking a Sicilian sundial back to Rome:

Quando os romanos ainda rudes conquistaram a culta Grande Grécia, Valério Messala trouxe de Catania um relógio solar que mandou colocar no Fórum junto aos Rostos. Não atendeu Valério Messala nem à diferença de longitude nem à orientação do gnômon, e dispô-lo ao acaso. Só um século mais tarde é que se descobriu em Roma que o relógio solar marcava a hora com grande erro de tempo, e só então é que foi substituído. O relógio que dava o tempo certo em Catânia errava em Roma. Assim as instituições: podem dar certo nos seus países de origem, e trazer a confusão e a desordem nos países para onde arbitrariamente as transmudam. (100)

Prado's anecdote illustrates the second perspective in this dialogue, one which embraces and even celebrates the local by highlighting some degree of incompatibility of artistic sensibilities dependent on a cultural context. Under this broad heading one might place a literature politically engaged against a kind of neo-imperialism, or "cultural colonialism" as it will be called in *Telles As meninas* (1973). It is a pertinent element of reception, particularly with the rising influence of the U.S. in country, but, as will be seen in *Telles'* work, a component in a larger schematic. Artistry entails rebellion of all kinds, but to limit the artist to various types of geopolitical power dynamics is to rob them of their full existence and independence.

The primary salient point of difference in this part of the conversation seems focused on societal expectations of the artist, largely derived out of idiosyncratic norms of

individuality and collectivism. Points of contrast clearly come to the fore as the *avant garde* first generation of Brazilian Modernism explicitly negotiates the relationship with not just domestic Romanticism, but those from without. The latter include inherited, long-standing Francophone models, and, more recently, with delayed popularity, prominent U.S. ones, which focus on the artist's role in relationship to others, the artist's subjective experience, and in what way the artist's rebellion takes shape. These notions, of course, dovetail with the already-mentioned critique of society and its political leadership in focus throughout these decades in Brazil.

Triandis & Gelfand (1998), is generally useful here, in that it posits a vertical and horizontal axis to the expressions of individualism or collectivism. Verticality suggests inequalities, and the acceptance and the expectation of hierarchical roles, while the horizontal is the expectation of equality. This model helps elaborate the initial idea from Prado, and the, in some ways, evident idea that two distinct cultures, across the complexities of individualism-collectivism/vertical-horizontal variance, would necessitate different types of heroes, artists, and artist heroes to represent the community at large. Considering the first example offered in this monograph, the interplay of individualistic and collectivist roles negotiated within a national project, is, after all, at the core of Whitman's undertaking. In Mário's "A meditação sobre o Tietê" as, in part, a retrospective on his career and the first phase of Modernism, as well as a rebellion against the social moment, one sees the conflict between the outside U.S. source and the Brazilian demands on the artist as hero of the people. Sabino continues this discussion, in many ways picking up where Mário left off, while taking on a U.S. conception of the bildungsroman that F. Scott Fitzgerald has re-infused with Romantic egoism. While Veríssimo often offers his critique problematizing U.S.

and Anglophone notions of the artist in the socioeconomic terms of Neorealism, his handling of familial obligation and generational pressure in the face of independence (sometimes quite similar to vertical-collective criteria used in studies) becomes a complex extension of this paradigm to considerations of aesthetic endeavor. Telles will, as well, pick up this thread of generational struggle and independence, while creating a failed, unrecognized artist team in the context of an oppressive dictatorship. The introduction of social psychological work here, it should be said, is intended to open and help frame the conversation, rather than subordinate the fiction and poetry. Instead, what this monograph hopes to draw into focus is a choice and execution: how and why Brazilian authors highlight this difference in juxtaposition with the fictional U.S. artist, embracing the local in the face of a more globally-pervasive cultural norm, thereby reaffirming the local project as it positions itself in a confluence of traditions.

Chapter 1

Phantasmagoric Igarapé:

Mário de Andrade's Dialogue with Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*⁵

The land and sea, the animals, fishes and birds, the sky of heaven and the orbs, the forests, mountains and rivers, are not small themes... but folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects... they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls.

—Preface to the 1855 first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman.

In the wake of two strokes in his fifties, Walt Whitman wrapped up an extended convalescence in isolation not far from Camden, New Jersey, on the banks of Timber Creek. His greatest work and the war behind him, the poet—famous for his vigor and infamous for his celebration of the body—sought, in these months, a second chance in life, inaugurated through the act of communing once again with nature. In *Specimen Days*, the great 19th-century poet of rivers, that had celebrated their role as global networks and commercial waterways, vibrant with activity, now nourishes himself in solitude on the intimacy of a potential dialogue with a musical brook, “gurgling, gurgling ceaselessly—meaning, saying something of course (if only one could translate it)” (83). In the entries of his poetic diary

⁵ Much of the material presented here was first published by the author in Portuguese as “Igarapé Fantasmagórico: Um diálogo entre a poesia de Mário de Andrade e *Leaves of Grass*, de Walt Whitman,” in *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada*, n. 46, Aug 2022, pp. 79-97.

from 1876, Whitman relays the inspiration owed this stream as he describes wetting his pen in its light current to continue writing. He describes, as well, swimming in its water, benefiting from the freshness of its spring, and with it an implicit act of strengthening himself in the promise of purification and rejuvenation. Apart from a hyperbolic faith in the restorative power of nature and the transcendental sublime, the descriptions of the creek, with its dragonflies and kingfishers, are simple and matter-of-fact. It is, at the same time, curious to witness this faith as—if we borrow a dichotomy from Jorge Luis Borges—Whitman, the man, seems to (successfully) seek a cure in the visionary paradigm of Whitman, the poet (see “Nota sobre Walt Whitman” 249-53 and “El otro Whitman” 206-8). It is simultaneously one of his most democratic and self-possessed gestures, as he in part joins the mass of Whitman acolytes, allowing his own absorption into a practical project that would so influence literature as a regional and national project in the decades to come.

While he expects no cure, Mário de Andrade, the Pope of Brazilian Modernism revisits his familiar Tietê River—a historically central artery of the city of São Paulo—in the last poem of his life, likewise, to evaluate an inheritance of his own work and his own place in the masses. Jason Tércio describes a Mário, in the week of finishing “A meditação sobre o Tietê,” the same week as his passing, who was expressly bitter and tired, complaining of unfair public attacks (650). Antônio Cândido (who would go on to become one of the most important Brazilian literary critics of the century) attempted to console him by saying, “Poucas pessoas são mais estimadas e admiradas do que você no Brasil” (652-653). Mário smiled sadly, saying, “Eu é que sei” (653). Despite ever-increasing fame, in 1945, this is a frustrated poet, one who saw the 1938 suspension of the city’s Department of Culture and Recreation that he co-founded, who, embittered, temporarily left São Paulo for Rio de

Janeiro, and who, in the end, would not witness the fall of Gertúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo*. In the personal disillusionment of this last poem of his life, Mário partly returns, once again, to a Whitmanian vision and model often adapted and embraced by various Latin American *avant gardes* as if it were a kind of panacea.

Whitman was long-since embedded in the literary traditions of Spanish America and Brazil. *Avant garde* movements—including Brazilian Modernism—found in the Good Gray Poet an ever-expanding hope to incorporate into their project. Lauded by José Martí in 1887, a broad and profound influence began first in Spanish America, where the poet had a large impact on colossal figures such as Rubén Darío.⁶ In particular, and to a certain extent, in contrast with Europe, the relationship between the community and its natural environs, as presented by Whitman, contributed to the model for various Spanish-language traditions—revisited and explored via pressing questions of regional and national identity. Among many essential authors across the decades one can point to Pablo Antonio Cuadra from Nicaragua, Pablo Neruda from Chile, and César Vallejo from Peru. Particularly in the movements of literary revolution in the first half of the 20th-century, Whitman, romantic and non-romantic, rebel to form and convention, served as a link in the process of reconciliation with the local Romantics and their earlier efforts to capture the experience of the people, informed by geography and nature. In the model, kinetic energy, productivity, the drive of the people continues to entail individual industriousness and work ethic—an idea borrowed from Ralph Waldo Emerson—or are substituted by a variety of other aims, projected in regional values, including the struggle against neo-imperialism. Originally focused on the identity of the hard-working individual, this paradigm cultivates an Emersonian transcendence that offers

⁶ For an in-depth comparison of the two poets, see Peña (1977).

individual purpose, conceiving this subject as a vital part of a community connected to the land. Instead of the “farmer,” Emerson’s worker is the “Man on the farm,” unified with all the other workers of his society (84). It is in self-expression of fulfilling and giving body to this goal that a particular balance of subjugation to and freedom from social onus becomes a unifying element seemingly shared among members of the social group.

In contrast to much of Spanish America, Brazil, at this time, as has been mentioned, was traditionally more closely linked to the cultural influences of Europe, and above all France. As a result, Whitman did not become popular in-country until the beginning of the 20th century; at that time, his poetry arrived embedded in and interpreted by francophone Symbolism and, subsequently, *avant garde* movements that included figures such as Émile Verhaeren (Paro “Whitman” 57). As Maria Clara Bonetti Paro points out, it is in the Modernism of the second half of the 1920s that the presence of Whitman flourishes—in transcendental notions, as well as language—in the writing of poets such as Ronald de Carvalho and Tasso da Silveira. Mário, then, is reacting to both a tradition of Whitman adaptation in Latin America and Brazil, while (one can see) dialoguing with poets like Carvalho and Silveira over the years. His struggle seems less an *agon* in the Bloomian sense, but—working off of T.S. Eliot’s model of tradition as an “order” and the dynamic, organic negotiation of the “mind of Europe” (37-38)—questions two decades of attempted adaptation, in full-blown pessimism, asking how Whitman actually fits into the mind, or order, of Brazil.

As Bonetti Paro points out, with English, French, and German versions of *Leaves of Grass* in his personal library, Mário read Whitman before the wave of popularity in Modernism reached its full intensity. He mentions the bard in the 1922 “Prefácio

Interessantíssimo” and praises him in correspondences. A wide, varying fusion of influences pervades his oeuvre—often adapted with keen awareness and a critical, as well as cultural, agenda. His primary challenge to Whitman in the form of “A meditação sobre o Tietê,” occurs, then, not at an individual level—poet to poet—but on the level of tradition and local reality, and a notion of Whitman as a type of panacea. While this actively happens primarily in reception, one can see tendencies in Whitman that cultivate it. Even with his greatness, Whitman now and then inevitably overreaches as he insists on the universality of his message and work; it is inherent to his project as semi-deified poet for all times and all places.

Ronald de Carvalho, who passed at forty-one in 1935, arrives at an experimentation and adaptation of Whitman, in some ways similar to a Mário of that time, but is also quicker to intentionally mimic the New Yorker, offering up lines like that of “Eu ouço o canto enorme do Brasil!” (19). While Carvalho’s sense of language and the poetic line are astounding, the partial failures at arriving at a synthesis that would incorporate Whitman into a South American or Brazilian order (in Eliot’s sense) often lack the intriguing complexity of Mário’s experiments. *Toda a America* (1926) chronicles the poet’s journey across South and North America. Carvalho, in the first poem, focuses mainly on Europe, explicitly distancing America from it—“tu não sabes o que é ser Americano!” (10)—instead of utilizing a Whitmanian mode of reducing Europe by declaring the United States its natural heir. Later in the book, this explicit approach returns in Carvalho’s celebration of an “America livre de terror,” primarily eliciting the injustices of European socioeconomic inequality (45).

Carvalho at moments embraces Whitman’s driving impetus of progress, along with his grand lines, rhythms, and lists, but infuses them (to limited success) with old paradigms of the land as “virgindade” (“Puente del Inca” 27). In addition, as will sometimes plague

Mário in his dialogue, Whitman's celebration of grand cosmic purpose clashes with Carvalho's aesthetics, which seem to build off Francophone currents that echo Parnassianism and Symbolism. Whitmanian globe-trotting references to far off places, adapted in Carvalho, come with an air of the exotic ("Broadway") and this New World is one of mermaids ("Brasil"); we may beautifully hear the *chiar* of the *caatinga* as a single soundscape, but the unifying framework beyond the images and sounds, and their resulting composite (beyond *l'art pour l'art*) is not present, or at least unclear. Carvalho, likewise, swiftly leaps the gap between the term *America* as Whitman seems to have typically meant it, to an *America* that seemingly extends from Tierra del Fuego to Ellesmere Island—one example of the way in which Whitman invites a grandiose reading. Yet sometimes an old metaphor of connection, novelistically-applied to geography, is intriguing in its layers as, for example, "os teares de Jersey, Oaxaca, São Paulo, Sucre e Punta Arenas trançam e retrançam o fio de seda e o fio de lã" ("Toda a America" 49). In this interconnectedness and survey of the land in Carvalho, rivers play a central role, as, in Argentina, he hears "o ritmo... de todos os teus rios," or, in Mexico, focuses on the Rio Grande ("El Puente del Inca" 28, "Fronteira do Rio Grande" 36). Rivers are approached at the level of American network (from Canada to Argentina) in the nocturne of the fourth section of the poem "Toda a America." Carvalho presents them with the following Whitman-inspired anaphora:

Quem exprimiu jamais a tua grande noite, grávida de vicio, cólera e prazer?
a tua noite que funde todas as cosmologias,
a tua noite por onde corre o Amazonas,
a tua noite cheia das vozes do Mississipi, do São Francisco, do Araguaya e do Prata,

a tua noite das cachoeiras e dos saltos, do Niagara, de Paulo Affonso e Iguassú... (56)

This penultimate stanza, which precedes a short and final fifth stanza that functions as an epilogue, finalizes the map of Carvalho's grand trip throughout the book, from south to north, weaving together the different lands much like his proposed loom.

As will be seen later, Mário has parallel experiments following Carvalho's 1926 publication, attempting to negotiate Whitman into a Brazilian literary order heavily influenced by the French tradition. He undertakes a substantial amount of this through the symbol of the river, dialoguing with one established in his broad knowledge of world literature, the rivers of Whitman, and, clearly, its representation in the Brazilian tradition, with a focus on Modernist contemporaries adapting Whitman. Bonetti Paro was the first to recognize how waters and rivers function as a point of connection and exchange between Mário and Whitman. This element, in fact, reveals itself as central to an extended dialogue between the two poets. If Carvalho echoes other Latin American traditions when he pens, "Eu ouço o canto enorme do Brasil!" Mário develops a dialogue that over the course of its trajectory challenges such an adoption, resisting simple and definitive classification by preserving the complexity and agency of the artist. From *Pauliceia desvairada* to "A meditação sobre o Tietê, the *paulistano* (while simultaneously cultivating other projects) substitutes the East River and other great, storied rivers of Whitman's poetic world with São Paulo's Tietê. At the end of this process, in "Meditação," he arrives at a kind of inversion of transcendental core ideas, largely accepted and celebrated by Spanish American and Brazilian authors, highlighting instead the distinct role of the local artist and the independence of the literary mind of Brazil in a commentary and check on a country rife with

dictatorial tendencies. Rather than build toward a type of expected, affirming individual glory, the revindication of a dejected and tired poet is thwarted by a river that, for the poet hero as representative, is a threatening nightmare reflective of the current climate.

Era uma vez um rio...

In his essay, "Nature," in 1836, Emerson in large part seems to reiterate ideas of the classical sublime and European Romanticism. However, just a few years after abdicating his position of pastor in Massachusetts, in a preaching tone, he finds a mode to poetically disseminate them at the service of a national project. Even his least convincing arguments (like positing that ethical language comes from nature, for example) furnish a vision that elevates the common man, promising a cosmic significance to the labor of his position. For Emerson, the individual (and above all the writer) enters into the virtue and perfection of nature, ordered as "in the mind of God," finding there an intellectual truth that allows the individual participation in the divine and subordinates nature to the human experience. Bertrand Russell conceived of philosophy as the space between theology and science, and Emerson seems to take this tact, promulgating a prophetic vision in which the non-visionary can participate.

At the collective level, and in the hands of Whitman, this idea finds political and aesthetic purpose in its marriage with value placed on work and the celebration of progress, which seems to anticipate particular *avant garde* currents to come, including, in its treatment of technology, Futurism. The Whitmanian universe is chock-full of mechanics, steamboats, and trains. Even the celebration of the body, in a poem like "I Sing the Body Electric," is couched in terms of electricity, a uniting energy that powers a young telegraph in "Starting

out from Paumanok,” bridging the continent to realize Manifest Destiny. Industrial and technological progress are melded with the aesthetic, as Whitman portends a future made and led by poets, with the poet as agent of society’s realization, whose “spirit responds to his country’s spirit,” and whose expression is “transcendent and new” (618, 619). Carvalho, again, puts it more directly; in building on Whitman, he joyously envisions the Brazilian citizen as “o homem de amanhã!” (15).

One can say that Mário de Andrade would have the right to reject the label of *futurista*, applied by Oswald de Andrade, solely on the grounds of the negative portrayal of technology that he presents in *PD*⁷. Seen as his first Modernist work, it offers a perspective that is anything but optimistic. Beyond the endemic enthusiasm and energy in the rebellion of the young vanguardist—influenced by Francophone sensibilities and Naturalist tropes—the burgeoning technology of São Paulo, instead of carrying its people into the future, is an atonal commotion of incongruous components that buck potentially unifying models of interpretation. This São Paulo is a universe of taxis *vascolejantes* and rattling streetcars—a dirty and dark world full of sudden clamor and useless motion. If a disjointed schematic of carnivalesque elements—“Arlequinal!”—facilitates the reception of this bleak, frenetic scenario, it undermines the general flavor of progress and the advancement of generations.

Such is the focus of Mário’s first handling of the *paulistano* river in the brief poem, “Tietê,” a work that reflects a persistent preoccupation with irreconcilable modes of thinking. This tension, insist Émorine and Pontes de Azevedo, arises from an “embate entre dois tempos” (102). In question, present in the poem is the founding myth of the São Paulo of Borba Gato and the *bandeirantes paulistas* of two centuries earlier. It utilizes Victor

⁷ *Pauliceia desvairada*

Brecheret's *Monumento às Bandeiras*, whose mock-up was finished shortly before the publication of the poem, as a metaphoric bridge between the contemporary and the glorified past. In the poem, the context of this reflection on the mythic past, is an uneventful morning of swimming, establishing a continuous temporal tension. It begins "Era uma vez um rio..." creating a psychological space that conjures up the idyllic and allegoric (36). Immediately after, it evokes and undermines the discourse of a simple eulogy for the bandeirantes: "Porém os Borbas-Gatos dos ultranacionais esperiamente!" (36). Their project to "Povoar!" is revisited via Brecheret's work at the end of the second stanza in an outburst of exclamations. Reflecting the clash of temporal planes and notions of national identity, the Modernist Brecheret, who tackles this mythology of the past (though considered naturalized at the time) was born in Latium in Italy. The constructive material of the poem is Italian Brazilian within a Modernist sensibility. It is with this verse that the poem suddenly changes to present the contemporary reality of the river, giving way to a São Paulo that reflects a reality of recent European immigration—and the river as a magnet for factories operated by immigrant labor. In *Tietê, o rio que a cidade perdeu*, Janes Jorge describes a river that, along with its offshoots and surrounding wetlands, served as a focal point in the first half of the century for swimming on hot days and as a supplementary food source for struggling immigrants (17, 88). The Italian at the end of the poem, in the morning swim on the river, turns the mixture of inheritance and actuality even more complex, relegating the final scene to an anticlimactic, uncontested acceptance, as the figures of the poem talk about going to lunch.

If rivers can be traditionally seen as symbols of the passage of time, in a unifying sense, the river—guide and route of the *bandeirantes*—manifests an irreconcilable clash. The Modernist act of sculpting the past to create the present moment is an immensely rich

metaphor that remains undeveloped, which seemingly confirms the poet's resignation (if not celebration) of the incompatible, conflictive currents highlighted throughout *PD*. Mário expands on this same idea in the poem "Tu," which maps out São Paulo as a woman—a Lady Macbeth made of fine, morning mist (47)—utilizing the model of a body as map for tension rather than unification. Here he carries the clash of waves to an extreme as he, for example, calls the city an "italo-franco-luso-brasílico-saxônica" seamstress of sunrises (47), using the adverb *bandeirantemete* to describe the fieriness of the dawn, thereby mocking a ready, unifying solution for imagined specters of the past. In this collection, the poem that most addresses the idea of the progress of the people and foreshadows what will be presented in "A meditação sobre o Tietê," is "Paisagem No. 4." It is a poem with shades of mock patriotism and pride in São Paulo, that follows carts carrying coffee down the city's streets, highlighting the local economic engine. It presents a cold and mechanical feel of "indiferenças maternais," in which Emerson's paradigm of unifying the collective—facing the suggestion of economic exploitation—is inverted in the call to "A vitória de todos os sozinhos!" (51).

If Mário de Andrade concentrates on the conflict between the present and past, and the challenges of collective identity in "Tietê," Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" offers the inverse. The difference is that the New Yorker arrives at a temporal transcendence by finding the sublime in the quotidian. The realization of the present is celebrated in the simplicity of the poem, building off the simple premise of the daily back-and-forth of the masses between Manhattan and Brooklyn, and the expanding use of ferries for commuting concentrated on the East River. The grandeur of this poem consists of the poet's meditation on the river not just as a kind of conduit to span physical space or as a metaphor to unite the

population in that moment, but as conduit to speak with the many generations of a distant future. Whitman writes in the preface to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, speaking of the U.S. project and the poet's part: "Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet.... he says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you" (623).

In "Crossing," the poet first establishes a multiperspective, panoramic vision imagining what hundreds of other passengers are seeing, forming a composite vision of the present before expanding in new temporal directions conjoining the current moment to the future:

Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of
Brooklyn to the south and east;
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-tide, the falling back to the sea of
the ebb-tide. (136)

What follows is a participation in the divine which Emerson promised, updated in the messianic Whitman. If the collisions of the two temporal planes of the poem "Tietê" (in the perspective proposed by Émorine and Pontes de Azevedo) reduce the grandiosity of the present moment to the intensely ordinary, "Crossing" manages to echo across centuries:

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
 I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations
 hence,
 Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt

 I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old... (136)

If time is considered in three planes (as he addresses in his original preface), Whitman utilizes the river as meditative focal point in contemplating the present and the future, while Mário muses on the river as a spring from the past that leads to an ahistorical present. Compared to the ferry, the technological advances that are presented in the world of *PD* lack the promise of the future, and the river as a vehicle for reflection is prisoner to the past.

This theme in Mário de Andrade's work becomes even more intriguing at the end of 1926, when the author substitutes the past of "Era uma vez" with a more familiar and tangible one provided by the pseudo-indigenous world conceptualized in *Macunaíma*. Here the epitaph *igarapé*, which brings with it ideas of a barely navigable stream or channel, is applied repeatedly to the river as a way of approaching an imagined past and projected indigenous identity in continual conflict with perspectives like that of the "Carta pras Icamiaba." The letter, written in a stilted, erudite Portuguese, briefly positions the protagonist as a (presumably European) learned outsider, explorer and purveyor of an exotic 20th-century São Paulo. The city presented is compared with Rome, with the *paulistano* river assigned the Tiber's relation to Rome: "Beija-lhe os pés a grácil e inquieta linfa do Tietê" (*Macunaíma*

80). The river, depicted in the letter, has calm and restorative waters like those of the city of Aachen (*Aquisgrana*), evoked in the chapter by its name in the days of the Roman Empire, and it is bestowed the utility of the Scheldt, a waterway that established the importance of Antwerp in Europe. It is, in short, a mental schema constructed by European reference points, forcibly superimposed on the São Paulo of *Macunaíma* to no small comic effect. The tininess inherent in the idea of an *igarapé* clashes with the grandiosity of these ideas. Beyond this, whether intended or not, even the name of the river Tietê reveals a palimpsest, problematic along the same lines. The previous name of the river was *Anhembi*, referencing the presence of the *anhuma* bird (horned screamer) in the area, and it was probably settlers who renamed it “Tietê” (Jorge 147). This newer name can be translated from Tupi-Guarani as “true river” (Tupan-An 68). The river in *Macunaíma*, then, becomes the focal point in the search for a viable, applicable mythology in the effort to reconcile conflictive representations of the past that continually insist on their verisimilitude. The great mythology questioned in the poem “Tietê” of *PD* is again challenged, now in disorienting layers of interpretation in the parodic whirlwind of Mário’s rhapsody. In this way, the *paulistano* deconstructs the facets of the river in their function of representing the metropolis. That said, there are moments in his work previous to “A meditação sobre o Tietê” in which he seems to quest after a reconciliation of incompatibilities between the *igarapé*, the waterway of the famed founders of the city, and the quotidian, as well as artistic, experience of the 20th-century Brazilian. In this sense, “Nocturno de Belo Horizonte,” first published in 1927 in *Clã do Jabuti*, contemporary to the initial Whitmanian boom of adherents like Carvalho and Silveira, is an inversely-positive proto-“Meditação” of Whitman’s model, concentrated on the river as temporal pathway.

Vem, minha gente!

In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman often manages to access this temporal element through the idea of functionality—be it in brief portraits of fishermen going about their daily work or in the attention given commercial boats and ferries navigating the river. His way of subjugating the glory of nature (in Emersonian terms), then, is to find its utility in the flow of progress. In this way geographical and chronological fidelity are corrupted, with the river as a temporal disruptor and the human body (and even the collective body) used as a metaphorical schematic to break down fixed notions of geography; an actual cartographic map becomes first and foremost a map of identity—interactive with the environs and shaped by the acts of exploration, naming, cultivating, and developing. The river, in broader terms, is the promise of adventure and exploration, seemingly inextricable from industriousness. This lends itself to the more specific way of seeing the river as a conduit that enables communication and commerce not just with the country but the world, consolidating the fusion between progress and development over generations. As so many other Romantics, and poets in general, framed it, the river must find its route and become a delta, culminating in its arrival to the sea.

Tasso da Silveira elegantly writes of just such an expansion in his “Noturno,” but with a subtle somnambulist sensibility deriving from the loosely defined tradition of the nocturne and its vague nighttime melancholy. In his short poem, he speaks to a ship tied to the dock, and urges it, not in grandiose, expansive terms, but addressing an intimate agency: “Não dorme. Sonha, acordado, / que vai pelo mar enorme, / pelo mar ilimitado” (307). This idea of the unconscious revealing itself in the night does lend itself to the larger scale concerns of a people and geography revealing their true nature. Yet the scale of the poem

itself becomes difficult to synthesize with a grand Whitmanian project of the people. In “Toda a America,” in speaking of the Amazon, Mississippi, and São Francisco, Carvalho utilizes America’s night, but in this Whitmanian mapping, it moves to a commotion of noises, abandoning a sensitivity seen here in Silveira, and even in other parts of Carvalho’s own poem.

Mário’s efforts in this vein are best epitomized by “Nocturno de Belo Horizonte.” As a first attempt to make Whitman a central touchstone in his poetic endeavor, it is faithful to the practical and Romantic notion of a river that flows “serra abaixo” (*Poesias completas* 129). In achieving this, the poem utilizes an association that is complex but familiar. It opens with the quiet contemplation of the “calma do noturno,” in a manner particularly reminiscent of the *mineiro* Alphonsus de Guimaraens, as much in its fog and moonlight as in the water/air dichotomy of a poem like “Ismália,” but with a style that reflects Whitman. As for a transcendence of generations, Guimaraens’ frequent religious tone is substituted for a Whitmanian march of progress, focused on the Brazilian Gold Rush in Minas Gerais and the “luta para civilizer.” In a strange mix, in a quasi-eulogistic portrait, Mário maintains a certain distance, or even hint of irony, allowing the voice of the poet to separate itself from the drive of the entire poem, and partly withdraw from the population:

Que luta pavorosa entre floresta e casas....

Todas as idades humanas

Macaqueadas por arquiteturas históricas

Torres torreões torrinhas e tolices

Brigaram em nome da?

Os mineiros secundam em coro:

—Em nome da civilização!

Minas progride. (126)

The idea that “Minas progride” feeds off of a complicated foundation. If the final message of the author shows a determined optimism in a struggle linked to a conception of progress, it is problematized by the underlying past of exploitation.

The subsequent stanzas offer a familiar trope: the arduous and fragile effort to resist and expel invading nature, one of the archetypal struggles of the Brazilian city. This is clearly opposed to Emerson’s model in that it takes a position of opposition to nature. Nevertheless, the rivers here operate as a unifying symbol, based on the idea of interconnectivity through exploration and trade—among them the Paraíba, the Rio das Mortes, the São Francisco, and the Itoupava. Their names flash alongside historical moments and figures: “Dom Rodrigo de Castelo Branco,” “Robério Dias,” “espanhóis de Felipe IV,” “Chico-Rei.” With a focus on long lines, conjunctions, and exclamations, the self-sustaining rhythm of Mário’s verses stands out, echoing Whitman’s prosody, yet the New Yorker avoids citing specific historical figures. His use of proper names tends to limit itself to Christ and a few other figures that already bring with them an extensive, inherent mythology. Part of his process is erasing individual identity to diffuse the individual into the collective at a mythic scale. Thus, Whitman sacrifices the monikers of the past in favor of a present continually mindful of the future, while Mário insists on a reconciliation with historical details and figures which are often problematic.

Beyond this, in the two authors, the process of combining disparate and even opposing elements in poetic creation tends to be quite different. Whitman may seem rebellious at moments, as in the famous lines of *Song of Myself*: “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes)” (77). Yet, in contrast, Mário normally does not feel the need to defend either his rampant contradictions (he does, after all, seem to seek them out) or his rebellious diction. Considered in the light of that general rebellious tendency, this project then stands out for the way in which Mário seeks to reconcile diverse elements—with the faith and sincerity of the imperative—seeking to unify an immense variety of the populations and cultures of the Brazil of “Nocturno.” The poet reflects, then calls out, via the network of rivers:

Eu queria contar as histórias de Minas
Pros brasileiros do Brasil...
Filhos do Luso e da melancolia,
Vem, gente de Alagoas e de Mato Grosso,
De norte e sul homens fluviais do Amazonas e do rio Paraná...
Vem, minha gente!
Bebedores de guaraná e de assaí,
Chupadores do chimarrão,
Pinguíços cantantes, cafeistas ricos... (134)

It is not that the register of Mário’s poems do not achieve the grand, elevated platform of conviction in other texts of his oeuvre. The voice of *Há uma gota de sangue em cada poema*

(1917) attempts to find the great stage of a witness condemning the war, and the poet of *PD* strives to be heard over the chaos of the city. However, here, in “Nocturno,” the poet assumes the role of poet-prophet reminiscent of Whitman, calling—with the familiarity of the Brazilian singular (“Vem, gente!”)—the multitude of Brazilian ethnicities to a *locus amoenus*, not idealized, but beautiful in its defects. The masses arrive by means of this network of rivers and consist, primarily, of “homens fluviais,” beckoned as “bebedores” to waters which seem to exhibit a baptismal quality.

Returning to Whitman, the poem first titled “Poem of Salutation” in 1856, and later altered to the French, “Salut au Monde!” to reflect the lingua franca of the moment, stands in parallel to “Nocturno.” As the only foreign poem published in the first edition of the journal *Festa*, in 1927 (Paro “Whitman” 60), its importance for the Modernists is evident. The poem, as its title suggests, is a Whitmanian calling out and vast survey—often seeming to fly over the globe—and overcoming a grand, physical geography. In it, the idea of a network of interconnectivity takes various shapes. When it is time to ask, “What do you see Walt Whitman?” the normally clear delineation between civilization and nature becomes blurred, as these two elements seem to partly unify, aligned under the same objective. In the fifth section of the poem, for example, this effect is achieved by using technology to evoke nature. It is the railways and electric telegraphs that span the globe, mapping out the connective tissue of a global vision. In particular, the rivers, with their flow toward the sea, form a great network, oftentimes named, as we see in Mário’s poem—as if citing their names had the Adamic performative power of possession and assimilation. The survey of the Amazon, Paraguay, Po, Danube, and Yellow Rivers, among others, is an implicit mechanism in Whitman’s poetry to enter not just into brief contemplations of other civilizations, but to

travel temporally and evoke the distant and religious past to which America might be seen as heir. When Mário adopts this flow in “Nocturno,” he cannot resist subverting the Romanticized church of Guimaraens with a dose of the profane, as we see at the poem’s end with an episode in which dona Branca Ribeiro do Alvarenga, who belongs to the Vicentine nobility of Vila Rica, orders the construction of a church “pra que Deus perdoasse as almas pecadoras do marido e da filha” (134).

In a general sense, one of the large differences between the poems here is an inversion in the relationship with the foreign. One could say that Whitman practices the most intense form of *antropofagismo*. Consider his grandiose thoughts, again, in the preface to *Leaves of Grass*: “The American poets are to enclose old and new for America is the race of races. Of them a bard is to be commensurate with a people. To him the other continents arrive as contributions” (618). It is not that he markedly distorts in his earnest glimpses of the rest of the world; his glances are too quick for that. However, more than simply seeing it, Whitman notably romanticizes it in a composition of his own creation. Mário, in this dynamic, turns out to be the actual polyglot, but turned within, toward the domestic. Always speaking of Brazil, his adaption of Whitman is not a Pan-American one, like Carvalho’s. He writes:

A Espanha estilhaçou-se numa poeira de nações americanas

Mas sobre o tronco sonoro da língua do ão

Portugal reuniu 22 orquídeas desiguais.

Nós somos na Terra o grande milagre do amor!

.....

As pátrias têm de ser uma expressão de Humanidade. (135)

In effect, the difficult task of unifying the then twenty-two Brazilian states requires something on the scale of the great Whitmanian undertaking of envisioning a global fraternity. In this context, Mário more freely allows himself the elements and tools of Romanticism, and it is perhaps because of this that “Nocturno,” though mitigating them through immense complexity and occasional irony, so heavily deals with the Romantic, including aspects of Alphonsus de Guimaraens. The voice of the poet shouts, in elevated passion, acknowledging among the variety, “fluminenses salinos,” “teutos de Santa Cantarina,” the “vaqueiros de couro da caatingas,” and “toda a minha raça morena” (134). In this way, the poem is an unusual fusion of discourses, with historical details and other specificities colliding against a natural Romantic glossing.

In addition, Mário de Andrade ends the poem with a Whitmanian trope derived from Emerson’s model. In Whitman, nature—in an isomorphism that blurs the distinction between the two—reflects both a map of the individual’s body and the body of the community, exemplified in poems like “From Pent-up Aching Rivers” or “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” This technique, of the individual body projected on the environs, is popular in various acts of singing the city, with Borges utilizing it in *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (1923), just a year after *PD*. In the last stanza of “Nocturno,” with all the country figuratively called to this city, Belo Horizonte is anthropomorphized. It is now a sleeping giant that “respira de leve” and delights in the role of unity as its pores “aspiram com sensualidade com delícia” (137). In a triptych with earth and air, the last verses return to the idea of water, with waterfalls representing its function in nature explored early in the poem, now domesticated in the fountains of the city of Belo Horizonte. Mário, in effect, captures and confines the powerful, expansive water of

Whitman, which networks the globe, and by making its terminus the fountains, subsumes its vital force into the city project. Captured, its action is now sustenance for all those invited drinkers, while symbolically embodying its original primordial aspect as a force in nature—vitality contained amongst the trivial and quotidian the city’ order. It is, in short, a human harmony seldom seen in other parts of the Andradian body of work, in which the river typically brings with it elements of chaos and uncontrolled sexuality, while the city struggles only to be something more than a chaotic reflection of nature. In *PD*, for example, when the human element is associated with the city, it is not realized through the speaker of the poem, for whom it tends to be threatening and surrealistic, creating alienation. The *pauliceia* is an infected “grande boca de mil dentes” and São Paulo “é um palco de bailados russos” (33, 46). The surrealism of “Tristura,” in which the poet and city theoretically procreate is such that, instead of being any kind of holy union, the delineating line between the two is reaffirmed and fortified (39). It is this idea of dysfunction that Mário returns to in “A meditação sobre o Tietê.”

Uma lágrima apenas

In what is said with respect to “A meditação sobre o Tietê,” Genro Appel tells us that “há quem o considere o poema testamento do poeta” (54). David Haberly writes: “It seems evident... that [“A meditação sobre do Tietê”] was intended to serve as some sort of summation of his enormously influential contribution to Brazilian verse” (227). Following this vein, the poem can offer the promise of wonderfully complex teleologies that are difficult to resist. Written two years after “O Movimento Modernista” (1943), the Pope of the Modernist Movement can seem resigned to an express frustration in the darkness and interior

conflict of the piece, inviting the reading of the poem as the final punctuation to the ostensible arch of Mário's career. The impression of a type of swansong is solidified in the grandness of the endeavor that is this poem, larded with references to his own poems of the past, including "Tempo da Maria," "Eu sou trezentos..." and the familiar trope of the *Boi da Paciência*. As previously mentioned, Mário is here, without doubt, a frustrated poet contending with misfortune in the last years of his life in the political climate of São Paulo. For these reasons, beyond the personal farewell, it is not difficult to succumb to the temptation of interpreting "Meditação" through the provocative mythology of the fatigued crusader resigned to the inevitable defeat at the end of the long campaign. Yet instead of this, it seems more fruitful to think of a Mário in a crisis of despair, after decades of work, much like the Whitman convalescing on the banks of Timber Creek, looking to the literary tradition for guidance.

As far as recognizing the influence of Whitman in the poem, Bonetti Paro limits herself to suggesting that the image of the "a noiseless patient spider" is expressed by the "aranha insaciada" of "Meditação," now representing "sua aspiração artística de dar uma alma ao Brasil" ("Encontro das águas" 93). Luiz Costa Lima points out, briefly, an inversion of Whitman in the negativity of the poem. From his point of view, instead of the scenes of the Tietê harmonizing, "a apresentação da cidade se opõe à realizada por Whitman, no seu canto do mundo industrializado" (120). "Meditação" is, like other Andradian works, something of a chimera sewn together from disparate parts, each resisting the other, but taken to an expansive extreme. The poem begins with that return to the river seen in Whitman at Timber Creek, the hope to begin a dialogue with a familiar symbol and touchstone of the past and access a literary mind. It happens at night, but in contrast to the tender revelation of the

nocturne, the Tietê here is a dark monster, as the poem explodes, embracing the negative sensibility of a nightmare diffused throughout the piece. This quality is created with the inversion of the journey of the transcendental and multitudinous *I* that is found in Whitman. Acknowledging yet thwarting the schematic and transcendental flow proposed by Emerson, this singular work resuscitates themes of uselessness and disillusion explored in the São Paulo of *PD*, but it follows these explorations to another dimension, that of the artist's path leading toward sacrificial self-destruction to maintain collectivist obligations in the face of defunct verticalities. In the process of the first person associating himself with the environs, in what would be a Romantic communion, the entire process of subordinating nature (in Emersonian terms) shows itself ineffective. There is a kind of Bloomian *daemonization* present here, and a certain kind of anti-sublime, but it is less concerned with one-to-one *agon* and more the interaction of Brazilian tradition with Whitman, in realistic and caustic appraisal of the social moment. The idea is not to win against Whitman or inspire with Romantic hyperbole but use him to reveal truths of the local moment and the role of the artist. In 1944, Mário reads *Leaves of Grass* again, and the following year, in composing the poem, mixes it with elevated Francophone symbolist roots that had already figured out how, in part, to accommodate the bard.

The choice of the locale of the Ponte das Bandeiras for "Meditação," appropriates and corrupts the Romantic notion of a bridge and Byronesque qualities of conjoining two portions of land. In Whitman's "Song of the Exposition," the Brooklyn Bridge is listed among the great endeavors of an increasingly interconnected world, and part of a project that makes the globe "our own rondure" (171). That said, it has been discussed as to why there is so little attention given the bridge in Whitman's poetry overall. Richard Haw proposes that

the predictable and focused travel of crossing the bridge does not equal the grandness of actually being on the river (13-14). Of course, in “Crossing,” the sublime relies on the visual scope of the journey and the handling of the river and flow beneath the boat. The Ponte das Bandeiras may occupy a parallel position in Mário’s poem, carrying with it the same sort of rigidity and limiting vision that may have turned Whitman off to further consideration of the Brooklyn Bridge and others.

Formerly known as Ponte Grande, the Ponte das Bandeiras was remodeled in 1942 to facilitate the expansion of the city of São Paulo, strengthening the connection with neighborhoods to the north, like those of Santana and Jardim São Paulo. President Getúlio Vargas was present for its inauguration, which included a regatta on the river. With a name recalling the *bandeirante* myth, yet another context reaffirms the link between a notion of national progress and the founder myth, problematized in “Tietê” of *PD*. “Meditação” begins and closes with the bridge, and the idea of it as supremely static, in contrast to the movement and purpose of Whitman’s ferry, calls into question monolithic myth. The Tietê—*rio verdadeiro*—becomes a faithful representation of the *paulistana* situation, beneath appearances of the bridge as a symbol of the path of progress. The poet, “grimpado” on its arch, clings to the support to an unsatisfactory ideology. The bridge, in its fixedness, at least at first, directs the poet’s eye downward to the flow of time and the brutal struggle of the masses that move below.

Returning to the paradigm of the igarapé of *Macunaíma*, with all the grandiosity of “Carta pras Icamíabas,” Mário de Andrade, in effect, substitutes, in “A meditação sobre o Tietê,” his own versions of a psychological phantasmagoria with the grandness of a symphony. In a composition of various apparent influences, Mário, in stylistic terms

continues with his adaptation of Whitman's eloquent grandness, brimming over traditional norms of the verse. The phraseology of Whitman, imitative of a river itself, succumbs to the power of the poet's undertaking, as he is elevated to observer of the defects riddling a conception of progress for his community. This is achieved through an intensified focus on orality, but then layered with an invitation to a rich, imagined soundscape within the poem. With respect to evoked, disparate sounds within Whitman, the third part of "Salut au Monde" is a good example, and perhaps "I Hear America Singing," is the most extreme one, in that they propose a striking variety of sound—of mechanics, carpenters, brick layers, etc.—with their endogenous music synthesized in the song of the poet, clearly central to the poem's effect. In Mário's poem, the sonority manifests as a cacophony of all the specters of the river, with not only those heard outright in the scene, but those which contribute to the impact while existing only metaphorically, or which are evoked without existing diegetically. The river of constant murmurs produces "cordas oscilantes" and the numerous plutocrats possess a "grito metálico" (306, 311). Added to this cacophony are voices and songs of beauty, as well as the muted power of silenced individuals. It is a place of constant aural change and, yet, in total effect, silences, rolling on in a "rumor surdo," never realizing itself, never finding the shore with the song of its waves (311).

Appropriating the long verse, "Nocturno," in some moments, seems a more direct attempt to adapt Whitman's prosody, while in "Meditação" a rich subversion is central to this process. The long line is often fragmented or flows out of control, in a series of ideas and sounds that collide with normal stream of consciousness. For example: "É um rumor de germes insalubres pela noite insone e humana" (305) or "Olha os peixes, demagogo incivil! Repete os carcomidos peixes!" (308). In this sense the line desynchronizes time and time

again, notably, for example, with the recurrent and varying motive of the night. In the second-to-last stanza it takes this form, complicated by the surrealistic, challenging metaphor of eyes as night: “É noite!... é noite! E tudo é noite! E os meus olhos são noite” (313). At the same time, this stylistic mosaic of interior disharmony creates a conflict between the original material of the long verse and the interruption of its flow with truncated sentences, sometimes of just one word each. This leads up to an ending in which Mário seems to most effectively undermine Whitman’s phrasing. The final image is of alga carried off by the current of the river, in a never-ending flow leading into a vast darkness without form. The orality here undercuts a potential grace to this flow with short sentences and plosive consonants that heighten a choppy effect: “**Da Ponte das Bandeiras, morta dissoluta, fraca, / uma lágrima apenas, uma lágrima, / Eu sigo alga escusa nas águas do meu Tietê**” (314, my bold).

In summary, if the flow, with its sound and meaning, carries with it Whitman’s progress, in Mário’s work it is morphed into tumult and confusion. Likewise, while the voice of Whitman’s poems can suddenly transport to unifying, elevated effect, here the positioning of the poet, sometimes in the water, sometimes out, has instead a disorienting effect, undermining linearity and emphasizing the tenuousness of the distinction between the collectivism entailed in being in the water and the poet’s role contemplating the water from above. In the third stanza of Mário’s poem, for example, the poet seems to enter the water again, this time with an altered connotation of a familiar, communal nature. As in Whitman, the passage reaffirms the community and, by extension, should reaffirm its truth (as defined by Emerson) through beauty and order, but a rampant inexorable monstrosity confounds any type of subordination. “E fui por tuas águas levado,” it begins, conjuring up the Romantic

notion of being carried away by nature and opening oneself up to the sublime, “A me reconciliar com a dor humana pertinaz, / E a me purificar no barro dos sofrimentos dos homens” (306). It is the poet as spokesman for the people, but primarily unified with the masses in their struggle and suffering, reversing the Whitmanian model and questioning mechanisms of beauty revealed. French influences seem at work, as the oil on the surface of the river, for example, is the pollution of the city, but even it, in the light, appears beautiful, contrasting with other moments in which it seems detestable. In this case, the poet goes to purify himself in the ugly and disgusting, the mud of reality, which interferes with the transcendental process, resulting in “na mais incompetente solidão” (309). In this sequence of the poet trying to connect with the people, even the idea of labor, so central to Whitman, is implemented, with the focus on the hands of the poet, but instead of the promise of life and future, the river brings the opposite. This opposite surfaces out of the insistent complexity of the river, which harbors both the good and evil of the “multidão,” a torrent full of “purezas e martírios,” while at the same time dirty and a realm of “impiedade” (311). It is, we learn, the birthplace of the poet, that gives “sangue e vida a beber” (311), but in his struggle for truth, he is overwhelmed by an insidious ugliness. One notes that in this process, the appeal, in horror, is not to another *paulistano* but to someone, who is not from there, and thus would understand it all through the disappointment of a superficial beauty. “Isto não são águas que se beba, conhecido!” insists the poet, “Estas águas / São malditas e dão morte, eu descobri!” (307).

The disconcerting premise in this construction is that the water flows inland and not in the direction of the sea. In Silveira’s “Fio d’água” (1918), he contemplates, once again, the release into the sea, in which the “pobre fio d’água cristalina” suffers wanderings around the

globe until transforming its soul to one that is “heroica” e “bravia” by its entrance into the sea (22). Mário, then, dialogues with this pro-Whitmanian adaptation, undermining the acceptance of the Romantic. In the second stanza, in one more way of evoking the Romantic disposition, the poet speaks positively about ocean storms: “Por que me proíbes assim praias e mar, por que / Me impedes a fama das tempestades do Atlântico / E os lindos versos que falam em partir e nunca mais voltar?” (305-6). The meditations of both Whitman and Guimaraens approach the coast, and, in particular, the coast at night, as a special place on the edge of a vastness and implied infinite. In an old trope, the coast is the limit of human habitat, and the ocean, apart from being vast, brings with it a parallel to the subconscious, or, even—as a seemingly endless repository of rivers that connect the world—a collective unconscious. In Whitman, in particular, often the shoreline is associated with the possibility of future generations (“On the Beach at Night”), the promise of love (“Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd” and “Song of Myself”) and the inexplicable inspiration of personal growth present in the idea of rebirth, as seen in the progression of “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.” In the final verses of this last poem on the coast of Long Island, the poet finds his voice, his words rising up out of the sea:

My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending
aside,)

The sea whisper'd me. (212)

In “Meditação,” as he cites poetry from his own earlier work, Mário establishes an inversion of the relationship between Whitman and the sea. His Tietê is a place where the voice of the poet is not even recognized and where it is solitarily asked why a variety of figures, the “donos da vida” and even humanity at large “não me escutam” (311). Seen in juxtaposition with the Whitmanian trope of saluting comrades of the world—ready to listen—it becomes all the more defeating.

This use of the ocean also relates to the Whitmanian idea of a global network. The model of water as a communicative conduit, adapted to Brazil in “Nocturno,” is inverted in “Meditação.” In its journey to the west, the waters of “Meditação” “se afastam dos oceanos” (307), building on a sense of isolation and provincialism. Along these lines, the poet must explain the river’s toxicity to the other witness of the poem, the listener, never described, that seems to bring with them an outside perspective. The continued collective identity based on the conception of the *bandeirantes* of the poem “Tietê” of *PD*, that followed the river inland, becomes dysfunctional, with its festering provincialism of frustrated possibilities. It is an extreme indictment when we consider that of the Modernists, Mário was the one content with São Paulo and cultural, research treks within Brazil, shunning the idea of a visit to Europe and a more international lifestyle. In the fourth stanza, we hear:

...E as minhas vozes,
Perdidas do seu tenor, rosnam pesadas e oliosas,
Varando terra adentro no espanto dos mil futuros,

À espera angustiada do ponto. Não do meu ponto final! (306)

The contrast with Whitman is even stronger in light of the parallel made by Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, in *Raízes do Brasil*, between the U.S. pioneers and the *bandeirantes*. Whitman's pioneers follow a unifying purpose that leads to viable progress and a promising future. In "Pioneers, O Pioneers!" he writes:

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers! (193)

In "Meditação," instead of the drive of the march, the varying inhabitants of the Tietê are carried with or seem to work against the current.

Much of the poem addresses what is never realized, an idea strongly expressed in the fauna of the phantasmagoric river. This body of water, that does not run to the sea, is populated by a great variety of spectral ocean fish. Once again there is a contrast with Whitman and Emerson's idea that nature conveys a divine truth in the order, organization, and beauty that it presents to humankind. In the Whitmanian model, even the animals participate in a meaningful cosmic order, occupying their due place and carrying out their proper role in nature. Whitman, as if assuming the role of Adam, likes to name them, and this technique gained popularity with various Latin American poets. It is a way of both possessing and linking oneself to the environs. In Section 33 of "Song of Myself," he lists the

names of animals as if reenacting the Garden of Eden, referencing the “panther,” buck,” “rattlesnake,” “alligator,” “black bear,” etc. (54). Mário also adopts this form of listing when populating his Tietê with aquatic life, including the “peixe dourado,” “peixins japoneses,” the “tubarão-martelo,” the “boto-ministro,” the “peixe-boi,” and the “peixe-baleia” (308). With their usage in representing figures and groups of society, Genro Appel and Haberly attempt to partially decipher the stanza *à clef* that Mário constructs here, for example, identifying the nod to Asian immigration in the “peixins japoneses” (Genro Appel 57; Haberly 280). As the extensive Andradian furtive references play out in detail here, it is clear that the chaos of the society destroys the natural order and becomes a true hallucination, violating space and filling his *igarapé* with the leviathans of an ocean that is never reached.

As in “Nocturno,” love is celebrated, but in “Meditação,” handled in a singular way. The common representation of a journey beneath the surface of the water as a dive into the subconscious, into the depths of the human psyche, is implemented in various ways in the poem. However, here, instead of Andradian Freudianism or the female seductor of a river (as seen in an example like “Poema”), there is an “amor de amor,” connected to the act of writing that parallels Whitman’s hope as poet of the masses (312). “Desde me fiz poeta, e fui trezentos,” says the poet, citing “Eu Sou Trezentos...,” “eu amei / Todos os homens” (312). This love has the power to elevate the poet above the chaos of the waters, or even facilitate a challenge to their toxicity in the opposition of a flame: “E me salvo,” he writes, “no eternamente esquecido fogo de amor” (312). A decisive conclusion here is complicated by various factors, including spatial-temporal inconsistencies in which the poet is simultaneously saved by love, finds himself lost like an alga floating away with the river, or even possibly crucified on the bridge. That said, one can see the focus on suffering—and his

return to his own poetry of the 1920s— as a replacement for the fraternal sublime in Whitman. Mário returns to the model of “Nocturno” to cement this. In it, the great waters linking the rivers of his Brazil, feed the fountains of the new city of Belo Horizonte. At the end of “Meditação,” the language is more open and less definitive, and the complexity of the metaphor of water in the poem suddenly takes on new layers:

Sob o arco admirável

Da Ponte das Bandeiras, morta, dissoluta, fraca,

Uma lágrima apenas, uma lágrima,

Eu sigo alga escusa nas águas do meu Tietê. (314)

His role obliterated in the social context, the poet enters the water and allows himself to be carried away, not just because of compassion and an effort to understand human suffering, but as his only remaining expression in his role as representative, guide, and supposed leader of the masses. He becomes a tear in these last lines, in effect, going back to the fall which initiated the poem, now expanded in metaphorical richness. The poet-man becomes not just water, but a tear, a drop, that embodies a contrastive empathy with the grand despair of the poem. Thus, the poem arrives to its end, and the would-be poet hero is incorporated into the new complexity of the water as metaphor.

Poets of the Future

Disillusioned at the start of the U.S. Gilded Age, in *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman complains of the rampant hypocrisy and corruption of both business and government in his

country. Shortly before falling sick, he portrays a nation in the process of losing itself, above all, through the seduction of riches at any cost, while the voice of art fails vertically, proving itself anemic. Yet he cultivates a hope. The U.S. and democracy are, for him, synonymous, and the guardians of that democracy are the great poets of the future. In *Vistas*, to a certain extent anticipating other meditations on the individual and the collective, Whitman tells us that poems about life are useless, and that the great poets of the future will write “great poems of death” (68), presumably, here, thinking in terms of great tragic figures of European literature that surpass the confines of an individual’s life and feed the mythos of a people. The parallel with a frustrated Mário in the Vargas Era is striking, in light of the *paulistano*’s disappointment with the Modernist project and his vision of a 1940s writer as the defender of democratic values (Tércio 625). In “Meditação,” the social dysfunction impedes Emerson’s proposed subordination of nature; in contrast, Mário, as an exhausted poet, purges his psyche on the banks of the Tietê, creating a phantasmagoria in which the poet, instead, is subordinated and discarded, but redeemed, even if a lost and tragic figure, connected through empathy to the masses in the symbol of the river.

Chapter 2

Deus/Diabolus Ex Machina:

Sabino's Reimagining of Fitzgerald's *Bildungsroman* as Unfulfilled Journey

Talent doesn't starve any more. Even art gets enough to eat these days.

Artists draw your magazine covers, write your advertisements, hash out rag-time for your theatres. By the great commercializing of printing you've found a harmless, polite occupation for every genius who might have carved out his own niche. But beware the artist who's an intellectual also. The artist who doesn't fit—the Rousseau, the Tolstoi, the Samuel Butler, the Amory Blaine...

—Amory Blaine, self-aggrandizing to Jesse Ferrenby's father at the end of

This Side of Paradise, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

A arte... é uma maneira de se vingar da vida.

—Toledo to a young Eduardo Marciano, *O encontro marcado*,

Fernando Sabino.

In *Cartas a um jovem escritor* (2003), Fernando Sabino recalls seeing Mário de Andrade for the last time in 1945 as they exited a bar on Avenida São João in downtown São Paulo. With (as Sabino describes it) a familiar farewell of the arm, Mário bid “Adeus.” “Adeus, por quê?” asked the young *mineiro*, then 21 years old, “Você não pretende morrer, e

eu muito menos. Vamos nos ver breve, se Deus quiser aqui ou no Rio” (10). Mário would finish “A meditação sobre o Tietê” in the next few days, and a heart attack would take his life at the end of the month.

Just how accurately this exchange is conveyed—recalled by Sabino roughly 57 years after the fact—seems secondary to how it captures the almost uncanny and culturally representative nature of their entire relationship. Mário de Andrade was born shortly after the fall of the Second Empire, amidst a São Paulo benefiting from the coffee boom in the late 19th century. As a young writer, he transitioned out of a Symbolist treatment of World War I in his first book, ushered in the first wave of Modernism, and presided over its aftermath and reevaluation as literary and cultural colossus in the early 1940s. Sabino was born some 370 miles away, in a recently-dubbed Belo Horizonte; in a prolific career of prose, he would launch his first novel in 1956, see various adaptations of his fiction to the silver screen in the latter half of the 20th century, and witness the rise and fall of the Brazilian military dictatorship—passing on at the beginning of the 21st century.

The idea that the two—the younger a prodigious, perpetual local short-story contest winner, 18 years old, who had published one book, *Os grilos não cantam mais* (1941)—would share a three-year overlap of correspondence and friendship is extraordinary. This is even understood in the context of a smaller Brazil of limited, close-knit artistic circles, and Mário’s general interest and concern for the next generation of writers, including the *Vintanistas*, in particular. On a 1989 episode of *Roda Viva*, Sabino describes Mário’s first written response (to receiving *Os grilos não cantam mais*) as “uma coisa fantástica pra minha vida” and a “grande acontecimento”: “A partir daí nós iniciamos uma correspondência, em que ele, com uma paciência bovina, ele aguentou esse rapazelho pernóstico, e desaforado, e

metido, e, sabe, atrevido, que escrevia perguntando tudo, e ele se dispôs a responder tudo, todos os grandes problemas que passam na cabeça de um quase adolescente” (*Roda Viva* 8:25-8:53).

Partially reflected in a downcast Mário leaving that bar on Avenida São João, the poet figure of Mário’s “A meditação sobre a Tietê” stands in stark contrast to the youthfulness and self-driven education of Sabino’s letters. Purveyor of a lost battlefield, the creation of a poet unknowingly at the end of his career, “Meditação”’s speaker watches the polluted waters pass below the *Ponte das Bandeiras*, a rushing commotion of decay and graft. The *mind of Brazil*—a casualty of demagoguery—is alienated from the clamorous flow and inexorable flawed direction of society. The artist character, who, in part, waged a war to reassess Romanticism in a contemporary context finds himself an outcast without an inhabitable space. Absent the Romantic outlet of marginalization that might elevate the individual to the future, socially-validated role of martyrdom, the artist who has rejected too much becomes the sorry, cautionary pariah of a society that has lost its way.

As Mário’s last poem closes, with a lonely tear and the image of a seemingly useless alga drifting away on the river, the hope absent in the poem is that of the next generation and the promise it might hold. In this sense, outside the world of the text, both Mário’s behavior and correspondence with Sabino dialogue with and potentially work against such tragedy, while in *O encontro marcado* (1956), the *Bildungsroman* and first novel that Sabino would eventually write, it finds surprising echoes. Perhaps a pressing question then, is, despite this hope and promise, why Sabino would use the main U.S. text that his novel dialogues with to effect an iteration of the unrealized artist theme of “Meditação.” Like *Encontro*, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* (1920), draws heavily on the autobiographical material of

a young, budding writer. Both works then are *Künstlerromane* that have a complicated, performative interplay with the real world, ushering their writers onto a stage of national importance. They are books particularly celebrated in the years following their publication for so effectively capturing the spirit of a community, or, better said, a cross-section of a community, in time—something of a *Volkgeist*, in the original Hegelian sense of the word.

In Sabino's text, the protagonist of *Encontro*, Eduardo Marciano, a promising young writer, in fact, called *o escolhido* in the book, has no figure like Mário in the years preceding induction into society. Despite Marciano's talent and engagement with an array of literary influences, the book's framing leads toward a Kafkaesque futility. It is a world in which a figure like Mário did not and cannot exist on a social level. Instead, the mentor becomes the figure of Toledo, a writer of the previous generation who, although published, never became the writer he hoped to be. Rather than passing on the torch of success, this aspect of the novel becomes about somehow protecting a small, precious flame, pushing and aiding Eduardo to abandon societal norms and become the artist that Toledo himself never managed to be. Eduardo, as he faces a mid-20th-century Brazil, is unable to condemn and assume his role as outcast and iconoclast against those Kafkaesque elements that echo the nightmare of Mário's Tietê. The book follows Eduardo into middle age, in some ways a variation of Dante searching for literary validation halfway through life⁸, in this case a writer who failed for never trying, still harboring hope for his own book, and simultaneously repeating Toledo's model. This model clings to the same collectivist hope Samuel Butler offers at the end of *The Way of All Flesh* (1903)—the hope that, while the current generation has failed, it might now

⁸ Marco Aurélio Matos points out the allusion to Dante in the letter excerpt from Hélio Pellegrino that serves as epigraph for the novel and, in his analysis, cites Dante directly: “nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita” (36).

know enough to facilitate success in the next. Eduardo has not necessarily given up his dream (particularly in light of the parallel to Sabino's life) but gives all his books to a budding young writer in Rio before going home to Belo Horizonte. In contrast to the correspondence between Mário and Sabino, and in contrast to Butler, there is some ambiguity as to whether this will prove fruitful at all.

A Contentious Reader in New York, Heir to Fitzgerald

It should come as no surprise that Sabino, master of the *crônica*, should be so good at capturing the spirit of a community—to understand and reconcile its values with its perceived values, to navigate its shortcomings and hypocrisies, to understand how it best or worst expresses itself; this is, after all, much of what the *crônica* is about. Sabino was a great admirer of U.S. literature and culture in general, while at the same time proving himself, like Mário, a particularly confrontational reader of it. “Meditação” makes a point, of course, in privileging how Whitman might be applied to a Brazilian context over how he is read in a U.S. context. Given changing geopolitics, the large influx of U.S. literature appearing in translation in Brazil, and his own experiences, Sabino seems keenly aware that he is, at least in part, like Mário as literary giant and Monteiro Lobato as short story writer and translator, a transmitter, as it might be described in the paradigm of the *mesologie* model. Of preeminent importance in his novel is how what U.S. writers like Fitzgerald have to offer might be read away from their source in the Brazilian context.

O tabuleiro de damas, a kind of literary autobiography published by Sabino in 1988, details the obvious influence of, like Mário, extensive reading in various literary traditions.

However, in contrast to Mário, Sabino experienced much more personal interaction with them, particularly when it comes to the U.S. The influences and cross-cultural dialogues are present, more overtly, in pieces like his *crônicas*, as well as pervasive at levels of theme, form, and style across his work. His time in New York, from 1946-1948, during his formative early twenties, is the most accessible example of this prior to *Encontro*—chronicled in *A cidade vazia* (1950), with “Medo em Nova York,” a reflection on a return visit, added to the collection in 1984. The great *cronista* reported to fellow Cavaleiro do Apocalipse, Paulo Mendes Campos, that the “sociologia de bolso” present in the book was owed to his study of the *New Yorker* (“Retrato” 16), which seems plausible, yet there is more going on here, refining his overall tendency toward subversion and reimagining. If the book is now and then over-generalizing, reductive, and even a touch self-promotional (as might be expected for newspaper pieces, given the form, and that they were targeted to an audience back in Brazil), much of its brilliance is in the insights yielded by applying the often mercilessly corrosive criticism of the *crônica* to U.S. or, better said, New York society.

Offering a penetrating observation, Carlos Drummond de Andrade insists that Sabino does not pull his punches in the book because he is, after all, a humorist in the vein of Mark Twain (*Medo* 6), yet more than this, Sabino utilizes mechanisms to carry out a default, subversive challenge to source culture that fits into a larger paradigm. This is one in which the *crônica* is only one weapon of an arsenal that can be put to work to slay another culture’s sacred cows—or at least challenge its assumptions and conclusions. *A cidade vazia* is that: highly accurate and critical of the source culture; other times it battles its own ghosts or the ghosts of its readers—the notions (or anticipated notions) held by the Brazilian outsider in the cross-cultural dynamic that need slaying. Its ambition is in portraying another culture’s

solitude (“Oito milhões de solitários” & “O passageiro subterrâneo”), as well as the materialism and illusions it clings to (“O ano que vem”), while seeking to undermine and reframe its sometimes more often lauded qualities, be they efficiency and organization in the business space (“Eficiência é nosso lema”) or a lack (reframing) of corruption (“Contramão”).

At the same time, Sabino refuses to be hemmed in by the very culture he is visiting and representing. While he cites U.S. writers, his is a New York of Fyodor Dostoevsky—that of great cities and the struggle of the masses across the globe in basic housing. It is also that of other literary visitors. In his farewell to the city (“Por isso lhe digo adeus”), as he surveys the East River and city from the Brooklyn Bridge, he does not think of Whitman, but its famous visitors, Federico García Lorca and Vladimir Mayakovski. It is in *A cidade vazia* that he offers up a small, early portrait of a marginalized artist, a Russian painter of questionable talent by the name of Anton in “O parasita da sociedade.” “Anton,” he explains, “é mais do que um pintor fracassado: é sem dúvida um boêmio, um vagabundo, peso morto, parasita da sociedade. Pois viva Anton! E a sociedade que se dane” (178). There is little expectation that Anton will become a painter whose work redeems him. Yet the struggle, no matter how failed, is validated for its mere attempt at artistic endeavor. The potential for the artist, unrealized in the social domain, to assume the position of resistant figure clearly forms part of Sabino’s early sensibility.

Sabino returns to a decadent Big Apple in “Medo em Nova York,” where he takes refuge in the bar of the Plaza Hotel. There he partially relives a scene that seems out of *Paradise*: “Julgo até ver o fantasma de Scott Fitzgerald, completamente de pileque, cruzando comigo na escada que leve ao bar subsolo” (*Medo* 18). Simultaneously embraced and

challenged, the U.S. current, in particular, within Sabino's longing for a golden past, and reaching out across cultures, is a continual element in his literary creation. His close friend, and one more Cavaleiro do Apocalipse, Hélio Pellegrino, describes it thus, a few years before the publication of *Encontro*, when Sabino was roughly 29 years old:

“[Ele] sente que nasceu com vinte anos de atraso, pois se identifica mais com a época dos *twenties* do que com a nossa: Scott Fitzgerald, Chaplin do cinema mudo, Lindbergh, Dempsey, Weissmuller, Apollinaire, Ezra Pound, Louis Armstrong, Saint-Exupéry são lembranças que carrega consigo, de um mundo extinto em 1930, e que não chegou a alcançar.” (“Fernando Sabino, escritor” 12)

Many years later, in *O tabuleiro de damas*, when talking about the influence of U.S. writers on his formation, Sabino only mentions Fitzgerald in passing (35). Yet in that previously-mentioned episode of *Roda Viva* from 1989, he describes two books as “protótipos” of *O encontro marcado*: Gustave Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869) and Fitzgerald's *Paradise*.

Roots of the *Bildungsroman*

The first half of the 19th century in German-speaking Europe saw the boom of the *Bildungsroman*, but more than this, intense interest in the concept of *Bildung* in general. G.W.F. Hegel identified the basic tug-of-war of this moment of development and entering adult society as common, one in which society does not meet the youth's “ideal requirements,” while, from society's perspective, the youth is “not fully equipped for the part he has to play” (“Philosophy of Mind” §396). This is the model of the common battle that

Fitzgerald's protagonist wages, leading up to his book's finale. Amory Blaine is burdened, on the one hand, by the freedom and privilege of his upper-class life and time at Princeton, and on the other, by the intense idealism wrapped up in becoming the writer he seems clearly bound to become. In fully constructing the character, Fitzgerald has created a rich tension between an artist without a place in society and a figure with salient personal deficiencies.

Hegel, likewise, recognized a widespread delay or reluctance on the part of youth to limit their "universal scope" by dedicating themselves to a vocation. "This aloofness," he writes, "is a product of the abstract thinking, which clings to the universal and the unreal. It fails to recognize that the conception must experience a division into conception and its reality if it is to have a definite and particular realization, and to win for itself reality and ethical objectivity" (*The Philosophy of Right* §207 R). In *Paradise*, we see Blaine, still in his education, most succinctly described by his distant cousin, Clara Page, with whom he falls in love. "You're a slave," she explains to him, "a bound helpless slave to one thing in the world, your imagination" (2126).

This tension with the social dimension is inherent to the genre and the historical modes of thinking that underlie it. Centuries prior, in a theological context, Meister Eckhart conceived of *Bildung* as a spiritual transformation based on the *Bild*—or *image*—of God. Douglas Hedley explains this as the "the shaping of the self that emerges from the recognition of true identity and vocation" (616). Tobias Boes maps out how the term became secularized, still focused on individual development, and gained popularity in the second half of the 18th century (47-48), until taking on historicist dimensions in representing the dynamic of the individual to the culture of the time in what had become a fragmented German-speaking "transnation" (2). As it moved to other cultures and took on varying incarnations

over the decades, its usage abandoned a stricter idea of a formation that allowed one to become part of a *Bildungsbürgertum*⁹. It shifted to more general ideas of a self-guided education, sometimes propelled by an initial, significant loss, and centered on themes such as morality, aesthetics, and affect. What remains, though, is inevitably the individual's experience—all the more intense, in the case of the artist—assimilating the way things work and developing the relevant rules of community. This creates not just a portrait of its *Geist*, but potentially critiques it based on the experience of the individual and the conception of this dichotomy in the text—as, in the case of Fitzgerald, Blaine resists his induction.

Flaubert as Rebellious Confederate

Sometime around the age of fifteen, Sabino met the writer Guilhermino Cesar, who, after reading some of his stories lent him books of short stories from Guy de Maupassant, Prosper Mérimée, and Flaubert (*Tabuleiro* 26). The moment—as well as others of book lending—replays itself in *Encontro*, with the character Toledo as Cesar's fictional counterpart.¹⁰ Sabino describes having a poor “francesinho de ginásio” at the time of this interaction with Cesar and devotedly reading the books several times, in effect, capturing little (26). Shortly before the publication of *Encontro*, Sabino had translated Flaubert's short posthumous commonplace *Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues* (1911-13), incorporating it into the larger work, *Lugares comuns - as bobagens que a gente diz: eu, você e Flaubert* (1952).

⁹ It is worth noting the exclusion inherent to such a model, taking different shapes in its iterations across time and culture.

¹⁰ A notable shift comes with Eduardo's return to Belo Horizonte later in the book, as Toledo tries to offer the hope of change that might (we infer) allow for the writing of a novel. At this point Toledo admits to quoting Mário, with some of the language from the correspondence of Mário and Sabino.

Building on Flaubert's original work, Sabino turns the book into a consideration of cliché, stock phrases, and cultural stereotypes, as well as their interplay with writing style and irony. For his entry on *Americanos*, it is perhaps worth noting that he offers: "Povo extraordinário. —Parecem crianças. —Espírito esportivo. —Imperialismo" (106).

As with Mário, Sabino's vast crucible of influences, both within the Portuguese-language literary tradition and without, make tracing how *L'Éducation* precisely shaped the book, in conjunction with Fitzgerald's, a complex project. In *Paradise*, Fitzgerald is not yet the writer of *The Great Gatsby* (1925). In the moves across time and space, tracking the development of his protagonist in *Paradise*, he presents the reader with fragmented passages (with their own headings), stand-alone poems and other writing, as well as parts of the second half in the form of dramatic dialogue. Sabino's treatment of, in many ways, parallel material echoes Flaubert's expertise in stringing together of a highly mobile, yet flowing narrative, seen in particular across the scope of a novel like *L'Éducation*.¹¹ Sabino's prose is reminiscent of Flaubert's efficiency and precision, yet this relationship is, of course, dauntingly complex. In a synthesis of influences, what Sabino seems to have done, in part, is update Fitzgerald's first novel with other, more recent elements from the U.S. context, utilizing developments in Imagism and Minimalism in the time that separates Fitzgerald's first novel from his own. One hears Sabino citing (among many others) Ezra Pound's ideas on efficiency of language (*Lugares comuns* 30), in which "a palavra é que impulsiona a ação" (*Tabuleiro* 47). Seen in this light, likewise, his deft transitions jumping between time and space, which seem to echo a Flaubertian construction, in reality, reflect a potentially

¹¹ Oliveira & Justo (2010) make the case that Sabino's novel reflects a notion of modern tedium, taking the work of Charles Baudelaire as a point of departure. It seems reasonable to suggest that existential angst and thwarted agency, both relating to time in Sabino's novel, reflect mid-19th-century French inspiration.

broad array of intermediary incarnations and developments—amongst which one would surely have to include Ernest Hemingway, of whom Sabino was a notably insightful reader.

L'Éducation bears many of the elements of the novel of formation, which will appear in both *Paradise* and *Encontro*: a band of classmates reading influential classics, a preoccupation with the aesthetic, and an enthusiastic interest in politics (in this case to the point of revolution). Yet really the novel seems to have two important broader contributions to Sabino's text. First, it offers elements of the psychologically focused novel of formation without following the model of the protagonist from childhood to induction into adulthood (in a typical *Entwicklungsroman* format) like James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). Instead—and in various ways Clarice Lispector's *Perto do coração salvagem* (1943) utilizes this technique to greater extent shortly before *Encontro*—much of the focus is from adulthood looking back to incorporate childhood. For example, in *L'Éducation*'s final chapter, the jaded protagonist, Frédéric Moreau, and his childhood friend, Deslauriers, both now old, think back to their childhood and their capacity to be swept away by sincere puppy love before receiving the world's brutal education from young adulthood onward. In incorporating the kind of retrospective failure and disappointment that can only come with middle age, one wonders how much Sabino leans on Flaubert's novel to follow Eduardo's life as long as he does.

The bildungsroman does have roots in the picaresque, with a protagonist that faces an imperfect, challenging world, but something new happens in mood and tone in *L'Éducation*—that is, the Romantic shifting toward the often brutal, indifferent fictional landscapes of the Realism and Naturalism of the latter half of the 19th century. It is perhaps best characterized halfway through the book when Frédéric, who has long since romantically

fixated on the married Marie Arnoux (a dynamic which carries with it autobiographical shades from Flaubert's life), finally gets his chance to be alone with her. In a fruitless effort to, obliquely and affectively, get at the elephant in the room, Frédéric thumbs a volume of the Romantic Alfred de Musset, lost in the idea of grand love through the ages, expounding on "l'amour, de ses désespoirs et de ses emportements" ["love, its despairs and its transports"] (Flaubert 455, Baldick 215). We are told a practical and self-aware Madame Arnoux considers such things "criminel ou factice" ["criminal or artificial"] (Flaubert 455, Baldick 215). It leaves the young man totally dejected and opens the floodgate to Frédéric's education of liaisons and unrealized adulterous love that leave him alone and nostalgically regretful at the end of life.

L'Éducation was published a few years after *Madame Bovary* (1856) had prompted a lawsuit against Flaubert for, in the words of the 1819 penal code, "outrage à la morale publique et religieuse et aux bonnes moeurs" (Dupray 228). Unrepentant, *L'Éducation* is a similar undertaking in which, in the Hegelian model, an individual ideal collapses in the face of societal expectations. This is connected to a tension between the original theological idea of Meister Eckhart, depending on how liberally one interprets the *Bildung* as nearing the spiritual and divine, and one as a process of entrance into society. Flaubert recognizes how, in Hegelian terms, the "universal scope" of youth's ideals not only represent impossible Utopian ideals but how they can represent themselves in deformed fashion within the context of society. Fitzgerald captures this with the original title of his book *The Romantic Egotist*, and Flaubert's critic of society comes in the inversion of the Romantic Egotist, as he learns a social game that, in the case of Frédéric, at times, leads him to behavior that he himself is disgusted with.

While perhaps not a bildungsroman, *strictu sensu*, Flaubert creates a more complete marriage with elements of the genre and the picaresque. The picaresque presents a critique of society with a protagonist that often comes from the lower socioeconomic classes, one that does not assimilate an inner code, allowing for eventual entrance into the bourgeoisie or *Bildungsbürgertum*, as they are conceived, but exhibiting reactionary cunning that will enable their survival. Just how grim and morally bankrupt the society might be is revealed by the behavior required to survive in it. Flaubert's *L'Éducation* in large part revives some of that social critique, as in the 89 years separating the publication of *L'Éducation* and *Encontro*, literature trends toward more intimate and psychological representations of unrealized dreams and passions. It is no coincidence that the books Toledo lends Eduardo are those that the Monsenhor has prohibited in the *Ginásio*. Frédéric's is not simply a developmental, adolescent undertaking of understanding right and wrong, but like many other characters connected to the genre, including Amory and Eduardo, an apprenticeship of navigation in relation to self-understanding, many times in connection to sex and love.

An Anti-Formation out of Joyce's Model

The novel, in general, as it moves into the 20th century, enters into personal psychology and themes of inaction and paralysis. The *Künstlerroman*, as conceived by James Joyce in this context, in *Portrait*¹², presents an ambivalence and decision of personal direction focused, like Flaubert, on the constrictive and problematic expectations of society.

¹² In the original polemic over whether Fitzgerald had read and was influenced by James Joyce's *Portrait* before writing *This Side of Paradise*, this work falls firmly in the camp that he did, given both a reference to Fitzgerald's protagonist reading *Portrait* (3188) and a variety of key similarities, several outlined by García Díez (1983).

It presents a basic protagonist reimagined in *Paradise* and *Encontro*—one who, despite keen interpersonal insight, an intense cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility, and a sensitivity to moral concerns, never actually creates a substantial creative work. The moment of entering into adult society has arrived, and the reader is left to decide whether the *Bildung* was successful in personal terms and if and how that might manifest itself in societal terms shortly after the story's close. It is difficult, in the context of so much autobiographical material, to identify to what extent one is superimposing onto the text, thinking that Stephen Dedalus (as a variation on James Joyce) is now ready to go forth and “forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race” and so write *Ulysses* (253). Yet in Dedalus choosing the path of the artist over that of the priest, and his experience at Trinity University, the possibility of some variation on an initiation seems entirely likely.

Paradise, likewise, follows Amory Blaine, from childhood (albeit a contrasting, elite one of travel and transatlantic influence), into his early twenties, and up to his young adulthood that coincides with the end of World War I—the moment he might dedicate himself to a vocation. However, despite the potential real-world connections to a Fitzgerald suddenly skyrocketing in popularity, it enlarges the ambiguity of Amory's future, as the reader considers whether Blaine in all his abstractions has become someone capable of creating a great, artistic piece of writing or not. The focus of the narrative, in contrast, to Joyce's work, which itself breaks tremendous ground in the area of psychodrama, becomes one of inaction. As Rosalind Connage's mother succinctly describes him at the beginning of the second half of the book, after his university years, Amory is a “*theoretical genius*” (2882, my italics), that is, one who has never been able to realize his possible talent and, hence, prove himself as such.

The novel's first half (Book I) focuses, briefly, on Amory's childhood and New England preparatory school, moving on to describe his Princeton years as a promising writer. In this time, influenced by his Irish Catholic mother Beatrice (née O'Hara), Amory begins a friendship and correspondence with Monsignor Thayer Darcy, a relationship through which he most explicitly contends with inherited traditions of religion and notions of Celtic identity. At the same time, he will prove himself a weak university student, seeking out books of great writers, thinking, philosophizing, and writing for the school newspaper, *The Princetonian*, while (like Fitzgerald) failing to find a way to pass his math class. A brief interruption of enlistment and the last years of WWI are characterized through a short interlude of letters and a poem. The narrative, in Book II, moves its focus to romantic and erotic entanglements in New York City, Atlantic City, and Maryland, with Blaine eventually quitting an advertising job, and, nearly broke, setting out on a period of "drifting" that includes a return visit to Princeton.

The disjointed composition of its narrative, which incorporates material previously written by Fitzgerald in those corresponding years, takes on a repetition and a motif of failure that, particularly in a formative sense, seems to deprive Blaine of the meaning, agency, and personal progress often present in *Portrait*. The story relays different romantic relationships (with different so-called *Popular Daughters*), though Blaine is never able to find lasting love. As the book nears its end, he is a somewhat destitute and increasingly solitary figure among the masses of New York, the richest moments of his life, his intellectualizing and sophistry at Princeton, that go hand-in-hand with his often-bad poetry (or poetic prose), never parlayed into the book he might write. Yet, in the end, as in Joyce's text, *Paradise* allows for the

inference of a victory—the individual assuming a role in which art becomes possible, who seems to find a position in society (even if it implies critique and rejection).

This is the battle Blaine wages leading up to the book's finale. He is burdened, on the one hand, by the freedom and privilege of his upper-class life and his time at Princeton, and on the other, by the intense idealism wrapped up in becoming the writer he seems clearly bound to become. In fully constructing the character, Fitzgerald has richly counterbalanced the idea of an artist without a place in society, with pertinent personal deficiencies, poignantly offering up a wraithlike father (Stephen Blaine) looming in the “background” who has passed on to the protagonist a “tendency to waver at crucial moments” (33). And, indeed, from childhood Amory exudes the defunct “aristocratic egotism” of his mother and the Romantic dilettantism of perpetual change (257). Yet what Fitzgerald, like Flaubert, has explored—by the time the book arrives to its end—is less failure of the initiate to tame their idealism but society's failure to accommodate it.

This tension of resistance to education and assimilation is heightened in Blaine's striving to be an artist of significance and his growing disparagement, first, toward his generation, then of accepted popular writers in the second half of the book, until building to broad criticism of society in general. Surely Blaine, publishing in the Princeton newspaper and seemingly successful, though unfulfilled, at his advertising job would have shaped himself into the person that can write his first novel. Yet he himself, in his time at university, shows a refusal to see his trajectory as an education and transformation that might allow for productivity as a writer. After failing said math exam and losing the opportunity to chair the *Princetonian* he comes up with a history of his life constructed as a formula of adding together discrete entities: “the fundamental Amory” at the beginning of his life, then

eventually “Amory *plus* St. Regis” to include his preparatory schooling, moving toward “Amory *plus* St. Regis’ *plus* Princeton,” and finally back to the solitude of “the fundamental Amory” (1459, my italics). Rather than these schools forming part of an education that would effect a transformation for an entrance into society, he (undoubtedly, inaccurately) conceptualizes them as having no effect on him, reaffirming his utter individualism. The best he can do is envision a sort of mathematical pairing—and the reader already knows Amory’s general ability with mathematics. “That had been,” a narrative, focalized through Amory, explains, “his nearest approach to success through conformity” (1459). The sense is that Amory has always seen his education as moving toward society’s idea of what a writer should be. He takes a stance of resistance to the construction of an education as it is presented by the powers that be.

Sabino’s approach to Fitzgerald’s bildungsroman is part of the aforementioned larger trajectory of contentious reading and dialogue and, while a labor of respect, is more palimpsest than transposition. If his best tools for contention in the *crônica* are levity, hyperbole, and a light touch, in *Encontro*, they are second to a highly concise prose that drives toward a somber, existential angst. If there was some doubt as to whether Amory Blaine might publish that first great work of art or fade, with much of the Lost Generation, into the ether of oblivion amidst the ambiguity of Fitzgerald’s ending, there is no doubt as to an inductive artistic debut ever occurring in young adulthood in *Encontro*.

If Eduardo does not manage to write his great novel in middle age, he does at least find a certain personal peace, one which runs in the opposite direction of Amory Blaine’s trajectory toward solitary rebel, and toward, not just connection to others, but group values that facilitate such connections. The book, like *Paradise*, is divided into two main parts. The

first opens to a frighteningly prodigious Eduardo Marciano, and his early school days, growing up in an almost rustic Belo Horizonte. (Sabino was born in 1923, and the book appears to follow this general timeline.) As the name *Marciano* might suggest, he is characterized by a defiance and drive, reaching, at times, the point of overt pride, as with his early success as a competitive swimmer. He stands out for his literary talent, winning short story contests, and seems bound to embark on an important career, while a rebellious streak incorporated into an early sexual awakening will come to typify the entrance into adulthood that he shares with friends that have corollaries in the real world—including Mauro Lombardi (Hélio Pellegrino) and Hugo (Otto Laura Resende). We accompany Eduardo recklessly wooing Antonieta, his wife-to-be, hear of his mandatory military service as a cavalryman, and see him begin a career in journalism while working on a law degree. He begins voracious work on a novel that he will never publish, amidst dedicating himself to texts in English, posting H.L. Mencken and Henry James on his desk. Similar to the current reflected in Sabino's letters to Mário, Eduardo is so determined to become a novelist that he even hesitates in being with Antonieta. His hope before marrying her is the same as Amory's, desperate to marry and practically provide for Rosalind; it is that of suddenly overcoming the difficulty of finding a financial practicality in writing. His ambition is to “publicar imediatamente um livro – iniciar a carreira, firmar-se como escritor,” and yet that will not happen (126).

Instead of the image of a disappearing Amory, headed to Princeton and what is now the site of his anti-formation, in Part II of *Encontro*, we follow Eduardo out into middle age. After marrying Antonieta and moving to Rio, he accepts a post as a city bureaucrat, arranged by her father, who is a Minister high up in the government. This seems to absorb him into a

condemning representation of established upper middle-class society, arriving at Kafkaesque tones. This is the induction he did not want; it absorbs him into a social apparatus in which his dreams and ambitions, including that of writer, fall by the wayside. In the years to come, he proves an emotionally absent father and unfaithful husband. His shortcomings gnaw at his peace of mind, as he loses a fellow adolescent swimmer, Rodrigo, to a plane accident at sea. In a context of growing existential anxiety and emotional isolation, the eponymous *encontro marcado*—once a pact for friends to meet twenty-five years after school—becomes tied up in what is, in effect, a structural *deus ex machina*, holding the extended bildungsroman together.

The *Künstlerroman* offers unique potential in rejecting aspects of the education process as it is recognized by society and assuming a conventional place in the community. The possibility of vindication through craft lingers easily, or, as in the case of Anton in Sabino's *A cidade vazia*, through affiliation of cause with those working toward the defining of the artistic mind. As Fitzgerald shows, making the focus the formation of an artist opens up space in the story trajectory and creates possibilities for endings. Consider the layout Raul Pompeia creates in *O Ateneu* (1888), a non-artist bildungsroman. To allow the expectations of the school to play out their full course would be, in part, a failure to undermine and critique the values it represents. The narrative then goes to the extreme of burning the school down before Sérgio's time comes to an end, within the community-controlled guidelines of graduation. If Sérgio were to drop out, his marginalization has minimal impact in the context of undermining the closed community. What Sabino offers with Eduardo is a stalemate, an extension and exploration of this tension between the individual and community expectations. His alteration of Fitzgerald, and by extension Joyce, is to follow the Romantic Egotist never able to write their book in society at large. With inspiration from works like

L'Éducation and, potentially others, like *Perto do coração selvagem* (1943), Sabino, expands and exaggerates his own literary production and timeline as novelist, exploding the story well past the general years in which Dedalus or Blaine would publish their first book.

Escrever é renunciar...

While less elegantly, and with much more exaggeration, like Mário's poet on the Ponte das Bandeiras, Blaine spends much of the second half of Fitzgerald's book protesting that the notion of what could be called the U.S. *Bildungsbürgertum* has been hijacked. This is less in the sense of politicians ignoring the artist and more focused on journeymen authors passing for great auteurs in the Anglophone literary landscape. The challenge for the reader, arriving to the last chapter of the book, is how much to take Blaine at his word (and there are several indications that Fitzgerald wants us to) when he insists that he has abandoned much of religion and seems to have adopted a default attitude of continual criticism toward society at large. From his perspective, he has "escaped from a small enclosure into a great labyrinth. He was where Goethe was when he began *Faust*; he was where Conrad was when he wrote *Almayer's Folly*" (4043). While potentially effective as a conceit, his is the illusion of non-transformation that sparks a liberating resistance and an acceptance of his role as artist outcast. In an arabesque of detached intellectual thought, in the book's final pages, he lists himself with Leo Tolstoy and Samuel Butler, amongst the marginalized, genius artists of Western civilization in the previous century (4115).

It is worth noting that Amory's notion of abandonment, while conceptualized in very different terms, also lies at the heart of Sabino's preoccupations with what it means to be an

artist—and, in a sense, the final step and confirmation of the artist’s life. Outside fictional texts, in his conversation with Mário, for example, it appears as a concern about the negation of happiness to pursue the creative process (*Cartas* 27), and its absence comes to define Toledo, the mentor as unrealized writer. As Toledo explains to the book’s young protagonist: “Escrever é renunciar — eu não sei renunciar. Gide disse que o diabo desta vida é que entre cem caminhos, temos de escolher apenas um e viver com a nostalgia dos outros noventa e nove. Pois bem: a literatura é como se você tivesse de renunciar a todos os cem...” (29). This pronouncement is, in reality, already present in a young Eduardo, in whom, similar to Fitzgerald’s protagonist, a Romantic notion of, in actuality, pseudo-impooverishment naturally blooms as a rebellion within a bourgeois conception of the world. Still in *ginásio*, Marciano goes to Rio to receive second prize for a *maratona intelectual*: “Ao fim de quinze dias de vagabundagem, o dinheiro acabou. Saiu pela rua, mão no bolso, sentindo que naquele momento começava a viver. Pobreza, fome, miséria — tudo era preciso, para tornar-se escritor” (27).

The Chosen Denied Agency

If Amory is, from the start, an unrecognized “boy marked for glory” (244), Eduardo not only impresses those around him but becomes the hope of those around him to one day tell their story and vertically climb to literary heights—in a sense, become their champion. This emphasis on the group is one of the stronger contrasts between the texts of Sabino and Fitzgerald, as Amory proves himself individualistic to a fault and triumphs because of it within the text. In *Encontro*, one night, however, in uncomfortable intimate and direct

conversation, Eduardo, Hugo, and Mauro thoroughly describe one another. The weaker, sensitive, observant Hugo takes his turn, summing up the protagonist in the following, penetrating description:

E você, Eduardo. Você, o puro, o intocado, o que se preserva, como disse Mauro. Seu horror ao compromisso porque você se julga um comprometido, tem uma missão a cumprir, é um escritor... Seu desprezo pelos fracos porque se julga forte, sua inteligência incômoda, sua explicação para tudo, seu senso prático — tudo orgulho. O orgulho de ser o primeiro — a vida, para você, é um campeonato de nataçãõ. Sua desenvoltura, sua excitação mental, sua fidelidade a um destino certo, tudo isso faz de você presa certa do *demônio*.” (96, my italics)

This is a fascinating undertone of ideological, and by extension, cultural conservatism that allows for the contextualization of the protagonist as rebel in collective terms (vertical collectivist)—in contrast to both Joyce’s and Fitzgerald’s examples. Despite the friends’ hellraising linked to revolutionary ideology, despite their engagement with a variety of texts from different times and from around the world, despite Mauro’s proclaimed atheism at the time, as Hugo describes it here, *pride* (*orgulho*) seems to take on Catholic connotations and warn of a fall. This is, in fact, something of an inversion in how both Joyce and Fitzgerald handle religion. While both establish a model that allows for moments of exploration into the alter ego as pathetic, this surprising use of religion, first, in the abstract, and then as it comes to connect with ideas about the Devil, allows space for a group touchstone, for a confessional mode (explored later), and the presentation of flaws in an expiatory rather than condemnatory mode. This may be Sabino’s greatest high-wire act, to look for answers and salvation in

traditional culture while simultaneously presenting a society that he feels has gone astray to the point of Kafkaesque nightmare.

The groundwork for this sense of connection and responsibility to the group is also carried out in a variety of techniques. Eduardo, for example, goes through a period of acting out toward the end of his time in Belo Horizonte, which will turn out to be the death throes of his life as a great novelist. Consider the focalization of the third person narrative here: “O que se passava com ele? Sua inquietação, sua vontade de encerrar uma fase da vida e inaugurar outra era algo que saltava aos olhos de todos” (147). In terms of narrative, this kernel cannot be explained as coming from the perspective of Eduardo’s concerned parents. And though, in the moment, he has just met with Mauro’s disapprobation, another quick shift in time and place by Sabino has left that friend’s perspective behind. The perspective at work here then seems to enter the collective, the community, Belo Horizonte, an idea totally antithetical to a generally third person narrative (punctuated with inner dialogues) that follows a self-obsessed Amory around.

One night, after their fathers have met, worried about the group’s direction in life, Eduardo starts to riff, proposing, tongue in cheek, the founding of a new movement: “o terrorismo” (71). He explains that his idea is based on *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and that Kafka is *the* Terrorist role model. As they together build on and react to this idea, he imagines a fictional President of Congress announcing one day: “Meus senhores! O problema é o seguinte: *Não há problema!*” (72). Eduardo explains the fallout of this thought virus: “Daí os sábios terem de resolver o problema da inexistência do problema. É o terror” (72).

With great skill, Sabino concentrates this dynamic with the government and Church through other members of the young group of friends—for the most part, away from the protagonist and in a politically outspoken Mauro. When Eduardo speaks at the university auditorium, arguing for the removal of the university rector, he later feels regret thinking of the reaction on the man's face, as if slapped, asking himself if his own behavior went too far. Mauro responds, “Impiedoso é você, defendendo um sujeito que pactua com a ditadura” (89). In similar fury, when Mauro sees more than fifty families of *retirantes* taking refuge under the Santa Teresa Viaduct, in downtown Belo Horizonte, he goes to the first bar that he can find and calls the Palace of the Archbishop, though it is the middle of night, to vent his fury. We are told, at one point, after the fact (in the equivalent of the English past perfect), as if it were no surprise, that Mauro had founded a clandestine journal that is violently against the government. Through him we receive a portrait of the society at large and come to understand how pregnant with ambivalence Eduardo's relationship is with Antonieta's father, a minister in the government.

It is perhaps no surprise that Eduardo's playful Kafkaesque paradigm gets turned against its inventor, though in a maneuver typical for Sabino, it seems less to do with *The Metamorphosis* and more to do with *The Trial* (1925). In a moment of intense spontaneity and, in effect, self-expression, he acknowledges his previously suppressed passion for Antonieta and, in short order, gets on a train to Rio de Janeiro. On arriving to Rio, he checks in to the Hotel Elite, the site of his mentally freeing first trip to the city as a student. A self-involved interpretation of his interactions with Antonieta that day leads to a strange, drunken encounter with her at a black-tie event. He returns to the hotel and, by chance, shares the elevator up with a woman he does not know. Sometime later, lying naked on his bed, he

hears the woman fall from a floor above to the ground below—an apparent suicide. When she twitches on the asphalt and yet witnesses do nothing, he feels compelled to leave his room in a raincoat and call the front desk. The woman—who we later learn was a prostitute—dies shortly after arriving to the hospital. It is an event that will come back to haunt Eduardo at different moments, with emerging details that seem to incriminate him, and a variety of people who question whether he is telling the truth, including Antonieta’s father, who clearly has the power to simply make it go away.

The story, as it evolves out of the Hotel Elite experience, portrays not just a Kafkaesque notion of how dysfunctional society and government have become. We see in the story Eduardo’s effort to engage in a collective society, with a posture of accountability and decency in the Commons. He goes against his disposition, as Hugo describes it, of having no time for anyone, of giving the impression of heading somewhere to a great destiny, in this situation; yet he is punished for it. He must, if he is to follow his conscience, participate. That, though, is the very thing that creates the strange inexplicable trouble for him in this social climate. He describes the fallout from this woman’s suicide, as it continues to haunt him, once again, as the Terror (80).

The Lone Swimmer

There is, of course, Amory’s exit from the *Princetonian*, but if there are peripheral themes and metaphors dealing with agency—or the absence thereof—in *Paradise* it comes,

in part, in expected contrasts to the heroic notions of Rupert Brooke's poetry¹³ and general philosophizing on the connection between "physical shape" and courage in connection to strength of character (3210). If there is a notion of general agency here, it is on a grand scale in the character Burne Holiday, in a way that Blaine seems to respect, arguably because it entails a rejection of society that Blaine will himself experience at the end of the book. Holiday, in short, declares himself a pacifist and leaves Princeton on a bicycle as the others prepare for war. While we never see it, Blaine is happy to find that he has the courage to go into battle. But the idea of how this might all play out specifically and people proving themselves in war is left principally untold—but for the occasional memory of a fallen friend. On a personal level, Blaine's story does not have the urgency of a world of fruitlessness deserving a parallel to Kafka. His is the weight of privilege and choice, in a world lacking meaning for him and therefore disorganized for him, but coherent in its own terms. That said, the main, concise metaphor used to suggest it comes in the mentioning of U.S. football. Amory plays the sport at St. Regis, and when arriving at Princeton, he aspires to a football career that would make him one of "the gods of the class" (3983), but that imagined future and group destiny is quickly cut short when he wrenches his knee in his second week at quarterback. War, or rather preparation for it, as Eduardo Marciano experiences it at a CPOR (*Centro de Preparação de Oficiais da Reserva*), takes on the similar tone of interlude or frustration, rather than a coming of age that might occur in the martial realm. Instead, Sabino takes the idea of sport and physicality and expands it, making it central to the construction of this book and other pieces.

¹³ Much of Brooke's poetry celebrated the war, which took his life in 1915. The close of his poem, "Tiare Tahiti," provides the title of Fitzgerald's novel.

Water, as it does in much of Mário's work, has antagonistic potentials in Sabino, often built on the familiar trope of going below the surface, which brings with it potential associations with the unconscious and inner workings of the collective. In *O encontro das águas* (1977), documenting his visit to Manaus, Sabino (often playfully) cultivates the dynamic of amazed city slicker reacting to his Amazonian environs. Yet this is not entirely in contrast to his conception of water in his various works that present characters who are swimmers. Here too, the challenge the water presents is formidable, at a smaller, more-controlled level—even, one could argue, at as controlled a level as a pool—and, in this sense, water in varied forms offers a kind of primal challenge, something to be overcome, an apt metaphor for agency, again and again in the motif of the swimmer. *O Grande Mentecapto* (begun in the early 1940s and published in 1979) offers up a river (presumably the Rio das Velhas in Minas Gerais) that is a place where a comrade has drowned in youth, but also a strange, foreboding environment in which Geraldo Viramundo, the protagonist might excel. Amidst the often irreverent and cynical tone of the picaresque novel's narration, Geraldo jumps into the river alone, enveloped in the strange, foreign environment, and we are presented with both the lovely and quixotic image of him swimming in chase after the stars as they reflect on the surface of the water (14).

In *Encontro*, Dona Estefânia, Eduardo's mother, first encourages him to swim, worried about his mental health when a friend, Jadir, commits suicide. Eduardo takes to it not only for his obvious natural talent at it, but because it fits into his conception of himself and the world, “porque natação não depende de ninguém, só de mim” (35). Not merely this expression of individualism, the swimming race is something which he can attain control over (36), and, in the problematic, and disorienting moment of young adulthood, when he

feels frustration, and, perhaps, powerlessness, in the would-be transition into a writer in society, he returns to the pool, to set one last record. As Hugo says in his description of Eduardo that night when the friends are talking, “a vida, para você, é um campeonato de natação” (96). In the first race he participates in, still an out-of-shape smoker, he is devastated when he comes in third. Yet notably at this race an old swimming teammate, Rodrigo, appears and goes into the locker room to say hello and wish him luck: “Olha, você tem de ganhar. Apostei em você, não vai me fazer perder meu dinheirinho.” “É lógico que vou ganhar,” responds a confident Eduardo (141). Again, we see his inability to understand his role in the community. His father, who comes to watch the race, observes that “para que um ganhe, é preciso que o outro perca” (143). He seems to ignore this, quits smoking and spends the next few weeks aggressively training so that he can set one last record.

The drowning trope of *O grande mentecapto* returns as, years later, married in Rio, Eduardo reads about Rodrigo’s plane going down off the coast of Rio. He obsesses for a few days about how long Rodrigo, his fellow swimmer might survive in the water, and whether he swam in the right direction for land. “Por que não tenta dormir um pouco?” asks Antonieta. “Afinal vocês não eram tão amigos assim, não se viam há tanto tempo...” (225). Eduardo, as might be imagined, explodes at this suggestion. In the lapse between the news and the finding of Rodrigo’s body, Eduardo’s swimming record is finally broken. As he sits on the beach, looking out at the sea, Tércio asks, referring to his friend’s newspaper pieces, “Por que você em vez de ficar escrevendo sobre romance, não escreve logo um romance?” (227). He learns later that the radioman who had looked down in the water was mistaken, Rodrigo had never had the chance to swim at all; he had immediately gone down with the plane. The implication being that swimming (and its expression of consummate

individuality) was never the agency it seemed to be. Near the story's end, when Eduardo makes a nostalgic return journey to Belo Horizonte, twenty-five years after school, and after his marriage breaks up, he returns to the club to see that his name has been replaced on the plaque of honor.

The Chômeur

“Amory,” says Rosalind, his most ardent love, as she realizes she cannot commit to the uncertainty of a future with him, “you’re young. I’m young. People excuse us for poses and vanities...and yet getting away with it. They excuse us now. But you’ve got a lot of knocks coming to you” (2965). Toledo, likewise, when the politically-charged band of friends briefly turns against him, responds, “Vocês hão de ver. Quem foi que disse que todo homem é incendiário aos vinte anos e bombeiro aos quarenta?” (85). By extending the story, Sabino gives us an undermined artist, entering into that disillusion, amplifying context and consequences, more fully exploring the difficulty in finding agency in adulthood that stems from unrealized plans, all in the context of mid-20th-century Brazil. He creates, carrying on the book, an effect which Clarice Lispector calls, “estrangulamento gradativo que vem de todos os lados” (*Cartas* 187). He moves from the lightness of youth to a time when the consequences of a poorly-defined *Weltanschauung* come to roost, a time in which the would-be artist has hit rock bottom. After all, in the car ride of the final moments of *Paradise*, a liberated, unaccountable Amory lectures Mr. Ferrenby and tears into his assistant, pontificating on the way the world should be—his soapbox the promise of youth. Instead,

when Eduardo marries Antonieta and abandons journalism and the dream of being a novelist to become a city bureaucrat, he seems to fade into strange nebulousness.

At a party in Rio, in the beginning of the second half of the book, in a typically oblique way, Tércio answers the question of who he is that might very well function for Eduardo, saying that he is a *chômeur*. Beyond the mere idea of being unemployed, it is an apt allusion to the idea of vocation in the context of the bildungsroman, in the sense that Eduardo went through the wrong induction. He is an unemployed writer with a paycheck. “Chômeur,” Amorim elaborates, “é ser uma coisa e não ser, compreende?” “Hamlet,” Eduardo explains, picking up the thread, “era um *chômeur*.” To which Amorim says, “É o ‘não poder ser’ de que nos falava Bergson...” (163). The apparent allusion to *L’Évolution créatrice* (1907), building on Hamlet’s soliloquy and Henri Bergson’s elevated abstract considerations on the impossibility of the non-existent, works as a playful smokescreen for what will become a poignant truth as the second half of the novel progresses, the inability to become what one was meant to be.

In it, Sabino connects to the collective by exploring and building patterns of Catholic-influenced thought, expanding on Joyce and Fitzgerald using a satanic (or potentially demonic) figure to help organize their texts. Sabino, most likely, would have objected to the idea of *deformity* in his own belief at the time, but he is clearly, in Eduardo’s revelation, getting after an underlying group ideology, reflective of something that Mário says to him in 1942: “Eu desconfio, ainda não sei, pelos seus escritos, que você é católico, ou pelo menos, certamente deformação católica... Eu também sou deformação católica, acredito vorazmente em Deus, ... Mas é estranho como não tenho a menor ‘religião’, nisso em que a religião é uma religião, uma organização coletivizada das nossas relações e deveres pra com Deus”

(*Cartas* 33). The revelation on this idea, effectively building off of a more mystical, rather than religious model, comes as something of an inversion of Fitzgerald's spectral satanic figure in particular.

Augustine, the Confessional, and the Devil Revised

The Confessions (circ. 400CE), read and deeply considered by Joycee, Fitzgerald, and Sabino before writing the books discussed here, is a text seeking different types of reconciliation. On the one hand, Augustine considers how philosophical considerations, and systems of thought in general, might fit under or be excluded in a Christian cosmology. Yet at the same time, the book is a biography—and a performative one at that—in the sense that it has both personal and contemporary social objectives that are difficult to delineate from one another. As Maria Boulding points out, this is an Augustine appointed to the position of Bishop of Hippo only some two years prior, with a past that likely raised concerns across the region—in short, he found himself in a situation which would warrant an “*apologia pro vita sua*” (“The Confessions” 10). His approach in this context, it seems (at least), is less one of rationalization and distortion, but rather that which is now distasteful to him assimilated through the larger approach of the retelling of his life, reframed, and seen through the lens of Christianity. Consider his adolescence, famously portrayed as licentious, recharacterized as a turning away and the carrying out of wretched acts, larded (as the rest of the book is) with reinterpretation through the Bible. He explains, opening Book II: “Now I want to call to mind the foul deeds I committed, those sins of the flesh that corrupted my soul, not in order to love them, but to love you, my God. Out of love for loving you I do this, recalling my most

wicked ways and thinking over the past with bitterness so that you may grow ever sweeter to me” (62).¹⁴ The performative aspect here occurs on the personal level as he reconciles himself to the divine—and in this sense it is easy to see why Boulding calls the text “one long prayer” (9). On another, he is both demonstrating and becoming the man for the job, the leader for the diocese and community, reflecting the idea of the Confession as public act in the early centuries of the Church before the eventual establishment of the one-on-one Sacrament of Reconciliation.

As the bildungsroman begins to deal more with inner psychological workings and paralysis of action, it further couples with growing autobiographical aspects (particularly in the *Künstlerroman*) that can create a confusion of threads of extratextual performativity in connection to the author’s life. In this context, elements of the confessional are revived and perhaps facilitate the ability of the genre to successfully capture the spirit of the time. Particularly in the hands of Joyce, it most begins to feed off the form of the religious *apologia pro vita sua*, but inverted, as abandonment with Dedalus and Blaine, and reharnessed toward the path of the artist. It is perhaps not that surprising an adaptation, if the picaresque can be seen as an odd inversion of the hagiography—and the bildungsroman, as the genre experiments, moves back toward the picaresque. The narrative that is making sense of Dedalus’ life realizes this by creating an ambiguous push and pull between Stephen’s potential life as, on the one hand, (if not a saint) a priest and, on the other, his life as a writer and artist. Part of the craft of this structure and the set-up for the eventual direction is an embedding of the idea of the writer in the would-be priest. For example, when asked at a

¹⁴ “Recordari volo transactas foeditates meas, et carnales corruptiones animae meae, non quod eas amem, sed ut amem te, deus meus. amore amoris tui facio istuc, recolens vias meas nequissimas in amaritudine recogitationis meae” (Liber II Caput 1 Georgetown).

young age who the best writer of English prose has been, Dedalus answers by saying it is J.H. Newman (80), and it is worth noting here that Newman wrote his own *Apologia pro vita sua* (1865-1866). Later, when talking to a priest outside the chapel, some of the lads ask if Victor Hugo is not “the greatest French writer” (156). To which the father says, “Victor Hugo had never written half so well when he had turned against the Church as he had written when he was a Catholic” (156). On crossing the bridge (presumably over the Tolka River), in Chapter 4, looking out at the distant clouds, Dedalus, of course, realizes that abandoning the dream of becoming a quiet, genuflecting priest is, like Amory Blaine, an act of liberation; he is now “The Dedalus,” “Stephanos,” “Bous Stephaneforos!” (168). It is language and mythology that Fitzgerald seems to pick up on as he describes Amory’s liberation, his own casting aside of what he perceives as a religious burden, the previously described escape from “a small enclosure into a great *labyrinth*” (4043, my italics).

In *Portrait*, there is a dialogue with Augustine in particular, who is referenced a few times to clarify and reaffirm the aspects of sin. His notorious sins of the flesh from Book II of *The Confessions*, seem to loom over the narrative as Stephen visits and tries to resist falling into the habit of visiting prostitutes. One might argue that Father Arnall’s retreat sermon at Belvedere, extensively exploring the suffering of hell, backfires in figures like Dedalus, Blaine and Marciano, in that the artist that is—as Clara Page puts it, “a helpless slave” to their imagination—is touched too deeply, and driven to quest too literally and intellectually, when bombarded with such a discourse and considerations. However, buried in this speech is Augustine’s conception of the Devil. The lapsed Manichaean, in *The Confessions*, and, later in *City of God*, resists potential currents of Dualism in the Christian God-Devil model, recognizing that not only can the Devil not be the origin or embodiment of evil, but also

recognizing the original seed of rebellion in him if he was made by God¹⁵. “Theologians consider,” says Arnall, “that it was the sin of pride, the sinful thought conceived in an instant: *non serviam: I will not serve*. That instant was his ruin” (117). In a familiar trope, the artist—be it through the perpetual resistance of Amory or Eduardo’s defiance—figuratively quests after the same power that seduced the character of Lucifer and the other fallen angels in an extension of the Romantic misreading of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667). The artist becomes disinherited from the larger plan of the making of humankind in the Genesis myth. As Arnall describes it, “Adam and Eve... were created by God in order that the seats in heaven left vacant by the fall of Lucifer and his rebellious angels might be filled again” (158).

Apart from the controlled chaos of Dedalus’ crisis of flames of imagination, *Portrait* comes to the reader with all the consideration of Augustine’s re-reading of his life, through some of the best crafting of English-language Modernism. Yet in *Paradise*, there is an embraced disorganization of craft that allows for the particular performativity of the *Künstlerroman*. “There were days,” *Paradise*’s narrative tells us, “when Amory resented that life had changed from an even progress along a road stretching in sight, with the scenery of quick unrelated scenes” (3550). *Paradise* is a rebellion as a quest to find the space to exist as an artist. The resultant lacking organization is part of the point; the search for form is key.

Fitzgerald himself, from the beginning, recognized the egotistical or even self-indulgent aspect of this kind of project—with the original *The Romantic Egotist* title, a name

¹⁵ “si dialobus auctor, unde ipse diabolus? quod si et ipse perversa voluntate ex bono angelo diabolus factus est, unde et in ipso voluntas mala qua diabolus fieret, quando totus angelus a conditore optimo factus esset?” (Liber VII, Caput 3).

he kept for Book I of the final product. He tells the New York Tribune, in May of 1920, that it took him three minutes to conceive of the book and three months to write it (*Conversations* 4). As mentioned, part of the work in those three months seems to have been an organizing and editing of raw material, written in his time at Princeton as he experienced new literature and ideas. “I realize,” he tells *Shadowland* in January of 1921, “that *This Side of Paradise* was immature and callow, just as such critics as H.L. Mencken and others have said, altho they were kind enough to say I had possibilities” (*Conversations* 7). *The New Republic*, in 1920, which was otherwise praising of *Paradise*, writes, “Although the story is composed of discrete incidents in the most modern tendency, with the gaps consciously acknowledged, the omissions are occasionally irritating and a more obvious unity than that of the spiritual and intellectual metamorphoses of Amory Blaine (subject to change without notice) would contribute to the solidity and importance of the book” (*Conversations* 49). Mencken, in his review of *The Great Gatsby*, commends Fitzgerald for taking this criticism to heart and improving his writing in terms of structure and language. He writes: “*This Side of Paradise*, after all, might have been merely a luck accident. But *The Great Gatsby*, a far inferior story at bottom, is plainly the product of a sound and stable talent, conjured into being by hard work” (Mencken 90). Yet for Mencken, *The Great Gatsby* falls far short of *Paradise*. He seems to be continually rooting for Fitzgerald the “social historian,” agent of the bildungsroman’s *Volkgeist*, instead of Fitzgerald “the stylist” (91). The Fitzgerald who best captures a part of the U.S. East Coast spirit of the late 1910s is one willing to wade through the mess of an increasingly chaotic and overwhelming early 20th century right before our eyes.

Who, or what, then is the Devil for Amory Blaine? It is one, like Dedalus, connected to sexual desire and flames, but, more than this, it is a figure at the edges, in and out of the performative chaos of this new kind of bildungsroman, deeply connected, like Joyce, to an individualistic suffering and an intensely personal schematic of morality. Fitzgerald gives the reader a first glimpse of the figure in a section of Chapter 3 entitled “The Devil.” Amory is on something of a double date, on a night out to different clubs on Broadway, that will eventually end up at Phoebe Column’s flat—as, one infers, a private destination for intimacy. Phoebe is with Fred Sloane throughout the night, and perhaps it is no coincidence that Amory is paired off with Axia *Marlowe* in a scene that carries with it those Faustian tones. Amory is sick, though he has not drunk much. It seems to be a metaphorical, existential ailment, when at Maxim’s, sometime after two in the morning he feels someone staring at him:

[Amory] turned and glanced casually... a middle-aged man dressed in a brown sack suit, it was, sitting a little apart at a table by himself and watching their party intently. At Amory’s glance he smiled faintly. (1887)

The emphatic “it was,” is the first hint at the occurrence as a kind of unbelievable sighting. Amory asks, indignantly, to the others, “Who’s that pale fool watching us?” The omission and ambiguity here is rich, as, without the narrative explicitly saying so, the others in the group (who seem to be drunk) are unable to see the man in the sack suit.

The girls decide to take the party to Phoebe’s, where Sloane pours brandy, and a reluctant Amory tries to go along with the course of the night. Much is left omitted as Axia declares that she likes him, puts her head on his shoulder, and he accepts a glass of brandy from her:

There was a minute while temptation crept over him like a warm wind, and his imagination turned to fire, and he took the glass from Phoebe's hand. That was all; for at the second that his decision came, he looked up and saw, ten yards from him, the man who had been in the café, and with this jump of astonishment the glass fell from his uplifted hand. There the man half sat, half leaned against a pile of pillows on the corner divan. His face was cast in the same yellow wax as in the café, neither the dull, pasty color of a dead man—rather a sort of virile pallor... Then, suddenly, Amory perceived the feet, and with a rush of blood to the head he realized he was afraid. The feet were all wrong... with a sort of wrongness that he felt rather than knew... He wore no shoes, but instead, a sort of half moccasin, pointed though, like the shoes they wore in the fourteenth century, and with the little ends curling up. They were darkish brown and his toes seemed to fill them to the end.... They were unutterly terrible. (1887)

The shoes seem to be poulaines or curled crackowes, which, in their suggestive phallic shape (filled by the figure's feet), carry with them an entire history of sexual suggestion and legal efforts at suppression—one that naturally, at times, came to be associated with Satan and the demonic. Fitzgerald utilizes the shoes to juxtapose the contemporary with the historical.

There is a connotation here of a Devil arising out of U.S. Protestant Revivalism and teetotaling, connected to nightclubs as dens of inequity. It is a conception of alcohol and sex that would lead to the prohibition years that begin in Fitzgerald's book. Yet this man in the sack suit is, as Amory conceives of him, a much more passive figure, an observer. As Amory flees the get-together, his thoughts turn to death and mortality, as, in a dissociative daze, he imagines the face of a classmate (Dick Humbird) who died drunk driving. After eventually hurrying back to his room at Princeton over the next few hours, he is greeted by his

roommate Tom, who says, “Had a hell of a dream about you last night... I had an idea you were in some trouble” (1764). It is the suggestion of something sinister, in this more traditional portrayal, outside the “scenery of quick, unrelated scenes” pushing events toward a chaos devoid of meaning (3550).

Back home in Princeton, Amory reads H.G. Wells to calm his mind, who is one of the figures in the book that stands as a touchstone for clear-headed thinking and strong morality in an ambiguous, complicated, 20th-century. While it is unclear that this is the actual book Amory reads at this moment, one of the Wells books cited by title toward the story’s end is *The Undying Fire* (1919), a de-theologized retelling of the Book of Job. Wells’ novel is significant not just because Job is now a teacher and hope lies in the effort of educating and shaping the young. It is also a representation of an increasingly secularized, literary Satan of the 20th century who represents the “Unexpected” (2). The beginning of the book draws a portrait of deity and nemesis as polite adversaries, locked in a game of chess:

But the chess they play is not the little ingenious game that originated in India; it is on an altogether different scale. The Ruler of the Universe creates the board, the pieces, and the rules; he makes all the moves; he may make as many moves as he likes whenever he likes; his antagonist, however, is permitted to introduce a slight inexplicable inaccuracy into each move, which necessitates further moves in correction. (4)

Amory’s act of reading a somewhat secularized, less horrifying Satanic figure, to escape, to bowdlerize the fear that his experience at Phoebe’s apartment inspired, parallels his intellectualizing at Princeton as he fails to make sense of his visceral experience of life.

Amidst the storm outside, lightning flashes and the roommate Tom, for a split second, sees a face watching Amory from the darkness—that is, reading Wells will not make it go away.

When Amory is supposedly liberated, and Romantically decides to be poor and set out drifting, he seems to gain that same vantage the man in the sack suit had. He sees from afar or—notably—*seemed* “to see a well-dressed young man gazing from a club window on Fifth Avenue and saying something to his companion with a look of utter disgust” (3924). He finds himself outside the chaos and disorganization of his own story, like Burne Holiday, modeling self-realization with religious Christ-like undertones, suddenly with agency—one of making sense of the chaos that is his life. This moment of setting out, in fact, imitates Holiday’s initial liberation when he conquers his fear of being in the woods off campus. On a walk together at night, he explains it to Amory: “I began analyzing it—my imagination persisted in sticking horrors into the dark—so I stuck my imagination in to the dark instead, and let it look out at me—I let it play stray dog or escaped convict or ghost, and then saw myself coming along the road” (1937). It is at the moment of Amory’s setting out—of seeing himself from without—that he dismisses Monsignor Darcy’s argument that “if you doubted the devil it was the devil that made you doubt him” (4036)¹⁶. It is, of course, no surprise that a great artist would need to understand religious and cultural taboo. Fitzgerald, in a sense though, seems to anticipate George Bataille here (as Fábio Lucas argues Sabino will), suggesting that the artist must know and acknowledge evil—as also a “*rêve du Bien*” [“dream of the Good”] (20, Hamilton 14)—to create a framework of “hypermorale” [“hypermorality”] (8, Hamilton 3). This, in a way, is a reiteration of the role given Dante’s

¹⁶ The word *devil* appears in lower case in Fitzgerald’s text. Yet there seems an attempt to preserve an ambiguity as to whether it is satanic or demonic figure. For example, as he talks to his roommate, Tom, Amory says, “I think I’ve—I’ve seen the devil or—something like him” (1778).

protagonist in the *Inferno*. At the end of the Fitzgerald's book, in a perhaps over-exuberant flourish, Amory cements his *non serviam* liberation, by moving into something of a Taoist-inspired schematic of aesthetics:

The problem of evil had solidified for Amory into the problem of sex... Inseparably linked with evil was beauty—beauty, still a constant rising tumult; soft in Eleanor's voice, in an old song at night, rioting deliriously through life like superimposed waterfalls, half rhythm, half darkness. Amory knew that every time he had reached toward it longingly it had leered out at him with the grotesque face of evil. (4282)

It must be recognized that Sabino was trying to capture some of Fitzgerald's strange performative spontaneity. Reminiscent of *L'Éducation*'s narrative, the staccato, shifting aspect of the book's narrative led Clarice Lispector to comment in a letter, “É angustiante a rapidez com que [o tempo] decorre” (186). She continues, reacting to the construction of the book: “O livro todo parece filmado em luz de rua, sem *maquillage*. Por isso dá às vezes a impressão desconcertante de falta absoluta de ‘literatura’... O estratagema é quase uma ausência de estratagema” (188). Added to this type of style and construction is the acknowledgement of *Encontro*'s metatextual interplay on the part of Sabino. In that episode of *Roda Viva*, Sérgio Pinto de Almeida asks, “Você não mentiu no livro?” “Não, não,” responds Sabino, “eu procurei ser honesto e jogar tudo na mesa e não blefar” (*Roda Viva* 20:36-20:42). While many of the facts and, certainly, names have been changed, the model followed is similar to Augustine's. If, as Howard Bloom argues, the advent of Christianity marks a watershed moment in human history in that it divorces religion from genealogy on a large scale, Augustine's text, likewise, demonstrates an agenda toward common ideology and identity across disparate populations. In the context of the 20th-century Brazil and the

reception of Sabino's novel, the personal and confessional manage to connect with the collective, resonate with a generation, and unite a group in the mind of its literature, as it dialogues with what Boes calls *normative ideals*.

All that said, there is clearly more of an established plan than Fitzgerald to contextualize the lack of order that comes from prioritizing the personal and performative over the aesthetic. Sabino, in effect, expands, develops, and revises Fitzgerald's Devil in relation to chaos and its interconnectedness with a lack of agency. Wells and Fitzgerald here, of course, represent a growing trend in the 20th-century to deal with a literary and mythical Satan in an increasingly secularized way. Take, for example Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (written 1928-1940) with the satanic figure of Woland, a strange extension of the Lucifer misread from *Paradise Lost*, turned, in part, against (instead of Milton's perfect God as ruler) dysfunctional government and a society gone astray. The writer (the Master) and Woland are, in the end, strange allies of a kind.

A variation on this, argues Fábio Lucas, is found in the connection to Bataille in Toledo's discourse on abandonment. After explaining to Eduardo that while he was never able to, writing is the act of abandoning the hundred paths of life, he seems to almost paraphrase Bataille, whose *La Littérature et le Mal* actually came out the following year: "A arte é uma maneira de ser dentro da vida. Há outras... É uma maneira de se vingar da vida. Assim como se você procurasse *atingir o bem negativamente, esgotando todos os caminhos do mal*" (47, my italics). Lucas makes his case as follows:

Curiosamente, Toledo expõe a sua teoria da arte enveredando-se pelo caminho tomado posteriormente por George Bataille, que alinha a literatura no lado do Mal, já

que no lado do Bem estão as propriedades de Deus, gerador do Cosmo e responsável pela harmonia universal das coisas. Somente o Demônio, na linha daquele pensamento, seria capaz da liberdade descompromissado que é com a ordem natural das coisas. (28)

While this seems a fair representation of the secularized literary Satan of the 20th century, developing out of Milton's misread rebel, it seems less so of Bataille, who in making his case does not argue along the lines of a binary of the sides of God and the Devil.

What seems more relevant here, in regard to Bataille's point of view, instead, is Giorgio Vasari's description of the death of Spinello Aretino in *The Lives (Le Vite)* (1550 & 1568). As Vasari tells the story, Aretino, then 92 years old, painted various religious scenes for a brotherhood in Arezzo, which included a depiction of Lucifer. Vasari writes, "And so anxious was the artist to make him frightful and horrible, that it is said,—such is sometimes the power of imagination—that the figure he had painted appeared to him in his sleep, demanding to know where the painter had seen him looking so ugly as that, and wherefore he permitted his pencils to offer him, the said Lucifer, so mortifying an affront?" (269). It is a scare that kills poor Aretino (according to the story), as the artist conceptualizes evil to model good, though at their own peril. If there was some doubt to Sabino's portrayal, Toledo, in fact, says of allegiance-free liberty a few paragraphs earlier, "Parece preceito evangélico: aquele que perder sua vida, a salvará. Mas às avessas, procurar Deus onde ele não se encontra. A atividade literária é exatamente isso" (47). This is, in effect, the same act that Amory will experience, but through opposing mechanisms, as the Princetonian is never freed from being the Romantic Egotist.

As *Encontro* carries on, past the moment of invocation into society, the failure to control one's destiny, the failure to move into society as writer for an extended period, is held together by a solitary figure. One night, Eduardo and Hugo, like Amory believe that they have seen the Devil. In the park on a clear night with a bright moon, they have been philosophizing on their morality. Then they are silent, and here it is worth noting that Sabino puts a large emphasis on silence in the book. When the prostitute of the Hotel Elite has taken her fatal fall, for example, it is followed by silence. In Rio, Eduardo's friend Germano will say that only silence is sincere (112), that "o silêncio é a linguagem de Deus" (112). As the two sit in the park, lost in silence, the sensitive Hugo suddenly feels afraid. The two hear a noise behind them and turn to see a figure, pale like Amory's: "um homem alto, magro, lívido, vestido de smoking, um cravo vermelho na lapela, sorrindo para eles" (82). They run from the park and consider the unlikelihood of the figure: "Vestido a rigor, no Parque, a esta hora? Só pode ser o demônio" (82).

Eduardo's true fall comes in the last two chapters of the book. His marriage falls apart amidst affairs he has been carrying on, one in particular with Neusa, and Antonieta leaves him. Vítor a friend who has had a cancer scare, reaches out to him, only to be run over by a bus on Christmas Eve, and Maria Elisa, whom he has grown attached to, asks that he not come around anymore. At the point of breakdown, he struggles emotionally in paying for and helping Neusa with an abortion. It is at this point that the figure of the park reappears while Eduardo is drunk in a bar: "Destá vez, o homem não estava vestido de smoking, mas num terno cinza, camisa azul de riscas, gravata de seda prateada e um cravo branco na lapela. O rosto era o mesmo do último encontro — pálido, fino, escanhado... Olhou-o, intrigado. Quem diabo seria aquele homem" (298). This figure then launches in to a meta-explanation

of how Eduardo is a character in a novel. To which the protagonist answers, “Você seria personagem também” (299). But the man responds:

— Não: eu seria a única pessoa do lado de fora com quem você pode conversar. Uma espécie de janela aberta para a realidade. Sua chance de se rebelar contra o seu criador, se libertar. Longe de mim você será apenas escravo.

— Escravo, como? — perguntou Eduardo, já meio confuso.

— Escravo do romancista. Quando o romance é seu, o verdadeiro romancista é você.

(299)

The paradigm offered by the stranger in the tuxedo is an adaptation of Burne Holiday, explaining how he conquered the darkness by imagining himself the darkness. It is also Amory Blaine discovering how to acquire a perspective from outside his own mortality, his own chaotic, mortal coil, of which he cannot make sense. It is not necessarily joining a side, but rather a theft of positioning. The silver-tied figure notes, “O mundo ao seu redor? Olhe só quanta injustiça, quanta miséria, tanta gente sofrendo” (301). “Demagogia,” responds Eduardo, repeating the refrain of Mário’s “Meditação,” in condemnation of the contemporary society. The allusion to Mário in this encounter suggests the role for mentorship, as the correspondence between Sabino and Mário becomes a way to connect with the group and collectively operate across generations, to transcend and escape the solitary pit of what the novel has become.

While he is loosely connected to mentorship and guidance, who is this character? Is the reader meant to distrust the narrative earlier in the book when it announces that “uma

noite, Eduardo e Hugo viram o demônio” (81)? Does Sabino build on Fitzgerald’s ambiguity to suggest that the common figure may not necessarily be the Devil at all, but perhaps a divine agent, offering freedom through transcendence? In such a case the mentioned creator against which one rebels may not be God, but the powers that be in society. Perhaps it depends on the character’s perspective; as Burne Holidays discovers, what may seem sinister and threatening at one moment may appear existential insight at another. That man may be one thing for Eduardo, as a young man in the park, and another for an Eduardo trying to find real agency later in life. Whatever this figure is precisely, it proves a turning point for Eduardo the prideful, independent champion swimmer. Hélio Pellegrino’s conception of the Devil many years later in the crônica “A burrice do demônio,” captures why the Romantic Lucifer cannot completely capture the role of the writer as Sabino conceives it. “O demônio,” he writes, “está condenado, por toda a eternidade a não ter relação com quem quer que seja. Ele é infinitamente isolado, píncaro de solidão que sequer se reconhece como tal: o sentimento da própria solidão já é uma nostalgia — uma aragem — do Próximo” (122). As *Encontro* closes, it focuses back in on the group and the hope in the correspondence between Mário and Sabino that was left absent in the construction of “Meditação.” The dynamic between Toledo and Eduardo reiterates itself as Eduardo recognizes the adolescent son of Misael as a budding new literato: “Ele vive lendo,” explains the father (303). It moves Eduardo to give him all his books as he leaves Rio to start life again. As he does, he recalls the pact of the friends to reunite after twenty-five years, a trip he carried out by going to Belo Horizonte, in desperation, with the bond and connection only realized later, after the encounter with the mysterious figure and a lesson in individual-group identity.

“Fernando, vamos mentir que não é assim”

Whether all of this is enough for the change that Eduardo seeks, to change his life and finally write a great book, to arrive late to his vocation in the original construct of the bildungsroman, of course, returns to the same unknown of Joyce and Fitzgerald’s text. However, it is an entirely different formation.

As Eduardo leaves the bar in their second encounter, the conversation with the mysterious figure turns to broad cryptic statements. The figure warns:

— “Cuidado com o automóvel. Com quem você conta?”

— “Eu me conheço, mas é só.”

— “Quem você está pensando que é? Scott Fitzgerald? Ele tem um romance que termina assim.

— Ele termina onde eu começo. (301)

It is, on the one hand, tongue-in-cheek, riffing off the image of a drunken Fitzgerald that Sabino presents in “Medo em Nova York.” On the other, it is a final condemnation of the independence of the Amory Blaine at the end of *Paradise*—from Sabino’s perspective, still the Romantic Egotist that insists he knows himself and that is all, not needing anyone else.

The sense of community and *Volkgeist*, captured by Sabino, is best summed up by Clarice Lispector in a letter from January of 1957, immediately after reading the book. In it, she first describes the despair the book inspired in her as she read it, to which she wanted to say, “Fernando, vamos mentir que não é assim” (186). However, after the book’s end and its strange *ex machina*, she reacts as follows:

Nunca me senti tanto pertencendo a uma “geração”. Pela primeira vez, talvez, senti a palavra geração em outro sentido. E veja, Fernando, que isso veio de algo mais, no seu livro, do que de fatos e ambientes, porque minha vida não teve esses fatos nem esses ambientes. Vem de algo mais, de alguma coisa essencial que você pegou, e que me deu essa impressão de “estarmos todos no mesmo barco”. E que me deu certeza de um encontro marcado, e a esperança. (187)

Chapter 3

The Dying Fire:

The Impossibility of Érico Veríssimo's Artist

*L'attention du jeune homme fut bientôt exclusivement acquise à un tableau qui, par ce temps de trouble et de révolutions, était déjà devenu célèbre, et que visitaient quelques-uns de ces entêtés auxquels on doit la conservation du feu sacré pendant les jours mauvais.*¹⁷

—The young Nicolas Poussin, looking on one of Porbus' masterpieces in "Le chef-d'œuvre inconnu," Honoré de Balzac (1831).

A Pilgrimage of Recognition

In 1943, a 37-year-old Érico Veríssimo, returning for a second, extended stay in the U.S., looks out from a train as he and his family cross the Southwest. His *Olhai os lírios do campo* (1938) has recently inaugurated the phenomenon of what might be called the modern bestseller in Brazil (Cândida Smith 154), and now, a translation of his *Caminhos cruzados* (1935) has just been launched in the U.S. market, initiating a nearly two-decade period, leading up to the Boom, in which he will be the most repeatedly published contemporary author from Latin America (161).

¹⁷ "The young man's attention was soon exclusively absorbed by a picture which had already become famous even in that epoch of commotion and revolution, and which was visited by some of those obstinate enthusiasts to whom we owe the preservation of the sacred fire during evil days" (Burham Ives 9).

Here, the sun-bleached, desert landscape of New Mexico invites a daydream in which the phantoms of D.H. Lawrence, a hero of Veríssimo the adult, and Tom Mix, a hero of Veríssimo the child, swap places. In the imagined scene, the English Modernist, who had transplanted himself to Taos some two decades earlier, ends up saving film icon Ruth Roland from the clutches of Hollywood-conceived Indians, and Tom Mix, larger-than-life star of silent Westerns, writes *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) (1400). The representational aspect of the fantasy, unplumbed, suggests something of Veríssimo's creative process at large; novels, he says—in a 1967 interview with Clarice Lispector, nearing the end of his career as one of their accomplished creators—are arts of the unconscious (32).

The daydream, in effect, mimics many of those seen in his writing of the 1930s. It could well be the fantasy of Clarissa, a mainstay of novels such as *Clarissa* (1933), *Música ao longe* (1936), *Um lugar ao sol* (1936), and *Saga* (1940). These are novels that, with their technical acumen in representing inner character life, adapt, to Veríssimo's own ends, approaches of Anglophone Modernist figures like Katherine Mansfield, figures that he would translate during his time at *Editora Globo*. Yet, topically, much of this New Mexico vision specifically echoes the fantasies of Napoleão, the child of the romantic João Benévolo of *Caminhos cruzados*, who imagines a revolver-wielding Tom Mix that not only patrols the streets of Porto Alegre, but who must be up on the surface of the moon as well, as the boy looks up into the night sky outside his bedroom window. Though begun in the mid-1920s ("Memórias" Torres 66), the structure of the novel, as well as some of its themes, uses Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) as a springboard. Veríssimo translated Huxley's book in 1933 (Bordini 23), before publishing *Caminhos cruzados* in 1935, and on his first visit to the U.S., he met and interviewed Huxley, who spent the last quarter century

of his life in Southern California. While a representation of some of D.H. Lawrence may live as Mark Rampion in *Point Counter Point*'s pages, a novel full of London artists and intellectuals, *Caminhos cruzados*, inaugurating Veríssimo's entrance into broad U.S. readership, is a book of artists that never will be, and the tension between the realities of life and art's indulgent escapist aspects.

The familiar dreamscape of Veríssimo's vision on the train in New Mexico stands out for the setting it comes to us in, Veríssimo's second travel book on the U.S.: *A volta do gato preto* (1946). It is a follow-up to *Gato preto em campo de neve* (1941), a book in many ways similar to Sabino's *A cidade vazia* (1950) in its initial reactions to the U.S. and the parallel analyses drawn with Brazil (at the same time that it relates encounters with famous literary figures). It seems that with more working knowledge of the U.S. in particular, the subjective experience of the artistic avatar Veríssimo presents in his second book expands, further fleshing out a writer of two worlds, with a foot in each, taking up a state-sponsored lecture residency at University of California, Berkeley, and traveling about as literary and cultural ambassador. The historian Richard Cándida Smith explains that this second book was originally conceived to explore questions on a social level as to how the U.S. actually functions (165), at a time when the Roosevelt administration sought to lead U.S. culture away from its isolationism—in part, cultivating an awareness and relationship with Brazil and its Spanish American neighbors. It is true, that, as Cándida Smith argues, this convergence, and the space Veríssimo opens up in his writing, offers few explicit answers on a cultural and historical level. If answers do come, they come at the personal level, in flourishes of the travel book as an aforementioned *art of the unconscious*.

Across the silence of the New Mexico landscape, then, what masquerades as whim and confusion in Veríssimo's desert, as his two phantasms swap roles, is mental synthesis and reconciliation enabled by pilgrimage. The problematic representation of the settler/indigenous paradigm aside, Tom Mix (in films such as *Riders of the Purple Sage* [1925] and *Destry Rides Again* [1932]) is the precursor to other, more familiar lone riders of the Hollywood West. These are figures built on the notion of an idealized iconoclast, an exemplar of a particular type of U.S. individualism, going against the misguided errors of the settler masses (the collective gone wrong) who lose their sense of justice in the heat of the moment or are subjugated to oppressive (vertical) power. The idealized cowboy and gunslinger here often embody the capacity of the individual to stand firm in the face of popular behavior and act as corrective force.

Veríssimo would begin *O tempo e o vento* (1949-1962) four years after the daydream described here. Yet this melding of Mix and Lawrence seems to suggest more than permission to marry Western-like fare with those aspects of master craft in Lawrence (as a figure of more elevated literature) that find their own incarnation, via various traditions, in Veríssimo's work. Why is it that Mix writes *Lady Chatterley's Lover* rather than Lawrence writing a script for *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912)? Does this daydream harbor some hope that in U.S. society—moving beyond Romantic notions connected to Whitman and Fitzgerald—an ideal notion of a lone figure facilitates or creates space for the artist as iconoclast? This idea of individualism and the social ties of the artists seem to pervade Veríssimo's thoughts. As the discourse of his reverie ends, his narrative transitions to an observation on the behavior of soldiers in one of the train cars, noting, “Ah! Se pudéssemos inculcar no homem comum brasileiro a consciência de sua importância como indivíduo”

(1416). A pervading tension, as seen in Sabino's Eduardo Marciano, continues between individual and group identity.

Across Traditions

Extensive verbiage complementary to the silent cinema of Veríssimo's youth, came early and quickly, and through broad reading and a variety of languages—with a heavy emphasis on English. Veríssimo describes writing his first short story at ten, as well as reading Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, and Anatole France from a young age (Lispector 28). In the first volume of his autobiographies, *Solo de clarineta* (1973), he describes a certain teacher, Lindau Ferreira, saving his early, faltering relationship with English at his Protestant high school run by expatriates (2256). As a young man, in part driven to supplement his income, and in his capacity as a staff member at *Globo* in Porto Alegre, Veríssimo began to translate popular books from different languages, primarily from English. Across the years, these came to include British Commonwealth commercial successes, including books by Huxley, James Hilton, W. Somerset Maugham, and (of particular influence on his earlier work) short stories of Mansfield. U.S. authors included John Steinbeck and Robert Nathan—author of *Portrait of Jennie*, a best-selling novella from 1940 discussed here. It was also at this time that Veríssimo began teaching English. This relationship eventually led to various trips and residencies in the United States (with the next generation of the family setting down roots in the U.S.), as well as Veríssimo's friendships with giants from mid-20th-century U.S. literature such as Thornton Wilder and John Dos Passos. In his doodling and notes for his

books, one finds thoughts in English.¹⁸ This background and relationship with the Anglophone tradition, focalized through the U.S., was so strong that it garnered negative attention. Some in Brazil wondered if he was not actually an agent for the U.S. (Cândida Smith 170). As Bordini points out, the launch of *Caminhos cruzados* spurred a lasting, unspoken critique which characterized his work as “obediente às formulas narrativas anglo-saxônicas” (23).

These elements of Veríssimo’s background transpired to shape specific aspects of how he represented and presented the idea of the artist to his reader for interpretation and judgement. The first is his handling of an unaccommodating environment driving the desire of escape or emigration. It is not a motif uncommon to the Neorealist sensibility of the time, and yet Veríssimo explores it focusing on the notion of the artist, repeatedly choosing to portray the enclaves of civilization in Rio Grande do Sul as not merely uninspiring or limiting, but hostile to the aesthetic. The artistic impulse, with its capacity to upset the status quo, has been reduced by the community to the role of, at best, a “graceful monument to the obvious,” to borrow a phrase from George Orwell. The sense is that the space and mechanisms for the society to, on a small scale, renovate and challenge itself have nearly been all snuffed out, while, at the same time, more conservative modes of literature either come from without (e.g. Robert Luis Stevenson) or the local past is insufficient to feed them, as is the case with seu Leocádio’s epic poem in *Música ao longe*, considered later on.

Veríssimo’s representation seems to capture Whitman’s worst fears of the Gilded Age, in which society, in a sense, overpowers the artist. This is, of course, in stark contrast to

¹⁸ Samples are reproduced throughout *A liberdade de escrever, entrevistas sobre literatura e política: Érico Veríssimo*, a text organized by Maria da Glória Bordini, which also offers Lispector’s interview.

Whitman's poetic texts that announce a vast expanse leading west to California, if not all of the world, inviting artistic possibilities. In this context, there is a drive in Verissimo's work, as in Sabino's, to problematize representations of mentorship and guidance in general from the previous generation, thereby emphasizing it. After the early nurture of his aesthetically minded mother, Princeton, for Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine, offers enough of that space to eventually independently find his own way, and that space is found again in U.S. examples here. Also discussed in this chapter, Edna Ferber's *So Big* (1924) offers two archetypes for the artist as a figure that struggles in mere pockets of society rather than against a pervasive cultural landscape. Mentored by Selina DeJong, Roelf Pool does leave the microcosm of High Prairie, Illinois, to train in France, but, in the end, recognition and a flourishing artistic community await both him and Dallas O'Meara in the U.S. big city. Similarly, Eben Adams of Robert Nathan's *Portrait of Jennie*, trains in France, but it is returning home to the U.S. Northeast that he finds his muse and recognition, creating his masterpiece.

While Whitman is a master at opening up new realms of consciousness, concerned with the realization of the individual, he contextualizes this in practical terms of economic and national progress. A country in which much of the population conceptualized itself through work productivity, entrepreneurship, expansionism, and growth, saw as well, in the first half of the 20th century, the rise of the second generation of U.S. Pragmatism, influencing and partly organizing the social sphere. In this dichotomy with European tradition, a certain inutility becomes an adversity for the artist, without their own applicable cosmivision, seeking to venture beyond entertainment and amusement. What is more, it seemingly links the utility lacking in art to traditional notions of masculinity. *Portrait of Jennie* even briefly takes to task a cult of utility, making Arne Kunstler, its perpetually

misled artist, its voice-piece at one point. He tells the book's successful Adams, "Let us not fool ourselves... Beauty is only noble when it is useful. The symbol of the world today is a power plant; and if it appears ugly to us, that is only because we do not look at it in the right way" (Nathan 1397). A book like Ferber's *So Big* becomes a story of optimism in this framework, seeking to reconcile artistic endeavor with favored conceptions of utility.

Veríssimo focuses on a variation of its inverse—emphasizing the current in Brazilian culture focusing on the artist as an impracticality. The artists and those concerned with aesthetics considered here are time and again judged insufficient against economic metrics, which, in turn, are tied to notions of masculinity. The model is obviously further complicated in the context of the developing world and Brazil of the 1930s—where Veríssimo portrays art as a pipedream on disparate sides of the economic spectrum. For the working class, it may serve as escapism, but it is a fantasy distraction from putting food on the table. Those positioned higher socioeconomically prove themselves elitist purveyors of woolgathering, disconnected from the struggles of the world.

Despite the financial hardships of the 1930s, the universe conspires to reward Nathan's Adams for his unfailing commitment to his art. Yet this is, in effect, a contrast with the *ex machina* sent Sabino's Eduardo Marciano, a would-be writer who has so totally lost his way that he must be brought back into the light. Like Sabino, Veríssimo presents us with a world in which a hostile order is most often insurmountable and the distance between an original purpose and its realization is immense. The alternative to the *ex machina*, in a world without possibilities, in which commitment is corrupted or thwarted, is a (perhaps Whitmanian) re-envisioning of the world itself. In the context of *Caminhos cruzados*,

Veríssimo offers us the anti-Neorealist fantasy of Professor Roxo Clarimundo, who finds the world around him so unappetizing that he would futilely seek to imagine and invent it anew.

An Art Unable to Reproduce Itself Across Generations

Música ao longe returns to the eponymous protagonist of Veríssimo's first novel, *Clarissa* (1933), now in her hometown of Jacarecanga, in the interior of Rio Grando do Sul, where she has become a teacher. Presumably set around the time Veríssimo wrote it (1934), we see her psychologically stifled by her once rich and prestigious family, a line of generals and heroes (146). The story focuses primarily on the mental inner-workings of this single young woman, partially through her diary, as hardships for the family grow, and old familiar figures of the community pass away—both, in various senses, disappearing into the past. Her first escape from this environment is a romanticized version of a contemporary poet, who goes by the nom de plume of Paulo Madrigal. She falls in love with him as a figure she invents reading the frequently maudlin, and vaguely clunky poetry of his *Poemas escritos n'agua*. On meeting him in person, in the second half of the book, the hope that he might resemble the poet she has imagined quickly fades. Eventually her cousin, Vasco, orphan, recluse, and black sheep of the family, who comes and goes at night to the family home, supplants Madrigal, as Clarissa finally perceives her love for him in a final epiphany.

The first displaced artist of the book comes as precursor out of the past. After introducing Clarissa and her present-day family, the story (with beautiful framing) moves back to 1910, where the reader is quickly introduced to a father-son dynamic through the perspective of the patriarch Olivério Albuquerque, pillar of the community. We find him

observing and interacting with his youngest, Cristóvão, a poet with eyes reminiscent of his late wife, Henriqueta. This physical description, as it comes to us focalized through Olivério, quickly communicates how the patriarch sees his son, who, we are told later in the book, from the perspective of Tia Zezé, is, in fact, a close resemblance to his father (121). In Veríssimo's quick brush stroke, the description is both one of loving affection and judgment in which Cristóvão does not live up to Olivério's ideas of what a man should be, failing to recognize himself in the young man and frame the relationship with certain precepts of masculinity. In the brief snapshot we are given, this conception stems mainly from Cristóvão's penchant for poetry—the art that Olivério's late wife practiced and which he himself does not understand. When Cristóvão explains to his father that “sonetos” are not “modinhas,” the latter lets out a stifled laugh: “Quem havia de dizer! Um poeta na família” (33). The response from the family in the room is laughter, as an astonished Cristóvão looks down at the floor. With the help of his sister, Tia Zezé, Olivério attempts to socially repair the moment, expanding the conversation to all his sons. He looks at his wife's portrait and imagines dying soon, and, should there be a heaven, telling her how well it is going with her sons: “Riqueta, os nossos meninos estão crescidos e são homens de bem. João de Deus vai casar. O Jovino está estudando comércio. O Amâncio vai tomar conta da estância. O Cristóvão imagina, até já faz versos...” (34). The way in which Olivério trails off, forebodes much. Amâncio will wind up severely addicted to cocaine. Jovino, an unproductive alcoholic. And João de Deus will watch, primarily on the sidelines, as his family grows poorer. The tragedy which is about to befall Cristóvão is not escape through exile but escape through death, serving as metaphorical death and reckoning for the decline of the family.

Cristóvão addresses the first part of his suicide note to his father, citing the forging of the latter's signature to obtain ten *contos* as the reason for taking his own life. Yet the narrative (without ever telling us what the money was specifically for) economically jumbles this motivation up in the context of a son who cannot understand his father and a father who cannot understand and connect with Cristóvão the poet. As Olivério reflects on his son's death, he first calls sonnets "modinhas" once again (41). Yet he goes on to explain aloud that ten *contos* certainly was not worth someone killing themselves over, rightly highlighting Cristóvão's unreasonableness. In the second half of his suicide note, the inability to exist as artist is again highlighted, as Cristóvão explains to João de Deus (his brother and Clarissa's father) that he has torn up all his poetry, asking that if he has missed one, to please not publish it.

Having drowned himself, Cristóvão is found in a lake on the outskirts of town. In parallel to the voice in "A meditação sobre o Tietê" finding the nightmare of the collective conscious under the surface of the water, the character's death is closely associated with moving beyond the superficial; while Olivério comes off as decent and strong, in the glimpse we see of him, he resists profundity—failing to understand his son's poetry while perpetuating the myth that the Albuquerque once hosted Dom Pedro II in their home. The name Cristóvão resonates here as one thinks of the legend of St. Christopher carrying travelers, and the Christ child, across a river. Cultivating the vagueness of its representation, Veríssimo portrays a son that seems to have succumbed to that weight, much of that being his potential role to take the family forward, not in economic or military terms, but on an artistic level. It is precisely this thread that Clarissa seeks to find in the hierarchical collectivist microcosm of her family life.

A Landscape of Imposters

The blue cover of Paulo Madrigal's book, *Poemas escritos n'água*, (as we see it focalized through Clarissa) depicts a pensive man with fine hands tracing arabesques on the surface of a pond in a garden of white roses and cypresses. The cover of the book not only contributes to her romantic construction of him but carries with it allusions to the lost past of Cristóvão. The romantic construction is also fed by her reading the prose poetry of this imagined figure, and assuming the role of its second person addressee. She assembles a mental portrait in which Madrigal is tall, thin, pale, and handsome. The poetry, like the cover art, resides at the surface of the water, as Clarissa feeds on the book's various romantic and idealized meditations on love, such as the excerpt lending itself to the title of the novel: "O amor que ainda não se definiu é como uma melodia de desenho incerto. Deixa o coração a um tempo alegre e perturbado e tem o encanto fugidio e misterioso de uma música ao longe" (55). A deeper significance—one that might go below the surface—is provided by Clarissa, who, lacking it in the context of her sterile family life, invents it in her journal and musings, as Henriqueta and Cristóvão might have. The Paulo Madrigal that she dreams of has deep, dark eyes (55), much like those of Cristóvão (120). In an imagined conversation with him, she contemplates running away from her family which has become a force suffocating to the aesthetic: "Quero bem à minha gente, gosto desta casa, onde nasci. Mas fico triste vendo que tudo está caindo aos pedaços" (56). To this, her imagined Paulo whispers a poem in her ear about a Clarissa who is the prisoner of a castle, rescued by a knight and taken away to a better life (56).

Paulo Madrigal, as it turns out, is a failure as the best the society can offer for the role of artist, and the problems of this collective appointment are dramatically mirrored in the

breakdown of Clarissa's cherished preconception of him, though they themselves are unreasonable in their own way. When he is set to arrive to Jacarecanga, he is announced with all the pomp due a poet as celebrity visiting a small, out-of-the-way city. We slowly construct a more veracious idea of who the writer is, at odds with Clarissa's fantasy. This comes first through a piece in the local *Gazeta* and the discussions that follow, at which point Clarissa tries to make sense of the idea that her Paulo Madrigal is a traveling salesman by the name of Anfilóquio Bonfim. Her first, seemingly unconscious, acknowledgement that he may not be as she has imagined comes not in her diary, in which she consciously resists this possibility, but reflected to her in her dreams, in which an unsuppressed intuition of the truth rises to the surface. When she finally meets the poet, there is a complicated balance between the young, sheltered adult who, on the one hand, judges people physically and has given herself to fantastic expectations, and, on the other, an Anfilóquio who, after marketing himself as romantic figure at the cost of the quality of his poetry, turns out to be anything but charming.

Beyond Clarissa's attention to his weight and speech impediment, Madrigal's voice is grating, his conversation with her soporific and punctuated with an idiotic smile, all the while giving the impression of an excessive drinker. The Paulo Madrigal that seemed to understand Carrissa's inner life so well goes on about Gargarol, the throat medication he sells, and speaks on the enchantment of Jacarecanga, a town which she feels suffocated in. When he asks the band for a tango and invites her to the dance floor the illusion fully fades; it is an inversion of both the intimacy she had imagined with him and the fascinating idea—with the stories of Tia Zezé entertaining suitors present in her mind—of a beautiful, vivacious young woman who can inspire the pen of poets. On arriving home, Clarissa leafs through *Poemas*

escritos n'água again coming to terms with having lost her illusory Prince Charming, and reclaims the beauty in the book, which really emanates from her as reader; she concludes that her Paulo Madrigal will remain a prisoner forever in its pages (176).

Much like Mário toward the end of his life and Whitman on the artists of the Gilded Age in the U.S., the true artist, that is, one that is at least torchbearer and protector of the cultural mind, misunderstood at the familial and cultural levels in Veríssimo's work, is left little space to exist. One of the clear corruptors of a model that might support the role of artist is the abstract homage paid the notion of poetry, the idea of the tradition of poetry in the abstract, as cache, without corresponding appreciation and cultivation. João de Deus, disparaging the immigrant Vittorio Gamba, who now holds the mortgage of Jovino's home, vents indignantly, insisting on the prestige and clout the family once had "porque ele é um Albuquerque e os Albuquerques existiam muito antes do Rio Grande, muito antes do Brasil" (47). He continues, "Tinham nome em Portugal: guerreiros, descobridores, *poetas* e senhores de vastas terras" (47, my italics). He has watched as the space for those poets disappears, yet he will invoke the social standing they suggest.

Poetry in this context, is not art but something linked to summon standing in the past, in provincial decadence alongside certain types of industrialization late to arrive to the Latin American countryside. Paulo Madrigal/Anfilóquio Bonfim, in this sense, embodies the duality of the *gaúcho* interior. He is credited in the *Gazeta* as "um dos *poetas* notáveis da nova geração gaúcha" (160), yet he writes in a strange mixture of themes and styles from movements like the Parnassianism and Symbolism of the 19th and early 20th centuries, in a trite, easily accessible manner that pulls on the uninitiated reader's heartstrings; meanwhile, a contemporary Regionalism and the second wave of Brazilian Modernism pervades the

country's literary scene. Likewise, seu Leocádio, the so-called wisest person in Jacarecanga (“astrônomo, prestidigitador, colecionador de selos e borboletas, músico, inventor” [135]) turns out, on his passing, to have been more interested in presenting himself as the wisest person in Jacarecanga rather than becoming it. In some sense he is, in effect, a parallel to Toledo of Sabino's *O encontro marcado*: the mentor and guide of the previous generation who never found his own way. He is, as will be seen, guilty of a deception that Toledo never committed, an error far more significant on a generational level.

Always in old-fashioned attire, he insists, for years, that he is working on a colossal poem about the Emperor's visit to the town which he hopes to finish before he dies. “Vocês,” he always says, “vão ficar surpreendidos quando virem o poema. Que grandiosidade!” (160). He sums up his old-fashioned sensibility quite well as he finishes, offering a cryptic, undeveloped metaphor: “O menino não comerá o fruto da noqueira coeva” (160). On hearing from Clarissa of Madrigal's arriving to the town, he tells her “que não gostava dos poetas modernos e que só eram bons os poetas de antigamente, os que faziam sonetos” (161). As Clarissa goes through his things on his death, his books and writing, his fake telescope, she discovers the manuscript of the poem, the cover of which reads: “o imperador de jacarecanga: Poema em dez cantos, por Leocádio Santarém” (237). She expects to hear beautiful, grand moving things about her family as she opens the book. Yet it is empty but for the sentence “O imperador nunca esteve em Jacarecanga,” and, written in a corner of a page, a trite rhyme: “Acabou-se o que era doce, quem comeu regalou-se” (238). The idea that seu Leocádio merely liked the idea of being a poet rather than being a poet is fully realized in this moment. In the scheme of the book, the manuscript brings with it a variety of possible interpretations, not the least of which is the idea that the gloried past, misrepresented like

those about the visit of the Emperor, where never that gloried but rather a disseminated narrative that people tolerated.

The Unexiled Artist

Clarissa views her diary as something egregious, full of brutal honesty and thoughts that fail to conform to her family and her position in it. She likens it to her soul, and says, more than once, that it is something she must remember to destroy. One day she finds Vasco, also known as Gato-do-Mato, the rebel and disgrace of the family (211), in her room, with her diary in his hands. When he keeps it to read, as revenge one night she enters his room. There, to her disbelief, she finds a shelf full of books in various languages, including, French, English, and Italian, and is suddenly overwhelmed by the idea that the disagreeable Vasco is a secret artist—not a poet, but a painter. The first painting she sees is of a silk floss tree next to the house, which she mentions at the beginning of her diary and serves as a touchstone through much of the narrative. In bloom, she has opened her window to savor its aroma, or stopped and contemplated its singing birds. “Se eu soubesse pintar,” she writes, “eu pintaria a nossa paineira” (26). She finds a signature claiming it as the work of Vasco’s bohemian painter father, who left his wife and child early on. As she examines the canvasses, she realizes that there is a portrait of her, and that Vasco harbors the secret flame of his artist father, both of which are condemned by the family. Clarissa’s father, it turns out, tried to cure Vasco of what he saw as the vice of painting. As we will learn in Veríssimo’s later novel, *Um lugar ao sol*, this had a particularly cruel tabor, in a scenario in which a thirteen-year-old Vasco sought to kill himself.

The main seesawing feature of the character of Vasco for the reader to parse out in *Música ao longe*, is between, on the one hand, unreasonable juvenile and anti-social tendencies, and, on the other, defined in terms of innovation and self-expression amidst a truly uninviting, suffocating community in decline, emblemized by the Albuquerque clan. Vasco does not seek to hold his father accountable for his actions but harbors a desire to emulate both the good and bad in him. His father left him and his mother, after she fell for his allure as artist, and, abandoned, took her own life. Likewise, Vasco feels no restraint or compunction in stealing Clarissa's journal. He has within him, as Clarissa suggests, the drive of the cat of Rudyard Kipling's "The Cat that Walked by Himself" (1902). In this origin fable, Dog, Horse, and Cow all willingly and quickly submit themselves to subjugation for the benefits entailed in domestication. It is Cat, neither gregarious nor obedient, who draws out his resistance to living with humans, cunningly negotiating with Woman, who is the driving domesticating force of the story, a mainly sedentary and privileged domestic existence. The price is that he is occasionally tormented by Man and Dog, though free to wander, independently, outside the home. It is a model of resisting one's expected place and role by questioning social norms—in this case, the artist who negotiates an existence living, in a sense, both inside and outside of society.

Like Kipling's Cat, Vasco/Gato-do-Mato comes and goes at odd hours, hiding his art in his room.¹⁹ "On moonlit nights," Kipling tells us, as he closes the brief story, "he roams the woods or the roofs, walking by his wild lone" ("The Cat Who Walked by Himself"). Yet unlike the cat of the story, Vasco is unable to negotiate an adequate place either in the home

¹⁹ This idea is expanded at the beginning of *Um lugar ao sol* in which, as a child, Vasco escapes to the country and nature for days at a time.

or Jacarecanga—or, it seems, even Brazil of the 1930s. The impulse to walk alone grows into an impulse of exodus, the only solution for the artist is to set out. As he and Clarissa understand how much they have in common, he confides, “Isto aqui não é terra, não é vida. O mundo é largo, há muita coisa bonita pra gente ver e fazer” (227). This is a notion that Veríssimo concentrates in the symbol of the kite, and the traditional place it holds in Brazilian and *gaúcho* culture. In flashback, we are told that a young Vasco constructed a giant kite of red silk on a particularly windy day. “Vocês vão ver minha invenção,” he announces to those watching. “Uma pandorga pequena tem força, não tem? Pois uma pandorga grandumba pode ter força pra carregar a gente, não pode? Pois vocês vão ver...” (164). As might be expected, the endeavor ends in mishap shortly after he insists, “Agora vocês vão ver como eu vou voar. Digam pra vovó que eu fui fazer uma viagem na China e na Índia” (163). The kite escapes as he falls hard into rocks in a way that, as the doctor later says, could have killed him. In the present day, having broken into his room, Clarissa finds a painting of a boy looking up at a red kite in the sky. Veríssimo’s ambiguity between frustrated juvenile impulse and the liberty of artistic expression continues in the one-word title of the painting: *Inveja*. As Veríssimo’s series continues, Vasco continues his craft with limited artistic success in the Porto Alegre of *Um lugar ao sol*. Yet at the end of *Saga* (which Veríssimo disliked and called false [Aguiar 4]), after fighting in the Spanish Civil War, Vasco withdraws to the pastoral with Clarissa two hours outside of Porto Alegre, happily distant from the world and an inchoate World War II, enjoying relative bucolic seclusion and focusing, we are told only briefly, on his books and painting.

Emeralds and Wheat: Imagining a Space for the Artist in a Land of Utility

Despite the Roosevelt administration pushing for the importation of Latin authors, there was some delay in translating Veríssimo into English for the first time. The concern was that he lacked the very thing Machado de Assis argued against some 70 years earlier in “Instinto de nacionalidade”: a showcasing and prioritization of local color. The universality of Veríssimo’s approach to writing in this regard, coupled with his intense relationship with U.S. and Anglophone literature in general, may have deprived his work of an exotic appeal for the mid-20th century U.S. reader, but it elicited comparisons to contemporaries and predecessors in the U.S. Among these, Edna Ferber (Cándida Smith 157), who had published her breakout novel, *So Big* (1924), twelve years earlier, subsequently winning the Pulitzer Prize. By the time Veríssimo crossed the U.S. by train in 1943, Ferber’s novel had already spawned the second of what would be three Hollywood adaptations, including one before U.S. cinema moved into sound.

So Big is a novel whose structure often seems to baffle readers without impeding its enjoyment, and Ferber herself, on submitting the manuscript to her publisher seems to have her own apprehensions. “I feel very strongly that I should not publish it as a novel,” she writes to Russell Doubleday, on submitting the manuscript. “I think its publication as a book would hurt you, as publishers, and me as an author. No one would read it. It is the story of a middle-aged woman in a Chicago truck garden. Nothing happens” (280). Yet the book, according to Ferber’s own account, deeply moved those at Doubleday, and, subsequently, skyrocketed as a bestseller.

If Veríssimo's Clarissa is fearful even of expressing her true thoughts in her journal, while maintaining familial devotion, clinging to fantasies of the Albuquerque family of the past and her image of Paulo Madrigal, Ferber's first protagonist, Selina DeJong (née Peake), the aforementioned "middle-aged woman in a Chicago truck garden," offers something of an anthesis—a figure, with a "misleadingly delicate face" (17), who quickly casts away illusions and breaks with norms both to survive and speak her mind. She grows up, shaped by enraptured visits to the theater, which nurture a sense and appreciation for beauty that follows her into adulthood. Though she has proclaimed that she will be a novelist, and even, at one point, a new Jane Austen, the sudden death of her gambler father immediately sets her face-to-face with survival, as, out of practicality, she becomes determined to find a teaching position.

Yet it turns out that a person with such a profile, denied the opportunity to become an artist, can play a critical role in the preservation of the *feu sacré*. She finds herself in High Prairie, at the time, a Dutch farming settlement to the south of the city, where, while learning how to be part of the community, she speaks her mind and refuses to fully conform. There she teaches the son of the family she initially stays with, Roelf Pool, to cultivate his appreciation of the beautiful and helps open the world of art to him. She gives up teaching after only a year to marry Pervus DeJong and acclimates to the life of a truck farmer. With her husband's untimely passing, she takes control of the farm, is able to redesign it, improve its crop, and rises to become a sought-after supplier in the city.

Roelf heads to France, fights in the war, and pursues a career as a sculptor. Meanwhile, Selina's success, and her connections in Chicago, allow her to provide her son Dirk (nicknamed "So Big" as a baby) with an education. The book shifts in focus to this next

generation. Here, in contrast to *Música ao longe*, in which the artistic impulse is extinguished, the parental generation, itself denied the artistic element, seeks to exercise influence, cultivating it in the coming generation should it be there. Selina largely encourages her son to move away from farming to pursue a life and career of self-expression. He begins university with a focus on architecture, though feels frustrated when he moves into it as a career. At this point, he is rejected by Paula Arnold, the woman he is interested in, who explains that she needs someone with more money. Disillusioned with the distant and, perhaps, improbable prospect of one day creating a great building, Dirk then goes into bonds (groomed by a married Paula), a field which proves far more lucrative. Some years in, he meets and falls for a commercial artist that he contracts for his company. This is the charming and self-assured artist Dallas O'Meara—a touch rebel, a touch bohemian, but someone exuding vivacity, insistent on breaking with broad-spread expectations to live the life she wants. She rejects Dirk romantically, but she meets and adores his mother, as well as Roelf, who returns at the end of the novel, a celebrated sculptor, to visit the DeJong farm. The close of the novel is a kind of epiphany, in which Dirk returns alone to his Chicago apartment, regretting what he has done with his life.

Rather than following merely Selina or Dirk individually, rather than end on a pivotal moment such as marriage or death, the book becomes something of a thesis novel, centered on the idea that the driven and determined Selina and the story's artists—Dallas and Roelf, in particular—are kindred spirits in the same purpose-laden ecosystem, thereby reconciling individualistic artists to the collective. Each side, Ferber seems to argue—one, the hard driven go-getter of the struggling masses and, the other, the aesthete—is a side of the same coin. This is so much so that they have an immediate affinity, as her novel closes with a quiet

festival of mutual appreciation between the two on the DeJong Farm. It is a wonderfully attractive thesis in the context of the Roaring Twenties and the Lost Generation. Dirk, by choosing a life of finance, and a bond industry that grew alongside a quickly multiplying stock market, becomes a condemnation of an extreme and the greed-led economic crash to come in a few years. As his mother says, when he tries to defend his bond career choice as an exciting one, “What nonsense, Dirk. It’s like selling seats at the box office of a theatre for the play inside” (286). Dallas begins to explain why she is not interested in him near the end of the book. “I’d rather,” she says, “plan one back door of a building that’s going to help make this town beautiful and significant than sell all the bonds that ever floated a—whatever it is that bonds are supposed to float” (335).

Ferber’s thesis is also ambitious in that it engages with a representation of the cross-section of the U.S. that it does: a Midwest in large part defined by utilitarianism and the agricultural struggle of the individual land-owning farmer. She frames this idea in something Selina’s father says to her as a child: “There are only two kinds of people in the world that really count. One kind’s wheat and the other kind’s emeralds” (10-11). We are then told that famed stage actress Fanny Davenport is an emerald and the industrious August Hempel, who builds an empire on raising hogs and selling pork, is wheat. What follows in the novel indirectly expands on this idea. Selina, around the age of nineteen, arrives to High Praire in the wagon of Klaas Pool, who will host her. The conversation, largely impeded by his practical sensibilities and limited English, gives way to Selina’s exuberance at seeing the rows of cabbage, stretched out across the fields, as the narrative tells us, “mile after mile... jade green against the Earth” (23). He is at first confused by her initial reaction gazing out across the fields. “Oh, Mr. Pool!” she exclaims. “How beautiful it is here!” He asks,

“Beautiful? ...What is beautiful?” (24). She explains, “This! The—the cabbages” (25). It is a notion that is met with mockery by the immigrant farmer. Yet, as the story progresses, Ferber supplants Klaas’s view with its own version of the idealized symbiosis of the two. In it—as both she and Roelf (an *emerald*) observe at the end of the book—she has wound up by lot, *wheat*, though as her black sheep father suggested, viewing the game of life from without, she appreciates the emeralds and the role each has to play.

It is worth noting that the novel’s prime examples of *wheat* are not merely expressive and thrive in static roles but exhibit traits that large swaths of the U.S. at the time might deem ideals, including innovation and entrepreneurship. That said, this idea of an expanding, agricultural society at its best in a schematic of *emerald* and *wheat* recognizing their counterpart in the other hints at a Marx-inspired approach to socioeconomic structures, largely contextualized and embedded in a cross-section of the land-owning Midwest. There is, budding up from under the surface in the novel, the (perhaps Whitmanesque) notion that mode of production becomes a kind of self-expression and that the artist, despite frequent relegation to an inferiority by a complex of U.S. pragmatism and capitalistic goals, is paired here with the laborer. This marriage is perhaps best expressed in the subject matter that Dallas O’Mara seeks out in her painting. “That’s what I mean when I say I want to do portraits,” she explains to Dirk’s surprise. “Not portraits of ladies with a string of pearls and one lily hand half hidden in the folds of a stain skirt. I mean character portraits of men and women who are really distinguished looking—distinguishedly American, for example—like your mother” (356). This is not the only point at which the book puts excessive faith in physiognomy, but painting Selina—which Dallas arranges at the story’s end—as

representative of a certain U.S. ideal solidifies this relationship of *wheat* and *emerald* symbiosis.

It is an inspiring idea as a counterpoint to a booming U.S. beginning to enter into a financial craze, as well as a formula prescient of Social Realist trends to come in the next few years. Yet, where the thesis feels most forced and patently moralizing is in the figure of Dirk and the novel's ironic moniker for him: *So Big*. In the end, he is not a figure with a promising eye for beauty. Nor is he someone who harbors enough passion to regret pursuing the architectural career for a spectrum of outcomes from envisioning great buildings to realizing the most mundane of designs. It seems then that there is a heavy load created by this thesis shaped around mode of production. In it, Dirk, seen in the worst light, has a kind of parasitic existence, and, at best, becomes the effete figure of a pointless trajectory—a trajectory that had often been assigned the artist in the U.S. context. The paradigm condemns Dirk, the financier, to the notion, as he says to himself again and again, on the final visit to the farm, “You’re nothing but a rubber stamp, Dirk DeJong” (358). Or, as we see it as a cultural value expressed in sexual selection, Dallas seems to wish he had pursued architecture with a fever as if it were a kind of dream or remained a variation on the farmer life that he always, partly, regretted leaving behind. She rejects him for this lack of fight: “If you want to know, I like ‘em with their scars on them. There’s something about a man who has fought for it” (347). It is both an empowering notion, taken in the niche of the story, and yet, in a larger view, simplistically Romantic.

The novel then needs, to some degree, two lead characters to ensure that its thesis can play out multi-generationally, much in the way Veríssimo explores themes and character tendencies across generations. Does Ferber's emerald-wheat paradigm, despite its seemingly

untethered idealism, function if the sensible, intuitive reader places qualifications on it? Is it meant to exist at a certain core of the society or, in actuality, as a never-met ideal? Or does she see it as something of the future, in the broadening possibilities of the country and the growth of the 20th-century? Even if it is better described as a shortcoming of a novel whose popularity, in large part, has disappeared into the past, it expresses a tremendous optimism—an optimism in which the artist is as essential as the entrepreneurial laborer and rises up out of harsh, survivalist conditions of the countryside. *Música ao longe* expresses, in many ways, the inverse. Roelf and Dallas quickly take control of their lives and the distance, and struggle from a choice of course to destination seems so short and effortless that it weakens some of the book's larger conclusions. Meanwhile, Vasco's kite is a complex metaphor for the difficulty of realizing the dream. He knows that leaving is the answer, but escaping is a less than simple proposition, and even that, we later learn, may hold little hope. What prospects exist are in a climate of pervasive pessimism that leave him, at the end of *Música ao longe*, working at the bread factory of Gamba, who is, in effect, a family enemy.

It Avails Not, Time nor Place

In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Whitman writes, "It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not, / I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence" (136). The capacity of the artist as empowered shaman-prophet, the violator of temporal norms, with a capacity to traverse times or even reconcile those at odds, seen here in Whitman, shifts from a communal role to the elevation of the artist as lone individual in Robert Nathan's *Portrait of Jennie*. Immensely popular at the time, the novella

echoes a conception of the artist similar to that explored with Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine. Though, perhaps less self-congratulating, Nathan's protagonist, Eben Adams, is positioned as enlightened outsider of society, and as such a kind of beneficiary of cosmic countenance. Of Midwestern and New English roots, he has studied his art in France, and now, some time before the U.S. entrance into World War II—in the 1930s of the Great Depression—he struggles as a painter living in New York, focusing on landscapes as he tries to make rent and feed himself. When he has hit rock bottom, without money, friends, or food, when the courage to continue as painter has all but faded, his muse reaches out to him. Alone like a kind of *flaneur* in Central Park, in a winter's mist, he meets an anachronistic little girl playing by herself on the Mall: Jennie Appleton.

Encouraged by the local gallery, Eben begins to paint portraits of Jennie as she comes to visit him sporadically over the next few months—each time disappearing and returning significantly older. As Henry Matthews of the gallery sees the results, he is taken with her as a figure out of time. She is, at first, a subject that is “old-fashioned” (528) and, later, one that is “timeless” and “eternal” (470). He sees in her a feminine quality he imagines lost in the present day, something captured in the portraits of Leonardo Da Vinci and John Singer Sargent. Jennie continues to visit, as a flat, representational character, revealing, indirectly, how years are passing for her as weeks pass for Eben. As she grows into a young woman, their dynamic becomes romantic, and Eben paints his masterpiece of Jennie—*Girl in a Black Dress*—which sells for thousands and finds a place in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With the money he makes on this final portrait, Eben heads to the Truro area on Cape Cod with the previously mentioned friend and unsuccessful painter Arne Kunstler. During an Atlantic storm toward the book's end, Jennie, who up to this point still seems somewhat specter-like,

appears—perhaps more corporeal—as a passenger swept off a cruise ship. She has ostensibly caught up to Eben temporally, as he comes to her aid on shore. With the two finally meeting, in sync, Jennie dies in his arms.

The novella is dull in terms of interpersonal psychology. Eben cuts a deal with a restaurant owner to paint a mural for food, he negotiates with Matthews and Miss Spinney at the gallery, he briefly argues with his landlord (Mrs. Jekes), and seems to take something of a liking to the taxi driver Gus Mayer. While all of this remains fairly superficial, his more protracted interactions with Jennie are even less complex, in which she is most characterized by her drive to simply be with him and approve of his work. If the reader is to take their relationship literally, as one between two people, it is rife with problems. In effect, he becomes romantically involved with a woman that he knew as a little girl a few months ago. She appears only briefly now and then—to cook, to clean, to suggest that she is temporally trying to catch up with him, and for a penultimate visit, in which it seems the plan is for her to spend the night. When she does appear washed ashore, in the last minutes of her life, with her last breathes, she prioritizes the utterance, “We’re together, now” (1568).

Yet the story is intriguing taken as allegory and as a commentary on art. One of its strengths is the way in which its first-person narrative cultivates a subjective, unreal air. Subjectivity in the novella is taken to the verge of solipsism while maintaining a realist mode. The approach here is not the overt, even pleasant, disassociation of the daydreamer—generally useless in the context of practical norms. Nor is it the possibly mad, uneasy, and uncertain solipsism of something like the Fantastic or various Edgar Alan Poe’s stories. In Nathan’s work it is, instead, empowering to the protagonist, and the absence of substantial interpersonal interaction and the way in which Eben conceals detail in the shifts from scene

to scene somehow seem the trick of the painter. In the end, the title of the book is quite apropos; it is, indeed, a *portrait*. It is by losing himself in his thoughts, through solitude, that Eben reaches a kind of personal transcendence that violates time and space, in which he becomes the center of the cosmos, or his art manages to reflect the order of the universe. Once again, as in Ferber's novel, the development of craft is taken for granted. As with Roelf Pool, there is merely an allusion to training in France, and the rest, if it takes effort, is not mentioned. In Nathan's schematic, to be the starving artist is not to be damned, it is to reach a state of self-realization that finally opens one up to the muse.

A Music of the Spheres

Huxley's roman à clef, *Point Counter Point*, presents a variety of fictionalized stand-ins for London artists (of the 1920s) who obtained both commercial and critical success—among them painters, as well as writers such as Lawrence, Mansfield, and Huxley himself. The book is modeled on notions of a musical composition, with its counterpoint and harmony, each of its characters, playing their own parts, often through their thoughts—building on an already existing Modernist trend to emulate music, inspired by thinkers like Water Pater and those before. Early in the novel, Lord Edward Tantamount reflecting on the Claude Bernard's work, considers the living being as ““member of the universal concert of things”” (40). The aim, in more literary terms, is an interweaving of individual points of view and plots. *Caminhos cruzados* is, at a fundamental level, structured in much the same way, with Porto Alegre substituted for what is principally London, and the 1930s substituted for the 1920s, with rich, varied, and concise glances into the interior processes of its characters

facilitated by Veríssimo's expert interlinking of internal experiences. Veríssimo's book has a singular symphonic result as we jump from character to character in a five-day period in May.

This effects more of a portrait of the community at large, as if it were almost a kind of collective conscious—and, indeed, some shared dream is suggested in how the third person narrative opens to a city sleeping in the early dawn. From the Coronel José Maria Pedrosa, recently arrived to Porto Alegre with his family after winning the lottery, to Maximiliano nearing his death, consumed by tuberculosis, to the self-serving charitable acts of the seemingly pious Dona Doralice Leitão Leiria, the narrative draws on dozens of invented personalities from the poorer Travessa das Acácias to the wealthier Moinhos de Vento. While there are parties and community events, there is no unification through, say, a grand event that would pull everyone into its scope. Instead, character arcs vaguely synchronize, giving the impression of a collective as protagonist. *Caminhos cruzados* shares with Huxley and Lawrence's work an unflinching exploration of sexuality under a social veneer, as well as a broad-minded examination of religion and pious facades. It is, in short, a book that would land Veríssimo in trouble in the Brazil of the time,²⁰ and his criticisms of socio-economic struggles and allusions to communism (amidst the Brazilian Neorealist wave), would eventually require his explicit clarification that he was, indeed, not a communist, face-to-face with the local chief of police (Veríssimo *Solo* 273-5).

²⁰ Bordini outlines the public reaction to the novel (alongside the critical) explaining how the Church and political leaders spearheaded accusations of “imoralidade, atentado aos bons costumes cristãos e materialismo comunista” (23). She points out that William Du Bois at *The New Times Book Review* thought previous comparisons to Theodore Dreiser were unfair to Veríssimo (25). Likewise, Bordini cites Bertram Wolfe's observation writing for the New York Herald Tribune Books that Aldous Huxley had much to learn from Veríssimo. Her compelling thesis is that New Criticism, which had not yet had its influence on Brazil, freed up the possibility to appreciate Veríssimo's novel aesthetically (26).

The motif of the artistic continues in Veríssimo's novel. If Huxley's book is populated with significant artists, socialites, and politicians that hail from socioeconomic privilege, *Caminhos cruzados* is full of practical aesthetes of more modest resources that are reminiscent of *So Big*, as well as would-be artists that, unlike Roelf Pool and Dallas O'Meara, find the distance from commitment to execution challenging—a challenge that proves them ineffectual. The first of these characters is Clarimundo Roxo, intellectual and professor, as well as 48-year-old bachelor and, in many ways misanthrope. He is the first developed character that we meet in the novel's opening, asleep in his modest home. And he will be the last character whose thoughts we visit in the book, as he begins to write, in the same place, what he imagines as his magnum opus. He is, in effect, one of the narrative devices that links together the community as he moves about town to visit his pupils. When we first see him, even unconscious, he battles to reconcile his relationship to time; he is shortly after described as “o escravo fiel das horas” (23). There, fast asleep, he is trying in vain to synchronize his sleep to the ticking of his alarm clock (20). The narrative then enters his dreams, where he is lost amongst grand expanses, and, amidst other occurrences, walks arm-in-arm with Albert Einstein, attempting, without success, to explain the Theory of Relativity to its originator as the physicist morphs into Fiorello, an immigrant shoemaker who works nearby. As the alarm rings, the narrative continues: “O milagre acontece: o infinito é devorado pelo finito: o mundo ilimitado do sonho desaparece dentro do mundinho de quatro paredes que o despertador enche com sua voz metálica” (22). Here, Veríssimo uses the colon (*dois pontos*), infrequent in his writing, to create a kind of Russian doll effect—an abrupt transition between autonomous layers. This moment not only sets up the showcasing of interior life that will pervade the book, but quickly establishes a conflict within the

professor to battle time, to resist and indirectly express his satisfaction with the unrecognized and sterile life that he leads.

He most fully expresses this with his hope of writing his own variation of a Theory of Relativity—that is, a treatise that will create a cosmovision reconciling the various aspects of his universe. Somewhat paradoxically, his obsession with time—both in the quotidian of his own life and in his resulting interest in Einstein’s work—seems best described as an impulse of control. In, for example, methodically scheduling and reviewing the classes of the day first thing on waking, he is seeking control, with time as the key to conquering his universe, though, in effect, rendering himself a kind of slave. In those first moments of the aforementioned dreams, he hears the alarm clock sound and unconsciously interprets it as the “tão falada música das esferas...” (22).

The character that Veríssimo has created here is wonderfully complex in that he is not incompetent or a fraud like *Música ao longe*’s Leocádio but lost to pedantry. Irritated by the mundane reality and people around him, he insists on an inorganic verticality. He reads Einstein’s work in German, considers time in French, and seems entirely competent teaching Latin and Portuguese, but he shuns the human-to-human connection and equality that language skills and intelligence might facilitate. He focuses on the grammar of language over communication, humiliating one of his students in front of the class (99-100). He insists on explaining the Theory of Relativity to Fiorello, who despite his inability to grasp the secrets of mathematics, lives with a “plenitude animal que deixa o professor um tanto perturbado” (55). Ignoring social convention or consideration, Clarimundo humiliates a waiter—who is eagerly expecting a tip— by giving a brief, uncontextualized discourse on gravity (119). The hope it seems, in these events, is to position himself at the center of his universe, at the center

of its hierarchy, by insisting on the importance of his knowledge, rather than learning how to interact within social norms and on more equitable terms. As his name seems to vaguely suggest, he wishes for his clarifying vision of the world to reinvent it.

In the end, on a larger scale, Clarimundo entertains the illusion of relying on science but, in reality, is an artist misconceived. The first hint that this is a personal, subjective endeavor comes when he sits down to read Einstein. The narrative tells us, “O espírito do professor monta na vassoura mágica e vai fazer uma excursão pelo país das maravilhas” (24). What could otherwise be a metaphor representing primarily enthusiasm takes on clearer flavor when he describes the initial notions of the great work he will write: *O observador de Sírio*. At its core a variation on the familiar trope of thought experiments, it involves a man from Sirius—perhaps, it might be inferred, a planet near Sirius—observing Earth with a magical telescope. Yet it becomes clear that rather than a vehicle for a consideration in the realms of philosophy, astrophysics, or sociology, the Observer from Sirius is, in fact, a literary device masquerading as a unifying theory. The professor revels in the idea of the book’s first printing and potential readership though we see he is not quite sure what the book is about as the narrative follows his thoughts: “Naturalmente o seu Homem de Sírio há de fazer revelações assombrosas. Ele mesmo agora não sabe com clareza que revelações possam ser... tem apenas uma vaga ideia” (56). It becomes clear that he does not, in imitation, want to write a theory of the universe, but a theory of his universe, in which, he tells us later, science and fantasy will mix (306). He explains to Fiorello what his man from Sirius might consider: “Essas histórias todas de Mussolini, de crise econômica, de comunismo, tudo isso vai aparecer sob um aspecto novo... O *meu* homem de Sírio fará revelações sensacionais...” (196, my italics).

Portrait of Jennie is a celebration of the idea that art is a transcendental act that harbors the potential to overcome space and time. This, Nathan seems to suggest, is a beauty not fixed on one generation but possessing a kind of timelessness. Despite the different sensibilities of the two texts, his artist, Eben Adams, by extension, possesses an immense power very similar to the one which Clarimundo seems to covet. Parallel to the subjective haze of Nathan's narrative, Veríssimo's professor loses himself in daydreams that reject, for him, the unessential of the ordinary world. Fitting into the larger pattern of Clarimundo's withdrawal from ordinary social interaction, he daydreams at one point, preferring to imagine his book rather than listen to his landlord, the Widow Mendonça as she discusses a drama within the community. "Essas coisas triviais da vida," the narrative tells us through his perspective, "não têm para ele existência real" (109).

Clarimundo's (seemingly unintentional) fundamental error seems to be that of supplanting the role of art with that of science, a familiar trope given the Positivist history of Brazil, with its proclivity toward ignoring individual psychology. When the professor finally writes the preface to his book and has the last word in the multifarious narrative of *Caminhos cruzados*, his focus is on literature. Speaking of Travessa das Acácias, he writes, "Nenhum acontecimento romântico quebra a calma desta rua e de seus habitantes. Onde os dramas de que falam os romancistas? Onde as angústias que cantam os poetas?" (306). It is a delicious example of dramatic irony to close the book. The reader has just traversed some 300 pages, chock-full of not just elaborate interconnected psychodrama, but elicit secrets, events, and life-changing developments, below the calm surface of five days ostensibly taken at random from the city's life. That is, what Clarimundo hopes to accomplish through his withdrawal and the distant eye of his man from Sirius is readily available as the novel refines

ways of delving into individual psychology and how it might be considered as a kind of collective concert—not entirely different from the one that Huxley’s Lord Tantamount proposes. As Clarimundo finishes his preface, he finds the water for the coffee on the stove long since boiling. He has lost track of time.

All Art is Quite Useless

At stake for the young would-be writer, Noel—son of Virginia Madeira and her husband Honorato Madeira, a local businessman—is a sense of utility in art. When we first meet the character, he is staring out at a sunny morning in Ventos de Moinho, recalling the late Tia Angélica, the woman caretaker who was an authority figure for him. As the book progresses, we find out that she was more so than his mother who, in effect, was often overridden by the nanny in deciding how to raise him. Both kind and tyrannical, Angélica, despite Virgínia’s wishes, raised him, the narrative tells us, “dentro do reino da fantasia, com mimos, doces e contos de fadas” (27). Her bedtime stories included “Hansel and Gretel,” (the “João e Maria” title suggests Lobato’s translation), “Puss in Boots,” and what seem to be other variations on further stories collected by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Alongside these was the story of Pinitim, who one São João hides in a large balloon and floats up to the moon. There he discovers it is made of sugar and populated with man-beasts who speak a language incomprehensible to him. Pinitim shortly discovers that he is hungry. He gets skinnier and skinnier until he becomes so small that a beast comes along and eats him. Yet in a tired trope, he wakes up; it was all a dream, and all consequences are negated.

One day, shortly after an awkward induction into sexual activeness with a prostitute, Noel rereads his collection of Grimm stories and celebrates them for the escapism they offer—as he sees it, a happier world free of the complications of sex and women, one that never evolves (28-9). Yet, as a young adult, he seems to revile this quality in himself. Why, he asks himself, eating at the table with his father, can he not be a simple man, one given to worldly appetites: “Por que esse medo da vida, essa distância dos homens, esse apego aos livros, ao irreal, ao imaginado?” (29). Likewise, he retreats into the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1927). Building on a figure who so wholeheartedly embraced the idea of reclusion, his is enamored with his idea of an often sick, woman artist, who he thinks of as a “fada” and “anjo” (149). Like Clarissa with Paulo Madrigal in *Música ao longe*, he carries on an intimate conversation with her in his head, in which “Katie” speaks to him in English.

The woman he falls in with in life, instead, is the imminently practical, assertive Fernanda of his childhood. From Travessa das Acácias, she plays the role of confidant and, even, in a sense, a type of older sister to his listless young man—a counterpoint to his disassociated way of seeing the world. Working for a living, her mettle is perhaps best shown, standing up to her boss, Teotônio, as he fires her without cause to accommodate a nepotistic hire, alleging (out of the blue) that she is a communist. As far as the roles of storytelling and literature, the contrast between Noel and Fernanda is perhaps best characterized in an early moment of their trip to Ipanema as young adults. Taking in the scenery, Noel says, “Parece um céu de sonho, de contos de fadas.” To which Fernanda smiles and answers, “E no entanto é um céu de verdade...” (146). She will not reject an approach to art as escapism, she, in fact approves of the idea of reading such literature after coming home

from work. Yet she reminds him, in a phrase, that it is at the same time the physical sky, that of the physical world of real consequences.

The journey from conception and conviction to valuable result that is glossed over in both Ferber and Nathan proves one fraught with frustration for Noel. Noel's efforts to become a writer render escapist, fantastic results, as he is lost, like Clarimundo, in the act of reconciling the limits of reality with seemingly infinite interior life. Even as he turns to autobiography, hoping that it might free him of his demons, he winds up with continual failure. "O que vai para o papel," we are told, "é uma história sem força, sem carne, sem sangue, é como que um conto de fadas de outro conto de fadas, uma mentira de outra mentira" (151). The solution that Fernanda offers is for him to look at the dramas that abound around him under the façade of society—and, in this sense, much like the novel itself in which she is a character. Among other characters of Veríssimo's narrative, she points to João Benévolo, who, with a wife and child, has lost his job. She suggests beginning a story from the idea of someone suffering from hunger, much in the way João does throughout the chapters of Veríssimo's book. Fernanda, in a sense, may be the character closest to the suggestion of a diegetic narrator in *Caminhos cruzados*, as various people seem unable to realize themselves as not just writers but imaginative aesthetes in an unaccommodating, tough world. Here, Teotônio's subsequent accusation that she is a communist, suggests that any literature which attempts to address the current social situation and how individuals fare in it, has the radical agenda of socially-engaged, revolutionary literature. As part of the complexity of the character, she, herself, will read an escapist novel later in the book and admire it for what it is.

It is slowly that Noel's reveries turn to an idealized notion of Fernanda as a figure that empowers him. He acknowledges that she was right, that in the end, "é preciso dar um passo na direção da vida, dos homens" (151). He imagines her in the room as he writes again, in a way, channeling her spirit. It is in thinking on the misery of his protagonist, José Pedro, that Noel believes he has left behind the autobiographical and the realm of fairy tales. Yet as Fernanda points out, it is difficult for someone who has experienced little misery to imagine it well. The experience of Noel's invented hero does mirror, in a demented way, the strange, horrible withdrawal João Benévolo will give into later in the book, as he and his family go hungry, and he finds increasing comfort in his daydreams that echo adventure tales. "A miséria de sua casa era uma miséria dourada," writes Noel to begin his novel. "Ele esquecia a mulher, os filhos e a falta de emprego e começava a recordar a infância com os seus mistérios e os seus contos de fada..." (204). Through Noel we are presented with a dysfunctional version of Ferber's emerald and wheat paradigm. What is assumed in *So Big* is a drive, the notion that Dallas O'Meara would want to paint the weathered face of Selina, toughened by all her enterprising on the farm. Veríssimo presents us with problems that may come with both privilege and impoverishment in a Brazilian context, in which Travessa das Acácias and Moinhos de Vento are insular worlds. Fernanda surprises Noel with a candid critique on his portrait of hunger, beginning, "Provavelmente escreveste depois dum almoço bem farto..." (205). While she has little hope that he will have the audacity to rebel against his parents, who would undoubtedly disapprove of the match, and propose to her, she tells him he has made the right decision to take his father's offer to become a partner in the family business—to attempt, as he himself frames it, to become fully human. "Pinitim," she says, "precisa convencer-se de que na Lua só há montanhas geladas... Ora, olhando o mundo com os olhos

humanos, estarás em condições de descobrir a beleza de certas paisagens que eu te quero mostrar” (206). It is then by giving up his full dedication to art that he finds some salvation as a person, and he decides to embark on a move toward responsibility and marry Fernanda. What salvation he finds, then, is in fleeing his own art, eventually working at a newspaper in Veríssimo’s *Um lugar ao sol*, with Fernanda motivating him to write a novel, yet heavily editing, guiding him, and organizing its publication. This results in a novel titled *Um lugar ao sol* that is more hers than his, complicating the artist as individual figure in an unwelcoming society and undermining an idealization of their role that might otherwise apply to Noel.

Cowboys on the Moon

Ten years after the romantic João, of *Caminhos cruzados*, beat out the more practically minded Ponciano for the hand of Laurentina, winning her over with the pieces he would write for dailies, this daydreamer has proven himself a ne’er-do-well who cannot provide for his wife or child. He is a figure haunted by hunger and the inability to provide but, as previously mentioned, in many ways unmotivated to take practical steps aimed at survival. Instead of turning to utility, he spends the last of money lent the family on an impulse buy of *Treasure Island* (1883).²¹ While João imagines himself in far-off locales, Napoleão, affectionately known as Poleãozinho, repeatedly imagines a revolver-wielding

²¹ What seems to be an error here speaks to Veríssimo’s strength and comfort in the Anglophone literary traditions, as well as how much of himself he may have put into the character of João Benévolo. It is difficult to find a translation of *Treasure Island* into Portuguese predating Álvaro Eston’s *A ilha do tesouro* in 1933. There is little indication or likelihood that João Benévolo has a background in English, or that he attended something similar to a school run by U.S. expatriates, as Veríssimo did, yet he fondly recalls reading the book in his high school years—in what would be the early 1920s.

Tom Mix. João, along with Noel, best epitomizes a motif that runs through the novel of adventure and fantasy literature as impractical in a Brazil in which one must struggle to survive—particularly in its Travessa das Acácias. The theme conjures up, in part, adults, and, in this novel, men, in particular, who will not grow up and attempt to assume responsibility within the society. His main effort to find work involves going back to Teotônio’s office, where he was fired, to ask for a letter of introduction at another company—something Teotônio readily agrees to in the moment, but fakes, leaving João high and dry. As the hunger begins to increase, we find João first escaping in his dreams, for example, while in the France of *The Three Musketeers* (1844), his stomach growls: “É um protesto que quer dizer: ‘Estou com fome’. João Benévolo volta à realidade. O sonho se apaga” (128).

These dreams shift to daydreams, as, toward the end of the book, he sets out on something of a dissociative fugue, trying to get away from Travessa das Acácias. His impulse, on this last day, is to seek out beauty, which he hopes to find on the piers and by the river. His hunger, with his crying child and wife at home, is, of course, not the liberation that Noel imagines. It is a sorrowful escapism to read, in which, contemplating the wealth around him, and restaurants that throw out food, he wonders at his lot in life. The narrative effects a poignant mixture of, on the one hand, someone who would not commit to protect his family, and, on the other, a likeable character who is also a victim of an unfair and often unbeatable system. On the final day of the book, the last we see of João, he recently returns, having collapsed of hunger on his sojourn, and seems doomed to accept charity from Ponciano once again. Even if the family does find food, what will be the fate of Poleãozinho? What promise is there for him in this society where the world of fantasy and adventure, and the would-be artist, cannot seem to reconcile the two? The child stares up at the moon over Travessa das

Acácias: “A Lua! Se a gente pudesse voar como um passarinho e ir para a Lua? Que será tem na Lua? Gelo? Água? Queijo?” It must certainly not be the fare of traditional bedtime tales, but, Poleãozinho decides, Tom Mix.

The melancholy, and perhaps hopelessness, of this construct echoes Lobato’s own hopes for such a space of reflection and imagination, as, in *Mundo da lua* (1923), part of himself (couched as a best friend) decides to leave for Mars one day. “Tinha um amigo na Terra, tu” says Hélio, his friend, “mas vejo-te mudado, cheio de ideias práticas, de olhos ferrados na vitória. Isso fatalmente nos separará no correr do tempo. Ora, se tem de ser assim amanhã, precipitemos os acontecimentos: seja hoje. Adeus!” (3). The book goes on to address that space by now and then tangentially contemplating life on the moon. Yet this moment with Poleãozinho may best get after Lobato’s vision of Hollywood cinema.

In Lobato’s *A onda verde* (1921) one sees both the ideas of manhood and notions of individualism that Veríssimo complicates, exploring them in his novels:

Tom Mix, William Hart, Eddie Polo, Antonio Moreno e outros maravilhosos cowboys povoam hoje os cérebros infantis, impregnando-os fortemente num ideal novo.

Porque o cinema americano renova, ressurge a cavalaria andante, dá-lhe formas atuais, lógicas e modernas, conservando-lhe, porém, o espírito.

...Jeca Tatu aprenderá [nesta escola] a perdoar com generosidade o erro dos fracos e a punir com dureza o crime dos fortes. E aprenderá ainda a mover-se, a correr, a nadar, a ser homem com H maiúsculo em todas as situações da vida. (21)

At the beginning of that train ride in 1943 (described in *A Volta do gato preto*) in which Veríssimo will see the ghost of Tom Mix, the family sets out from Miami. Veríssimo takes in the cityscape, the sea with its ships, and the night sky. He is now an author translated and published in the U.S. and Anglophone landscape, one of many cultural artifacts dear to his youth, which have contributed to his literary sensibilities and been central in his trajectory as a translator. As the train exits the city, one could say he ponders the moon in much the same way Philip Quarles of *Point Counter Point*, Huxley's possible alter ego, does in India, on the eve of the journey home to England. It reminds Quarles, at the same time that it reminds his wife, to whom he now feels distant, of the moon of their early romance in Hertfordshire years ago.

Veríssimo's own reverie expands to Whitmanian dimensions, as he reflects back on seeing the moon as a teenager in a small city in Brazil, presumably Cruz Alta, dreaming of far-off journeys. As a teen, he said to himself that this is the same moon that shines on all humankind across the world, over San Francisco, Paris, and Shanghai. It is a moon of all human history, the moon of Cleopatra, Socrates, Christ, and Napoleon (668). It is, in addition, as we return to Veríssimo's thoughts of that present moment, the moon of adventure, that of writers like Jules Verne, who wrote *From the Earth to the Moon* (*De la Terre à la Lune*) (1865) and Rudolph Erich Raspe's infamous moon-visiting Baron from *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchhausen* (*Die überraschenden Abenteuer von Baron Münchhausen*) (1785) (672).

In his daydreaming, Veríssimo returns to the very image at the heart of Noel's inutility as a writer in *Música ao longe*, the moon of Pinitim that Fernanda insists Noel must mentally revise, as well as the moon of a dreaming Poleãozinho. The Érico Veríssimo that he

presents to us in travelogue at this moment is a success, measured against the brutality and hopes of his fictional world:

Está claro que seria ridículo se nesta altura da vida eu ficasse aqui a buscar novas imagens literárias para descrever a lua. Ao cabo de tantas andanças no mundo dos livros e no mundo real a gente acaba convencendo-se de que no fim de contas lua é lua mesmo. Mas a verdade é que, com ciência ou sem ciência, com realismo ou sem ele, com experiência da vida ou sem ela – a lua sempre comove. Bole com o romântico que mora dentro de nós, leva-nos a recordar coisas. (663)

Chapter 4

The Daring Young Woman on the Flying Trapeze:

The Unheard Artist in Lygia Fagundes Telles

Mas éramos audaciosos e a audácia é a fortuna da juventude, não foi o que aprendemos em latim?

—Lygia Fagundes Telles, organizing the reception of Érico Veríssimo for a conference in São Paulo in 1944, *Conspiração de nuvens* (2007).

In 1944, a young Lygia Fagundes Telles, law student and short story writer, arrives to tea at Confeitaria Vienense in the center of São Paulo—once a local haunt for *Klaxon* collaborators in the early 1920s. Near the fore of her thoughts is the U.S. writer William Saroyan. Waiting to have tea with her is Mário de Andrade. For the Telles represented amidst the memoir sensibility of “Durante aquele estranho chá” (2002), (the otherwise unrelated) Mário and Oswald de Andrade are titanic twins, giants of the Brazilian intellectual and literary tradition, audaciously swinging across cosmic expanses. Yet at the same time, as she goes on constructing the afternoon—attentive, as she explains, to emotions over facts—Telles offers allusions to the context of a past faded away: a letter from Mário, given to her, lost at the end of the piece. This is no longer a São Paulo of budding *avant garde* fervor and promise; that ruckus has long since given way to the climate of World War II and “repressão local” under the Vargas Regime (13). Telles, leaving the reader to glean what she might precisely mean, briefly insists on an imperative to take up the quotidian tasks Mário offers in

Pauliceia desvairada but notes the contrast of her São Paulo with his; this, for her, is “a cidade mais bem-comportada do planeta” (13). In it, she sees herself—as she begins talking to Mário—playing out her own version of Saroyan’s “The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.”

It seems unclear how Telles first read the 1934 short story that launched Saroyan to literary fame—making him a forerunner to both the Beat Generation and Postmodernism. Yet the story enjoyed a certain, even lasting, popularity in Brazil and was indicative of a further wave of outside literatures translated into Portuguese during and after World War II with the U.S. center stage. A Portuguese language version of the story, translated by João Cabral de Melo Neto (“O ousado rapaz do trapézio suspenso”), was printed in a collection of U.S. short stories in 1945.²² Organized by Vinícius de Moraes and originally titled *Os norte-americanos: antigos e modernos*, the volume draws from a breadth of work. It begins with Lobato’s translation of Washington Irving’s “Rip van Winkle” (1819) and presents a variety of names such as Edgar Allan Poe²³, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pearl Buck, William Faulkner, and Eudora Welty, among others, often translated by figures central to 20th-century Brazilian literature.

In Saroyan’s story, published in an eponymous collection a year before Veríssimo’s *Caminhos cruzados*, the reader is presented to an inversion of the character João Benévolo.

²² Denise Bottmann’s work offers a useful cataloguing of various U.S. texts translated and published in the 20th and early 21st century. “O quinteto da renascença americana no Brasil,” in particular, traces the Brazilian publication of the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.

²³ Various texts explore the dialogue between Fagundes Telles and Poe. One of the more apparent examples of this dialogue is Telles’ adaptation of Poe’s “The Cask of Amontillado” (1846) with “Venha ver o pôr do sol,” which appears in *Antes do baile verde* (1970). For a comprehensive discussion on the relationship between “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “O encontro,” see Camarani & Marques (2009).

Indeed, a focus on the dichotomy between dreaming and waking, echoes between Saroyan's short story and Veríssimo's novel.²⁴ The ostensibly young, as yet unsuccessful writer that Saroyan presents to us in the third person narrative of his story is the realization of what Noel (Veríssimo's would-be escapist young writer) fantasizes, in imagining the *miséria dourada* of his hungry João Benévolo awake. "If the truth were known," we read, in Saroyan's story, as the writer starts his day, "he was half starved, and yet there was still no end of books he ought to read before he died" (7). In the end, the plot is far crueler to Saroyan's character than Veríssimo's, and yet fate much kinder. Without money the starving writer looks to compete in the vaguely-labeled sphere of "commerce"; ostracized, he contemplates writing "An Application for Permission to Live" as he tries to fill up his stomach on water and continues reading Marcel Proust. Yet this is an artist, obsessed with remaining independent and private, one with a strange kind of agency—who steals paper and pens, who, though lacking reception, goes on writing despite the implicit self-destruction his path entails. The key difference is that, opposed to the model Veríssimo offers, the marginalization here offers transcendence, not lost in escapism but ever aspiring to "a trapeze to God, or to nothing, a flying trapeze to some sort of eternity" (8). Saroyan's writer seems—at the story's end—to die in pursuit of his vocation, becoming, at the moment of death, transfigured, "all things at once" as his face becomes "unalive, perfect" (11).

In a historical context, the strange agency and optimism here is not merely a brief reimagining of the Romantic poet or *poète maudit*. It is a substantial contribution to a 20th-century U.S. model of glorified artistic marginalization. The Beat Generation will pick up on

²⁴ There are various indications that Veríssimo read and thought highly of Saroyan, including a reference to the play "The Time of Your Life" (1939) in *A volta do gato preto* and a 1943 letter to Robert Nathan asking him to introduce Vianna Moog to Saroyan on a visit to New York ("Letter to Robert Nathan").

the work of Saroyan, as well as John Fante, years later, elaborating on this model. Saroyan's first collection of stories, as well, will impact Caetano Veloso even before his becoming a teen. In an oft-cited interview with the magazine *CULT*, Caetano explains how Saroyan shaped his idea of "ousadia formal" and, as if, in its rebellion informing him intuitively of the traditional literature that had come before, giving him "uma ideia do moderno que me serviu para sempre" (45). In short, innocuously captured in the title word *modernos* of that 1945 collection of U.S. short stories are the kernels of a crisis of existential self-reflexivity in the U.S. that would fuel a large-scale counterculture movement, across various media, in the second half of the century. It is a climate in which it will eventually become normative, much like the earlier Brazilian examples reviewed in these chapters, for the poet hero, in varying incarnations, to appear as outcast in a mainstream national project. In short, given the paradigm seen here, it is no surprise that such authors will enjoy extensive popularity in Brazil in the years to come.

There in the café on Rua Barão de Itapetininga, Telles begins describing the personal and emotional aspects of her current undertakings to Mário, contextualized in the reading of Saroyan's story. She cites the story, the assuming of her vocation characterized as an act of daring (*ousadia*). Surprised, Mário wonders why she would speak in terms of daring. She then asks if becoming a writer and lawyer does not encroach on traditionally male territory. In what follows of that strange tea, he demonstrates the amusement of a sudden supporter, hearing of the trials and hardships she describes as a woman trailblazer in both areas. This moment between Lygia and Mário seems to typify the relationship with U.S. representations of the artist in this climate, which, among others, becomes an ever-growing, sometimes

viable touchstone for conceptualizing the artist in real life, while at the same time, its principal qualities are time and again corrupted on the pages of fictional worlds.

Telles exemplifies the representation of the artist explored in these chapters as a capstone, more its heir than pioneer, its continuation beyond extended direct dialogue. She straddles the third phase of Modernism and what is to come, turning to France (corresponding with and translating Simone de Beauvoir), and strengthening the exchange with Spanish America, all the while outspoken against specific aspects of Brazil's relationship with the United States. Her work, in considering the project that Lobato and others set into motion, moves up to and beyond the limit of a broad timeline of 1920-1970 that Hirsch and Milton (2005) explore, into a period when much of the original hope Lobato connected to a U.S. model has been problematized at political and cultural levels. This is the time of Eduardo Galeano's seminal *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, published in 1971, which reflects and shapes the intellectual thought of the moment, offering an in-depth historical consideration of outside exploitation moving into the 20th century. In Brazil, such a model is particularly pertinent, as part of what the outreach and exchange of the Roosevelt regime has led to is a foundation for continued neo-imperialistic tendencies (that Prado observed in 1893), including the U.S. government's support of the overthrow of the João Goulart regime. What Hirsch and Milton draw into focus, though, is a local intellectual concern with the influence of mass culture, as it assumes a variation on the original role given the Francophone world, but now amplified in the context of technology and global exchange, rendering the U.S. a powerful presence across literature and other media in Brazil.

In her speech accepting a chair in the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1987, Telles sketches one conception of how this dynamic plays out on a cultural and artistic level large

scale. After mentioning Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud, she presents great artists of the Brazilian past as a band of outcasts, marginalized and forgotten by the domestic masses, consuming, and offering themselves up to Anglophone culture:

Imaginaí agora uma reunião na linha dos malditos, dos raros. Daqueles que, pelos caminhos mais inesperados, escolhem a ruptura. Fora do tempo e ocupando o mesmo espaço, estão todos numa sala, é noite. Os gênios ignorados num País de memória curta, que parece preferir os mitos estrangeiros como se estivéssemos ainda no século XVII, sob o cativo do reino. Os mitos estrangeiros que continuam nos vampirizando, já estamos quase esvaídos e ainda oferecemos a jugular no nosso melhor inglês, “o vosso amor é uma honra para mim!”. Pois, imaginaí essa reunião com gente aqui da terra: abraçado à sua viola, num canto de sombra, está Gregório de Matos, ouvindo embevecido o piano de Villa-Lobos. Ao lado, um homem pequeno (o Aleijadinho?) diz qualquer coisa que faz Guimarães Rosa rir seu riso luminoso. Tarsila desenha em silêncio, observada por Oswald de Andrade, que gesticula e fala, enquanto Cruz e Sousa se aproxima de Castro Alves, que conversa com Glauber Rocha²⁵ em tom de conspiração... (“Discurso”)

There is some flight of fancy here, yet at the same time an onerous seriousness that comes from a nationalism fed, in large part, by antagonism. That historic continuity which Mário called into question, divided up—as Alfredo Bosi conceived it—into islands of geography and time, finds reconciliation and fusion in Telles’ portrait. Heaven is, as both the rowdiness and her list of figures across different media continues to grow, largely a raucous party, a

²⁵ Glauber Rocha had died just a few years before the speech, at the age of 42.

welcoming place in which the iconoclasm that fuels a portrayal of the artist as outcast in their time and home is the very thing uniting them. Through her portrait, and her disparagement of popular cultural consumption, Telles calls for the embracing and affirmation of that space beyond the hypothetical.

The Keys Unplayed

“Porque os homens não me escutam!” explains the voice of Mário’s “A meditação sobre o Tietê,” observing the painful tumultuous flow of society, shouting to be heard above the river’s chaos. The figure asks, “Por que os governadores / Não me escutam? Por que não me escutam / Os plutocratas e todos os que são chefes e são fezes? / Todos os donos da vida?” (*Poesias Completas* 311). If both voice and identity come to Whitman from the waves of the sea in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” “Meditação” suggests a voice robbed by the tumult and clamor of the Tietê. The marginalized artist is denied voice, denied access to shaping the direction of society, the futile figure of a landscape in which the mind of Brazil is suppressed by the powers that be.

This theme, that of the unheard artist, is central in Fagundes Telles’ longer fiction of the sixties and seventies.²⁶ Themes long-present in her work as novelist, take on expression in real life in 1976-1977, when, during the Ernesto Geisel regime, she, along with Nélida Piñón, Jefferson Ribeiro de Andrade, and Hélio Silva, compose the *Manifesto dos Mil* against government censorship—eventually delivering the final product to the Minister of Justice in

²⁶ Others have recognized parallel phenomena in varying forms. For a discussion on the silenced voice of the marginalized in Telles’ later short stories, see Gomes (2012), focusing on “O X do problema” from *Seminário dos Ratos* (1977) and “Dia de dizer não” from *Invenção e memória* (2000).

Brasília. In the manifesto, the idea of silencing is couched in terms of Brazil itself: “Nós, para quem a liberdade de expressão é essencial, não podemos ser continuamente silenciados. O nosso amordaçamento há de equivaler ao silêncio do próprio Brasil e à sua inequívoca conversão em país que muito pouco terá a dizer brevemente” (“Letter to Armando Falcão” 1). Censorship in this context, along with other modes of suppressing expression, is not just the idea of quieting the artist’s voice, in effect, barring the artist’s access to influence over the mind of Brazil. Rather, the notion of a country that soon will have very little to say takes a large scale, generational view of art, in which the long-term effect of suppression begins to snuff out the local tradition of art itself, extinguishing the *feu sacré* that gestates revelation and illumination.

At the same time, in a 1984 U.S. interview on censorship, Telles explains how this threat to silence on a public level can have an unintended effect in the individual artist, in her case, invigorating and inspiring her as a writer: “O poeta Carlos Drummond de Andrade disse num poema: ‘A última arma do cidadão é o silêncio.’ Eu, pela primeira vez não concordo com o poeta... Não, não é o silêncio. A última arma do cidadão ainda continua sendo a palavra” (“Interview Harmon” 2). She explains it this way within the context of her own artistic process: “Tolher e me reprimir me estimulou enormemente, e a vontade minha de renunciar um estado de coisas através dos meus personagens, muitas vezes através dos símbolos e dos signos” (“Interview Harmon” 1). The interplay, then, is between the daring artist, even if denied communication and influence, rising to the challenge, while the public issue is highlighted and problematized within the text. A variation of the latter as has been seen here in the work of Sabino and Veríssimo, both in those who are artists that fail to be and those celebrated despite inadequacy—a notion so wonderfully portrayed in the poet

Paulo Madrigal of *Música ao longe* (a novel which Fagundes Telles made a point of telling Veríssimo she loved). In 1977, the *Manifesto dos Mil* is a real-life expression of a theme which has already run, in different variations, through Fagundes Telles' novels of the last two decades: *Verão no aquário* (1963) and *As meninas* (1973). That is, the theme of silence, and what it means for artistic expression to be heard, silenced, or even the choice of the artist not to speak.

The first of these, *Verão no aquário*, offers the reader the character of Patrícia, the novelist as not only mother, but the pillar of a family. Her alcoholic husband, failed in business, has long since passed away. Yet the household, beyond Raíza (Zazá), both main character and narrator, includes Zazá's cousin and aunt, as well as the housekeeper Dionísia. Along with her opaque, sometimes almost secretive, productivity as novelist, Patrícia is a notably insightful and involved mother—perhaps best epitomized by her conversation with Raíza in Chapter 12, in which she tenderly preaches moderation in the radical life reformation her daughter has undertaken. This is the core of the novel, young Zazá on the cusp of entering adulthood, and, one might say, the *Bildungsbürgertum*. She is in some sense lost, experimenting and testing limits, in search of herself. She often antagonizes her mother, continually attempting to seduce André, a young seminarist who she suspects her mother loves. Near the book's end, he takes his own life after responding to her advances with unwelcomed violent intensity.

In all this, Raíza wonders if she herself might not be a pianist and artist. Will her juvenile rebellion against social norms parlay itself into the subversion endemic to the artist as partial outsider? The tension is much like that of *O encontro marcado*, in which the brunt of the drama is in the artist failing at becoming an artist. “Escrever é renunciar,” Toledo, the

largely failed writer in Sabino's novel, tells us. He was unable, he explains, to reject the appeal of a hundred paths and give everything to the art. While albeit not an entirely uncommon notion, it finds similar articulation in *Verão no aquário*. At one moment, Patrícia is addressing her daughter's life direction when she asks, "E os estudos? Quer dizer que não vai mesmo continuar?" (123). Raíza hates the power and resents the purpose that comes with her mother's grasp on art, describing the subjective experience of this dynamic like that of the Sage of Siam talking to an ant. Yet she ventures this earnest question: "Mas eu seria uma grande pianista?" (123). Her mother, impenetrable, offers her an answer that seems to echo both the dedication of the Daring Young Man, as well as Dallas O'Meara's ideal in *So Big*—the implicit honor, reward, and self-realization in such an endeavor whether lost or won. "Só depois," Patrícia explains, "de muitos anos de trabalho você poderia ter essa resposta. Seria preciso antes muita dedicação, muito amor para que um dia você mesma saiba..." (123). A frustrated Raíza cuts her off, "Se venci? ... Quer dizer que só na velhice? Não, muito obrigada, quero a resposta já. Não suporto a ideia de passar a vida estudando para depois um Goldenberg²⁷ me anunciar que não tenho vocação, que devo fazer outra coisa" (123). When the conversation comes to an end, and Patrícia sits at her typewriter, listening to her daughter, the scene winds down with a rich metaphor: "Deslizando as mãos no teclado, ela tamborilou de leve nas letras" (125). Patrícia, keeper of art, thoughtlessly drums the keys of her typewriter, her own instrument, suggesting an unplayed piano. That is, in the gesture, without pressing the keys, she emphasizes the absence of unrealized words and absent music. It seems a particularly apropos moment for Telles the piano player, as well as fan of *Música ao longe*.

²⁷ Her piano teacher in the book

The elegance of how Telles constructs her almost-*Künstlerroman* is in making Patrícia the guardian of veritable, estimable art (recognized even from the perspective of Raíza), but couples it with the negotiation of the mother-daughter dynamic at a critical moment of throwing off parental oversight and defining oneself. The model of an apprentice going to a master to become a journeyman that we might associate with early forms of the bildungsroman, instead, is a story of stagnation and suffocation. The central metaphor here is that of an aquarium. The theme, first introduced as an aquarium that Dionísia cares for and moves around the kitchen, is drawn to the fore, growing in Raíza's thoughts and in her conversations with a mother who wants to see her find her way and establish a viable individuality. One such conversation takes place amidst tension between the two of them as Raíza stares at the tank and mumbles, "Vou pedir à titia que vista uma roupa de fada e me transforme num peixe. Deve ser boa a vida de peixe de aquário" (150). To which her mother answers: "Deve ser fácil. Aí ficam eles dia e noite, sem se preocupar com nada, há sempre alguém para lhe dar de comer, trocar a água... Uma vida fácil, sem dúvida. Mas não boa. Não se esqueça de que eles vivem dentro de um palmo de água quando há um mar lá adiante" (150). Always the contrarian, Raíza, in turn, says, "No mar seriam devorados por um peixe maior, mãezinha" (150). If the Tietê of "Meditação," resisting its Romantic path to the sea is a phantasmagoria, Raíza's aquarium, in the light of the window, is an elysian solace, from which she contemplates, at various times, swimmers who have drowned in the sea. Yet much of her rebellious behavior, the bad judgment of which seems to agitate her as it is not integral to her own values, seems to arise from that very lack of responsibility and importance that comes with aquarium life.

The figure of Sabino's Cristóvão, who drowns himself in *Música ao longe*, is estranged from the preceding generation. Yet Raíza is in the odd position of having to move away from her mother to fully establish herself, while facing the difficulty of that parent being both exemplary and a guardian of art. Seen within the collective dynamic, it demands a reconciliation and appreciation of family ties, thereby undermining what might otherwise be typical rebellion on the part of Raíza. On a larger literary level, it is a dynamic not wholly absent aspects of the relationship between the First and Third Phases of Modernism—the latter pervading Telles formative years as an artist. In the book's denouement, Raíza goes to the piano and builds musical flourishes like towers above the crashing waves of the ocean. She asks her mother, “Você acha que eu serei uma pianista? Como sempre desejei, mamãe? Você acha?” (236). After much cajoling, Patrícia responds, “Não, Raíza, acho que não. Mas isso não tem importância, não é mesmo?” (236). Raíza repeats to herself again and again that it does not matter to the beat of her music. Set as counterpoint to this, she asks her mother, about the novel she has been writing through the book. “Estou refazendo certos trechos, tenho tantas dúvidas,” her mother says. “Nem sei ainda se vou publicá-lo” (236). Herein is the artist deciding not to speak, with a notable peace that appears to come from faith in art as a participatory tradition that exists beyond the individual. This idea of the artist deciding not to let their work be known, in a context that recognizes the mind of society, rather than insisting on personal expression at all costs is a theme which reaches its more complete expression in *As meninas*.

Artists Marginalized to Subterfuge

Published in 1973, during the *Anos de Chumbo*, it is amazing that *As meninas*—a novel that probes the untampered thoughts of its female protagonists, as it depicts adultery, drug use, rape, abortion, and organized leftist activity undermining the government—ever made it past the censors. In “Conspiração de nuvens,” Fagundes Telles relates what her late husband, Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes, lead founder of the *Cinemateca Brasileira*, and once imprisoned political activist, said about how the novel got past the gatekeepers of the moment. He heard from his sources that the censor assigned the manuscript had simply given up on Page 72 because he thought the book “chato” (65). Telles reveals in the same piece that a letter describing the torture of a prisoner from Page 128 (of a recent Companhia de Letras edition) was, in fact, a first-hand letter that had arrived to her husband from a real political prisoner. The novel, for its difficulty, becomes a unique unsilenced artifact, neither overtly dissimulating or suggestive in its ellipses—the ambition of its art enough to have it ignored.

It is, indeed, a demanding, even taxing read, as it splits its time between three different young women in the Nossa Senhora de Fátima Boardinghouse—Lia (Lião), Lorena, and Ana Clara. It shifts between third and first person, as it enters the thoughts of all three protagonists at different times, following streams of consciousness through, often, decontextualized, or even drug-fueled, analepses. The effect is like the dispersion of a prism, both in terms society and artistry. Lorena Vaz Leme is the former poet and *paulista* patrician, level-headed, but infatuated with a married man, always lending her friends money or a car, playing her records late into the night, as she attends law school. Lia de Melo Schultz, writer and would-be novelist, the daughter of a reformed Nazi and a Bahian woman, is an underground leftist activist, saving newspaper clippings, perpetually interpreting and

preaching through the lens of political engagement. A model, the beautiful Ana Clara Conceição hails from a humble background. A drug addict, she is in love with Miguel, but ready to shun commitments to love in order to marry a rich man, even if she disdains him. It is her addiction that will bring the plot to a head, as she dies in Lorena's bathtub late one night. In part, to protect the nuns, who are sympathetic to the political situation in the country, and, in part, to preserve something of Ana Clara's dignity, Lorena, with Lia's help, conspires to dress up the body elegantly and leave it on a bench in a nearby plaza.

The dispersive effect of the novel, as prism, is at its height in the design of Lorena and Lia as types of contemporary artists, in which, on the one hand, a more purely aesthetic and, on the other, a more politically-engaged sensibility are bands of light in a larger whole. Near the book's beginning, Lia asks to borrow Lorena's car, yelling up from outside the house, to which Lorena attempts to slow down the situation, and turn the interaction into a visit. "Por que essa pressa?" she asks. "Suba, venha ouvir o último disco de Jimi Hendrix, faço um chá, tenho uns biscoitos maravilhosos" (18). "Ingleses?" Lia, ever politically serious, asks. "Prefiro nossos biscoitos e nossa música. Chega de colonialismo cultural" (18). To which Lorena, building on the idea with an earnest tone akin to the heiress of a screwball comedy, responds, "Mas nossa música não me comove, querida. Se os seus baianos dizem que estão desesperados, acredito, acho ótimo. Mas se vem John Lennon e diz a mesma coisa, então vibro, fico mística. Sou mística" (18). Beyond whatever dramatic hyperbole present, or even potential critique of Lorena, the reader is first introduced here to how she interprets the world personally and aesthetically. Her mantra is a line near the end of Drummond's "A máquina do mundo," which she urges herself to memorize in Chapter 3: "É a máquina do mundo, repelida, se foi miudamente recompondo" (59). She eschews the workings of the

world for her own, personally-defined poetic reality. This is reinforced in Lorena's treatment of poetry, which she treats like her father treated the Old Testament, opening to verses at random (111).

Lorena is repeatedly taken to task by Lia, preached to again and again. One episode relates Lia trying to explain—after a seemingly gauche remark by Lorena—how attempting to civilize the indigenous Brazilian is the fastest way to kill them. Lorena attempts to follow Lia's point but soon grows tired of the discourse. She begins to think instead of the Romantic Antônio Gonçalves Dias and his “índios divinos-maravilhosos” of *Os Timbiras* (1857), injecting into the conversation the lines, “Oh Tupã! que mal te fiz, que assim me colha do teu furor a seta envenenada!” (118). Yet, as Lorena has repeatedly observed, Lia is neither moved by poetry nor seems to understand it. After the interjection Lia immediately launches into a discourse about the dollar. We are told that Lorena once dedicated herself to poetry, and there is some indication that she has gone on writing; we get a glimpse at it in a letter to her love interest M.N., and by her own admission, it is bad. Otherwise, we see her admonish herself for not continuing her commitment to the art—the failed, unexpressed poet.

The overlap in interests between author and character are not avoided, as Lia, at one point, lectures—not for the first time, we are told—on Simone de Beauvoir. The novel she commends in the book, to a young fellow revolutionary, is André Malraux's political *Man's Fate* (*La Condition humaine*) (1933). If Lorena gives her flak in return, it is in alluding to the idea that underlying her life choices are echoes of fervent nationalism seen previously in her family. When, early on, Lia gets frustrated listening to one of Lorena's Hendrix records, unsolicited, Lorena mumbles, “Não tenho Wagner, querida. Tenho leite. Serve leite?” (61). This leads in to Lorena examining the emphatic markings Lia has made in a book, which

highlight the following passage: “A Pátria prende o homem com um vínculo sagrado. É preciso amá-la como se ama a religião, obedecer-lhe como se obedece a Deus. É preciso dar-mos inteiramente a ela, tudo lhe entregar, votar-lhe tudo. É preciso amá-la gloriosa e obscura, próspera ou desgraçada” (61). What Lorena balks at in her reaction to the passage Lia has found so powerful is the particular notion of nationalism at work. “E a Pátria,” she asks herself, amidst her musings, “para ela [Lia] não era o povo?” (61). It is then that she launches into a reflection about Herr Paul, ex-Nazi, and Lia’s family. Likewise, when Lorena is playing jazz later in the book, she speculates as to what Lia’s reaction would be if she entered at that moment: “...Durante vinte minutos ficaria explicando por que essa música tira o caráter. Mas o que ela queria que eu ouvisse? *A Internacional?* Devia estar cantando aos gritos em algum aparelho, *groupons-nous et demaaaaain! Demain*” (105).

Lia, as well, is the failed artist. As she and Lorena are spoofing a TV interview toward the beginning of the book, she suddenly interrupts play when Lorena asks about the novel she has been on the verge of completing: “Rasguei tudo, entende? ...O mar de livros inúteis já transbordou. Ora, ficção. Quem é que está se importando com isso?” (29). For Lião, who, we are told, has always loved writing stories, the explanation in the context of the censorial moment is an almost Sartrean one in which, given no choice, the artist refuses to speak rather than being silenced. Seen in terms of *So Big*, it succumbs to a lack of utility that Ferber’s wheat-emerald paradigm seeks to overcome. Yet, within the complexity of the novel, Telles reveals more personal, perhaps even more compelling reasons under the veneer of the political toughness of a lion. It is Lorena, naturally, who immediately interprets Lia’s motives as personal, and Lia, some pages later, as we enter her thoughts in the first person says, “Não gosto do que eu escrevo. Ninguém gosta, deve ser uma bela merda” (33). Further

on in the book, Lia herself, makes the clearest admission, speaking to her confederate in the movement, Pedro:

—Pensei que tivesse vocação e me enganei como esses padres que estão aí se casando.

—Mas como você sabe que se enganou?

—A gente sabe, Pedro. A gente sabe. (137)

The reality of a chosen silence lies much closer to the dynamic Telles describes in her manifesto, and which Patrícia touches on in *Verão no aquário*. It is one which treats art as a sacred fire, in which the artist, while at times radical and critical of the direction of society, works to someday be good enough to take part in a tradition beyond themselves.

Telles gives to her expert duo of never realized artists, a final, impactful artistic gesture, not as individuals but a strange, impromptu team. This is, in effect, the opportunity for the artist (artists) to express themselves in a throwback to the trickster mode under suppressive circumstances. It is played out in the context of the body—which, as regards Ana Clara, has been emphasized by her modeling, her intimate moments with Miguel, and a rape scene toward the book's end. For Telles, the body, particularly within the climate of censorship under the Military Dictatorship, becomes a point of contention (“Interview Harmon” 5). For censors that “leem pouco ou não leem” (2), it may be indiscriminately banned, ostensibly for its pornographic potential (5), but one sees in these terms (as has been explored by others) the fundamental deprivation of agency and violation of basic individual rights. When, as previously mentioned, late one night, Ana Clara dies of an overdose in Lorena's bathtub, the latter, despite some training and her best efforts, cannot save her friend.

She then resists Lia's insistence to call the nuns and leave things as they are. Instead, Lorena protects her friend's body, dressing up Ana Clara elegantly in preparation to leave her in a lovely nearby plaza. "Se a morte não tem remédio, posso ao menos salvar as circunstâncias!" (272). To which, Lia, opposed to the idea and thinking her friend has lost her mind, corrects her, "Você quer dizer as aparências" (272). Lorena's is a strange kind of artistic gesture in a society in which the government seeks a stranglehold on appearances. Through creative conspiracy, she and Lia collectively play the game of appearances to undermine it. "Ana Clara," Lorena explains, "*não* pode morrer drogada num quarto do Pensionato Nossa Senhora de Fátima. Não pode. Sabe o que isso vai significar para as freirinhas? Para Madre Alix?" (272). Lia, lending her strength, does eventually acquiesce. When they take the body by car to that nearby plaza, seating Ana Clara on a bench, their final act of artifice in the book is a, if not idealizing, inoculating revision of her passing. The task is quickly accomplished before dawn, making use of Lorena's extensive reading of detective novels. As it is carried out, Lorena tries to remember a poem by Federico García Lorca, an artist who was a silenced casualty of a dictatorship, and whose body remained unbound for decades. The two friends effectively part ways, their cooperative artistic undertaking complete—Lorena to her life as law student and Lia to an eventual reuniting with her boyfriend in Algiers.

The Conspiracy

Telles tells different versions of the time she went, as a young student, to visit Monteiro Lobato in prison—both primarily limiting themselves to the traits she admired in him. In 1941, the Vargas regime had imprisoned him for publicizing his critique of its

petroleum policies. In each he receives her warmly and later, when freed, visits her on her birthday. The 2010 description of the encounter Telles wrote for *Estadão*, has the texture and light touch of a *crônica* for the public, echoing notions of the artist unheard:

Ele [Lobato] interrompeu-me com um gesto afetuoso, eu sabia que era avesso às homenagens e assim entendi a razão pela qual desviou a conversa, afinal seus personagens não eram culpados pela sua prisão, mas sim as cartas que andou escrevendo, ou melhor, as denúncias que andou fazendo através dessas cartas porque livros os governantes não liam mesmo. Deviam ler mas não liam e daí a ideia das cartas curtas e diretas.

Comecei gaguejando, bem, era difícil explicar, eu era uma estudante pobre, queria me formar para ter um diploma e assim anunciar um bom emprego. Na realidade, queria ser escritora, escrever contos, romances... Monteiro Lobato voltou-se para o editor e tocou-lhe no ombro. "Olha aí, a mocinha é vidente! Já está sabendo que escrever neste país não dá dinheiro, escritor morre pobre e ignorado. Então ela é uma vidente!" ("Encontro afetuoso")

Yet Telles' 2002 version in *Durante aquele estranho chá* includes a Lobato who is not quite so at ease. Amidst the humor and grace of the interaction, he describes a night of existential terror, and the keeping of a metaphorical fire:

O importante é não entregar os pontos, fincar o pé. Na noite escura, na negra noite dos velhos, os sons vão se amortecendo, vozes e imagens vão ficando distantes. A gente fica só. E porque está escuro, só aí é que damos com o vivíssimo olho da morte ora surgindo por detrás das moitas, por detrás de um muro, a nos espreitar... A gente

então precisa acender o fogo e ficar assim vigilante, acordado. Enquanto isso, vamos fazendo nossas coisas, as coisas que mais amamos e tirando o melhor partido de tudo. Mas é preciso ficar atento, não deixar que esse fogo se apague porque aí de nós se pegamos no sono! (96)

Conclusion

Marginalization Reimagined

Je sais que la douleur est la noblesse unique
Où ne mordront jamais la terre et les enfers,
Et qu'il faut pour tresser ma couronne mystique
Imposer tous les temps et tous les univers.

[I know that sorrow is the one human strength
On which neither earth nor hell can impose,
And that all the universe and all time's length
Must be wound into the mystic crown for my brows.]²⁸

—The poet speaking to God in Charles Baudelaire's "Bénédiction,"
Fleurs du mal.

Particularly in the case of "A meditação sobre o Tietê," Mário, emerging from a heavily French-influenced tradition, draws, not only on familiar 19th-century Francophone tropes like the contemplation of ugliness and commotion, but on the figure of the *poète maudit*. The brief portrait that Paul Verlaine offers us in *Les poètes maudits* (1884) is of a rebellious, marginalized figure, in many ways insulated from a society on a decadent course, solitarily shouting, as Tristan Corbière does, "Mon âme n'est pas en état de grâce!" (9). And if there is some similarity between the putrid Tietê of "Mediatação" and the river of Rimbaud's "Bateau Ivre," the speaker of the latter is totally alone in a struggle against the

²⁸ David Paul's translation (1977).

tumult, while the speaker of “Meditação” ardently expresses his drive to assume a participatory role in the masses. Herein lies one of the challenges in Mário’s poem: to reconcile aspects of that *poète maudit* sensibility with the collectivist demands of critiquing national direction and embracing local culture. It seems that at least in part, he finds the answer in first partially imitating, and then corrupting, what one might call Whitman’s *process* (to use Lobato’s term).

The variations that follow buck U.S. representations, bringing a social criticism to bear, as they move further away from the original French conceit, condemning new iterations of the insular artist figure. Sabino revises *This Side of Paradise*, not just for what Fitzgerald himself seems to some degree to have acknowledged as an indulgent celebration of the individual, but to dialogue with community and tradition in a forward-thinking way. Veríssimo, meanwhile, contrasts his local reality with those of a fictional, hope-laden U.S., showing a dwindling space for the dreamer, deflected into irrelevance by social structures and patterns. Beyond her exploration of family and artistic voice, Telles reaffirms a collective stance under the worst years of the Military Dictatorship.

By the time Telles is inducted into the Academia Brasileira de Letras in 1987, the French tradition—criticized so emphatically by Lobato in 1919—has fallen in influence enough for ready use in a speech convoking great Brazilian artists. Her allusion to Baudelaire and Rimbaud before presenting her party of artistic greats is more than an isolated thought experiment. It is representative of new trends in literature that renegotiate a position once associated with the *poète maudit*.

Eu queria tanto...

Hirsch and Milton divide the initial decades of translation of U.S. texts proliferated in Brazil into two main phases; the second of these, in the sixties and seventies, saw an immense popularity in the Beat Poets, a group often tilted toward the confessional and personal, writing variations of themselves into their work, building worlds of characters based on their friends and actual experiences. It is a new incarnation of Barolsky's *cult of the artist*, first seen in Dante, and it is parallel to what we have already seen in Verlaine, as he considers his examples from Villiers de l'Isle-Adam to Rimbaud, blurring the line between the personae of the writers and their work.

The duality of the fictionally represented writer and what acts as the writer's persona has been explored in these chapters, in consideration of preface, *crônica*, memoir, speech, interview, and letters. In the U.S., Saroyan does his part to commence a process that will rebelliously play with and break down this duality once again, presenting a preface to *The Daring Young Man* that was met with some indignation. If his preface does not arrive at the scope of Mário's "Prefácio Interessantíssimo," it certainly arrives at its level of rebellion, often taking the shape of mock earnestness. In it, Saroyan builds the portrait of an unapologetic non-conformist artist, irreverently offering his advice to young writers, listing the rules for writing stories that he has formulated over the years. The first alone captures the flavor of his biting pseudo-pedantry:

I wrote rule Number One when I was eleven and had just been sent home from the fourth grade for having talked out of turn and meant it.

Do not pay any attention to the rules other people make, I wrote. They make them for their own protection, and to hell with them. (I was pretty sore that day). (3)

As this current moves forward in the U.S., the distance between artistic persona and short story that Saroyan plays with here continues to narrow. It could be said John Fante takes its next step in the build up to the Beats, with his Arturo Bandini, the protagonist of *Ask the Dust* (1939), self-assuredly choosing a down-and-out lifestyle as a writer in Los Angeles.

The motif explored in this monograph in a Brazilian context, moving beyond the considered time frame, undergoes a reimagining and dialogue with past and parallel iterations of marginality. In what might best be categorized as part of a generation subsequent to Telles, a group of poets rising in the seventies, still under the Military Dictatorship, would find themselves on the margins. If Lobato did much to build up the publishing business post-World War I in Brazil, these poets, utilizing and—to some extent—embracing a marginal role, found ways to get their message out as well, this time circumventing the traditional publishing apparatus through mimeographs and flyers. It is a time of social repression and strife, yet their poetry often embraces an insular, personal model.²⁹ What does it mean to be a poet hero in these new circumstances? Is it to take your route, seek out your own realization as an artist rather than falling, shouting, consumed into the great tumultuous flow of demagoguery? In 1984, Paulo Leminski translates *Ask the Dust*. In 1980, he prints a poem that reduces the tension between the models of the solitary and the social to the sadness of the quotidian, not in a tragic treatment like Veríssimo's *Caminhos cruzados*, but in a self-empowering way that recognizes the surrounding reality. Its critique

²⁹ For a consideration of how the sensibility of this movement's poetry achieves a political impact, see Santos (2010).

of society echoes the texts we have seen, addressing denied sustenance, on literal and metaphorical levels, but with this notion seen in a new light. In closing, the poem moves beyond a central dichotomy prevalent earlier in the century, which the writers considered in this monograph contended with. Its lines move on, finding agency inhabiting a marginal space reflective of ordinary local experience:

eu queria tanto
ser um poeta maldito
a massa sofrendo
enquanto eu profundo medito

eu queria tanto
ser um poeta social
rosto queimado
pelo hálito das multidões

em vez
olha eu aqui
pondo sal
nesta sopa rala
que mal vai dar para dois (750)

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