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A trilingual reading of "A cartomante" by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis

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ABSTRACT: This article examines early translations of "A cartomante," one of the most anthologized stories written by Brazilian author Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis. I compare an Argentine translation and an English translation vis-à-vis the Portuguese original to determine to what extent they preserve and reproduce the literary features of the original text. I assess the alterations of the authorial voice in terms of additions, omissions, word choice, and style. Translation studies notions developed by Ernst-August Gutt and Lin Zhu inform this analysis. Whereas the Argentine translation tends to present more typos, suppress words, and reduce the intensity of some passages, the English translation over-dramatizes and over-explains some scenes, at the same time that it reimagines the characters to make them more attractive to the US readership. However, both translations reject some of the most characteristic aspects of Machado de Assis's writing such as colloquialism and self-reflexivity. The close reading of these translations improves our understanding of Machado de Assis's reception in Latin America and the United States at the beginning of the 20th century.

KEYWORDS: Brazil, short fiction, translation, fortune-teller, cartomante, Machado de Assis

In this article, I examine early Spanish and English translations of "A cartomante," one of the most anthologized stories written by Brazilian author Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908). I compare these translations to the Portuguese original to trace the alterations of the authorial voice in terms of additions, omissions, word choice, and style. Contemporary critics such as K. David Jackson consider Machado de Assis to be the greatest master of the short story in Brazil (208). What is more, Mauro Rosso equates him to European and American short story writers such as Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, or Edgar Allan Poe (19), while Earl Fitz argues that Machado de Assis can "be considered as one of the modern novel's great masters" ("Machado de Assis" 43). Being ahead of his time, as critics recognize today, Machado de Assis's works might have presented a challenge for his early translators. Fitz notes that Machado de Assis knew the European novel "very well" and that he improved it by experimenting with its form and structure (43, 48). Machado de Assis subverted the realistic novel by questioning the "bourgeois notion of language as a stable, objective, and highly controllable medium" (50-51). The Brazilian author is famous for his unreliable and self-reflexive narrators, his dry ironies, oral texture, and for using ambiguity to prompt the active participation of the reader (48). These features infused his novels and short stories with a distinct personality. US novelist John Barth even claimed that Machado de Assis's techniques anticipated postmodernist aesthetics (47). "A cartomante" was not an exception. Some of Machado de Assis's most characteristic devices are present in this story. However, they are removed from the Spanish and English translations that I examine in this article, which

proves how Machado de Assis's style was not fully understood by some of his first translators. Through a close reading of these two translations, which, by the way, are notoriously different, I aim to improve our understanding of Machado de Assis's reception in Latin America and the United States at the beginning of the 20th century.

In "A cartomante," Machado de Assis tells the story of a married woman, Rita, who has an affair with Camillo, her husband's best friend. Due to a series of accusatory and anonymous letters that Camillo receives, the lovers—first Rita and then the skeptic Camillo—seek the help of a fortune teller, who appeases their anguish telling them that Villela, the husband, knows nothing about the affair. At some point, the letters stop as Camillo and Villela grow increasingly apart. Months later, Camillo receives a note from Villela urging him to come see him. Eased by the fortune teller's words, Camillo goes to Villela's house convinced that he has no intention to harm him. However, as he enters the living room, he sees Rita's dead body and is shot dead. As Marcelo Mendes de Souza indicates, the story was first published in 1884 in the Brazilian journal *Gazeta de Notícias*, a cosmopolitan and liberal newspaper, and then compiled in *Várias Histórias* (1896), Machado de Assis's fifth short story volume (546-47).

Some scholarship on "A cartomante" has been published over the past years. Diva Cardoso de Camargo et al. analyze the story from the perspective of functionalist discourse analysis, Mary L. Daniel uses a comparative approach to contrast "A cartomante" with Joao Guimarães Rosa's "Cartas na mesa," and Ellen H. Douglass and David M. Bergeron examine the inscription of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. There are also two studies by Mendes de Souza and Raúl Antelo on

an Argentine translation of "A cartomante." These studies analyze the linguistic and stylistic features of this Spanish translation and suggest the possibility of Borges being the translator. The debate about whether or not Borges translated Machado de Assis's story emerges in the midst of a long-standing lacuna regarding the connections between the two writers. In the present article, I build on these two studies as I examine the same Argentine translation. However, my aim is not to dig deeper into the Machado de Assis-Borges connection. Instead, my goal is to compare the Argentine translation with an early English translation and assess how they differ from each other and from the Portuguese original.

Rhett McNeil notes that Machado de Assis's work was "relatively unknown outside of Brazil" in the first decades following his death (91). However, there are a few early translations worth mentioning. In 1902, Machado de Assis's *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* was translated into Spanish in Uruguay by journalist and writer Julio Piquet (Rocca 38). This was the first translation of a work by Machado de Assis. In 1905, another novel by Machado de Assis, *Esaú e Jacó*, was made available in Spanish for the Argentine readership and the translation is thought to have been carried out by Piquet as well (36, 46). However, according to Ubiratan Machado, Spanish translations of Machado de Assis started to appear more regularly in Argentina in the 1940s: Spanish versions of *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* and *Dom Casmurro* were published in Argentina in 1940 and 1943, respectively (338-39).

In Europe, France and Spain were the first countries to translate Machado de Assis. In 1910, Adrien Delpech translated into French Machado de Assis's short story collection *Várias Histórias* and, in 1911, *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (McNeil 84). Two years later, in 1913, *Quincas Borba* was published in Spain (Mendes de Souza 542), followed by *Narraciones Escogidas* (1916), a volume of short fiction translated by Spaniard Rafael Cansinos Assens (McNeil 85). According to Hélio de Seixas Guimarães, during his lifetime, Machado de Assis made several attempts to have his work translated into German; however, he was unsuccessful (36).

Before having his first translations published in the United States, Machado de Assis had entered this market through the New York publication *O Novo Mundo*, the first newspaper in Portuguese to appear in the country, for which he wrote in 1873 his famous article "Notícia da atual literatura brasileira - Instinto de Nacionalidade," an essay that explores the nationalistic elements of Brazilian literature (Seixas Guimarães 36). The first English translations came a few decades later. Isaac Goldberg translated three stories by Machado de Assis ("A cartomante" was one of them) and included them in *Brazilian Tales* (1921) (92). However, Machado de Assis's novels had to wait until the 1950s to become available in English. *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* appeared in 1951, *Dom Casmurro* in 1953, and *Quincas Borba* in 1954 (Fitz, "The reception" 17). Although these were "very good translations," according to Fitz, in the 1950s, the United States "did not offer an intellectual climate that would have been hospitable to the acerbic and disillusioned voice of Machado

de Assis, and this may well have hurt his reception here" (20). Fitz argues that, except for critics such as Dudley Fitts, reviewers overlooked the most interesting aspects of these novels including their metafictional experiments, self-conscious narrators, and time structure (20-21).

For this article, I will use the 1903 Portuguese version of "A cartomante" published in Machado de Assis's *Várias Histórias*, Goldberg's 1921 English translation ("The fortune-teller"), and the Argentine translation I have mentioned ("El incrédulo frente a la cartomante"), which was published in March 10 of 1934 in *Revista Multicolor de los Sábados*, a cultural and literary supplement directed by Jorge Luis Borges and Ulises Petit de Murat (Antelo). As Mendes de Souza indicates, this supplement had an editorial philosophy "that preferred the sensational" and served as a platform for the avant-garde writers of Buenos Aires (544, 557). As was common practice in *Revista Multicolor*, the translation appeared without credits (544). The relevance of this translation lies in the fact that it was, arguably, the first Latin American translation of "A cartomante."

I propose that both translations, specially the English one, inscribe a new sensibility that performs a slight act of erasure of Machado de Assis's narrating style. Compared with the English version, where creative additions are abundant, the Argentine translation incorporates style changes, but overall remains more faithful. In the Argentine version, omissions are more frequent than additions, probably because of the space limitations of *Revista Multicolor*. Apart from a series of exclamation signs in the opening dialogs, the only major addition is in the title: as indicated before, it went from "A cartomante" ("The fortune teller") to "El incrédulo frente a la cartomante;" an alteration that, according to Mendes de Souza, has to do with the magazine's "overstated" style (552).

Translation "above all, is a search for literariness," explains Lin Zhu (613) or, in other words, for those literary features that give a text a unique personality. These literary features relate to stylistic, formal, and narrative devices the author incorporates to produce certain effects on the reader. According to Zhu, the "difficulty" of literary translation lies in the ability of the translator to decipher the literariness of the source text and inscribe it in the translated text, a task that depends on "the translator's literary knowledge and ability to detect the expressive energies of textual structures" (613). When discussing literariness, Zhu refers to Ernst-August Gutt's concept of "communicative clues." For Gutt, "communicative clues" are important because "they provide clues that guide the audience to the interpretation intended by the communicator" (134). However, literature is made of nuances that are sometimes difficult to recreate in another language or that are simply not perceived or understood by translators. As a result, some communicative clues may be lost. Paul Hond notes that "in balancing authenticity with readability, translators tackle a seemingly impossible art." Because translation is an act of interpretation and recreation, the translated text is a hybrid of the author and translator's voices.

Before addressing the particularities of the Argentine and English translations of "A cartomante," I will examine some similarities. First, both translations often replace Machado de Assis's numerous semicolons and commas with periods. This alteration results in a change of narrative rhythm. The semicolons and commas in the original Portuguese text create an atmosphere of anxiety and increasing trepidation. Semicolons and commas create fragmentation and uneasiness, but there is still continuity and movement because these are not full pauses. In some passages of the Argentine and English translations, this effect is lost because the abundance of periods creates dryness. Antelo argues that the "staccato rhythm" of the Argentine translation resembles "symptomatically ... the enunciative structure of Borges' 'El Aleph.'" Antelo suggests this coincidence may prove that the Argentine writer translated Machado de Assis's story. However, the "staccato rhythm" is also present in some passages of Goldberg's English translation, therefore, it can hardly be taken as evidence that Borges translated Machado de Assis. In this excerpt from the Argentine translation, the abundance of pauses is particularly evident: "Aquí cerca, en la calle Guarda Vieja. No pasaba nadie en ese momento. Tranquilízate: no soy una tonta ("El incrédulo" 7). Goldberg does something similar: "Near here. On Guarda-Velha Street. Nobody was passing by at the time. Rest easy. I'm not a fool" (66). The periods suggest that Rita, the speaker, is calmed or trying to maintain self-control. In the Portuguese original, the use of commas and semicolons conveys more agitation even though the ideas expressed are the same: "Aqui perto, na rua da Guarda Velha; não passava ninguém nessa ocasião. Descansa; eu não sou maluca" (Machado de Assis 4). The reader can picture Rita speaking quickly and nervously as she tries to convince Camillo of her discretion during the fortune teller visit.

Another similarity between the Argentine and English translations is that often both formalize the phrasing reducing the oral quality of the original. In the Argentine translation, repetitions and colloquialisms are brought to a minimum, as Mendes de Sousa emphasizes (554). Instead of the colloquial uttering "mas que não era verdade" found in the Portuguese text ("but that it wasn't true") (Machado de Assis 3), the Argentine version prefers the solemnity of: "pero que eso no tenía fundamento" ("El incrédulo" 7). When Camillo leaves the fortune teller's house, the latter says "Vá, vá tranquilo" ("Go, go, take it easy") (Machado de Assis 17). However, the Argentine version erases the repetitions, flattening the fortune teller's persona with a conventional "Vaya tranquilo" ("El incrédulo" 7). By this same process, "longo, longo" ("long, long") (Machado de Assis 19) turns into "largo, interminable" ("El incrédulo" 7) and "Vem já, já" ("Come, now, now") (Machado de Assis 10) changes to "Ven, en seguida" ("El incrédulo" 7).

The English version formalizes the text by merging separate clauses with conjunctions, prepositions, and gerunds. This rephrasing obliterates Machado de Assis's enumerative and anxious style. In the introduction, the narrator describes Camillo's reaction

after Rita confesses to going to a fortune teller: "repreendeu-a; disse-lhe que era imprudente" ("he reproved her; he told her it was imprudent") (Machado de Assis 4). In his translation, Goldberg connects the two sentences with a gerund: "Then he reproved her, saying that it was imprudent" (66). By "fixing" disjunctions, Goldberg counteracts the atmosphere of agitation that Machado de Assis sets from the beginning with his spasmodic constructions. Later, the tension rises. Camillo suspects Villela has finally discovered the affair and Machado de Assis conveys his anguish—once again—through fragmented discourse: "Camillo estremeceu, tinha medo" ("Camillo shuddered, he was afraid") (Machado de Assis 11). Nonetheless, Goldberg unites the two sentences eliminating Machado de Assis's distressing ruptures: "Camillo shuddered with terror" (74).

The English translation was published during the modernist period and the Argentine during the flourishing of the avant-gardes in Latin America. Both artistic movements promoted the creation of a new sensibility and rupture with the past. However, both translations "normalize" some of Machado de Assis's most original twists.

In "A cartomante," Machado de Assis plays with self-reflexivity and prosopopoeia. However, as Mendes de Sousa notes, both devices were removed from the Argentine translation (555-56). In the Portuguese original, the narrator steps out from his impersonal and omniscient tone and suddenly becomes warm and casual addressing the reader in an informal way. Early in the story, the narrator states: "*Cuido* que elle ia falar" ("I believe he was about to talk") (Machado de Assis 4; my emphasis), in reference to Camillo. Through this first-person intervention, the narrator becomes self-referential. By inserting this metafictional element, the Brazilian author departed from narrative conventions highlighting the artificial nature of literary texts. In the Argentine translation, the narrator's self-referential utterance is eliminated and replaced by "Camilo se disponia a hablar" ("El incrédulo" 7), which resembles the English version: "He was about to speak" (Goldberg 67). Both translations remove the first person as an undesirable anomaly.

Later in the story, Machado de Assis humanizes the fortune teller's house: "A casa olhava para elle" ("The house was looking at him") (Machado de Assis 13). The narrator inverts the natural order of things to convey Camillo's anguish and distorted perception of reality. Camillo is so desperate for answers that he assigns mysterious qualities to the fortune teller's house. According to the narrator, Camillo feels the house is addressing him in some way. The Argentine version eliminates this trope and replaces it with a plain location statement: "La casa estaba enfrente" ("El incrédulo" 7), while the English translation reproduces the trope, but domesticates it with the word "seemed": "The house seemed to look right at him" (Goldberg 77). Although the English version is closer to the original, none of the translators dared to preserve the prosopopoeia. The new phrasings are not as effective as the original in terms of conveying Camillo's momentary neurosis.

The changes in punctuation, linguistic register, and the

elimination of some of Machado de Assis's narrative devices in both the Argentine and English translations result in a loss of what Zhu calls the "expressive energy" (613) of the original text.

Now, I will delve into the singularities of the Argentine translation. As indicated before, aside from the change in the title and the inclusion of some exclamation marks at the beginning, the Argentine translation is low on creative additions. The Argentine translation is characterized by a higher prevalence of errors, more conciseness due to omissions, and word choice that reduces intensity. None of these aspects are present in Goldberg's English translation, which I will discuss later in more detail.

Regarding the typos and inaccuracies of the Argentine translation, the most obvious example is "Rita" ("El incrédulo" 7). There is also a short sentence with an accent missing and a gender agreement mistake: "Cómo de allí llegaron al amor *el* nunca *la* supo" (7; my emphasis). In the original Portuguese, it is: "Como dahi chegaram ao amor, não o soube elle nunca" ("How they went from there to love, he never knew") (Machado de Assis 7). It should have been "Cómo de allí llegaron al amor *él* nunca *lo* supo." The personal pronoun "él" is accentuated throughout the rest of the Argentine translation, meaning that the missing accent in this sentence was due to carelessness, not to the use of different accentuation norms. Additionally, the Argentine translation has a preposition error that results in a change of meaning: "Camilo era un ingenuo *de* vida moral y práctica" ("El incrédulo" 7; my emphasis). This phrasing fails to convey the sense of the original: "Camillo era um ingenuo *na* vida moral e pratica" (Machado de Assis 6-7; my emphasis). Goldberg's translation expresses the correct meaning: "Camillo was but a child in moral and practical life" (69). The Argentine version makes Camillo look moral and practical, not as someone who is naive or inexperienced in moral and practical life. Inaccurate word choice is an issue as well. The Argentine translation replaces the word "active" with the word "attractive" for no apparent reason: "solo el interés es atractivo y pródigo" ("El incrédulo" 7). In the Portuguese text we have: "só o interesse é activo e prodigo" ("only interest is active and prodigal") (9). Finally, the phrase "lo hacía *aparentar* más viejo" ("El incrédulo" 7; my emphasis), referring to Villela, reflects an incorrect use of Spanish. It should have been either "Lo hacía parecer más viejo" or "Lo hacía aparentar más edad." All these inaccuracies contest the thesis that Borges, the Argentine erudite, carried out this translation.

The Argentine translation also suppresses some sentences and words. Although omissions do not cause significant meaning alterations, they contribute to a more succinct style.² For example, the Argentine translation omits some details regarding Camillo and Rita's relationship. This sentence from the Portuguese original is not present in the Argentine translation: "Liam os mesmos livros, iam juntos a theatros e passeios" ("They read the same books, went together to theatres and walks") (Machado de Assis 7). Also, when describing the stairs that lead to the fortune teller's house, Machado de Assis conveys a stronger sense of materiality and

detail: "os degráos comidos dos pés" ("the stairs eaten by the feet") (14). However, the Argentine translation is shorter and more generic: "los escalones gastados" ("El incrédulo" 7).

On the other hand, word choice sometimes results in a loss of intensity. At the beginning of the story, in the Portuguese original, Machado de Assis compares Rita to a snake that suffocates Camillo in a "espasmo" ("spasm") (8). The Portuguese word "espasmo" changes to "abrazo" in the Argentine version ("El incrédulo" 7), which is much more benign. Similarly, Camillo's "susto" with being discovered by his best friend (Machado de Assis 15) turns into just "preocupación" in the Argentine translation ("El incrédulo" 7). By the same token, the act of physically knocking the fortune teller's door in desperation vanishes from the Argentine translation. The Portuguese word "bater" ("to knock") (Machado de Assis 14) gives way to the much milder "llamar" ("El incrédulo" 7). Machado de Assis used "communicative clues" to create a dramatic effect; however, as noted, some of these clues were suppressed in the Argentine translation creating a much flatter version of the story.

I will now proceed to examine the particularities of Goldberg's English translation. After a close reading of this version, it becomes evident that it is not only a linguistic translation, but also a stylistic transformation and adaptation to the taste of the US readership. Goldberg modified the "expressive energy" of the original text by adding new elements that are not to be found in the Portuguese original, such as adjectives, metaphorical elaborations, idiomatic expressions, exaggerations, and his own sense of humor. The number of additions totals more than forty.

Goldberg reworks descriptions and assigns new qualities to objects and persons. When Machado de Assis writes that Rita's mouth is "fina e interrogativa" ("thin and interrogative") (6), Goldberg omits the thinness and incorporates a couple of extra qualities: "*plastic and piquantly* inquiring" (50; my emphasis). By way of this reinterpretation of Rita's mouth, Goldberg makes her look more audacious adding new "expressive energy" to the text. Goldberg even reverses Machado de Assis's rendering of Rita's eyes as "teimosos" ("stubborn") (7) by portraying them as "timorous" (70), which is the contrary of stubborn. This creates a paradox in Rita's face, which, according to Goldberg, combines timid eyes with piquant lips. Goldberg also reimagines the banister at the fortune teller's house as "*smooth and sticky*" (78; my emphasis), while Machado de Assis only depicts it as sticky. These additions incorporate new textures and features to the story, characters, and scenarios.

Contrary to the Argentine version's propensity to soften descriptions, Goldberg tends to exaggerate. The most evident example of this is the representation of Rita's dead body. With his usual dryness, Machado de Assis writes "sobre o canapé, estava Rita morta e ensanguentada" ("on the sofa, there was Rita dead and bloody") (19). However, Goldberg dramatizes the scene and writes that Rita was "dead in a *pool* of blood" (83; my emphasis). Similarly, he re-elaborates Machado de Assis's depiction of Rita as

a suffocating serpent by including a pair of fangs that are absent in the original. Goldberg writes: "she was crushing his bones, darting her venomous fangs into his lips" (71), whereas Machado de Assis uses a less aggressive image and chooses not to victimize Camillo as much: "fez-lhe estalar os ossos n'um espasmo, e pingou-lhe o veneno na bocca" ("made his bones crack in a spasm and dripped the poison into his mouth") (8). Another instance of exaggeration is present in the scene where Camillo meets the fortune teller. In the original, the fortune teller says to Camillo: "Vejamos primeiro o que é que o traz aqui. O senhor tem um grande susto" ("First, let us see what brings you here. The gentleman has a great fear") (Machado de Assis 15). When Goldberg translates this passage, he adds a phrase—"received a severe shock"—that is absent from the original: "Let us first see what has brought you here. The gentleman has *just received a severe shock* and is in great fear" (79; my emphasis). Also, the needless addition of the word "very" in several instances also reveals Goldberg's intention to escalate tension and suspense, a pattern that together with the indicated exaggerations, altered Machado de Assis's delicate balance between dryness, irony, and drama.

Humor, metaphors, and idiomatic expressions are an important part of Goldberg's repertoire as well. When describing the fortune teller's teeth, Machado de Assis writes "duas fileiras de dentes que desmentiam as unhas" ("two rows of teeth that belied the nails") (16), meaning that the teeth were so repulsive that they made her also repulsive nails look decent. Goldberg reworked this image with his own ludicrous remark: "two rows of teeth that were as white as her nails were black" (80). Apart from the comical, Goldberg emphasizes the shadowy. When describing the staircase leading to the fortune teller's attic, he says they "*buried* in deeper gloom" (78; my emphasis). This metaphorical touch contrasts with Machado de Assis's more dry and colloquial account. For Machado de Assis, the staircase was just "peior que a primeira e mais escura" ("worse than the first one and darker") (14). Goldberg also ventures with idioms. At one point, Rita talks to Camillo in a way that bears the indistinguishable stamp of Americanness—"don't poke fun at me" (66)—. In the original Portuguese text, we find: "Não ria de mim, não ria" ("Don't laugh at me, don't laugh") (Machado de Assis 4). Though Goldberg only uses this kind of expressions occasionally, they contribute to culturally adapt the story to the US readership.

Goldberg's explanatory remarks also deserve a comment. Interestingly, the English version is full of attempts to "clarify" Machado de Assis's intentional ambiguities. The Brazilian author sought to stimulate the active participation of the reader by deliberately creating spaces of vagueness or imprecision. Machado de Assis's implied reader is expected to contemplate these ambiguities and fill in the blanks. However, Goldberg took matters in his own hands by filling in some of the blanks. By doing the reader's job, Goldberg altered the "communicative clues" originally left by the author and reduced the participatory nature of the text.

In the opening paragraph, Machado de Assis refuses to

explicitly reveal the link between Camillo and Rita, in order for the reader to infer this later: "Hamlet observa a Horacio que ha mais cousas no ceu e na terra do que sonha a nossa philosophia. Era a mesma explicação que dava a bella Rita ao moço Camillo, n'uma sexta-feira de Novembro de 1869" (Machado de Assis 3). However, Goldberg "resolves" this vagueness by adding the word "lover" in that paragraph and clarifying the connection between Camillo and Rita from the very beginning: "Hamlet observes to Horatio that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. This was the selfsame explanation that was given by beautiful Rita to her *lover*, Camillo, on a certain Friday of November, 1869" (65; my emphasis). Goldberg adds needless hints as if anxious about the readability of his own translation. After Camillo receives the menacing letters, Rita decides to take the envelopes home, so if any letter came with the same handwriting, she would be able to intercept it. In his translation, Goldberg assigns an artificial and hyper-explanatory tone to Rita: "'Very well,' she said. 'Give me the envelopes *in which the letters came*, so that I may compare the handwriting with that of the mail which comes to him. *If any arrives with writing resembling the anonymous script*, I'll keep it and tear it up'" (72-73; my emphasis). The parts in italics are additions and are not present in the original. Machado de Assis has Rita say the same more naturally and without stating the obvious: "Bem, disse ella; eu levo os sobrescriptos para comparar a letra com a das cartas que lá apparecerem; se alguma fôr igual, guardo-a e rasgo-a" ("Alright, she said; I'll take the envelopes to compare the handwriting with the letters that appear there; if any are the same, I'll keep them and tear them up") (10). Goldberg's anxiety over precision is also present in the initial remarks about how Rita and Camillo's friendship turned into a romantic affair. Machado de Assis writes "Como daí chegaram ao amor, não o soube ele nunca" ("How they got to love from there, he never knew") (7), which Goldberg translates as "Just how *this intimacy between Camillo and Rita* grew to love he never knew" (69). The parts in italics are unnecessary. Whereas Machado de Assis omits the names of the characters, Goldberg identifies them by name to eliminate any doubts about who the narrator is referring to, and he does this repeatedly throughout the text. Some of Goldberg's additional remarks make the text sound as if addressed to novice readers.

It was not the objective of this essay to determine the superiority of one translation over the other, but rather to examine the similarities and differences between the two texts vis-à-vis the Portuguese original and reflect about how Machado de Assis was read in Latin America and the US. The differences between the two translations are manifest: while the Argentine version has more errors and tends to eliminate words and mitigate the intensity of some descriptions, Goldberg takes more liberties, over-dramatizing and over-explaining some scenes, as well as reimagining new attitudes for the characters to make them more appealing to the US readership. Despite these differences, it is interesting that both translations reject some of the most original aspects of Machado de

Assis's writing such as colloquialism and self-reflexivity. The reasons why some of Machado de Assis's style marks were suppressed are not to be found in the target languages. Machado de Assis's enumerative and informal style and his taste for ambiguity and self-referentiality could have been reproduced both in Spanish and English. I cannot determine with precision the reasons why the

translators omitted these style marks or communicative clues. Yet, it can be argued that they did not consider them to be crucial, which is an indication of how the Brazilian writer's aesthetic program was not fully understood, not even by his translators, during the first half of the 20th century.

NOTES

¹ All Portuguese to English translations in parentheses are my own

² For more insights on omissions, see Antelo's analysis about the removal of the word "outras" ("other") in the first paragraph of the Argentine translation.

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