

A post-colonial study, using semiotics, on classic book covers edited in Brazil and the United States

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Abstract

The control exercised by the countries of the Global North over the colonized nations is reflected in the cultural and ideological contexts of these societies. One of these reflections is found in classic book covers, which are the object of this research that analyzes how the Global North and Global South are represented in the graphic design of Brazilian and American classic book covers edited in Brazil and the United States. A semiotic analysis of the content and the expression plans was performed on 304 book covers, based on the theory formulated by Jean-Marie Floch. Within the set of works analyzed, we sought to verify the existence of geopolitical elements in the graphic design of book covers, at what level American symbols are reinforced on the covers edited in Brazil, and how the Brazilian symbols appear on the covers edited in the United States. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism was used as the basis for this verification, and it was observed that Brazilian titles, when published in the United States, are loaded with stereotypes created by the West, while American books, when published in Brazil, reflect the same representations found on the covers of that country.

Keywords: Postcolonialism. Orientalism. Book cover. Geopolitical elements. Semiotics.

Um estudo pós-colonial, com o uso da semiótica, sobre capas de livros clássicos editados no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos

Resumo

O controle exercido pelos países do Norte global sobre as nações que foram colonizadas se reflete nos contextos culturais e ideológicos dessas sociedades. Um desses reflexos é encontrado em capas de livros clássicos, que são o objeto desta pesquisa, a qual pretende analisar como são representados o Norte e o Sul globais no projeto gráfico de capas de livros clássicos brasileiros e estadunidenses. Para alcançar esse objetivo, foi realizada uma análise semiótica dos planos de conteúdo e da expressão em 304 capas de livros, com base na teoria formulada por Jean-Marie Floch. No conjunto de obras estudadas, buscou-se verificar elementos geopolíticos no projeto gráfico de capas, em que nível os elementos estadunidenses são reforçados nas capas editadas no Brasil e como os itens brasileiros aparecem nas capas editadas nos Estados Unidos. Para tanto, utilizou-se a teoria de Edward Said sobre orientalismo como base para essa verificação, observando-se que os títulos brasileiros, quando editados nos Estados Unidos, são carregados de estereótipos criados pelo Ocidente, enquanto os livros estadunidenses, quando editados no Brasil, refletem as mesmas representações encontradas nas capas daquele país.

Palavras-chave: Pós-colonialismo. Orientalismo. Capa de livro. Elementos geopolíticos. Semiótica.

Un estudio poscolonial, utilizando la semiótica, sobre portadas de libros clásicos editados en Brasil y Estados Unidos

Resumen

El control ejercido por los países del norte global sobre las naciones colonizadas se refleja en los contextos culturales e ideológicos de esas sociedades. Uno de esos reflejos se encuentra en las portadas de libros clásicos, que son el objeto de esta investigación que pretende analizar cómo el norte global y el sur global están representados en el diseño gráfico de portadas de libros clásicos brasileños y estadounidenses. Para lograr este objetivo, se realizó un análisis semiótico de los planos de contenido y de expresión en 304 portadas de libros, basado en la teoría formulada por Jean-Marie Floch. Dentro del conjunto de obras analizadas, se intentó verificar la existencia de elementos geopolíticos en el diseño gráfico de portadas de libros y hasta qué punto se refuerzan los símbolos estadounidenses en las portadas editadas en Brasil y cómo aparecen los símbolos brasileños en las portadas editadas en Estados Unidos. Para ello, se utilizó la teoría del orientalismo de Edward Said como base para esta verificación y se observó que los títulos brasileños, cuando se publican en Estados Unidos, están cargados de estereotipos creados por Occidente, mientras que los libros estadounidenses, cuando se publican en Brasil, reflejan las mismas representaciones que se encuentran en las portadas de ese país.

Palabras clave: Poscolonialismo. Orientalismo. Tapa de libro. Elementos geopolíticos. Semiótica.

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INTRODUCTION

Colonialism by the Global North is still experienced today by societies in the Global South (Young, 2003), determining what is considered to be developed and underdeveloped and the paths to achieving development (McEwan, 2018). This control is expressed in a number of cultural and ideological scenarios, given that colonizers have always treated those colonized as inferior beings who need salvation and assistance in reaching a state of civilization. This vision has thus become an ideological justification for the Eurocentric world to act imperialistically in the rest of the world (Mignolo, 2011).

One of the most prominent post-colonialist authors in the discussion on how the North relates imperialistically to the South is Edward Said. His central theory concerns orientalism (Said, 2007), in which he outlines the bases upon which the Eurocentric world defines the East. In this process, Eurocentric thinkers have created an image that distorts who oriental people are, while also extolling their own superiority. According to the author, one way in which this occurs is when the Eurocentric world attempts to group 'other' peoples together under terminology that, in the eyes of the colonizers, may seem like common sense, such as America, The West, The East and Islam. However, in doing so they minimize the diversity of these peoples and invent collective identities that, in truth, serve merely to reinforce stereotypes, the principal function of which is to make that which is different appear more familiar.

In this process of colonization, cultural complexities that are inherent to all peoples are displaced, thus undermining their stories and identities. Over time, these cultural aspects are being lost. Consequently, Said explains, oriental people only exist in the world from the standpoint of people from The West, whose vision always compares 'the other', who they undervalue and assume lacking in development, with themselves. As such, the people from The East are a representation, an image, that has little to do with what they actually are (Said, 2007).

The colonial process discussed by Said has been spreading across the globe, and one way this has been facilitated is through the spread of books and literature from the North. On the one hand, the Eurocentric world is producing sophisticated literature that affirms its intellectual and cultural importance to the rest of the world and, on the other, the South is seeking nationalistic and patriotic expression, cultural and historical appreciation and local knowledge, in its literary expression (Bosi, 2004).

In addition to narrative content, another element related to books that also exhibits colonial profiling is the graphic design of book covers. Books have been used to illustrate differences in how the North and the South are portrayed, but principally regarding their covers (Heller, 2011). However, the study of book covers, particularly by authors from different disciplines, is not common (Camargo, 2016; Hanes, 2014; Machado, 2017; Melo, 2014), and research that associates such visual features with the post-colonial debate are even more scarce.

The same is true for the world of marketing. While some research in this area has been dedicated to analyzing books, publishers and consumer behavior around these products (Noorda, 2019; Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster, 2019), little is, in fact, said about the nature of graphic illustration in books, such as their covers and the way in which they are used for colonial ends. Both the book cover and the contents are important for research of this type. In Brazil particularly, when the number of readers increased, in the 1950s, due to a rise in the number of people attending university, publishers had to improve their strategies in order to attract new consumers. Thus, marketing practices were incorporated in book design and their covers came to be treated as "tools of seduction at point of sales" (Melo, 2014). Therefore, although there is a clear connection between marketing and book covers, the geopolitical link between these elements receives little attention.

This should come as no surprise given that post-colonial discussions have been largely ignored, with little recognition being given to the way in which North-South relations are kept structurally unequal and thus feed into asymmetric power distribution between the two (Jack, 2008; Varman, 2018). However, more recently, other authors have broken away from this tradition, demonstrating how marketing has been used as an element of colonization by the North (Nurchahya, Hafiar & Nugraha, 2018; Touzani, Hirschman & Smaoui, 2016; Varman & Costa, 2013). Like Said (2007), these authors show how certain circumstances associated with the South are controlled by the North (Touzani et al., 2016) and are then (re)constructed with the aim of representing these realities as places that are culturally and epistemologically backward, marginalized and dependent (Varman, 2018; Varman & Costa, 2013).

By following this line of critical research, this article seeks to analyze how the global north and south are represented in the graphic design of classical book covers in Brazil and in the United States. In order to achieve this objective, a semiotic analysis of 304 book covers was carried out as described, using the theories on orientalism, developed by Said (2007), as a basis.

In addition to this Introduction, this article contains a further five sections. The second chapter discusses Said's theories on orientalism. The third chapter explores the methodology used for data collection and analysis of the research material. The fourth chapter is an analysis of the research findings. The fifth chapter is a discussion of the data analysis. Finally, the sixth chapter outlines the final conclusions of the research.

EDWARD SAID AND ORIENTALISM

Orientalism is one of the theories of post-colonial research which discuss the power some peoples hold over others when the former withholds control over what knowledge is and how it is used (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007). On the basis of this concept of power, Edward Said came to his interpretation of orientalism, in an attempt to show how the North controls the South, even though colonization has ended (Ashcroft et al., 2007).

It is important to stress that when North and South are referred to here, we are not talking merely from a geographical standpoint in defining these concepts. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, these classifications are, in fact, epistemological, and there may be a number of 'Global Souths' in the North and 'Global Norths' in the South. However, "given the unequal development of capitalism and the persistence of occidental-centric colonialism, the epistemological South and the geographical South are partially superimposed, particularly with regards to countries that have been subjected to historical colonialism" (Santos, 2019). At the time when Said developed his theory, however, the same type of principal was in use. Although France, Great Britain and the United States are the references used by the author to represent the Occident and its relationship to the Orient – i.e. Asia and the Middle East – this choice came about purely for practical purposes. His focus, in fact, was to present the 'historical generalizations' (Said, 2007) that the Occidental episteme created to develop the concept of orientalism.

Said (2007) developed his theory based on this understanding, rooted in an ontological and epistemological distinction between Orient and Occident. According to him, the Orient was molded by occidental culture as a place where exoticism, charm and magic are part of daily life, in contrast to the occidental episteme which is dominated by knowledge and rationality. Thus, a cultural Eurocentric hegemony was created that reinforced the belief among the peoples who originate from these places that they have a culturally superior identity in relation to non-Eurocentric peoples (Memmi, 1992).

In this way, the Orient came to be portrayed as a backward place and in need of salvation. Because of this, the wisdom, understanding, meanings, patterns and forms of expression of these non-Eurocentric peoples were subordinated by colonizers (Spivak, 2010), who imposed their own beliefs, expressions and images on those being colonized, in a form of social and cultural control (Bhabha, 1994), transforming Eurocentric culture into a universal model to be adopted by everyone (Castro-Goméz, 2002).

Therefore, by creating these comparisons between epistemic spaces, the Eurocentric world started to define what it is to be oriental and furthermore, what it is to be occidental. As such the Orient only exists in the world in the way the Occident represents it, in a process of constant comparison between it and 'the other', by means of which 'they' are seen as inferior to 'us' because they have not reached 'our' level of development (Said, 2007). An oriental person is no more than a representation/image that distorts who the individual actually is and changes their essence (Bhabha, 1994). The occidental person represents the apex of modern civilization, because unlike their oriental equivalent they have evolved and are now at the center of the world (Said, 2007).

Said (2007) explains that the concept of the 'other' emerges from this 'artificial' distancing between one epistemic space and another, and is created with the aim of clarifying the supposed ontological and epistemological separation between the colonizer and the colonized group. Thus, the dominating subject acquires a sense of retaining power and the dominated subject then believes they are the dependent. Within this process, the colonized group becomes objectified, while the colonizer is an individual, with a sense of self that is constituted "within oneself and for oneself by means of one's discourse and capacity for reflection" (Quijano, 2007). Furthermore, the object is considered to be external in relation to the subject, in other words, someone who is different in nature.

Said's theory of orientalism has provided researchers in the South with a critical perspective that has allowed them to break away from Eurocentric traditions and hold in check the control that the North still wields over the rest of the world. Several different areas of knowledge have drawn on these arguments, including that of marketing (Jack, 2008; Varman, 2018). In their inquiries, researchers who take a critical stance show how the North imposed its way of thinking on the South, even though this Eurocentric approach was of little use in explaining their realities, and erased the local knowledge that had been created by those to whom it was actually pertinent (Varman & Sreekumar, 2015). In doing so, the North created a sense of dependence on foreign knowledge among institutions in the South, as they came to believe it was better and more suitable for solving their problems (Rodrigues & Hemais, 2020). From the critical perspective of thinkers in this area, it can be seen that Said's theories (2007) are apt for analyzing post-colonial phenomena in marketing, including the one chosen for this research.

METHODOLOGY

The book covers that are the object of this research were analyzed using the French approach to semiotic discourse. Although this theoretical methodological approach is more common in interpretative marketing studies (Lima & Pessôa, 2018) and in communications and branding (Lawes, 2020) than in critical ones, there is evidence that semiotics can be suitably applied as analytical methodology in post-colonial research (Carlson, 2008; Mignolo, 2009), as well as within the area (Hemais, Pessôa & Barros, 2019), which supports the choice made here.

Throughout this research, drawing on the theory formulated by Jean-Marie Floch, the planes of content and expression were observed. Together, these two planes lead to the semi-symbolic systems, "that are defined not by conformity between the isolated elements of the two planes, but **between** the categories of expression and categories of content" (Floch, 2001, our emphasis).

The meanings of the text, which in semiotics can be verbal, visual or a fusion, are firstly analyzed using the mechanisms and procedures of the plane of content. The methodology of this analysis was conceived in the form of a generative path of the senses (Greimas & Courtés, 2008). In the analyses of the book covers, the third stage of this path was used: the level of discourse, considered to be the most complex and concrete. For this, the elements that appear on the surface of the text, i.e. the themes and figures that feature on the covers, were observed in the plane of content.

Throughout the stories told in the books that form the corpus of the research, a theme emerges through which semantic aspects of discourse appear in an abstract form. In the pictures, on the other hand, these features appear as sensorial effects, whether in colors and shapes or in symbols that produce effects of reality when they are acknowledged to be figures from the real world (Barros, 2003).

After analysis of the plane of content had been carried out, the plane of expression was investigated. According to Teixeira (2008), the categories of the plane of expression are what shape meaning. In this analysis the chromatic, eidetic and topological categories were used. While the first concerns the combination of colors, the second takes into account the relationship between shapes and the third is related to the position and direction of shapes in space.

In order to maintain the post-colonial perspective of this research, semiotic analyses were carried out in conjunction with others based on theories of orientalism. Said (2007) explains that the Orient is a cultural representation designed by the Eurocentric world and bears little relationship to the reality of this 'other' epistemological space. However, this is the representation that has spread throughout the world and which modulates the asymmetrical relationship between North and South. Thus, through analyzing the covers of classical North American and Brazilian books, we sought to understand whether the images illustrate this asymmetry of representations, which justifies our choosing of Said's theories (2007) as the approach for carrying out this research.

Although the investigation carried out in this research focused on analyzing classical book covers from two countries, one associated with the North and the other with the South, the choice of the United States and Brazil should be understood as representative of the epistemologies of colonizer and colonized, rather than as actual geographical locations. Indeed, as

Santos (2019) explains and as cited above, 'global souths' can be found in the North and 'global norths' in the South. The choice to base the analysis on book covers from the United States to represent the North was made in order to maintain the rationale adopted by Said. According to the author "since the Second World War, America has dominated the Orient," (2007) which shows the global geopolitical prominence of the country and as such justifies using it for an analysis of the concept of orientalism. In this case, from the Second World War, when the British naval blockade prevented books from Europe from being imported to Brazil, books from the New World, by both Hispanic-Americans and mainly by authors from the United States, came to represent 43% of imported books (Hallewell, 2005). Therefore, the choice of classical books from the United States is a logical one for this research, given the importance North American literary culture has historically had in Brazil.

The decision to analyze covers of classical Brazilian books is justified by the concerns expressed by local researchers regarding the way in which marketing that is locally conceived and put into practice has been controlled by the dominant epistemology of the North (Boschi, Barros & Sauerbronn, 2016; Veludo-de-Oliveira, Quintão & Urdan, 2014). Given that books are products and as such are connected with marketing (Noorda, 2019; Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster, 2019), these researchers' concerns, can be seen to encompass the graphic design of these products, as they also portray the geopolitics discussed here. These issues, however, should not be taken to be unique to Brazil, because in other non-Eurocentric countries the same type of issues surrounding graphic images on book covers are encountered (Ünsür, 2020). Thus, the problem of marketing and book covers in the South can be thought of not so much as a geographical issue but rather as an epistemic one, relevant to anywhere that pertains to a particular episteme. Therefore, in this sense, the selection of Brazil for the analysis of classical book covers is a suitable one, as representations are similar to those of other countries in the South.

The Brazilian book covers were pre-selected after consultation of the publication *História concisa da literatura brasileira (A Concise History of Brazilian Literature)*, by Alfredo Bosi (2004). A selection was made of the most important titles in the literary movements of romanticism, realism, before modernism and modernism.

Following this stage, research was carried out on *Estante Virtual*¹ an online second-hand book shop. The classics are on the sites list of titles that sell most copies. This check made it possible to verify which of the most important books in the literary genres cited above were among those most sold in Brazil. Next, research was carried out on a number of national and international sites to find which of the books had the greatest diversity of covers and which would therefore be best suited to the diachronic aims of this study, in trying to find similarities in purposes in the different book covers. Finally, four Brazilian classics were selected: *Iracema* (1865), by José de Alencar; *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (1881), by Machado de Assis; *Os Sertões* (1902), by Euclides da Cunha; and *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (1958), by Jorge Amado.

The choice of North American books was made after consulting the publication, *Outline of American Literature* by Kathryn VanSpanckeren (2006), published by the US State Department, which provided information on the books that are considered to be classics in the country. Next, the books with the most diverse covers published, in both Brazil and in the United States, were chosen with the total number of books coming to four: *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), by James Fenimore Cooper; *Moby Dick* (1851), by Herman Melville; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), by Harriet Beecher Stowe and *The Great Gatsby* (1925), by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In line with the method adopted by Pessôa (2013), "The phase of gathering research material abided by criteria of relevance and representativity in order to allow for the identification of the most important discourse strategies," for the body of work being analyzed.

Once the covers had been gathered, they were observed in conjunction, as though on a mood board,² in order to identify the symbols that appeared most frequently, as done by Pessôa, Barros and Costa (2017). This process made it possible to establish four categories that show how the symbols that surround the construction of book covers are employed. They are: image of the author – in either an illustration, caricature or photo of the author of the book; pictures of the characters from the story; landscapes – with photographs, illustrations and paintings that refer to the universe presented in the stories, and symbols which not include human figures as their principal type of expression. The images that compose these covers represent ideas or storylines that are told in the books.

¹ Retrieved from www.estantevirtual.com.br/livros-mais-vendidos/literatura-brasileira

² Mural, with pictures, for visual organization of ideas.

A small number were found of 'all type' compositions, visual montages made up of purely verbal text, without pictures. These were not included in the analysis, as the main objective was to identify the meaning of the visual symbols on book covers. Not all the titles have covers in all the categories. The focus of this study is of the covers of classics published after 1950, a period during which North American culture started to spread into Brazilian society more intensely (Hallewell, 2005).

A total of 440 covers were selected. Editions adapted for children and young people were not analyzed, neither were those that on close inspection were found to be from the UK and not North America. Books from the same publisher with minor graphic changes which therefore did not warrant analysis as they were similar were also not included, neither were publications that did not fulfil the criterion of having been published after the 1950s. Once these cases had been eliminated from the total of 440, the remaining 304 covers were analyzed.

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF CLASSICAL NORTH AMERICAN AND BRAZILIAN BOOK COVERS

The first point that was noted was the large number of North American book covers published in Brazil. The same is not true of Brazilian works published in the United States, where there are fewer covers of Brazilian titles and less attention is given to the composition of layouts than foreign covers receive here.

The large number of covers in the category 'pictures of characters' occurs in both North American and Brazilian titles, published in their respective countries. It was perceived that Brazilian publishers are loyal to the characteristics of the foreign characters. However, in the case of Brazilian books, the characters disappear from covers published in the United States.

On the covers of *The Great Gatsby* that were analyzed, for example, the Brazilian publishers L&PM, used the same image³ that was used overseas, only changing the text to Portuguese (Figure 1). None of the North American publishers from the sample analyzed did this on the covers of Brazilian titles.

Figure 1
Comparison between the L&PM cover and the Oxford University Press Cover

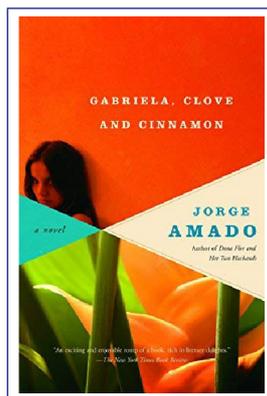


Source: Publisher L&PM (2004) and Oxford University Press (1998).

An exception was found on the covers of one of Jorge Amado's novels. All the North American covers of *Gabriela, cravo e canela* analyzed carried a picture of the main character. However, the image is not loyal to the characteristics of Gabriela. On the publisher Alfred Knopf's 2006 cover, for example, Gabriela is portrayed as a young woman with a salacious expression (Figure 2). The picture is not reminiscent of Jorge Amado's Gabriela, a migrant from the countryside who went to the city in search of a better life.

³ A reproduction of the work of art *Jeune fille en vert*, 1927-1930, by the artist Tamara de Lempicka. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2ydBwy6>

Figure 2
Publisher Alfred Knopf (2006)



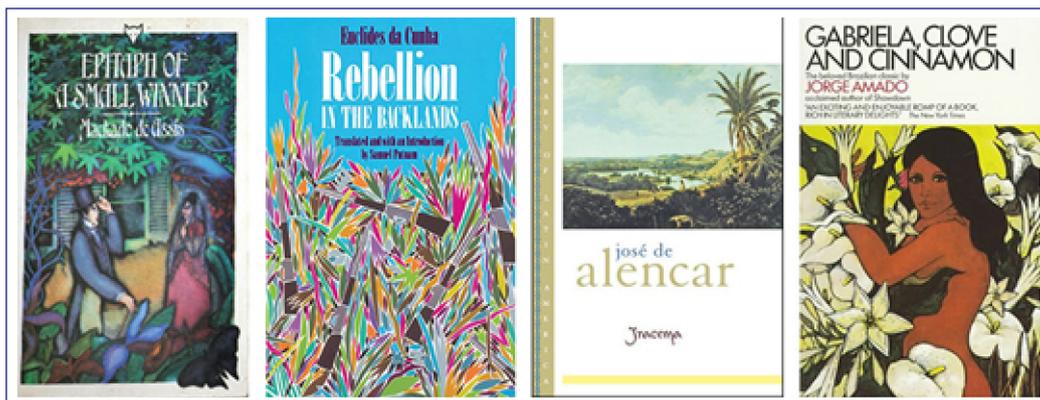
Source: Knopf (2006).

The cover by Avon Books, from 1967, once again shows a naked Gabriela, sensual and surrounded by lilies (Figure 3) which are not native to Brazil and do not grow in tropical regions.

A lack of understanding of Brazilian culture is apparent on the covers of the North American publishers. This can be seen in examples of cultural references from other countries and graphic styles that are not and never were those adopted by Brazilian artists, such as the similarity of the lines on the illustration of *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* to the works of Paul Klee and the use, by a different publisher, of a Mexican-style skull on the cover of the same novel.

In the sample analyzed, none of the North American book covers released by Brazilian publishers refers to the flag of the United States, nor do they use predominantly blue and red colors. However, on the Brazilian book covers published in the United States, the colors green and yellow can be seen, for example, in the illustration for *Iracema*. There are also images of plants, foliage and forests. This was the same on all the Brazilian titles published in the United States that were analyzed, which reinforces the stereotype that Brazil is a wild place (Scheyerl & Siqueira, 2008) (Figure 3).

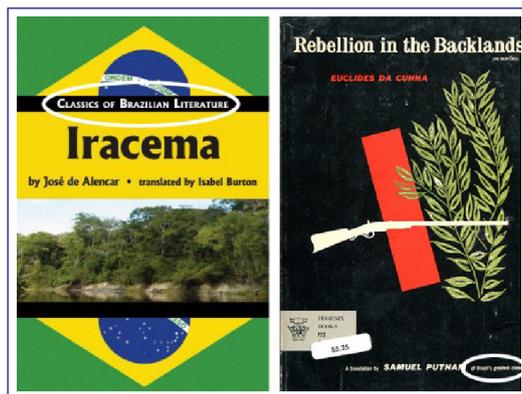
Figure 3
Plants, foliage and forests on the covers of Brazilian titles released by North American publishers



Source: Trafalgar Square (1985), University of Chicago Press (2010, 2000) and Avon Books (1967).

The use of terms that indicate that the work is Brazilian or Latin American literature or that the author is Brazilian is common on the covers of North American covers of Brazilian books (Figure 4). However, this type of information does not appear on North American books published in Brazil. These works are considered to be world classics and as such not to require a specification of origin. The classifications that are used are: celebrated work, universal classic, a classic of universal literature, a literary classic in translation and in the specific case of the 2007 cover of *The Great Gatsby* by the publishers BestBolso, “a great classic of modern North American literature” (Figure 5).

Figure 4
Classics of Brazilian literature and Brazil's greatest classic



Source: Luso-Brazilian Books (2008) and University of Chicago Press (1957).

Figure 5
Universal classic and a great classic of North American literature



Source: Editora Melhoramentos (2008) BestBolso (2007).

In Brazil, special editions of all the sample of North American titles were released, with sophisticated graphic design, hardback covers and exclusive illustrations (Figure 6). The same does not appear to have happened in North America as no special edition cover of any Brazilian titles was found among the sample.

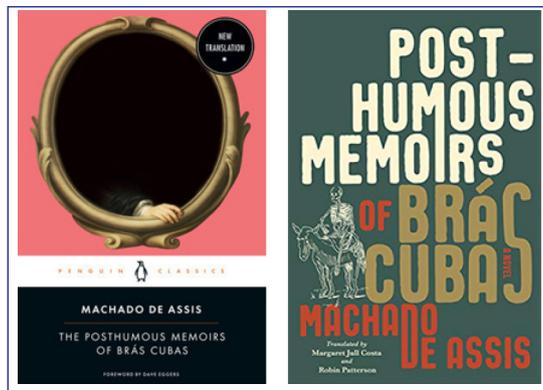
Figure 6
Special editions of North American titles published in Brazil



Source: Editora Cosac Naify (2008), Editora Geração Editorial (2013), Carambaia (2018) and Editora Nova Fronteira (2018).

The novel that had the most editions in the United States was *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*. In 2020, the North American companies Penguin and Liveright published this work by Machado de Assis and unlike the other Brazilian novels in the sample they paid attention to choices in graphic formatting (Figure 7).

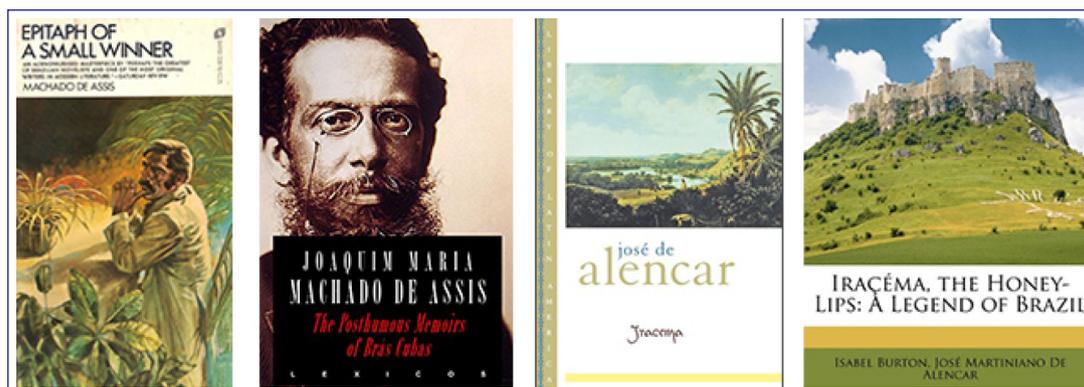
Figure 7
Penguin (2020) and Liveright (2020) Publishing houses



Source: Penguin Random House (2020) and Liveright (2020).

Some North American publishers use Machado's full name on their covers: Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, while others use only Machado de Assis. This lack of identity in terms of this Brazilian novel also occurs in the translation of the title. On some covers, the title is *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, while on others it is *Epitaph of a Small Winner*. The same was seen on the covers of *Iracema*. Sometimes the author appears as José de Alencar, and others as José Martiniano de Alencar with the name of the translator coming first and separated with a comma, giving the impression that she was the co-author. The title appears as *Iracema* and *Iraçéma, the Honey-Lips: a Legend of Brazil* (Figure 8).

Figure 8
Book covers by Brazilian authors published with different titles



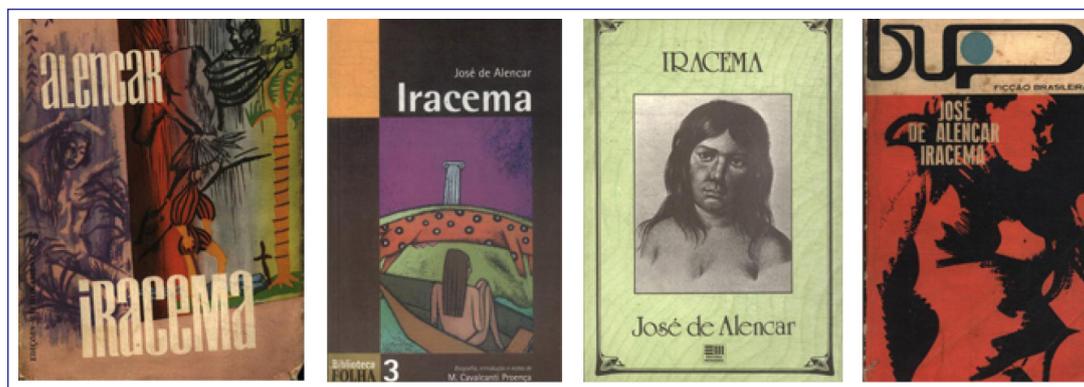
Source: Avon Books (1978), Lexicos Books (2018), Oxford University Press (2000) and Nabu Press (2010).

This lack of cohesion in different editions is not seen on the covers of North American novels released in Brazil. In the sample of *The Great Gatsby*, for example, the author and title are the same on all editions. The title of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is always the same. Some abbreviations appear of the author's name, for example, H Beecher Stowe, instead of Harriet Beecher Stowe, but no names are added. On the cover of *The Last of the Mohicans*, an abbreviation of the same nature was noted in the name of the author and in some editions the title appears in the singular – *The Last Mohican*. Nevertheless, there are no examples of completely different titles for the same piece of work.

Despite being the North American title with the fewest editions in Brazil, *Moby Dick* has the highest number of special graphic designs and has covers in the category 'pictures of characters' that best interpret the theme of the novel. In Scheyerl and Siqueira's 2008 research on how foreigners view Brazil, one of the interviewees stated that they recognized a strong desire in Brazilians to imitate the culture of the United States. Speaking about the work of this author, Said (2011) remarks that Captain Ahab, one of the main characters in the book, represents the United States' desire to conquer the world. Ahab is obsessed with the whale and is unrelenting in his search for it. Perhaps, at an unconscious level, this justifies the value attributed to Melville's work, in Brazil.

It was also noted that not all the covers of Brazilian authors published in Brazil correctly reflected the themes of the books. This is evident on the covers of *Iracema* analyzed in the category "pictures of characters", which display some foreign influences, in both visual language and in the positioning of the male characters, who are presented as superior white men. On other covers of the same novel, there is a female figure either to the side or with her back to us or looking down, sadly or in a reticent or sensual style (Figure 9).

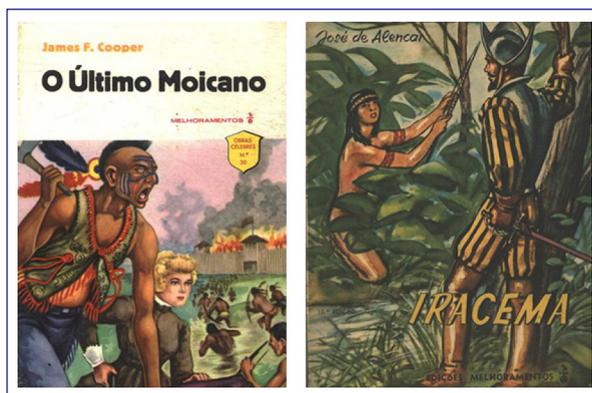
Figure 9
Covers of *Iracema*



Source: Editora Melhoramentos (1967), Editora Ediouro (1997), Editora Moderna (1984) and Editora Biblioteca Universal Popular (1964).

Although the white European man is placed in a superior position to *Iracema*, a Brazilian indigenous woman, on covers of *Iracema*, white European women are not given the same status on covers of *The Last of the Mohicans*, about a North American indigenous man. The male indigenous character from the North can be understood to be portrayed as stronger than the female character, also indigenous, from the South. (Figure 10).

Figure 10
Comparison between indigenous characters



Source: Editora Melhoramentos (1967, 1965).

Neither is the theme of the novel *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* well represented on the covers analyzed in the category 'landscape', figuring scenes of Rio de Janeiro in days gone by. One of the characteristics of Machado de Assis' realist books is the almost complete lack of description of landscapes. Emphasis is on developing a psychological profile of the characters and on philosophical reflection (Castello, 1953). Therefore, a cover depicting a landscape contributes little to reflecting the meaning of the novel (Figure 11).

Figure 11
 Covers of *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* with landscapes



Source: Editora Nova fronteira (2016) and Editora Biblioteca Azul (2007).

When characters are pictured on the cover of this novel, they are often not coherent with the storyline. The image of a joyful Brás Cubas is not in line with the pessimistic reflection he makes of life throughout the narrative. On another cover, the same painting of Belmiro de Almeida is used by another publisher to illustrate the novel *Dom Casmurro*, the theme of which is different from *Memórias Póstumas* (Figure 12).

Figure 12
 Covers with a joyful Brás Cubas and another novel using the same picture



Source: Editora Moderna (1988), Editora Ática (1991) and Editora L&PM (1997).

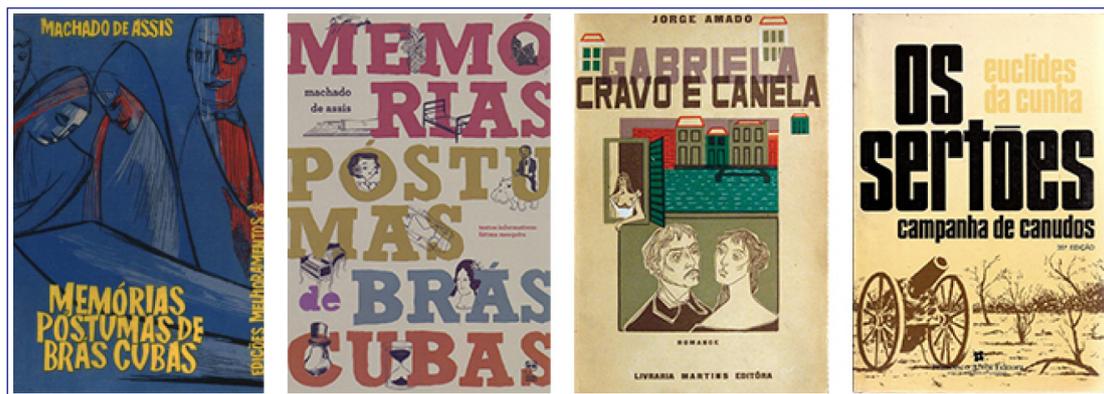
A novel that contradicts the above description is *Os Sertões*. Of the 28 covers analyzed, 26 consistently express the theme of the novel, by means of characters, symbols, landscapes and a picture of the author.

There is still interest in publishing Brazilian classics in the twenty-first century. However, appreciation of foreign writers is still great in this country, as seen previously in Figure 6. The Zahar collection of classics, by Grupo Companhia das Letras, for example, has only one title by a Brazilian author in a total of 87 publications.⁴ In 2015, they published *O Ateneu*, by Raul Pompeia, and celebrated this title's inauguration of Brazilian authors in their collection, but no further books were released.

⁴ Retrieved from zahar.com.br/classicoszahar

In spite of the negative points expressed here, a positive one is the fact that there are a number of Brazilian covers for Brazilian works, many of which are high quality (Figure 13). This reflects publishers' interest in continuing to publish and the readers' interest in continuing to consume books by national authors. The small number of covers of *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela*, in comparison with other Brazilian titles, is justified by the fact that this is the only book that has not yet entered the public domain.

Figure 13
 Brazilian covers of national works



Source: Editora Melhoramentos (1967), Editora Panda Books (2018), Editora Martins (1958) and Editora Francisco Alves (1979).

In addition, in 2016 Brazilian publishing houses, such as Carambaia, Antofágica and Ubu, starting to launch special hardback editions of Brazilian classics (Figure 14). Just a small number of the titles, which were covered in this analysis, are discussed here. Carambaia released three editions of *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*. The one that they denominate as 'special' has a cloth cover, exclusive pictures that were manually printed and only 100 numbered copies were produced. Antofágica released the same novel, with the original illustrations by Candido Portinari, previously unpublished notes and additional texts by specialists on the works of Machado de Assis. Ubu released two versions of *Os Sertões*, both containing comments, organized by Walnice Nogueira Galvão, a specialist in Euclides da Cunha, with a critical essay, reproductions of pages from the author's notebook and pictures of the only known photographic record of the conflict. The 'complete edition', as it is named by the publishers, is a box set with two volumes, the second of which is dedicated to a comparative analysis of the different versions of *Os Sertões* that were published when Euclides da Cunha was alive.

Figure 14
 Special editions of Brazilian books published by national publishing houses



Source: Editora Antofágica (2019), Ubu Editora (2019) and Editora Carambaia (2018).

POST-COLONIAL DISCUSSION ON CLASSICAL BOOK COVERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL

Said explains that the Eurocentric world has imposed itself globally as being central not only in terms of political and military force, but also because its culture is viewed – by Eurocentric people themselves – as superior and therefore as more deserving of expansion, in order to “guide and/or instruct non-European or peripheral individuals” (Said, 2011). In this process, these peoples came to internationalize their point of view about the rest of the world and to dictate how the South should be seen by everyone, including societies in the South. So, naturally, the image of what came to be this epistemic space is filtered by authors from the North, who make partial interpretations of the South, presenting an undignified image, as their ontologies and epistemologies are not qualified to see the South as different and as a locus of equal importance as their own (Said, 2007).

Through Said’s theories on orientalism, we perceive that Brazilian culture is not represented on the covers released in the United States, in a way that is as relevant as the way in which North American culture is portrayed on covers published in Brazil. The visual elements used on the original covers of North American works are maintained on Brazilian editions. The same cannot be said of covers of Brazilian titles published in the United States. What happens, therefore, is an attempt to portray the Brazilian themes in the works through the eyes of a foreigner (Said, 2007), using symbols and landscapes. The result is that a reflection of the material produced in Brazil is not seen on the North American covers, as though it were not necessary or admissible to use the graphic language from a country, they consider to be inferior, as a point of reference (Scheyerl & Siqueira, 2008).

Therefore, the way in which characters, cultures, landscapes, images, colors, authors’ names and book titles are portrayed by North American publishers on the covers of Brazilian classics is perceived to be inappropriate. In general, a certain inferiority of Brazilian society in comparison with the North is portrayed and it is deemed necessary to explain to the reader that these books are “Brazilian or Latin American” works; in other words, they are separate from the Eurocentric world and are not universal, as the North American novels are said to be. The book covers analyzed here, therefore, reinforce the hierarchy of geopolitical importance between the North and the South, the bases of comparison having been created by the Eurocentric world (Said, 2007).

Marketing, as a whole, alienates post-colonial discussions of this nature (Jack, 2008; Varman, 2018), particularly those regarding the geopolitics behind classical Brazilian and North American book covers. It has become accepted that the elements that marketing is composed of, like the P for product as analyzed here, i.e. books and their graphic designs, are always treated as non-geopolitical in the marketing literature. However, even at the level of micro-marketing, we perceive residual traces of orientalism from the North, in both this research and others originating in the South (Touzani et al., 2016; Varman & Costa, 2013). The notion that a discourse by the North on the nature of the South as being remote from the Eurocentric reality, that is created through marketing devices, among them products and advertising, permeates the research.

Reflection, from a post-colonial perspective, on what products and communications of marketing are, in particular when they are associated with businesses and organizations originating in different epistemological spaces, is important in broadening these concepts and rendering understanding of the geopolitical issues presented here less alien. In this way, it will be possible to handle marketing devices in a less ingenuous way, making the broader picture of what is actually behind the symbols and meanings they are consuming clear to consumers, particularly in the South. Perhaps, then, we can think of marketing that is in line with value principles and even sovereignty of consumers, not only in the North but also, more importantly, in the South.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to analyze how the North and the South are presented in the graphic design of classic Brazilian and North American book covers published in the two countries. To this end, a semiotic analysis of 304 covers was carried out, as described, based on Said's (2007) theory of orientalism. In the analysis presented here, geopolitical elements were identified in the graphic design of the book covers, with North American symbols being reinforced on covers edited in Brazil, replicating the editorial representations of the original country. The same, however, cannot be said about Brazilian symbols on the covers published in the United States. In the latter case, graphic motifs are used to create a representation of Brazil, in particular and of the South as a whole, that portrays the vision that the North, led by the United States, has and wants to uphold, about non-Eurocentric societies.

It is understandable that these discussions and concerns about geopolitics in marketing are the subject of little reflection in the area, given that the discipline is historically dominated by the North (Jack, 2008; Varman, 2018). It is highly likely then that researchers in this area, who follow the dominant epistemology, are unaware of the phenomenon being investigated here and of others related to post-colonial issues, as they do not experience the control that is felt by those in the South. It is up to researchers who carry this episteme of 'otherness' to shed light on the problems caused by an exogenic imposition of this extent, that restricts forms of thinking, acting and being (Said, 2007).

For this to happen, it is fundamental to look at the way marketing is practiced and created in the South, from the point of view of the epistemology of the South. Perhaps, in this way, other facets would start to appear, helping this area to identify that which is actually beneficial for consumers, in both the Eurocentric and in the non-Eurocentric worlds. It is conceivable that this observation of marketing would facilitate greater acceptance of geopolitical discussions within this area, so that, gradually, post-colonial marketing analyses, like the one presented here, may become commonplace.

During this research it was possible to perceive that some Brazilian publishers use visual compositions that do not value national culture or that negatively reinforce the image of Brazilian characters. It is therefore considered to be important for Brazilian publishers to pay closer attention to the creation of classical Brazilian book covers to avoid reinforcing distorted visions of the national culture that may reflect the idea that North has of those who live in the South without this actually being true.

According to Quijano (2007, p. 177), it is necessary to free Latin Americans from colonial power. For this, intercultural communication is needed in which there is "an exchange of experiences and meanings," allowing a premise to emerge that can "legitimately claim some level of universality". An exchange of information between Brazilian and North American publishers who have commercial links would therefore be relevant. This would encourage a suitable representation of Brazilian culture on the covers of books published in the United States, even for books in the public domain.

Future research could involve a broader analysis of graphic design in books as a whole, in other words in addition to the cover, contents could also be analyzed. Furthermore, it would be pertinent to have a hard copy of the book, as this changes the perception of the person who is doing the analysis. Other factors can be taken into consideration, such as the texture of the paper, the size of the book and the quality of the printing materials, among others.

In addition, as noted in the findings, it is important to investigate the possible causes behind Brazilian publishers' recent interest in publishing special editions of some national classics. These have distinguished features not only on the cover and in the contents, but also in the whole process of graphic production that involves researching the use of sophisticating finishing, such as specific varnishes and hot stamping, as well as the best printing to be applied in each part of the book. In order to reach a response to this, consumers of this type of product should be interviewed, i.e. consumers who are prepared to pay a higher purchase price and who see value in a high-quality publication, although aware that they could acquire a free copy of books that are in the public domain.

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