TRANSLATION AND/AS SOFT POWER: LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE U.S. DURING THE COLD WAR*[1]

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Abstract: This essay explores the growth of the field of Latin American literature in translation in the U.S. from the second World War through the 1970s. In particular, I focus on how private actors such as publishers, translators, and philanthropic organizations strategically pushed to translate literature from the region as a mode of book diplomacy, whereby publications are subsidized, translated, and disseminated as means of establishing goodwill with their authors and advocates, and, ultimately, with their Latin American compatriots. I begin by examining publisher Alfred A. Knopf's efforts to translate Latin American literature, while also exploring the translation and cultural diplomacy efforts of Harriet de Onís, Knopf's main translator for Spanish and Portuguese from 1950 through the late 1960s. Subsequently, I discuss two translation subsidy programs from the 1960s and 1970s that were founded by different Rockefeller philanthropies with an eye towards casting the U.S. and the democratic system in a positive light for Latin American writers at a time when revolutionary fervor and anti-Americanism were running high in the region. In each case, Brazilian literature and authors–including, of course, Machado de Assis–play a prominent role. I end with a brief discussion of how the move to translate Machado de Assis into English in the U.S. in the early 1950s fits into this broader panorama–or doesn't.

Keywords: Latin American Boom; U.S. philanthropic organizations; Cold War cultural diplomacy; Machado de Assis.

TRADUÇÃO E/COMO SOFT POWER: LITERATURA LATINO-AMERICANA NOS EUA DURANTE A GUERRA FRIA*

[1] A autora expressa seu agradecimento a Hélio de Seixas Guimarães, Luiz Felipe Macedo e Luciana Namorato pela revisão da tradução.

Resumo: *Este ensaio trata do crescimento do campo de traduções da literatura latino-americana nos EUA no período compreendido entre a Segunda Guerra Mundial e a década de 1970. Em particular, mostra como agentes privados – editoras, tradutores e organizações filantrópicas, por exemplo – estrategicamente impulsionaram a tradução da literatura da região como uma forma de diplomacia do livro, em que as publicações são subsidiadas, traduzidas e divulgadas como um meio de estabelecer boa vontade com seus autores e defensores e, em última análise, com seus compatriotas latino-americanos. Começo examinando os esforços do editor Alfred A. Knopf para traduzir a literatura latino-americana, ao mesmo tempo em que exploro os esforços de tradução e diplomacia cultural de Harriet de Onís, principal tradutora de Knopf para espanhol e português de 1950 até o final dos anos 1960. Posteriormente, discuto dois programas de subsídio à tradução das décadas de 1960 e 1970, criados por diferentes programas de filantropia da Fundação Rockefeller com o objetivo de apresentar os EUA e o sistema democrático de forma positiva aos escritores latino-americanos em uma época de fervor revolucionário e forte antiamericanismo na região. Em ambos os casos, a literatura e os autores brasileiros – incluindo, é claro, Machado de Assis – desempenham um papel de destaque. Concluo com uma breve discussão sobre como o movimento de traduzir Machado de Assis para o inglês nos EUA no início dos anos 1950 se encaixa, ou não, nesse panorama mais amplo.*

Palavras-chave: *Boom latino-americano; organizações filantrópicas; Guerra Fria; Diplomacia Cultural; Machado de Assis.*

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Cold War in general and the anxieties about the Cuban revolution were high in the U.S., while U.S. foreign policy and interventionism fostered anti-Americanism in Latin America, especially in intellectual circles. In this context, public and private organizations took steps to both counter the anti-Americanism and contain the spread of revolutionary politics by creating funding opportunities that would cast the U.S. in a positive light for foreign artists and intellectuals. Their motivation stemmed from the results of postwar mass communications research that indicated that the diffusion of political ideas was particularly effective through so-called "opinion leaders," respected community members who could "exert significant influence on their peers' opinion formation" and thus sway public opinion abroad towards the U.S. (ROBIN, 2001, p. 83).

A 1962 U.S. Information Agency memo on "The Intellectual in the Latin American Cultural Program" that was sent to the organization's Latin

American Policy Committee explicitly outlines the rationale for targeting the region's writers by founding translation programs and contests:

> While [the intellectual] is fundamentally a literary figure, he is a creator. Even when a scientist, his [sic] influence in his society comes almost entirely through the printed word. The printed word is fundamental to intellectual recognition. Getting something into print is not easy in most of Latin America. The accolade of translation and foreign printing is one of the highest that can be received, especially if the promise of monetary return is associated with such activity, either directly in the form of prizes, or indirectly from royalties. Medals, certificates, and public ceremonies have wide appeal as evidence of recognition. This is the kind of recognition better extended by private entities than official.[2]

In short, translation initiatives were seen as having the potential to attract Latin American intellectuals to the U.S. and its democracy and prise them away from the sway of revolutionary ideology.

Translation as/Translators and Book Diplomacy

Alfred A. and Blanche Knopf founded their publishing house, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., in 1915. They published European writers from the start, and over the years added several works from Latin America. In 1942, unable to travel to Europe for new prospects during the war, Blanche Knopf visited several Latin American countries–Colombia, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil–under the aegis of the State Department (BALCH, 1998, p. 50; ROSTAGNO, 1997, p. 31). The relationships that she established with writers and publishers, and the cultivation of the image of U.S. publishers as prestigious outlets for publication, fit in nicely with the Good Neighbor agenda. During her travels, she contracted a number of works for the firm that, in Irene Rostagno's words, "fed the officially promoted appetite for things Latin American" (ROSTAGNO, 1997, p. 33).

U.S. interest in the region waned following the war, but the Knopfs' commitment to it did not, even though the market for Latin American literature was small and it was expensive to publish as translations required

[2] Memo to the Latin American Policy Committee on "The Intellectual in the Latin American Cultural Program," May 24, 1962; Records of the USIA, Record Group (henceforth RG) 306, P9, Box 11, File 3; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (henceforth NARA).

both greater investment in publicity for authors who were often unknown in the U.S and the up-front cost of translation. Alfred A. Knopf was the first to admit that most of his company's translations of Latin American literature were done at a loss. However, the symbolic capital that he gained from doing this meant more to him than monetary returns, and he remained committed to publishing works that were more likely to become prestige items than best-sellers. In this way, Knopf, Inc. exercised significant soft power in Latin America for the U.S.: publication by the company helped Latin American writers to further their careers, which, in turn, helped to cultivate goodwill amongst their authors and, it was hoped, their readers. Thus did Gilberto Freyre (1965, p. 209), a longtime Knopf author, claim that "the presence of Alfred A. Knopf among the Latin peoples of the continent has been that of an extra-official ambassador [...] [who brought] the United States, through the charm of his personality, closer to these same Latin peoples". Indeed, de Onís's (1965, p. 203) declaration that Knopf was "a one-man Alliance for Progress" captured how his promotion of Latin American literature generated tremendous positive sentiment for the U.S. within the region.

Despite the Knopfs' efforts, though, the publication of Latin American literature in the U.S. prior to the Cuban revolution was largely piecemeal. However, the revolution prompted the movement known as the "Boom" in Spanish American literature, where authors such as Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa entered the international literary mainstream. After 1959, the tide began to turn and other commercial presses (e.g., Grove, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Harper & Row, Pantheon) started to publish literature from the region.

While translation writ large thus could wield considerable soft power, translators themselves could also play an outsized role in courting authors. The work of Harriet de Onís offers a key example of how translators–in addition to the labor of translation–could also be brokers of literary taste in the U.S. and unofficial agents of book diplomacy. As the Knopfs were for many years the primary publishers of Latin American literature in the U.S., de Onís was both a powerful gatekeeper and an important advocate. De Onís saw her–and the Knopfs'–work as a mode of private cultural diplomacy that helped to further official foreign policy efforts. She was particularly interested in Brazil and its cultural production, as well as its political position. In late 1959, for example, she told Knopf that "Brazil is becoming more important every day. [...] the day will come [...] when one of the things

for which you will be remembered is being the first to publish Brazilian authors. Not only trade, but culture follows the flag."[3]

De Onís's relationship to the work of Jorge Amado shows how she viewed her work as translator to also be one of cultural diplomacy (even if it meant going against her own political [i.e., anti-communist] beliefs). For example, when James Taylor's translation of João Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas* was panned by critics, she offered to rework it "without credit or payment: This will be my contribution to the alliance for progress."[4] Also, when first asked by Knopf, Inc. to review Jorge Amado's *Gabriela* (1962), she agreed to read the novel, but made sure that the publisher was aware of the writer's involvement, until the mid-1950s, with the Communist Party.[5] While she enthusiastically recommended *Gabriela* and waxed eloquent about some of Amado's later works, she continued to express concern about their communist message.[6] At the same time, de Onís conducted her own efforts to draw Amado towards the U.S. In 1962, for example, when asking the *Saturday Review* to review one of his novels, she both stated that the work deserved good press for its quality and underscored the importance of a positive reception in the U.S., as it could positively dispose Amado and his fellow Latin American writers–opinion molders–towards the nation and, in turn, affect the image of it that they conveyed to their compatriots.[7]

Translation Subsidy Programs

I turn now to analyze two Latin American translation programs that shed light on the political dynamics within which translation of works from the region was entangled in the U.S. Both began in the 1960s and received support from different Rockefeller philanthropies. Both also, in effect, were conceived of as modes of book diplomacy during a period when anxieties about revolutionary ideology and anti-Americanism in Latin America were high in the U.S. The many literary successes of Boom authors–coupled with

[3] De Onís to Alfred A. Knopf, Nov. 25, 1959, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Records, Harry Ransom Center (HRC), box 327, folder 7 (materials in this collection will be identified subsequently as KR, followed by box and file numbers [e.g., KR 327.7]).
[4] De Onís to Alfred A. Knopf, July 7, 1961, KR 327.7, HRC.
[5] De Onís to Alfred A. Knopf, July 9, 1960, KR 295.1, HRC.
[6] De Onís to Koshland, December 9, 1961, KR 339.5, HRC.
[7] De Onís to W.D. Patterson, April 2, 1962, KR 361.3, HRC.

the quality of the literature and, often, the politics that it reflected– convinced publishers to add more Latin American writers to their lists. So, too, did the increased availability of translation and publication subsidies from public and private organizations seeking to cultivate positive relations with Latin American artists and intellectuals.

The Association of American University Presses-Rockefeller Latin American Translation Program

The first initiative that I will discuss is the Latin American Translation Program (LATP), which was funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) and administered by the Association of American University Presses (AAUP). It was part of a wave of translation initiatives funded by philanthropies in the 1950s and 1960s. In early 1958, Frank Wardlaw, director of the University of Texas Press, informally proposed a program that would help pay for the translation of fictional and scholarly works by university presses (UP's). Wardlaw was motivated by a desire to give the presses commercial success and let them make an "important contribution."[8] At the same time, he also saw the initiative as having the ability to improve inter-American understanding and mutual goodwill.[9] In early 1960, in conjunction with August Frugé, Director of the University of California Press, and two other UP directors, Wardlaw formally proposed a translation subsidy project to the foundation that would be overseen by the AAUP. While the proposal asserted that "there is no disposition on the part of the Association of University Presses [sic] to embark upon a translation program for the sake of international relations," it is clear that organizers were sensitive to what their program might mean to hemispheric political relations.[10] As Wardlaw wrote, "we are all convinced that a translation program such as this one could do enormous good in strengthening the cultural ties which bind us to Latin America."[11]

[8] Cited from the notes of an interview between John P. Harrison and Frank Wardlaw, dated 29 January 1958, in the RF Archives, Record Group (RG) 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2737, Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC).
[9] Letter from Wardlaw to Harrison, dated 6 January 1958, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2737, RAC.
[10] Cited from "General Statement and Justification," by August Frugé, 16 February 1960, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2738, RAC.
[11] Cited from a letter from Frank Wardlaw to John P. Harrison, 11 March 1959, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2737, RAC.

In April of 1960, the RF awarded a five-year grant of $225,000 to the AAUP to support a program wherein individual UP's would propose previously untranslated works from Latin America for their respective lists to a national committee, which would award approximately 15 grants of up to $3000 each per year; literary works as well as recent and canonical texts in the humanities and social sciences were eligible for the subsidies. The foundation's approval noted the strategic nature of the program with its observation that UP's "now appear ready to act on the belief that significant recent developments in Latin America call for a reorientation of thought in regard to the role this area will play in the future of cultural and intellectual exchange among nations."[12]

The alignment of the RF and the AAUP in their efforts to conduct book diplomacy reflects the dynamics of what scholars have designated the "state-private network," which Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas have characterized as the "unprecedented collaboration between 'official' U.S. agencies and 'private' groups and individuals in the development and implementation of political, economic, and cultural programs in support of U.S. foreign policy from the early cold war period to today" (KENNEDY; LUCAS, 2005, p. 312). In other words, the interests of private organizations were already very much in line with those of the State. In the case at hand, both RF officers and those coordinating the translation program shared an interest in using the program to improve mutual understanding, serve as a means for helping the U.S. to understand the region's culture and history, and benefit the national interest. And yet, despite shared strategic motivations, neither the Foundation nor the AAUP had direct control over the choice of book proposals presented by UP's, which meant that the program ultimately operated with autonomy.

From the program's inception, there were many applications for subsidies. The committee approved fifteen titles during the first year and thirty-five–more than twice the annual goal–during the second.[13] The program ultimately subsidized eighty-three books at twenty UP's between 1960 and 1966 (see Table 1).[14] Titles included both scholarly works and numerous important works of literature, some of which had laid the foundations for the Boom. Together, Texas and California, both of which

[12] Cited from a resolution on "Yale University Press-Latin American Translations," 6 April 1960, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2738, RAC.
[13] Report on the Latin American Translation Program (April 1, 1960 – March 31, 1962), in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 292, folder 2741, RAC.
[14] Not all of the titles proposed ultimately made it into print.

already had a long history of publishing Latin American literature and scholarship (reflecting the geography and history of the states that they served), published fifty books, including most of the literary ones subsidized by the program.

TABLE 1: SELECTED LITERARY WORKS PUBLISHED THROUGH THE AAUP PROGRAM[15]

Author	**English Title**	**UP**	**Date of English Publication**
Juan José Arreola	*Confabulario and Other Inventions*	Texas	1964
Adolfo Bioy Casares	*The Invention of Morel*	Texas	1964
Jorge Luis Borges	*Dreamtigers*	Texas	1964
	Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952	Texas	1964
Concolorcorvo	*El lazarillo: A Guide for Inexperienced Travelers between Buenos Aires and Lima, 1773*	Indiana	1965
Daniel Cosío Villegas	*American Extremes*	Texas	1963
Rubén Darío	*One Hundred Selected Poems*	Texas	1965
Sergio Galindo	*The Precipice*	Texas	1969
Elena Garro	*Recollections of Things to Come*	Texas	1969
Francisco López de Gómara	*Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary*	California	1964
William Grossman (trad.)	*Modern Brazilian Short Stories*	California	1967
Martín Luis Guzmán	*Memoirs of Pancho Villa*	Texas	1965
Inca Garcilaso de la Vega	*Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and General History of Peru*	Texas	1966
J.M. Machado de Assis	*The Psychiatrist and Other Stories*	California	1963
	Esau and Jacob	California	1965
José Carlos Mariátegui	*Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*	Texas	1971
José Martí	*Martí on the U.S.A.*	Southern Illinois	1966

[15] "Projects Approved" list, 1 April 1966, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 293, folder 2743, RAC.

José Luis Martínez, ed.	*The Modern Mexican Essay*	Toronto	1963
Ezequiel Martínez Estrada	*X-ray of the Pampa*	Texas	1971
Octavio Paz	*Selected Poems*	Indiana	1963
	The Siren and the Seashell	Texas	1976
Ricardo Pozas	*Juan the Chamula*	California	1962
Rachel de Queiroz	*The Three Marias*	Texas	1963
Graciliano Ramos	*Barren Lives*	Texas	1965
Samuel Ramos	*Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*	Texas	1962
Alfonso Reyes	*Mexico in a Nutshell and Other Essays*	California	1964
Juan Rulfo	*The Burning Plain*	Texas	1967
José Vasconcelos	*Mexican Ulysses*	Indiana	1963
Agustín Yáñez	*The Edge of the Storm*	Texas	1963
	The Lean Lands	Texas	1968
Leopoldo Zea	*The Latin American Mind*	Oklahoma	1963

In 1966, as the end of funding for the program approached, the grantees requested a renewal of support because most titles had been published at a loss and sales income alone was insufficient to fund continued publishing in the field. Trying to capitalize on the program's role as an agent of book diplomacy, they argued that "the value of the program to scholarship and international understanding has been far greater than sales and monetary returns would indicate."[16] The committee members who selected the books funded by the program also endorsed the proposal: they praised its success in creating a market for books on Latin America and, notably, its effects on Latin American intellectuals in their capacity as opinion molders and its contributions to inter-American relations. RF officers, though, were concerned that the program was neither in keeping with the Foundation's current priorities nor self-sustaining, and ultimately turned the proposal down.

The LATP achieved its goal of boosting the publication and profile of Latin American literature in the U.S., but operated at a financial loss.

[16] "A PROPOSAL TO THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION For Renewal of THE LATIN AMERICAN TRANSLATION PROGRAM," 4 February 1966, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 293, folder 2743, RAC.

Information provided by the University of California Press and the University of Texas Press indicates that sales were modest at best. Only 12 of the hardback publications had sold over 1000 copies, and none had sold over 3000 copies, although 3500 copies had been sold of two of the paperback books.[17] This was not uncommon for Latin American literary works, but the lack of revenue generated demonstrated why commercial publishers had little incentive to take on works from the region. Most books subsidized by the program brought in between $2700 and $5200. Martín Luis Guzmán's *Memoirs of Pancho Villa*, Agustín Yáñez's *The Edge of the Storm*, and Francisco López de Gómara's *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary* were the top sellers, netting between $8200 and $14,800; perhaps not coincidentally, *Memoirs of Pancho Villa* and *Cortés* had benefitted from the highest promotion and advertising budgets. However, with the sole exception of *Cortés*, which posted a gain of $1301, as of early 1966, the University of California Press and the University of Texas Press had published all of their books at a net loss: even though the cost of translation was subsidized, manufacturing costs, overhead, and editorial and other expenses significantly increased the press's investment in each book.[18] Hence, despite high publicity budgets, *Memoirs of Pancho Villa* posted the highest overall loss ($6270). In contrast, Borges's *Dreamtigers*, which had had the smallest promotional budget, had the smallest loss–a testament, it would seem, to the growing interest in the author's work in the years following his receipt of the 1961 International Publishers' Prize.[19]

I would argue that the sluggish sales of books in the program were at least partly related to its neglect of the contemporary fiction–most notably, that of the Boom authors and their contemporaries–that was rising in popularity during these years. The University of Texas Press was the only press to publish any recent fiction, including works from the 1940s through the 1960s by Bioy Casares and Borges, as well as by several Mexican authors. Two of the latter, Sergio Galindo's *The Precipice* (1960) and Elena Garro's *Recollections of Things to Come* (1963), were the most contemporary novels that were subsidized by the AAUP program. However, despite having been published in Spanish during the early Boom years, neither one of them attained–in Spanish or in English–a profile comparable to Boom works. The other literary works published by the various university presses fell, for the

[17] "REPORT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN TRANSLATION PROGRAM COMMITTEE," written by Sloane, May 1965, in the RF Archives, RG 1.2, series 200r, box 293, folder 2743, RAC.
[18] "A PROPOSAL TO THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION," RAC.
[19] "A PROPOSAL TO THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION," RAC.

most part, into three main categories: Brazilian fiction; conquest and colonial narratives; and essays. In general, then, the program's literary translations gained some visibility, but brought little revenue to their publishers.

University presses rely heavily on the recommendations of academics for their lists, and it seems likely that faculty were proposing titles that were currently being taught in university courses. The contemporary fiction subsidized by the program could have been included in the increasing number of courses on Latin American literature in translation that followed the Cuban revolution, while the essays, earlier texts, and works on the Mexican Revolution would have been suitable for courses in both literature and history. Not all Latin Americanist scholars were equally apprised (or, in some cases, approving) of the latest trends in narrative, though, which foregrounded the stylistically avant-garde and politically revolutionary. This may have affected how few proposals the UP's received to translate Boom and other contemporary literature.

The increasing professionalization of the Latin American writer during these years may also have hampered the ability of the AAUP program to acquire contemporary literature. At this time, Boom writers and their contemporaries were becoming more market-savvy in their efforts to promote their work, hiring agents and networking with large New York publishing firms. As a result, they were more likely to publish with commercial presses, whose marketing strategies, contracts, and more experienced translators were more advantageous to writers than those of university presses. At the same time, there was a core group of academics–some of whom were themselves translators–who, during the years of the AAUP program, operated like agents and steered the authors with whom they were in touch to commercial presses (often by way of their contacts at the Center for Inter-American Relations, which I discuss below). In the end, then, the very factors that kept risks down for UP's (e.g., smaller editions and, hence, smaller and more specialized audiences, lower costs, and, as nonprofit organizations, the fact that they were not as driven by corporate pressures to show large annual profits) and thus made them a good initial vehicle for building an audience for Latin American works ultimately rendered them unsuitable to the "bestsellerism" that defined the Boom–and to publishers' desire to stay in the black.

The Literature Department and Translation Program of the Center for Inter-American Relations

In contrast to the LATP, the translation subsidy initiative that was run by the Literature Department of the non-profit Center for Inter-American Relations (CIAR) was well equipped to take advantage of the activity in the field of Latin American literature at this time. The Center was founded in the 1960s by David Rockefeller, with funding from several Rockefeller philanthropies, to serve as a counterweight in the U.S. to the Casa de las Américas, a Cuban state-sponsored foundation that was a center of cultural activity in the years after the Revolution.[20] It sought

> to improve communication among those concerned with the process of political, economic and social development in the hemisphere [... and] to develop the goodwill and respect of leading Latin Americans as the sensitive interpreter in the United States of their desires for understanding and recognition, both of themselves and of their countries' problems and aspirations.[21]

And, like the Casa de las Américas, the Center was also envisioned as a magnet for Latin American writers and artists, as well as professionals and statesmen.

The CIAR was composed of four departments, each of which had different agendas and acted independently: Public Affairs, Literature, Music, and Visual Arts. Of all the Center's departments, Public Affairs demonstrated the closest alignment to the U.S. foreign policy establishment, and occasionally was criticized by Latin Americanists within and outside of the U.S. for activities that seemed to channel official U.S. policies. The Center's cultural programs, on the other hand, sought to uphold the freedom of expression of the individual artist, which was, during this period, touted as a benefit of democracy and contrasted with the U.S.S.R.'s restrictions on intellectuals' liberties. As a result, the Literature Department, which was the cornerstone of the Center's cultural programs, displayed an openness to political orientations that deviated from those of the establishment and the Center's own administration. Over the years, it subsidized the visits and/or

[20] For an extended discussion of the Center, its history, and its programs, see chapter 4 of my book, *The Latin American Literary Boom* (COHN, 2012).
[21] "Program and Budget 1968-1971," section A, 15 March 1968, in the RBF Archives, RG 3.1, Box 192, Folder 1239, RAC.

publication of numerous authors espousing Marxist and pro-Cuba positions, including Miguel Ángel Asturias, Ernesto Cardenal, Cortázar, Fuentes, García Márquez, and Pablo Neruda. By cultivating relationships with writers (both left-leaning and otherwise), assisting with the dissemination of their work and the cementing of their reputations, and, even, publicly advocating for them during tense political moments, the Literature Department performed key work in cultural diplomacy that bore political fruit and goodwill among the authors served by the program.

Through its networking and publicity activities, the Literature Department created a high-profile space for Latin American literary activity in New York City and throughout the U.S. It supported all aspects of the translation, publication, and promotion of Latin American literature: it "recommend[ed] new books, commission[ed] [...] sample translations [and reviews], act[ed] as informal agent," organized conferences and publicity, and more (CENTER, 1969, p. 14-15). The department also supported a new wave of translators, which both played a role in the success of the works that it subsidized and improved the quality of translation available overall. The Center's translators included Suzanne Jill Levine, Gregory Rabassa, and Eliot Weinberger, among others. Many were a generation or two younger than de Onís, and were often more open to the playful inclinations of modern writers (as well as to their politics). They were talented, committed to professionalizing the craft of translation, and received frequent awards and accolades for their work. And, like de Onís, they, too, became advocates for the authors whom they served.

Between 1967 and 1983, the Literature Department ran a subsidy program that supported more than fifty translations, including many high-profile contemporary literary works, critical works, anthologies, and other texts (Table 2). The translation program quickly became the department's centerpiece. As Rostagno (1997, p. 107) details, its director, José Guillermo Castillo, worked with an all-star committee of U.S.-based academics, critics, and translators, as well as poet Mark Strand and Argentine critics Omar del Carlo and María Luisa Bastos. The program subsidized the translation of six to eight works per year into English. It generally split the cost of translation with publishers, contributing up to $2500 per work, although in several cases it subsidized the entire translation. By underwriting the translation of literary works, many of which had already achieved bestseller status in Spanish America and Spain, the Literature Program heightened the international visibility of the Boom in the U.S. (MAC ADAM, 2000, p. 186).

TABLE 2: SELECTED LITERARY WORKS PUBLISHED THROUGH THE CIAR TRANSLATION PROGRAM

Author	**English Title**	**Publisher**	**Date of 1st Publication in English**
José María Arguedas	*Deep Rivers*	U of Texas P	1978
Miguel Ángel Asturias	*Strong Wind*	Delacorte	1968
	The Green Pope	Delacorte	1971
Adolfo Bioy Casares	*Plan for Escape*	Dutton	1975
	Asleep in the Sun	Persea	1978
Jorge Luis Borges	*The Book of Imaginary Beings*	Dutton	1969
	Selected Poems 1923-1967	Delacorte	1972
Guillermo Cabrera Infante	*Three Trapped Tigers*	Harper & Row	1971
Julio Cortázar	*62: A Model Kit*	Pantheon	1972
	All Fires the Fire	Pantheon	1973
	A Manual for Manuel	Pantheon	1978
José Donoso, Carlos Fuentes, e Severo Sarduy	*Triple Cross* (Three novellas)	Dutton	1972
José Donoso	*The Obscene Bird of Night*	Knopf	1973
	The Charleston and Other Stories	David R. Godine	1977
	Sacred Families	Knopf	1977
	The Boom in Spanish American Literature	Columbia UP	1977
José Lezama Lima	*Paradiso*	Farrar, Straus and Giroux	1974
Pablo Neruda	*Selected Poems*	Delacorte	1972
Juan Carlos Onetti	*A Brief Life*	Grossman	1976
Octavio Paz	*Eagle or Sun?* (bilingual edition)	October House	1970
	Eagle or Sun? (bilingual edition)	New Directions	1976
	Configurations	New Directions	1971
Manuel Puig	*Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*	Dutton	1971
	Heartbreak Tango	Dutton	1973
	The Buenos Aires Affair	Dutton	1976
	Kiss of the Spider Woman	Knopf	1979
Ernesto Sábato	*On Heroes and Tombs*	David R. Godine	1981

Luis Rafael Sánchez	*Macho Camacho's Beat*	Pantheon	1980
Severo Sarduy	*Cobra*	Dutton	1975

The program's subsidy of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970) marked a watershed moment in this process. *No One Writes to the Colonel* had been published in English in 1968, but attracted very little attention. In contrast, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* became the second Latin American novel (following *Gabriela*) to make the *New York Times*' bestseller list; it also made *Publisher's Weekly*'s list and was named one of the year's Notable Books by the American Library Association (ALA). The novel thus both cemented the author's reputation in the U.S. and accelerated the breakthrough of Latin American literary translation in the U.S.: by bringing Latin American literature to the attention of a broad audience, it opened up a market for translations that the Center's program then met. Other books subsidized by the translation program also helped to catalyze even more interest in the field. For example, three novels by Manuel Puig–*Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*, *Heartbreak Tango*, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*–also made the ALA Notable Book lists (*50 YEARS*, 1996). And in 1971, four more of the program's translations appeared in the *New York Times*'s annual selection of noteworthy titles: Borges's *The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-1969*; Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers*; Paz's *Configurations*; and Puig's *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* (1971: A SELECTION, 1971). Donoso's *The Obscene Bird of Night* received the same honor in 1973, as well as a P.E.N. Translation Prize. In the long run, then, the Literature Department as a whole was instrumental in transforming the conditions for publishing Latin American literature in the U.S.: in addition to making the translation and publication of novels possible in the first place, it also helped to establish an infrastructure for publicity and coverage, as well as for connecting authors and publishers.

Creating Bestsellers

Studying the commercial presence and marketing strategies–or the lack thereof–of these translation programs provides critical insights into the development of the market for Latin American literature in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s. So, too, does the contrast between the high profile of works supported by the Center's program and the relative invisibility of

those of the LATP. As the 1960s progressed and the international reputation of Latin American literature grew, commercial presses became more willing to take risks, including contracting "stars" such as Borges, Cortázar, Fuentes, García Márquez, Neruda, Paz, and Vargas Llosa and publicizing noteworthy works even when subsidies were not available from the Center. Publishing Latin American literature was still not profitable, but its appeal was rising, and the number of translations climbed rapidly.[22] The market for these works also increased in universities, where the number of courses offered in Latin American literature doubled between the Cuban revolution of 1959 and the late 1960s, and the number of courses in translation also rose dramatically (NEEDLER; WALKER, 1971, p. 133). The critical success of *Hopscotch* (1966) and the critical and commercial success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* further contributed to this process by opening up a broader market and ushering in a new wave of translations.

The books subsidized by the AAUP program accounted for approximately half of the Latin American translations published in any given year during the first half of the 1960s. The program thus singlehandedly increased the number of Latin American works on the market. But, as I noted previously, these works had originally been published in the 1950s and earlier; appealed primarily to smaller, often academic, audiences; and were less likely to be of commercial interest than those of the Boom authors and their contemporaries that were being published throughout the 1960s. It was not UP's, then, but, rather, commercial presses and the CIAR's Literature Department that ultimately took advantage of the burgeoning market for Latin American translations in the U.S. Indeed, virtually all of the literary works subsidized by the Center were first published in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the rising tide of Latin American literature, and the program deftly used market forces to promote them.

The Literature Department built an infrastructure that maximized the public visibility of Latin American authors and their works. One of its key roles included getting book reviews placed in major periodicals. As Richard Ohmann (1983, p. 202) has noted, during this period "the single most important boost a novel could get was a prominent review in the Sunday *New York Times*". In general, reviews of Center-sponsored books appeared in a timely fashion in the journals that "carried special weight in forming cultural judgments" among elite intellectuals and cultural leaders, including

[22] This assessment was gathered from reviewing Bradley A. Shaw's *Latin American Literature in English Translation* (SHAW, 1976).

the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, and others (OHMANN, 1983, p. 204); they also appeared in academic and popular periodicals such as *Choice*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Library Journal*, *Nation*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Time*. Prose works were frequently reviewed in anywhere from ten to twenty periodicals.[23] Books by rising authors and those that the Center was particularly interested in promoting received even better coverage: Donoso's *Obscene Bird of Night*, for example, was reviewed in twenty-four periodicals; Borges's *Book of Imaginary Beings* in thirty-one; and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in thirty-three.

In contrast, the AAUP program was not involved with the promotion and sale of the works that it subsidized as its funds only covered costs incurred in the actual production of the books. Literary works subsidized by the AAUP program thus received significantly less fanfare because they were marketed by UP's, often through noncommercial channels. For the most part, each book subsidized by the AAUP program only received between one and seven reviews. There was only one literary work published through the AAUP translation program that received publicity comparable to what was regularly afforded the Center's works: Machado de Assis's *Esau and Jacob* (1965) was reviewed in nineteen periodicals, including both popular and elite high-circulation venues such as the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*. The attention lavished on the novel may be attributed to the perception articulated by its publisher that the writer was "thought by many to be the finest fiction writer of all Latin America and the only one before Jorge Luis Borges to bear comparison with the best European writers" (FRUGÉ, 1993, p. 112). Otherwise, the AAUP-sponsored books were reviewed primarily in trade and academic journals (e.g., *Choice*, *Hispania*, and *Library Journal*) that reached smaller and more specialized audiences, and reviews often took several years to appear. Ultimately, then, the Center's translation program was able to leverage the marketing, publicity, and networking forces of the Literature Department within which it was housed, and thereby gain far greater visibility for the works that it subsidized.

The Literature Department was indispensable in disseminating Boom and other Latin American texts and criticism in the U.S. and in gaining considerable visibility for them, in contrast to the much lower profile of the literary works sponsored by the AAUP program. Both translation programs targeted academic audiences, through which books could be introduced into

[23] This information was compiled from Tarbert and Beach's *Book Review Index: A Master Cumulation 1965-1984* (TARBERT; BEACH, 1985).

university courses and thereby achieve the status of "literature," but only the Center's program made a concerted effort to reach a broader reading public (see OHMANN, 1983, p. 205-206). And, as Richard Ohmann (1983, p. 207, 206) has argued regarding the U.S. literary scene during this period, "canon formation [...] took place in the interaction between large audiences and gatekeeper intellectuals," that is, by attaining *both* high sales and "the right kind of critical attention"–or, to draw on Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, by involving both the field of large-scale production and the field of restricted production. By targeting both the cultural elite and popular readers, then, the Center's literature program accelerated Latin American writers' ability to gain a foothold in the U.S. literary scene.

At the same time, the CIAR's translation program also played an important role in cultural and book diplomacy through networking, publicity, and advocacy. While largely operating independently of the Center's politics, the program's motives were at times directly tied into geopolitical concerns, including an interest in promoting inter-American exchange and understanding for the sake of improving international relations in the hemisphere. These efforts affected how Latin American writers saw the U.S., even as they pursued their own political and literary agendas. For years, then, the Literature Department walked a fine line by simultaneously taking advantage of the Cold War interest in Latin America, which created a favorable climate both for receiving funds from U.S. philanthropic organizations and for the reception of the works that it was promoting, and by supporting authors whose politics ran counter to those of the Center. As such, then, it is a fine example of the goals and dynamics involved in book diplomacy–as well as the tensions and paradoxes that can plague it.

What, then, might this context tell us about the history of translating Machado de Assis, who seems to have captured the imagination of U.S. translators, publishers, and readers alike? In the early 1950s, well before the rise of interest in Latin American literature–and the more tangible benefits for publishers–that came with the Boom, Noonday Press released translations of three novels by Machado in consecutive years: *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* (*Epitaph of a Small Winner*, trans. William Grossman, 1952), *Dom Casmurro* (*Dom Casmurro*, trans. Helen Caldwell, 1953), and *Quincas Borba* (*Philosopher or Dog?*, trans. Clotilde Wilson, 1954). This was a gamble for Noonday as none of the author's novels had previously appeared in English, so there was no guarantee of an audience. And yet, it

paid off: over 24,000 copies of *Epitaph of a Small Winner* were printed in several editions between 1952 and 1964, while *Dom Casmurro* also was reprinted several times by 1961 (with 11,000 copies printed). Only one edition (of approximately 5000 copies) of *Philosopher or Dog?* was printed, but even this number far surpassed most of the figures for works supported by the AAUP program. (Perhaps together, this successful cluster of translations may have laid the groundwork for the heightened interest in the LATP translation of *Esau and Jacob*.[24])

The story of the translation of Machado's work is anomalous for its time, in many respects. On the one hand, over the years, he seems to have enjoyed what might be called a "cult presence" among translators who were individually, and passionately, committed to the dissemination of his work in English. Indeed, Machado translator Helen Caldwell's description of herself as a "one-man woman" when declining an invitation from Knopf, Inc. to translate Guimarães Rosa speaks directly to the personal devotion of the writer's advocates (qtd. in GUIMARÃES, 2019, p. 118). At the same time, and on a broader scale, Machado was the rare Latin American author who, though not widely translated into English, was considered by some to be on a par with European authors, who occupied the center of what Pascale Casanova has called "the world republic of letters." Noonday took advantage of his cultural capital. At a time when Latin America was of increasing strategic interest to the U.S., the press was able, as Hélio de Seixas Guimarães (2023) describes in his article in this issue, to capitalize on a political moment that sought to foster international understanding and goodwill, and successfully lobbied U.S. and Brazilian government and private agencies to both promote the translations and buy copies in bulk at discounted prices.

The interest in the U.S. in Machado's work in the 1950s thus seems to tell a slightly different story from the trajectories of other Latin American translation initiatives. It, too, was enabled by a political moment in which inter-American cultural diplomacy initiatives were on the rise, but his translations were not part of any broader initiative or infrastructure. Rather, they were the result of independent grass-roots interest and Noonday's willingness to act on it and then take advantage of a broader network of public and private organizations to reach a general readership. Ultimately, the surge in interest in Machado may also have laid some of the foundations

[24] See Guimarães and Oliveira (2021) for a history of the translation of *Quincas Borba*; the numbers that I have included here on printings and numbers are from Guimarães and Oliveira (2021, p. 12).

for publishing his and other Latin American works in translation in the years following the Cuban revolution, generating both interest in Machado and Brazil in the U.S. and, I suspect, a tremendous amount of good will towards the U.S. within Brazil.

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