

Publishing Brazilian literature in Portugal: Sousa Pinto and the “Livros do Brasil Collection”

Gilberto Gilvan Souza Oliveira [*]

[*] Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC). Fortaleza (CE),
Brasil. E-mail: profgilbertogilvan@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0330-8716>

Translated by Eoin O’Neill

Abstract: This article analyzes the experience of Sousa Pinto as a publisher in the formation of the Livros do Brasil and its main collection, which had the same title as that of its publishing house, centering the discussion on the publication of the works of Erico Verissimo.

Keywords: Livros do Brasil; Collection; Brazilian Literature.

Editar a literatura brasileira em Portugal: Sousa Pinto e a “Coleção Livros do Brasil”

Resumo: O presente artigo analisa a experiência de Sousa Pinto enquanto editor para a formação da Livros do Brasil e de sua principal coleção, que carregava um título congênere ao de sua casa editorial, centrando as discussões na edição das obras de Erico Verissimo.

Palavras-chave: Livros do Brasil; Coleção; Literatura brasileira.

Taking advantage of the attempts of Portuguese publishers to restart publishing the works of Brazilian writers in Portugal, in the 1940s¹ Sousa Pinto (1901-1987) bought the Lisbon branch of *Livraria Civilização Brasileira*,² afterwards changing its trading name to *Livros do Brasil* (Books of Brazil).

Despite the change of name from *Civilização Brasileira* to *Livros do Brasil* during its first years of operation the publisher maintained the same activity as the previous owner, Octalles Marcondes Ferreira. In other words, the sale of Brazilian books published in Brazil. Moreover, there was no separation between *Livros de Portugal* (his first publishing company, founded in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and *Livros do Brasil*.

To the contrary, the first two years of its operations in Portugal can only be dimensioned through their relations of dependency on *Livros de Portugal*, since the latter became the channel for Brazilian books to cross the Atlantic. To have an idea, in 1945, according to the publishers' records, *Livros de Portugal* sent more than 200,000 volumes of Brazilian books to Portugal.

Once *Livros do Brasil* began to edit and publish books by Brazilian authors, as well as selling them, other sensibilities were gestated and new forms of reading and literary reception were used, taking into account that initially the works sold by *Livros do Brasil* were treated as imported products. Moreover, Sousa Pinto inserted the texts in other publishing projects, instituted others materialities, while critics saw them as texts belonging to foreign writers, even though two Portuguese speaking countries were involved.

Over time, and due to the success in the sale of books by Brazilian writers, simply distributing them in Portugal was not enough. It had become too expensive and increasingly unfeasible due to the high financial cost of importing book and the consequent impact on the price at which they need to be sold in Lisbon, meaning that the initial intentions of the project were expanded.

In 1946, Sousa Pinto began the process of preparing a catalogue whose aim was to disseminate Brazilian literature in a collection bearing the publisher's name, going through difficulties common to other bookshops in the 1940s, including the lack of financial resources and foreign currency, precarious structural conditions, and the difficulty of pro-

¹ In 1930s Portugal, there was a strong presence of Brazilian publishers and booksellers selling works by Brazilian writers which were published in Brazil. This caused a fascination of Portuguese readers with Brazilian literature, especially due to the visual appearance of editions. As a form of reaction to this process, Portuguese publishers began to sell books from Brazilian literature at lower prices, a factor which prevented the branches of Brazilian book shops from continuing the operate in the Portuguese market (Medeiros, 2010).

² The branch of *Civilização Brasileira* in Lisbon opened in 1932 and remained until 1944. This factor revealed the longevity of its operations for more than a decade in the Portuguese publishing market and at the same time gives an idea of its importance, taking into account that, taking advantage of the favorable exchange system, this contributed to the creation of the necessary conditions for the inclusion of Brazilian books in the Portuguese book system.

ducing a reading public, albeit in this case two Portuguese speaking countries were involved.

The creation of the catalogue produced by Livros do Brasil with a specific collection for Brazilian literature reconfigured its presence in the Portuguese book market, a tonic which became present in Brazilian newspapers.

Books by Brazilian writers had circulated in Portugal before the operations of Livros do Brasil. However, the *Livros do Brasil* collection now gave Sousa Pinto's printing house a sign of distinction among the other Portuguese publishers.

It cannot be denied that Sousa Pinto's investment was risky, despite an increased demand for Brazilian literature in 1930s Portugal. Moreover, the formation of a reading public is always uncertain, after all, books are not only a commercial product, but also a network of sensitivities engendered through language materialized in texts and in the object-book, the potency of literary writing, and relations with subjects/readers.

Furthermore, it is important to clarify that Sousa Pinto knew the Portuguese market and also understood the forms of the production and reception of books, and the Brazilian literary system, since during his period in Brazil, the establishment of commercial networks resulting from the management of Livros de Portugal put him in direct contact with the main Brazilian publishers and bookshops.

Added to this is the fact that Sousa Pinto's movement between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, during the time he lived in Brazil, meant that he made contact with various writers, including Erico Verissimo. It is worth noting that Livros de Portugal³ was located at no. 106 rua do Ouvidor, while Livraria José Olympio Editora, the main publisher in Brazil at that time, was located on the same street at no. 103. Meetings between publishers and writers were thus inevitable and it was part of the atmosphere of the main ebullition point of the book market in Brazil.

Sousa Pinto knew it would be easier and more suitable to put the authors into the same collection rather than publicize them individually, hence the publications released by Livros do Brasil reached readers in a set in which there was a dialogue between the different books based on the organizational structures of the publishing market or literary criticism.

In comparing the works of Brazilian writers released in the *Livros do Brasil* collection with the Brazilian editions belonging to José Olympio Editora it can be noted Sousa Pinto,

³ In 1946, Livros de Portugal was transferred to Rua Gonçalves Dias no. 62, in the Center of Rio de Janeiro. The change in address did not distance the publisher from the central locus of the circulation and production of books in the Carioca capital at that moment since the new street intersected with Rua do Ouvidor.

despite presenting some visual differences, took José Olympio's project as a reference, assuming similar strategies, such as investment in the insertion of paratexts.

In some cases, Sousa Pinto maintained the same graphic and typographic features of the Brazilian editions. Due to the circulation of editions from Editora Globo and even Livraria José Olympio Editora, a visual culture had already been created for the works in question and, to a certain extent, keeping certain aspects, as in the case of paratexts, gave credibility to the edition and gave positivized meanings and significance to the text and authorship.

The forms of circulation and reception of literary works went through a process of visual recognition which established themes among readers and publishers, but without losing sight of the importance of texts housed in the supports, since for Brazilian literature to become popular among the Portuguese, two measures were necessary: the establishment of a network of meanings and the construction of sensibilities around the Brazilian book, which also came to be a Portuguese product with the investment of *Livros do Brasil*.

According to Nuno Medeiros (2010), it has to be taken into account that, despite the graphic renewal and the search for its own identity, the Portuguese publishing system did not manage to free itself totally from its previous mode of production, profoundly marking the administrative organization and the financial investments of publishers. *Livros do Brasil* thereby mixed the old publishing policy, coexistence of its own editions aimed at a specific public, and in parallel the importing of books from overseas.

The publication of foreign works in Portugal was seminal to define *Livros do Brasil*'s space of action in the Portuguese publishing market. Titles from both Brazilian literature and other collections aimed at the classics of global literature became the focal point of Sousa Pinto's catalogue, at the same time that the sale of science fiction books (taking into consideration the question of importation), made it similar to other publishers.

However, unlike the two publishing houses mentioned above, Sousa Pinto was sensitive and strategic to investing in Brazil literature, after all he knew both the Brazilian publishing market and the canonical structures, not to mention that it was only in the 1930s, and more strongly from the 1940s, as already mentioned, that a growing interest of Portuguese for Brazilian writers can be noted.

In the *Livros do Brasil* collection, the works of writers linked to the modernist movement stand out in particular, with an emphasis on writers from the Northeast, who were published in Brazil by Livraria José Olympio Editora and were part of José Olympio's project to discuss Brazil in depth through literature.

Although Sousa Pinto had highlighted other elements in his presentation of these writers, it is possible that the interests of José Olympio were not completely silenced. In other words, the works published in the *Livros do Brasil* collection could be a possible path to dis-

cover Brazil from another perspective and through different thematic foci, such as the example of Jorge Amado, whose reception in Portugal was marked by the discourse around his political position as a communist writer. It should be noted that in the first two years (between 1946 and 1948) Sousa Pinto centered on the literature of Erico Verissimo only afterwards expanding his catalogue to a multiplicity of actors and themes.

One of the objectives of Sousa Pinto's enterprise was to attempt to approximate the Portuguese language of Brazil and Portugal, as well as to facilitate other cultural exchanges resulting from this process, with literature being used as a means to establish a possible path of connection between Brazil and Portugal.⁴ This possibility of communication between the two nations was linked to Lusophone questions.

The relations of the Portuguese publisher used to leverage Livros do Brasil were initially with Editora Globo, which marked the first phase of Livros do Brasil's activities in Portugal, either through exchanges for the translation of works in foreign languages (especially English), book distribution, or the first editions of the collection about Brazilian literature which bore the publisher's name.

In relation to this question, based on a chronological survey of the publications of the Brazilian works in the Livros do Brasil catalogue, Erico Verissimo⁵ was identified as the writer with the largest number of editions with different titles.

Despite being conflictual, the partnership between Sousa Pinto and José Olympio Editora was what became most significant in relation to the projects which distinguished them from other publishers located in their respective countries. Both invested in the dissemination of Brazilian literature and in greater volume in authors linked to the modernist movement.

In both Brazil and Portugal a significant number of works were released from writers from the Brazilian Northeast, including José Lins do Rego, José Américo de Almeida, Rachel de Queiroz, Jorge Amado, and Gilberto Freyre; as well as from the rest of Brazil, such Lygia Fagundes Teles, Clarice Lispector, and Agripino Grieco, to cite just a few.

Although José Olympio and Sousa Pinto did not meet to decide on whether or not to form similar catalogues, it can be considered that they, in relation to the publication of these writers, presented more similarities than differences in their printing projects. While

⁴ Sousa Pinto left this question evident in the article "As relações culturais entre Brasil e Portugal", published in *Boletim Livros de Portugal*, in 1982.

⁵ Livros do Brasil published the following works of Erico Verissimo in Portugal: *O resto é silêncio*, novel (1954); *Viagem à aurora do mundo*, novel set in prehistory (1955); *Saga*, novel (1955); *Olhai os lírios do campo*, novel (1955); *Clarissa*, novel (1957); *México*, travel story (1957); *Um lugar ao sol* (1959); *Gato preto em campo de neve* (1960); *O continente* (1973); *O retrato* (1973); *Solo de clarineta: memórias* (1974) *O senhor embaixador* (1978); *O tempo e o vento* (1979); *O prisioneiro* (1980); *Israel em abril* (1986) and *Incidente em Antares* (1988).

José Olympio Editora used literature associated with the Documentos Brasileiros collection with the purpose of giving readers titles that could help them understand and interpret Brazil; in Portugal, Sousa Pinto's *Livros do Brasil* collection also presented and constructed a narrative about the discovery of the Brazilian nation, or at least the (re)discovery of literature.

Moreover, permitting its interpretation as the process of the insertion of Brazilian literature in the international market refers to both symbolic and commercial goods. More than this: the texts that were part of the collections in question constructed marks of authorship and narratives about literature and Brazilian writers.

However, it was the books of Erico Verissimo which received the greatest flow of participation in the composition of *Coleção Livros do Brasil*, whose editions can be taken as a series to identify the identity and the graphical, typographical, and material continuities and particularities used by Sousa Pinto in the process of implementing his publishing project.

Sousa Pinto, publisher of Erico Verissimo

Sousa Pinto came to Brazil in 1941 to organize the Portuguese Book Exhibition. He remained in the country until 1944, working in Livros de Portugal. This allowed him to establish contacts with different intellectuals, editors, literary critics, and others involved in the Brazilian book market.

Furthermore, his experience as owner of a publishing company in Brazil, Livros de Portugal, meant that he understood, or better, perceived the structures by which the Brazilian publishing market functioned, the forms of book production and circulation, the reception of literature and, furthermore, could glimpse connections and projections of this universe in other literary systems.

It can be considered that it was through his experiences in Brazil that Sousa Pinto, upon returning to Portugal to continue his work as a publisher, began his first commercial exchanges with Brazilian publishers. Initially this process was clearly seen in the continuity of commercial activities exercised by the branch of Livraria Civilização Brasileira, in other words, the sale of works of Brazilian literature, treated as imported books, which were produced in Brazil and sent to Lisbon and other Portuguese cities.

However, the conditions of the Portuguese book market, including the high cost of foreign books, Portuguese readers search for Brazilian writers, and the favorable reception of Brazilian literature, led Sousa Pinto to transform in 1948 Livros do Brasil into a space not only for the sale of Brazilian literature, but also its production.

Furthermore, he knew how to benefit from the commercial dynamics of books that emerged at the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, a period in which the rela-

tions of the publishing market between Brazil and Portugal suffered an inversion in processes of production and circulation. This provoked a discontinuity in the historic construction of the diffusion of printed material among the two countries, in which the former was seen as dependent on the latter, both in relation to production of books and commercial aspects.

On reflecting on this transformation, Nuno Medeiros (2018, p. 188) stated that

The dynamics of change exercise disturbing effects on the established mercantile and representational order, originating responses and counter-responses, whose logic can be unveiled in the tensional game of strategies of influence and counter-influence put into play by each of the book-systems, each one seeking to implement a set of plans [...] This appears to be, up to a certain point, the case of Brazil and Portugal in relation to the book. The model thereby traced out suffered, however, the challenge of action of determined types of agent, above all individuals (publishers and booksellers), who sought to make concrete the establishment or the updating of collaborative connections through the sale and publication of books by Brazilian authors or with Brazilian themes in Portugal and vice-versa.

Although this inversion presented positive points, amongst which was the end of unilateral relations between the two countries in relation to the circulation of books, it is important to highlight, as Medeiros (2018) points out, that even with the modification of the ways the commercial and publishing transit of books occurred, whether they were Brazilian or of other nationalities, it can be perceived that until 1960 it was common for some Portuguese publishers to continue to treat book production of Brazil within a perspective of subalternity and inferiority in relation to the idea of the market and the possibility of seeing Brazil as a country producing and consuming books as a merchandise.

This vision, which certainly generated discordances among Brazilian and Portuguese publishers, lingered for a long time in the twentieth century, even though, both in Brazil and Portugal, the process of the renewal of the publishing market, in the model which exists today, took place simultaneously in the 1930s and 1940s and with many similarities in its progress: thematic multiplicity of publications, diversity of publishers, new graphic, typographic, and forms of literary criticism forms, to cite just some characteristics.

It is in this scenario that I identify the second phase of Sousa Pinto's action, in other words, the moment in which he actually assumed the condition of publisher of Brazilian literature in Portugal. In this process, Editora Globo, from Porto Alegre, through Henrique

Bertaso⁶ and Erico Verissimo, had an important role in making this project possible, since it was with this publisher that Livros do Brasil signed the first agreements for the publication of Brazilian works.

Generally speaking, the publication agreements signed by the Portuguese publisher and Editora Globo, and later Livraria José Olympio Editora, marked and definitely decided the history of Livros do Brasil, especially with the former, since the first Brazilian book published by Sousa Pinto was *Olhai os lírios do campo* by Erico Verissimo. The latter, in turn, presented the Portuguese public with the collection which bore the same name as its publisher: *Coleção Livros do Brasil*.

Verissimo was selected to open the collection for various reasons. The first was his friendship with Sousa Pinto, expressed in the letters and confidences exchanged between them, as which always began with “my dear friend” or “dear friend”; the second was due to the fact that at the end of the 1930s, specifically in 1938, and the beginning of the 1940s, *Olhai os lírios do campo* was one of the bestselling books in Brazil. It was responsible for making Verissimo’s name as an author and became a bestseller, also getting a positive critical reception. This fact was reported in Brazilian newspapers:

Erico Verissimo continues being the most read Brazilian writer. He has published the following books: *Caminhos Cruzados* (17 editions); *Música ao Longe* (7 editions); *Um Lugar ao Sol* (6 editions); *Clarissa* (5 editions); *Olhai os Lírios do Campo* (11 editions); *Saga* (4 editions); *O Resto é Silêncio* (2 editions); *Fantoches* (1 edition); *As Mãos de Meu Filho* (1 edition); *A Volta de Joana D’Arc* (4 edition); *Gato Preto em Campo de Neve* (5 editions); two educational books and eight volumes for children. In all of Brazil 366,000 copies of his works were sold. *Olhai os Lírios do Campo* (47,000 copies sold) was his most popular novel. The short story collection *Fantoches*, (only one thousand copies sold) is his least popular book (Estatística, 19 maio 1946, p. 2; emphasis added).

It is possible to list a third reason: literary qualities and the Verissimo’s narrative style, since giving

a social and engaged nature to his novels, Erico Verissimo took advantage of modern narrative techniques, many of them used for some time in Europe, but little known in Brazil, in the wake of the aesthetic renewal of the Modernism of 1922, whose proposal he accepted although he never officially joined the movement (Santos, 2014, p. 335).

⁶ In 1940 Henrique Bertaso (1906-1977) became part of the staff of Editora Globo. Before this, since 1921 when he was 15, Bertaso had worked in the Gaúcha press. He was also one of those responsible for the creation of *Revista do Globo* (Verissimo, 2011).

It should be highlighted that, on the one hand, the Portuguese editions of Erico Verissimo's books benefitted not only Sousa Pinto as a publisher, but also significantly contributed to the process of the internationalization and dissemination of Brazilian literature in the foreign literary system, even though it was a Portuguese speaking country.

The set of Erico Verissimo's work released by Livros do Brasil demonstrate that the paratexts present in these books sought to give a valuative connotation to the meaning of publication of the author's works and to Sousa Pinto's publishing activities. This is the case of the *O retrato de Erico Verissimo*, present on the front cover of the Portuguese edition of *O retrato* in the series *O tempo e o vento* (1979),⁷ in which it is stated:

Erico Verissimo is, no one ignores anymore, one of the most important writers in Portuguese. Literature has always been his fundamental concern. [...] In 1949 he began his *magnus opus* with the publication of the first volume of *O tempo e o vento*. An unprecedented grandiose symphony in the literature of Brazil. [...] Undoubtedly it is one of the most imposing novels in the rich and multifaceted literature of our brother country. The important sociologist Gilberto Freyre stated that it is "a great book... one of the most significant which has lately appeared in Brazilian literature". We can add to this the significant words of Oswaldo Aranha, who said that it is "a book which will last and make us last". "It is superb in its epic atmosphere", according to Moysés Velinho, an important Brazilian man of letters. It is a work that urgently needs to be brought to the attention of the Portuguese public, who will undoubtedly admire it in all of its profound grandeur (Livros do Brasil, 1979, n.p.).

It can be noted that the first resource chosen by Sousa Pinto was one that aimed to establish the connective links between Brazilian and Portuguese literature based on linguistic questions. In other words, Verissimo's works belonged to Portuguese spoken in Portugal and in Brazil, seen as *fraternal countries*, even though there existed at this time publications and orthographic agreements recognizing the particularities and the differences between the Portuguese spoken in both nations.

Since the 1930s, and more sharply in the 1960s, the Portuguese language was a point of connection in arguments for the holding of events and editorial exchanges, whose objective was the approximation between the two countries, whether in the sphere of literature, the publishing market, or even political and commercial relations between Brazil and Portugal.⁸

⁷ The publication of the first Brazilian edition dates from 1951, having been released by Livros do Brasil in Portugal in 1979, which we will use in this article.

⁸ According to Gabriela Grecco (2018), these exchanges, as well as the institutionalization of literary prizes, at the same time that they sought the nationalization of Brazilian culture, promoted its internationalization in some cases, as in the

Moreover, the emphasis given to the trajectory of the production of *O retrato* and the place which literary criticism conferred on it in the Brazilian literary canon established a connection between the work and the foreign reader through qualifications attributed to the fictional text. In this way, it is not without pretension that citations were highlighted from analyses by Gilberto Freyre, Oswaldo Aranha, and Moysés Velhinho, even though the Portuguese publisher did not reference these excerpts.

On the back cover of the same 1979 edition of *O retrato* was the paratext *Erico Verissimo, o escritor e a crítica*, listing other excerpts of analyses published by Portuguese critics or by Portuguese newspapers, once again without making the due bibliographic references:

... the most important novelist in the Portuguese language.

Carlos Queiroz

Erico Verissimo makes us penetrate the heart of the characters, share their misfortunes, tears, anguish, fleeing our sensitivity to their tragic destiny.

When the author manages to identify the reader with his figures, it is because they live beyond literature, in real humanity.

Artur Portela

Erico Verissimo is not just an important Brazilian writer limited to Brazil. His name and his work go beyond the frontiers of his country, gaining universal sympathy. The pages of his book tremble and throb, bringing us the heat of human emotion and a message of poetry and tenderness.

Rabelo Bittencourt

... one of the greatest writers in Portuguese. Portugal will recognize him, thanks to the Portuguese editions of his great work.

(in *Jornal do Comércio*)

... Erico Verissimo knows how to balance in his novels the human document and psychological analysis.

José Osório de Oliveira (*Livros do Brasil*, 1979, n.p.).

In this case, it can be perceived that this content projects an expectation in the reader and qualifies the work of Erico Verissimo, since these quotations come from people considered to be important critics in the Portuguese literary scenario. The name and the sig-

dictatorial regimes, politicizing literature with the purpose of forging an identity.

nature demarcated a place of prestige and respect for the text of the other, a typographic mark which conferred on the writing of the other a mode of reading, also reacting to what would be read, impacting the process of authorial invention and reading processes.

Among those cited in the paratext in discussion is Artur Portela, who was important for his polemical texts in *Diário de Notícias* (Lisbon), both in his columns on literature and on fine arts, as well as having collaborated with important magazines, including *Revista Mundo Gráfico*.⁹ Another name deserving of mention is José Osório de Oliveira who, in addition to being a poet, was an important literary critic.

The intellectual trajectories of the critics mentioned overcome the absence of complementary information about them. In turn, the quotations, grouped in a single paratext, filled an autonomous function, connecting with other typographic elements which attributed literary and aesthetic value to the work in its textual dimension.

Moreover, they also included the literature of Erico Verissimo in Portuguese reading taste, since, as it is possible to perceive, the elements highlighted were not restricted to Verissimo being the writer of *O retrato*, but mainly being an author in which these elements could be found throughout his entire literary production.

In order to produce an overview of the impact of the works of Erico Verissimo on the catalogue of the *Livros do Brasil* collection, it was identified that of the first 25 titles released 12 are from him: *Olhai os lírios do campo* (no. 1), *Saga* (no. 2), *Caminhos cruzados* (no. 4), *Um lugar ao sol* (no. 5), *A volta do gato preto* (no. 6), *Clarissa* (no. 7), *Música ao longe* (no. 9), *Gato preto em campo de neve* (no. 12), *O resto é silêncio* (no. 14), *O tempo e o vento* (no. 15), *O retrato* (no. 18) and *Noite* (no. 25).

As can be observed from the number of titles, but also expressed in the numbers of reprints, Sousa Pinto gambled on and invested in Verissimo's writing. On average, the 2,800 copies were printed of the first edition, with the following works standing out: *Israel em abril* (5,000 copies in 1970), *México* (4,800 copies in 1957), *O senhor Embaixador* (4,000 copies in 1965), and *Incidente em Antares* (3,800 copies in 1971). All these figures refer to the first edition (Chaves, 1972).

In the paratexts presenting the books Sousa Pinto used resources for the creation of a consensus among readers about Erico Verissimo, rhetorically questioning in *Saga*: "WHO does not know in Portugal the name of Erico Verissimo?" The question is answered by highlighting that the writer was one of the greatest Brazilian novelists, using adjectives

⁹ Although it only lasted eight years, *Revista Mundo Gráfico* was an important Portuguese periodical which circulated fortnightly. It was founded in 1940, with Artur Portela being its first editor. The magazine dealt with novelties from Portugal and the international sphere about graphic questions (Tavares, 2018).

which described him as admired and beloved, and tracing a sequence of Portuguese editions of his books, notably *Saga*, in *Coleção Livros do Brasil*:

The author of “Música ao longe”, “Caminhos cruzados”, and “Olhai os lírios dos campos”, counts on thousands of Portuguese readers and each reader admires him with persistence and devotion. “Saga” is one of the key books of the sensitivities and intellectual tendencies of Erico Verissimo, one of these books in which the soul and the thought of the author, clearly manifested page by page, through unforgettable characters and a beautiful and captivating narrative, immediately wins our attention and captures our interest (Verissimo, 1962a, n.p.).

In this way, when the trajectory of the various editions is associated with the literary qualifications of the writers, Erico Verissimo is announced to readers as an unavoidable author for the knowledge of Brazilian literature. The narrative artifice is repeated in *Clarissa*, in which Sousa Pinto calls him, “without a doubt, one of the greatest writers which the world counts on at present; his characters become dear to the Portuguese public” (Verissimo, 1962b, n.p.). This is returned to in *O retrato*: “Erico Verissimo is, no one ignores him now, one of the greatest writers in Portuguese. Literature has always been a fundamental concern” (Verissimo, 1977, n.p.).

The connotation given by *Livros do Brasil* to the establishment of this singularity can be questioned, since the singularization also occurred, each in their own way, with other authors published in the collection. It can also be considered an artifice by the publishing market and its narrative compositions of the projections of works and authors.

The difference in this case resides in the fact that Erico Verissimo differentiated himself in relation to those who also were part of *Coleção Livros do Brasil* to the extent that, taking into account only a mathematical calculation, the number of editions and titles published in Portugal by Sousa Pinto is higher than the others.

In the 18th edition of *Olhai os lírios dos campos*,¹⁰ the book flap contains an overview of the publication of Erico Verissimo’s books in Portugal. According to this the debut novel in the collection “is truly remarkable. [...] If the number of copies printed in Portugal is added to those of Brazilian editions, it will be seen that this book reaches figures which writers in Portuguese are not very used to” (Verissimo, 1980, n.p.).

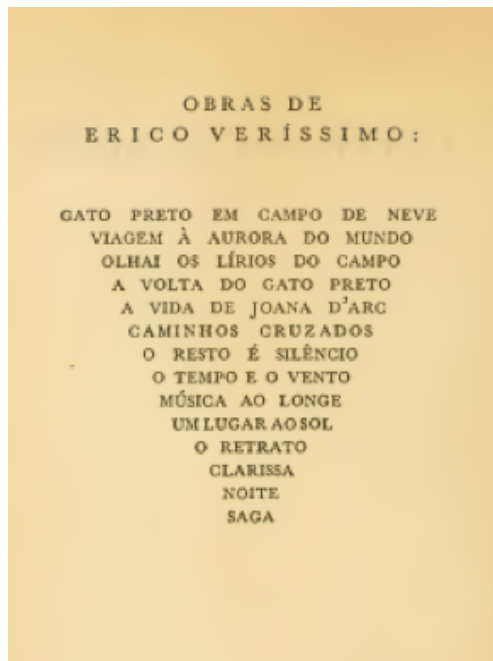
What is interesting is that Sousa Pinto points to the presence of Brazilian publications, released by Globo publication as justification of the success of the book among Portuguese readers. An interesting fact since, as mentioned above, in accordance with the idea that the

¹⁰ A preliminary version of this text appeared in the 4th edition, which was updated in later ones.

good reception and circulation of a work in Brazil did not guarantee that the same would happen in Portugal. It was in the perceptive relationship of the two literary systems that the publisher formed his collection, reaching for their correlations, both in relation to print runs, sales, and the reception of the public, and in relation to themes and styles,¹¹ in this way searching for the literary qualities of the author and for the plot of the novel which, according to him, provoked interest in old and future readers.

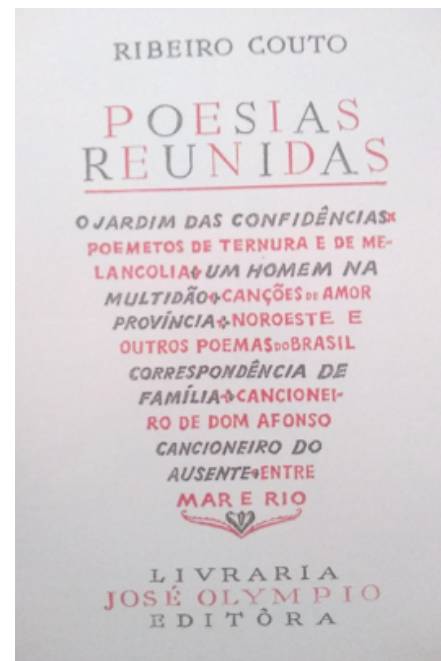
Moreover, the place of importance given to Erico Verissimo by Sousa Pinto in *Coleção Livros do Brasil* was expressed in the materiality of publication. One example is the paratext *Obras de Erico Verissimo*, which was present in various Portuguese editions of different titles by the author:

Figure 1 – Obras de Erico Verissimo



Source: Verissimo (1968).

Figure 2 – Paratexto de Poesias reunidas



Source: Couto (1960).

¹¹ It is interesting that the same occurred with other authors, since Sousa Pinto sold Brazilian editions in Portugal. Added to this factor is the fact that Jorge Amado's books, for example, circulated in the Portuguese book market before the work of *Livros do Brasil*, either as a distributor or publisher.

The first of the two figures above belonged to the already mentioned work by Erico Verissimo which was published by Livros do Brasil and whose illustrations were by Bernardo Marques.¹² The second was *Poemas reunidos*, by Ribeiro Couto, released by José Olympio Editora, with graphic design by Luís Jardim.¹³ Both functioned as editorial devices which traced a trajectory of authors in the catalogue of the publishers in question.

At the same time, they were aligned with the aesthetics of concrete art or concrete poetry, in evidence at that moment, revealing that the object book connects with other languages and aesthetics for the establishment of closer relations with the reader, for the expansion of spaces of circulation, as well as demonstrating that the publishing process is always collective and plural.

In both cases, the typographic resource prepared by illustrators and taken advantage of by the respective publishers, assumes the visual dimension of the word. In other words, the white page gains geometric contours concretized through the spatial organization of the titles of the authors' works.

In the case of Ribeiro Couto, Luís Jardim followed the elements used by concretism: both the materialization of intellectual concepts, in this case the title of Couto's poems and the artificiality of the set of colors by intersecting the red with a grey tone (approximating tones of black), used to color the curvilinear designs which separate the titles of the poems.

These procedures established a network of feelings through an inverted pyramid, thereby connoting authorial growth not limited to a chronology or to an evolutionary state of literary action, but evoking a network of meanings particular to the author, like a literary style or a particular form of writing.

In analyzing these two cases, they expose printing, graphical, and typographical practices shared by José Olympio in Brazil and Sousa Pinto, on the other side of the Atlantic, which extrapolated national frontiers and were part of the actual dynamics of book manufacture, seen both as object and a work of art, and which dialogues with other aesthetics and artistic tendencies.

Furthermore, referring to the publication of Erico Verissimo's books, Sousa Pinto used the same resource to release new editions of the same work or of other titles, in which the paratext was updated, but maintaining the strategy of using white space for the production of meaning, becoming a book-object, though abandoning linguistic linearities and

¹² Bernardo Loureiro Marques (1898-1962) was a graphic artists, illustrator, and painter. He participated in the second phase of Portuguese modernism and the fine arts renovation movement in Portugal during the twentieth century.

¹³ A Brazilian painter and writer, Luís Jardim (1901-1987) made his name through his articles on painting, the publication of works for children, and cover art for various Brazilian writers, including Rachel de Queiroz.

opting instead to choose meanings produced by elaborations of forms and lines, reaffirming the spatial-geometric principles of the concrete aesthetic.

In relation to Livros do Brasil's attempt to trace a historicity for each work published, I only identified the case of *Caminhos cruzados*. The second Portuguese edition has a book flap announcing a set of information about the Brazilian editions. In first place, this strategy evidences the scope of the work in question through the successive editions published by Editora Globo (1935, 1936, 1937, and 1938) and winning the Graça Aranha prize. Second, it highlights the translation to English by Louis Kaplan, with the title *Crossroads*, released by Macmillan, revealing its international circularity and the interest of other publics.

All of this to justify that even though *Olhai os lírios do campo* was Erico Veríssimo's best-selling book, *Caminhos cruzados* continued to be the preferred work of his readers, a discourse which became a commercial strategy with the purpose of attributing literary qualities to the authors, since authorship is constructed "not only from discourse, but also a materiality, materiality and discourse [...] are inseparable" (Chartier, 2012, p. 63). Sousa Pinto thus concludes that "the first Portuguese edition of this famous novel in 'Coleção Livros do Brasil' rapidly sold out, which proves that interest in this work by the great writer from Rio Grande do Sul has not waned" (Livros do Brasil, 1947 n.p.).

Contemporary publications of Brazilian literary works became a point of connection between Brazil and Portugal, creating another form of relating Brazil to Portugal, with the world of books and its agents being the possible intermediaries in a new intellectual and literary configuration through narratives detached from the Brazilian colonial past, in which Brazil was seen only as an extension of the Portuguese patria. Despite this, this question was not a guiding element which ran through the entire trajectory of *Coleção Livros do Brasil*, though it had a striking presence between the 1950s and 1970s.

This point gained more evident contours in the presentation of the Portuguese edition, published by Livros do Brasil, of *Solo de clarineta: memórias – volume I* (1973), in which Sousa Pinto justified the publication stating that

Upon reaching the exceptional degree of a popular writer – a writer capable of reaching the broadest layers of the public with his powerfully human message – the writer would contract the commitment of his revelations. The dimension of his work and its repercussion in the Luso-Brazilian world justified this overview of the past, this recapitulation of his personal experience, varied and enriching, in which his fictional creations were enrooted. Despite his desire not to stand out as a character, and despite his detachment, Erico Verissimo ended up accepting the logic of his situation as a writer: not to look at himself narcissistically in the mirror of the past, but to animate each page of the book with the vivifying breath of a profoundly liberal and humanistic thought (Livros do Brasil, 1973, n.p.).

By choosing *luso-brasileirismo*, Sousa Pinto disseminated the work of Erico Veríssimo through a perspective of reading unity, in other words a common optic between the Portuguese who dialogued with the idiosyncrasies of Brazil and Portugal or the discovery of Brazilian literature. This perspective, or rather, the decision to unite the meaning of publications around this concept, is related to the intellectual production and books of Gilberto Freyre, which was already popular among Portuguese readers in the 1970s.

Moreover, the Portuguese publisher established standards of reading for *Solo de clarineta* from a reductionist perspective, although it was evident that the publications possessed another connotation: the rupture with the consolidated narrative of history as a continuum, with Brazil being dependent on Portugal, at least in the case of literary production.

However, it should be highlighted that Sousa Pinto's use of *luso-brasileirismo* as a discourse of unity is strikingly aimed at the works of Gilberto Freyre, in a type of justification to make him a writer of literature and in this way to substantiate the place of the sociologist in a literary collection.

The circumstances analyzed until now show that Erico Veríssimo's works rapidly became successful with the Portuguese public and transformed Livros do Brasil into the most important publisher in Portugal concerned with the production, sale, and circulation of Brazilian literature in the Portuguese publishing market.

In addition to justifying the popularity of the author's book based on the numbers printed and sold, this became clear with Sousa Pinto's invitation to Veríssimo to travel to some Portuguese cities between 20 February and 10 March 1959. This involved afternoons of autographs, talks, dinners, and celebrations among the Portuguese intellectual circles, both in Lisbon and neighboring cities. His trip to Portugal is described in the second volume of *Solo de clarineta* (1976):¹⁴

My editor Antônio de Souza Pinto and Eng. Jorge de Sena waited for us at the quay, in the company of other people who – leaning over on the ship's rail – I try but do not manage to identify. We disembarked. I had barely put my feet on Portuguese soil when I felt a native son of this land. Indeed! Here are my remote roots, from here one of my ancestors left one hundred and fifty years ago on his Brazilian adventure. I am at home. Souza Pinto is a middle-aged man, slightly above average height, with rosy and fleshy cheeks; he dresses with British elegance and smokes a pipe. Jorge de Sena is a professor, inside and out. I know his excellent poems and essays. He has and deserves the reputation of a man of uncompromising moral and intellectual integrity. At first sight he seems somewhat withdrawn and silent. Like me he

¹⁴ The citations and *Solo de clarineta* were taken from the Brazilian edition. For this reason, it is dated 1976. See Veríssimo (1976).

hates the Salazar regime. I am certain that we will understand each other well (Verissimo, 1976, p. 65-66).

It is interesting to highlight that the book counted on the collaboration of Sousa Pinto, since Erico Verissimo asked his publisher for the itinerary of its trajectory. The latter sent details of both his first (in 1959) and second trips, in May 1966, and asked told him to get help from “Jorge de Sena with the aim of reviving his memory of his memorable first trip to Portugal”.¹⁵ According to Verissimo,

In narrating this voyage to Portugal in the second volume of *Solo de Clarineta* I am remembering that pleasant time in Portugal. Here and there it is necessary to appeal to the imagination to fill a gap or give a scene more life. However, I hope that I never enter the land of lies. Sometimes for questions of literary composition and time, I mix on the same page incidents that occurred at various opportunities. It is what I call the “porridge of time”. What is essential is remaining with the spirit of the trip, the “juice” of my personal impressions.¹⁶

The presence of Erico Verissimo in Portugal represented a bridge across the Atlantic, the meeting between the author and his books published overseas, which were seen as foreign books even though the writer felt at home when stepping onto Portuguese soil. Nevertheless, he adopted a rhetorical discourse in his narrative to denote and evidence the friendship with his publisher and also to establish connective links with his Portuguese readers, since the work was practically published simultaneously in Brazil and Lisbon.

Another element is the absence of political presentations in the paratexts of some of the books released by *Coleção Livros do Brasil*.¹⁷ While the Brazilian edition of *Incidente em Antares*, released by *Coleção Sagitário*, from Globo, highlighted that:

There is no little irony in this book (and certainly it is not without advantage) against the “grandeur” of numerous facts and men of Brazil. This is a work written without fear and contemplation, which remembers and lucidly warns. Never before has a novelist expressed so boldly his disbelief to disenchanted “heroes”, here stripped of their useless glow of commendations and reduced to their true size. We never had such a

¹⁵ Collection of the Centro de Humanidades da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas/Universidade Nova de Lisboa (CHAM/FCSH/NOVA). Letter by Sousa Pinto to Erico Verissimo. Lisboa, 31 jul. 1975. Uncatalogued. 1975.

¹⁶ Collection of the Centro de Humanidades da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas/Universidade Nova de Lisboa (CHAM/FCSH/NOVA). Letter by Erico Verissimo to Sousa Pinto. Porto Alegre, 3 jan. 1975. Uncatalogued. 1975.

¹⁷ In making this affirmation, I do not want to say that the political questions present in the literary text have disappeared. The question raised here is how the paratexts, which are prescriptions for reading, direct the reader’s gaze to certain aspects to the detriment of others.

political Erico Verissimo, which means, in rigorous Brazilian terms, so seized by such bitter reasons, which he softens with his always jovial tone in writing and with a well-played configuration of satire which imposes the narrative (Verissimo, 1971, n.p.; emphasis in the original).

The term *political* is an emphasis that can be found in the actual Brazilian edition, very probably related to the fact that the book had been written and published in the middle of the Brazilian military regime and was considered by the literary critics as an analysis of the political context experienced by the country at that moment.

The Portuguese edition had its particularities. First, it does not mention at all that the book had originally been published in a collection. Second, unlike the other books released as part of *Coleção Livros do Brasil*, in which the paratext presenting the work and author was written by the publisher, Erico Verissimo was asked to submit a text for *Incidentes em Antares*. However, he refused. Some extracts were taken from his response and his justifications for his refusal. Generally speaking, though, the presentation was limited to stating that

Antares in this case is not the magnificent constellation of Scorpio, but a small city – imaginary but real, as the novelist states – located to the north of São Borja, on the banks of the Uruguai River. Erico Verissimo considers *Incidente em Antares* to be a type of estuary into which flow rivers and streams of various of his tendencies and characteristics as a writer (Verissimo, 1971, n.p.).

In *Saga*, for example, even if only in a footnote, Sousa Pinto mentions that part of the plot takes place in Spain during the Civil War. Furthermore, in this edition the Erico Verissimo's original dedication was kept. Even without giving a biography of those mentioned in the acknowledgements, this contains political connotations, taking into account that they were former combatants:

To the former combatant of the International Brigade who gave me the itinerary of Vasco in his time in Spain, as well as many other valuable suggestions; and to Mr. Jesus Corona, to whom I owe a handful of notes about Argelés-sur-mer prison camp; I would like to give both my thanks and praise (Verissimo, 1962a, n.p.).

In *O senhor embaixador* (1968), also produced in the same historic context as the previous work, a reduced version of the introduction to Brazilian edition was used for the Portuguese presentation. In this, certain elements would be maintained which were removed when *Incidente em Antares* was published:

it is set in the Republic of Sacramento, a Caribbean island governed despotically by a military governor supported by a rural oligarchy and two American companies [...] In this multi-faceted novel, rich in action, dialogue, and intrigue, problems of our time and our continent are stirring: Interamerican relations, both political and economic, and also and mainly human (Verissimo, 1971, n.p.).

As can be seen, even with the mention that the narrative is based in a place where there is a despotic government, a military dictatorship, marked by the oligarchical regime, the space is demarcated by Interamerican relations, both in political and economic aspects. In other words, in the way it is presented to the reader the plot could be based in Brazil, or in any other country in the Americas.

The absence of a political tone as a prescription for reading and the mark of authorship used in the narratives produced by Sousa Pinto for Brazilian literature could only be present when this relationship took place between Portugal and Brazil. When these did not establish a correlation, it was only possible to adapt the publishing resources of the original edition.

Although political themes did not publicly appear or when they are mentioned they are hurriedly presented without any emphasis in the paratexts, in the correspondence between Sousa Pinto and Erico Verissimo, they are present and run through the confidences of the two friends.

Bad times these, my Friend! [...] I am aware that you had already faced identical situations to those occurring here in this, until now, peaceful country. We are not used to it and the impact was great and painful. We move from one extreme to another, thanks to the wrong politics of the past which never taught the people the paths of true democracy. The antidote of fascism turns out to be the opposite pole. In this chapter we have daily surprises and not only those of a general order which politicization imposes, such as those people we considered sensible and honest who suddenly transformed into what they already were but were usually camouflaged (Verissimo, 1957, n.p.).

But there was a point of reconciliation when themes such as those of the above letter were made public. It was called Gilberto Freyre. It is not by chance that after Erico Verissimo's trip to Portugal and his criticisms of Salazar's Estado Novo, Sousa Pinto began to insert Freyre's analyses of books by literati [confirmar tradução] in the editions released by Livros do Brasil.

In *O tempo e o vento*, a long extract occupies a central place in the presentation, justifying the publication as "one of the most impressive novels in the rich and multifaceted literature of our fraternal country. The famous sociologist Gilberto Freyre stated that it is 'a

great book... one of the most significant which have recently appeared in Brazilian literature” (Verissimo, 195?, n.p.).

References

- CHARTIER, Roger. *O que é um autor? Revisão de uma genealogia*. Trad. Luzmara Curcino e Carlos Eduardo Bezerra. São Paulo: EdUFSCar, 2012.
- CHAVES, Flávio Loureiro. *O contador de histórias: 40 anos de vida literária de Erico Verissimo*. Porto Alegre: Globo, 1972.
- COUTO, Ribeiro. *Poesias reunidas*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1960.
- ESTATÍSTICA. Correio da Manhã, Coluna Vida Literária, Rio de Janeiro, 19 maio 1946, p. 2.
- GRECCO, Gabriela de Lima. Los libros de la Nación: premios literarios en Brasil durante la dictadura de Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945). *Revista de Estudos Brasileños*, v. 5, n. 9, p. 1-13, 2018.
- LIVROS DO BRASIL. Caminhos cruzados de Erico Verissimo. In: Verissimo, Erico. *Caminhos cruzados*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1947, s.p.
- LIVROS DO BRASIL. Solo de Clarineta (memórias) por Erico Verissimo. In: Verissimo, Erico. *Solo de clarineta*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1973, s.p.
- LIVROS DO BRASIL. Retrato de Erico Verissimo. In: Verissimo, Erico. *O retrato*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1979, s.p.
- MEDEIROS, Nuno. *Edição e editores: o mundo do livro em Portugal 1940-1970*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2010.
- MEDEIROS, Nuno. *O livro no Portugal contemporâneo*. Lisboa: Le Monde Diplomatique/Outro Modo, 2018.
- SANTOS, Donizeth. O projeto literário de Erico Verissimo. *Estudos de literatura brasileira contemporânea*, n. 44, p. 331-363, jul./dez. 2014.
- TAVARES, Ana Catarina Oliveira. *Representações da II Guerra Mundial na “Revista Mundo Gráfico” (1940-1946)*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História Contemporânea), Universidade do Porto. Porto, 2018.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *O tempo e o vento: o retrato*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 195?.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Saga*. 4. ed. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1962a.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Clarissa*. 5. ed. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1962b.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *O prisioneiro*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1968.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Incidente em Antares*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1971.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Solo de clarineta*. v.2. Segunda parte, póstuma, organizada por Flávio Loureiro Chaves. Porto Alegre: Globo, 1976.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *O tempo e o vento: o retrato*. 2. ed. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1977.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Olhai os lírios dos campos*. 18. ed. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1980.
- VERISSIMO, Erico. *Um certo Henrique Bertaso*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2011.

Errata

DOI: 10.1590/TEM-1980-542X2024v300115t

Where read:

Gilberto Gilvan Souza de Oliveira

Be read:

Gilberto Gilvan Souza Oliveira