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Passo e Compasso: Nos ritmos do envelhecer (review)

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reception of Lispector's work, she continues on to suggest that the reader of Lispector's work is perforce "caught" in the indeterminacy of her writing. Highlighting readers' letters to Lispector in response to her various *crônicas*, as well as Lispector's (sometimes vexed) replies, Gotlib underscores once again Lispector's writerly strategies of ambiguity—and her own enmeshment, as Peixoto terms it—with her various presentations of "self," other, and author.

As a Lispector scholar and reader, I find the collection quite valuable; given the relative paucity of work in English on Clarice Lispector, Pazo's and Williams's collection of English-language writing on this author is welcome, not just for its mere presence, but especially for its attention to newer critical thinking on race, gender, and nation. Most especially welcome is the turn indicated in this volume toward an examination of the several kinds of writing in which Lispector engaged—letters, *crônicas*, semi-autobiography, fiction—a turn that indicates a more comprehensive way of thinking both about her fiction and about her life-work as a whole.

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**Barbosa, Maria José Somerlate, org.** *Passo e Compasso: Nos ritmos do envelhecer*. Coleção Memória das Letras 17. Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2003. 317 pp.

The unifying thread in this collection of nineteen essays by eighteen authors is the subject of aging (*velhice*, *terceira idade*) and the aging/aged (*idosos*, *velhos*) in the Lusophone literary world. The initial "Apresentação" by Prof. Barbosa (who also authored two of the essays) describes the tripartite arrangement of the collection: The first section—subtitled "Passos"—includes four essays (by Ivete Lara Camargo Walty, Lúcia Sá, Zilá Bernd, and Maria Nazareth Soares Fonseca) dealing with the role of the elderly as emblematic figures and/or storytellers (*griots*) in various works of African and Brazilian literature (including a pair based on Amerindian themes). Individual authors treated in this subdivision are Agostinho Neto, Costa Andrade, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, Suleiman Cassano, Mia Couto, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Gonçalves Dias, Darcy Ribeiro, and several narrators of oral tales among Amazonian *ribeirinhos* and Amerindians of the Cinta Larga community.

The second group of essays—subtitled "Compassos"—consists of eight pieces (by Carmen Lucia Tindó Ribeiro Secco, Regina Zilberman, Maria Angélica Lopes, Maria da Glória Bordini, Margo Milleret, Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, Angélica Soares, and Prof. Barbosa) treating the broad theme of literary representations of sexuality/eroticism, the aging human body *per se*, and the roles of older men and women in selected works and authors of Brazilian, Portuguese, and African literature. Among the individual authors treated in this section are

Machado de Assis, Lygia Fagundes Telles, João Guimarães Rosa, Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Roberto Costa Neves, Adélia Prado, Leilah Assunção, Fernanda Botelho, and Helena Parente Cunha.

The final segment of the collection—subtitled “Ritmos”—contains a series of seven essays (by Paul Dixon, Paulo Motta Oliveira, Theodore Robert Young, Nelson Vieira, Dino Preti, Maria Luzia Teixeira Couto, and Prof. Barbosa) tangential to the themes treated in the previous two sections and broadly covering such diverse aspects as the linguistic idiosyncrasies of selected octogenarians, the effect of social pressures on the self-concept of “younger elderly” and “older elderly,” the interface between ethnic identity and chronological age, the establishment of *escolas/universidades de terceira idade* in Brazil, Europe, and North America, and the key role of selected *velhos/idosos* in works of Camões and a pair of Portuguese writers (Almeida Garrett and Eça de Queirós) of the XIX century, Machado de Assis, Érico Veríssimo, Monteiro Lobato, Vinícius de Moraes, Chico Buarque de Holanda, Jorge Amado, Jorge de Andrade, Lya Luft, Nélida Piñón, and a quintet of modern Jewish fiction writers of Brazil (Clarice Lispector, Samuel Rawet, Moacyr Scliar, Jaime Lerner, and Cíntia Moscovich).

Organizing a collection of studies such as that put together by Prof. Barbosa is a bit like herding cats, given the wide diversity of authors treated, aspects analyzed, and points of view represented. Certain authors—Machado de Assis, Lygia Fagundes Telles, Adélia Prado, and Mia Couto (Mozambique)—stand out in terms of frequency of treatment and depth of analysis. No single theoretical perspective dominates the collection, and the resulting kaleidoscope of individual studies offers a refreshing variety and accessibility to students of literature, sociology, history, and general culture. Taken as a whole, the collection may be said to focus most especially on the dichotomy or multiplicity of roles played by the elderly in diverse cultures, ethnic contexts, and historical moments; the diversity among rural and urban realities as reflected in national literatures; the dynamic of generational tensions and the conflict between “traditional” and “new” values throughout history; and the interaction of persons—particularly women—and their space (i.e., a “sense of place”). Three of the essays are essentially linear plot summaries, with relatively little analytical or comparative commentary. Two other essays focus mainly on one author but pay cursory attention to a second as a kind of *postscript*, but in general the pieces are well balanced. One may question the inclusion of the last two essays of the final section—“Pressões sociais e sua representação no discurso dos ‘idosos velhos’” (Dino Preti) and “Da rigidez do conceito de velhice à convivência nas escolas de terceira idade” (Maria Luzia Teixeira Couto)—in a volume dedicated otherwise to literary studies; perhaps these two pieces—one linguistic and the other dealing with educational policy and philosophy—might better fit in a collection of sociolinguistic studies.

Inevitably readers and reviewers will “resonate” especially with certain literary works, their authors, and those who study them. This reviewer must confess a special predilection for the following essays in the present collection: “Velho e velhice nas literaturas africanas de língua portuguesa contemporânea,” by Maria

Nazareth Soares Fonseca; “A mulher e a casa: Modos de ser, modos de estar,” of Angélica Soares; “Ficção, fatura e falta: Machado de Assis e a questão da idade,” by Paul Dixon; “Idade como crítica em *O tempo e o vento* de Érico Veríssimo,” of Theodore Young; and “Ideologia e ident/idade na literatura brasileira,” by Maria José Somerlate Barbosa, the organizer of the collection.

As pointed out in the essays by Ivete Lara Camargos Walty and Professor Barbosa herself, modern Brazilian culture in particular chooses to look *forward* rather than *backward* and displays much more interest in youthful and futuristic subjects and concerns than in gerontological ones. Given that premise, the present volume may offer a salutary, balanced tonic for scholars and Portuguese-language readers in general. Its multifaceted character invites a broad readership among those eager, or at least willing, to escape the “madding crowd” for a few hours and meander along a “road less taken” in the interests of a broader perspective of age and literature.

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**Causo, Roberto de Sousa.** *Ficção científica, fantasia e horror no Brasil 1875–1950*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2003. 337 pp. Notas. Bibliografia.

In his book entitled *Ficção científica, fantasia e horror no Brasil 1875–1950*, Roberto De Sousa Causo defines, reviews and historicizes the influences of the science fiction genre—*ficção especulativa ou científica*—in Brazil from the nineteenth century to contemporary authors. For the author, who has been involved with science fiction publications as a reader, editor, and writer, particularly since the 1980s, the book started as an academic project in the Departamento de Teoria Literária e Literatura Comparada da Universidade de São Paulo.

The book has been divided into three chapters with an introduction and includes a collection of color images of book covers, journals and posters from authors such as H.G. Wells (*A guerra dos mundos*); Edgar R. Burroughs (*Tarzan and Amazing Stories*); and Brazilian authors such as Gastão Cruls (*A Amazônia misteriosa*) (1925) and Berilo Neves (*Século XXI*) (1937). All these images are focused on the author’s definition of science and speculative fiction as a genre: “o modelo de investigação especular de seus próprios objetos, originários da própria estrutura da qual o autor extrai os elementos da sua produção, mas com um sujeito exótico, uma alteridade que é virtual—o Outro é o ser alienígena” (62). To encounter “otherness” or the Other appears here problematized, since Brazilian authors write precisely from this *virtual space* of a *mundo subdesenvolvido* which is in itself an “Other.”

This colonial paradox, which as Antonio Candido has argued defines Brazilian literature and culture, culturally and politically finds a problematic axis here, since scientific and speculative fiction are popular genres that are in many ways crossed by influences of European (mainly British) and United States authors.