

CLARICE LISPECTOR'S TRANSLATORS IN THE UNITED STATES*

Os tradutores de Clarice Lispector nos Estados Unidos

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ABSTRACT

Clarice Lispector's entry as an author into the United States happens at different moments, beginning in the 1950s, with the translation of several short stories, carried out among others by Elizabeth Bishop, culminating with a biography of the author written in English by Benjamin Moser in 2009, and a little later, with the publication of the short stories and other pieces, in the emblematic edition entitled *The Complete Stories*, in 2015, edited by Benjamin Moser and translated by Katrina Dodson. These publications put the translators in the spotlight, as they were responsible for renewing Clarice's presence on American soil. This paper aims to research the translators of Clarice Lispector's works in the English-speaking cultural system, considering only the American context. The aim is to highlight these professional figures who contributed to the dissemination of this important Brazilian writer abroad, analyze their profile, and also examine their presence and imprint on some of the translations performed, such as prefaces, postscripts, notes, etc., assessing the degree of visibility and invisibility (Venuti 2021). By considering the relevance of translators as social actors/dialogical bodies (Robinson, 1991, 2012) and as "translating subjects" (Berman, 1995) and the fact that English translations of Clarice's works have influenced and stimulated the circulation of this author in other literary systems, by examining the biobibliographical profile, verifying its presence or not in the paratexts (Genette, 2009/Batchelor, 2018) of Clarice Lispector's English-language translators and their translation position, as well as their project and horizon (Berman, 1995), we gain an understanding of the translation policies of a given cultural polysystem.

KEYWORDS: Clarice Lispector; Translated Brazilian Literature; English Cultural System; Translators.

RESUMO

A inserção de Clarice Lispector nos Estados Unidos acontece em diferentes momentos, iniciando na década de 1950, com a tradução de alguns contos, realizada entre outros por Elizabeth Bishop, culminando com uma biografia da autora escrita em inglês por Benjamin Moser, em 2009, e um

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pouco mais tarde, com a publicação dos contos e outros textos, na emblemática edição intitulada *The Complete Stories*, de 2015, com organização de Benjamin Moser e tradução de Katrina Dodson. Essas publicações colocam em evidência os tradutores, pois são os responsáveis por renovar a presença de Clarice em solo americano. Por isso, o presente artigo visa investigar os tradutores das obras de Clarice Lispector no sistema cultural anglófono, considerando apenas o contexto estadunidense. O objetivo é dar destaque a esses profissionais que contribuíram para a divulgação da literatura dessa importante escritora brasileira no exterior, analisar o seu perfil e também examinar a presença de suas marcas em algumas das traduções realizadas, como prefácios, posfácios, notas etc., verificando o grau de visibilidade e invisibilidade (Venuti 2021). Assim, considerando a relevância dos tradutores como atores sociais/corpos dialógicos (Robinson, 1991, 2012) e como “sujeitos traduzintes” (Berman, 1995) e o fato das traduções em inglês das obras de Clarice influenciaram e estimularam o trânsito e a circulação dessa autora em outros sistemas literários, conhecer o perfil biobibliográfico, verificando a sua presença ou não nos paratextos (Genette, 2009/Batchelor, 2018) do(a)s tradutore(a)s de língua inglesa de Clarice Lispector e sua posição tradutiva, além de seu projeto e horizonte (Berman, 1995) ajuda a compreender as políticas de tradução de um determinado polissistema cultural.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Clarice Lispector; Literatura brasileira traduzida; Sistema cultural estadunidense; Tradutores.

Clarice Lispector is one of the most important Brazilian writers of the twentieth century. She is a multifaceted author whose work cuts across several genres: from the novel to the short story, from chronicles to theater and translation. Her work has been the object of many kinds of analysis, with critics approaching stylistic and thematic aspects of her writing, highlighting, among other aspects, her experimental prose, her idiosyncratic syntax, her unusual combinations of words, the constant presence of female characters, her use of stream of consciousness, the theme of existentialism, etc.

In addition to her recognition and fame in Brazil, Clarice Lispector’s works have been translated and retranslated in different cultural systems, including in the English-speaking domain, especially in the United States. This interest in the author in the American context has grown over the years and is linked to different factors, as we will see below. Translators are a key element in this process.

The first signs of Clarice Lispector’s presence in the United States can be found in the 1950s, with the translation of her short stories published in literary magazines and anthologies. A little later, university presses such as the University of Texas Press and the University of Minnesota Press began to disseminate Lispector’s writing. Later, her work was published by trade publishers such as New Directions. In the twenty-first century, this author’s works were part of a new and ambitious translation project. One example is the publication in 2015 of *The Complete Stories* (See Figure 1), by New Directions, edited and with a foreword by Benjamin Moser and translated by Katrina Dodson¹.

This revival of Clarice Lispector in the American cultural system also witnessed a boost in translations and retranslations of the author’s works in other cultural systems, such as Argentina, England, Germany, Italy, Holland, Hungary, Mexico, Poland and Spain. This contributed to greater international projection and consolidated Lispector’s place in the Western literary canon. That is, in this specific case, the United States, a country with a dominant language, relaunched Clarice Lispector internationally, even contributing to the creation of a certain “Lispectormania”, as was seen in 2020, when events were organized in many places to celebrate the centenary of the writer’s birth.

1 In “A recepção de *The Complete Stories* de Clarice Lispector nos Estados Unidos pelos epitextos da imprensa em 2015” (2022), Guerini and Sales discuss the reception of Clarice Lispector’s *The Complete Stories* by the American public through the eyes of the press, and they conclude that, after *The Complete Stories*, the Brazilian writer reached another level of recognition and dissemination in the American cultural system, consolidating her position in the international literary canon. (The article was published in the journal *Linguagem & Ensino*, UFPEL, in 2022).

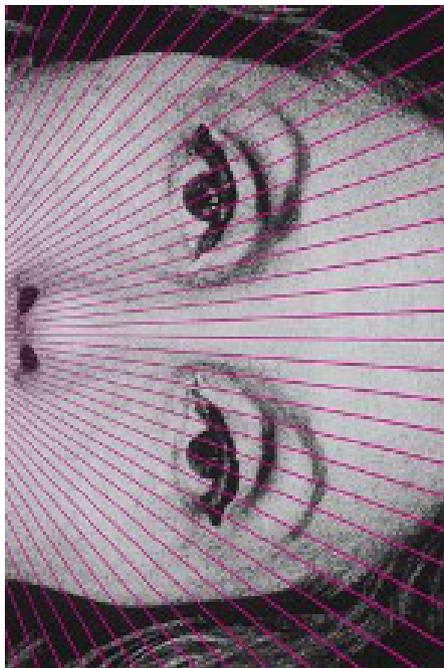


Figure 1 – Cover of *The Complete Stories*
Source: New Directions

In this context, a number of agents² - publishers, the press, and universities – were active in a major way in the dissemination of Clarice Lispector's work. Likewise, translators played a key role in this process, since they are responsible for giving a new life, or after-life to the “original” text, contributing to its renewal and its “survival” in another cultural/literary system. In other words, translators are responsible for prolonging, renewing, revitalizing, and enhancing the “original”. That is why Walter Benjamin states that in/with translations “the life of the originals attains in them to its ever-renewed and latest and most abundant flowering” (BENJAMIN, 1986, p. 72), and this happens thanks to the translators.

In this article, we intend to bring to light some of the translators, fundamental figures in the internationalization process, highlighting the professionals who contributed to the circulation and dissemination of Brazilian literature abroad, more specifically the works of Clarice Lispector in the United States. We analyze their bio-bibliographical profile and assess the degree of their visibility/invisibility (VENUTI, 2021), detecting their presence or not in the paratexts (GENETTE, 2009; BATCHELOR, 2018) of the translated works, such as covers, dust jackets, prefaces, postscripts, notes, etc.

2 The agents belong to what Even-Zohar calls the “institution” and is the institution that governs the norms of a given system and “the institution includes at least part of the producers, ‘critics’ (in whatever form), publishing houses, periodicals, clubs, groups of writers, government bodies (like ministerial offices and academies), educational institutions (schools of whatever level, including universities), the mass media in all its facets, and more. Naturally, this enormous variety does not produce a homogeneous body, capable, as it were, of acting in harmony and necessarily succeeding in enforcing its preferences. Inside the institution there are struggles over domination, with one or another group succeeding at one time or another at occupying the center of the institution, thus becoming *the* establishment. But in view of the variety of the literary system, different institutions can operate at the same time for various sections of the system” (EVEN-ZOHAR, 1990, pp. 37-38).

Thus, considering the importance of translator(s) as social actors and as a dialogic body (ROBINSON, 1991; 2012) and as “translating subjects” (BERMAN, 1995) and the fact that English translations of Clarice’s works have influenced and stimulated the crossing over and circulation of this author in other literary systems, analyzing the English translators of Clarice Lispector and their position, project and translation horizon (BERMAN, 1995), or their imprint, can be instrumental in understanding the politics of translation in a given cultural polysystem.

Our hypothesis is that Clarice Lispector’s translators in the United States, given their importance both in academia and in the publishing market, were instrumental in increasing the interest of the reading public and, consequently, influencing the reception and contributing to Clarice Lispector’s move from a “peripheral” writer to a key author in the Western canon.

The article is organized, then, in two articulated sections. In the first section, we briefly discuss the way Clarice Lispector was introduced in the United States, based on research by Monteiro (2002), Lanius (2017), and Dodson (2017). In the second, we list some translations to then analyze some of the main translators, based on the reflections by Berman (1995), Robinson (1991; 2012), Genette (2009), Batchelor (2018), Venuti (2021).

CLARICE LISPECTOR’S RECEPTION IN THE UNITED STATES

According to Monteiro (2002), there are two reasons for the interest in Lispector in the US context: 1) in the academic field, due to the presence of professors working at American universities in the field of Brazilian studies and the increasing number of programs and courses on Luso-Brazilian themes; and 2) in the publishing world, due to the boom of Latin American fiction in the 1960s and 1970s, when the US government invested in research and teaching on Latin America, reacting against the repercussions of the Cuban Revolution (1959). Monteiro points out that:

Throughout the 1970s, then, a significant bibliography of work was produced that shows the growing recognition of Clarice Lispector’s works in North-American universities and attests to a real appreciation of her writing. Nevertheless, the visibility that she attained in the academic field was clearly not matched in the publishing world. Only in the following decades, in the 1980s and 90s, were these two important audiences of her work to reach a balance, and this was because feminist theory was beginning to develop. A theoretical tendency with strong critical and political potential, where she had previously been unknown: English and French language and literature departments, not to mention the women’s studies courses being organized at the time. (MONTEIRO, 2002, p. 177)

Specifically regarding the translations of Clarice Lispector’s works, Lanius (2017) draws attention to the existence of two translation projects involving the writer’s work in the United States: 1) the initial translations, between the 1960s and 1990s, in which the writer’s image was linked to the academic context and feminism; and 2) starting in 2009, with the publication of the biography *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector*, authored by Benjamin Moser and published by Oxford University Press, a prestigious academic press. Lanius also notes that, in the first moment, the translators carried out more “domesticating” translations and, in the second, more “foreignizing” ones.

In an essay entitled “Rediscovering Clarice through Translation”, published in the *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies*, Dodson (2017) goes further and highlights four moments in the process of the writer’s arrival in the United States. 1) The first moment, in the 1960s, is marked by the first translation of a full work by Lispector into English, namely, *The Apple in the Dark*, in 1967, by Gregory Rabassa. 2) The second, happens in the 1980s when, framed by feminist criticism, Hélène Cixous writes a series of books elevating the writer to an icon of women’s writing and boosted the inclusion of Clarice Lispector in women’s studies courses. 3) A third moment occurs in the 1990s, with an increased interest in world literature, when the US publishing house New Directions³ and the British publisher Carcanet Press⁴ publish translations of Lispector’s works, mainly by Giovanni Pontiero (a period in which the writer was already known among lovers of Latin American literature and feminist theory). 4) The fourth moment occurs from 2009 onward, when Moser publishes the first biography of the writer in English. The success of this publication spawned new translations, all published by New Directions, starting with the translation of her last novel *The Hour of the Star*, in 2011. Afterwards, in 2012, four other works were launched, culminating with the publication of *The Complete Stories*, in 2015. This fourth moment, according to Dodson, is what raised the level of recognition of the writer internationally.

Although we acknowledge that the moment of greater appreciation of the writer in the United States occurred in the twenty-first century, and research shows that Lispector was already considered a canonized writer⁵, it is useful to go back in time to have a more complete and systematic overview and present the appearance of translations of Clarice Lispector’s works in the American context, with an emphasis on the translators, in order to map these important agents and cultural mediators, and answer the following questions: 1) who are these translators or these dialogic bodies? (ROBINSON, 1991; 2012); 2) what is the bio-bibliographic profile of these translating subjects? (BERMAN, 1995); 3) are these agents visible or invisible? (VENUTI 2021); and 4) what is their position, their project, and their translation horizon? As Berman (1995) emphasizes, before analyzing a translated text, it is necessary to know the translator’s nationality, their profession, their linguistic domains, the works they translate/translated, etc.

TRANSLATIONS & TRANSLATOR(S) OF CLARICE LISPECTOR’S WORKS IN THE UNITED STATES

Clarice Lispector’s work began to circulate in the United States with the publication of some translated short stories in magazines and anthologies. This is the case, for example, of the short story “Temptation”, published in the review *Américas* in 1955. Lispector appears on the collaborators’ page

3 Publishing house founded in 1936 by James Laughlin (1914-1997), based in New York City. New Directions is known for publishing foreign authors and translations of various literary genres. On its website, in the “About Us” section, the publisher notes that it is “Interested in publishing translated foreign writers (often in bilingual editions).” <https://www.ndbooks.com/>. Accessed on: 02 Feb. 2022.

4 A publisher founded in 1969 by Michael Schmidt, based in England, publishing English-language literature since then. It published a large number of translations in a wide variety of genres. <https://www.carcanet.co.uk/>

5 In “Clarice Lispector sob a ótica da imprensa norte-americana: o caso do *The New York Times*” (2016), Hanes and Guerini for example, analyzed the presence of Clarice Lispector in the American context, in the period from 1964 to 2016, from what was published in *The New York Times* and concluded that Lispector was presented as a canonized writer and that her image and presence in the press grew, exponentially, starting with the translation project coordinated by Moser. See http://www.periodicos.letras.ufmg.br/index.php/o_eixo_ea_roda/article/view/10167

of the issue, which leads us to assume that the translation was done by the writer herself. Later, in 1956, the short story “Amor” was translated by Lispector in partnership with Stanford Bradshaw and published in the *New Mexico Quarterly*. Then, in 1961, the short story “The Crime of the Mathematics Professor” was published in *Odyssey Review*⁶, with translations by William L. Grossman and José Roberto Vasconcelos⁷. In 1964, Elizabeth Bishop translated three of Lispector’s short stories, “The Smallest Woman in the World”, “A Chicken”, and “Marmosets”, which appeared in *Kenyon Review*⁸ that year. These short stories later appeared in Bishop’s book *Poems, Prose, and Letters* (2008). In 1973, “The Smallest Woman in the World” and “Marmosets”, translated by Bishop appeared in the anthology *The Eye of the Heart: Short Stories from Latin America*, edited by Barbara Hoves.

In 1967, the short story “The Crime of the Mathematics Professor” was included in the anthology *Modern Brazilian Short Stories*⁹, published by the University of California Press and edited by William L. Grossman, who also introduced the work and translated the short story together with Roberto de Vasconcelos. That same year, *The Apple in the Dark*, the first complete work in English, was published by Alfred Knopf with a translation by Gregory Rabassa. This translation was republished in 1986 by the University of Texas Press.

The University of Texas Press published two more works by Lispector: *Family Ties*, in 1972, translated by Giovanni Pontiero, and *An Apprenticeship or the Book of Delights*, translated by Richard A. Mazzara and Lorri A. Parris, in 1986. *The Apple in the Dark* (1967) and *An Apprenticeship or the Book of Delights* (1986) were published in the Texas Pan American Series¹⁰. *Family Ties* (1972) was published in the Latin American Masterpieces in English¹¹ Classics Series. The University of Minnesota Press published *Near to the Wild Heart* (1988), translated by Ronald W. Sousa, and *The Stream of Life* (1989), translated by Elizabeth Lowe and Earl Fitz. The University of Minnesota Press also published academic works on Lispector¹². The American publishing house New Directions began its series of works by Lispector with works already published in the United Kingdom by Carcanet Press. This is the case, for example, of *The Foreign Legion* and *The Hour of the Star*, both from 1992, translated by Giovanni Pontiero. For New Directions, Pontiero also translated *Selected Crônicas* (1996), a selection of texts from *Discovering the World (A Descoberta do Mundo)* and which Pontiero had already published with Carcanet Press, in 1992. In 1989, New Directions published *Soulstorm*, translated by Alexis Levitin, a volume that combines texts from two of Lispector’s works: *A Via Crucis do Corpo* (1974b) and *Onde Estivestes de Noite* (1974a).

After the release of the biography of the writer, *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector*, in 2009 by Oxford University Press, New Directions published retranslations of some of her works,

6 *Odyssey Review* is a publication of the Latin American and European Literary Society.

7 See: <https://themillions.com/2015/08/a-horribly-marvelous-and-delicate-abys-the-complete-stories-by-clarice-lispector.html> Accessed on: 18 Jan. 2022.

8 See: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i403162> Accessed on: 16 Jan. 2022.

9 See: <https://archive.org/details/modernbrazilians00gros/mode/2up> Accessed on: 17 Jan. 2022.

10 A book about Lispector was published in this series - *Sexuality and Being in the Poststructuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector* - by her translator, Earl E. Fitz, in 2001. This series published a total of 89 works by key Latin American authors between 1962 and 2001.

11 Available at: <https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/lisfam>. Accessed on: 14 Jan. 2022.

12 CIXOUS, H. *Reading with Clarice Lispector*. Edited, translated and with a preface by Verena Andermatt Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. PEIXOTO, M. *Gender, Narrative, and Violence in Clarice Lispector*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

and also the first translation of *A Breath of Life*, in 2012, by Johnny Lorenz. Within the New Directions project, *The Hour of the Star* was retranslated in 2011 by Benjamin Moser (See Figure 2), who is also the biographer and editor in the new publication project, with a preface by Colm Tóibín and an afterword by Moser. The same work was reissued in 2020 in hardcover to commemorate the centenary of the writer's birth¹³.

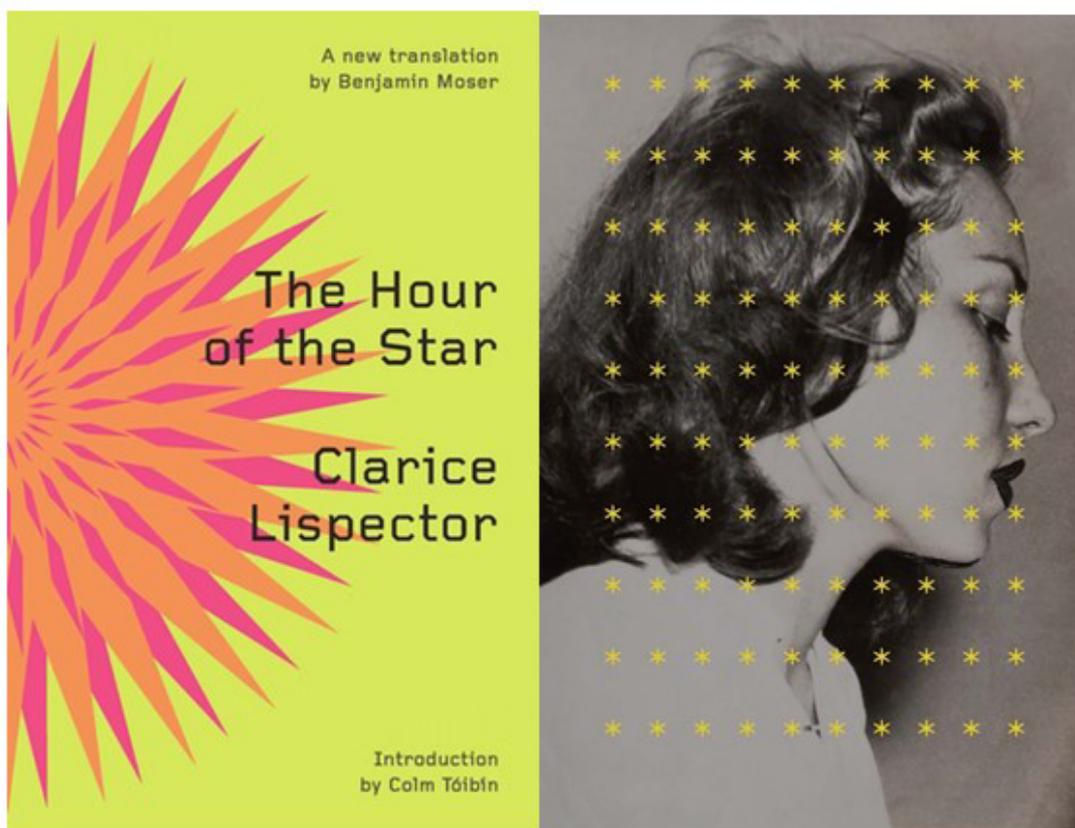


Figure 2 – Covers of *The Hour of the Star* (2011 and 2020)
Source: New Directions

The following year, four works were published, simultaneously, in print and e-book format: *Near to the Wild Heart*, translated by Alison Entrekin and with an introduction by Benjamin Moser; *A Breath of Life*, translated by Johnny Lorenz and with a foreword by Pedro Almodóvar and Benjamin Moser, and an introduction by Olga Borelli; *The Passion According to G.H.*, translated by Idra Novey and with an introduction by Caetano Veloso; and *Água Viva*, translated by Stefan Tobler, who kept the title in Portuguese, and with an introduction by Benjamin Moser. Of these, only *A Breath of Life* was translated for the first time.

These publications present usual and unusual editorial and marketing strategies: well-known prefaces, covers that dialogue with each other, by portraying together a photo of the writer, the name of the translator mentioned on the cover alongside a quote by an intellectual or renowned media figure, as we can see in the image below (Figure 3):

¹³ This 2020 publication is a hardcover reprint of the 2011 edition. The difference, besides the cover, is in the afterword, written by the writer's son, Paulo Gurgel Valente. Available at: <<https://www.ndbooks.com/book/the-hour-of-the-star-1/>>. Accessed on: 29 Jan. 2022.

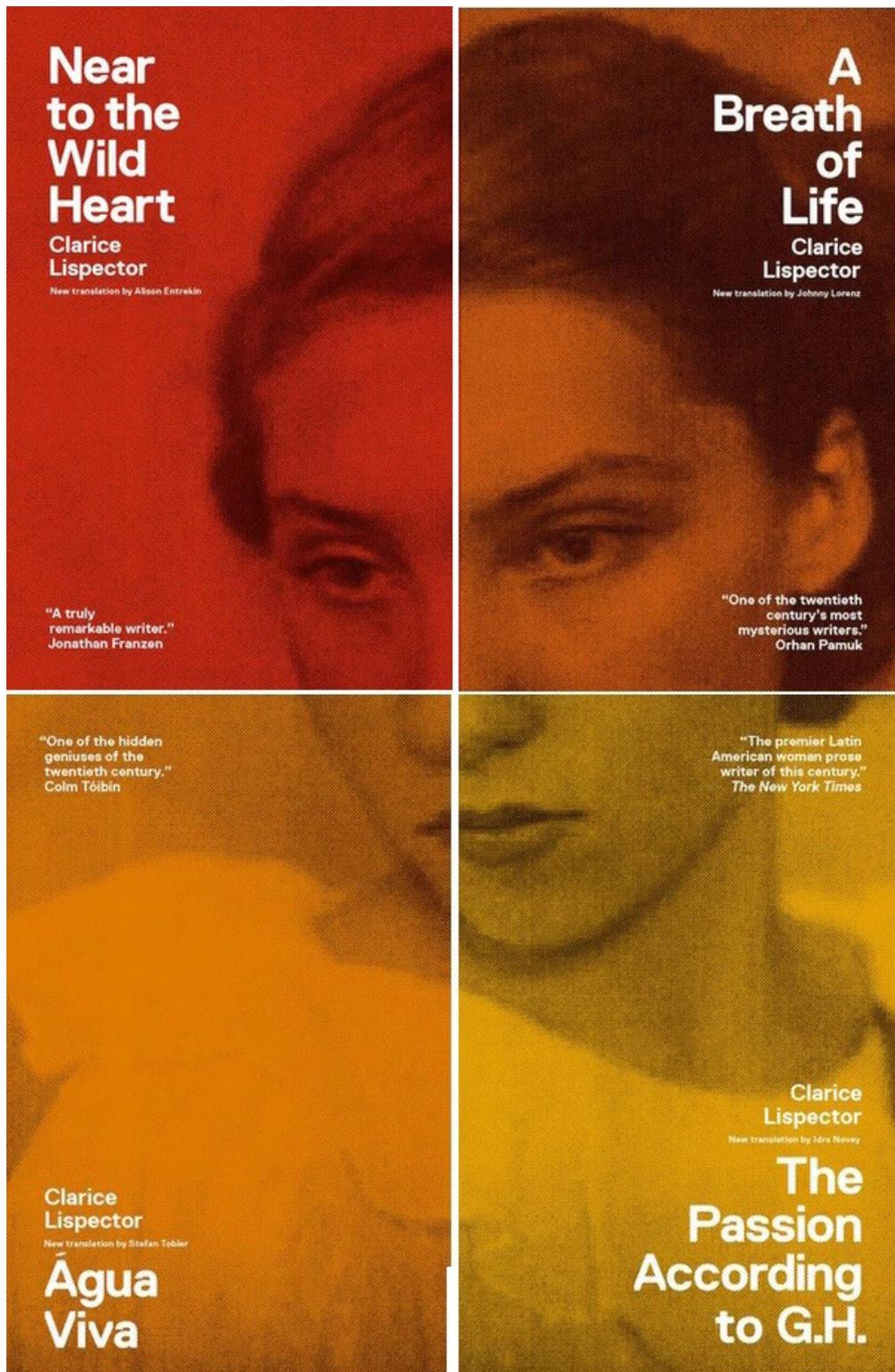


Figure 3 – Covers of Clarice Lispector’s works published in the United States
Source: New Directions

Besides the translators' names and a remark noting that these are new translations, the covers feature quotes by famous writers. *Near to the Wild Heart* features a quote by the American novelist Jonathan Franzen: "A truly remarkable writer". *A Breath of Life* quotes Orhan Pamuk, a novelist and winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature: "One of the twentieth century's most mysterious writers". *Água Viva*¹⁴ includes the Irish writer Colm Tóibín's remark to the effect that Lispector is "One of the hidden geniuses of the twentieth century". *The Passion According to G. H.* quotes from *The New York Times*: "The premier Latin American woman prose writer of this century". These phrases give visibility to the writer and also to the translators, as their names also appear in this prominent paratext.

Some of the translators that have contributed to bringing Clarice Lispector's work to life in the United States include: Elizabeth Bishop, Gregory Rabassa, William L. Grossman, José Roberto Vasconcelos, Richard A. Mazzara, Lorri A. Parris, Giovanni Pontiero, Elizabeth Lowe, Earl Fitz, Alexis Levitin, Magdalena Edwards, Benjamin Moser, Katrina Dodson, Alison Entrekin, Johnny Lorenz, Idra Novey, and Stefan Tobler. Of all these translators, we can say that most were linked to the academic world, especially those who authored the first translations, such as Rabassa and Pontiero, but also Elizabeth Lowe and Earl Fitz. In fact, an important and surprising fact is that the names of some translators, such as Rabassa and Pontiero, but also Richard A. Mazzara and Lorri A. Parris, appear on the covers, as we can see in Figure 4, an unusual feature at that time in works translated in the American literary system, as Rabassa himself would recall (RABASSA, 2005).

It is possible that Rabassa and Pontiero were listed on the cover because at the time, they were already well known in the academic and publishing world, and the Brazilian author was still relatively unknown. Featuring Rabassa and Pontiero's names gave the translated works a seal of quality and, in this case, more visibility to the translator than to the writer. Including the translators on the covers would be a practice that the translations published by New Directions would follow starting in 2012, as can be seen in Figure 3.

It is also important to call attention to some bio-bibliographical information on the translators because as Berman (1995) and Robinson (2012) point out, knowing who the translators are, what their profile and characteristics are, whether they are writers or not, whether they have received awards or not, etc., is crucial to a better understanding of some of their practices.

First, we highlight Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), an important poet and writer, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1956, who lived in Brazil for almost 15 years. Bishop translated three short stories by Lispector¹⁵ as well as poems by Carlos Drummond de Andrade and excerpts from *Morte e Vida Severina* by João Cabral de Melo Neto¹⁶. She also served as a creative writing professor in the English department at Harvard from 1963 to 1970¹⁷. According to Pechman (2015), Bishop and Lispector kept in touch between 1962 and 1964, and the relationship between the two was described as "complicated" and "tense"¹⁸, but one that was wrapped in some kind of fascination, especially on Bishop's part. According to Hicok:

14 The only work in which the Portuguese title was retained in the translation.

15 See: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/i403162>>. Accessed on: 20 Jan. 2022.

16 Published in *Poetry*, in October 1963.

17 See: <<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/elizabeth-bishop-and-alice-methfessel-one-art>>. Accessed on: 06 Feb. 2022.

18 See: PECHMAN, A. "It's complicated: Clarice Lispector and Elizabeth Bishop's fraught relationship". *Poetry Foundation*. Available at: <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/70270/its-complicated-56d24a0b3a371>>. Accessed on: 06 Feb. 2022.

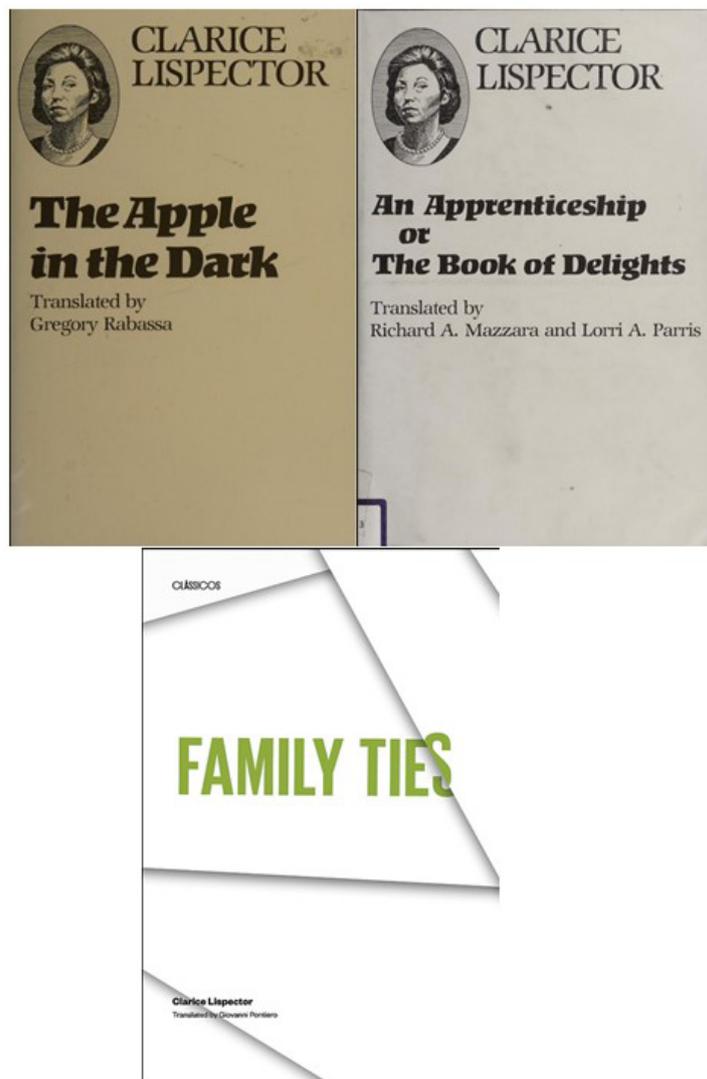


Figure 4 – Translations of works by Clarice Lispector published by the University of Texas Press
Source: The University of Texas Press

Bishop admired Lispector's writing, particularly her stories, and worked to promote her in North America. In addition to translating and publishing three of Lispector's stories in the *Kenyon Review* in 1964, Bishop's enthusiasm was instrumental in Alfred Knopf's decision to publish a book-length translation of Lispector's novel *The Apple in the Dark* in 1967. Comparative work on these two writers is scant, yet Bishop translated Lispector, wrote about her in letters, and shared a deep affinity with her work that offers interesting opportunities for cross-cultural analysis. At least one of these stories can be seen as one of several key texts Bishop was working on in Brazil that provide social commentary and critique on the history of colonialism and the exploitation of indigenous populations in Brazil (HICOK, 2016, p. 75).

Another key figure in the dissemination of Clarice Lispector in the United States is Gregory Rabassa (1922-2016). An educator, he was also largely responsible for bringing Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking Latin American fiction to English-speaking audiences. Rabassa translated more than

30 works by authors such as Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, and Clarice Lispector¹⁹. For his translation of *The Apple in the Dark*, Rabassa wrote an introduction at the request of the publisher. In this paratext, he introduces the work and the writer, without talking about the translation process itself. However, years later, when writing his translation memoir *If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Dyscontents*, published by New Directions in 2005, he speaks of the experience of prefacing the work he translated, revealing that:

Knopf asked me to write an introduction to the novel because they felt that it would be difficult to understand. I disagreed but was glad to oblige. Afterwards I wondered if it really was needed or whether the novel was more arcane than I had thought. In that case my explanation would probably only be the one of many possible twists. This bears out my idea that every reader reads his or her own book. One nice bit about *The Apple in the Dark* is that Alfred Knopf saw to it that the translator's name appeared on the dust jacket. This was a recognition that would be long in coming with other publishers and after Alfred went upstairs Knopf was lax in following it up. (RABASSA, 2005, p. 74)

It is worth mentioning that Rabassa translated only one work by Lispector, but it had the merit of being the first complete work by the author that circulated in the North American context. When he translated this work, he was already a recognized translator and enjoyed a certain fame. In 1967, Rabassa was awarded the National Book Award for Translation; in 1992, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Literature Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award; and in 2001, the Gregory Kolovakos Award. For his work as a translator, he won the National Medal of Arts (2006), the highest honor in the arts in the United States²⁰. Some years after having translated Lispector, Rabassa reflected on literary translation. For Rabassa, the translator is a writer and also a reader. According to Rabassa:

The translator must put to good use that bugbear of timid technicians: the value judgment. In translation as in writing, which it is as we have said, the proper word is better than a less proper but standard one. (...) Translation is based on choice and a rather personal one at that. Long ago I discovered a funny thing: if you ponder a word, any word, long enough it will become something strange and meaningless and usually ludicrous. I suppose this is some kind of verbicide, bleeding the poor word of its very essences, its precious bodily fluids, and leaving a dry remnant that could pass for a five-letter group in a cryptographic message. When we snap out of it and retrieve the meaning of the word, we have, in a sense, deciphered it. This is as far as I would go in turning translation entirely over to reason since so much of it should be based on an acquired instinct, like the one we rely on to drive a car, Ortega's vital reason.²¹ (RABASSA, 2005, p. 9)

For Fitz, in an article titled "The Reception of Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector in the United States and Beyond", Rabassa was one of the main promoters of Brazilian literature in the United States:

[...] loved Brazilian literature and sought always to promote it. His Ph.D. from Columbia University was, in fact, in Portuguese (a language for which he had a special affection) and not Spanish. Greg was an early champion here in the States of several Brazilian writers, notably Nélida Piñon, Dalton Trevisan, Osman Lins, Machado de Assis, and Clarice Lispector, whom he had met during his sojourn in Brazil.

19 See: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gregory-Rabassa>. Accessed on: 19 Jan. 2022.

20 <https://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2015/01/01/opening-doors-the-magical-touch-of-gregory-rabassa/>. Accessed on: 15 Feb. 2022.

21 Rabassa is referring to the Spanish philosopher and essayist Ortega y Gasset.

Deeply impressed by her talent, he rendered her great 1961 novel, *A Maçã no Escuro*, as *The Apple in the Dark*, which, in 1967, the prestigious publishing house, Alfred A Knopf, was pleased to publish. (FITZ, 2020, p. 26)

Another prominent name in the translation of Clarice Lispector’s works into English is Giovanni Pontiero (1932-1996), a Scottish-born translator of Italian ancestry. Pontiero worked in Brazil as a professor at the Federal University of Paraíba from 1960 to 1961, but for most of his life he was a professor of Latin American literature at the University of Manchester in England and translated works from Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian into English. He achieved recognition as a Portuguese language translator, having translated authors such as José Saramago and Clarice Lispector. He translated five books by Lispector²², which were published in the United Kingdom and the United States, as shown in the table below (Table 1):

Table 1 – Translations of Lispector by Giovanni Pontiero (1980s and 90s²³)

UNITED KINGDOM	UNITED STATES
<i>Family Ties</i> (1985) – Carcanet - Translation, acknowledgments, and afterword by Pontiero	<i>Family Ties</i> (1972) - University of Texas Press - Translation, acknowledgments, and introduction by Pontiero.
<i>The Hour of the Star</i> (1986) - Carcanet – Translation and afterword by Pontiero	<i>The Hour of the Star</i> (1992) - New Directions - Translation, acknowledgments, and afterword by Pontiero. The translator is mentioned on the front and back covers.
<i>The Foreign Legion</i> (1986) - Carcanet - Translation and afterword by Pontiero	<i>The Foreign Legion</i> (1992) - New Directions - Translation, acknowledgments, and afterword by Pontiero. The translator is mentioned on the front and back covers.
<i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> (1990) - Carcanet - Translation and afterword by Pontiero	<i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> (1990) - New Directions - Translation and afterword by Pontiero.
<i>Discovering the World</i> (1992) - Carcanet - Translation and preface by Pontiero	<i>Selected Crônicas</i> (1996) - New Directions - Translation and preface by Pontiero. The American version is a selection from <i>Discovering the World</i> published under the title <i>Selected Crônicas</i>

Source: Created by the authors of this article on the basis of existing bibliographical data

Carcanet initially published *Family Ties* (1985) after buying the rights from Carmen Balcells, the literary agent responsible for Lispector’s rights abroad, via the University of Texas Press, who had already published this work in 1972. Later, Carcanet negotiated the rights to other works, directly with Carmen Balcells and published *The Hour of the Star* and *The Foreign Legion*, in 1986, *Near to the Wild Heart*, in 1990 and *The Discovery of the World*, in 1992, all translated and with a preface or afterword by Pontiero.

22 Interestingly, the volume *The Besieged City* (Pontiero’s translation of *A Cidade Sitiada*) is mentioned on Carcanet’s site, but with the following note: “This title, though contracted for publication, was never in fact published”.

23 We do not discuss here the subsequent re-releases of these publications.

Pontiero's relationship with Lispector's work began in 1968, when he won the Camões prize for his translation into English of Lispector's short story "Amor". In 1970, Pontiero won the Rio Branco Prize for an academic paper on Lispector's fiction. He subsequently received several other awards for his translations of José Saramago and several other translations. Besides Clarice Lispector, he translated other Brazilian writers such as Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Manuel Bandeira, and Lygia Fagundes Telles. The Camões Institute created an award named after him in 2001 to reward translators²⁴. Like Rabassa and other translators, Pontiero also wrote about Lispector's work²⁵.

Of the five translations by Pontiero published in the United States, all of them give visibility to the translator in some way or another: either by putting his or her name on the cover, as in the translation of *Family Ties* by the University of Texas Press, *The Hour of the Star*, and *The Foreign Legion*, both published by New Directions, or by opening up space for the translator to write the introduction, preface, or afterword. In the ten-page introduction to *Family Ties* (1972), Pontiero briefly discusses the author's biography and then talks about existentialism in the work, establishing relations with the Brazilian critic Benedito Nunes and the writings of Sartre and Camus.

In the afterword to *Near to the Wild Heart*, published by New Directions in 1990, Pontiero introduces the author to American audiences and focuses on contextualizing the work and situating the reader vis-à-vis the complex plot of Lispector's writing. Pontiero follows the same strategy in the afterword to *The Foreign Legion*, published in 1992. Pontiero introduces the writer and discusses aspects of her writing and the richness of her published texts, emphasizing her introverted writing and distinctive syntax. In the afterword to *The Hour of the Star* (1992, New Directions), Pontiero starts off mentioning that the work was published the same year of Lispector's death and relates the work to her Northeastern experiences. He then introduces the main character and approaches issues around existentialism in the novel.

Although the voice of the translator is present in some of the paratexts, none of them mention the translation process, perhaps because, at the time, the field of translation studies was still invisible and the focus was on analyzing the text based on the formal and thematic characteristics of Lispector's work.

Regarding other translators, such as Richard A. Mazzara and Lorri A. Paris, who appear on the cover of the translated work, there is little bio-bibliographical information available. But at the time of publication of *An Apprenticeship or the Book of Delights* in 1986, Mazzara was a professor of modern languages and literatures at Oakland University. Lorri A. Paris had a master's degree in Latin American Studies and a graduate degree in Journalism. A year before the publication of this translation, Mazzara and Parris published an article about the work entitled "The Practical Mysticism of Clarice Lispector's *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres*" in the scholarly journal *Hispania* (1985)²⁶. This article was adapted and became the afterword to the work they translated, though no author is listed there.

Another figure is Ronald W. Sousa (1943-), who authored the translation *The Passion According to G.H.* in 1988. He was a professor of Spanish, Portuguese, and comparative literature at the University

24 <https://www.motaword.com/blog/playing-with-portuguese-giovanni-pontieros-translations>. Accessed on: 17 Feb. 2022.

25 PONTIERO, G. Clarice Lispector: An intuitive approach to fiction. In: BASSNETT, S. (ed). *Knives & Angels: Women writers in Latin America*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 1990. p. 74-85.

26 MAZZARA, R. A.; PARIS, L. A. The Practical Mysticism of Clarice Lispector's *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres*. *Hispania*, v. 68, n. 4, 1985.

of Illinois. In addition to this translation, he translated works by Portuguese-language writers, such as Manuel Antônio de Almeida as well as academic translations. In 1989, Sousa wrote a scholarly article on Clarice Lispector²⁷, and was also the author of the preface of the translation of *The Passion According to G.H.* In the preface, Sousa talks about his translation process:

As a translator preparing this singular text for a reading public unable to go to the original, I have felt acutely the ways in which traditional expectations have been violated, for such violation has robbed me of useful ways of structuring my presentation. What I have done as a result is to treat the Portuguese original in quite specific ways. (...) I have subordinated the rendition of many of what would traditionally be called “literary devices” to delineation, first and foremost, of the intellectual positions set forth in the book, and only thereafter have I endeavored to reproduce such features as style variation and artful use - or violation - of language norms. In so doing, I have often made the translated text more conventional than the original, regularly had to paraphrase where no single term was readily available in English, and occasionally had recourse to philosophical terminology where the original uses more ambiguous, and therefore more powerful, formulations. The result is a text that has lost something of the ambiguity and idiosyncrasy that is part and parcel of the original from which it arises and has become more expository in tone than that original. I invite the reader to imagine a Portuguese text that transmits a much greater sense of potential language chaos than does the translation (SOUSA, 1988, p. ix).

Another one of Lispector’s translators connected to the academic world is Elizabeth Lowe, a professor and researcher in the field of literary studies and translation studies. She was the founder of the Center for Translation Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she served as Professor of Translation Studies from 2008 to 2015. She was also a professor at New York University from 2015 to 2020 and is currently a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts. She has translated works by Machado de Assis, Nérida Piñon, Clarice Lispector, Euclides da Cunha, João Paulo Cuenca, Abel Coelho, João de Melo, and Antônio Lobo Antunes. Together with Earl E. Fitz, she translated *Água Viva* (*The Stream of Life*), published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1989. Elizabeth Lowe has published articles and book chapters on Clarice Lispector, as well as the monograph *The City in Brazilian Literature* (1982), and *Translation and the Rise of Inter-American Literature* (2007), coauthored with Earl E. Fitz²⁸.

Earl E. Fitz, who had Gregory Rabassa as a mentor during his academic training, translated *Água Viva* with Lowe, teaches Portuguese, Spanish, and comparative literature at Vanderbilt University. In addition to translation, Fitz has written extensively on the work of Clarice Lispector²⁹. Fitz also translated *The Woman Who Killed the Fish*, published in *Latin American Literary Review* (1982)³⁰.

We move now from the translators from the initial phase of Lispector’s presence in the United States, figures who were strongly linked to the academic world, to the translators of the more “commercial”

27 SOUSA, R. W. At the site of language: Reading Lispector’s “G.H.” *Chasqui*, v. 18, n. 2, 1989.

SOUSA, R. W. O lustre. In: MARTING, D. E. (ed.) *Clarice Lispector: a bio-bibliography*. London: Greenwood Press, 1993.

28 See: <<https://www.umassd.edu/portuguese-studies-center/events/contraponto-interview-with-prof-elizabeth-lowe-on-happy-people-in-tears.html>>. Accessed on: 20 Feb. 2022.

29 FITZ, E. E. *Clarice Lispector*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985; FITZ, E. E. *A writer in transition: Clarice Lispector and “A Via Crucis do Corpo”*. *Latin American Literary Review*, v. 16, n. 32, 1988; FITZ, E. E. *Sexuality and Being in the Poststructuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector: The difference of desire*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2001; FITZ, E. E. Clarice Lispector as a Northeastern Writer. *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, 49:1-2, 43, 2016.

30 LISPECTOR, C. The Woman Who Killed the Fish. Trans. by Earl E. Fitz. *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 11, No. 21, pp. 89-101, 1982. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/20119325?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents. Accessed on: 15 Feb. 2022.

phase. In this phase, Benjamin Moser stands out. In addition to authoring a biography of Lispector, Moser was the translator of two works, *The Hour of the Star* (2011), and, in partnership with Magdalena Edwards, *The Chandelier* (2018). Moser was also the general editor of the new publishing project of Lispector's works in translation by New Directions. He chose translators from different backgrounds and commissioned prefaces from famous figures linked to popular music and cinema, such as Caetano Veloso and Pedro Almodóvar. He also strove to foreignize the translations, as he himself stated when justifying the need for the retranslations (MOSER, 2011). In his view, Lispector's work had been domesticated in the first translations, noting that they "[...] did little justice to Lispector's unexpected and strange language"³¹ (LEÃO, 2015, n.p.). Thus, in translating the short stories, Moser, as general editor, suggested that the translator keep Clarice's strange language, because "... if you take out the weirdness of Clarice, you take out Clarice" (MOSER, 2011, n.p.)³².

This phase gave rise to a new crop of translators. These include award-winning Australian translator Alison Entekin, who translated *Near to the Wild Heart* in 2012³³ and other Brazilian writers such as Chico Buarque. Entekin, who studied creative writing and literary translation, is currently translating *Grande Sertão: Veredas* by Guimarães Rosa into English. Johnny Lorenz, the son of Brazilian immigrants to the United States and a professor at Montclair State University, translated *Um Sopro de Vida (A Breath of Life)* in 2012³⁴ and *A Cidade Sitiada (The Besieged City)* in 2021. Idra Novey is a poet, university professor, and author of the translation *The Passion According to G.H.* (2012). Stefan Tobler is a Brazilian translator of Portuguese and German and founder of the British publishing house And Other Stories. He translated *Água Viva* (2012). Tobler also worked with Moser on the retranslation of *An Apprenticeship of the Book of Pleasures*, to be published in 2022³⁵.

In 2018, the first English translation of *The Chandelier* was released by New Directions, a co-translation by Benjamin Moser and Magdalena Edwards. Edwards was born in Chile and raised in the United States. She has a doctorate in comparative literature and has done research on Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil. Edwards is an actress and a teacher, and has published several pieces about her experience as a translator (2020a³⁶, 2020b³⁷, 2021³⁸). For Edwards:

31 According to Moser: "When you love a book, you want to share it, but the translations were so bad that I didn't talk about it and even warned others: 'Don't read it, for God's sake, the translation is so bad that you will think this author is shit and you won't understand her stature and importance' [laughs]. I spent years working on how to get her to these people: I did the biography, which was a big risk because she was unknown to this (foreign) public, but I told myself: 'If I do this and they see who she is, they will want to release the books too' - and that's what happened. Really, it was very good and it has worked out well with her, although it might not have happened, and I would have been almost forty years old and done all this for nothing". In interview with Gustavo Leão. Available on: <https://www.vice.com/pt/article/aewagp/uma-entrevista-com-benjamin-moser-o-biografo-de-clarice-lispector>. Accessed on: 05 Jan. 2022.

32 (...) if you take out the weirdness of Clarice, you take out Clarice. MOSER, Benjamin. Brazil's Clarice Lispector gets a second chance in English. *Publishing Perspectives*, 2011. Available at: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2011/12/brazil-claire-lispector-second-chance-in-english/>. Accessed on: 19 Dec. 2021.

33 The translation was nominated for the PEN Translation Prize in 2013.

34 This translation was shortlisted for the Best Translated Book in 2013.

35 <https://www.ndbooks.com/book/apprenticeship-or-the-book-of-pleasures/>. Accessed on: 20 Feb. 2022.

36 EDWARDS, M. "Marriage Is the End" — a response to Rivka Galchen's review of Clarice Lispector's *The Chandelier & The Besieged City* — published in the *London Review of Books*. May 7, 2020.

37 Edwards, M.; Gotlib, N.; Paddock, L.; Rollyson, C. "Benjamin Moser's Pulitzer Prize is a Travesty." An Op-Ed published in *Los Angeles Review of Books*. May 13, 2020.

38 EDWARDS, M. An Essay on Clarice Lispector. In: *After Clarice: Reading Lispector's Legacy in the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Adriana X. Jacobs and Claire Williams. Cambridge: Legenda, 2021.

Translation is an intimate effort, one of the most profound ways of doing reading. The translation is the moment of the bathroom mirror. The moment between Macabéa, the typist who uses her fingers to create words, and the writer Rodrigo S.M. who is tormented by the words she uses to create the typist's story. Am I as a translator more of a typist or more of a writer? (...) That exchange between Rodrigo S.M., the writer, and Macabéa, the typist, has to do with the exchange between the author (actually Clarice Lispector) of *A hora da Estrela* and her translator, who translates *The chandelier* from Portuguese to English, and who is obsessed with all the translations of all the Clarician texts. The tr/A/nslator who sees the AUTHOR in the bathroom mirror and vice versa. So it is. (EDWARDS, 2021, p. 210)³⁹

Following this (re)translation boom, 2015 saw the release of *The Complete Stories*, a compilation of the writer's short stories, translated by Katrina Dodson and edited by Benjamin Moser. Katrina Dodson is a writer, a translator from Portuguese, and a professor. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of California. She studied Elizabeth Bishop's time in Brazil in her doctoral dissertation. For her translation of *The Complete Stories*, she won the PEN Translation Prize (2016), the American Translators Association Lewis Galantière Prize (2016), and the Northern California Book Award (2016). She is currently translating Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*, to be published by New Directions in 2023.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By analyzing the bio-bibliographical profile of the translators, we noted that translations of Clarice Lispector's works were mostly done by translators connected to academia, whose names were made visible on the book covers, as in the case of the first translations by Rabassa and Pontiero (see Figure 4 and Table 1), a phenomenon that was not very common in the United States, as already demonstrated by Venuti (2021), and that will be repeated in 2012 in the translations published by New Directions that were part of the project coordinated by Benjamin Moser (see Figure 3). Moreover, often the translators used paratextual spaces to preface or write afterwords to their translations, as in *The Apple in the Dark* (1967) and *Family Ties* (1972), but also in *An Apprenticeship or the Book of Delights* (1986), and in all the translations authored by Pontiero for Carcanet.

One aspect that should be stressed is the fact that the first translations, published in academic journals, were done by important and prestigious figures, such as the writer Elizabeth Bishop. Another noteworthy factor is that, with the publication in 2009 of Moser's biography of Lispector, a series of (re)translations were done bringing to the fore Lispector's "new" image, which highlighted her Jewish and Ukrainian descent. Not coincidentally, Alexandra Pechman (2015) claims that Moser will be seen as the new promoter of Clarice Lispector in the United States, replacing Elizabeth Bishop.

Moser's project, as he himself attests, involved presenting Lispector in a new guise, seeking a foreignizing rather than domesticating effect for the author's works in the North American context. That is, Moser has a very explicit project in his promotion of Lispector in the United States and dictates

39 A tradução é um esforço íntimo, uma das formas mais profundas de fazer leitura. A tradução é o momento do espelho do banheiro. O momento entre Macabéa, a datilógrafa que usa os dedos para criar palavras, e o escritor Rodrigo S.M. que se atormenta com as palavras que usa para criar a história da datilógrafa. Será que eu como tradutora sou mais datilógrafa ou mais escritora? (...) Aquela intertroca entre Rodrigo S.M., o escritor e Macabéa, a datilógrafa, tem a ver com a intertroca entre a autora (na verdade Clarice Lispector) de *A hora da estrela* e sua tradutora, que traduz *O lustre do português* para o inglês, e que fica obcecada com todas as traduções de todos os textos claricianos. A tr/A/d/UTORA que vê a AUTORA no espelho do banheiro e vice-versa. Assim é. (EDWARDS, 2021, p. 210)

“norms” for translation in the target literary system. Currently, the translations of Lispector’s works seem to occupy a central position in the twenty-first century American context.

Although Lispector’s translators have different projects, Benjamin Moser’s is one of the most explicit ones. As translator and general editor of the new translations, through his strategies, he seems to aim at making the translations acquire the status of a poetic work, in line with what the translator and translation theorist Inês Oseki-Dépré (2021) observes. Oseki-Depré argues that the translator “(...) is entrusted with a double task, that of appropriating the original poetic project and that of inventing or choosing the form in which the poetic object will appear in the other language. The translation may, in this case, appear as a literary masterpiece both for its formal novelty and for its inscription in the national or world literary narrative.” (OSEKI-DÉPRÉ, 2021, p. 160).

As we can see, the translators have played a very important role, devising translation strategies, contributing to the afterlife and renewal of the circulation of Lispector’s works in the US cultural system. Moreover, the translators were responsible for strengthening the literary image of the writer, not only by translating, but also by writing about the writer’s work, and sometimes commenting on aspects of the translation, thus using their authorial voice in the paratexts, as is the case of Pontiero’s afterwords or Moser’s own pieces, both in the translations and in those published in the press.

Many of Lispector’s translators also can be considered “polytranslators”, in Berman’s sense (1995; 2012), because their work has a close or direct relationship with their work as writers and essayists, as is the case of Bishop and Edwards.

In addition to contributing to the afterlife of Clarice Lispector’s works in the American cultural/literary system, renewing and revitalizing her literature, the translators, many of whom received important awards for their translations, such as Rabassa, Pontiero, and Dodson, also collaborated to enhancing Lispector’s originals, introducing and guaranteeing her presence in the international literary canon.

Finally, it is worth noting that the translators of Clarice Lispector’s works into English operate with a dominant language in a “central” cultural system, and “(...) the more central a language is, the greater its capacity to function as an intermediary or carrier language. (...) Another observable trend concerns the variety of works translated. The more central a language is in the world translation system, the more numerous are the genres of books translated from that language” (HEILBRON; SAPIRO, 2009, p. 17). In other words, Clarice Lispector’s works seem to have benefited not only from the competence and quality of the translators, but also from having been received by a central cultural system, which contributed to the visibility and stability of this “peripheral” writer via translation.

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