

The Author as Plagiarist—
The Case of Machado de Assis



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The Author as Plagiarist—
The Case of Machado de Assis

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Translators

O grotesco, por exemplo, não está no texto do poeta; é uma excrescência para imitar *Mulheres patúscas de Windsor*. Este ponto é contestado pelos satanistas com alguma aparência da razão. Dizem eles que, ao tempo em que o jovem Satanás compôs a grande ópera, nem essa farsa nem Shakespeare eram nascidos. Chegam a afirmar que o poeta inglês não teve outro gênio senão transcrever a letra da ópera, com tal arte e fidelidade, que parece ele próprio o autor da composição; mas, evidentemente, é um plagiário.

—Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro*

The element of the grotesque, for example, is not to be found in the poet's text: it is an excrescence, put there to imitate *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This point is contested by the satanists, with every appearance of reason. They say that, at the time when the young Satan composed his opera, neither Shakespeare nor his farce had been born. They go as far as to affirm that the English poet's only genius was to transcribe the words of the opera, with skill and so faithfully that he seems to be the author of the composition; but of course he is a plagiarist.

—Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro* (John Gledson, trans.)

A Revolução Francesa e *Otelo* estão feitos; nada impede que esta ou aquela cena seja tirada para outras peças, e assim se cometem, literariamente falando, os plágios.

—Machado de Assis, *A Semana*, 28 July 1895

The French Revolution and *Othello* have been written: still there is nothing to prevent one from lifting this or that scene and using it in other dramas: thus are committed, literarily speaking, acts of plagiarism.

—Machado de Assis, *A Semana* (Helen Caldwell, trans.)