

## Introductions to Garrett's *Travels*: The Uses of Editors and Readers

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*Travels in My Homeland* (*Viagens na minha terra*, 1846), by the multifaceted Almeida Garrett (1799–1854), became a work of consequence for literatures in Portuguese, while also creating strong, explicit and implicit links to Anglo-American literary traditions, especially English authors from the long eighteenth century, like Sterne and Swift, and to the text's nineteenth-century American counterpart, Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). It has been acknowledged by critics as a seminal influence for the most acclaimed novelists of the Portuguese language writing later in the nineteenth century, Eça de Queirós in Portugal and Machado de Assis in Brazil. A common saying has it that all speakers of Portuguese speak "Camões's language" (a *língua de Camões*), but it would be more accurate to say that their modern idiom is a lot closer to the colloquial language of Garrett's *Travels*.

The text's good critical fortune, in evidence particularly since the publication of Jacinto do Prado Coelho's "Garrett, the Art of Prose" (1955; in this volume), includes several memorable pieces of criticism published over the past few decades and the work has been a touchstone for the coming of age of new critical talent. Fortunately, it was possible to congregate a good share of the most insightful criticism on Garrett's *Travels* in this volume. The critics will speak for themselves, and will follow or gain distance from each other in due course. Beyond the common object of analysis, there is among them no

shared school of critical thought or framework of textual analysis. Therefore, revisiting Garrett's *Travels* is a transdisciplinary project, intended to create a hospitable space for scholarly contradictions, in line with the inspiring realization that, among these contradictions, some of the most productive are presented to the demanding reader by Garrett's text itself.

The canonical strength and endurance of Garrett's *Travels* can be attributed, in part, to the authorial control exercised in the text over its editors and readers, which has been fuelling the desire to introduce the work anew.<sup>1</sup> The persistent appellative task of introducing *Travels in My Homeland* becomes, precisely, an important topic in the book itself, given that Garrett's own "Prologue" (Prólogo) to his text, disguised as being authored by the book's editors, is certainly one of the most intense examples of the genre.<sup>2</sup> Keeping in mind this specific use of the "editors" by Garrett, it is quite ironic that most editions of the book over the decades, including its English translation, suppress this short but hyperbolic opening piece, a true chapter zero to be directly continued in Chapters I, II, and III. Maybe the explicit glorification, or self-glorification, of an author is feared to be off-putting for students and other readers presumably more interested in the embedded and troubling sentimental novella of Santarém's valley, with its romance between Carlos and his cousin Joanhina (diminutive of Joana, also meaning "ladybug"), than in the many other genres present in the book, such as political prose or lyric poetry. The recurrent suppression of the prologue is nonetheless somewhat intriguing, since Garrett makes no secret—given his narrating persona's bonhomie and use of self-importance—of his ambitious program in the opening paragraph of Chapter II:

These interesting travels of mine shall be a masterpiece, erudite, sparkling with new ideas, something worthy of our century. I need to inform the reader of this, so that he may be forewarned and not think that they are just another batch of these fashionable scribblings entitled *Travel Notes* or something similar, which weary the printing presses of Europe without the slightest benefit for science or for the advancement of the species.<sup>3</sup>

Having read the above passage, one could ask, after knowingly suspending Garrett's irony: what is the "benefit for science and the advancement of the species" that deserves such great authorial emphasis in *Travels in My Homeland*? It cannot be the author's conservative position against the construction of the "barons' railways" (as opposed to the stone-paved roads he favors [*Travels* Chap.

XLIX]).<sup>4</sup> In my own experience of reading the book repeatedly over the years, the most striking observation I've arrived at is that *Travels* produces, according to its own terms, *male monsters*—such is at least Carlos's self-assessment in his long letter to Joaninha. This fictional experiment in monster formation is an astonishing symptom of the crisis staged in a dysfunctional family. Carlos's monstrosity is linked to his unprompted practice of equanimity by contiguity in romantic love or, in more colloquial terms, to his womanizing tendencies; for some reason, he seems constitutively incapable of engaging in clean-cut serial monogamy. As happens so many times in *Travels*, Garrett's implicit homosocial drive aligns him, the author, with his hero, or anti-hero, Carlos; the author's description of himself as seen by elderly characters of the *ancien régime* associates him, since childhood, with the "monster" Napoleon Bonaparte and the aftermath of the French Revolution (Chap. IX). Carlos's clear position in the Portuguese civil war of the 1830s, on the side of the liberals fighting against the royalists, cannot be transferred to his private life. His complaint that history cannot highlight the individual drama has its counterpart in his concept of a more beneficial society that cannot enable a harmonious transition of his family from the *ancien régime* to nineteenth-century liberalism. *Travels*, like the country it portrays, becomes a machine to eliminate women: they either die, remove themselves from the world, or are actually killed (e.g., Garrett's wife, Santa Iria, Joaninha, Francisca, Georgina). Male monstrosity is not only found on the side of the liberals; the royalist and very *ancien-régime* Friar Dinis would also qualify for the gallery of rogues of his surviving and troubled male country.

The injunction "These interesting travels of mine shall be a masterpiece" requires the reader's participation in a very serious manner. Inscribing his reader in an outstanding series ranging from (at least) Cervantes's *lector* in *Don Quijote* (1605–15) to Machado de Assis's *leitor* in *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* (1881), through Laurence Sterne's manipulated reader in *Tristram Shandy* (1760–67), Garrett sets him up (yes, him, on which more later) in a double bind. In the precise constraints of the text, the reader, ironically addressed many times as "amiable reader," etc., is structured as a value-added function of *Travels* in a specific way. In Chapter III, referring to the above-quoted promise, in Chapter II, that his travels will be a masterpiece, Garrett writes that he does not want to disappoint the reader. In this regard, the transition between Chapters II and III is crucial: in order to be or not to be disappointed, the reader has to have accepted the idea of *Travels* as a masterpiece. In other words, to continue being the reader in the text, the reader

has to implicitly accept and be part of the reading process of *Travels* as a masterpiece; otherwise, he or she could not legitimately continue to be the reader of these *Travels*. At this point one could argue that the empirical reader—any one of us—could read the work as she or he pleases, constructing liberally the meaning and value of the book. In this way, one would be stressing the power of readership over authorship. However, the reader of *Travels* cannot be the empirical reader, neither today nor in 1846. For example, the entrapment of the reader in Chapter IX leaves him at the Asseca bridge apparently forgotten by the author, which is possible only due to the fact that the reader is not, in the very terms of the book, the empirical reader. In the structure of *Travels*, the reader is construed by the author as a function used to control meaning and, most important of all, to establish and secure in the reading process the status of the work as a masterpiece. Ultimately, the author of *Travels* stands with Walter Benjamin: “In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful” (“The Task of the Translator” 69). For Garrett, the construction of the author as crowned by the halo of fame at the expense of his editors and readers is connected to his construction of the *typographic man* and to his priority task of thinking the national community through the narrative.<sup>5</sup> For someone in the privileged second-level-observer position of revisiting the work through its criticism (the position occupied by the reader of *Garrett’s Travels Revisited*), Garrett, as the self-described archaeologist of his country, may be perceived as a representative of the typographic man as a voracious author.<sup>6</sup>

Garrett’s gendering of the reader in *Travels* goes a step further when compared with the use of the reader in Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, possibly due to the fact that in Portuguese, unlike in English, there is a clear distinction between the *leitor* (male or “neutral” reader) and the *leitora* (female reader). Nevertheless, such language-induced distinctions are not highlighted, for example, by Machado de Assis, also writing in Portuguese, in the late nineteenth century. Garrett, on the other hand, practices them systematically, making clear that the rhetoric of the author’s domination and control over the reader is directed toward the male or the generic reader, whereas, when addressing and interacting with his female readers, the author uses a softer and more sentimental vocabulary. Garrett’s sophisticated and meticulous fictionalization of the readers of his book transforms them into devices for meaning production.<sup>7</sup>

Reading the outstanding humanist introduction to the work written by the dean of Garretian studies, Ofélia Paiva Monteiro, we may reinforce our

perception that *Travels* does not consist of mere “fashionable scribblings.” The book’s first six chapters were published in the *Revista Universal Lisbonense* in 1843 (between August and December); these six chapters, in a revised and expanded version, were then republished, together with an additional 43 chapters, in the same periodical between June of 1845 and November of 1846. Garrett also revised his 49 chapters as he prepared the two-volume book edition of *Travels*, which was published in 1846 (the first volume in February and the second in November).<sup>8</sup> These different phases of editorial work with the relatively short texts labeled as “chapters” co-opt the book’s “editors,” who assume the authorship of the prologue, as critical readers. These editors even excuse themselves explicitly from not reading the work in a critical manner, due to its temporary incompleteness: “We will not analyze *Travels in My Homeland* now: the work is not yet complete [the prologue was published in the first of the two volumes the work would eventually comprise], and therefore the judgment could not be completed either; we simply say what all say and what all can judge already.”<sup>9</sup> Relying upon the editors and readers entrapped in *Travels* is, as we have seen, a loaded proposition. To present a more extended account of the unrivalled “Prologue,” I translate from Monteiro’s critical edition:

The editors of this work, seeing how enormously popular it became when published in fragments in the *Revista*, decided to render a service to their country’s letters and its glory by printing it now collected as a book, so that one may better judge its variety, the wealth and originality of its inimitable style, the deep philosophy it contains, and overall the great and transcendent moral thought it always tends to, whether it plays and laughs with life’s most serious things or discusses seriously its levity and its trifles.

[ . . . ]

Orator and poet, historian and philosopher, critic and artist, jurist and administrator, scholar and statesman, who cultivates his own language religiously and speaks the foreign ones correctly—educated as he was in the classical purity of Antiquity and then acquainted with all the other literatures, those of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the contemporary era—the author of *Travels in My Homeland* is equally familiar with Homer and with Dante, with Plato and Rousseau, with Thucydides and Thiers, with Guizot and Xenophon, with Horace and Lamartine, with Machiavelli and with Chateaubriand, with Shakespeare and Euripides, with Camões and Calderón, with Goethe and Virgil, Schiller

and Sá de Miranda, Sterne and Cervantes, Fénelon and Vieira, Rabelais and Gil Vicente, Addison and Bayle, Kant and Voltaire, Herder and Smith, Bentham and Cormenin, with the Encyclopaedists and the Holy Fathers, with the Bible and the Sanskrit traditions, with everything that ancient art and science as well as modern art and science have produced. One may see this in his writings, and especially in the work we now publish [*Travels in My Homeland*], despite the fact that it was clearly composed on the spur of the moment [composto claramente ao correr da pena].

[. . .]

Upon our request, and in order to bring this second edition closer to the dignity of his reputation, the author dedicated himself to directing it: he corrected, expanded, and changed it in many parts, and he illuminated it with notes most indispensable for the general understanding of the text [geral inteligência do texto], so that it will now appear much improved when compared to the first printing. (*Viagens* 83–86)

The so-called first edition of *Travels* from 1846 is described above by the “editors” as the work’s “second edition” and, taking into account some very simple math, it is in part a third edition, if we consider the first six chapters published in the *Revista* in 1843, republished with revisions in the same publication in 1845, and republished again with more *corrections, expansions, and changes* in 1846, in the first volume of the first book-form edition of *Travels*. The stated formula of the text’s production as “clearly composed on the spur of the moment” is just as clearly incompatible with the factual reality of its successive revisions. The Portuguese expression “composto [. . .] ao correr da pena” splits into two divergent uses that are condensed into one by means of the complex word *pena*, which has the double meaning of “pen” and “sorrow or pain.”<sup>10</sup> In Chapter I, in another important occurrence, *pena* as pen is personified: “My pen [pena] was always ambitious: poor and yet presumptuous, it needs a broader theme.” In Chapter XLIII, *pena* as sorrow appears when Garrett is about to leave Santarém: “What am I made of, what sort of person am I, that I cannot stay long in a place, yet cannot leave it without regret [pena]?” Three chapters later, Carlos’s letter returns to the use of *pena* as intense sorrow, translated by John M. Parker as “pain”: “It was the first sincere love in my life and it was also the first time that I was going through the agonizing pains of love [pena d’amor]” (Chap. XLVI). A bit further in the same chapter we read, “I no longer felt pain [pena] or desire [. . .],” as also in

Chapter XLVII: “And when the date of Laura’s wedding approached, when she had to return from Wales and I, faithful to my promise, was to allege very urgent business in London which would oblige me to be away until her departure for India, I was so sorry [eu tive uma pena] and found it so difficult to keep my promise, that I felt ashamed.” *Pena* as pen of the first chapters is replaced by *pena* as sorrow and pain in the showdown of the book’s last chapters. From the editors’ “Prologue” to Chapter XLIX, *Travels* transforms the ecology of writing a masterpiece into a political and emotional lament, making it its own unique form.

The intended “general understanding of the text” is served materially by the author’s endnotes listed in alphabetical order (note A, B, C, etc.). One of these notes may be highlighted as evidence of the equivalence that is established in Garrett’s text between the author and the narrator. The distinction between these concepts has been, in the past few decades, one of the conceptual pillars of the study of narratives (known as narratology).<sup>11</sup> One of the best ways to argue in favor of the *lack* of distinction between the author and the narrator in *Travels* would be to quote from Garrett’s Note B, which comments on the following passage from Chapter I: “My mind has been made up by the fatuous statements of a newspaper which, for sensationalism, decided to headline my visit as having a specific political design.” Garrett’s note reads: “This is historical fact: it is also true that it was largely responsible for the brutal persecution suffered by the author a few months later.” Garrett’s persona, the exposed narrator and author of *Travels*, is directly linked here to the citizen, blurring the boundary between the fictionality of the narrator and the reality of the civil author. The exercise of replacing the word *author*, abundantly used in the text, with the term *narrator*, not used at all, also produces convincing evidence of the overlapping between these two concepts. In *Travels*, the continuum between real-life persons and characters is even drawn directly in the narrative, when in Chapter XLIII Garrett, the person and the author, meets Friar Dinis, the character; they talk about the end of the “story of the valley” and the Friar allows the author to read the long letter from Carlos to his cousin Joaninha.

The editors’ claim that they “decided to do a service to their country’s letters and its glory” deserves critical attention. The *history of the future* has shown that they did in fact render a service to Portuguese letters by publishing *Travels*, but it goes without saying that they were not in a position to guarantee this would happen.<sup>12</sup> However, when it comes to their service to

the glory of their country, we need to pause. Garrett's *Travels* mounts its triumph upon two major failures the text recounts: the suffering of nationalism and the unmaking of family. The two unhappy outcomes have contexts and several stories attached to them, yet context analysis cannot change the substance of these failures. At the end of the thirteen days of *Travels*, there is no happy country as there is no happy family, and one is left, literally, with the text of poorly preserved ruins of both the country and the family. They may be organized for the comfort of the modern tourist to visit and revisit, but Garrett's thirteen-day round trip Lisbon-Santarém-Lisbon (little more than 40 miles each way) in the end may be more accurately perceived as a descent into hell (in national natural and architectural spaces conveniently situated as destinations for relatively short trips from the capital city), a laborious work of disturbing investigation before the ruins of the country and the family may be declared ready for soft, touristic enjoyment.<sup>13</sup> Following the unhappy family story of the Santarém valley, it may seem that the monuments of the "archaeological studies" (Chaps. XXXVI–LXII), with some proper restoration work done to them, could compensate at the level of the country for the failure of the family, as well as fit a dignified national design, while nature would belong to a more stateless realm. However, when Carlos narrates his stay in England, in Chapter XLVI, he conceptualizes nature as a woman who is both national and local: the appeal of Joanhina's eyes is described with a reference to the "wild-rock rose and the bristly gorse of our heathland," which is opposed to the "grassy smell of the evergreen [English] lawns." In this passage as in others, dear reader, the intersection of nationalism, gender, and nature are patiently awaiting your probing critical intervention.

Leo Tolstoy opens his *Anna Karenina* by suggesting that it may not be possible to write a good novel about a happy family.<sup>14</sup> *Travels* is not exactly a book comparable to the novels *Anna Karenina* or Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, but it is up to its readers to decide if it is a work worth spending time with, and worth reading sometimes against its voracious and Shandean author.<sup>15</sup> My hope is that this volume will help you on the path that you, dear reader, may choose (or that is chosen by someone writing you), if you accept the challenging and rewarding experiences of being a reader of both Garrett's masterpiece *Travels in My Homeland* and this *Garrett's Travels Revisited*.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> One of the most powerful introductions to an edition of *Travels in My Homeland* is Augusto da Costa Dias's "Estilística e dialéctica." Carlos Reis wrote a book-length introduction to the study of *Travels (Introdução à leitura das Viagens na minha terra)*. The complete list of introductions to *Travels* would contain dozens of items.

<sup>2</sup> It is a general critical consensus that *Travels*' "Prologue," ostensibly "from the editors" to the first edition, was written by Garrett himself. Indeed, a close comparative reading of its syntax, vocabulary, tone, and topics provides detailed evidence of Garrett's authorship of this short prose piece. Already in 1899, Machado de Assis clearly attributed the authorship of the "Prologue" to Garrett himself, writing: "Whoever said of Garrett that he was an entire literature by himself said it briefly and well" ("[Garrett]" 931). Machado is interestingly ambiguous about how to judge Garrett's use of the "editors" to display a bold statement of his own triumph: "We do not know if today we would forgive him for this. To us, and to the generation of our youth, it seemed his right, a unique right of his" (931).

<sup>3</sup> I use John M. Parker's translation of Garrett's *Travels*, unless otherwise noted, and use chapter rather than page numbers in the parenthetical references when quoting from it.

<sup>4</sup> In this regard, Garrett's drive for a dignified museumification of Santarém is the opposite of Mark Twain's desire for the progress of efficient railways and his disdain of antique churches of the Old World in *The Innocents Abroad*.

<sup>5</sup> I use "typographic man" here in the sense proposed by Marshall McLuhan (1964).

<sup>6</sup> Américo Lindeza Diogo and Osvaldo Silvestre, in their *Rumo ao português legítimo*, study from the point of view of class analysis the emergence and dominance of Garrett's style as a peripheral response to the sophisticated culture of the long eighteenth century in England. According to Diogo and Silvestre, Garrett's style would be popularized by Eça de Queirós's formula (144).

<sup>7</sup> A longer version of this argument may be found in my *Almeida Garrett. Crise na representação nas Viagens da minha terra*.

<sup>8</sup> This first edition of the book is available online at the "Biblioteca Digital" of the National Library of Portugal <[www.bn.pt](http://www.bn.pt)>.

<sup>9</sup> Garrett, *Viagens* 86. My translation.

<sup>10</sup> Brazilian novelist José de Alencar (1829–1877) wrote a personal column entitled "Ao correr da pena" for the newspaper *Correio Mercantil* between September of 1854 and July of 1855 and then in *Diário do Rio* between October and November of 1855. The texts were later collected in a book with the same title, published in 1874. Alencar also uses the word *pena* in its double meaning of pen and sorrow in Portuguese. I thank Anna M. Klobucka for pointing out this connection to Alencar.

<sup>11</sup> I am referring here to the common understanding prevalent in the teaching of literature, which imputes reality to authors and fictionality to narrators and makes it explicit that when students confuse these two concepts they are committing a shameful error.

<sup>12</sup> I use here, in a loose sense, the concept of the *history of the future* borrowed from António Vieira's *História do futuro* (partially translated into English by Gregory Rabassa in Vieira's *The Sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fish and Other Texts*). According to the "editors" of *Travels*, Vieira is one of the authors with whom Garrett was familiar.

<sup>13</sup> Pedro Serra, in an indispensable essay, "A questão do livro nas *Viagens na minha terra*" (2004), argues that Garrett's *Travels*, following in the footsteps of Alexandre Herculano, is part of the trend of modern cultural tourism.

<sup>14</sup> The short first paragraph reads as follows: "All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (1).

<sup>15</sup> *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is another nineteenth-century literary masterpiece about the family. Carlos's stay in England, as portrayed in his long love-and-farewell letter to Joaquina, which occupies five chapters (XLIV–XLVIII), is the reversal of Austen's novel. The extraordinary male and, in everyday life, mostly female English hospitality toward the revolutionary émigré starts with no pride and no prejudice, but in the course of events develops as a reinforcement of a pride-and-prejudice society. For perceived insurmountable reasons, Carlos is left by Laura just as, for perceived insurmountable reasons as well, he later leaves his cousin Joaquina. Romantic love prevails in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and is derailed in Garrett's *Travels*. Failed romantic love and failed nationalism are not necessarily bad things for the author's artistic attainment. The uneasy narratives of two failures, family and nation, became indeed—as announced by himself—Garrett's masterpiece.

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