BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL BOOK CLUB
| MACHADO DE ASSIS | Collected Stories of Machado de Assis |
| 21st March 2019, 18.30-21.00 |

2019 – The year of adding marvellous Brazilian novels to your reading list!

MACHADO DE ASSIS (1839-1908)

Contos de Machado de Assis*

Book club members are invited to read the following nine short stories for the meeting:

Frei Simão (1864) – Friar/Brother Simão

Ponto de vista (1873) - Point of View

O espelho - Esboço de Uma Nova Teoria da Alma Humana (1882) - The Mirror – A Brief Outline/Sketch of a New Theory of the Human Soul

Galeria Póstuma (1884) - Posthumous Picture Gallery

Ex-Catedra (1884) - Ex-Cathedra

A causa secreta (1885) - The Secret Cause

O Cônego ou Metafísica do Estilo (1885) - The Canon, or the Metaphysics of Style

Idéias de Canário (1895) - Canary’s thoughts/ideas

Evolução (1884) - Evolution

* featuring a selection of short stories from Contos Fluminenses (1870), Histórias da Meia-Noite (1873), Papéis Avulsos (1882), Histórias sem Data (1884), Várias Histórias (1896), Páginas Recolhidas (1899), Relíquias da Casa Velha (1906)

translated as

The Collected Stories of Machado de Assis (2018)
– seventy-six short stories translated by Margaret Jull Costa and Robin Patterson
THE COLLECTED STORIES OF MACHADO DE ASSIS

TRANSLATED BY MARGARET JULL COSTA AND ROBIN PATTERTON

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL WOOD
Celebrating the great master of world literature, Machado de Assis, with a selection of the newly translated short stories! Alternatively, read any other earlier translations, or the fabulous originals or both!

Sally forth to realize how present-time the first published short story (1864) about the Benedictine Friar Simon is: the editor disguises himself as an author!

The epistolary Points of view will leave you amazed as you discover innuendoes concealing the main themes.

Consider that every human being has two souls within themselves: one looking outwards from inside and the other gazing inwards from outside. A new theory of the human soul etched within the reflections of a looking glass.

Surprise or shock at finding a posthumous picture gallery in the portraits of friends and acquaintances in the diary of a deceased man?

Evolution of thoughts or was it borrowing ideas? Once travelling to the Imperial town of Vassouras, two characters comment on ‘how government has failed to match up the needs of Brazil’; and more ‘that it seemed to be more interested in keeping it behind other American nations’. One of the characters dreams of becoming a minister for industry and takes the big idea from the other that the only pathway to progress is the creation of networks of railroads linking up the whole of Brazil.

Could it be an allusion to some of the content Letters from England by ‘the Eagle of the Hague’ and a fellow founder of the Brazilian Academy of Letters? You will surely be amused to find out how a Canary theorises on the origin of human language? Or is it the cage owner, who puts forward a history of Canarian language?

Speaking of language, you will laugh at the Canon who, in writing a sermon realises that words have a sex! In crafting his sermon, he comments that the paradox will be solved by 2222….

DETAILS OF AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS:

ENGLISH

NB. This collection contains 76 of 216 short stories by Machado de Assis
The selection of short stories is from
Contos Fluminenses (1870), Histórias da Meia-Noite (1873), Papéis Avulsos (1882),
Histórias sem Data (1884), Várias Histórias (1896), Páginas Recolhidas (1899), Relíquias da
Casa Velha (1906)

Free downloads available from:

- Domínio Público:
  http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/pesquisa/ResultadoPesquisaObraForm.do?first=50
  &skip=0&ds_titulo=&co_autor=&no_autor=machado%20de%20assis&co_categoria=2
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- Gutenberg Project
  http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/9685

- Brazilian Senate Library (copies of originals and rare editions)
  https://www12.senado.leg.br/institucional/biblioteca

SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND TRANSLATION

Machado de Assis wrote at least 216 short stories. There may be more short stories, which
were written under other pen names, which Machado de Assis used at various times. Often,
the original short stories were published in newspapers and their feuilletons. Had Machado
de Assis written in English, his short stories would have achieved huge universal acclaim very
early. His short stories contain embryonic ideas, which he later developed or incorporated
into his novels or plays. The versatility of form and style is breathtaking.

We will be discussing a selection of nine short stories from the earliest published in 1864
and later included in the first anthology of short stories.

There are numerous overt and covert references and quotations to the Greek and Roman
Classics, to William Shakespeare, John S. Mill, Herbert Spencer, Elizabeth Gaskell, Laurence
Stern, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson, Charles Dickens, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin
and many more British and world authors. Machado de Assis was able to quote from
contemporary arguments in science, philosophy, and the humanities from a critical
standpoint. Using a good dose of wit, he also poked fun at the some of the non-persuasive
theories of scientists and scholars. This clearly demonstrates how he read everything and had
an amazing capacity to incorporate the ideas to prove his arguments even in fictional form.
Undoubtedly, he brought universal knowledge to the Brazilian literature and culture. His
approach ensured that a fabulous amount of cognitive goods came to flow and circulate in
Portuguese – he often translated the originals to use in his quotes. He, thus, enabled various
generations of readers in Brazil, and elsewhere, to become acquainted and appropriate a vast
amount of knowledge. He will continue to do so as more people read his œuvre.

During the life time of Machado de Assis, anthologies of his short stories were published
in seven volumes under the titles Contos Fluminenses (1870), Histórias da Meia-Noite...
Although *O Alienista* appeared along with the short stories – it is a novelette or a novella. It was published in *A Estação* from 15th October 1881 to 15th March 1882. It has had various translations under various titles since 1962. It appeared in the anthology *Papéis Avulsos* (1882) with other short stories. *Papéis Avulsos* was translated by John Gledson as *Loose Leaves* and appears as *Miscellaneous Papers* in the 2018 Jull Costa and Patterson translation. *Relíquias da Casa Velha* (Relics of the Old House) has miscellaneous texts and not only short stories. Our Book Club has been reading and discussing the main novels and short stories by Machado de Assis since its launch in January 2015. *O Alienista* read and discussed at a special Olympic edition in August 2016 – the post is available on our website: https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-08-machadodeassis.pdf

One of the latest collection of translated short stories was published in June 2018 translated by Margaret Jull Costa and Robin Patterson. It contains 76 short stories selected from the seven anthologies. Margaret Elisabeth Jull Costa OBE (1949 -) is a British translator of Portuguese and Spanish-language fiction and poetry, including the works of Eça de Queiróz, Fernando Pessoa, Javier Marías, Bernardo Atxaga, Luís Fernando Veríssimo, Lúcio Cardoso, Paulo Coelho, José Régio and Nobel Prize winner José Saramago, and others. Margaret Jull Costa won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award with her translation of A Heart So White by Javier Marías in 1997. She is won the Oxford Weidenfeld Translation Prize, (for her translations of All the Names, by Jose Saramago, in 2000, The Maias, by José Maria de Eça de Queirós, in 2008, and The Elephant's Journey, by Jose Saramago, in 2011). She became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature on 2013 and was made an O.B.E. in 2014.

Robin Patterson came late to literary translating, having previously pursued a legal career in various parts of the world. He has participated in both the Birkbeck and the BCLT literary translation summer schools and, in 2013, and was mentored by Margaret Jull Costa as part of the BCLT mentorship programme. In 2014, his translated extracts from José Luís Peixoto’s Inside the Secret were serialised by Ninth Letter, and his translation of Eve’s Mango, an extract from Vanessa da Mata’s debut novel, featured on the Bookanista website. He also contributed a translation of Congressman Romário: Big Fish in the Aquarium by Clara Becker to The Football Crônicas, a collection of football-related Latin American literature published by Ragpicker Press in June 2014. He translated Our Musseque by José Luandino Vieira for Dedalus.

Their translation includes a foreword by Michael Wood, a Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester and broadcaster. The University website describes him as:

Michael Wood joined the university in 2013 as Professor of Public History. Michael Wood is the University's Professor in Public History. He teaches undergraduate and
postgraduate students at the University, leads historical field trips and gives three public lectures a year. He is the author of several highly praised books on English history including *In Search of the Dark Ages*, *Domesday*, and *In Search of England*. He has now made well over one hundred documentary films, among them *Art of the Western World*, *In Search of the Trojan War*, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, *Conquistadors* and *The Story of India* – all of which were accompanied by bestselling books. His recent series, *Story of England*, the tale of one village (Kibworth in Leicestershire) through history, was praised by the Independent as 'the most innovative TV history series ever.'

Source photo and text: https://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/history/connect/events/michael-wood-events/

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**BIOGRAPHY**

**JOAQUIM MARIA MACHADO DE ASSIS**

(21st June 1839 – 29th September 1908)

*‘Machado de Assis’ by Marc Ferrez (1843-1923)*

‘Há coisas que melhor se dizem calando’

‘Some things are better said by remaining silent’.
Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis is the most celebrated classic Brazilian author, thinker and a social critic. A true man of genius, he wrote poetry, novels and short stories, plays, chronicles, translations, including a notable *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (1812-1870), parliamentary reports, music scores, economic outlook articles and much more. His insights into the life and times of 19th century Brazil permeate all of his works. A classic master of Brazilian and world literature, he covertly brought and disseminated some of the leading European and universal ideas to Brazil.

The Cosme Velho House, no.18, Rio de Janeiro, where Machado de Assis lived from 1883-1908. The Cosme Velho Borough Residents' Association funded this plaque.
(Source of the images: Wikipedia Commons)

Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis is the most celebrated classic Brazilian author, thinker and a social critic. A true man of genius, he wrote poetry, novels and short stories, plays, chronicles, translations including *Oliver Twist* by C. Dickens, parliamentary reports, music scores, economic outlook articles and much more. His insights into the life and times of 19th century and early 20th century Brazil permeate all of his works. A world classic master of Brazilian and world literature covertly brought some of the leading European and universal ideas to Brazil.

He was an extraordinary man of letters of mixed race and an immense capacity to respond to the challenges with which life presented him. Many are the similarities between Machado de Assis's and Charles Dickens' childhood and youth, both living in the 19th century capitals Rio de Janeiro and London. Both had to start work early and amassed their vast knowledge through unwavering determination and self-improvement.

Machado de Assis also had to live with epileptic seizures, misunderstood in medical circles in 19th century, which exerted adverse effects on his social wellbeing. He became a printer’s apprentice at the age of 17 and taught himself various languages and studied world literature. He had a keen interest in music and excelled as a chess player.

He started writing very early, became an exemplary civil servant and remained happily married to a cultured woman, Carolina Augusta Xavier de Novais (1835-1904). He was a founder member the Brazilian Academy of Letters and was elected as its first president on 20th July 1897. In 1908, he was given a full state funeral.
In addition to leaving a legacy of superlative novels and short stories, poems, plays and chronicles, Machado de Assis bequeathed some of the deepest appraisals of the values and attitudes of the societies of 19th-century Rio reflecting a keen sense of ethics. Machado’s oeuvre is timeless. There is a significant dialogue between author/narrator with texts from Antiquity, the Fathers of the Church, science treatises and universal literature, a thesaurus of overt and covert references. Machado de Assis surprises his readers with numerous references to English and British literature. His influence in bringing such readings to Brazil is noteworthy. For instance, numerous quotations of works by William Shakespeare (1564-1616) amply demonstrate the breadth and depth of his acquaintance with the essence of William Shakespeare’s ideas and metaphors. It is thanks to Machado de Assis that British authors gained exceptional popularity in Brazil.

His dialogue with the reader/interlocutor illustrates fascinating aspects of human understanding. The embryonic topics and ideas which appear in his poems, plays and chronicles often reappear in his novels. The shorter works are the source of subsequent full-fledged narratives, creating, thus, an internal dialogue, intertextuality of a very original kind foreshadowing much modern writing.

His influence on literature both in Brazil and elsewhere is wide-ranging. His works have remained as a source of inspiration for many. Susan Sontag (1933-2004) once referred to him as the greatest writer ever produced in Latin America, surpassing even Jorge L. Borges (1899-1986). Harold Bloom (1930- ) went further describing him as ‘the supreme black literary artist to date’ (in Genius, 2002). Sir Salman Rushdie (1947- ) remarked that ‘If Borges is the writer who made Garcia Marquez possible, then, it is no exaggeration to say that Machado de Assis is the writer who made Borges possible’. The influence, which Machado the Assis has had on Jorge L. Borges has, more often than not, been neglected. Louis de Bernières is another author who reads Machado. There are many more.
Works on Machado abound, although paradoxically little of what he wrote, has actually been read. His *Dom Casmurro*, *Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, *Quincas Borba* and other novels, short stories and writings carry features of universal literature akin to the greatest authors of all times. Various scholars have, more often than not, tried to classify his works as realist, romantic as well as attempted to fit them into some fixed category or methodological framework but, invariably, they have failed as the distinguishing features of his *oeuvre* extend beyond such models.

Translations of his works into English and other languages are yet to deliver the inherent quality of both his exquisite use of Brazilian Portuguese and his true genius. The British Library holds over 300 copies of various works by Machado de Assis including some of his earliest works acquired in the 19th century, reflecting thus the interest which his works attracted from the time of his first publications.

**BIOGRAPHIES** *(selection in Portuguese):*

The Brazilian Academy of Letters has a link with various archival materials:

http://www.machadodeassis.org.br/

**JOSÉ GALANTE SOUSA** (1913-1986) was one of the main scholars and biographers of Machado de Assis. His *Bibliografia de Machado de Assis* (1955), as *Fontes para o estudo de Machado de Assis* (1958) & *Cronologia de Machado de Assis*, published in 1958 – *Revista do Livro*, and reprinted in *Cadernos de Literatura Brasileira* of the *Instituto Moreira Salles*.

**FRANCISCO DE ASSIS BARBOSA** (1914-1991) Another excellent albeit short biography in the form of an essay written in 1988 as an introduction to the collection of 17 books on Machado de Assis published by Machado’s editor Livraria Garnier (Rio de Janeiro e Belo Horizonte): *Machado de Assis – Vida e Obra: Parábola Perfeita*. The essay appears in the novel *Ressurreição* (in *Coleção de Autores Célebres da Literatura Brasileira* pages 11-52). This collection of the Machado de Assis works is one of the very best in terms of quality of the texts vis-à-vis original sources. This collection is an essential source for scholars and translators, who wish to verify textual variations of various extant editions of Machado de Assis.

**WILSON MARTINS** (1921-2010), a distinguished intellectual/cultural historian and literary critic, who did not write a biography of Machado de Assis *per se*, but volumes four and five of his *História da Inteligência Brasileira*, are an essential source for any Machadian and/or historian of ideas. The second complete edition (1996), seven volumes, was published by the Secretary of Culture of the State of Paraná, by the then Secretary for Culture, lawyer, literary critic and intellectual, Dr Eduardo Rocha Virmond (1929- ).

**DANIEL PIZA** (1970-2011) wrote a more recent popular biography *Machado de Assis Um gênio brasileiro* [*Machado de Assis: a Brazilian Man of Genius, N.K.*], 2nd revised edition 2006, beautifully illustrated with reprints from original sources.

The most recent publication on Machado de Assis in Brazil is a sort of ‘hybrid’ book *Machado* by *Silviano Santiago* (1936- ) published in 2016.

You may also find this BBC Radio Scotland programme by Mark Rickards broadcast in January 2015 relevant and one of our book club members, David Acton, reads excerpts from *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02gthsd

You may also be interested:

The Cultural Section of the Embassy of Brazil in London held the Machado de Assis Week in June 2007 launching the worldwide celebrations of the centenary of Machado de
Assis’s death (a DVD was produced by Rosana Teixeira, Cameraman & video producer – Gilson Pereira/MIGHTY VIDEO, Abridged, narrated, translated by Nadia Kerecuk)

The DVD contains an edited selection of the footage of the main events of the Machado de Assis Week promoted by the Embassy of Brazil in London from 18th to 22nd June 2007 celebrating the legacy of Machado de Assis (1839-1908) launching the celebrations of the centenary of his death.

There are three sections in the recording:
1) An outline of the main activities of the Week, excerpts from the address by President of Brazilian Academy of Letters, and lectures by J. Gledson, S. P. Rouanet, N. Kerecuk, A. C. Suriani, films, workshops, documentary, reading of a play, exhibition and comments from participants (A. Lisboa, S. Watts, S. Tobler, B. Colbrant, H. Caldin).
2) Recording of the dramatic reading of the short 1878 play Bote de Rapé (SnuffBox) by Natan Barreto and actors, a first annotated translation into English by Nadia Kerecuk (catalogued http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk, full record at http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=OXVU1&docId=oxfaleph019455932)
3) A short documentary about the Machado de Assis holdings at the British Library (A. A. Brayner).

Source: Academia Brasileira de Letras. Personal effects of Brazilian writer Machado de Assis.

2019: #AddBrazilianNovels2yourReadingLists

HAPPY READING!

Attendance is free, but booking is essential: nadia.kerecuk@itamaraty.gov.br

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Creator and Convenor of the © Brazilian Bilingual Book Club at the Embassy of Brazil in London