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Étienne Sauthier, *Proust sous les tropiques: Diffusion, réceptions, appropriations et traduction de Marcel Proust au Brésil (1913-1960)*. Preface by Laurent Vidal. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2021. 412 pp. Appendices, index, and bibliography. €26.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-7574-3286-0; €19.00 (pdf). ISBN 978-2-7574-3295-2; €19.00 (eb). ISBN 978-2-7574-3313-3; €29.00 (pb + pdf). ISBN 978-2-7574-3313-3.

Review by Igor Reyner, Paraná State University.

Preceded by a preface signed by historian Laurent Vidal, this study comprises a foreword, an introduction, ten chapters divided into four sections, a conclusion followed by a set of French translations of excerpts by Brazilian writers interested in Proust, a biography index of key individuals mentioned in the book, a subject-organized bibliography, and an index. Respecting a linear chronology, each section encompasses a crucial stage of the reception of Marcel Proust in Brazil until just after the moment of the publication of the first Brazilian Portuguese translation of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. The time frame for each section is persuasively defined, providing clear temporal reference points that help the reader navigate the vast bulk of primary sources meticulously examined by Sauthier. Diverse, they include articles published in some of the most important newspapers in the country,^[1] leading literary magazines,^[2] novels and poetry collections by eminent Brazilian writers who were influenced by Proust, private correspondence, and a miscellany of other documents, such as publication contracts and library loan records of Brazilian public libraries. One of the premises of Sauthier's book is that the reception of an author is the product of intellectual, material, and social processes that are equally shaped by events and agents (p. 320). Therefore, in addition to exploring this vast array of primary sources while taking into account their historical and geographical contexts, Sauthier's monograph looks into the biographies of key individuals associated with the Brazilian intellectual and social elite, since they played a decisive role in shaping the local responses to Proust.

The first section, "Pages à la mer: la traversée (1913-1923)," covers the period between 1913 and 1923 according to three consecutive moments: the biennium preceding the First World War; the war period; and the quinquennial following the conflict, from 1919 (the year in which Proust was awarded the Goncourt prize for *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*) to 1923, the year of the publication, by Carlos Bosleli, of the first Brazilian essay to critically engage with Proust. As a prelude, the section begins by tracking the steps of a few influential members of the Brazilian elite during the *Belle Époque*, such as Alceu Amoroso Lima, José Pereira da Graça Aranha, and Paulo Prado. Sojourning in Paris around 1913, year of the publication of *Du côté de chez Swann*, the inaugural novel of *À la recherche*, these individuals, Sauthier argues, would have heard about Proust due to their associations with the Catholic far-right monarchist political movement *Action*

Française, a prominent member of which, Léon Daudet, was the older brother of Proust's close friend Lucien Daudet. The Parisian stay of these Brazilians represented the culmination of a sort of civilizing (or colonizing) process, since as Sauthier contends, "le voyage à Paris est pour les élites nationales [de l'Amérique latine dans ces années-là], qu'elles soient brésiliennes, argentines, chiliennes ou mexicaines, le couronnement d'une formation" (p. 33). Forced to cut short their Parisian sojourn due to the outbreak of the First World War, these individuals returned to Brazil, where a few years later they would either champion, in the case of Amoroso Lima, or rebuke, in the case of Graça Aranha, Proust's literature.

The two first chapters of the first section work nicely as a preamble, since they give a sense of the Brazilian elite of the time, from which Proust's readership came: not least because they were the few Brazilians with enough command of French to read Proust in his original language. It is the third chapter, however, that properly broaches what can be seen as the core of the first stage of the Brazilian reception of Proust. In addition to showing how Proust's name surfaced in the press as a result of the 1919 Goncourt prize, Sauthier demonstrates how the author was initially either praised or rejected for his ties to nineteenth-century literary values. These responses, Sauthier claims, can only be fully comprehended if taken into account alongside the horizons of expectation—a term he borrows from Hans Robert Jauss—of the Brazilian places reached by Proust's image and work. In order to do so, and aware of the challenges inherent in any reception study focused on a continental country such as Brazil, the author strategically opted to narrow his approach by attending primarily to three locations: Rio de Janeiro, which was the capital of Brazil from 1763 to 1960, São Paulo, which witnessed a rapid expansion due to the booming coffee market during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, and the North-East (*Nordeste*), especially Recife, the capital of the State of Pernambuco, which has been historically associated with the country's sugar cane production. Key to the economic and political history of the country, these metropolises were indisputably crucial to twentieth-century Brazilian literature, and the comparative approach offers a pleasant and enlightening, though inevitably reductive, panorama of the reception of Proust in Brazil. The systematic juxtaposition of the three geographical scenes provides the chapters of the book with a digestible structure, especially as regards the capacious inventory of references to Proust in the Brazilian press that fills several pages that, though relevant, at times become tedious.

Sauthier's geographical focus is also justified by the fact that these three locations are the cradle of key hegemonic artistic movements that sought, in their own way, to define what the authentic Brazilian identity would be (p. 61). In opposition to *Anatolisme*, the movement spurred by Anatole France's style and values that towered over the literary scene of 1920s Rio de Janeiro, the São Paulo of the same time was defined by Modernist tendencies, witnessing, in February 1922, the *Semana de Arte Moderna*. This event, which took place at the Municipal Theatre and had wide-reaching repercussions, aimed at liberating Brazilian art from the traditional European influence by combining folkloristic elements and an indigenist thematic with procedures borrowed from the international avantgarde that flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century. Differing from the literati from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, North-eastern intellectuals advocated a literary and artistic stance that became known as *Regionalismo*. In a more political and sociological vein, this aesthetic standpoint stressed the local culture of the North-East, shaped by the sugar cane plantations, and depicted the tough life of the people from those arid lands. Products of "les dialectiques du local et du cosmopolite dans la nouvelle recherche identitaire du Brésil" (p. 53), these three artistic movements, constantly at odds with Europe,

“vont peu à peu façonner une nouvelle identité brésilienne” (p. 53). And it is in relation to them that Proust would be perceived in Brazil during the 1920s and 1930s.

Section two, “Une diffusion, des réceptions (1922/23-1933),” interrogates how Proust’s work negotiated the aforementioned cultural contexts, and follows the evolution of his reception from the moment Proust began to draw critical attention to that in which his ideas were radically incorporated into the work of Brazilian writers. It then peruses the numerous mentions Proust gathered in the press over these years, analyses the repercussions of a group of lectures and conferences given in Brazil by eminent literary figures, and puts forward a commentary of a set of fictional as well as theoretical works that, to a varied degree, draw on Proust. The section is divided into three parts, each one corresponding to a crucial stage in the process of integration of Proust into the Brazilian culture. After examining the references to Proust in newspapers and weekly publications, which signal “le moment d’une prise de contact avec l’auteur” (p. 78), Sauthier explores as a potential turning point the celebrated lecture on Proust given by pioneer French comparatist Paul Hazard at the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1926. Hazard’s seminar, as Sauthier seems to suggest, would inspire more in-depth readings of the French writer, contributing to a renewed interest in Proust that would ultimately yield creative responses, such as the novel *Sob o Olhar Malicioso dos Trópicos*, published by José Barreto Filho in 1929. A landmark of the Brazilian reception of Proust, Barreto Filho’s novel is a pastiche of *À la recherche* as well as the first example of a commensal integration of Proust into Brazilian literature (p. 74). Another milestone of the reception of Proust in Brazil around the same time is the publication, in 1927, of the essay “La Musique chez Proust et Stendhal” by Tristão de Athayde, penname of Alceu Amoroso Lima. One of the most prominent Brazilian advocates of Proust, Amoroso Lima would also give an influential and widely advertised lecture on Proust in that same year. Still another major event related to the Brazilian reception of Proust at the time is Jorge de Lima’s thesis on Proust, which was written to support his candidacy for a lectureship at the *Liceo Alagoano* in 1929. This lengthy essay is considered the first scholarly Brazilian article on the French writer, and its production involves an anecdote, since Lima’s copy of *Du côté de chez Swann* was allegedly gifted to him by Proust’s last secretary, Henri Rochat, with whom Lima met during Rochat’s trip to the Brazilian North-East (p. 92).

For Sauthier, however, a watershed in the reception of Proust is the publication, in 1933, of *Casa-Grande e Senzala* by sociologist Gilberto Freyre. Translated into English as *The Masters and the Slaves*, *Casa-Grande e Senzala* is the first and still the most influential work by Freyre, as well as a cornerstone of Brazilian sociological studies. Framing, for the first time, miscegenation as a positive feature of Brazilian society, insofar as it would be the result of a more integrating form of colonialization, Freyre’s work popularized a quasi-theory that, for decades, upheld the Brazilian myth of racial democracy, responsible for perpetuating racism and racial inequality in the country. It is astonishing, therefore, that a radical sociological effort such as Freyre’s would be seen by its own author as akin to the endeavors of the narrator of *À la recherche*. Yet, that is what Freyre unequivocally states in the preface to his book when avowing that “L’étude de l’histoire intime d’un peuple,” which is how he presents his study, “a quelque chose de proustien” (p. 149). This short but powerful sentence of far-reaching implications was enough to persuade Sauthier to elect Freyre’s allusion to Proust as one of the landmarks of his study. And it should not have been otherwise, given Freyre’s stature in the Brazilian intellectual landscape. Yet, the allusion seemed to have failed to drive Sauthier to pursue a more satisfactory, in-depth, and substantial analysis of the wide-ranging ramifications of the connection between Freyre and Proust. One of the gravitational forces of Sauthier’s book, this unexpected link is underexplored

and meagerly glossed, revealing one of the books limitations: Sauthier is only sparsely analytical, relying first and foremost on a thorough, descriptive approach. This is not a problem *per se*, given that most of what is being described is novel and unfamiliar, especially for a French readership. Nonetheless, it often leaves the reader wishing for a supplementary, more speculative style, particularly at points where fruitful theoretical links seem to have been overlooked or given short shrift.

The third section, “Les intermittences du cœur: discontinuités du rapport brésilien à l’Europe (1933-1947),” first examines the period between 1933 and 1940 when, due to the Second World War, the exchange of books between Brazil and France was interrupted (p. 168), before discussing the period from 1940 to 1947, the year in which the first *Proust Club* was founded in Brazil. Among other things, this period marks the transition from the first generation of Proust’s readers to a second generation of his readership. These Proust enthusiasts were associated, to different degrees, with different political circles. On the one hand, there were those very conservative members of Brazilian society, such as José Lins do Rego, Álvaro Lins, or Mansueto Bernardi, who were connected to the Brazilian Integralist Action, a fascist political party led by Plínio Salgado. On the other hand were those in the entourage of Gustavo Capanema, the Minister of Education and Public Health of Vargas Government, who happened to have had access to *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* in Belo Horizonte, the capital of the State of Minas Gerais, in 1919. Capanema’s office assembled the key Brazilian cultural figures of the 1930s, many of whom were closely engaged in the promotion of Proust in the country, such as poets Manuel Bandeira and Carlos Drummond, and literati Afonso Arinos, Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade and Alceu Amoroso Lima. Finally, on a more liberal and Modernist front, there were also the young students of the newly founded University of São Paulo—Antonio Candido and Ruy Coelho—who were the founders of *Clima* magazine and future frontrunners of Brazilian literary critique.

The rise of a second generation of Proust admirers, as Sauthier establishes, coincides with a growing attention to Proust’s work throughout the 1930s. This wave of interest reaches its peak on 12 October 1941, with the announcement by the press of a project of translation of the whole *À la recherche* into Portuguese by *Livraria do Globo*, which marked, for Sauthier, the conclusion of the process of integration of Proust into the Brazilian literary space (p. 200). Nonetheless, the interest elicited by Proust ebbed due to the Second World War, and the period between 1942 and 1946 witnessed not only a decrease in the influence of Proust in Brazil but also put a halt to the translation project. Things would only take a favorable turn again after the end of the conflict, with *Livraria do Globo* resuming the translation project in 1946, and the first *Proust Club* being founded in Brazil in 1947, almost at the same time as the *Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et de Combray* in Paris. Based in Rio de Janeiro, but with members from different parts of Brazil, the *Proust Club*, according to Sauthier, set up the first official Proust community in the country (p. 235), not only consolidating but expanding in a number of ways the Brazilian reception of Proust.

The fourth and final section, “Démocratisation: une traduction, des études, un nouveau lectorat (1948-1960),” covers the period between 1948, year of the publication of *No Caminho de Swann* (the Portuguese title of *Du côté de chez Swann*), and 1960, a few years after the publication of the final volume of the translation of Proust into Portuguese. This section chiefly attends to three events that contributed to consolidating a positive image of Proust among not only the Brazilian elite but also a wider audience. It follows the reception of the translation of *À la recherche* into Portuguese. It explores the impact of the newly founded and very active *Proust Club*, especially with regard to the publication of *Revista Branca*, their literary magazine whose title was inspired

by *La Revue blanche*, the French art and literary magazine to which Proust contributed in his youth. And, finally, it assesses the impact upon the Brazilian reception of Proust of the TV show *O Céu é o Limite* which, in 1956, had as one of its main attractions French socialite Christiane Mendes Caldeira as a contestant in a quiz about Proust, a topic of her choosing. The success of the show was such that, two years later, another famous member of the elite, Gilda Osvaldo Cruz, the daughter of celebrated Brazilian doctor Osvaldo Cruz, would also be invited as a contestant to answer questions about Proust.

The final years of the Brazilian reception of Proust within the scope of Sauthier's book represent indeed a moment of popularization and democratization. On the one hand, the TV show made Proust known to a much wider audience, even if only trivially. On the other hand, the publication, between 1948 and 1957, of the first Brazilian translation of Proust into Portuguese by a stellar team consisting of Mário Quintana, Manuel Bandeira, Lourdes Sousa de Alencar, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, and Lúcia Miguel Pereira, allowed Proust to be effectively read by a large portion of the Brazilian readership that could not have read the author in the original language. The translation's impact was such that, as Sauthier points out, "entre la fin octobre et début novembre 1948, *No Caminho de Swann* a été le deuxième livre le mieux vendu à São Paulo" (p. 243). Moreover, Proust translations had a broader impact, insofar as they detached, as Sauthier insightfully notes, the French language from French literature and culture (p. 315) such that one no longer needed to read French to enter the universe of Marcel Proust.

Alongside these processes of democratization of Proust, the activities of the *Proust Club*—especially the public lectures they organized and the literary magazine they published—contributed to creation of a group of Proust enthusiasts and qualified commentators. Among their main publications is the fourth volume of *Revista Branca*—entirely devoted to Proust (1949-48)—and *Proustiana Brasileira* (1950), a special issue that sought to "fournir un panorama plus ou moins exhaustif de la réception de l'auteur de la *Recherche* au Brésil" (p. 248). As Sauthier convincingly demonstrates, The *Proust Club's* actions and the translation of *À la recherche* into Portuguese not only crowned a long process of integration of Proust into Brazilian culture but also amplified and intensified an enduring Brazilian interest in Proust that has not waned since. To prove his point, Sauthier highlights the fact that in the 1980s, *À la recherche* gained a second translation into Brazilian Portuguese, signed by Fernando Py, and that today, a third translation by Mario Sergio Conti and Rosa Freire d'Aguilar is well under way (p. 326).

The merits of Sauthier's enterprise lie beyond the fact that it is the first book-length account of the reception of a writer such as Marcel Proust in a country as culturally and socially complex and multifaceted as Brazil. Its main virtues are the volume and the quality of the information amassed, the orderly structure, and Sauthier's fastidiousness. The downside, however, is that his desire for comprehensiveness sometimes yields a repetitious style that, instead of clarifying the content, eclipses it. Occasionally, dating inconsistencies occur, though these do not compromise the reading. In my view, the only truly problematic element of this otherwise excellent work is this revealing statement: "C'est ainsi, entre 1948 et 1960, à la colonisation de l'espace intellectuel brésilien par l'œuvre proustienne en langue portugaise que l'on assiste" (p. 236). Describing the reception of Proust in Brazil as any form of colonization, whether literally or metaphorically, is more than a poor choice of words, it is symptomatic and utterly incorrect. It is symptomatic and distasteful if we bear in mind that Brazil was a colony, and for that we still pay a terrible price. And it is incorrect because though Proust has certainly exerted a significant influence over

Brazilian writers and intellectuals, these writers and intellectuals are nothing more than a drop in the vast ocean of Brazilian culture.

NOTES

[1] *Correio da Manhã, Correio Paulistano, Correio de São Paulo, Diário Nacional, Diário de Notícias, Gazeta de Notícias, Jornal do Brasil, Jornal do Recife, O Estado de São Paulo, O Imparcial, O Paiz, Província*, and others.

[2] *América Brasileira, A Ordem, A Revista, A Revista da Semana, Careta, Clima, Estética, Festa, Fonfon, Movimento, Revista Branca, Revista de Antropofagia, Revista do Livro, Revista Klaxon, Revista Souza Cruz*, and others.

Igor Reyner
Paraná State University
igor.reyner@unespar.edu.br

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