THE MACHIAVELLIAN NARRATOR IN MACHADO DE ASSIS'S "MISSA DO GALO"

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RESUMO: O presente ensaio estuda a teoria da mente e o caráter maquiavélico do narrador do conto de Machado de Assis intitulado "Missa do galo". O estudo centra-se em vários detalhes do texto que comprovam a profundidade da visão do narrador, que está em desacordo com a sua própria falta de entendimento de um episódio de sua vida em torno do qual a história gira. Em uma narrativa bem machadiana, duas verdades mutuamente exclusivas emergem na representação do narrador de um passado autobiográfico que contribui para a criação de um exemplo da inteligência maquiavélica. Sugere-se que o narrador de Machado é, de fato, o que os estudiosos da teoria da mente chamariam de um personagem maquiavélico. O narrador da história de Machado é engenhoso no sentido de que ele parece saber e manipular a mente dos leitores que, junto com a sua capacidade de manter o leitor em constante oscilação entre as duas versões da verdade, faz dele um narrador maquiavélico.

PALAVRAS- CHAVE: Inteligência maquiavélica; leitura da mente; teoria da mente; Machado de Assis; Missa do Galo.

ABSTRACT: This essay studies the theory of mind and the Machiavellian character of the narrator of Machado de Assis's short story titled "Missa do Galo." The study focuses on several details of the text that prove the narrator's depth of vision which is at odds with his own misunderstanding of an episode from his life around which the story revolves. In a classic Machadian narrative, two mutually exclusive truths emerge in the narrator's representation of an autobiographical past, which contributes to the creation of an example of Machiavellian intelligence at work. I suggest that Machado's narrator is, in

fact, what Theory of Mind scholars call a Machiavellian character. The narrator in Machado's story is ingenious in that he seems to know and manipulate the reader's mind which, along with his ability to hold the reader in constant oscillation between the two versions of truth, makes him a Machiavellian narrator.

The narrator of the short story "Missa do Galo" by Machado de Assis recounts an episode from his youth opening his story with the following line: "Nunca pude entender a conversação que tive com uma senhora há muitos anos, contava eu dezessete, ela trinta" (Machado, "Missa do Galo" 63). With the very first sentence, Nogueira, the character-narrator of the story, makes it clear that he is going to tell us an episode from his life that he himself does not quite understand. Thus, apart from imparting an intriguing tone to the narration, he is also implicitly giving the reader a task to pay close attention and understand what had happened. As the story unfolds, the narrator reveals features of what Theory of Mind scholars call Machiavellian intelligence. Indeed, "Missa do galo" presents an excellent example of a story where Theory of Mind techniques are put to use by a strategic narrator in order to create a highly Machiavellian story. Nogueira brilliantly constructs a narrative where Machiavellian tactics fabricate a reader response that oscillates between two equally valid interpretations. I suggest that the narrator skillfully maintains this ambivalence by concealing his depth of vision and playing on his younger self's mindblindness. The narrator's Machiavellian intelligence is also manifest in his ability to predict reader responses and provoke inferences in order to elude accountability for the accuracy of the recounted event, as well as in fabricating a desirable response by manipulating the reader's metarepresentational and source-monitoring abilities. I propose that reading the story through a cognitive lens will illuminate Machado's narrative technique that maintains the ambivalence of the story and will provide a new theoretical approach for analyzing his strategic narrators.

Cognitive studies and Theory of Mind present an original approach to literary studies and rely on our knowledge of human cognition and brain to provide a deeper insight into literary narratives and characters. Sandija O'Connell describes Theory of Mind as

the mechanism

impossible to operate in any society. Theory of Mind is the name given to this understanding of others. It is the basic necessity of humanity and is understood the same way the world over (2).

This mechanism is inevitably applied in our interaction with literary characters as cognitive approaches to literature come to prove that we perceive characters like human beings. Understanding the character's mind, besides being a natural response to a text, is also a task that cognitive and Theory of Mind analysis of literary texts try to address. Not only do we apply Theory of Mind to make sense of literary characters' minds, but these characters themselves demonstrate such capabilities as they navigate the web of human interactions in their fictional worlds. Some characters, the so-called round ones, normally showcase stronger understanding of human minds and feelings, while others often remain mindblind to the thoughts and feelings of fellow characters. World literature has seen novels inhabited with characters possessing a strong Theory of Mind, while satiric literature, for example, often uses mindblindness to create characters that do not fall under the mentioned "round" category (Vermeule 196). In response to this distinction, Theory of Mind studies often describe certain literary characters as possessing Machiavellian intelligence. Coined by Richard Byrne and Andrew Whiten and commonly used in cognitive studies in literature to refer to the body of practices applied by strategic and tactical literary characters, the term Machiavellian intelligence (Social Intelligence) is used "to describe that practical, pragmatic ability to act in one's own best interests, often in a way that involves deceit of others" (Mancing 124). A closer analysis of "Missa do Galo" demonstrates that we deal with such a Machiavellian narrator that utilizes the typical Machadian ambivalence to create his narrative.

The plot of "Missa do Galo" follows Nogueira, the narrator, who retells a conversation that took place between him and Conceição, the landlady of the house where he was staying in Rio de Janeiro when preparing for university entrance exams. On

Christmas eve, Nogueira decides to stay up in order to go to the midnight mass with a neighbor. It was going to be his first experience of the mass, and he did not want to miss it. Being a keen reader, Nogueira grabs Dumas' novel *Three Musketeers* and delves into the reading as he is waiting for the time to pass. All of a sudden, Conceição appears in the hallway and strikes up a conversation with him. The exact implications of this very conversation still remain a mystery to the narrator. Or so he claims.

Anyone who reads this story is likely to conclude that the narrator attempts to understand whether Conceição had tried to seduce him or not. However, that is what the reader *infers* from the text. For the narrator never specifies what exactly he could not understand from that conversation. The criticism of the story, as confirms Paul Dixon, "é consistente em identificar a possibilidade de sedução como o cerne da experiência. Mas tal conclusão se formula em grande parte na mente do leitor, porque a evidência textual é mínima" ("Teoria" 91-92). This conclusion on the readers' part is not only counted on by the narrator, but happens so naturally and implicitly that it is easy to overlook the fact that such information was never directly provided by the narrator. We, as readers, fill in the gaps and make inferences thanks to our cognitive input. Nogueira only hints at Conceição's possible intentions to seduce him by recounting the circumstances of their talk making sure to leave room for doubt. He carefully calculates our inferences and at the same time finds ways to implicitly deny them to stay on the safe side. The story's power, therefore, lies in its ability to elicit contradictory inferences from the reader. As a result, the ambiguous nature of the conversation or at least its representation as such by Nogueira leaves the reader wondering as to what the true intention of the landlady was: to seduce the seventeen year old boy or to just be friendly?

Some texts provide easy access to characters' state of mind, while others require more cognitive input in order for the reader to tap into the characters' inner world. "Missa do Galo," in this regard, is a text that invites a great amount of cognitive working, which, nevertheless, does not facilitate or guarantee the discovery of the truth about the characters' minds. The problem in Machado's story is that the few cues that the text provides for analyzing Conceição's Theory of Mind are already theorized by Nogueira,

the first-person narrator of the story. This means that Conceição's speech, thoughts and gestures are represented through Nogueira's mind given that he is the person narrating the story. It is obvious that Nogueira cannot be trusted and some critics have rightly noted that Nogueira is an unreliable narrator (Valente 41). A close analysis of certain textual cues questions Nogueira's innocence and not knowing and reveals his intention to make the reader take responsibility of what he intends to communicate. Thus, studying him as not just a problematic narrator, but deciphering his Machiavellian tactics will shed light on his narrative strategies.

To begin with, one of Nogueira's main strategies is to make the reader infer things in order to avoid accountability for his own statements. It seems as if the narrator implicitly acknowledges our capability to make inferences and plays it safe by not stating something that may affect his reputation with unnecessary gossip. In her analysis of Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Vermuele believes that Dupin's Machiavellian trick "lies in knowing what inferences his friend will form" (87). Likewise, Nogueira uses his ability to predict, then cultivate inferences in order to construct his narrative. More often than not, he prefers to suggest things, rather than state them. For example, when he says, "Quando eu acabava uma narração ou uma explicação, ela inventava outra pergunta ou outra matéria, e eu pegava novamente na palavra" (69), he does not directly state Conceição's motives for inventing new topics, but seems to suggest that Conceição was interested in keeping him talking to her over and over again. Consequently, this sentence may lead the reader to look for adulterous motives in Conceição's desire to talk to the boy.

On other occasions, Nogueira provokes an inference on the reader's part that is soon to be counterbalanced by another statement in order to sustain the ambivalence. For instance, Nogueira mentions: "Perguntou ela inclinando o corpo para ouvir melhor" (68). This sentence, on one hand, suggests Conceição's physical closeness to Nogueira initiated by the former, and on the other hand, provides quite a valid motive for this action. The narrator seems to block the reader's perverse inference through a slight clarification that safeguards his reputation both as a narrator and a person respecting the name of the family that hosted him.

This constant game of ambivalence, is in fact, one of the strongest narrative tactics of the text. An example of a textual clue that adds to this ambiguity and provokes inferences in the reader is Conceição's request to speak in a quiet voice, because her elderly mother could wake up: "Mamãe está longe, mas tem o sono muito leve; se acordasse agora, coitada, tão cedo não pegava no sono" (68). Conceição makes it clear that her mother is far and there is not much risk that she will wake up (to see the two together?). At the same time, however, she suggests that the mother sleeps lightly and could, therefore, wake up easily. Here, two mutually exclusive motives are to be noted that make this statement a perfect example of Machiavellian intelligence inside a classic Machadian ambivalence. The narrator leaves it to the reader to infer whether good will or seduction prevails in Conceição's preoccupation.

Along with the aforementioned tactics, one of Nogueira's main narrative advantages is the fact that we access Conceição's character through his representation. This implies that Conceição's mind is already theorized by Nogueira himself. Although Nogueira's representation of Conceição may be subjective and ambiguous, it reveals a few details about Nogueira's narrative tactics that play with reader's reception of certain information. It is quite intriguing, for example, how Nogueira sees and represents Conceição's way of dealing with her adulterous marriage. He says: "Conceição padecera, a princípio, com a existência da comborça; mas, afinal, resignara-se, acostumara-se, e acabou achando que era muito direito" (64). To make such a metarepresentation (i.e. *I think* that Conceição thought/felt that) of Conceição's intimate feelings about her marriage situation, certain conditions should be met: it is public knowledge, the narrator is an extraordinary mind-reader and can penetrate the depths of Conceição's feelings, or Conceição has enlightened the narrator herself, which is not very likely given the cordial nature of their relationship. Of course, we can speculate on other conditions, too. However, we can clearly infer from here that Nogueira shows that he has a very clear understanding of Conceição's opinion regarding adultery when he states that she "acabou achando que era muito direito" (64). Very ironically, the entire story revolves around the fact that Nogueira has trouble reading Conceição's mind. In other words, the narrator's

initial claim that he cannot understand the implications of his communication with Conceição is at odds with his ability to comment on Conceição's most intimate thoughts and feelings.

Additionally, by making such a statement the narrator automatically implies that (he believes) Conceição has a disposition to think that adultery was "muito direito." To back this up, Nogueira goes on to cite the public: "Boa Conceição! Chamavam-lhe 'a santa', e fazia jus ao titulo, tão facilmente suportava os esquecimentos do marido" (64). Here, the narrator introduces the public mind stating that *they* called her a saint. Then he continues, with a different tone, as if to slightly contradict the public mind he agreed with a moment ago by adding his own truth: "Em verdade, era um temperamento moderado, sem extremos, nem grandes lágrimas, nem grandes risos" (64). While Nogueira briefly expresses agreement with the public characterization of Conceição as a saint, at the same time he emphasizes the superiority of his own characterization of Conceição by introducing the phrase "em verdade." This way, the narrator posits himself as possessing a deeper insight than the public and attempts to gain the reader's confidence toward his words, then portrays a Conceição that is anything but a saint. If this portrayal is not imposed on Conceição, but is objectively drawn out based on Conceição's character, it can only strengthen the hypothesis that the narrator is a penetrative thinker and possesses a very strong Theory of Mind. If that is the case, why is Nogueira trying to tell us otherwise in expressing his confusion regarding that night? I propose that Nogueira's motive for not articulating his understanding of the matter in a straightforward manner can be explained by his choice to refrain from defaming a family that has shown him hospitality. Consequently and conveniently, the burden of making judgements on Conceição's motivations falls on the reader. Not by accident does Nogueira ask for God's forgiveness if he misjudges Conceição's character: "Deus me perdoe, se a julgo mal" (64).

Further on, after questioning the public opinion and the characterization that they give Conceição as a "saint" just because she tolerates her husband's negligence, Nogueira continues: "Tudo nela era atenuado e passivo. O próprio rosto era mediano, nem bonito nem feio. Era o que chamamos uma pessoa simpática. Não dizia mal de ninguém,

perdoava tudo. Não sabia odiar; pode ser até que não soubesse amar" (64). Does this imply that if Conceição loved her husband, she would not deal with his betrayal so easily and would not be tempted to seduce a seventeen year old? Here, the narrator inserts yet another piece of the public mind (this time including himself in it) as some sort of acknowledged truth saying that "era o que chamamos uma pessoa simpática." When discussing such phrases as "a nice person" implying a universal truth, Lisa Zunshine notes that

> somewhat paradoxically, they can be easily interpreted as implying an interested source of representation even as they deny that there is one. They seem to hint that somebody wants to manipulate us into doing something that would benefit him or her by having us take a certain percept as a universal truth" (62).

There is obviously an attempt on the part of the narrator to trick us into a certain belief by classifying Conceição under a universally accepted categorization of a nice person. However, it appears to me that the narrator veils his true attitude toward Conceição through a very superficial characterization as nice. She was considered to be nice *by the public*, even though she might not have been such. It is not too hard to tell that the narrator chooses a very safe way of characterizing Conceição by keeping our attention distracted from his subjective representation with a piece of the public mind, at the same time leaving room for a little disagreement with such acknowledged truth. This, again, serves as a technique to safeguard the narrator's good reputation in the reader's eye. In other words, the narrator's true inclination regarding the situation remains veiled by his ambivalent representation of the story where Conceição is vaguely portrayed both a saint (in the public eye) and a seducer (in Nogueira's experience). While being the only source of information through which we gain access to this episode from his life, Nogueira includes the public to make us believe that we gain information about Conceição through the public mind as well. This, consequently, weakens our ability to track the sources of specific information throughout the reading and comes as a cautionary action in response to our "metarepresentational" capabilities (a term used by Theory of Mind scholar, Lisa Zunshine), that is, an ability to track the sources of

representation (i.e. who said, thought or felt what) and understand the sentiments of those sources and representations (54-55). Regarding this, Lisa Zunshine proposes that

> Whereas our Theory of Mind gives us an opportunity to invest literary characters with a potential for a broad array of thoughts, desires, intentions, and feelings and then to look for textual cues that allow us to figure out their states of mind and thus predict their behavior, our metarepresentational ability allows us to discriminate among the streams of information coming at us via all this mind-reading. It allows us to assign differently weighed truth-values to representations originating from different sources under specific circumstances (60).

Nogueira deals with this ability of ours in quite an intelligent way as he tries to diffuse his personal opinion with the public characterization of Conceição backed by universal truth. In other occasions, instead of playing with sources of representation (we are well aware that it is Nogueira who tells, thinks or feels), he takes an unexpected but equally justifiable logical turn in the middle of the sentence in order to half-deny our inference. A good example of this is when Conceição inclines her body toward Nogueira. Whether we infer that Conceição inclined her body toward Nogueira to seduce him or to hear him better is solely our responsibility. After all, we and only we are responsible for the inferences we make. Nogueira toys with such intriguing moments by simply pushing the readers to make their own inferences. In this way, he eludes responsibility for the recounted and instead guides us toward drawing a desirable conclusion, or rather confusion out of the story.

Related to metarepresentation is our ability known in Theory of Mind studies as source monitoring. In short, source monitoring is an ability to track the sources of information that we store in our memory and refer to them by source-monitoring tags such as time-specifying tags, place-specifying tags, and agent-specifying tags (51). For example, Nogueira recalls an episode that happened to him many years ago and refers to the place-specifying tag (Rio de Janeiro), the agent-specifying tag (Nogueira himself) and the time-specifying tag (1861 or 1862) to retrieve that memory. Cognitive studies make a distinction between episodic memories and semantic memories in that semantic memories are "representations that are stored without a source tag" and often are pieces

of information based on the above mentioned universal or acknowledged truths. While episodic memories relate to specific experiences and are said to be retrieved though metarepresentations (Zunshine 51). In addition, in relation to reader's source monitoring abilities when working with a narrative, it has been noted that readers naturally fail to properly keep track of all the source tags of the discourse, particularly if a certain statement is represented as universal truth (Zunshine 51). By the same token, with a superficial reading and weak source monitoring of "Missa do Galo," we are likely to take the above characterization of Conceição for absolute truth, by leaving out the agent-specifying source tag "Nogueira diz que" in "Conceição era atenuado e passivo…." (64), which strategically and conveniently serves the narrator's intentions. Nogueira makes a generalization through his own characterization of Conceição using the public mind to present his description under the positive but superficial label of a "nice person" when he is making judgements about Conceição's disposition to be likely to tolerate even a harem. "No capítulo de que trato, dava para maometana; aceitaria um harém, com as aparências salvas. Deus me perdoe, se a julgo mal" (64). In this passage, the narrator makes sure to ask for God's forgiveness if he is misjudging her.

It is by such indirect commentary on dispositions that the narrator constructs Conceição's character in the reader's mind. This link between dispositions and characters is thoroughly discussed in Alan Palmer's book titled *Fictional Minds*, where the author invites our attention to the concept of dispositions and how important they are in the context of linking the character's consciousness to their characterization. He notes that "it is by interpreting episodes of consciousness within a context of dispositions that the reader builds up a convincing and coherent sense of character" (43). According to Palmer, the term "mind" denotes a class of skills, propensities, capacities, tendencies, habits… these are states of mind or dispositions that, Damasio claims, are "records which are dormant and implicit rather than active and explicit, as images are" (qtd. in Palmer 43). So the reader's task with texts like this one is to retrieve those dormant and implicit records in order to construct the characters' minds. A good deal of the information provided by the narrator about Conceição strives to lead the reader to discover her

possible dispositions. However, two truths emerge when a reader tries to do so, which confirms the co-existence of two possible interpretations of this story creating "duas hipótesis mutuamente exclusivas" as observed by Paul Dixon in his analysis of the story ("Lei" 43). Such ambivalence contributes to the creation of a perfect example of a Machiavellian narrator who strategically manipulates and counterbalances possible interpretations refusing to give out clues for deciphering the truth.

All of these narrative strategies are put together by a Machiavellian narrator whose main tool is his penetrative thinking. The narrator in "Missa do Galo" directs his mindreading skills toward the reader as he cultivates contradictory responses through an ambivalent narrative. Nogueira is a figure that "sees farther than anybody else – the mastermind. The mastermind dominates other people through analytical reflection" (Vermeule 86). Whereas this does not hold true for the seventeen year old Nogueira, it definitely does for his adult counterpart as "Missa do Galo" rests upon Nogueira's reflections on the matter and his careful analysis of certain details of his encounter with Conceição such as her clothes, gestures, movements, and words. While the presence of a skilled mind-reader is often a prerequisite, such narratives also tend to "feature a presence of one or more blocking figures – someone blind, dull, or unresponsive" (Vermeule 86). If in Poe's text, the mastermind Dupin boasts about his mind-reading abilities, in "Missa do Galo," the narrator claims the exact opposite: he failed to understand what was on Conceição's mind - a Machiavellian trick par excellence directed at the reader. Machado's story is brilliant in that both the blocking and the Machiavellian figures are embodied in the same character – Nogueira. These two figures are respectively split between Nogueira's younger and adult selves. Nogueira's younger self perfectly fits the above description of the blocking feature by virtue of his unresponsiveness to the encounter with Conceição. By contrast, the adult Nogueira, in his capacity of a mastermind, adopts his younger self's lack of understanding to build a conveniently ambivalent interpretation of the story. About strategic characters, Vermeule states that "what they show is almost always less important than what they don't show. Machiavellian narratives suppress obvious tropes of reflection" (96). I suggest that it is through suppressing his younger

self's mindfulness that Nogueira constructs his Machiavellian narrative. Nogueira's inability to comprehend the conversation with Conceição paired with his thorough reflection on the circumstances of their talk are the two elements that make up Nogueira's Machiavellian intelligence and ambivalence. Nogueira's main skill, therefore, lies in concealing his own depth of vision. While adult Nogueira's mindreading and analytical skills peak through when taking a closer look at the text, the story rests on his not knowing.

Another cue that gives away Nogueira's Machiavellian character is the self-reflexivity of his narrative. According to Vermuele, the narrator, often a he, "reflects not only on the motivations of others but also on his own reflections" (87). When Conceição's enters the room, Nogueira asks her whether he woke her up by moving around in the house. Conceição's denies his assumption, but the narrator is not convinced because according to him, her eyes did not look like she just woke up. Nogueira, not wanting to denigrate Conceição's good name, discards his observation: "Essa observação, porém, que valeria alguma coisa em outro espírito, depressa a botei fora, sem advertir que talvez não dormisse justamente por minha causa, e mentisse para me não afligir ou aborrecer. Já disse que ela era boa, muita boa" (66). Nogueira reflects back on Conceição's motivations and his own thought processes justifying his decision for discarding his own observation by his innocent nature. This is yet another attempt on the narrator's part to safeguard his representation of the situation by emphasizing that Conceição's was really nice and, most importantly, that this is not the first time he is mentioning that fact.

According to Brian Boyd, "Storytelling is a particular kind of action, and telling a particular story invites an audience to interpret not only the story's events but also the storyteller's action in telling it" (370). This holds very true both in everyday life and in fiction. Nogueira's action in telling the story consists in concealing his own depth of vision and showcasing a neutral position toward the landlady. He positions himself as a not-knowing, objective narrator by providing what Boyd calls "strategic information" (130). Instead of revealing details that can compromise him, Nogueira selects

information that is convenient to share or gives out just enough information to enhance the doubt in the reader. For instance, among other things revealed at the beginning of the story is the fact that Conceição's husband was having an extramarital relationship with another woman and the family would refer to his nocturnal absences by the euphemism of "o teatro" (64). Nogueira, the innocent teenager that he was, did not understand the euphemism at that time. He says: "Mais tarde é que eu soube que o teatro era um eufemismo em ação" (64). This comes to highlight young Nogueira's inability to comprehend a linguistic nuance or his landlords' marital situation thus portraying a non-responsive, naive character. It is not known when and how Nogueira found out the real meaning behind the word *o teatro*. We do know, however, that he did figure it out and this makes one wonder whether he ever came to decipher other ambiguities encountered during his stay in Rio. The narrator does not seem to suggest that.

Even though we are dealing with a highly Machiavellian narrative that features some of the important Machiavellian textual cues mentioned by Vermuele such as "gossip, games of 'evens and odds,' eye contact… and people who 'turn a blind eye'" there are several loopholes that allow for an analytical reader to question Nogueira's not knowing (86). On several occasions, the narrator makes it clear that some things did not stick with him from that night because it happened years ago. I propose that Nogueira tries to conceal his good memory in order to justify his confusion with certain details. At the beginning of the story, Nogueira says that this happened in the year when he was preparing for the entrance exams and clarifies that "era 1861 ou 1862" (64). Here, the narrator does not explicitly say that he cannot remember the exact date, but he does it in a subtle way, providing the two dates as a subtle signal to the reader that the narrator does not have a very reliable memory (although he does not openly declare that in this part of the story). As a matter of fact, this is what often happens to us, real people; when we narrate episodes from our past, we may have a hard time remembering some dates. However, it is surprising that this piece of information escapes the narrator given that this was the year he was entering the university. One would think it should be difficult to forget such an important year. To emphasize that, I will parenthetically add that I

prepared for my entrance exams in the academic year 2002-2003, when I was sixteen years old. These tactics set out at the beginning are meant to prefigure the possibility of slight inaccuracies and safeguard the narrator's position as an honest storyteller.

Nevertheless, what is more suspicious about Nogueira not remembering the exact year is the precision and detail with which he narrates the rest of the story: he recalls incredible details including publication information of the *Three Musketeers* that he was reading that night, ending with the position of the furniture in the room or the location of the household keys. Valente is correct in noting that "the narrator's unreliability is exactly what makes this story so compelling, for it allows Nogueira to reveal much more about himself than he intended" (14). Indeed, Nogueira unintentionally contradicts himself by revealing that he has good memory skills recollecting small details from that night.

Conclusion

Despite these little cues that let an attentive reader peek through Nogueira's well-constructed narrative, the Machiavellian intelligence that drives the story is undeniable. Nogueira not only demonstrates mind-reading skills, but also shows awareness about reader's interaction with literary texts, their metarepresentational and source-monitoring capacities, as well as the utility of mindblindness in the construction of intelligent narratives. I believe that a Theory of Mind analysis of "Missa do Galo" provides further insight on Machado's technique in creating highly ambivalent and reflexive texts among which are "Dom Casmurro," "A Chinela Turca" and others. Curiously, a direct reference to Niccolo Machiavelli and his story "The Prince" is to be found in Machado's story "Teoria do Medalhão" ("Papeis" 50). This said, I believe that further research on Machado's Machiavellian narrators can illuminate his narrative practices and improve our understanding of Machado's idiosyncratic narrative vision.

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