

Fitz, Earl E. *Clarice Lispector: From Brazil to the World*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2024. 227p.

In his most recent monograph, Earl E. Fitz aims to explain the enduring and ever-growing appeal of Clarice Lispector to readers around the world. In the process, he advances his interpretation of the most salient dimensions of Lispector's writing, synthesizing a critical approach developed over decades of scholarship and numerous influential books and articles. Most importantly, Fitz offers a sustained argument for the importance and validity of reading Lispector within the field of World Literature together with a critical appraisal of what it would mean for the field of World Literature to credibly and responsibly read and teach her work. The book is intended primarily for a non-specialist audience, offering the greatest value to those who study and teach Lispector within World Literature courses and programs. In addition to being offered for sale in paperback and hardcover, this ninetieth volume of the Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures series is available as an open access e-book.

Clarice Lispector: From Brazil to the World is divided into six chapters, accompanied by an introduction and brief conclusion. The introduction presents Fitz's view that Lispector's formal and thematic multiplicity can explain the ever-widening circulation of her work among international readers, her status, in Fitz's terms, as "the world author *par excellence*" (8). Drawing on the work of influential theorists of World Literature, Fitz begins his argument with the recognition that Lispector is now variously read within contexts of Brazilian literature and of World Literature. With David Damrosch, Fitz seeks to understand the aesthetic features of Lispector's works that allow them to circulate within the networks of World Literature and be read according to its procedures. At the same time, following Emily Apter, Fitz is concerned about the "untranslatability" of Lispector's writing, those aspects of aesthetic and political signification at risk of erasure

when the author's work becomes known primarily via translation and in contexts that lack sensitivity to the historical and social circumstances of its production. In addition to summarizing the book's central claims and situating its concerns within debates about World Literature, therefore, the introduction also presents a general frame of reference for understanding the outlines of the Brazilian social and literary histories from which Lispector sprang.

The succeeding chapters focus on Lispector's relationship to a series of themes that, according to Fitz, can account for the author's strong reception within World Literature: politics, humor, writing and language, eroticism, God, and World Literature and translation. Each of the first five chapters surveys several of Lispector's works in relation to its thematic focus, exploring their potential appeal to global audiences while noting important historical considerations that might be lost on readers unfamiliar with Brazil. The final chapter, "Clarice, World Literature, and Translation," stands apart in offering an extended critique of World Literature as Fitz contends it often presents itself: as a practice of reading that domesticates texts through translation while failing to distinguish appropriately between the literary work as produced in its original language and its translated re-creation. Against what he sees as an impoverished if seductive approach to the study and teaching of literature in general, and to the work of Lispector in particular, Fitz mounts an impassioned defense of a comparative method that rejects the parochial limitations of monolingual literary and cultural analysis to instead embrace deep reading in multiple languages and transnational traditions.

The book has some features with which specialist readers may be tempted to quibble. For one, given the historical reception of Lispector as a writer who was more philosophical than political, Fitz's choice of politics as the theme of the first chapter is striking. The argument, above all Fitz's suggestion to read veins of political allegory in Lispector's dictatorship-era fiction, is provocative. Still, as a book directed at readers who may be unfamiliar with the breadth of Brazilian literature, the chapter might have addressed how Lispector's literary approach to politics differed from prominent alternatives, including those offered by influential, slightly older contemporaries like Rachel de Queiroz and Jorge Amado.

More importantly, the book's argument implies an interesting tension that remains unexplored. On the one hand, Fitz seeks to catalog the aesthetic features of Lispector's writing that contribute to its international circulation among readers unfamiliar with the historical specificities of Brazilian culture. And, on the other hand, he explicates with care and patience many details of Lispector's life and of Brazilian history that he plausibly believes readers must appreciate in order to read Lispector well. This raises a potentially uncomfortable problem, however: what if a measure of Lispector's global popularity is due precisely to its propensity for being "misread," its availability – produced by its intrinsic textual qualities as much as by discursive, institutional, and political forces – for appropriation by modes of reading quite at odds with those favored by specialists in Brazilian literary and cultural studies? If there is a danger in reading Lispector without sufficiently historicizing her work, what can be said about the ways in which her texts seem to offer themselves up for such reading? Is it possible that a more historicized, better-informed reading of Lispector, for which Fitz strongly advocates in this book, would prove incompatible with her free circulation as "world author *par excellence*"?

Fitz does not take up these questions, but in leading us to the puzzle he has produced yet another important contribution to the inexhaustible study of Clarice Lispector. The book contains highly compelling readings of both well-known and obscure texts, offering a precious interpretative synthesis representing Fitz's many decades of teaching and scholarship. And it includes a strong case for the importance of Portuguese language education and Brazilian cultural scholarship within U.S. academia. Fitz thus demonstrates, as he has many times, that he is one of the great champions of the field of Afro-Luso-Brazilian studies.

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¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. Approved for public release: distribution unlimited. PA#: USAFA-DF-2024-617.