

# Ferreira de Castro's *Emigrantes*: An Anarchist Portuguese Novel Responds to the Myth of the 'Brasileiro'

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## ABSTRACT

The Portuguese author Ferreira de Castro was a participant in the Iberian anarchist movement in the early twentieth century. This article suggests that his novel *Emigrantes* (Emigrants) is an attempt to disprove the myth of the 'brasileiro', the wealthy Portuguese-born man who returns home from Brazil as a powerful patriarch. The figure of the 'brasileiro' represented the possibility of success offered by international capitalism. Ferreira de Castro's anarchist sympathies inspired him to craft a novel which reaches the conclusion that the possibility of material gain is ephemeral for the poor.

**Keywords:** *Portugal, Brazil, diasporic novel, anarchism, Ferreira de Castro*

José Maria Ferreira de Castro was born in a rural town in Portugal in 1898 and left his village to work as a labourer in Brazil in 1911 (Pandeirada, 'Testemunhos do oceano', pp43, p48). He worked as a warehouse employee in the Amazon forest, near a rubber plantation, for four years (48). After leaving the warehouse, he began authoring articles for the periodical *Portugal* in the Brazilian state of Pará in 1917, beginning his career as a writer (p51). Destitute, Ferreira de Castro returned to Portugal in 1919 (p52). In Portugal, he wrote over a hundred articles for two anarchist publications: *A Batalha* (The Struggle), the official publication of the union *Confederação Geral do Trabalho* (General Confederation of Labor) or CGT; and *Renovação* (Renewal) (Cabrita, 'No rasto da passagem', p123). The CGT was formed at a worker's conference in the city of Coimbra on 10 September 1919, and presented itself as an organisation dedicated to a revolutionary form of unionisation (Sousa, *O Sindicalismo em Portugal*, pp112-115). Although the precise form of revolution advocated by the CGT was open to interpre-

tation given that the union included both radical and less radical elements, the radical presence was sufficient that the CGT actually formed committees to study industries and prepare for the expropriation of all factories and farms by workers (pp122-126). When, as in Italy, Spain and Germany, fascist elements began to assert themselves in Portugal during the 1920s and 1930s, the CGT became one of the primary organs of resistance, calling for the people to take up arms and for a general strike on 1 June 1926, leading the already repressed organisation into a clandestine existence (Guimarães, 'Cercados e Perseguidos', p3).

Ferreira de Castro was not only affiliated with *A Batalha*, the official organ of the CGT, but he also associated with well-known Portuguese anarchist journalists such as Pinto Quartin, as well as other influential figures in radical circles (ibid.). In *A Batalha* and *Renovação*, another publication divulged by the CGT for the purposes of commentary on culture, including art and literature, Ferreira de Castro proclaimed his love of liberty and 'o futuro' (the future) over the course of 134 articles (Cabrita, 'No rasto da passagem', pp119, 123). His articles not only focused on workers' rights and political occurrences – the need for workers to obtain paid vacations or the need to oppose the rise of fascism in Europe in the early twentieth century, for example – but on what he termed 'arte social' (social art) (pp124, 126, 131). A 'literatura vermelha' (red literature) had to be developed to divulge the value of liberty and the struggles of working people's lives (p127). During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Portuguese had colonised significant parts of Africa as well as South America, and, as discussed by Jesuit Priest André João Antonil in an early-eighteenth century account, had imported slaves into Brazil and generated a domestic caste system comprised of 'negros' (blacks), 'mulattos' (mixed-race), and 'brancos' (whites) (Antonil, *Brazil at the Dawn*, pp39-40). In the pages of *A Batalha*, Ferreira de Castro rejected colonialism, dubbed as pirates Portuguese explorers considered national icons by much of the Portuguese people, and lauded revolts against colonial powers in India and Africa (Cabrita, 'No rasto da passagem', p134).

Perhaps the experience of having lived in Brazil, a former Portuguese colony, shaped his views. Ferreira de Castro's time in Brazil clearly influenced his trajectory as he transitioned from journalist to novelist. Two of his novels fictionalised his experiences residing in northern Brazil: *Emigrantes* (Emigrants), published in 1928, and *A Selva* (The Jungle), published in 1930 (Abreu and Guedelha, 'A *Selva*, de Ferreira de Castro', pp225-237). *A Selva*, the story of a conservative young law student from Portugal who dreams of making a fortune in a rubber plantation in Brazil and experiences a softening of his views after exposure to the harshness of plantation life, is Ferreira de Castro's most widely read and renown work – it not only resulted in Brazil nominating Ferreira de Castro for a Nobel Prize in literature but in a well-received

film adaptation in 2002 (Coelho, 'A *Selva*', p17, pp19-20, pp22, 44).

*Emigrantes*, far less analysed in academic publications, merits the same level of scrutiny and praise because it is innovative in its attempt to unravel popular myths held to be truths in Portuguese society. It is the story of a poor Portuguese man from a rural town who seeks manual work in Brazil to improve his fortunes. While *A Selva* tells the story of a well-educated emigrant who is confronted with the reality of a different country and changes as a result of his new environment, *Emigrantes* is a novel with a different moral: the same fundamental problem affects the emigrant in his native country as in the host country, the concentration of power in the hands of the few. The relationship between immigrants, emigrants and Brazilians in the novel is one of common suffering without an element of otherness imposed upon the new environment or its culture. Afro-Brazilian, indigenous Brazilian, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese workers find themselves in the same situation, without caste distinctions.

This article suggests that *Emigrantes* is an anarchist-influenced response to the image of the 'brasileiro' (Brazilian) in the novels of Camilo Castelo Branco and other authors. As discussed below, the 'brasileiro' is a Portuguese-born man who returns to his home country from Brazil a wealthy patriarch. While, in Camilo Castelo Branco's work, emigrants to Brazil return as part of the elite, Ferreira de Castro asserts that the possibility of ascension through access to the global market is chimerical. To Ferreira de Castro, the global capitalist system cut the ground from under the 'brasileiro' myth. 'Brasileiros,' like Brazilians (also dubbed 'brasileiros') and Portuguese, are overwhelmingly poor, tortured souls.

The first section of this article discusses the history of anarchism in Portugal to provide a summary of the ideas Ferreira de Castro encountered in radical publications such as *A Batalha*. The second section presents a summary of novels describing the Portuguese experience in the Americas in order to situate the figure of the 'brasileiro' within the context of a body of literature. The third section presents the narrative of *Emigrantes* and discusses the unravelling of the 'brasileiro' myth within that novel, asserting that Ferreira de Castro deployed anarchist concepts in his mission to unravel the ideology behind this figure.

## **ANARCHISM IN PORTUGAL: A BRIEF SUMMARY OF A DIVERSE MOVEMENT**

During the period lasting from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, anarchism transitioned from virtual non-existence as a political movement in Portugal to the primary strain of radical leftist thought in the labour movement in that country.

The first Portuguese worker's associations were not anarchist in nature: the *Associação dos Operários* (Worker's Association) was formed in Lisbon in 1851 as a mutual aid society with workers paying into a common fund to secure themselves against sickness and old age; the *Centro Promotor dos Melhoramentos das Classes Laboriosas* (Center for the Promotion of Betterment for the Laboring Classes), created in 1852, not only managed a similar fund but provided education courses and advocated for specific legislation; the *Associação dos Trabalhadores da Região Portuguesa* (Association of Worker's of the Portuguese Region) was formed in 1873 and, while serving many of the same purposes, led strikes and helped divulge a new party, the Socialist Party (Sousa, *O Sindicalismo em Portugal*, p27, p28, pp44-45, p47).

Explicitly anarchist groups began to appear in Portugal at the end of the nineteenth century. The anarchist *União Democrática Social* (Union for Social Democracy) and *Grupo Comunista-Anarquista* (Anarchist-Communist Group) were formed in the 1880s, while the *Grupo Revolucionário Anarquista II de Novembro* (Revolutionary Anarchist Group of the 2nd of November) was organised in the 1890s (p48, p59, p64). By 1902, the anarchist *Federação Socialista Livre* (Free Socialist Federation) was attempting to coordinate action between many different anarchist groups in Portugal (Freire, *Anarquistas e Operários*, p302).

Anarchist libraries began to open their doors to the working classes in the early twentieth century. The *Grupo de Propaganda Libertária* (Libertarian Propaganda Group) in the city of Porto, a group formed in 1904, not only published its own newspaper but provided reading materials at its *Centro e Biblioteca de Estudos Sociais* (Center and Library of Social Studies) (p297; Sousa, *O Sindicalismo em Portugal*, p80). A number of anarchist publications were available to workers, including such titles as *O Protesto-Guerra Social* (The Protest-Social War), *A Comuna* (The Commune), *O Libertário* (The Libertarian), and *Comuna Livre* (Free Commune) (Freire, *Anarquistas e Operários*, p343, p354).

Portuguese immigrants to Brazil participated in the simultaneously expanding anarchist movement in that country. The Portuguese immigrant José Marques da Costa published anarchist articles in the northern Brazilian periodicals *A Revolta* (The Revolt), *O Trabalhador* (The Worker), *Voz do Povo* (Voice of the People), and *Renovação* (Renewal) (Rodrigues, *Os Companheiros Vol. III*, 33-34). Neno Vasco was born near the city of Porto and immigrated to Brazil at a young age, returning to Portugal to attend university and then resettling in São Paulo, launching the anarchist newspaper *Terra Livre* (Free Land) in 1905 (Samis, *Minha Pátria é o Mundo Inteiro*, p22, pp28-29, p67, p70, p72, p171). In Brazil, he worked with Italian immigrants and was exposed to the ideas of classical Italian anarchist Errico

Malatesta, subsequently dedicating himself to translating and divulging Malatesta's works in Portugal and Brazil (pp153-154, p167, p168). Pinto Quartin was born in Brazil to Portuguese parents and immigrated to Portugal with his family, working on the Portuguese version of the anarchist newspaper *Terra Livre* and the Brazilian radical newspaper *A Vida* (The Life) (Toledo, *Anarquismo e sindicalismo revolucionário*, p22, p25, p26).

The Portuguese anarchists were generally dedicated to the ideal of anarchist communism as elaborated by classical anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin (Freire, *Anarquistas e Operários*, 309). According to this philosophy, all property, including factories and farms as well as homes, should be owned in common by residents in small communes as part of a federation forming a loosely organised totality (Kropotkin, 'Modern Science and Anarchism', p70). Thus, anarchism is similar to Marxism in calling for the abolition of private property but different in its demand for the immediate abolition of the state, rejecting calls for the provisional establishment of a worker's state in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat (Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, pp325-326). In the anarchist communist view, the entirety of the state apparatus should be immediately eliminated after the expropriation of all wealth by workers who would govern themselves via free associations – the dictatorship of the proletariat would simply delay the formation of these self-governing, free bodies. Anarchist communists believed that the entire body of legal statutes should be eliminated, including criminal statutes and property deeds, that prisons should be abolished, and that wages should be eliminated and replaced with equal access to communal goods primarily produced in a local economy wherein workers alternate their labour in agricultural, manufacturing, and intellectual pursuits (Kropotkin, 'Law and Authority' pp38-41; Kropotkin, 'Prison and their Moral Influence on Prisoners'; Kropotkin, 'The Wage System', p100, p102). In the anarchist communist system, everyone would perform a small portion of different types of labour such that everyone would be a farmer, factory workers, teacher, etc.

The anarchist communist belief in the expropriation of wealth was so widely divulged in Portugal during the early twentieth century, that the idea of socialising production was represented in the organisation of labour unions. The CGT formed a *Liga Operária de Expropriação Económica* (Worker's League for Economic Expropriation) to attack the capitalist system via 'expropriação total e completa' (total and complete expropriation) of the means of production, organising workers to study how each industry functioned in preparation for a social revolution – ultimately, the *Liga* was organised as a federated group of councils in different industries with specific workplaces reporting directly to the CGT leadership (Sousa, *O Sindicalismo em Portugal*, pp122-126).

As a radical, class-based movement, anarchism was sometimes able to build bridges between disparate communities, even if divisions still manifested themselves. This solidarity-based transcendence of difference was not limited to the anarchist movement in Brazil. In the early twentieth century, a Portuguese organiser named Big John Avila belonging to the radical union Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which contained a number of anarchist members, mobilised 'Portuguese negroes' (most likely Cape Verdean immigrants) for a strike in Rhode Island (Rosemont, *Joe Hill* Chap. VII). In New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts, radical labour unions united Portuguese and Cape Verdean members (Reeve, 'Portuguese Labor Activism in South-eastern Massachusetts', pp344-345). Anarchism in Brazil was especially diverse. The Portuguese anarchist José Marques da Costa worked closely with Domingos Passos, a mixed-race man with indigenous and African ancestors known as the Brazilian Bakunin, an activist who spread anarchism throughout Brazil as a leader in the labour movement and who was jailed by Brazilian authorities for his subversive activities (Rodrigues, *Os Companheiros, Vol. II*, pp23-27). Afro-Brazilian agitator Natalino Rodrigues was an anarchist who organised labourers in bakeries, constantly pursued by authorities, a campaign to set him free attracting support from anarchists throughout Brazil (Parra, *Combates Pela Liberdade*, pp66-71).

Solidarity between Portuguese-speaking anarchists of different colours was not limited to Brazil. The same caste system present in Brazil differentiating between *negros*, *mulattos* and *brancos* was also found in Portuguese colonies in Africa, such as Angola and Mozambique. In the city of Maputo in Mozambique, once known as Lourenço Marques, Portuguese labourers and Mozambican workers organised, some of them divulging anarchist ideas or reading imported issues of *A Batalha* (Capela, *O movimento operário*, p27). A number of anarchists in Lourenço Marques in the early twentieth century who admired the Spanish anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer y Guardia formed the *Grupo Libertário Francisco Ferrer* (Libertarian Francisco Ferrer Group) in the 1910s (pp286-287). Certainly, the labour movement in Lourenço Marques was racially divided (Penvenne, 'Labor Struggles at the Port', pp249-285). Within this division, however, publications such as *O Emancipador* (The Emancipator) created a space for solidarity not only on its pages but also in working class centres such as the *Centro Socialista Revolucionário* (Revolutionary Socialist Center) (Hohlfeld, 'Comunicação e Cidadania', p21). The point is that radical circles could provide an environment where differences were overcome to a significant degree, as was the case in Brazil.

In Portugal, the tendency towards solidarity moved Portuguese anarchists to help Spanish anarchists organise. In 1923, anarchist activists formed the

*União Anarquista Portuguesa* (Portuguese Anarchist Union) or UAP and began publishing the newspaper *O Anarquista* (The Anarchist), which published a proposed programme for an Iberian anarchist conference in 1926 –in 1927, an Iberian anarchist conference was indeed held and led to the creation of the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (Iberian Anarchist Federation), an influential organisation supporting armed opposition to the rise of Franco (Sousa, *O Sindicalismo em Portugal*, p147; Christie, *We are the Anarchists!*, p33, p34).

In Portugal, the rise of the Salazar dictatorship was met with opposition by anarchists who suffered repression. The Portuguese government created the Tarrafal concentration camp in Cape Verde in 1936, arresting and sending anarchist militants to the camp, many passing away as a result of a lack of proper medical care (Rodrigues, *A resistência anarcosindicalista*, p69, p70). Anarchists formed underground resistance groups such as *Aliança Libertadora de Lisboa* (Liberating Alliance of Lisbon) (p280). As censorship in Portugal prohibited the publishing of anarchist newspapers, anarchists smuggled subversive Brazilian newspapers into the country for workers to read or hear read aloud (Rodrigues, *A oposição libertária*, p73). The anarchist resistance attempted to assassinate Salazar in 1937 but failed (Rodrigues, *A resistência anarcosindicalista*, p76). The rise and dominance of anarchism within the Portuguese working class waned as repression increased thereafter.

## THE PORTUGUESE IN THE AMERICAS: THE 'BRASILEIRO' IN CONTEXT

Researchers of diasporic fiction present diasporic novels as reflecting the nature of culture as a 'dynamic process,' the product of constant 'cultural border-crossings', reflecting 'global mobility' (Nyman, *Home, Identity and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction*, p13). The experiences of Portuguese men and women in a number of nations has led to complex narratives, which frequently reflect an ambition for social ascension on the part of their protagonists.

Portuguese-American literature, for example, has generated a significant body of works (Almeida, 'Two Decades of Luso-American Literature'). In the segregated United States, during much of the twentieth century, Portuguese immigrants were often viewed by members of the public as 'coloured' but generally enjoyed the legal benefits of 'whiteness' as a result of European citizenship (Moniz, 'The Shadow Minority', p409). In North Carolina, the Portuguese were barred from attending all-white schools until the Civil Rights of 1964 but were not required to attend black schools, reflecting an ambiguity as to whether the Portuguese were 'white' or not (419). Portuguese persons could be classified as 'black Portuguese,' a category which included many Cape Verdeans, or 'white Portuguese' (pp416-418).

Portuguese-American literature was impacted by the racialised culture of the United States via a yearning to climb not only the economic ladder but also the racial ladder. In his short story 'Through a Portagee Gate', the Portuguese-American author Charles Reis Felix writes about working for a boss who is saddened by the fact his daughter was marrying a Portuguese man:

His words hurt. The blow was unexpected. Harry didn't even know he had delivered it. But why was I so surprised? I knew how Harry felt about Mexicans. That should have told me how he felt about the Portuguese. For, in the mind of the rural native Californian, the Mexicans and the Portuguese were lumped together, sort of like cousins. The social scale of agricultural California placed the blacks, of course, at the bottom. Then, a significant distance up, came our little brown brothers, the Filipinos. Then came the Mexicans, and, slightly above them, the Portuguese (p43).

In his coming-of-age novel, *Tony: A New England Boyhood*, the Portuguese American protagonist, a young boy, describes his encounter with Cape Verdeans, citizens of Portugal at the time, on a Massachusetts beach in the following terms:

All the people here were coloured. They came from the islands of Cape Verde off the coast of Africa. Ma had told him about them. They were Portuguese Negroes, a mixture of Portuguese and Negro blood ... They acted the way you were supposed to act and he attributed this to their Portuguese blood (pp171-172).

In this 2008 novel, reflective of Felix's own experiences, the reader is presented with a thoroughly American, twentieth-century experience comprised of designated districts for 'coloured' people and 'whites'. Throughout the novel, the character of Tony feels a sense of shame with regards to this Portuguese heritage at the same time as he is careful to defend social constructs which allow him to protect sentiments of superiority.

Other Portuguese diasporic writers reflect similar anxieties and a desire to climb the rungs on social ladders, economic and ethnic. The Portuguese-Trinidadian writer Alfred H. Mendes depicted the lives of the immigrant and rum shop owner António da Costa and his Trinidadian son Joseph in his 1934 novel *Pitch Lake*. Da Costa and his son mostly interact with 'Indians and negroes and coloured people' in their shop and Joseph maintains a secret relationship with a dark-skinned young woman named Maria while da Costa has a secret child with an Indian woman (p9,



pp15-16, p18). The Portuguese occupy an ambiguous place in Trinidadian society as they do in the United States: 'the Portuguese, of all the white communities in the island, were the most despised: they made themselves too cheap by running the shops of the island and coming into contact with common coloured people' (pp14-15). Thus, the Portuguese stood at the bottom rung of the social ladder as a result of mingling with non-whites but also as a result of their lower economic status. Trinidadians of Portuguese descent break from Portuguese-born immigrants to open their own social club in order to distance themselves from the lower-class tendencies of these Portuguese immigrants and emigrants (pp59-61).

Other Portuguese-Trinidadian writers reveal the same basic feature in their diaspora narratives: an encounter with an economic and ethnic caste system and the struggle of Portuguese immigrants to ascend within that system at any cost. Albert Maria Gomes, the first Chief Minister of independent Trinidad, relates the fictional story of Madeira-born Papa Montales and his children in the novel *All Papa's Children*. The Portuguese in Trinidad are represented as motivated by 'greed for money' and are stingy (pp8-9). Mr Cuevo, another Portuguese, is described in the novel in the following terms by his servant: 'A detestable man! Tight with his money, shifty, all for himself' (p42). The same stereotypes regarding Portuguese people are repeated throughout the novel: they are obsessed with money, concerned with their social status, and willing to commit any act or adopt any attitude to improve their lot.

The same image appears in *O Cortiço (The Tenement)* by Aluísio Azevedo, a novel published in Brazil in 1890. The Portuguese immigrant João Romão resides in Rio de Janeiro with his mistress, a slave woman named Bertoleza whom Romão seduces after her previous partner, another Portuguese immigrant, passes away (pp19-20). Romão places all his money in the bank, steals materials from construction sites to make a profit, constantly aspires to owning more land, and angrily competes for land and prestige with another Portuguese immigrant named Miranda (pp22-23, p28). Bertoleza ultimately commits suicide after discovering that Romão was planning on dispatching her back into slavery in order to marry a higher-class woman and rise up the ranks of Rio society (p231, p242, p254). For Romão Bertoleza was a reminder of his low-class, hard-grinding past. She had to be replaced with a pale, perfumed young woman with delicate hands (pp232-233).

Portuguese immigrants, competing against lower-income Brazilians for employment, faced growing anti-Portuguese sentiments, as the Portuguese were accused of maintaining monopolies in specific sectors and were labelled as greedy and immoral – these tensions even led to attacks against Portuguese persons in Brazil

by people of colour (Silva, 'O emigrante Português em três romances', pp30-32). In other novels such as *O Mulato* (The Mulatto), Aluísio Azevedo again introduced Portuguese characters dominated by greed and the desire for social climbing, adopting negative attitudes with regards to those viewed as lower-class as a result of ethnic or economic circumstance (p85, pp111-117).

In Portugal, meanwhile, Portuguese emigrants to Brazil who returned home with tremendous wealth were depicted as powerful men by such authors as the great writer Camilo Castelo Branco in many of his novels, including *Eusébio Macário* and *Os brilhantes do brasileiro* (The Jewels of the Brazilian) (Machado 'O "brasileiro" de torna-viagens', pp60-61). In most of Camilo Castelo Branco's novels, the Portuguese emigrant to Brazil appears as a person driven exclusively by the profit motive, willing to adopt any cruelty to achieve social elevation (Moysés, 'Entre Portugal', p43). At the same time, workers who became wealthy in Brazil returned to Portugal as beneficent patriarchs, contributing to the improvement of their communities of origin (ibid). They are rough men with rough manners who purchase titles of nobility to hide their origins (p47).

Camilo Castelo Branco was perhaps most responsible for building the image of Portuguese emigrants to Brazil as greedy men willing to do anything for power (Pereira, 'Entre Portugal e Brasil', p213). The figure was constant in much of his work: *O que fazem mulheres* (*What Women Do*) (1858); *Anos de prosa* (*Years of Prose*) (1863); *O esqueleto* (*The Skeleton*) (1865); *Os brilhantes do brasileiro* (1869); *Eusébio Macário* (1879); *A brasileira de Prazins* (*The Brazilian Woman from Prazins*) (1882); and other works (ibid). The theme of the 'brasileiro' as a nouveau riche figure also appeared in the writings of Portuguese author Júlio Dinis through figures like Eusébio Seabra in the novel *A morgadinha dos canaviais* (*The Little Heiress of the Sugarcane Fields*) (p214). The myth of success in Brazil was so widespread that many peasant families in Portugal were thought to have produced at least one such 'brasileiro' (Bretell, *Men Who Migrate*, p80). These 'brasileiros,' many of them living outside Portugal for most of their lives, frequently returned as older men who not only built structures for their communities with their capital but also lent money to locals (p81).

The failed 'brasileiros' hid themselves from sight, frequently returning to Portugal but choosing not to reconnect with their families – to be a 'brasileiro' was to be a success or to be invisible (Machado, 'O "brasileiro de torna-viagens', p54). To summarise, 'brasileiros' were obsessed with money and status. On obtaining wealth they looked down on those around them, were unscrupulous and adopted a nouveau riche style. Camilo Castelo Branco utilised the word 'Brasil' to form new words, 'brasilinizada', 'brasilismo', 'brasilianizado', always with the implication

of immorality, dishonesty, or of a lack of sophistication tied to wealth (p60). Yet, despite his hideous qualities, the 'brasileiro' remained an ideal, representing the promise of wealth offered by the global market, particularly in Brazil.

### **EMIGRANTES: AN ANARCHIST NOVEL DEMYSTIFIES THE FIGURE OF THE 'BRASILEIRO'**

*Emigrants* is the story of Manuel da Bouça, a rural worker in Portugal who lives with his family next to a large uncultivated estate, who decides to emigrate to Brazil to work and gather sufficient funds to return home, purchase some of the land and improve his house (pp22-24). The examples of workers who grow rich in Brazil motivate him to pursue the trip at any cost (p31). To raise funds for his trip, Manuel borrows money and allows his own land to serve as collateral (p28). He travels to Brazil alone, arriving in Rio, and then moves on to the city of Santos, where he encounters an emigrant from his village and learns from him that very few emigrants are able to improve their lot (pp122-125).

Manuel da Bouça obtains employment as a farm worker, working at a farm near the city of Piracicaba, in rural São Paulo (p152). He works with Italians, Spaniards, indigenous Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians, developing a romantic relationship with an Afro-Brazilian woman named Benvinda whom he aids financially (p162, p165, pp177-178, p184). Thereafter, Manuel's lot worsens considerably – his daughter in Portugal marries without his consent, the land he had offered as collateral is repossessed, and his wife passes away (p172, p203, p219).

Manuel begins to frequent radical circles. Illiterate, he listens as his friend Fernandes reads issues of the periodical *A Plebe* (*The Plebs*) (p214). *A Plebe* was an anarchist periodical published in the state of São Paulo tied to the labour movement but also espousing other ideals, such as education (Gonçalves and Nascimento, 'A educação nas folhas do jornal "A Plebe"', pp359-368). At first, Manuel is sceptical of the anarchist goal of communal property ownership but he eventually accepts it as necessary (Castro, *Emigrantes*, p214). He begins to frequent 'associações proletárias' (proletarian associations), unions and social centres where workers' rights are discussed (p215). When the São Paulo Revolt of 1924 (a coup led by members of the military against Brazilian president Artur Bernardes) erupted, certain unions convinced members that the lot of workers could be improved by a change in governance, persuading Manuel da Bouça to take up arms – but Manuel soon abandons the revolt and returns to Portugal destitute (p224, p227, p235, p257). The revolt, after all, was a military revolt for a change in leadership, not a revolt for the working class.

Academics who have analysed the novel have generally focused on the socio-logical perspective the novel deploys, an almost scientific detachment which concentrates on descriptions of flora and fauna and generalised social conditions as opposed to character development. Célia Marques Pinho describes *Emigrantes* as possessing a ‘dimensão socio-antropológica’ (a social-anthropological dimension) (Pinho, ‘A dimensão socio-antropológica’, p51). Pinho posits that the characteristics ascribed to Manuel da Bouça – illiterate, a rural man with a provincial outlook, a moral traditionalist, seeking wealth while labouring on large farms – were deliberately chosen so that Manuel could become a representative of a class of persons, the typical emigrant to Brazil (p56). She claims, furthermore, that intercultural contact is important in the novel because the coexistence of multiple diasporas question the reality behind monolithic modern states (pp72-73). In a sense, *Emigrantes* is a sort of post-modern novel. Ana Cristina Carvalho analyses *Emigrantes* from a human ecology perspective, wherein individuals are the product of the ecosystem they inhabit, described as intimately connected to flora and fauna (Carvalho, ‘Emigrantes’, pp9-23). Margarida Maria de Jesus Simões Pandeirada examines the relationship between Ferreira de Castro and neo-realism (Pandeirada, ‘Testemunhos do Oceano’, pp65-74).

A reading of the novel as an explicitly anarchist response to the ideology behind the ‘brasileiro’ – the ideology of the struggle for wealth to transform oneself into a patriarch via an embrace of the global market – actually helps to explain the observed anthropological and naturalist tendencies within the novel. Anarchists such as Kropotkin asserted that mutual aid was a necessary instinct in human beings which developed through evolution to allow for survival (Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*). According to this view, humans possess a natural desire to help each other but the capitalist system distorts this instinct. *Emigrantes* is notable for the solidarity shared between workers from different ethnic backgrounds, without these workers attempting to gain wealth at the expense of others or lying to each other. The workers in *Emigrantes* pursue wealth but they are not João Romão from *O Cortiço*, a man willing to steal to gain his power and prestige. The adoption of racist attitudes within societies divided by caste systems is also absent from *Emigrantes*. Rather, the workers behave honourably, as if this is their inherent nature, but are exploited nonetheless.

The influence of anarchist ideology on the novel is made clear by the author himself. The fourth edition of Ferreira de Castro’s *Emigrantes* begins with a preface by the author, a statement of ideology, reproduced here at length to clarify the thesis behind the novel:

Men transit from North to South, from East to West, from country to country, after bread and a better future.

They are born as a result of biological fate and when, after their conscience opens up, they look towards life, verify that there are only a few of them who seem to be allowed the right to live. Some resign themselves immediately to this situation of superfluous elements, of individuals who exceed their number, of the beings they are only in suffering, in the physiological vegetating of an existence conditioned upon thousands of restrictions. They bow themselves before concepts long before established, accept as good what was already rooted when they arrived and allow themselves to go on like this, humble, invisible, submissive, from cradle to grave – watching, patiently, the lives other happier men live. Some, however, do not resign themselves easily. The land in which they were born and which was taught them to love with great patriotic tropes, with flamboyant words, exist only, as in the rest of the World, for the enjoyment of a minority. And they, their souls bitten by understandable ambitions, also want to live, also want to equally enjoy the regalia which privileged men enjoy. And they displace themselves, and emigrate, and transit from continent to continent, from hemisphere to hemisphere, after their bread.

But, in all the World, or in almost all the World, they will find a similar drama, because similar are the laws which govern the human conglomerate (Pórtico).<sup>1</sup>

This introduction suggests four points. First, the conditions into which emigrants are born determine their behaviour. As emigrants are born into societies dominated by the wealthy, they naturally desire to emulate this behaviour as opposed to humbly accepting their lower status. As such, emigrants cannot be viewed as inhuman but should be viewed as a product of a particular order, its natural result. Thus, the novel embodies the ideal of historical materialism. Secondly, the vast majority of emigrants fail to achieve their objectives and live the same sort of life in the host country that they lived in their nation of origin. The rule, for Ferreira de Castro, is that the poor generally stay poor, an anti-capitalist thesis. Thirdly, he suggests that nations are false creations, generated by patriotic fictions which benefit a minority, describing the conditions of emigrants in the following terms:

They continue to transit with a homeland on their passport, but, in reality, without any homeland, because that one which is attributed to them belongs only to a select few. To them, she only exists when the trumpets of war sound

in the barracks or when public departments collect tribute from them. It is like this in Europe and it is like this on the other continents.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Ferreira de Castro's references to biological fate, to natural laws governing human behaviour imply a dedication to the belief human beings are the product of evolutionary tendencies. In his introduction to his novel about the 'brasileiro', *Eusebio Macário*, Camilo Castelo Branco explicitly rejects the notion that naturalism should govern narratives (Granja, 'Brasileiros e portugueses', p140). By contrast, social realism in Portugal, as a movement loosely associated with socialist circles, was concerned with raising consciousness by depicting reality as it presented itself, motivating individuals to act to improve these circumstances through the strengthening of the bonds of solidarity (Pandeirada, 'Testemunhos do oceano', pp60-62).

The need for solidarity transpassing borders and ethnicities is a central theme in *Emigrantes*. Manuel da Bouça finds himself in the same predicament as Italian and Spanish immigrants and Brazilians of all colours, as explained by a friend of Manuel's:

Here there are no Portuguese nor Brazilians – what there are are men! It due to these silly notions that we live like this. To be Portuguese, to be Italian or to be from here in Brazil, this does not matter. What matters is being a proletarian, it is to be a man. We are all brothers. The others are the ones who are not. They take from us our skin in all parts of the World, without asking where each one was born (pp230-231).<sup>3</sup>

This anti-nationalist sentiment was very much integral to anarchist thought. Some anarchists viewed patriotism as a threat to the freedoms of the working class (Goldman, 'Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty'). Some even declared themselves openly anti-patriotic (Ryner, 'Antipatriotisme'). The Brazilian feminist and anarchist Maria Lacerda de Moura, active in the early twentieth century, opposed the Second World War as a futile exercise in nationalism, calling upon women to reject differences in politics, religion and culture, to generate a culture of peace antithetical to the pro-patriotic, materialistic impulses of what was mistakenly called civilisation (Leite, 'O Pacifismo de Maria Lacerda de Moura', p1, p2). She rejected the importance of the concept of a homeland and borders (p3). If the nation only interacted with working people to demand sacrifices, it could not serve any useful purpose as far as these radicals were concerned. If the goal of anarchism was to remove impediments to cooperation between individuals, the nation-state stood as a major roadblock to international mutual aid. As the American anarchist author

and sociologist Howard Ehrlich postulated with regards to the black flag, one of the primary symbols of the anarchist movement: 'The black flag is a negation of all flags. It is a negation of nationhood which puts the human race against itself and denies the unity of all humankind' (Ehrlich, 'Why the Black Flag?', p31).

The historical materialism present in the novel was also familiar to anarchist thinkers. Historical materialism is generally tied to Marx's formulation: 'The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness' (Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique*, p11). For Marx, the 'mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life' (ibid). Anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin disagreed with Marx's idea of State communism, preferring communism without a State, but agreed with the concept of materialism – in fact, Bakunin believed adopting a materialist point of view was essential to realising idealistic goals because materialism provided a logical point of departure for transformative action (Bakunin, *God and State*, p 49). If one started from the material, one could build the ideal (ibid).

Manuel da Bouça's failures are designed to illustrate the failures of capitalism. Hence, Ferreira de Castro repeats the same mantra throughout the novel: in every country, the poor suffer the same inhumane conditions. The implication is that capitalism is global in nature and that solidarity should similarly cross borders but also that only the elimination of the capitalist system can allow for progress in the material conditions of the poor. Throughout the novel, the idea that capitalist promises are illusions appears repeatedly as Manuel da Bouça is disappointed to find that the 'brasileiro' ideal was a myth.

## CONCLUSION

This article has argued that *Emigrantes* should be read as an anarchist response to the capitalist ideology behind the figure of the 'brasileiro' in Portugal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ferreira de Castro posits that capitalism creates similar conditions everywhere it exists, that solidarity must be encouraged amidst the diversity of many nationalities and ethnicities, that cooperation is a natural instinct, and that narrow patriotism restrains the formation of relations of solidarity. The novel makes this argument through explicit statements of ideology but also in what is absent from the narrative: the struggle for success via immoral behaviour wherein characters cheat and steal from each other to obtain economic advantage; or the adoption of ethnic caste norms, in the form of racism. Despite the sad ending of the

novel, Ferreira de Castro presents an optimistic vision of human nature wherein cooperation is persistent, an innate norm which is distorted by the underpinnings of the economic system the characters in the novel are forced to encounter.

The novel's rejection of patriotism may, in part, reflect the fact that the novel was published in 1928, amidst the rising inequality preceding the Great Depression and the initial murmurs of the authoritarian nationalism which would follow in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, and other countries. The anti-nationalist internationalism present in the novel appears, in this context, as an alternative path. Perhaps this is why the novel seems so relevant to our current political situation as the global market meets ever-increasing opposition from authoritarian regimes and the mantra of a solidarity-based alter-globalisation gains more and more adherents. In our current context, Ferreira de Castro's novel continues to suggest a different way forward for us to follow.

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## NOTES

1. Os homens transitam do Norte para o Sul, de Leste para Oeste, de país para país, em busca de pão e de um futuro melhor.

Nascem por uma fatalidade biológica e quando, aberta a consciência, olham para a vida, verificam que só alguns deles parece ser permitido o direito de viver. Uns resignam-se logo à situação de elementos supérfluos, de indivíduos que excederam o número, de seres que o são apenas no sofrimento, no vegetar fisiológico de uma existência condicionada por milhentas restrições. Curvam-se aos conceitos estabelecidos de há muito, aceitam por bom o que já estava enraizado quando eles chegaram e deixam-se ir assim, humildes, apagados, submissos, do berço ao túmulo - a ver, pacientemente, a vida que vivem outros homens mais felizes. Alguns, porém, não se resignam facilmente. A terra em que nasceram e que lhes ensinaram a amar com grandes tropos patrióticos, com palavras farfalhantes, existe apenas, como o resto do Mundo, para fruição de uma minoria. E eles, mordidas as almas por compreensíveis ambições,



querem também viver, querem também usufruir regalias iguais às que desfrutam os homens privilegiados. E deslocam-se, e emigram, e transitam de continente a continente, de hemisfério a hemisfério, em busca do seu pão.

Mas, em todo o Mundo, ou em quase todo o Mundo, vão encontrar drama semelhante, porque semelhantes são as leis que regem o aglomerado humano.

2. Eles continuam a transitar com uma pátria no passaporte, mas, em realidade, sem pátria alguma, pois aquela que lhes é atribuída pertence apenas a alguns eleitos. Para eles, ela só existe quando nos quartéis soam as cornetas de guerra ou nas repartições públicas se recolhem tributos. É assim na Europa e é assim nos outros continentes.
3. Aqui não há portugueses nem brasileiros – o que há são homens! É por essas besteiras que nós vivemos assim. Ser português, ser italiano ou ser cá do Brasil, isso não tem importância. O que vale é ser proletário, é ser um homem. Nós somos todos irmãos. Os outros é que não são. Eles tiram-nos a pele em toda a parte do Mundo, sem perguntar onde cada um nasceu.

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