



Our Lady of the Workboats: Solidarity and Spirituality on the Bay of All Saints

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Abstract

At the end of Jorge Amado's *Mar Morto* (1936), a sailor's grieving widow defies a fate that seems inevitable. Instead of resigning herself to a life of precarity, she takes command of her husband's boat. In doing so, she aligns herself with Iemanjá, a sea deity from the Afro-Brazilian religion of Candomblé. This essay takes this episode, and Amado's novel, as its intellectual point of departure. Joining literary studies with maritime social history and nautical science, it charts the physical characteristics and cultural histories of the Baía de Todos os Santos in the Brazilian state of Bahia, which influenced *Mar Morto* on the level of form and theme. In the spiritually charged home waters of Amado and his characters, ocean literacy is both locally specific and diasporic: intertwined with African-descended cosmologies and ongoing struggles for sovereignty and freedom. By attending to these forms of what Justin Dunnivant (riffing on Katherine McKittrick) calls "livingness on the sea," this essay models a maritime literary studies that recovers gendered and racialized ocean literacies and demonstrates the importance of local ways of knowing the ocean to the global literature of the sea. It is drawn from a book project tentatively titled "Atlantic Shapeshifters: Sea Literature's Fluid Forms."

Keywords

maritime literature, Brazil, ocean literacies, Jorge Amado, Candomblé

Figure 1. (left) Fabio Rodrigues, Pozzebom/Agência Brasil, "*Presente de Iemanjá na Praia do Rio Vermelho, Salvador, Bahia*" (Offering to Iemanjá at Rio Vermelho Beach, Salvador, Bahia), 2008. Photograph. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0 BR DEED, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Presente_para_Iemanja_Praia_do_Rio_Vermelho3.jpg

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At the end of Jorge Amado's *Mar Morto* (1936), a grieving widow becomes a sailor and defies a seemingly inevitable fate. Days after her husband Guma runs afoul of a reef off Porto Antônio and drowns rescuing a smuggler's son, Livia declines an offer to sell his prized *saveiro*, the *Paquete Voador*, "*um dos melhores e mais velozes saveiros do cais*" (the *Flying Packet*, one of the best and fastest sloops on the waterfront).¹ Her husband had used this agile, gaff-rigged work sloop for coastal trade on the Baía de Todos os Santos (the Bay of All Saints), the shallow, reef-strewn estuary that gives the Brazilian state of Bahia its name. In a devastating turn of events, what became Guma's final trip would have been the last in a series of smuggling runs he had taken on to pay off the *Paquete Voador* and save enough money to join his wife's uncle's warehouse in the upper city of Salvador da Bahia as a partner. Put another way, Guma died at precisely the moment of upward mobility. As a member of the middle class, he would have been able to leave infamously risky maritime labor behind for a more stable life—one in which he could assume the bourgeois pastime of recreational sailing. Instead, his death leaves his widow and young son in the precarious circumstances that, throughout the novel, Amado characterizes as the inevitable, even fated, misfortune of the women of the waterfront.

For the bereaved Livia, selling the *Paquete Voador* would be like giving away "*tudo que restava de Guma no mar*" (all that was left of Guma on the sea).² Not only that, she reasons, it would be tantamount to prostitution—one of the few recourses *Mar Morto* allows for Bahia's waterfront widows. That her husband loved the *saveiro* was clear; "*ele o comprara para o filho, morrera para poder conservá-lo*" (he'd bought it for their son, he'd died to keep it).³ Instead of allowing herself and her son's inheritance to belong to another man, Livia chooses to work the Bay. She approaches one of her husband's fellow *mestres de saveiro*—sloopmas-

ters—to arrange a consignment of cargo. "*Quem vai levar o saveiro?*" (Who's going to handle the sloop?), he asks her. "*Eu*" (I am), she responds.⁴ *Mar Morto*'s final chapter, "Estrela," or "Star," follows Livia outbound on her maiden voyage. It begins routinely enough—at dawn on a working waterfront, with an old salt watching sailing vessels get underway. Quickly, though, it becomes clear that this morning is different. As the old salt, Guma's uncle Francisco, watches the *Paquete Voador* sail out of the harbor in convoy with the other vessels, he has trouble believing his long-practiced eyes. Standing on the foredeck of the *saveiro*, Livia, a woman who was not born to waterfront life and whose physical and emotional fragility, Amado writes, makes her ill-suited for hard work, seems to shapeshift into Iemanjá, a powerful sea orixá (deity) of the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé religion, who orients the very novel.

When *Mar Morto* invites its readers to lend their ears to "*as histórias da beira do cais da Bahia*" (the dockside tales of Bahia) and blames any inadequacies or inaccuracies on the landsman—Amado—who has written them down, it grants narrative authority to the dockworkers, canoe-men, fishermen, sloopmasters, and their families who make their homes and livelihoods on Salvador's waterfront.⁵ Amado describes these people as "*o povo de Iemanjá*"—the people of the maternal, seductive orixá who embodies the ocean and who, according to Candomblé cosmology, gave birth to all the other orixás.⁶ These "anthropomorphized nature deities" from West Africa were "syncretized with Roman Catholic saints"; Iemanjá, for instance, is associated with the Virgin of Immaculate Conception.⁷ Having survived the forced migration of some five million captive Africans to Brazil from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, Iemanjá is said to make her home in the Bay of Bahia.⁸ There, she contributes to African-descended "oceanic literacies" that are at once material and metaphysical, and, by extension, to the

spiritual and political charge of the Bay itself.⁹ If *Mar Morto* is a chart—and I’m convinced it is—it is one that embeds sociocultural hazards like structural poverty and navigational hazards like reefs, storms, and shoals in an Afro-Brazilian cultural and spiritual hydrography. A regionalist novel that understands maritime risk as both structural and intersectional, *Mar Morto* anchors literary and political consciousness in its characters’ knowledge of their local waters, and identifies its seafaring Afro-Brazilian women with Iemanjá. In doing so, it charts the gendered and racialized oceanic literacies of the Bay of Bahia.

As they embark on the project of translating the Black Atlantic, Ana Farani, Denise Carrascosa, Geri Augusto, Luciana Reis, Paula Campos, and Raquel L. Souza, perhaps predictably, look to the sea. These decolonial, Black feminist translators describe their collective effort as “*Cartas Náuticas Afro-diaspóricas para Travessias Literárias*” (Afro-diasporic nautical charts for literary crossings). Such charts depend, they argue, on recalibrating technologies like compasses, sextants, and lighthouses, and on reclaiming spaces like the hold and the port. Instead of the watermarked paper that facilitated imperial worldmaking and the subjugation of Black bodies, they offer fugitive charts tattooed on dark skin, showing escape routes from the waterfront of an old slave port: Salvador da Bahia.¹⁰ In keeping with *Mainsheet*’s inaugural theme of freedom, sovereignty, and the sea, this essay takes their project to heart. Joining literary studies with nautical science and maritime social history, it participates in the blue humanities and coastal studies; these scholarly currents explore the relationships between the biophysical ocean, its coasts, and human cultures, past, present, and future.¹¹ In companionable conversation with archaeologists and historians such as Justin Dunnavant and Kevin Dawson, who have drawn attention to African-descended cultures of swimming, diving, and boatbuilding as practices of mean-

ing-making and *marronage*, this essay foregrounds Afro-Brazilian ocean literacies.¹² Meanwhile, its interest in the coastal cultures and traditional boats of Bahia draws on work by nautical preservationist Marcelo Bastos, by Geri Augusto, and by *quilombola* (maroon-descended) scholar-activist Elionice Conceição Sacramento, who asks “how identity and ancestry participate in the construction of community, the constitution of territory, and the fight for rights” and foregrounds women’s roles in these struggles.¹³

As this essay explores the confluence of local maritime knowledge and literary representation, it is mindful that, as Dan Brayton writes, “coastwise navigation is at least partly a hermeneutic activity.”¹⁴ At the same time, though, it takes issue with Margaret Cohen’s 2019 contention that “[e]very so often, sea fiction introduce[s] into the masculine fraternity of seamen a woman whose presence there is implausible, without historical precedent.”¹⁵ Pace Cohen, Livia’s presence in *Mar Morto* as an African-descended woman whose oceanic literacy is the product of a working-class society that assimilates maritime risk through the figure of Iemanjá is both plausible and part of a long historical precedent in which human relations with the ocean intersect with gender, race, and class. These intersections, which often manifest locally, are legible across the global literatures of the sea.

Accordingly, this essay begins by orienting readers to the historical, cultural, and physical characteristics of *Mar Morto*’s home waters, locating the novel and its author in literary history. Paying special attention to traditional boats as a “social map,” its first section, called “The Coastwise Canon,” revalues coastal waters as “geographic, historic spaces in the Black Atlantic.”¹⁶ Section Two, “The Capsized Candle,” works in dialogue with Christina Sharpe’s theory of the wake, reading the maritime mourning rituals enacted by *Mar Morto*’s characters after Guma’s death as a form of spiritual oceanography indebted to the *kalunga*, or

African-descended Sea of the Dead. And in the final section, “Our Lady of the Workboats,” the widowed Livia’s alignment with Iemanjá redresses the unfreedom that pervades *Mar Morto* and alludes to Brazil’s ongoing histories of maritime resistance. Ultimately, by locating *Mar Morto* in a coastwise canon that extends well beyond blue water nautical adventure fiction—the “form without a function” that, for Cohen, is nostalgically adrift in the wake of the great Age of Sail, this essay demonstrates the contributions of local maritime knowledge to the development of a global literature of the sea.¹⁷

The Coastwise Canon

Profound unfreedom pervades the maritime world of *o povo de Iemanjá*. Along the Depression-era waterfront of the city of Salvador, structural inequality governs the “social and cultural contracts of a marine life”—the daily navigation of risk that occurs in maritime communities worldwide.¹⁸ Bright youngsters like Guma leave school as early as eleven years old having received only the rudiments of formal education: enough literacy and numeracy to scan a letter or bill of lading and sign their names with a flourish. “Their destinies,” Amado writes, “have already been charted for them.”¹⁹ Without opportunities like university and technical school, these destinies are circumscribed to “*a proa de um saveiro, os remos de uma canoa, quando muito as máquinas de um navio*” (the bow of a sloop, the oars of a canoe, at best, the engine room of a ship).²⁰ *Mar Morto*’s children learn to assimilate the risk associated with their professions through lyric refrains like *é doce morrer no mar* (it’s sweet to die in the sea), a line from a popular song Amado penned in collaboration with Dorival Caymmi, and through devotion to Iemanjá, who, according to the novel, reserves a special reward for drowned sailors.²¹ Writing a mere forty-eight years after Brazil abolished slavery in 1888—within living memory—Amado describes the men, women, and children populat-

ing his novel as “chained to the sea,” with invisible but unbreakable leg irons.²²

“Writers and mariners of various stripes,” observes Dan Brayton, “have been drawn to the representational challenges of seacoasts”—to their cultural, political, and biophysical dynamism as well as to their historicity.²³ Jorge Amado is no exception. His grade school composition “O Mar” (The Sea, 1923) and memoir *Navegação de Cabotagem* (Coasting, 1997), register the lifelong inspiration he drew from his home waters, “o mar da Bahia, do Recôncavo Baiano” (the sea of Bahia, of the region along its coast).²⁴ “*Não é o distante oceano que perdeu a terra de vista*” (this is not some distant ocean where the land disappears from view), writes literary critic Ana Maria Machado.²⁵ Rather, these are coastal waters, largely within the sight of land, embraced by littoral communities populated by “*a gente pobre do cais*” (poor folk of the waterfront) that Amado, a member of the Euro-Brazilian elite, came to know directly as a young man, when he frequented the bohemian hangouts, brothels, and Candomblé houses of Salvador’s working waterfronts.²⁶ The mariners, fishermen, and dockworkers he met in those spaces made precarious livings in traditional wooden boats like *saveiros*, *escunas* (schooners), *canoas* (canoes), and the *jangada*, a raft-like craft whose name originates from the Malayalam word *changadam* and the Southern Indian province of Kerala, where Portuguese merchant ports developed during the sixteenth century.²⁷ When they encountered the Brazilian *jangada*, the Portuguese described it by drawing upon “a colonial imagination and vocabulary, informed by their presence in southern India.”²⁸

Coastwise navigation, like prevailing winds and ocean currents, is deeply entwined with the histories of imperial world-making and enslavement that shaped Brazil. In caravels adapted from coastal fishing craft, Portuguese *marinheiros* (mariners) explored the Canary Islands and the West African coast, where they encountered peoples

who “wove...aquatic experiences into amphibious lives, interlacing spiritual and secular beliefs, economies, social structures, and political institutions—their very way of life—around relationships with water.”²⁹ When it came time to sail home to Portugal with cargoes of dyestuffs, gold, and the captive Africans who would be sold as slaves in Lisbon as early as the 1440s, the *marinheiros* found themselves facing the prospects of beating upwind along the African coast or stemming the Canary current.³⁰ Instead, they sailed offshore; through this counterintuitive *volta do mar*, a navigational development so consequential that Captain Elliot Rappaport compares it to the “splitting of the atom,” they acquired the increasingly detailed understanding of ocean gyres that by the end of the sixteenth century, undergirded a global maritime empire.³¹

On either side of the equator, steady easterly trade winds drive surface currents from Africa to the Americas. These equatorial currents divide off the northeast coast of Brazil, with one branch flowing into the Caribbean, the other hugging the coast and flowing south. At 12°50' south latitude, 38°38' west longitude, just south of the narrowest part of the Atlantic, the Bay of Bahia was a convenient downwind sail from Angola, which, by 1620, was the embarkation point of half of the captives transported to Brazil.³² Tens of thousands of these captives were landed at the mouth of the Bay of Bahia in the city of Salvador; from there, many were sent to work in the plantations that, by 1625, supplied Europe with the majority of its sugar.³³ The capital of Brazil from 1549 to 1763—and after Lisbon the “most important city in the Portuguese imperial world”—Salvador, with its impressive imperial center, its Casa de Angola, and its 1155 *terreiros* (worship houses) de Candomblé, is now the cultural and spiritual capital of African Brazil.³⁴

“The history of Bahia,” writes John Sarsfield in a 1985 article in *WoodenBoat*, “is intimately intertwined with the history of its sailing vessels.”³⁵ As early as the sixteenth century, Portuguese impe-

rial chroniclers described Bahia as a fundamentally maritime region. “There are so many boats in Bahia,” Gabriel Soares de Sousa wrote in 1587, “because all of the plantations were reached by sea, and there isn’t a person who doesn’t have his boat or at least a canoe, and there isn’t a plantation that doesn’t have four vessels and more which serve them very well.”³⁶

During this period, the *caravelão*, a lateen-rigged coastal vessel “perfectly adapted to the reef-strewn coast” of Brazil’s Northeast and constructed using Mediterranean molding techniques similar to the whole-molding techniques that built the sloops and shallops plying colonial North American coasts, connected the “archipelago” of sugar towns along the Recôncavo Baiano’s plantation coast.³⁷ It is probable that the gaff rig was introduced to Brazil during the Dutch occupation of Bahia and Pernambuco in the seventeenth century.³⁸ In their construction techniques, hull design, and sail plans, the *saveiros* that populate the writings of Jorge Amado and the songs of his friend and collaborator Dorival Caymmi render these competing imperial influences with local hardwoods, dendê oil, and cotton canvas.³⁹ Ben Fuller, curator emeritus of Mystic Seaport Museum and of Penobscot Bay Marine Museum, has suggested that “the peapod is to Maine what the dory is to Massachusetts, the Whitehall to New York City, the sharpie skiff to Connecticut, and untold other watercraft to the specific shores and tasks for which they were adapted”; by this logic, the *saveiro* is to Bahia a traditional wooden boat that conjures “romantic memories” and cultural authenticity while also registering the racial capitalist maritime histories that shaped Brazil.⁴⁰

Built from woods including the Brazilwood that Oswald de Andrade described in his 1924 *Manifesto da Poesia pau-Brasil* as the ideal building material for a national poetry for export, *saveiros da Bahia* are literal metaphors.⁴¹ As they convey “passengers and cargo from one place to another”—say,



Figure 2. Tomás Britto, *Saveiros da Bahia*, 2017. Photograph. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saveiros_da_Bahia_de_Todos_os_Santos_01.jpg

from Cachoeira to Itaparica, or from Mar Grande to Maragogipe—they embody the original meaning of this literary term and register the importance of local waters to literary production.⁴²

In the 1960s, commercial ferry service and newly-built highways decimated Bahia's culture of traditional boats.⁴³ Projeto Içar's Marcelo Bastos estimates that today, only about 20 saveiros remain in active service. These vessels give form to a confluence of nautical preservation and epistemological injustice. Although individual saveiros like *Sombra da Lua* have been recognized as cultural patrimony, the tradition they represent is imperiled because the expertise of their builders—*mestres carpinteiros navais* (master shipwrights) who build by eye and mental algorithm—remains undervalued and unprotected.⁴⁴ In Amado's day, however, Bahia's working waterfronts represented a contact zone in which the vessels engaged in coastwise trade and fishing embodied an uneasy confluence of African, Indigenous, and European histories.⁴⁵

Mar Morto renders this waterscape with the specificity of a nautical chart, scrupulously orient-

ing readers to the storms, reefs, tides, and prevailing winds of Brazil's second-largest coastal bay. Easterlies prevail on the Bay of Bahia during the Southern Hemisphere's summer months, while southerlies, including the June gales Amado mentions repeatedly in *Mar Morto*, dominate the winter months.⁴⁶ These seasonally shifting prevailing winds exert most of their influence at the mouth of the bay, where "foul ground" extends several nautical miles south and east from Ilha Itaparica, into the Canal do Salvador. Here, tidally exposed reefs and overfalls—the "turbulent, potentially dangerous" surface waters caused when "fast tidal currents run over very rough ground"—pose hazards to navigation at the precise zone where inshore and offshore overlap.⁴⁷ The Bay's physical characteristics also undergird its spiritual significance. Having come to Bahia from her ancient home on the West African coast to see the Río Paraguaçu, Iemanjá chooses to stay. Although she could live anywhere, Amado writes—"nas cidades do Mediterrâneo, nos mares da China, na Califórnia, no mar Egeu, no golfo do México" (the cities of the Mediterranean,



Figure 3. Garcia Bento, *Saveiros*, 1925, oil on canvas. Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro. Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Garcia_Bento_-_Saveiros,_1925.jpg

the China Seas, California, the Aegean, the Gulf of Mexico)—she makes her home in a sacred stone by a breakwater. The deepest part of the Bay, the submerged river valley at the Paraguaçu's mouth, becomes one of her favorite haunts.⁴⁸

Guma's most daring exploits join these forms of maritime knowledge. When a panicked Baiana Line officer bursts into the sailors' bar offering a reward of 200 *milreis* to anyone willing to tack a saveiro into a southerly gale to rescue the distressed steamer *Canavieras*, outbound for Ilheus and in danger of running aground on a lee shore at the mouth of the Bay, Guma responds. Drenched and smiling, he is welcomed aboard by the steamer's English captain. In the absence of sea-room, the captain seems all too eager to turn the helm over to a consummate inshore mariner.⁴⁹ For an evening, Guma is in command. "*É ele quem dá ordens. Só mesmo assim um homem da beira do cais pode chegar a comandante de um navio. Só por arte de Iemanjá*" (He gives the orders. Only in that way can a man from the waterfront ever get to be captain of a ship. Only through the wiles of Iemanjá).⁵⁰ On this stormy night, coastal piloting undermines class hierarchy, a subversion that occurs through the agency of an orixá particularly devoted to local waters. Guma's

rescue of the *Canavieras*—proof of his favor with Iemanjá—makes the light-skinned youth eligible for an honor usually reserved for the waterfront's Black community. At the next Festa de Iemanjá, he is dedicated to the orixá based on his seamanship; when he becomes an "African diaspora body," his embodied, technical, and experiential knowledge of the Bay merges with the spiritual knowledge of Candomblé.⁵¹

As it joins one of the hallmarks of sea fiction—sustained attention to the mariner's craft—with African spirituality and social critique, *Mar Morto* demonstrates the role of local maritime knowledge in the formation of regional and national literatures.⁵² In the 1920s, a Brazilian intelligentsia disappointed with the First Republic (1889–1930) searched for a unified cultural and literary identity distinct from the influences of Portugal and France.⁵³ The young Amado, then a political reporter and aspiring lawyer affiliated with the Partido Comunista, began his literary career by dismissing the linguistically and formally inventive modernism of Mário de Andrade as "bourgeois"—contrived precisely to mask its lack of cultural authenticity and political commitment.⁵⁴ Instead, and in alignment with regionalist thinkers like Gilberto Freyre, whose 1926 *Manifesto Regionalista* foregrounded the place-bound relationships between culture and environment and marshalled regionalism against the modernism and cosmopolitanism he considered disingenuous, Amado devoted his literary attention to his native Bahia.⁵⁵ His first four novels, *O país do Carnaval* (1931), *Cacau* (1933), *Suor* (1934), and *Jubaibá* (1935), adhered to the conventions of the "proletarian political novel and privileged the social position of 'the people'" (*o povo*).⁵⁶ Amado's sixth novel, *Mar Morto*, retains the political commitment and class consciousness of his earlier "Bahia novels" but advances them by depicting ocean literacies that are at once spiritual and material.

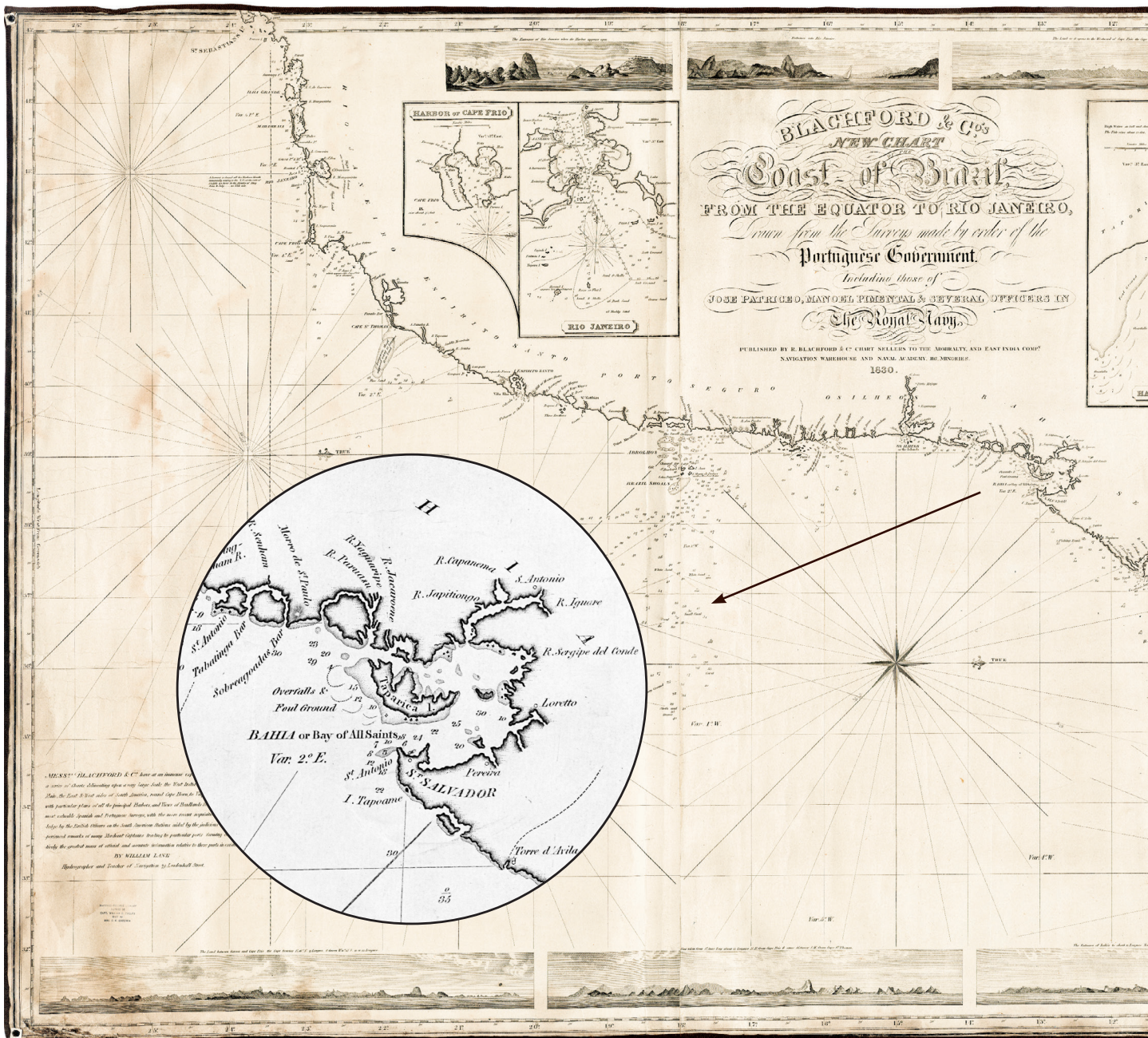




Figure 4.
Jose Patriceo and Manoel
Pimental, *New Chart of the
Coast of Brazil*. Published
by R. Blachford & Co., 1830.
Courtesy of the Harvard
Map Collection, Harvard
College Library

The Capsized Candle

When the sharks—probably tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*)—pull Guma offshore, beyond his capsized *Paquete Voador* and out of the sight of a horrified Livia, who watches from shore, the waterfront community is left without a body.⁵⁷ Three of the four chapters that comprise the final section of *Mar Morto*—the section that gives the novel its name—center on the search for his remains. Aboard the *Viajante sem Porto*, a saveiro skippered by the couple's neighbor Manuel, a crew comprising friends, the local doctor, Guma's uncle Francisco, and Livia, ghost along in the wake of a lighted candle floating in a saucer. A kind of supernatural navigational aid, this candle, according to local tradition, would guide the search party to *o afogado*—the drowned man. When the candle stops, the saveiro heaves to while men dive in search of the body; when the candle capsizes, extinguishing itself in the water, it indicates that *o afogado* has gone forever with Iemanjá, to "*as terras do sem fim*"—the unknown, underwater "Land of the Endless Way."⁵⁸ That the world of the living can call off the search.

These three eerie chapters suspend *Mar Morto* between the romance and nautical adventure of most of the novel and the transformative final chapter in which Livia trans-corporates into Iemanjá. Literally and figuratively, they are Guma's wake—a word that refers to the ephemeral tracks left by vessels and bodies as they move through the water and to the watch before burial kept by the family and friends of the deceased; it is as much a temporary region of "disturbed flow" as it is a form of attention that holds space for loss and contemplation.⁵⁹ In her watershed *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016), Christina Sharpe endows the word "wake" with additional intellectual force as "the conceptual frame of and for living blackness in the diaspora in the still-unfolding aftermaths of Atlantic chattel slavery," a forced migration by sea that established Bahia as "the Blackest and most slavery-marked" part of Brazil.⁶⁰ As these

chapters retrace the voyages Guma took in life, through waters he knew intimately, they challenge readers to recognize the "presence and contemporaneity of spirituality" with maritime culture, history, and practice.⁶¹

In *Mar Morto*, this contemporaneity operates on the levels of language and figurative device. In constituting Guma's wake, the chapters that follow the saveiros crewed by mourners in search of his body suggest a polysemy—that is, "a word's capacity to carry two or more distinct meanings"—that moves between Portuguese and English.⁶² In Portuguese, the word *vela* can mean sail, candle, and, in certain cases, wake or vigil. For instance, the phrase "*no meio da noite a vela andou para longe*," which is translated as "in the middle of the night, the candle went far off," would also make sense as "in the middle of the night, the *sail* went far off."⁶³ Synecdoche, a figure of speech in which a defining part of something names the whole, transforms the candle into a vessel under sail.⁶⁴ By contrast, "*suspendem as velas dos saveiros*" (they set the sails on the sloops), can really only refer to sail.⁶⁵ Most haunting is the image of Livia, "looking for the body of her husband with a candle."⁶⁶ In Amado's original prose, the phrase "*procurava o corpo do marido com uma vela*" collapses the distinction between sail and candle and makes both into technologies of the wake—the maritime ritual whereby Livia conjures Guma's spectral presence and searches for his beloved body.⁶⁷ A body that, if it is found at all, will be found transfigured—spongy with saltwater, crawling with crabs, eerily subsumed into the local marine foodweb like the rich, strange body of Alonso in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610), its component atoms persisting in the ocean for as long as 260 million years.⁶⁸ Alive "in the time of the wake, known as residence time," Guma's body, like the slippage of the word *vela* between sail, candle, and wake itself, anchors the metaphysical in material relations with the ocean.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the saveiro's wake through a

bay that, to Livia, seems to have died along with her husband, localizes these relations in the couple's home waters.

The twin voyages of the candle and the saveiro around the evocatively named Baía de Todos os Santos—the Bay of All Saints—thus instantiate a spiritual oceanography: a form of ocean literacy in which the biological or physical characteristics of a particular body of water contribute to its spiritual meaning.⁷⁰ Although the ocean in *Mar Morto* is complicated—“*belo e terrível*” (beautiful and terrible) in the novel's terms—the adjective “*morto*” (dead) in its Portuguese title, Ana Maria Machado tells us, “shouldn't fool anyone.”⁷¹ In marine ecological terms, for instance, Amado's shark-infested urban ocean is very much alive; the waters from the Bay to Abrolhos Bank are a global biodiversity hotspot, and the abundance of marine predators in the novel signals the relative health of the ecosystem. This “livingness,” a term I borrow from Black feminist geographer Katherine McKittrick, is spiritual as well as ecological.⁷² The home of Iemanjá and of a collectivity of drowned sailors known for their profound skill and radical politics, the Bay of All Saints, Machado writes, is “*um olimpo brasileiro e líquido*” (a liquid, Brazilian Olympus).⁷³ In the Africanist terms more suited to the cultural waterscape of the novel, this spiritually and ecologically charged body of water is legible as the kalunga or “Sea of the Dead,” which links “the world of the Living and that of the Ancestors.”⁷⁴

Our Lady of the Workboats

For those who ply its waters in search of the dead, the Bay of Bahia is an ally and an obstacle. “No mar encontrará Guma para as noites de amor” (In the sea she will find Guma for nights of love), Amado writes of Livia. “Em cima do saveiro recordará outras noites, suas lágrimas serão sem desespero” (On the sloop she will remember other nights, her tears will be without despair).⁷⁵ As much a material choice as a metaphysical one, Livia's decision to

work the Bay alongside her young son Federico and Guma's swashbuckling adoptive mother, Rosa Palmeirão, reanimates an ocean that seems to have died along with her husband. When she assumes ownership and command of the *Paquete Voador*, Livia renders women's maritime labor visible. While Amado frequently depicts Livia aboard her husband's saveiro, he does not, strictly speaking, depict the process of “enskilment”—the embodied learning curve whereby a woman from the upper city of Salvador becomes part of the “necessarily collective enterprise” that is life on the waterfront.⁷⁶ However, as anthropologist Gisli Pálsson writes, maritime enskilment “involve[s] whole persons, social relations, and communities of practice.”⁷⁷ Moreover, women's maritime labor, according to sociologist Kate Olson, is especially expansive and fluid, encompassing roles like mending sails and nets, processing and selling catches, caring for children, and, when necessity demands, serving as crew.⁷⁸ This expansiveness also encompasses the emotional labor of scanning ominous skies and forecasts. Waiting. Wondering.

Mar Morto renders these forms of maritime labor visible through Livia and other female characters such as the local schoolteacher, who envisions and articulates an alternative to the hardscrabble lives of *o povo de Iemanjá*:

Você nunca imaginou esse mar cheio de saveiros limpos, com marítimos bem alimentados, ganhando o que merecem, as esposas com o futuro garantido, os filhos na escola não durante seis meses, mas todo o tempo, depois indo aqueles que têm vocação para as faculdades? Já pensou em postos de salvamento nos rios, na boca da barra? As vezes eu imagino o cais assim...

(Have you ever imagined clean sloops with well-fed sailors earning what they deserve, their wives with a guaranteed future, their children in school, not for six months but all the time, and those with talent going on to uni-

versity later? Have you ever thought of rescue stations along the rivers, at the mouth of the bay? Sometimes I can imagine the waterfront like that...⁷⁹

Although the novel ends before any of these changes can be realized, when Lívia transforms into a *dona de saveiro* with an intergenerational crew, she becomes capable of transforming the unfreedom that pervades *Sea of Death* into the social and environmental change that, for much of the novel, seems both distant and unlikely. Glad to see “one of the best and fastest saveiros on the waterfront” back at work, the other skippers getting underway that morning hang back rather than racing *O Paquete Voador*.⁸⁰ Instead, they sail as convoy: showing solidarity with a man whose death, however heroic, could have been prevented by lighthouses, lifeboat stations, and the ability to earn a living wage.

Mar Morto’s concluding show of maritime solidarity registers a regional history in which vernacular boats like the *saveiro* and the *jangada* became the vessels of Afro-Brazilian struggles for justice. In the late 19th Century, a group of fishermen led by Francisco José do Nascimento, the “Dragão do Mar” (Sea Dragon), disrupted the internal slave trade, carrying escapees hundreds of nautical miles to Ceará, the first Brazilian state to abolish slavery. These fishermen and their vessels became internationally-recognized symbols of Brazil’s abolition movement and inaugurated a tradition of *reides* (raids) or maritime protests that continued at least through 1941, when another group of fishermen sailed the thirteen hundred nautical miles from Fortaleza to Rio de Janeiro—a strike aimed at including maritime professions under the social programs and labor reforms of the *Estado Novo*. Orson Welles’ unfinished 1941 film, *Four Men on a Raft*, follows their voyage.⁸¹ Such maritime resistance continues in the Bay of Bahia to this day. For instance, as they work to maintain their territory

and biocultural knowledge in the face of 21st century extractivism, inhabitants of fishing *quilombos* (maroon-descended communities) such as Conceição de Salinas practice *marêletica*, a tidally driven abolitionist political ecology anchored in “diasporic cosmologies and epistemologies in which water occupies a central place.”⁸² The women of these communities identify themselves with an epithet that seems to come straight from *Mar Morto*’s pages: “*Mulheres da Maré*,” Women of the Tides.⁸³

By way of conclusion, I’d like to linger with another epithet, *dona de saveiro*, the phrase that describes Lívia in *Mar Morto*’s final chapter. Translated simply, it means the owner of a *saveiro*, a Bahian work sloop. The feminine word *dona* functions similarly to the English honorifics Madame, Mistress, or Lady and often carries connotations of domesticity, as in *dona da casa*, woman of the house. *Dona dos saveiros* is also one of the many epithets that Amado and his characters use for Iemanjá. These include *senhora dos oceanos* (Lady of the Oceans), *sereia* (mermaid), and the Yoruba-inflected *mãe das águas* (mother of waters). *Mar Morto*’s concluding image of Lívia on the foredeck of her *saveiro*, hair streaming, with a flock of seabirds encircling her, also partakes of an Atlantic visual and spiritual vocabulary in which representations of Iemanjá, with their blue dresses and crowns of stars, intersect with the iconography of the Virgin Mary adorning coastal churches like Our Lady of Good Voyage in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where a blue-cloaked statue cradles another workboat of Atlantic diaspora, the fishing schooner. This resonance led me to the loose translation of *dona dos saveiros* that gives this essay its title: Our Lady of the Workboats.

In adopting this title, I do not intend to overwrite the centuries of violence and unfreedom that led to this spiritual and aesthetic confluence. Indeed, Amado’s Lívia, an explicitly Black Iemanjá, actively resists the whitening impulse of the devotional and popular imagery I have just

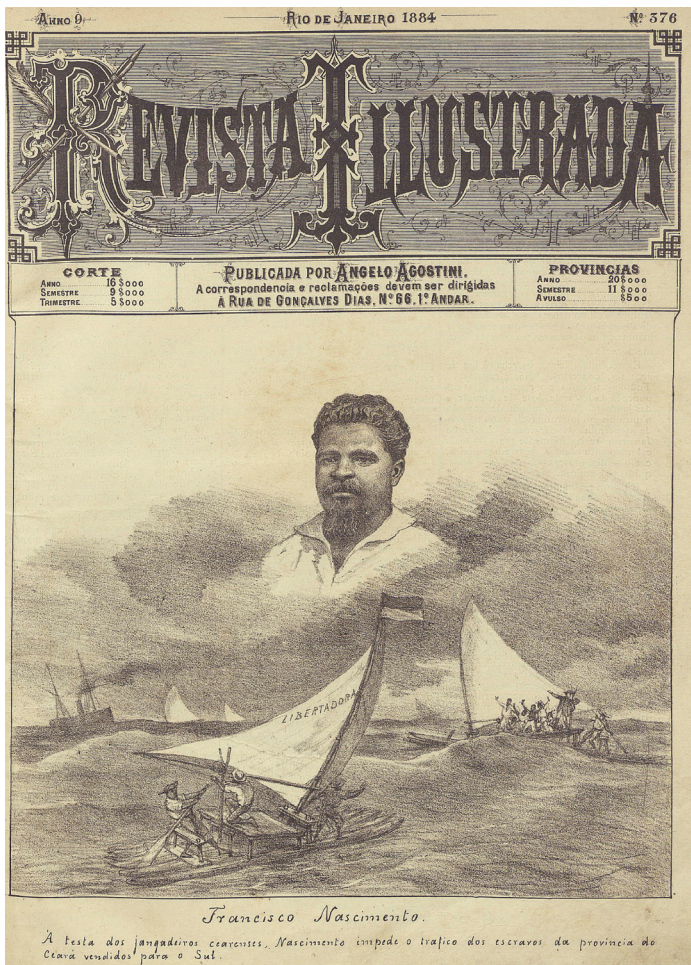


Figure 5. Cover of *Revista Illustrada* No. 376 (1884), depicting Francisco Nascimento, “O Dragão do Mar” (The Sea Dragon), with the caption, “A testa dos jangadeiros cearenses, Nascimento impede o tráfico dos escravos da Província do Ceará vendidos para o Sul” (At the head of the Ceará raftsmen, Nascimento prevents the traffic of slaves from the province of Ceará to be sold in the south). CC BY-NC-SA 3.0. Image and translation courtesy of Biblioteca do Senado Federal, Brasília.

described. While this resistance is literary, its implications are material. As the female counterpart of *Mar Morto*’s *mestres de saveiro* or sloop-masters, Livia foregrounds the expansive and fluid participation of women in waterfront life, while as a seafaring widow and mother, she reconfigures the traditionally male-dominated family workboat as a domestic space. From within *Mar Morto*’s pages, she renegotiates “the social and cultural contracts of a marine life” as an ally of Afro-Brazilian maritime peoples beyond them—the abolitionist fishermen of the nineteenth century, or the contemporary *quilombola* “People of the Waters” who maintain their own “contracts with the mud and sea.”⁸⁴

Although firmly anchored in its home waters in the Bay of Bahia, *Mar Morto*, like many of Amado’s novels, circulated well beyond it and entered the expansive genre of sea literature—works in which the ocean’s ecological dynamics or cultural histories inflect form or theme.⁸⁵ This literature depends, like the craft of seamanship itself, on a process in which experiential knowledge of the ocean crosses into the imaginative sphere.⁸⁶ As this essay has demonstrated, *Mar Morto* centers maritime experiences that are at once locally and historically specific and diasporic, calling attention to the forms of “livingness on the sea” whereby its characters respond to inequality and loss.⁸⁷ By demonstrating the connection between sea stories like *Mar Morto* and ongoing struggles for sovereignty and freedom, maritime literary studies can frame the ocean as both a source of culture and a matter of justice.⁸⁸ In doing so, it calls all of us to a deeper sense of responsibility to the waters we study and the stories they contain.⁸⁹



Figure 6. Angelo Lualdi, *Our Lady of Good Voyage*, 1915. Painted wood and metal. Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Massachusetts. Gift of the Parish of Our Lady of Good Voyage Church, 1984 (2410). Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Our_Lady_of_Good_Voyage,_by_Angelo_Lualdi,_c._1915,_painted_wood_and_metal_-_Cape_Ann_Museum_-_Gloucester,_MA_-_DSC01375.jpg

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Endnotes

- 1 Jorge Amado, *Mar Morto* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia de Bolso, 2008), 252. Jorge Amado, *Sea of Death*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Avon Books, 1984), 266. With respect to *Mar Morto* (1936), I quote from the Companhia de Bolso edition (2008) and the English translation by Gregory Rabassa. All other translations from the Portuguese are my own.
- 2 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 252; *Sea of Death*, 267.
- 3 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 252; *Sea of Death*, 266.
- 4 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 253; *Sea of Death*, 267.
- 5 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 7; *Sea of Death*, 1.
- 6 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 7; Zora Seljan, *Iemanjá e Suas Lendas* (Rio de Janeiro: Gráfica Record Editôra, 1967). Seljan offers an introduction to the body of legends surrounding Iemanjá. Originally published in 1967 with a preface by Amado, the compilation includes selections from *Mar Morto*, as well as works by anthropologists Lydia Cabrera and Câmara de Cascudo. The work is the result of a petition by devotees of the orixá, who originally wanted it to be written by Amado. (Seljan, *Iemanjá e Suas Lendas*, 110.)
- 7 Marília de Andrade, "Brazil," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, edited by Selma Jeanne Cohen and the Dance Perspectives Foundation, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195173697.001.0001/acref-9780195173697-e-0284>.
- 8 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 70; SlaveVoyages Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Estimates, accessed July 20, 2023, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates>
- 9 Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). Ingersoll draws from Native Hawai'ian theory and practice to articulate oceanic literacy as "a critical political and ethical literacy" and an "ethical reading of the ocean" (Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*, 95). "While it asserts cultural sovereignty," she writes, "oceanic literacy also invents something new" (Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*, 93). Oceanic literacy as conceived by Ingersoll is distinct from the science-oriented ocean literacy framework developed by UNESCO, which defines the term simply as "an understanding of the ocean's influence on you—and your influence on the ocean" (National Marine Educators Association, "Ocean Literacy," <https://www.marine-ed.org/ocean-literacy/overview>). As Helen Rozwadowski points out, ocean literacy would benefit from the integration of public humanities. (Helen M. Rozwadowski, "Ocean Literacy and Public Humanities," *Parks Stewardship Forum* 36, no. 3 (2020): 365–373, <https://doi.org/10.5070/P536349841>.) A better strategy for ocean literacy," Rozwadowski writes with Kathleen Schwerdtner Manez and Suzanne Stoll-Kleemann, "would be to consider people as environmental humanists do, recognizing that the human relationship with the oceans has existed for millennia and understanding that different groups of people at different times have had distinctive relationships with the parts of the seas they encountered" (Kathleen Schwerdtner Manez, Suzanne Stoll-Kleemann, and Helen Rozwadowski, "Ocean Literacies: The Promise of Regional Approaches Integrating Ocean Histories and Psychologies," *Frontiers in Marine Science* 10 (July 2023): 3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1178061>). They advocate for a regional approach to ocean literacy that would be "place-specific, represent different knowledge and emotional systems, and reflect the histories of the particular areas in question" (Schwerdtner, Manez et al., "Ocean Literacies": 5). I use the two terms interchangeably.
- 10 Denise Carrascosa, Ana Farani, Geri Augusto, Luciana Reis, Paula Campos, and Raquel L. Souza, *Traduzindo no Atlântico Negro: Cartas Náuticas Afrodiáspóricas Para Travessias Literárias* (Salvador, Bahia: Literatura Negra Ogums, 2017), 21–30.
- 11 John Gillis, "The Blue Humanities," *Humanities* 34, no. 3 (May/June 2013), <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/mayjune/feature/the-blue-humanities>; Joana Gaspar de Freitas, Robert James, and Isaac Land, "Coastal Studies and Society: The Tipping Point," *Coastal Studies and Society* 1, no. 1 (March 2022): 3–9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/26349817211047765>;
- 12 Steve Mentz, "A Poetics of Planetary Water: The Blue Humanities After John Gillis," *Coastal Studies and Society* 2, no. 1 (2023): 137–152, <https://doi.org/10.1177/26349817221133199>.
- 13 Kevin Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power: Aquatic Culture in the African Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Justin Dunnivant, "Have Confidence in the Sea: Maritime Maroons and Fugitive Geographies," *Antipode* 53, no. 3 (2021): 884–905, <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12695>.
- 14 Elionice Conceição Sacramento, *Da Diáspora Negra ao Território de Terra e Águas: Ancestralidade e Protagonismo de Mulheres na Comunidade Pesqueira e Quilombola Conceição de Salinas* (Curitiba, Brazil: Editora Appris Ltda, 2022), 87. A master fisherwoman, scholar of environmental studies, and activist on behalf of "traditional, indigenous, and maroon communities" who was born and raised in Conceição de Salinas, Sacramento is also a member of the Movement of Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen (MPP) and the National Articulation of Fisherwomen (ANP). I was introduced to Sacramento's ideas and practice by her friend and collaborator Geri Augusto in 2022. *Quilombola* is a word used to describe "descendants of African people who were enslaved and brought to Brazil and who, over time, escaped slavery. Their name is derived from the word *quilombo*, describing the formation of family groups that resisted the slave system in Brazil, and their ethnic and cultural identity distinguish them from other Black communities in the country." For more, see Thaís Verly-Luciano, Beniamino Cislighi, Raquel Barbosa Miranda, Jerusa Araújo Dias, Ximena Pamela Diaz-Bermudez, and Angelica Espinosa Miranda, "Violence in Quilombola women living in rural communities in Brazil," *Revista da Saúde Pública* 56 no. 114 (2022): 2.
- 15 Daniel Brayton, "The Riddle of the Sands: Erskine Childers Between the Tides," in *Coastal Works: Cultures of the Atlantic Edge*, ed. Nicholas Allen, Nick Groom, and Jos Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 118.
- 16 Margaret Cohen, "A Feminist Plunge into Sea Knowledge," *PMLA* 134, no. 2 (2019): 375, <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2019.134.2.372>.
- 17 Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 228; Dunnivant, "Confidence in the Sea," 899.
- 18 Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 180. I adapt the term coastwise canon from Brayton, "Riddle of the Sands," 114.
- 19 Deirdre Ni Chonghaile, "Greim an fhir bháite," *Archipelago* 12 (Summer 2019): 26.
- 20 Amado, *Sea of Death*, 39.
- 21 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 44; *Sea of Death*, 39.
- 22 Piers Armstrong, "Popular Sovereignty, Bakhtin and the Sea in Jorge Amado's Religion," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 26 (January 2007): 147; Courtney Campbell, "Four Fishermen, Orson Welles, and the Making of the Brazilian Northeast," *Past and Present* 234, no. 1 (2017): 200, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw052>.
- 23 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 44; *Sea of Death*, 39.
- 24 Brayton, "Riddle of the Sands," 112.
- 25 Ana Maria Machado, "Posfácio: A Invenção da Bahia," in Amado, *Mar Morto*, 263 (translation mine).
- 26 Machado, "Posfácio," 263 (translation mine).
- 27 Machado, "Posfácio," 263 (translation mine); Armstrong, "Popular Sovereignty," 138.
- 28 Machado, "Posfácio," 263; Campbell, "Four Fishermen," 179.
- 29 Campbell, "Four Fishermen," 179.

- 29 Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936): 111–115; Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 9; Howard French, *Born in Blackness: Africa, Africans, and the Making of the Modern World, 1471 to the Second World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2021), 2.
- 30 Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 1986.
- 31 Daniel G. Brayton, "Rethinking Literature and Culture from a Maritime Lens: The Coriolis Effect, Oceanic Gyres, and the Black Atlantic," *Coriolis* 1, no. 2 (2010): 1–3; Daniel G. Brayton, "Networks," in *A Cultural History of the Sea in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Steve Mentz (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 83–103; Elliot Rappaport, *Reading the Glass: A Captain's View of Weather, Water, and Life on Ships* (New York: Dutton, 2023), 170.
- 32 French, *Born in Blackness*, 165–183.
- 33 French, *Born in Blackness*, 167.
- 34 French, *Born in Blackness*, 307–308; Lilia Moritz Schwarcz and Heloisa Maria Murgel Starling, *Brazil: A Biography* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 57; Mapeamento dos Terreiros de Salvador, accessed July 18, 2023, www.terreiros.ufba.br.
- 35 John Sarsfield, "From the Brink of Extinction: Mediterranean Molding," *WoodenBoat* 66 (September/October 1985): 84.
- 36 Gabriel Soares de Sousa, *Derrotero General de la Costa del Brasil y Memoria de la Grandezas de Bahia* (1587), quoted in Sarsfield, "From the Brink," 84.
- 37 French, *Born in Blackness*, 307; Sarsfield, "From the Brink," 87.
- 38 Felipe Castro, Denise Gomes Dias, Rodrigo Torres, Samila Ferreira, and Marcelo Bastos, "Saveiros da Bahia," Nautical Archaeology Digital Library, Texas A&M University, accessed August 1, 2023. <https://shiplib.org/index.php/ship-models/watercraft/saveiros-da-bahia/> Accessed August 1, 2023.
- 39 Sarsfield, "From the Brink," 89.
- 40 Ben Fuller, "The Maine Peapods: Small Workboats with Enduring and Universal Appeal," *WoodenBoat* 284 (January–February 2022): 24.
- 41 Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto da Poesia pau-Brasil* was originally published in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* on March 18, 1924. For an English translation, see Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry," trans. Stella M. de Sá Rego, *Latin American Literary Review* 14, no. 27 (January–June 1986): 184–187.
- 42 John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward an Elemental Theory of Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 101.
- 43 Sarsfield, "From the Brink," 84; Marcelo F. Bastos, "Ofício de Mestre Carpinteiro Naval: Registro Especial de Ofício," Fundação Gregório de Matos, Prefeitura de Salvador, 2023, 14.
- 44 Marcelo F. Bastos, "A preservação da memória e resgate das técnicas de projeto e construção dos saveiros através de ferramentas paramétricas," 27 Congresso Internacional de Transporte Aquaviário, Construção Naval e Offshore, Rio de Janeiro, October 23–35, 2018; Marcelo F. Bastos, personal communication, July 17, 2023.
- 45 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- 46 Mauro Cirano and Guilherme Camargo Lessa, "Oceanographic Characteristics of Baía de Todos os Santos, Brazil," *Revista Brasileira de Geofísica* 25, no. 4 (December 2007): 363–387, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-261X2007000400002>.
- 47 Tristan Gooley, *How to Read Water: Clues and Patterns from Puddles to the Sea* (New York: The Experiment, 2016), 238.
- 48 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 74; *Sea of Death*, 70.
- 49 John Stilgoe, *Alongshore* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). Stilgoe differentiates between offshore and inshore mariners based on the idea of sea room as "maneuvering space, as refuge from the inshore hazards and from the steep waves passing over any ground reached by the dipsey lead. In the offing mariners feel safe, even in great storms. Inshore they feel otherwise. Inshore lies shipwreck, the end of the ship, the beginning of the small-boat work long-distance mariners traditionally loathe." Stilgoe, *Alongshore*, 70.
- 50 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 72; *Sea of Death*, 68.
- 51 Aisha Beliso de Jesús, "Santería Copresence and the Making of African Diaspora Bodies," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 3 (2014), 503–526, <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca29.3.04>. Beliso de Jesús argues that through ritual initiation in "African-inspired religions" including Candomblé, a person, regardless of gender, sexuality, racial identity, or national affiliation, can become an "African diaspora body," acquiring, through the copresence of the orishas [orixás], embodied knowledges that are also forms of racial consciousness, because "copresences... embody the physical endurance of black enslaved Africans in the Americas under colonialism and imperialism, as well as contemporary forms of racial feeling and marginalization." Beliso de Jesús, "Santería," 504. John Durham Peters understands technique as "the right translation of *Techniken* if we are thinking about practices of know-how, handicraft, and corporeal knowledge that interact with bodies or instruments." (Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 90). Guma's seamanship partakes of both formulations.
- 52 Cohen, *Novel and the Sea*.
- 53 Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. Malcolm B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 286; Schwarcz and Starling, *Brazil*, 393.
- 54 Casanova, *World Republic*, 313; Machado, "Posfácio," 268.
- 55 Gilberto Freyre, *Manifesto Regionalista*, 7th ed. (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Editora Massangana, 1996), 47–75.
- 56 Casanova, *World Republic*, 313; Thomas Waller, "The Blue Cultural Fix: Water Spirits and World-Ecology in Jorge Amado's *Mar Morto* and Pepetela's *O Desejo de Kianda*," *Humanities* 9 no. 3 (2020), 72, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9030072>.
- 57 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 242; *Sea of Death*, 252–3.
- 58 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 25.
- 59 Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 21.
- 60 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 2; French, *Born in Blackness*, 11.
- 61 Akeia De Barros Gomes spoke to this "presence and contemporaneity" at a panel discussion called "Reclaiming the Ocean in Practice," which took place on December 2, 2022, at Philips Brooks House, Harvard University. I am indebted to her presentation on the subject.
- 62 Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), s.v. "polysemy."
- 63 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 246; *Sea of Death*, 260.
- 64 Baldick, *Literary Terms*, s.v. "synecdoche."
- 65 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 254; *Sea of Death*, 268.
- 66 Amado, *Sea of Death*, 258.
- 67 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 245.
- 68 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 40.
- 69 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 19.
- 70 Alison Glassie, "Ruth Ozeki's Floating World: *A Tale for the Time Being*'s Spiritual Oceanography," *Novel* 53, no. 3 (November 2020): 452–471, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-8624642>.
- 71 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 44; *Sea of Death*, 39; Machado, "Posfácio," 262, translation mine.
- 72 Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Katherine McKittrick, "On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place," *Social and Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (December 2011): 947–963, <https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1080/14649365.2011.6>

24280. McKittrick develops the idea of "livingness" across several of her works; it may be broadly defined as "the production of [Black] narratives and lifeways that enhance our collective human-environmental well-being." Queens University, "Katherine McKittrick," accessed June 8, 2023, <https://www.queensu.ca/research/researchers/katherine-mckittrick-0>. Recently, Justin Dunnivant has taken the idea to sea, working to "resituate[s] Black livingness in the Atlantic." Dunnivant, "Have Confidence in the Sea," 901.

73 Machado, "Posfácio," 265, translation mine.

74 Geri Augusto, "Narrative Sovereignty: Kalungas, Carrancas, and Freedom on the Waves," 32nd Annual Conference on American Literature, American Literature Association, Boston, July 8, 2021. See also Kevin Dawson, "Waterscapes and Wet Bodies: Beach Culture in Atlantic Africa and the Diaspora 1444-1888," *Coastal Studies and Society* 2, no. 1 (March 2023): 58-81, <https://doi.org/10.1177/26349817231165157>.

75 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 255; *Sea of Death*, 269.

76 Gisli Pálsson, "Enskilment at Sea," *Man* 29, no. 4 (1994): 902, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3033974>, 902, quoted in Elspeth Probyn, *Eating the Ocean*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 42.

77 Pálsson, "Enskilment at Sea," 902.

78 Kate Olson, "Here All Along," *Earth Island Journal* (Autumn 2021), <https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/magazine/entry/here-all-along/>

79 Amado, *Mar Morto*, 142; *Sea of Death*, 142-43.

80 Amado, *Sea of Death*, 266.

81 Campbell, "Four Fishermen," 173, 180. Amado would probably have sympathized with these struggles. In the 1940s, as a congressman for the Brazilian Communist Party, he advocated freedom of worship for practitioners of African religions, and for a broader legitimization of Black culture. When he died in 2001, he was mourned by the literary elite, the state, and by the Afro-Brazilian communities to whom he was an ally. For more, see Márcia Rios da Silva, "Jorge Amado: The International Projection of the Brazilian Writer," in *Brazilian Literature as World Literature*, ed. Eduardo Coutinho (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 199-220.

82 Geri Augusto, "Reclaiming the Atlantic in Practice: Three Moments," Panel Presentation, Philips Brooks House, Harvard University, December 2, 2022. Augusto uses the term *maréutica* to refer to the set of *quilombola* ecological theories and practices developed by her friend and collaborator Elionice Sacramento in which the tides (*mares*) offer "metaphor, touchstone... analytical framework [and] narrative sovereignty."

83 Geri Augusto, "For Marielle: Mulhere(s) Da Maré-Danger, Seeds and Tides," *Transition* 129 (2020): 246-264, <https://doi.org/10.2979/transition.129.1.20>.

84 Ní Chonghaile, "Greim an fhir bháite," 26; Augusto, "Reclaiming the Atlantic." Here, I join Deirdre Ní Chonghaile's thinking on "the social and cultural contracts of a marine life," informed by her background as an Aran Islander, with the theory and practice of *maréutica* advanced by Elionice Sacramento in Conceição das Salinas and introduced to me by Geri Augusto. I draw the quotation "our contract is with the sea and the mud" from Augusto's 2022 presentation "Reclaiming the Atlantic in Practice: Three Moments."

85 Bert Bender, *Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Machado, "Posfácio"; Hélio Pólvora, "Jorge Amado e o romance do mar," in *Colóquio Jorge Amado: 70 anos de Mar Morto* (Salvador: Fundação Casa Jorge Amado, 2008). This definition of sea literature draws on Bert Bender's idea that sea literature derives "a sense of primal order from the sea" (201). Independently of each other, Ana Maria Machado and Hélio Pólvora locate *Mar Morto* in a global tradition of sea literature dominated by writers such as Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, and Victor Hugo, whose novel *Les Travaillleurs de la mer* (1866) was translated into Portuguese by the

novelist Machado de Assis. On the global circulation of Amado's novels, see Rios da Silva, "Jorge Amado."

86 Literary scholar Hester Blum calls this epistemological synthesis "the sea eye" and theorizes the relationship between experience at sea and the writing of sea narratives fictional and nonfictional. "As the assimilation of fragmentary knowledge drawn from the totality of a sailor's maritime experience," she writes, "the sea eye functions analogously as the epistemological apparatus that grows out of the material practices it organizes...the sea eye is an industry that helps process the broader forces that produce maritime literature." Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum Sea Narratives* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 116. Meanwhile, marine science historian Helen Rozwadowski writes that the ocean is "known through imagination as well as through direct experience." Helen Rozwadowski, "Oceans: Fusing the History of Science and Technology with Environmental History," in *A Companion to American Environmental History*, ed. Douglas Cazaux Sackman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 456, quoted in Antony Adler, *Neptune's Laboratory: Fantasy, Fear, and Science at Sea*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 6.

87 Dunnivant, "Confidence in the Sea," 901.

88 Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, "What I Know About the Ocean: We Need Ocean Justice," in *Black Futures*, ed. Kimberly Drew and Jenna Wortham (New York: Penguin, 2021), 200-212. See especially 200.

89 For a call to responsibility that explicitly implicates white scholars, see Valérie Loichot, *Water Graves: The Art of the Unritual in the Greater Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 281.