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Female Literacy, Sex and Adultery in Turn-of-the-Century Brazilian Fiction

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Prohibited Pleasures:

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Abstract

In this dissertation I examine the entanglement between female literacy and female sexuality in nineteenth-century Brazilian novels. I investigate the ways in which male authors used literature as a mechanism for policing female sexuality and stabilizing the traditional family. I argue that nineteenth-century Brazilian fiction exhibits a recurring preoccupation with a perceived crisis in the institution of marriage. This crisis was often associated with an alleged growth in female adultery which, as some authors claimed, was a symptom of the social decay brought about by modernization and the breakdown of traditional gender roles. I first trace the migration of this literary concern with female sexuality from Europe to Brazil to demonstrate that Brazilian authors not only drew on European literary models, but also created a local literary tradition with the figure of the adulteress at its center. This study covers a period ranging from the publication of José de Alencar's courtesan novel *Lucíola* in 1862 to the publication of Júlia Lopes de Almeida's *A Falência* (*The Bankruptcy*) in 1901. Almeida's novel, the first adultery novel written by a Brazilian woman, explicitly critiqued male authors' accounts of female adultery and articulated a new vision of the family based on female solidarity and education. Ultimately, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which novelists created and criticized romantic fantasies of love, desire, and consumption in the wake of social and political changes that placed women's rights and the future of the family at the center of public debate.

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So I will begin with the end, at the very moment of completing the dissertation. My mother is singing a vibrant song in Japanese, in the kitchen of her home in Omaha, Nebraska. I ask her what the song is about. She says it is about an adulteress pleading with her married lover not to leave her. It could not be a more appropriate song given this dissertation’s subject matter—nor a more beautiful voice singing the saddest melody.

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Machado de Assis writes of the narrator's parents in *Dom Casmurro* that "if conjugal felicity can be compared to the grand prize in a lottery, they had won it with the ticket they purchased together." This is how I feel when I reflect on my relationship with Jason Rhys Parry. It is rare to find someone who shares similar passions and who works night and day measuring the weight of ink. This dissertation was made with love and is a proof of love—a love for books and a love between two souls. There is not enough ink available to express my deepest gratitude for enjoying each day next to you, Jason, exploring possible worlds through words, and dreaming of parallel universes. You have supported this project since we met in a seminar room at the Universidade de Lisboa in a sunny afternoon at Prof. Kadir's seminar, and it was amidst

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Cintia Kozonoi Vezzani, Montgomery-Texas, July 2021

List of Abbreviations

"*Como*"	—	José de Alencar. *Como e Porque Sou Romancista*. 1873.
"EQ-PB"	—	Machado de Assis. "Eça de Queirós: *O Primo Basílio*." 1878.
AC	—	Júlio Ribeiro. *A Carne* (*The Flesh*). 1888.
AF	—	Júlia Lopes de Almeida. *A Falência* (*The Bankruptcy*). 1901.
BAL	—	Brazilian Academy of Letters (Academia Brasileira de Letras).
DC	—	Machado de Assis. *Dom Casmurro*. 1899.
DC-HC	—	Machado de Assis. *Dom Casmurro*. Translated by Helen Caldwell.
FS	—	Valentim Magalhães. *Flor de Sangue* (*Flower of Blood*). 1897.
IG	—	Machado de Assis. *Iaiá Garcia*. 1878.
IG-AB	—	Machado de Assis. *Iaiá Garcia*. Translated by Albert Bagby.
L	—	José de Alencar. *Lucíola.* 1862.
LdeS	—	Aluísio Azevedo, *Livro de uma Sogra* (*Book by a Mother-in-law)*. 1895.
MB	—	Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*. 1857.
MB-EM	—	Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*. Translated by Eleanor Marx-Aveling.
MdA	—	Lúcio de Mendonça. *O Marido da Adúltera* (*The Husband of the Adulteress)*. 1882.
OPB	—	Eça de Queiroz. *O Primo Basílio*. 1878.
OPB-MC	—	Eça de Queiroz. *Cousin Bazilio.* Translated by Margaret Jull Costa.
R	—	Machado de Assis. *Ressurreição* (*Resurrection*). 1872.

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Introduction

At a correctional facility:
The judge: *In conclusion: you, lady, deceived your husband.*
The adulteress: *On the contrary, Mr. Judge, it was he who deceived me. He told me that he was leaving on a long trip and then he suddenly returned.*

Em polícia correcional:
O juiz: *Em conclusão: a senhora enganou seu marido.*
A adúltera: *Pelo contrário, Sr. juiz, foi ele quem me enganou. Disse-me que ia para uma viagem longa e apareceu de repente.*

— "Moisaco"[1]

The above joke appeared in the newspaper *O Paiz* in September 1884. It captures a widespread anxiety about female infidelity in Brazilian society that, as we shall see in this work, was also expressed in turn-of-the-century fiction. The setting of the joke, within the disciplinary space of the correctional facility, clearly shows the gender asymmetries involved in discussion of adultery more broadly. In this scene, a man invested with power—"Mr. Judge"—has the authority to decide the fate of a woman for her crime. The crime in question, adultery, is presented as a constant danger demanding male vigilance and supervision. Beyond dramatizing the tendency to judge women for their sexual transgressions, the dialogue also reveals the extent to which the popular figure of the adulteress was an invention of print media.

In this dissertation, I argue that nineteenth-century Brazilian fiction exhibits a recurring preoccupation with a perceived crisis in the institution of marriage. This crisis was often associated with an alleged growth in female adultery which, as some authors claimed, was a symptom of the social decay brought about by modernization and the breakdown of traditional gender roles. I first trace the migration of this literary concern with female sexuality from Europe to Brazil to demonstrate that Brazilian authors not only drew on European literary models, but

also created a local literary tradition with the figure of the adulteress is at the center. My study covers a period ranging from the publication of José de Alencar's courtesan novel *Lucíola* (1862), to the first adultery novel written by a Brazilian woman, Júlia Lopes de Almeida's *A Falência* (*The Bankruptcy*, 1901).

In the years leading up to the establishment of the First Brazilian Republic in 1889, the institution of marriage increasingly became an object of debate in novels and newspapers. Because healthy marriages were considered a barometer for the integrity and prosperity of the emerging Brazilian nation as a whole, threats to the institution of marriage became a frequent topic in fiction. In *Adultery in the Novel* (1979), the critic Tony Tanner notes that, in the European context, "although the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel may be said to move toward marriage and the securing of genealogical continuity, it often gains its particular narrative urgency from an energy that threatens to contravene that stability of the family on which society depends" (4). As this dissertation demonstrates, the perceived crisis of marriage emerged out of an evolving entanglement of sex, books and money that offered women opportunities for social mobility, allowed them to imagine other possible futures, and subjected the traditional union to the destabilizing logic of the free market with its limitless selection of commodities and perpetual production of new desires.

In *fin-de-siècle* Brazil, as in Western Europe, adultery was a gendered crime. Although the Penal Code of 1830 described punishments for both men and women if found guilty of adultery, in practice only female adultery was generally perceived as a criminal offense. As Dorothy Thomas explains in *Criminal Injustice* (1991), even though the Penal Code did not condone such a practice, "the popular notion that a man could legitimately kill his adulterous wife" persisted in nineteenth-century Brazil (15). In an 1882 review of a novel of wifely adultery

published in the newspaper *Gazetinha*, a critic sought to remind his readers that "customs make the laws, and not the laws the customs" ("os costumes fazem as leis e não as leis os costumes"; U. Duarte 3) before defending the public punishment of adulterous women. The reviewer's remarks highlight a general skepticism about the possibility of meaningfully changing the practice of killing adulterous wives through changes to the law.

Legal changes nevertheless did occur with the establishment of the First Brazilian Republic. On January 24, 1890, Marshal Manoel Deodoro da Fonseca revealed the Decree 181 on civil marriage as part of the new *Constituição da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil*. Among other changes, this decree announced the separation between church and state, and the requirement that all couples obtain civil marriages independently of any religious wedding ceremonies.[2] As much as civil marriage was interpreted by supporters of the Republic as a clear sign of progress and modernization, the inadequacies of the new divorce laws were a source of disappointment. Article 88 of Decree 181 defined divorce not as a dissolution of marriage, but as "the indefinite separation of the bodies" ("O divórcio não dissolve o vínculo conjugal, mas autoriza a separação indefinida dos corpos ..."; Fonseca, "Decreto Nº 181"). In practice, this meant that people could not remarry even if they were granted a divorce, at least until the death of the former spouse.

Although the updated Penal Code of 1890 did not condone the killing of adulterous wives, even if their husbands caught them in the act, it did contain a provision exonerating those found to be "in a state of complete deprivation of sense and intelligence in the act of committing the crime" ("Artigo 27, § 4º Os que se acharem em estado de completa privação de sentidos e de inteligência no ato de cometer o crime"; Fonseca, "Decreto Nº 847"). Defense lawyers were thus frequently able to exempt their male clients from punishment for killing their wives by

describing such acts as a "crime of passion" (Del Priore 318). One of the authors of the Penal Code, Batista Pereira, was heavily influenced by the followers of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who offered theoretical support for this view of men as uniquely susceptible to murderous rage (Borelli). For Lombroso, "female crimes are almost always an effect of suggestion," prompted by husbands or lovers, rather than originating in an independent will (*Criminal Man* 344). Moreover, what Lombroso called "the sexual coldness of the normal woman" was an impediment for most women to commit crimes of passion (*The Female Offender* 249).

While the defense of the "crime of passion" was outlawed in the third Penal Code, written in 1940 and still in operation today, cultural attitudes regarding the distinction between male and female infidelity persevered.[3] Even in the 1950s, a group of Brazilian law experts could write:

> When a man violates the conjugal loyalty he does that by futile desire. That doesn't destroy the love of the woman, or the fundament of conjugal society. The woman's adultery, on the contrary, affects the family's internal order, compromising the stability of the conjugal life. The woman's adultery is more serious, not only for the scandal it causes, but also because it hurts the moral values and the law more deeply. There is the danger of her introducing strange children to her home. (L. Oliveira, qtd. in Thomas 22)[4]

Even though this passage dates to decades after the period in which the novels I analyze were written, the conflation of wifely fidelity with the stability of the household is very much a vestige of nineteenth-century sentiment. The criminalization of female adultery stemmed largely from the threat of "strange children" posed by a wife's affairs as well as the increased risk of public scandal.

The idealized figure of the wife at stake in these novels contains and harmonizes "the biological *female*, the obedient *daughter*, the faithful *mate*, the responsible *mother*, and the believing *Christian*" (Tanner 17, emphasis in the original). In this view, when faithful to her husband, a wife promotes a conception of marriage that mediates the natural, the familiar, the social, and even the transcendental (Tanner 16). These several roles collectively assemble a single form of life characterized by patterns of behavior that facilitate the process of nation-building. In the context of Brazil, the conception of the institution of marriage anchored by this ideal image of the faithful wife was also thoroughly racialized. A census from 1872 reveals starkly different rates of marriage among white and mixed-race populations in Rio de Janeiro. Looking at this data discloses the extent to which marriage itself was at that time a largely white institution (Frank 16). Moreover, as we shall see, the perceived threats to the institution of marriage—centered on female access to books and education—were also thoroughly bourgeois in nature, limited in scope to the upper classes that were literate. The rise of female adultery as a topic of literary debate may thus be seen as one consequence of the emergence of the "bourgeois reading public" (Habermas 85).

The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has provided the canonical account of the emergence of the "public sphere," which he relates to the increasing circulation of letters and, eventually, newspapers in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. While Habermas's account of the public sphere describes the exclusion of women from this domain of public debate and discussion, subsequent historians have identified how women, despite their marginalized status, were nevertheless able to participate in the public sphere. Luke Goode writes that "*Structural Transformation* exhibits a tendency, which revisionist historiography cautions against, to portray the exclusion of women from the official public sphere in quasi-

natural terms, that is, as if the exclusion of women flowed seamlessly from an ideology of domesticity keeping them in their place" (Goode 32). This dissertation follows this trend of revising Habermas by identifying the ways in which female literacy facilitated the participation of women in the public sphere. In particular, this account shows how women participated in this male-dominated world as courtesans and as writers of letters that found their way into public venues. Moreover, the last chapter of this dissertation draws attention to how the domestic labor of women sustained (and still sustains) the global economy on which a vibrant public sphere depends. Far from documenting their exclusion from public life, this dissertation shows how the behavior of female characters upsets the categories of public and private by demonstrating how bodies, letters, and forms of labor could circulate between private and public spaces. While the male authors of these novels often sought to educate female readers, these writers were nevertheless participating in a renegotiation of public and private in which women were, even if only as readers, taking an increasingly active part.

With the advent of the bourgeois class in European countries, female readership expanded rapidly, partially because of the additional free time that wives and daughters of the middle and upper classes had available (M. Prado 127). Increases in leisure time among this social stratum led to a "reading revolution" in the eighteenth century. According to Ruth Perry, novels "introduce[d] expectations of romantic thrills and exciting amorous adventures to the isolated, bored, . . . women who were not part of the new expanding capitalism" (xi). Whereas European women in previous eras were generally restricted to reading religious texts (if they read at all), the bourgeois age saw the creation of a "library for women" that consisted of texts on domestic instruction, travelogues, tales, and the first novels ("bibliotecas para mulheres"; M. Prado 128). Simultaneously, the social practice of reading texts out loud gradually shifted to one

of reading independently in silence, transforming reading into an introspective experience that created "a space of autonomy" for women (Perry 69).

In Brazil, the first half of the nineteenth century also witnessed a steep rise in the number of books written for women. The same year that the Portuguese royal family decamped to Brazil in 1808, they established a printing press called the Impressão Real (or "Royal Press"). This press was responsible for publishing the first officially sanctioned books, feuilletons, pamphlets locally in Rio de Janeiro. Among these materials, Maria Prado has identified feuilletons specifically marketed toward a female audience. These works were published despite the fact that women accounted for only around 0.8% of all readers between 1810 and 1818 (122-124). The feuilletons for women printed by the Impressão Real were translations of French texts, including *Paul et Virginie* (1810) by Bernard de Saint-Pierre—a novel that, as we shall see, some fictional characters encountered in this dissertation will also read (M. Prado 130).

In 1827, the French expatriate Pierre Plancher—founder of multiple newspapers in Brazil—created one for women titled *O Espelho Diamantino* (*The Diamond Mirror*). His purpose was to entertain and instruct the "fair sex of the Court" ("[d]o belo sexo desta Corte"; qtd in. M. Prado 126). It was also in 1827 that the first law dedicated to public instruction in Brazil for both genders was approved, aiming "to create schools in every city, village, and places with high population" for boys ("haverão escolas de meninas nas cidades e vilas mais populosas"; "Lei de 15 de Outubro de 1827," Art.11). The same law authorized the creation of schools in cities and larger villages for girls "in which the Presidents in power [in Council], deem this establishment necessary" ("em que os Presidentes em Conselho, julgarem necessário este estabelecimento"; Art.11). While the distribution of boys' schools was based on local populations, girls' schools were contingent on a decision by the government in power. The Law

of 15 October defended that both girls and boys should receive a similar basic instruction, with the exception of geometry for girls, who would instead take courses in "domestic economy" ("economia domestica," Art. 12) As Monica Machado underscores, girls could learn the basics of mathematics, but not geometry—and although the salary was the same for male and female teachers, an exception was made for teachers of geometry, who received more. Since women were excluded from teaching (or learning) this subject, they effectively often received less money for their work (M. Machado).

In terms of the qualifications to become a teacher, even though the basic requirements were the same for men and women, the twelfth article in the law specified that women should be of "recognized honesty" ("reconhecida honestidade," Art. 12). In other words, they had to possess a flawless reputation for moral conduct. Female teachers were often likened to mothers, and their economic independence was thus achieved at the expense of maintaining a public image that reinforced traditional notions of femininity (Zilberman, "Mulher" 135-6).

The explicit union of the figures of teacher and mother were present throughout the century. As part of the drive to increase attendance at schools in the 1870s, the government marketed the school system as an expansion of the "maternal house" ("casa materna") wherein children would be cared with love by women who represented the "mother of the family of the school" ("mãe-de-família da escola"; qtd in. Zilberman, "Mulher" 137). Far from compensating women for this work of being both teacher and supplementary mother, these teachers often struggled to sustain themselves (137). As Elizabeth Marchant has highlighted, female teachers in Latin America were often "understood as *transmitters* rather than *creators* of knowledge" (Marchant 5; emphasis added). Many male writers, as the following chapters make clear, perceived educated women as a threat and advocated for husbands to monitor their wives' moral

instruction. The idea that women were passive absorbers of information not only rendered female literacy a risk factor for moral deviance, but it also inspired male writers to use fiction as a mechanism for promoting moral behavior in their female readers.

In 1879, the Brazilian government allowed women to begin entering higher education. Yet, their participation was limited to medical school and "only few women were able to be enrolled in the last decades of the nineteenth-century" ("…foram bem poucas as que conseguiram ingressar nelas nas ultimas décadas do século XIX"; Hahner 53). It was only in 1887 that the first woman, Rita Lobato Velho Lopes, actually graduated from medical school in Bahia (C. Nascimento).

Class was a determining factor in female access to education. Girls of a higher social strata received a more "sophisticated education" ("formação mais sofisticada") with private instructors and had classes of "French, music, piano, painting, basic mathematics, etiquette, catechism, cooking, and moral principles" ("francês, música, pintura, as quatro operações, e ainda etiqueta, catecismo, culinária e princípios morais"; C. Duarte 15). Women who received such privileged education formed the majority of the new class of female readers that booksellers would start to target. It was members of this group that would author the first writings advocating for equal rights for women.

The size of the contingent of literate women in Brazil can be approximated through an examination of census records. In the first census, conducted in 1872, 19.85% of men and 11.5% of women were literate. Among slaves, less than 1% knew how to read and write (qtd. in Duarte 14). This percentage did not significantly increase by the next census in 1890. Indeed, according to Ferraro and Kreidlow, the 1890 rate of illiteracy earned Brazil the title of "world champion of illiteracy" ("campeao mundial do analfabetismo"; 182).[5]

Although they remained small in absolute numbers, the increase in female literacy was enough to produce a crescendo of publishing activity in Brazil. Constância Duarte has compiled an astonishing assemblage of 143 magazines and newspapers from the nineteenth century that either featured writing by women or which were directed to female audiences. While most of these were published in the cities of Brazil, three were produced abroad (in New York, Lisbon and Paris) (8-9). As this explosion of writing by and for women testifies, women "immediately took over reading which in turn led them to writing and criticism" ("imediatamente se apoderaram da leitura, que por sua vez as levou à escrita e à crítica"; C. Duarte 2). The *Jornal das Senhoras* (RJ) in particular became a popular newspaper that contained articles by women during its run from 1852 to 1855 (C. Duarte 12). In its pages, there was a constant appeal for a more consistent instruction for girls, and calls for the improvement of women's quality of life. The target audience was not restricted to women, but also included men, aiming to convince them to "accept (and support)" measures promoting gender equality. Duarte also highlights the newspapers *O Bello Sexo* (1862 in Rio de Janeiro) and *O Sexo Feminino* (published first in 1873 in Minas Gerais and then transferred to Rio de Janeiro in 1875) for their continuous advocacy of increased female education (12).

It was in *O Sexo Feminino* that the newspaper's founder, Francisca Senhorinha de Motta Diniz, published a landmark text entitled "What do we want?" (*"O que queremos?"*) on the subject of female emancipation. The text articulated the reasons that women had for desiring educational opportunities. She writes that women need "true education":

> that we have heretofore not received so that we can also educate our children; / We want instruction to learn about our rights, and use them in due time; / We want to know the couple's business, so that we can manage them well if we have to; / Finally, we want to

> know what we do and for what reason; / We want to be partners with our husbands, not slaves; / We want to know how to do business outside the home; / All we don't want is to continue to live deceived.
>
> . . . Queremos a educação verdadeira que não se nos tem dado a fim de que possamos educar também nossos filhos; / Queremos a instrução pura para conhecermos os nossos direitos, e deles usarmos em ocasião oportuna; / Queremos conhecer os negócios de nosso casal, para bem administramo-los quando a isso formos obrigadas; / Queremos enfim saber o que fazemos, o porquê e pelo quê das coisas; / Queremos ser companheiras de nossos maridos, e não escravas; / Queremos saber o como se fazem negócios fora de casa; / Só o que não queremos é continuar a viver enganadas. (Diniz, qtd. in C. Duarte 263)[6]

Despite its radical tone, Diniz's list of demands was more or less compatible with the vision of a unified teacher-mother figure being advocated by the state. Her eagerness for women to participate in business was also compatible with an emerging capitalist sensibility that equated individual freedom with an ability to take part in the free market. Nevertheless, the call for gender equality in the text was evidence of a growing movement for women's rights in Brazil.

If the publication of books and newspapers for literate women reflected their growing desire to participate in the public sphere, this desire also manifested in the increasing use of letters as a media for women to communicate. Although there were restrictions on female mobility, letters written by women could circulate more freely between spaces. Letter writing was a way for women to fulfill familial and social expectations (such as answering invitations, engaging with the future husband while maintaining physical distance, etc.), but the practice also created opportunities for women to contact potential lovers.[7]

Many literary critics have identified how the use of letters mediated the private and public spheres, often bringing them into scandalous contact. Although typically addressed to a single recipient, and intended for that addressed audience alone, letters were liable to fall into other hands. As Catherine Delafield explains: "[c]rucially there was already a planned instability within the written text because it could circulate further to both intended and unintended audiences" (*Women's Letters* 2). As letters represented one of the few means by which women of the time period could articulate their inner lives, the revelations contained therein were made under an assumption of privacy. Yet, precisely because of this perceived sense of relatively uninhibited disclosure, letters exercised a kind of voyeuristic fascination on the reading public. As Perry notes of eighteenth-century England: "Booksellers often advertised the fact that a set of letters had not been intended for publication because privacy, like virginity, invites violation" (70). The same sense of privacy that had encouraged the writing of the letters in the first place made them more likely to be sought out by other readers. Moreover, the knowledge that readers would seek out these vicarious glimpses of women's thoughts incentivized booksellers to exaggerate or fabricate letter compilations of this kind. The line between authentic and fictional epistolary writing was often "deliberately blurred" in this manner (Perry 79).

The enduring association between women and letter writing traditionally resulted in a characterization of epistolary fiction as a "'female' genre, practiced by and most suitable for women authors" (Salsini 6). But letters were also the preferred communication medium for romance and courtship; and, as such, they required participation from both men and women. Elaborate letter writing rituals and rules of etiquette accompanied the formation of relationships. As Alessandra El Far writes of such rituals in Brazil during the nineteenth century, "after the first demonstrations of affection and interest [during a courtship], there was an expectation for a letter

to be sent to the father, formalizing the request for marriage" ("Lovers' notes" 3). Men thus also had to learn the specificities of epistolary style; and there were several popular manuals for instructing them in the composition of pleasing love letters, such as the *Mensageiro dos amantes ou carcás de frechas amorosas, Counselor of Lovers,* and the *Manual of Gallant Letters* (El Far 3-4, her translation).

The exchange of romantic notes and letters occurred in less formal circumstances as well. El Far relates the story of an English female traveler to Brazil in the 1820s who is shocked to learn that "there were at least ten ladies in that room holding notes (*bilhete*) that they would slip into the hand of their heartthrobs" ("havia naquela sala pelo menos dez senhoras providas do bilhete que escorregariam na mão de seus galãs"; qtd. in El Far, "Uma etnografia" 409). The women writing these notes were both single and married. In another article, El Far analyzes lovers' notes (*bilhetes de namoro*) published in the *Jornal do Commercio* throughout the 1870s. Observing that lovers could not always trust slaves and messenger boys to deliver messages discreetly, the *Jornal do Commercio* decided to sell space in "the classified section, to those who wanted to publish personal messages, signed only with initials" (El Far, "Lovers' notes" 5). Here we see how certain media technologies—letters and newspapers—combined with increased female literacy, facilitated romantic connections, especially those pursued outside of the socially sanctioned methods of courtship. The *bilhetes de namoro* were means for circumventing the chaperones and other mechanisms of supervision that regulated the meetings between unmarried members of the opposite sex. For married women, meanwhile, these notes were helpful tools for committing adultery.

Alongside the increasing popularity and importance of letter writing, the epistolary novel came to prominence in the nineteenth century—as did the presence of letters as plot devices

within novels. Delafield describes the relationship between letters and novels as "symbiotic" (*Women's Letters* 10). While the presence of letters added a veneer of authenticity to novels, the popularity of epistolary novels granted a romance to the act of letter writing (see Perry 70).

Epistolary novels were also responsive to emerging notions of romantic love, and helped popularize the idea of the letter as a vector of attraction. The increased sense of realism established by means of the use of letters was often put to use to depict an idealized image of romantic love. As Perry writes, "epistolary novels perpetuated the myth of romance in everyday life by telling such stories as if they were true" (167). In these cases, the ability of letters to externalize private feelings endowed them with an evidentiary quality which was, ironically, put in the service of producing an unrealistic vision of romantic love.

In nineteenth-century France, the perceived connection between letter writing and women diminished the stature of epistolary fiction as a genre. In a short entry in his Dictionary of Accepted Ideas (*Le Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues*), titled "Epistolary Genre" (Genre Épistolaire), Gustave Flaubert facetiously describes this kind of writing as: "A style of genre reserved exclusively for women" ("Genre de style exclusivement réservé aux femmes"; translated by Barzun 35). Flaubert's statement puts in condensed form a widely held assumption about epistolary fiction, which was seen as inferior to other genres precisely because of its association with female writing. In a similar register, Laura Salsini writes: "when the male critical establishment coupled women's writing with the epistolary mode it soon became devalued as a genre" (7).[8] In the hierarchy of literary genres, much like in the hierarchy of professions today, the participation of women led to a depreciation of perceived value. Not only was the literary marketplace affected by the rise of female readers, but the activity of women writers—particularly their growing use of letters—affected the prestige of certain forms of

fiction. While these remarks have predominantly pertained to Europe, the same tendencies could be seen in nineteenth-century Brazil, where the reading and writing habits of women became a political flashpoint.

The link established in nineteenth-century fiction between female literacy and transgressive female sexuality cannot be disentangled from the social, political, and economic transformations that reshaped Brazilian society during this time. In placing the debate about adultery in fiction in this wider social context, this dissertation makes an intervention in the scholarly literature examining the relationship between the nation and fictional representations of the family. A key point of reference in this field is Doris Sommer's book *Foundational Fictions* (1984). Sommer claims that novels in nineteenth-century Latin America functioned as "national allegories" that linked the success of individual families to that of the emerging Latin American states. Sommer argues that these novels encouraged a vision of new nations as populated by homogeneous families that, altogether, would produce a harmonious social order. However, as Nathalie Bouzaglo points out in *Ficción Adulterada* (2016), at roughly the same time that the "national allegorical" novels analyzed by Sommer were being written, there was, simultaneously, a popularization of the topic of adultery in literature. Far from presenting a model of the family as a harmonious social unit, these novels featuring adultery presented the family as a potentially unstable entity implicated in asymmetrical power relations between genders that threatened the integrity of the nation. As Bouzaglo explains, the figure of the adulteress corrupted the order imagined by Sommer's national allegories. The adulteress produced uncertainty regarding the paternity of children, the viability of patriarchal norms, and the status of women as property. As such, the adulteress threatened the imagined social order that underpinned attempts at nation-building carried out through literature.

Building on the works of Sommer and Bouzaglo, this dissertation focuses more narrowly on the connection established by male authors between female literacy and adultery and how the phenomenon of the literate woman was deemed a major threat to the stability of the family and the nation. In nineteenth-century fiction, writing, reading, and cheating are acts that catalyze one another. The frequent co-incidence in fiction of reading and wifely adultery casts suspicion on the very idea of female education, which in many novels is treated as a gateway to women's moral degradation. In tracing the transatlantic trajectory of this association between reading and female promiscuity, this dissertation documents how the adulteress emerged as a threatening symptom of widespread changes that undermined the traditional family.

The first chapter of this dissertation introduces the category of courtesan novels—that is, novels about the professional lovers who played a crucial role in the nineteenth century as symbols of female modernity. Courtesans could experience financial independence and social mobility but were not considered suitable partners for marriage. Nevertheless, turn-of-the-century medical professionals believed courtesans could help preserve healthy marriages by relieving excess male sexual energies. In this sense, courtesans were excluded from the same institution of marriage which they were credited with maintaining. I analyze how European authors often depicted courtesans as readers of courtesan novels, a phenomenon which produced a chain of intertextual references that José de Alencar, a canonical Brazilian author, continued in his efforts to create a national Brazilian literature. Alencar saw his mission as educating female readers to uphold traditional morality by abstaining from sex outside marriage. Despite this moralizing goal, however, Alencar's works were censored and scandalized Brazilians with their depictions of sexually wayward women. As the remaining three chapters of the dissertation further demonstrate, novels of wifely adultery often include female characters who are not only

readers of romantic novels (including those about courtesans), but they also dream about enjoying a life with sexual and economic freedom.

The second chapter documents the migration of the wifely adultery novel from France to Portugal to Brazil. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856) establishes an association between female literacy and female adultery that will become a trademark of the genre. Emma Bovary experiences intense frustration due to the discrepancy between her actual married life and the fantasies she had nurtured after reading romantic novels. Eça de Queiroz will perpetuate this link between reading and cheating in *O Primo Basílio* (*Cousin Bazilio*, 1878) while also intervening in a debate, sparked in France with the publication of Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s *L'Homme-Femme* (1872), about the right of a husband to kill his adulterous wife. In Brazil, Machado de Assis's critique of *O Primo Basílio* will foreshadow his own attempt to remake the adultery novel in *Dom Casmurro* (1899). But in looking to Machado's early works *Ressurreição* (*Resurrection*, 1872) and *Iaiá Garcia* (1878), we can already see how his identification of suspicion as a threat to marriage—rather than female literacy—already diverges from the common conventions of the genre.

Chapter three consists of analyses of a selection of Brazilian novels depicting wifely adultery. Novels studied in this chapter include the classic *Dom Casmurro* by Machado de Assis as well as works by lesser-known writers such as Lúcio de Mendonça and Valentim Magalhães. The crisis of marriage depicted in these novels is intertwined with literacy as female characters articulate their complaints against gender inequality through letters while intercepted letters also reveal their infidelity to their husbands. Letters are presented in these novels as a form of media that mixes the public and private spheres. Not only do letters help women make contact with potential lovers, but they also serve as records of affairs that can endure beyond the

transgressions themselves. These novels also raise the question of culpability as many male characters blame themselves for the sexual transgressions of their wives. In these cases, female education is seen either as a threat to female morality or as a responsibility of husbands in order to safeguard their wives' virtue. Together, the works examined in this chapter demonstrate the different ways in which female literacy posed a threat to the institution of marriage. However, while Machado de Assis draws on the association between letters and wifely adultery in *Dom Casmurro*, he departs from his predecessors by emphasizing the role of the male imagination in undermining the stability of the family.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation contrasts the male depictions of female adultery with a novel written by a woman, Júlia Lopes de Almeida. In this chapter, I discuss Almeida's novel *A Falência* (1901), which portrays the affair of the wife of a wealthy coffee producer against the background of a stock market crash. By closely reading this novel, I analyze how Almeida draws attention to the invisibility of the female labor that sustains the financial economy and to the fundamental role played by illusions and fantasies in both adultery and stock market speculation. This chapter derives a critique of turn-of-the-century sexual norms and financial capitalism from Almeida's work and demonstrates how an emphasis on female solidarity distinguishes *A Falência* from the adultery novels written by men.

After close analysis of nine Brazilian novels published between 1862 and 1901, as well as novels from France and Portugal, I conclude the dissertation with remarks on the role played by women in destabilizing the boundary between private and public. As courtesans, letter writers, adulteresses, and laborers, women exerted a profound influence on the public sphere even as they were often excluded from it. I argue that the fictional female characters studied here, whether as readers or as sexual beings, did indeed illustrate a threat to the institution of

marriage. Their transgressive acts, carried out with books or with bodies, presented a challenge to a social structure that systematically denied women equality. Given the injustice of marriage as it existed in the nineteenth century, these transgressive characters' acts can be read as forms of civil disobedience that enacted female educational and sexual freedom.

Chapter I – The Femme Fatale and the Epistolary Form: From French Courtesan Novels to José de Alencar's *Lucíola* (1862)

This chapter examines how the Brazilian writer José de Alencar (1829–77) reinvents the European literary figure of the courtesan in his 1862 novel *Lucíola*. In this novel, the main character, Lúcia, criticizes the behavior of the female protagonist of Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s novel *La dame aux Camélias* (1848). By focusing on this critique, I claim, we can see how Alencar positions himself relative to his European predecessors. Moreover, Lúcia's critique perpetuates a tradition of blaming women for their deviant sexuality. That Lúcia's criticism is not of Dumas, the male author, but rather of Marguerite, the protagonist, appears to stem from Lúcia's failure to appreciate the fictionality of the text and a confusion of the novel for reality. Alencar uses his female character to criticize female behavior, and, as we shall see, he also uses his novel as a tool to cultivate bourgeois sexual attitudes in his readers—a goal consistent with Alencar's mission to reinforce a patriarchal sexual morality.

Alencar's portrayal of courtesans simultaneously draws on and departs from an inherited tradition of French courtesan novels. Courtesans became popular subjects in European fiction during the nineteenth century because of the celebrity of many real-life courtesans and their association with modernity, a glamorous lifestyle, and relative sexual freedom.[9] Due to their upward social mobility, courtesans symbolized the possibilities of modern urban life, providing women with a model for how to live outside the confines of marriage. At the same time, in a number of fictional works of the second half of the nineteenth century they were often portrayed as femmes fatales, dangerous figures who could debase honorable men and undermine the moral foundations of society. Somewhat paradoxically, courtesans were also frequently depicted as

defenders of the institution of marriage—despite being socially excluded from it—even to the point of having to sacrifice their own romantic relationships in order to safeguard the bourgeois family.

As I will show in the following pages, the critical reception of *Lucíola* showcases the double standards of Brazilian men of letters, who objected to the immorality of depictions of courtesans in Brazil while celebrating the same subject matter in works set in France. I argue that Alencar adopted an epistolary form and deployed a female pseudonym in order to increase the verisimilitude of his text while also distancing himself from its potentially controversial subject matter—a decision certainly informed by the censorship of his earlier play about a courtesan, *As asas de um Anjo* (*The Wings of an Angel*, 1858). Through a reading of Alencar's intellectual memoir (*Como e por que sou romancista* [*How and why I am a novelist*], written in 1873 and published posthumously in 1893), I further address the contradiction between his use of courtesans as main characters and his stated goal of creating a pedagogical national literature. Despite ostensibly acting as warnings to female readers of the dangers of forsaking patriarchal sexual norms, fictional courtesans nevertheless articulate opinions and criticisms of dominant ideas of love and gender relations. In both the European courtesan novels and Alencar's later works, there is an established link between female readership and female sexuality. This chapter explores how Alencar adapted this feature of courtesan novels to the Brazilian context in his project of creating a national literature that would cultivate proper sexual mores.

In the next section, I contextualize nineteenth-century courtesans. Professional lovers, they symbolized female modernity while simultaneously upholding the well-being of society. Courtesans were considered necessary for the release of excess male sexual energies. Thus,

while they were not permitted to marry, they played a pivotal role in upholding the traditional institutions of marriage, family, and procreation.

Courtesans in the French Tradition

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe witnessed social, political, and economic transformations following the relative fall of the aristocracy and the ascendance of the bourgeoisie as well as the increasing importance of urban centers. A renewed emphasis on the individual promoted by capitalism opened new possibilities for social mobility. Among these changes was the emergence of new professions, including a new class of female prostitutes known as courtesans.

Courtesans were more privileged than common prostitutes. Not only did they provoke sexual fantasies, but they were also educated in music and literature and even managed their own finances (Hickman 2). Unlike prostitutes, who rarely had any choice in clients, courtesans could seduce men in the highest social positions (from kings to aristocrats to nouveaux riches), and their freedom was a source of envy among women. Nevertheless, they occupied an unstable financial position and were not recognized as respectful social figures or considered eligible candidates for marriage.

Despite their exclusion from the institution of marriage, courtesans were necessary for its preservation. They offered sexual pleasure to men who saw in marriage the exclusive aim of procreation. Moreover, they also satisfied the sexual desire of men who thought that they had to protect the virginity of young and single women waiting for an honorable marriage. As Peter Brooks summarizes in *Body Work*, "[t]he counterpart to the male *viveur* is the courtesan, whether

actress, prostitute, or other form of kept woman to whom the patriarchal sexual economy has assigned the role of arousing and satisfying male desire. The courtesan's life is a brief flare of glory" (69). Because their lives were typically characterized by excess and vice, courtesans often died at a young age from diseases that ultimately also endangered their male lovers. While they represented a sexual escape for men, courtesans thus also came to symbolize the danger of contamination through venereal disease and moral corruption.

As courtesans had to be easily accessible, they inhabited modern urban centers such as Paris, where they circulated more or less freely through public spaces (e.g., streets, theatres, opera houses, restaurants, salons). Urban population growth afforded proximity between bodies of different origins (Nagelkerke 14). The courtesans' widespread availability, combined with a lack of public health infrastructure, meant that they were often associated with corruption and death. They were seen as femmes fatales both for their power of seduction and for their role in spreading fatal venereal diseases. According to Nico Nagelkerke, "sexual subjects were strictly taboo in decent society despite the prevalence of prostitution. . . . Perhaps fear of sexually transmitted infections (STI), notably syphilis, and unwanted pregnancies, but also a loss of one's social status, reputation and position, made people afraid of sexuality" (14). The courtesan thus provoked not only desire but also fear—a fear of facing financial ruin and disease, and a fear of falling in love with a woman unworthy of marriage.

The association of courtesans with femme fatales is expressed everywhere in nineteenth-century literature. The femme fatale, "the seducer who destroys men," ("seductrice qui detruit les hommes" Horvath 123; my translation), is best—and perhaps first—represented by Manon Lescaut, the eponymous protagonist of Abbé Prévost's 1731 novel. As Angela Scholar summarizes, the story is "a *coup de foudre*, of the fatal passion of a young man for a girl he

meets in an inn yard and with whom, in order to save her from the convent, he elopes" (ii). The novel is the tale of "their difficulties in making ends meet in Paris, of the wealthy lovers she takes to remedy this situation, and of the deceits they practice against these lovers, which lead them into crime, imprisonment, and finally exile" (ii). Prévost's depiction of immoral behavior by "people of standing" resulted in his book being censored twice, in 1733 and in 1735 (ii). Scholar describes the downfall of the protagonist, Des Grieux, in the following terms: he "is an aristocrat, a young man of highest rank, character, and prospects who ruins himself for a courtesan and, worse still, justifies so blatant a betrayal of his class by asserting not only the irresistible power of sexual passion but the claims of sentiment over those of social convention" (ii).

The archetypical literary courtesan, Manon Lescaut, then, is a figure who associates with men of a high social class but who threatens this same social class by seducing an aristocrat who debases his noble station by pursuing her. By giving in to his passion for Manon, Des Grieux threatens the class solidarity of the aristocracy. Of noble origins, Des Grieux ruins himself, refuses his father's guidance, steals, and commits murder, all in order to provide himself and Manon with a luxurious lifestyle. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to him, Manon prostitutes herself in order to secure the life she wishes to enjoy in Paris.

One century after its publication, Prévost's novel reappeared in the title of the twenty-eighth chapter of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*,1830). The protagonist, Julien Sorel, attends a balletic opera performance of *Manon Lescaut*.[10] Sorel attends the performance with Madame de Fervaques, a devout woman whom he pretends to seduce in order to provoke jealousy in the woman he truly loves. At the opera, according to the narrator, "Julien spoke of the ballet of *Manon Lescaut* in the most enthusiastic terms. His only reason for talking

in that strain was the fact that he thought it insignificant" (Stendhal 325). Madame de Fervaques, in turn, observes that the ballet is "much inferior to the novel of the same name, by Abbé Prévost, on which it was based" (Stendhal 325). She continues:

> Among the books in this immoral and dangerous category . . . it is said that *Manon Lescaut* occupies a very high place. The weaknesses and well-deserved anguish of an assuredly guilty heart, it is said, are there drawn with a truthfulness that attains to profundity—which did not keep your Bonaparte from proclaiming, at Saint Helena, that it was a novel written for servants. (Samuel 325)
>
> Dans ce genre immoral et dangereux, *Manon Lescaut* continua la maréchale, occupe, dit-on, un des premiers rangs. Les faiblesses et les angoisses méritées d'un cœur bien criminel y sont, dit-on, dépeintes avec une vérité qui a de la profondeur, ce qui n'empêche pas votre Bonaparte de prononcer à Sainte-Hélène que c'est un roman écrit pour des laquais. (Stendhal)

Manon Lescaut is, in Stendhal's novel, an object of political and cultural commentary. Even the religious Madame de Fervaques is aware of the ballet's source material and Napoleon's critique of the novel—although, according to Gilbert Martineau, it was one of his favorite books. Indeed, Napoleon was known for reading sentimental books, and it is unclear whether he actually criticized Prévost's novel or whether Stendhal (an admirer of Napoleon) represents him as having done so (Martineau 125). What is clear is that the story of *Manon Lescaut* inspired commentary and adaptations long after its publication, pointing to the enduring fascination of the French reading public with courtesans.

Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* marks the beginning of the long intertextual afterlife of Prévost's novel. But it was Alfred Musset's poem *Namouna* (1832) that canonized and

reinterpreted the figure of Manon as a femme fatale. As Scholar has suggested, with Musset's poem Manon is transformed from "a girl of common birth, witty and full-loving, streetwise rather than mysterious" into a being that achieves the "status of a myth, that of the *femme fatale*, the bewitching temptress, seductive as a siren, enigmatic as a sphinx" (xxix).

At the same time, the figure of the courtesan also came to encompass "angelic" or innocent characteristics, such as a feeling of regret, as one who is victimized by men. According to this new characterization, the "courtesan [is] reclaimed for virtue and constancy by love, to the point where—conveniently—she sacrifices herself for the young man she has led astray" (Scholar xxix). Puccini's operatic adaptation of *Manon Lescaut* from 1893, for example, minimizes her infidelity, leading her to appear incidentally rather than deliberately unfaithful to Des Grieux. Thus, one century after the publication of Prévost's novel, Manon had been transformed from an active force of financial and social mobility into a threat to moral values and class solidarity and, finally, into a submissive woman, victimized by men, who regrets her deviant life and ultimately searches for her lover and society's forgiveness.

The literary figure of the courtesan reached its highest fame and canonical form with Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s 1848 novel *La Dame aux Camélias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*) and its subsequent stage adaptations. According to David Coward, "Dumas turned the novel, which he wrote in a month, into a play, which took him a week" (vii). The play was first performed in 1852, when "it started its career as the greatest dramatic success of the century" (vii). One year later, Verdi's *La Traviata*, based on Dumas's novel, debuted in Venice, also becoming "an immense success" (vii). The story is based on the life of the famous courtesan Marie Duplessis (Coward ix), who passed away in 1847 at the age of twenty-three. Dumas's novel depicts courtesan Marguerite Gautier (based on Duplessis), who falls in love with Armand Duval and

renounces her other lovers in order to be completely faithful to him. However, their relationship is not accepted by society and ultimately brings shame to his family. Marguerite breaks off the relationship after Armand's father speaks to her, and she later dies of tuberculosis.

Referring to Dumas, as well as the Goncourt brothers and Zola, Courtney Sullivan argues that these authors,

> centered their ambivalence to changes brought about by capitalism, modernity, revolution as well as evolving gender roles on the figure of the prostitute, fantasizing that these problems could be eradicated through her destruction, containment or punishment. Only in keeping the actions of the marginalized prostitute in check could some sense of order be restored. (3)

Sullivan argues that Marguerite's death is evidence of a general hostility toward prostitutes by nineteenth-century male authors. Despite their fascination with courtesans, and their frequent recourse to using them as characters, Dumas and other authors viewed them as an embodiment of negative modern social trends that needed to be erased. *La Dame aux Camélias* is simultaneously a courtesan novel and also a triumphant tale of the bourgeois family and the institution of marriage, insofar as Marguerite dies and Armand's family's reputation is protected. Traditional social values are reestablished at the novel's conclusion at the expense of the courtesan, who, after offering joy and sexual pleasure, is excluded from society.

In the eyes of Armand's father (who represents the bourgeois perspective), Marguerite is a femme fatale whose powers of seduction bring shame and ruin to the life of an honorable man who cannot resist her charm and beauty. Yet, by breaking up with Armand, Marguerite proves to be a self-sacrificing angel. She transforms from the stereotyped professional lover who destroys the life of a man to the sacrificial figure who dies in order to protect the bourgeois family. In

recognition of this shift, Armand describes her as "an angel" after he reads a letter from her in which she explains that she is ending the relationship at his father's request (20).

Nineteenth-century novels about courtesans frequently became characters in their own right, promiscuously circulating between and within the fictional worlds of subsequent novels. At the beginning of *La Dame aux Camélias*—which takes place chronologically after Marguerite's death—the narrator buys Marguerite's used copy of *Manon Lescaut*. And, as I will discuss, *La Dame aux Camélias* itself plays a decisive role in the plot of Alencar's *Lucíola.*

Despite the similarities between the three novels, a key difference separates Alencar's courtesan novel from its French predecessors. The narrative structure of the two French novels is similar in that they both feature a male lover who tells the story of his passionate affair to the narrator, a man of similar social class. As critics such as Julia F. Costich[11] and Julia V. Douthwaite[12] have remarked, this storytelling takes place within a specific social stratum (that of upper-class men) and is catalyzed by the exchange of money for information. Although the content of both novels is dominated by female characters who exchange sex for money, their form is driven by male characters who exchange stories for money. While both courtesans die at the end of their novels, as a kind of justice for the sins of their transgressive sexuality, the male lovers who tell their stories survive and rejoin society without suffering any punishment.

In contrast, Alencar chooses to relate his courtesan story in an epistolary form, through letters written by a man to a female addressee. His decision to adopt this structure and present the novel as if it were compiled and published by the female addressee could have been a response to critical accusations about the immorality of his earlier dramatic work about courtesan, *As Asas de um Anjo* (1858). By publishing *Lucíola* under the pseudonym G. M., the initials of a supposedly respectable lady, Alencar preserved himself from charges of immorality.

In the sections that follow, I will show how Alencar's defense of the morality of his work occasions a comparison of the uneven treatment granted to French and Brazilian works about courtesans. His claims about the embedded morality of his works, however, must first be contextualized against his own turbulent life story, which almost certainly affected his views on sex and marriage—views that inform the moralistic perspective that infuses *Lucíola*.

From Illegitimate Son to the Father of Brazilian Literature

José Martiniano Pereira de Alencar was born in 1829 in Ceará, a province in the northeast of Brazil. As Lira Neto notes in a recent biography, Alencar was born into a tumultuous family that was frequently involved in political and moral controversies and that owned vast lands in Ceará. Alencar's grandmother dona Bárbara had a close relationship with the priest Miguel Carlos da Silva Sadanha—so close in fact that gossipers speculated that one of her sons, Martiniano (Alencar's father), was indeed the fruit of this illicit relationship. Martiniano would later become a priest himself as well as one of the leaders of the Pernambuco Revolution of 1817, a political uprising where Brazilians tried to emancipate themselves from Portugal. After the revolution and the political turmoil, Martiniano became intimate with his cousin Ana Josefina de Alencar, and they eventually fathered José de Alencar and seven other sons (Neto 43). Martiniano never tried to hide his illicit relationship and made sure to recognize and legally register his sons with Ana Josefina. In contrast, Alencar was particularly sensitive to issues of sex, sexuality, and marriage. According to Neto, he was known as "the son of the priest," an insult generally targeted at those who were born out of wedlock—and indeed, not only Alencar's father but also, likely, his grandfather were priests.

Alencar's literary memoir *Como e por que sou romancista* (*How and Why I am a Novelist*, written in 1873) uses the same epistolary form and exhibits similar concerns as *Lucíola.* In the memoir, he describes his trajectory as a writer who chose to publish novels that would cater to modern tastes.[13] By 1873, four years before his death, he had already published twenty-one novels, seven plays, and several chronicles (collected in *Ao correr da pena*), in addition to other critical texts on literature and politics. Although Alencar does not mention the potentially scandalous aspects of his own family history in his memoir, he does delve into the preoccupation with marriage that is everywhere in his fictional works. In addition, he implicitly reiterates a pedagogical concern about reading and readers' expectations, as when he relates his old habit of reading aloud to his "good mother," moving from letters and newspapers to the "volumes of a small romantic bookstore" (9).[14] Alencar recounts the excitement of his mother and her friends when he read these books to them, and I suggest that this experience of reading aloud and receiving the audience's reactions and comments was constitutive for his own development as a writer. As Andreia Carneiro and Adeítalo Pinho claim, since Alencar wrote and published novels in serialized form, he was able to transform the story according to his readers' reactions, indicating a recursive relationship between his writing and his readers' reception of his texts. As Frederico Barbosa explains, Alencar even changed the destiny of some characters after complaints from his cousins and sisters: "[h]e wrote listening to his readers. He knew very well what the audience wanted: adventure and love, action and emotion" ("[e]screvia ouvindo seus leitores. Sabia, portanto muito bem o que o público queria: aventura e amor, ação e emoção"; qtd. in Carneiro 73).

Alencar's affinity for the epistolary form extended through his career, beginning with his first novel, published in 1856 as a feuilleton. In fact, four out of Alencar's first five novels—

Cinco Minutos (1856), *A Viuvinha* (1857), *Lucíola* (1862), and *Diva* (1864)—take the form of long letters. He also adopted the epistolary form in later novels, and in some instances (as with *Sonhos d'ouro* [1872]) preceded or followed the novel with a letter.

In the late 1850s, Alencar invested much time and attention in writing plays, as part of an attempt to create a national dramatic repertoire that could stand on its own against plays received from abroad. Cristina Bezerra argues that "theatre was largely responsible for the celebration of Alencar's name," and that critics viewed Alencar's plays as satisfying an ideal of the theatre as an educational space ("o teatro foi um grande responsável pela celebrização do nome de Alencar"; 22). After the police censored his play *As Asas de um Anjo* in 1858, Alencar entered a two-year period of silence, in which he did not publish a single line. He eventually returned with the publication of the novel *Lucíola* in 1862, the first in a series titled "Women's Profile" ("Perfil de Mulher") written under the pseudonym G. M.

Critical responses to *Lucíola* at the time of its publication were sparse, perhaps due to the fact that it was published under a pseudonym. Only after the publication of *Diva* (1864), the second novel of the "Women's Profile" series, did some newspaper articles refer, retrospectively, to *Lucíola*. Over the following decades, and mostly after the death of Alencar, his oeuvre became a part of the nation's literary legacy. Later critics often read his work as the romantic expression of a local Brazilian spirit. Antonio Candido would even call Alencar our "little Balzac."

Although it did not attain the status and popularity of *Senhora* (the third book of the series "Women's Profile") or of his indigenist works (*O Guarani*, *Iracema*, and *Ubirajara*), *Lucíola* continues to be widely read, mostly under the prism of reflections on literary nationalism or Brazilian romanticism. Since 2000, scholars have also situated *Lucíola* in relation to patriarchal society through an examination of female characters' clothes (Waller), the contrast

between “public women” and “private women” in the nineteenth century (Arruda), the discourse of love and prejudice in the novel (Miranda Filho), and the way in which the character Lúcia can be compared to other protagonists (Santos). Further, and important given my focus on fictional female readers, Valéria de Marco and Maria Moraes Pinto have both studied the role of the reader and the action of reading in *Lucíola* and Alencar’s other texts. Marco sees reading in *Lucíola* as an intentional practice of intertextuality that Alencar adopts in order to scaffold a national literature on a dialogue with foreign models. Pinto, observing the author’s oeuvre, concludes that Alencar presents female characters as readers to model practices of reading for his actual readers.

The Fallen Angel

An important intertext of *Lucíola*, predating it by four years, is Alencar’s 1858 play *As Asas de um Anjo*. This play tells the story of a fallen woman who becomes a courtesan and, in the end, redeems herself; moreover, the play also presents criticisms and metaphors that Alencar would reframe in the novel. In both, Alencar constantly refers to the relationship between sex and money—or the economics of love—and presents characters who criticize the hypocrisy of society and the double standards between male and female mores. Moreover, both protagonists are readers of novels. Importantly, however, the courtesan in the play returns to the traditional family realm, while the courtesan in the novel dies excluded from society, an alteration that seems to manifest Alencar’s response to the criticism and censorship that his play faced. In writing the novel, Alencar follows the established model of the European courtesan novel, wherein the female protagonist dies for the sake of the family. By adjusting the ending, Alencar

thus perhaps sought to mitigate the provocative nature of his subject matter and avoid further censorship.

As Asas de um Anjo was Alencar's fourth play. His theatrical career began in 1857 with *O Rio de Janeiro: Verso e Reverso* (*Verse and Reverse*, 1857), which was acclaimed for its originality and patriotic themes. It was with his second play that Alencar fulfilled his dream of drawing the royal family to the Teatro Ginásio Dramático to watch *O Demônio Familiar* (*The Family Demon*), a play that João Roberto Faria identifies as the "first realist Brazilian comedy" ("primeira comédia realista brasileira" 55) and it was an instant success. However, the follow-up play, *O Crédito* (*The Credit*, 1857), was criticized as a mere copy of French models. After this failure, Alencar dedicated a last play to the Ginásio Dramático theatre house: *As Asas de um Anjo*. The play opened in May 1858 and closed the following month, when police banned it, ostensibly to protect public morality. The play depicts Carolina, a young lady who runs away with a lover, leaving her parents mortified and shamed. After two years, Carolina realizes that her life is far from promised and decides to become a courtesan, leaving behind her daughter and enjoying new lovers and luxurious gifts. However, her opulent lifestyle is unsustainable, and she falls into misery. Her cousin Luis, who has always loved her, rescues her by offering her a symbolic marriage (a legal bond that would give her the right to her daughter and yet not necessitate sexual interaction with Luis). Carolina is, ultimately, an angel: seduced by a life of moral corruption, she feels remorse for having deviated from traditional sexual norms. Even if the play concludes with the return of Carolina to the family unit, her asexual marriage nevertheless serves as a punishment for and a constant reminder of her past transgressions.

Although the initial reception of the play was generally positive, it was banned from theatres in short order. This closing followed complaints from a few conservative critics who did

not condone Carolina's final redemption. They also harshly criticized the scenes where her father, extremely drunk—he fell into alcoholism after her elopement—seems to approach Carolina as any other prostitute, without recognizing her as his daughter.

The backlash against Alencar's play is particularly surprising given the popular reception accorded to the theatrical adaptation of Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*, which was first staged in Rio de Janeiro in 1856, two years before *As Asas de um Anjo*. According to Bruna Rondinelli, critics defended the idea that theatre had the role of educating society, and most considered the foreign play to exhibit noble virtues since Marguerite's sacrifice of her love for Armand upheld traditional family values (122). Spectators and critics also appreciated that the story was supposedly based on the real life of Marie Duplessis (Rondinelli 122). In an article from 1856, Sousa Ferreira highly recommended the play for its lessons for each gender and every age: "Go and listen to *The Lady of Camelias*, and perhaps gazing deep into the abyss, on those who lost their honor, the horrible struggle, this nameless torment of poor Marguerite, perhaps horror will draw you back into the heart of the family and of virtue" ("Ide ouvir *A Dama das Camélias*, e talvez contemplando no fundo do abismo, sobre cuja honra perdeis, essa luta horrível, esse tormento sem nome da mísera Margarida, talvez o horror vos faça recuar até o seio da família e da virtude"; qtd. in Rondinelli 113).

Alencar's play likewise ultimately defends traditional family values—albeit through the redemption of the fallen woman. Nevertheless, it was still attacked as a moral danger to Brazilian society. Society could accept the sacrificial death of the courtesan (in Dumas) but not her reunion with the family (in Alencar). In an article in *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* (June 22, 1858), Alencar criticized the prohibition of his play, highlighting the asymmetrical reception of these two plays about corrupted women. In his opinion, Brazilian audiences preferred not to acknowledge the

existence of marginalized figures within their own society but were happy to do so when the story was set elsewhere. What Alencar failed to recognize in this article is that he broke with the established precedent of punishing the courtesan. Brazilian men—parents, husbands—might simply have preferred a story in which the family's well-being is secured without the courtesan's being forgiven.

Despite these criticisms, Alencar intended his play to conserve the traditional family—and allowing for the courtesan's redemption was a part of this effort. Throughout his writings, Alencar constantly emphasizes the pedagogical role of an artist in society. For example, in the preface to the 1859 publication of *As Asas de um Anjo*, he explains how the spectators' eyes, if not guided, will not know how to see ("os olhos não sabem ver")—a concise summary of Alencar's pedagogical understanding of artistic production. He admits, in the case of this play, that he may have failed in presenting a truly harmonic picture ("Go ahead and censor *As Asas de um Anjo* because one or another of these conditions is missing"; "Censurem pois *As Asas de Um Anjo* porque lhe falte uma ou outra dessas condições"), but he asks that Brazilian society not censor the school of realism from which the play was born, a school that he describes as the "tendency of modern literature" ("tendência da literatura moderna"). For Alencar, realism amounts to an ethical practice of manifesting social truths—and this is what he was striving to accomplish by centering his play on the marginalized figure of the fallen woman. Moreover, vis-à-vis the French tradition, Alencar claims that it was precisely the redemption of his protagonist that prevented his play from being a mere copy of the "old type of Manon Lescaut" ("velho tipo de Manon Lescaut"). By differentiating himself from the French model in which the courtesan dies to protect the familial institution that her existence seems to threaten, Alencar offers an original, and yet similarly moralistic tale that is even more faithful to the family values that he

sought to espouse. In the newlyweds' last exchange of the play, Luis says that Carolina's happiness is in motherhood, and she agrees, saying that she would live for her daughter. This conclusion clearly embodies Alencar's pedagogical approach to theatre, in which he teaches spectators the value of preserving the family no matter the cost.

Although Alencar claimed that *As Asas de um Anjo* would be his last play, in 1862, the same year that he anonymously published *Lucíola*, the anonymous play *O que é o casamento?* (*What is Marriage?*) was performed at the Ateneu Dramático. Moving away from courtesan protagonists, this play questions the integrity of the institution of marriage through a focus on the problem of female adultery and female expectations of domestic happiness. The comedy, divided into four acts, is a compilation of possible answers to the question "what is marriage?" given by two different couples: a well-established couple and newlyweds who seem to have begun their marriage with an asymmetrical level of love (the bride is more in love with the groom). Both relationships are changed when the men suspect adultery. In the first case, suspicion moves the spouses apart, and they stay together only to raise their young daughter. In the second case, the suspicion of an affair makes the husband realize that he indeed loves his wife—so much so that he would kill her for a betrayal. The play ends happily, however, with all suspicions allayed. The wives were innocent of adultery, and the response to the question of "what is marriage" is "living with reciprocal trust" ("vive pela confiança recíproca").

As for Alencar's own life, he would marry only belatedly, after he had already theorized so much about marital life. According to Neto, after Alencar published *Diva* in 1864, his bronchitis grew so bad that he was obliged to isolate himself in the Tijuca hills, outside of Rio de Janeiro. There he met and fell in love with Georgiana Cochrane, marrying her six months after their first date. Finally, Alencar was experiencing a married life that seemed, indeed, based on

mutual trust—even if gossip from 1954 would spread that Alencar's eldest son was actually fathered by Machado de Assis (Neto 387). With Alencar's family history in mind and taking note of his own vision of literature as a pedagogical instrument for forming moral subjects, we can now turn to *Lucíola* and the ways in which the novel undermines Alencar's own pretentions to upholding traditional values.

Lucíola: Early Reception and Modern Criticism

Figure 1. Caricature of Alencar from 1858 (Neto 191).

Following the curtailed production of *As Asas de um Anjo* in 1858, the *Revista Ilustrada* published a caricature of the author with wings, transforming him into an angelic figure similar to the female character of his play (Fig. 1). Standing still, Alencar is far from flying, since the wings are holding his feet together, while his hands are tied. As Neto describes the illustration, "Alencar with his feet and hands bound by censorship: the prohibition of *As Asas de um Anjo*

threatened to steal Alencar from literature and turn him over to bureaucracy" ("Alencar com os pés e as mãos atadas pela censura: proibição de *As asas de um anjo* ameaçou roubar Alencar da literatura e entregá-lo à burocracia"; 191). Indeed, Alencar did not publish any literary work for more than two years. However, the shadow of the fallen angel—the figure of the courtesan—stayed close to him, and it only let him go after he published the novel *Lucíola* anonymously in 1862. He released it in book format, in contrast with his first three novels, which were all initially published as newspaper feuilletons. As Alencar shared in his memoirs, he printed the first edition of *Lucíola*, "on my own and with the utmost secrecy" ("pôr minha conta e com o maior sigilo"; 21). As if in response to critics' reproaches of his 1858 play, Alencar created a character and a narrative that would prove that a fallen woman could, indeed, experience true love and be saved by it while remaining chaste—but, this time, he followed the French model of not readmitting the courtesan to the family.

The few critics who commented on the 1862 publication of *Lucíola* emphasized its gendered readership, as my investigation of the digital archive of Brazilian newspapers revealed. A journalist for *Semana Ilustrada*, in a column on Joaquim Macedo's play *Lusbella*, briefly mentions that a novel was released, and that it had two faults: a high number of Gallicisms and a narrow audience of men or ladies older than sixty years ("Lusbella" 6). Two days later, a journalist (known only as "F.") for *Correio Mercantil* demanded an explanation from *Semana Ilustrada*'s columnist, first by rejecting the Gallicism criticism, and second by asking why the book was not appropriate for forty-year-old ladies. Nevertheless, F. acknowledged that *Semana Ilustrada* was the only newspaper that had brought attention to the release of *Lucíola*, comparing the quiet reception unfavorably to the Inquisition—which at least cared enough about books to burn them. Finally, F. highlighted critics' lack of engagement with Brazilian writers, concluding

with the statement that "if *Lucíola* were French, or even Portuguese!..." ("Se *Lucíola* fosse francesa, ou mesmo portuguesa!..."—indicating that if the novel were foreign, it would have received more critical attention (F. 2). Three days later, a long column dedicated exclusively to *Lucíola* and signed by "Z." appeared in *Correio Mercantil*. This column began with a critique of the moralistic idea that "*all* books should serve all readers" ("*todos* os livros sirvam para todos os leitores," emphasis in the original) and concluded by once more emphasizing the silence of critics about this new novel (Z. 2). A month later, in November, a critic in the journal *Constitucional* claimed that *Lucíola* "deserves to be read, as one of the best pages from our society and letters" ("merece ser lida, como uma das melhores páginas da nossa sociedade e das nossas letras"; Vasconcelos 2) and congratulated the anonymous writer for his great contribution to Brazilian literature.

Of particular note is an 1863 short story titled "Phantasmagoria" that was published in *Correio Paulistano* and signed by R. In it, and despite the fact that *Lucíola*'s authorship was still unknown at the time, the narrator identifies a similarity of style between *Lucíola* and Alencar's 1857 novel *Guarani*:

> I was reading . . . this long epic of the heart, of the woman whose anonymous writer named *Lucíola*. . . .
>
> - What is this, Julio? For you are still in slippers and reading so restfully, when I supposed you were putting your hat on? Would this book be, by chance, *The Guarani* by Alencar, or any of the *Nights*, by Mery, to make you forget about our rendezvous?
> - It is neither one, nor the other; it is by an incognito author, whose beautiful style resembles the first name you mentioned: it is *Lucíola*.

- Ah!

  This—ah!—from my friend left me perplexed: I never found out what he meant with that exclamation . . .

Lia . . . essa grande epopeia do coração, da mulher que o seu incógnito autor chamou *Lucíola*. . .

- Que é isto, Júlio? Pois ainda estas em chinelas e lendo tão descansadamente; quando já te supunha deitando o chapéu? Será por acaso esse livro, o *Guarany* de Alencar, ou alguma das Noites, de Mery, para te fazer esquecer o nosso passeio?
- Não é nem de um, nem de outro: é de autor incógnito, cujo lindo estilo assemelhar-se ao do primeiro que citaste: é *Lucíola*.
- Ah!

Este—ah!—do meu amigo deixou-me perplexo: nunca soube o que ele quis exprimir pronunciando-o com aquela entonação... (R. 3).

Critics would not begin to associate *Lucíola* with Alencar until 1865, and yet here, in a fictional work dated two years earlier, a character recognizes a similarity in styles. Moreover, the friend's exclamation ("ah!") is unintelligible to this character—a possible reference to the ambivalent reception of the anonymous novel. Nevertheless, Alencar would only openly reveal his authorship in his 1873 memoir that was published posthumously. In life, Alencar would deny being the author of *Lucíola* and the other novels of the "Women's Profile" series, claiming that they were written by their male protagonists and all published by G.M.

Indeed, in his memoir, Alencar identifies a difference between the critical reception of his novel and the reactions of the general readership. Alencar contrasts the meager critical comments inspired by the book with its relatively large sales figures: "Despite the disdain of the critics,

Lucíola conquered its audience, and not only made its way, but gained popularity. In one year the first edition of a thousand copies sold out, and Mr. Garnier bought me the rights for the second edition" ("Apesar do desdém da crítica de barrete, *Lucíola* conquistou seu público, e não somente fez caminho como ganhou popularidade. Em um ano esgotou-se a primeira edição de mil exemplares, e o Sr. Garnier comprou-me a segunda."; "*Como*" 21). The commercial (if not critical) success of Alencar's writing after the publication of *Lucíola* was crucial for his future career, particularly with regard to his changing financial relationship with the publishing house. As Ubiratã Machado informs us, "[t]he contracts signed with José de Alencar, starting in August 1863, guaranteed to the northeastern writer an average of ten percent of the price of the cover, paid in advance, an unusual practice at the time" ("[o]s contratos firmados com José de Alencar, a partir de agosto de 1863, garantiam ao escritor cearense cerca de 10% do preço da capa, pagos antecipadamente, uma prática insólita para a época"; qtd. in Carneiro 85). Indeed, critical opinion concerning *Lucíola* only emerged belatedly, with the publication of Alencar's *Diva* (1864), which was published under the same pseudonym—although the responses were still superficial, with Machado de Assis (under the pseudonym of Sileno) merely noting the popularity of the courtesan novel (*Imprensa Acadêmica*, 17 Apr. 1864), and Joaquim Nabuco describing *Lucíola* as nothing more than a copy of earlier French novels (Marco 95). It was only in 1865, the year after *Diva*'s publication, that critics in newspapers would publicly associate these novels with Alencar himself. Considering the remarks by even such renowned authors as Assis and Nabuco, one may understand Alencar's bitterness about the lukewarm reception that *Lucíola* received at the time of its publication and afterward.

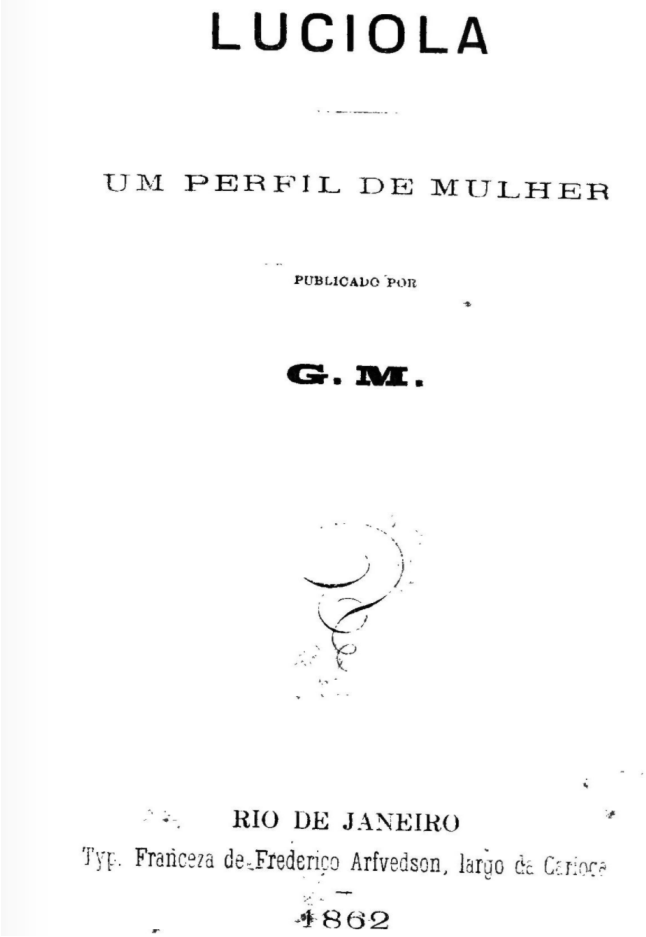
Over the last three decades, scholars have investigated *Lucíola* and situated it in relation to other Brazilian novels. Maria Conceição da Silva, for example, writing in 1989, presents a

typology of fictional readers in Brazil, from Alencar to Osman Lins (H. Guimarães 26). Starting with *Lucíola*, da Silva identifies a tutelary structure through which Alencar positions himself as the voice of authority in his writing. Revisiting Nabuco's characterization of Alencar as an imitator of European novels, Valéria de Marco claims that Alencar "invites the reader to reflect on the difficulty and anguish of knowledge, to consider the foreign models as a source of experience, as parameters for reflection, as mirrors that may reveal differences, helping to perceive the specificities of Brazilian reality" ("convoca o leitor a refletir sobre a dificuldade e a angústia do conhecimento, a considerar os modelos importados como fonte de experiência, como parâmetros para a reflexão, como espelhos que podem revelar diferenças ajudando a percepção das especificidades brasileiras."; 97). Similarly, Maria de Moraes Pinto identifies the literary intertextualities between *Lucíola* and several French texts, only to suggest that these same references serve as mechanisms for Alencar to highlight the specificities of the Brazilian setting (*Alencar e a França* 143). Most recently, Zephyr Frank has analyzed *As Asas de um Anjo* and *Lucíola* as containing characters that, "despite sexual lapses, prove to be honorable and worthy" (107). According to Frank, Alencar addresses the dissonance between a more "human" representation of the fallen woman and the male gaze that objectifies others and identifies the "availability" of these "objects" for (sexual) consumption (110). In a remark that anticipates some of the claims made in this dissertation, Frank argues that the narrator "sees but does not comprehend" Lúcia's feelings and her reality.

My critical contribution to the study of *Lucíola* consists in identifying Alencar's simultaneous use of literary mechanisms to distance himself from the potentially controversial subject matter of the novel and use of his female protagonist to model a critical reader, one who finds fault with the depiction of a courtesan in Dumas's earlier French novel. As we shall see, at

no point does Lúcia consider the role or motivation of the male author of *La dame aux Camélias* with whose representation of courtesan life she disagrees. Alencar's female protagonist lodges her criticisms against a female character and thus distinguishes herself from her French predecessor while also perpetuating a tradition of blaming women for their transgressions. In the next sections, we will see how Alencar not only introduced an implied reader through the use of a pseudonym, but also modeled the act of reading within his fiction so as to encourage a certain interpretation of his text in relation to earlier courtesan novels.

The Author, the Editor, and the Reader: G. M.


LUCIOLA

UM PERFIL DE MULHER

PUBLICADO POR

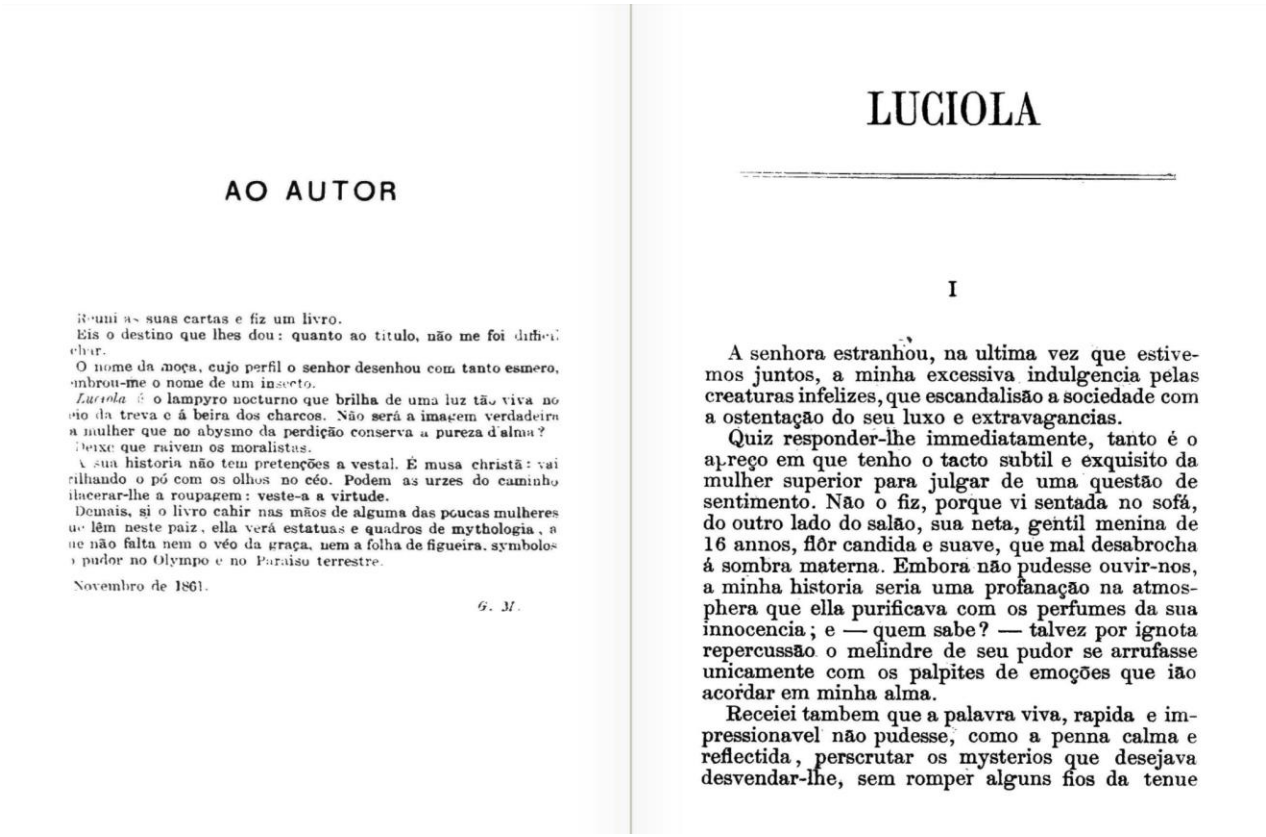
G. M.

RIO DE JANEIRO

Typ. Franceza de Frederico Arfvedson, largo da Carioca

1862

Figure 2. *Lucíola*'s first edition (1862)



AO AUTOR

Reuni as suas cartas e fiz um livro.
Eis o destino que lhes dou: quanto ao titulo, não me foi difficil achar.
O nome da moça, cujo perfil o senhor desenhou com tanto esmero, lembrou-me o nome de um insecto.
Lucíola é o lampyro nocturno que brilha de uma luz tão viva no seio da treva e á beira dos charcos. Não será a imagem verdadeira da mulher que no abysmo da perdição conserva a pureza d'alma?
Deixe que raivem os moralistas.
A sua historia não tem pretenções a vestal. É musa christã: vai cilhando o pó com os olhos no céo. Podem as urzes do caminho ulcerar-lhe a roupagem: veste-a a virtude.
Demais, si o livro cahir nas mãos de alguma das poucas mulheres que lêm neste paiz, ella verá estatuas e quadros de mythologia, a que não falta nem o véo da graça, nem a folha de figueira, symbolos o pudor no Olympo e no Paraiso terrestre.

Novembro de 1861.

G. M.

LUCIOLA

I

A senhora estranhou, na ultima vez que estivemos juntos, a minha excessiva indulgencia pelas creaturas infelizes, que escandalisão a sociedade com a ostentação do seu luxo e extravagancias.

Quiz responder-lhe immediatamente, tanto é o apreço em que tenho o tacto subtil e exquisito da mulher superior para julgar de uma questão de sentimento. Não o fiz, porque vi sentada no sofá, do outro lado do salão, sua neta, gentil menina de 16 annos, flôr candida e suave, que mal desabrocha á sombra materna. Embora não pudesse ouvir-nos, a minha historia seria uma profanação na atmosphera que ella purificava com os perfumes da sua innocencia; e — quem sabe? — talvez por ignota repercussão o melindre de seu pudor se arrufasse unicamente com os palpites de emoções que ião acordar em minha alma.

Receiei tambem que a palavra viva, rapida e impressionavel não pudesse, como a penna calma e reflectida, perscrutar os mysterios que desejava desvendar-lhe, sem romper alguns fios da tenue

Figure 3. Preface signed by G.M. and first page of the novel.

Among the techniques adopted by Alencar to protect himself from any association with the controversial subject matter of *Lucíola* was his use of the pseudonym G. M. (Fig. 2). As Neto points out, Alencar was a congressman at the time of *Lucíola*'s publication. Perhaps understandably, given his public role, he might have preferred not to be linked to a transgressive courtesan novel (216). Even if, according to Neto, the initials G. M. brought to mind a real author (*gaúcho* writer Gaspar Martins), G. M. is described in the very first line as a woman ("A senhora estranhou") who received the letters from the narrator, Paulo, and who edited them together into a book. Indeed, it was only thirteen years after *Lucíola*'s publication, in his preface to *Senhora* (1875), the third and last novel of the "Women's Profile" series attributed to G.M.,

that Alencar's name is linked to the series, although he uses the preface to deny being the author of any of the three novels.[15]

Geovanina Maniçoba carefully identifies the different roles that G. M. plays in the construction of *Lucíola*—both internally, as part of the narrative, and externally, as a pseudonym writer who has her own list of books in the advertising pages of the Garnier publishing house. For Maniçoba, G. M. is a pseudonym, a character, a narrator, a "listener," and an editor (5). In what follows, I will first focus on G. M.'s role as the editor of the book and then turn to her position as the first and privileged reader of the story. We might say that G. M. is the first and only reader of Paulo's original letters, insofar as the novel represents the product of her editing. Thus, the female editor G. M. is also a character who participates in the plot that she ostensibly helps construct.

The full preface to *Lucíola* (Fig. 3) signed by G.M. is as follows:

TO THE AUTHOR.

I gathered your letters and made a book. This is the destiny that I give: concerning the title, it was not challenging to find one.

The name of the young woman, whose profile you drew so carefully, reminded me of the name of an insect. *Lucíola* is the night lamp that shines with a very bright light in the darkness on the edge of the marshes. Wouldn't this be the true image of the woman who, in the perdition of the abyss, conserves the purity of her soul?

Let the moralists rage.

Your story doesn't have virginal ambitions. It is a Christian muse: it walks on dust with its eyes raised to the sky. May the thorns of the path tear its garments: it is dressed in virtue.

Moreover, if the book falls into the hands of some of the few women who read in this country, they will see mythological statues and paintings, lacking neither of the veil of grace, nor the fig leaf, symbols of modesty in Olympus and in the earthly Paradise.

November 1861

G. M.

AO AUTOR.

Reuni as suas cartas e fiz um livro. Eis o destino que lhes dou: quanto ao título, não me foi difícil achar.

O nome da moça, cujo perfil o senhor desenhou com tanto esmero, lembrou-me o nome de um inseto. Lucíola é o lampiro noturno que brilha de uma luz tão viva no seio da treva e a beira dos charcos. Não será a imagem verdadeira da mulher que no abismo da perdição conserva a pureza d'alma?

Deixe que raivem os moralistas.

A sua história não tem pretensões a vestal. É musa cristã: vai trilhando o pó com os olhos no céu. Podem as urzes do caminho dilacerar-lhe a roupagem: veste-se a virtude.

Demais, se o livro cair nas mãos de algumas das poucas mulheres que lêem neste país, ela verá estátuas e quadros de mitologia, a que não faltam nem o véu da graça, nem a folha de figueira, símbolos do puder no Olimpo e no Paraíso terrestre.

Novembro de 1861.

G.M.

G. M. receives, compiles, frames, and gives a title to the collection of letters, thus turning it into a book that may or may not be read by women, but in any case is appropriate for them. I want to highlight three aspects of this preface: first, the editor claims that she had the freedom to choose

the title of the book; second, she deems the novel's content to be beyond any moral reproach, as she identifies a "Christian muse" in the story; and third, she alludes to a limited community of female readers. The preface presents an ambiguous—perhaps ironic—tension between the male addressee (Paulo, the narrator) and the incidental reader ("the few women who read in this country"). In fact, there is a chiasmatic relationship: the preface is authored by a (fictional) female editor and addressed to a male reader (Paulo), whereas the novel is written by a man (Alencar)—like the internal letters, written by Paulo—and intended (though not exclusively) for female readers, beginning with G. M.

Indeed, the figure of the author-reader in *Lucíola* is complex and worth examining, as it determines the way that Alencar structures his moral lesson. Though *Lucíola* received little attention from critics, it sold out its first run of one thousand copies. The concealed authorship of the book seems to have contributed to its "sensational" quality, leading it to be popular among male readers (Vieira 85). While the initials G. M. on the cover of *Lucíola* and the revelation in the preface that she is a woman seem to erase the novel's male authorship, such an impression is undermined later in the preface when it explains that the letters were actually authored by Paulo. There remains a gendered tension between the epistolary narrative, produced by a man, and the book, authored and signed by a woman. This gendered ambiguity at the level of the novel's authorship, I argue, is also present at the level of the reader, whose gender is independent of that identified in the preface.

After reading the preface, readers encounter Paulo addressing G. M. about his story. He begins by explaining that his writing is a "sketch of a female profile" ("um perfil de mulher apenas esboçado"; *L* 1).[16] Paulo delegates to G. M. the responsibility of deciding the title for the manuscript and leaves its destiny in her hands. Nevertheless, the story concludes with Paulo's

announcement that he wrote these pages exclusively for her, lady G. M. Although Paulo is the author of the letter, the first-person narrator of the novel, and the protagonist of the narrative, G. M. is not entirely absent. She appears in the letters and is thus a (secondary) character. Paulo describes how, when they met, G. M. expressed interest in his love story, but he chose not to narrate it orally because of the presence of G. M.'s sixteen-year-old granddaughter, whom he deemed too innocent to hear his tale. Moreover, in his letter he defends the written word over speech, as "when you blush it is marked on your face, but paper is a silent and impassive witness" ("[o] rubor vexa em face de um homem; mas em face do papel, muda e impassível testemunha"; *L* 1). Here, Alencar also differentiates his text from the French courtesan novels, which are transcriptions of conversations between two men rather than written correspondence from a man to a woman.

Besides favoring writing because it allows G. M. to encounter his story without fear of blushing, Paulo also uses the written nature of his account to draw attention to those moments in which he includes details that would have been skipped over by individuals less committed to honesty and transparency. In a scene preceding the description of an orgy, Paulo writes: "If I now had Mr. Couto by my side, I am confident that he would advise me in this difficult situation to use an ellipsis. Indeed, isn't the ellipsis the manifestation of hypocrisy in the book, as hypocrisy is the ellipsis in society?" ("Se tivesse agora ao meu lado o Sr. Couto, estou certo que ele me aconselharia para as ocasiões difíceis uma reticência. Com efeito, a reticencia não é a hipocrisia no livro, como a hipocrisia é a reticência na sociedade?"; *L* 27). Paulo's support of an honest form of writing that documents those phenomena that polite society would perhaps rather ignore can be read as a subtle criticism by Alencar of the censorship of his play. Alencar seemingly enlists Paulo to offer a defense of his brand of realism.

The Scene of Reading in *Lucíola*

Moments of—and commentary on—reading appear throughout the novel. From Paulo's projection of G. M.'s experience of reading his letters ("I am not sure if you will find pleasure in reading these colorless scenes" ("Não sei se a senhora achará prazer na leitura destas cenas sem colorido"; *L*, chap. 15, 73), to Lúcia's habits of reading novels (chap. 11) and her request for Paulo to read stories aloud to her (chap. 17), there are multiple reflections on the practice of reading. By featuring characters who are also readers, *Lucíola* instructs readers about the power of reading—and the danger of uncritical readership—and reveals how one's understanding of a story can depend on life experience. For example, Paulo contrasts two of his experiences with reading Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788), first at an early age and later when he was more mature, saying that it was a story that "we all read once when we are fifteen years old, and we still can't understand it; and then again when we are thirty, when we can't feel it" ("todos lemos uma vez aos quinze anos, quando ainda não o sabemos compreender; e outra aos trinta, quando já não o podemos sentir."; chap. 17, 84). The innocence of the youthful reader impedes his understanding of the story, at least in this example, while the maturity of the older reader impedes an emotional connection. This emphasis on age is perhaps what distinguishes *Lucíola* from other courtesan novels, as the implied reader according to the narrator should be an "elderly lady" and not her young granddaughter, although, as previously discussed, newspapers debated this point.

Though Paulo differentiates his varied experiences as a reader, he describes Lúcia as more consistent but haphazard in her reading practice: "rare was the day when Lúcia wouldn't

distract herself at least for one hour with the first book that would fall into her hands" ("raro era o dia em que não se distraía uma hora pelo menos com o primeiro livro que lhe caía nas mãos."; *L*, chap. 11, p. 48). The seemingly disorganized quality of Lúcia's reading habits appears to have produced in her mind a variety of underdeveloped and incomplete ideas: "[f]rom these quick readings and with no method, arose the profusion of varied and imperfect notions that she would acquire and that would reveal themselves in her conversation" ("[d]essas leituras rápidas e sem método provinha a profusão de noções variadas e imperfeitos que ela adquirira e se revelavam na sua conversação."; chap. 11, p. 48). Moreover, when Paulo reads aloud from Saint-Pierre's story or François-René Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801), the emotion that Lúcia expresses through her comments indicates a complete identification with these fictional characters, one unmitigated by any awareness of their fictionality. For example, she exclaims, "if I were Atala, I could lose my soul to give you the virginity that I can't" ("se eu fosse Átala, poderia perder a minha alma para dar-lhe a virgindade que não tenho"; chap. 17, p. 85).

Throughout the novel, Paulo describes Lúcia as an avid reader whose favorite book was the Bible. Freitas de Vasconcelos even highlighted in an 1862 column in *Constitucional* how "Lúcia reads the Bible, the book par excellence" ("Lúcia lê a Bíblia, o livro por excelência"; Vasconcelos 2). Yet Lúcia does refuse to continue reading one book, *La dame aux camélias*. In her refusal, we can see how Alencar dramatizes the distinctions between his own work and those of his European predecessors.

Reading the Courtesan Novel

Lúcia is part of an intertextual tradition of female characters who read courtesan novels. Marguerite, the protagonist of *La dame aux Camélias*, for example, reads *Manon Lescaut* (1731), which had also appeared in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830). Alencar draws on this tradition of intertextual references, in which fictional readers become readers of fiction. As Sandra Nitrini suggests, "if we get into the world of the characters, and put our focus on the readers, we will see that the three novels [*La dame aux camélias*, *Paul et Virginie*, and *Atala*] combine into a constitutive trace of the interiority of Lúcia and Paulo: they project their life experience in reading, establishing a relationship between fiction and the 'reality' that they are living" ("se adentrarmos o mundo das personagens e as focalizarmos como leitoras, veremos que os três romances aglutinam-se em torno de um traço constitutivo da interioridade de Lúcia e Paulo: projetam sua experiência de vida na leitura, estabelecendo uma relação entre a ficção e a 'realidade' por eles vivida"; 140). By introducing fictional readers, authors also position themselves in relation to earlier works, thus retroactively creating a genealogy. Moreover, these scenes provide a commentary on the social role of reading itself. As I will discuss later in this dissertation, the scenes of female reading that emerge with the courtesan novel will also reappear in novels of wifely adultery.

The convention of fictional female characters reading and talking about books serves a pedagogical function to teach the bourgeois subject about the dangers of uncareful reading. By dramatizing the effects of actual novels on fictional readers, authors demonstrate the possibilities for literature to influence readers in the real world. In *La Dame aux Camélias,* Armand depicts several moments in which Marguerite reads *Manon Lescaut*, and he even catches her writing in the margin of the book. The scene has a clearly pedagogical function: "she always said that if a woman is truly in love, then that woman could never do what Manon did" ("elle me disait

toujours que lorsqu'une femme aime, elle ne peut pas faire ce que faisait Manon"; 129). Marguerite reproaches Manon for continuing to prostitute herself as a source of income in order to provide for both herself and Des Grieux. If, in 1731, Manon is described as able to reconcile her love for Des Grieux with her source of income (sleeping with other men), in 1848, Marguerite presents a romantic view of love wherein a courtesan should deny her other potential lovers—even if that means sacrificing her economic well-being—in order to remain faithful to a single partner. Alencar, in turn, depicts his courtesan as a "fictional reader" who not only reads a novel but also discusses its verisimilitude. According to Paul Goetsch, "the fact that characters read [*in certain* novels] is of central importance, not only for their own personal development but also for us as a revelation of the writer's attitude toward art and life" (195). Thus, in chapter 15 of *Lucíola*, Paulo finds his lover reading a novel that at first she tries to hide: "It was a well-known book: *A Dama das Camélias*" (70). Fourteen years after the publication of *La Dame aux Camélias* in Paris (and nine years after it received its first, partial publication in Brazil), Dumas *fils*'s book was incorporated into a Brazilian novel about a courtesan in Rio de Janeiro.[17]

Alencar is clearly placing himself within this tradition of European courtesan novels. Yet, as much as Alencar wants to insert his novel into this long tradition, he also distances himself from the European model by depicting a character who harshly criticizes Dumas's courtesan novel. Indeed, after falling into Lúcia's hands, *La Dame aux Camélias* will cease to circulate, as Lúcia destroys her copy:

> —This book really is no good. I do not even really want to finish it.
>
> A literary sacrilege was committed here. The leaves of this realist school flew shattered by Lúcia's clenched hands, which seemed to strangle a viper rather than tear open the innocent book that had been unfortunate enough to irritate her mood.

> — Realmente este livro não presta. Nem quero acabá-lo.
>
> Cometeu-se aí um sacrilégio literário. As folhas desse primor da escola realista voaram despedaçadas pelas mãos crispadas de Lúcia, que parecia antes estrangular uma víbora, do que rasgar o livro inocente que tivera a infelicidade de irritar-lhe o humor. (*L* 71)

This "sacrilegious" destruction of a novel that represents the realist movement in fiction is also a de-consecration of the tradition epitomized by *La Dame aux Camélias*, the most important nineteenth-century courtesan novel. Alencar seems to be divided between preserving the sacredness of the "innocent" European novel, on the one hand, and exposing the detrimental effects on the moods of women across the Atlantic, on the other.

In Alencar's novel, Dumas's book—and, metonymically, its female protagonist—is compared to a "viper," conjuring associations not only with the arch-seducer Cleopatra, but also with the foundational triangulation of Eve, Satan, and temptation. However, Lúcia's ripping of the book also echoes the actual publication history of the French novel in Brazil. According to Bruna Rondinelli, the serialized publication in Portuguese translation of *La Dame aux Camélias* in *O Jornal das Senhoras* in 1853 was suddenly interrupted without an explanation. Like Lúcia, the target female readers were left with a fragment, torn from the complete novel. In a sense, this discontinued publication inadvertently satisfied the demands of Brazilian writers at the time, including Alencar and Adolfo Caminha among others, who perceived foreign literary works as stealing the already limited reading public in Brazil. Literary critic Hélio Seixas Guimarães notes that "what is behind the complaints by Alencar and Caminha, who refer to their audience as 'indolent,' is the fact that the foreign works eat up a considerable part of the small reading public for literature—decreasing even more the potential audience for the restricted national

production" ("[o] que está por trás das queixas de Alencar e Caminha, que se referem ao público como indolente, é o fato de as obras estrangeiras abocanharem parte considerável do minguado público da literatura, diminuindo ainda mais o mercado potencial para a pequena produção nacional"; 47).

In contrast with her literary predecessors, Lúcia rejects physical love. She criticizes the "sensual passion of Marguerite, who did not even have the merit of fidelity. If this woman had prostituted herself more than ever, and presented herself as a depraved courtesan without shame or modesty, it was when she was inspired to profane her love with the kind caresses that so many had bought before" ("paixão sensual de Margarida, que nem sequer teve o mérito da fidelidade. Se alguma vez essa mulher se prostituiu mais do que nunca, e se mostrou cortesã depravada, sem brio e sem pudor, foi quando se animou profanar o amor com as torpes carícias que tantos haviam comprado"; *L* 71). She defends "the true love of the soul" ("o verdadeiro amor d'alma"; *L* 71), emphasizing the superiority of spiritual love over carnal passions, and eventually forgoes physical intimacy altogether, even with the man whom she loves, Paulo. Her rejection of physical love appears to satisfy a criticism of *La Dame aux Camélias* made by a Brazilian critic in 1856 (in a review signed as M.): "[v]ice is like the cold, it sterilizes without fertilizing. Many tears of regret are necessary to make the flowers of candor and virtue regrow in one's chest" ("[o] vício é como o frio, esteriliza sem fecundar. São precisas muitas lágrimas de arrependimento para que reverdeçam no peito as flores da candura e da virtude"; qtd. in Rondinelli 115). Alencar appears to have shared M.'s reservations about the possibility of Marguerite's redemption. In contrast, in order to prove Lúcia's transformation, Alencar has her abandon sex altogether.

Though Paulo describes Dumas's novel as an "innocent book" (71), the courtesan at the novel's heart was an embodied threat to the traditional system of class and gender relations. As Rita Felski argues, "in nineteenth-century France in particular, the courtesan was to become *the* exemplary symbol of an eroticized modernity" (64). Modernity, for Felski, refers not only to a "substantive range of sociohistorical phenomena—capitalism, bureaucracy, technological development, and so on—but above all to particular (though often contradictory) experiences of temporality and historical consciousness" (9). As much as Dumas characterizes his protagonist as an angelic figure, she is still a professional lover, exchanging her body for money. She is a symbol of female modernity that is, nevertheless, predicated on the existence of male clients, male narrators, and male readers.

The Courtesan and the Crisis of Marriage

Although Alencar is critical of Rio de Janeiro's hypocritical values and double standards, his work nevertheless seems to exhibit extremely conservative views about sex that reflected popular fears about female sexuality. Indeed, according to Frank, Alencar's writing is characterized by a "fear of sex" that was concentrated in the figure of the courtesan (132). With the rise and popularity of courtesans in urban centers and novels, the unity of wife and husband is threatened by a third figure: the professional lover. Courtesans posed a distinct threat to the institution of marriage. Men—the potential lovers and clients of courtesans—were liable to fall prey to the sexual allure of courtesans and lose their honor, financial integrity and social status. Women, on the other hand, could observe well-dressed courtesans in the streets and read about their erotic fulfilment and financial independence in novels, thus seeing in them a possibility of

social mobility and freedom that was at the time barred from wives. Courtesans are thus dangerous to both the men who fall in love with them and the women who may fall in love with what they represent. As a result, they bring instability to the institution of marriage.[18]

Lucíola, although ostensibly a novel about a courtesan, nevertheless represents the institution of marriage as the highest and most honorable goal to be achieved. At the end of the novel, Lúcia reveals to Paulo that she first accepted sex for money in order to purchase medication to help her family survive an outbreak of yellow fever. As a result of the medicine, her father and sister survived. But when her father discovered that she had sexual intercourse in exchange for money, he expelled her from the family home and, with nowhere else to go, she entered a brothel. From then on, Lúcia saved the money that she earned for her sister's dowry (*L* 97). Therefore, *Lucíola* is the tale of a woman who falls victim to the abusive male society and, nevertheless, sacrifices herself to afford a dignified life for her sister within that same society. The only path seemingly open to her sister to achieve this life is through marriage, which is only possible through the monetary exchange of a large dowry. Marriage is a contract with both financial and social components. As Lúcia's family does not have the means to provide a dowry, she "creates" the means through her work—an activity that she accepts, as long as its shame rests only on herself: "All the money acquired through my infamy was destined to help my father and to make a dowry for Ana. . . . I would sell myself, frankly and in goodwill; I accept the prodigality of the rich; never the ruin and misery of a family" ("Todo esse dinheiro adquirido com a minha infâmia era destinado a socorrer meu pai, e a fazer um dote para Ana. . . Vendia-me, mas francamente e de boa-fé; aceitava a prodigalidade do rico; nunca a ruína e a miséria de uma família"; *L* 97). Lúcia's goal of providing an honorable future for her sister reveals how

marriage offered the only salvation for a parentless girl or someone from a less favorable social condition.

In accordance with the social norms at the time, Lúcia cannot enjoy the prospect of marrying Paulo—despite the fact they are in love—as her body is irredeemably stigmatized by her prostitution.[19] Even though Lúcia chooses to leave the urban center and move to the countryside, she cannot erase or escape the transgressive acts from her past. Not only do external opinions influence Lúcia's actions,[20] but her own attitude results in a self-imposed inability to merge spiritual love and physical pleasure with Paulo. The relationship between sex, love, and pleasure embodied in the figure of the courtesan is clearly articulated in the question that Frank asks when discussing fallen women:

> In this regard, it seems safe to say that these characters bear the stamp of a common nineteenth-century European cliché. Clichés are not false. They are powerful ideas to live by. Can there be any doubt that some women in Rio de Janeiro operated according to these ideas, taking advantage while being taken advantage of? But what of the more common cases, the everyday compromises and arrangements entered into by unmarried women as they attempted to carve out a life in society and develop relations with men of wealth and social standing? (106–7)

Lucíola is not the regular tale of a fallen woman who pursues the path of prostitution in search of wealth and social mobility. Although she is a victim of a series of events, Lúcia nevertheless finds a way to achieve financial independence through her profession: that is to say, she takes advantage while being taken advantage of. After consolidating her empire—with a value of more than "fifty *contos de réis*" ("cinqüenta contos de réis"'; 102, an equivalent at the time of approximately $25,000),[21] an amount that surprises Paulo—she gives everything to her sister:

"Only one thing justifies this fortune: it is the saintly motive for which I sold myself. Ana may enjoy it with no regrets or embarrassment since she will not know where it came from" ("Só uma coisa justifica essa fortuna, é o motivo santo por que me vendi para adquiri-la. Ana pode gozar dela sem remorso e sem vexame, porque não saberá donde lhe vem"; *L* 102). By representing a fallen woman with angelic characteristics, *Lucíola* challenges the demonic image of the femme fatale. Lúcia's sexually transgressive behavior is ultimately in the service of the perpetuation of the bourgeois family, which will continue through her sister's marriage and Lúcia's death.

Conclusion

The analysis of José de Alencar's 1862 novel *Lucíola* presented in this chapter draws on biographical information to demonstrate how a man who was himself deemed of illegitimate birth helped create a national literary tradition centered on the reinforcement of traditional family values. Yet, by examining his works on courtesans, we can discern two notable contradictions in these texts. First, while attempting to create a national literature, Alencar drew on French models, particularly, in the cases analyzed here, a tradition of courtesan novels inaugurated by Abbé Prévost and made famous by Alexandre Dumas *fils*. Due to the similarities between his works and those of his French predecessors, Alencar was even derided as a mere plagiarist. As if anticipating these criticisms on his supposed absence of originality, Alencar included within *Lucíola* an explicit textual reference to and fictional destruction of Dumas's well-known novel *La Dame aux Camélias*. The second contradiction concerns the stated objective of Alencar to create a moralistic work while yet portraying these deviations in such a way that enticed men to buy the book and seek sexual arousal in its pages. Alencar's moralistic vision of literature seems to clash with *Lucíola*'s highly sexual content. I argue that Alencar attempts to resolve this second

contradiction (moralizing aims achieved through depictions of immoral content) by having his narrator, Paulo, expound on the virtues of writing that does not censor its subject matter—certainly a reference to the censorship of Alencar's earlier work—and by creating a female pseudonym, G. M. to distance himself from the novel's controversial subject matter and make it seem aimed at older women.

In the next chapter, I show how the reading of novels and letters was crucial to the development of plots of wifely adultery, and I demonstrate how the entanglement of books and sexuality was reprised by wives seeking fulfilment in extramarital affairs. While courtesans presented a threat to the institution of marriage insofar as they could seduce men who would fall in love with them, we shall see how fictional courtesans could also undermine marriages by presenting literate wives with a vision of life untethered from the strict sexual and economic boundaries characterizing nineteenth-century marriages. Not only would fictional wives be inspired by fictional femmes fatales, but these literary infatuations would themselves prove fatal: reading leads to cheating, which, in these fictional worlds, invariably leads to the death of the adulteress. While the courtesans whom I have examined in this chapter are depicted as readers, the novels of wifely adultery that I will examine also represent wives as uncritical consumers of literature. To document the relationship between marriage, adultery, and literacy, I trace another transatlantic literary genealogy stretching from Gustave Flaubert's classic novel *Madame Bovary* to Eça de Queirós's *O Primo Basílio*, while subsequently analyzing the reception of these novels in Brazil, paying particular attention to Machado de Assis's harsh critique of Queirós's novel.

Chapter II – The Origin of the Wifely Adultery Novel: "Fatal Letters" in France, Portugal, and Brazil

Nineteenth-century European and Brazilian writers not only witnessed the rise of a new social class of women—the courtesans—who brought changes to the institution of marriage (from helping to maintain it to spreading sexual diseases), but they also observed the rise of female literacy. This latter development had implications both for the content of nineteenth-century fiction and for the literary marketplace itself, in which books for women played a larger role. Literate women created a new market of potential readers, and greater numbers of magazines, newspapers and books targeted female readers. In parallel, women also started to write increasing numbers of letters. As it was a dominant means of communication at the time, and a socially acceptable mode of female expression, the epistolary as such emerged as a genre of writing characterized by a high degree of female participation.

Letters became known in the eighteenth century as a "*genre féminin*" (Planté 234). Like the circulation of courtesans in real and fictional worlds, female literacy and letter writing fostered a sense of the crisis in the institution of marriage among nineteenth-century novelists in Europe and Brazil. As letters became a primary means of communication between lovers, they were increasingly implicated in a variety of social processes, from the arranging of rendezvous to the breaking up of relationships.

Whereas the courtesans of Prévost, Dumas *fils*, and Alencar's novels were femme fatales (women who ruined the men who fell in love with them), novels of wifely adultery were frequently populated by "lettres fatales." These fatal letters ruin the lives of those characters who receive them, discover them or intercept them. Alternatively, letters can also take the form of

suicide notes; and, in this context, they leave a record of a character's final thoughts before their deaths. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the popularity of novels of wifely adultery in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with a growing use of letters as either formal components of novels or as plot devices. Multiple writers in Europe and in Brazil paid close attention to the artificiality of crafting letters—to the materiality of paper, seals, and ink. Furthermore, these novelists described the lethal effects of letters that traveled beyond their specific recipients or whose contents caused potentially fatal heartbreak.

The writers of the novels of wifely adultery examined here engage in a pedagogical project similar to that explored in the previous chapter. Just as the authors of courtesan novels showcased the dangers of the new class of transgressive females, the authors in this chapter will demonstrate the harmful effects of female literacy. Not only do novels inspire unrealistic visions of romance in naïve female readers, but the medium of the letter affords women opportunities to communicate directly with lovers, to break hearts, and to have their hearts broken. Women who can read and write, many of these authors imply, are liable to deviate from conventions and bring ruin upon themselves and others. If the courtesan novels warned women (and titillated men) by describing a female sexuality untethered from traditional norms, these novels of wifely adultery underscore the dangers of female literacy.

This chapter explores the foundational novel of wifely adultery by Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (1856). The scandal generated by this novel guaranteed its commercial success, and ensured a string of "importations" by authors working in other languages but eager to copy Flaubert's focus on wifely adultery as well as his "naturalistic" style.[22] Among those authors "importing Madame Bovary" was the Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz, whose novel *O Primo Basílio* (*Cousin Bazilio,*1878) marked the emergence of the theme of wifely adultery into

Lusophone literature. The success of Queiroz's novel, in turn, inspired a critical review by the Brazilian writer Machado de Assis—who, at the time, had just published his fourth novel, *Iaiá Garcia* (1878). None of Machado's early novels had achieved the popularity of Queiroz's controversial work, and, whether motivated by jealousy or genuine aesthetic disagreements, Machado's criticism of Queiroz's naturalistic style nevertheless foreshadowed his own stylistic innovations. Among Machado's primary objections to *O Primo Basílio* concerned the role played by what he calls the "fatal letters" ("fatais letras"; 3) that constitute the correspondence between the lovers intercepted by the maid Juliana.

This chapter analyzes the different uses of letters in the wifely adultery novels of Flaubert and Queiroz as a means of understanding their distinct approaches to the entwined problems of adultery and female literacy, as well as Machado's use of letters as tools of suspicion of female infidelity in his early novels. To explore the shifting use of letters in Machado's early works, I analyze his first published novel, *Ressurreição* (*Resurrection*, 1872), as well as *Iaiá Garcia* (1878). The following pages expand on the provocative but underdeveloped insight of the critic João Cezar de Castro Rocha, who claimed that, in *Madame Bovary* and *O Primo Basílio*, "[t]he immediate experience of the lover's physical encounter is transformed into an experience mediated by writing and reading" (74). Furthermore, by foregrounding Machado's critique of Queiroz's novel, this chapter gestures towards how Brazilian writers responded to the theme of wifely adultery. In order to articulate the diverse roles played by letters in these novels, I will first draw on critical readings of Edgar Allan Poe's famous short story "The Purloined Letter." Cataloguing the distinct ways in which letters act in the plots of wifely adultery novels allows me to highlight the different potential threats they posed to the institution of marriage.

Letters and Their Guises

To begin a discussion of letters and adultery—and their entanglement in nineteenth-century literature—it is worthwhile discussing the role of Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Purloined Letter" in establishing and popularizing the letter as a plot device that mobilizes themes of secrecy and suspicion. Poe's short story has also become a critical text in literary theory, inspiring influential readings by Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Barbara Johnson. At stake in these readings is the significance of letters as symbols of language and communication more generally, as well as the nature of power and possession.

In the fall of 1844, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter" was published in the American annual volume *The Gift* ("the only authorized periodical version of the tale," Urakova 325) and was very well-received both in the US and abroad, where it appeared in an unauthorized version in *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* (Mabbott 4). In Paris, it was translated as "Une letter volée" in August 1846 and published in the *Magasin Pittoresque*. The story was an immediate success and considered "a most notable production." As Thomas Mabbott states, some critics still consider "it the best of all Poe's stories" (4).

The short story describes an investigation into a stolen letter from the queen's royal apartment in Paris. During an interview with the royal couple, a certain "Minister D—" sees the letter and snatches it, substituting it with a fake letter. Though the queen witnesses the theft, she cannot draw attention to the event because doing so would alert the king to the letter and its contents—which she evidently desires to keep secret. Despite exhaustive searches of the minister's office, the police are unable to locate the stolen letter on the queen's behalf. Succeeding where the police failed, the detective Auguste Dupin notices the letter hidden in

plain sight in the minister's office, and replaces it with a similar substitute. The story describes two robberies of the same object: the minister steals the letter from the Queen and Dupin steals the letter from the minister.

Although the specific content of the letter is never explicitly revealed, the police officer hints that the "disclosure of the document to a third person . . . would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station" (Poe 209). As a result of the theft, "the holder of the document" now enjoys an "ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized" (Poe 209). Despite the paucity of information about the letter's contents, both the inspiration of the story and several other details indicate that it may have involved revelations of an adulterous affair.

Poe's interest in the combination of letters and adultery probably stemmed from his awareness of a certain controversy that rocked the British royal family when he was living in England. Poe was eleven years old when he left the United Kingdom in June 1820 after a sojourn of five years. His departure coincided with a public debate regarding charges of adultery brought against Caroline, Princess of Wales. Public interest in the scandal was revived with the publication of the Countess of Guernsey's *Death-Bed Confessions* in 1822, which the critic Richard Kopley identified as the source of Poe's inspiration for "The Purloined Letter." Kopley describes the episode from *Death-Bed Confessions* as follows: "In 1813, an ambitious minister had stolen Princess Caroline's letter to the king from her secretary's desk, and for his own political purposes had had it published in the newspaper. This minister then went to dinner with his friends and 'amused them with an account of the purloined letter.'" (18) The phrase "purloined letter" appeared in the *Death-Bed Confessions* (74) and, given the accusations of

adultery leveled at the princess, it is likely that this historical letter contained information about her extramarital affairs.

The link between the letter in Poe's story and female adultery is further attested to by Detective Dupin's substitute letter that that he leaves in place of the stolen original at the minister's office. As Michael Williams points out, Dupin signs his fake letter with a quotation from Crébillon's *Atrée*, "a version of a bloody myth about murder, revenge, and adultery" in which a wife's letter containing evidence of her adultery is revealed to her husband (144). Regarding the ambiguity of Poe's story's title, Williams writes that the "letter" in the story "is both epistle and character" (144). Not only does "the purloined letter" denote an object stolen within the story, but it can also refer to the alphabetic characters of this letter, which are purloined from the reader by paraphrase in the following passage: "And here the Prefect, producing a memorandum-book proceeded *to read aloud a minute account* of the internal, and especially of the external appearance of the missing document" (Poe 213, my emphasis). While the minister conceals the stolen letter in the story by hiding it out in the open, in this passage Poe conceals the content of the letter by offering readers a superficial summary in its place.

Poe's short stories exerted an influence in both France and Brazil in the nineteenth century. According to Carlos Daghlian, "Poe had the good fortune of being discovered by Brazil's most outstanding writer, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis" who read Poe both in English and in French and was "captivated by the American author and played a major role in making Poe known in the 1880s" (132). It was Machado who translated "The Raven" into Portuguese in 1883—a translation that was later incorporated in the first Portuguese collection of Poe in 1901, published by Garnier (Englekirk). One year earlier, the *Diário do Brasil* published Júlio Ribeiro's translation of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (as "Assassinatos na Rua

Morgue"). At least two of the writers who would contribute to the adaptation of the novel of wifely adultery in Brazil were evidently also avid readers and advocates of Poe's work.

Though it is difficult to assess the Brazilian readership of "The Purloined Letter," there is some evidence to suggest that Machado de Assis was familiar with it.[23] In a short story titled "Os óculos de Pedro Antão" ("The Glasses of Pedro Antão"), serialized in *Jornal das Famílias* in 1874, there are several elements that appear to reference Poe's story, such as the role played by tinted glasses. Notably, Machado also references Crébillon—the same author cited in the conclusion of Poe's story. The narrator of Machado's story, Pedro, shares his name with the eponymous character Pedro Antão—much in the same way that the two characters in "The Purloined Letter" are named "Minister D—" and "Dupin." Finally, the two stories both revolve around the search for a letter documenting a love affair outside of marriage. Beyond the possible influence of "The Purloined Letter" on Machado, Poe's story highlights the theoretical concerns motivating this chapter's focus on the relationship between letters and adultery—namely, the way in which the stolen letter represents a trace of an affair that survives after the act itself, and how possession of letters confers power over others.

Poe's short story also provides a framework for elaborating the diverse uses of letters in adultery novels. First, letters can be lost. Second, they can be forged and replaced. Third, letters can be anonymous or bear an inauthentic signature (in Poe's case, Dupin's letter is signed as Crébillon). Fourth, letters are essential for the communication of love affairs but are also instruments of blackmail, extortion, and the rupturing of relationships. Fifth, the exchange of letters is a "metaphor for the sexual intercourse that fulfills the entailment produced in the granting of a correspondence" (Duyfhuizen 24). Sixth, the fact that letters can fall into anyone's hands make them a metonym for literature itself. As the poet Jean Paul writes: "Books are thick

letters to friends" (qtd. in Sloterdijk 190). In the case of the wifely adultery novel, Flaubert's book is, I argue, a "thick letter" to readers that would inaugurate a correspondence of similarly thick letters—a tradition of wifely adultery novels written by readers Flaubert would never meet but who were in each case responding to his initial missive: the controversial classic, *Madame Bovary* and the dangers of female literacy.

Madame Bovary (1856) and the Threat of Immoral Literature

Gustave Flaubert once wrote in a letter that: "Two things sustain me: love of Literature and hatred of the Bourgeois" (qtd. in Brown 525). Both of these elements are evident in his first published novel, *Madame Bovary* (1856), a story that presents a critical vision of bourgeois life and a depiction of the capacity of a love of literature to threaten love itself. Flaubert was born in Rouen, in 1821. During his life, he witnessed political turmoil in France, including revolutions, the return of the monarchy and the establishment of two empires, and the declaration of the Third Republic in 1870. During his later life, Flaubert revised and finally published the novels *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869) and *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1874), as well as plays and short stories, including *Trois Contes*. He died suddenly while working on *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, a novel that "depicts the inability to acquire knowledge on the part of the principal characters that manifests itself in supreme mediocracy" (Taylor 138). The unfinished novel was published posthumously. He passed away in 1880 in Croisset, single and without children.

Madame Bovary was serialized in *La Revue de Paris* between October and December, 1856. The story begins and concludes with the life of Charles Bovary, a common provincial man with neither ambitions nor talents who ultimately becomes an "officier de santé" (a country

doctor). His mother arranges his first marriage and, after becoming a widow, he then marries Emma, the daughter of one of his patients. The story follows the married life of the Bovary family up to Emma's suicide following two affairs and the accumulation of excessive debts. Shortly after learning about Emma's affairs, Charles passes away as well.

In January 1857, Flaubert was put on trial for having "corrupted the public morals" by "bringing *Madame Bovary* into the world" (Ferguson 749). Flaubert's novel was charged with employing an "impersonal narrative voice, which left the reader with no perspective from which to judge the behavior of Emma Bovary" (Haynes 4). Crucially, depicting adultery was not the crime. It was an absence of overt condemnation of Emma Bovary's behavior. The lawyer prosecuting Flaubert emphasized this absence of judgment in his arguments: "Who would condemn this woman *[Emma]*?" he asked. "No one. Such is the conclusion. There is not in the book a person who condemns her" (Pinard). The lawyer, speaking on behalf of the French state, was invoking an ideal of literature as a moralizing force. According to this view, novels should act as instruments of moral instruction—particularly for female readers, who may otherwise be tempted to mimic the transgressive behavior they encounter in fiction. Such is the trajectory of Emma Bovary herself, who cheats on her husband after discovering that her married life does not live up to the romantic fantasies she imbibed as a young reader. Despite these accusations, the court found Flaubert innocent. Aided by the significant controversy caused by the trial, *Madame Bovary* was a commercial success.

Nineteen years after its publication, Émile Zola called it "the code of the new art" ("Le code de l'art nouveau se trouvait écrit," transl. Heath, 1; qtd. in Lourenço 414). But immediately after its release, the reception of the novel was less enthusiastic. Indeed, many critics were hostile to the work. In its review, the critic at the journal *L'univers* declared: "Art ends the

moment it is invaded by filth." Across the channel, *The Saturday Review* proved even less sympathetic, calling *Madame Bovary* "one of the most revolting productions that ever issued from a novelist's brain" (qtd. in Heath 49). In a scathing dismissal of these early critics, Margaret Gilman claims that these reviews "well deserve the accumulated dust which only erudition has disturbed" (138).

Flaubert's novel remains a frequent object of literary criticism and has been treated to sustained analysis by such prominent critics as Francis Steegmuller, Erich Auerbach, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Tony Tanner. Psychoanalytic (Collas), Marxist (Ahearn), feminist (S. Wolf) and deconstructionist (Winchell) readings have also been added to this secondary literature. Among the most consequential recent interpretations of the novel is that made by Jonathan Culler, who identifies two distinct conceptions of realism at work in *Madame Bovary*: "realism as the representation of a world that fits our models" and "realism as the *effet du réel*" (695). In the former case, realism is the product of a studied correspondence between writing and the world. The incorporation of certain details gives the impression of the writer's accuracy. In the latter case, realism is an effect achieved by means of the author's incorporation of details that are largely meaningless—that reflect the messy and often incoherent perceptions of daily life. Culler identifies the source of this tension between two realisms in Flaubert's "revolutionary use of *style indirect libre* in many places in the novel," which grants readers access to both the characters' internal thoughts and the varied observations of an anonymous narrative voice (692). In Rocha's words, this technique "transformed the history of the modern novel" (78).

For our purposes, the aspect of Flaubert's novel that deserves attention is the distinct role played by letters in the narrative—a role that will be reprised by later Lusophone authors inspired by *Madame Bovary*. Naomi Schor, in her classic essay "Pour une Thématique

Restreinte," sees Emma's use of letters as symptomatic of a secret desire to become a famous writer herself. According to Schor, although Emma's gender and the provincial norms governing her life placed limitations on her artistic ambitions, Emma nevertheless uses letters as if they were the basis of an epistolary novel. As we have seen, this would have been the only acceptable genre for a woman to write at this time (Schor 39-40). In the critic's words, Emma is "neither lacking the words nor the pen, but the phallus" ("ce qui lui manque pour écrire ce ne sont ni les mots, ni la plume, mais le phallus"; Schor 39) Highlighting Emma's purchase of ink and paper, Schor goes on to say that Emma's acquisition of lovers was a pretext for writing, and that, after her second lover, she realizes that "above all she loved to write . . . and at this stage assumed plainly the role of writer" ("elle aime toujours et de plus en plus écrire. Ce n'est qu'à cette étape qu'Emma assume pleinement son rôle de scripteur"; Schor 40). Following Schor's description of Emma as a writer, this chapter demonstrates how letters and female literacy are central to the tradition of adultery novels that Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* inaugurates.

In Brazil, the early reception of *Madame Bovary* was characterized by a conspicuous silence. Andrea Muller suggests that the absence of critical commentary stems from the fact that French newspapers circulating in Brazil publicized the accusations of immorality leveled against the novel (16). A brief note on Flaubert's trial appeared in the *Correio Mercantil* on April 20 ("Correspondência" 1), repeating the charge that the novel constituted an "attack on religion and social order" ("ataque à religião e à ordem social"; 1). It included a brief analysis of the novel that underscored its "sensuous" language and hinted at even more scandalous passages that the publisher had edited out (Muller 160-1). Though the novel was not singled out in the press, subscribers of the *Revista Popular* could order a copy of *Madame Bovary* from a list of 209 other French books, including a large number of religious works (Muller 162). In January 1870,

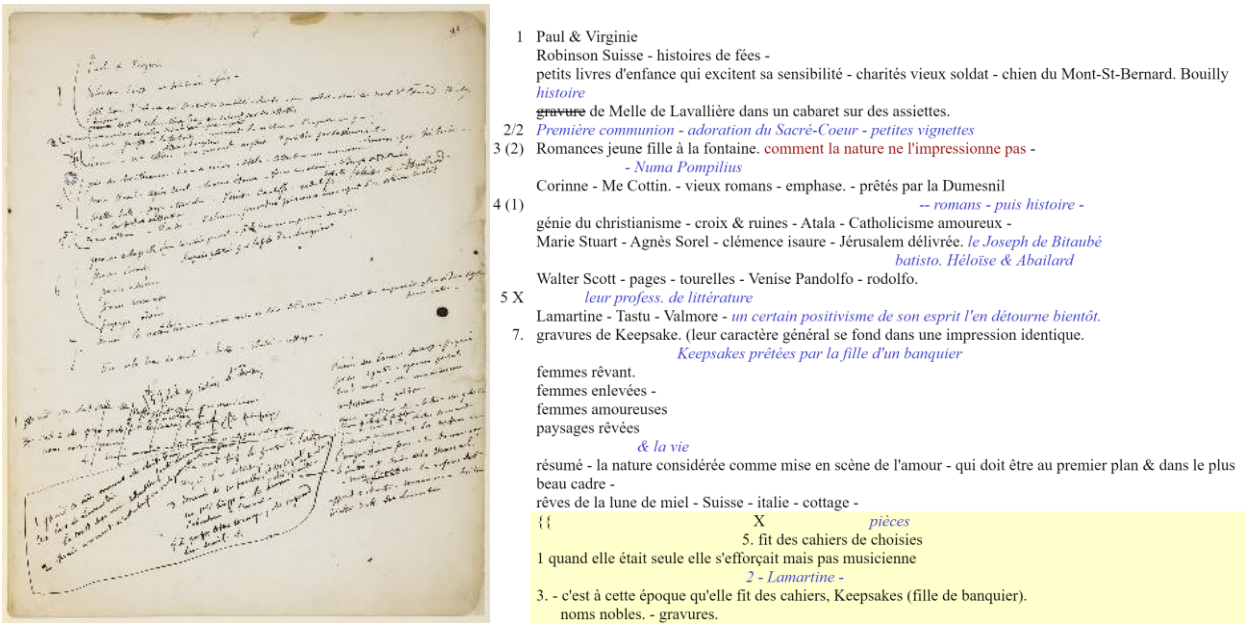
Guimarães Jr. wrote a long critique of the novel *Uma Mulher Honesta* (*An Honest Woman*) by Freitas Vasconcelos wherein he defended the moralistic value of literature and rejected the waste that Vasconcelos—and Flaubert—made of their own abilities by portraying immoral figures. Vasconcelos's novel, which, unfortunately, is no longer in print and seems to have disappeared into obscurity, depicts the life of the "most stupendous courtesan: the married woman who prostitutes herself" ("biografar-nos a mais estupenda de todas as cortesãs: a mulher casada que se prostitue"; 2). While Flaubert depicted the pernicious effects of literature on women, Guimarães Jr. claims that Flaubert was also exercising a negative effect on male writers, establishing a precedent for the depiction of immoral subjects.

Following Flaubert's death on May 8, 1880, Eça de Queiroz published an homage to the French author in *Gazeta de Notícias* on July 24. In this text, he states that "*Madame Bovary* is today a classic work and certainly his [Flaubert's] best book" (é hoje uma obra clássica—e de certo o seu melhor livro"; "Cartas" 3). In Queiroz's summary, the novel depicts the "painful and deep story of a small provincial bourgeois lady" who is led astray by "demoralizing modern education" and "agitated by the appetite for luxury and an aspiration to pleasure" ("história profunda e dolorosa duma pequena burguesa de província … educação moderna desmoralizada … agitada de apetites de luxo e de aspirações de prazer"; 3). Queiroz's homage hints at the quiet accomplishment achieved by Flaubert's novel: to have become acknowledged as a "classic work" ("uma obra clássica"; 3) in the Lusophone world while hardly attracting any critical attention. This review by Queiroz marked a turning point in the discussion of Flaubert in Brazil, perhaps facilitated by the appearance of a Portuguese translation in 1881, where criticisms of *Madame Bovary*'s immorality were largely superseded by widespread recognition of its aesthetic quality.[24]

In 1884, Valentim Magalhães wrote that Flaubert himself was not "aware or was not even suspicious of the extraordinary transformation that his book *[Madame Bovary]* was destined to operate in the contemporary novel" ("ele não tinha consciência, não desconfiava talvez sequer da extraordinária transformação que o seu livro estava destinado a operar no romance contemporâneo"; "Zola" 1). He quotes L. Desprez who classifies *Madame Bovary* as the "most beautiful novel of the nineteenth century" and refers to it as the "Bible of Naturalism" ("o mais belo romance do século XIX', no dizer de L. Desprez, a bíblia do Naturalismo"; 2). By 1887, interest in Flaubert was great enough in Brazil that *Correio da Manhã* advertised the forthcoming publication of his correspondence, drawing specific attention to his love letters. As we can see, over the course of twenty years, *Madame Bovary* emerged from a conspicuous invisibility in Brazil to achieving such status that there was sufficient interest to warrant the publication of the author's love letters.

Novels and Letters as Lethal Weapons

One of the more remarked-upon aspects of *Madame Bovary* is the link that Flaubert establishes between Emma's early reading habits and her conduct later in life. In a work of genetic analysis drawing on archival materials, Sarah Hurlburt has uncovered the detailed reading list that Flaubert drew up for his fictional female protagonist. This list of books, present in Flaubert's notes (Fig. 4),[25] was significantly reduced in the published version of the novel, which only explicitly names a few of the books that Emma reads. Hurlburt interprets Flaubert's decision to erase these other novels as an attempt to deny Emma any opportunity for "intellectual progression" that would make her more critical as a reader (86).



1 Paul & Virginie
Robinson Suisse - histoires de fées -
petits livres d'enfance qui excitent sa sensibilité - charités vieux soldat - chien du Mont-St-Bernard. Bouilly
histoire
~~gravure~~ de Melle de Lavallière dans un cabaret sur des assiettes.
2/2 *Première communion - adoration du Sacré-Coeur - petites vignettes*
3 (2) Romances jeune fille à la fontaine. comment la nature ne l'impressionne pas -
- Numa Pompilius
Corinne - Me Cottin. - vieux romans - emphase. - prêtés par la Dumesnil
4 (1) *-- romans - puis histoire -*
génie du christianisme - croix & ruines - Atala - Catholicisme amoureux -
Marie Stuart - Agnès Sorel - clémence isaure - Jérusalem délivrée. *le Joseph de Bitaubé*
batisto. Héloïse & Abailard
Walter Scott - pages - tourelles - Venise Pandolfo - rodolfo.
5 X *leur profess. de littérature*
Lamartine - Tastu - Valmore - *un certain positivisme de son esprit l'en détourne bientôt.*
7. gravures de Keepsake. (leur caractère général se fond dans une impression identique.
Keepsakes prêtées par la fille d'un banquier
femmes rêvant.
femmes enlevées -
femmes amoureuses
paysages rêvées
& la vie
résumé - la nature considérée comme mise en scène de l'amour - qui doit être au premier plan & dans le plus beau cadre -
rêves de la lune de miel - Suisse - italie - cottage -
{{ X *pièces*
5. fit des cahiers de choisies
1 quand elle était seule elle s'efforçait mais pas musicienne
2 - Lamartine -
3. - c'est à cette époque qu'elle fit des cahiers, Keepsakes (fille de banquier).
noms nobles. - gravures.

Figure 4. Gustave, Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*, "Plan et scénario partiels - l'éducation d'Emma : lectures, religion (I, chap. 6)"

The books that Emma is said to have read in the novel include *Paul et Virginie*, by Saint-Pierre, as well as novels by Honoré de Balzac, Eugène Sue, and George Sand. *Paul et Virginie* was itself a contested work, which was alternatively branded a portrait of youthful virtue and a dangerous incitement of sexual passions (Hurlburt 89). For Emma, the text produces a kind of sensual awakening rather than instilling any moral lessons. Likewise, the texts by Balzac, Sue, and Sand are less noted by Emma for their social commentary than for the ideas they give her for furnishing her rooms (Hurlburt 88).

Beyond the misreading of novels, letters and their (mis)interpretation also play a crucial role in the plot of *Madame Bovary*. In a key scene that takes place at a ball, Emma notices the secret exchange of a note between lovers (Part I, Chap. 8) that is quite similar to the description related earlier of the English traveler to Brazil in the 1820s. "The gentleman bowed," writes Flaubert, "and as he moved to stretch out his arm, Emma saw the hand of a young woman throw

something white, folded in a triangle, into his hat" (*MB*-EM 66; "Le monsieur s'inclina, et, pendant qu'il faisait le mouvement d'étendre son bras, Emma vit la main de la jeune dame qui jetait dans son chapeau quelque chose de blanc, plié en triangle"; *MB*).[26] It is at the ball that Emma witnesses the capacities of letters to catalyze romantic relationships—particularly socially unsanctioned ones. Although this experience introduces Emma to the possible uses of letters in orchestrating extramarital affairs, her observations at the ball do not apprise her of the artificiality of letters—that is, to the properties of the medium that facilitate the communication of false feelings. While her reading of fiction often conflates fiction for reality, her reading of letters similarly fails to recognize the fictional elements present in private correspondence.

Flaubert's approach to relating the narrative allows readers to glimpse the extent of Emma's illusions regarding letters, which she sees as an authentic expression of inner feeling but are often as manufactured as the novel in which she herself appears. For example, after writing to her lover, Rodolphe, expressing the wish to run away with him, he settles down to write his response, in which he not only rejects Emma's request but insists that their relationship come to an immediate end. Flaubert describes Rodolphe's writing process. In search of inspiration, the character re-reads the letters of their relationship collected in a biscuit box, specifically searching for the earliest ones that were long and passionate. Rodolphe employs several artificial effects in his preparation of the letter, going so far as to drop water on the pages to pretend that his own tears have stained the paper. The letter arrives at Emma's house hidden in a fruit basket, and, after reading it, Emma falls ill for more than a month. Because the reader has information about the ease and levity with which Rodolphe composed the letter, the magnitude of its effect on Emma highlights her credulity. Even the earlier letters, those reexamined by Rodolphe for inspiration, are also recast in this light. While reviewing these passionate notes, Rodolphe

exclaims: “What a lot of rubbish!” (*MB*-EM 261-2 “Quel tas de blagues!…”). Clearly, Rodolphe was scarcely more sincere at the beginning of their correspondence than he is at the end, indicating that Emma has been mistakenly taking letters at face value for the entire duration of their affair.

As the novel’s conclusion demonstrates, letters are devices that can contain potentially dangerous information. They can induce fatal effects even after the deaths of their senders or recipients. Charles finds Rodolphe’s final letter in the attic months after Emma’s suicide. He then reads the letter and interprets as a sign of platonic love between Rodolphe and his deceased wife. It is only later that Charles, upon opening Emma’s drawers, finds multiple letters from Rodolphe and Léon (Emma’s second lover) that make clear the physical and romantic nature of these relationships. Charles reacts by “sobbing” and “crying aloud.” He is “distraught, mad,” (*MB*-EM 387; “sanglotant, hurlant, éperdu, fou”; *MB*) and, not too long afterwards, he dies.

It is this foundational novel on wifely adultery—with a bourgeois female protagonist—that establishes a clear connection between sexual transgression, female literacy, and letters. From bringing lovers together to breaking up relationships, from featuring fake tears to inspiring real ones: letters build meaning through their form and their content. But the meanings that letters have are clearly shaped by the predispositions of their readers, who may be more or less inclined to romantic fantasy, suspicion or trust.

Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* showcased two ways in which female literacy threatened traditional marriage. The first consisted of the potentially destabilizing effects of novels on the imaginations of women. Even those novels intended to provide a moral example (such as *Paul et Virginie*) could lead women astray by awakening passionate feelings that husbands may find themselves unequipped to fulfill. Secondly, the exchange of letters facilitated the communication

and meeting of women with potential lovers. Furthermore, as evidence of these affairs, letters could linger on, be discovered, and pose mortal threats to husbands that found them. The emotional charge of letters was shown to be so great that the same letter destroys Emma's health and incapacitates Charles. A letter casually dashed off by Rodolphe becomes a lethal weapon—and, in becoming literate, women were bringing these dangerous items into the home. The crisis of marriage, according to Flaubert, is a crisis of literacy and literature. In the next section, I will show how *Madame Bovary* was transformed and re-imagined in Portugal twenty years later.

O Primo Basílio **(1878) and the Affair with the French Novel**

Eça de Queiroz achieved fame during his lifetime and is widely recognized as the most important Portuguese realist writer of the nineteenth century. His work is replete with harsh criticisms of both hypocrisy in society and in the Catholic church.[27] He was born in 1845 in Póvoa de Varzim, Portugal, the illegitimate son of an unmarried upper-class couple. He was raised by his paternal grandparents before his parents legally married years later. He worked as a journalist and as a diplomat at the Portuguese consulates in Cuba (1872-1874), England (1874-1888), and in France from 1888 until his death in 1900. He married D. Emilia at the age of 40 and together they had four children. He is mostly known for his novels *O Crime do Padre Amaro* (1875), *O Primo Basílio* (1878) and *Os Maias* (1888).

In letters sent from England to his friend Ramalho Ortigão after *O Primo Basílio*'s publication in February 1878, Queiroz criticized his own novel, calling it "mediocre." Nevertheless, he counted on his friend's support to help publicize it as he was in need of money (Monica 146). According to António Lourenço, *Gazeta de Notícias* was the first Brazilian paper

to feature an article on *O Primo Basílio*, written by Ortigão published on March 25. As if preparing Brazilian readers for the content of the novel, Ortigão gives special attention to the verisimilitude of Luiza, the wifely adulteress**,** describing her poor judgment regarding her cousin's character as typical of her lack of education and romantic reading habits (Lourenço 417). Perhaps to Queiroz's own surprise, the novel was "a spectacular success," quickly selling out its first edition (Monica 146). In August of the same year a second edition was released. Throughout the following decade, *O Primo Basílio* was translated into German (1880), French (1883), Spanish (1884), and English (1889)—indicating its popularity and the degree to which it circulated beyond the limits of Lusophone readership.

The novel depicts a typical bourgeois *lisboeta*, Luiza, who spends her monotonous days reading romantic novels. When her husband, Jorge, travels for work purposes, she is seduced by her bachelor cousin, Bazilio, and begins having an affair. After stealing Luiza's correspondence with Bazilio, her maid, Juliana, blackmails Luiza for money. Bazilio leaves Portugal after offering Luiza some money, but Luiza refuses it, ultimately becoming the puppet of Juliana in lieu of payment, doing all the domestic work while her maid relaxes. Finally, after Jorge returns, Luiza confides in Sebastião (Jorge's friend), who confronts Juliana and manages to recover the stolen letters. Juliana dies of a heart attack and Luiza falls ill in bed. One day Luiza receives a letter from Bazilio that Jorge opens for her—and, in doing so, discovers their love affair. Angry at first, Jorge forgives Luiza. Yet, with the shock of the revelation, Luiza's health deteriorates, leading to her death.

In the critical reception of the novel, one area of focus was its relationship to *Madame Bovary*. Only one year after the novel's publication, on May 3, 1879, the *Revista Musical e de Belas Artes* featured a column on "Plagiarisms" that included a remark on *O Primo Basílio*,

describing it as "a novel that 'resonated' in Brazil like no other" that was "clearly inspired in the immortal book by G. Flaubert" ("romance que ecoou no Brasil como nunca outro o fez … inspirados evidentemente no imortal livro de G. Flaubert"; Mirandola 3). The critic continued:

> But anyone who reads Eça de Queiroz's novel swears that it was written in one breath. And it really was, and the artist assimilated and possessed so intensely the French book, acclimatized the accessory circumstances so well, that the paternity of the work cannot be put into question. It [the novel] is *not his legitimate daughter* because Mr. Eça de Queiroz was disengaged when he composed *Cousin Bazilio,* but it is his *natural daughter* nonetheless, who has its *mother-idea in France and its second father in Portugal*.
>
> Mas quem lê o romance de Eça de Queiroz jura que aquilo foi escrito de um só folego. E foi-o realmente, e o artista assimilou-se e possui-se tão profundamente do livro francês, aclimou-se tão bem as circunstâncias acessórias, que a paternidade da obra não pode inteiramente ser-lhe disputada. *Não é sua filha legitima,* porque realmente o Sr. Eça de Queirós andou desquitado da sua imaginação quando compôs o—*Primo Basílio,* mas é *filha natural* que tem a sua *ideia-mãe em França e seu segundo pai em Portugal*.
>
> (Mirandola 3, my emphasis)

In this critic's reading, *O Primo Basílio* is the illegitimate offspring of Queiroz and *Madame Bovary*, but the "paternity" of the novel cannot be doubted—meaning, in this case, that Queiroz has injected enough of his own original material that it is sufficiently distinct from Flaubert's work. Not only is Emma Bovary an adulteress, but Mirandola describes the novel *Madame Bovary* as if it were cheating on Flaubert and having an affair with Queiroz. In this scenario, Queiroz is the lover of Flaubert's novel and *O Primo Basílio* his "natural child." Rather than an

"anxiety of influence," Mirandola posits an illicit romance of influence. Queiroz is both the writer of an adultery novel and an adulterer of an adultery novel.

Other critics have debated the extent to which Queiroz had simply imitated Flaubert or had productively modified the French predecessor (even rewriting the original, as Silviano Santiago suggested).[28] Rocha argues that Queiroz "revealed [his talent] *through imitation* … which *goes beyond mere copying*" (80, emphasis in the original). In this reading, *O Primo Basílio* is an imitation that succeeds in surpassing its French model through its incorporation of a "plurality of female characters" not found in *Madame Bovary* (Rocha 76).

Lourenço emphasizes how Queiroz adapted Flaubert's model to the reality of Lisbon, including the "local colors" and criticisms of Portuguese social mores (415). Differently from Emma Bovary, who committed adultery to chase her romantic fantasies and distance herself from the mediocrity of her married life, Luiza has no other reason to cheat than the weakness of her education and her intense sensuality (415). Similarly to the fate of *Madame Bovary*, *O Primo Basílio* was also criticized for not containing a more explicit condemnation of the adulteress. Although Queiroz's novel received both praise and disapproval, Lourenço identifies a difference in the reception of Portuguese and Brazilian audiences[29]—perhaps because the Portuguese audience had already experienced the polemic surrounding Queiroz's earlier novel *The Crime of the Father Amaro* (1875), which featured a promiscuous priest (416). For Lourenço, it is precisely the "new style" founded by Flaubert that makes it impossible for the "impersonal" narrator to present any judgment on his characters (418). The contribution of Queiroz is the presentation of a female character who has desires and feels sexual pleasure—an idea that was advanced for the time (419).

Another major critical contribution to the discussion of Flaubert's influence on Queiroz is Elizabeth Amann's *Importing Madame Bovary: The Politics of Adultery* (2006). In this book she compares the imitations of the French novels in different countries (Spain, Portugal, and Russia) in their political and cultural dimensions. Amann contrasts the reading materials of Emma and Luiza and concludes that each one reads books that present an unobtainable reality: Emma's medieval romance *Ivanhoe* is practically speaking scarcely less distant from her experience than the Revolution of 1848 of *La dame aux Camélias* is for Luiza. Accordingly, "Eça emphasizes the *distance* of his adulteress from the world of Marguerite Gautier and from the revolution she embodied […]," arguing that "Portugal, like Luiza, cannot enter the plot of 1848" (Amann 134). In this foundational contribution to Lusophone literature, not only does the female protagonist read French novels, but the very novel in which she appears is also based on a French work. But the association with France evident in *O Primo Basílio* mirrors the medieval world that inspires Emma in its distance. Despite the intimacy of adultery, it is represented as inspired by far-off times and places.

Machado de Assis Reviews *O Primo Basílio*

As opposed to the muted reception of *Madame Bovary*, the arrival of *O Primo Basílio* in Brazil was greeted by an abundance of both praise and criticism lasting for a period of five months (S. Azevedo 19). Early appraisals of the novel can be sorted into two dominant groups: those who criticized its immorality and those who admired Queiroz's realist style. In this sense, the polarized reception of *O Primo Basílio* was indicative of opposed feelings among critics regarding realism and the moral function of literature (Azevedo and Berrini 214). *Gazeta de*

Notícias published comments on Queiroz's novel every week, with notices appearing on March 25, April 8, April 12, April 14, April 20, and April 24. Anticipating the remarks of Machado de Assis, one critic dismissed those who would read the novel as simply a lesson for adulteresses to "burn their lovers' letters so that the maid won't find them in a basket of old papers" ("as mulheres casadas tem em queimar as cartas dos amantes, para que as criadas as não encontrem no cesto dos papeis velhos"; L. 1).

Even satirical magazines weighed in on the controversy surrounding *O Primo Basílio*. The journal *O Besouro* featured the following poem on April 27:

> In the crossed-eye inspiration of the Eças de Queiroz,
>
> to prostitute the home is also *realism*.
>
> Na vesga inspiração dos Eças de Queirós,
>
> prostituir o lar, também—é *realismo*. (qtd. in S. Azevedo 30)

In an effort to puncture the conceit that *O Primo Basílio* was a realist novel, the poet describes Quieroz as "cross-eyed" as opposed to "clear-eyed"—implying that, in the poet's opinion, the situation depicted by Queiroz was hardly realistic.

Although critics were divided between criticizing and praising Queiroz's book, S. Azevedo highlights that they were unanimously hostile to the theatrical adaption of the novel that premiered in July 1884 under the direction of Antonio de Meneses (36). In this adaptation, Jorge kills Luiza with his own hands after he discovers her affair. For those who defended the book, Luiza's suffering was crucial to the novel's morality (S. Azevedo 37). There was also criticism of the on-stage representation of the "nest of love" where Luiza and Bazilio meet for sex. Echoing the censorship of Alencar's *As Asas de um Anjo*, the theatrical adaptation of *O Primo Basílio* highlighted the gap between what was acceptable to depict in fiction and on

stage. In the *Gazeta de Notícias*, one critic noted that the scene may be excused as part of the realist school in fiction, but not in the theater (S. Azevedo 37).

Of this outpouring of criticism, it was one particular review of *O Primo Basílio* that caught Queiroz's attention, written by the Brazilian novelist Machado de Assis. Published under the pseudonym of Eleazer, Machado's review appeared on April 16, 1884 in *O Cruzeiro*. In it, Machado criticized the novel's lack of a moral lesson ("ensinamento"; 4), as well as its surplus of vulgar scenes. The article itself became an object of critique in Brazil and he responded to these comments on his review on April 30 in a follow-up article, clarifying his previous points, and emphasizing that the major fault of Queiroz's novel was the plot's complete reliance on multiple chance occurrences.

The first review by Machado describes the character Bazilio as a cliché, denounces Luiza as a puppet, and praises the maid Juliana as the "most complete and real" ("mais completo e verdadeiro"; "EQ-PB" 3) character in the novel. His main critique consists of Queiroz's complete reliance on "fortuitous circumstance" ("circunstância fortuita"; "EQ-PB" 4). He notes that, if the letters were not stolen by the maid, or if the lovers could have given her enough money (for example, by winning the lottery they had bought tickets for), the story would have ended happily.

Contrasting real life with fiction, Machado claims that mislaid letters could provoke curiosity among readers, and even cause a public scandal, but the novelist's art requires "something else"—some kind of internal struggle that suggests dynamism in the characters ("EQ-PB" 3). Machado claims that Queiroz's novel is merely a description of characters buffeted blindly by fate, lacking any kind of moral sensibility. For Silviano Santiago, however, Machado's critique is misguided, as he is comparing the Portuguese novel to the French model

by Flaubert, while not identifying that Queiroz had a distinct plan in mind. Machado was primarily interested in the moral-ethical drama of the jealous man (foreshadowing the plot of *Dom Casmurro*), whereas Queiroz's real drama consists of having a text (a play) within a text (Santiago 59-60). The moral-ethical drama effectively becomes displaced to the characters' changing relationship to this play within the novel.

Between Machado's first and second critical comments in *O Cruzeiro,* he received responses from a defender of Queiroz in *Gazeta de Notícias* (Apr. 20, 1878), including explicit questions directed to Eleazar (Machado's pseudonym) asking if Luiza, who seemed "extraordinary" to him, was not in fact the "ordinary character of the modern woman: weak, futile, and frivolous?" ("o caráter ordinário da mulher moderna, fraca, fútil e leviana?"; Saraiva 1). The critic continued: "Are there women like Luiza or are there not? Is this character a photograph or a product of the author's imagination?" ("Há mulheres como Luiza ou não as há? É este caráter uma fotografia ou o produto da imaginação do autor?"; Saraiva 1). Four days later, a different critic advised Eleazar to follow the dictum of Boileau: "Avant donc que d'écrire, apprenez à penser" (Amenofis 1). These critics identified in Queiroz a faithful portrayal of reality—particularly in his depiction of Luiza, who merely resembled a type of modern woman: superficial and easily manipulated. For them, the absence of internal struggle that Machado criticized is simply further proof that Queiroz has accurately captured Luiza's frivolity.

In response to these criticisms, Machado elaborated his remarks, arguing that his detractors had not understood what he had written (an echo of the same response that Alencar made to the censors of *As Asas de um Anjo*) ("EQ-PB" 6-7). While Machado articulates the dangers of misreading in his fiction, his response to Queiroz's defenders insists that critics

themselves are not immune to mistaken interpretations. He suggests that their reception to his critique is evidence of a lack of attention and patience even among those supposed experts in the art of reading. Machado uses Shakespeare's *Othello* as an example of how fortuitous circumstances can help propel, but not dominate, a plot. In the play, the elements of action exist in the "jealous and ardent soul of Othello, the perfidy of Iago, and the innocence of Desdemona" ("a alma ciosa e ardente de Otelo, a perfídia de Iago e a inocência de Desdêmona"; "EQ-PB" 7) while the scarf (hinting at Desdemona's affair) was only accessory to the central plot. For Machado, the letters in *O Primo Basílio* are like the scarf; however, unlike in Shakespeare's play, there is no corresponding excitement of the passions in Queiroz's characters. The letters are a simple device for the story to unfold; and, without them, the last chapter of *O Primo Basílio* would simply amount to a return to the conditions of the first chapter, with Jorge and Luiza living happily together. Machado claims that the only real lesson to be learned from Queiroz is that one must find trustworthy maids if one is to successfully carry out adulterous affairs.

In Machado's opinion, adultery is not depicted as a moral problem in the novel, but a parenthetical event in the couple's lives after which things could return to normal if not for Juliana's theft or Jorge's opening of Bazilio's final letter. Luiza tries to hide her affair from Jorge because she fears his reaction, not because of guilt or regret. As in Flaubert's novel, adultery is not presented as a moral sin, but a wife's secret.[30] Letters are the spillers of secrets—inflicting fatal wounds when their contents are revealed.

Having a Letter as Having a Lover

In *O Primo Basílio,* Luiza is depicted reading *La Dame aux Camélias* (1848) by Alexandre Dumas *fils*. In the critical literature on Queiroz's novel, Luiza is often referred to as a "naive reader" ("leitora ingênua"; Cechim 17), who uses literature to "[fill] a void in a barren existence" (Fedorchek 532). This description calls attention to her position as a "victim of her own readings" and of Bazilio, who "seems to emerge out of a fictional universe" ("vítima das suas próprias leituras e Basílio parece emergir do universo fictício"; Dal Farra qtd. in Cechim 17). Like Emma, Luiza mistakes novels for guides to a fulfilling romantic life. She is also a poor judge of male character, misinterpreting eloquent words for real love. Queiroz clearly draws on Flaubert's fictional universe—particularly his characterization of Rodolphe—for his portrayal of Bazilio, who is also a serial seducer of women.

The scene in Flaubert's novel in which Rodolphe is depicted writing a letter to Emma is adapted by Queiroz, who also endows Bazilio with the same shamelessly manipulative approach to writing exhibited by Rodolphe. Yet, differently from Flaubert's novel, in which the narrator first presents Rodolphe's struggles to write the letter, then Emma's painful reaction to reading it, Queiroz's narrator intertwines the scene of Bazilio's writing and the scene of Luiza's reading. By merging these two events, Queiroz *transgresses* the French model (to use Santiago's term) and highlights the discrepancy between Bazilio drinking beer, playing cards, and distractedly writing the letter, and Luiza, completely absorbed in its contents and flushed with pride at having acquired a lover. Bazilio writes the letter between flipping through magazines, before returning home to obtain a monogrammed envelope– "because that 'always made a better impression'" (*OPB*-MC 170; "Porque sempre fazia mais efeito"; *OPB* 147).[31] Luiza passionately kisses the paper the letter comes on, and revels in the words' "amorous warmth": "and it seemed to her that she was finally entering a superior and more interesting

existence, where each hour had a different charm, each step led to some new ecstasy, and in which her soul was clothed in a splendour radiant with sensations!" (*OPB*-MC 171; "parecia-lhe que estava enfim numa existência superiormente interessante, onde cada hora tinha o seu encanto diferente, cada passo conduzia a um êxtase, e a alma se cobria de um luxo radioso de sensações"; *OPB* 147).

In the next paragraph Luiza will finally exclaim: "I have a lover!" (*OPB*-MC 171; "Tenho um amante!"; *OPB* 148). To receive such a letter, for Luiza, is to have a lover. Her exclamation is a clear reference to Flaubert's novel, where Emma, after her first rendezvous with Rodolphe, announces to her reflection in the mirror: "I have a lover! a lover!" Flaubert describes Emma "delighting at the idea" of having a lover "as if a second puberty had come to her" (*MB*-EM 209; "'J'ai un amant! un amant!' se délectant à cette idée comme à celle d'une autre puberté qui lui serait survenue"; *MB*). If Emma's first puberty was marked by the moment when her body became ready to give birth—marking her suitable for marriage—then Emma's second puberty is marked by a discovery of bodily pleasure, and is caused by a relationship that undermines her marriage. We may read Queiroz's description of Luiza as having reached "a superior and more interesting existence" as a similar moment of a "second puberty." Yet, both puberties are defined by illusions: Emma and Luiza's adolescence ill-prepares them for a boring married life, and their second puberties similarly result in extreme disappointment when they are left behind by their lovers.

The depiction of adultery in *O Primo Basílio* took place in the context of changes to Portuguese law regarding the crime of infidelity and an international debate in Europe about the right of a husband to kill his adulterous wife. In 1867 (eleven years before the publication of Queiroz's novel) Portugal changed from the *Ordinations* to a very progressive Civil Code. It

read, in part: "*civil law is equal to everyone*, it does not distinguish between person and sex, save in the cases expressly listed" ("[a] *lei civil é igual para todos*, não faz distinção de pessoas nem de sexo, salvos os casos expressamente enumerados"; E. Guimarães 560, emphasis in the original). Although the Civil Code declared that both spouses should be faithful to each other, it was the husband's obligation to defend the wife's person and her goods, and she was "obliged to be obedient to the husband" ("*obrigação de prestar obediência ao marido*"; E. Guimarães 561, emphasis in the original). Wives were financially dependent on their husbands, even if they had family resources (the only exception was for real estate, which husbands could not seize). In this Civil Code, a gendered asymmetry concerning the crime of adultery was maintained: while a husband could ask for a separation (there was no divorce) if he had suspicion that his wife was committing adultery, a wife could only go to court if the husband "committed a public scandal or if he had abandoned his wife or if he brought his lover to live in the marital home" ("*cometido com escândalo público ou completo desamparo da mulher ou concubina … e mantida no domicílio conjugal*"; E. Guimarães 562, emphasis in the original). In article 372, it states that the husband who killed his adulterous wife and her lover would be condemned to six months of exile (the same could happen if the wife killed her adulterous husband if his lover was living with them). Ultimately, although the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 presents both genders as equal according to the law, the legal system was still tilted in favor of men, who enjoyed, for example, the right to open any letters addressed to their wives (E. Guimarães 562).

Similarly, the French Penal Code, devised during the reign of Napoleon, possessed a double standard to that of Portugal when it came to prosecuting cases of adultery. A woman convicted of adultery could be imprisoned, but men could not (Offen). In a trial that caused huge controversy in France, a man named Du Bourg was convicted for killing his wife after

discovering *in flagrante delicto* her with her lover in a room on the rue des Écoles (Ferguson). Du Bourg's conviction in 1872 surprised the nation and caused a heated discussion in the press. If his wife had been found and killed in his own home, Du Bourg could not have been charged; but the law did not afford Du Bourg the same latitude elsewhere.

Perhaps the most significant contribution to this debate was a pamphlet by Alexandre Dumas *fils*. Although he was himself the son of an illegitimate affair, his pamphlet, titled *L'Homme-Femme,* contained a fierce defense of the right of a husband to kill his adulterous wife. The pamphlet sold 50,000 copies in six months and caused further controversy as male and female readers (as well as, in one case, a male reader pretending to be "une femme") (Offen 30) responded to Dumas *fils*'s incitement to "kill her" ("tue-la"; 176).

The debate surrounding Du Bourg's trial and Dumas *fils*'s pamphlet is embedded within Queiroz's novel through the figure of the playwright Ernestinho (Jorge's cousin). Ernestinho asks for advice as he pens a romantic play titled "Honor and Passion," which focuses on the theme of wifely adultery. The play inside the novel is an example of "mise-en-abîme," "a reflexive strategy where the content of a medium is the medium itself" (Oxford)—in this sense, excerpts that Ernestinho reads from the play are both within the novel and part of the novel. In the second chapter of *O Primo Basílio*, for example, when Ernestinho is at Luiza and Jorge's house with other friends, he asks for their thoughts regarding his play's ending: if whether the wife, who commits adultery with a charming count who helps her husband to pay his debts, should be forgiven or killed by her husband. In response to the passage, Jorge channels Dumas *fils*'s argument in *L'Homme-Femme*:

> 'If she deceived her husband, then I think she should die. … I can't allow a cousin of mine, someone from my own family, of my own blood, to take the namby-pamby

> decision to forgive such a thing. No, kill her! It's a matter of family principle. Kill her and be done with it!' (*OBP*-MC 40)
>
> 'Se enganou o marido, sou pela morte. .. Posso lá consentir que, num caso desses, um primo meu, uma pessoa da minha família, do meu sangue, se ponha a perdoar como um lamecha! Não! Mata-a! É um princípio de família. Mata-a quanto antes!' (*OPB* 27).

This scene not only recapitulates a recent debate happening in France, but also foreshadows Luiza's adultery. Jorge's vocal support for killing adulterous wives also primes readers to expect that he will do the same when he finds out about Luiza's affair near the novel's end. For Silviano Santiago, Ernestinho's play becomes a mirror for the characters in which they can see their own actions (and their possible consequences) reflected (62).

It is necessary to evaluate how Jorge, after discovering Luiza's affair, forgives her, and, in parallel, informs Ernestinho that he has changed his mind and insists that the adulteress should be forgiven in the play (*OPB* 414-8). Jorge, in the end, moves away from Dumas *fils*'s position in *L'Homme-Femme* after experiencing adultery under his own roof. This shift in Jorge's opinion can also be read as Queiroz positioning himself against the French author and advocating a less severe position.

While Jorge finds out about Luiza's affair after opening a letter sent to her by Bazilio, Luiza finds earlier in the novel (from a letter that comes to her by mistake) that Jorge has been flirting with women and possibly committing adultery while on an extended business trip. In the letter, he boasts of becoming the "Don Juan of Alentejo" (*OBP*-MC 266; "D. Juan do Alentejo" *OPB* 229). Here, Queiroz manifests the blatant discrepancy between men and women when it comes to adultery. While Luiza is told by Jorge's friend to not take Jorge's comments seriously,

Jorge seriously considers killing Luiza—and would have legal immunity if he decided to do so, precisely because of his legal authority to open a letter.[32]

As David Billick explains when analyzing the different moral standards at work in the novel and in Portuguese society: "[m]ales, of course, are possessed of a degree of 'idiosyncratic credit'; that is, they are permitted to transgress social norms to a large extent without any real censure. Women, on the other hand, must adhere to a much more stringent code, and any indiscretion meets with ostracism" (67). By reading *O Primo Basílio* as a response to *L'Homme-Femme*, we see how Queiroz articulates an ostensibly pro-feminist view[33]—that adulterous women should not be killed—while simultaneously depicting an adulterous woman as a naïve and impressionable puppet. Moreover, his novel hints at the limitations of individual acts of forgiveness in the face of public opinion, which may not be so easily overcome. Although Jorge forgives Luiza, it is unclear whether society would. Indeed, her friend, Leopoldina, is routinely snubbed because she is a known adulteress. In a highly symbolic moment, Luiza's head is shaved after she falls ill—a measure intended to reduce her fever, but which summons associations with public punishments of promiscuous women.

In the words of his biographer, Maria Filomena Monica, "Eça believed it [*was*] his mission to teach Portuguese society morality through a series of satirical novels" (150). In *O Primo Basílio*, this morality concerns the institution of marriage and the imbalances woven into it—imbalances which individual actions are largely powerless to overcome, which are coded into law, and which, even if amended, may produce still more trouble as impressionable women seek out the romance they have vicariously experienced in fiction. But what Queiroz fails to articulate is a demand for a world wherein Jorge's life and social standing depend on Luiza's forgiveness—that is, a world where his attempts to mimic the fictional Don Juan earn him as

much scorn as Luiza's emulation of the behavior modeled by fictional courtesans. As we will see in the next section, the early novels of Machado de Assis are distinct from those by Queiroz and Flaubert examined here insofar as they locate the threat to marriage posed by literacy as one bound up with problems of interpretation.

The Early Novels of Machado de Assis and the Crisis of Imagination

When Machado de Assis wrote his critique of *O Primo Basílio* in April 1878, he had just published his fourth novel, *Iaiá Garcia*. Rocha considers the year 1878 a turning point in Machado's life due to the fact that, once the dust raised by the debate concerning Queiroz's plagiarism of French literature started to settle, Machado began drafting *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (*The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*), which marked a defiant break with literary conventions. In what follows, I return to Machado's first published novel, *Ressurreição*, and to *Iaiá Garcia*—the last novel before the creative transformation manifested by *Brás Cubas*—in order to explore how different uses of letters informed the narrative structure of Machado's writing from the very beginning of his career as a novelist.

This section demonstrates the agency of letters in Machado's early works, paying particular attention to gendered differences in reading and the faculty of imagination. Specifically, I demonstrate how letters in Machado's early novels play a significantly different role than in Flaubert and Queiroz's works—a difference with implications for the study of female adultery in literature. As opposed to *Madame Bovary* and *O Primo Basílio*, where letters facilitate the establishment of transgressive extramarital affairs, in *Ressurreição* and *Iaiá Garcia* letters work to sunder relationships. Adultery does not occur in either *Ressurreição* or *Iaiá*

Garcia, but letters serve as pretexts for suspicion. Where Emma and Luiza see their letters as metonyms for the lovers that send them, the letters in *Ressurreição* and *Iaiá Garcia* cause characters to imagine affairs where they do not exist. The crisis of marriage, for Machado, is less a crisis of female promiscuity brought about by literacy than it is a crisis of imagination. The act of adultery is not essential in plots where the mere suggestion of adultery is sufficient to trigger the collapse of a relationship. While Flaubert and Queiroz blame female education for wifely adultery, Machado highlights the potential for imaginative readers of both genders to treat innuendos as facts and legitimate grounds for suspicion.

Critics routinely rate Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis as one of the most important nineteenth-century Brazilian writers. He was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1839 and died in the same city in 1908. Machado was the son of a mixed-race housepainter and a white mother from the Portuguese island of São Miguel. His family may have been "poor and unorthodox (marriage between a white woman and a free man of color was uncommon)" but "it was nonetheless connected to 'good society'" (Frank 43). Though he lacked formal education, Machado was an autodidact in multiple domains. He began his career in journalism as an apprentice to a typesetter and soon took on roles as a reviewer, contributor, theater critic, and writer of short stories. As Regina Zilberman recalls, Machado "educated himself by writing for the *Jornal das Famílias*" ("educou-se literariamente escrevendo para o *Jornal das Famílias*"; 138), where his literary success depended on being well-received by the periodical's bourgeois female readers. In 1869, he married Carolina Augusta Xavier de Novais, his "perfect companion for thirty-five years" ("Foi companheira perfeita durante 35 anos"; BAL, "Machado") who was a "woman of culture and intellect who collaborated on his later works" (Frank 44). His first novel, *Ressurreição*, was

published in 1872, and the following year he began his bureaucratic career, which brought him financial stability for the rest of his life.

The debate between Machado and Queiroz described above marked a critical turning point in Machado's stylistic evolution. As Rocha argues, there was a clear discrepancy in the two authors' relative stature. While Machado was publishing "*his fourth novel*" and had received only modest acclaim, Queiroz had already experienced "a sensational debut" in 1875 that put him on a clear "path to enshrinement" (Rocha 48, emphasis in the original). The massive success of *O Primo Basílio* could only have highlighted this difference, and placed in stark relief the obstacles facing a Brazilian author seeking international recognition. In this respect, Rocha argues that *Iaiá Garcia* is the last novel where Machado still respects literary conventions. Following the success of Queiroz, whom Machado saw only as a plagiarist of French literature, Rocha claims that Machado decided to transform "the notion of 'backwardness,' which accompanies the process of peripheral modernization, into a critical project" (242). Rather than achieve success as a plagiarist of French literature—that is, as a writer of works betraying an excess of reverence for European models—Machado's turning point accompanies an embrace of irreverence for literary hierarchies as an aesthetic principle.

Machado's subsequent works, perhaps even to his own surprise, proved to be successful. At the age of fifty, Machado de Assis had become a kind of "patriarch of letters" ("patriarca das letras"; Candido, "Esquema" 16). As evidence of this status, he was part of the group that envisioned the foundation of the Brazilian Academy of Letters; and, at its inauguration in 1897, Machado was elected as its president—a role he accepted and held until the end of his life in 1908 (BAL, "Machado").[34]

Among the multiple notable critics of Machado's work, Hélio Seixas Guimarães has investigated the role of the reader in his novels and elaborated a theory that Machado aimed to create a new Brazilian reader—one that would be more critical of the books received from abroad. In what follows, I analyze Machado's first and fourth novels in dialogue with Guimarães' analysis, giving special attention to the role of letters—and their readers—in these early novels.

Ressurreição (1872): The Male Reader and the Anonymous Letter

Machado's first novel, *Ressurreição* (*Resurrection*, 1872), received a generally positive reception. One critic states that: "the press was unanimous in greetings worthy of the work's real merit" ("a imprensa foi unanime em saudações dignas do merecimento real da obra"; Ferreira, qtd. in H. Guimarães 246). However, amidst this positivity, Machado also received negative remarks about his lack of originality (Planche, qtd. in H. Guimarães 239). He was referred to as "more Portuguese than Brazilian" and criticized for his lack of "fiery imagination" ("mais português que brasileiro . . . uma imaginação pouco impetuosa e ardente"; Rodrigues, qtd. in H. Guimarães 263). The supposed lack of imagination manifested in the absence of physical descriptions of the characters (Ferreira). Nevertheless, the reception was sufficiently laudatory to encourage Machado in his career as a man of letters.

For Guimarães, the style of Machado's first novels formed part of a literary project aimed at producing a new kind of reader in Brazil. As critics of the time noted, the characterization and plot structure of *Ressurreição* were distinct from those found in most romantic narratives. Although *Ressurreição* possessed aspects of a traditional romantic plot—the gentleman Félix

falls in love with the widow Lívia—one significant departure from convention was the fact that the obstacle to the lovers' happiness comes from within. It is Félix's jealousy, rather than social norms and expectations, that prevents the successful union (H. Guimarães 88).

Another distinguishing aspect of Machado's novel is his use of direct address. The third-person narrator breaks the fourth wall to "get closer to the reader" ("aproximar-se do leitor"; 89)—guiding the reader as one might in a conversation, by "correcting the interpretative impulses of the interlocutor" (". . . corrigindo os impulsos interpretativos do interlocutor"; H. Guimarães 90). Not only does the third-person narrator work to create a "new kind of reader," but Machado articulates a pedagogy of reading by portraying the characters themselves discussing the role of readers. Differently from typical cases wherein female readers were portrayed as naïve and easily manipulated, in *Ressurreição* Lívia is the one who arrogates to the reader a particular responsibility for correctly interpreting texts.

One example of such a dialogue about reading takes place when Félix is discussing a patient and friend, named Meneses, to whom Félix attributes an overactive imagination caused by reading "bad books" ("maus livros"; *R* 22). Félix cites the story of Thales, the pre-Socratic philosopher who fell into a hole while contemplating the stars. Asking whether it is better to keep one's eyes fixed on the ground or raised to the heavens, Félix criticizes Meneses's tendency to behave like Thales. Félix asks, "what is life if not a combination of stars and holes?" The existence of pitfalls necessitates a measure of attention to the here-and-now, meaning that the "best way of escaping the precipices is by fleeing from what enchants" ("Mas que é a vida senão uma combinação de astros e poços, enlevos e precipícios? O melhor meio de escapar aos precipícios é fugir aos enlevos."; *R* 22). In response, Lívia wonders if the "books of imagination… are not as detestable as you [Félix] think," adding that "they are neither hateful

nor great" ("Os livros da imaginação... esses livros não são detestáveis, como o senhor disse . . . não os há detestáveis nem ótimos"; *R* 22). Lívia articulates a view quite close to that of reception theory in literary studies, according to which the significance of a text is primarily generated by the reader. In contrast, Félix adheres to a more formalist view, placing an emphasis on the content of the books themselves.

The disagreement between Lívia and Félix concerning the proper way to read is motivated by Meneses. The narrator describes him as "inclined to pink fantasies" and "the inverse of Félix, whose spirit invents precautions and doubts" ("propenso às fantasias cor-de-rosa"; "[a]o inverso de Félix, cujo espírito só engendrava receios e dúvidas"; *R* 44). For Guimarães, the difference between these characters is key to understanding Machado's literary project. The narrator of *Ressurreição*, he writes, "seems to desire to transform the Meneses-reader into a Félix-reader, in the way in which he aims to inspire his readers to raise doubts concerning the procedures and habits of traditional reading" ("parece querer transformar o leitor-Meneses num leitor-Félix, no sentido de induzir seu interlocutor a duvidar dos procedimentos e hábitos tradicionais de leitura"; 93). Although Machado is clearly departing from the conventions of romantic literature, Guimarães claims that Machado still shares with his romantic contemporaries a vision of literature as a pedagogical tool capable of shaping readers (97).

But there is one key scene that challenges Guimarães's characterization of Félix as a cautious and doubtful reader. At a crucial point in the novel, Félix receives an anonymous letter that casts doubt on Lívia's character. The message reads: "Miserable guy! You are loved as the *other* one was; you will be humiliated like *him*. After a few months you will have a Cireneu to help you carry the cross, as the other one had, for which reason he left this life for a better one. If there is still time, renege!" ("Misero moço! És amado como era o *outro*; serás humilhado como

ele. No fim de alguns meses, terás um Cireneu para te ajudar a carregar a cruz, como teve o outro, por cuja razão se foi desta para a melhor. Se ainda é tempo, recua!"; *R* 74, emphasis in the original). The letter likens Lívia to a cross which Félix would be fated to share with another man—as Jesus shared his cross with Simon of Cyrene. In this Biblical allusion, Lívia is compared to a lethal instrument of torture, and in marrying her Félix would be taking suffering upon himself.

Despite the letter's anonymity and absence of firm evidence, Félix proves only too willing to believe its contents and immediately breaks off his engagement with Lívia. Although Guimarães characterizes the "Félix-reader" as one defined by "doubts" and "precautions," in this scene Félix also has a pink imagination. If Emma and Luiza are depicted as writing letters to lovers because of unrealistic romantic fantasies, Félix is depicted as fantasizing affairs because of a written letter. Far from being a critical reader, Félix excessive suspicion makes him susceptible to believe in an enigmatic message devoid of concrete proof.

On closer inspection, both "Meneses-readers" and "Félix-readers" are defined by imaginative leaps. But there is a third reader in the novel, unremarked by Guimarães: Lívia. If Meneses-readers and Félix-readers are two manifestations of an uncritical approach to literature, then Machado's pedagogical project may instead consist in turning Meneses- Félix-readers into Lívia-readers. It is Lívia, after all, who realizes that individual readers are not passive recipients of textual meaning but active agents in its construction. If Machado is intending to reshape his readers, as Guimarães suggests, I submit it is Lívia that provides the model.

Additional evidence of Félix's tendency to read uncritically is provided in the novel when the narrator reveals that Félix has modeled his romantic life on that of a character in a novel by Henri Murger. Mimicking a character with "an addiction to premature catastrophes" ("o sestro

destas catástrofes prematuras"), the narrator reveals that Félix ends his love affairs "because they weighted on him" ("porque ja lhe pesavam"; *R* 3). If Emma and Luiza begin affairs because of what they read, Félix ends his for the same reason.

Clearly, Félix's behavior is influenced by the literature he reads. But despite this fact, it is Lívia who is singled out as an impressionable reader by other characters in the novel. At one point, Lívia's brother describes her as a *romanesca,* a word that in Portuguese includes connotations of being carried away by both fictions and romance, adding that she "holds many fantasies in her mind, fruit of her loneliness these last two years and from the books she must have read" ("[t]raz a cabeça cheia de caraminholas, fruto naturalmente da solidão em que viveu nestes dois anos e dos livros que há de ter lido"; 6). Although this personality trait "is a pity" ("faz pena") he nevertheless insists that she "has a good soul" ("é boa alma"; *R* 6). Notably, Lívia's brother fails to name any of these novels that have supposedly filled Lívia's mind with fantasies. As opposed to Flaubert, Alencar, and Queiroz who give examples of novels that influence their female protagonists, Machado's narrator provides no confirmation of the accusation that Lívia's behavior is dictated by fiction. I propose that this silence is conspicuous. By repeating the idea—common at the time—that women are especially susceptible to being influenced by books, but showing instead how it is a male character whose life is governed by texts, Machado is implicitly critiquing the idea that uncritical reading is a uniquely feminine quality.

Iaiá Garcia (1878): Reading Faces Reading Letters

The relationship between letters and suspicion of adultery persists in Machado's subsequent novels, particularly in *Iaiá Garcia*. While the anonymous letter in *Ressurreição* cements Félix's doubts regarding the fidelity of Lívia, a letter in *Iaiá Garcia* causes the eponymous character to doubt the fidelity of her stepmother, Estela. Neither woman is the intended recipient of the letter, but its contents—and Estela's reaction to them—is as significant for the plot of *Iaiá Garcia* as the anonymous letter was in that of *Ressurreição*.

In September 1877, Machado completed writing *Iaiá Garcia*, which was published in serial form in *O Cruzeiro* from January 1 to March 2, 1878. It was in February of that year that Queiroz's second novel, *O Primo Basílio,* was published in Portugal, arriving in Brazil the following month. In April, Machado wrote his articles criticizing Queiroz's new novel.

At the time of its publication, *Iaiá Garcia* received mixed reviews. One anonymous critic described the novel as having a "mild and easy style without trivialities, with some interesting physiological studies 'done in a hurry' . . . Yet we can be convinced that the qualities are not enough to transform it into a work of art befitting the republic of letters" ("[u]m estilo ameno e fácil sem trivialidade, alguns interessantes estudos fisiológicos feitos ao correr da pena . . . Mas pode convencer-se de que não são as suficientes para tornar uma obra d'arte viável na república das letras"; qtd. in H. Guimarães 281). One month after its publication, Rigoleto criticized Machado's decision to name the novel after its protagonist, as it inspired a "malicious experience in the audience, to see if they would focus their sympathies on the sly Iaiá Garcia" ("uma experiencia maliciosa sobre o público, a ver se ele concentrava as suas simpatias na matreira Iaiá Garcia" qtd in Guimarães 285). In Rigoleto's long critique, he describes the first half of the book as "read without any surprises," while the second half "draws the reader to a *crescendo* of interest until the end, which, *unlike the vulgarities of the Basílios,* is without blemish and without

reproach" (". . . se lê sem grande abalo . . . arrasta o leitor com um interesse sempre crescente, até o desfecho, que, bem ao revés desses torpes Basílios, é sem mancha e sem reproche"; qtd. in H. Guimarães 284, my emphasis). According to Rigoleto, Machado is heavily indebted to European sources, claiming that "in a copious literature of French novels" he found "a complete arsenal of weapons and resources to lay siege to the imbecile of Jorge." ("em uma copiosa literatura de romances franceses um arsenal completo de armas e recursos para fazer cerco ao imbecil Jorge"; qtd. in H. Guimarães 285). In 2014, José Luiz Passos described *Iaiá Garcia* as a novel that portrayed a new literary subject: a female character that undergoes a moral and psychological evolution (85). Iaiá Garcia was contrasted with Queiroz's heroines who were "misgoverned by their own desires" ("[marcadas pelo] desgoverno dos próprios desejos"; 86). Passos argues that Machado's contribution to the literary theme of adultery was his focus on the "moral emotions associated with that experience—such as jealousy, shame, blame, remorse, and resentment" ("emoções morais associadas a essa experiencia—como o ciúme, a vergonha, a culpa, o remorso e o ressentimento"; 202).

As a matter of comparison, when the novel was reprinted twenty years later, the negative comments dissipated. At that time, Machado had already published *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* (1881), which marked a shift in his writing style. This time, critics praised *Iaiá Garcia* unreservedly, using adjectives such as "delicious", "honest", and "beautiful" to describe it ("delicioso e honesto"; "belíssimo"; qtd. in H. Guimarães 289; 294). José Veríssimo claimed in a commentary on the second edition of *Iaiá Garcia*[35] that everything essential in Machado's writing is "effectively in his first works; indeed he has not changed, only evolved" ("de fato ele não mudou, apenas evoluiu"; qtd. in H. Guimarães 289). Though we will have occasion later in this dissertation to study Machado's last major work, these critics' remarks make clear how the

themes of suspicion, ambiguity, and the treatment of faces as texts are already evident in *Iaiá Garcia*.

The beginning of *Iaiá Garcia* takes place during the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870). The widow Valéria uses her power over her son, Jorge, to send him away from the woman he is in love with, Estela. Although also being in love with Jorge, Estela refuses his advances because she is not wealthy and does not wish to be indebted to him. Valéria and Estela are the primary agents in the novel, with the male characters largely playing reactive roles. Jorge leaves for the war in part to spite his mother and Estela. Upon returning, he discovers that Estela has married Luis Garcia, a friend of his family. Estela agrees to the marriage, which is instigated by Valéria, because it is a platonic "white marriage" primarily undertaken to provide Luis's daughter, the eponymous Iaiá, with a maternal figure.

A crucial scene in the novel revolves around a letter that Jorge sent to Luis Garcia while away during the war, in which he describes his love for Estela, who is not mentioned by name. While organizing some documents, Estela finds the old letter and Luis rereads it. In the letter, Jorge describes how his love has transformed him "from the child that [he] was" into "a man of wisdom" (*IG*-AB 86; "De criança que era, fez-se homem de juízo"; *IG* 53). Considering Jorge's youthful passion amusing, Luis insists that Estela read the letter despite her protestations. As a result, she is forced to study the document and examine its contents, becoming visibly affected by Jorge's declaration of love for her. Iaiá, who is also in the room with Luis and Estela, notices Estela's intense reaction to the letter—a reaction which apparently goes unnoticed by her father. Iaiá is struck by the emotions on Estela's face and suddenly begins to suspect a relationship between her and Jorge. The influence of this moment on Iaiá's development is profound. In the words of the narrator, it is Iaiá's "moral puberty" (*IG*-AB 87; "puberdade moral"; *IG* 54). At this

moment, the narrator states: “Childhood had finished; womanhood was beginning” (*IG*-AB 87 “A criança acabara; principiava a mulher”; *IG* 54).

Reading in this passage is likened to a sexual awakening. Not only does Estela betray signs of a rekindled passion for Jorge—she is flushed and shaking,—but observing Estela reading the letter provides Iaiá with an experience that the narrator describes in sexual terms. The doubts that arise in her mind about Estela’s fidelity are compared to the ripping open of a door that exposes her “enclosed garden” (“[j]ardim fechado”; *IG* 54). Her “crystalline and virginal thinking,” the narrator explains, “not dimmed by experience, was not aware of even the first touches of womanhood. She had no idea of evil; did not know the vicissitudes of the heart” (*IG*-AB 87; “Seu pensamento cristalino e virginal, nunca embaciado pela experiência, ignorava até as primeiras cismas de donzela. Não tinha idéia do mal; não conhecia as vicissitudes do coração”; *IG* 54). No longer capable of “virginal thinking” after the door to her “enclosed garden” is torn open by the thought of adultery, the letter’s reemergence marks Iaiá’s entrance into womanhood. While Emma Bovary experiences a “second puberty” when observing herself in the mirror, and Luiza experiences a “superior and more interesting existence” after reading a letter from her lover, Iaiá’s “moral puberty” is brought on by observing Estela’s reaction to a letter from a man who once loved her. Other than providing possible evidence of Machado’s familiarity with *Madame Bovary*—a novel he is otherwise silent about—the similar scenes in these three novels establish a genealogy in which letters play a growing role: from initiating an affair, to substituting for a lover, to inspiring a vicarious experience of romantic love. The examples demonstrate a growing mediatization of human relationships: the romantic caresses that Emma experiences are transformed into romantic words for Luiza in a love letter, which are transformed finally into imagined possibilities by Iaiá, inspired by a letter to which she does not

have complete access, only through the reactions she sees on an older woman's face. At this stage, Iaiá has neither a letter nor a lover, but only the mediated experience of both.

The letter is also important insofar as it signals another departure from the conventions of romantic novels. Guimarães claims that this letter marks "the liquidation of romanticism" ("a liquidação do romantismo"; 125). Rediscovered after five years, Luis Garcia considers Jorge's passionate writing a ridiculous example of youthful excess—and remarks how Jorge has since moved on, indicating that his love, far from being an eternal transcendent force, was instead a transient disposition subsequently overcome. For Guimarães, Luis Garcia is Machado's depiction of an ideal reader, who is capable of "demystifying" romance. It is worth noting, however, that Luis Garcia's skill as a reader does not extend to an ability to read the reactions of other people. He seemingly remains completely unaware of the drastic changes in Estela's composure while she reads the letter. It is instead Iaiá who notices these changes; and although her interpretation of Estela's reaction is imperfect—since Estela is not in fact currently carrying on an affair with Jorge—it is far more perceptive than Luis Garcia's simple dismissal of Jorge's passion. Machado's insight here is not simply that letters, once they resurface, can puncture poetic visions of romance, but that letters also turn the faces of their readers into texts. Letters are not merely documents sent from one person to another, they are also the authors in a sense of their recipients' reactions.

This episode also provides an example of how letters mediate the private and public spheres in unpredictable ways. In comparing the impact of seeing Estela reading the letter to a door being ripped open in Iaiá's mind, the narrator emphasizes the idea that letters not only traverse physical thresholds as they circulate, but that their contents—and reactions to them—also redraw the boundaries of private life. The two actions of reading in this scene (of the letter

and of Estela's face) generate the opening of two metaphorical doors: the memories of the past and the morality of Iaiá. The two metaphorical openings include an invasion of the privacy of the other (Estela invading the confessional space of Jorge; Iaiá invading the emotional space of Estela). In the end, these openings result in the closing of the two female characters' relationship.

Conclusion

Fatal letters are a common feature of canonical adultery fiction. Even in those cases when the impact of reading letters proves not to be fatal, letters may nevertheless still pose a mortal threat to relationships and to the stability of the institution of marriage. Moreover, as the examples from Poe and Queiroz demonstrate, the capacity of letters to fall into hands they were not intended for makes them instruments of power over others. Their circulation may be a precursor to either sex or blackmail.

The emergence of the genre of the wifely adultery novel, and its association with letters, is bound up with the rise of female readership. This conjunction produces the figure of the wife who commits adultery due to the influence of the books she reads. As we have seen in the examples of Flaubert and Queiroz, the discrepancy between the fantasies contained in romantic novels and the realities of married life encourage women to seek out more passionate encounters with their lovers. These novels revolve around a conception of female readers as impressionable and pliable beings whose moral sensibilities can be undermined by certain narratives. In the early works of Machado, however, the idea of female readers as subject to fantasies that lead to affairs is largely replaced by a vision of readers as subject to suspicions of nonexistent affairs.

Beyond focusing on female readers, the novels by Flaubert and Queiroz also reflect the growing use of letters by women—in these cases, as a means to make contact with potential lovers. In *Madame Bovary* and *O Primo Basílio*, the entanglement of female literacy and sex follows an identical trajectory: women read, women write, women cheat. The advent of the epistolary as a socially acceptable mode of female expression creates further opportunities for these characters to act on the fantasies fed to them in novels by addressing potential paramours. As a form of social media before the letter, letters facilitate illicit sex but also carry the risk of exposing the adulterous wife's activities to her husband (or maid).

However, as Machado's critique of the use of letters as central plot devices in *O Primo Basílio* suggests, the arrival of the wifely adultery novel in Brazil would see this triangulation between women, writing, and reading shift in multiple ways. Specifically, the early works of Machado de Assis challenge precisely the association between female reading and infidelity. In *Ressurreição*, Félix believes in an anonymous letter hinting at Lívia's infidelity despite an absence of hard evidence. However, as *Iaiá Garcia* makes clear, this is not a trait unique to men. The fact that suspicion is so intimately entwined with letters in Machado's novels further indicates how the mediatization of human relationships introduces new possibilities for omission, deception, and misinterpretation. The novels covered in this chapter reveal a whole taxonomy of letters: anonymous letters, intercepted letters, letters that dissimulate emotions and letters that reveal hidden truths; and accompanying this taxonomy of letters is an equally variegated taxonomy of readers occupying a spectrum from the naïve to the suspicious, each carrying their own risks of misinterpretation, each posing a unique threat to the stability of the institution of marriage.

While Machado was concerned in his early works with suspicions about adultery, in the next chapter we will encounter multiple novels that adhere more closely to the European model established by Flaubert and Queiroz. We will also see how Machado further subverts the conventional association between letters and adultery by investing an imagined letter with proof of his wife's infidelity. As a means of organizing my readings of these novels, I will focus on how a European debate—already present in Queiroz—about the right of a husband to kill his adulterous wife came to influence Brazilian fiction. As such, the following chapter demonstrates how questions of female education and punishment permeate five Brazilian novels published between 1880 and 1899.

Chapter III – The Adulteress Arrives in Brazil:

The Circulation of Suspicion in Brazilian Novels of Wifely Adultery

The figure of the adulteress that circulated all over Europe, in novels and pamphlets, became a significant feature of Brazilian literary culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this chapter I analyze the representation of wifely adultery in five Brazilian novels, from the understudied *O Marido da Adúltera* (1882)[36] by Lúcio de Mendonça to the canonical *Dom Casmurro* (1899) by Machado de Assis. The selected novels are in explicit dialogue with European predecessors; and in addition to references to European texts, these Brazilian novels perpetuate the association of adultery and letters evident in the works explored in the last chapter. Indeed, I argue that the crisis of marriage as portrayed in the following novels is a crisis resulting from an untrained readership that misreads and misinterprets texts in such a way that their relationships and marriages are undermined. Moreover, with the exception of Machado de Assis, the Brazilian writers studied here also persist in viewing literature as a moralizing force capable of shaping the attitudes of readers (male and female). As I discussed in the previous chapter, whatever pedagogical inclination may have been present in *Ressurreição* is abandoned by the time of the publication of *Iaiá Garcia*. When writing *Dom Casmurro*, this chapter will show, Machado mocked the pretensions of writers to shape their readers by portraying a narrator who misuses examples from world literature to justify his punishment of his wife and son.

To demonstrate the transatlantic trajectory of the transgressive figure of the unfaithful wife, I open this section with the sculpture *Christ and the Adulteress* by Rodolfo Bernardelli. Work on this sculpture began in 1881 and was concluded in 1884. It was presented to the

Brazilian public in 1885. The sculpture was the first addition to the collection of the Academy of Arts in Rio de Janeiro, and it is still considered a highlight of Brazilian national art.

To Forgive or not to Forgive the Adulteress

Bernardelli was born in Mexico in 1852 but grew up in Rio de Janeiro and became a Brazilian citizen in 1874. Four years earlier, he was admitted to the Imperial Academy of Arts (AIBA) and joined a movement to create a national Brazilian artistic tradition (M. Silva, "A formação" 124). Among his works, the statue *Christ and the Adulteress* is regarded as one of his highest contributions. He executed the work during an apprenticeship in Rome financed by the Brazilian government. In 1882, Bernardelli sent drafts of the work to the National Museum of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro to receive approval. For Maria Couto da Silva, who compares Bernardelli's sculpture with other works, the decision of portraying Christ and the fallen woman was probably the result of his desire to create a moralizing art that was realistic in style ("A formação" 129). Possibly, Gustave Doré's illustrations in the *Sacred Bible* were among his references and inspirations. This version of the Bible was very prominent in the 1860s due to Doré's realistic illustrations (M. Silva, "A formação" 128). It remained popular into the 1920s (Apostolos-Cappadona 452). There are multiple similarities between Doré's illustration (Fig. 5) and Bernardelli's sculpture (Fig. 6), notably Christ's drapery and the adulteress's position at Christ's feet. The sculpture and the illustration both refer to the same Biblical episode in which Jesus defends a woman from being stoned as an adulteress. Jesus's challenge to the woman's would-be executioners, memorably rendered in the King James Bible as: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:3-5, 126) appears radically at odds with

many of the attitudes expressed in European adultery novels, and, particularly in Dumas *fils*'s famous pamphlet, *L'Homme-Femme* (1872), wherein he defended the right of the husband to kill an adulterous wife. Christ's defense of the adulteress is all the more provocative given the double-standards embedded in nineteenth-century adultery laws, when men could often kill women for committing the same act that they engaged in with impunity.

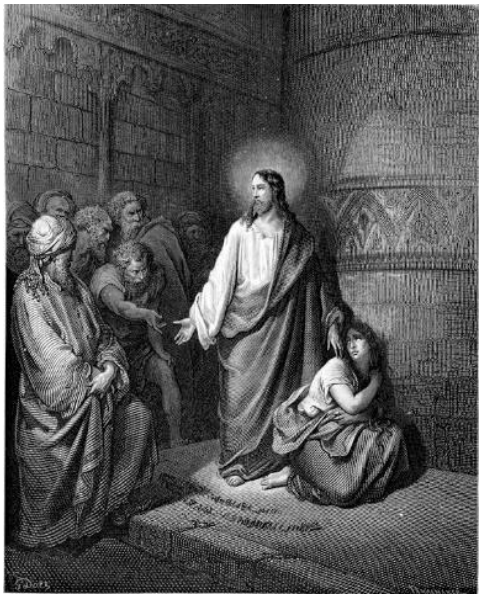


Fig. 5 Gustave Doré, "Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery," *La Grande Bible de Tours,* John 8:3-5, 1866, Public Domain.

Fig. 6 Rodolfo Bernardelli, "Cristo e a mulher adúltera," *National Museum of Fine Arts,* Rio de Janeiro, Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Upon returning to Brazil in 1885, Bernardelli had a solo exposition at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts that included the presence of the Emperor Dom Pedro II, his patron. Reviewers at the time highlighted the statue, describing "blood seemed to circulate in the body of these figures" ("[n]os corpos dos personagens parece circular sangue;" qtd. in M. Silva, "A formação" 129). Other critics focused on the figure of the adulteress, describing her

physiognomy of "shock, with shame, and confidence" ("do susto, da vergonha e da confiança"; qtd. in M. Silva, "A formação" 130).

The sculpture, like the literary representations of the adulterous wife, was modeled in Europe—inspired by French predecessors—and then transported to Rio de Janeiro, to be admired by the nobility and literati. The author Valentim Magalhães, after seeing the statue, wrote "the *Adulteress* is far more beautiful than those Venuses of the Medici" ("a *Adúltera* é muito mais bela do que aquelas Vênus, a de Médici"; "Rodolpho" 1). Magalhães placed this fallen woman above a goddess, and asked "after contemplating [the statue], who would not judge her—a woman?" ("quem há que, contemplando-a não a julgue—mulher?"). Although these early critics placed an emphasis on Bernardelli's realism and praised its moralistic depiction of the fallen woman, few seemed to note how this work—and the scene that inspired it—challenged precisely the act of judging women that was not only central to many works of fiction at that time, but was also a part of the sexist legal landscape in which those works were written. As we have seen in *O Primo Basílio*, Jorge initially defended the right for the husband to kill his adulterous wife. While he eventually decides to forgive Luiza, his own infidelities are never seen as equivalent acts for which he should be judged. The tension between a popular disposition toward judging adulteresses and desiring to seek punishment for them versus Christ's example of forgiveness will be crucial in the discussions of the following novels set in Brazil.

One early manifestation of a Brazilian response to the question of adultery inflected by this Biblical episode is present in the letter written by Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) to the famous French philosopher Ernest Renan (1823-1892). When contrasting Christ's example of withholding condemnation for the other's sins with Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s pamphlet *L'Homme-Femme,* Nabuco ponders the justifiability of Dumas *fils*'s position. In his perspective, the

traditional idea of killing the adulteress was incompatible with the values of modern society. According to Nabuco's criteria, Jesus had more modern views on gender than Dumas *fils*.

The young Nabuco—who would later become a defender of the monarchy, a loud voice for the abolishment of slavery, and a renowned diplomat—had as early as 1872 articulated the need to properly instruct women (48). He wrote that such education should not be restricted to learning languages and artistic skills, but also providing them with tools to be an equal contributor to the couple's wellbeing and society more broadly. For Nabuco, there was a paradox in positioning women as the source of wisdom in the household while preventing them from attaining a proper education (45). His harsh criticism of Dumas *fils* and those who defended the right of a cuckolded husband to kill his adulterous wife rested on the absence of any checks on the husband's authority. The husband would be at once the victim, the detective, the lawyer, the judge, and the executioner, leaving the wife with no mode of recourse (49).

As evidenced by Bernardelli's sculpture, adultery became a subject of widespread cultural commentary in Brazil during the second half of the nineteenth century. The theme had a particular resonance in the period's literature. This chapter demonstrates how the theme of wifely adultery evolved in Brazilian literature in dialogue with European models. Lúcio de Mendonça's epistolary novel *O Marido da Adúltera* (*The Husband of the Adulteress*, 1882) was inspired by Dumas *fils*'s *L'Homme-Femme*, and was followed by the scandalous naturalist novel *A Carne* (*Flesh*, 1888,) by Júlio Riberio, who dedicated his novel to Zola. Ribeiro's novel is notable for featuring the most intellectual and literate female character in nineteenth-century Brazilian fiction. Aluísio Azevedo's *Livro de uma Sogra* (*Book by a Mother-in-Law*, 1895) takes the form of an extended letter from an older woman to her daughter and son-in-law that contains the recipe for a successful marriage amidst the perils of adultery. *Flor de Sangue* (*Flower of Blood*,

1897) by Valentim Magalhães uses the "old anonymous letter" not only to denounce the adulterous wife, but also to reveal to the cuckhold that she cheated on him with his best friend. The chapter concludes with Machado de Assis's *Dom Casmurro* (1899), where the narrator compares his son's face to a letter proving his wife's adultery. Besides perpetuating an association between reading, writing, and cheating, these novels also participate in an ongoing dialogue about adultery as a crime—about whether murder or forgiveness were appropriate responses, and the extent to which husbands also bear some blame for the misdeeds of their wives.

O Marido da Adúltera (1882): Who to Blame for the Crime of Adultery?

As evidence of the esteem Lúcio de Mendonça's works were held in during his lifetime, Valentim Magalhães wrote in 1888 that Mendonça ranked right below Machado de Assis as a novelist. After Machado, Magalhães claimed that "the author of *The Husband of the Adulteress* is the most elegant, chaste, and great among our writers" ("Posso afirmar que são admiráveis de graça, naturalidade e correção. Depois de Machado de Assis, é o autor *d'O Marido da Adúltera* o mais elegante, castiço e grandioso dos nossos prosadores"; "Notas" 220). Although he was an important intellectual figure and a leading advocate for the foundation of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, Mendonça's work is not considered part of the Brazilian literary canon. *O Marido da Adúltera* was forgotten soon after its release, a situation that I hope to partly amend in this section by highlighting the innovative use of multiple narrators and the novel's internal debate on the gendered politics of style.

Lúcio Eugênio de Meneses e Vasconcelos Drummond Furtado de Mendonça was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1854 and raised in Minas Gerais by his relatives after his father died and his mother moved away after remarrying. He never had proper instruction and learned how to read and write by following the sounds and the characters through reading newspapers (Venancio 10). He moved to São Paulo in 1871 to pursue a law degree. However, after involving himself in student protests known as the "Academic Revolution of 1872" ("revolução academica de 1872"; Correia 374) against professors, he was suspended from the law school for two years. He spent this hiatus in Rio de Janeiro, circulating in the high literary circle of the time, working next to his brother Salvador de Mendonça, as well as Joaquim Nabuco, Quintino Bocaiúva, and other well-known men of letters. He published his first book of poetry, *Névoas matutinas*, with a preface by a young Machado de Assis in 1872.

His older brother, Salvador de Mendonça was also a writer. He published the novel *Marabá* as a feuilleton (serialized novel) from 1874 to 1875 in *O Globo*. His novel cited Dumas *fils*'s *L'Homme-Femme* and intervened in the ongoing debate about killing adulterous wives. In this novel, the character Agenor finds out that his wife, Lúcia, is not a virgin and kills her. While referencing the popular discussion catalyzed by Dumas *fils*, Salvador de Mendonça's novel is also notable for its political content. His protagonist travels to the United States, hinting at the Republican model of government that he supported, and references to indigenous traditions (Bezerra, "Salvador"). In 1875, José de Alencar wrote a letter praising the novel (with some critical remarks) that helped to promote the book as an original contribution to Brazilian literature. That same year, Salvador de Mendonça moved to New York to work at the Brazilian consulate—it was the beginning of a long diplomatic career. Today, however, Salvador de Mendonça's novel has been largely forgotten.

Lúcio de Mendonça, meanwhile, returned to São Paulo and after completing his degree in 1878, was granted a position as the commissioner of the province of Minas Gerais, requiring him to move to the town of Campanha, in the south of the state, in 1879. The following year, he married Ms. Marieta, the daughter of an attorney. After six years in Campanha he attained the position of city councilor.[37] But eventually he moved back to Rio de Janeiro; his atheistic, positivist, and republican ideas had inspired fierce opposition in Campanha that left him discouraged (Araújo 227-8). With the establishment of the Brazilian Republic, Mendonça built a political career, ultimately reaching the position of Minister of the Supreme Federal Court (1895). Known as the "Father of the Academy"[38] he was an advocate for the establishment of the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1897. According to El Far, the "academy was to promote Brazilian culture and especially national literature" (qtd. in Schwarcz, "Machado" 23). In 1907, due to health issues including blindness (a fate that his brother also shared) he retired and passed away in 1909 (BAL "Lúcio").

The town of Campanha, where Mendonça lived for six years, had a combination of conditions—political, economic, and social—that promoted the establishment of an urban population that "incorporated into their habit the acquisition of information in printed format, as an alternative to the rooted oral sources" ("...incorporava o habito da obtenção da informação, por meio impresso, de forma sistemática e periódica, como alternativa ao enraizado recurso da oralidade"; C. Nascimento, "Mulheres" 262). This easy access to the printed materials is evident in the data presented by Cecília do Nascimento, who claims that "the twenty thousand citizens of the city. . .—being less than one tenth of them literate—had in their availability, in the first years of the decade of the 1870s, at least three newspapers constantly circulating, *O Monitor Sul-Mineiro, Colombo, O Monarchista*" ("[o]s 20 mil habitantes da cidade. . .—sendo menos de um

décimo deles leitores—tinham à sua disposição, nos anos iniciais da década de 70 dos oitocentos, pelo menos três jornais de circulação constante…"; 260). Mendonça began contributing to *Colombo* in January 1879, a time when the newspaper refashioned itself, becoming the "first and [most] brilliant organ of the periodic press from Minas Gerais extensively dedicated to republican values" ("o primeiro e brilhante órgão ostensivamente republicano que teve a imprensa periódica mineira"; Veiga, apud Araújo 227). From 1880 to 1881 *O Marido da Adúltera* was published as a feuilleton in *Colombo* and subsequently printed as a book in 1882 (A. Gomes 24).

O Marido da Adúltera opens with the subtitle "Letters from an unknown woman to the editors of the newspaper Colombo" ("Cartas de uma desconhecida à redação do *Colombo*"; *MdA* 7). According to this unknown first-person narrator, who signs the letter as Laura de M., the motivation for asking the editor of the newspaper to publish her letters stems from a desire to transform her tragic life into an example for other women so that they might avoid repeating her own mistakes—among which, most consequentially, is her infidelity to her husband, named Luis Marcos. As the title of the novel indicates, Laura is an adulteress—who clearly says that she committed adultery due to her unhappy marriage. The novel is composed of five letters from Laura, told from her point of view, as well as commentary by the editor of the newspaper and an additional three letters written by the best friend of Laura's husband. Together, these letters tell the story of how Laura lost her husband, who commits suicide after discovering that she was committing adultery.

A review by Urbando Duarte de Oliveira published in *A Gazetinha* on May 21, dubbed the novel "too audacious" ("mais ousado"; qtd. in Gomes 38). *O Marido da Adúltera* only began to attract attention decades later in 1950 with the publication of the essay "Um romance

esquecido" ("A Forgotten Novel") by Brito Broca. In 2009, the novel was republished by the Brazilian Academy of Letters in a lavish new edition. In the introduction to this release, the critic Ubiratan Machado describes Mendonça's text as "unusual" ("estranha") in its critique of the then-dominant patriarchal code of honor and "singular" in its use of an adulterous female narrator as a moralizing voice (11).

Recently, some critics have noted the epistolary format of the novel (one of the few examples of Brazilian epistolary novels) and the use of both newspapers and letters as media for debating, instructing, and spreading information (Sussekind). The newspaper becomes a character within the story, functioning as the mechanism through which Laura reads Luis's poems and where Luis finds out about Laura's adultery after recognizing himself in a parody about an adulteress published in the newspaper (Sussekind; Gomes; Vilar). Other critics noted similarities between *O Marido da Adúltera* and canonical adultery novels. For example, Laura is diagnosed with a "primitive bovarism" ("bovarismo primitivo"; Garbo 29) in the way she decries the provincial boredom of her life in Minas Gerais (Garbo 30). The term "bovarism" was coined by Jules de Gaultier in 1892, based on his reading of *Madame Bovary*. In his definition, bovarism means "the power of man to conceive of himself as someone other than he is" ("*le pouvoir départi à l'homme de se concevoir autre qu'il n'est*"; 13, emphasis in the original). By 1904, the term had entered the Brazilian context through the writer Lima Barreto, who reviewed Gaultier's definition of "bovarism" and identified examples of this condition in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

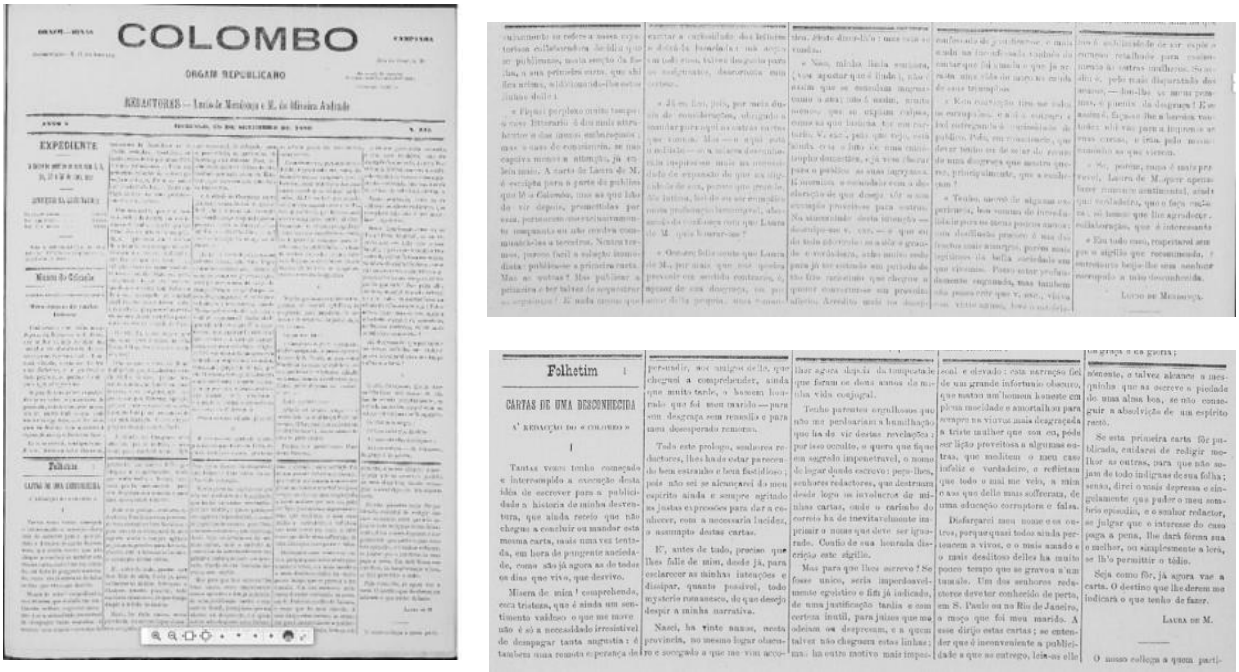
As a way of explaining the lack of attention given to *O Marido da Adúltera*, Adriana Gomes suggests that the novel's ending, where the husband dies instead of the adulterous wife, came as a shock to readers (41). Although Gomes identifies *O Marido da Adúltera* as "a social

pedagogical tool," aiming to "instruct its female readers" in "the morals and good customs of nineteenth-century Brazil" ("instrumento pedagógico e moralizador ... instruir as leitoras ... a moral e os bons costumes do Brasil oitocentista"; 31), she claims the unexpected ending affords multiple interpretations. For Gomes, Luis's decision not to kill his adulterous wife seems to favor the adulteress, as she could re-start her life somewhere else (39-40). Although designed with a pedagogical message, Mendonça's decision to forego punishment for the adulteress defied a convention that had defined similar adultery novels, in which the threat of death was mobilized to regulate the behavior of female readers.

The use of a female first-person narrator in *O Marido da Adúltera* also subverts the structure of the typical adultery novel by introducing a fictional female perspective on the institution of marriage. By including a female narrator who describes her own point of view of the process by which she came to violate the institutional norms of marriage, the novel establishes a polyphonic space where competing perspectives encounter one another. Specifically, the claims of the female narrator are questioned within the novel by the two male narrators—the editor who receives the letters and the man who claims to be the friend of the husband involved in the story. Both male narrators challenge her motivations, her agency, and, indeed, even her authorship of the letters themselves.

Lúcio de Mendonça is not only the editor of the actual newspaper *Colombo* (Fig. 7), but he also introduces himself within the story as the recipient of these letters from Laura de M. In the opening of the story, Mendonça (the editor) expresses ambivalent thoughts about publishing Laura's letters—a narrative device that grants the novel the appearance of authenticity. He notes the danger to his professional position that might attend the publication of letters with a transgressive subject—in this case, the confessions of an adulteress. According to Flora

Sussekind, Mendonça's decision to ultimately publish the letters serves to enhance the "impression that the newspaper itself is a polemic space, in which it is possible to put divergent opinions into dialogue" ("a impressão de que o próprio jornal é um espaço polemico, onde poderiam dialogar opiniões divergentes"; 215). As narrative strategies, the editor Mendonça presents the consequences and the benefits of publishing a story from the transgressors' point of view and theatrically grants the character the platform for her tale. Notwithstanding, the narrator claims to let a female writer to express herself publicly only because her overly sentimental style masks a thinly veiled attempt to justify her actions. The editor thus bears no responsibility for any moral harm caused by sharing her writings as they simply reinforce her social disgrace. In this narratological conceit, the fictional editor Mendonça publishes Laura's letters not due to their quality but, rather, because of the opposite: her duplicity, he implies, is so ill-hidden that even her subversive attempt to glamorize her criminal action is ineffective.


COLOMBO

ORGAM REPUBLICANO

Folhetim

CARTAS DE UMA DESCONHECIDA

Fig. 7: "Cartas de uma Desconhecida" ("Letters from an unknown woman"), *Colombo*, Sep. 26 1880.

After the first letter from Laura and the editor Mendonça's response, there are two consecutive letters from Laura describing her story. The fourth letter in the narrative, however, is from another narrator: an anonymous man who claims to be the best friend of Laura's husband, Luis. In his first letter, he reveals that he does not believe that Laura's letters are actually written by a woman—explicitly claiming that they must be, in fact, written by a man who signs with Laura's name. This male character publicly announces that whoever writes Laura's letters "must be someone—a man—who knows all about her life and dominates her as a despot" ("deve ser alguém—um homem—que conhece toda a sua vida e que a domina como déspota"; *MdA* 63) He continues: "I say that it must be a man because that style soaked in reality does not come from a female's quill; moreover, I say it because of the naked and merciless manner in which the shameful facts of this woman's life are revealed" ("Digo que deve ser um homem porque não é de pena feminina aquele estilo embebido de realidade; o mais que digo vê-se pela desapiedada nudez em que se revelam os fatos vergonhosos dessa vida de mulher"; *MdA* 63). The failure of Laura's letters to conform to a preconceived idea of what constitutes a feminine writing style leads the husband's friend to doubt that it was Laura that wrote them. Paradoxically, it is because the details of her account are presented so realistically that the husband's friend considers them the product of a male imposter. Yet, besides being too realistic, the husband's friend also accuses the letters supposedly written by Laura of containing "inaccuracies." Thus, while stylistically the letters conform too closely to reality, their content betrays an attempt to intentionally misrepresent what happened. The husband's friend claims he is writing in order to "reestablish truth" ("restabelecendo a verdade"; *MdA* 63).

The fictional editor and the husband's friend thus target Laura's writing style, but arrive at completely different assessments. While, for the editor, her overt sentimentality is actually evidence of her guilt, for the husband's friend it is the brazenness with which she presents her story that indicates the presence of a man behind her words. In both cases, a critical evaluation of Laura's writing is intended to discredit her account, but the specific allegations are diametrically opposed: she is at once too romantic and too realistic, an obviously guilty woman and secretly a man.

Christine Planté argues in her book *La petite sœur de Balzac*, that to write "as a woman" is to write "as men have defined women and their writing" ("*comme une femme telle que les hommes ont défini et son écriture*"; 214, emphasis in the original). In the nineteenth century, argues Planté, women's writing only qualifies as women's writing insofar as it corresponds to a male idea of what constitutes women's writing. Furthermore, Planté argues that one necessary characteristic of women's writing in this period is that it is not artful. According to nineteenth-century attitudes, she claims, writing can either be well-crafted or feminine, but it cannot be both (214). Despite the fact that ultimately there is indeed a man ventriloquizing Laura's words—in this case, Mendonça, the author of the novel—the letters calling Laura's authorship into question nevertheless confirm Planté's point about how women's writing in nineteenth-century literature was ultimately determined by male judgment.

In addition to claiming to present the perspective of the adulterous female character, Mendonça's novel is also distinct from other novels of wifely adultery insofar as it ends with the husband committing suicide, rather than with the death of the adulteress. In his first letter, the anonymous friend of Laura's husband recounts a conversation between them concerning Dumas *fils*'s pamphlet L'*Homme-Femme* and the debate about killing adulterous women. In Mendonça's

novel, the anonymous friend claims that Luis thought Dumas *fils* was wrong to defend the killing of adulterous women, insisting that it was the cheated husband who ought to be blamed for neglecting his wife and not exerting a strong enough influence on her character. The attitude expressed by Luis was not only starkly distinct from that expressed by Dumas *fils*, but was also different from popular attitudes shared by many men in Brazil, who maintained a practice of killing women suspected of adultery long after changes to the law that made such actions illegal.[39]

When Luis Marcos eventually discovers his wife's adultery, he maintains his stance, accepting the blame for his wife's affair. "I am the guilty one," he writes in the suicide note that he sends to the anonymous friend, "and I should be the one to die" ("O culpado sou eu; quem deve morrer, sou eu"; *MdA* 151). Therefore, although Luis spares his wife's life and kills himself instead, breaking with local custom, this mercy is predicated on an asymmetrical assessment of marital responsibility—one that, effectively, saves the woman by stripping her of any agency. Following Luis' explanation, a woman's actions are reflections of her husband's influence. The female tendency towards adultery, Luis implies, is a flaw that can be treated by a husband's instruction. By presenting himself as a model of integrity and honesty, a husband might inspire his wife to similar heights of virtue.

In the letters signed by Laura, she appears to endorse a connection between literacy, pedagogy and sexual ethics. Indeed, she explicitly frames her letters as a lesson to possible female readers so that they can avoid the mistakes she made. She writes: "This faithful narration of a great dark misfortune, which killed an honest man in his youth . . . may be a useful lesson to some other women, who will meditate on my unhappy and true case and reflect that all evil has come to me and to those who have suffered most from it, of a corrupting and false education"

("esta narração fiel de um grande infortúnio obscuro, que matou um homem honesto em plena mocidade […] pode ser lição proveitosa a algumas outras, que meditem o meu caso infeliz e verdadeiro, e reflitam que todo o mal me veio, a mim e aos que dele mais sofreram, de uma educação corruptora e falsa "; *MdA* 8). It was her "corrupting and false" education that caused her to commit adultery and to suffer the aftermath; and her writing is thus intended to provide this education to other women who might benefit from her true story.

Beyond her flawed education, Laura also attributes her infidelity to the dangerous monotony of her life in the province, claiming that: "From this emptiness came boredom, which is the path to perdition for those with an imaginative nature like mine" ("Desta falta me veio o tédio, que é caminho certo da perdição para as naturezas imaginativas, como infelizmente é a minha"; *MdA* 116). As much as Laura identifies the connection between idleness and a tendency to give into fantasies, Laura is different from Emma Bovary insofar as she claims to be aware of the differences between novels and reality:

> … the great madness of love adventures is beautiful in the novels, where one dies poetically, with the author's funeral phrases and the sweet sighs of the nervous reader, and then one turns the page, or closes the book, and it is all over. In reality, it is not as simple; there is the evil comment, the social demands, and worse than everything, the indifference after the torturer's satisfaction.
>
> … a honestidade era o mais cômodo; as grandes loucuras amorosas são bonitas nos romances, onde se morre poeticamente, com frases fúnebres do autor e doces suspiros da leitora nervosa, e volta-se a página, ou fecha-se o livro, e está acabado. Na realidade, já não é tão simples; há o comentário maligno, as exigências sociais, e pior do que tudo, o desdém do algoz saciado. (*MdA* 120).

The narrative calls attention to the dangers of mistaking fiction for reality. After experiencing social exclusion and being blamed for the death of her "honest husband," Laura (or the man behind her narrative), tries to illustrate for potential female readers that there are consequences to violating social norms, expectations, and the masculine code of honor—even if these consequences do not lead to their deaths. Here, Mendonça's use of narrative strategies to enhance the feeling of authenticity in the novel extends to both the form of the novel and its content. In writing an ending that is distinct from that traditionally used in adultery novels, and having a character explain how novels unfold differently from real life, Mendonça makes his novel appear more realistic. Laura's story is a disguised fiction cunningly offered up as proof of the distinction between fiction and reality: if her story was in a novel, the text implies, then she would have died at the end of it, following convention.

Mendonça's convoluted narrative adds several innovations to the traditional plot of wifely adultery novels in Brazil even as it maintains a correlation between women reading and women cheating. That the husband assumes the blame for his wife's affair is unusual for the time, but this arrogation of responsibility rests on the same conception of women as pliable beings that one finds in *Madame Bovary* and other canonical adultery novels. Whereas Flaubert highlighted the suggestiveness of women to the influence of novels, Mendonça describes the husband as a determinative agent of influence. Rather than shaped by books, women can be shaped by their husbands—and whatever flaws in their character are introduced by reading, an attentive husband can unmake.

Following Mendonça's description of the husband's influence as a potential antidote to the harm caused by reading, the next novel we will examine, *A Carne* by Julio Ribeiro, will showcase how an excess of literacy can make a woman reluctant to enter into a marriage with a

strong husband who might evert such a benign influence. In this instance, the risk posed by reading to the institution of marriage is not so much that it leads women astray into the arms of lovers, but that some women may end up preferring the company of books to that of a husband.

A Carne (1888): The Literate Femme Fatale

A Carne is not considered part of the Brazilian literary canon, but its sexual content has earned the novel a significant reputation and it has been adapted for the screen multiple times. Since its publication in 1888, it has occupied an ambivalent space between fame and infamy (Silveira). Upon its release it prompted "strong reactions from the press" ("grande polêmica nos jornais"; El Far, *O Livro* 30). Eva Bueno writes that critics at the time described the novel as "obscene, silly, exaggerated," and "criticized" the novel "from all points of view" (*Resisting*, 114).

As mentioned earlier, Júlio César Ribeiro Vaughan was the first translator of Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" into Portuguese. He was born in Sabará (Minas Gerais) in 1845, the son of an American investor from Virginia and of a Brazilian teacher. It was from his mother that he received his primary education—indicating that during the mid-nineteenth-century in the province of Minas Gerais, a woman could have a professional job and still be responsible for instructing her child. Perhaps due to this closeness with his mother, he kept her last name for himself (Ribeiro) instead of adopting his father's surname, Vaughan (Fitz 23). Earl Fitz notes that Ribeiro converted to Protestantism and was known for being a "free-thinking Mason" (23). After moving to Rio de Janeiro to join the Military School, Ribeiro resigned and dedicated himself to pursuing journalism and an academic career (in Latin

and Rhetoric), becoming a philologist affiliated with the College of Law in São Paulo. In 1888, he achieved notability among Brazilian novelists of the time with the publication of *A Carne*. Upon its release, the novel sparked intense debates and criticism. Among these debates, the most famous discussion was between Ribeiro and the priest Senna Freitas—resulting in a series of articles entitled "The Polemic." The debate primarily concerned the presentation of female sexuality in the novel. Specifically, Freitas emphasized his shock at Ribeiro's description of a men having "animal needs" ("necessidades do mundo animal") and defining love as nothing more than "animals in heat" ("o amor é cio, e nada mais"; qtd. in Silveira 197). In the same year, Ribeiro published a design for a new national flag in the republican newspaper *O Rebate*. Although it was not embraced by the republic, the state of São Paulo did adopt Ribeiro's flag and it is still used today. Instead of the green and yellow colors found on the monarchical flag, Ribeiro chose black, white, and red to represent the "three races" (African, Europeans, and natives) that together make up the Brazilian people (C. Ribeiro 65). He died two years later, in 1890, of tuberculosis in Santos (São Paulo) (BAL, "Júlio Ribeiro").

A Carne depicts the story of Lenita, who is raised by her wealthy and widowed father, receiving a special education not generally available for women at the time (having classes in physics, mathematics, algebra, Latin, German, and English, to mention some examples). Overly critical of Brazilian society, Lenita repudiates marriage and, with the abrupt death of her father, she moves to the farmhouse of her father's tutor, Colonel Barbosa—who lives with his sick wife, their son, Manuel Barbosa (called Barbosa in the story), and slaves. There, she experiences an environment isolated from society. Amidst an intellectual and sexual relationship with Barbosa, Lenita has an unexpected pregnancy. Since Barbosa was legally married in France and the Brazilian constitution did not recognize his divorce, Lenita leaves Barbosa and, once in São

Paulo, accepts to marry the bourgeois Dr. Mendes and raise Barbosa's child as Mendes's. After finding out about Lenita's pregnancy and marriage, Barbosa commits suicide.

The novel created a scandal, with most critics objecting to the work's depictions of sex. There were some notable exceptions to this widespread denunciation, including Alfredo Pujol, who defended the book as "worthy of the school he *[Ribeiro]* associated it with"—that is, Naturalism (qtd in. L. Almeida 109). Valentim Magalhães praised the book in his *Notas à Margem* in 1888, playing with the novel's title by categorizing the critics' positions using gastronomical adjectives: some saw the novel as "dry" ("Carne…seca"), others saw it as too "raw" ("Carne…crua"), and still others considered it "rotten or swinish" (Carne… podre ou de porco). In Portuguese, "carne" means both "meat" and "flesh," so Magalhães's descriptions carry connotations of both culinary criticism and cannibalism (*Notas* 220). For Magalhães, however, Ribeiro's novel was a "*Carne*… de Venus; divina" ("Flesh of Venus, divine" 220). Here, the question of artistic "taste" is taken more literally, and the polysemy of *carne* hints at both the consumption of the book as literature and the consummation carried out in the novel's pages.

Besides these laudations, however, the general position of the critics is more accurately summarized by José Veríssimo 1889 assertion that Ribeiro committed "abuses" to literature by creating an "obscene" novel that resembled "the monstrous childbirth of an artistically diseased mind" (qtd. in Bueno, *Resisting* 114). If we recall the critic of *O Primo Basílio* who defended that novel as the natural son of Queiroz (even if it was not his "legitimate offspring"), Veríssimo also adopts the language of parenthood—only in this case to credit the novel's moral deformities to the artistic defects of the father. Here, as in the case of *O Primo Basílio*, the paternity of the novel is clear, only it is the novel's monstrousness, rather than its quality, that confirms the author as its creator.

Although harshly criticized by literary critics at the time, *A Carne* has since been rehabilitated, becoming a popular best-seller of sorts. It even inspired three cinematic adaptations in the first half of the 20th century.[40] For Afrânio Coutinho, it was precisely the stigma surrounding the novel and the critical comments describing the book as "illicit" and "obscene" that enticed more readers to buy it—and, in his view, its popularity can be attributed to its erotic scenes rather than its literary merit (Silveira 209). More recently, critics have paid attention to the entanglement of the scientific and sexual dimensions of the novel. Lilia Schwarz, for example, demonstrates that independently of the level of scientific knowledge that the characters may possess, they are still motivated by their flesh, their desires, and instincts ("O olhar naturalista" 156). Marcelo Bulhões highlights the paradox of Lenita simultaneously appearing as a "superior woman" due to her education and as subject to "female weakness" because of her flesh ("mulher superior"; "fraqueza feminina"; 63). For Bulhões, the characters participate in the exercise of scientific knowledge, analyzing, classifying, and dominating nature systematically while, at the same time, they are part of this same nature that is pervaded by sexual impulses and irrational actions. While Lenita and Barbosa study nature, Ribeiro "studies" ("analis[a]") them, and finds that education alone is insufficient to erase the overpowering force of female sexuality (Bulhões 70).

Situating the novel in its historical context and taking into account Ribeiro's anti-monarchical position, Eva Bueno provides a reading of the novel as an allegory of the political situation in Brazil. Thus, Lenita could be compared to Princess Isabel—who signed the Aurea Law abolishing slavery in May 1888, several months after the publication of *A Carne*. Despite Princess Isabel's exceptional education and being named by her father, Emperor Pedro II, as his legitimate successor, it was unthinkable to have a woman as the ruler of Brazil. For Bueno, it

was precisely her intelligence and outstanding education that was unbearable for men ("Elas por eles" 225) and *A Carne* can be read as a gendered critique of the monarchy. For Ribeiro, female education was only a superficial layer that did little to compensate for the fickleness of women's bodies, instincts, and the menstrual cycle (Bueno, "Elas por eles" 225). The critic concludes that the representation of Lenita shows how women should never be put in a position of power and leadership, but always kept under masculine control.

Leonardo Mendes argues that the hostility against *A Carne*—and against naturalist literature in general—stemmed from an anxiety about the high status of literature. There was a fear, implicitly expressed by the novel's critics, that Ribeiro's salacious content was diminishing the position and value of literature in society. Literature had a "sacred status" that was challenged when journalists wrote novels (28). The novel's protagonist—white, young, and rich—resembled the literate elite that would have bought the book. By describing the sexual life of a member of their own class, the novel broke with a tradition of restricting sexual descriptions to the "animal sex" of slaves and subalterns (as in Aluísio Azevedo's *The Slum* from 1890) (32). Lenita, therefore, broke with literary convention when she went to Barbosa's room searching for sex (32). In depicting Lenita as a woman liberated from traditional moral constraints, thanks in part to her extensive education, and tying this nontraditional background to her cruel separation from Barbosa, Ribeiro identifies how the cultivation of female intellect raises new dangers that threaten the lives of men.

There are three moments in the novel where reading shapes the reactions of the characters and their responses towards the institution of marriage. First is the letter from Barbosa to Lenita that confirms his feelings for her; second is Lenita finding love notes from Barbosa's previous affairs; third is the letter that Lenita sends to Barbosa explaining her decision to leave Barbosa

and marry Dr. Mendes and rejoin the same society that she frequently disparaged. I here analyze these reading scenes to demonstrate how the superior education of Lenita is depicted as a threat to her male lover's life and to the institution of marriage.

Differently from the characters in *O Marido da Adúltera*, Lenita is remarkable for her high level of education—which was unusual for the time. For Lucia Miguel Pereira, Ribeiro "did not draw her [Lenita] from life but from books" (trans. Barne xiv). Lenita's initial education comes from her father and together they read the "Portuguese classics, and the finest foreign books, as well as a selection of the best literature from all times" ("… clássicos portugueses, os autores estrangeiros de melhor nota, e tudo quanto havia de mais seleto na literatura do tempo"; *AC* 3). Although typically humble and discreet, when facing bachelors who tried to impress her during the balls, Lenita would "simulate candidness" ("candura adoravelmente simulada"; 3). She would "hide her immense superiority behind artifice" as strategies to humiliate men by exposing their own ignorance with "treacherous questions" ("escondendo com arte infinita a sua imensa superioridade" … "rede de perguntas pérfidas"; *AC* 3). Superior education here is represented as a tool for female deception, allowing Lenita to feign ignorance of what a man is saying, only to later confront him. Lenita's father comes to regret providing her with such an exceptional education, seeing how she uses this knowledge to bring shame to men.

While Emma, Luiza, and Laura are portrayed as avid readers of romantic novels and, consequently, as disappointed with the realities of marriage, Ribeiro endows Lenita with an opposing tendency. Her reading has removed her illusions about marriage, which she sees as less about love than about fulfilling a social "need" ("*necessidade* do casamento"; *AC* 4, my emphasis). She claims that, when she "feels the need" to get married, she will seek a mediocre man, justifying this choice by explaining that great men are generally not good husbands (*AC* 3-

4). Lenita articulates this decision as a move toward gender equality, as she identifies how superior men (particularly intellectuals) often choose inferior women. Her education, therefore, alerts her to gender asymmetries; but her response to this awareness is to establish their mirror image: a superior woman married to an ignorant, naïve man.

Despite Lenita's rationality, *A Carne* lavishes significant attention on the desires of the body. When Lenita receives the first letter from Barbosa while he is away for work purposes, she is eager to see if Barbosa declares his love for her. After confirming her suspicions of their mutual affection, Lenita then "reread the letter, but reread it attentively" ("[r]eleu a carta, mas releu com atenção"; *AC* 53). Ribeiro differentiates his female protagonist from the other female characters we have encountered who are not careful readers of texts—either of novels or letters. And while a letter from Barbosa addressed to Lenita becomes the cornerstone of their affection, wherein Barbosa declares his "need for her company" ("…necessidade . . . da sua companhia"; *AC* 51), it is the discovery of old letters and notes from Barbosa's previous relationships that unleashes a series of thoughts in Lenita that lead to her decision to break up with Barbosa the next time he leaves for work purposes.

After finding the old love notes written by Barbosa to former lovers, Lenita returns them to their box and locks herself in her room and cries. She interprets the letters as evidence that Barbosa's affections are fleeting—that the same sentiments he expresses to her have been expressed to others before, and may also, one day, be consigned to the box (81). Like the biscuit box in which Rodolphe keeps Emma's notes along with the letters from his other conquests, Barbosa's box of notes signals to Lenita the transience of love. As seen in the previous chapter, old letters also demonstrate the ephemerality of affection in Machado de Assis's *Iaiá Garcia* when Luis re-reads Jorge's letter and laughs at his youthful passion. Letters, therefore, hold the

power to undermine the romantic rhetoric of transcendent and undying love by bringing disparate temporalities into communication. The old romantic claims contained within letters may be proven false when they reemerge in a new context in which they no longer hold true. In *A Carne*, the common medium of expression used between these different lovers (letters) and the similarity of their contents all lead Lenita to view Barbosa's love as something fungible, easily transferable from woman to woman.

Soon after this episode, Lenita discovers that she is pregnant. She decides to break off her relationship with the intellectually gifted Barbosa and marry a mediocre man, in this case, Dr. Mendes. In a letter to Barbosa, sent three months after her departure, she explains that she would have married him if he were divorced; because he was not, she "searched for" ("tive de procurar"; *AC* 100) a suitable man who would accept her and her unborn child.

Throughout the novel, Lenita expresses contradictory attitudes towards marriage. Together, Lenita and Barbosa criticize marriage, describing it as a "selfish, hypocritic, immoral, and sovereignly stupid institution" ("egoística, hipócrita, profundamente imoral, soberanamente estupida"; *AC* 34). For Barbosa, who was himself married in France and did not have his divorce recognized in Brazil, he foresees the fall of the institution of marriage but "with time, and with the same slowness as it was formed" ("com o tempo, a mesma lentidão com que se formaram"; 32). After finding out that Lenita was truly attracted to him, Barbosa imagines the "future of the marriage institution" once it is no longer "a draconian contract" with no possibility of divorce ("o casamento do futuro não há de ser este contrato draconiano"; *AC* 67). Nevertheless, after discovering her pregnancy, Lenita does not break with social expectations by nourishing an illegitimate family with Barbosa away from society. Rather than flee the "sovereignly stupid institution" of marriage, Lenita accepts Dr. Mendes's proposal and returns to the city.

Despite the fact that Lenita agrees with Barbosa's criticism of marriage, in an earlier moment in the novel, Lenita claims that it is "madness to break from the product of an evolution of thousands of centuries. Society is right: it rests on the family, and the family rests on marriage" ("[é] loucura quebrar de chofre o que é produto de uma evolução de milhares de séculos. A sociedade tem razão: ela assenta sobre a família, e a família assenta sobre o casamento"; *AC* 83). This view, rather than the one she shares with Barbosa, is the one that ultimately defines her actions. While Lenita does break with social convention by initiating (and then breaking off) a relationship with Barbosa, and induces Dr. Mendes to agree to raise her child from Barbosa, she nevertheless chooses to perpetuate the same institution that she criticizes. As Regina Zilberman says of the naturalist novel *O Mulato* (1881) by Aluísio Azevedo—a story where the romantic couple does not succeed due to racial and social differences— *A Carne* ends by "confirming the marriage institution and rejecting the vehement passions of youth" ("[c]onfirmando o casamento enquanto instituição e rejeitando as veleidades da juventude"; 139). Although the novel's erotic aspects made the novel a scandal and a commercial success, the text's conclusion highlights the threat to men posed by female sexuality when unconstrained by marriage. Barbosa dies because he believed marriage did not matter to Lenita; Dr. Mendes ends up raising another man's child with a woman who does not love him.

Ribeiro's novel depicts an image of female education that is distinct from that portrayed by Flaubert, Queiroz, and Mendonça, but that is nevertheless as dangerous to men. Although Lenita is a careful reader who does not display the same novel-induced delusions that plagued Emma and Luiza, her education is depicted as lessening her capacities for sympathy. The emotionless calculus of risk and benefit that guides Lenita's actions leaves her insensitive to the

harm that she causes. In an inversion of typical gender roles, the rational woman brings harm to an emotional man who ends his life on a sudden impulse.

As if written to prevent the kind of tragic outcome outlined in *O Marido da Adúltera* and *A Carne*, the next novel analyzed here, *Livro de uma Sogra* by Aluísio Azevedo, proposes mechanisms for altering the typical marriage so as to increase its chances of success. The narrative, as we shall see, amounts to an instruction manual for a newlywed couple containing rules to help them to sustain their mutual attraction and avoid the temptations of adultery.

Livro de uma Sogra (1895): A Manual for a Successful Marriage

A Carne's ending, wherein the couple is not legally allowed to wed because divorce was not permitted in Brazil, is a criticism of the Brazilian Empire—a government intertwined with Catholic values and rules. One year after the publication of this novel, on November 15, 1889, the proclamation of the Republic of Brazil took place, leading to changes in the nation's religious and marital laws. In a decree issued on January 7, 1890, "church and state were separated . . . and only civil marriages were recognized. These reforms, with the establishment of the freedom of religious worship, were incorporated in article 72 of the constitution of 1891" (Borchard 347). Precisely because marriage was now separated from the church, faithful republicans, like Ribeiro, envisioned the inclusion of divorce as part of the legal changes. Yet, this expectation was soon frustrated.

Pascal Mallet, who was known during his lifetime for being a dedicated republican and polemicist, published a pamphlet titled *Pelo Divórcio!* in 1894. This work argued for the legalization of divorce, and was the last work published by its author, who passed away soon

after its appearance. Although Mallet's death largely overshadowed the reception of *Pelo Divórcio!*, one critic signing as "B." considered *Pelo Divórcio!* to be Mallet's best work, praising his denunciation of the "immutability of the family institution, the fierce stubbornness of the Catholic religion, the crazy intransigence, the rebellious intolerance of positivism and the hypocrisy of a fictional Moral, which fights against divorce but allows and favors prostitution" ("o preconceito da imutabilidade da instituição familial, a teimosia ferrenha da religião católica, a intransigência alucinada, a rebarbativa intolerância do positivismo e a hipocrisia de uma Moral fictícia, que combate o divórcio mas permite e favorece a prostituição"; B. 2). It was amidst this larger debate about divorce led by republicans that Aluísio Azevedo published *Livro de uma Sogra*, which appeared in 1895—one year after Mallet's pamphlet.

According to the critic Veríssimo (1900), *Livro de uma Sogra* was much more widely discussed in the newspapers than Mallet's pamphlet. For the critic, Azevedo's work was indeed the "first Brazilian book, that I know, wherein marriage is put into question and discussed in its elements and its effects" ("[o] primeiro livro brasileiro que conheço em que o casamento é posto em questão e discutido nos seus elementos e nos seus efeitos"; 52). Jean-Yves Mérian, the well-known biographer of Aluísio Azevedo informs us that "not a single newspaper was indifferent" to the publication of *Livro de uma Sogra*, which received attention from the press throughout the month of October 1895 ("nenhum jornal ficou indiferente"; 536). The widespread coverage of the book, and its renewal of an ongoing debate about the need to legalize divorce, was an achievement for Azevedo who, according to his biographer, wanted above all else "to cause a polemic" ("*[ele]* conseguiu o que queria: provocar uma polêmica"; Mérian 536). Despite the fact that he recognized Azevedo's "distinct" approach to discussing marriage, Veríssimo still

criticized the lack of moral and social concerns in the novel. The novel was an intellectual exercise, the critic claimed, that was hardly applicable to the real issues of domestic life.

Azevedo himself was never married. Yet, his mother was an example of a woman who challenged the patriarchal norms in the northeast of Brazil. Aluísio Tancredo Gonçalves de Azevedo was born in 1857 in São Luís (Maranhão), from an unrecognized union between his mother, Emilia, and the vice consul of Portugal, David Azevedo. Emilia was legally married to a violent man; but, in defiance of social expectations, she eventually abandoned him. Years later, she met David, with whom she had five children but never legally married (Mérian 537). It was only in 1864, with the death of her first husband that Azevedo was officially recognized as David's son (Frank 65). Zephyr Frank highlights the influence of Azevedo's unusual background on his literary work, starting with the example that his parents offered him: that "of freely given love in a situation outside conventional marriage" (65).

At the age of nineteen, Azevedo moved to Rio de Janeiro to become closer to his older brother (Artur) while studying drawing at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts. With the passing of his father, Azevedo returned to Maranhão, where he published his first novel, *Uma lágrima de mulher* (*A Woman's Tear*, 1879). His second novel, *O Mulato* (*The Mulatto*, 1881) is considered the inaugural work of the literary school of Naturalism in Brazil,[41] and it provoked scandal and debate with its representation of racial prejudice. Following the success of this novel, Azevedo returned to Rio de Janeiro aiming to become a full-time professional writer. Among his publications, divided between romantic feuilletons published exclusively for income, and works of more serious fiction, such as *O cortiço* (*The Slum* ,1890), the latter led to Azevedo's name being added to the canon of Brazilian literature. Today, he is most well-known as an observer of urban social life.

After sixteen years of writing—with a total of twelve novels and ten plays—Azevedo published his last fictional work, *Livro de uma Sogra* (*Book by a Mother-in-law*), in 1895. Four months later, he embarked on a career as a diplomat, living in Spain, Japan, England, Italy, and, finally, Argentina—where he passed away in 1910 next to his companion Pastora Luquez and her two children, for whom Azevedo cared as a father (BAL, "Aluísio Azevedo").

Livro de uma Sogra presents itself as a manuscript written by Olímpia to her daughter and her son-in-law, that aims to answer the question: how can a married couple be happy while remaining faithful to one other? The main strategies suggested by the mother-in-law are for the couple to live separately at regular intervals and for each one to find a friend of the opposite sex to serve as the "lover of the heart." Together, the friend of the heart and the spouse would fulfill each partner's emotional and sexual needs, respectively, while maintaining the fidelity expected in marriage. Artur de Azevedo, Aluísio's brother, identified in the female narrator Olímpia a portrayal of their mother (Emilia)—such a comparison did not stop Artur from labeling the work a "terrible little book against conjugal mores" (qtd. in Mérian 537-40). Although Olímpia is depicted as determined to rescue the institution of marriage from its possible failure, the way in which she proposes to do so is seen by Artur as an attack on marriage itself. The novel thus raises the question of how the institution of marriage can be modernized without losing its essence.

Lulu Sentos, a critic at the time of the novel's publication, underscores the narrator's combination of romanticism and rationality. In order for the married couple to remain faithful to each other, they must live in a "perpetual honeymoon" of enjoyment and desire for one another. This state can only be achieved in Olímpia's theory through constant separation and the presence of friends for the soul. Sentos summarizes Olímpia's theory in the following words:

> … there is no real affection, name it as you like, love or friendship, if not between individuals of the opposite sex; but physical love lives out of illusions; and when these illusions are lost, that love disappears; in this sense—and this is the morality (?) of the book—each creature has to, in order to be happy, have physical love and a love for the soul of the opposite sex. That is, the author inverts the platonic adultery, reducing the spouses, I wouldn't say to procreation machines, but to two individuals who do not like to manufacture stars with the leftovers of old moons, and they arrange themselves to always have new moons, to be in a perpetual honeymoon.
>
> … não há afeto real, desse-lhe o nome que lhe der, amor ou amizade, senão entre indivíduos de sexo oposto; mas o amor físico vive de ilusões, e quando elas se perdem, ele some-se; de modo que—e é esta a moralidade (?) do livro—cada criatura deve ter, para ser feliz, uma de sexo oposto para o amor físico, e mais uma para o amor da alma. Isto é, o autor inverte o adultério platônico, reduzindo os conjugues, não direi a máquinas de procriar, mas a dois indivíduos que não gostam de fabricar estrelas com os restos das luas velhas, e arranjam-se de modo a ter sempre luas novas, a estar em perpétua lua de mel. (Sentos 1)

The inclusion of the question mark after the word "morality" indicates the possible irony or perhaps the paradox of the theory expounded in the novel: in order to avoid adultery and the crisis of marriage, it is necessary to have two lovers—one for the body, and the other for the soul. The physical love depends on a constant precession of "honeymoons"—the endless renewal of seduction and excitement, while the spiritual love remains asexual. Sentos skepticism about the feasibility of the mother-in-law's suggestions was not the only doubt that marked the

reception of Azevedo's novel. Other critics identified similarities between the *Livro de uma Sogra* and earlier works dealing with similar themes.

Valentim Magalhães published a review of the novel on September 23, 1895, in which he praised Azevedo's book, describing it as "a close and strong study of the eternal problem of love in marriage" ("um estudo cerrado e forte do eterno problema do amor no casamento"). However, he also emphasized Azevedo's indebtedness to European writers, claiming that Azevedo could have not written the *Livro de uma Sogra* "without *The Physiology of Marriage* by Balzac, and the books by Henri Beyle and Bourget on love, the plays by Dumas *fils* and other renowned works" ("sem a *Fisiologia do casamento,* de Balzac, os livros de Henri Beyle e Bourget sobre o amor, as peças de Dumas filho e algumas outras obras célebres"; "Semana," 1895, 1). Magalhães later wrote a second review of the *Livro de uma Sogra*, comparing it to Leo Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), which was published in Brazil in 1890. Tolstoy's novella suggests that sexual relations should be exclusively reserved for procreation purposes, while love between souls has a more elevated status (Mérian 539)—a similar division between soul and body already present in Brazil in Alencar's *Lucíola* (1862). Azevedo, differently from Tolstoy, defends the importance of a healthy and happy sexual life for both partners within the institution of marriage, while advocating for a "reciprocal platonic adultery" through friendship ("'adultério platônico', recíproco"; Mérian 541). Indeed, Azevedo's acknowledgment of the possibility of female sexual pleasure in writing was pioneering for the time.

Beyond identifying earlier models that served as the basis for Azevedo's work—which perhaps indicates a reluctance to credit the Brazilian writer for his own ideas and originality—Magalhães also echoes the skepticism expressed by Sentos about the novel's stated plan for saving marriage: "When you don't have a wealthy mother-in-law who is also a wise philosopher,

how can you have two houses—one for the husband and the other for the wife—and travel to Europe and the United States, whenever the partner is presenting the first symptoms of pregnancy so that he does not see her swell up like a balloon?" ("Quando não se tem sogra rica e astutamente filosofa, como se há de ter duas casas—uma para o marido e outra para a mulher e fazer viagens a Europa e aos Estados Unidos, quando a cara metade acusa os primeiros sintomas da gravidez para não vê-la inchar como um balão?"; "Semana," 1895, 1). The jocular tone adopted by Magalhães in his review, and the accusation of unoriginality implied by his references to similar novels from Europe and Russia, caused a bitter dispute between the two writers, who had previously been friends.

In January 1896, Azevedo wrote a critique of Magalhães, who classified his novel as a "bastard son" of Tolstoy's *Sonata* after praising it in an earlier review: "[s]o my *Book of the Mother-in-law* four months ago was not 'good, it was great,' and now it is nothing more than a bastard son of *The Kreutzer Sonata* …. At which time would the talented critic have spoken sincerely: when he praised my work or when he attacked it?" ("o meu *Livro de uma sogra* há quatro meses não era 'bom, era ótimo', e agora não passa de um filho bastardo do *Sonata a Kreutzer* ... Em qual das vezes teria o talentoso crítico falado com sinceridade: quando elogiou a minha obra ou quando a deprimiu?"; "Na Notícia," 1-2). The term "bastard son" exposes the same anxieties about paternity that dominated discussions about the risk of female adultery and belongs to the same pattern of previous critiques that adopted the metaphor of parenthood to describe the influence of the writer on his work. In Queiroz's case, his *O Primo Basílio* was referred to as natural but illegitimate. In the case of Ribeiro, it was the son of a monstruous mind. Here, the *Livro de uma Sogra* is a bastard from Tolstoy, whom Magalhães credits with granting the novel its most distinctive aspects.

One of the more notable reviews of Azevedo's work was written in French, and titled "Letters from a woman of the world" ("Lettres d'une femme du monde"). The review, signed by V. de A., challenged the authenticity of Azevedo's rendering of a woman's writing style—a critique that resonates with the debate between the narrators of *O Marido da Adúltera*. V. de A., who claims to be a French woman married to a Brazilian man in France, states that there are "expressions that an honest woman would never have dared to write," and that the mother-in-law "wears panties so cheerfully, her ideas seem fake from one end to the other" ("des expressions qu'une honnête femme n'aurait jamais osé écrire"; "cette belle-mère, qui porte si gaillardement des culottes elles *[théories]* me semblent fausses d'un bout à l'autre"; 1). Furthermore, V. de A. asserts that this "man in makeup understands nothing about marriage" and, finally, that "this mother-in-law is a fool and her son-in-law an idiot" ("Cet homme manqué n'entend rien au mariage"; "cette belle-mère est une sotte et son gendre un imbécile"; 1). In an ironic comment, V. de A. calls the son-in-law a "big silly" and thinks that "it is hilarious" to imagine him being faithful to his wife while spending months in Europe by himself.

Differently from other critics focused on the perceived tension between the theories espoused by the narrator Olímpia and their practicality, V. de A. shares her own experience as a married woman. She admits not asking her husband "to do the impossible, that is, fidelity. What do I care if he is a bit of a runner? It's in his nature as a man, and, provided he doesn't have the foolishness to make a false household, he will enjoy his home all the better" ("je ne demande pas l'impossible à mon mari, c'est-à-dire la fidélité. Que m'importe qu'il soit un peu coureur ? C'est dans sa nature d'homme, et, pourvu qu'il n'ait pas la sottise de se faire un faux ménage, il n'appréciera que mieux son chez soi"; 1). It is the demand that Azevedo's novel places on men—that they refrain from sleeping with other women, and restrict themselves to "platonic"

adultery with a lover of the soul—that makes the novel most unrealistic to this "woman of the world." This review signed by a woman perpetuates the idea that adultery is a gendered crime, and that women are somehow more naturally inclined to fidelity than their male counterparts.[42]

Despite its polemical reception, the book was largely forgotten in the twentieth century. In an assessment of Azevedo's works written in 1950, Lucia Miguel-Pereira selected only *O Cortiço, O Mulato,* and the *Casa de Pensão* as the texts by Azevedo that "endured," while others, including *Livro de uma Sogra*, are described as "illegible" (143-144; qtd. in L. Ribeiro 8). In contrast, a 2001 review in *Folha de São Paulo* describing the rediscovery of *Livro de uma Sogra*, praises the novel's prescience, and presents the following question as the core thesis of Azevedo's novel: "Love may last forever, but is it possible to love someone every day?" ("O amor pode até durar para sempre, mas é possível amar alguém todo dia?" Menezes). The critic sees wisdom and contemporary relevance in Azevedo's theory that the enemy of the success of marriage is the loss of excitement through daily intimacy and that sensual love depends on *saudades*.

Although the ideas in the novel were unprecedented in Brazilian fiction, *Livro de uma Sogra* maintains the tradition of linking female literacy, female sexuality, and the crisis of marriage. In the novel, the mother-in-law Olímpia recounts episodes from her married life, and contrasts her intellectual development with that of her friends. For Olímpia, her friends were "romantic ladies" ("moça romântica"; *LdeS* 14), whereas she harbored different ideas:

> I never dreamed of having any prince charming as my fiancé, nor some singular and handsome adventurer, who would come from far away […] and reach me and lay down at my feet his heart of a poet in love and his glorious sword of a knight. No, and I think that these ladies, who have "crooked" dreams, are truly handicapped in their hearts—a

> deformity resulting from a disease that was very prevalent when I was eighteen—a romantic infection, with a pernicious character and accompanied by acute delirium and brain disorders.
>
> Não sonhei nunca para meu noivo algum príncipe encantado, nem algum singular e formoso aventureiro, que viesse de longínquas paragens ... para chegar ate mim e depor a meus pés o coração de poeta enamorado e a sua gloriosa espada de cavalheiro. Não, e acho que essas donzelas, que sonham assim torto, são verdadeiras aleijadas do coração, deformidade consequente de uma moléstia que grassava muito quando eu tinha dezoito anos—a infecção romântica, com caráter pernicioso e acompanhada de crises agudas de delírio e perturbações cerebrais. (*LdeS* 14-15)

Olímpia's ideas about marriage seem to be formulated in knowing opposition to the conventional views expressed by famous fictional female readers such as Emma Bovary. Through Olímpia, Azevedo is not only criticizing the school of romantism— "an infection!"—but he is using his novel to propose changes to literary trends, indicating how literature could induce a different kind of sexual and social behavior among women.

The changes that Olímpia proposes, including having the partners living at different houses and spending months apart during pregnancy, function as ways to preserve the illusions that are necessary for romance—illusions that are endangered by the prolonged proximity of marriage. While romantic novels create the illusion of husbands as princes, leading to frustrated marriages that motivate wifely adultery, Olímpia's strategies are designed to prevent this disillusionment by restricting the time husbands and wives spend in each other's company. She is advising her daughter to continually see her husband *as if* he were always someone different. Olímpia is not rejecting but embracing the powerful importance of illusions in a marital

relationship and explaining how illusions serve as the basis for sexual attraction and passionate feelings.

Rather than incentivizing the reading of romantic novels, the *Livro de uma Sogra* positions itself as a replacement, serving as a guide for future couples to preserve the feeling of a constant "honeymoon." Yet, as Magalhães notes, Azevedo's audience would for the most part be unable to put his theory into practice due to the expenses involved. "[H]ow many husbands," he asks, "could afford spending months in Europe or in the United States while his wife is going through pregnancy?" (". . . como se há de . . . fazer viagens a Europa e aos Estados Unidos, quando a cara metade acusa os primeiros sintomas da gravidez . . . ?" "Semana," 1895, 1) As a wealthy woman, such financial concerns do not appear to enter Olímpia's mind. As such, not only is Azevedo's solution to the crisis of marriage limited to the bourgeois class, but the crisis itself is depicted as a uniquely bourgeois phenomenon.

If one perceived risk to the institution of marriage was the tendency for married men to fall in love with courtesans, Olímpia's solution is to have the husband treat his wife like a concubine. She suggests that a husband only visit her "every now and then, [so that] he loves her always and always" ("uma vez por outra vez, amam sempre e sempre"; *LdeS* 19). In this way, the wife is prevented from being transformed into a boring, everyday figure.

The audacity of this proposal—saving marriage by turning wives into concubines—is matched by the candidness of Olímpia's description of unfulfilling sex in marriage. Olímpia recalls her nuptial night and the painful experience she underwent, in which her "body, without reaching the necessary degree of sexual appetite, deprived itself of the indispensable and beneficial lubrication with which nature protectively enables and prepares, in such cases, our delicate organs of love" (" corpo, sem atingir o necessário grau de apetite sexual, privou-se

da indispensável e benéfica lubrificação com que a natureza protetoramente habilita e prepara, em tais casos, os nossos delicados órgãos do amor"; *LdeS* 35). She claims that this "absence transformed an act, that should have been good and natural, into real violence" ("essa falta transformou um ato, que devia ser bom e natural, em verdadeira violência"; *LdeS* 35). Such a description is meant to educate female and male readers who may be unfamiliar with the biological processes involved in sex. Azevedo's book thus partakes of a tradition that sees literature as a pedagogical tool; however, the aim in this case is not moral instruction but the removal of a barrier to mutual sexual pleasure—a barrier which may compromise the marriage's integrity. The above quotation on the absence of lubrication and the pain resulting from unfulfilling sex are pioneering for the nineteenth century, particularly since the narrative voice represents that of an older woman.

While the wife must be treated as a concubine, the strategies that Olímpia outlines are also meant to preserve the allure of the husband. With physical distance maintained between them, a husband and a wife will miss each other so much so that they will not feel the need of meeting a courtesan or engaging in adultery. The temporal limits on their contact and the different houses in which they live, aided by dress codes that maintain a degree of formality conducive to seduction, removes the couple from the comfortable zone of married life that is liable to cause dissatisfaction. Azevedo claims that, at the moment of seduction, women adorn themselves, "or rather, disguise themselves" ("ou melhor — disfarçar-se"; *LdeS* 19). The disguise, Olímpia explains, transforms the suitors (the women as much as the men) into what they are not, since they aim to "hide from the gaze of the other their little flaws and little miseries" ("em esconder aos olhos do outro os seus defeitozinhos e as suas pequenas misérias";

LdeS 20). As a result, every relationship is from the start based on illusions that are necessary for seduction and which, for the long-term success of a couple, have to be constantly renewed.

With this plan for a successful and happy marriage, spoken through the voice of Olímpia, Azevedo is also masking his own criticisms of the institution of marriage by having his narrator call it an "immoral institution" on his behalf ("imoral o casamento"; *LdeS* 17). Given Azevedo's own background, particularly the trend-breaking behavior of his mother and the fact that he himself was never married, it seems fair to conclude that he may have shared some of Olímpia's criticisms of marriage. The drastic conditions that Olímpia places on marriage for their success—conditions which, as Veríssimo pointed out, would have been untenable for the majority of the population—also seem to indicate that Azevedo possessed a rather pessimistic view of marriage.

If we consider the *Livro de uma Sogra* as a book-length letter to some newlyweds, it is remarkable in its use of the epistolary mode insofar as it does not document or cause the termination of a relationship—unlike the letters in the novels we have seen thus far—but instead contains proposals for a marriage's fulfillment and success. As many critics pointed out, however, the provisions laid out in the novel for preserving marriage would seemingly undermine the very nature of marriage itself by turning every couple into lovers who happen to be legally bound but otherwise share none of the bonds or intimacies associated with marriage. In turning out attention to a novel by Magalhães who criticized the derivative nature of Azevedo's novel, we shall see how Magalhães himself also adopts established elements of earlier adultery novels in his work *Flor de Sangue*—specifically, a reliance on letters as plot devices.

Flor de Sangue (1897): The Afterlives of Letters

As we have seen from his previous appearances in this chapter—from praising Bernardelli's statue and Ribeiro and Mendonça's novels to criticizing Azevedo's lack of originality—Valentim Magalhães was a major figure in turn-of-the-century Brazilian literature. Although his criticism was widely read during his lifetime, his novel, *Flor de sangue,* and his other writings are little read today. For the purpose of this chapter, Magalhães's novel makes a contribution to the genre by depicting a love triangle where a man sleeps with the wife of his best friend and reveals that fact to him through a letter. Besides this innovation of having the lover confess to the husband, however, the novel's lukewarm reception also signals a growing weariness among Brazilian critics of the plot devices often used in adultery novels—particularly, letters.

Antônio Valentim da Costa Magalhães was born in 1859 in Rio de Janeiro. It was at the School of Law in São Paulo that he began a bohemian life in the company of Raul Pompeia, Luís Murat, Luis Gama, and others. He published his first book of poetry in 1877, entitled *Cantos e Lutas* (*Songs and Struggles*). After returning to Rio de Janeiro, he founded the newspaper *A Semana*, "as a means of uniting those who held similar views about literature" and promoted the study of French works by authors such as "Zola, the Goncourt Brothers, Maupassant, and Flaubert" (Loos, *The Naturalistic* 33). *A Semana* served as the space to unite the most eloquent writers of the time, while also advocating the abolition of slavery and the establishment of the Republic.

Throughout his literary career, Magalhães took part in multiple public debates—including with the renowned critic Sílvio Romero in 1884. Moreover, his constant desire to promote his friends may have distracted him from his own literary production. According to Dorothy Loos, "his greatest contribution […] lay in his stimulating others to achieve success"

("The Naturalist" 244). Though he supported many writers from his inner circle, he also came to destroy some of these same friendships through his criticism, as in the case of Azevedo mentioned previously. Magalhães compiled his literary notes and reviews and published them in the books *Escritores e Escritos* (*Writers and Texts*, 1894) and *Bric-a-Brac* (1896). His poem collections *Alma* (*Soul*) and *Rimário* (*Rhyme Set*) both appeared in 1899. In 1903, Magalhães died of an intestinal infection at the age of forty-four in Rio de Janeiro (Motta 66).

His only work of prose, *Flor de Sangue*, is best known not for its literary qualities, but for being the first book donated to the Brazilian Academy of Letters' library—a gift that the Academy still praises on their website. The same website reproduces Veríssimo's description of the book as "literature made in a hurry" ("literatura apressada"), and adding that such a judgment "is not without justification" ("não sem razão"), claiming that a "hundred years later, this work is only remembered for the fact that it was the starting point of the Academy Library" ("[c]em anos depois, essa obra só é lembrada pela circunstância de ter sido o marco inicial da Biblioteca da Academia." BAL, "Valentim Magalhães"). While Machado de Assis complimented his friend for his "curiosity and ardor," his experimentations with diverse genres, and his "fighting attitude," he nevertheless also dismissed the novel, writing that "naturally not everything that he [Magalhães] writes will have the same value" ("A Semana," 1896, 402). Subsequent critics have largely agreed with these assessments.

The novel, divided into two parts, follows first the seemingly peaceful married life of Corina and Fernando. After the return of Fernando's best friend, Paulino, from abroad, Corina seduces Paulino and they have a passionate affair until Paulino realizes that she was not in love with him. Paulino writes a long letter to Fernando informing him of the affair and then commits suicide. The second part of the novel begins five years later. Corina is having other affairs

unbeknownst to her husband, but, one day, he receives an anonymous message denouncing Corina as an adulteress. To defend his honor, Fernando murders his wife's lover and goes to prison—where he then finally receives the earlier letter from Paulino. That letter had been entrusted by Paulino to a friend, who we learn was only to give it to Fernando in the event he discovered Corina's affairs. Fernando dies shortly after reading Paulino's letter. After her husband's death, the novel concludes with Corina becoming a professional lover under the alias "Flower of Blood."

For Veríssimo, Magalhães's novel signaled an oversaturation of the topic of wifely adultery in fiction. He wrote that "to depict this most exhausting theme [adultery involving two friends and one of their wives], a rare talent is now required, capable of rejuvenating itself by exceptional qualities of psychological penetration, creative imagination and excellence of style" ("[p]ara tratá-lo exige-se já agora um raro talento, capaz de rejuvenescer por qualidades excepcionais de penetração psicológica, de imaginação criadora e de excelências de estilo"; 92). He labels Corina as "a seducer, with a perverted temperament and an education that we have seen in a hundred novels, without any particular trait that distinguishes her" ("Corina é a loureira, pervertida de temperamento e educação que temos encontrado em cem romances, sem nenhum traço particular que a distinga"; 95). Veríssimo charges Magalhães with repeating the same link between adultery and female education that "we have seen in a hundred novels"—an indication of the overfamiliarity of this association for turn-of-the-century readers. His description of Corina as a "seducer" also elicits comparisons with earlier novels in the genre; but, like the link with education, this character type also seems to have lost its novelty. From the controversy that greeted Alencar's *Lucíola* in 1862, which centered on the provocative sexuality

of Lucia, the figure of the femme fatale had, by the time of *Flor de Sangue*'s publication in 1895, become an exhausted cliché.

As Veríssimo identified, the association of wifely adultery and female education is present throughout the novel—from the description of Corina's youth, when she was "educated with excessive freedom," to the book written by Paulino, titled *A Mulher* (*The Woman*), which is "a study of the influence and role of women in society" ("um estudo da influência e do papel da mulher na sociedade"; *FS* 13). In this book, Paulino claims that one can never forgive a man for disrupting matrimonial peace. The narrator of *Flor de Sangue* reproduces Paulino's argument that male lovers deserve most of the blame in the event of adultery, since women are "'irresponsible beings that our selfishness has completely spoiled, reducing them to eternal physical and moral servitude'" ("'ente irresponsável, que o nosso egoísmo estragou completamente, reduzindo-o a à eterna servidão física e moral'"; *FS* 14). Since Paulino states that a man has hundreds of free women to choose from "to satisfy the beast's appetites," he thus has no right to "desire those who, by virtue of convention and prejudice, have a master, an owner" ("desejar aqueles que, por força da convenção e do preconceito embora, tem um senhor, um dono"; *FS* 14). He continues, with an ironic tone: "'The woman is the husband's object; a third-party could use her, as much as he could use any other object that belongs to the husband—his umbrella, his wallet, his glasses'" ("'[a] mulher é coisa do marido; há tanto o direito, para um terceiro, de se servir dela como de um objeto dele—do guarda-chuva, da carteira, das lunetas'"; *FS* 14). Paradoxically, Paulino himself does not follow his own directives and lets the "beast" speak louder, sexually enjoying Corina on his friend Fernando's marriage bed. Yet, after being rejected by Corina, he is no longer able to reconcile his friendship with Fernando and his affair with his wife. In the fatal letter that he writes, Paulino blames both himself and Fernando for not

having properly "correct[ed] the evils of [Corina's] education" ("corrigir os males dessa educação"; *FS* 120).

Yet, Magalhães shifts the question of literacy and adultery from an exclusively female focus to include men as well. Among the other topics present in the adultery novel that Veríssimo finds wearying is the use of the plot device of the "old anonymous letter, revealing to Fernando the new betrayal of his wife, whom he catches in *flagrante delicto* and whose lover he kills" ("a velhíssima carta anônima, revelando a Fernando a nova traição da mulher, que ele apanha em flagrante e cujo cumplice mata"; 93). As we have seen in the previous chapter, a similar anonymous letter was used by Machado de Assis in *Ressurreição* in 1872. Twenty-three years later, the anonymous letter was "old." But it is arguably not the most significant letter in the novel. While the anonymous letter alerts Fernando to his wife's infidelity, resulting in his committing murder and subsequent imprisonment, it is another letter—a fatal letter—containing the revelation of his dead best friend's betrayal that leads to Fernando's death. The shock of Paulino's affair with his wife is even greater than the shock of catching his wife having sex with another man. Here, the danger of male literacy is the articulation of hypocritical views (such as Paulino expresses in his book) and in the power of letters to expose the profound vulnerability induced by masculine friendships: the betrayal of his wife is bearable, that of his friend is not.

In *Flor de Sangue*, as in *O Marido da Adúltera* analyzed earlier, it is the male characters who commit suicide and not the adulteress. In both cases, before committing suicide the characters articulate their motivations for doing so in letters—the former because he has slept with his friend's wife, the latter because his wife has slept with another man. Although, according to Tanner, the adulteress in fiction is generally described as a "virtual nonbeing," in these two novels it is the men who have their existences annulled (Tanner 11). While the female

characters are affected by the revelation of their affairs, they nonetheless live on. In these cases, the threat posed by female adultery has proved to be an existential one for affected men. Nevertheless, both novels imply that adultery is not the fault of the woman: "It was her temper and her education that made her this way" concludes Paulino's letter ("Fora o seu temperamento e fora a sua educação que a fizeram assim"; *FS* 88). Although Paulino's letter blames Corina's affairs on her education, his own book puts the blame for adultery squarely on the men who sleep with married women. There are two contradictions here worth noting: one between Paulino's theoretical ideas and actual behavior, and another between his account of female adultery in his book and that given in his letter. What all of his positions have in common, however, is a refusal to acknowledge married women as sexual agents who may choose to engage in extramarital affairs for their own reasons.

Although *Flor de Sangue* contained the distinct plot element of a fatal letter addressed from one man to another, it nevertheless combined this innovative idea with stock characters and plot devices borrowed from earlier novels. Considering Magalhães's criticisms of Azevedo for a lack of originality, Veríssimo's criticism of the derivative nature of Magalhães's novel in turn attests to a crisis in the writing of adultery novels that perhaps surpassed the crisis of marriage to which they alluded. In particular, the figure of the educated woman, whose reading habits prefigure sexual transgression, and variants of whom we have encountered in nearly every book thus far reviewed, had become so well established by the time of *Flor de Sangue*'s release that Veríssimo complained of having seen this character in "a hundred novels." The use of letters to reveal affairs was also by this time a well-worn feature of adultery plots, and this chapter has revealed the numerous methods adopted by turn-of-the-century Brazilian authors for turning letters into devices for spreading information about adultery beyond the participants in the affairs

themselves. It seems fair to say that the novels about the crisis of marriage were at this point suffering themselves from a crisis of originality; and it was at precisely this moment that Machado de Assis would publish *Dom Casmurro*, which introduced an ambiguity to the adultery novel that is not present in the other works discussed in this chapter. Whereas the sexual transgressions of Laura de M., Lenita, and Corina are all presented as undeniable facts to which the characters themselves admit, the character Capitu of Machado's *Dom Casmurro* never admits to having an affair. Beyond this uncertainty, Machado also transforms the use of letters in adultery novels, so disparaged by Veríssimo, by adopting the letter as a metaphor for his child's face. Whereas earlier novelists were criticized for authoring illegitimate or monstrous children, the character of Bentinho will doubt the paternity of his own son, and will express this doubt in epistolary terms.

Dom Casmurro (1899): Epistolary Suspicion

Machado de Assis's seventh novel, *Dom Casmurro*, published in 1899, continues an engagement with the topic of suspicion already evident in his debut novel, wherein an imminent marriage is called off because of accusations of female infidelity contained in an anonymous letter. The two early novels by Machado analyzed in the previous chapter, *Ressurreição* and *Iaiá Garcia*, used a third-person narrator to describe characters' suspicions of adultery while also clarifying for the reader that no adultery in fact took place. Meanwhile, in *Dom Camurro*, the first-person narrator articulates his suspicions that his wife has committed adultery with his best friend and the narrative clearly reflects his own biases and limitations.

One could read *Dom Casmurro* as a response to Veríssimo's critique of Magalhães's novel mentioned above—specifically, his claim that a writer can only satisfactorily "depict this most exhausting theme" of adultery by means of "psychological penetration, creative imagination and excellence of style" ("o estafadíssimo tema . . . exige-se já agora um raro talento, capaz de rejuvenescer por qualidades excepcionais de penetração psicológica, de imaginação criadora e de excelências de estilo"; 92). The major departure of *Dom Casmurro* from the tradition of the wifely adultery novel consists of Machado's decision to limit the story to the (possibly cheated) husband's point of view. Through this narrative strategy, the reader's knowledge is restricted to the jealous husband's perspective, who is depicted as a mediocre reader, but as a calculating narrator eager for the reader to come to his same conclusions. In contrast to *Flor de Sangue*, then, and in conformity with Veríssimo's recommendations for revitalizing the adultery novel, Machado grants readers full access to a conflicted mind who is highly imaginative and whose recollections are seasoned with ironic comments that elevate *Dom Casmurro*'s style.

Hélio Seixas Guimarães has identified two critical comments written after *Dom Casmurro*'s publication that attest to the fact that readers of the time grasped the novel's fundamental ambiguity, which stemmed from the absence of a narrative voice external to that of the aggrieved husband. One critic is Medeiros de Albuquerque who, according to Guimarães, "seems to completely believe in the narrator's version" and yet still "suggests that it would be necessary to relativize the facts of the story" ("parece acreditar completamente na versão do narrador . . . [ele chama a atenção] . . . sugerindo a necessidade de relativizar a verdade dos fatos narrados"; H. Guimarães 184). Albuquerque admits that, as much as he believes that the narrator

was betrayed, he also recognizes that the absent perspective of Capitu precludes any definitive judgment of the narrator's claim.

The other critic that Guimarães highlights is Veríssimo, whom I claim Machado responded to by "revitalizing" the adultery novel. Veríssimo differentiates between the characters of Bentinho and Bento Santiago and Dom Casmurro as the narrator, and attributes the commentary of the latter as undermining the validity of his descriptions of the former. He claims that having Dom Casmurro narrate the story of Bentinho and Bento compromises the authenticity of the narrative. The inclusion of "moral reflections, explanation of acts, and feelings" within the narrative makes one doubt the objectivity of the entirety of his account ("reflexões morais, as explicações dos atos e sentimentos"; Veríssimo, qtd. in H. Guimarães 186). In Guimarães's words, "it is not only Dom Casmurro who is under suspicion, but everything that is being narrated" ("não é só o Dom Casmurro que está sob suspeita, mas tudo o que é narrado"; 186).

Although Guimarães identified early instances of skepticism regarding the authority of the narrator, the most forceful case against the reliability of Dom Casmurro as a narrator did not appear until 1960, when the American critic Helen Caldwell defended the innocence of Capitu against the narrator's accusation of her infidelity. Reviewing Caldwell's *The Brazilian Othello*, Roberto Schwarz challenged her position of defending Capitu when the narrative itself is ambiguous and the reader has no access to Capitu's perspective. In my analysis, while underscoring the importance of recognizing the ambivalence of the narrative, I highlight the use of reading and letters to demonstrate how Machado transformed the typical elements of the wifely adultery novel to show a woman who is not an impressionable object, but a proactive

agent, and the protagonist's imaginative invocation of a letter to express his doubts about his wife's faithfulness.

One creative way of summarizing the plot of *Dom Casmurro* is by evoking Joaquim Nabuco's critique of Dumas *fils*' pamphlet *L'Homme-Femme* from 1872 (seen in the introduction of this chapter). According to Nabuco, the fault of Dumas *fils*'s argument consists in his arrogation of all authority to the husband, who, in Dumas *fils*'s scenario, is empowered to act as the victim, detective, lawyer, judge and, finally, the executioner. In concentrating these roles in the single person of the husband, Dumas *fils* removes any opportunity for the wife to articulate her defense (49). I argue that there are reasons to suspect that Machado was aware of this debate about Dumas *fils* and incorporated some of Nabuco's ideas into his narrative. Not only did Machado cultivate a life-long friendship with Nabuco (see Aranha; Jackson), but Machado would have known about the controversy caused by Dumas *fils*'s pamphlet as it was incorporated into the 1878 novel by Queiroz that he harshly criticized. While critics, such as Marta de Senna, consider *Dom Casmurro* a response to the success of *O Primo Basílio*—indeed, as "the finest and most subtle Machadean piece of criticism of *Cousin Bazilio*" (151)— I claim that Machado's novel was a broader reaction to a particular debate within the tradition of wifely adultery regarding the husband's right to kill an adulterous wife. Machado's intervention in this ongoing controversy, as we shall see, borrowed liberally from the stock devices of previous adultery novels, only to transform them and show how a male narrator's tendency to view his life as a play—in this case, Shakespeare's *Othello*, which he cites twice in the novel—causes his marriage to fall apart. Machado's novel provides a case of a male *bovarism*, of the type Lima Barreto claimed characterized Rio de Janeiro society at the turn of the century (M. Carvalho).[43]

Nabuco's characterization of Dumas *fils*'s vengeful husband as a man claiming for himself multiple roles also summarizes the narrator of Machado's novel, who presents the story of his childhood and adult life as if he were the lawyer of a victim. The victim is himself, and the crime in question is his wife's alleged adultery. He is also a victim of a double betrayal (according to his perspective)—not only did his wife, Capitu, cheat on him, but she did so with his own best friend, Escobar. In speaking as a prosecutor, he presents the evidence from his own memories that he himself, as a kind of detective, deems relevant to the case. Among the clues indicating the infidelity of Capitu, he highlights the resemblance between their son, Ezequiel, and his friend Escobar. Although multiple characters note the similarity, it is not the only instance of such similarity in the novel. The narrator recalls how Capitu's best friend's mother looked just like Capitu—a detail that seemingly undermines the idea that Escobar must have fathered Ezequiel. Finally, acting as a judge, Dom Casmurro finds Capitu guilty of the alleged crime. Although the narrator claims to have initially considered killing himself, his final decision—carried out as if by an executioner—comes after watching *Othello,* when he realizes that "the last act showed me that not I, but Capitu ought to die" (*DC*-HC 243; "O último ato mostrou-me que não eu, mas Capitu devia morrer"; *DC* 118). In the event, Dom Casmurro does not kill Capitu or their son, but sends both abroad and refuses to acknowledge their existence, condemning them to a kind of social death. These multiple roles of the narrator as victim, detective, lawyer, judge, and executioner correspond directly to Nabuco's critique of Dumas *fils*'s idea of allowing husbands to kill their (possibly) adulterous wives. As the narrative clearly demonstrates, there is no space for the perspective of the wife—no possibility for her defense or explanation. Even though Dom Casmurro neither kills Capitu nor denounces her publicly, his treatment of her and his structuring of the narrative both prevent her from speaking out. If for

Nabuco the excess of the husband's authority challenged the possibility of having access to the wife's point-of-view, Machado strategically elaborates a novel of adultery from the perspective of the betrayed husband that largely succeeds in silencing the wife.

Machado makes use of the common association between female literacy and adultery, but does so in such a way as to create an image of the female reader as an active seeker of knowledge, rather than as an easily manipulated marionette. In doing so, Machado was perhaps also inspired by Nabuco, who, as early as 1872, had advocated for equal rights between a husband and wife, claiming that women should have access to better education to contribute to the family and society's process of modernization. Machado's novel, however, illustrates the discrepancy between traditional and modern values, insofar as Capitu's curiosity and avid interest in learning are not recognized or rewarded by her society. Indeed, her curiosity is characterized by the narrator as all-engulfing. As captured in the description of Capitu's "undertow eyes," this curiosity which pulls all thing toward it contains a threatening dimension for the male narrator.

Capitu's intelligence and discernment is a notable departure from most other female protagonists in the works we have encountered so far. If we recall Machado's description of *O Primo Basílio*'s Luiza as a puppet, then Capitu appears to be her opposite: it is she, not a man, who appears to pull the strings of those around her. In his criticism of Machado's review of *O Primo Basílio*, Saraiva pondered whether Luiza was not in fact the "ordinary character of the modern woman: weak, futile, and frivolous?" ("o caráter ordinário da mulher moderna, fraca, fútil e leviana?," Saraiva 1). Twenty-one years later, I claim that Machado created a vision of the modern woman who, differently from Luiza, is not deluded by written and spoken words. In a sense, her preoccupation with escaping her lower social class mirrors the concerns and desires of

the courtesan of Alencar's *Lucíola*—except Capitu applies her intelligence and charms to the acquisition of a wealthy husband rather than to the seduction of wealthy lovers. Capitu contains traces of the femme fatale character type, but in seeking marriage with Bento, she pursues her financial stability through the socially sanctioned pathway of marriage rather than the unsanctioned one of becoming a professional lover (see G. Passos).

Differently from the portrayal of Bentinho as an inattentive reader of questionable scholastic abilities, Dom Casmurro describes Capitu as possessing an agile mind.[44] In the chapter titled "Capitu's Curiosity," the narrator provides glimpses of her education: "from the age of seven she had learned reading, writing and arithmetic, French, religion, and needlework" (*DC*-HC 63; "desde os sete anos, aprendera a ler, escrever e contar, francês, doutrina e obras de agulha"; *DC* 30). What she had not learned in a formal setting, she expressed a desire to learn outside of school: how to make lace, for example, or how to read Latin and English. At Bento's house, he says "[s]he used to read our novels, leaf through our books of engravings: she wanted to know about the ruins, the people, the campaigns, the names, the story, the place" (*DC*-HC 64; "[l]ia os nossos romances, folheava os nossos livros de gravuras, querendo saber das ruínas, das campanhas, o nome, a história, o lugar"; *DC* 30). As a potential reader, Capitu is active, collecting as much information as she can from different sources. In contrast, Dom Casmurro describes his own young self as a less conscientious reader. For Guimarães, Bento commits "mistakes" and "has limitations" when it comes to reading. Indeed, "all his literary references are related directly or indirectly" to the events he narrates, a fact that emphasizes "the intense subjectivism of this reader who sees his own story in everything he reads" ("intenso subjetivismo deste leitor que enxerga sua própria história em tudo aquilo que lê"; H. Guimarães 171). Bento's

reading habits are less determined by a curiosity like Capitu's, which draws the outside world toward it, than a tendency to project his internal states onto the books that he encounters.

For example, Bento superimposes the plot of *Othello* onto the story of his own life, comparing Capitu to Shakespeare's character Desdemona in order to reinforce the idea of Capitu's guilt. Even when he recognizes Desdemona's innocence, he does so only to distinguish her from Capitu, who in his mind is clearly guilty ("E era [Desdemona] inocente, vinha eu dizendo rua abaixo; - que faria o público, se ela deveras fosse culpada, tão culpada como Capitu?"; *DC* 118). Shakespeare is a recurring presence in Machado's works (see Teles); and, as we have seen, *Othello* appeared in his critique of *O Primo Basílio* in 1878, when he contrasts Queiroz's use of stolen letters as a central plot device with Shakespeare's use of Desdemona's handkerchief. In *Dom Casmurro,* Machado appropriates the play to grant dramatic weight to his own life story. Subsequent critics have recognized the importance of Shakespeare's work for understanding Machado's text. Helen Caldwell called *Dom Casmurro* the "Brazilian Othello," and other have drawn attention to other similarities: including the possibility that the narrator is multiracial (see Braga-Pinto). The first reference to the play appears early in *Dom Casmurro* in chapter 72, where Machado cites *Othello* as foreshadowing his own story when Capitu peeks through the window and sees Escobar after his first visit to Bentinho's house. Dom Casmurro argues in this chapter, titled "A dramatic reform," that plays should begin with their endings and then unfold backwards. In his words, *Othello* should open with the last act: the killing of Desdemona and then work backwards to when they are happily in love. By doing this, the narrator claims, the audience would "go to bed with a good impression of tenderness and love" (*DC*-HC 145; "ia para a cama com uma boa impressão de ternura e de amor"; *DC* 70), rather than feeling pity at the unnecessary death of Desdemona. For Guimarães, the ways in which

Dom Casmurro distorts his reading of Othello and other texts to support his own views reveals him to be a "bad reader" ("mau leitor," 171). Instead of reading *Othello* as a precautionary tale about male suspicion, he interprets Shakespeare's work as justifying his own treatment of Capitu.

Beyond "seeing his own story in everything he reads" Dom Casmurro is also an imaginative reader who articulates an approach to reading that justifies his tendency to project additional meanings onto the texts that he encounters. *Dom Casmurro* alludes to the existence of a particular kind of novel, called "books with omissions" that implicate the reader in the construction of their narratives. He says:

> There is no way of emending a confused book, but everything may be supplied in the case of books with omissions. For my part, when I read one of the latter types I am not bothered a bit. What I do, on arriving at the end, is to shut my eyes and evoke all the things which I did not find in it. How many fine ideas come to me then! What profound reflections! The rivers, mountains, churches, which I did not find on the written page, all now appear to me with their waters, their trees, their altar. (*DC*-HC 119)
>
> Nada se emenda bem nos livros confusos, mas tudo se pode meter nos livros omissos. Eu, quando leio algum desta outra casta, não me aflijo nunca. O que faço, em chegando ao fim, é cerrar os olhos e evocar todas as coisas que não achei nele. Quantas ideias finas me acodem então! Que de reflexões profundas! Os rios, as montanhas, as igrejas que não vi nas folhas lidas, todos me aparecem agora com as suas águas, as suas árvores, os seus altares. (*DC* 58)

Bento continues, addressing himself to his audience: "everything is to be found outside a book that has gaps, gentle reader" *[livro falho]* (*DC*-HC 20). Just as he is compelled to "fill in other

men's lacunae," through imaginative engagement with a text's gaps, Bento acknowledges that the reader may have to "fill in" the gaps left in his own account of events. In *Dom Casmurro,* the "reader is explicitly summoned to *interpret*" the missing parts of the text ("o leitor é explicitamente convocado a participar do processo literário na condição de *intérprete*, completando lacunas"; H. Guimarães 167, emphasis in the original). Recalling Roland Barthes' distinction between readerly and writerly texts, we may say that *Dom Casmurro* falls into the latter category to the extent that Machado positions the reader as part of the structure of the novel, as the one who must help produce the meaning of the story (4-5).

In one crucial passage, which recalls the central role of letters in the tradition of adultery fiction, Dom Casmurro demonstrates this practice of shutting his eyes and evoking things that are not there. The narrator's proof of Capitu's adultery takes the form of a letter; however, it is an imaginary letter that only exists in the narrator's mind. After Capitu calls attention to physical similarities between Ezequiel's eyes and those of Escobar, Bento begins carefully reflecting on the physical characteristics of his son. Over time, he observes greater similarities between the boy and his deceased friend. Slowly, as his son grows, the narrator claims that "Escobar started to appear this way out of the grave" ("Escobar vinha assim surgindo da sepultura" 116). To explain this process of observation, Bento compares his son's face to a letter which gradually becomes more decipherable:

> I read the letter, uncertainly at first, and not all of it; later I was able to make it out more surely. True, I refused to read it, shoved the paper into my pocket, ran home, shut myself in, refused to open the blinds, even closed my eyes. When I opened my eyes again, letter and writing were clear—the message crystal clear" (*DC*-HC 239).

> Li a carta, mal a princípio e não toda, depois fui lendo melhor. Fugia-lhe, é certo, metia o papel no bolso, corria a casa, fechava-me, não abria as vidraças, chegava a fechar os olhos. Quando novamente abria os olhos e a carta, a letra era clara e a notícia claríssima. (*DC* 116)

While the "letter" written in Ezequiel's features is initially difficult to read, Bento also tries to close his eyes and resist acknowledging the information. The language Dom Casmurro uses here, of closing the eyes, is the same he adopted when outlining his approach to reading "books with omissions." Given the fact that Dom Casmurro admitted to evoking things that are not there in the case of books, his conjuring of an imaginary text revealing his wife's adultery could be an example of a similarly imaginative approach to reading faces. Here, Dom Casmurro's tendency to see himself in the books he reads—in this case, Shakespeare's *Othello*—coincides with a tendency to imagine things that are not written on the page. Not only does he summon an imaginary letter to describe his son's face, but he also applies his "lacunar" method of reading to this imaginary letter.

While Emma Bovary strives to make her life correspond to those she finds in romantic novels, Dom Casmurro develops an approach to reading that enhances what is written on the page. If Emma detected a mismatch between the excitement of her novels and the boredom of her life, Dom Casmurro enhances the books he reads with his own overactive imagination, adding "profound reflections" and vivid images that are not actually found on the written page. In the case of the imaginary letter, he applies this same technique to his own life—enhancing it through a method of creative emendation that he refined in his reading. Dom Casmurro sees a letter in a face, and, closing his eyes, invents added contents for this letter that proves his wife's

infidelity. By means of an imagined letter, he turns himself into an Othello who would be justified in his revenge.

The letter, as a metaphor for the face, shares with the less metaphorical letters covered in this chapter a quality of both inviting attention and inflicting harm. Like the femme fatales of the courtesan novels, letters also seduce and bring ruin. Given the enduring association between letters and adultery novels, evident in Machado' own works, the use of an epistolary metaphor to articulate a growing suspicion of wifely adultery is both a use of an established convention and a dramatic rupture with it. Machado's metaphor exposes the same anxieties about paternity that have characterized several critical remarks seen in this chapter, in which the authorship of novels by Brazilian authors is brought into question by referring to the influence of European and Russian writers. Dom Casmurro's use of a textual metaphor to describe his own child implies a patriarchal view of the family in which children are "authored" by their fathers and where sex itself is a kind of writing (Gilbert and Gubar 13). Just as foreign influences endangered the claims of Brazilian writers to the paternity of their own novels, adulterous wives endanger the husband's inscription of his physical similarities on his children. The stakes of this metaphor are clear as soon as we grasp the larger implications of this view: that women are reduced to living inkwells into which a man may dip his metaphorical pen. The comparison of children to letters implies a degree of control over both women and children that, in the actual event, a father will never be able to successfully exert. This loss of control of men over the conditions of reproduction, and the accompanying anxieties about paternity and the institution of marriage, would only accelerate amidst the processes of modernization—already visible in nascent form in *Dom Casmurro*. The distinguishing features of Capitu—her intelligence and curiosity combined with her capacity for strategizing her way out of her inferior social class—herald a kind of

modern woman altogether distinct from the type Machado criticized in Queiroz's *O Primo Basílio*. In reading *Dom Casmurro,* we can see the collision of this new vision of the modern woman with an institution of marriage still defined by the overwhelming authority of a husband who, although admittedly less intelligent, nevertheless still holds the combined powers of a lawyer, detective, judge, and executioner. Given this power imbalance, as *Dom Casmurro* shows, it remains possible for a husband to silence a wife completely—even if only on the basis of an imagined letter.

Conclusion

It is in the context of a transnational debate about female infidelity and the morality of punishing women that the topic of wifely adultery arrives in Rio de Janeiro—encapsulated in the presentation of and reception to Bernardelli's sculpture *Christ and the Adulteress* in 1885. Although the Penal Code of 1830, established during Brazil's monarchy, removed the right of a husband to legally kill his wife and her lover if they were caught in the act of adultery, Dorothy Thomas writes that "the popular notion that a man could legitimately kill his adulterous wife persisted" (20). While popular attitudes (particularly among men) still promoted the killing of adulterous wives, several of the Brazilian novels reviewed here disclose the multifaceted nature of this public discourse by also blaming the husband for the transgressions of the wife. The debate about killing a wife was inflamed by the controversy of Dumas fils's *L'Homme-Femme*, and several of the works covered here responded directly to its argument for wife-killing. Even when authors opposed Dumas *fils*'s premise, however, they did so in a way that perpetuated an idea of marriage in which power was consolidated in the figure of the husband. As articulated in *O Marido da Adúltera* and *Flor de Sangue*, a husband's failure to properly educate and surveil

his wife effectively implicates him in his wife's crime of adultery. While this attitude appears to partially exonerate women for responsibility of the crime of adultery, it does so by depicting them as nonentities completely reliant on moral guidance from men. In absolving wives from responsibility for their actions, these authors also stripped them of agency.

European models shaped the writing of adultery fiction in other ways as well. The figure of the woman driven to infidelity by the books she reads, pioneered in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, was a constant feature of late nineteenth-century Brazilian adultery novels. Examples of this trend range from the highly educated woman who brings harm to men (*A Carne*) to a matriarch's guide for her son-in-law on how to maintain a successful and faithful marriage *(Livro de uma Sogra*). Male authors not only debated the proper parameters and content of female education, but they incorporated the use of letters to demonstrate how female access to and participation in the production and dissemination of epistolary media could undermine the institution of marriage. Moreover, these authors inherited the preoccupation of their European predecessors with the capacity of letters to inform cuckolded husbands about their wives' infidelity.

These traits of adultery novels—the debate about revenge, the dangers of an educated women, and the use of letters to reveal adultery—are all present in the canonical novel *Dom Casmurro*, albeit deployed by an unreliable male narrator who is, as much as Emma Bovary, also an uncritical reader. *Dom Casmurro* combines familiar plot devices of adultery novels, including the use of a love triangle involving two friends (as in *Flor de Sangue*), the depiction of a modern woman who is an active learner (drawing from *Livro de uma Sogra* and *A Carne)*, and the use of letters to reveal an affair. Where *Dom Casmurro* departs from the tradition of wifely adultery novels is its preservation of a sense of ambiguity regarding Capitu's innocence. The conjunction

of the epistolary mode and the adultery novel is also presented in *Dom Casmurro* as a feat of male imagination wherein the narrator transforms his son's face into a letter that supposedly proves his wife's adultery. In subverting these plot devices, Machado is seemingly responding to Veríssimo's claim that the genre had become "exhausted" ("estafadíssimo"; 92) and granting it a new complexity by foregrounding the biased nature of the stories men write about the institution of marriage.

By restricting women's access to education, men withheld from women the capacity to articulate their own descriptions and diagnoses of the crisis of marriage. In the next chapter, we will see how a female writer, Júlia Lopes de Almeida, challenged this monopoly held by male authors by writing an adultery novel that explicitly comments on the ways in which male authors used literature as a tool for blaming women for the crisis of marriage. Almeida's pioneering portrayal of wifely adultery instead focuses on the economic changes that were undermining the conditions that had sustained the traditional family. By analyzing her work, we can begin to untangle the ways in which systemic economic changes were also pivotal in affecting the institution of marriage. Her novel, *A Falência*, offers a competing description of the causes of instability in turn-of-the-century society and offers a vision of the future of the family based on female solidarity rather than the preservation of male authority over female sexuality.

Chapter IV – Júlia Lopes de Almeida:

Economics, Adultery, and the Future of the Family

As we have seen, urbanization and the growing market for female readers were key to the rise of the courtesan novel and novel of wifely adultery, respectively, in nineteenth-century Brazil. Both trends sparked widespread concerns over the integrity of the family that also manifested anxiety about the stability of the Brazilian nation. The social mobility afforded women by the role of the courtesan, and the access to romantic narratives afforded by female literacy, were perceived as temptations capable of influencing women's sexual morals. In many of the novels reviewed so far, male writers sought to use literature as a mechanism for counteracting these temptations—for showing women what might happen if they succumb to the desire for independent wealth or for passionate romantic love.

Beyond urbanization and female education, however, there was another transformation undermining the institution of marriage at the end of the nineteenth century: the financialization of the economy. In this chapter I review the threat posed to the institution of marriage by the instability of the stock market, as evidenced by the novel *A Falência* (*The Bankruptcy* 1901), written by the pioneering female author Júlia Lopes de Almeida. While Almeida's male predecessors generally sought to use literature as a means of guiding female conduct, Almeida's novel describes an alternative model for the family predicated on female solidarity. Rather than describing the collapse of the family as stemming from the individual acts of wayward women, Almeida's novel attends to the structural and systemic transformations that are obsolescing the family unit. Her novel does not seek to dispense blame on a fictional female character as a warning to female readers, but offers readers a glimpse of a future after the breakup of the family

that is compatible with female empowerment. It is men, Almeida's novel implies, who have engendered an economic system in which "all that is solid melts into air" (Marx and Engels 13)—including the family.

Coffee Exports and the Stock Market

In order to situate the context to which Júlia Lopes Almeida's novel was a response, a brief survey of the history of the rise and fall of the coffee industry in Brazil is necessary. By the second half of the nineteenth century the production and exportation of coffee became an international symbol for Brazil and emerged a major source of the nation's wealth. While Almeida wrote an adultery novel about a family involved in the coffee industry, the origins of the cultivation of coffee in Brazil also revolved around a legendary story about adultery. Although it remains uncertain if Almeida was familiar with these legends, the episode clearly shows an association between coffee, power, and love—all relevant themes for my analysis of Almeida's novel.

According to Afonso de Taunay's authoritative *Historia do Café no Brasil*, the Dutch monopoly on coffee production—fiercely protected since the sixteenth century—was first broken when the seeds of coffee plants crossed the border between Dutch Guiana to French Guiana as contraband in the 1720s (1: 249-250). From there, coffee soon entered Brazil under mysterious conditions.

Taunay reproduces a popular legend that the Portuguese-Brazilian diplomat, Francisco de Melo Palheta was invited to Cayenne in 1727. According to the official records, his mission was to serve as the neutral mediator between the French and the Dutch governments concerning the

border lines of the Guianas. Yet, secondary sources testify to a secret mission sponsored by the general governor João da Maia da Gama, who had strict instructions for Palheta to bring coffee seeds back to Brazil. These sources state that Gama instructed Palheta to bring the seeds "in any possible way" even suggesting that he sneak into a garden and steal some seeds ("de todos os modos" . . . "verá se pode esconder algum par de grãos . . . e com toda a cautela"; Taunay, *Pequena História* 27). The popular legend describes Palheta as a natural Don Juan who seduced the French governor's wife, Madame d'Orvilliers, while facilitating the negotiations. When they said their goodbye, one version of the story states that Madame d'Orvilliers gave Palheta a bouquet of flowers that contained hidden coffee seeds. In this tale, Madame d'Orvilliers not only cheated on her husband by having an affair with Palheta, but also betrayed her country by letting the precious seeds escape into the hands of a potential competitor. Upon his return, Palheta planted the coffee seeds in his home in Pará. From this original, illegitimately acquired plant, the seeds gradually spread towards the south of Brazil (Pendergrast 16; Dean 23; Hecht 111-2) and a small batch was even sent to Lisbon in 1731.[45]

Coffee seeds only reached Rio de Janeiro in the early 1780s. According to Pendergrast, coffee was initially produced in Brazil exclusively for domestic consumption but became an export in 1823 as the prospect of war between France and Spain threatened the closure of trade routes (20). In the 1860s and 70s, coffee production was regarded as a "sure way to riches" in Brazil (26). At this moment, economic primacy was switching from the sugar plantations of the northeast to the coffee monoculture plantations in the south-central region (Birchal 1). The emergence of coffee as a major commodity was initially made possible by the intensive use of slave labor, though immigrant workers were increasingly used after the prohibition of the slave trade in 1850. When slavery was finally abolished in 1888 in Brazil, coffee production became

strongly associated with immigrant laborers.[46] The rapid expansion of coffee plantations was also made possible by the proliferation of railways and the conversion of large parts of the countryside into agricultural land (MacLachlan 62).

The rise of coffee production in Brazil coincided with the ascendence of the stock market as a major force in the Brazilian economy. New market regulations were ushered in as part of a broader suite of economic transformations during the transition to a republican government. The first president under the Constitution of 1891, Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca, elected Rui Barbosa as the finance minister, who sought to transform Brazil into a global hub for commerce. In *A History of Modern Brazil*, Colin MacLachlan explains that Barbosa

> believed Brazil could duplicate the experience of the United States and could do so in short order. He pressed for continuation of the liberal credit and favorable business regulations introduced during the last months of the empire. The promise of rapid development led to wild financial manipulations, inflation, and economic distortions. A protective tariff, designed to stimulate industrialization, increased the cost of imported goods, while industry only slowly expanded and found itself unable to meet demand. (46)

Despite the ultimate failures of Barbosa's efforts, they nevertheless produced dramatic changes. The nominal capital of corporations listed on the Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo exchanges rose from 410,000 contos to 3,778,695 contos between May 1888 and December 1891 (Haber 84). This period of rapid financial growth became known as the *Encilhamento*—a term meaning, literally, "saddling up" (Beckman 90). In 1892, this bubble burst in a massive crash that led to the collapse of multiple banks. One price of this financial collapse was a significant number of suicides—particularly among landowners and bankers that had invested heavily and lost

everything. Far from catching up with the United States, the Brazilian economy remained devastated for years.

The traumatic and transformative experiences of stock market collapses became a recognizable theme in world literature at the end of the nineteenth century. Halina Suwala, in an analysis of Emile Zola's *L'argent* (1891), established the category of the "novel of the stock exchange" (qtd. in Wasserman, "Financial" 193)—a coinage that precedes Erika Beckman's analysis of the "stock market novel" in Latin America developed in *Capital Fictions* (2013). Along with Zola's depiction of religious investors in Paris, other novels in this category include Alfredo de Taunay's *O encilhamento* (1893), a novel that describes the 1892 boom and fall taking place during the first years of the Republic of Brazil. Another stock market novel from Brazil, largely forgotten since its publication until it was reprinted a century later, is Júlia Lopes de Almeida's *A Falência* (*The Bankruptcy*). This text is not only a unique example of a wifely adultery novel written by a woman, but it is also an astute critique of the effects of financial capitalism on domestic life.

Mother and Writer

Júlia Valentina da Silveira Lopes, popularly known as D. Júlia,[47] was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1862 and passed away in the same city in 1934. Throughout her life she wrote ten novels, in addition to chronicles, plays, poems, and children's books. She also received several honors from national and international institutions, including a first-place award from the Dramatic National Company for her play "Quem não perdoa" ("Who does not forgive"), which premiered in 1912 at the Municipal Theatre in Rio de Janeiro (C. Almeida 8).

The daughter of wealthy and intellectual parents, Júlia received an extensive and liberal education, which, as we have seen in the last chapters, was unusual for a woman at the time (Ruffato 7). Her parents migrated from Portugal to Brazil before Júlia was born. In 1862, her father, Valentim, and her mother, Antonia, established a secondary school, the *Colégio Humanitas*, that also served as the family's house. The following year, her father enrolled in a medical school in Germany. Upon his return in 1869, the family moved to Campinas, where Valentim built a private hospital, Casa de Saúde Bom Jesus (De Luca 183, paraphrased by Amed 92-3). The family stayed in Campinas until 1885 and it was there that her father encouraged Júlia to publish her first chronicles in the local newspaper, the *Gazeta de Campinas*. Following in the footsteps of her older sister, Adelina, who published some poems in the well-regarded literary newspaper *A Semana* (RJ), Júlia published her first works in 1881. At the age of twenty-three, Júlia began exchanging letters with the Portuguese poet and journalist Francisco Filinto de Almeida (known as Filinto) in 1885 (Amed 97). At the time, Filinto was co-editor of *A Semana* in Rio de Janeiro with Valentim Magalhães. It was from this correspondence that their relationship would be born.

According to her grandson, Claudio Lopes de Almeida, her father was not in favor of her marriage to Filinto. For him, Filinto was "connected to the theatre and a known bohemian" ("Filinto era ligado a teatro e boêmio conhecido"; 7). In the end, her father relented, and permitted them to get married, on the condition that the marriage take place in Portugal, where her father was living at the time. In 1886, Júlia moved to Lisbon, where she and Filinto got married and the following year she published her first book of short stories, *Traços e iluminuras* (*Strokes and illuminations*). After moving back to Brazil, Almeida published her first novel, *Memórias de Marta* (*Memories of Martha*), serialized in *Tribuna Liberal* from 1888 to 1889. It

was followed by the publication of *A Família Medeiros* (*The Medeiros' Family*, 1892), *A Viúva Simões* (1897), *A Falência* (1901), *A Intrusa* (1908), *Cruel Amor* (1911), *Correio da Roça* (1913), *A Silveirinha* (1914), and *Pássaro Tonto* (posthumously, 1934). Her novel *O Funil do Diabo*, written shortly before her death in 1934, was not published until 2015.[48]

The same year that Almeida published her first novel, 1888, she also had her first child, followed by another five—of whom only four survived. Eventually, the family moved to the neighborhood of Santa Teresa in Rio de Janeiro, where Almeida launched the "Green Salon" (Salão Verde)[49]—a literary salon that she would lead for twenty-one years that hosted prominent artists, intellectuals, and journalists (Ruffato 8; Amed 87) including Olavo Bilac, Afrânio Peixoto, Coelho Neto (Needell 159), Lúcio de Mendonça and Valentim Magalhães (Amed 87). Because of the privileged position that her husband had as editor of the newspaper *A Semana*, and the couple's close friendship with the director of the *Jornal do Commercio*, Almeida enjoyed a level of access to the publishing world that was highly unusual for a woman (Amed 16). Together with Filinto, she wrote the novel *A casa verde*, which was serialized from 1898 to 1899 under the pseudonym of A. Julinto (Stasio and Faedrich).

Ana Simioni and Michele Fanini note how the "Green Salon" was characterized by a distinction between male and female roles. While Almeida circulated in this masculine literary world, it was clear to all participants that Filinto was the one with "moral and financial authority" in this space ("autoridade moral e financeira"; Simioni, qtd. in M. Fanini 321). In one of her recollections, Margarida Lopes (Almeida's oldest daughter) describes the social circle of her mother: despite knowing many male writers, "her closest friends were bourgeois ladies with no literary pretensions" ("suas amigas mais próximas eram senhoras burguesas sem a menor pretensão literária"; qtd. in M. Fanini 321). In this sense, Almeida had an unusual public life as a

writer who maintained her traditional role as a housewife. Indeed, Almeida's success was partly the result of her ability to reconcile her domestic and professional lives—becoming a role model for other modern women (M. Fanini 323). It is important to highlight that, although Almeida may not have interacted with other female writers in Brazil, there were other women writers working around the same time, such as Nísia Floresta (1810-1885), Maria Firmina dos Reis (1825-1917), and Narcisa Amalia (1852-1923). As Nadilza Moreira explains, however, amidst this group of writers, it was Almeida who received "recognition and status" as a writer, not "only from her peers, the writers, but also from Brazilian and foreign critics" ("o reconhecimento e o estatuto de escritora advindo não somente de seus pares, os escritores, mas da crítica brasileira e estrangeira"; 1).

In 1891, Almeida and her sister Adelina published the *Contos Infantis em verso e prosa destinados as escolas primarias do Brasil* (*Children's Stories in Verse and Prose Addressed to Primary Schools in Brazil*, signed with Almeida's maiden name—"Lopes"). The book was originally written in 1886; and, according to Claudio Lopes de Almeida, the work of composing the piece was divided between the two sisters along formal lines: Júlia wrote the prose and Adelina wrote lyrics (7). The book went through three consecutive printings of five thousand copies each. Eventually, it was reprinted seventeen times and added to the mandatory reading list for public schools in multiple states during the Republic government (Eleutério 74). This was only the first of many literary successes during her lifetime. In the book's prologue, the authors explain that the collection of stories aims to make the young reader view people with more "sympathy" ("[ele verá então com] simpatia os que sofrem"; Lopes vi). They claim that the work offers readers "a moral and aesthetic education" ("a educação moral e estética"; Lopes vi). For the sisters, the book had a practical intention, writing that if "one single child who reads us

performs, in imitation of our heroes, a good deed, we will feel well compensated for our efforts" ("Que uma única das crianças, que nos lerem, pratique, imitando um de nossos heróis, uma ação boa, e ficaremos bem pagas da canseira"; Lopes and Vieira vii). Ultimately, the authors defended that their book is a reaction to the poor quality of other books written for children by male authors, which they claim tend to be either too complex for young readers to understand or too banal to merit interest (vii). This criticism of male authors of children's books foreshadows Almeida's critique of male writers of adultery novels in *A Falência*. This first publication also indicates her enduring emphasis on primary education and literacy, which is also a theme that I will highlight in this analysis.

Almeida was known during her lifetime as the "first-lady of the Tropics" (Sharpe) during the "Brazilian belle-epoque," a term conventionally employed to designate the period between the proclamation of the Republic in 1889 and the Week of Modern Art in 1922 (Moreira 57; see Eisenhart). As part of her involvement in the cause of women's rights, she joined the "Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress" in 1922 ("Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino,"). During the interwar years of 1925 to 1931, she lived in Paris with her husband and children. In 1934, Almeida went to Luanda to visit her youngest daughter, Lucia, who graduated from musical school and was, according to Claudio Lopes, a "pianist, singer, and musician of unusual talent" ("virtuosa no piano, cantora e musicista de invulgar talento"; 9). Théa Igoki wrote that Lucia was homesick for Brazil and falling ill, so Almeida left Rio de Janeiro in a hurry to take care of her daughter. While in Africa, Almeida contracted malaria and her health deteriorated (9-10). As soon as she was strong enough to travel, she returned to Brazil with her daughter, where she passed away.

Though her work was largely forgotten after her death, she was an active intellectual figure and prominent literary voice during her lifetime. She wrote for prestigious newspapers throughout her career, including *Gazeta de Notícias*, *A Estação*, *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Ilustração Brasileira*, *Jornal do Commercio*, *Kosmos*, *O Mundo Literário*, and *O País*—to which she contributed a front-page column for twenty-two years (Ruffato 8). Through her participation in the inaugural issue of the literary magazine *A Mensageira* in 1897, Almeida was an important voice fighting for women's suffrage and access to education (Ruffato 10). In parallel to advocating for women's rights, however, Almeida also fulfilled gender expectations by writing texts signed as "D. Júlia" in which she positioned herself as "a kind of wise and savvy counselor" ("uma espécie de conselheira sabida"; Stasio and Faedrich 13). Written in the form of manuals, these texts—such as *Livro das noivas* (1896) and *Livro das donas e donzelas* (1906)—served as guides for newly married women and were replete with tips for succeeding in domestic life.[50]

More recently, a number of critics have investigated why Almeida was not included in the Brazilian literary canon even though the *Gazeta de Notícias* referred to her in 1902 as among the great Brazilian writers—ranking her just under Machado de Assis (A.G. 1). Almeida was so popular among her contemporaries that a newspaper report from 1916 described how crowds of fans descended on her home to wish her a happy birthday (*A Notícias*, "x x x" 2). Although the Brazilian Academy of Letters established a prize in her name that was awarded to female writers between 1952 and 1964, her books remained largely out of print.

Writing and Women's Work

A commonly cited description of Almeida comes from the journalist Paulo Barreto (1881-1921), known by his pseudonym, João do Rio, who visited the homes of many acclaimed intellectuals and interviewed them. In 1905, he published this collection of interviews as a book titled *O Momento Literário*. In the introduction, do Rio explains that his intention was to satisfy his readers' curiosity about the private lives of popular writers of the time. Although he refers to some of the writers by name on the book's cover—including both Júlia and Filinto (Fig. 8)—when it comes to the book's index (Fig. 9), do Rio disrupts his own pattern of listing the full names of each artist to title the Almeida's interview "A Home of Artists" ("Um Lar de Artistas"). Although Rio's interview takes place at the Almeida's home, in the presence of both writers, the resulting text is mostly filled by Júlia Lopes's responses. This is evident with the opening of the interview, in which the journalist quotes Júlia's direct speech for multiple pages (Fig. 10).

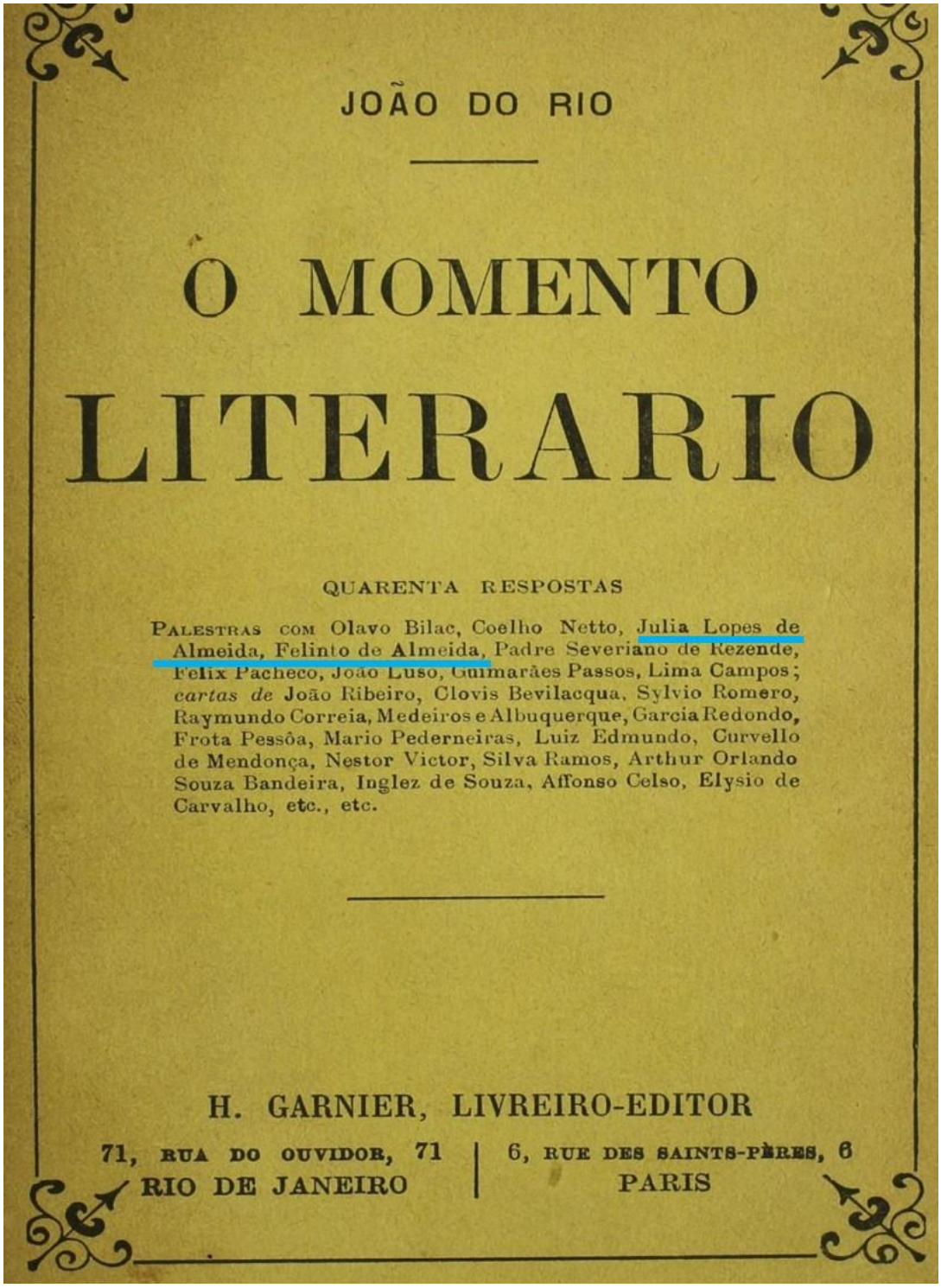
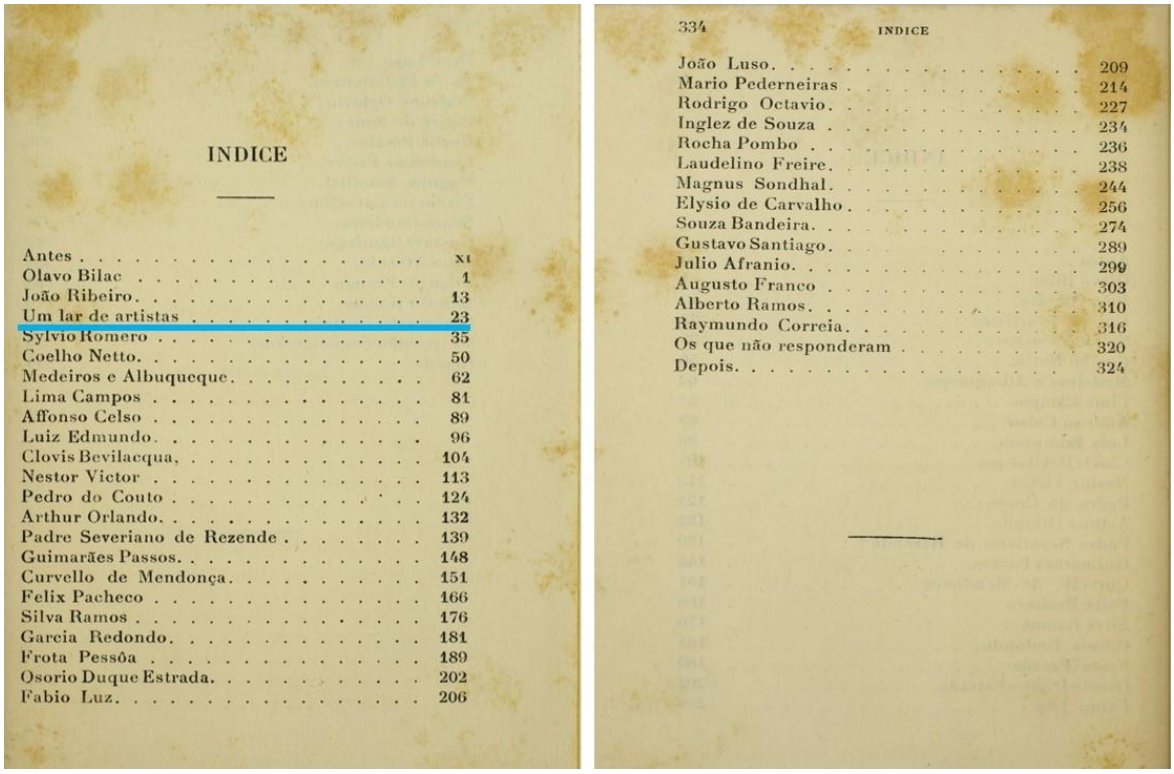


Figure 8. Cover of *O Momento Literário* (do Rio).



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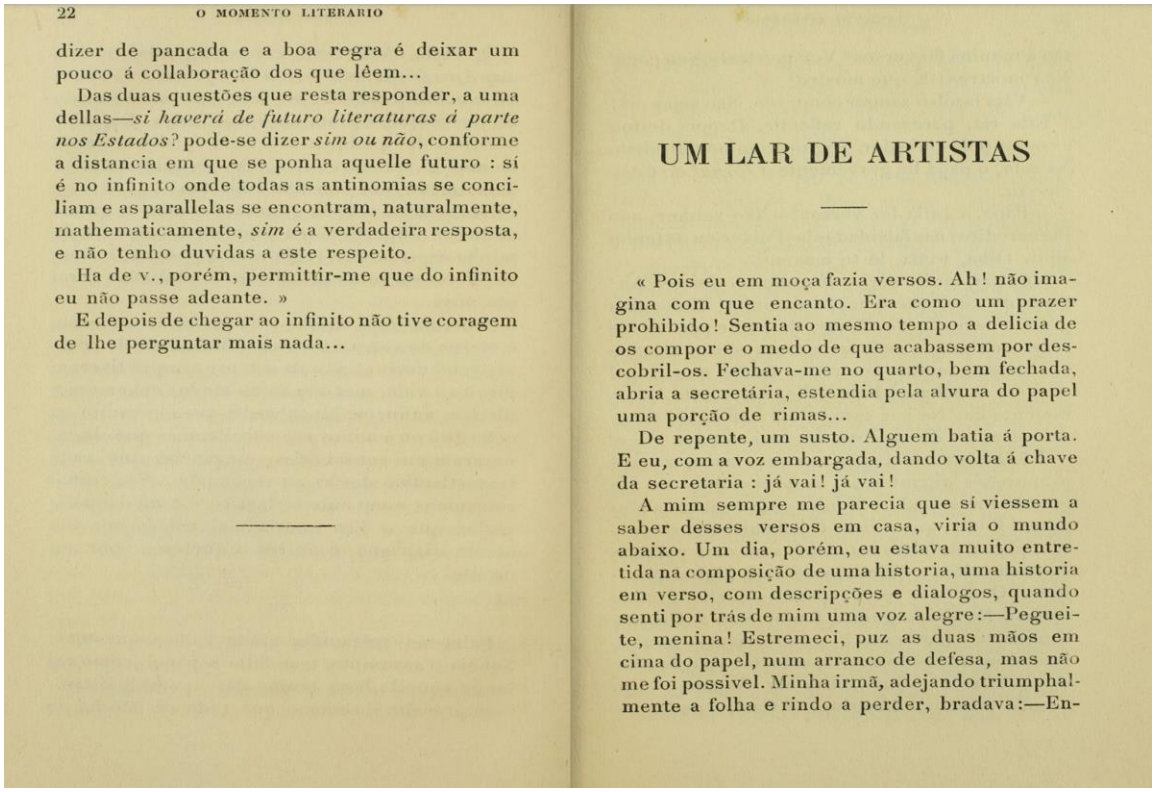

dizer de pancada e a boa regra é deixar um pouco á collaboração dos que lêem...

Das duas questões que resta responder, a uma dellas—*si haverá de futuro literaturas á parte nos Estados*? pode-se dizer *sim ou não*, conforme a distancia em que se ponha aquelle futuro : si é no infinito onde todas as antinomias se conciliam e as parallelas se encontram, naturalmente, mathematicamente, *sim* é a verdadeira resposta, e não tenho duvidas a este respeito.

Ha de v., porém, permittir-me que do infinito eu não passe adeante. »

E depois de chegar ao infinito não tive coragem de lhe perguntar mais nada...

UM LAR DE ARTISTAS

« Pois eu em moça fazia versos. Ah! não imagina com que encanto. Era como um prazer prohibido! Sentia ao mesmo tempo a delicia de os compor e o medo de que acabassem por descobril-os. Fechava-me no quarto, bem fechada, abria a secretária, estendia pela alvura do papel uma porção de rimas...

De repente, um susto. Alguem batia á porta. E eu, com a voz embargada, dando volta á chave da secretaria : já vai! já vai!

A mim sempre me parecia que si viessem a saber desses versos em casa, viria o mundo abaixo. Um dia, porém, eu estava muito entretida na composição de uma historia, uma historia em verso, com descripções e dialogos, quando senti por trás de mim uma voz alegre:—Pegueite, menina! Estremeci, puz as duas mãos em cima do papel, num arranco de defesa, mas não me foi possivel. Minha irmã, adejando triumphalmente a folha e rindo a perder, bradava:—En-

Figure 10. First page of the entry "Uma Lar de Artistas" (do Rio 23).

The narrative that opens the interview establishes an association between the act of writing and the thrill of forbidden pleasures. In do Rio's rendering of Almeida's words, her earliest efforts at writing took place under a shadow of anxiety about being discovered in the act by her relatives—signaling her awareness that writing was not typical behavior for a young woman. In remembering these early experiences, Almeida describes writing lyrical poetry as a "prohibited pleasure" ("prazer proibido"; 23)—characterized by the simultaneous feeling of the "delectation of composing" and the fear that her writings would be found ("delícia de os compor"; 23). For the purpose of this chapter, I want to indicate the significant overlap between the terms Almeida uses to describe the "prohibited pleasure" of writing and the terms frequently used in fiction to describe the act of adultery—namely, a commingling of gratification and the fear of being discovered. In both cases, this combination of sensations occurs within the context of a woman challenging traditional gender roles.

Returning to do Rio's juxtaposition of "home" and "artists" in the title of his interview with Júlia and Filinto, it is possible to see how the tension between public and private in relation to gender and writing continued to influence her career. Even at the moment when Almeida is being interviewed as a public figure due to her status as a professional creative writer she is still connected to the household and domestic activities. As evidence of the competing claims made on her time as a writer and mother, her interview with João do Rio is frequently interrupted by her movements to another room to check on her children. In these moments, do Rio continues the conversation with Filinto. At one point, the interviewer claims to hear a certain slippage or confusion in the way in which Almeida talks about her children and her books: "Mrs. Júlia is sitting in the shade, talking about her books and her children at the same time. I believe she confuses them and thinks about her imagined characters as she kisses the sweet fruits of her life.

Her voice is calm, sweet, and her gestures are maternal" ("D. Júlia está sentada na sombra, fala dos livros e dos filhos ao mesmo tempo. Estou a crer que os confunde e pensa nos personagens da fantasia criadora como beija os meigos frutos da sua vida. É calma, repousada, doce a sua voz, como são maternais os gestos seus"; 32)

While Rio sees similarities in the way Almeida discusses her characters and her children, the interview also captures a tension between the two—that is, between her biological reproduction and her artistic production. While many nineteenth-century Brazilian critics highlighted in previous chapters described the literary influences of novels in terms of parenthood (the works are "natural", "illegitimate", or "monstrous" offspring), Rio's interview with Almeida demonstrates how motherhood could interfere with the process of writing. During the interview, Almeida discusses how she is forced to divide her time between her domestic responsibilities and her creative work while being a mother.

The tension between her family life and her creative efforts is also conveyed in her description of her reading habits. At one point in the interview, Almeida describes the sources of her literary development, acknowledging how her father and husband facilitated her "literary education" (her father recommending Portuguese novels and her husband exposing her to the "modern" ones, such as the French). When do Rio compares a work by Maupassant to her novel *A Viúva Simões,* Almeida explains that she only read Maupassant after publishing her novel. She says: "I am of very little reading. I could spend my life reading, but a housewife cannot spend that much time. I even feel anxious looking at the books that are waiting to be opened. It would be so lovely to spend one's life reading!... Who, however, would take care of the children, of the house?" ("Sou de muito pouca leitura. Era capaz de passar a vida lendo, mas uma dona de casa não pode perder tanto tempo. E até fico nervosa quando vejo livros por abrir. Seria tão agradável

gastar a existência lendo!..."; 31) In seeking to answer Almeida's rhetorical questions, this chapter focuses on the subject of the asymmetrical distribution of domestic labor between the sexes—an imbalance that remains largely intact today—and analyzes how *A Falência* presents an alternative distribution of domestic labor predicated on mutual female cooperation and education.

Indeed, the lack of time Almeida had for reading was a direct result of the demands placed on her time by her domestic labor. In her striving to succeed in both the public and private spheres, we can see how her conspicuousness as a rare woman in the world of letters was at once compensated for and complicated by her role as a traditional wife and mother. As Renata Wasserman writes of Almeida: "Accounts of her life and activities indicate that she made herself—and it seems she did so consciously—into a model of how a woman could be active in public while remaining, as Peggy Sharpe puts it, 'in harmony with the patriarchal model dominant in her time'" (*Central* 35). Unlike the heroines of *Madame Bovary* and *O Primo Basílio*, who abandon conventions after reading books, Almeida's public persona indicated that it was possible to write books while upholding the conventions of traditional gender roles.

Almeida's personal experience with these two forms of labor—the creative work of writing and the nurturing work of running a household—is an experience of what David Harvey has called "[c]ontradictions within the division of labor" (112). Her remarks in the interview with do Rio do not merely attest to a personal difficulty with time management, or a struggle to balance competing claims on her energy and attention, but speak to a general feature of capitalism—that is, the "contradiction between the conditions required to ensure the social reproduction of the labor force and those needed to reproduce capital" (Harvey 182). Although Almeida's relative affluence may have helped shield her against this contradiction, her remarks

to do Rio attest to her awareness of the limits placed on her ability to read and write by the demands of raising children. In her 1901 novel, *A Falência*, this contradiction would be dramatized as part of a general critique of financial capitalism and the gendered consequences of its extreme volatility.

A Falência (1901): Early Reception and Modern Criticism

While the interview with do Rio underscores the challenges posed by motherhood to her writing process, elsewhere in her work we can see her speak to the positive influence of her family life on her creative work. In a note, written probably around 1932 or 1933, Almeida acknowledges that she wrote *A Falência* twice, "[t]he first [time], when single" ("A primeira em solteira"; qtd. in Ruffato, 14). Despite making some progress on the novel, she decided against continuing work on this early version: "This [version of the] novel I destroyed, feeling that it was lacking what the subject demanded and the knowledge of life. The idea stayed singing in my spirit and only after many years of married life, and becoming five times a mother, I wrote all the chapters, from the first to the last, definitively." ("Esse romance rasguei-o, sentindo que lhe faltava o que o seu assunto exigia e o conhecimento da vida. A ideia ficou cantando no meu espírito e só depois de muitos anos de casada e cinco vezes mãe, foi que o escrevi do primeiro ao último capítulo definitivamente"; Almeida, qtd. in Ruffato 14). From this first version of the novel, written in 1886 and published with other short stories in *Traços e iluminuras* (*Strokes and illuminations*) in 1887, Almeida made fundamental changes to the narrator's perspective and the characterization of the protagonist. Nevertheless, the main narrative arc of the story remained largely unchanged from this early version. Both versions of the novel depict the fall of a wealthy

coffee-producing family in Rio de Janeiro in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The title also remained unchanged in the novel's final version: *A Falência,* a word which, besides meaning "bankruptcy," also evokes and is etymologically linked to *falecimento*, or "passing away" and *falha* "mistake" (*Michaelis*). The word *falência* is also derived from the Latin *fallire,* which means both "to cause to fall" and "to cheat and deceive" (*Etymology*). This glimpse into the semantic richness of the novel's title articulates the association between death, error and financial ruin at the center of the novel's plot. But this linguistic background also expresses the link between adultery, concealment and ruin that characterize the novel's comparison between moral and financial bankruptcy.

The novel *A Falência* describes how a patriarch named Teodoro commits suicide after losing his family's fortune through stock market speculations after deciding to gamble his wealth through his broker, Inocêncio. Alongside Teodoro's calamitous financial decisions, the novel also depicts the affair of his wife, Camila, with a close family friend named Dr. Gervásio. The novel clearly demonstrates the asymmetrical and gendered nature of the crime of adultery, as Teodoro's affairs cause no controversy though Camila's affair, if discovered, would have dramatic consequences. After Teodoro's death, Camila is shocked to discover that she cannot marry Dr. Gervásio because, unbeknownst to her, he is still legally married to another woman that he left after he discovered that she had committed adultery. Disillusioned with love and marriage, she focuses on teaching her daughters how to read and write. The novel's ending manifests a social space of female companionship outside of the conventional patriarchal family.

Upon its publication, *A Falência* was well received. However, the critical praise made frequent reference to her gender and her role as a housewife. Baptista Coelho, writing in the journal *Cidade do Rio* on January 14, 1902, celebrated Almeida's exceptional powers of

observation, which stemmed from "the insight that only those of her sex have" ("perspicácia que só as do seu sexo tem"; 1). Moreover, he praised Almeida not only as a writer but also as a "Woman, Wife, and Mother" ("Mulher, Esposa e Mãe"; 1) whose feminine and maternal qualities endowed her writing with a multifaceted quality that enhanced, rather than diminished, her novel: "the writer did not kill the woman" ("o escritor não matou a mulher"; Coelho 1), he said. Concluding his review, Coelho wrote: "I don't know anyone in Brazil who exceeds her as a novelist" ("Não sei de quem, no Brasil a tenha excedido como romancista"; 1). Here, Almeida's status as a wife and mother is described as having an ambiguous relationship with her novel. While writing is presented as a threat to her femininity—"the writer did not kill the woman"—her abilities as a writer are also in part credited to her feminine powers of perception.

The focus on her domestic identity as a wife, mother, and homemaker would feature in other reviews as well, as would comments on what were perceived as distinctly feminine aspects of her writing. An anonymous reviewer in the *Gazeta de Notícias* wrote that "if it *[A Falência]* had been written by a man, it would have been thought, deduced, and executed differently. Only a woman could have cast on the hard subject of this novel the veil of soft poetry, whose purity sweetly curls across the pages like an indistinct perfume" ("...se fosse o livro de um homem, teria sido pensado, deduzido e executado de outro modo. Só uma mulher poderia ter lançado sobre o duro assunto deste romance o véu de suave poesia, que docemente ondula pelas páginas num perfume vago"; "Crônica" 1). While Coelho's review attributed Almeida's powers of observation to her gender, the anonymous reviewer in the *Gazeta de Notícias* ascribes to her gender an aromatic quality of her writing style. Both critics are eager to detect the influence of her femininity in her prose, but they arrive at divergent accounts of how that influence manifests itself.

Two of the novel's female characters also received attention from critics. These characters are Nina, Camila's niece, and Ruth, Camila's oldest daughter. The former receives Camila and her daughters in the house that was gifted to her by Teodoro after Camila loses her own home. Ruth is presented as an artistic woman who earns money after Teodoro's death by teaching violin classes. Of these characters, the anonymous reviewer writes that "only the soul of a woman could create them" ("só uma alma de mulher poderia cria-las") because of the "divine material of affection and tenderness" ("o divino material de afeto e de ternura"; "Crônica" 1) evident in their portrayal. José Maria dos Santos, writing in *O Paiz* (to which Almeida also contributed) similarly highlighted the uniqueness of Nina and Ruth—"two rods . . . of love and kindness" ("amor e pela bondade"; 2). Although Nina and Ruth are hard-working characters who help the family rebuild after Teodoro's death, these critics focus solely on their "tenderness" and "kindness"—seemingly ignoring their traits of perseverance and fortitude.

While he commended her portrayal of Ruth and Nina, Santos criticized Almeida's "inclination to fantasy," ("[gênero] inclinado à fantasia"; 2). He claimed this inclination stemmed from the "delicacy of her female spirit" ("delicadeza do seu espírito feminino; 2"), which was not compatible with the harshness of realism. As previous chapters have shown, female characters were often presented as susceptible to fantasies because of the books they read. Here, Santos attributes a similar tendency to a female writer. But in the act of attributing this tendency to Almeida, Santos is unwittingly placing himself within a tradition of male writers who describe women as being inclined to fantasy. Nevertheless, Santos ends his review saddened that, because Rio de Janeiro is dominated by people like Teodoro—anxious for money with little time for culture—the book may go unread.

In an extensive review published the following month (Feb. 16, 1902), Valentim Magalhães took issue with the book's description of the male characters and questioned the novel's verisimilitude. Notably, he states that Teodoro should have "fatally received anonymous letters" ("devia fatalmente receber cartas anônimas"; "A Falência" 1) denouncing his wife's adultery. If not to Teodoro, he says, a similar letter would have been sent to Camila revealing to her that Dr. Gervasio was married. Such anonymous letters, Magalhães insists, are a real and omnipresent "plague in all major social centers" ("praga formidável em todos os grandes centros sociais"; "A Falência" 1). Quoting a statistic of dubious provenance, he says that "eighty percent of deceived husbands receive anonymous letters warning them of their misfortune" ("[o]itenta por cento dos maridos enganados recebem cartas anônimas, avisando-os do seu infortúnio"; "A Falência" 1). If we recall the critical review of his own novel, *Flor de Sangue*, published in 1897, which attacked the use of an anonymous letter as a plot device, one cannot help but see this review of *A Falência* as a defense of the anonymous letter as a widespread phenomenon meriting depiction in fiction. Despite this perceived shortcoming, however, Magalhães goes on to praise the novel's characters, who behave more like living people than "puppets" ("títeres"; 1)—a word that echoes Machado's critique of Queiroz's characterization of Luiza published in 1878.

As previously mentioned, the reviewer A.G. noted Almeida's stature as a writer, placing her "just under Machado—the master" ("a não ser Machado de Assis, o mestre"; 1), but lamented her perpetuation of the exhausted form of the adultery novel and her inadequate account of the commercial elements of the plot. Even a year later, in a summary of recently released books, which included, along with Almeida's collection of short stories, *Ânsia Eterna*, Euclides da Cunha's classic *Os Sertões, A Falência* was once again mentioned as a book that was still being applauded as a major success ("Ânsia Eterna" 2).

As we can see, Almeida was regarded as among the best Brazilian novelists of her era, and her works enjoyed both critical and commercial success. Her novel *A Família Medeiros* sold out its entire run only three months after its publication in 1892 (Pereira 270). Yet, despite this initial enthusiasm for her work, her oeuvre largely fell into obscurity after her death. In the twenty-first century, however, her writings are being rediscovered. Critics have proposed reasons for this decades-long lapse in the popularity of Almeida's works (Maia). Jassara Amed has outlined the difficulties facing women writers during turn-of-the-century Brazil. While Almeida was especially prominent, other female writers struggled to receive recognition, including Narcisa Amalia, Francisca Júlia, and Emilia Moncorvo. Amed argues that part of Almeida's literary project was a response to what she perceived as the failures of the Republic government to live up to its progressive potential. By targeting women and children readers, Almeida sought to remedy the shortcomings in the new government's education policies. Amed argues that Almeida

> produced most of her work targeting a female audience, incentivizing them to join society in a different way: they should become social agents, intermediaries of education, introducing scientific knowledge, fighting superstition and combating the ignorance left over from the Empire.
>
> [ela] produziu grande parte de sua obra para o público feminino, cabia às mulheres integrarem-se de outra forma à sociedade. Elas se tornariam agentes sociais, seriam intermediadoras da educação, introdutoras do conhecimento científico, combatendo as superstições e a ignorância remanescente do Império. (105)

Amed describes Almeida's audience as middle-class women who valorized the family unit while welcoming the transformations that were taking place through the processes of modernization.

These women would have been a mixture of an impoverished elite as well as women from unprivileged origins who were able to ascend the social ladder (193).

A Falência has been republished by four different presses in the last three years. It has also been included on the mandatory reading list for the 2020 university entry exam for the University of Campinas in the state of São Paulo. Regina Zilberman wrote in the preface for the Unicamp edition that:

> Whether in the context of female writers, or among Brazilian fiction of the first years of the twentieth century, *The Bankruptcy* holds a position of relevance, resulting from the originality of its plot, from the characters that develop in the course of its action, from the society and settings represented, from the controversial ideas, and, above all, from the way in which Brazil, amidst its process of modernization, is depicted, encapsulated in the Rio de Janeiro of those days.
>
> Seja nesse contexto [do grupo de escritoras], seja no todo da ficção brasileira dos primeiros anos do século XX, *A falência* detém uma posição de relevância, advinda de seu enredo original, das personagens destinadas a desdobrá-lo em ações, da sociedade e do cenário representado, das ideias polemizadas e, acima de tudo, do modo como aparece o Brasil em vias de modernização, sintetizado no Rio de Janeiro daqueles tempos. ("Falência" 13)

The commentator from Unicamp's blog admits that "[i]t is impressive that, after more than one hundred years since its first publication, the questions raised in *A Falência* are still so relevant and that Júlia Lopes de Almeida remains an unknown writer for the vast audience of Brazilian readers" ("Impressiona que, passados mais de 100 anos de sua primeira publicação, as questões

abordadas em *A Falência* sejam ainda tão atuais e que Júlia Lopes de Almeida seja ainda uma autora desconhecida para grande parte do público leitor brasileiro" Trindade).

A special report on Almeida by *Globo News* featured an interview with the academic Rosiska Darcy de Oliveira, in which she claimed: "The only thing that stopped her from being as famous as, for example, Lima Barreto was the fact that she was a woman. This is a historical injustice, making invisibility a law." ("A única coisa que a impediu que ela tivesse tido a mesma fama que, por exemplo, de um Lima Barreto, foi o fato dela ser mulher. Isso é de uma injustiça histórica, tornar a invisibilidade uma lei"; R. Oliveira 00:02:04). A 2019 report in *Folha de São Paulo* compared *A Falência* to the most well-known works of Edith Wharton, "wherein the protagonists confront the gradual loss of social privileges, financial decline, and the solitude of realizing that their destinies are bound to the institution of marriage" ("nos quais as protagonistas se defrontam com a gradual perda de privilégios sociais, o declínio financeiro e a solidão por verem submetidos os seus destinos à instituição do casamento"; Albuquerque).

Renata Wasserman's *Central at the Margin: Five Brazilian Women Writers* is one of the few works published in English to feature commentary on Almeida. In the book Wasserman compares Almeida to Rachel de Queiroz (1910-2003), Lygia Fangudes Telles (1923-), Clarice Lispector (1920-1977), and Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914-1977) as examples of pioneering women who were well-known when their books were first published but who were largely excluded from the canon of world literature. Starting with *A Falência*, Wasserman emphasizes how Almeida was "one of the few Brazilian writers of either sex to issue a novel that sits squarely in the world of business" (*Central* 38). For Wasserman, Almeida documented the influence of the global economy on the personal lives of women, capturing the significance of economic shifts at multiple scales, "not just domestic, but national" (*Central* 38).[51] Expanding

Wasserman's claim regarding Almeida's ability to describe the entwinement of economics and private life, I argue that the novel is also a study of the loss of credibility in both a financial and a personal sense. As I will demonstrate in the following section, Almeida identified a crisis of credit and credibility that was not only restricted to economic terms, but also related to how market forces and an asymmetrical and gendered concept of fidelity affected the institution of marriage. While Teodoro lost his capital and financial credit, the adulteress Camila loses her credibility as a faithful wife and mother.

Adultery, Economics and the Textual Attitude

To assess the novelty of Almeida's contribution to the tradition of the wifely adultery novel, it is useful to compare *A Falência* to Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856). Such a comparison demonstrates how both novels manifest a crisis of credibility that extends from personal relationships to institutions. This comparison also demonstrates how Almeida self-consciously writes in reaction to an established genre of female adultery novels, exemplified by *Madame Bovary*, that feature female characters written by men. Not only does Almeida's text dramatize the precarity induced by unconstrained capitalism—the same forces that led Emma Bovary to commit suicide—but she also depicts an alternative economic system predicated on feminine solidarity. Almeida's vision of a cooperative economic sphere populated by women challenges the abstract figure of "economic man" central to modern economic theory, who is largely defined by his competitive instincts and unfettered pursuit of self-interest (Marçal 19). Moreover, the economic dimensions of *Madame Bovary* and *A Falência* offer distinct treatments of the relationship between literature and adultery insofar as Emma's habits of infidelity and

consumption are attributed to the effects of the romance novels she reads whereas Camila evinces an aversion to adultery fiction that appears to be informed by a critical awareness of the limited perceptions of male writers to adequately capture female sexuality.

Emma Bovary and Camila both have affairs while married, challenging the norms of the institution of marriage. By deceiving their husbands, they also risk their own credibility as honest women in the eyes of their families and society. Meanwhile, the bankruptcies experienced by Emma Bovary and Teodoro demonstrate the foundational role of fantasies in sustaining financial credit and the institutions of the global economy. Emma's purchases and Teodoro's investments are inspired by the reading of catalogues and the comparison of external signs of wealth, respectively. Credit and stock market speculation emerge as mechanisms for Emma and Teodoro to actualize in their own lives the representations of wealth that they have encountered, but these same mechanisms introduce a fateful precarity into the domestic sphere.

To compare Emma and Camila's affairs and Emma and Teodoro's financial ruin and death is to articulate a link between fantasy, economics, and adultery—an association hinted at by the etymology of the word credit. The word "credit" is derived from the Latin verb *credere*, meaning "to believe", which is in turn derived from the Proto-Indo-European word for "heart".[52] The word "credit" names both the instrument of Emma's pursuit of wealth but also gestures toward the credulity of her husband, Charles, who fails to notice her affairs. Moreover, Teodoro's decision to invest in the stock market is tied to his perception of the credibility of his acquaintance, ironically named Inocêncio, who has facilitated the acquisition of sudden wealth of other men through stock market speculation. Credibility is also a key term for Camila's love life, since in the story she will tell her lover that she knows that her husband, Teodoro, lies to her by having other lovers, while she herself doesn't know that her lover is also lying to her. In both

novels, misguided belief in the likelihood of future returns on investment, the indefinite deferment of debts or in the discourses of other characters in their romantic and economic relationships results in illusions that are eventually punctured by bankruptcies (whether moral or economic).

Both novels dramatize a pattern of adultery and bankruptcy that exposes the constitutive role played by fantasies in the maintenance of social and economic institutions. In his classic work *Orientalism*, the critic Edward Said describes the "textual attitude" as "a common human failing to prefer the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human" (93). Said cites *Don Quixote* and *Candide* as works that satirize the "fallacy" of assuming "that the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what books—texts—say" (93). Emma Bovary, whose visions of married life—inspired by the reading of romance novels—collide with the underwhelming reality of her provincial existence, is a prime example of such a textual attitude. The failure of Charles Bovary to match the protagonists of these novels encourages her to seek love elsewhere.

But Emma's economic behavior also manifests a preference for simple narratives over nuanced ones. Through the mechanism of credit, Emma is able to construct an imaginary future that has little correspondence with economic realities. As Jens Beckert writes in *Imagined Futures*:

> expectations of the future, and the actions taken based on those expectations, are the result of contingent interpretations. These interpretations take narrative form. Economic action should therefore be understood as anchored in narrative constructions, implying that no empirical inquiry of the economy can detach itself from the investigation of the hermeneutics of economic action (274).

According to Beckert, economic action is rooted in stories told about the future. These narratives are fictional texts insofar as they make claims about futures that have not yet come to pass. If the fictional futures that underlie economic action are texts, it follows that it may be possible for those interpreting such futures to fall victim to the consequences of Said's textual attitude. Not only are Emma Bovary's romantic exploits based on a failure to distinguish between literary narratives and reality, her economic life—enabled by credit—is likewise predicated on an unrealistic narrative of an infinitely deferrable future and a perpetual postponement of debt repayment.

Building on Emma's example as an adulteress and a debtor, whose visions of married life and wealth are sustained by reading books and catalogues, I show how the textual attitude also manifests itself in *A Falência*. The textual attitude is evident in Teodoro's confusion of projected economic futures for financial realities and in Camila's reprimand of Dr. Gervásio for uncritically accepting a model of female sexuality presented in popular novels. As we shall see in the next pages, these examples demonstrate not only the role of narratives in economics, but also the economic dimensions of adultery.

Fictions of Financial Futures

Júlia Lopes de Almeida's novel draws attention to how the introduction of the stock market initiated a process of dematerialization that separated labor from value. While Karl Marx asserted that commodities are not only material entities but also "mystical" things "abounding in metaphysical subtleties" (81), the financialization of the economy (the transition occurring when financial services begin to dominate an economy, replacing manufacturing as a primary source of

wealth production) introduces another layer of abstraction into economic exchange. The abstraction of labor that Marx claimed "stamps" commodities as commodities is compounded by an additional abstraction during the process of financialization. The abstract values stamped on commodities become themselves commodified in a kind of self-reflexive mode of speculation—an economic hall of mirrors populated by, as Fredric Jameson writes, "spectres of value" (142). Although Jameson's analysis focuses on the conditions of late capitalism, we can see these economic phenomena appearing in Almeida's novel in their incipient forms. For example, Jameson argues that late capitalism is characterized by "the increasingly feverish search, not so much for new markets (these are also saturated) as for the new kind of profits available in financial transactions themselves" (142). As the title of Almeida's novel indicates, these financial abstractions have very real material effects on the well-being of the novel's characters, resulting in a material and moral bankruptcy, precipitating a state of economic and emotional precarity.

One material effect of the stock market depicted early in the novel is the massive wealth it generates for certain fortunate individuals—wealth that manifests as expensive commodities. Indeed, Teodoro's decision to invest in the stock market is in part inspired by the fact that his own house, "um palacete" ("a small palace"; 17) is no longer the grandest and most expensive in the neighborhood. That distinction now belongs to the home of Gama Torres, a younger coffee seller who is described as a "modern business man" ("negociante moderno"; 6) because he invested in the stock market with the support of the broker Inocêncio, and was able to "build a large house" ("casão"; 5) with his riches acquired seemingly overnight. The difference in the size of Teodoro and Gama Torres's houses seems to indicate the relative wealth-generating capacities of businesses based on the buying and selling of commodities and financial speculation,

respectively (see Palacios). Indeed, before the rise of the stock market, coffee exports had not only produced vast fortunes in Brazil but had played a role in configuring the global luxuries market in the nineteenth century (Topik 24).

Teodoro is torn throughout the novel during this transition between a traditional plantation-based economy and a financial one—a change which he interprets through a theological lens. He believes that God helps those who work for long periods of time, and he sees Gama Torres's sudden enrichment as the result of the Devil's hand. Although Teodoro initially resists the promises of quick riches by criticizing Gama Torres's gambling, he eventually succumbs to the seductive possibility of tripling his wealth on the stock market over the course of a few days. Teodoro's abandonment of his more conservative business practices exemplifies an economic trend witnessed by Almeida's contemporaries. As Felisbello Freire explains in his *História constitucional da República*, this era was "a time of gambling never before seen. True adventures where the audacity of some sacrificed the naivety of others. Fortunes that existed, disappeared. Some, who the day before came as beggars for bread from the State, at the next moment, presented themselves millionaires" ("Foi uma época de jogatina nunca vista entre nós. Verdadeiras aventuras em que a audácia de uns sacrificou a ingenuidade de outros. Fortunas que existiam desapareceram. Tipos que de véspera se apresentavam mendigando um pão do Estado, em um decreto de nomeação, apresentavam-se milionários"; qtd. in Taunay 9: 67). Freire's remarks on the sudden acquisition and loss of fortunes speaks to the economic uncertainty (and fascination) that the emergence of the stock market unleashed in the previously more economically stable lives of *A Falência*'s bourgeois protagonists. In a moment of self-reflection, Teodoro's lament is expressed in the free-indirect speech of the narrator: "He had worked so hard to finally achieve what others had acquired with a gesture!" ("Trabalhara

tanto, para afinal alcançar o que os outros adquiriam com um gesto!"; *AF* 80). Contrasting his own arduous and gradual enrichment with the sudden fortunes of the nouveau-riche who, in a single day, obtain similar wealth to that which Teodoro took his entire life to acquire, he links the intensification of economic volatility with the decoupling of profits from productive labor.

Teodoro is eventually convinced to invest his money on the stock market by this relatively new acquaintance, Inocêncio, who joins the regular meetings of his fellow coffee producers. Inocêncio's credibility stems from his role in the sudden rise of Gama Torres through stock market speculation. The narrator describes Inocêncio's discourse as designed to dissolve doubts. His words "appeared as *irrefutably true*. . . All the obscure points were *clarified*, repeated, as the difficult passages of a composition are practiced until they are played flawlessly" ("irrefragável verdade . . . Todos os pontos obscuros eram esclarecidos, repetidos, como os compassos difíceis de uma música, até que se passasse por eles sem tropeço"; *AF* 122, my emphasis). The clarity of the language employed by Inocêncio allays Teodoro's misgivings about the stock market. Inocêncio's speech, complemented by handwritten notes and passages from foreign newspapers, produces for Teodoro a vision of future economic prosperity that paradoxically mobilizes clear language to conceal the fundamental opacity and uncertainty of the future. Indeed, Inocêncio produces a fantasy of foreknowledge about the future in his description of an economic system that Teodoro is only beginning to understand. Despite the initial aversion he felt for the stock market, Teodoro is enticed by Inocêncio's proposal. The narrator claims that Inocêncio "extended the proposal seductively" ("...proposta, e estendia-a sedutoramente"; *AF* 123). In other words, there is a blurring of romantic and financial terms to describe Teodoro's attraction to the possibility of profits.

Teodoro's seduction by Inocêncio's account of future profits provided by a financial system about which he knows little is a manifestation of Said's "textual attitude." Said claims that one situation in which the textual attitude appears is when "a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant." In cases such as this, "one has recourse not only to what in one's previous experience the novelty resembles but also to what one has read about it" (Said 93). Such a textual attitude is evident in *Madame Bovary,* when the romantic novels read by Emma create a simplified image of married life that fills the vacuum of her inexperience. For Teodoro, Inocêncio's discourse and the textual sources that supplement it form a representation that renders the complexities of the stock market cognizable. The clear and readily understandable explanations furnished by Inocêncio preclude the necessity for any fine-grained analysis of the complex and volatile mechanisms underlying stock prices. The simplified fantasy becomes a substitute for a sprawling and uncertain reality.

Yet, even a rigorous and thorough analysis of the functioning of the stock market would reveal the central role played by fantasy. Indeed, Anna Kornbluh's book *Realizing Capital* demonstrates the relationship between economics and fantasy very precisely: "something within all capital is fictitious" (7), she writes. In financial capital, this "something" is the set of expectations about the future that determine value. Together, these expectations produce a fictional discourse that disavows its fictionality. It is crucial to the system's functioning that no one treat these imaginary values as imaginary.

Finance produces an effect akin to that of the textual attitude, as seen when Teodoro believes his economic fantasies will be materialized in the near future. When Teodoro finds out that he has lost everything, he asks the family doctor (who is also Camila's lover) to tell Camila and the children about their destitution. In the dialogue, Dr. Gervásio criticizes Camila's shock

and incredulity concerning the possibility of Teodoro's bankruptcy and says: "You, women, don't understand these things. You only know life on a superficial level, that is why you are surprised with normal facts. Today it is Teodoro's bankruptcy, tomorrow will be someone else and then another. The list will be long" ("Vocês mulheres não entendem destas coisas. Só conhecem a vida pela superfície, por isso é que têm surpresas com fatos naturalíssimos. Hoje a falência é de Teodoro, amanhã será de e depois de outro... A série há de ser longa"; *AF* 186). Gervásio paints Teodoro as one casualty of the onward march of capital; and, furthermore, he claims that the conditions of Camila's gender have prevented her from seeing and understanding the risks encapsulated in the financial market upon which her husband was betting. Curiously, Gervásio does not assign Teodoro's failings to his gender, but instead describes them as part of a general economic dynamic. Likewise, whereas Camila's surprise at her husband's bankruptcy is a product of the superficiality of the knowledge she has by virtue of her gender, Teodoro's surprise at going bankrupt is not attributed to any particular masculine quality.

The attribution of limited financial acumen to gendered differences in knowledge is also present in *Madame Bovary*. The narrator writes that Emma was "troubled no more about money matters than an archduchess" (372; "[elle] ne s'inquiétait pas plus de l'argent qu'une archiduchesse"). Emma's frivolous attitude towards money is compared to that of a female aristocrat who, like Camila, is insulated from economic anxiety and spends without care or concern. Moreover, Emma's entrance into a system of debt obligation is undertaken without a clear understanding of the responsibilities it places on her. Just as Teodoro is seduced by Inocêncio's proposed scheme to attain instant wealth, Emma is tempted by the luxuries displayed to her by the local merchant and creditor, Monsieur Lheureux. Emma appears gripped by a perpetual propagation of new desires that, once fulfilled, are only replaced by fresh iterations.

The economic behaviors of Emma and Teodoro are thus not only the result of a confusion between simplified explanations and complex realities but are also enabled by the distinct temporalities produced through debt spending and financial speculation. In the temporal regime of finance, Elena Esposito explains, "the future is produced using expectations about the future, in a circularity where one loses sight of the difference between reality and illusion" (93). In finance, value becomes tied to expectations about future values, and money becomes a tool for adjudicating these different expectations rather than a metric of time spent in productive labor. Stock market shares, like novels themselves, are crystallized fantasies. In Flaubert's novel, due to Emma's relative lack of wealth, her desires produce a slightly different temporality than that found in the typical stock market novel. For Emma, the promise of credit—or the deferment of payment into a projected future—serves as a means of escaping present conditions. She borrows from the future to pay for the present, while Teodoro gambles away his present wealth for the sake of potential future gains. These distinct modes of expenditure represent the gendered dimensions of economic activity. As a female bourgeois character, Emma is not free to pursue wealth through commerce, investments or labor. Given the relatively limited wealth of her husband, Emma turns to credit. Teodoro, on the other hand, is free to gamble away his family fortune.

From Fictional Futures to Fantasies of Adultery

Just as Camila's husband is seduced by the lure of multiplying his wealth through stock market speculation, Camila herself is seduced by the refined manners, extensive knowledge, and passion embodied by Dr. Gervásio. While Teodoro's stock market misadventures lead to

material ruin, Camila's transgressive sexual behavior threatens the abstract ideal of the family and the broader social order.

Studying this entanglement of sex, money, and fantasy within the novel, it is possible to discern from Almeida's work a critique of both capitalism and the gender norms governing turn-of-the-century Brazilian society. Reading Gervásio's claim that "You, women, don't understand these things" ("Vocês mulheres não entendem destas coisas"; Almeida 186) alongside the works of feminist economists allows us to see how Gervásio's exclusion of women from economic considerations is in fact widely replicated in mainstream economic theories. Marçal, for example, has identified how the "primary characteristic" of "economic man"—the rational actor central to so many economic models—"is that he is not a woman". She adds: "Economists sometimes joke that if a man marries his housekeeper, the GDP of the country declines" (60). Moreover, she describes how models of economic behavior have tended to privilege those traits deemed masculine: competition, reason, and individuality, at the expense of feminine traits such as caring and cooperation. Furthermore, economics as a discipline, she argues, has discounted the unpaid domestic female labor that makes complex economic activity possible.

The literary critic Bill Overton, meanwhile, has identified in his study *The Novel of Female Adultery* (1996) how the genre of the adultery novel has from the outset possessed a markedly gendered emphasis. "No classic novel," he writes, "let alone any fictional tradition, is based on male adultery. The widely used term 'novel of adultery' is therefore a misnomer which masks a gender bias both in the novels themselves and in the critical discourses within which they have been interpreted. This is why I employ the term 'novel of female adultery' instead" (vii). While women are excluded from economic theories, 'adulterous' men are conspicuously absent from adultery novels—as is any discussion of their guilt.

Thus, while theories founded on "economic man" exclude the contributions of women, the adultery novel excludes adultery performed by men. Despite the contrary omissions in economics and adultery fiction (one overlooking women and one overlooking men), there is a common economic dimension to novels of female adultery that *A Falência* underscores. If, in Flaubert's novel, the three themes of adultery, illusions, and debt are concentrated in the character of Emma, in Almeida's novel there is a gendered division: Camila commits adultery while it is the husband, Teodoro, who bankrupts the family. Nevertheless, in Almeida's work, both characters are subject to illusions: as we have seen, Teodoro dreams of a rapid increase in wealth while Camila is deceived in the course of her romantic adventures.

Teodoro exhibits something similar to Said's textual attitude insofar as he prefers the simple clarity of Inocêncio's explanations to a rigorous engagement with the complexities of the uncertain financial futures they describe. Reading Almeida alongside Said thus highlights Almeida's critique of the naivety of Teodoro as a danger to social stability. In Almeida's novel, finance plays the role that literature does in conventional novels of wifely adultery, insofar as it encourages risky behavior that undermines the social order. Almeida portrays the seductive visions of finance as working on Teodoro in much the same way that Flaubert describes the fantasies of literature affecting Emma. As Elena Losada has pointed out, female characters exhibiting such a textual attitude is a common feature of adultery fiction, in which reading is often represented as a gateway to committing adultery:

> For women, 'having literature' is always negative, it converts them into unnatural beings; in other words, monsters. . . . [r]eading is presented as the natural precursor to adultery. In novels, women found heroes, the space for an epic sense of existence that the bourgeois world had forgotten. And these heroes of another world and another time

> seemed to shine with perfection, highly superior to the real husbands they would meet. How could Charles Bovary compete with Ivanhoe? (242)

According to the narrator's descriptions, Charles is a simple provincial bourgeois physician, who fails to live up to Emma's image of a potential husband based on the heroic and glorious knight Ivanhoe. Emma's lovers (first Rodolphe and then Leon) similarly fail to live up to the standards of her literary models. In *A Falência*, the comparison is more complex, since there is not an outstanding difference between Francisco Teodoro and Dr. Gervásio. While Emma's lovers at least possess certain qualities that Charles lacks (such as good looks, aristocratic values, being a hunter, enjoying fashion, reading poetry, etc.), highlighting Charles's relative deficiencies, Camila, on the other hand, still admires Teodoro even though she is in love with Dr. Gervasio. Camila and Teodoro's marriage was arranged by her parents and Teodoro's friend. While Teodoro needed a wife, Camila's family was in a precarious financial situation that his money could ameliorate. Although their marriage was arranged, it was not altogether unhappy. The narrator describes how the newlyweds eventually "got used to each other and lived in peace" ("Tinham-se acostumado um ao outro, viviam em paz"; *AF* 16). Their domestic peace is sundered by the arrival of Teodoro's former lover, with whom Teodoro begins carrying out an affair. Teodoro does not realize that Camila knows about this affair—that she has received an anonymous letter revealing his secret. Yet, Camila insists that her relationship with Dr. Gervasio is not about revenge, and that she still esteems Teodoro despite his betrayal. When talking to Dr. Gervasio, she admits that the "more I love you [Dr. Gervasio], the more I admire him [Teodoro]" ("quanto mais te amo, mais o estimo"; *AF* 32). While in Emma's case, Rodolphe had the wealth that Charles lacked and Leon had literary qualities that Charles never developed, in *A Falência* Dr. Gervasio is the one remedying perceived deficiencies in Camila. During his frequent visits to

Teodoro and Camila's house as a physician caring for their children, Dr. Gervasio gradually makes suggestions to Camila about what she should wear and how she should speak, transforming her, slowly, into his vision of how an elegant woman should look and behave. The narrator reveals that Dr. Gervasio took great pleasure in this "work" of molding Camila ("uma obra sua"; *AF* 34), and Camila's attraction to Dr. Gervasio stemmed largely from the attention he lavished on her.

In contrast to Emma, Camila seems relatively content with the material conditions of her bourgeois life: her mansion, jewelry, and dresses seem enough for her. While Emma shares Teodoro's passion for money but lacks his wealth, Emma shares Camila's transgressive sexuality. There are key differences between Camila and Emma as characters, however, that are exhibited most starkly in their different attitudes towards novels. According to Elizabeth Amann in *Importing Madame Bovary*: *The Politics of Adultery*, Emma is a "Quixote in skirts" and, like Quixote, she mistakes tales of romance and chivalry for actual romantic life (16). Camila, on the contrary, refuses to read a romantic plot of adultery offered to her by Dr. Gervásio. Camila's refusal, I suggest, is one way Almeida criticizes the tradition of adultery novels written by men that portray women as female Quixotes. Camila's resistance to the typical representations of women in adultery novels is simultaneously a resistance to the link between literacy and adultery established in *Madame Bovary*. Not only is adultery presented as a uniquely feminine crime in the genre of the adultery novel, but it is also associated with a particularly feminine mode of reading that is, allegedly, at once uncritical and escapist.

In *Madame Bovary*, Emma is educated in a convent to become a good wife and mother. Challenging the limits of such an education, Emma also participates in the clandestine trade of romantic novels that circulate in the convent. She obtains these illicit books from an old lady

who “always carried [some novels] in the pockets of her apron” (*MB*-EM 46; “quelque roman qu’elle avait toujours dans les poches de son tablier”"; *MB*). In another example of the relationship between economics and fantasy in Flaubert’s novel, the old woman who gives Emma the novels that will inspire her illusory visions of romance is herself a victim of bankruptcy—prefiguring the relationship between books and bankruptcy that will characterize Emma’s future. The narrator explains that she was “[p]atronized by the clergy, because she belonged to an ancient family of noblemen ruined by the Revolution” (*MB*-EM 45; “Protégée par l'archevêché comme appartenant à une ancienne famille de gentilshommes ruinés sous la Révolution”; *MB*). Little is known about her family’s history beyond the fact that she is still respected by the clergy for her “ancient” values; in the convent, however, the old lady is the source of love stories that will spur Emma’s disappointment with married life and will motivate her sexual and consumerist habits:

> Before marriage she thought herself in love; but the happiness that should have followed this love not having come, she must, she thought, have been mistaken. And Emma tried to find out what one meant exactly in life by the words felicity, passion, rapture, that had seemed to her so beautiful in books. (*MB*-EM 43)
>
> Avant qu’elle se mariât, elle avait cru avoir de l’amour ; mais le bonheur qui aurait dû résulter de cet amour n’étant pas venu, il fallait qu’elle se fût trompée, songeait-elle. Et Emma cherchait à savoir ce que l’on entendait au juste dans la vie par les mots de félicité, de passion et d’ivresse, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres. (MB)

Emma’s participation at the age of fifteen in this clandestine book trade, according to the narrator, made her “hands dirty with books from old lending libraries” (*MB*-EM 46; “se graissa donc les mains à cette poussière des vieux cabinets de lecture”; *MB*). When enumerating the

novels that Emma reads, the critic Margaret Cohen brings attention to a point that has also been somewhat overlooked concerning Flaubert's gender bias: "Flaubert," she writes, "does not name the most read novels in private lending libraries during the first decades of the Restoration. Before Walter Scott, and indeed, even contemporary with him, these novels were *sentimental novels by women writers*" (Cohen 752, my emphasis). How to understand, then, this absence of the names of female authors in *Madame Bovary*? Many of the novels that Emma reads in secret were probably written by women, but these women's names are not listed by Flaubert. Indeed, Flaubert's decision to discuss Walter Scott while omitting the names of the female authors that Emma would almost certainly have also read echoes a general tendency toward the erasure of female authors from literary history that also plagued authors in real life, including, later, Almeida herself. As Rita Schmidt writes, Almeida "participated in the inauguration of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, for which she was nominated. But since she was a woman, her nomination was, nevertheless, refused" ("Participou da fundação da Academia Brasileira de Letras, para a qual foi indicada. Por pertencer ao gênero feminino, sua indicação, no entanto, não foi homologada"; 91). In both Flaubert's manuscripts and the Brazilian Academy of Letters' decision to exclude Almeida, there is a tendency to erase the names of female authors.

Whereas Flaubert depicts a recursive dynamic wherein Emma imbibes the fantasies of romantic novels only to attempt to realize those fantasies in her own life, Almeida has Camila evince a much more critical attitude towards literature. For, in Almeida's novel, differently from Flaubert's, the issue of gender and authorship is explicitly raised. In the first scene where the two lovers are shown by themselves, Dr. Gervásio gives Camila a book. When Camila asks about its content, Gervásio says that it is about "a love somewhat similar to ours" ("um amor um pouco

parecido com o nosso"; *AF* 32), which indicates it is a novel about adultery. Camila then rejects the book, explaining that she wouldn't read such a novel since:

> Male writers do not forgive women; they make us responsible for everything—as if we already did not pay a high price for the happiness we enjoy! In these books I am always afraid of the end; I rebel against the punishments they throw on us, and I feel desperate for not being able to shout at them: hypocrites!
>
> Os senhores romancistas não perdoam às mulheres; fazem-nas responsáveis por tudo - como se não pagássemos caro a felicidade que fruímos! Nesses livros tenho sempre medo do fim; revolto-me contra os castigos que eles infligem às nossas culpas, e desespero-me por não poder gritar lhes: hipócritas! (*AF* 32)

Almeida presents Camila as being aware of the male perspective of writers of the nineteenth century who harshly judge sexual transgressions committed by women but treat those committed by men as inconsequential. Since Flaubert, the adulteress in fiction is almost always punished for her actions, either directly (excluded from the family unit, as in *Flor de sangue*) or indirectly (Luiza's illness in *O Primo Basílio* after her husband discovers her affair). On the other hand, the male characters who have affairs tend to face few if any consequences for their transgressions.

Camila interprets these penalties in economic terms, claiming she pays a "high price" for her happiness. For Camila, the act enjoying the pleasures of sex and romantic love carry the risk of being discovered and either killed or cast off by her husband. As her husband's wealth is her only means of subsistence, her economic well-being is entirely bound up in fulfilling the expectations of a faithful wife. The economic risk inherent to Camila's affair makes it comparable to Teodoro's gambling on the stock market, which also has both a high degree of

risk and reward. While Teodoro risks the family fortune to increase his wealth and status, Camila is risking her own family's integrity for the sake of romantic love.

Through the character of Camila, Almeida implicitly critiques what Edward Said called the "second situation favoring the textual attitude" (93). Whereas, as we saw with Teodoro, the first situation involving the textual attitude occurs when humans substitute knowledge gained through texts for actual experience, the second situation occurs when certain descriptions gain traction and are reproduced in a discourse. Said gives the example of lions: "If one reads a book claiming that lions are fierce and then encounters a fierce lion (I simplify, of course), the chances are that one will be encouraged to read more books by that same author, and believe them" (93). The author of these descriptions is granted the status of expert and his or her account of the nature of lions is reproduced by successive writers. The lion's fierceness predominates in subsequent representations, subsuming other qualities and emerging as its own object of study. Just as the lion in Said's example is reduced to a single quality that is simultaneously dominant yet unquestioned, fictional representations of women, Camila claims, are characterized by their misdeeds—which in the context seems to imply in all women a tendency toward adultery. Not only is adultery the crime that Camila is guilty of but, as we have seen, the novel of female adultery is a recognizable genre of turn-of-the-century fiction that generally presented adultery as a gendered crime that only women were capable of committing and for which they were solely to blame.

Drawing on Said, I argue that transgressive sexuality becomes a defining quality in female characters written by men, forming a genealogy of such representations that is self-reinforcing: the more such representations appear, the more accurate such representations appear to be. Indeed, the accuracy of a particular representation is judged by its conformity with

previous representations. In this sense, we can appreciate how even a genre of fiction such as realism, with its supposedly close correlation between the fictional world and reality, may still be populated by representations of women that focus extensively on their transgressive sexuality. Following Said, we could say that the fictional worlds and the representations contained therein affect real attitudes so that reality begins to conform to fictional worlds rather than the other way around. Such a dynamic was, after all, the key claim in Said's *Orientalism*: a book about the West's "textual attitude toward the Orient"—where fictional representations were shown to affect real perceptions towards whole regions and peoples.

Unsurprisingly, as the critic João Roberto Faria explains, nearly all the most well-known descriptions of Brazilian female characters were written by male writers in the nineteenth century ("Representations" 141). Against this backdrop of canonical depictions of women created mostly by men, it is possible to read Camila's critique of male writers as an example of how Almeida was also challenging conventional descriptions of women. The novel that Gervásio offers Camila appears to belong to a different genre than those read by Emma. Indeed, Gervásio presents Camila a "novel of female adultery"—offering her precisely the same genre of novel in which they are appearing as characters. The double standard evinced by such literature—wherein female sexuality is a phenomenon that requires policing but male sexuality is unproblematized—appears to Camila as yet another manifestation of the same gender inequality that partially motivated her affair in the first place. Regarding her husband's affairs, Camila says:

> What woman, as ignorant or as indifferent as she is, doesn't suspect, doesn't feel the adultery of the husband on the same day that it takes place? There is always a vestige of the other, that becomes visible in a gesture, in a perfume, in a word, in an act of

> kindness… . . . I found out about many things and pretended to ignore all of them! Isn't this what society wants from us?
>
> Qual é a mulher, por mais estúpida, ou mais indiferente, que não adivinhe, que não sinta o adultério do marido no próprio dia em que ele é cometido? Há sempre um vestígio da outra, que se mostra em um gesto, em um perfume, em uma palavra, em um carinho... . . . Eu soube de muitas coisas e fingi ignorá-las, todas! Não é isso que a sociedade quer de nós? (*AF* 32)

The focus of adultery novels on transgressive female sexuality is the fictional counterpart of a normative social order that requires Camila to passively accept her husband's infidelity. Almeida thus appears to self-reflexively place her novel in opposition to those novels of female adultery written by men. Camila's dialogue amounts to a critique of the textual attitude, insofar as she refuses to accept that fictional representations of female conduct adequately or fairly capture reality. I suggest that Almeida is using Camila's remarks to her lover as a space to criticize her fellow male writers, saying to them via the character Camila: "I rebel against the punishments they throw on us, and I feel desperate for not being able to shout at them: hypocrites!" ("revolto-me contra os castigos que eles infligem às nossas culpas, e desespero-me por não poder gritar lhes: hipócritas!"; *AF* 32). Considering Almeida's exceptional ability to participate in both the public and private spheres in a patriarchal society, combining her role as an exemplary mother and housewife with her public role as a writer, this desire to "shout" at male writers for their hypocrisy is perhaps only possible in this fictional text, where Camila's transgressions allow her to express sentiments that even Almeida herself, bound by the multiple roles she played, could not publicly articulate. As if dramatizing the extent of male hypocrisy, Camila shouts the word

"hypocrite" at Dr. Gervasio, who is not only responsible for initiating the affair with her, but is also himself a hypocrite, hiding his status as a married man.

Reading as Resistance (Against the Textual Attitude)

In the end of *A Falência*, it is Nina, the niece of Camila who helped with family's domestic chores, who saves the family after Teodoro's suicide. While the family was still wealthy, Teodoro gave Nina a birthday gift: a small house under her name. After bankruptcy and Teodoro's suicide, Nina invites Camila, her daughters, and the domestic servant, Noca, to move into her house. Although Teodoro loses the family fortune by gambling on the stock market, Nina is able to keep the small property since it is under her name. The contrast between what is lost and what remains indicates that in *A Falência*, there is an emphasis on the value of land and physical assets over the abstract values of stocks. In *Realizing Capital*, Kornbluh traces the history of the term that appears in the title of her work, concluding that the word "realize" comes from "real estate," which was a conversion of "money into land" (2). Almeida's novel appears to criticize the abstract values of financial capital by depicting the relative stability and use value of real estate. The durability of the house's value as a place of shelter stands in stark contrast to the wild fluctuations of stock market values. The latter (stock market values) introduce precarity into the futures they conjure up through the production of fantasies of foreknowledge whereas the former (the land) adds certainty to the future by persisting in its usefulness over time.

While Camila had the offer of shelter and support from her niece, Emma receives no such assistance despite appealing to her lovers for financial relief. Indeed, it is through their failure to provide monetary or emotional support that Emma realizes that her lovers were not serious about

their partnership. What follows is a crucial event in the French novel in which Emma appears to grasp the scale of her own illusions: "You made me *believe* you" ("Tu m'y as fait croire"), she says to her lover, Rodolphe, "for two years you held me in the most magnificent, the sweetest *dream*!" (*MB*-EM 387; "tu m'as pendant deux ans, traînée dans le rêve le plus magnifique et le plus suave!" ; *MB*, my emphasis). Emma's reaction when she realizes that her lovers had lied to her about the extent and nature of their love is similar to Camila's reaction when she finds out that her own lover was, indeed, married: "He was married! He had lied to her! So many years of lies, so many years of lies!" ("Ele era casado! Ele mentira-lhe! Tantos anos de mentira, tantos anos de mentira!"; *AF* 220). Despite experiencing similar moments of disillusionment, the two novels differ in respect to the female characters' eventual destinies.

As much as Camila is depicted as critical of the hypocritical male discourses against female adultery, she herself fails to see that she was misled by her lover, Dr. Gervásio. In having Camila carry out an affair with a man she believes is single but is actually married, Almeida once more departs from the convention of adultery novels. As Overton writes, "[e]ach [wifely adultery novel] is based on a plot in which, with minor variations, a married woman from the middle or upper classes is seduced by an unmarried man of the same class and comes to grief. They are further alike in that each is told in an impersonal narrative voice, and each was written by a man" (3). While Overton compares adultery novels by Gustave Flaubert, Leo Tolstoy, Theodor Fontane, Jens Peter Jacobsen, Eça de Queirós, Leopoldo García-Alas and Benito Pérez Galdós, identifying the features common between them, Almeida upsets this particular narrative expectation, as Camila is actually having an affair with a married man. The fact that the plot *of A Falência* hinges on an act of male adultery, which prevents the marriage that might otherwise resolve the novel's tensions, distinguishes Almeida's novel from its predecessors. Although

Camila is upset when she discovers that she cannot marry Dr. Gervásio, this departure from the conventions of the genre allows Almeida to explore a mode of social organization outside of the traditional family. *A Falência* demonstrates a possible life for women based on mutual cooperation and support.

Another convention that Almeida avoids at her novel's conclusion is the typical fate of the adulteress. Whereas other adultery novels end with the adulteress ostracized, dead, or forced into a loveless "white" marriage, Camila's fate is to commit herself to the education of her children. In contrast, when discussing Emma's suicide, Bernard Paris writes that literature "is full of protagonists who are granted romantic deaths, who feel that they have actualized their idealized images and then die before they are subject to continued failure, despair, and self-hate" (212). Almeida's novel, once more, strays from this tradition of adultery novels as it is Teodoro, and not Camila, who commits suicide. Unlike the deaths of cuckolded husbands in *Marido de Adúltera* and *Flor de Sangue*, Teodoro's suicide is also unrelated to his wife's adultery. In Almeida's novel death and adultery remain unassociated, which leaves the question of guilt and culpability open. No one is punished for their adultery in *A Falência,* which further undermines the common connection between sex and death in adultery novels, where the unsanctioned practice of sex leads to death.

Almeida's avoidance of these common endings to adultery novels is a narrative strategy to develop a feminine social space in which women prove to be resilient in the face of financial crisis and emotional devastation. In *A Falência,* after the dissolution of all the couples—both the married and the adulterous ones—the narrative proceeds to focus on the bonds between the female characters that find themselves left outside of the bonds of romantic love or global finance. Upon realizing that her relationship with Dr. Gervásio has no future, Camila directs her

attention to the creation of a new future embodied by her daughters (differently from Emma's daughter, who is left penniless). She invests in this future not through speculative financial transactions, but by giving her daughters the tools to become independent through education. The novel ends with her declaring her intention to teach her daughters how to read and write (*AF* 221).

Conclusion

After depicting the dissolution of social and financial models predicated on the policing of female sexuality and the financialization of the economy, Almeida's novel depicts a new model for the family and for the economy, based on female cooperation and the revaluation of forms of care work including the education of children.[53] More broadly, the novel, while in constant dialogue with the tradition of wifely adultery novels, nevertheless differentiates itself by presenting an alternative model of female pedagogy predicated not on the relationship between male authors and female readers, but on that between mother and daughter. By teaching her daughters how to read, Almeida seems to suggest, a different kind of literacy than that practiced by Emma—who read novels isolated from the world in a convent—is possible. Indeed, literacy may function to undermine what Said called the textual attitude. Considering the critical attitude towards literature expressed by Camila in response to the book offered to her by Dr. Gervásio, it seems entirely possible that such critical thinking skills may also be transmitted to her daughters along with the ability to read and write.

In departing from narrative conventions established by Flaubert in *Madame Bovary* and widely replicated afterward, Almeida rewrites the novel of female adultery by suggesting that

perhaps women have more credibility discussing female sexuality than male writers and deserve credit for the caring labor they overwhelmingly perform. Despite the collapse of the financialized economic system portrayed in the novel, and the discrediting of an institution of marriage based on lies shared by husbands, wives, and lovers, *A Falência* nevertheless supplies an image of a family in which female education prevails and labor rooted in care is valued as truly transformational.

Conclusion

"Everything comes to an end, reader. It is an old truism to which may be added that not everything that lasts, lasts for long."

"Tudo acaba, leitor; é um velho truísmo, a que se pode acrescentar que nem tudo o que dura dura muito tempo."

— Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro* (HC 221; *DC* 108)

The first Brazilian novel examined in this dissertation, José de Alencar's *Lucíola* (1862), features a courtesan who destroys a bestselling French book about a courtesan. The last novel analyzed in this dissertation, Júlia Lopes de Almeida's *A Falência* (1901), depicts an adulterous wife who refuses to read a novel of wifely adultery written by a male author. Published almost forty years apart, these fictional scenes echo one another, but they represent distinct aims on the part of their authors. Alencar's decision to have his protagonist destroy the canonical European story of a woman who defies traditional morality reflects his ambiguous relationship with his European literary predecessors. While he was willing to copy aspects of the plot of well-known courtesan novels, this scene nevertheless attests to his desire to break with European templates and establish an independent Brazilian literary tradition. The scene in Almeida's novel, on the other hand, is a clear rejection of the common depictions of female sexuality found in adultery novels written by men. In the years between the publication of *Lucíola* and *A Falência*, the representation of female sexuality as a destabilizing force threatening the social order became omnipresent in Brazilian literature.

These two scenes are emblematic of two braided themes whose entanglement has shaped this dissertation. On one side is the male author eager to establish his originality—a tendency

which frequently manifests itself as an anxiety about the paternity of his work. Due to the popularity of both courtesan novels and novels of wifely adultery, and male writers' frequent recourse to these genres, they were constantly faced with accusations of plagiarism or lack of originality. Authors who depicted a courtesan or adulteress in their works were, given the frequently used metaphor comparing authorship to fatherhood, running a risk similar to the husbands of adulteresses who may end up with offspring reflecting the influence of another man.

The other theme concerns the representation of female literacy as a catalyst for female sexual transgressions. Established in Alexandre Dumas *fils*' well-known story *La Dame aux Camélias* (1848) and Gustave Flaubert's controversial book *Madame Bovary* (1856), the figure of the woman with an appetite for literature and sex eventually spread around the world. In Brazil, this conjunction of female literacy and female sexuality became enfolded in debates about the right of husbands to kill their adulterous wives and the proper extent and content of female education. Almeida's *A Falência*, published at the turn of the century, rejected both the common tendency for authors to blame women for the crime of adultery (and treating male adultery as unremarkable) and the insistence that women were acritical readers of books. The character Camila's refusal to read the book offered by her lover is also a refusal of the pedagogical mission many male writers assumed for themselves by means of which they sought to mold female behavior.

These two themes—a preoccupation with transgressive female sexuality and a common association between female literacy and infidelity—meet at the nexus of Brazil's changing social and economic landscape. While *Lucíola* dramatizes the life of a woman in a new social niche created by urbanization—that of the courtesan—Almeida depicts a female community operating in the ruins of the patriarchal family. In both cases, the female characters' need to attain

economic self-sufficiency leads to a conflict with the traditional roles assigned to women. The novels published in the intervening period between *Lucíola* and *A Falência* also attest to the effects of access to social and political changes on the institution of marriage, from the threat educated women posed to the men who fall in love with them to the female promiscuity made possible by the growing circulation of letters.

In one sense, the perceived crisis in the institution of marriage was imported into Brazilian literature from European models, but these Brazilian adaptations of European forms also stimulated discussion about the state of Brazilian women in a rapidly changing modernity. Literature not only sought to diagnose the new threats facing the institution of marriage—aggravated by the establishment of the Republic, among other transformations—but also sought to exercise an influence on the formation of the bourgeois woman. The emergence of a new class of literate women raised the question of how the act of reading could strengthen or undermine feminine morals. The perceived perils of female readers incited by the books they encountered to commit sexual transgressions were not only incorporated into the plots of many of these novels, but some explicitly positioned themselves as antidotes to such destructive literary influences. Female writing was also perceived as a morally dubious practice, though male authors often used female narrators to tell their stories. This is the case, for example, in *O Marido de Adúltera* (1882) and the *Livro de uma Sogra* (1895), which present themselves as moral guidebooks for young women and their husbands. Valentim Magalhães' *Flor de Sangue* (1897) placed responsibility for a woman's moral instruction in the hands of her husband, while Julio Ribeiro's *A Carne* (1888) portrayed a well-educated woman as a danger to her lovers. Whether to warn women away from adultery or warn male suitors about the risks of either deficiencies or excesses

of female education, these novels all intervened in a debate about how to preserve marriage in the face of unprecedented social changes.

The novels of Machado de Assis represent a major departure from this focus on female literacy and from a conception of literature as a tool for moral pedagogy. *Ressurreição* (1872) and *Iaiá Garcia* (1878) highlight how suspicion can undermine relationships even in the absence of concrete evidence of infidelity. Seemingly responding to the controversy surrounding his critique of Eça de Queiroz's *O Primo Basílio* (1878) as well as José Veríssimo's complaint about the "exhaustion" of the topic of adultery in fiction, Machado's canonical novel *Dom Casmurro* (1899) features a first-person narrator who suspects that his wife, an educated woman, is committing adultery. However, the text of *Dom Casmurro* contains no decisive evidence substantiating the accusation of adultery. Indeed, the main proof against the narrator's wife takes the form of an imagined letter—a play on the ubiquity of letters in novels of wifely adultery. I argue that Machado's use of letters underscores the dangers of literacy from a different angle: not that messages will be intercepted, as in *O Primo Basílio,* but that they can be misinterpreted. When letters function as vectors of suspicion, insinuations of adultery can be just as disruptive as outright revelations of extramarital affairs. In these three novels, Machado demonstrates the role of active imagination in shaping and breaking romantic relationships. As mediators of human bonds, Machado shows how letters amplify the effects of suspicion and can undermine the mutual trust that successful unions require.

At stake in this dissertation is our understanding of the distinction between the public and private spheres in turn-of-the-century Brazil. As we saw in the introduction, the canonical account of the public sphere articulated by Jürgen Habermas gives little space to women, but in the Brazilian context, the behavior of women was a constant subject of the public sphere's

discussions. Whether as courtesans circulating in public while engaging men in the private domain of sex, or as wives writing letters that circulated to intended and unintended readers, the female characters in these novels demonstrate how women could transgress the boundary delimiting the private and public spheres. Male authors interpreted these acts of boundary as threats to the institution of marriage itself. Literature, in these cases, was treated as a mechanism for neutralizing these threats by adjusting the behavior of readers. Against this trend, the work of Júlia Lopes de Almeida asks something quite different of readers: to imagine alternative forms of social organization that accept female literacy as an asset rather than a liability. Her work also departs from a historic tendency in adultery fiction to judge female sexual transgressions more harshly than those committed by men. In reading her novel, published at the turn of the last century, we capture a glimpse of how female authorship can transform an entire literary tradition while inviting us to imagine a different future.

Notes

Introduction

[1] All Portuguese translations are mine unless otherwise noted. For all quotes I include both the original and an English translation. Nineteenth-century Portuguese spelling has been updated, for example changing "ph" into "f."

[2] "The Republic only recognizes civil marriage, the celebration of which will be free of charge" ("§ 4º - A República só reconhece o casamento civil, cuja celebração será gratuita"; Barros).

[3] In February 2021, the judge Dias Toffoli submitted to the Supreme Court of Justice the requirement to review the Penal Code of 1940 to invalidate any use of the "honor" defense as an argument for justifying feminicide. He argues for the formalization of "the understanding that the thesis of the legitimate defense of honor is unconstitutional" ('firmar o entendimento de que a tese da legítima defesa da honra é inconstitucional"; Toffoli 22). On March 12, 2021, the Supreme Court in Brasilia unanimously voted to approve this change (see R. Motta; Flores).

[4] Divorce was legalized as an amendment in 1977, changing the Brazilian Constitution of 1967, which stated that "marriage is indissoluble" ("§ 1º O casamento é indissolúvel," Article 1, Title IV, Ramos) to "marriage can only be dissolved, in the cases expressed by law, as long as there is a previous judicial separation for more than three years" ("O casamento somente poderá ser dissolvido, nos casos expressos em lei, desde que haja prévia separação judicial por mais de três anos"; Maciel, Portela et al.).

[5] For the record, "illiteracy only started to decrease in the country in the 1960s, but women were still 53% of the illiterate population" ("[o] analfabetismo só começou a diminuir no país a partir dos anos 1960, mas as mulheres eram ainda 53% da população analfabeta naquele ano"; De Melo and Thomé). For the authors, the "victory" of female education only arrives in 1991.

[6] For more information on *O Sexo Feminino* as well as other newspapers written by female writers, I recommend "*O Sexo Feminino* em campanha pela emancipação da mulher" (Nascimento and Oliveiro) and "A imprensa feminina no Rio de Janeiro nas décadas finais do século XIX" (Carula).

[7] "The manuscript letter might be written as part of a family duty or as an exercise in literacy or politeness. . . . For women, it should be argued that the opportunity and authorization to write affected their level of empowerment which has been re-drawn by the onward circulation and preservation of those texts" (Delafield, *Women's Letters* 2).

[8] For information on the relationship between genre and gender in Brazilian literary history, see Tedeschi, "Por uma História Menor—Uma Análise Deleuziana sobre a História das Mulheres." I also recommend Rachel Soihet's "Violência Simbólica: Saberes Masculinos e Representações Femininas" for a reflection on female education in Brazil.

Chapter I

[9] Nico Nagelkerke explains that *courtesan* "generally denot[ed] a high-class prostitute, or *demi-mondaine*, that is a woman 'kept' by one or more wealthy men, and not a low-class prostitute working on the street or in a bar or brothel. Courtesans were not (not always anyway)

only kept for sex but also for entertainment, culture, and conversation. For wealthy men an expensive courtesan was also a way of flaunting their wealth and a form of conspicuous consumption" (12).

[10] According to Scholar, this performance is a reference to either a ballet-pantomime by Jean-Louis Aumer with music by Fromental Halevy or to one by Eugène Scribe.

[11] "That the great motivating force of Manon Lescaut is money is thus doubly true: Manon's exploitations (and Des Grieux's cards) keep the household, and therefore the story, in motion, while Des Grieux uses the story to repay the generosity of Renoncour" (Costich 525).

[12] "Indeed, the Man of Quality pays des Grieux to hear his tale: a gesture one critic dismissed as 'too vulgar' to be 'about money'" (Douthwaite 52).

[13] The memoir was published posthumously in 1893 by Alencar's son Mário de Alencar. Concerning Alencar's relation to the novel form, Zephyr Frank says that Alencar "is also generally credited, along with his contemporary Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, with introducing the genre of the novel in Brazil" (5).

[14] All translations of Alencar's work and of the newspaper criticism of the time are my own, with the exception of the preface of the novel *Senhora*.

[15] "This book, like the two that preceded it, is not authored by the writer to whom they are usually attributed" (Alencar, *Senhora,* "To the reader," transl. Catarina Edinger). According to Maria Wolf, by distancing himself from the authorship of these texts, Alencar's preface to *Senhora* "plays on the reader's desires—marked perhaps by a concern for 'truth'—to read precisely those accounts which provoke such disclaimers" (62).

[16] Page citations from *Lucíola* in this chapter refer to the digital version provided by Domínio Publico, based on the *Bom Livro* 12th edition (São Paulo: Ática, 1988). This digital edition suppresses the preface of the book.

[17] It is important to clarify that Lúcia is probably reading the theatrical adaption of Dumas *fils*'s novel, as evident in Paulo's characterization of the book as belonging to the "realist school." As Faria explains, this is a difference between the adaptation and the original novel, which instead belonged to the tradition of romanticism ("Preface" 25).

[18] Due to the heteronormative nature of the institution of marriage in the nineteenth century, I am not developing an analysis of other sexualities in this chapter, despite the fact that, hypothetically, a wife could fall in love with a courtesan as well.

[19] As Maria Cecilia de Moraes Pinto argues, "[t]his awareness of the irreversible degradation of the flesh has something of tragedy and it configures the world with no exit for the regretted prostitute. The body does not regenerate" (85).

[20] Lúcia is recognized as a courtesan even after she leaves the urban center, as evident in the following reaction to her: "Do not touch anything that belongs to this woman! She is a lost soul!" (*L* 104).

[21] I am drawing on Zephyr Frank's calculations: "In Brazil during the nineteenth century, the primary unit of currency was the mil-réis. One thousand mil-réis made up 1 conto, which was the highest unit and would be written as 1:000$ (1 conto and o mil-réis). During most of the period contemplated in this book (1840s-1880s), the mil-réis was worth about 50 cents. Thus a rich estate of 300 contos, like that of Quincas Borba, would have worth approximately $150,000" (xiii).

Chapter II

[22] For more information, see Elizabeth Amann, *Importing Madame Bovary*.

[23] In November 1866, the *Jornal do Commercio* in Rio de Janeiro announced *The Gift* among the list of "English Books – Just Received." For more information on Assis and Poe, refer to Fernandes and Ginway**.**

[24] Francisco Vieira first translated Flaubert's second novel, *Salammbô* into Portuguese in 1862. Almost twenty years later he translated Flaubert's first novel, *Madame Bovary*. It appeared in Brazil on a list of books recommended "only for men" (Muller 175-6; 207).

[25] Available online via the *Centre Flaubert* (https://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/manuscrits/) hosted by the University of Rouen.

[26] The page numbers on the left refer to the English translation by Eleanor Marx-Aveling; the French original is from Project Gutenberg.

[27] I am following the spelling found in the English translation by Margaret Costa: *Queiroz* (and not the Portuguese *Queirós*), *Luiza* (and not *Luísa*) and *Bazilio* (and not *Basílio*).

[28] In "Eça, autor de *Madame Bovary*," Silviano Santiago argues that in nineteenth-century literature, the peripheral nations did not search for originality in their writing, but the "*transgression* that is created from a new use of the model borrowed from the dominant cultures" (58). Santiago concludes that one work complements the other, bringing to light what is invisible in the other. Among Queiroz's "transgressions" of Flaubert's text, Santiago highlights the inclusion of an adultery plot through a play that serves as a cautionary tale for the reflection of the characters before and after their actions, as well as the inclusion of the dream-world as the space for Luiza's guilt to manifest.

[29] For more information on the reception of *O Primo Basílio* in Brazil, please refer to José Leonardo do Nascimento's *O primo Basílio na Imprensa Brasileira do século XIX* (2007).

[30] It is important to note that Machado does not mention *Madame Bovary* in his critique of *O Primo Basílio*. In fact, as Rocha points out, Flaubert is conspicuously absent from all of Machado's works (70). But the lapse is particularly noticeable at this moment, when Machado abstains from commenting on the obvious similarities between Queiroz and Flaubert's works.

[31] The first page numbers refer to the English translation by Margaret Jull Costa; the second refers to the Portuguese original from the *Biblioteca Virtual de Literatura* in the public domain.

[32] "By law, Jorge is entitled to repudiate his deceitful wife or send her off to a convent. Either way she would lose her status as a respectable woman and her material comforts. But if he killed Luiza, Jorge would only suffer a minor penalty: a six-month exile from his hometown" (Alonso 97).

[33] Claudia Pazos Alonso argues that: "While it is certainly the case that, as a realist writer, Eça was reflecting in his fiction the fact that different prospects apply to men and women in nineteenth-century Portuguese society, it doesn't necessarily follow that he agrees with the status quo. . . In fact, running against the overt message of the novel, which is the punishment of the adulterous wife for her transgression, it is possible to find in *O Primo Basílio* a substantial subtext which challenges both conventional ideas and the written law in force at the time, as far as adultery is concerned" (100-101). For more critical comments on *O Primo Basílio*'s depiction of misogyny in Lisbon society, please refer to Davil Billick, "Misogyny in Eça de Queiroz."

[34] For a recent presentation of Machado de Assis's racial identity, I suggest Lamonte

Aidoo: “Social Whiteness: Black Intraracial Violence and the Boundaries of Black Freedom”.

[35] Marta de Senna notes that *Iaiá Garcia*’s first edition (1878) “is sprinkled with ‘naturalistic’ terms and expressions, like ‘instinto’ or ‘índole’, all of them banished by the author in the second and definitive edition (1899)” (141).

Chapter III

[36] *O Marido da Adúltera* was published as a *feuilleton* between 1880 and 1881. The book came out in 1882 and from here onwards I am referring to the date of the publication of the book.

[37] Before Mendonça joined the *Colombo,* the newspaper was categorized, at least during its foundation in 1873, as a “misogynistic environment” (“ambiente misógino”) evident in the editor’s critique of the new feminist newspaper *O Sexo Feminino* published by Francisca Diniz. The editor justified this stance by invoking the example of Molière’s killing of the “wise women” (“mulheres sábias”) in his play *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (*The Affected Ladies*). The editor of *Colombo* “had little receptivity to the ideas of Diniz” (“pouca receptividade às ideais de Francisca Diniz”), whom he claimed was trying to invert the roles assigned by nature to the sexes (C. Nascimento, “Mulheres” 264). The editor’s harsh comments seem to indicate that men were aware of the dangers to the status quo posed by women writers and newspapers with feminist ideas (C. Nascimento, “Mulheres” 276).

[38] Machado de Assis cited Mendonça in at least two letters as the “Father of the Academy” (“é o pai da Academia”; qtd in. Venancio 49-50).

[39] In Salvador de Mendonça’s novel *Marabá,* the protagonist also challenges Dumas *fils*’s position on killing adulterous women, but when he is confronted with his own wife’s adultery, he

ends up breaking with his own principle and kills her. His little brother Lúcio de Mendonça seems to be writing in response to this earlier text.

[40] For more information, see Afrânio Coutinho and the "Introduction" to the English translation of *A Carne* by William Barne (page xiii).

[41] For more information of the classification of literary schools, see A. Fanini.

[42] For more information on the double standard in sexual morality, please see "Female Adultery, Ideology, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction" (Bill Overton 1996).

[43] According to Carvalho, "[a]lthough he [Lima Barreto] comments on the aspects of bovarism related to Flaubert's novel, Barreto immediately diverts his argument to the Brazilian reality, seen from the perspective of the city of Rio de Janeiro. He has fun pointing out everyday behaviors of imposture, trickery or the abuse of power, which already denote new ways of interpreting the concept postulated by Gaultier." ("Embora comente os aspectos do bovarismo relativos aos romances de Flaubert, Barreto imediatamente desvia sua argumentação para a realidade brasileira, perspectivada a partir da cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Diverte-se em apontar comportamentos cotidianos de impostura, malandragem ou abuso de poder, os quais já denotam novas formas de interpretação do conceito postulado por Gaultier"; 6).

[44] Machado's female characters have recently received increased critical attention. Earl Fitz contrasts Machado's early novels with the later ones, identifying an escalating level of complexity in his description of female characters. He argues that the later novels exhibit an understanding that "women see most clearly what is not working as it should in Brazilian society," and for that reason men are the ones who "must become more like the women, and not vice versa" (213). Twenty-first-century researchers have also focused on the themes of

reproduction and fatherhood in *Dom Casmurro* (Hosseiny), and the characterization of feminine and masculine perspectives in *Dom Casmurro* (Gualda).

Chapter IV

[45] Taunay collected the different versions of the story of how Palheta acquired the coffee beans and emphasized, from Palheta's own testimony, that there was no affair between him and Madame d'Orvilliers. In one version, it is said that Mme. d'Orvilliers put coffee beans in Palheta's pocket in front of her husband, "who smiled." Meanwhile Palheta claims that it was an official negotiation that let him bring the coffee plants and coffee seeds legally to Brazil (1: 349-350).

[46] "Immigrants appeared to have saved coffee. Five years before the end of slavery in 1888, few new groves were planted. In the 1890s growers planted some 350 million new coffee trees. Many now portrayed themselves as forward-looking modernizers" (MacLachlan 42).

[47] In this biographical section, I reference Almeida by her maiden name (Júlia Lopes) and then only as Almeida afterwards, following the standard of naming writers by their last names.

[48] For more information on the publication dates and serialization dates, see Stasio and Faedrich.

[49] A large part of the income that helped with the construction of the big house ("casarão") in Santa Teresa came from selling *A Falência*. According to the grandchildren Claudio and Fernanda Lopes de Almeida, the "Green Salon" received this nickname due to the amount of green space, plants, and open ambiance the house provided in contrast to traditional enclosed rooms (M. Fanini 320).

[50] Faedrich and Stasio identify a link between the texts signed "D. Júlia" and Clarice Lispector's early texts directed to an exclusively female audience. In their view, both Almeida and Lispector were fulfilling an expectation that women writers should provide recommendations, guidance, and tips for a successful domestic life. Whereas Lispector published these texts under pseudonyms for financial reasons (as a source of income), Faedrich and Stasio claim that Almeida did out of "normative adherence" ("adesão normativa"; 14).

[51] The etymology of the word "economy" is rooted in the Greek terms: *nemein* (manage), *nomos* (managing), and *oikos* (house), leading to *oikonomia*, "household management," to *oeconomia* in Latin and then "economy" in English in 1530s (*Etymonline*).

[52] "credo: (…) from PIE compound ***kerd-dhe-*** 'to believe', literally 'to put one's heart'" (*Etymology*).

[53] As Wasserman writes: "It is characteristic in her [Almeida's] novels that she establishes, again and again, some community of working women as the ideal both of a social and an economic life" (*Central* 37).

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Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

2021 **Northwestern University, Evanston, IL – USA**
Department of Spanish & Portuguese
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2012 **Universidade de São Paulo, SP – Brazil**
B.A., Brazilian, Portuguese, and French Literature

2011 **Université Lumière Lyon 2 – France**
Undergraduate Exchange Student, Portuguese and French Literature

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

2012 "Flashes intermitentes: a presença da fotografia em *Dom Casmurro.*" *Machado de Assis em linha*, n. 10, ano 5, Dec. 2012, online journal, http://machadodeassis.net/revista/numero10/rev_num10_artigo09.asp

2013 "Dans l'abîme." *Non Plus - Revista Discente da Área de Frances – USP*, vol. 4, 2013, online journal, http://www.revistas.usp.br/nonplus/article/view/61956

Book Chapters

2020 *[under review]* "Judging Capitu: Placing *Dom Casmurro* in the Tradition of Adultery Novels." *Approaches to Teaching World Literature: Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis* (Eds. Pedro Meira Monteiro; Hélio de Seixas Guimarães). MLA Press.

2020 "On Moral and Financial Bankruptcy: Adultery and Financial Speculation in *A falência* by Júlia Lopes de Almeida." *Comparative Perspectives on the Rise of the Brazilian Novel.* (Eds. Ana Cláudia Suriani; Sandra Guardini Teixeira). UCL Press, 2020. 297–315.

Public Outreach

2020 "Trees, Lungs, and Gender." *Living With Plagues: New Narratives for a World in Distress*. Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, https://doi.org/10.21985/n2-fefe-3s55.

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2021	English PEN Translates Award Winner for *The Bankruptcy* by Júlia Lopes de Almeida, translated from the Portuguese by Cintia Kozonoi Vezzani and Jason Rhys Parry (UCL Press). Country of origin: Brazil.
2020-21	Buffett Institute Global Impacts Fellowship Buffet Institute for Global Affairs, Northwestern U, Evanston, IL
2019-20	Graduate Fellowship Spanish & Portuguese Department, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2018-19	Paris Program in Critical Theory Fellowship Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and The Graduate School, NU
2017	Summer Institute Cologne – [sic!] The Graduate School, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2017	Conference Travel Grant Spanish & Portuguese Department, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2017	Conference Travel Grant The Sexualities Project, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2017	SSRC-DPD – Preliminary Summer Research grant The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
2017	LASA – Beca de cuatro noches de hospedaje en un hotel LASA Fondos Adicionales, Lima, Peru
2017	Conference Travel Grant The Graduate School, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2016	Conference Travel Grant The Sexualities Project, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
2016	Conference Travel Grant Spanish & Portuguese Department, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2015	Conference Travel Grant The Graduate School, the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and the Program in Comparative Literary Studies, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2014-15	Graduate Fellowship Spanish & Portuguese Department, Northwestern U., Evanston, IL
2012	University of São Paulo Dean's Office Fellowship São Paulo, Brazil

2010	Winner of the "SLAM 2010" Contest - Participation in the « Rencontre Internationale de Jeunes » at the Festival de Théâtre d'Avignon Embassy of France, Brazil / Paris-Avignon, France

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Papers Presented

2020	"Breathe." PACO [Promoting Awareness of Clotting Outcomes Foundation]. June 27. Zoom. [Invited speaker on literature and thrombosis]
2019	"Le livre comme arme dans l'éducation des femmes au XIXème siècle au Brésil." Colloquium « Poétiques et Politiques de la lecture : regardes croisées entre la France et le Brésil », École Normale Supérieure, Paris, Apr. 4-5.
2018	"Capitu Cheated. So What? Reading *Dom Casmurro* in the Tradition of the Adultery Novel." Colloquium 'Machado de Assis, Yesterday and Today,' University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA, Apr. 6-7.
2018	"Two Reasons for Not Reading: The Writer and the Housewife in Júlia Lopes de Almeida." MLA 2018, NYC, USA, Jan. 4-7.
2017	Poster Presentation – "Machado de Assis and his Image: Photography, Narration and Race." Summer Institute Cologne [sic!], Germany, Sep.1.
2017	"Tensões entre as esferas do público e do privado: Júlia Lopes de Almeida, leitora e escritora." XV Congresso Internacional da ABRALIC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Aug.7-11.
2017	"Two paths to ruin: moral and financial bankruptcy in *A Falência*." ACLA Conference Annual Meeting, Utrecht, Netherlands, Jul.6-9.
2017	"The Canudos War: Unfaithful Wives & Everyday Life." LASA 2017 – Diálogos de Saberes, Lima, Peru, Apr.29-May1.
2016	"Nested Secrets: The Voice of the Adulteress in *O Marido da Adúltera.*" Incomplete: The Unsaid and the Undone at Princeton University, NJ, Oct. 21-22.
2016	"Fooling Images: Film, Fiction, and Reality in Bioy Casares' *La Invención de Morel.*" VI Lisbon Summer School for the Study of Culture – "Transvisuality," Lisbon Consortium, Lisbon, PT, Jun. 27-Jul.2.
2015	"Routine and Repetition in Bioy Casares' *La Invención de Morel.*" 1st Chicago Graduate Conference – "Exceso/Consumo/Excesso," University of Illinois at Chicago, IL, Nov. 12-14.

2015	"'To live forever we shall die': Analyzing the Impossibility of Being in *La Invención de Morel*." IWL – "World Literature and Production & Sociology of World Literature." Lisbon, PT, Jun.30.
2015	"The Cost of Friendship: Inequality and Asymmetry in Aluísio Azevedo's *O Coruja*." Graduate Student Colloquium – "Friendship, Masculinity, Vulnerability," Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, Mar.12.
2012	"A Study on Fernando Pessoa's Fictional Narrative." 20th SIICUSP (Simpósio Internacional de Iniciação Científica da Universidade de São Paulo) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, BR, Oct.23.

Workshop and Summer School Participant

2018	Goethe-Universität-École-Normale-Supérieure-Northwestern University Doctoral Dissertation Workshop in Critical Theory, 11/16-11/17 in Paris, France
2017	University Initiative Dissertation Proposal Development Program – Fall Workshop, 09/13 – 09/17 in Minneapolis, MN
2017	Summer Institute Cologne [sic!] – "Belief/Believe" Summer School, 08/30 – 09/07 in Koln, Germany Attended the seminar "Visual Narration: Seeing is Believing – Evidentiality in Visual Narration," led by Patrick Noonan (Northwestern U) and Stephan Packard (U of Freiburg/U of Cologne).
2017	University Initiative Dissertation Proposal Development Program – Spring Workshop, 06/07 – 06/10 in Pittsburgh, PA
2016	VI Lisbon Summer School for the Study of Culture – "Transvisuality" Summer School, 06/27 – 07/02 in Lisbon, Portugal Attended the master class by Anton Kaes (UC Berkeley) and Eric Rentschler (Harvard U) on "Media Archaeology: The Futures of the Past."
2015	The Institute for World Literature (IWL) Summer School, 06/22 – 07/16 in Lisbon, Portugal Attended the seminars by Prof. Djelal Kadir (Pennsylvania State U): "When Literature Meets the World" and Galin Tihanov (Queen Mary, U of London): "Exilic Writing and the Making of World Literature."

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

2018	Winter Quarter: Spanish 397 – Topics in Latin American and Iberian Literatures and Cultures / Portuguese 396 – Topics in Lusophone Cultures, "The Crisis of Marriage in Brazilian, Portuguese, and Lusophone African Fiction," NU.

Teaching Assistant

2018	Fall Quarter: Graduate Paper Advisor for two undergraduate students of the Northwestern University-Université de Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle Program in Art, Literature, and Contemporary European Thought (ALCET)
2018	Spring Quarter: Spanish 260-0 – Literature in Latin America before 1888, Northwestern U.
2017	Fall Quarter: Spanish 331-0 – Realism in Spain: The Problem of Representation, Northwestern U.
2017	Fall Quarter: Spanish 331-1, Northwestern U.
2017	Spring Quarter: Spanish 101-1, Northwestern U.
2017	Winter Quarter: Spanish 121-2 and Portuguese 101-2, Northwestern U.
2016	Spring Quarter: Port-210 – Icons, Legends and Myths in Brazil, NU.
2015	Fall Quarter: Spanish 220 – Introduction to Literary Analysis, NU.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2017-2018	Graduate Assistant (Northwestern U) – French and the Global Humanities Organizer of the "Beyond Anthropophagy: Cultural Modernities between Brazil and France" conference, led by Prof. Bush and Prof. Braga-Pinto
2017-2018	Graduate Representative for the Spanish & Portuguese Department, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.
2015	Research Assistant (Northwestern U) – Prof. Braga-Pinto Revision of Prof. Braga-Pinto's book manuscript, *A Violência das Letras: Amizade e inimizade na literatura brasileira (1888-1940)* (EdUERJ, 2018)
2012	Undegraduate Researcher (University of São Paulo) – Prof. Caio Gagliardi "A Narrativa de Ficção em Fernando Pessoa"

LANGUAGES

Portuguese	-	native speaker
English	-	fluent
French	-	fluent
Spanish	-	proficient
Italian	-	basic