

## British Novels in Nineteenth-Century Brazil

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**ABSTRACT:** From the most celebrated novelists to the most popular *feuilleton-romans*, French literature played an indisputable role in the making of Brazil's literary past. The aim of this essay is to argue that, though not fully acknowledged, British novels also were widely available in nineteenth-century Brazil, enabling the establishment of some links between their narrative paradigms and techniques and the making of the Brazilian novel, mainly with reference to common themes and conflicts. My hypothesis is that the presence of these novels in Brazil contributed to the formation and consolidation of the genre on Brazilian territory, resulting in the acclimatization of forms and procedures.

**KEYWORDS:** theory of the novel, circulation, acclimatization, comparative literature, book trade.

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In sum, foreign debt is as inevitable in Brazilian letters as it is in any other field, and is not simply an easily dispensable part of the work in which it appears, but a complex feature of it.

—Roberto Schwarz

It has long been a commonplace among Brazilian literary historians and critics that French novels and novelists played a central role in the development and consolidation of the Brazilian novel during the nineteenth century. The received view has been that French novels were the predominant—almost exclusive—model available to Brazilian writers, and much of the evidence to date confirms the idea that these materials were pervasive in their influence. The pervasiveness of this French literature, and of French culture in general, stemmed not only from canonical works but also from popular fiction in French, as Antonio Candido makes clear in his *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*:

Translated books belonged, in the main, to what one considers today third-rate literature; but they were frequently cherished novelties, just like the

good works. Thus, side by side with George Sand, Merimée, Chateaubriand, Balzac, Goethe, Irving, Dumas, Vigny, lined up Paul de Kock, Eugène Sue, Scribe, Soulié, Berthet, Souvestre, Féval, besides others whose names do not mean anything today: Bard, Gonzalès, Rabou, Chevalier, David, etc. The vast majority of them were French, revealing in their titles the genre we call *feuilleton*. Who knows which and how many of these by-products influenced the making of our novel? Sometimes, they may have had more relevance than the important books on which we prefer to fix our attention.<sup>1</sup>

However, the question that Candido poses about the influence of less canonical literature and literature in French translation has not yet been explored fully. This essay takes up his challenge and argues that alternative sources of information—such as newspapers, catalogues, and literary periodicals—show that British novels also made a significant and hitherto unrecognized contribution to the formation of the Brazilian novel as a genre during this period.

These sources make it clear that although France always functioned as an intermediary in the literary marketplace, Britain brought to Brazil much more than a regular supply of merchandise and manufactured goods, like the chinaware, glass, pots and pans, cutlery, and tools found on the shelves of shops and warehouses in Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century. Not only were hardware and utensils from Britain available to the inhabitants of the still small and provincial Brazilian capital, but books and periodicals in general, and novels in particular, also found their way into the country, accompanying the introduction of new habits of consumption, new fashions, and a certain refinement of manners that even today is attributed to the British influence on everyday life in Rio de Janeiro after 1808.<sup>2</sup> The supply of British novels, sparse though it was at the beginning, intensified when bookshops and circulating libraries were opened some decades later. These novels often arrived in Rio's harbor via Lisbon, in Portuguese translation, or via Paris, translated into French, and circulated themes, narrative procedures, and techniques that had already become standard in European fiction.

In addition to reconstructing the history of the circulation of British novels in Brazil, this essay substantiates Roberto Schwarz's claim that "the novel had existed in Brazil before there were any Brazilian novelists" and explores the ways in which British narrative models were appropriated by the first Brazilian writers of prose fiction.<sup>3</sup> It does not, however, discuss the prominent role played by

translation and by Portuguese and French translators in this process. Nor does it touch upon the issue of reading practices; although scholarship can establish which books were available on library shelves, it is nearly impossible to ascertain whether or how they were read.

Nonetheless, the history of the circulation of literary materials during this period, and of the appropriation of narrative techniques and processes drawn directly or indirectly from British literature, makes it clear that the unitary model of French influence is flawed and incomplete. From beneath the fragmentary references, misspellings, French titles, and anonymity—frequent in the advertisements and catalogues that publicized these works—a more variegated picture of the conditions governing the development of the genre in Brazil begins to emerge.<sup>4</sup> This picture encompasses a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, written by both famous and lesser-known novelists.<sup>5</sup> The Portuguese prince regent's decision to flee to Brazil during the Napoleonic invasion permanently altered life in Rio de Janeiro. Among other important changes, the country was suddenly and quickly integrated into the literary marketplace, thanks to the diligent and interested efforts of traders on both sides of the Atlantic. (Previously, censorship had been strict, and the Portuguese authorities had kept a close watch over the circulation of books.) Not only did the prince regent's act opening up Brazilian ports facilitate this integration, but it also came at a convenient time for European booksellers, who were eager to expand their sales and find new consumers for the books they printed and sold.

Despite Portuguese censorship and control prior to this period, recent research has shown that many books were available in colonial Brazil, and some novels could be found in private collections or for sale.<sup>6</sup> There is also evidence that books may have been smuggled into the country to circumvent official bans. Yet the policy of repressing the distribution of literature in Brazil differed markedly from patterns in Spanish America, where, as Irving Leonard notes, large shipments of Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599; second part 1604) to Mexico City in 1600 were soon followed by copies of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, which reached Peru in 1606, a year after its publication in Spain.<sup>7</sup>

The sheer diversity that characterizes Latin America makes it inadvisable to generalize about the nature of literary communities across the territory. As José Mindlin points out, "The history of the book and the press in Brazil is very different from that in Spanish America, for books in Spanish were already being published in the New World in the sixteenth century, while Brazil was to wait

more than two centuries.”<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, it is important to situate Brazil in terms of the continent as a whole in order to elucidate the ways in which patterns of distribution and consumption were and were not similar across the linguistic and cultural divide. In fact, studies of the history of the book for Brazil do reveal some striking similarities with Spanish American countries, allowing us to draw some parallels and underscore some common features. For one thing, censorship on moral, political, and religious grounds seems to have exerted the same central role throughout the region, in what would be an often unsuccessful attempt to curb the free circulation of ideas and books. Moreover, Brazil was not alone in its position as the final destination for the books that French, British, and German booksellers had been printing in increasing numbers and at cheaper prices since the early nineteenth century. These sellers looked to the whole of Latin America as a potential marketplace.

While no full mapping has been made of which British novels circulated in which countries in the region, references to Oliver Goldsmith, Walter Scott, and Charles Dickens are endemic. These writers were figures in the “naturalization” of European novelistic conventions in Latin America, which, according to Antonio Benitez-Rojo, consisted of “the expropriation of a foreign discourse by subjects (writers) of a nation for the purpose of transforming it so that it may serve the nation.”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, it appears that many translations of European texts into Spanish and Portuguese relied on identical sources, and that many of the novels circulating in Brazil also circulated in Hispanic America. For example, the French edition of Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747–49, 1785–86) was translated into Portuguese and found its way onto the shelves of an important circulating library in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>10</sup> This same edition was later translated into Spanish and published by Ackermann in Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, the collection of British novels found in Brazil is highly representative of the history of the European edition and publishing market; the subscription and circulating libraries in Rio de Janeiro had on their shelves works of the most important publishers and booksellers in Europe, which was no doubt also true of the rest of Latin America. Of course, their presence in Rio is not surprising, since the most famous nineteenth-century publishers, such as Aillaud and Hachette in Paris, Routledge and Bentley in London, and Bernhard Tauchnitz in Leipzig, were businessmen who had a keen eye on the market and employed agents globally. Nor was this export trade insubstantial. The *Revue Britannique* for March 1840 reports 230,000 francs’ worth of books sent from France to Brazil for 1838 (with 60,000



francs' worth sent to Cuba in the same year), while Belgian piracies amounted to 16,000 francs' worth of sales for Brazil and 112,000 francs for Mexico in 1837.<sup>12</sup>

Although beyond the scope of Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998), Latin America, if properly explored, would no doubt complete the literary routes that he draws for Europe in his discussion of narrative markets operating around the middle of the century. As in most European countries, so in Latin America, "the majority of novels are, quite simply, *foreign books*," that is, French and British novels, which "become models to be imitated."<sup>13</sup> Less clear, from the examination of individual collections, is what he defines as the "overpowering presence of the canon," an anachronistically problematic concept when used with reference to the nineteenth century, and one that can be applied only with the benefit of hindsight. In addition, the apparently peaceful coexistence of major and minor novelists on the shelves of Brazilian circulating libraries equally refutes any notion of the predominance of canonical works.

Nevertheless, this common literary repertoire seems to reinforce Moretti's argument in favor of the hegemonic role of what he calls the "Anglo-French core" over a literary world system.<sup>14</sup> Moretti contends that "in cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system (which means: almost all cultures, inside and outside Europe), the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a Western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials."<sup>15</sup> There can be no doubt that, to a certain extent, this model applies to Brazil. Yet I would like to challenge Moretti's use of the term "compromise" to define the "encounter of Western forms and local reality" because it ignores the importance of particularities and contexts.<sup>16</sup> In fact, a very strong critical tradition in Brazil argues for treating texts individually, since artistic elaboration is always rooted in real processes, and their explanatory power is embedded in the literary form itself. As Schwarz insists, "there is no simple consequence to be drawn from such a dualism [between European model and Brazilian reality]; in a culturally dependent country like ours, its presence is inevitable, and its results can be either good or bad. Each case must be judged on an individual basis. Literature is not a matter of rational judgment; but of imaginative form."<sup>17</sup>

### Crossing the Oceans

"Traduit de l'anglais": this is how most eighteenth-century British novels got to France, after having taken Britain by storm and become fashionable with com-

mon readers. Crossing the English Channel, however, was simply the first leg in a long journey to foreign lands and audiences. If *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, published by Samuel Richardson in 1740, became a model imitated by countless British novelists, its impact on the European continent was certainly almost as considerable. Translated into French by the Abbé Prévost in 1742, this story of a heroine who resists all attempts at seduction by her master but who ends up marrying him and climbing socially as a reward for her chastity was enthusiastically received, thanks to Richardson's clever combination of realism and morally uplifting narrative. As he made clear, his main goal in his novels was to amuse and edify ("instruction without entertainment . . . would have but few readers"), and his work not only inspired many other novels of the period but also inculcated models of behavior for marriageable young ladies.<sup>18</sup> *Pamela*, then, becomes a kind of "civilizing" heroine, who would inhabit the pages of novels across the English Channel as well as in Britain, and leave indelible marks on the imaginary of novelists abroad. In its wake came hundreds of other novels that, in both Britain and France, filled the leisure hours of female readers, their privileged public, and helped consolidate the new genre.

From its birth, the novel had been described as a bastardized and popular genre, seen by many as disreputable reading, the pastime of the idle, or, even more dangerously, a corrupter of manners. Yet the positive reception that the works of the founding fathers of the British novel had in France, mainly between 1740 and 1760, was only the starting point for a dynamic process of exchange between the two countries, prompting a French critic and historian to define the eighteenth century as the century of the novel.<sup>19</sup> No matter how recalcitrant they were in relation to the British variety of social realism, which they judged to be "in bad taste," the French learned how to take advantage of the formal solutions proposed by their British counterparts and gradually substituted the demands of *vraisemblance* for the principle of *bienséance*, lending their stories a more realistic orientation to character composition, choice of setting, and introduction of new narrative methods.<sup>20</sup>

Never an especially affordable pastime, since sale prices were not particularly low, novels found an excellent source of publicity and dissemination in the circulating libraries, which became a crucial factor in the development of the habit of reading and in the genre's popularity. One of their main staples, the sentimental novel (greatly in vogue from 1750 onward), established a paradigm that transformed itself into a kind of formula through constant repetition by its pro-

ducers. The heroines of popular novels were generally very beautiful, extremely delicate, sensitive, prone to frequent swoons and abundant tears. Models of virtue and perfection, they were innocent victims permanently threatened by callous villains or uncontrollable passions. If unlucky enough to be seduced, they were bound to perpetual imprisonment in a convent (reintroduced by the gothic novel). The blend of sentimentalism and gothic elements (present in the derelict old abbeys, dungeons, and castles that were frequently used as settings) was the main dish served to readers. In 1775, for example, William Lane founded one of the most famous British publishing houses of the period—the Minerva Press, which became a symbol of popular fiction for decades.<sup>21</sup> For almost fifty years, Minerva would be an important supplier of circulating library novels in Britain; most of these works were written by women who, protected by anonymity or pseudonyms, were often responsible for the period's best-sellers.<sup>22</sup>

Things were not much different in France. After the first *cabinet de lecture* opened in Paris in 1767, French readers' tastes for the novel were fed by the same stories of adventure, crime, and passion.<sup>23</sup> In fact, a comparison between the list of British novels translated into French and the catalogue of the publisher Pigoreau reveals an intriguing coincidence of titles and authors.<sup>24</sup> It is this same Pigoreau who provides clues to the parameters that may have guided the translation of these novels into French. After all, meeting public demand took precedence over fidelity to and respect for the original, since the modern concept of authorship, with strict controls over intellectual property, had yet to develop: "The lively and quick Frenchman does not read a novel but to amuse himself for a few minutes; he wants to be led to the conclusion by the shortest route. The phlegmatic Englishman loves to stop at the details, and does not want to reach the dénouement before strolling about the long circuits of a labyrinth."<sup>25</sup> It was therefore in the temperament of the reader that Pigoreau located the main differences between British and French novels, thus defining the guidelines that should govern the translator's process of adaptation. Pigoreau would have known what he was talking about, since he was one of the main publishers and booksellers in Paris and an important purveyor of novels to the circulating libraries.<sup>26</sup>

With their eyes always on the market, booksellers had already realized the great potential of the sale and rental of novels, which, like any other commodity, had to please the public and conquer new markets. The 1808 opening of Brazilian ports to foreign trade thus was most convenient. Throughout the colonial pe-

riod, Brazil had confronted the structural impossibility of having books circulating in its territory. Without its own press, with works needing to pass censorship before distribution, and with a small number of booksellers, the country—even after the opening of its ports—depended on illegal trade, carried out by the British, the French, and the Dutch, and on a small publishing industry of books in Portuguese that supplied its small consumer market from London and Paris.<sup>27</sup> However, with the foundation of the *Impressão Régia* in 1808, the suspension of censorship in 1821, and the rise of French booksellers in Rio de Janeiro, this picture started to change. Little by little, ads began to appear announcing the sale of “novels” at the “Gazeta shops.”

The booksellers and the circulating libraries were responsible, in Brazil as in Europe, for the diffusion and circulation of novels, playing as central a role as shapers and mediators of taste as their British and French counterparts.<sup>28</sup> If, in the 1820s, the shops adjacent to the daily newspapers sold and rented books, in the 1830s entrepreneurs founded libraries and circulating libraries similar to those in Britain and France as commercial ventures, making packages of novels sent from the metropolis available in the provinces. The “remainders,” or the surplus editions for the French circulating libraries—as well as the “best-sellers” already translated into Portuguese—ended up in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro.<sup>29</sup> The expression “translated from the French,” which appears in a great number of novels that circulated in Brazil, is frequently a false clue, hiding the British origin of the novel, and may have given these books a kind of cachet, making them easier to sell and rent. According to Laurence Hallewell, there was in Brazil “an exceptional receptivity towards the ornaments of French culture,” which was seen as modern and progressive, French being also the language of elite culture and society.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the bitterness of Anglo-Brazilian relations, mainly over the slave trade and what was considered the British government’s undue interference in local matters, may have contributed to this preference for things French. Symbols of civilization and refinement, French cultural products had the added advantage of being free of the taint of British imperialism and diplomatic imbroglios.

An examination of Pigoreau’s *Petite bibliographie biographico-romancière* and Harold Streeter’s *The Eighteenth-Century English Novel in French Translation* attests to the British origin of many of the novels “translated from the French” found in the catalogues of Rio de Janeiro’s circulating libraries.<sup>31</sup> A comparison of the bibliographical information available, which includes the translator’s name



or initials, shows that the edition that came to Brazil, or served as the source text for the translation into Portuguese, was often identical to the editions that appeared in French circulating libraries—as for example with Ann Radcliffe’s *L’Italien, ou Le confessional des pénitents noirs* (1830) and Mrs. Helme’s *Alberto, ou O Deserto de Strathnavern* (1827).<sup>32</sup> Thus, as Marlyse Meyer has pointed out, the forms of the novel that came to Brazil were always British, though their mediation was French.<sup>33</sup>

Between 1808 and 1822, during the viceroyalty, the books published by the *Impressão Régia* show a predominance of works translated from French and a considerable number of sentimental stories and “moral tales.” Likewise, the 1815 *Catalogue of Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga’s Books* includes *Gil Blas*, *Aventures de Télémaque*, Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon’s *Oeuvres* (1802), and Denis Diderot’s *Jacques le fataliste* (1778, 1796), all of them French works.

Similarly, the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, from its founding on 10 September 1808 until its demise on 22 June 1822, published in its *Loja da Gazeta* section lists of works available, for example, at the shop of Paulo Martin, Filho, a bookseller established at Rua da Quitanda, 34. While they give evidence of the regular supply of foreign works to the reading public in Rio de Janeiro, these ads announced several “very modern and entertaining novels.” Some were of anonymous authorship; some were old and well-known books like Alain René Lesage’s *Diabo Coxo*,<sup>34</sup> Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s *Paulo e Virgínia* and *A Choupana Índia*, *Mil e Huma [sic] Noites*, François-René de Chateaubriand’s *Atala, ou Amores de Dois Selvagens*, and Jean-François Marmontel’s *Belizario*. Most, however, were British fiction: Mrs. Helme’s *Luíza, ou O Casal [sic] no Bosque* (21 September 1816), Jonathan Swift’s *Viagens de Guliver* (15 March 1817), Daniel Defoe’s *Vida e Aventuras Admiráveis de Robinson Crusoe* (9 April 1817), Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones, ou O Engeitado [sic]* (10 May 1817), the anonymous *Vida de Arnaldo Zulig* (4 July 1818), and Samuel Richardson’s *Historia da Infeliz Clarissa Harlowe* in eight volumes (8 March 1820).<sup>35</sup> Everything seems to indicate that these are the first British fictional works to circulate in Brazil.

It might also be worthwhile to note the ads for the arrival in 1809 of *Cartas de Maria Wollstonecraft, relativas à Suécia e Dinamarca, com uma notícia de sua vida por Francisco Xavier Baeta* and, in the year 1819, of *Carta escrita pela senhora de \*\*\*, residente em Constantinopla [illegible] em que trata das mulheres turcas, do seu modo de viver, divertimentos, vestidos, maneira de tratar os maridos, etc.*, which must certainly be one of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s “Turkish Embassy Letters,” which ap-

peared in 1763. But it is Mary Wollstonecraft who merits a brief mention in one of Brazil's earliest novels, Joaquim Manuel de Macedo's *A Moreninha* (1844). In a lively dispute between two of the young male characters about courtship and women's hearts, the British writer is invoked as a champion of women's rights whose work the female protagonist may have read. The reference may not say much about women readers at the time, but it does inject a note of verisimilitude, as well as demonstrating that Macedo was well informed about what kind of writer Wollstonecraft had been.<sup>36</sup>

The *Jornal do Comércio*, founded by Pierre Plancher in Rio in 1827, also adopted the systematic practice of announcing the sales of its novels. British novels continued to figure in supply lists in the drugstores and bookshops that had now become part of the landscape of the city. But these works were found not only in the imperial capital; Gilberto Freyre notes that it was possible to find Portuguese translations of Defoe, Walter Scott, and Ann Radcliffe in the interior of the country as well.<sup>37</sup> Since reading habits and practices were rarely recorded in the nineteenth century, it is difficult to tell why these novelists were chosen and how their novels were used. But it is likely that what was offered to the tiny Brazilian reading public was what was in vogue or commercially successful in London and Paris.

British novels could also be found in Rio's British Subscription Library, which had a good supply of the latest European works. The British had established this venue in 1826 to serve the resident British community. This is where most of the novels could be found in their original English-language version, though editions in English also appear in the catalogues of the Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro (founded in 1837) and the Biblioteca Fluminense (founded in 1847). Most novels in these catalogues, however, had already been translated into Portuguese from the French.

The French bookshops that clustered from the 1820s around the Rua do Ouvidor, the center of elegant life in the city, also ensured the sale and rental of novels to a tiny literate population, for whom reading novels became part of the pattern of good manners to be followed and imitated.<sup>38</sup> The truth is that the packages of British novels that did arrive in Rio de Janeiro in the first three decades of the nineteenth century almost always came from Paris or Lisbon, translated from the French. The flow may have been slow at first, owing to the two-month transatlantic voyage, but with the advent of the steamship after 1850 Liverpool was only twenty-eight days away from Rio, ensuring that the flow not only remained constant but intensified. As the century progressed, advances in

the means of transport, changes in the economics of publishing and banking and, above all, changes in the interests of readers were crucial factors in guaranteeing that these novels were available not only in the collections of libraries and circulating libraries, but also on bookstore shelves.

### **The Burden of the Novel**

Perceived as “light reading,” in the words of the journalist Quirino dos Santos, owner of the *Gazeta de Campinas*, or “tenth-rate novels,” in the words of another newspaperman, these books left strong marks on the imaginary of Brazilian novelists. José de Alencar was among those who believed that reading this type of novel had helped to “imprint on my spirit the moulds of this literary structure.”<sup>39</sup> These were the novels that crossed the oceans, carrying within them the recurring themes of marriage, private and domestic life, and the usurpation of rights and inheritance, and imbued with strong and exaggerated emotions, usually expressed in ornate, high-sounding language. Similarly, the different genres of the novel current in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain (domestic, sentimental, gothic, of manners, of doctrine, historical) circulated in Brazil, offering ideas to the country’s first fiction writers. Following the useful distinction between *novel* and *romance* made by Clara Reeve in her *Progress of Romance* (1785), it can be said that the romance repertoire is undoubtedly present to a high degree in this initial period of novelistic production. Uncontrollable passion, seduction, kidnapping, betrayal, terrible villains, disrepute, last-minute revelations, absence of half tone, lack of causal links between events, and stereotypical characters characterize these works.

Some texts, however, began to lay more emphasis on verisimilitude and plausibility, presenting more lifelike language and scenes and bringing the story closer to the lives of common people, which is typically the novel’s primary concern. It seems that because of the enbourgeoisement of manners and the changing role of women in Brazilian society, the novel began to flourish to the detriment of the romance, although the latter never completely disappeared from the work of romantic novelists. In its initial stages, Brazilian fiction also suffered from an overall lack of definition, with texts being referred to as novels, short stories, or novellas regardless of their length or formal characteristics. The use of the genre as “an instrument for the discovery and interpretation of the country,” however, soon made realism predominate, with only a residual recourse to the romance.<sup>40</sup>

The formation and consolidation of the novel took about a hundred years in Britain, if *Robinson Crusoe* is taken as a point of departure and Walter Scott's works as its culmination. In Brazil, this timeline was compressed, since the nature of the country's cultural relations with Europe and the simultaneous availability of novels produced in Britain and France gave Brazilian novelists a much wider range of models. Thus works by the founders of the British novel in the previous century—Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Laurence Sterne—were on offer at the same time as the great nineteenth-century novelists.

Practically all subgenres current in Britain were available in Brazil: apart from Richardson's domestic and sentimental novel, Horace Walpole's and Ann Radcliffe's gothic fiction, Fanny Burney's novel of manners, William Godwin's novel of doctrine, Samuel Johnson's Oriental fantasy *Rasselas* (1759), and William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), works by writers such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton and William Harrison Ainsworth could also be obtained. A survey of the British novels in circulation also attests to the presence of women novelists who had become well known and widely read in Britain throughout the eighteenth century: Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Sophia Lee among them, together with those uncovered by Marlyse Meyer, including Elizabeth Helme, author of *Sinclair das Ilhas* (*St. Clair of the Isles, or The Outlaws of Barra*, 1803) and Regina Maria Roche, author of *Amanda e Oscar* (*The Children of the Abbey*, 1796).<sup>41</sup> There were also considerable numbers of anonymous works and of novelists generally associated with the "popular novel," that is, works of limited literary merit that were designed to feed the novel market and to meet the demands of the reading public in Britain and France.

The seclusion of Brazilian women, their limited education, and the circumscribed world in which they lived made them a privileged public as far as the consumption of *feuilletons* and popular novels was concerned, a situation very similar to that of British women in the eighteenth century. Confined to the domestic sphere and the patriarchal family, Brazilian women of status were denied access to the open world of the streets, where only prostitutes and slaves could roam unaccompanied. The paternal and social control over their lives also constrained their access to education and a professional life. Motherhood, home, and family were the only arenas in which they could engage, and marriage was the only means for them to ascend socially or maintain their status, and was always a matter of familial concern and interest. With the gradual introduction



of bourgeois habits and values into Brazilian society, mainly during the second half of the nineteenth century, women became responsible for the family and the education of their children. Handed over from the authority of their fathers to that of their husbands, young women had very little room for intellectual development, and their main accomplishments included playing an instrument (usually the piano), embroidery and, if they were literate, reading.

Given the scarcity of available data, it is difficult to generalize about reading habits. However, judging from the number of circulating libraries established in several regions of the country during this period, it appears that reading novels became more widespread. Ana Luiza Martins has documented the presence of almost twenty circulating libraries scattered across the province of São Paulo alone.<sup>42</sup> Her survey confirms the predominance of the genre, especially *feuilletons*, and the massive presence of foreign authors in translation, among them Scott and Dickens. This expansion was certainly an object of concern, which may explain Júlia Lopes de Almeida's complaint at the end of the nineteenth century about the pernicious effects on women of reading novels. She warned ladies against "detrimental, unwholesome novels, filled with romantic adventures and dangerous heroes," while recommending works of a morally uplifting nature.<sup>43</sup> Almeida undoubtedly echoes the authoritative voices of the medical and psychological theorists, writers of advice manuals, reviewers, periodical journalists, and educators who had laboriously attempted to control women's reading throughout the nineteenth century in Britain, worried about the imaginative fulfillment of desire or the affective power that reading might entail. Rather than celebrate its beneficial potential, essayists and reviewers often speculated about the dangers of reading novels, their corrupting and morally debilitating influence, especially on women.<sup>44</sup>

To a certain extent, Horace's maxim *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*, a touchstone of the eighteenth-century British novel, also crossed the Atlantic to Brazil.<sup>45</sup> Surprisingly, however, it appeared more in response to demand on the part of critics than as an essential component of Brazilian novels themselves. In some critical texts this demand is explicit, and fiction is expected to fulfill an edifying function, thus contributing to the building up of virtue and good habits. For the novelist Antonio Gonçalves Teixeira e Sousa, "the aim . . . of the novelist is (if the background of his work is fabulous) almost always to present the beauty of nature, to delight and moralize."<sup>46</sup> The "first manifestations of fiction in Bahia," according to David Salles, also had a moralizing goal.<sup>47</sup>

Published in periodicals designed to spread civilizing habits and introduce new European works, these short fictional exercises set in motion the usual romantic machinery (villainy, incest, coincidences, surprises, seduction, etc.) in order to tell a story that set a good example of moral behavior and condemned vice.

Fearful of the nefarious effects that reading novels could have on young ladies, the genre's first critics hastened to insist that writers pay attention to morality and virtue. We see this in Dutra e Mello's criticism of *A Moreninha* (1844), published in *Minerva Brasiliense* on 15 October 1844, and also in the article published in *Guanabara* in 1855 about *Vicentina* (1853), both novels by Joaquim Manuel de Macedo:

The novel has a modern origin; it came as a substitute for the romances and stories that so delighted our parents. . . . Through it one can moralize and instruct the people. . . . If the theatre was justly called the school of manners, the novel is moral in action. But in order for it to bring the benefits we have just admired, it must follow the rules that belong to it; it must be like a beehive of tasty honey and not a cup of deleterious poison. The people in their candid simplicity seek through it to instruct while entertaining themselves.<sup>48</sup> (Emphasis added.)

In this comment, J. C. Fernandes Pinheiro simply echoes the opinion, common among British critics and reviewers, that the novel justified its existence only in its capacity for moral instruction, as an instrument of reform intended to instill appropriate patterns of behavior in a rising social class. In a new society like the Brazilian one, it is not difficult to understand why some also expected the novel to fulfill its mission as an instigator or reformer of customs. The gradual re-Europeanization of Rio de Janeiro during Dom João's reign, exemplifying the need to introduce more "refined" habits, brought about substantial changes in men's and women's ways of living. It altered customs dating from colonial times and made available to the emerging political, economic, and social elite better education, cultural products and equipment (theaters, libraries, books and bookshops, printing shops), and the latest improvements of European civilization. As mentioned above, with the establishment of the Portuguese Court in Rio de Janeiro and, later, with the city made into the seat of the first empire, there was an investment in urbanization and a campaign to polish manners and normalize conduct. The elite thus displayed a clear intent to "civilize" the people and build a national culture. Literature played a central role in this civilizing

march and in building a national consciousness through literary periodicals, newspapers, and the prose fiction that was beginning to be produced locally. Novel writing became part of this cultural movement, though it was late in coming. (Teixeira e Sousa's 1843 *O Filho do Pescador* is considered the first Brazilian novel.) It is therefore easy to understand the interest that European novels generated among intellectuals, journalists, and writers of the time.

There was also a need to justify the new genre's lack of theoretical nobility, which, according to Antonio Candido, made seventeenth-century French novelists—and, I would add, eighteenth-century British novelists as well—avail themselves of the artifice of the “sweet remedy” (the *utile et dulci*) to overcome the perception that fiction was inferior to tragedy and epic. Because it arrived in Brazil as a genre that had already consolidated itself in Europe, the novel did not have to struggle so hard to gain acceptance, and Brazilian novelists could move on quickly to other materials and topics, such as the everyday lives of the common people. Indeed, when compared to its British counterpart, the Brazilian novel did not take long to get rid of its “state of ashamed shyness” and of the blemish of being a minor and bastardized form.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the novel had fewer problems embracing the “validity in itself of mimesis” and the “free play of creative fantasy,” since it was directly engaged in the tasks of mapping out the country—its history, geography, topography, and people—on the one hand, and of raising national consciousness, on the other, while still looking to British and French models for guidance.<sup>50</sup>

As Meyer comments, “the fictions imagined by eighteenth-century ladies and spinsters lulled Brazilian nineteenth-century imaginations”—an observation that seems valid for writers and readers alike.<sup>51</sup> In her exemplary study of the *feuilleton*, Meyer shows not only the remarkable penetration of the *romance-folhetim* (the counterpart of the popular British novel) in Brazil but also its later ramifications on melodrama and soap operas. The formula was much the same as that used in popular British fiction: kidnapping, treachery, dishonor, virtue in distress, terrible villains, seduced and abandoned heroines, all combined with realistic scenes of everyday life, the valorization of domestic space, and the new role of women in the bourgeois family.

In Brazil as in Britain, the interest in novels and romances may very well have been related to other types of changes also taking place in Brazilian society. As Nelson Werneck Sodré, writing about the 1860s, points out: “If the great majority of the public was constituted by marriageable young ladies and students, and

the privileged literary theme must be, exactly because of that, marriage, a little blended with the old love motif, the press and literature, closely connected then, was bound to be led to meet this demand. Women began to free themselves, little by little, from colonial confinement and submitted themselves to the patterns of European fashion, appearing in the drawing rooms and a little on the streets."<sup>52</sup>

While novel and romance reading was part of this process, no less important were the periodicals created specifically for women. A *Mulher do Simplicio, ou A Fluminense Exaltada*, launched by Paula Brito and printed by Plancher in 1832, is said to have been the first women's magazine in the country, but earlier in 1827 Plancher announced that his *Espelho Diamantino* had "the special aim of promoting the instruction and entertainment of the fair sex in this Court."<sup>53</sup> This was simply a repetition, on the other side of the Atlantic, of the same process Englishwomen had experienced almost a century before. It is not hard to explain why modernization was so delayed in the country, given the backward state in which the Portuguese had kept the colony, the low rates of literacy, the slow introduction of modern habits and improvements, the persistence of slavery until 1888, the presence of an elite unconcerned with providing the great majority with education or civil rights, and the very violent nature of social relations.

Nonetheless, although schooling in Brazil was very deficient—the first official survey of literacy rates, made in 1872, reported that only one-fifth of the free population across Brazil could read—it is necessary to recall the habit of reading aloud at families' evening gatherings and to add the "circle of listeners" to the numbers of those who could, occasionally, take advantage of the circulation of books in the country; this included Brazilian women, whose lack of education was abundantly documented by foreign travelers. The testimony of the British traveler Maria Graham, however, presents an alternative viewpoint and suggests that at least a few women (albeit a small minority) were habitual readers, even of philosophy and politics; Graham cites the example of one Dona Maria Clara.<sup>54</sup> The publication of periodicals directed specifically at the "fair sex" likewise provides evidence of a female readership.

Scholars must therefore revise the myth of women's illiteracy and see its development as more relative; as early as 1813 the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro* published advertisements announcing the establishment of the first lay boarding schools for girls, such as that of Dona Catharina Jacob.<sup>55</sup> The frequency and regularity of ads heralding the opening of schools for young women—with sewing, embroi-



dery, languages, dancing, and music on their curricula—presupposes a willing clientele. It is true that the standard of education was not very high, and it seems that many girls gave up their studies before their conclusion. Yet, as the warnings against the dangers of reading fiction clearly indicate, there was indeed a female reading public for the novels that regularly arrived on European vessels.

At the same time, the insistence on edifying or instructive reading points to an educational project that aimed to prepare Brazilian society for the future, as part of a civilizing mission that involved men of letters, the elite, and the government. A process of enlightenment ensued, similar to that which had taken place in Britain and France in the eighteenth century, and which in Brazil was embodied in the foundation of colleges, the development of the press, and an emphasis on the diffusion of knowledge. Thus periodicals proliferated, and they came to play an important role precisely because of their avowed role in educating men and women. *O Espelho Diamantino*, for example, made it very clear that it was interested in offering more than just entertainment to its female readers. These periodicals' claims to offer instructive and edifying material may be little more than an imitation of their European models, or even a marketing ploy to make such periodicals acceptable in respectable homes, but the intention to help women in their new roles seems to have been programmatic:

Yes, we hope so, and God forbid we form such a frail idea of the talent and prudence they [the ladies] are endowed with that we endeavor simply to entertain them with novels or anecdotes. Of course, we wish to make the fair sex smile from time to time at some decent jokes and circumstantial stories; however, our main purpose is to provide mothers and wives with the necessary instruction (at least [encourage them to feel] the need for such instruction) to guide the education of their children and imagine the occupations, dangers, and duties of the careers their husbands and sons are called to follow and, as our readers belong mostly to the higher ranks of society, we must stimulate some readers to engage in the study of Politics: most certainly we could not give the ladies greater proof of our devotion and of the high consideration we have for their judgment than by beginning our work with the most abstract and judicious subject.<sup>56</sup>

Thus the press played a major role in the instruction of its readers. Newspapers and periodicals, with their sections of varieties, miscellanies, and *feuilletons*, seem to have constituted “a kind of local version of the *Encyclopédie*,” thus

decisively contributing to the process of formation of their public.<sup>57</sup> The decision to focus on edifying stories seems to have been the obvious course.

Side by side with the desire to create a national literature, represented by the experiments of early Brazilian fiction writers in various periodicals, there was also the long-lasting habit of including translations of foreign narratives, which filled the leisure hours of a public eager for European novelties. The periodical *O Beija-Flor* (1830–31) is emblematic of this dual purpose; in its very first numbers, it published both the anonymous *Olaya e Júlia, ou A Periquita*<sup>58</sup> and “O Colar de Pérolas ou Clorinda,” a story attributed to Walter Scott, whose capacity for historical reconstruction and morality the translator praised highly. According to the translator’s prologue in *O Beija-Flor*:

One of Walter Scott’s characteristics is the purity and decency with which he deals with love. There has never been a more chaste novelist. Even though they are in love according to the novelist’s strict orders, his heroes, or heroines, do not generally appear but in the background. It is true that the lovers represent the first figures in the story that we have translated both because it is short—it takes up a mere two sheets—and because Walter Scott himself, giving himself a secondary role, depicts their physical and moral shape; however, the author veils their criminal passion with such delicacy and shows them so cruelly punished by the catastrophe, that the moral lesson which he wanted to teach cannot but deeply engrave itself in one’s heart.<sup>59</sup>

The *Jornal do Comércio*, from the late 1830s onward, also profited from the formula of blending the first fictional experiments of Brazilian writers with the publication of well-known French novels. Opening the *Folhetim* section at the bottom of the page with *O Capitão Paulo*, a *feuilleton* by Alexandre Dumas, in 1838, Plancher adopted the practice of offering his readers fiction in installments, and gave Pereira da Silva, Justiniano José da Rocha, and Joaquim Norberto de Souza e Silva the opportunity to bring their work to the public.<sup>60</sup> These short Brazilian novels (a concept used very loosely among them) blend the ingredients, borrowed from their British and French counterparts, that would become their customary fare.

### **Borrowings**

One of the most visible effects of what Candido calls the novel’s “state of ashamed shyness”—that is, its permanent need for self-justification—also

found practitioners among Brazilians. This explains the various artifices employed by the country's first writers of fiction, who aimed, on the one hand, to respond to the moralizing appeal and, on the other, to lend a certain air of truthfulness to their accounts. The assurance of authenticity was an efficient tool in the process of convincing readers that the hours they dedicated to reading fiction would not be wasted. The many attestations of veracity and the strategies used in the search for verisimilitude often seem formulaic (a mere imitation of similar claims in British novels), since by this time the suspicion against fiction had diminished considerably. In fact, there was not much condemnation of fiction in Brazil except from very conservative quarters and the church, and the novel there had the clear purpose of developing and stimulating patriotic spirit and spreading knowledge about the country. But early Brazilian novels did practice some of the tricks commonly found in eighteenth-century European novels, and even in nineteenth-century novels—for example, the recourse to old manuscripts, employed by Walpole, which we see in *Olaya e Júlia, ou A Periquita*: “As a matter of fact, at bedtime, my guest trusted me with a quite voluminous manuscript, which I devoured during the night and of which, with its owner’s permission, I took a copy. I cannot publish it in its entirety, it being too long; but I presume that the summary I have made of it will be worthy of my readers’ attention.”<sup>61</sup>

In José de Alencar’s *Lucíola* (1862), Paulo’s letters are the raw material out of which the novel is composed, employing roughly the same device that Richardson used in *Pamela*. Richardson presents himself as the editor of a correspondence that has its “foundation both in Truth and Nature” and that was entrusted to him so that, once made public, it could become exemplary. The recurring references to the novel’s commitment to truth cannot be overlooked; Joaquim Manuel de Macedo takes a similar approach in *Os Dois Amores* (1848):

“[D]o you think novels are lies? . . .”

“I am sure about that.”

“You are very misinformed in that matter, D. Celina; novels are always founded on truth; the novelist’s hardest task consists in misrepresenting that truth in such a way that his contemporaries cannot give the characters acting in it their true names.”<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, Manuel Antonio de Almeida’s narrator apologizes to the reader for the repetition he is obliged to reproduce: “It is most unfortunate for those of

us who write these lines to fall prey to the monotony of nearly always repeating the same scenes with minor changes: however, we are obliged to be faithful to the times whose customs we are attempting to depict."<sup>63</sup> In Alencar's *Senhora* (1875), the prologue claims that the "story is true; and the narrative comes from a person who was a confidant(e), in circumstances I am unaware of, to the main actors of this curious drama."

A common practice among these well-known novelists, these claims to narrative truth were also invoked in the works of their precursors, as they rehearsed their first steps in fiction writing. *A Perjura*, a novella published in 1838 in *O Gabinete de Leitura*, contains the epigraph "All is true" and employs as its strategy a letter to the narrator from a certain Eugênio. The letter contains the story that the narrator now retells, and it illustrates a discussion the two men had had about perjury and remorse. In it, Eugênio recounts a narrative he heard from an old woman while he was on his way to a trial in Cabo Frio. This story concerns the woman's granddaughter, Henriqueta, who has been punished for relinquishing Eduardo, the man she had promised to marry, and letting herself be seduced by the rakish Domingos, whose lover she becomes. Fate has it that Eduardo perishes while trying to save her from an accident with her carriage. Henriqueta, consumed by remorse, is overcome with hallucinations and madness and eventually dies. The moral implications are obvious, though not a word of condemnation is uttered.

In another story, "A Ressurreição de Amor (Crônica Rio-grandense)," published in four parts in the *Jornal do Comércio* between 23 and 27 February 1839, an atmosphere of mystery and terror predominates, conventions borrowed from the gothic novel, equally popular on both sides of the Atlantic. In the best tradition of the genre, its distraught protagonist, Francisco, violates the tomb of his beloved only to discover that she is still alive. The narrator wastes no opportunity to heap hyperbolic praise on the natural beauties of his province while telling this tale of horror and death. With long descriptions of the natural landscape, the anonymous author struggles to establish some causal relationship between setting and plot, producing a formal fracture between the Brazilian scenery and a story of thwarted love stemming from the social differences between the aristocratic Francisco, the governor's brother, and Amália, a rich but plebeian young lady—a narrative of love and madness very much in the fashion of European melodrama.

Early Brazilian writers of fiction not only capitalized on these artifices and



devices to persuade their readers but also lavishly recycled the repertoire of situations, behavioral norms, and characters that defined European novelistic paradigms. The moralizing mission and the reform of manners, though not always explicitly proclaimed, reveal themselves in the choice of intrigue and dénouement, and with the punishment of vice and the reward of virtue, at the same time that extravagant plots, unhappy love, mystery and terror, revenge, and seduction constitute the dainty dish served in slices to readers, male and female.

However, a disjunction between form and content is nearly always evident. Attempts to provide “local color” through descriptions of Brazilian landscape end up putting these texts out of sync with their European-shaped plots. Brazilian authors of the period were not unaware of this contradiction and its implicit rejection of realism. Thus Paula Brito, in the preface to “O Enjeitado” (published in the *Folhetim* section of the *Jornal do Comércio* on 28 and 29 May 1839), claims that he wants to discard the conventions of gothic fiction, leaving aside castles, feudal lords, dungeons, and the supernatural in favor of “simple narratives” and contemporary stories. He is interested in recounting the lived experience of his era, he tells us, rather than fantastical stories rooted in the past:

When the books sent us from old Europe are but remembrances of ancient ages; when, after the Goths, Vandals, and feudal lords have annoyed us, today we are only presented with Vandals, Goths, and feudal feats; when, after so many sermons against the crusades, Walter Scott and other pens, if not of the same stature at least of superior fame, had as many sermons in their favor; [when] our imaginations are heated with the heroes of Palestine, it will be hard to believe that we appear before the public with such naïve narratives; but we, whose life is recent, whose history is contemporary, whose annals are not yet concealed in the dust of old books buried at the bottom of libraries, we tell only what we see or hear, lending it only a few garments.<sup>64</sup>

Ironically, what follows is the narrative of the misfortunes of the lovers Emília and Júlio, both of them haunted by Júlio’s mysterious origins. The bourgeois drawing room where they find themselves—like hundreds of European ones—is the stage for a conversation in lofty language in which the habitual sentimental and moral clichés can be distinctly heard, without anything that might betray the Brazilian character of the story.

However, the recourse to scene and the delineation of conflict, which sound very promising in comparison with other contemporary narratives, soon give

way to a long narrative summary in which the narrator takes on the responsibility of uncovering his protagonists' past. The effort to explain to his readers his characters' motivation is evident, but the use of coincidences to propel the action seems inevitable, and it is Emília's mother who providentially unveils the secret of Júlio's birth. In a flashback, now reporting the mother's narrative, the narrator leaves behind the bourgeois drawing room for a prosperous sugar plantation populated by "hundreds of slaves" whose owner "was feared by all who approached him for any reason." Brazilians are at last on truly national ground; they will easily recognize the patriarch who "treats everybody as if they were his slaves," above all his daughters, "whose will is never consulted." If adultery and illegitimacy are common themes in European fiction of the era, the authoritarianism, tyranny, and violence here are genuinely Brazilian. This juxtaposition engages the interest of Brazilian writers and readers precisely because it exposes the author's difficulties in confronting his material. Nothing is satisfactorily tied together, from a formal point of view, although the effort to achieve some level of resolution is clear.

### **Narrative Paradigms**

In the earliest examples of fiction in Bahia, Salles sees the coexistence of two patterns: the first, copied from outdated European models, emphasizes sound moral principles still active in the more conservative sectors of society. The second is characterized by the use of dialogue, the realistic description of scene, the relativism of the characters' behavior, and a certain social realism and is closer to the style of *A Moreninha*.<sup>65</sup> It is not possible to verify whether this observation applies to the whole of fiction produced across Brazil in its early stages, since a considerable part of the archive has been lost. However, with the consolidation of the genre after the 1840s, what came to predominate was verisimilitude in plot and a more satisfactory relationship between the depiction of setting and the situations enacted. If, in Macedo's sentimental novels, the edifying intent discussed above or the burden of romantic subliterate did not completely disappear, some of the qualities that made the writer a faithful chronicler of life in Rio de Janeiro, a "breath of fresh air," as he has been described, already stand out, secured by his search for plausibility and verisimilitude and by his investment in the depiction of local customs and social life.

In *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, Candido points to two main narrative structures, thus establishing a fundamental distinction between novels that explore

the subjective layers of characters' inner lives, in the manner of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, and those that deal with life as a series of related actions, where all the emphasis lies on the scene and event, and what matters is the "larger movement of social life," represented in Brazilian literature by Almeida.<sup>66</sup> *Candido* thus draws the two main paradigms that have structured plots since at least the time of Richardson and Fielding in 1740s Britain and that were closely imitated by their followers on both sides of the English Channel.

The clash between social and economic position, on one side, and virtue and the laws of love, on the other—which, according to *Candido*, is already delineated in Alencar's *A Viúvinha* (1857) and would become the central conflict in *Senhora*—is nothing but the transposition to a Brazilian social milieu of the pattern created by Richardson's *Pamela* and taken to extremes in *Clarissa*. It is no coincidence that Alencar, writing to D. Paula de Almeida, declares, "There are two ways of studying the soul: one is dramatic, similar to Shakespeare's; the other, philosophic, as in Balzac. The novelist has both at his disposal; but he should, whenever possible, choose the former, and make his characters reveal themselves in the course of action."<sup>67</sup> In his comments about this method of composition, Richardson employs exactly the same arguments, which Alencar may not have read directly but which he may have encountered in the novels he read in his youth and which had been made by Richardson's followers, as Alencar testifies in "Como e porque sou romancista."

Also fruitful are the relations that can be established between Fielding's novelistic method, expressed in his prefaces and introductory chapters, and Almeida's method in *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias*, in spite of the two novelists' significant differences in perspective. Employing wit and humor, Fielding aims to set an example by advocating goodness and innocence, whereas Almeida's criticism of the "sad moral state of our society" (which is how his narrator describes his social milieu) is more adequately inscribed in the framework of the chronicle of manners. In both cases, however, what predominates is the logic of the event, the absence of soul-searching conflicts, and the narrator's distance from what he chronicles, characterized by a certain ironic—and at the same time playful—approach to the material.

From "Amélia," Emílio Adet's short treatise on virtue, to *A Moreninha*, fiction had come a long way, not so much in chronological terms as from the point of view of what had been learned and incorporated, thanks to the availability of

foreign models. It would fall to Alencar and Machado de Assis, Brazil's first two great novelists, to resolve and overcome the impasses and formal mismatches that had characterized the work of their predecessors. Despite their limitations, these earlier writers were essential participants in a process of acclimatizing the European bourgeois novel to Brazilian soil. Their first attempts, though clumsy, paved the way for the more challenging and mature formal solutions found in Alencar and Machado. Of course, the acclimatization of the novel in Brazil took a very particular shape: it became a powerful instrument in the hands of these first fiction writers, deeply engaged in the mission to construct a nation and a national consciousness. In their inexperienced hands, this mission translated itself into blanket praise for what they conceived to be the most Brazilian of all subjects—the country's nature and its people. Later, with *O Guarani* (1875) and *Iracema* (1871), two of his Indianist novels, Alencar shaped his own imaginary version of a national literature and a hybrid cultural identity. As Doris Sommer puts it, "What could be more Brazilian and proclaim independence from the Old World more clearly than casting the nation's protagonists as Indians and as those first Portuguese who, turning their backs to Europe, chose to unite with the natives?"<sup>68</sup>

Inchoate Brazilian criticism, in its turn, found the opportunity to express itself in the various literary periodicals, however ephemeral, that proliferated across the land from the 1820s on. Although they exhibited deficiencies similar to those of the forerunners of fiction, these first critics also employed methodologies that they viewed as appropriate to evaluating the work of their contemporaries. These critics offer fundamental proof of the prevailing conceptions of the novel that were available in the period in which the genre was codified in Brazil. Although crude in form, it was a reflection of such important issues as the representation of reality and the social function of the novel—well-known and familiar questions in the critical debate that had been waged in Britain and France beginning in the eighteenth century.

As noted above, the aura of inferiority surrounding the novel in the face of classical forms like tragedy and epic meant that novelists were forced to defend themselves for choosing it as their means of expression. Criticism also seems to have been guided by its demand that novelists offer readers "the image of virtue . . . and the abhorrence of vice," as A. F. Dutra e Mello proclaims in his study of *A Moreninha* in *Minerva Brasiliense*, in which he actually quotes Horace's precept. Exemplifying that contrast would be the noble mission of a genre that came into the world a bastard, according to many of these critics.



Yet critics did not restrict themselves to the desire for edification, having remembered to address a few formal problems and to offer some pointers for new and inexperienced novelists. They demanded fidelity to the real because of the genre's investment in domestic settings and everyday life. Nonetheless, they failed to realize that, deep down, didactic moralizing and fidelity to the real might be incompatible. As Alencar remarks perceptively in his foreword to *Asas de um Anjo* (1858), written in response to accusations of immorality in his comic play:

I do not consider reality, or rather, artlessness, the reproduction of nature and of social life in the novel or in comedy, a school, or a system; but the only element of literature: its soul. . . . I agree, as has been said, that at times repulsive scenes are copied from nature and from life that decency, taste, and delicacy cannot tolerate. But then the error lies not in the literature but in the writer; it is not art that renounces beauty; it is the artist who does not know how to give his picture those divine touches that gild the thickest darkness of corruption and destitution.<sup>69</sup>

Almost 150 years after Crusoe stepped forward in a short preface to address his readers and justify the story they were about to read, one can still hear echoes of similar conceptions, critiques, defenses, and arguments that were part and parcel of the history of the novel in Britain and France, and that made the period of its rise one of the richest in literary history, both in Brazil and on the other side of the Atlantic.

#### NOTES

The epigraph is from Roberto Schwarz, "The Importing of the Novel to Brazil and Its Contradictions in the Work of Alencar," in *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992), 50.

1. Antonio Candido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira (Momentos Decisivos)*, 2 vols., 4th ed., (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1971), 2:121–22. All translations from the Portuguese are my own unless otherwise noted.

2. With Napoleon's imminent invasion of Portugal, and the Portuguese monarchy under threat, Lord Strangford convinced Prince Regent Dom João to flee to his Brazilian colony in 1807. Soon after his arrival in January 1808, Dom João complied with the clauses in the treaties he had signed with the British government, not only by opening up trade between Brazil and Britain but also by ceding to Britain and her citizens advantages

and privileges granted to no other foreign country. Rio de Janeiro became the capital of the Portuguese empire at this time. Brazil broke from Portugal only in 1822.

3. Schwarz, "Importing of the Novel," 41.

4. The catalogues include books covering different subjects and novels in several languages, with the exception of that of the Rio de Janeiro Subscription Library, which lists only works in English; they include *Catálogo de Algumas Obras que Se Vendem na Loja de Paulo Martin (Vindas neste Último Navio de Lisboa)* (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. Nacional, 1822); *Catálogo da Biblioteca do Gabinete Português de Leitura do Maranhão* (Maranhão: Tip. do Frias, 1867); *Catálogo da Biblioteca Municipal do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. Central de Brown A. Evaristo, 1878); *Catálogo da Livraria de B.J. Garnier* number 23 (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. de Pinheiro; Paris: Tip. de Simon e Cia., 1865); *Catálogo dos Livros da Biblioteca Fluminense* (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. Thevenet SC., 1866); *Catálogo dos Livros do Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. Americana de L. P. da Costa, 1844); *Catálogo dos Livros do Gabinete de Leitura da Cidade do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul* (Rio Grande: Typographia do Cruzeiro do Sul de José Vieira Braga, 1864); *Catálogo de Livros Portugueses que Se Acham à Venda na Loja de Mongie* (Rio de Janeiro, n.d.); *Catálogo das Obras Existentes no Gabinete Português de Leitura da Bahia* (Bahia: Tip. de Tourinho SC., 1868); *Catálogo Suplementar dos Livros do Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Tip. Perseverança, 1868); *Catalogue of the Rio de Janeiro Subscription Library* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1842); *Primeiro Suplemento ao Catálogo dos Livros da Biblioteca Fluminense* (Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia do Arquivo Médico Brasileiro, 1849). See also B. F. Ramiz Galvão, *Catálogo do Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro, 1906–7).

5. The collection comprises at least ninety-nine novelists and some five hundred titles, including works in English, French, and Portuguese. A considerable number of them can still be found in the Gabinete Português de Leitura in Rio de Janeiro.

6. See Márcia Abreu, *Os Caminhos dos Livros* (Campinas: ALB/Mercado de Letras; São Paulo: FAPESP, 2003). Luiz Carlos Villalta has examined private collections and post-mortem inventories in his work. See his "O que se fala e o que se lê: Língua, instrução e leitura," in *História da Vida Privada no Brasil*, ed. Laura de Mello Souza, 3 vols. (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 1:331–85.

7. Irving A. Leonard, "Don Quixote and the Book Trade in Lima, 1606," *Hispanic Review* 8.4 (1940): 285–304, and also "Guzmán de Alfarache in the Lima Book Trade, 1613," *Hispanic Review* 11.3 (1943): 210–20.

8. José Mindlin, "The Book in Brazil," in *Literary Cultures of Latin America: A Comparative History*, ed. Mario J. Valdés and Djelal Kadir, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2:23.

9. Antonio Benitez-Rojo, "The Nineteenth-Century Spanish American Novel," in *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, ed. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1:429.

10. See the entry in the *Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro* catalogues for 1844, 1858, and 1868: “*Historia da virtuosa, e infeliz Clara Harlowe. Escrita em inglês pelo célebre Richardson e traduzida em francês por M. Le Tourneur, e do francês em português pelo tradutor do Viajante Universal, em 12, Lisboa, Tip. Rollandiana, 1804–1818, 15 volumes.*” Paul Barde of Geneva was the publisher of the 1785–86 French edition.

11. See Eugenia Vera Roldán, *The British Book Trade and Spanish American Independence: Education and Knowledge Transmission in Transcontinental Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), Appendix 2: “*Clara Harlowe: Novela, trad. del inglés al francés por M. Le Tourneur, siguiendo en todo la edición original revista por su autor Richardson, y del francés al castellano por D. José Marcos Gutiérrez, 8 vols. Plates. Revised edition of: Clarissa Harlowe (Madrid, 1796). Transl. by José Marcos Gutiérrez from the French: Clarisse Harlowe (Geneva: Paul Barde, 1785), Transl. by Le Tourneur from the English: Clarissa Harlowe (1747–49). Ackermann’s edition was a revised version of the one published in Madrid, 1796, with corrections derived from a comparison with the English original version.*”

12. “De la situation actuelle de la librairie et particulièrement des contrefaçons de la librairie française dans le nord de l’Europe,” *Revue Britannique*, 4th ser., 26 (March 1840): 52–97. A table with comparative values can be found on p. 80.

13. Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1998), 187. See especially chapter 3, “Narrative Markets, ca. 1850.”

14. Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *New Left Review* 1 (January–February 2000): 54–68, and “More Conjectures,” *New Left Review* 20 (March–April 2003): 73–81.

15. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” 58.

16. *Ibid.*, 62. “Compromise,” in its correlated meanings of “mutual agreement,” “arrangement,” “adjustment,” and “accommodation,” hardly describes what resulted from this encounter.

17. Schwarz, “Importing of the Novel,” 46.

18. Richardson to Lady Echlin, 22 September 1755, in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), 4:59–60. The full quotation reads, “but [I] am afraid instruction without entertainment (were I capable of giving the best) would have but few readers. Instruction, Madam, is the pill; amusement is the gilding.”

19. See Georges May, *Le dilemme du roman du XVIIIe. siècle: Étude sur les rapports du roman et de la critique (1715–1767)* (Paris: PUF, 1963), 163.

20. *Ibid.*, 162–63.

21. In fact, the name Minerva Press began to be used only after 1790. See Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790–1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 106.

22. The Minerva Press catalogues, for instance, contain titles by Charlotte Smith and Ann Radcliffe. The list of 1798 best-sellers includes several female novelists who are

barely known today, such as Agnes Maria Bennett, Eliza Parsons, and Mary Meeke, but also Regina Maria Roche and Elizabeth Helme. Some Minerva novelists appear in the ads and catalogues in Brazil.

23. See Françoise Parent-Lardeur, *Lire à Paris au temps de Balzac: Les cabinets de lecture à Paris, 1815–1830*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1999), 10.

24. A. N. Pigoreau, *Petite bibliographie biographico-romancière, ou Dictionnaire des romanciers tans anciens que modernes, tant nationaux qu'étrangers; avec un mot sur chacun d'eux et la notice des romans qu'ils ont donné, soit comme auteurs, soit comme traducteurs, précédé d'un catalogue des meilleurs romans publiés depuis plusieurs années, et suivi de tableaux propres à en faire connaître les différents genres et à diriger dans le choix des ouvrages qui doivent faire la base d'un cabinet de lecture* (Paris: Pigoreau Libraire, 1821–28, including supplements).

25. *Ibid.*, 5th supplement, February 1823, 18.

26. Marlyse Meyer, *Folhetim: Uma História* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996), 34. See also 49–50n28. Other French circulating library catalogues also confirm Pigoreau's prominent role in the business. Though Pigoreau is not directly mentioned in Balzac's *Illusions Perdues* (1835–43), critics generally agree that he is the model for Duguereau, the bookseller to whom Lucien de Rubempré offers his work for publication. See Pierre Citron's introduction to Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie Humaine*, 12 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 5:54–58.

27. Rubens Borba de Moraes points out that Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768) could only be read by special license because they had been included in the list of books forbidden by the Real Mesa Censória. See his *Livros e Bibliotecas no Brasil Colonial* (Rio de Janeiro: LTC, 1979), 56. See also Abreu, *Os Caminhos dos Livros*.

28. Nelson Schapochnik records the existence of Cremière's circulating library, on Rua da Alfândega, and those of Mongie, Dujardin, and Mad Breton, on Rua do Ouvidor. See his "Contextos de Leitura no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX: Salões, gabinetes literários e bibliotecas," in *Imagens da Cidade: Séculos XIX e XX*, ed. Stella Bresciani (São Paulo: ANPUH/Marco Zero/FAPESP, 1993), 147–62.

29. "Remainders" is a term used to refer to unsold stocks bought at reduced prices from the original publisher.

30. Laurence Hallewell, *O Livro no Brasil (Sua História)* (São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz/EDUSP, 1985), 117. France always served as a kind of role model as far as cultural artifacts and products were concerned.

31. See Harold Streeter, *The Eighteenth-Century English Novel in French Translation: A Bibliographical Study* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1963).

32. Respectively, *The Italian, or The Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797) and *Albert, or The Wilds of Strathnavern* (1799).



33. See Marlyse Meyer, "O que é, ou quem foi Sinclair das Ilhas?" in *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 1973), 37–63.

34. Translation of *Le Diable Boiteux* (1707) and the first novel published by Imprensa Régia, in 1810, according to Rubens Borba de Moraes, in *Livros e Bibliotecas no Brasil Colonial*, 120.

35. Respectively, *Paul et Virginie* (1788) and *La Chaumière Indienne* (1791); *A Thousand and One Nights*; *Atala* (1801); *Belisaire* (1767); *Louisa, or The Cottage on the Moor* (1789); *Gulliver's Travels* (1726); *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719); *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749); *Life of Arnold Zulig* (1790); *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady* (1747–48). The dates in parentheses in the text above are the dates when the novels were first advertised in the newspaper. From 1801 there is evidence that license requests were made to the Portuguese board of censorship for the shipment of the French versions of Defoe's *Aventures de Robinson Crusoe* (Paris, 1799) and Richardson's *Histoire de Clarisse* (Venice, 1788) and *Histoire de Grandisson* (Amsterdam, 1777). For the circulation of books in the colonial period, see Abreu, *Os Caminhos dos Livros*, 95–97.

36. Joaquim Manuel de Macedo (1820–1882) was a doctor and man of letters. See *A Moreninha* (1844; São Paulo: Ática, 1995), 69.

37. Gilberto Freyre, *Ingleses no Brasil: Aspectos da Influência Britânica sobre a Vida, a Paisagem e a Cultura do Brasil*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2000), 43. Both Freyre and Hallewell note that in 1832 the *Tipografia Pinheiro, Faria e Cia.* published, in Olinda, the novel *A Caverna da Morte*, but both wrongly attribute it to Ann Radcliffe. It must be the anonymous *The Cavern of Death: A Moral Tale* (1794).

38. Bookshops belonging to Villeneuve, Didot, Mongie, Crémère, Garnier, Plancher, and Dujardin were all situated in this area.

39. José de Alencar (1829–1877), novelist and politician, played a central role in the consolidation of the novel in Brazil. His testimony about the importance of foreign novels to his formation as a novelist can be found in "Como e porque sou romancista," in *Obra Completa*, 4 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: José Aguilar, 1965), vol. 1. Marlyse Meyer records references to Mrs. Helme's *Sinclair das Ilhas* not only in Alencar but also in Machado de Assis and Guimarães Rosa. See her "O que é, ou quem foi Sinclair das Ilhas?"

40. Candido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, 2:109.

41. See the state-of-the-art listing of novels at [www.unicamp.br/iel/memoria/Ensaio/index.htm](http://www.unicamp.br/iel/memoria/Ensaio/index.htm). There was also the overwhelmingly popular Charles Dickens and the omnipresent Walter Scott, whose appeal has yet to be explained.

42. See Ana Luiza Martins, *Gabinetes de Leitura da Província de São Paulo: A Pluralidade de um Espaço Esquecido* (1847–1890) (São Paulo: FFLCH/USP, 1990). See also "As Leituras às Vésperas da República," in *Suplemento de Cultura, O Estado de São Paulo* 7 (no. 486), 18 November 1989, 4–6.

43. Júlia Lopes de Almeida, *Livro das Noivas*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1896), 36.

44. For a discussion of reading during this period, see Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), and Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

45. A. F. Dutra e Mello, “A Moreninha,” in *Minerva Brasiliense* 1–2, 2.24 (15 October 1844): 747. The passage from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* continues with the words *lectorem delectando pariterque monendo*. “He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure / at once delighting and instructing the reader.” See Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. and ed. H. R. Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 479.

46. Antonio Gonçalves Teixeira e Sousa, *Introduction to Gonzaga, ou A Conjuracão de Tiradentes*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de Teixeira, 1848–51).

47. See David Salles, ed., *Primeiras Manifestações da Ficção na Bahia* (São Paulo: Cultrix-INL-MEC, 1979).

48. J. C. Fernandes Pinheiro, *Guanabara: Revista Mensal, Artística, Científica e Litteraria* 3.1 (1 March 1855): 17–20.

49. See Antonio Candido, “Timidez do romance,” in *Educação pela Noite e Outros Ensaíes* (São Paulo: Ed. Ática, 1987), 82–99.

50. *Ibid.*, 88.

51. Marlyse Meyer, “Mulheres Romancistas Inglesas do Século XVIII e Romance Brasileiro,” in *Caminhos do Imaginário no Brasil* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1993), 47–72.

52. Nelson Werneck Sodré, *História da Imprensa no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1966), 227–28.

53. *A Mulher do Simplício, ou A Fluminense Exaltada* was edited in Rio de Janeiro by Paula Brito and ran from 1832 to 1846.

54. Maria Graham, *Diário de uma Viagem ao Brasil*, trans. Américo Joacobina Lacombe (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia; São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1990), 376.

55. Delso Renault, *O Rio Antigo nos Anúncios de Jornais (1808–1850)* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1969), 19.

56. *O Espelho Diamantino: Periódico de Política, Literatura, Belas-Artes, Teatro e Moda* 3 (1827): 35–36. This journal carried the motto “Dedicado às senhoras brasileiras” (Dedicated to Brazilian women).

57. Flora Süssekind, *O Brasil Não É Longe Daqui: O Narrador; A Viagem* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990), 79.

58. Marlyse Meyer calls this a “Franco-Brazilian” novel and attributes its authorship to Charles Auguste Taunay. See her essay “Uma Novela Franco-Brasileira de 1830,” in *As Mil Faces de um Herói Canalha e Outros Ensaíes* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 1998), 333–47.

59. Translator’s prologue, *O Beija-Flor* 1 (1830): 32. There is no record of any work by Walter Scott under this title. According to the British Library’s catalogue, this work is by

Constantine Henry Phipps and was published in the *Keepsake* in 1829. I am indebted to Ross Forman for this information.

60. Alexandre Dumas Père's *Le Capitaine Paul* appeared in 1838.
61. *O Beija-Flor* 4 (1830): 112–13.
62. Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, *Os Dois Amores* (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson, 1950), 12.
63. Manuel Antonio de Almeida (1830–1855) wrote only one novel, *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias* (1854), which became one of the most important texts in the history of the Brazilian novel.
64. See *Os Precursores do Conto no Brasil*, ed. Barbosa Lima Sobrinho (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1960), 197. It is interesting to note that the narrator indirectly shows that he is a reader of gothic novels.
65. See Salles, *Primeiras Manifestações*, 27.
66. Candido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, 2:215–16.
67. Alencar, “Carta a D. Paula de Almeida,” in *Obra Completa*, 1:1212.
68. Doris Sommer, “O Guarani and *Iracema*: Brazil’s Two-faced Indigenism,” in *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 147. Sommer reads these two Alencar novels as national allegories that connect the love stories of their Indian and Portuguese protagonists to the foundation of the nation (and erase the violence and extermination that characterized this encounter).
69. Alencar, *Obra Completa*, 1:922.

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