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Bound by Fiction: Figural Entrapment in *Dom Casmurro* and *Madame Bovary*¹

Madame Bovary, affirms Stephen Heath, remains an inescapable if not obsessive, fact of modern literary experience (1). The novel's influence on the international writing community was phenomenal indeed, and its literary legacy continues to resonate within the subtexts of compellingly disparate works of art. For Emma Bovary, the data of reality achieves significance only when it coincides with the plot outlines of familiar narratives, and it is precisely this centrality of the aesthetic that proves so alluring to writers otherwise unmoved by bourgeois disillusionment. The idea that the grid of narrative alone can provide the coherence and distance required to make sense of existence provides an alluring point of intersection between *Madame Bovary* and Machado de Assis's *Dom Casmurro*, two works wherein the arbitrariness of discourse, its capacity to both reflect and distort experience, constitutes a master figure.² In both *Madame Bovary* and *Dom Casmurro*, the narrative's connection to the reality beyond it remains tenuous, if not absent outright. Emma's reality is structured by the fictions she has read; Bento Santiago's by the one he constructs. In other words, for both characters, the reality of an event is less significant than the acceptance of that fact as real, a perspective which enables the verity of illusion to assume primacy over referential truth. In their novels, both Flaubert and Machado work to undermine deliberately the referential security of their readers in order to imprison them more narrowly within the text. In so doing, they negate the very possibility of a grounding origin that would confer legitimacy on the text and in consequence, the work of art becomes the only reality that matters.³ In this context, mimetic fidelity becomes not only peripheral but totally irrelevant. The legitimacy of these narrative worlds is to be measured not by the degree to which the narrative confirms the laws of nature but by the internal coherence of the text's own "figural" connections.⁴ In other words, the causal links invoked to explain phenomena in the real world have no priority within the fictional frame of these particular novels. Here, fictional truth overrides mimetic truth; authenticity is determined by intertextual and tropological relationships rather than by a recog-

nized synonymy between constructed text and external reality. Textual mimesis, that is to say, a discursive system based on a similitive relationship between phenomenon and language, sign and signifier, text and reality is abandoned in favor of a system where words and meanings are engaged only in a figural, non-referential relationship.⁵ The very concept of “realism” is defined here less by the degree to which text and reality neatly coincide than by the degree to which figures and tropes coalesce and cohere.

In *Dom Casmurro*, reality is perceived as a set of competing discourses, that of Bento Santiago, who attempts to convince readers of the “truth” of his wife’s infidelity, and that of Capitu herself, who maintains in vain her innocence. That Bento’s proofs depend heavily on a variety of intertextual corroborations underscores the purely discursive nature of his wife’s guilt, and radically unsettles our perception of the writer’s objective reliability.⁶ In *Dom Casmurro*, we are constantly made aware of the text as a deliberated construct, a structure underpinned not by real phenomena but by other discourses.⁷ Bento’s entire narrative constitutes a patchwork of literary borrowings from ancient to modern times, a continuous parade of prior influences that can only underscore the literariness of the ostensible “autobiographical” endeavor.⁸

In Machado’s hands, the textual enterprise negates the very concept of extra-textual truth by the auto-destructive manner of narration. In a pivotal scene wherein Capitu’s resemblance to the portrait of Gurgel’s wife is brought to Bento’s attention, it is averred that “Na vida ha d’essas semelhanças exquisitas” (267)⁹; “...Sometimes, in life, there are these strange resemblances” (176).¹⁰ Despite this cautionary coincidence, Santiago’s attempts to persuade readers of his wife’s infidelity rest heavily on the shaky evidence of Ezekiel’s chance resemblance to Escobar. Elsewhere, the fraudulence of the narrator’s own conventions becomes readily apparent. He admits to a habit of promising *pater nosters* for favors, prayers he has absolutely no intention of offering. These inauthentic promises cast Bento in the role of deliberate manipulator and place the reader on early notice that he is hardly a man of his word. Moreover, his narrative analogies prove the opposite point he is intending to argue. For example, the central comparison between Desdemona and Capitu either establishes her innocence, or suggests an ulterior motive on the narrator’s part. Conceivably, the reference to Desdemona is designed to insinuate a synonymy between Othello and Bento as tragic victims, and/or between Shakespeare and the narrator as twin examples of creative genius. However, his obsessive narrative comparisons have a corrosive effect on the authenticity of the entire account. Literary and personal parallels converge throughout, but the similitude rests always at the level of discourse. For example, convinced of his wife’s infidelity, he would have the reader believe he contemplates suicide. Unlike Cato, however, he has no copy of Plato handy, and is forced to substitute a copy of Plutarch’s life of Plato in preparation for his self-immolation. The

suicide never takes place, and we are left with only its narrated intention and its mimetically imposed prelude.

The failure of the mimetic endeavor that these episodes insinuate constitutes a central theme of *Madame Bovary* as well. For both Emma Bovary and Bento Santiago, the notion of textual mimesis, that is to say, a discursive system based on a simulative relationship between phenomenon and language, sign and signifier, text and reality, is abandoned in favor of a system where words and meanings are engaged only in a figural, non-referential relationship (Gill 17). It is significant that both Emma Bovary and Bento Santiago are bound initially by language to a specific set of behaviors that are in fact antithetical to their fundamental essence. Emma is linked by a marriage contract that imprisons her in a life-style that runs counter to her aspirations; Bento is bound to the priesthood even before his birth by his mother's vow to God. Subsequently, both find ways to circumvent this imprisonment: Bento locates a proxy; Emma indulges in adulterous relationships. It is significant also that both characters enter the textual world, not as independent characters, but as parts of continuing sequences. Inscribed in an ongoing process of fixed meanings, they appear powerless to alter the preordained course of events. Emma is the third Madame Bovary and second wife of Charles; Bento is the allegorical duplicate of the brother who died, a surrogate figure whose future is ransomed to repeat the past. Both characters come into their respective novels as functions rather than beings, as metaphors of a process of infinite replication. In other words, they are intended to respect the established patterns that predate their entry into the narratives. Emma Bovary is expected to imitate the behaviors of her predecessors; Benthino, in order to fulfill his mother's pledge to God, is instructed to imitate the priest's every move ("Quando iamos a missa, dizia-me sempre que era para apprender a ser padre, e que reparasse no padre, nao tirasse os olhos do padre" [35]; "When we went to Mass, she would always tell me it was to learn to be a priest and that I should watch the padre, that I should not take my eyes off the padre" [36]).

It is perhaps in subliminal revolt against their pre-programmed roles that both characters are initially seduced by the potential power of the divine logos and its mystical capacity to transform word into flesh. For both Emma and Bento, the ecstasy of religious discourse is linked to its attendant semantic power. Whereas mimetic language closes the range of signification by encoding only the familiar, the discourse of the religious experience opens onto an infinite space of signification. In contrast to the repressive tautology of mimetic discourse, the vocabulary of the liturgical theater is imprecise, vague, symbolic, and expressly alien to the limited comprehension of mortal man. Liturgical discourse is linked to the realm of the imaginary, and in consequence, it must be accepted on faith rather than on the basis of sensorial perception or the deductive proofs of conventional reasoning. The effectiveness of mystical discourse, unlike mimetic discourse,

is not dependent on its resemblance to the known. In fact, in ecclesiastic dogma, mystery provides proof of divinity: were God's law comprehensible within the limited scope of man's power of reason, it would no longer be God's, but man's law. What matters is not that the religious signs and symbols be understood, but that they evoke a sensation within the soul of the believer. The realm of mystic devotion allows for the installation of a world of pure conjecture, a world where illusion and truth are inseparable, where discourse expands rather than limits the imagination, where the word is endowed with transformative powers fully capable of turning the bread and water of ordinary existence into the body and blood of imagined ecstasies. A dangerous consequence of such mystic non-referentiality is that "signs" and "symbols," the palpable images of the impalpable mysteries, threaten to take on more import than the divine signifier to which they refer.

Such is indeed the case for Emma Bovary and Bento Santiago who are hyperbolically aroused by the signs of Christianity but have absolutely no interest whatsoever in its grounding source, the life and lessons of Jesus Christ. For these characters, the sign is everything. Emma is entranced by the heady scent of incense, the shadows cast by candles, the impalpable accoutrements of mystical devotion:

...elle s'assoupit doucement à la langueur mystique qui s'exhale des parfums de l'autel, de la fraîcheur des bénitiers et du rayonnement des cierges. Au lieu de suivre la messe, elle regardait dans son livre les vignettes pieuses bordées d'azur, et elle aimait la brébis malade, le Sacré-Coeur percé de flèches aigues, ou le pauvre Jésus, qui tombe en marchant sur sa croix. (49)¹¹

...she succumbed peacefully to the mystic languor emanating from the fragrances of the altar, from the freshness of the font and the glow of the candles. Instead of following the Mass, she looked at the pious vignettes edged in azure in her book, and she loved the sick lamb, the Sacred Heart pierced with sharp arrows, and poor Jesus stumbling as He walked under His cross. (56)¹²

Christ's message is clearly peripheral, if not inconsequential. It is the discourse of mysticism that seduces Emma, the language and symbols that can engender altered states of consciousness and confer ecstasy upon her soul. Her fervor is egocentric rather than theocentric. In fact, rather than feel remorse for offending the God she serves, Emma delights in enumerating sins and even invents transgressions in order to prolong the penitential experience, a practice so antithetical to true piety as to constitute nothing short of heresy.

For Bento Santiago, too, the *Imitatio Cristo* swerves blasphemously off-course. Bento eagerly plays at mass with Capitu, not to re-enact the resurrection of Christ, but to partake hedonistically of the candy-host:

Voltava com ella, arranjavamos o altar, engrolavamos o latim e precipitavamos as cerimonias. *Dominus, non sum dignus*... Isto, que eu devia dizer trez vezes, penso que só dizia uma, tal era a gulodice do padre e do sacristao. (35-36)

I would come back with it, we would arrange the altar, mumble the Latin and rush through the ceremonies. *Dominus non sum dignus*. . . . I was supposed to say that three times but I believe that I actually said it but once, such was the gluttony of the padre and his sacristan. (37)

More disturbingly, the communion experience is connected to a latent eroticism that widens further the gap between the signs of mysticism and its ostensible signified:

A bocca podia ser o calix, os labios a patena. Faltava dizer a missa nova, por um latim que ninguem aprende, e é a lingua catholica dos homens. Nao me tenhas por sacrilego, leitora minha devota; a limpeza da intencao lava o que puder haver menos curial no estylo. (47)

Her mouth the chalice, her lips the paten. It only remained to say the new Mass, in a Latin that no one learns, and that is the catholic language of men. Do not hold me sacrilegious, my devout reader; purity of intention washes away whatever may be slightly uncurial in my style. (43-44)

Likewise, Emma Bovary relates the pleasures of the mystical experience to pleasures of the flesh, an association suggesting that the joys of mystical discourse are directly proportional to the voluptuousness of allusion rather than the lucidity of revelation:

Les comparaisons de fiancé, d'époux, d'amant céleste et de mariage éternel qui reviennent dans les sermons lui soulevaient au fond de l'âme des douceurs inattendues. (49)

The references to fiance, husband, heavenly lover, and eternal marriage that recur in sermons awakened unexpected joys within her. (56)

The early preoccupation with the discourse and external trappings of spirituality coincides with an explicitated dissatisfaction with the oppressive stasis of sameness that nature produces and discourse reflects. Significantly, boredom is at the root of Emma's malaise and it motivates the textual enterprise in *Dom Casmurro* as well. In both texts, the inevitability of destiny has the effect of stifling creativity, of eradicating the very possibility of projecting an authentic (as opposed to a copied and counterfeit) self. In *Madame Bovary* and *Dom Casmurro*, the security of familiar tradi-

tions appears less comforting than imprisoning, and in consequence, imitation becomes not a connecting but an alienating experience. For Emma Bovary, the mimetic order constitutes an arbitrary set of sanctioned behaviors that have been legitimized through repetition rather than intrinsic merit. For Bento, too, mimesis is fraudulence masquerading as truth. The act of imitation, like the homeopathic cures of the charlatan José Dias, is presented as Truth, but it is Truth in the service of communal deception (a homeopathia é a verdade, e, para servir a verdade, menti" [17]; "...homeopathy is Truth, and to serve Truth I lied" [25]). The art of simple duplication, like the stuff of Bento's dreams, cannot compete with the power of fantastic innovation. Whereas Bento's dreams, a tedious rehash of quotidian reality, fail to inspire, Capitu's dreams wherein angels imitate man, suggest that even the sky is not the limit:

Quando me perguntava se sonhara com ella na vespera, e eu dizia que nao, ouvia-lhe contar que sonhara commigo, e eram aventuras extraordinarias, que subiamos ao Corcovado pelo ar, que dançavamos na lua, ou entao que os anjos vinham perguntar-nos pelos nomes, afim de os dar a outros anjos que acabavam de nascer. Em todos esses sonhos andavamos unidinhos. Os que eu tinha com ella nao eram assim, apenas reproduziam a nossa familiaridade, e muita vez nao passavam da simples repetiçao do dia, alguma phrase, algum gesto. (39)

When she asked me if I had dreamed of her the night before, and I said "no," she told how she had dreamed of me, extraordinary adventures, how we went to the top of Corcovado through the air, danced on the moon, and then angels came to ask us our names to give them to other angels that had just been born. In all these dreams we went hand in hand. The dreams I had of her were never like that: they merely reproduced our familiar life together, and many times did not go beyond a simple repetition of the day before, some phrase, some gesture. (39)

Indeed, the placing of one's faith in mimetic truth leads more often than not to error. As a child, Ezekiel is reprimanded for his habit of miming other people:

Agora reparava que realmente era vezo ao filho, mas parecia-lhe que era só imitar por imitar, como succede a muitas pessoas grandes, que tomam as maneiras dos outros; e para que nao fosse mais longe...(346-47)

For the first time, she realized it was a bad habit in the boy, but it seemed to her that it was only imitating for the sake of imitating, as many grown persons do who adopt the manners of others; but in order that it might go no further... (225-226)

Additionally, his resemblance, either by chance or by imitative effort, to Escobar unleashes the sequence of associative indices against Capitu that culminates in Bento's repudiation of his only child.

In both works, the diegetic and the mimetic actively oppose each other, undermining the myth of textual referentiality, that is to say, the assumption that discourse passively reflects a coherent and objective reality to which it is inferior. In *Madame Bovary*, words, like the bank notes the heroine signs and which serve only to mask a reality of bankruptcy, are essentially nothing but a formal process of exchange underpinned by nothing of substance. Ultimately, Emma is reduced to an accumulation of theatrical gestures and discursive posturing designed to simulate behaviors found in grandiose narrative plots. Like the consummate actress whose role and being are eternally severed, Emma articulates words and phrases that have meaning for others but communicate nothing of her internal feelings and provide no lasting sense of personal satisfaction. In this sense, she is the metatextual embodiment of Rodolphe's pastiche love letter, a composite of borrowed fragments and plagiarized attitudes designed to transform absence into presence. Emma thus emblemizes the very essence of the anti-mimetic endeavor, a character reflecting nothing but authorial design, one who repudiates first her child, then her very existence in order to eliminate the ties that secure her to the realm of empirical reality, in order to become nothing but text.

The repudiation of a progeny that would connect source and creation preoccupies Bento Santiago as well. Like Emma, Bento indulges readily in verbal posturing, leading the reader to conclude that he is either the most tragic of victims, or the most consummate of liars. There is evidence to suggest that the second alternative is the more likely. The narrator opens with an assertion of independence ("Vivo só, com um criado. A casa em que moro é própria" [7]; I live alone, with one servant. The house in which I live is *mine*" [18]), a boast that is rendered meaningless by his subsequent admission that the house, although technically his property, replicates the home of his parents (7-8). For Bento Santiago, as for Emma Bovary, however, the imitative gesture fails to recover any underlying essence and leads ultimately to outright repudiation:

O meu fim evidente era atar as duas pontas de vida, e restaurar na velhice a adolescência. Pois, senhor, não consegui recompôr o que foi nem o que fui.

(8)

My purpose was to tie together the two ends of my life, to restore adolescence in old age. Well, sir, I did not succeed in putting back together what had been nor what I had been (19).

As the reader soon discovers, Bento Santiago's autobiographical account

turns out to be not the diegetic transcription of mimetic phenomenon, but rather the metalinguistic recycling of prior narratives:

Talvez a narraçao me desse a illusao, e as sombras viessem perpassar ligeiras, como ao poeta, nao o do trem, mas o do *Fausto*: *Ahi vindes outra vez, inquietas sombras?* (10)

Perhaps the act of narration would summon the illusion for me, and the shades would come treading lightly, as with the poet, not the one on the train but Faust's: *Ah there, are you come again restless shades?* (20)

The decision to write in the hope of recovering an authenticity that imitation has failed to provide places the textual endeavor in an antithetical relationship to mimetic reality.¹³ Writing replaces rather than transcribes living.¹⁴ Like the leper Manduca who is reborn through narrative, Bento, too, experiences a rebirth through the magic of narrative. Bento's coming of age is the result of hearing himself projected into a narrative account that is for all intents and purposes, the imagined fabrication of José Dias. Moreover, it is significant that this initial narration is couched in metaphoric and periphrastic disguises:

Não me parece bonito que o nosso Bentinho ande mettido nos cantos com a filha do *Tartaruga*...(12)

It doesn't look right to me for our Bentinho to be always getting into corners with the daughter of old *Turtleback* (21).

The discourse works its magic, however, and from that point on, discourse assumes primacy over reality in the mind of Santiago.

The high priority accorded the act of reading in *Bovary* and *Casmurro* is related to the joy of poesis, the process of constructing a reality through discourse alone. The fact is, the void of contingent reality simply cannot compete with the deliberated plenitude of fiction. In the real world, signs are often meaningless, resemblances misleading. Textual reality, on the other hand, is coherent, planned, overdetermined by authorial intention. In the text, words connect to other words in an interconnected pattern of prior design. Events engage meaningfully in the textual rush towards closure that the discourse compels. Textual reality has none of the messy contingencies of empirical reality. Whereas in reality, Ezekiel's resemblance to Escobar is nothing but one of those strange resemblances to which Gurgel referred, in the text, resemblance has a signification: Ezekiel is Escobar's son. In *Dom Casmurro*, textual reality is not vertical and inductive; nor is it subordinated to a higher, authorized point of origin which it mimes and reproduces. Instead, reality is horizontal and deductive, the linear product of a

conspiracy of signs. Here, "truth" is not established mimetically, but metaphorically, by connecting disparate images into one coherent interpretation. It is not simply the resemblance between Escobar and Ezekiel that proves revelatory; the likeness is troubling, but not incriminating. It is actually the figural connections rather than the mimetic evidence that indict Capitu. The intellectual connection of disparate images coalesce into one coherent conclusion. Dias' suggestive remark about Capitu's sly, oblique eyes begins a sequence of metaphorical associations that lead Bento to his final confirmation. Capitu's gypsy eyes, sly, oblique and like the tide, these undertow eyes that can engulf their unsuspecting victims, even those wary of their deceptive beauty, are transformed into the real sea that drowns Escobar. The tears in Capitu's eyes, tears that link the "undertow" figure with Escobar's drowning, condemn her on the basis of figural connections.

It is surely not accidental that both works take as their title imprecise and misleading designators that are assigned to the protagonists by others. "Madame Bovary" represents a label of social convention that reduces women to the realm of objects or material property. The loss of original identity encoded by the necessity of changing names underscores the manner by which women are successfully integrated into the social structure at the expense of their individuality. "Dom Casmurro" too, constitutes an empty sign in that it fails to accurately reflect either the conventional signification of the word or the person to whom it is applied.¹⁵

Naõ consultes dicionarios. *Casmurro* naõ esta aqui no sentido que elles lhe daõ, mas no que lhe poz o vulgo de homem calado e mettido comsigo. (6)

Don't consult your dictionaries. *Casmurro* is not used here in the meaning they give for it, but in the sense in which the man in the street uses it, of a morose, tight-lipped man withdrawn within himself. (18)

The name is hurled at the narrator in response to his failure to make an appropriate social response to the poetic endeavors of an acquaintance, verses to which he paid little attention due to fatigue rather than critical judgment and which he admits "may not have been entirely bad" (p. 17).¹⁶ The fact of the matter is, both characters define themselves in opposition to these externally applied references which constitute social and linguistic entrapments. In other words, from the outset we are confronted with characters who define themselves in opposition to an endorsed view of reality that first defines then excludes them.

Emma Bovary's inability to distinguish between romanesque illusion and empirical reality, much like Cervantes comic hero who preceded her and whom she closely resembles, has been enshrined in the daily lexicon of dozens of languages. But whereas the adjective *quixotic* connotes an almost endearing quality of misplaced heroic idealism, the substantive *bova-*

ryism has a pejorative resonance about it, suggesting, among other things, deliberated self-delusion and an almost desperate insistence on seeing things as they are not. This differentiation is due in part to the fact that unlike Cervantes' comic hero, Emma tilts not at windmills, but at the fundamental "truths" on which her society is constructed. For her, happiness, desire, fulfillment, contentment are constructed concepts, manufactured and defined by a ruling class and then imposed upon a captive citizenry.

In *Frame Analysis*, Erving Goffman notes that one can learn how reality is produced by examining how that reality is mimicked or faked (251). In their repudiation of a textual reality based on an inherent relationship between text and reality, language and object, sign and signifier in order to depict one wherein words and meanings are engaged in a figural, non-referential relationship, *Madame Bovary* and *Dom Casmurro* affirm the independence of the textual enterprise. It is not without significance that a primary theme in both works is adultery, that most taboo of social and moral transgressions. The relationship between the violation of social and literary codes has been duly noted by Emile Faguet in his assessment of Stendhal's work:

But what more effective way of rationalizing that sense of scandal and consolidating that morality than by accusing her creator of stepping outside the limits of mimetic representation itself, by making of the moral scandal a scandal of representation itself? (Qt. in Prendergast, 121).

That question is directed even more appropriately to *Dom Casmurro*, where the moral and mimetic transgressions are so entwined as to become inseparable. At the conclusion, the reader is left at an impasse; there is simply no way to determine whether Capitu or Bento is the real fabulator. This dilemma violates the agreed upon pact by which literary discourse is presumed to relate to reality and leaves us with nothing but a discursive accusation, supported by intertextual references relating life to opera and drama, and an unconvincing denial, mediated by the accuser himself.

But if there is no deeper structure to be relied on, if language can indeed construct reality within the text, it can surely do so outside the text as well. In order to attack the reigning ideology, Emma and Bento have only to expose the fictionality of fiction, to portray the textual event as nothing but discourse, a set of constraints and conventions that only coincidentally relate to anything beyond it's fictive self. In so doing, they suggest that reality, too, might be nothing but a verbal conspiracy, that the values and practices we live by are perhaps little more than reiterated illusions that careless "readers" have transformed into truths (Waugh 22). In other words, a fundamental theme of both works is not the manner by which texts distort reality, but how reality is turned into social text. But even as these novelists call into question the very legitimacy of the reality the "realist" novel ostensibly

reflects, that is to say, even as they expose the fictions of Truth, they affirm in turn a central truth of fiction. In the realm of narrative, the truth of a text depends not on its fidelity to external reality but on the integrity of its figural coherence, on the writer's ability to persuade readers not that fiction is truth but that truth has no ontological status within textual bounds at all.¹⁷

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NOTAS

1. This is an expanded and revised version of a paper delivered at the 1992 annual Modern Language Association Convention held in New York at a session entitled "Romance Language Writers Reading Flaubert: *Madame Bovary* as Intertext."

2. An excellent discussion of the anti-mimetic properties of Flaubert's novels can be found in Christopher Prendergast's *The Order of Mimesis*. See in particular page 2, where he speaks of the hollowness of Flaubertian discourse and his chapter entitled "Flaubert: the Stupidity of Mimesis" (180-211).

3. Notes Maria Luisa Nunes in "Machado de Assis's Theory of the Novel": "His (Machado's) general literary ideal was the creation of reality and esthetic truth. For him, reality had nothing to do with the servile and photographic reproduction of the school of Zola. It was much more complex and imitated the ambiguity of life itself" (65). For a more thorough review of the novel's ambiguity, consult Paul Dixon's chapter on *Dom Casmurro* in *Reversible Readings: Ambiguity in Four Modern Latin American Novels* (23-59).

4. On the importance of metaphor in *Dom Casmurro*, see Dixon 46-50.

5. See also Anne-Marie Gill's remarks in "*Dom Casmurro* and *Lolita*: Machado among the Metafictionists" (17).

6. For more on the general unreliability of the narrator, see Helen Caldwell's *The Brazilian Othello of Machado de Assis*, and Maria Luisa Nunes, "Story Tellers and Point of View in Machado de Assis' Last Five Novels" (58-59).

7. For some interesting insights into the "metaliterary" aspects of the novel, see Paul Dixon 51-59; and Anne-Marie Gill 17-26.

8. For a discussion of these literary allusions, see Helen Caldwell's *The Brazilian Othello of Machado de Assis*.

9. All references in Portuguese are to Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro* (Rio Janeiro: Jackson, 1946).

10. All references in English are to Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro*, translated by Helen Caldwell (New York: Noonday, 1953). Paul Dixon also alludes to this scene in underscoring the unreliability of proofs of resemblance as a means to attain truth (35).

11. All references to *Madame Bovary* in French are to Gustave Flaubert, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 6 (Paris: Conard, 1930).

12. All references to *Madame Bovary* in English are to Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (New York: Signet Classics, 1964).

13. See Gill, 18, concerning the notion of text as a metaphor for the creation of self by means of fiction in "*Dom Casmurro and Lolita*."

14. Nunes discusses the importance of writing and its relationship to meta-literariness in *Dom Casmurro* in "Story Tellers and Character" (56, 61).

15. Helen Caldwell points out that the dictionary usage that Santiago does not want us to see specifies "wrong-headed" as part of its meaning, a particularly significant detail for the reading I propose (2).

16. The meta-literary importance of this scene is underscored in Gill 19.

17. For insights into the issue of literature's "truth status", consult Waugh's chapter four, "Are novelists liars? The ontological status of literary-fictional discourse," in *Metafiction*, 87-114.

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