

## ‘A NATIONAL UNITY OF INTERESTS AND AFFECTIONS’: FRAMEWORKS OF THE UNION IN THE EARLY BRAZILIAN NOVEL

Thiago Rhys Bezerra Cass<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

### Abstract

Novelistic fiction from the United Kingdom has been consistently acknowledged as a major repository of narrative paradigms for the incipient Brazilian novel. Genres originally offering a narrative solution for tensions embedded throughout British and Irish society would cross the Atlantic and, by mid-nineteenth century, be rendered instrumental for structuring local experience. Among these genres, arguably, was the national tale. National tales aimed to bridge the social dilemmas inherent to a multicultural state like the United Kingdom and, more broadly, the British Empire. Works such as *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), by Sidney Owenson, *Marriage* (1818), by Susan Ferrier, and *The Absentee* (1812), by Maria Edgeworth, engendered sentimental plots of star-crossed lovers who stood for the divergent UK nationalities, allegorically and didactically overcoming the perceived English prejudice against the Irish and the Scots. Circulating in Brazil for at least five decades, national tales purveyed a narrative framework whereby the unsolvable contradiction between colonial heritage and postcolonial nationalism could be fictionally negotiated in and by an intercultural erotic union. Indianist novels like José de Alencar's *O Guarani* (1857), we speculate, may have re-enacted such framework.

**Keywords:** National tale; Indianist novel; Sydney Owenson; Maria Edgeworth; José de Alencar.

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\* Professor do Departamento de Letras Anglo-Germânicas e do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência da Literatura da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. É também professor permanente do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Linguísticos e Literários em Inglês da Universidade de São Paulo. Email: bezerracass@letras.ufrj.br. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5647-4462>



In his literary testament, José de Alencar fondly recalls a 'continuous and repetitive' ritual from his childhood. His family would gather around a dimly lit jacaranda table and ask him to read aloud one of the few volumes of his mother's library. 'Of a dozen works, stood out *Amanda and Oscar, Saint-Clair of the Isles, Celestina*, and others that I do not recall' (Alencar 1958a, 132-4).<sup>1</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, he wonders whether the reiterated reading of this small choice of novels 'contributed . . . to imprint on [his] spirit the framework of this literary structure' (Alencar 1958a, 134).<sup>2</sup> Mystified or not, these reminiscences of a 'Mozart[ian]' early genius vividly bear witness to the complex status of the novel to a nineteenth-century Brazilian literary consciousness. In Alencar's memoirs, the novel is a 'framework' that is at once foreign and available: a 'structure' codified in Europe, but graspable even in hinterlandish soirées.

Significantly, the three titles presented as the embodiment of a, or rather the, novelistic form came from the British Isles. Since the implosion of the colonial order, in 1808, such receptiveness towards UK fiction had been far from unusual in Brazil. Catalogs and collections of metropolitan and provincial libraries clearly indicate that, throughout the nineteenth century, the country's diminutive reading public had handy access, either in the original or in translation, to a considerable fraction of the uninterrupted output of English, Scottish, and Irish novels (Vasconcelos 2011 and 2013; Meyer 2001, 47-72). Thus, when the heirs of Dona Genebra de Barros Leite (?-1836) made an inventory of her personal library, in São Paulo, they came across no less than seventy-one volumes of novels categorically ascribed to Walter Scott, in at least four different languages (Deacto 2011, 165). Equally revealing is the catalogue of the Bibliotheca Fluminense (Fluminense Library), published in 1866. Patrons found fifteen-volume octavo editions of *History of the Virtuous and Unhappy Clara [sic] Harlowe (História da Virtuosa e Infeliz Clara Harlowe)*, by 'the renowned Richardson' ('o célebre Richardson'), stacked alongside now-almost-forgotten Gothic romances, like the abovementioned *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) (*Amanda e Oscar, ou Historia da Familia de Dunreath*), by Regina Maria Roche (*Catalogo dos Livros da Bibliotheca Fluminense* 1866, 148, 167).

One may describe such inflow of UK novels solely in terms of cultural imperialism, taking one's cue from a wealth of scholarship that places Brazil and Latin America as informal parts of Britain's nineteenth-century global empire (Brown 2008; Guimarães 2012, 223-232; Knox 2019). Persuasive and substantiated as this line of reasoning certainly is, it bypasses recurrent features in UK fiction that made it so appealing in nineteenth-century Brazil, to readers and aspiring writers alike. None of the books Alencar used to read in his childhood is set in UK's perceived seat of political, economic and, by implication, cultural power: England. Instead, they all posit a Union—a legal and political construct designed to mediate the relations between ethnic, culturally, and religiously different peoples—as their fictional site. In *The Children of the Abbey*, the disinherited siblings Oscar and Amanda wander from Scotland to Devonshire, and thence to London, Ireland, and Wales (see Morin 2018, 99-100). Indeed, many of the novels

that emerged from the British Isles between 1790 and 1830 were invested in constructing a Unionist identity that could imaginatively reset the perception of England's longstanding ascendancy over Scotland and Ireland (Trumpener 1997, xv; Sorensen 2012, 165; Kidd 2018, 22-30). With its commitment to narratively dispel the inherent ambiguities of a multi-ethnic polity, UK fiction arguably offered imaginative strategies to Alencar and his contemporaries for welding a national identity out of a social order based on racial inequality, out of 'a society of masters and slaves,' as a character laments in a novel by Lourenço Amazonas, *Simá* (1857), 'wherein [the Portuguese] are the masters!' (Amazonas 2011, 31).<sup>3</sup> This paper speculates whether a widely-read subgenre of Unionist fiction, commonly called national tale, may have informed the way in which would-be writers like Alencar tinkered with the possibilities of the novel.

### *'The dearest, most sacred, and most lasting of all human ties'*

Exploring the feasibility and completeness of the Unionist experiment may have been a trait of many novels published in England, Scotland, and Ireland, but few had narrative models—Alencar's 'frameworks'—as resonant and replicable in multicultural environments as those configured in works that came to be known as national tales (Donovan 2010, ix-xiii; Bellamy 1998, 54-77). As a self-conscious genre, the national tale crystallizes around the turn of the nineteenth century, a period associated with 'novelism,' or the awareness that novels might be privileged sites for negotiating intractable ideological disputes (Siskin 1998, 22, 172ff). Figures on production and sales of novels indicate that the acrimonious political climate of the day was concomitant with an unprecedented interest in prose fiction (Raven 2015, 6-14). Tellingly, an anonymous reviewer to the *British Critic* complains in 1797 that 'the rapid increase which this class of publications has acquired, and is daily acquiring, renders . . . the critic's task a work of increased difficulty. Our shelves are groaning with the weight of novels which demand a hearing' (Williams 1970, 443). In 1806, those avid readers and weary critics granted an audience to a novel ostensibly invested in giving voice to the Gaelic Irish.

Published six years after the Acts of Union 1800, Sydney Owenson's third novel, *The Wild Irish Girl*, articulates and confronts antagonistic discourses on integrating the Celtic fringe into a recently expanded Union. It had an intriguing but evocative subtitle: *A National Tale* (Connolly 2012, 31; Burgess 2007, 42). Throughout the eighteenth century, 'tale' had become a common designation for avowedly didactic or instructive stories (Jarrells 2012, 1368). When translated into English, Voltaire's or Marmontel's *contes philosophiques* were rendered into *philosophical tales*. And edifying books, like the anonymous 1773 epistolary novel *The Anchoret*, were presented to the public as *moral tales*, with the intention, as stated by a critic from *The Monthly Review*, of 'delighting gentle readers' (1773, 71). *National*, on the other hand, summed up the 'political tendency' of 'this fictitious narrative' (Owenson 2000a, 253, 256). In *The Wild Irish Girl*, as Owenson (now

Lady Morgan) (2000a, 262) would go on to explain in the Prefatory address to the 1846 edition, nationality functions both 'as a principle and as a watchword.' As a principle, the adjective *national* boldly—albeit inaccurately—announced 'the first attempt at a genuine Irish novel' (Owenson 2000a, 256): set in Ireland, with Irish characters, informed by Irish cultural and literary debates, and proudly redolent of Ireland's 'wildly magnificent landscape' (Owenson 2000b, 18). As a watchword, such adjective warned prospective readers that the novel was 'founded on national grievances, and bourne out by historical fact' (Owenson 2000a, 253-4).

*The Wild Irish Girl* certainly fulfills the didactic and political expectations raised by its subtitle. In a reworking of *Pamela*'s epistolary form and plot of social reconciliation through marriage, Owenson's 'national tale' tells the story of how the son of an absentee landlord, Horatio Mortimer, parts with his former prejudices and falls in love with Glorvina, the daughter of the Prince of Inismore, a descendant of the Gaelic or Milesian aristocracy evicted from its ancestral possessions by Cromwell's New Model Army. When Mortimer arrives at his father's estate in Connaught, banished from England due to his dissipated lifestyle, he is unimpressed with an old man's encomiums on Glorvina's dignity, appearance, and intelligence. The Englishman privately dismisses her as a red-headed 'romp,' raised by a 'bigotted' [sic] and 'illiberal' priest and a 'ferocious' and 'savage' Irish chieftain. He conceives her as someone unfit for 'genteel society, where her ideal rank would procure her no respect, and her unpolished ignorance, by force of contrast, make her feel her real inferiority' (Owenson 2000b, 41). Rather early in the novel, these derogatory assumptions about Glorvina prove to be ungrounded. The eponymous wild Irish girl is presented as nothing less than an 'incarnation of some pure ethereal spirit' (Owenson 2000b, 46). Endowed with 'sylphid elegance' and 'spherical beauty,' she was well-versed in the Greek and Latin classics, fluent in Enlightenment philosophy, and an authority in Irish antiquities. And, of course, she was a gifted harpist. Glorvina, however, seems unaware of her astounding attributes and achievements. She is characterized as a meek and candid Romantic heroine, a lass whose 'frank and open ingeniousness' totally captivates the ecstatic English protagonist (Owenson 2000b, 189).

Mortimer's ever-growing admiration towards Glorvina makes him reevaluate Ireland and its Gaelic inhabitants. Her Rousseauesque mixture of sharp intellect and untutored emotion seems far-fetched from 'that placid but distant reserve' that the epistolary narrator imputes to Englishwomen. At the novel's outset, the voices and manners of the Gaelic Irish are registered in a comic light, as Mortimer strives to make sense of what he hears and sees. Pages later, though, Mortimer quits his condescending tone and realizes that Glorvina's extraordinary qualities might be coextensive to the country and society where she was born and raised. Formerly scorned as rude and primitive, the mores of the land are then re-signified as manifestations of a prelapsarian vitality: Glorvina has a 'superior and original character' because it is 'at once both *natural* and *national*' (Owenson 2000b, 116).

Appropriately, Mortimer's trajectory towards cultural, religious, and ethnic tolerance culminates in him proposing a 'matrimonial allegiance' with Glorvina

and deciding to settle in Ireland. As he blesses the intended marriage, Mortimer's father, the Earl, unambiguously prescribes an allegorical reading for such union:

Take then to thy bosom *her* . . . whom national and hereditary prejudice would in vain withhold from thee.—In this the dearest, most sacred, and most lasting of all human ties, let . . . the distinctions of English and Irish, of protestant and catholic, for ever buried. And, . . . look forward with hope to this family alliance being prophetically typical of a national unity of interests and affections . . . (Owenson 2000b, 250).

The weaving of an allegory into an amorous plot, whereby 'a unity of interests and affections' buries 'hereditary prejudice,' constitutes a narrative formula that simultaneously admits and downplays the difference between the peoples grouped under the Union. Janus-like, such formula sets for closure of past misunderstandings and envisions a yet unborn nation that will be both Irish and English, where reconciliation is expected to take precedence over former grievances (Corbett 2000, 53). And to mark the departure from the suspicions and resentments of the old guard, the most prominent paternal figures in the novel—the Earl and the Prince of Inismore—are pushed aside at the concluding chapter, when the hitherto epistolary narrative shifts into an omniscient voice. The Prince finally expires after a long period of infirmity, in which his decayed physique became indistinguishable from the ruinous castle he inhabits with his daughter. As for the Earl, for years he had sought Glorvina's hand, but he magnanimously calls off the impending forced marriage when she betrays her attachment to his son. The intended union, the Earl explains, was conceived as an 'honourable and virtuous' way of mending the fortunes of the family his ancestors had brought so much misery upon: 'To restore you to the blessings of independence; to raise your daughter to that rank in life, her birth, her virtues, her talents merit; and to obtain your assistance in dissipating the ignorance, improving the state, and ameliorating the situation . . . of your poor unhappy compatriots' (Owenson 2000b, 232). Frustrated in his intentions, the Earl is compelled to realize that love is probably more lasting cement than 'duty' for binding the English and the Gaelic Irish together (see Corbett 2000, 64-65).

This amorous plot quite deliberately taps into an enduring tradition of portraying, either commendably or derisively, the Union's constitutional arrangements as nuptial agreements (see Shields 2010, 12ff). Almost one century before the publication of *The Wild Irish Girl*, Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe, situated in opposite poles of the political spectrum, interpreted in connubial terms the Acts of Union 1707, between England and Scotland. Swift's satiric pamphlet *The Story of the Injured Lady*, written on the immediate aftermath of the creation of the British state (but published only in 1746), has Ireland as a dejected and precociously-aged woman, seduced and deflowered 'half by Force, and half by Consent,' complaining about 'the Inconstancy and Unkindness of [her] Lover' (i.e., England). Such Lover had abandoned her and started making 'very pressing Overtures of Marriage' to his other mistress (Scotland), someone

with 'no Reputation either for Virtue, Honesty, Truth, or Manners.' Adding insult to injure, Ireland's former Lover was now treating her as nothing more than 'an old Dependent upon his family' (Swift 2010, 235-9). As a passionate advocate for the 1707 settlement, Defoe tended to see the Union as a very special type of matrimony, perhaps one with two grooms. Reacting to Swift's 1714 libelous depiction of the Union as a marriage between 'a Person of Quality' and 'a Woman much his Inferior' (Swift 2008, 264), Defoe ferociously declared that 'in a Marriage the Woman is a Subject, and inferior; Promises Obedience, and is call'd by the Name of her Husband: But here is an entire Dissolution of their former Capacities and Circumstances, and both become equally subjected to a new Constitution, and take up a new Name.' If one wanted to humour Swift's 'facetious, but scurrilous' 'whym' of calling Britain a marriage, Defoe went on, one would have to add the caveat that it begets 'no Headship': 'if either of these United Persons, or States, or Bodies, call them as you please, practise the least Superiority or Authority over one as *England* or *Scotland*, they invade the Contract' (Defoe 1714, 14). Predictably, the matrimonial trope would resurface with full force after the Rebellion of 1798, when the Union between Great Britain and Ireland started seeming inexorable to Whitehall and the Protestant Ascendancy (Dougherty 2012). As reported by Mr Crookshank in a debate at the Irish House of Commons, Sir Boyle Roche saw no reason for hindering the 'consummation' of John Bull's courtship towards Hirbenia (or Sheelagh) (*A Report of the Debate of the House of Commons of Ireland, on Tuesday and Wednesday the 22nd and 23rd of January, 1799, on the Subject of an Union* 1779, 25). To Sir Capel Molyneux, however, the proposed dissolution of the Dublin Parliament was tantamount to forced marriage, one that would necessarily end in divorce: 'An Union, so unnaturally pressed on, or forced against the inclination of one of the parties, could never be binding; disgust and separation must inevitably ensue; and the injured party . . . to seek retaliation, a divorce a *Vinculo Matrimonii* must ensue for ever!!!' (Molyneux 1799, 9).

Unsurprisingly, this unionist *topos* had novelistic renderings prior to *The Wild Irish Girl*. In Smollett's *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), for instance, the Scotophobia unleashed by the Forty-Five is narratively defeated by the marriage of the Lowlander protagonist with an English gentlewoman, Narcissa. Nevertheless, in Owenson's national tale, the plot of intercultural love has also a conspicuous pragmatic orientation, for such plot is unapologetically geared towards bridging the otherness of the Gaelic Irish to non-Irish audiences (Ferris 2002, 13). Indeed, Mortimer's trajectory from idle foppishness to repentant betrothal is couched in didactic terms, whose ultimate addressees, even when characters ventriloquize the lesson, are the novel's implied 'English readers.'<sup>4</sup> As Ferris (2002, 13) has indicated, Owenson clearly spelled out these creative tenants in the *Preface* for the revised edition of *O'Donnel*, her second explicitly-subtitled 'national tale': 'A novel is especially adapted to enable the advocate of any cause to steal upon the public, through the by-ways of the imagination, and to win from its sympathies what its reason so often refuses to yield to undeniable demonstration'

(Owenson 1835, viii). Whereas Glorvina and her entourage teach Mortimer to accept Ireland with ‘an eye beaming complacency’ (Owenson 2000b, 242) and respect the country’s ‘national character and manners’ (Owenson 2000b, 16), an authorial voice often speaks directly to the reader in paratextual interventions on the prejudices he or she might have hitherto nurtured against Ireland. For example, Father John’s jeremiad on English ‘calumnies’—that have painted Ireland as a barbarous, indolent, and obstinate country—is punctuated by an extensive footnote in which the ‘author’ of ‘this little work,’ with a not-so-oblique reference to the troubles of 1798, declares that it is almost impossible ‘to efface from the Irish character the odium of cruelty, by which the venom of prejudiced aversion has polluted its surface’ (Owenson 2000b, 171, 244; Bartoszyńska 2015, 24-5).

The fictional protocols of *The Wild Irish Girl*, with their conflation of intercultural matrimony and readerly interpellation, would have an eventful afterlife in the British Isles, most notably in those places where the unionist connubial trope had wider currency: Scotland and Ireland (Connolly 2015, 222).<sup>North of the Tweed.</sup> Susan Ferrier’s *Marriage* (1818), for instance, inflates the plot of star-crossed lovers into a family romance of three successive matrimonies. In different sections of the story, an Englishwoman, Lady Juliana, her English-raised daughter Adelaide, and her Scottish-born and raised daughter Mary find themselves associated to men from the opposite side of the Border. As a consequence, each woman is urged to tolerate the ways and traditions of a new and unfamiliar country. Lady Juliana and Harry Douglas’s marriage flounders as she rejects the rambunctious habits of her husband’s Highlander family. Similarly, Adelaide abandons the Duke of Argyll and elopes to the Continent with her paramour, Lord Lindore. Only Mary overcomes this legacy of cultural squabble, making it no more than a tortuous prelude to a Glorvinan conclusion (see Tracy 1985). Notwithstanding Mary’s secluded Highland environment, her English-born aunt, the tedious but sensible Mrs Douglas, quickly becomes in charge of her upbringing. As an adult, Mary is thus able to appreciate the peculiarities of both England and Scotland: ‘The road lay by the side of a river; and though Mary’s taste had been formed upon the wild romantic scenery of the Highlands, she yet looked with pleasure on the tamer beauties of an English landscape’ (Ferrier 1997, 253). Mary’s complacent hybrid identity, contrasted to the bigotry of her mother and sister, secures her a ‘happy marriage’ (Ferrier 1997, 468) with Colonel Charles Lennox, a Waterloo hero brought up in a ‘perfectly English’ milieu, despite being the son of ‘a true Scot to the very tip of his tongue’ (Ferrier 1997, 266). Together, they agree ‘in making choice of Lochmarlie for their future residence’ (Ferrier 1997, 468). Unmistakably, their Scotland-based ‘virtuous attachment’ emerges as the symbolic yardstick with which the narrator measures, to her ‘southern readers’ (Ferrier 1997, 29),<sup>5</sup> ‘the many ill-assorted couples in this world—joined, not matched’ (Ferrier 1997, 205). In Ireland, Maria Edgeworth’s *The Absentee* (1812) merges the theme of cultural prejudice with the one of social snobbery. During an expedition to his family’s ancestral home in County Wicklow, Lord Colambre, an Irish youngster educated in England, convinces himself that he

cannot bear living without his (apparently) poor and illegitimate cousin, Grace Nugent. After a series of twists, Colambre discovers that, despite being raised in Ireland and being thus perceived by everyone around her as Irish, Grace is of English extraction. Repentantly, Colambre crawls back to her arms. Decided to settle in Ireland, the couple is heartily welcomed by tenants long exhausted by Colambre's rack-renting overseer. In a brogue-inflected letter to his brother Pat, Larry Brady concludes with a plea that could easily be extended to all Anglo-Irish landlords: 'so haste to the wedding. . . . Pat, you would not be out of the fashion – and you see it's growing the fashion not to be an Absentee' (Edgeworth 1999, 256). Walter Scott, who himself tinkered with allegorical plots of national healing by turning them into somewhat-unresolved triads (Waverley/ Flora Mac-Ivor/ Rose Bradwardine, Ivanhoe/ Rebecca/ Rowena, etc.), praised Edgeworth's knitting of domestic fiction, travelogue and biting political commentary. In a much-anthologized passage from the 'Preface' to his *Magnum Opus* edition, he stated that Edgeworth's novels 'may be truly said to have done more towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has been followed up' (Scott 2010, 294).

### 'Linking the reciprocal interests of the Indians with our people'

Brazilian readers and aspiring writers had access to the frameworks of British and Irish national tales—in French, English, or Portuguese—for most of the nineteenth century. Tellingly, it is possible to stumble upon references to lesser-known practitioners of the genre in improbable contexts. In her *Opúsculo Humanitário* (1853), the feminist polymath Nísia Floresta (1989, 26) maintains that Elizabeth Hamilton 'was the first to paint lively and justly the life of Scotland's lower classes.' And in 1858 *Diário de Pernambuco* went on to publish a serialized *Sketch of an English Literature Tableau* (apparently, a translation from the *Revue de Paris*) that takes the literary output of 'Miss Ferrier,' among others, as an example of the propensity of British women to engage in novel-writing (Bedoin 1855, 3). Moreover, there is considerable evidence that both Edgeworth and Owenson retained their status as literary celebrities on southern Atlantic shores. After the flight of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil in 1808, readers and booksellers were finally allowed to procure licenses in Rio de Janeiro, and not in far-away Lisbon, for importing foreign print material (Abreu 2012, 114ff). Edgeworth's *oeuvre* was certainly one of the beneficiaries of this overall cutting of red-tape, as *Scènes de la vie du grand monde*, a five-volume French translation by Pigoreau of *Tales from Fashionable Life*, which include *The Absentee* (*L'absent, ou la famille irlandaise à Londres*), was the tenth most imported fictional title through the Rio de Janeiro Customs in the waning days of colonial rule (Abreu 2014, 21-2). Besides *Scènes de la vie du grand monde*, readers and booksellers also sought licenses to import, among others, *The Absentee*, *Sidney*, *Harrington*, *Madame de Fleury*, *Moral Tales*, *Popular Tales*, *Vivian*, and English versions of *Tales from Fashionable Life* (Souza 2014, 118-22). This non-negligible interest in *Tales from Fashionable Life* may well have



increased after the independence, in 1822. After all, there was an 1839-Portuguese anthology of Edgeworth's fiction, titled *Livro das famílias: collecção de contos, novellas e dramas de Miss Edgeworth, traduzido em portuguez, e oferecido as suas compatriotas por uma menina de 12 annos, ornado com uma linda estampa* (*Book of Families: Collection of Tales, Novels, and Plays by Miss Edgeworth, Translated to Portuguese and Offered to her Compatriots by a 12 year-old Girl, Ornamented with a Beautiful Engraving*) (Rodrigues 1951, 51). Most importantly, a substantial amount of Edgeworthian imaginative prose, including *Tales from Fashionable Life*, can be traced in the catalogues of the following collections: Fluminense, Rio-Grandense, Royal Portuguese Circulating Library (Real Gabinete Português de Leitura), and the now lost Rio de Janeiro British Subscription Library (Ramicelli 2017; Vasconcelos, n.d.). As to Owenson, archival research indicates that her name had currency in different types of discourse. Snippets from her novels, political tracts, and travelogues were translated and pirated even by papers entirely devoted to what today goes under the name of business news, such as *O Auxiliador da Indústria Nacional* (*The National Industry Assistant*) (Morgan 1843). It was also not uncommon to come across her writings indirectly, through second-hand quotations. As an illustration: in 1858, when Alencar was the paper's 'editor-in-chief', the politically erratic *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* published a Portuguese version of Joseph Méry's feuilleton *Les damnés de Java* (*Os condenados da Índia* [sic!]), which begins: 'It is not fashionable anymore to salute, in a prologue, the country approached by the historian, the poet, or the novelist. . . . This polite formula has lost its sway. Lady Morgan gave it the last blow in her memoirs. "This man, she says of a famous writer, this man, who praised every city, every mountain, and every river of the universe, has never saluted me in a salon"' (Méry 1858, 1).<sup>6</sup> Her death in 1859 didn't go unnoticed by *Correio da Tarde*, a paper also published in Rio de Janeiro. In a short obituary, it 'announced the passing of Lady Sydney Morgan.' The large sums she had earned with her publications weren't enough to make her a wealthy person, observed the obituarist, inducing Lord Grey's government to award her 'a 300-pound pension' (*Correio da Tarde* 1859, 3).<sup>7</sup> With all this buzz around Owenson's name and writings, it was only natural that there would be evidence of readers having more than fragmentary contact with her extensive novelistic output. For instance, José de la Brosse, a French merchant settled in Rio de Janeiro by the late 1810s, sought two licenses for importing *The Wild Irish Girl* (Souza 2014, 123). One can still find an 1835-edition of *O'Donnel* stacked at the Dewey collection of the National Library, in Rio. And both *O'Donnel* (1 volume) and *The Wild Irish Girl* (3 volumes) are mentioned in the two versions of the catalog (published in London in 1842 and 1864) of the Rio de Janeiro British Subscription Library (*Catalogue of the Rio de Janeiro British Subscription Library* 1842, 90, 99; *Catalogue of Books in the Rio de Janeiro British Subscription Library* 1864, 15, 22).

Part of the diminutive reading public, therefore, had been familiar with UK national tales long before the 1840s, which is generally described as the formative decade of the Brazilian novel (Sales, 2011; Augusti 2010, 89ff).<sup>8</sup> Crucially, the 'framework' configured in works such as *The Wild Irish Girl* was available for,

to use Candido's formula (1964, 112), the fictional 'research and discovery' of the newly-independent South American nation. As João Almeida Pereira Filho complained in an 1847-essay published in three installments by *Ensaios Litterarios*: Brazilian novelists were compelled to 'usurp' domains that were theoretically alien to their craft, such as historiography, psychology, religion, military sciences, and political theory.<sup>9</sup> The lack of educational institutions and research centers in postcolonial Brazil resulted in an unspecialized intellectual environment. Intrinsically omnivorous, novelistic narratives tended to display acquaintance with multiple branches of knowledge, presenting themselves, again in Candido's words, as a sort of 'initiation for grasping the [country's] reality' (1976, 136).<sup>10</sup> It is not unwarranted to suppose that the nascent Brazilian novel might have replicated morphological traits of works such as *The Wild Irish Girl* in order to refigure the new nation in a coherent, meaningful, and palatable whole.<sup>11</sup>

The Glorvinan conciliatory plot, with its markedly didactic orientation, might have offered effective narrative devices for tackling one of the most insurmountable antinomies of nineteenth-century Brazil: that between, on the one hand, the heritage of colonialism and violence towards the native population and, on the other hand, the official horizontality of post-independence nationalism (Ricupero 2004, 85-111). This was an issue the rarefied intelligentsia of the Empire had long agonized about. One may take as symptomatic (Treece 2000, 81) a document produced by José Bonifácio Andrada e Silva (2002, 187, 190), *Notes for the Civilization of the Savage Indians of the Brazilian Empire* (1823). Addressed to the recently-instituted Constitutional Assembly, these *Notes* consist of brief propositions for overcoming the 'great difficulties' for catechizing and permanently settling 'savage Indians' (*índios bravos* or Tapuias). He urged his colleagues at the Assembly to implement legislation that would, in the long run, allow the Empire 'to gain [the] trust and love' of the Indians. Andrada e Silva's recipe was radical but straightforward: among other things, the Empire would 'favor by all possible means matrimones between Indians and whites, and mulattoes.'<sup>12</sup> Acts of 'justice,' 'gentleness,' and 'constancy,' Andrada e Silva (2002, 184) implies, wouldn't be enough for defeating 'continuous and deep-rooted fears'<sup>13</sup> and, most importantly, 'linking the reciprocal interests of the Indians with our people, creating one national body' (Andrada e Silva 2002, 189).<sup>14</sup> Whereas integration and cultural understanding were acknowledged as no more than wishful thinking, the Glorvinan national tale had the potential to translate this sort of political aspiration into cogent fictional narratives.<sup>15</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, there were recurrent novelistic forays into the colonial encounter trying to reinterpret the moment when, to quote from Alencar's famous definition, 'the invading race destroys the Indigenous race' (Alencar 1958a, 149).<sup>16</sup> To carry out their historical-cum-fictional revisionism, so-called Indianists quite purposely parted with the paradigm of the already canonical European and North American historical novels set in the New World. Prosaic realism, Alencar (1958a, 149) objected, could not manumit 'the savage . . . from the vile crust with which he was wrapped by the chroniclers.'<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the sense of sexual

interdiction and sterility that pervades novels like Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801) and Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) was ideologically at odds with the official conciliatory mood that had set in after the turbulences of the First Reign and the Regency of 1831–1840 (Wasserman 1994, 193-4; Moraes Pinto 1995, 148; Treece 2000, 147, 173ff). 'To govern is to unite,' wrote Sales Torres Homem (1853, 2), a former liberal who had grown disenchanted with the partisan violence of the interregnum: 'the art of men who left their name imprinted in the political annals of nations has always consisted in fomenting unionist feelings, in congregating society's opposite forces, and aligning them with the government, emphasizing the elements of cohesion over those of division.'<sup>18</sup> When the panic caused by the uprisings of hordes of Indians and mixed-race populations finally subsided, some imperial institutions even celebrated the country's non-European populations. In 1847, for example, the Historical and Geographical Institute awarded an essay by the German botanist Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1991, 31) in which he exalted Brazil's multiracial origins as nothing less than 'providential.' Unlike Cora and Uncas, the protagonists of Indianist novels tend, thus, to display 'unionist feelings': they rehearse the trajectory of Mortimer and Glorvina and become sexually intimate. As their heterosexual love entanglement ultimately topples cultural barriers, a simultaneously inclusive and conservative fictional order is enacted. This order tentatively exposes the violence implicit in colonial racial relations, whilst endorsing the entrenched pleas for national unity (Treece 2000, 147, 173ff; Santiago 1982, 104; Bosi 1992, 189ff). Accordingly, Lourenço da Silva Araújo Amazonas' *Simá* (1857) forwards a grim vision of the convention whereby 'a colonizing subject traveling in a colonial space and falling in love with a colonized subject' (Wright 2002, 36). Here, sexual contact between whites and Indians degenerates into either rape or incest. With *Gupeva* (1861), Maria Firmina dos Reis explores both the reproductive and the deadly consequences of amorous encounters between whites and Indians. First, a Tupinambá called Épica abandons the first-person narrator, Gupeva, and elopes with Count \*\*\*. In the second half of the novella, the couple's daughter, also called Épica, falls for an outcast adventurer, Gastão. On a more uplifting tone, Alencar's *Iracema, Legend of Ceará* (1865) rewrites the wars of conquest into a sentimental story of intercultural love. Wedded to a Portuguese conquistador, the Indian Priestess Iracema gives birth to Moacyr after betraying her tribe, the Tabajaras, to their enemies, the Pitiguaras. The 'first Child born in Ceará' (Alencar 2000, 111) is an Adam-like figure of a people in whose veins flow the 'blood' of both 'the white warrior' and 'the race, whose face bears the color of the sun' (Alencar 2000, 111).

But it is throughout Alencar's *The Guarany* (1857), arguably Brazil's most canonical Indianist novel, that one may trace more confidently the confluence of structural, pragmatic and mimetic strategies typical of the national tale. Programmatically subtitled as *Brazilian Novel (Romance Brasileiro)*, *The Guarany* was presented, in a note to the first bound edition, as an 'experiment in national novel' (Alencar 1857, 1).<sup>19</sup> Such experiment, went on the prefatory disclaimer, had the 'merit' of 'telling things of our land in the early days of colonization, and

merging historical reminiscences with Indian customs. . . . [T]he reader will see that imagination has only given some colour to national customs, which may become sources of poetry to our literature' (Alencar 1857, 1).<sup>20</sup> By placing the antithetical notions of 'colonization' and 'Indian customs' as textual antecedents to an evocation of all-encompassing 'national customs,' Alencar seems to imply that owning 'our literature' is not only a matter of conveying local scenery ('our land') and local memory ('historical reminiscences'), but of also foregrounding the process whereby formerly divergent strands coalesce into a recognizable (or readable) unity.

*The Guarany*, thus, thematizes the Portuguese intrusion into the New World, along which, the loquacious narrator tells us, 'civilization' reduced 'the king of the wilderness' and 'lord of the forest' to a condition of captivity and slavery (Alencar 1893c, 539). It will be up to the white female protagonist, Cecilia, to do away with the expectations of her racial peers. She threads a path along which 'repugnance' and 'antipathy' (Alencar 1893b, 433) towards the Amerindian Pery will give way to 'gratitude and admiration': 'What an outpouring of gratitude and admiration was revealed in Cecilia's look! It was then for the first time that she comprehended all the self-sacrifice of Pery's devotion to her' (Alencar 1893c, 539). Her conversion, however, is not an act of motiveless benevolence. Episode after episode, Pery proves his unrivalled heroism. He captures a jaguar by its belly. He descends into an abyss filled with venomous creatures just to recover a bracelet Cecilia had dropped. He unravels a plan to abduct Cecilia and kill her father, Dom Antonio de Mariz. And, most sensationally, he eats a poisonous *curarê* fruit and surrenders himself to the Aymorés, a cannibal tribe bent on overriding the forest retreat of the Mariz family. Only a last-minute rescue party sent by Dom Antonio forestalls the sacrificial repast.

Parallel to these demonstrations of boldness and gallantry, Pery progressively guides Cecilia out of her cultural insularity, making her appreciate his traditions, the values and legends of his people, and the intricacies of his language. Along the way, Cecilia will come to acknowledge the humanity of those with a 'copper-colored skin' (Alencar 1893a, 88). In a much-quoted passage, Pery starts calling her *Cecy*. Angrily, she asks whether he is incapable of speaking her name properly. 'Pery pronounced all the syllables distinctly; this was the more to be wondered at since his language lacked four letters, of which *l* was one. "But then," said the girl with some curiosity, "if you know my name why do you not always say it?" "Because *Cecy* is the name which Pery has in his soul" (Alencar 1893b, 434). Paragraphs below, she learns that *Cecy* is a Guarany verb meaning *to pain, to grieve*. 'From that day she was good to Pery. She gradually lost her fear, and began to understand that untutored soul. She no longer saw in him a slave, but a faithful and devoted friend' (Alencar 1893b, 434). In passages like this, free indirect speech sententiously cajoles readers into taking part of Cecilia's education. And lest they fail to pick up the instruction, extensive footnotes generally expatiate upon the scene (Abreu 2011; Ramicelli 2015). For example, Pery's lethal use of his arrows and bow is glossed by citations that 'prove' that Europeans have always lauded 'the skill and dexterity' of the Indians with their arms (Alencar 1958b, 405).<sup>21</sup> Such

didactic doubling makes the implied white reader complicit in the elimination of the cultural and, most importantly, racial barrier that separates Cecilia from Pery. Initially, she describes him as a slave. Afterward, as a friend. In the Epilogue, she calls him 'brother.' At the conclusion, she confesses the desire that burns within her: 'Contemplating his sleeping head, the girl admired the beauty of his features, the correction of his noble profile, the expression of strength and intelligence that animated that savage bust engraved by nature' (Alencar 1958b, 377-8).<sup>22</sup> In other words, as the indiscreet narrator puts it, 'Cecilia loved' (Alencar 1893c, 541).

The European descendant and the Indian consummate their union in a high-handed allegorical key (De Marco 1993, 44ff). In a desperate move to save Cecilia from the Aymoré siege, Pery begs Dom Antonio to exfiltrate his daughter from the family's isolated and imminently doomed abode. Notwithstanding his cheerful acceptance, Dom Antonio imposes one condition: that Pery will convert to Christianity. Pery kneels down and is swiftly baptized and symbolically knighted by the old patrician. With Cecilia's escape, Dom Antonio uses his provisions of gunpowder and blows his fortifications up, killing everyone, besiegers and besieged.

The cataclysm frees Pery and Cecilia from both the Aymorés and the constraints of colonial society. The Indian throws away the carbine Dom Antonio had given him earlier in the novel (Alencar 1893c, 543). And he tells Cecilia that he can never be or live as a Christian. He had undergone baptism 'because it was necessary to be a Christian to save you; but Pery will die an Indian like Araré' (Alencar 1893c, 542). Among whites, in their cities, he would become 'the slave of slaves.' As to Cecilia, she rejects Pery's original plan of escorting her to Dom Diogo, her brother, in Rio de Janeiro. She'd rather stay in the forest with Pery: 'We will live together as yesterday, as today, as tomorrow. [Will you take care of me?] I too am a child of this land; I too grew up amidst this scenery. I love this beautiful country!' (Alencar 1893c, 545).<sup>23</sup> As soon as she proclaims her intentions, however, they see themselves surrounded by a flood of biblical proportions. Cecilia doesn't believe in deliverance. She thinks that God bars her love to Pery (Alencar 1893c, 547). The native is not intimidated. He cites Tamadaré, a Guarany Noah-like figure, who survived a flood from the top of a palm tree. When the waters eventually subsided, he descended with his wife 'and peopled the earth' (Alencar 1893c, 548). Inspired by the legend, Pery roots out a tree to make it into a canoe. Carried out by the torrent, Cecilia and Pery finally kiss each other. Allusively, Tamadaré's myth is to be rehearsed. But the couple about to people the earth is now manifestly hybrid, the product of a fictional conciliation of cultures otherwise irreconcilable.

### *Spinning loose*

Spatial dislocation of genre depends, first and foremost, on its social and aesthetic portability, on whether its structures are apt to find resonance overseas (Cohen 2003; 2010, 167-71). Therefore, one of the most important novelistic genres of Victorian England, the industrial novel, had negligible repercussions in

nineteenth-century Brazil. Its focus on the hardships of Mancunian workshops was quite far-fetched from Brazil's agrarian reality. The national tale, on the other hand, constituted a framework replicable in different parts of the globe, as it struggled with materials more or less pervasive: the yoking of peoples with dissimilar historical experiences under the same political organization. That's why the Glorvinan narrative model, although emerging from a very specific UK context, was internationally consumed and catered formal solutions to writers in places as dissimilar as India, France, and, arguably, Brazil (Trumpener 1997, 161ff; Donovan 2010, x).

The Atlantic, however, was not only the pathway through which books and goods arrived from abroad (Warwick Research Collective 2015, 7). It was also a barrier, whose crossing was full of setbacks. And it was an economic space wherein Europe's insertion was radically different from South America's (Bethencourt 2013, 18). In postcolonial Brazil, ethnic tensions were severer and more intractable than those in the United Kingdom, as discrimination based on race and/or skin color greatly complicated cultural prejudice. Thus, the conjunction of foreign form and local materials oftentimes entailed literary works that, in the words of Roberto Schwarz, spin loose (Schwarz 2000, 50). Their unfolding inadvertently exposes the tenuousness of their fictional protocols. Whereas the framework of the national tale accommodates all the official four nations under the United Kingdom, it has a narrower scope in the tropics. Brazilianess was not a concept akin to Ronald Malcolm's idealization of Britishness, in Susan Ferrier's *Destiny, or the Chief's Daughter* (1831): 'I was not aware it was more fortunate to have been born an English than a Scotchman, since both are alike Britons' (Ferrier 1929, 696). Indeed, the amorous plot of the national tale is never employed in Brazil to rescue African descendants from the social death imposed by slavery. As Joaquim Nabuco (2003, 38), a vocal and fierce critic of Alencar's Indianist fiction, once implied in a groundbreaking pamphlet on the abolitionist cause: no one could envision a 'union of races'<sup>24</sup> under the aegis of forced labor. And, to make Cecilia and Pery re-enact the union of Mortimer and Glorvina, the old guard needn't only be displaced. The entire world had to be exploded and washed away. Moreover, Owenson's scheme of cultural understanding becomes nuanced in Alencar's novel. First, the Indian has to renounce—albeit half-heartedly—his religion. And, most importantly, in *The Wild Irish Girl* the English character learns to love and respect Ireland and its inhabitants as a whole; in *The Guarany*, the blood-thirsty Aymorés are markedly contrasted to Pery's tribespeople, the 'valorous' Goytacaz. In spite of paratextual assurances that 'the title we give to this novel'—i.e., *The Guarany*—'means Brazilian Indian' (Alencar 1958b, 410),<sup>25</sup> it quickly becomes clear that Alencar's allegory of national unity was not open to all the members of the race with a 'copper-colored skin.'

### Notes

1. '[D]e uma dúzia de obras, primavam a Amanda e Oscar, Saint-Clair das Ilhas, Celestina e outros de que já não me recordo.' The literary reminiscences of Alencar's childhood are discussed by Silva (2008, 568).

2. '[C]ontribuiu para mais gravar em meu espírito os moldes dessa estrutura literária.'
3. "[U]ma sociedade de senhores e escravos! mas em que vós sois os senhores."
4. For example: 'You know, my dear Sir, that by one half of his English readers, Ossian is supposed to be a Scottish bard of ancient days; by the other he is esteemed the legitimate offspring of Macpherson's own muse. But here . . . We are certain of his Irish origin' (Owenson 2000b, 103).
5. The narrator also mentions her 'fashionable readers' (Ferrier 1997, 113).
6. 'Já não é modo hoje saudar, em um prologo, o paiz a que se chegam o historiador, o poeta e o romancista. . . . Essa formula polida cahiu em desuso; Lady Morgan deu-lhe o último cóрте nas suas memorias. "Esse homem, diz ella fallando de um celebre escriptor, esse homem que saudou todas as cidades, todas as montanhas, todos os ríos do universo, não me cumprimentou nunca em um salão."
7. 'Annuncia-se a morte de lady Sydney Morgan. Bem que tivesse recebido sommas consideraveis pela publicação de suas obras, lady Morgan não era rica, e o no ministério de lord Grey se lhe votou uma pensão de 300 libras.'
8. The importance of European models to early Brazilian novelists has been paradigmatically discussed by Schwarz (2000, 35) and Meyer (1973, 44).
9. In the opening paragraph, João Almeida Pereira Filho stated that the novel is 'a usurper, because usurpation is its essence.' Similarly, he argued that the 'novelist is a Historian, a poet and a Psychologist in his descriptions: he is a man from the military, the navy, of God, and of the State' (Pereira Filho 1847, 3-4). For a historical account of *Ensaios Litterarios*, see Garmes 2006.
10. '[C]omo iniciação ao conhecimento da realidade.' Gil (2011, 55) and Moraes (2015, 60ff) have discussed *Candido's* assessment on the centrality of the novel in Brazilian intellectual life.
11. Sommer's (1991) theorisation of Latin American 'foundational fictions'—among which are Alencar's Indianist novels—has long been borrowed as an explanatory model by scholars of the British and Irish national tale. According to Sommer, Latin American foundational fictions were marked by conciliatory plots along which racial, regional, or class differences would be narratively overcome. Critics like Corbett (2000, 53), Connolly (2012, 89), and Maurer (2012, 24) have all pointed out the structural similarities between Latin American (or Sommer's) foundational fictions and national tales by Owenson and Edgeworth. Maurer, incidentally, evokes an unheard-of genre: 'Latin American national tales.'
12. 'Favorecer por todos os meios os possíveis os matrimônios entre índios e brancos, e mulatos.'
13. '[M]edos contínuos e arraigados.'
14. '[L]igar os interesses recíprocos dos índios com a nossa gente, e fazer deles todos um só corpo da nação.'
15. Jameson (1981, 79-82) has provided the paradigmatic theorization on how fiction provides narrative solutions to unsolvable social contradictions.
16. '[A] raça invasora destrói a raça indígena.'
17. '[O] selvagem . . . da crosta grosseira de que o envolveram os cronistas.'
18. 'Governar é unir: a arte dos homens que deixarão um nome nos fastos politicos das nações consistiu sempre em fomentar esses sentimentos capazes de união, em formar um só todo das forças dissidentes da sociedade, e faze-las convergir para o fim do governo, em dando preponderancia ás causas de cohesão sobre as

de divisão.' On Torres Homem and the conciliatory politics of the Second Empire, see the works by Rodrigues (1982, 60-2) and Neddel (2006, 204).

19. '[E]nsaio de romance nacional.' The Guarany was first published serially in *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* from January through April 1857. Later in the year, Alencar self-published a bound edition.
20. 'O seu único merecimento, se algum lhe cabe, é de fallar de cousas da nossa terra dos primeiros tempos de colonisação, e misturar algumas reminiscencias historicas aos costumes indigenas. . . verá o leitor que a imaginação não fez mais do que dar algum colorido aos costumes nacionaes . . . que podem tornar uma fonte de poesia para nossa literatura.'
21. 'A destreza e a habilidade com que índios atiravam a seta era tal, que os europeus a admiravam.'
22. 'Contemplando essa cabeça adormecida, a menina admirou-se da beleza inculda dos traços, da correção das linhas do perfil altivo, da expressão de força e inteligência que animava aquele busto selvagem moldado pela natureza.' I decided not use Hawes' (1893c, 539) translation of this passage because it downplayed Cecilia's admiration for Pery.
23. In his translation, Hawes omits the question 'Tu cuidas?' (Alencar 1958b, 390).
24. '[U]nião das raças.'
25. 'GUARANI — O título que damos a este romance significa indígena brasileiro.'

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