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FOUR COLLECTIONS OF SHORT STORIES BY MACHADO DE ASSIS:
ROMANTIC NARRATIVES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

City University of New York

PH.D. 1984

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FOUR COLLECTIONS OF SHORT STORIES BY MACHADO DE ASSIS:
ROMANTIC NARRATIVES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

by

ROY EDWARD CRAVZOW

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1984

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1984

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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PREFACE

The literary career of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis covered fifty-four years. From 1854, when at the age of fifteen he published a poem, until September of 1908, the last month of his life, Machado de Assis was continuously writing. Being his own severest critic and a perfectionist in form and organization, Machado de Assis would constantly revise his poems, short stories, novels, and plays. Many times years would pass between editions of a book as evidenced in Crisálidas, a collection of poems. The first edition had appeared in 1864. Thirty-six years later he published a revised edition in which he omitted ten of the original twenty-two poems and carefully scrutinized the others, making changes where he deemed necessary.

During his lifetime, Machado de Assis published seven books containing short stories. They were: Contos Fluminenses (1870), Histórias da Meia-Noite (1873), Papéis Avulsos (1882), Histórias sem Data (1884), Várias Histórias (1896), Páginas Recolhidas (1899), and Relíquias de Casa Velha (1906). Of the two hundred seventeen short stories written by him, only seventy-six appeared in the above seven volumes that he had organized. The first two volumes pertain to a youthful literary phase in which he was still heavily influenced by a romantic movement already passé in the creative capitals of

Europe, the cultural centers of admiration and imitation for Machado and his contemporaries.

Following a stay of four months for reasons of health in the mountain community of Nova Friburgo during the southern hemisphere summer of 1878-1879, Machado de Assis entered the more important creative period of his life producing his most critically acclaimed short stories and novels. Five of the short story collections were published after 1880 and only the first, Papéis Avulsos, contained any short stories written prior to that year. The collection Papéis Avulsos (1882), markedly different from Contos Fluminenses (1870) and Histórias da Meia-Noite (1873) in its structure, style, and narrative point of view of the individual stories, indicated a turn away from traditionally constructed albeit superior romantic, sometimes mildly satirical short stories to ones that featured shocking realism, cynicism, and pessimism. In Papéis Avulsos, the author allowed the human race to indict and convict itself of continual chronic degradation. The collection Histórias sem Data, published just two years later in 1884, confirmed this new direction in his short fiction.

This study will focus upon his first two volumes composed of predominantly romantic narratives and on the following two collections which indicate and confirm the completely new direction upon which Machado de Assis had embarked. Each story in the four collections must be analyzed as should other stories which he did not select for a volume. Just as he was meticulous in revising poems thirty-six years after their

initial publication, so Machado would not select a short story that he thought was either inferior or would disturb the unity of a book. His literary judgment of whether it was to be included in a specific volume or discarded was made of each story. Previous studies of the short stories of Machado de Assis have alluded only to differences in pre- and post-1879 collections. The critics have never demonstrated the dissimilarities in the collections by a detailed analysis of each story. Furthermore, there has never been a study of the volumes themselves to show the superiority of the stories selected to those discarded and to demonstrate the unity within each collection. This study of four collections of short stories by Machado de Assis will contribute to a more complete understanding of them.

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CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF MACHADO DE ASSIS

From the time Machado de Assis had his first piece of writing (a sonnet) published on October 3, 1854 in the newspaper Periódico dos Pobres,¹ issued between 1850 and 1856 in Rio de Janeiro, to the time of his death in 1908, the course of events in his life holds little mystery. As a talented youth, he was protected and supported by the leading writers and publishers of the day, including Manuel Antônio de Almeida, Paula Brito, and Quintino Bocaiuva. In the 1850s and early 1860s, he contributed to various small magazines and newspapers such as A Marmota and O Espelho in which he wrote theater and literary criticisms, published poetry, and engaged in political, social, and philosophical polemics. For the magazine A Semana, he was a political editorialist writing a weekly column, and also was assigned to cover senatorial deliberations for it. Following stormy controversies in which young Machado criticized important political figures in his column, he suddenly eliminated politics from his writings. His disillusionment and withdrawal from partisan writing, his growing introspection, his maturation as a writer, his turning to the short story and the novel as primary vehicles for creative expression, his orderly life, marriage,

bureaucratic service, and a lifelong search for dignity and social status in class-conscious nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, are all matters of public record. However, it is regarding his early formative years, the reasons for his subsequent withdrawal from contemporary politics and polemics, and for the pessimism in his later writings, that still cause much disagreement among his leading biographers. The two major opinions have been expressed by Lúcia Miguel Pereira and Jean-Michel Massa.

The Lúcia Miguel Pereira View

Writing in 1936, the eminent biographer and critic, Lúcia Miguel Pereira, approaches Machado de Assis romantically and psychologically. In her book, Machado de Assis, Estudo Crítico e Biográfico, young Machado appears as a Brazilian Horatio Alger hero. A child of the favela, fighting against inferior education, suffering the loss of his mother and sister when he was four years old and subsequently being cared for by his stepmother after the death of his remarried father, this poverty-stricken mulatto, epileptic, sickly, weak youth, through devotion, hard work, and the sponsorship of key individuals, lived to become Brazil's greatest author. Too poor to attend school, little Machado accompanied his stepmother Maria Inês to the colégio where he listened attentively, picking up fragments of knowledge, as she sold cakes and bread at the schoolhouse door. Here and there a book or two was given to him. Maria Inês taught him

how to read and write, and the nearby French baker named Gallot taught him to read and write French.² His ambition to rise in social status, his sensitivity, and his desire for knowledge, led him to frequent the Paula Brito Bookstore, and at the age of fifteen, to pen a few verses. Since Rio de Janeiro was quite small with 160,000 free citizens and 110,000 slaves, and a maximum of thirty percent of the free men being able to read and write, the literary society was an intimate group. A boy with talent would naturally receive encouragement from them to develop his abilities.

In the view of Lúcia Miguel Pereira, Machado de Assis in the early 1860s became a good journalist who was not afraid to state his opinions, and a literary and theater critic, and a poet as well. In his newspaper columns, he attacked cabinet ministers and senators for mediocrity and he even criticized statements of the Emperor. However, after 1862, he became timid and stayed out of further political polemics. Lúcia Miguel Pereira offers the psychological explanation that his epilepsy and his naturally introverted personality resulted in a turn inward; a loss of faith in man, religion, and politics, and a turn toward the supremacy of art.³ For a few years, Machado was to hold the opinion that the theater would be a useful vehicle for the education and the uplifting of the masses. Soon, however, few thoughts of social problems would be reflected in his writings. Already in Crisálidas, his first book of verse, published in 1864, the presence of a poor, restless soul, introverted, a prisoner of

his torments and resignation, was revealed.⁴

According to Lúcia Miguel Pereira, Machado de Assis' personality had been totally formed twenty-five years before his novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas, with its pessimistic mood, was published. It was her opinion that Machado, in his early poems and novels, had found that life offered man only bitter reality, loneliness, and sadness.⁵ She felt that this attitude never really changed during the years. The principal themes in Crisálidas are the inaneity of life, the falseness of human feelings, the impassibility of nature, and the power of art. These themes would be examined and reexamined in later works and in different genres, but the answers Machado would find would always be the same.⁶

The Jean-Michel Massa View

Writing in 1965, Jean-Michel Massa, a scholar from France, approaches Machado de Assis more objectively than does Lúcia Miguel Pereira. His book, entitled La Jeunesse de Machado de Assis (1839-1870), is not a complete biography. It only traces the first thirty-one of Machado's sixty-nine years, but it does thoroughly cover his formation and maturation. Massa argues that there has been too much psychological analysis written about his relationship to his mother and his stepmother, too much romanticism concerning his humble origin and epilepsy, and too many first-person recollections taken down in testimony given many years after the occurrence going unchallenged and being accepted as biographical facts. While

not wanting to debunk totally the Horatio Alger story, Massa believes that a more thorough analysis of texts and documents would reveal more about Machado the human being. His introverted personality is not an adequate explanation of his decision at the age of twenty-three suddenly to stop expressing political views in his columns and to withdraw from combative contemporary polemics.⁷

It is fact that Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis was born on June 21, 1839 on the Morro do Livramento, an estate owned by the wealthy Mendonça family, for whom his parents worked as household servants. His father was a free mulatto and his mother was of Azorean ancestry. Since the infant Machado was baptized six months after birth, he must have been a healthy child. A sickly child, reasons Massa, would have been baptized immediately, in case of sudden death.⁸ As an artisan and painter, his father, Francisco José, had status among the estate workers, and his mother, by nature of her background, also was considerably above slave rank.⁹ The fact that she was literate, and Azorean, did not come to light until 1939 in research connected with the centennial anniversary of Machado's birth. On the estate therefore, his mother would work commensurate with her social status: sewing, maybe a little teaching, and possibly being in charge of the servants rather than participating in the menial tasks.

Massa does not believe that the boy Machado was a street urchin as is the view of Lúcia Miguel Pereira. He, however, explicitly states that although little Machado spent

much time in the casa grande and was a favorite of the elderly owner Dona Maria José de Mendonça Barroso until her death in 1845, the boy was definitely aware of the class distinction between himself and the lady.¹⁰ There is no attempt by Massa in his book to portray Machado as higher in social standing than he was. The attempt is to portray him no lower than his true status. Massa believes that Machado and his family were not at the bottom of the social ladder but that in the language of today they would be called the lower middle class, la petite bourgeoisie.¹¹

In 1849, when Machado was ten years old, his mother died. From then until 1854, Massa cannot find evidence to substantiate the highlights of previously reported biographical information. The supposed fact that Maria Inês, his stepmother, gave him needed primary lessons and sold cakes at the school where the child sat at the door listening to classes originated with Hermitério dos Santos in an article entitled "Machado de Assis," published in the Rio newspaper Gazeta de Notícias in 1908, just after Machado's death.¹² All subsequent biographers through 1960 repeated these assertions without further questioning. However, documents consulted by Massa show that Machado's father, Francisco José, did not marry Maria Inês until 1854,¹³ just prior to the publication of Machado's first poem. There is no evidence regarding Francisco José and Maria Inês either living together or not between 1849 and 1854 but this would be the period of selling cake at the school. Regarding the episode of the baker and

the French lessons, records indicate the French proprietor did not move into the bakery until 1862. The only person named Gallot in Rio dated from 1858. She was a woman who began as a teacher of painting and sewing and in 1860 she called herself a teacher of languages.¹⁴ In Massa's opinion, the entire bakery story, started by Hermetério dos Santos in 1908 and taken from the testimony of a few aging eyewitnesses, does not coincide with dates and people listed on official city records.¹⁵ In addition, a baker could not have taught Machado enough advanced French to enable him to write a poem in that language by 1859.

Summarizing the period between 1849 and 1854, Massa justifiably concludes that these years are still not well enough known to any biographer for one to say with certainty what actually happened in the life of young Machado.¹⁶ However, through this period, there is no evidence to suggest that his health was anything but robust. In 1845, his infant sister and his elderly godmother, Maria José de Mendonça Barroso, both died of measles, and between 1851 and 1853 there was a yellow fever epidemic in Rio de Janeiro. Throughout his youth, he also avoided tuberculosis, a rampant disease in that era. A sickly youth would most certainly have succumbed to one or another of these ancient scourges but Machado not only survived but began to build his career as a poet, dramatist, critic, and political commentator. Nowhere in future writings does Machado ever mention having suffered any serious illness in his youth nor does any biographer ever mention his being

ill with or overly concerned about any of the diseases previously mentioned.

In April 1858, Machado de Assis at the age of nineteen published two articles in A Marmota ambitiously entitled "O Passado, o Presente, e o Futuro da Literatura." In them, he advocated a national literature based on Brazilian, not Portuguese values. He traced the history of the Portuguese domination of Brazil and he favored cultural independence and growth in all creative literary forms. These articles were a ringing call to battle in strident patriotic tones. The cultural leaders of the nation are its writers, he said. Writers must be social men and participate in social movements. The writer has three paths in which he can play a role of national leadership: short story, theater, and journalism.¹⁷

In these articles, there are no statements or judgments about a personal esthetic view of literature. Machado in 1858 was searching for a proper genre in which to express his opinions, attitudes, and feelings. By 1859, he had abandoned the idea (or had passed through the stage) of being a pure poet, a vate, or bard, as the popular romantic expression called it, and he had made his entry as a man of letters.¹⁸ At that time for Machado, fiction, theater, and criticism all had a social purpose: to arouse in the masses a striving toward personal and national economic and cultural growth. The government should eliminate corruption, propel Brazil forward as a leader among nations, and should aid the people in whatever way people might want. It is the writer who must

inspire the people to create a great nation.¹⁹

As late as 1858, much of Machado's poetry was political. It extolled the glory of progress, and, without defining the word, promoted the idea of progress as the only goal for Brazil. In a search for an ideal leader for his own country, Machado exalted the Mexican revolutionary leader of the times, Benito Juárez. Only a few years later, this strong feeling of idealism and desire for social change with himself as a leader and creator of a movement would all end suddenly in disillusionment, withdrawal, and pessimism.

A naturally introverted personality, as described by Lúcia Miguel Pereira, could not have produced such a bold, idealistic, and extroverted document as "O Passado, o Presente, e o Futuro da Literatura." Massa suggests worldly and political forces caused Machado, the young political journalist, to suffer some serious reverses which completely changed his attitudes, and led to an abrupt termination of a polemic-filled, combative life.²⁰

In the late 1850s, the newspaper Correio Mercantil led the opposing press against the government. Machado, also on the side of the opposition, began to write for the Correio Mercantil. He also contributed to O Paraíba and O Espelho, two political and cultural publications founded by his friends and ideological colleagues. He was to write only one more article for A Marmota whose political position was, for him, too neutral and leaning toward being pro-government.

Though extremely nationalistic, Machado and his circle

of young literary friends had been influenced by a French thinker of the 1850s, Eugène Pelletan, who believed in the endless progress of the human race. In Pelletan's philosophy, mankind was always advancing toward a further greatness. This is a philosophy of extreme optimism which Machado accepted wholeheartedly during the late 1850s and early 1860s.²²

Within this philosophy of optimism, there were constant changes and evolution as evidenced by the articles Machado had published. In "O Passado, o Presente, e o Futuro da Literatura" (April 1858), it was the man of letters, the playwright, and the critic who must lead the nation toward social progress. By January 1859, in his article "O Jornal e o Livro," published in the Correio Mercantil, he had undergone a sweeping change of thought. He confessed that his previous opinions were no longer valid, that it is not the playwright and critic who must lead the nation toward growth, but the complete journalist, who is also a man of letters. He stated that in the year before, he had underestimated the literary value of journalism. The newspaper represents liberty and civilization, and a free journalist faces the issues of his era.²³ The following year Machado had the opinion that the playwright, when afforded the opportunity, must lead the people and the nation to superior heights.

At the age of twenty, Machado de Assis contributed poetry and a weekly column on the theater to O Espelho, a magazine which existed for only nineteen issues between September 1859 and January 1860. In his theater column, he

included comments and opinions on contemporary Rio de Janeiro and its people, using the text of a play and the atmosphere of the theater as a point of departure. The theater had brought him in contact with the upper class, the only class that attended it. He criticized the manners of an audience when the people viewing a play did not exhibit standards of behavior he expected and thought were appropriate.²⁴ Thus Machado revealed a fascination for upper-class society and a preoccupation for correct, refined manners which he was to maintain during his entire life. There appears to be no contradiction between his defense of democratic ideals and support of good manners.

In his theater reviews, Machado attempted to analyze a play and promote a social position at the same time. He would express an esthetic judgment about a play and the performance, and then give an opinion about the author and the actors' understanding of the social point they ought to be promoting. Machado thought actors and authors should be the teachers of the people and the government, but that they should be guided by the critics.²⁵

In other articles written for O Espelho, he stated that the hope for the future of Brazil lay with the proletariat and that the aristocracy was disintegrating. In another theater review, he criticized an author writing for money by selling his pen to the highest bidder in the name of literature.²⁶ (This is exactly what Machado de Assis was to do years later with many short stories.)

In the second article of a four-part series of essays entitled "Aquarelas," Machado criticized the parasite in society, a favorite theme he would use in many future short stories and novels. He declared the parasite to be a consumer who was non-productive, a drone in the beehive. There were church parasites, diplomatic parasites, and literary parasites. All had dirtied and corrupted the God-given jewel of intelligence.²⁷ Article three of "Aquarelas" attacked the retired bureaucrat as a conservative, a non-producer, and a critic of progress, whose only functions were to consume tobacco and play cards.²⁸

The portrait of Machado de Assis as a young man of twenty, gleaned from his writings in O Espelho and summed up by Jean-Michel Massa, is that of a gifted and idealistic but naive and immature writer, anxious to do battle to uplift the cultural life of his country both by criticizing existing works and by producing his own poetry, plays, and prose, eager for political change, and optimistic for the future of Brazil. It is easy to understand why Quintino Bocaiuva, in January 1860, asked him to join the staff of the newspaper Diário do Rio as its theater critic and also its correspondent at the Senate.²⁹ His news articles on Senate affairs were to be more editorial opinions than factual reporting.

In October of 1861, he was assigned to write a weekly column under the heading of Comentários da Semana. In five and a half months, he wrote a total of twenty-one columns, all political, in which he was allowed free choice of theme.

He attacked corruption directly, naming senators and cabinet ministers who he said were profiting from their positions. Machado's favorite charges against them were incapacity, mediocrity, ambiguity, duplicity, illegality, and hypocrisy, as well as favoritism.³⁰ Machado, on the side of the Liberals, fought violently, and the conservative ministers and senators (The Conservatives were in power and the Liberals were the minority opposition) fought back, mainly in the newspaper Jornal do Comércio. Since his political opinions coincided with those of the leaders of the Diário, he had no reason to expect or suspect that any censorship by management would occur.

In his Comentário column of February 22, 1862, Machado entitled a paragraph "Desgosto pela Política," in which he vehemently stated that while he was fighting for ideals, others twisted everything to support their own interests and personal gain.³¹ Until May 5, he continued to write his column but the content became progressively more literary and less political. An agreement had been reached behind the scenes between the growing liberal forces, who included in their number Saldanha Marinho, the political editor of the Diário and Machado de Assis' superior, and the conservative government. The Liberals had been offered a role in the administration. One of the conditions was that the liberal press would have to halt its strong attacks against the Conservatives. The private position of Machado was to refuse compromise. His superiors disagreed with him and as a result

Machado lost his position as political columnist. He was not discharged from the paper but was forced to join the ranks of writers of harmless news. This effective censoring of his views, his belief he had been made a scapegoat in a political deal concocted by his friends and allies now in accord with the despised Conservatives, profoundly affected Machado de Assis. He would soon turn toward more creative literature to express his ideas³² (first poetry and the theater, then the short story and the novel), ideas still in flux but no longer influenced by Pelletan nor by the philosophy of optimism he had embraced such a short time before.

The Growth of Machado de Assis (1862-1870)

The loss of his political column was just the first of three traumatic shocks to confront Machado de Assis during the 1860s. Each successive one further served to dispel much of Machado's interest in the political and social problems of the day. He gradually shifted his public stance from that of an active supporter of the anti-monarchist liberal position to one of a disinterested spectator while he deepened his perceptions as a creative writer. The experience Machado gained in observing the people around him (politicians and their critics, influential businessmen, parasites, social climbers, and women upon whom traditional restrictions were placed by a male-dominated society), many of whom were numbered among his friends but whose help was questionable in his times of greatest need, matured him and drove the future

author of Dom Casmurro onto the path of pessimism.

The fact that each of three distinct traumas suffered in an eight-year period, beginning with the loss of his column in February 1862, and ending soon after his marriage on November 12, 1869, almost five months after his thirtieth birthday, had always been preceded by periods of optimistic bursts of thought and activity followed by periods of pessimism, would tend to support the hypothesis of Jean-Michel Massa rather than that of Lúcia Miguel Pereira and the traditional biographers. It was not a natural, introverted, and pessimistic inclination coupled with physical disabilities, but the many daily difficulties and sometimes crushing defeats experienced by Machado de Assis in his long struggle for financial survival, recognition, and status, which led directly to a growing introspection, withdrawal, and pessimism. His personality changed as a result of events and circumstances over which he had no control. The fiery political rhetoric of the early years, the public recitals of poetry and drama while supposedly being a stutterer, the interest in attending the theater and parties during the middle 1860s, the bold, active courtship of Carolina despite relentless opposition from her family (with the exception of her brother Faustino who had introduced them), and the moderately successful but always arduous struggle throughout the decade to earn a respectable salary, cannot be dismissed as moments of optimism and energy of an otherwise sickly and introverted young man. Until the blows suffered by him, some

of which were delivered by those with whom he thought he was closest, became too difficult to overcome, we have a picture of a normal, aggressive young man, eager to make his mark in the world. As of November 12, 1869, his wedding day, there is no hint of shyness, stuttering, or fear of stuttering in public, or of the epilepsy that was to possess him beginning in the early 1870s. However, the cumulative effects of the reversals now to be discussed could not help but hasten the arrival of these afflictions and bend the will of the man who, years later, was able to write Bras Cubas and Dom Casmurro.

Prior to the disappointment of losing his column, Machado had become interested in the theater. The young romantic poets of the 1850s and early 1860s admired and sang praises in verse of the leading actresses of the day. This was a chaste type of hero worship made all the more alive and exciting because of the relative smallness of Rio de Janeiro around 1860 (The population of free citizens numbered approximately 150,000³³) and the intimacy of the creative writers and the performers. The small cultured elite, whether journalists, publishers, actors, artists, or poets, wrote for the same magazines and newspapers, performed in or attended the same few theaters, and frequented the same establishments. In short, they all traveled in the same circles. This was Machado's cultural milieu.

Before 1862, Machado's interest in the theater as a creative form appeared to be secondary to his being a vate first and then a political journalist. But the theater, with

its manners and glamour as well as the opportunity it presented to promote a social point of view with a captive audience, supposedly representing the elite literate citizenry, slowly gained in appeal to Machado as he continued to grope for a proper means of expression.

His first complete play, Desencantos, was written in 1861³⁴ when he was still an active columnist for the Diário. Previously, he had published Hoje Avental Amanhã Luva, a one-act comedy imitated from a French play, and a part of a play entitled Odiesséia dos 20 Anos, both of which appeared in four successive issues of the literary magazine A Marmota in March of 1860.³⁵ On July 8, 1861, an operetta, Bodas de Joaninha, by a Luis Olona, was performed in Rio. It had been translated from Spanish by Machado de Assis but the text has subsequently been lost.³⁶ With the cancellation of the column and his feeling that he had been betrayed by his friends and superiors at the Diário, the creative theater and related theater activities occupied much of Machado's thoughts until 1864.

In "O Velho Senado," an essay of reminiscence written in 1898 about members of the Senate whom he had observed in 1860, Machado pondered on their subtle gestures and physical appearances.³⁷ In 1898, he would become more acute in his evaluation of people's actions and motives. However, early commentaries, delivered in his position as one of the official government censors of the theater, a non-salaried post he obtained in January 1862 while still a vociferous critic of the government, and held until March 1864, only reflected dogmatic

moral and social positions. In his play Desencantos, Clara, the heroine, chooses practical Pedro, the Congressman, over Luís, the poet. Subsequently, Pedro becomes cold toward Clara, but five years after the wedding Luís meets and marries Clarinha, Clara's daughter by a previous marriage. The conclusion drawn by the author is that God has helped the poet and that idealism has triumphed over materialism.³⁸

According to government regulations, for any play to be granted a license and produced, there would have to be a certain decorum in dress and language, and no disrespect could be exhibited toward the nation or its leaders, nor any attack on religion be made. These terms were vague, and each member of the Board of Censors acted with final authority with regard to a play submitted to him. Of the nine plays reviewed by Machado in his two years as a censor, he rejected four as being immoral.³⁹ As an example, O Filho do Erro, written by a friend, J. R. Pires de Almeida, was rejected because the heroine Helena had become debauched, said Machado, after being seduced, and showed no remorse.⁴⁰ A conclusion of Massa is that because Machado held this office he was in a position to discover himself further as well as having to interchange ideas diplomatically with his fellow-dramatists. Sometimes it was necessary for Machado to have to advise another playwright that a particular scene or conclusion could not be approved unless certain alterations were made. Thus he was obliged to read many plays. The position he held as a censor aided him in recognizing his own limitations as a

dramatist.⁴¹

The bitterness engendered in February 1862 lingered throughout 1862 and into 1863. In his first article for a new literary journal named Futuro and founded in September 1862 by Faustino Xavier de Novais (older brother of his wife to be, Carolina), the scars were visible. It was his first expression of editorial comment in over six months and the tone was restrained and cynical. In the article, Machado, the author, removes his pen from the drawer and advises it how to write. He admonishes himself to stay out of polemics with everyone, especially politicians and writers. He must be enthusiastic, cordial, and just, but ought to praise or condemn without exaggeration. This will result in honors and happiness.⁴² In poems such as "Aspiração" and "Tristeza," Machado bared his disappointed soul. The poet has found neither hope nor sincerity in life, and has concluded that only materialism and dullness exist.⁴³

Throughout 1862 and 1863, Machado remained on the staff of the Diário, toiling there daily but only publishing five articles of opinions, all literary and non-controversial.⁴⁴ Working in the office of the Diário, correcting other writers' articles, and writing harmless stories himself, were his assignments in the only position he held in which he was assured of earning a regular wage. Contributions to Futuro and publishing plays produced little in the way of money. As a dramatic censor, he functioned as an unpaid servant of the State.

Futuro existed only from September 15, 1862 until July 1, 1863. In all, twenty issues were published before monetary problems forced it to close. Its founder, Faustino Xavier de Novais, born in Oporto, Portugal, in 1820, was an aging bohemian-type poet who had come to Brazil for a change of scene, attracted by its image. As an acquaintance of Camilo Castelo Branco and Alexandre Herculano, he solicited contributions from them, and from Ramalho Ortigão and Silva Rabelo, for his literary magazine.⁴⁵ Brazilian collaborators included José de Alencar, J. M. de Macedo, and twenty-three-year-old Machado de Assis who was now truly a contributor to a cultural periodical of distinction. Futuro offered Machado an outlet for pent-up emotions, a chance to write regularly again under his own name, and the opportunity to appear side by side with the finest writers of the Luso-Brazilian world. Writing for Futuro was his first step to overcome the trauma of February 1862, and to his return temporarily to social and political involvement during the middle 1860s. However, Machado de Assis, from this time forth, appeared to have learned a valuable lesson; to strive to be non-controversial even when discussing contemporary political or social situations.

The avoidance of a partisan approach where politics was involved would seem to characterize his post-1862 writings. The first four articles for Futuro, published between September 15, 1862 and January 1, 1863, were very similar to the old Comentários da Semana columns in the Diário, without the

political polemics but with reviews of the theater and literature, and some national and international cultural chit-chat about such doings as the impending arrival of a famous Italian opera singer, or of a Brazilian author or diplomat in the northern part of the country or overseas. Another difference is in the tone of his essays. In the Futuro article of January 1, 1863, he welcomes the new year as a renewal of hope but makes reference to 1862 as a year of many broken trusts.⁴⁶ In the Diário columns, he had passed from one theme to another, from politics to literature to a personal attack on a government official, sometimes with breezy sarcasm in which he had appeared to be carried away with his own eloquence and rhetoric. In Futuro, the occasional sarcasm is heavy and the reviews of books and plays are matter-of-fact. Machado measures his phrases and appears restrained, almost showing no enthusiasm for his work. In January 1863, however, an international incident, the Christie Affair, returned Machado to the day-to-day world of events and conflicts. The melancholy mood of the past year, so visible in his poetry and a few essays, was dispelled.⁴⁷

In Rio de Janeiro, in late December of 1862, British naval personnel were involved in a drunken, destructive spree and were arrested by the local police. The British envoy to Brazil, Mr. Christie, demanded their immediate release and when it was not forthcoming, threatened that his government would take reprisals against Brazilian ships. The threats were not specific, but against the greatest naval power in

the world, the people of Brazil coalesced for the sake of their national honor. Everyone rallied behind the conservative government including the newspaper Diário and Machado de Assis, who expressed his opinion in the January 15, 1863 issue of Futuro.

Machado is resolute in his commentary but not strident. Our government had the courage to respond to the British demands with firm resolve, and we are in the right, he declared.⁴⁸ Patriotic, quasi-military societies were formed and Saldanha Marinho of the Diário was unanimously elected President of one named União e Perseverença. Machado de Assis, once again a thorough participant in a national issue but now from a patriotic and not a partisan point of view, wrote a passionate nationalistic poem entitled "Hino Patriótico." It was immediately set to music and sung in theaters and at patriotic rallies.⁴⁹ The words are emotional, stressing the honor of the nation, and affirming that Brazil, this country of America, will never kiss the feet of Britain.

His return to commenting on political and social themes appeared to continue though tempered by the knowledge of his past difficulties. Two months after the Christie Affair, Machado wrote a poem entitled "O Acordar da Polônia" in which he assumed an anti-Russian position with regard to the Russian domination of Poland. He supported the struggles of the Polish people to end their suffering. In the Futuro issue of March 1, 1863, he reacted happily to the news that the Brazilian government had eliminated Holy Week Pageants,

stating that they had not contributed to religious spirit. Machado, now reflective and tactful, made certain to add that without true religious education for the people of Brazil, the road ahead would lead only to materialism and the eventual death of the faith.⁵⁰ This kind of qualifying statement from Machado de Assis, an atheist in his later years and seemingly apart from religious rituals in his youth, appears to demonstrate the lessons of moderation and diplomacy learned in the aftermath of his troubles of 1862.

During the middle 1860s, Machado's attendance at many literary soirées, where he sometimes recited his own poetry and participated in dramatic readings from his plays, further appears to substantiate the hypothesis of Jean-Michel Massa that, in this period of his life, Machado was neither a stutterer nor an introvert nor a young man fearful of an epileptic attack at any moment. On November 22, 1863, at a soirée for his good friend, the Portuguese pianist, Artur Napoleão, he recited a recently written poem, "Epitáfio do México,"⁵¹ in which he predicted eventual freedom for the Mexican people from the hands of Maximilian and the French. It was similar to the poem that some months before had advocated freedom for Poland from Russian domination. From the end of 1863 to the end of 1865, Machado de Assis recited either his own poetry or translations he had made of the works of Spanish or French poets. He also participated in the reading of selections from his plays in at least six large literary gatherings that received wide press coverage.⁵² By January 1, 1866, he seemed

to be a full participant, perhaps considered by many to be already a leader, in the literary life of Rio de Janeiro. He was no longer a literary Wunderkind but now reputed to be a man of letters. However, Machado was still uncertain as to his future directions in the two fields of letters and politics in which he had been immersed since the late 1850s.

In 1863, Machado published two of his plays, O Protócolo and O Caminho da Porta, in a book optimistically entitled Teatro de Machado de Assis, Volume I. In a foreword to the book, his friend and sponsor, Quintino Bocaiuva, diplomatically criticized the two plays as lacking souls, but he conceded that the author had literary talent. Bocaiuva stated that theatrical pieces by Machado de Assis ought to be read and not performed.⁵³ These criticisms cannot be considered a definitive judgment as to the value of his plays since Machado, in attempting to portray characters and study their personalities rather than stressing social and moral messages (A theme he had advocated for theatrical productions just a few years earlier in his newspaper articles), now was adopting a point of view contrary to the direction of contemporary theater. Though he no longer espoused the theater as a vehicle for awakening the social consciousness of the people, his colleagues had not changed in their thinking. Hence, it is understandable that Bocaiuva would say that Machado wrote plays without souls, plays to be read, plays which appealed to the spirit of man and not to a live audience. In effect, this foreword was a devastating criticism

of Machado de Assis, the young playwright. Though from time to time he would continue to write a play which, despite Bocaiuva's words, would be performed, Teatro Volume II never did appear, and Machado soon abandoned the theater as his definitive genre.

Following this brief period in which the theater had been his primary mode of creative expression, Machado de Assis returned to his first love, poetry. On July 26, 1864, he contracted with the publishing company Garnier to print his first book of poems, entitled Crisálidas, which went on sale three months later and was lavishly praised.

The word crisálidas can be interpreted to mean something latent, as a butterfly still in the pupal stage. The majority of the twenty-two poems in the book, over half of which had never before been printed, are pessimistic in tone though "Epitáfio a México," "O Acordar da Polônia," and "Hino Patriótico" are included. The book contains revised versions of many poems published in magazines and newspapers; it was his wont throughout his life to revise his works and to publish them again. This makes a definitive study of Machado's thoughts at any particular time in his life extremely difficult to analyze since he sometimes would recast his work for a later edition many years after its initial printing. The critic always has to verify whether he is reading a first or a revised edition of a work. If the edition used has been printed after Machado's death, then the critic should try to discover on which edition organized by Machado the work being

read is based.

An important poem in the Crisálidas collection is "Versos a Corina," a poem of love dedicated to a young woman whose first name only is known. Jean-Michel Massa calls Corina a real person, not a fictitious one, who was a great love in Machado's life in 1864 and who rejected him, possibly because of prejudice against his background.⁵⁴ In one of his few letters to Carolina that have been preserved, Machado, in 1869, referred to Corina as a love interest that had not been reciprocated, and that he had terminated it in grief but with no remorse.⁵⁵ From the tone and length of the poem, it would appear that much sorrow had accompanied the end of the relationship. Concerning the depths of the affair between Corina and Machado, as to why they parted, or who had actually initiated the parting, no documentary proof has ever been found to answer any of these questions. The Corina romance, over by the end of 1864, remains to this day basically a mystery to all of Machado's biographers.

July 1, 1863 had marked the final issue of Futuro. In June of 1864, Machado began his collaboration with a Garnier-published, homespun-style, magazine appropriately entitled Jornal das Famílias. This magazine had begun publishing about six months before and Machado, for the fifteen years that it was to exist, would publish a total of sixty-nine short stories in it, forty-eight of them under diverse pseudonyms. Not only were his publications in the Jornal das Famílias an outlet for another literary genre in which he was

experimenting and perfecting his technique, but they were another small source of income as well. Since stories appearing in Famílias had to have a certain appeal, it appears that literary considerations did not always dictate what Machado wrote or how his material was stated.

Physically and emotionally, 1864 seems to be an important and demanding year for Machado de Assis. He bared his soul in poetry. He suffered in love. He began serious work in a new genre, the short story, and published five. He seemed to be a man-about-town, attending literary gatherings and the theater, and giving recitations of his poetry before friends and interested spectators. He began a new weekly series of chronicles in the Diário, called *Ao Acaso*, similar to the old *Comentários da Semana* column but now tempered by experience. To an observer noting all of Machado's feverish activities and his daily chores, he seems far from being the sickly, epileptic, introvert pictured by the traditional biographers. However, it is in this period that his intensive reading and writing created initial eye problems and forced him to use glasses. In later years, his graying beard and moustache, and the glasses, gave him the distinguished appearance that he desired, partly as a reflection of the writer he was, and partly to mask the African traits in his physical features that he considered a sign of low class.

The *Ao Acaso* series of chronicles, consisting of forty-two weekly articles in the Diário, written in the forty-six-week period from June 6, 1864 to May 16, 1865,

marked Machado's final series of columns in which politics was the important theme. The duration of the *Ao Acaso* chronicles coincided with a deepening international crisis in South America during 1864 and the beginning of the 1865-1870 war that aligned Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil against Paraguay.

In the *Ao Acaso* articles, the language in Machado's political attacks was as fierce as in *Comentários*, and even more caustic. However, the sentiments he expressed reflected local and national grievances rather than barrages of personal attacks directed at individual government officials. For example, he constantly excoriated the local government of Rio de Janeiro for failure to deliver the services for which it had been elected (not cleaning the streets properly, not keeping the new gas lights in good repair, not curbing vandalism) and advised the soon-to-be-chosen new administration that it should observe only three precepts: 1. attend to the city. 2. attend to the city. 3. attend to the city.⁵⁶ The irony perfected in later short stories and novels can be seen to have its origins in comments such as the one above. In addition to commenting on local matters, Machado also strongly criticized the dictators of both Paraguay and Uruguay (Ironically, Uruguay allied itself with Brazil and Argentina the following year in the war against Paraguay), denouncing them as despots without moral scruples, incapable men having no political dignity, and enslavers of their respective citizenry.⁵⁷ Other vigorous attacks were directed

against the official Catholic magazine, A Cruz, for not advocating religious tolerance.⁵⁸

The Ao Acaso chronicles terminated abruptly with the May 16, 1865 article. No advance notice was given by Machado that he was ending the series nor was there any statement subsequently made giving a reason for its termination. Perhaps, as the column had emerged week by week, the growing fierceness of the criticisms once again led to an editorial decision to cancel the column. However, as of 1865 and 1866, Machado showed no return to the pessimism and melancholia which had previously developed as a result of the cancellation of Comentários. It is possible Machado terminated the Ao Acaso chronicles of his own volition and, tired of the worldly battles and futile arguing, decided to devote more of his time to creative literature.

The second of the three great crises which Machado de Assis had to endure in the 1860s came to a climax during the first few months of 1867. He had to decide whether the newspaper Diário offered him enough wages and job security with time to write, or whether another position might be more advantageous to him. The period of decision-making can rightly be called a traumatic experience in his life because the final solution to this dilemma was precipitated by the feeling he was betrayed once again by those whom he considered his friends.

In December 1865, Saldanha Marinho, editor-in-chief of the Diário, was named President of the Province of Minas Gerais

and left Rio de Janeiro to assume his new post. His assistant, Henrique César Múzzio, accompanied him as his private secretary. No later than July of 1866, the name of Quintino Bocaiuva, who had served as editor-in-chief after Saldanha Marinho and was about to leave Rio for the United States for the purpose of experiencing that country's ideas of freedom following its Civil War, appeared no more in the Diário.⁵⁹ Twenty-seven-year-old Machado de Assis, seven years a writer, a columnist, and a friend of the Diário leadership, now became the senior man at the newspaper. He was given the total responsibility of getting out the paper though still being paid his old salary.⁶⁰ Why did he not demand a salary in keeping with his new responsibility? The Brazilian critic Luís Viana Filho takes refuge in the timidity legend; that Machado's personality would not allow him to argue and demand what he rightfully deserved. Viana further states that Quintino Bocaiuva, before leaving Rio, attempted to arrange a bureaucratic position in the Navy Department for Machado which never materialized.⁶¹

Toward the end of 1866, the picture of Machado that emerges is that of a young man once again thoroughly disillusioned. After all his effort in behalf of liberal positions (and the Liberals were now in power), he was unable to gain even a minor political appointment. Saldanha had been named the equivalent of State Governor, Múzzio had been appointed Saldanha's personal secretary, Bocaiuva had departed for the United States, and Machado de Assis, leading playwright,

essayist, poet, critic, and political pamphleteer, appeared to have been left holding the newspaper, and at the same meager salary he had always been receiving.

The fact that Bocaiuva attempted to place Machado in the Navy Department before July 1866 is proof of Machado's desire to enter government service, no doubt for the security this type of position would offer him, in preference to the time and energy that responsibilities at the Diário required. Though a leading writer, critic, and supporter of the political party in power, it was not until April 8, 1867, almost one year after beginning the search for a better position, that he was named assistant to the publisher of the Diário Oficial, the official government publication. Machado was to hold this new position until January of 1874 while, at the same time, the Diário, stripped of its leadership, would undergo several rapid changes of ownership until it permanently closed in the latter half of 1868.

The years of work on the Diário, supporting the Liberals and leading the editorial attacks against the Conservatives, brought Machado little financial reward. By 1869, he had married Carolina and even the new position that he had secured with the Diário Oficial would scarcely provide him with enough remuneration to support his wife. His second disillusionment with the political system seemed outwardly to remove politics from his thoughts. He needed the security and steady salary provided by government service, and not to be dependent on a partisan appointment. Therefore, once

again he became embittered. To ensure his personal economic survival, it is logical to believe that he decided for the second time to abstain from political polemics as he had once before vowed to do in the Diário in 1862. With the return to power of the Conservatives on July 1, 1868, Machado, in an article for the Imprensa Acadêmica of São Paulo, stated that he is not a politician and does not take sides in political disputes, but always adopts the cold impartiality of reason.⁶² Thus, Machado the practical politician had replaced Machado the political partisan.

A question that can never be adequately answered but which must be discussed is to what extent Machado's difficulties economically and with employment actually originated from his racial and social background. In 1860, in a city where half the population was slave (and he had obvious physical features denoting a partial African origin), he worked for and with men from a different social background, many of whom were natives of Portugal. During the late 1850s and throughout the 1860s, despite his important contributions to literature and to the political struggles, it seems many of his colleagues and acquaintances did not appear to consider him their equal; a fact which would further contribute to embitterment and withdrawal. Likewise, in Machado's courtship of Carolina, prejudice on the part of her family caused him additional emotional suffering between late 1868 and 1870.⁶³

Until recent discoveries by Luís Viana Filho and Jean-

Michel Massa, the traditional biographers of Machado de Assis had stated that Carolina Xavier de Novais had come to Brazil from Portugal sometime during 1866 to care for her brother Faustino who had developed mental illness. Immediately after her meeting with Machado and their falling in love, he is said to have wanted to leave the Diário and obtain a higher paying position so that he could marry her and not have to struggle economically. Difficulty in overcoming the opposition of her family (with the exception of Faustino), solely based on his mulatto background, postponed their marriage until late 1869. Finally, in November 1869, they married and began their life together with dignity and in middle-class surroundings.

However, it was on June 19, 1868 that the Diário reported the names of the passengers on the French boat Estremadure which had arrived from Portugal the day before. Viana states that Artur Napoleão, the pianist and friend of Machado de Assis, had been a passenger as well as Carolina Xavier de Novais. This corrects her arrival in Rio de Janeiro to two years after Machado's initial desire to leave the Diário and to a year and three months after he had accepted the position with the Diário Oficial. Thus Carolina had played no part in his personal crisis and subsequent change of direction between 1866 and 1868.⁶⁴

Carolina was thirty-three years old, single, and not unattractive in her photographs. According to Massa (citing the biography of Artur Napoleão), she might have been forced

to leave Portugal because of an unhappy love affair, and had traveled to Brazil to begin a new life. Her parents had died the year before. She was accompanied on the voyage by Artur Napoleão, who, coincidentally, was a family friend.⁶⁵ Her brother Faustino truly was ill and did need care, but it must also be noted that Faustino would be the only member of the family who strongly would support her marriage to Machado. There is ample circumstantial evidence that Faustino, although suffering from mental illness but with periods of lucidity, knew the personalities of his sister and his good friend Machado, and contrived to bring them together.

In May 1869, Machado de Assis contracted with Garnier to publish Falenas, his second book of poetry, and Contos Fluminenses, his first book of short stories in which all but one, "Miss Dollar," had already been published in the Jornal das Famílias. In September, just prior to Machado's wedding on November 12, 1869, Garnier advanced him money for another book of short stories and for two novels not yet written. The novels were entitled Resurreição and Ô Manuscrito do Licenciado Gaspar.⁶⁶ Of the latter title, nothing is known nor was a work ever written including this particular character. To the emotional stress as a result of his humiliation by the members of Carolina's family, and to the task of writing his first two novels, which fortunately had a publisher before they were written, was added the tragic loss of Faustino in March 1869, his friend and only supporter in the Novais family.

Despite his position with the Diário Oficial and the advanced payments from Garnier, Machado found himself short of funds with which to take and furnish a house and to begin married life. Before and after the wedding, he was forced to borrow from his friend Ramos Paz, with whom he had previously shared lodgings.⁶⁷

Carolina had brought no dowry with her from Portugal. She was one of five children of an artisan watchmaker, Antônio Luís de Novais, and his wife, Custódia Emília, who belonged to the middle class.⁶⁸ Coming from a family which was neither wealthy nor upper class in Portugal, she would nevertheless tend to rise in status as soon as she arrived in Brazil, being white and Portuguese. Thus the difference in social class between Machado and Carolina does not appear to be as great as has been reported by the traditional biographers, apparently a bit desirous of creating an embellished romantic legend.

This third intense traumatic period in less than a decade might have been the final blow in bringing about the onset of the epilepsy and stuttering that would accompany him the rest of his life. There is no actual evidence that Machado had suffered these illnesses prior to his marriage. All biographers make the point that Carolina did not know of the epilepsy until one day, in 1870, Machado collapsed in an attack of grand mal in her presence. It is logical to ask how, if he had been epileptic before, all his attacks had remained undetected, since he had been working under intense pressure and had been attending evening parties for years.

Could it have been that, in fifteen months of courtship, no one in gossipy Rio had informed any member of the Novais family of this fact? It is more probable to conclude that the cumulative effects of the three traumas of the 1860s, his mental struggles for finding the proper creative path of intellectual expression, his quest for financial independence, and the attainment of status for a poor mulatto among higher society, all took their toll upon Machado de Assis. The predisposition toward epilepsy must have been with him always, but the impact of successive unfortunate events appeared to have brought it to the fore.

Machado, Carolina, and Literary
Maturity (1870-1904)

Machado and Carolina had been married almost thirty-five years when she died on October 20, 1904. Machado survived her by nearly four years. Having been slightly more than thirty years old at the time of their marriage, just about one-half of his entire life had been shared with Carolina.

The friends and acquaintances of the literary master and his wife were many. Since they had no children, Machado no close relatives, and Carolina few surviving ones, the couple's family was small in number. Aside from three extensive visits to Nova Friburgo, a town located in the mountains some one hundred miles from Rio de Janeiro, Machado and Carolina resided in the city for all thirty-five years of their marriage. Except for eleven months during 1898,

Machado had held a series of positions in the federal bureaucracy from 1874 until requesting a leave of absence for health just three months prior to his death on September 29, 1908. The need for tranquility in his surroundings, the opportunity to contemplate and write, the daily responsibilities of his work in the government (in which all biographers report that he was a model official), the chronic epilepsy and stuttering which had created the timid and withdrawn Machado de Assis as depicted by Lúcia Miguel Pereira, and his profound love for his devoted wife with whom he wished to share as many hours as possible, had been the contributory forces which brought about a well-ordered, regulated life for Machado and Carolina that had begun soon after their marriage. With the publication of Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas in 1881, the majority of the writers and critics in Brazil (The most notable exception was Sílvio Romero) now recognized Machado de Assis as the nation's most important author of fiction.

It must be recalled that Brazil, and especially Rio de Janeiro, underwent enormous changes between 1870 and 1904. The Empire became a Republic. The nobility was stripped of its titles. Slavery was slowly but finally eliminated. The appearance of a modern city became visible in the form of covered sewers, electricity, horse-drawn streetcars, and a population of nearly one million by 1904.⁶⁹ Upper-class residential areas expanded southwest from the downtown section of Rio and now covered the entire zone from the Morro do Castelo near the business district to the Morro de São João, located

between Botafogo and the still virgin beaches of Copacabana. As the city expanded in this direction, Machado and Carolina moved toward more tranquil surroundings, away from its commotion. From their first home on the Rua dos Andradas near Castelo, which was within walking distance of the government buildings, publishers, bookstores, and theaters, the couple moved south and west, to Catete, and finally, in 1884, to their last residence, on Rua Cosme Velho, in the district of Laranjeiras.⁷⁰

By the beginning of 1870, the course of Machado's life appeared to change abruptly. No longer did there seem to be periods of soul-searching about which direction to take, or conflicts with associates, politicians, and superiors. Marriage, the emergence of the epilepsy, and the turn toward the novel and short story literary genres, seemed greatly to alter his personality as the decade progressed. For a man anguished by the fear of losing dignity from attacks of grand mal in public, always conscious of a feeling of inferiority and powerless to overcome it, except by attempting to be socially accepted through his writing, and having to work within the bureaucracy to support himself and his wife, the 1870s were the period of his most prolific literary activity. However, this was not the era in which he produced his best works. Between 1870 and 1878, he published four of his nine novels, or one novel exactly every two years. They were: Resurreição (1872), A Mão e a Luva (1874), Helena (1876), and Iaiá Garcia (1878). In addition, he translated into Portuguese over one

hundred fifty pages of Charles Dickens' novel Oliver Twist, wrote at least sixty short stories, and many articles of criticism including his famous critique of the novel O Primo Basílio by Eça de Queirós. .

In January 1874, Machado left the Diário Oficial and obtained a better position in the government. His new title was First Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works.⁷¹ None of his biographers tell specifically how he secured this post. The reason, however, for accepting a position totally divorced from his career as a writer would appear to be financial. There is no doubt that with his salary and additional funds from the sale of his books, short stories, and articles, Machado and Carolina were assured of an income that would enable them to maintain a middle-class standard of living. On his thirty-seventh birthday, June 21, 1876, Machado was appointed head of one of the two sections in the agricultural division of the ministry with a thirty-five per cent raise in salary. Later in the year, he became head of the entire agricultural division.⁷² Finally, after changing homes three times during the decade, the couple moved to the Rua do Catete, an upper middle-class residential street.

Since Machado did not leave a substantial legacy, it can be surmised that they were always, with careful planning, able to live within his income, and he could rely on a pension at retirement. Descriptions of their successive homes tell of tasteful furnishings. Photographs of Machado show

him attired in the manner befitting his profession and social position. While there are no accounts of any philanthropic gifts, neither are there any post-1870 instances reported that he had to resort to further loans.

Emotionally, the bureaucratic positions appeared to be a perfect complement to Machado's role as an author. The ministry was certainly less of a pressure than the newspapers, for which time was always of the utmost importance. The titles of his posts carried the connotation of social advancement; he was the man who reported directly to the Minister. His day began with his rising at dawn. Breakfast with Carolina, a walk in the garden, some hours of writing, and lunch generally preceded his departure for the ministry. Late afternoons were spent conversing with friends at bookstores or attending to personal matters in the city. At dinner, Carolina reviewed his morning writing with him. Many of their evenings were enjoyed either in quiet rest and reflection at home or at nearby homes with friends where Machado would excel at chess.

Life among the bureaucracy, the middle to upper-class society, and contact with the intellectuals, afforded him the opportunity to observe closely the bureaucrats, the women, the idle rich, the social climbers, and the parasites. However, it was not until December 1878 that an enforced period of idleness for the first time in his life, as his analytical powers were deepening, provided the occasion for him to think and to focus more precisely on people's personalities. He

was now able to express in words his growing pessimistic view of a world he increasingly found devoid of reason, logic, order, or hope.

Lúcia Miguel Pereira discreetly discusses the infirmities Machado suffered during the latter half of 1878 to about March of 1879. She refers to them as general fatigue resulting from overwork, an intestinal disorder, and an eye illness.⁷³ However, there is little doubt that Machado truly experienced a complete physical breakdown caused by years of working to excess: the ministry posts, the prodigious amounts of novels written during the 1870s, the collaborations on various newspapers and magazines, and the acceptances of special commissions to prepare speeches and write introductions to various works. Though he had considerably reduced his commitments by early 1878, the cumulative effect of so many years of hard work could not be remedied without complete rest.

In 1895, in a letter to his friend Magalhães de Azeredo, Machado himself briefly commented about that period in his life.

Eu não sei se teria agora tanta paciência; e, contudo, já fui doente exemplar, quando padeci de uma retinite e me proibiram ler. Estive assim longas semanas. Era minha mulher que me lia tudo. Para o fim serviu-me de secretária. As Memórias Posthumas de Braz Cubas foram começadas por esse tempo; dictei-lhe creio que meia duzia de capítulos.⁷⁴

The eye disease was retinitis, which had forced him to suspend temporarily all reading and writing. The fear of going blind, and a state of depression evoked by wondering if death were imminent, gripped Machado and led to his decision to leave

Rio de Janeiro and go to the mountain town of Nova Friburgo where he hoped that rest and the healthier climate would cure him.

For three months, Machado and Carolina stayed in Nova Friburgo. For the first time in his life, Machado had the opportunity to do nothing but think. Though Carolina's care and the long rest nursed him back to health, nevertheless, pessimistic thoughts of death, oblivion, and the futility of life took profound possession of him. After returning to Rio and still unable to do much intense reading, he resumed his post at the ministry. One year later, from March to December of 1880, a new novel of his was published serially in the Revista Brasileira.

The novel was Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas. It is the story of a bureaucrat who drifted through life, neither attaining the noteworthy status he desired, nor making any lasting contribution to the world. In an undertone within the book, there runs the question: what is the purpose of leaving a legacy to a world in which all things now alive will be extinct in one hundred years?

In his book Machado de Assis Desconhecido, Raimundo Magalhães Júnior becomes the first commentator to state that Machado had started to write Bras Cubas about the middle of 1878.⁷⁵ All other critics have consistently placed its inception in March of 1879, some nine months later, after Machado's return to Rio from Nova Friburgo. If Magalhães is correct, then the traumatic period of Machado's alarming

illnesses and gradual recovery, which extended at least for the six months from September 1878 to March 1879, would have had little influence upon his new literary path.

Magalhães bases his conclusion on rather weak evidence. He cites the excerpt from the letter Machado wrote to Magalhães de Azeredo in 1895, quoted four paragraphs above. In the letter, Machado made an incidental remark that he had started Bras Cubas by dictating half a dozen chapters to Carolina about the time of his eye illness when he was prohibited from using his sight. Magalhães then quotes a sentence from the September 14, 1878 edition of the Revista Ilustrada, which stated that Machado de Assis ". . . está quase reestabelecido de um gravíssimo incômodo, que o ia privando da vista do olho direito, . . ."76 Some member of their family or a friend most likely read this statement and doubtlessly informed Carolina of it. She would have read it to him. What other words, therefore, could have been more polite and appropriate for the newspaper to say than that Machado had "almost recovered" from this serious condition. In the four months from September to December of 1878, there appeared in print only two short stories, totaling twenty-eight pages. From January until June of 1879, nothing of his had been published: no poems, chronicles, articles of criticism, or short stories. This refutes the idea that Machado had "almost recovered" by September 14, 1878. Although at any time between June 1878 and March 1879 he could have dictated the first half dozen or so chapters of Bras Cubas to

Carolina, it is difficult to conclude that he had written very much of it before his return to Rio de Janeiro in March of 1879. The total evidence presented by Magalhães to support his contention that Machado had begun to write Bras Cubas in the middle of 1878 consists only of casual remarks in a letter Machado wrote to Azeredo seventeen years later, and one sentence from a newspaper column expressing an optimistic view of his supposed recovery.

The novel appeared serially in the Revista Brasileira from March until December of 1880. If Machado had begun writing it no later than the previous March, he still would have had one year to write and correct the first part of the book, and nine more months to devote to the final chapters. The few publications by Machado in 1880 (only thirteen poems and a one-act play, no short stories or chronicles) suggests he dedicated virtually all of his literary efforts and time to Bras Cubas.

Lúcia Miguel Pereira feels that excessive work at the ministry and the return to collaboration on newspapers and magazines were the reasons Machado had completed no more novels during the next ten years.⁷⁷ It is more probable that, after creating Bras Cubas, Machado had nothing additional to say in novelistic form until he could personally reach a different stage in life from which he could portray man in the human condition from other viewpoints, but still embody the pessimistic attitude which had crystallized in Nova Friburgo.

It is in the short story, the literary genre where time and space are restricted, and where only one episode in the life of the main character is usually presented, that Machado de Assis found the proper vehicle in which to proceed. In short stories during the 1880s and 1890s, Machado would examine the behavior of man, coincidentally preparing the way for other novels. Between Bras Cubas in 1881 and the beginning of the publication in 1886 of his next novel, Quincas Borba, as a serial in the periodical A Estação, he wrote over seventy-five short stories.

In January and February of 1882, Machado returned to Nova Friburgo to attempt to restore his health weakened again from excessive work undertaken during the previous two years. The two summers spent in the mountains, in the cool, healthy climate, proved to be the proper environment for his physical recovery. Because of this, he was able to complete two novels, numerous short stories, and chronicles by the late 1890s with no further leaves of absence requested from the ministry.

After many revisions, Quincas Borba was finally completed and published as a book in 1891, ten years after Bras Cubas. In Quincas Borba, the principal character, Rubião, whose life is as shallow as Bras Cubas', at last comprehends the necessity of insanity, like his late patron, Quincas Borba, as the only way to confront realistically the abyss of death. "To the victor the potatoes," the summation of Quincas Borba's irrational philosophy, which he called Humanity, was

understood by Rubião, the victim of exploiters and parasites, only after his mind ceased to function in the manner of those about him. A sane Rubião appears at the onset of the novel and an utterly insane Rubião, but a man who has learned Machado's truth about life, dies at its conclusion.

In Dom Casmurro, Machado's next novel, published in 1899, the protagonist Bento, an old man, narrates the story of his life which has been filled with jealousy and intrigue. He is convinced that his late wife, Capitu, had been unfaithful to him. It is not until the end of the novel that the careful reader realizes that Bento is insane. Therefore, his entire story must be adjudged as a ranting justification for his past attitudes and actions toward his deceased wife and son, and it cannot be accepted as fact.

From 1881, the year in which Bras Cubas was published, Machado de Assis was unquestionably the most important author of fiction in Brazil. Physically, he began to resemble the figure of the type of man he had always longed to be: an elder statesman, and a respected advisor. In his two roles as writer and government official, he attended numerous receptions, dinners, and luncheons, and mingled with honored guests and the nobility whom he had so vehemently denounced in chronicles in the late 1850s and 1860s. His hair turned gray and then white. It was clipped short around the neck and ears, drawing attention from the front of his face. He grew a beard and moustache which seemed to mask the African traits of his lips and nose, which in his mind had revealed

himself to the world to be a man of lower class origin. With the pince nez he had begun using in the middle 1870s, Machado de Assis created a pictorial likeness of a man now commanding the dignity and respect he had not received in his youth.

At this time, it was the youth of Brazil who revered him as the master of literature. And it was an aging Machado who wanted the friendship of the youth so as to remain in contact with the new generation of writers of fiction and criticism. His circle of young friends included José Veríssimo, who had come to Rio de Janeiro from the northern State of Pará in 1891, Magalhães de Azeredo, with whom he maintained a continuous correspondence, and especially Mário de Alencar, son of the romantic novelist, José de Alencar.⁷⁸ To Machado, young Alencar became the son he and Carolina never had, and who would be his closest companion and friend in the last years of his life.

When the Brazilian Academy of Arts and Letters, patterned after the world-famous French Academy, was founded in 1896, Machado de Assis was unanimously acclaimed its first president. Though credit for its foundation lay more with Lúcio de Mendonça than with Machado,⁷⁹ no other choice for president was logical. Once Machado was installed, he devoted much of his remaining life to insure the survival of the Academy, the third major literary society of which he had been a founding member, and the only one to endure and prosper. Two previous cultural organizations, the Arcádia Fluminense of 1865, and the Grêmio de Letras e Artes of 1887,

failed to exist for more than four months, because the former had no permanent place in which to hold its meetings and events,⁸⁰ and the latter had no funds and there was disunity among its founders concerning goals and methods for the election of new members.⁸¹

The master politician that Machado had become, perceived his role in the Academy as that of a unifying force. He engineered compromises in election of members, lobbied for funds from influential officials with whom he served in the government, initiated non-controversial projects, namely, a study of the problem of orthography and the compilation of a dictionary of Brazilian idioms,⁸² and endeavored to establish a permanent building for the Academy. It was not until 1904 that a government decree of 1900 was carried out which provided the Academy with official quarters. The organization was not to be without some difficult moments but its survival had been assured.

Many years in Machado's life had passed since the turbulent 1860s and his constant preoccupation with obtaining secure employment. From 1874 until 1897, he had served in the Ministry of Agriculture, Transportation, and Public Works, during the Monarchy and the Republic, surviving the crisis of revolution. His position was never guaranteed by a contract and was always dependent upon favors granted by the political party in power at the time. By the non-political nature of the offices he held, by avoiding partisan issues, by proving himself extremely competent in his assigned tasks,

by developing diplomatic skill, by avoiding conflicts with other individuals wherever possible, by cultivating friendships, and by his ever-increasing literary reputation which had elevated him in status above all other bureaucrats, Machado de Assis remained steadily employed for twenty-three years.

On January 1, 1898, by virtue of a merger of cabinet departments and President Prudêncio de Moraes' choice of an engineer to head the newly created position, Machado de Assis was dismissed. Diplomatically, it was called "being placed on availability," though he retained his salary through a special law promulgated for him. In reality, he was compelled to retire as a bureaucrat and was subsidized as a writer. But Lúcia Miguel Pereira and Raimundo Magalhães Júnior believe that an old disagreement with a high-ranking cabinet official was the cause of Machado's dismissal.⁸³ Coincidentally at this time Machado, under the pretext of advancing age (He was fifty-eight years old), had suspended all contributions to newspapers and magazines of chronicles and short stories with the exception of one short story each year until his death for inclusion in the Almanaque Brasileiro Garnier.⁸⁴ It is difficult to determine if this decision stemmed from bitterness over his "retirement," but it was during this period that he completed the novel Dom Casmurro.

Eleven months later, on November 16, 1898, Machado was appointed private secretary to the new Minister of Transportation, a position he held but disliked until the end

of 1902, during the terms of office of two subsequent ministers. Later, with a more favorable regime in power, he was reinstated as Director General of Accounting, this time in the Ministry of Transportation.⁸⁵ He remained at his new post until shortly before his death, taking only a brief leave of absence at the beginning of 1904 when Carolina became seriously ill.

Lúcia Miguel Pereira attributes the onset of Carolina's final illness to her ingestion of a poison sent by a druggist instead of Epsom Salts, which had been ordered.⁸⁶ It is difficult to believe that this accident could have produced intestinal cancer, the cause of her death as stated on official records.⁸⁷ In a weakened state, Carolina was taken to Nova Friburgo in January of 1904 by a weary Machado. He was hopeful that her illness would be cured with rest just as his had been years before, since in her case no diagnosis of any malignancy had been rendered.⁸⁸

Carolina returned from the mountains temporarily improved but soon became progressively weaker. Cared for primarily by Machado and her niece, Fanny de Araújo (whom Lúcia Miguel Pereira often cites as her primary source of information about the couple's last few years), Carolina suffered for many months prior to her death on October 20.

Raimundo Magalhães Júnior does not share Lúcia Miguel Pereira's opinion that Carolina was almost a collaborator of Machado who helped him to perfect his style, corrected his grammar (especially the use of pronouns), proofread his work,

and even suggested names for some of his fictional characters. Magalhães accepts Machado's own statements in a letter he wrote to Mário de Alencar in which Machado agreed with his young friend's observation that the character Carmo, wife of Aguiar, in his last novel Memorial de Aires, written after Carolina's death, was the fictional personification of her. Carmo is portrayed as the perfect companion to Aguiar, who shares her husband's private life, and without her he would be eternally grief-stricken and lonely.⁸⁹

Magalhães believes that Carolina was not the intellectual equal of Machado but a dedicated companion who gave him care and love, and with or without her, Machado would have become successful.⁹⁰ This point can never be proven but, during his physical and emotional crisis of 1878-1879, before Bras Cubas, Quincas Borba, and Dom Casmurro were written, it was Carolina who had nursed him back to health. She maintained an orderly and tranquil home thus allowing Machado to concentrate on ministerial and literary matters. It appears that she was able to keep him relatively well for many years, enabling him to produce a massive amount of work. Carolina was not a literary collaborator but a life collaborator who appeared in his life at a fortuitous moment. Her death was a shock to him, worsening his own illnesses and shortening his days.

The Years Alone (1905-1908)

The memory of Carolina remained constantly with Machado.

The house on Rua Cosme Velho continued to be his home and he made no changes in it. Each Sunday, as long as he was physically able, Machado went to the São João Batista Cemetery to place flowers on her grave. In letters of appreciation for their sympathy written to Joaquim Nabuco, Salvador de Mendonça, Alencar, and Magalhães de Azeredo, Machado told of the immensity of his loss and why he would have wanted to precede her in death since no one could have prepared him better for it than she. If he had succumbed before her, she would have had some relatives to comfort her whereas he had no family of his own to console him in his bereavement.

The majority of letters written during the last four years of his life are filled with a deep outward pessimism and a longing for sympathy and comfort which the ailing, aging, and extremely lonely Machado de Assis sorely needed. Although he plunged into affairs at the Academy with skill and energy, wrote another novel and some short stories, and continued to work at the ministry, his friends and he knew that his health was in a precarious state, and that the end of his life would not be too far distant.⁹¹

In August of 1905, Joaquim Nabuco, who was in Europe, sent Graça Aranha in Rio de Janeiro a branch cut from the oak tree above the grave of the poet Tasso, to be presented to Machado in the name of the Academy. The testimonial dinner given in his honor along with this symbolic award deeply moved him, and the knowledge that he was so dearly loved and respected encouraged him to return to the writing of fiction.⁹²

The affection and esteem of his fellow academicians were truly put to a test a few months later when Machado departed from his customary diplomacy and allowed his personal feelings to guide his actions. To fill a vacancy in the Academy, Machado had proposed his young friend, Mário de Alencar, who personally knew he was unqualified. Machado insisted that Alencar should not withdraw himself as a candidate even though he would be contesting with the novelist Domingos Olímpio, author of the celebrated novel Luzia Homem. Machado quietly let it be known among the members of the Academy whom he was supporting in the forthcoming election. Alencar, who could not oppose his old friend's wishes, gained the chair by a vote of seventeen to ten. This prompted another friend of Machado and member of the Academy, José Veríssimo, who had supported Domingos Olímpio, to write a sarcastic congratulatory letter to Alencar stating that he was honored to be among those who had absolute confidence in his literary future.⁹³ Fortunately, the Academy weathered the storm of controversy generated by Machado de Assis and continued to prosper.

Earlier in 1905, Machado had contracted with Garnier for the publication of Relíquias de Casa Velha, a book consisting of short stories, two plays, several articles of criticism, and one poem which was a sonnet dedicated to Carolina. He was also planning another novel in which the soul and spirit of his late wife would be immortalized by two fictional characters.

Memorial de Aires, Machado's last novel, was written

during 1906 and 1907 and first appeared in print in July of 1908. It was Mário de Alencar who, after analyzing the characters in Aires, elicited in return correspondence from Machado the confession that the character Carmo was definitely modeled after his Carolina.⁹⁴ However, it remained for Helen Caldwell, in her 1970 book entitled Machado de Assis, the Brazilian Master and His Novels, to discover that while Carmo depicts the mature Carolina, the character Fidélia, seemingly confused in the author's original handwritten manuscript with Carmo some 167 times, is not at all drawn from a new, late-in-life love of Machado's as hinted at by Lúcia Miguel Pereira,⁹⁵ but is actually a portrayal of Carolina as a young woman.⁹⁶

Unlike any other of the post-1880 novels (Bras Cubas, Quincas Borba, Dom Casmurro, and Esaú e Jacó), Memorial de Aires ends on a note of optimism. Both representations of Carolina are alive and well. Carmo is still married to her beloved Aguiar, and Fidélia, after slowly and naturally drawing away from her vow to remain a widow the rest of her life, is married to Tristão. The agony of separation that occurs in this novel is an agony of the living as Fidélia and Tristão must reside in Portugal while the older couple continue to live in Rio de Janeiro. Aires himself, the narrator as author, and Machado's alter ego, is still the handsome, healthy, retired diplomat actively whirling through Rio society in joyful involvement.⁹⁷

In retrospect, from 1880 to 1904, Machado's health was stable. Though occasionally beset with attacks of epilepsy,

his life was rich and abundant. He had his beloved Carolina, his social and economic status had risen, and he was famous among literate people throughout Brazil. This was the time of the greatest pessimism in his novels. After 1904 though, he had lost Carolina, his health had begun to deteriorate, and he was aging rapidly. However, the one novel he was able to write is optimistic in tone. It is set in the late 1880s, during the period in his life in which he had had the greatest happiness.

Machado's daily routine of writing in the morning at home, then working at the ministry, and visiting with friends late in the afternoon at the Garnier bookstore, was carried on under constant physical and emotional strain. He experienced more frequent attacks of epilepsy and was forced to carry a plainly visible card advising passersby how to help him should he become ill in the street. A photograph of Machado being helped to a bench after suffering what was delicately called a fainting spell is shown in the Aguilar edition of Obra Completa, Volume I.⁹⁸

On June 1, 1908, he was forced to begin an open-ended leave of absence from the ministry. Beset by a recurring intestinal disorder which impeded his digestion, a cancerous tongue which had developed from bites, self-inflicted during epileptic seizures, thus making eating difficult, and arteriosclerosis, Machado simply did not have the strength to continue working.

In letters sent to friends overseas (Nabuco, Salvador

de Mendonça, himself gravely ill, and Magalhães de Azeredo), and accompanied with copies of Memorial de Aires, Machado informed them that this was his last book.⁹⁹ Though the form of the novel and the wording of the preface afforded Machado the opportunity to write further memoirs of Counselor Aires, which would also have ostensibly been found in a desk drawer in the late diplomat's house, in truth he could write no more.

Machado de Assis died early in the morning on September 29, 1908 in his house on Rua Cosme Velho, surrounded by members of the Academy and other friends. His body was taken to the Academy to lie in state. He was given a State funeral, which was attended by the President of the Republic.¹⁰⁰ According to his wishes, he was buried in São João Batista Cemetery in the same grave with Carolina. A plaster mask of his face taken just after death clearly revealed his African ancestry, although the entry on the death certificate classified him as white.¹⁰¹ He had at last achieved the social status that he had always sought, and had left to posterity an enduring legacy of literature.

Footnotes

¹J. Galante de Sousa, Machado de Assis e Outros Estudos (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Cátedra, 1979), p. 17.

²Lúcia Miguel Pereira, Machado de Assis, 5^a edição, Coleção Documentos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro: José Olímpio, 1955), p. 43.

³Ibid., p. 82. ⁴Ibid., p. 131.

⁵Ibid., p. 128, quoted from Machado de Assis, Poesias Completas (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson Inc., 1950), p. 14.

⁶Pereira, Machado de Assis, pp. 130-131.

⁷Jean Michel Massa, La Jeunesse de Machado de Assis, Essai de Biographie Intellectuelle, Volume I, thèse pour le doctorat ès-lettres présentée à la faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Poitiers, 1969, pp. 2-3.

⁸Ibid., p. 50. ⁹Ibid., p. 53. ¹⁰Ibid., p. 56.

¹¹Ibid., p. 62. ¹²Ibid., p. 76. ¹³Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 77. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 78. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume III, Poesia, Crônica, Crítica, Miscelânea e Epistolário (Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), pp. 785-789.

¹⁸Massa, La Jeunesse, pp. 208, 211.

¹⁹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume III, pp. 785-789.

²⁰Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 227.

²¹Ibid., p. 214. ²²Ibid., p. 219. ²³Ibid., p. 224.

²⁴Machado de Assis, Crítica Teatral (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson Inc., 1957), p. 120.

²⁵Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume III, pp. 789-798.

²⁶Machado de Assis, Crônicas, 3º Volume (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson Inc., 1957), p. 14.

- ²⁷Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 279, quoted from Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume III, pp. 951-956.
- ²⁸Ibid., pp. 956-958.
- ²⁹Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 281.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 317.
- ³¹Machado de Assis, Crítica Literária (São Paulo: Livro do Mês S. A., 1962), p. 29.
- ³²Massa, La Jeunesse, pp. 321-325.
- ³³Jornal do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro), 1 July 1965, p. 133.
- ³⁴José Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia de Machado de Assis (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1955), pp. 344-345. .
- ³⁵Ibid., pp. 335-336. ³⁶Ibid., pp. 343-344.
- ³⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume III, p. 637.
- ³⁸Massa, La Jeunesse, pp. 340-341.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 357. ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 359. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 363.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 374. ⁴³Ibid., p. 377.
- ⁴⁴Jean Michel Massa, A Juventude de Machado de Assis, tradução de Marco Aurélio de Moura Matos (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1971), p. 445.
- ⁴⁵Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 368.
- ⁴⁶Machado de Assis, Crônicas, 3º Volume, p. 320.
- ⁴⁷Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 380.
- ⁴⁸Machado de Assis, Crônicas, 3º Volume, p. 328.
- ⁴⁹Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 383.
- ⁵⁰Machado de Assis, Crônicas, 3º Volume, p. 351.
- ⁵¹José Galante de Sousa, "Cronologia de Machado de Assis," Revista do Livro, September 1958, p. 147.
- ⁵²Ibid., pp. 146-148.
- ⁵³Machado de Assis, Theatro (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson Inc., 1944), p. 19.

- ⁵⁴Massa, La Jeunesse, p. 431.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 428.
- ⁵⁶Machado de Assis, Crônicas, 4º Volume (São Paulo: W. M. Jackson Inc., 1957), p. 107.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 197-200. ⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 145-146.
- ⁵⁹Massa, A Juventude, pp. 499-500.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 502.
- ⁶¹Luís Viana Filho, A Vida de Machado de Assis (São Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1965), pp. 66-67.
- ⁶²Massa, A Juventude, p. 577, quoted from Imprensa Acadêmica (São Paulo), 14 August 1868, p. 13.
- ⁶³Massa, A Juventude, p. 586.
- ⁶⁴Viana, A Vida, p. 79.
- ⁶⁵Massa, A Juventude, pp. 579-583.
- ⁶⁶Revista do Livro, p. 150.
- ⁶⁷Massa, A Juventude, p. 592.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., p. 580.
- ⁶⁹Brazil 1966 (Ministry of External Relations), p. 140.
- ⁷⁰Revista do Livro, pp. 150-154.
- ⁷¹Ibid., p. 152.
- ⁷²José Bettencourt Machado, Machado of Brazil (New York: Bramerica, 1953), p. 105.
- ⁷³Pereira, Machado de Assis, pp. 167-174.
- ⁷⁴Correspondência de Machado de Assis com Magalhães de Azeredo, edição preparada por Carmelo Virgílio (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1969), p. 41.
- ⁷⁵Raimundo Magalhães Júnior, Machado de Assis Desconhecido, terceira edição (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, S/A, 1957), pp. 308.
- ⁷⁶Ibid.
- ⁷⁷Pereira, Machado de Assis, pp. 182-194.

- ⁷⁸Viana, A Vida, p. 140.
- ⁷⁹Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 214.
- ⁸⁰Massa, A Juventude, p. 495.
- ⁸¹Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 187.
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 214.
- ⁸³Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 217; Magalhães, Desconhecido, pp. 200-203.
- ⁸⁴Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 223.
- ⁸⁵Revista do Livro, p. 165.
- ⁸⁶Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 257.
- ⁸⁷Revista do Livro, p. 166.
- ⁸⁸Correspondência de Machado de Assis com Magalhães de Azeredo, p. 252.
- ⁸⁹Magalhães, Desconhecido, pp. 315-316.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., p. 316.
- ⁹¹In A Vida, Viana reprinted parts of letters exchanged between Machado de Assis and various friends; see pp. 229-282.
- ⁹²Viana, A Vida, p. 252.
- ⁹³cited by Viana, A Vida, p. 256.
- ⁹⁴cited by Viana, A Vida, p. 266.
- ⁹⁵Pereira, Machado de Assis, p. 273.
- ⁹⁶Helen Caldwell, Machado de Assis The Brazilian Master and His Novels (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 198-201.
- ⁹⁷Machado de Assis, Memorial de Ayres (Rio de Janeiro: H. Garnier, Livreiro-Editor, 1908), pp. 265-273.
- ⁹⁸Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Renard Pérez, Volume I, Romance, nota preliminar de Barreto Filho (Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Aguilar Ltda., 1959), p. xlviii.
- ⁹⁹cited by Viana, A Vida, p. 273.

¹⁰⁰Caldwell, The Brazilian Master, pp. 222-223.

¹⁰¹Revista do Livro, p. 168.

CHAPTER II

CONTOS FLUMINENSES

In 1862, Machado de Assis began in earnest to write short stories. The only story he had previously written was "Tres Tesouros Perdidos" in 1858, a product of his adolescence which should not be critically discussed. The volume Contos Fluminenses, organized by Machado in 1869 and published in 1870, represents the author's choice at that time of which short stories he wished to bring before the public in book form. Let us not forget that in 1869 Machado was only thirty years old. He had recently married Carolina and had not yet embarked upon a life of relative tranquility and orderliness she was about to provide for him. He had not yet entered the bureaucracy. He was still earning his living from his position on the Diário Oficial and from the sale of his short stories, poems, and articles of criticism to various publications. His physical breakdown at the end of 1878, which greatly contributed to his developing philosophy of pessimism, was still nearly a decade away.

In counting, compiling, and organizing chronologically all the short stories written by Machado de Assis, there exists a major problem. Prior to the time of his illnesses, sixty-one short stories had been published in magazines and

newspapers signed with various names or initials: Job, Lara, Manassés, Max, Máximo, Otto, Marco Aurélio, Camilo da Anunciação, Victor de Paula, B. B., J. B., J. J., M. A., M. X., O. O., and X. Of this number, fifty-five were in the Jornal das Famílias, four in O Cruzeiro, one in A Época, and one in the Semana Ilustrada, all of which either the editors of the Jackson Publishing Company of São Paulo, or José Galante de Sousa, or Raimundo Magalhães Júnior have attributed to Machado de Assis. According to Galante de Sousa, in his book Bibliografia de Machado de Assis, Machado's use of pseudonyms continued through 1889, although only rarely after 1878.¹ After the closing of the Jornal das Famílias in 1878, many of Machado's stories were published in A Estação, a magazine similar to Famílias in reader appeal and content. In A Estação and in other periodicals in which his short stories were published after 1878, all except two stories in 1883 and one in 1884 were signed either Machado de Assis, M. de Assis, or M. de A. These three were signed M. A., not so unlike his own name as to totally obscure the authorship. (This information was culled from Galante de Sousa's Bibliografia.) However, Magalhães attributes to Machado three additional stories. They were printed in A Estação, one in 1883 under the pseudonym Próspero, one in 1884 with no signature, and one in 1885 signed Z. Z. Z. These two aliases Machado had never before used. In the chronicles, there is extensive use of assumed names Malvolio, Boas Noites, and Lelio, sometimes appearing in weekly articles for as long as two years.

Unlike the fact that many short stories were published under pseudonyms and their true authorship not generally detected by the public, these chronicles were known to have been written by Machado.

On the basis of his style, the Jackson editors in 1937 (fifteen), Galante de Sousa in 1955 (thirty-one), and Magalhães in 1956 and 1957 (twenty-one), working independently, have ascribed the authorship of these sixty-seven stories to Machado de Assis. Since Machado is acclaimed the greatest Brazilian writer of his time, it was sometimes difficult for them to ascertain if a story under an assumed name or initials was really written by him because in many stories, quality was often sacrificed to exigencies of the moment. Like many other writers, Machado's stories were published serially in magazines and newspapers, with chapters continuing in subsequent issues. Most of the pre-1878 stories were episodic in construction, in which any number of incidents could be added or removed without significantly altering the theme. Many times, the development of the characters was weak, and of necessity, subservient to a romantic and overly sentimental plot in which the reader was drawn into an emotional but unesthetic involvement. Since the endings, in the majority of cases, had to be moral and happy, because of the nature of the magazine and the type of audience for whom the stories were intended, the plot had to be twisted and the personalities of the characters manipulated. Classic virtue was rewarded and sin was punished. It is probable that Machado often wrote many

chapters in haste to meet deadline dates, and therefore the same story frequently contained errors in characters' names, places, and dates, from one episode to another.

Sometimes the similarity of a plot in a later short story led Magalhães to believe that a previous one must also have been written by Machado de Assis. In "O Que São as Moças" (Famílias, 1866) written under the pseudonym of Max, not declared either by the Jackson editors or by Galante de Sousa as a pen name used by Machado, the author created two women, Júlia and Teresa, "duas mulheres amigas e unidas como carne e unha. . . . Davam às duas a designação de Orestes e Pílades."² Both women fall in love with the same man. In the short story "Aires e Vergueiro" (Famílias, 1871), under the pseudonym J. J., attributed to Machado by the Jackson editors and following the Orestes and Pylades theme, Machado created two characters, Aires and Vergueiro, who are business partners. The two men "são unha e carne. . . . Eram dois amigos íntimos, dois corações iguais, dois irmãos siameses, . . ."³ However, there is an ironic twist in the story for which the reader is gradually prepared. Aires absconds to Europe with the money both had embezzled, and also with Vergueiro's wife.

In 1903, Machado de Assis wrote a short story using as a title "Pílades e Orestes," using identical symbolism. The two principal characters, Quintanilha and Gonçalves, were inseparable. "Tinham estudado juntos, morado juntos, e eram bacharéis no mesmo ano."⁴ "A união dos dois era tal que . . .

chamava-lhes . . . Pílades e Orestes."⁵ Just as Júlia and Teresa were in love with the same man in the 1866 story, and Aires secretly in love with Vergueiro's wife in the 1871 story, Gonçalves is secretly in love with Quintanilha's cousin, whom Quintanilha wanted to marry. The similarity of the theme and author's style in these three short stories led Magalhães to conclude that "O Que São as Moças" had been written by Machado de Assis.

The question of pseudonyms makes it impossible to state with complete certainty how many short stories Machado de Assis actually wrote over his lifetime. On pages 1181 and 1182 of Machado de Assis' Obra Completa, Volume III, published by Aguilar in 1962, there appears an extensive list of his short stories. In chronological order, covering the years from 1858 through 1908, the organizers of the edition, including José Galante de Sousa, Mário Matos, and Afrânio Coutinho, have listed 200 short stories which include most of the ones signed with pseudonyms. In addition, Raimundo Magalhães Júnior has printed thirteen other short stories he attributes to Machado, and the Jackson Publishing Company of São Paulo has printed four more. During Machado's lifetime, all 217 stories appeared in print at least once. Almost all of them were published first in a magazine or newspaper, sixty-seven of them under a pseudonym. Seventy-six stories, including eleven originally signed with assumed names or initials, were eventually selected by Machado for inclusion in the seven volumes published during his lifetime.

After their first printing in a newspaper or magazine, seventy-four other stories, not selected by the author for inclusion in a volume, never were seen again in print prior to their publication in six volumes (Contos Avulsos, Contos e Crônicas, Contos sem Data, Contos Esquecidos, Contos Esparsos, and Contos Recolhidos) by Magalhães in 1956 and 1957. Six other stories seemingly discarded by Machado, were published by Garnier in 1910, two years after his death, in a book called Outras Relíquias. In the Jackson edition of 1937, purported to be the complete works of Machado de Assis but inappropriately named by the editors, thirty-six additional stories were published as second volumes of two titles chosen by Machado for two collections of stories that he had organized; titles usurped by the Jackson editors: Contos Fluminenses and Relíquias de Casa Velha. Eight stories appeared in a book entitled Histórias Românticas, another title chosen by the Jackson editors but sounding to the public like one Machado himself might have selected. Using titles originally chosen by him, Páginas Recolhidas and Relíquias de Casa Velha, with the Jackson editors adding the designation of 1º Volume to his Relíquias de Casa Velha, in each book they inserted five more stories that the author had not selected for inclusion.⁶ The Obra Completa, Volume II, published by Aguilar, printed three stories not appearing since the nineteenth century. Jean-Michel Massa has found one complete story and parts of two others, all thought to have been lost, which he has reproduced in his book Dispersos de Machado de Assis. Of the 217 short

stories Machado was known to have written, only the story "Terpsícore," originally published in the literary section of the Gazeta de Notícias of March 22, 1886, remains lost in its entirety, as no scholar has yet been able to find a copy of the newspaper.

Primarily because of the diligence of José Galante de Sousa and Raimundo Magalhães Júnior, and if their observations are accepted attributing to Machado many stories published between 1862 and 1870 signed with pseudonyms, then at least twenty-four stories by Machado, previously undetected, were published during these years, twenty-three in the Jornal das Famílias and one in the Semana Ilustrada. Since some issues of the Jornal das Famílias for 1870 cannot be located, there always remains the possibility that a few more short stories, seemingly now lost forever, did appear in those issues and will one day be found.

Though the stories published between 1862 and 1878 covered most of the themes which Machado was to explore throughout his lifetime (those of moral problems, those in which the characters cannot resolve a dilemma, those of strange occurrences, fantasies, and satires), the literary movement under which these narratives can be classified is romanticism. The Machado de Assis of this era was a reflection of his times. He was a romantic writer of the nineteenth century and a man who had to sell his stories for the monetary reward they would bring him. He knew that he had to captivate his audience with an interesting plot or the story

would never be accepted for publication by the magazine or newspaper. Although there are romantic short stories in which character development is the primary objective of the writer, the most important structural element of romanticism is plot development, and the vast majority of Machado's stories written between 1862 and 1878 were stories in which the plot was the dominant feature.

For his first book of short stories, Contos Fluminenses, Machado chose seven pieces from a total known to us of thirty-three he had written by the end of 1869, and he seemed to have rejected twenty-six. Considerations of space in the volume obviously necessitated his discarding of a number of available and worthy stories. However, with few exceptions, those he selected appear to represent the most mature, imaginative, and technically superior ones of the entire group.

Of the seven stories in Contos Fluminenses, six had been published previously in the Jornal das Famílias: "Frei Simão" (1864), "Confissões de uma Viúva Moça" (1865), "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" (1865), "A Mulher de Prêto" (1868), "O Segredo de Augusta" (1868), and "Luís Soares" (1869). The seventh story, "Miss Dollar," had never before been published. Galante de Sousa feels that "Miss Dollar" was not printed in the 1870 lost editions of Famílias, and that it was written toward the end of 1869. This was the story that Machado selected to be the first in his initial book of short stories.

As in all the seven stories of Contos Fluminenses, the plot of "Miss Dollar" includes romantic conflict. Altruistic

Mendonça agonizes for months attempting to win the love of Margarida. Until the author explains the reason for her ignoring his courtship, the fear on her part that Mendonça, like all her other suitors, only desires her for her money, the reader is just as puzzled as the character as to why he is being rejected. The slowly building tension Mendonça suffers, complements the reader's heightening interest as the crucial moment of the story is reached in the following scene between Mendonça and Margarida.

At home one night, Mendonça, continually planning and thinking how to win Margarida, cannot sleep. He leaves his house well after dark, his steps unconsciously taking him to her garden. Her little dog, whose name is Miss Dollar, the instrument of their earlier introduction, happily barks at his presence and runs up the garden steps to Margarida's room. Mendonça impetuously follows the dog, and when Margarida appears, Mendonça realizes he has compromised her reputation by entering her bedroom. Of course, it was just such an impulsive and emotional act on his part for which Margarida had been waiting, as a demonstration of his love for her.

The matter-of-fact tone of the narrative, without the once-upon-a-time quality, characteristic of many of Machado's earlier romantic short stories which were written to sell to a popular audience, shows an advancement in his literary technique. In addition, the personality of Mendonça far exceeds in complexity Machado's earlier romantic heroes in the discarded stories. Mendonça is a more profound human being.

Though emotionally upset by his passion for Margarida, it is only after many months, and only in that one crucial moment in the garden, that his strong feeling conquers his logical mind. The amount of time that the author has allowed to pass is adequate for this change to occur in Mendonça's personality, considering the enormity of the mental torment he has been enduring. In this first story in Machado's first volume, the suffering of the logical thinking Mendonça respects the bounds of truthful possibility. The excesses of romanticism, present in many stories not included in Contos Fluminenses, have been eliminated in "Miss Dollar."

In "Luís Soares," the second story in the book, Machado de Assis portrays for the first time the "dandy," the wealthy, parasitic playboy about whom he would write in many of his later short stories and novels. At the age of thirty, Luís Soares, the anti-hero protagonist, sleeps all day, stays out all night, and is indifferent to politics, religion, and poetry (symbolizing matters of the heart and soul). As Mendonça agonized, so does Luís Soares, as he also tries to win the hand of his love. She is his cousin Adelaide, and the motive is specifically for her money. This is in sharp contrast to Mendonça.

One night Soares dreams of a harem in Arabia. The sweet dream is brutally changed into a nightmare when a eunuch plunges a dagger into his chest. And, in the reality of the short story, Luís Soares' dreams of wealth and a future life of dissipation are completely shattered when Adelaide,

perceiving his base motives, coldly and symbolically plunges the dagger into his chest as she rejects his emotionally contrived declaration of love.

O rapaz ajoelhou-se.
 - Ou seja a morte, ou seja a felicidade, disse êle, quero recebê-la de joelhos.
 Adelaide sorriu e soltou lentamente estas palavras:
 - Trezentos contos! É muito dinheiro para comprar um miserável.
 E deu-lhe as costas.
 Soares ficou petrificado. . . .⁷

Originally published in Famílias in 1869 under the pseudonym J. J., "Luís Soares" is one of Machado's better stories written prior to 1870. In addition to the development of the personality and thoughts of the "dandy," the reader sees the reactions of the suffering female protagonist, Adelaide. She comes to the realization that she must free herself from her love for Soares or endure a lifetime of suffering as his wife. As Soares acts out his deceptions, the reader is aware of his thoughts through the narration by Machado de Assis. However, the author's bias against Soares does not prevent him from providing us with the feeling of Soares' agony, albeit unsympathetically. The timely, but contrived entrance of Anselmo, the old family friend, with the news of Adelaide's inheritance, does not distract the reader from the main focus of the story, which is the personality of Luís Soares.

The story ends with the suicide of Soares. The moral ending for the readers of Famílias is the correct one, though it is unacceptable in a religious sense. The fact that Soares' death is ignored by the libertine friends he always admired is

predictable but essential. It is a sample of the ironic technique to be employed by Machado in later stories.

In the next two stories of the volume, the conflict between the sexes is enhanced by a note of mystery surrounding the female character. In "A Mulher de Prêto," the reader wonders why the supposed widow, thirty-four-year-old Madalena, is befriending young Dr. Estêvão. The reader suffers Dr. Estêvão's grand disillusionment with him as Estêvão first falls in love with Madalena and then learns he has been used by her as her device for a possible reconciliation with her very much alive husband from whom she has been separated, Congressman Meneses, Dr. Estêvão's good friend.

As a reinforcement of Estêvão's disillusionment, the young, sensitive doctor is interrupted in his love musings one day by another friend, Oliveira, who bursts into his house and overwhelms him with his new play, from which he proceeds to read aloud two dreadful scenes. (This was the kind of incident that often must have happened to Machado the drama critic.) And just after naive Estêvão's dreams of love are crushed by Madalena, he discovers a newspaper article about himself praising his friend Oliveira's new play. Simultaneously, he receives a letter from Oliveira asking him to excuse the slight alteration of the truth regarding his play.

It must have seemed to Machado de Assis, and likewise to the young, innocent Estêvão, that the Rio de Janeiro of the 1860s and 1870s appears to have housed many self-centered people filled with duplicity. Illusions are shattered.

Virtuous Estêvão does not commit suicide as does the evil Luís Soares. But he must temporarily abandon Rio de Janeiro and its intrigues, and flee to the interior, to the mountains of tranquil Minas Gerais (which Machado had never visited), to attempt to regain his emotional health.

"A Mulher de Prêto" is the only story in Contos Fluminenses in which Machado presents an overt criticism of society. Not only is the city an evil place but governmental officials do not take their responsibilities seriously. The author writes that Estêvão had made an appointment with Meneses during the time Meneses was scheduled to be in the Chamber of Deputies, "mas o deputado importou-se pouco com isso: não foi à Câmara. Mas teve a delicadeza de o não dizer a Estêvão."⁸

In "O Segredo de Augusta," the element of mystery has a comic conclusion. The protagonist Vasconcelos, an older version of the "dandy" Luís Soares, proposes that his daughter Adelaide marry Gomes. His wife Augusta is opposed to the marriage. The explanation for her opposition is not revealed until the last page of the story. Her "secret," the reason for not wanting Adelaide to marry, is that her vanity will not permit her to accept the idea that she might soon become a grandmother if the union between Adelaide and Gomes should take place.

Though this is the second consecutive story in which the female protagonist is named in the title, once again the point of view in the narrative is essentially male. It is

the machinations of Vasconcelos, endeavoring to restore the family's lost fortune in order to continue in his libertine ways, about which the author is primarily concerned.

The story contains some excellent dialogue. Machado de Assis, whose primary literary interest at that time was still the theater, has created a romantic comedy-drama in short story form. All of the action occurs within a few days. Every scene with dialogue is presented in Vasconcelos' home. Where the action is not interrupted by a short interval of time (comparable to a change of scene in a play), one character exits as another enters. Little character development takes place, and the personality of each individual is easily recognizable by his actions. There is the libertine husband, the vain wife, the innocent daughter, the good uncle, the forceful creditor, and the insincere friend.

In a confrontation over money, Machado has devised dramatic dialogue between Vasconcelos and his wife Augusta.

Vasconcelos viu o movimento e o olhar.

- O amor do luxo e do supérfluo, disse êle, há de sempre produzir estas consequências. São terríveis, mas explicáveis. Para conjurá-las era preciso viver com moderação. Nunca pensaste nisso. No fim de seis meses de casada entraste a viver no turbilhão da moda, e o pequeno regato das despesas tornou-se um rio imenso de desperdícios. Sabes o que me disse uma vez meu irmão? Disse-me que a idéia de mandar Adelaide para a roça foi-te sugerida pela necessidade de viver sem cuidados de natureza alguma.

Augusta tinha-se levantado e deu alguns passos; estava trêmula e pálida.

Vasconcelos ia por diante nas suas recriações, quando a mulher o interrompeu, dizendo:

- Mas por que motivo não impediu o senhor essas despesas que eu fazia?

- Queria a paz doméstica.

- Não! clamou ela; o senhor queria ter por sua parte

uma vida livre e independente; vendo que eu me entregava a essas despesas imaginou comprar a minha tolerância com a sua tolerância. Eis o único motivo; a sua vida não será igual à minha; mas é pior... Se eu fazia despesas em casa o senhor as fazia na rua... É inútil negar, porque eu sei tudo; conheço, de nome, as rivais que sucessivamente o senhor me deu, e nunca lhe disse uma única palavra, nem agora lho censuro, porque seria inútil e tarde.⁹

But the author is also capable of the most common clichés.

- Adelaide, o primeiro dever de uma filha é obedecer a seu pai, e eu sou teu pai. Quero que te cases com o Gomes; há de casar.¹⁰

- É um bom casamento, e por isso acho que todos devemos aceitá-lo. É a minha vontade, e nesta casa quem manda sou eu.¹¹

Unresolved at the close of the story is the financial problem of Vasconcelos. The last paragraph is narrated by the author rather than presented as dialogue. Machado has already informed the reader that the marriage plans were abandoned because Vasconcelos discovered that, coincidentally, Gomes too had lost all his money. In the future, the two men meet many times in the city. They "conversam, fumam, dão o braço um ao outro, exatamente como dous amigos, que nunca foram, ou como dous velhacos que são."¹²

"Confissões de uma Viúva Moça" is an epistolary short story in concept but is divided into chapters which do not correspond to the weekly "letters" which the character Eugênia, who is the "author" of the story, is supposed to have written to her friend Carlota. When the story opens, Eugênia has been a widow for two years, following an arranged marriage. After the death of her husband, she went to live in Petrópolis,

harboring a terrible secret. In her letters to Carlota, which Eugênia says can serve to instruct other young women, she confesses her sin that she was at the point of being unfaithful to her husband just prior to his death.

The story is strictly narrative. There is no dialogue, and all thoughts are from the point of view of Eugênia. In this third story in sequence with a woman in the title, it is the first and only story in Contos Fluminenses in which the woman is the main character and the men are the subordinate ones. The unnamed husband and the seducer Emílio are depicted through Eugênia's experiences with them, two years after they had gone out of her life.

In the past, Eugênia had begun to think more and more of Emílio. The plot of the story becomes her delayed confession of her desire to accept him as her lover. Since Eugênia is the narrator writing from her point of view, the reader is not informed of anything more than of what she confides to Carlota. Machado de Assis, in the only story of the seven in this volume he wrote in the first person, tells his character's story two years after the supposed incidents had occurred and from Eugênia's point of view, thus creating a structurally complex story for him in 1865. A similar technique would be used by Machado in his later novel Dom Casmurro, this time from the point of view of the husband, and with the added touch of the character revealing his insanity.

Another prelude to the ironic technique which Machado

often used in the post-1880 volumes, is employed in this story. Eugênia agrees to accept Emílio's offer of seduction. Immediately, she loses her husband, who at that precise moment, is carried home mortally ill. Later, she is rejected by Emílio who writes her a note concluding it with the word "adeus." Eugênia has now learned her lesson, and tells Carlota that having been scorned was a fitting punishment for her crime.

Probably due to concern for the readers of the Jornal das Famílias (in which the story first appeared), Machado does not effectuate an affair between Eugênia and Emílio. The character's sin is in agreeing to sin, and the moral lesson is in the loss of her husband and in her desertion by Emílio.

"Linha Reta e Linha Curva" is the longest story in the collection, covering about thirty-five pages in the Aguilar edition. It is approximately twice the length of each of the previous five stories. (The last story in the book is "Frei Simão" which is narrated in six pages.) Adapted from the play As Forças Caudinas, which was written after 1863, Machado reworked his original text to fashion a short story.¹³ As in a play, he used dialogue as his most important structural element. It is a cheerful, romantic short story, with no melodramatic or sad scenes.

Though "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" is the longest story in the volume, it has the least complex plot. Twenty-nine-year-old Tito, a world traveler, returns home to Rio and

Petrópolis. In order to win the love of Emília, he feigns lack of interest in all women. Near the end of the story, the reader learns that Emília had rejected him five years ago. This is the only story of the seven in the volume in which there truly is a happy ending. Tito and Emília marry, and Azevedo and Adelaide, a young married couple, friends of Tito and Emília, formerly presented to the reader in a happy beginning to the story, continue to live together in contentment. "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" is a welcome change of pace from "Luís Soares," "A Mulher de Prêto," "O Segredo de Augusta," and "Confissões de uma Viúva Moça."

After the confessions of Eugênia, Machado has again turned to his male character as the narrative focus. To develop more deeply the personality of Tito, Machado tells the reader that Tito has lived in Mexico and the United States, has seen London and Paris, and has absorbed into his soul the artistry of Italy and Greece. It is this worldly sophistication dominating his emotions with which Tito is able to discipline his feelings toward Emília. He feigns a lack of interest in her just as she pretends interest in him, but only to punish him for his assumed indifferent attitude toward her and women in general.

Emília, twice a widow within five years, is portrayed as a young, regally elegant, and vivacious woman. To the reader, she appears to lack the intelligence that the cosmopolitan Tito would desire in a mate. Her escort throughout the story is Diogo, obviously of Spanish origin. He is a

gentleman about fifty years old, depicted as a comic character, wealthy, and in love with Emília. A humorous theme running through the story is that at any moment, Diogo is expecting a live white bear to arrive from Europe as a present for Emília.

At the conclusion of the story, Tito proposes marriage to Emília and she accepts him. Azevedo explains to those gathered at his house (and to the reader) that Tito had to devise a plan to win Emília by using a roundabout course since the direct route led to nowhere. At that moment, Diogo appears and announces that the white bear has just arrived from Europe. An audience in a theater would expect a retort. Tito tells him: "Pois vá fazer-lhe companhia."¹⁴

The strength of "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" lies in the dialogue in the scenes between Tito and Emília (a psychological probing of motives), in the satirical figure of Diogo, and in the humor pervading the entire story. Its weakness lies in the author's failure to provide the reader with sufficient clues to ascertain Tito's true motive. Therefore, a second reading of the dialogues between Tito and Emília is required to understand fully Tito's comments. This story, however, is an essential interlude in this thoroughly planned volume by Machado de Assis. It prepares the reader for the finale of the collection, the total tragedy of "Frei Simão."

"Frei Simão," the last and shortest story in Contos Fluminenses, was written in 1864, eight years before the book

was published. At that time, Machado was twenty-five years old, and this was only the third short story he had ever written. Despite his youth and inexperience as a short story writer, Machado, employing the techniques of the flashback, the character's "memoirs," and the climactic moment, produced an effective, disciplined, romantic story of six pages divided into five chapters.

The author begins in his narrative present by informing us that Brother Simão, a taciturn and lonely monk, was dead. Then by going back further in time, the reader is told about Simão's behavior, his five-day illness suffered in silence, and before his death, shocking those in attendance by uttering the following words in a strange tone of voice: "Morro odiando a humanidade!"¹⁵ (Forty-five years later, the author of this phrase, Machado de Assis, at his own death, spoke these final words: "A vida é boa."¹⁶)

We are told that the monks, while gathering Brother Simão's papers, had found a packet of memoirs which they believed would explain his solitary life and strange last words. Now Machado, using a similar technique as did Cervantes when he wrote of finding the notes of Cid Hamete which told the story of Don Quixote, recounts the life of Brother Simão as revealed by the monk's own papers.

The young cousins, Simão and Helena, were cruelly separated by Simão's father who disapproved of their prospective marriage. Simão entered the Brotherhood after having been informed falsely by his father that Helena was dead. Years

later, there was a chance meeting of the two. From the shock of this encounter, Helena died almost immediately. Simão then took refuge in a monastery, dying there eight years later.

"Frei Simão" is a tragic, romantic story of lost love. There is the element of mystery at the start, the unspecified period of Simão's and Helena's separation leading to the climactic moment, a great display of emotion, and little character analysis by the author in this brief story practically devoid of dialogue. "Frei Simão," so different in construction from the other stories of Contos Fluminenses, effectively completes the volume.

The seven stories in Contos Fluminenses appear in the book in the order in which they have been discussed. Listing them in their proper place and with each one's original date of publication, "Miss Dollar," 1870, "Luís Soares," 1869, "A Mulher de Prêto," 1868, "O Segredo de Augusta," 1868, "Confissões de uma Viúva Moça," 1865, "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," 1865, and "Frei Simão," 1864, we find the order of the stories in reverse chronology. Rather than a deliberate attempt by Machado to place his stories in the reverse order in which they were written, compositionally, the appreciation of the whole volume is enhanced by the order he chose.

In "Miss Dollar," the first story, there is a happy ending. The agony of Mendonça is rewarded by the acceptance of his marriage proposal to Margarida. The reader is not shocked either by the development of the story or by its conclusion as in the second story, "Luís Soares." Though the

death of Soares by suicide morally fits the sins he committed against society's rules of conduct, the feelings engendered by the story are essentially negative. First Machado created a story revolving around a positive character, Mendonça, and then one revolving around a negative character, Luís Soares.

In the third story, where the plot is more complicated than in the previous two (which merely follow the protagonist as he attempts to resolve his emotional problems), the principal character Estêvão is positive. Machado dedicates two whole pages to Estêvão's background, his studiousness and sensitivity, gentleness and compassion, and the suffering he endured as a result of the death of his beloved parents. (Much of this description by Machado is probably not autobiographical, but his sympathy for Estêvão is obvious, since he had been orphaned, as was his character.) But in "A Mulher de Preto," all the people associated with Estêvão are negative, some because of their nature and some because of the circumstances in which they find themselves. Madalena uses Estêvão to regain her honor, which never should have been taken from her. Meneses harbors guilt and tragedy in his soul, and remains an enigma to Estêvão. In addition, Meneses ignores his responsibilities as a representative in Congress. It is the city and its people who are negative in this story, not the principal character.

In "O Segredo de Augusta," the principal character and the society in which he functions are negative. Vasconcelos is a Luís Soares with a family and responsibilities, which he

ignores. Luis Soares attempted to acquire a wealthy wife in order to continue his dissipative ways. Vasconcelos tries to sell a daughter and buy a son-in-law for the same purpose. His wife Augusta is vain, selfish, and immature. Her brother Lourenço is the one voice of reason and morality, and he is totally ignored.

Unlike the story "Luis Soares," where the disreputable character dies, there is no need for the demise of Vasconcelos. What is important is the resolution of the proposed marriage. Instead of treating the entire life of the character, as he did with Luis Soares, Machado presents a cross-cut view of one situation in the lives of Vasconcelos and his family, in which the characters reveal the one aspect of their personalities that the author wishes to depict. The reader is left with the feeling that, years later, if they were revisited, there would be little difference in the situations in which Vasconcelos and his family would be involved, and little difference in the ways in which they would attempt to solve their problems.

This onward progression of negativism and pessimism reaches a minor climax in "O Segredo de Augusta." In three stories, Machado has extended his pessimism to the plot and all primary characters. Lourenço, a secondary character, the echo of conscience and morality and the most righteous in the story, has no influence. It must be added that Machado de Assis is not calling for social changes or for changes in mankind's actions. The emerging pattern of pessimism is for

esthetic purposes.

"Confissões de uma Viúva Moça" is the logical story to continue the volume. It is the third story in succession that mentions a woman in its title. It is the fourth in succession in which evil, or sin, real or imagined, is presented. It is the first story of the four in which there is reflection by the characters on what their sins were. Soares, in despair, committed suicide. Madalena was finally adjudged innocent by her accusing husband Meneses, who, following a short reconciliation, left her once again. Vasconcelos continued his life of debaucherie. Eugênia is overcome by her guilt, revealing to her friend and to the reader that she has received a just punishment for her sinful thoughts.

"Confissões de uma Viúva Moça" is therefore unique in Contos Fluminenses as to time and point of view, and that the first character to feel guilt is a woman. All previous sinners Machado created were males who never seemed to ponder the morality of their thoughts or actions.

In Contos Fluminenses, Machado de Assis has proceeded from romantic stories of morality and conflict told by an all-knowing narrator to a specific story narrated by the character who has lived the situation. Compositionally, for the time being, the theme is exhausted and Machado, who has not placed any stories in the book identical in nature (though many published in Famílias up to 1870 appear to be very similar to each other), must continue his collection in another vein of thought so as not to repeat himself or tire the reader.

The new train of thought is comedy. "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," a story light in tone, is a long one, almost twice the length of any of the previous four. It complements the first story, "Miss Dollar," since there is no guilt or tragedy. It complements "Luís Soares" and "O Segredo" in its extensive use of dialogue in which the characters appear more as actors in a play (which is how they began their fictional lives) than characters in a short story. It is unique in Contos Fluminenses because of its happy beginning, its happy ending, and its humor.

Young, lively Emília has been twice widowed in five years and shows no effects of the two tragedies. Her escort, Diogo, is only concerned with her and the white bear, the comic theme running through the entire story. In "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," Machado moves from total drama to total farce. After the oppressiveness of the previous four stories, the reader is now able to escape into a light-hearted world of young people's intrigues, and knows that the story will end happily. "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" may not be true to life but it is true to some romantic narratives and theater. As a component of Contos Fluminenses, it balances the pessimism in the earlier stories and is a necessary transition to the extreme tragedy of "Frei Simão."

"Frei Simão" is the second story in the volume in which the protagonist dies, and the first in which a sympathetic character is so utterly destroyed. Luís Soares commits suicide but the reader is made to feel he deserved his

fate. Young Estêvão must leave Rio to regain his emotional health but his future looks optimistic. Mendonça and Tito succeed in winning the loves of their lives. Vasconcelos continues to drift. Eugênia suffers in her guilt in self-imposed exile in Petrópolis. However, good Simão, lied to by his own father that Helena was dead, and never recovering from the shock of seeing her alive, dies years later in a monastery.

As in "Confissões de uma Viúva Moça," the events have already occurred in "Frei Simão" when the story begins. In the former story, the character recalls the incidents that had happened. In the latter one, the character is dead and the author recounts the circumstances leading to his death from the notes he purportedly left behind. This entitles the narrator to interpret what was supposedly "found," and thereby to inject his own opinion into the events. Specifically in "Frei Simão," this enhances the mood of sadness the reader should feel. "Frei Simão," though only the third short story Machado wrote, nevertheless is the most advanced in its technique in Contos Fluminenses. It is a technique new to Machado de Assis but one at least as old as Cervantes.

Time is totally reversed in "Frei Simão." As the story begins, the author tells the reader that a certain individual, a Brother Simão, was dead, and that he knows the circumstances of his death. It is not until the second page of the story that we are informed that the late monk had left a series of papers that other monks had found. Then the contents of the papers are revealed by the author, who relates

the life of the late, solitary monk. The narrator has always known all the facts.

In the last paragraph of the story, more of an appendix than a part of Simão's life, Machado remains in the past but moves forward in time to after the death of Simão and informs the reader that the monk's father had entered the monastery, and his late son's cell, to atone for the crime he realized he had committed. This small section is not only an integral part of the story but is in the nineteenth-century tradition of acquainting the reader with the general future of fictional characters.

In summary, it has been shown that Contos Fluminenses is a book of diversified, romantic short stories. Allowing for overlapping, there are two stories with happy endings (separated in the volume), two with the death of the protagonist (one tragic and one morally applauded, and widely separated in the volume), two in which the dialogue and the setting are similar to that of theater (separated in the volume), and three in which there is a note of mystery (two stories in the middle of the volume and the last one). There is one comedy, one epistolary but containing narration and dialogue within the structure of "letters," and one utilizing the literary device of someone finding the character's personal papers and revealing them. The first story in the book is the only one in which character development (Mendonça) is most important. The last story is the only one in which time is non-chronological. In three, a woman is mentioned in the

title (all in sequence and in the middle of the volume). The first story and the next to last are happy ones. The second one and the last are tragedies, and these two begin to show the developing pessimistic philosophy of the author which will emerge and dominate his writings in the future.

In understanding why Machado de Assis chose these particular seven stories for Contos Fluminenses and discarded twenty-six, there appear to be both personal and literary motives. On November 18, 1869, four months before the publication of Contos Fluminenses and six months after contracting for the book with Garnier, Machado and Carolina were married. With the added responsibility of a wife and the decision to earn the greater part of his living as an appointed government official, Machado de Assis was not inclined to publish anything controversial under his own name. Though few of the twenty-six stories he rejected contained strong political or social opinions, or were satirical, but worthy of inclusion for their literary values, Machado chose not to use any of them.

"A Pianista," appearing in 1866 in the Jornal das Famílias under the pseudonym J. J., and about the same length as each of the first five stories in Contos Fluminenses, is critically worthy of inclusion. It is the story of Tibério Valença, Tibério Gonçalves Valença, one of the most interesting fictional characters created by Machado de Assis prior to 1880. The original opinions of Tibério Valença show upper-class positions toward people of other social levels in Rio

de Janeiro during the middle of the nineteenth century. If the story had appeared under his own name, "A Pianista," with its conflict between social classes resolved by a change in the views of Tibério Valença, might have prejudiced Machado's position in the government. In none of the seven stories he selected for Contos Fluminenses is there any association between people of different social classes.

Tibério Valença, always called by Machado by his first and last name for the aristocratic sounding quality of its seven syllables spoken together, was a wealthy member of the upper class and a staunch monarchist. In 1808, his father, Basílio Valença, had gladly given his home to a part of the entourage of the Portuguese Royal Family. "Tibério Valença foi educado nestas tradições."¹⁷ Conflict arises when his more liberal son Tomás, not linked by the author to his last name, falls in love with Malvina, a middle-class piano teacher and daughter of a deceased, self-taught, unprofessional lawyer. Since Tibério Valença's daughter Elisa had married within her class, no discord exists. Though Tibério Valença opposes the marriage of Malvina and Tomás, and disinherits his son, it is through Malvina's kindness, Tomás' devotion to his wife, Tibério Valença's own serious illness from which Malvina nurses him back to health, and a grandchild shortly due, that he realizes his error, asks for their forgiveness, and invites them to share his home.

Once again, Machado uses a female in the title though the story primarily concerns a male. After presenting the

piano teacher, Malvina, on the first page, Machado focuses the attention of the reader upon the social attitudes of Tibério Valença, the principal theme. Despite this unnecessary introduction, since Malvina's personality is unfolded within the story, a sentimental tone, and a predictable, satisfying, happy ending, "A Pianista," for its theme and character development, merits a place in Machado's first volume. It was controversial, and therefore discarded. "A Pianista" never appeared in print again until ninety years later, when Raimundo Magalhães Júnior included it in a collection of Machado's short stories called Contos Esquecidos.

In addition to rejecting all stories containing political or disputatious social themes, Machado also discarded all satirical and fantasy tales. In "Uma Excursão Milagrosa," which appeared in Famílias in 1866, Machado utilizes the idea of a miraculous voyage to serve as a vehicle for political and social satire. In a one-page prologue to the narrative of the author's fictional friend, a poor, hungry poet named Tito, Machado tells the reader that Tito's travels are more fantastic than those written by Jonathan Swift. Tito, we are told, is morally strong and charitable, but also has sold his poetry for money and has allowed a rich man to sign his name to Tito's verses. One dark, rainy night, Tito, recently rejected in love (as Machado de Assis was reported to have been at this time in his life), receives a celestial visitor. Now the story abruptly changes to a first person narrative.

Tito is whisked to the heavens, to a land of fantasy

where its inhabitants, the people of his thoughts, are busy at their tasks. Some are preparing cerebral food destined for the brains of politicians (The food disintegrates immediately upon being touched). Others are busy conjuring up pretexts with which to waste the time of statesmen. In this world of fantasy, the crime of being tardy for appointments (a normal occurrence in Rio de Janeiro), is punishable by death. The Queen of the realm is Fashion herself. Her companions are always changing clothing styles and constantly sending new ones to earth.

"Uma Excursão Milagrosa" is a rewrite of "O País das Quimeras," written four years earlier. Both stories are highly satirical and critical of Machado's Rio de Janeiro. Making "Uma Excursão Milagrosa" a first-person narrative of the section concerning the travels of Tito, having fewer classical asides to the reader, and placing less concentration on Tito's personal problems and more on the mockery of familiar, local institutions, constitute the major revisions of his earlier story. If it had been placed in Contos Fluminenses, "Uma Excursão Milagrosa" would have been the only story in the book not to have had amorous conflict as a major theme. Its autobiographical sections, sarcastic social criticism, and elements of fantasy, probably also contributed to its exclusion. Had it been included, this story would have demonstrated Machado's versatility with themes not expressed or emphasized in Contos Fluminenses.

From the onset of his career as a short story writer,

and especially during the 1870s, Machado de Assis wrote many stories that alluded to fantastic or supernatural occurrences. Much of the influence for the lugubrious tone can be credited to Edgar Allan Poe. After capturing the reader's attention and convincing him to accept the reality of extra worldly forces, which the author strongly implies exists, Machado then disproves the supernatural aspect at the conclusion. No story in this category appears in Contos Fluminenses, but two were written before 1870.

In "O Anjo das Donzelas," written in 1864, beautiful, fifteen-year-old Cecília, impressionistic, and romantic, thinks an angel visits her one night. The angel promises her salvation if she swears eternal virginity, and gives her a ring which she finds on her finger upon waking up the next morning. The years pass and she never marries. Eventually, she is reunited with a long lost cousin, who tells her and proves that, merely as a joke, it was he who slipped the ring on her finger that night long ago. The story ends on this note of irony.

"O Anjo das Donzelas" lacks originality and is a weak story. No mention is made of the existence of a cousin with a prankish personality until many years have elapsed in the narrative. The opening paragraph inviting the reader to enter the maiden's bedroom at night is merely a device to attract the reader's attention, and does not contribute to the portrayal of Cecília's personality.

Though "O Anjo das Donzelas" was unacceptable for

inclusion in the volume, "O Anjo Rafael," written in 1869, also discarded, is superior in content and construction. Dr. Antero, thirty years old and beset by creditors, is saved from suicide by a mysterious stranger who summons him to visit his master. Mystery abounds, far more in this story than in "O Anjo das Donzelas." There is a nocturnal ride in a carriage to a lonely house, guarded by an enormous dog. After spending the night in a dark guest room, Dr. Antero finally meets the master of the house, Major Tomás. The host reveals that he knew the young man's late father, and continually alludes to his own origin in heaven. When Major Tomás later states that he is the angel Raphael who has come down to earth, the reader soon realizes he is just an insane man.

Following Major Tomás' death, Dr. Antero marries his sheltered daughter, Celestina. Thus "O Anjo Rafael" has a conventional, happy ending though originally appearing to promise the unconventional. With too many hints of the macabre early in the story, the reader soon grows suspicious and anticipates a trick. In later years, Machado learned how to reveal more slowly and subtly a character's insanity, and how to disguise illusion, reality, and madness. However, in 1869 and the period of Contos Fluminenses, despite its weaknesses, "O Anjo Rafael" merits inclusion. Without the structure of the supernatural, it is basically a boy-meets-girl story. The reader could have accepted "O Anjo Rafael" as a substitute for "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," although the contrast between the total happiness in "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" and

the total tragedy of the following story, "Frei Simão," justifies the inclusion of "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" as more dramatically effective than if "O Anjo Rafael" had replaced it. It is possible that "O Anjo Rafael," about the same length as "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," was written too late in 1869 to be included in Contos Fluminenses. Neither did it appear in Histórias da Meia-Noite, Machado's second volume of short stories, which was published in 1873.

Other discarded stories, whether weak in plot or character development or overly sentimental, do possess a measure of creativity which foreshadows the Machado de Assis of the future. In "História de uma Lágrima," written in 1867, the tragic result of two men in love with the same woman is seen from a unique point of view. An exceptionally fine young man, Daniel, who is a dedicated employee of a firm in Rio de Janeiro, and a poet, Luís, both fall in love with Elisa, the daughter of Daniel's employer. The father perceives Daniel's love for Elisa and induces her to accept marriage to him. Dutiful, modest Elisa agrees. She constantly appears to be shy, weak, and sickly, and dies of tuberculosis three years later. Daniel discovers that she had always loved Luís and, upon her death, realizes she never should have been his wife. In the story, Daniel, now a man thirty years old but looking like sixty, recounts his sad experience to the narrator, who befriended him to learn the truth behind his reclusive and morbid habits.

"História de uma Lágrima" and "Frei Simão" are similar

in theme, but "Frei Simão" is more complex in structure and manipulation of time, rendering it a superior story. Therefore, "Frei Simão" was included in Contos Fluminenses and "História de uma Lágrima" was rejected.

The story "Questão de Vaidade" suffers from an excessive number of pages and the repetition of the central theme. Eduardo is in love with two women with opposite personalities. He cannot decide which one to marry. The author moves Eduardo from situation to situation in which one or both women are involved. Eduardo deceives the two until he finally loses them. In a later story, "Trio em Lá Menor," Machado refined this theme so that the action did not occur in romantically contrived incidents but in the mind of the woman who could not decide between her two suitors. In both "Questão de Vaidade" and "Trio em Lá Menor," each suitor fulfills a need for the protagonist, but in "Trio em Lá Menor" the two male suitors each have a glaring weakness that makes them more human than the two women in "Questão de Vaidade." Also Eduardo, having two women simultaneously in love with him, delights in the continual courtship that appeals to his vanity. This aspect of Eduardo's personality allows the author to interject as many additional scenes as desired, thereby increasing the length of the narrative at will for inclusion serially in Famílias. Thus, the author can manipulate his characters rather than allow them to live their own stories.

However, with the notable exceptions of "A Pianista," "Uma Excursão Milagrosa," and "O Anjo Rafael," the majority

of discarded stories have very little literary value. Stories such as "Cinco Mulheres," "O Oráculo," "Fernando e Fernanda," "O Pai," "O Último Dia de um Poeta," and "O Carro Nº 13," were written to appeal to the emotions of the readers of the Jornal das Famílias and to provide a supplement to the author's income. It was only following Machado's illnesses and residence in Nova Friburgo during the summer of 1878-1879 that esthetic rather than financial considerations seemed to dictate what he would write.

Five years before that fateful summer, Machado de Assis would publish another collection of short stories. In 1869, he had contracted with Garnier for Histórias da Meia-Noite. This book, not printed until 1873, would be a second volume of romantic short stories in which there would be many themes similiar to those in Contos Fluminenses.

Footnotes

¹José Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia de Machado de Assis (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1955), pp. 513-610.

²Machado de Assis, Contos Recolhidos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 233.

³Machado de Assis, Contos Fluminenses II (São Paulo: Livro do Mes S. A., 1962), 1962), p. 46.

⁴Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume II, Conto e Teatro (Rio de Janeiro: Editôra José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), p. 708.

⁵Ibid., p. 711.

⁶In 1962, the Livro do Mês Publishing Company of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo brought out a complete reprint of the thirty-one volume Jackson edition. Their editors modernized the spelling and eliminated many of the errors found in the text of the Jackson books. However, Livro do Mês left intact the misleading titles and faulty organization of material made within many volumes by the Jackson editors while changing the order of some of the books within the collection. For example, in the Jackson edition, Relíquias de Casa Velha 2º Volume is book nineteen while in Livro do Mês it is book seventeen. Crítica Literária is book twenty-nine in both collections.

⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, pp. 57-58.

⁸Ibid., p. 64. ⁹Ibid., pp. 93-94. ¹⁰Ibid., p. 90.

¹¹Ibid., p. 91. ¹²Ibid., p. 99.

¹³Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia, pp. 411-412.

¹⁴Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 151.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁶Lúcia Miguel Pereira, Machado de Assis, 5ª edição, Coleção Documentos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro: José Olímpio, 1955), p. 284.

¹⁷Machado de Assis, Contos Esquecidos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 216.

CHAPTER III

HISTÓRIAS DA MEIA-NOITE

Histórias da Meia-Noite is a collection of six short stories, five of them having been written in 1873, the year the book was published, and the sixth in the previous year. José Galante de Sousa states that, after Contos Fluminenses had been delivered to Garnier in 1869, on September 30, 1869, another contract was signed between Machado de Assis and the publisher. In this contract, Machado committed himself to deliver by the end of 1870 a sufficient number of short stories to form the volume already entitled Histórias da Meia-Noite, and also two other books, Resurreição and O Manuscrito do Licenciado Gaspar. Resurreição was to be a full length novel, and the assumption is that the never-written Manuscrito was also to be in this genre not previously attempted by Machado.¹

The first four years of the 1870s do not appear to be very calm ones for Machado de Assis. The direction he was finally to pursue in his writing of short stories and novels was not yet established. The pace of his life seems to have been a very exhausting one, with much mental energy spent in the performance of his varied tasks, and in the attempt to resolve old and new problems. By September 1869, Machado had held the position of Assistant to the Publisher of the Diário

Oficial for eighteen months, but the borrowing of funds from his friend, Ramos Paz, on the eve of his wedding to Carolina indicates that his salary was inadequate for their needs. If Jean-Michel Massa's deductions are to be believed, the following year, 1870, marked the emergence of the epileptic disorder that would plague him until his death some thirty-eight years later. In 1870, despite his physical difficulties and his work at the Diário Oficial, he published his translation of one-third of Charles Dickens' novel, Oliver Twist, in the Jornal da Tarde, six days each week from April 23 until August 23. He also wrote at least five short stories for the Jornal das Famílias, two of which were published in the January 1871 issue (We recall that some of the issues of Famílias for early 1870 are missing), and no doubt began to work on his first novel, Resurreição, which was not published until April 1872.

Throughout 1871, it appears that Machado concentrated much of his time writing Resurreição. According to José Galante de Sousa and Raimundo Magalhães Júnior, Machado had published only five short stories during that year. Galante de Sousa also lists just six short articles of criticism printed in magazines, and a few poems.² From the beginning of 1872, and the probable completion of Resurreição, until the end of 1873, the bibliography of Machado de Assis lists eighteen short stories, one play of which he was a co-author, the translation of another from French, an analytical article about nationalism in Brazilian literature, several poems, and

some brief critical pieces. Two other commissions that undoubtedly were undertaken for monetary reasons were the collaboration on a maritime dictionary, and the translation from French of a series of lectures on hygiene for use by school-teachers.³ When published in September 1873, this text formed an eighty-four page book.⁴

By late 1873, Machado was deeply involved with the writing of his second novel, A Mão e a Luva, to be published in November 1874, and with a change in his employment. After nearly six years of association with the Diário Oficial, and after more than a decade of political maneuvering to secure a safe bureaucratic position, Machado was granted his wish on December 31, 1873. He entered the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works as an assistant to the minister. In this department, he was employed for over twenty-five years.

By the end of 1871 (and not including the twenty-six stories he had had available for Contos Fluminenses and had not selected), Machado had ample new short stories that already had been in print with which to fulfill his commitment to Garnier. However, he still waited more than eighteen months to deliver stories for the second book. This leads Galante de Sousa to speculate that Machado had probably felt these were inferior, and that the author preferred to wait until he could produce more suitable work before publishing another book.⁵ The relative brevity of Histórias da Meia-Noite (only two-thirds as many pages as Contos Fluminenses)

could then be explained by Machado's obligation to honor a contract already more than two years late in its fulfillment. When it finally appeared in November 1873, the book was comprised of six short stories, four of which had been printed in the Jornal das Famílias in 1873, one in 1872, and one not discovered to have been published prior to Histórias. Disregarding all stories published earlier than 1870, Machado had twenty-five to choose from to compile Histórias da Meia-Noite. He chose six and rejected nineteen.

The first story in Histórias da Meia-Noite is "A Parasita Azul." It is the longest of the six, covering thirty pages in the Aguilar edition. "A Parasita Azul" has a theme similar to many of the stories found in Contos Fluminenses, but its plot construction is far more complicated than any story Machado wrote before 1872. As in "Miss Dollar," there is the gradual development of the personality of the main character. In this story, it is a doctor, Camilo Seabra. In the opening paragraphs, Camilo is now in Brazil after eight years supposedly studying in Paris but actually spending much of his time, and his father's and godfather's money, traveling throughout Europe. He has been forced by his father to return to the family home in Goiás under the threat of losing his allowance. Unlike Luís Soares, a "dandy" all his life, Camilo eventually rejects the playboy philosophy he acquired in his years spent in Europe, and accepts the wholesome, rural values awakened in him by his love for Isabel, the daughter of a local neighbor. A roman-

tic note of mystery begins to unfold when an old man in disguise cryptically informs Camilo that he is involved in a drama. The drama is that Isabel's childhood love for Camilo still exists. "A Parasita Azul" is similar in length to "Linha Reta e Linha Curva," and likewise has a happy ending as Camilo and Isabel marry and reside in a community with old friends and enduring traditions. Leandro Soares, a friend of Camilo during his adolescent days, closely resembles Lufs Soares, jealous, spiteful, and cunning. He blames an innocent Camilo for Isabel's indifference to him. As Lufs Soares dreamed of being knifed to death, Leandro Soares dreams of seeing Isabel and Camilo submerged together in a raging current of water. This dream, symbolizing a passionate relationship between Isabel and another man, deeply hurts Leandro who schemes to recapture the woman who was his only in his own mind.

In "A Parasita Azul," Machado de Assis evolves two individuals so that their personalities interchange. Leandro Soares' personality changes from an enthusiastic friend of many years and a splendid traveling companion on their journey from Rio de Janeiro to Goiás, to a scorned, jealous rival, who finally accepts a political position that he always coveted in return for abandoning all pretenses of his love for Isabel. Camilo changes from the sad, brooding playboy, yearning for Paris, to become the most tranquil man of his rural community, widely respected and admired. In addition to the love of Isabel, it is the beauty and eternity of

nature, and the goodness and vitality of the rural people that save Camilo Seabra from the fate of Luís Soares or Vasconcelos, obviously the ultimate end for Leandro Soares. Machado de Assis, in the first story of his second volume, has given the reader an epic-sounding, romantic adventure, in which all ends well and goodness triumphs over evil, opportunism, and jealousy.

"As Bodas de Luís Duarte" is an excellent satire on the people attending a middle class wedding party in a home in Rio de Janeiro. This is the kind of people and event that Machado knew extremely well. The entire wedding-day festivities emerge with humorous, sometimes mocking descriptions of each incident and guest with the exception of the bride, the most sacred object of all. Though she is only mentioned in a few paragraphs, the narrator tells us that:

Carlota estava efetivamente deslumbrante com o seu vestido branco, e a sua grinalda de flôres de laranjeira, e o seu finíssimo véu, sem outra jóia mais que os seus olhos negros, verdadeiros diamantes da melhor água.⁶

Luís Duarte, the groom, never appears as a human being but only as an object. He is perceived by the reader in the same way as he is perceived by the guests; the excuse for the party to be staged.

The guests are presented as an assemblage of comic types as they enter, talk, enjoy the music, and offer their comments about the wedding and accompanying traditions. Justiniano Vilela is described in terms of his enormous head, but also as a man who was capable of choosing a lovely lady for his wife. Dr. Valença is a serious man, so serious that

he needs four minutes to unfold his handkerchief and clean his nose. A normally grave man, says Machado, needs only two minutes. "Era um homem gravíssimo."⁷ As the afternoon progresses, the guests, and especially the host, are greatly relieved when Lieutenant Porffrio finally arrives. They all feel that no ceremonial occasion can ever be a success without a speech from Porffrio.

"As Bodas de Luís Duarte" sets forth no political message and is a ridicule of pretense and ceremony. It is a harmless exercise in good humor, and universal in a situation that is perfect for comical treatment. It is the antithesis of "A Parasita Azul" in time, space, and character development, but like the happiness that finally occurred in that small town in Goiás, it also came to pass in the residential zone of Rio de Janeiro.

"Ernesto de Tal" is the universal and traditional romantic triangle of two young men courting the same woman. As in "As Bodas de Luís Duarte," the individuals involved are from the middle class, and two are from Rio de Janeiro. Rosina, elegant but not wealthy, wishes to marry as advantageously as possible. Ernesto, whose last name has supposedly been forgotten by the author, and who is referred to as Ernesto de Tal, a name symbolic of one not having a family name worthy of mention or of remembering, only has a government job in the arsenal. In Rosina's thoughts, he will have to suffice as a husband unless a better prospect shows up in the near future, since not to marry would be the major catas-

trophe for her.

A rival to Ernesto appears in the person of the long-nosed fellow, known to the reader solely by this distinguishing feature. In one run-on sentence, he is described by Machado as a serious suitor with intentions for marriage, and with a satirized, stereotyped personality befitting his place of birth, Minas Gerais. "Tinha vinte e seis anos, era laborioso, benquisto, econômico, singelo, e sincero, um verdadeiro filho de Minas."⁸

The author and the reader are primarily concerned with the agony of Ernesto as he smokes, walks, thinks, suffers sleepless nights, daydreams at his job, and angrily hears his friend Jorge constantly warning him that he has never been Rosina's first and only choice for a husband. Our concern is also with Rosina, who is caught in the difficult situation of not wanting to lose the best possible opportunity for her future. It is she who controls the destiny of Ernesto, the long-nosed fellow, and the conclusion of the story.

"Ernesto de Tal" denotes a growth for Machado de Assis in his stories of romantic conflict. All three of the people involved have human and justifiable intentions. No moral judgments are set forth by the author as to how honorably they should act and think. Rosina, as long as she has a suitor, cannot suffer the loss of her future. Her worst fears, which are realized, are that the two men will unite against her. However, by her clever manipulation of Ernesto, since she is the one acting from reason and he from passion, Rosina

is able to marry him and avert the ultimate disaster. The reader has compassion for all three characters and is rewarded for his anxieties when the long-nosed fellow and Ernesto become business associates and friends. The long-nosed fellow is a wiser son of Minas Gerais, which is attributable to his experiences in Rio de Janeiro.

"Aurora sem Dia" treats satirically the society in which Luís Tinoco, a young and immature man of twenty-one at the beginning of the story, rises to rapid prominence. Possessed with the idea he is destined for greatness, Luís awakens one morning convinced he has great poetry within his soul. After publishing his verses in the Correio Mercantil, and a collection of poems in a book called Goivos e Camélias, Luís moves on to politics and to the elected position of State Representative. As in his literary "career," the outward appearance of the profession of politician, including the delivery of speeches interlaced with fiery rhetoric and extravagant gestures, replaces deep study and serious convictions. After a spokesman for the opposition reads Luís' horrible poems on the floor of the legislature, exposing Luís' lack of serious intellectual development, he is disgraced and his political career comes to a halt. Three years later, he is a mature man who has realized his limitations and has accepted them.

The fictional "Aurora sem Dia" of 1873 is not far different from the life of Machado de Assis between 1863 and 1866. Machado's strong articles on the Christie affair, the

publication of his poetry in various magazines and newspapers culminating with his book Crisálidas in 1864, and the loss of an election to the State Assembly of Minas Gerais in 1866, closely parallel events in the fictional life of Luís Tinoco. It is probable that Machado had truly believed in his own youthful writings as much as had Luís, though as literature Crisálidas does not merit condemnation. Machado, after his marriage and his turn to the short story and the novel after 1869, had appeared to find the proper direction for his creative expression. Luís Tinoco, too, realized his shortcomings as a writer and politician, and accepted the fact that his destiny must conform to his talents.

"O Relógio de Ouro" is the shortest story in Machado's first two books, having less than five complete pages in the Aguilar edition. It closely resembles many stories written after 1880 but is almost unique among Machado's short stories of the late 1860s and early 1870s. "O Relógio de Ouro" has powerful dialogue, a situation of strong conflict between the two main characters, and an ironic ending for which the attentive reader has been prepared.

The influence of Shakespeare is apparent as the protagonist, Luís Negreiros, accuses his wife Clarinha of being unfaithful, just as Othello had accused Desdemona. However, Luís Negreiros, whose first and last names always appear together, and sound to the reader like a sneer, has in his soul the meanness of Iago and not the pitiable sympathy that one feels for Othello. "- Vamos, de quem é aquêlê relógio?,"⁹

shouts Luís Negreiros at Clarinha upon finding a man's gold watch on a table in their bedroom. Clarinha, whose name symbolizes purity and innocence, agonizes but remains silent.

"O Relógio de Ouro" presents a slice of life unified in time and space. Easily adaptable to a two or even a one-act play, the story revolves about two characters whose highly different personalities are quickly revealed by their actions and words, and who are symbolized by the sound of their names, Clarinha, and Luís Negreiros.

Clarinha acabava justamente de ler uma página e voltava a fôlha com o ar indiferente e tranqüilo de quem não pensa em decifrar charadas de cronômetro. Luís Negreiros encarou-a; seus olhos pareciam dous reluzentes punhais.

- Que tens? perguntou a môça com a voz doce e meiga que tôda a gente concordava em lhe achar.

Luís Negreiros não respondeu à interrogação da mulher; olhou algum tempo para ela; depois deu duas voltas na sala, passando a mão pelos cabelos, por modo que a môça de novo lhe perguntou:

- Que tens?

Luís Negreiros parou defronte dela.

- Que é isto? disse êle tirando do bôlso o fatal relógio e apresentando-lhe diante dos olhos. Que é isto? repetiu êle com voz de trovão.

Clarinha mordeu os beiços e não respondeu.¹⁰

In what seems like an eternity to the deceitful, hypocritical Luís Negreiros but is actually only one day, he learns the watch is a present from his own mistress. Shakespeare's Desdemona and Machado's Clarinha were both faithful wives. The former suffered a tragic fate whereas the latter escaped unharmed.

As in Contos Fluminenses, Machado has included in Histórias da Meia-Noite one epistolary short story and again from the point of view of the woman. In comparing "Ponto de Vista" with the previously discussed "Confissões de uma Viúva

Moça," there is evidence of advancement in Machado's style of short story writing. "Ponto de Vista" is entirely constructed from a series of dated letters written over a period of seven months. The majority of them are from Raquel to Luísa, to enable the reader to see Raquel gradually falling in love with Alberto, whom she had at first severely criticized. Within the confines of the short story, the reader is not permitted to see all the correspondence between Raquel and Luísa. Many of Luísa's letters in answer to Raquel's early criticism of Alberto are omitted, making it necessary for the reader to create this portion of the story from imagination. This adds another dimension of realism to a fictional situation. By the time Machado includes a love letter from Alberto to Raquel, followed by a letter from Raquel to Luísa canceling a planned visit on the pretext of a minor illness, the reader becomes aware that the story will have a happy ending.

"Ponto de Vista" is humorous while "Confissões de uma Viúva Moça" was tragic. And in contrast to "Frei Simão," a tragedy with which Machado closed Contos Fluminenses, "Ponto de Vista," a comedy, completes Histórias da Meia-Noite.

Four stories that appeared in the Jornal das Famílias in the following order: "Ernesto de Tal" (March and April 1873), "O Relógio de Ouro" (April and May 1873), "As Bodas de Luís Duarte" (June and July 1873), and "Ponto de Vista," under the title "Quem Desdenha" (October and November 1873), were not placed in Histórias da Meia-Noite chronologically as they had been published in the magazine. "Aurora sem Dia"

was not found to have been published anywhere prior to Histórias da Meia-Noite. Galante de Sousa does not think that this story missing from Famílias was printed first in the lost 1870 issues but its writing does date from 1873, probably after "Ponto de Vista."¹¹

In Histórias da Meia-Noite, the stories are printed in the order in which they have been previously analyzed: "A Parasita Azul," "As Bodas de Luís Duarte," "Ernesto de Tal," "Aurora sem Dia," "O Relógio de Ouro," and "Ponto de Vista." This minor change in the placement of the stories apparently has some significance. Though the volume contains two stories with optimistic, happy endings, two which can be classified as satirical, and two which are basically character studies, the arrangement that Machado de Assis chose did not place two stories with similar themes, one following the other. The two satirical stories, which could have caused some embarrassment to the author in his quest for a safe bureaucratic position, were placed in the middle of the book. The reader's perception of the first, "As Bodas de Luís Duarte," is distracted by the length of "A Parasita Azul." Likewise, the second, "Aurora sem Dia," more subtle in its satire, is followed by the powerful "O Relógio de Ouro" and the cute, comic "Ponto de Vista," which serve the same purpose.

"A Parasita Azul" possesses many of the elements of a novel rather than of a short story. (This is the period in his life in which Machado had just finished his first novel

and was beginning his second.) Though "A Parasita Azul" and its counterpart in Contos Fluminenses, "Miss Dollar," are both constructed from the point of view of the male protagonists, Camilo and Mendonça, both doctors of medicine, "A Parasita Azul" attempts much more than does "Miss Dollar." Camilo's long journey from Rio de Janeiro to Goiás is graphically presented by Machado in scenes of Camilo and Leandro traveling together on horseback, resting around campfires, or at inns, as Camilo endeavors to adjust to his rustic homeland after spending eight years in Europe. In descriptive passages reminiscent of José de Alencar and Gonçalves Dias, Machado extols the classic virtues of love of country and of neighbor which he infuses into the fictional people of rural Goiás. All the people of Camilo's home town are kind-hearted. There is the good priest, Manuel, who had baptized him, beautiful Isabel, her father, Dr. Matos, and Colonel Veiga, who, unpretentiously but with noble stature, plays the part of the Emperor at the annual Feast of the Holy Spirit pageant. Other townsfolk are costumed either as shepherds or as Brazilian historical figures.

Apenas da igreja avistaram o cortejo, o sineiro que já estava à espreita, pôs em obra as lições mais complicadas do seu ofício, enquanto uma girandola, entremeada de alguns foguetes soltos, anunciava às nuvens do céu que o imperador do Divino era chegado. Na igreja houve um rebuliço geral apenas se anunciou que era chegado o imperador. Um mestre-de-cerimônias ativo e desempenado ia abrindo alas, com grande dificuldade, porque o povo, ansioso por ver a figura do tenente-coronel, aglomerava-se desordenadamente e desfazia a obra do mestre-de-cerimônias. Afinal aconteceu o que sempre acontece nessas ocasiões; as alas foram-se abrindo por si mesmas, e ainda que com algum custo, o tenente-coronel atravessou a multidão, precedido e acompanhado pela irmandade, até

chegar ao trono que se levantava ao lado do altar-mor. Subiu com firmeza os degraus do trono, e sentou-se nêle, tão orgulhoso como se governasse dali todos os impérios juntos do mundo.¹²

Months pass from the time Camilo sadly arrives in Rio de Janeiro until the time when he happily accepts his destiny in life. He would be a part of the populace, a leader in the town where he was born, and he would share all with his wife Isabel. Machado de Assis, though never having personally experienced the scenes he draws in the story, nevertheless has charmed the reader with his romantic exaltation of ancestral values, and has demonstrated his versatility as a short story writer. After the next eight years though, he would not be able nor would ever again want to produce a story like "A Parasita Azul."

"As Bodas de Luís Duarte" is pure farce. It resembles a comedy, to be played in a theater, intended to criticize mildly the middle-class society of Rio de Janeiro. However, the source of Machado's idea for writing the story can readily be ascertained. In 1869, the Brazilian writer, Franklin Távora, published a serious novelette of customs entitled Um Casamento no Arrabalde. The story centered about a wedding day, with its accompanying ceremonies, its descriptions and backgrounds of a middle-class family and their guests, who all live in a residential section of Recife. It appears that Machado de Assis saw in Távora's short novel an excellent opportunity for satire. Machado moved the scene to Rio de Janeiro and ridiculed not only the wedding day but also Távora's work.

Both authors present a character named Justiniano, a guest at the respective weddings. Here is Távora's description of his Justiniano interwoven with that of another guest, Felisberto. The reader should also compare the description of Justiniano's wife in Távora's novelette with Machado's description of Justiniano's wife in "As Bodas de Luís Duarte."

Justiniano era um distinto empregado da alfândega, e Felisberto, guarda-livros de uma casa inglesa . . . ; o primeiro tinha o rosto bonito demais para homem, formas fornidas e já um tanto maduras; . . .

A mulher de Justiniano era uma beleza. Em Paris chamar-lhe-iam ravissante; no Recife passa simplesmente por bonita; mas, na realidade, ela preenche as condições de delicadeza e perfeição que uma mulher deve trazer nas suas formas.¹³

However, Machado, in his jesting, goes right to the heart (or to the head) of the matter. In fact, Machado's description of his Justiniano, quoted below, could follow Távora's and still appear to be the portrayal of the same person even including the sections about the wives of each Justiniano and their modes of living.

A cabeça de Justiniano Vilela, - se se pode chamar cabeça a uma jaca metida numa gravata de cinco voltas, - era um exemplo da prodigalidade da natureza quando quer fazer cabeças grandes. Afirmavam, porém, algumas pessoas que o talento não correspondia ao tamanho; pôsto que tivesse corrido algum tempo o boato contrário. Não sei de que talento falavam essas pessoas; e a palavra pode ter várias aplicações. O certo é que um talento teve Justiniano Vilela, foi a escolha da mulher, senhora que, apesar dos seus quarenta e seis anos bem puxados, ainda merecia, no entender de José Lemos, dez minutos de atenção.¹⁴

Além do ordenado com que foi aposentado, tinha Justiniano Vilela uma casa e dous molecotes, e com isso ia vivendo menos mal. Não gostava de política; mas tinha opiniões assentadas a respeito dos negócios públicos. Jogava o solo e o gamão todos os dias, alternadamente; gabava as cousas do seu tempo; e tomava rapé com o dedo polegar e o dedo médio.¹⁵

Machado's descriptions of the bride's family and their actions are equally farcical. On the day of the wedding, José Lemos, her father, is hanging prints for decoration, unsuitable for the occasion. The titles of them are: The Death of Sardanapalus and The Execution of Mary Stuart, classic reproductions hung for the guests to assume that the host and his family possess a cultural awareness which actually does not exist in them. His wife, Dona Beatriz, thought the first print to be indecent and is silent about the second. José Lemos can only retort that the two prints "eram históricos."¹⁶ Rodrigo and Antonico, two of the couple's other children, are described by Machado in this way.

Rodrigo tinha dezoito anos e Antonico seis; o Antonico era a miniatura do Rodrigo; distinguiam-se ambos por uma notável preguiça, e nisso eram perfeitamente irmãos. Rodrigo desde as oito horas da manhã gastou o tempo em duas cousas; ler os anúncios do Jornal e ir à cozinha saber em que altura estava o almoço. Quanto ao Antonico, tinha comido às seis horas um bom prato de mingau, na forma do costume, e só se ocupou em dormir tranqüilamente até que a mucama o foi chamar.¹⁷

Távora's Casamento covers a period of several months culminating with the wedding day. A considerable amount of background information is given by the author about the family and guests. The wedding day is Távora's focal moment in time to discuss the people and their lives. By contrast, Machado's "Bodas" (a simplified word with the same basic meaning) takes place in one long scene on the wedding day with the focal point being neither the bride, the groom, nor the ceremony, but the oratory of Lieutenant Porfirio. Without him, no formal affair can be deemed a success in the

arrabalde of Machado's imagination.

Because of the length of "A Parasita Azul," the chronological center of Histórias da Meia-Noite is the third story, "Ernesto de Tal." Compositionally, it serves as a balance between the first two stories and the last three. It divides the two satirical ones, "As Bodas de Luís Duarte" and "Aurora sem Dia," and at the same time separates the mad jealousies of Leandro, in "A Parasita Azul," from those of Luís Negreiros, in "O Relógio de Ouro." "Ernesto de Tal" represents the final short story in Machado's seven volumes involving a romantic triangle written in a traditionally romantic way. Though he would never exhaust this theme, this is the last story in which he would treat it in a narrative manner, chronologically, and with a conclusion in which all characters will be content if not totally happy. After 1880, stories thematically similar to "Ernesto de Tal" would be developed more imaginatively, but in 1873 this story is acceptable for its depiction of human feelings without judging either the sentiments or the people.

If "Aurora sem Dia" were not immediately followed by "O Relógio de Ouro," it would have been the most likely story in the collection to make a strong impression upon its readers. Through the maneuverings and the thoughts of Luís Tinoco, Machado de Assis quietly but firmly makes attacks upon great institutions of Brazilian society, attacks which are not immediately apparent upon a first reading of the story. The strong, emotional involvement into which the

readers are swept by "O Relógio de Ouro," as all of us wish to know "- . . . , de quem é aquele relógio,"¹⁸ draws attention from the social criticism presented from the beginning to the end of "Aurora sem Dia."

Symbolically, Machado de Assis, now thirty-four years old and deeply absorbed in a hectic writing schedule he would maintain until 1878, aware of the great struggle necessary to produce work he felt to be acceptable to his standards, and realizing how easy it was for literature of an inferior quality to reach the public's attention, and be praised, has created in "Aurora sem Dia" a Luís Tinoco who was not discouraged from his goals until he had reached a far more advanced position than his talents should have taken him.

Luís Tinoco represents many of the young acquaintances of Machado de Assis. "Luís Tinoco possuía a convicção de que estava fadado para grandes destinos."¹⁹ One morning he awakens and proclaims himself a writer and a poet. In spite of the direct criticism of his guardian, Anastásio, and the subtle judgment of his poetry by his friend, Dr. Lemos, as not of excellent quality, Luís continues to write what he thinks are masterpieces. He finds a way for the famous newspaper, Correio Mercantil, to print his verses among the advertisements without his having to pay for the service. One day he reads the verses to Dr. Lemos in a restaurant.

A sobremesa, estando na sala apenas uns cinco frequentes, desdobrou Luís Tinoco o fatal papel e leu as anunciadas estrofes, com uma melopéia afetada e perfeitamente ridícula. Os versos falavam de tudo, da morte e da vida, das flôres e dos vermes, dos amôres e dos ódios;

havia mais de oito ciprestes, cerca de vinte lágrimas, e mais túmulos do que um verdadeiro cemitério.²⁰

After five months of writing, Luís publishes a collection of his poems under the ridiculous title of Goivos e Camélias (Wallflower Blossoms and Camellias). In their brief reviews, the newspapers do not discourage him. In their politeness, they only serve to encourage him by falsely promising to analyze his book at a later date, as does the educated Dr. Lemos.

Luís then starts a literary magazine with an equally atrocious title, Caramanchão Literário, for which there are actually eighty subscribers, according to him. But Luís soon decides that since his literary "fame" is now firmly established, he will become a politician and ultimately a statesman. Dr. Lemos then arranges a position for him in a law office and, because Luís becomes an expert on attacks and name calling, he is able to secure a nomination and eventual election to office in Minas Gerais. Finally, he is exposed as having all style and no substance.

The newspapers, the lawyers, the politicians, the oratorical tradition previously ridiculed through the person of Lieutenant Porffrio in "As Bodas de Luís Duarte," the rising in stature through the influence of friends, and the misguided personal values of the youth, have all been included in Machado's satire. Though the outcome for Luís Tinoco is his momentary disgrace and ultimate maturity, Machado, too, had to function within this absurd system and make it work for himself. Immodestly, Machado knew he had

the talent but intentionally did not exemplify it in Luís Tinoco. For Machado, Luís Tinoco is a personal symbol of people inferior to him who advanced faster than he was able to do. Though the story turns out morally correct, the careful reader will remember how Luís Tinoco, having limited talent, used influence, luck, and energy to attain a high position.

In "O Relógio de Ouro," Machado de Assis returns to a simplified and very melodramatic situation. Though poor, wronged, brave, and threatened Clarinha knows the watch is a present from Luís Negreiros' mistress, the reader is not informed of the fact until the end of the narrative, and is not cognizant that Clarinha ever knew about the affair until she hands her husband the note which accompanied the watch. Throughout the story, Luís Negreiros is the embodiment of evil as he verbally attacks his wife without listening to her protestations. Luís Negreiros is unequalled in his meanness as a protagonist created by Machado de Assis. No other character can be compared to him and no other story Machado wrote prior to 1880 can be judged stylistically to be of the same quality as "O Relógio de Ouro." In later stories of high drama, Machado would omit a distracting opening and closing sentence. In this case, the author announces his intention to tell the story of a gold watch and then he informs the reader at the close that the story has ended. However, for its drama, "O Relógio de Ouro" is certainly deserving of inclusion in Histórias da Meia-Noite and successfully dwarfs

"Aurora sem Dia."

Whereas Contos Fluminenses concluded with the shocking story "Frei Simão," Histórias da Meia-Noite comes to a close with the pleasing "Ponto de Vista." Successfully diverted from the satire of "Aurora sem Dia" by the force of "O Relógio de Ouro," the reader is now gently brought to the conclusion of the volume by the humorous "Ponto de Vista." Here, Machado de Assis captures the changing thoughts of Raquel, the young girl in love, showing her idealism and confusion at being chosen by Alberto to be his wife. Naturally, he is the man she had ridiculed in her early letters to Luísa. At the conclusion of the story, Luísa is left speechless and the reader is left with a smile and a chuckle. It is much more refreshing for the reader to end a volume with pleasant thoughts of Luísa and Raquel rather than to be left with the memory of the contemptible Luís Negreiros.

As in Contos Fluminenses, Machado de Assis did not include in Histórias da Meia-Noite any story which had either a strong social theme or was a satire overtly directed against aspects of Brazilian society. Of the two satires that were included, "As Bodas de Luís Duarte" is more stage farce than sharp satire, whereas "Aurora sem Dia" masks the general satire by centering the plot around one individual, Luís Tinoco, thereby diverting the reader from the other implied criticisms.

"Mariana," published in the Jornal das Famílias in 1871 under the pseudonym J. J., and not appearing in a collection during Machado's lifetime, is as melodramatic and as powerful

as "O Relógio de Ouro." "Mariana" is one of Machado's few stories of conflict between people from different social classes. The story tells of slavery, the intolerance of the upper class, and the impossibility of compromise between people of different social levels. Machado, all too familiar with these problems, especially prior to 1871, would not have wanted to express under his own name his views on abolition or criticize Rio de Janeiro's upper class as being absolutely insensitive to human desires, when at the same time he was hoping to rise in status through a political position which could only be granted to him by the very same people whom he might be attacking.

Coutinho, thirty-nine years old and upper class, tells his story of Mariana, the mulatto slave girl who, years before, had committed suicide in his presence because he did not return her love. Though Coutinho tells his friends he never really loved Mariana, he also never married following the tragedy. His engagement to jealous, slave-hating Amélia was broken by her, and it appears he would always be haunted by the memory of Mariana.

Outwardly, the reader sees the class consciousness of Coutinho and his apparent cold indifference to the sufferings of another. But inwardly, Coutinho recognizes he is a victim of a vicious institution, slavery, which destroyed the only love of his life.

No solution is offered by the author. The ending of the story is consistent with Machado's idea of upper-class

views that serious romantic relationships between people from different social classes cannot exist. In Coutinho's words:

Tal foi, meus amigos, êste incidente da minha vida. Creio que posso dizer ainda hoje que tôdas as mulheres de quem tenho sido amado, nenhuma me amou mais do que aquela. Sem alimentar-se de nenhuma esperança, entregou-se alegremente ao fogo do martírio; amor obscuro, silencioso, desesperado, inspirando o riso ou a indignação, mas no fundo, amor imenso e profundo, sincero e inalterável.²¹

It seems that Machado was able to discard "Mariana" more easily than Coutinho was able to forget his Mariana.

During the years encompassing the volumes Contos Fluminenses and Histórias da Meia-Noite, Machado de Assis was attempting to refine his short story technique in themes of fantasy and satire as well as beginning his dissections of the individual aspects and the motivations of man. Between 1869 and 1871, he wrote five short stories of fantasy, definitely showing the influence upon him of Edgar Allan Poe. They were: "O Anjo Rafael" (1869, already discussed in Chapter II), "A Vida Eterna" (1870), "O Capitão Mendonça" (1870), "A Felicidade" (1871), and "Rui de Leão" (1871). Though the title of his second volume is Histórias da Meia-Noite, a title suggestive of mystery and the supernatural in the stories, no story of fantasy appears in the book. It is possible that, since the years in which these stories of fantasy were written coincided with the dates of the expected delivery to Garnier of the short stories for the second volume, Machado had intended to use them. Perhaps upon reflection, he decided that these stories were not of a sufficiently high caliber to be included. He then kept the title but discarded the theme.

From this general period of his life, the one story of fantasy included in a volume is "A Chinela Turca," unquestionably the finest of the group. Though written in 1875, too late for Histórias da Meia-Noite, it did appear in the third collection of stories, Papéis Avulsos, in 1882, published after his illnesses and after his novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas. In "A Chinela Turca," to be discussed in detail in Chapter IV, Machado corrected the major weaknesses in his fantasy stories of the early 1870s, principally those in "A Vida Eterna" and "O Capitão Mendonça."

In "A Vida Eterna," there is a dream sequence and an adventure. The first major weakness of the story is that Machado's introduction to the dream (and the subsequent adventure) is not subtle but obvious.

A conversa, pouco animada ao princípio, foi esmorecendo cada vez mais, até que eu e ele, sem deixarmos o charuto da boca, cerramos os olhos e entramos no estado a que aludi acima, ouvindo os ratos que passeavam no forro da casa, mas inteiramente esquecidos um do outro.
Era natural passarmos dali ao sono completo, . . .²²

The adventure begins when Dr. Camilo, the narrator, hears a knock at the door while his friend Vaz still sleeps.

The second major weakness of "A Vida Eterna" (both later corrected in "A Chinela Turca") is that it is told as a first person narrative. Therefore, since Dr. Camilo ostensibly is the author, the story must end favorably so that he could write about it. No matter what frightening experiences Dr. Camilo encounters, he must survive. Consequently, the reader is not wholly involved and the element of fear is lost. Either by the realization that the adventure depicted is only

a dream or by the understanding that a first person story of this kind must have a satisfactory conclusion, the reader cannot suspend disbelief.

"O Capitão Mendonça," appearing in the Jornal das Famílias following "A Vida Eterna," is built in like manner upon a dream and an adventure, and has the same weaknesses. After the first person narrator, Amaral, falls asleep in a theater, the adventure begins. There is little semblance to reality. The reader, though momentarily shocked by the events in the narrative, suspects that Amaral will probably awaken soon, sometime during the second act of the play he is attending.

In contrast to "A Vida Eterna" and "O Capitão Mendonça," "A Felicidade" has more of a basis of reality with only a hint of a mystery until its conclusion. In this story, Machado de Assis has actually been influenced by his own short story, "Miss Dollar." The author's third character named Mendonça, akin to the Mendonça of "Miss Dollar," is now a man forty years old but still a person who cannot comprehend the actions of the woman with whom he is emotionally involved. This Mendonça reads in the newspaper an advertisement by a wealthy woman stating that she wishes to marry a man over the age of forty. On an impulse, he decides to answer it. They meet and he finds that she, Branca, is a beautiful woman but extremely vague as to the reason why she had advertised for a husband. He offers to marry her and she accepts him. Later however, Mendonça, believing that Branca must be

insane, does not return to her house as he had promised. A week later she visits him, completely dressed in black. In a supernatural ending to the story, Branca declares that she is Happiness herself, and that he, being weak and afraid of the unknown, will never find any happiness in this life.

"A Felicidade" is a good story for a popular magazine but shows little imagination or creativity on the part of the author. With the exception of the supernatural qualities attributed to Branca, "A Felicidade" is partly a tangential copy of "Miss Dollar." In the earlier story, Margarida's coldness to Mendonça was for self-protection whereas in "A Felicidade," Branca's coldness suggests to the reader that she is a being of another world. Through an impulsive act, Mendonça won his Margarida. Through the lack of an impulsive response, Mendonça lost his Happiness.

If 1870 and 1871 can be called the years in which Machado wrote short stories of fantasy, then 1872 and 1873 can be considered the years in which humor and satire became the dominant themes. "Uma Loureira" (1872), "Quem Conta um Conto" (1872), "Tempo de Crise" (1873), "As Bodas de Luís Duarte" (1873), "Ponto de Vista" (1873), and "Aurora sem Dia" (1873), the last three stories included in Histórias da Meia-Noite, all date from this period.

In "Quem Conta um Conto," Machado de Assis, with gentle irony and with the humor associated with the people of his city, Rio de Janeiro, tells the story of Gouveia and how the false rumor that his niece, supposedly engaged to someone

else, had run off with a lieutenant, was passed to Gouveia by an unsuspecting gossip named Luís da Costa, and was eventually traced to its source, Gouveia himself.

As Gouveia races through Rio de Janeiro and nearby Niterói, the rumor of his niece's "escapade" (She never even had been engaged) loses the embellishments added to it by various gossips. Following a casual statement made to Judge Lucas that he, Gouveia, was capable of punishing his niece if she were engaged and if she should flirt with any lieutenant who might be passing by, Gouveia finally realizes he was the original source of the rumor.

A major weakness of this hastily written story, in addition to its tone reminiscent of centuries-old fables, is that Machado, still in the period of writing stories with moral judgments, has the reader originally believing that the central figure is Luís da Costa, and that the story will probably end with his punishment for circulating false rumors. Abruptly, Machado discards Luís and we follow the enraged and outraged uncle who, upon realizing his role as the source of the gossip, cannot help but wonder how strangely people act and think.

Before the writing of "Aurora sem Dia," "Tempo de Crise," completed only a few months prior to "Aurora sem Dia," was the most important satirical story written by Machado de Assis. As in "Quem Conta um Conto," rumor is also the thread running through "Tempo de Crise," but Machado has shifted his narrative focus from an individual like

Gouveia to the general population of Rio de Janeiro. "Tempo de Crise" is concerned with the men of Rio de Janeiro, their talent for conversation and the intense desire of each one to be the first to learn the important news of the day, partly in order to broadcast it to his friends. The center for information is the famous street, the Rua do Ouvidor, just as important to the life of the city today as it was in 1873, the year of the story.

. . . A Rua do Ouvidor resume o Rio de Janeiro. A certas horas do dia, pode a fúria celeste destruir a cidade; se conservar a Rua do Ouvidor, conserva Noé, a família e o mais. Uma cidade é um corpo de pedra com um rosto. O rosto da cidade fluminense é esta rua, rosto eloquente que exprime todos os sentimentos e tôdas as idéias....

. . . Queres ver a elegância fluminense. Aqui acharás a flor da sociedade, - as senhoras que vêm escolher jóias ao Valais ou sêdas a Notre Dame, - os rapazes que vêm conversar de teatros, de salões, de modas e de mulheres. Queres saber da política? Aqui saberás das notícias mais frescas, das evoluções próximas, dos acontecimentos prováveis; aqui verás o deputado atual com o deputado que foi, o ministro difunto e às vêzes o ministro vivo. Vês aquêlê sujeito? É um homem de letras. Dêste lado, vem um dos primeiros negociantes da praça. Queres saber do estado do câmbio? Vai ali ao Jornal do Comércio, que é o Times de cá. Muita vez encontrarás um coupé à porta de uma loja de modas: é uma Ninon fluminense. Vês um sujeito ao pé dela, dentro da loja, dizendo um galanteio? Pode ser um diplomata. Dirás que eu só menciono a sociedade mais ou menos elegante? Não; o operário pára aqui também para ter o prazer de contemplar durante minutos uma destas vidraças rutilante de riqueza, . . .23

The first words heard by the author-narrator of the story as soon as he arrived in Rio de Janeiro were: "- Caiu o ministério!"²⁴ The government was now in a tempo de crise and to find out the latest and most accurate news, it was absolutely necessary to visit the Rua do Ouvidor.

- Sim; a Rua do Ouvidor é o lugar mais seguro para saber notícias. A casa do Moutinho ou do Bernardo, a

casa do Desmarais ou do Garnier, são verdadeiras estações telegráficas. Ganha-se mais em estar aí comodamente sentado do que em andar pela casa dos homens da situação.²⁵

The conversations taking place on the street and in the shops and restaurants, heard by the narrator-author, seem virtually the same in their wit and content as any conversation held today.

- Ora, vivam! Então já sabem da crise?

Esta pergunta era feita por um sujeito que entrou pela loja mais rápido que um foguete. Trazia na cara uns ares de gazeta noticiosa.

- Crise formal? perguntamos todos.

- Completa. Os homens brigaram ontem de noite; e foram hoje de manhã a S. Cristóvão...

- É o que eu dizia, observou o Dr. Abreu.

- Qual o verdadeiro motivo da crise? perguntou o C.

- O verdadeiro motivo foi uma questão da guerra.

- Não creia nisso!

O Dr. Abreu disse estas palavras com um ar de tão altiva convicção, que o recém-chegado replicou um pouco enfiado:

- Sabe então o verdadeiro motivo mais do que eu que estive com o cunhado do Ministro da Guerra?

A réplica pareceu decisiva; o Dr. Abreu limitou-se a fazer aquele gesto com que a gente costuma dizer: Pode ser...²⁶

To the carioca male, talking about the carioca women is equally as important as discussing politics. The two are easily combined during the same conversation.

A única preocupação do Lima eram umas senhoras que passavam. Ouvi dizer que eram as Valadares, - a família do indigitado presidente. Pararam à porta da loja, conversaram alguma coisa com o C. e o Lima, e seguiram viagem.

- São lindas estas môças, disse um dos circunstantes.

- Eu era capaz de as nomear para o ministério.

- Sendo eu presidente do conselho.

- Também eu.

- A mais gorda devia ser Ministro da Marinha.

- Por quê?

- Porque parece mesmo uma fragata.²⁷

However, the most important business on this particular day is politics, and there is feverish speculation as to the

composition of the new cabinet.

- Está enganado; pode o F. ficar com a pasta da Justiça, o M. com a da Guerra, K. Marinha, T. Obras Públicas, V. Fazenda, X. Império, e C. Estrangeiros.
- Não é possível; o V. é que deve ficar com a pasta de Estrangeiros.
- Mas o V. não pode entrar nessa combinação.
- Por quê?
- É inimigo do F.
- Sim; mas a deputação da Bahia.
- Aqui coçava o outro a orelha.
- A deputação da Bahia, respondia êle, pode ficar bem metendo o N.
- O N. não aceita.
- Por quê?
- Não quer ministério de transição.
- Chama a isto ministério de transição?
- Pois que é mais?²⁸

Finally, that same Friday night, three, four, and then many more people arrive on the Rua do Ouvidor with self-drawn, "authentic" lists of the new cabinet members who would not be officially installed until after the weekend. After much comparing of the various lists, a composite is arrived at, and

- . . . às 9 horas da noite sabíamos positivamente, sem arredar pé da Rua do Ouvidor, qual era o gabinete.
- O Mendonça ficou alegre com o resultado da crise.
- Perguntaram-lhe por que razão.
- Tenho dois compadres no ministério! respondeu êle.²⁹

This marvelous and gentle satire of a part of Rio de Janeiro and its people was not included in Histórias da Meia-Noite. Though written in the first person, the narrator appears as a spectator and not as a participant, never ridiculing the city or its people. The satire that was included in Histórias da Meia-Noite, "Aurora sem Dia," written just after "Tempo de Crise," was more marked in its criticism and, through the person of Luís Tinoco, was directed toward the institution of politics and not toward a light portrayal of a

political situation. "Tempo de Crise" is a humorous slice of carioca life, and a tour of the Rua do Ouvidor. It was not thought by Machado to be worthy of preservation though it is timeless in its dialogue and comedy and just as entertaining today as it must have been when it appeared in print in the Jornal das Famílias in April 1873, for the first and only time during the author's lifetime.

As in Contos Fluminenses, Machado de Assis also rejected for inclusion in Histórias da Meia-Noite many romantic stories he had available. Stories like "O Rei das Caiporas," "Almas Agradecidas," "O Caminho de Damasco," and "Canseiras em Vão" were sold to the Jornal das Famílias and then discarded as undesirable. In the case of "Almas Agradecidas," Machado published the first half in Famílias in March 1871, but it was not until October of that year that the second half appeared. Obviously too busy and uninterested in "Almas Agradecidas," Machado had not been able to complete it as scheduled. Even a rapid reading of it indicates the extremely weak conclusion reflects the author's haste and a lack of familiarity with his own story.

Though Machado de Assis would publish fifty-five short stories in magazines during the nine years following the publication of Histórias da Meia-Noite, no other collection would appear until 1882. During that period, he was extremely busy earning a living in the ministry, publishing five novels, and being forced to undergo extended convalescence from a physical breakdown.

Serialization of his short stories in magazines and newspapers continued even after 1881. However, the suspenseful chapter endings and the verbose and unnecessary romantic episodes within a story appear to have lessened as did the use of pseudonymic signatures. Machado de Assis, following the publication of his novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas in 1881, doubtlessly realized that if he continued to produce many serially romantic, episodic, short stories similar to "Nem Uma Nem Outra," whose forty pages were spread over three months in the Jornal das Famílias in 1873, or "Valério," whose twenty-two pages covered a period of four months in Famílias in 1874, thereby compelling the readers to await anxiously the next adventure, or the agony involved in the next decision, amorous or otherwise, of the protagonist, his reputation as Brazil's leading writer of fiction would be seriously undermined. His next book of short stories, Papéis Avulsos, published in 1882, is decidedly different in appearance and content from his two earlier volumes.

Footnotes

¹José Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia de Machado de Assis (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1955), p. 698.

²See Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia, pp. 455-460; Machado de Assis, Contos Esparsos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 224.

³Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia, pp. 475, 471-472.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 61. ⁵*Ibid.*, p. 474.

⁶Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume II, Conto e Teatro (Rio de Janeiro: Editôra José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), p. 196.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 195. ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 210. ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Galante de Sousa, Bibliografia, p. 474.

¹²Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, pp. 178-179.

¹³Franklin Távora, Um Casamento no Arrabalde, in Novelas Brasileiras, Seleção, prefácio e notas de Jamil Almansur Haddad (São Paulo: Editora Cultrix Ltda., 1963), pp. 108-109.

¹⁴Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 194.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 195. ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 192-193. ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 220. ²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 224. ²¹*Ibid.*, p. 783.

²²Machado de Assis, Contos Avulsos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 83.

²³Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 785.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 784. ²⁵*Ibid.* ²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 786-787.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 788-789. ²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 790.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 792.

CHAPTER IV

PAPEIS AVULSOS

Nine years to the month had elapsed between the publication of Histórias da Meia-Noite in November 1873 and the appearance of Papéis Avulsos in November 1882. For Machado de Assis, these nine years (especially the first five) probably represented the period in his life that the most intensive and constant mental activity took place.

At the beginning of this nine-year period, on December 31, 1873, about six weeks after Histórias da Meia-Noite was placed on public sale, Machado had begun his career as a high-ranking civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture, Transportation, and Public Works. He had been serving by appointment and quickly rose in rank to become the leading bureaucrat reporting directly to the minister. By 1878, in this capacity, he had received two promotions with added responsibilities. Concomitantly, he had written and published three novels and thirty-nine short stories. From July 1876 to January 1878, he had also written biweekly chronicles for the magazine Ilustração Brasileira, some poetry and literary criticisms. In 1878, he had also been engaged in a literary polemic across the sea with Eça de Queirós, criticizing the Portuguese novelist's O Crime do Padre Amaro and

O Primo Basílio. In December 1876, in a letter to his old friend Ramos Paz, Machado, excusing himself for a lack of time, had refused an offer from him to organize a daily newspaper to be called the Gazeta de Noticias. Therefore, it is not difficult to deduce that extreme fatigue aggravated by retinitis, an acute intestinal problem, and chronic epileptic attacks, necessitated absolute cessation of activities between December 1878 and March 1879 in an attempt to restore his health.

The Machado de Assis who returned to Rio de Janeiro from Nova Friburgo in March 1879 was a far different individual in his thinking from the young, romantic author and high-ranking government bureaucrat who, so debilitated, had left the city the previous December. The cure of his physical ailments was not complete, but he had recovered sufficiently to return to his post at the ministry and resume the writing of fiction but discontinuing all newspaper chronicles until 1883, and curtailing to a degree poetry and literary criticisms.

During the time his eyes were healing from retinitis, Machado de Assis began work on a new novel, Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas. About one year later, in mid-March 1880 and through December of the same year, the novel was serialized bimonthly in the magazine Revista Brasileira. The first complete edition appeared in book form in January 1881. Beginning with Bras Cubas, optimism, romanticism, melodrama, and at times the narrator as an impartial individual were no

longer in evidence in his novels. In their places, there was pessimism, bold advances in structure, and a refined artistry in developing the personalities of the characters. From a superior writer of conventional themes and structures, as seen in his novels Helena and Iaiá Garcia, Machado de Assis had now become an innovator and a portrayer of his new view of the world; a creator of individual characters whose personalities were developed as complete human beings, bordering many times on the fine line between sanity and insanity.

Following the critical acclaim of Bras Cubas in which Machado had committed to novelistic form the overwhelming depression and pessimism that had possessed him by 1879, during the next five years, rather than writing another novel, he turned to the short story as the fictional vehicle which could best serve his analysis of man on this earth, with respect to motivation and behavior. If Bras Cubas can be considered primary evidence of a complete change of direction by the author in the novel, then Papéis Avulsos, his third book of short stories, noticeably confirms this change. In the more limited genre of the short story, Machado would be able to examine a facet of personality, a foible, an idiosyncrasy, or tell a satiric tale. Since time and space elements are more restricted in the short story than in the novel, he had to create his point rapidly and move on immediately to the next situation.

To make his choice for inclusion in Papéis Avulsos, Machado de Assis had at his disposal fifty-five additional

short stories that were first published in newspapers and magazines since November 1873, assuming he had rejected all earlier ones. Though some stories that were included were written just a few months prior to the publication of Papéis Avulsos, and since the traumatic summer of 1878-1879 had almost bisected the nine years between volumes (the first five years pertaining to the pre-Bras Cubas period and the latter four years to his new direction), and though only two stories of a possible forty that were first published before 1879 were chosen while ten stories from a total of fifteen appearing after 1879 were selected for a total of twelve to comprise the book, it is evident that Machado de Assis did make a deliberate and careful choice of stories for Papéis Avulsos in order to produce an expressive and complete volume. It is also worthy of note that all ten stories first published after his illnesses in 1878-1879 and selected, show evidence of having been written after 1881 and the completion of Bras Cubas. There is little doubt that Machado de Assis clearly understood the direction of his thoughts on a definitive new path; the path that had been hinted at in his fiction after 1873 but not exactly crystallized in his mind until Bras Cubas. Many of the forty stories written between Histórias da Meia-Noite and his illnesses of 1878-1879 not selected for Papéis Avulsos were genuinely superior to those in Histórias da Meia-Noite. However, since 1881 and Bras Cubas, Machado had changed his thinking to such a degree that he rejected almost all his previous work.

Eight of the twelve stories selected for Papéis Avulsos were first published in the daily newspaper the Gazeta de Notícias. Though Machado's collaboration with the Gazeta began with an occasional contribution of poetry or literary criticism shortly after his refusal in 1876 to serve as the organizer of the newspaper, his first short story printed in it is dated December 1881. It was "Teoria do Medalhão," the second story in Papéis Avulsos. Two other stories, "O Alienista," the first in Papéis, and "D. Benedita," the fifth, originally appeared in A Estação, a literary and bimonthly family magazine first issued in 1879 and comparable to the now defunct Jornal das Famílias. Of the remaining two stories in Papéis, "Na Arca" appeared in O Cruzeiro in 1878 (The magazine closed in 1883), and "A Chinela Turca" was seen in print for the first time in A Epoca, a short-lived cultural review (four issues only in 1875-1876) edited by Joaquim Nabuco. With both A Estação and the Gazeta de Notícias, Machado had begun a collaboration that continued until 1904. With the exception of about twenty, all one hundred thirteen short stories subsequently written would be published first in either Estação or Gazeta.

The volume Papéis Avulsos is composed of twelve short stories, the preface, and the author's notes at the end. In the preface, Machado de Assis discusses his title and states it does not indicate a random choice of stories but only appears that way.

Este título de Papéis Avulsos parece negar ao livro uma certa unidade; faz crer que o autor coligiu vários

escritos de ordem diversa para o fim de os não perder. A verdade é essa, sem ser bem essa. Avulsos são êles, mas não vieram para aqui como passageiros, que acertam de entrar na mesma hospedaria. São pessoas de uma só família, que a obrigação do pai fêz sentar à mesma mesa. Quanto ao gênero dêles, não sei que diga que não seja inútil. . . .¹

Machado is the creator of the stories and so it was his choice how to arrange them in this book, since the stories are not placed in the precise order in which they had first appeared in newspapers and periodicals. With regard to their "species," Machado states that "o livro está nas mãos do leitor."² Its analysis is left to the reader. Though Machado may hint to the contrary by the following sentence: "Direi sòmente, que se há aqui páginas que parecem meros contos e outras que o não são, . . ."³ all of them can qualify as short stories of fiction. There are no poems, plays, or essays in Papéis Avulsos.

The first story, "O Alienista," is not only the longest one in the volume but also the longest short story in any of the seven collections Machado published within his lifetime. Covering thirty-five pages, it is equal in number of pages to "Linha Reta e Linha Curva" in Contos Fluminenses. However, the earlier romantic work contains several pages of short sentences in dialogue whereas "O Alienista" is composed mainly of lengthy narrative paragraphs. The sixth story, "D. Benedita," is about half the length of "O Alienista" and the remaining ten stories are between four and eight pages.

In "O Alienista," Machado de Assis probes into the reasoning process of man which defines man's nature and

establishes his humanity. The setting is the small town of Itaguaí, which serves as a miniature of the world. The time is remote (in the colonial era), thereby adding to the universality of the theme. In addition, just as Cervantes had "found" the writings of the Arab Cid Hamete Benengeli, which became the story of Don Quixote, so it was the historical chronicles of Itaguaí and not Machado de Assis which recount this tale.

Dr. Simão Bacamarte, of noble birth and with impeccable credentials of medicine, convinces the town fathers of Itaguaí to fund his sanitarium, to be called the Green House, where he will treat and cure the insane of the city. But in a conversation with his friend Crispim Soares, the druggist, Dr. Bacamarte reveals to him that his real purpose is far greater and nobler. He wants to study insanity in depth, classify the various types, discover its cause, and find the universal remedy.

One by one, four-fifths of the citizens of Itaguaí are committed by Dr. Bacamarte to the Green House. As each case in turn is described by the author, the reader notes that every successive person deemed mad appears to be more insane than the previous one. The careful reader then realizes that all, almost all, the majority, or some, or none of the townspeople are truly insane depending on one's own point of view. Do all of them merely possess normal thoughts and feelings based on a relative and wide definition of what is normal? Does the reader also conclude that Dr. Bacamarte is insane?

Is he the only true madman in Itaguaí?

Machado de Assis, satirically carrying the ideas of positivism to rationalized conclusions, has Dr. Bacamarte reason that four-fifths of the population adjudged insane is an enormously high proportion. Therefore, they must truly be sane and it is the remaining one-fifth who must be insane since the doctor had previously classified them as sane. What are these newly discovered traits of insanity possessed by only one-fifth of the population he secretly stalked, took notes on, and finally committed to the Green House? They are moral and mental righteousness, patience, wisdom, loyalty, tolerance, and modesty. Gradually, Dr. Bacamarte concludes that all people except himself lack one of the above traits of character, though sometimes it is not on the surface. Since he possesses all these traits, he is the only perfect person, and therefore the only one insane. So he releases everyone and enters his Green House as its only occupant.

In Machado's miniature of the world, represented by the town of Itaguaí and its citizens, everyone, including Dr. Bacamarte, thinks and acts according to the way his individual interests will be best served. The barber Porfírio, in a scene satirically presented and suggestive of the French Revolution, leads a coup against the town council, the supporters of Dr. Bacamarte. He promises those who follow him that he will attack and shut down the Green House ("... - "essa Bastilha da razão humana", - expressão que ouvira a um poeta local, e que êle repetiu com muita ênfase."⁴) and free

their friends and relatives. After bloody fighting takes place in the streets and his rise to power as acting governor is assured, the erstwhile barber prefers to enter into an accord with Dr. Bacamarte. Porfírio, now a leader in government, pretentiously considers himself an equal to the doctor, who he thinks is a leader in science.

At this point in the story, the psychiatrist and his Green House, and the line between sanity and insanity, become secondary themes to that of what effect power has upon human beings and the fears of men caught in changing circumstances. Crispim Soares, the druggist, thinking the new governor is going to close the Green House, arrest and possibly execute the psychiatrist, and perhaps condemn him since he is the nearest to a confidant that Dr. Bacamarte has, decides to pledge his allegiance to the new government rather than stand with Dr. Bacamarte in time of peril. Machado's Sancho Panza, who had joined the doctor for the prestige of being regarded by others as the intimate friend of the great man of science, now abandons his Don Quixote when there seems to be the possibility of personal danger.

In "O Alienista," Machado de Assis does not condemn self-interest. He merely reports it as a facet of life and a primary motivating force in men. Dr. Bacamarte also is governed by self-interest and his fate will be to die alone as the only inmate of his Green House.

"O Alienista" is a lengthy narrative story whereas "Teoria do Medalhão" is a short (six pages) satire totally in

dialogue form. On the evening of his son's twenty-first birthday, a father is giving advice to the young man. Though the situation is universal and the words of the father are always seriously spoken throughout the story, by the second page it becomes obvious that the message is satirical and the tone ironic.

The most useful and noble profession to which any boy can aspire is to become a pompous and prosperous person in reputation and appearance, the father advises. To accomplish this goal takes time but with careful training it can be acquired by the age of forty-five. This is the proper age for the emergence of the type. The boy must become restrained and grave looking by moderating all exuberance, playing whist and dominoes which help to stifle creative thoughts, avoiding exercise which tends to rest and restore the brain, and never walking alone because solitude tends to breed ideas.

The reader quickly understands that the type of person ridiculed is one with a total lack of creativity. Machado must have felt he was associating with several counterparts in many of his daily activities. They most likely were politicians, writers, congressmen, and cabinet officers whom he probably knew were interested primarily in enhancing their own images in society rather than exhibiting any growth and originality in their chosen professions.

The key to gaining the reputation and adopting the appearance of such a character is publicity, the father continues. The boy must join all organizations and keep his

name before everyone, belong to any political party he might wish, but always avoid ideas, ideology, imagination and philosophy, be serious but not melancholy, and jest and joke only in moderation.

And now the father warns his son of the one thing to avoid in order to reach the goal.

- Sõmente não debes empregar a ironia, êsse movimento ao canto da bõca, cheio de mistêrios, inventado por algum grego da decadência, contraído por Luciano, transmitido a Swift e Voltaire, feição própria dos céticos e desabusados.⁵

Of course, irony is the basis of this story.

"A Chinela Turca" is one of the two stories of fantasy Machado included in Papéis Avulsos. It was written in 1875, toward the end of a six-year period in which he published nine similar ones in magazines.

At the beginning, the story represents reality on the printed page. The characters function within the same limitations of body and mind as do the readers. It is the year 1850 as Machado reverts back in time twenty-five years. One evening, Major Lopo Alves, an old family friend, comes to visit Duarte just as Duarte is about to leave for a dance where he has planned to meet his new love. She is the blue-eyed Cecília, a relative of Major Alves. However, the major insists on reading his new seven-act, one hundred eighty-page, ultra-romantic play to Duarte who fumes silently but must be polite and listen.

Major Alves drones on and on, the time to go to the dance has passed, and now even a careful reader can be

tricked by the author. For Duarte is not yet asleep but merely daydreaming, as the following sentences mean to convey.

. . . fulgiam-lhe ao espírito os fios de ouro que ornavam a formosa cabeça de Cecília; via-a com os olhos azuis, a tez branca e rosada, o gesto delicado e gracioso, dominando tôdas as demais damas que deviam estar no salão da viúva Meneses. Via aquilo, e ouvia mentalmente a música, a palestra, o soar dos passos, e o ruje-ruje das sedas; enquanto a voz rouquenha e sensaborona de Lopo Alves ia desfiando os quadros e os diálogos, com a impassibilidade de uma grande convicção.⁶

Now let us examine the paragraph immediately following.

Voava o tempo, e o ouvinte já não sabia a conta dos quadros. Meia-noite soara desde muito; o baile estava perdido. De repente, viu Duarte que o major enrolava outra vez o manuscrito, erguia-se, empertigava-se, cravava nêles uns olhos odientes e maus, e saía arrebatadamente do gabinete. Duarte quis chamá-lo, mas o pasmo tolhera-lhe a voz e os movimentos. Quando pôde dominar-se, ouviu o bater do tacaço rijo e colérico do dramaturgo na pedra da calçada.⁷

The sentence "Voava o tempo (Machado had changed these three words for the Papéis Avulsos version), e o ouvinte já não sabia a conta dos quadros,"⁸ heightens the transition into the dream. It carries the reader along so skillfully and rapidly that he does not realize he has now entered another level of fiction along with Duarte, who has now truly fallen asleep and is dreaming.

Just as Major Alves has constructed an ultra-romantic play involving kidnappings, poisonings, arrests, and escapes, so in his dream the mind of Duarte reproduces similar events happening to himself. Visited by the police, he is first threatened with arrest for supposedly stealing a diamond-laced Turkish slipper, then kidnapped, forced to marry a woman resembling Cecília, and menaced with poison. At the

wedding ceremony, the priest called upon to officiate tells Duarte that he really is an army lieutenant in disguise and convinces Duarte to jump through the window to escape. Now on the outside and being pursued, Duarte

. . . ia saltando cêrcas e muros, calcando canteiros, esbarrando árvores, que uma ou outra vez se lhe erguiam na frente. Escorria-lhe o suor em bica, alteava-se-lhe o peito, as forças iam a perder-se pouco a pouco; tinha uma das mãos feridas, a camisa salpicada do orvalho das fôlhas, duas vêzes estêve a ponto de ser apanhado, o chambre pegara-se-lhe em uma cêrca de espinhos. Enfim, cansado, ferido, ofegante, caiu nos degraus de pedra de uma casa, que havia no meio do último jardim que atravessara.⁹

Duarte enters the house, which the reader is not told is his, and collapses in a chair. Still dreaming, he imagines Major Alves is across the room reading the Jornal do Comércio, a large-sized newspaper. The pages become smaller. At this point, Duarte becomes fully awake as the major concludes the reading of his play with the final melodramatic phrase, "- Anjo do céu, estás vingado!"¹⁰

Though many clues have been provided, albeit subtle, to suggest Duarte's adventure is just a dream, only now does the reader discover he has been deceived. At the beginning of the dream, Major Alves ostensibly folds his papers and leaves in a huff, but Duarte is unable to speak or move from his chair. Later, the word "adventure" is used to describe the events that are being created in Duarte's mind. After his kidnapping, Duarte is led through an infinite number of hallways and on stairways where he hears many strange voices, typical occurrences in a dream. Furthermore, no one is actually hurt during the entire adventure. Even the man Duarte

hit so violently in order to escape through the garden ". . . não caiu; sentiu apenas um grande abalo; . . ."¹¹

Since the author is the narrator of the story, he knows whether Duarte's adventure will end happily or tragically. Therefore, the reader is kept in suspense throughout, sympathizing with Duarte and, at the close of the story, trying with him to understand that the events were only in his mind, created in a dream, and hence did not have to be logical.

The short story "Na Arca," first published in May 1878, about six months before Machado's illnesses, reflects pessimism and sarcasm concerning man's relationship with his fellow man. The secondary title of the story is "Três Capítulos Inéditos do Génesis."

To search for the origins of conflict in man, Machado de Assis consults the book of origins, Genesis in the Bible, and adds three chapters to the passage describing the decline of modern man arising from the sons of Noah. In Genesis, God had saved Noah from the flood as the only man supposedly worthy of life. Machado's "Bible" chapters brutally and dramatically depict the beginning of violence which has led to wars between nations. The author uses two of Noah's three sons to prove his point. Before the waters have even receded and they are still afloat in the ark, Machado has them mentally partition the land they will later inhabit. Shem and Japheth disagree violently about who will own a river. They try to settle the matter in a fight without restraints, each

wanting to kill the other.

19. - E respondendo Sem: - "E meu!" Jafé fêz um gesto para derrubá-lo; mas Sem, que era forte, sacudiu o corpo e atirou o irmão para longe; Jafé, porém, espumando de cólera, tornou a apertar o irmão, e os dous lutaram braço a braço.

20. - Suando e bufando como touros.

21. - Na luta, caíram e rolaram, esmurrando-se um ao outro; o sangue saía dos narizes, dos beiços, das faces; ora vencia Jafé,

22. - Ora vencia Sem; porque a raiva animava-os igualmente, e êles lutavam com as mãos, os pés, os dentes e as unhas; e a arca estremecia como se de novo se houvessem aberto as cataratas do céu.¹²

The question arises, why did Machado choose Shem and Japheth to fight with each other and not include Noah's third son, Ham. In the Bible, Ham's son Canaan is condemned for Ham's failure to cover his naked father, Noah, in his tent. Possibly, Machado de Assis felt that Ham had suffered enough through his son Canaan, and so he would condemn only Noah's other two sons. Machado concludes by having his Noah lament:

26. - "Êles ainda não possuem a terra e já estão brigando por causa dos limites. O que será quando vierem a Turquia e a Rússia?"¹³

This is a wholly pessimistic view of human nature dealing with man entering into total warfare from almost the beginning of time, and continuing in the same pattern throughout the centuries. These chapters from Machado's Bible of hindsight human wisdom tell us that after God had destroyed everyone but Noah and his family, even among those saved there were some who had not learned their lesson.

"D. Benedita" is an excellent character study of a female Bras Cubas, the fictional genre used here reduced in size from a novel to a short story. Machado de Assis reveals

the personality of Benedita (always called by the title dona), age forty-two and the mother of eighteen-year-old Eulália, in seventeen pages revolving around one major problem she faces: the selection of a husband for her daughter.

"D. Benedita" is not a conventional love story. Eulália's negation of her mother's choice of a husband (Benedita's own husband is a Chief Magistrate in the north of the country and has been away for two years) is the pivotal point of the plot on which Machado slowly develops her personality. One morning she resolves to write to her husband about Eulália but is constantly distracted. She accidentally tears a cuff and goes off to mend it.

D. Benedita foi à caixinha de costura para dar um ponto no rasgão, e contentou-se com um alfinete. O alfinete caiu no chão, ela abaixou-se a apanhá-lo. Tinha outros, é verdade, muitos outros, mas não achava prudente deixar alfinetes no chão. Abaixando-se, aconteceu-lhe ver a ponta da chinela, na qual pareceu-lhe descobrir um sinal branco; sentou-se na cadeira que tinha perto, tirou a chinela, e viu o que era: era um roidinho de barata. Outra raiva de D. Benedita, porque a chinela era muito galante, e fôra-lhe dada por uma amiga do ano passado. Um anjo, um verdadeiro anjo. . . . D. Benedita entrou a virar e revirar a chinela, e a passá-la de uma para outra mão, a princípio com amor, logo depois maquinalmente, até que as mãos pararam de todo, a chinela caiu no regaço, e D. Benedita ficou a olhar para o ar, parada, fixa. Nisto o relógio da sala de jantar começou a bater horas. D. Benedita logo às primeiras duas estremeceu:
- Jesus! Dez horas!¹⁴

Through her actions and inner thoughts she reveals herself to be a procrastinator who acts solely upon her whims and fancies of the moment. Benedita's traits of character are understood by Eulália who, when she has a desire contrary to her mother's wishes, always says to herself: "- Isto acaba."¹⁵

Eulália knows her mother well. She watches Benedita enthusiastically start to read three books simultaneously and not finish one, or attempt for almost two years to plan a visit to her husband but always to postpone the sailing. She understands that her mother's deeply avowed friendship for Maria dos Anjos is only because Maria has a twenty-two-year-old son, her mother's choice for a son-in-law. Eulália's own choice for a husband is the naval officer Mascarenhas. However, Benedita does not receive any sympathy and understanding she should expect from her daughter. Benedita is a lonely woman, and unable to make any day-to-day decisions, especially the important one regarding Eulália that the absence of her husband has forced upon her.

Benedita finally writes a brief letter to him, the last few lines reading as follows.

Mas você que pensa? Devo limitar-me a aconselhá-la, ou impor-lhe a nossa vontade? Eu acho que devo usar um pouco de minha autoridade; mas não quero fazer nada sem que você me diga. O melhor seria se você viesse cá.¹⁶

And after sending the letter to be mailed,

D. Benedita deixou-se cair no sofá, cansada, exausta. A carta era muito comprida apesar de não dizer tudo; e era-lhe tão enfadonho escrever cartas compridas!¹⁷

Meia hora depois de cair no sofá, ergueu-se um pouco, . . .¹⁸

In a short story which could have been written as a romantic adventure similar to any of those in Contos Fluminenses or Histórias da Meia-Noite, Machado de Assis has indeed improved his short story technique. He avoids the narration of facts and summaries, and permits the actions,

words, and thoughts of his characters to convey his ideas. Also, this story, told from the point of view of the mother, is not merely a description of the romantic thoughts of the daughter. Whether Machado has only been influenced by his own novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas or whether he has deliberately evolved a female counterpart, "D. Benedita" does represent another creative step Machado de Assis has reached in the wide diversification of short story structures and forms found in Papéis Avulsos.

In "O Segredo do Bonzo," Machado, for the second time in Papéis Avulsos, structurally and stylistically imitates a text from the past in order to demonstrate ironically his concept of an aspect of human nature. In "Na Arca," Machado had used the Bible as a source and added three "chapters" to it while in "O Segredo do Bonzo," he used as his basis the sixteenth-century Peregrinação of Fernão Mendes Pinto in which Mendes Pinto had described travels to the countries of the Far East, sometimes accurately and sometimes fictionally and satirically.

In Machado's notes to "O Segredo do Bonzo," he states that, in order to give his message a sense of reality, he had to place the setting for the story remote in time and space. Also, to give it authenticity, it seemed best to attribute it to a supposedly previously unpublished chapter of Mendes Pinto's Peregrinação; this "addition" occurring between the original chapters 213 and 214.¹⁹ Naturally Machado is referring to Rio de Janeiro and its people in his time. By

using the device of observing exotic people in a distant land, he tends to universalize the message even further.

In the city of Funcheu, a Buddhist priest, Pomada, which is carioca slang for faker, Machado says in his notes,²⁰ has formulated this new doctrine: opinion is more important than truth. Whatever is said convincingly will be believed. In the late nineteenth or twentieth century, we would call it the power of advertising and propaganda. In old Funcheu, the disciples who used or tested the bonze's ideas convinced the populace that life after death resided in the cow, that the narrator's friend Titané was the finest sandalmaker in the world, thereby greatly increasing his sales, and that the narrator of the story himself was a great musician who gave a poor concert but nevertheless was wildly acclaimed because advance publicity had said that he was to be sensational. The most spectacular proof of the gullibility of people was in the belief that for some it was necessary to have their noses cut off due to disfigurement caused by an itching epidemic. They were told they could obtain a metaphysical nose as a replacement. They believed it and even continued to use their handkerchiefs.

Machado's satire begins from what is possible in both theory and belief, and terminates at what is completely ridiculous in fact. In almost the entire story, the reader is lulled into accepting if not the realism of the philosophy then at least the truth of the setting, written as if it were a chapter from a historical text. Finally, in regard to the

nose-itching epidemic, the reader perceives the satire and knows that he, too, has been victimized, this time by Machado de Assis esthetically, and probably frequently in real life by local disciples of the bonze, Pomada.

Machado de Assis had a double motive for writing the story "O Anel de Polícrates." It deals with an aspect of human nature, as do so many of his post-1880 stories. In this particular one, he also patterned a character, Xavier, after a gravely ill friend, Artur de Oliveira.

The story in dialogue form is a conversation between A and Z. The initials represent two people with entirely opposite attitudes toward life. A is the idealist, a poet, and seeker for the inner creativity of man. Z is the realist and merely a listener to A's tale of Xavier, the central theme of "O Anel de Polícrates."

Using the device of a story within a story, A first tells what happened when an ancient Greek governor cast his ring to the seas as a sacrifice to the gods for future favors. The ring was swallowed by a fish that was caught, served to the governor for dinner, and the ring appeared. Then A recounts the story of Xavier. He is a writer without an idea; a person who lacks self-confidence in his own creative ability. One day he observes in the street a rider struggling with his horse and wanting to avoid falling in sight of people. Xavier thinks and finally does create an original analogy based upon that situation. Life is like a wild horse. He who is not a good rider, let him appear to

be one.

Many of Machado's words expressed by his human-drawn characters, though sounding profound, are only meaningful when used in an appropriate situation. However, the romantic combination of words gives a sense of wisdom to this aphorism when Xavier tosses it out to a friend (in the manner of the Greek governor and his ring) after having described his numerous problems over the years and concluding what life is all about (It is a wild horse, etc.). This is the wrong situation for the analogy but, nevertheless, this clever-sounding thought is implanted in the mind of the listener.

Soon, Xavier hears and reads his line in divergent and absurd contexts: by a man praising another at a dance, and by a politician criticizing a cabinet minister in the newspaper. Individuals throughout the city adopt and use his saying as if it had been their original thought. Finally, he hears the words in a new play at the theater. The author of the play is seated near Xavier and even asks Xavier for his opinion of them. A week later, the same author becomes gravely ill, and before dying ironically leaves Xavier's words as his own legacy to the mourners.

Though hastily written to incorporate the personage of his dying friend, "O Anel de Polícrates" once again reveals Machado's knowledge of his own people and of human nature in general. Though there is similarity of the theme to an 1873 story, "Quem Conta um Conto" (previously discussed in Chapter III), the dialogue form, the framework of a story within a

story, and the involvement of the personal feelings of the author do represent major differences from his earlier work.

Whereas the story "D. Benedita" was a character study of one person, "O Empréstimo" is a character study of two people whom the author has brought together for one hour and in one situation which he contends can represent a lifetime.

It is four o'clock in the afternoon in the office of Vaz Nunes, a notary, on the Rua do Rosário in Rio de Janeiro. The reader immediately senses that the scene is one of business activity, finance, money, documents, and negotiations. The workers have just left for the day and Vaz Nunes is alone, preparing to close. In two paragraphs, Machado de Assis describes two people with distinctly opposite personalities and attitudes. The first is Vaz Nunes and the second is Custódio, the man who enters his office.

Este honesto tabelião era um dos homens mais perspicazes do século. . . . Tinha um olhar de lancêta, cortante e agudo. Ele adivinhava o caráter das pessoas que o buscavam para escriturar os seus acordos e resoluções; conhecia a alma de um testador muito antes de acabar o testamento; farejava as manhas secretas e os pensamentos reservados. Usava óculos, como todos os tabeliões de teatro; mas, não sendo míope, olhava por cima deles, quando queria ver, e através deles, se pretendia não ser visto. Finório como ele só, diziam os escreventes. Em todo o caso, circunspecto. Tinha cinquenta anos, era viúvo, sem filhos, e, para falar como alguns outros serventuários, roía muito caladinho os seus duzentos contos de réis.²¹

(Custódio) era um homem de quarenta anos. Vestia pobremente, mas escovado, apertado, correto. Usava unhas longas, curadas com esmêro, e tinha as mãos muito bem talhadas, macias, ao contrário da pele do rosto, que era agreste. Notícias mínimas, e aliás necessárias ao complemento de um certo ar duplo que distinguia este homem, um ar de pedinte e general. Na rua, andando, sem almoço, sem vintém, parecia levar após si um exército. A causa não era outra mais do que o contraste entre a natureza e

a situação, entre a alma e a vida. Esse Custódio nascera com a vocação da riqueza, sem a vocação do trabalho. Tinha o instinto das elegâncias, o amor do supérfluo, da boa chira, das belas damas, dos tapêtes finos, dos móveis raros, . . . Mas não tinha dinheiro; nem dinheiro, nem aptidão ou pachorra de o ganhar; por outro lado, precisava viver.²²

In dialogue form, but at times changing to narrative passages to expose the inner thoughts of one or the other, and with brief descriptive sentences to show their movements and gestures, Machado de Assis writes of the classic encounter between a parasite seeking a large favor and a conservative, wealthy businessman making an effort to be polite but unwilling to grant him anything. "Se estiver nas minhas mãos..."²³ says Vaz Nunes.

When Custódio arrives he has lofty dreams. He wants to borrow five thousand mil-réis to buy a share in a new business which will manufacture needles for export to the growing textile industry in England.

- Cinco contos?
- Sim, senhor.²⁴

The astuteness and goal of one is immediately sensed by the other. Since both personalities have been previously revealed, the reader becomes an avid spectator as Vaz Nunes and Custódio spar within certain accepted rules of behavior.

- Quero, decerto; digo-lhe que se se tratasse de uma quantia pequena, acomodada aos meus recursos, não teria dúvida em adiantá-la. Mas cinco contos! Creia que é impossível.²⁵

- Bem, disse ele, com uma pontazinha de despeito, há de perdoar o incômodo...
- Não há que perdoar; eu é que lhe peço desculpa de não poder servi-lo, como desejava. Repito: se fôsse alguma quantia menos avultada, muito menos, não teria dúvida; mas...²⁶

- Nem quinhentos mil-réis?²⁷

- Nem cem, repito. Tenho tido muitas dificuldades nestes últimos tempos. Sociedades, subscrições, maçonaria... Custa-lhe crer, não é? Naturalmente: um proprietário. Mas, meu amigo, é muito bom ter casas: o senhor é que não conta os estragos, os consertos, as penas-d'água, as décimas, o seguro, os calotes, etc.²⁸

Finally Custódio gladly accepts the five mil-réis note that Vaz Nunes offers him. The assurance in his pocket of the price of a dinner is now as emotionally satisfying to him as would have been the granting of his original request. By employing the practical language of business and commerce in Rio de Janeiro and combining it with his knowledge of the universal behavior of man, Machado has created a timeless confrontation resolved in the short span of one hour.

"A Sereníssima República" is a short satirical story in the form of a speech by a clergyman, Canon Vargas. In his notes to the story, Machado de Assis says that this is the only one in Papéis Avulsos with a limited theme and he is just discussing his country's electoral alternatives. Machado feels his readers should easily understand it even though it is in the form of an allegory.²⁹

The serious tone of the first two pages is underscored by realistic references familiar to the reader. Canon Vargas welcomes his audience, and refers to an article in the local newspaper O Globo which first mentions the renowned Darwin and then another English naturalist who supposedly discovered insect phonetics. The Canon says he is going to make an announcement which will astonish the audience. He was able to organize socially a new species of talking spiders, a

colony of which he had found one day in his garden. The previous realistic references he made tend to give credence to what Canon Vargas says he had accomplished.

The satire soon emerges and centers about the government Canon Vargas proposed to give to his spiders. They were to form a republic and elect leaders. However, the manner in which to insure honest elections became the major priority of the nation called Sereníssima República. In the second half of the story, the idea of a nation of spiders is forgotten as Machado ridicules elections, challenges of fraud to the winners, political parties, and even the minute studies of language in conjunction with the silly logic of the judges. A so-called great philologist "proves" that the name Nebraska is really the name Caneca just badly spelled, and that Caneca (no longer mentioned as a spider) really won an election though the name Nebraska was written on the ball chosen at random from the electoral sack.

In keeping with the spider theme, political parties are formed according to the preference of groups of spiders as to which way they should spin their threads to indicate justice and virtue. There is the straight-line party (a linha reta) and the curved-line party (a linha curva [The title of an 1869 short story by Machado was "Linha Reta e Linha Curva"]). As in all republics, or in a constitutional monarchy such as Brazil was at this time, a third political party exists as a compromise between the two extremes, and a fourth which, according to Machado, must be anti-everything.

In the country Sereníssima República, there are always new electoral reforms to prevent deception because there is always deception. It is a continuous situation. The electoral sack is constantly sewn, unraveled, and resewn in a variety of ways to try to insure an honest election. This is similar to what Penelope did to her own work while waiting for Ulysses to come home. But here in the republics of Canon Vargas and Machado de Assis, there is no guarantee an honest election will ever come to pass.

The story "O Espelho" has an important secondary title, "Esboço de uma Nova Teoria da Alma Humana." The word alma, or soul, is repeated constantly throughout the story and is used in a non-theological sense. The word has the tendency to be misleading and confusing to the reader until the definition of alma according to Machado de Assis is understood in this specific instance.

The traditional inner soul of man, which is his non-visible essence, is not the point of the story. Machado's character Jacobina does not attempt to define the inner essence of man but rather to recount a personal identity crisis he experienced at one time in his past. He narrates the story of what he calls his loss and rediscovery of his second, or outer, soul. The outer soul is how the world sees you. The crisis for Jacobina began when his role as a lieutenant in the National Guard, complete with a uniform and the constantly fawning admirers, became his total outer essence and as he said, "O alferes eliminou o homem."³⁰

One day while Jacobina is visiting his aunt at her country farm, she is called away because of a sudden emergency. He finds himself completely alone for an indefinite period of time. Until then, in his recent memory, he was known only as "the lieutenant" but now in his loneliness he becomes an amorphous non-entity. His reflection in a large mirror becomes as blurred as had his role in life without his military trappings and the presence of others about him. Since he no longer had any role to play, he concluded that the only way he could emotionally survive was to restore his outer self again. To accomplish this, he dresses in his lieutenant's uniform, sits before the large mirror for a few hours every day, and gazes at himself.

This climactic conclusion is reached through a fast-paced and emotional series of paragraphs with Jacobina describing his loneliness, his growing insecurity leading almost to madness, and the final realization that the only possible avenue of relief must be the recreation of the role of his outer self. This is a powerful short story, one in which in only six pages a man is placed in a role that eliminates the man, and then he is put in a situation that eliminates the role. Though the character Jacobina does not appear to comprehend that man cannot live emotionally through his image but must have values and a purpose that transcend his outer being, it is not the author's intention to discuss broadly the theme of the total consciousness of man in the limited sphere of the short story. At a first reading, this is a

frightening story, intensified by Jacobina's melodramatic tale of his discovery of the uniform and the mirror. Successive readings not only make one realize the timelessness of the ideas but how personal the problem of identity is to everyone, and how individual is the answer to it.

The story "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" that appears in Papéis Avulsos is a revised version of one previously written by Machado de Assis between six and seven years earlier. The more recent story is epistolary in construction, written as if it were a letter from the Chief Magistrate to the Chief of Police of Rio de Janeiro. The "letter" is dated September 20, 1875 (about the time the first version was written) though the revised story had been composed and published in 1882. The original "Visita" was not epistolary but a conventional narrative, written for and published in the Jornal das Famílias in October 1876. In Machado's own notes accompanying the revised "Visita," he states:

Este escrito teve um primeiro texto, que reformei totalmente mais tarde, não aproveitando mais do que a idéia. O primeiro foi dado com um pseudônimo e passou despercebido.³¹

In both versions, the Chief Magistrate, one evening after dinner, is reading about his favorite period in history, ancient Greece. He begins to wonder what sort of an impression modern clothing would have made upon the famous Greek warrior and athlete, Alcibiades. The Chief Magistrate claims knowledge of spiritualism and summons Alcibiades himself to come from the other world and appear alive before him.

Continuing with the definitive, epistolary version,

Alcibiádes does appear and the Chief Magistrate, after spending the evening with the ancient Greek, writes to the Chief of Police recounting what has transpired. He writes: "E aqui começa o extraordinário da aventura."³² By now, the reader has come to realize there are two levels of fiction functioning in the story. In addition to Machado's fantasy, the Chief Magistrate is writing a fantasy short story of his own. Not only the reader of the story "Uma Visita de Alcibiádes" but also the Chief of Police, the reader of the "letter," must suspend disbelief and accept the actual existence of Alcibiádes standing before the Chief Magistrate.

In the dialogue between the two men who are over two thousand years apart in time but who, for a brief moment, occupy the same time and space, what is important is the relativity of customs rather than the satire on modern western clothing as was the theme in the earlier discarded version of the story. The human traits the author assigns to Alcibiádes (vanity, stubbornness, and curiosity) extend over the centuries and, in the opinion of Machado, demonstrate similarities in human nature despite the disparity in time. The apprehension of the Chief Magistrate, who almost immediately regrets his conjuring up of Alcibiádes and wishes to flee from him, represents man's normal and eternal fear of the unknown and the unforeseen. And, comically, it is Alcibiádes, whose ancient world with its religion and customs is now non-existent, who dies a second time after seeing modern man dress for an evening dance in the formal attire of the day.

For the final story in the volume, "Verba Testamentária," Machado de Assis has returned to a theme he used in the first story, insanity. Once again the author is searching for the causes of insanity, but in this story he focuses his attention upon one possibly sick individual instead of on a doctor. This biographical, conventional narrative recounts in seven pages the entire sixty-eight years of one Nicolau B. de C., so named by the author. A limited number of characters are introduced but only the personality of Nicolau is developed.

As in the novel Bras Cubas, "Verba Testamentária" begins after the death of the principal character, but here it is the narrator who tells the story of Nicolau and his lifetime of behavior toward others and opinions contrary to the ways of the majority. The story opens with a clause from Nicolau's will, stating that his casket is to be made by Joaquim Soares of the Rua da Alfândega, a man whom Nicolau considered to be honorable and whose work he judged artistic. The story soon reverts to the time when Nicolau was a boy, who we are told was not a sane product nor a perfect organism from his earliest years.

The storyteller is the doctor in "Verba Testamentária," who diagnoses that Nicolau's periodic irrational violent outbursts, accompanied by his occasional staggering about and dribbling at the mouth (epilepsy?), was caused by a worm in his spleen which produced a secretion that compelled him to lash out against excellence and beauty and accept mediocrity

and ugliness as his perception of the truth. From the time of his youth when he would destroy other children's expensive playthings, tear their clothing and mistreat them, to his young manhood when he chose inferior friends, to his old age when he verbally abused and dismissed his faithful servants, and even after his death as evidenced by his will, Nicolau is revealed as having been mentally different. It is for the reader to decide whether or not having uncommon opinions sometimes defended by violent behavior, supposedly from a physical origin, as determined by the narrator, constitute insanity.

In this examination of a personality, Machado de Assis makes circular use of time by repeating at the close of the story the casket clause in Nicolau's last will and testament. As could have been anticipated, Nicolau's brother-in-law and sister do comment upon the reputed poor quality of the carpentry of Joaquim Soares. At the beginning of the story, it must be noted that Joaquim Soares is so moved by the notoriety given to the clause in the will pertaining to him that he refuses payment for the casket and performs his task "con amore."³³ Under these circumstances, therefore, is not Nicolau's judgment of Joaquim Soares justified? Since this singular peculiarity of Nicolau ultimately becomes positive, though no one realizes it, were there other times in his life when irrational actions or statements might have been proven correct? Despite one's spleen and its secretions, is insanity as relative a concept in "Verba Testamentária" as it was in

"O Alienista"? Can we believe the narrator or is he really just satirizing science and medicine, merely teasing the reader with a gravely rendered diagnosis which has no scientific basis?

Just as "Verba Testamentária" is a circular story, so Papéis Avulsos may be considered a circular volume. Machado de Assis begins this collection with an account of a doctor searching for the cause of insanity. Then he takes the reader through ten stories into vast areas of time and space. Finally, he closes the book with the biography of a possibly insane man but with the narrator of the story giving us a completely original diagnosis of the malady. We travel from Brazil to the lands of the Orient, to the era of the Bible, and to the human mind, in measurable chronological time and in unmeasurable cerebral time. In time and space, we return almost to where we began.

In the first of the post-Bras Cubas short story volumes, Papéis Avulsos, Machado de Assis has collected and organized a much greater variety of stories than in Contos Fluminenses and Histórias da Meia-Noite, and also has placed about twice the number in it than he had in each earlier book. In Contos Fluminenses and Histórias da Meia-Noite, Machado had placed in each book one conventionally romantic epistolary story, one easily adaptable to the theater, and the remainder all conventional narratives. In Papéis Avulsos, the one epistolary story is a fantasy having a story within a story, one is in the form of a chapter from a history text,

one is in the form of a speech, two are completely in dialogue, one is an imitation of chapters from the Bible, and six are conventional narratives. However, unlike the conventional narratives similar to one another in style in Contos Fluminenses and Histórias da Meia-Noite, in Papéis Avulsos, one story is an epic tale of a society in emotional and physical upheaval, one is a disguised fantasy, three are analyses of personalities with each character developed in a totally different manner, and the final story is a biographical account of a man deemed by the narrator to be peculiar and possibly insane. Also, none of the six structurally conventional narratives are adjacent to each other in the book. They appear as the first, third, fifth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth stories. The reader is constantly being tricked or surprised. What sets out as a conventional narrative can end up as a fantasy, a historical account as a satire, and a dialogue as a story within a story. It can therefore be concluded that all twelve stories in Papéis Avulsos are basically different from each other. The more complicated structures, styles, and themes of the twelve stories made arranging them a very important and difficult task. It is this order that produces in the mind of the reader an esthetic impression of the book as a complete unit.

Machado de Assis begins the first story, "O Alienista," as if it were to be strictly a narrative tale ("As crônicas da vila de Itaguaí dizem que em tempos remotos vivera ali um certo médico, . . ." ³⁴) relating events or incidents in the

professional life of Dr. Simão Bacamarte. Not until the thirty-five page story has been read in its entirety, however, does the reader understand that he has witnessed the fictional citizens of Itaguaí function as human beings in their attempt to survive political, social, and emotional conflicts which threaten their existence. In this negative epic work of Machado de Assis, there are no heroes or heroines but a real problem exists that menaces their lives, fortunes, health, welfare, and families: Dr. Bacamarte and his Green House. The result of his research into the minds of the populace eliminates the veneer of man's refined civilized nature, reducing everyone but Vicar Lopes, who lives in the realm of God, to the primitive instincts of herding, attacking, leading, or being led, lowering man's thinking to the level of basic compromise and capitulation for physical survival, and bringing to the forefront thoughts and actions based on pride, vanity, and lust. "O Alienista" is Machado's panorama of basic human nature released in this instance from the souls of the people of Itaguaí, but whose characteristics are present in all human beings in all places and eras.

After the grandiosity of "O Alienista," in which the reader must follow characters, emotions, situations, and symbols, a total change of pace is necessary. "Teoria do Medalhão" serves as the intervening episode of laughter in which for a few moments the thinking of the reader may approach the personality aspired to in the story. As the pompous and prosperous-appearing person does not have to think or

analyze anything but must only seem to agree with all people and issues, so the reader does not need to tax his intellect to comprehend the story. Machado's creativity lies in the significance of the dialogue and in the style of the story. He has amused the reader with a one-act play, an entremés, a between-the-acts interlude of limited purpose, theme, space, time, and characters.

The "intermission" represented by "Teoria do Medalhão" is over and the reader turns to "A Chinela Turca." It begins as a conventional narrative with a familiar situation in a familiar locale, Rio de Janeiro, almost contemporary (1850), on the night of a dance. "Vede o bacharel Duarte,"³⁵ Machado says in the first sentence. Feeling quite comfortable in this setting, we meet Duarte, an educated man with a common name, who is easily identifiable with the reader. Almost immediately, we learn he is young, in love, and is dressing to meet the young lady. We also discover there is an obstacle to his plans because of the unexpected visit of Major Alves.

With the major's ostensible departure and Duarte's plunge into the action and mystery of his kidnapping, interrogations, escape, and pursuit, the reader trusts and accepts the author's words of fiction. Sympathetic toward Duarte from the beginning of the story, we become as absorbed in his drama as we had been in the humorous dialogue of "Teoria do Medalhão." Though "Teoria do Medalhão" and "A Chinela Turca" are different in structure and theme, the reader is not required in both stories to analyze the personalities of the

characters or to ponder upon eternal and universal problems confronting humanity. The clues, given by the author that Duarte, bored by being compelled to listen to Major Alves' play, is merely dreaming a romantic adventure with himself as the main character, are not perceived by the reader who has not had to think deeply in the last two stories.

The realization of the trick and the fact that the first three stories in Papéis Avulsos are extremely different from each other alert the reader to be prepared for a wide variety of stories in the remainder of the collection. In the fourth story, "Na Arca," Machado de Assis truly returns to the serious and the universal and uses the most serious and most universal work, the Bible, as the basis for his pessimistic ideas on the behavior of man since the earliest of times. There is no further humor, no escape from reality, and no dangerous drama that ends by one's waking up in a chair and realizing it was just a dream. There is only the stark reality of the feuding family of Machado's Noah, adrift in their ark, which ". . . continuava a boiar sobre as águas do abismo."³⁶

In the first four stories of Papéis Avulsos, which in number of pages represents one half of the book, Machado de Assis has moved in a small circle. He began with the serious and the universal ("O Alienista"), proceeded to the comical ("Teoria do Medalhão"), hinted again at the serious but merely jested ("A Chinela Turca"), and returned again to the serious and universal with the added dimension of pessimism

(Na Arca").

The fifth story, "D. Benedita," takes the reader back to more familiar surroundings (Rio de Janeiro in 1869) and immediately the main character, the lady named in the title, is introduced. As in the first story, "O Alienista," and the third, "A Chinela Turca," this story is also a conventional narrative, but unlike them "D. Benedita" is the creation and the study of an individual personality. Simão Bacamarte is only a part of the drama of Itaguaí, and Duarte a romantic character in a pseudo-fantasy setting, but Benedita is a flesh and blood woman, suffering, and faced with timeless and universal family problems which she must resolve though she is emotionally unprepared for the ordeals.

Unlike the complexity of characters and situations presented in "O Alienista" and the rapid plot movement of "A Chinela Turca," "D. Benedita" is a simple narrative in which the characters function in the same time and space as the readers. This is the first story in the book in which the reader can recognize the main character as a fellow human being who also thinks, hopes, observes, and plans. For the first time in Papéis Avulsos, we are at ease, experiencing the world of Benedita and realizing it is equal to our own.

"O Segredo do Bonzo" is the second of four stories in Papéis Avulsos which is comic and satirical. However, all four are structurally unique and appear in different places in the book. The first comedy-satire, "Teoria do Medalhão," the second story in the collection, was in dialogue form and

set in one scene. The passage of time for the characters involved was equal to the time it took to read the story. Three serious stories followed "Teoria do Medalhão" before the next comedy-satire, "O Segredo do Bonzo."

In his secondary title to the story, Machado de Assis states that what will follow is a "Capítulo Inédito de Fernão Mendes Pinto."³⁷ In the first paragraph, he summarizes Mendes Pinto's previous chapter before telling what his "chapter" will be about.

Atrás deixei narrado o que se passou nesta cidade Fuchêu, capital do reino de Bungo, com o Padre-mestre Francisco, e de como el-rei se houve com o Fucarandono e outros bonzos, que tiveram por acertado disputar ao padre as primazias da nossa santa religião. Agora direi de uma doutrina não menos curiosa que saudável ao espírito, e digna de ser divulgada a tôdas as repúblicas da cristandade.

Um dia, andando a passeio com Diogo Meireles, nesta mesma cidade Fuchêu, naquele ano de 1552, sucedeu . . .³⁸

The last sentence of the first paragraph and the opening sentence of the second, loyal to Mendes Pinto's time and space, afford Machado the opportunity to write his own "history."

In addition to satirizing his own people as gullible sheep easily tricked, the complete story is also a satire of Portuguese historical writings which usually recounted faithfully the adventures in far-off lands of the author and his party, and contained detailed descriptions of all they saw and experienced. In a story nearly six pages long, there is little time for extensive detail although Machado does include some.

Usam neste reino de Bungo, e em outros destas remotas partes, um papel feito de casca de canela moída e goma, obra mui prima, que eles talham depois em pedaços de dois

palmas de comprimento, e meio de largura, nos quais desenham com vivas e variadas côres, e pela língua do país, as notícias da semana, políticas, religiosas, mercantis e outras, as novas leis do reino, os nomes das fustas, lancharas, balões e tôda a casta de barcos que navegam êstes mares, ou em guerra, que a há freqüente, ou de veniaga.³⁹

The early Portuguese travelers and explorers to the Far East were commercially oriented, and of necessity someone in any group had to have some knowledge of medicine and another had to be astute in learning languages. The companion of the narrator, one Diogo Meireles, perfectly named for the era, seems to be a Portuguese-of-all-trades.

Diogo Meireles, que melhor conhecia a língua da terra, pois ali estivera muitos meses, quando andou com bandeira de veniaga (agora ocupava-se no exercício da medicina, que estudara convenientemente, e em que era exímio) ia-me repetindo pelo nosso idioma o que ouvia ao orador, . . .⁴⁰

This is the last time in Papéis Avulsos that the reader travels with the author to a far away land and back in time. Though the remaining six stories take place in Rio de Janeiro in the middle of the nineteenth century, they are no less varied in their structures, styles, and themes than the first six.

In two stories (the seventh and the eleventh), instead of having the reader regress to ancient times to learn from the people of the era, Machado moves ancient times forward to instruct modern man. The first of these two is "O Anel de Polícrates," the second story in Papéis Avulsos written totally in dialogue form. However, it is not only a comedy-satire as is "Teoria do Medalhão," but an attempt by Machado de Assis, through his poet-character whom he called A, to

make A's listener and the reader understand and appreciate the intellect and personality of his dying young friend, Artur de Oliveira, personified in the character Xavier.

Though the story is a tribute to his friend, it has a message and a literary value which enable it to add to the stature of Papéis Avulsos. Fortune decreed that the Greek Polycrates was to receive only favors from the gods. Fortune decreed that Xavier's comparison of life to a wild horse would be quickly and widely quoted thus proving he still possessed creative talent. And fortune, the author feels, took Artur de Oliveira away while he was still a young man. To memorialize his friend, Machado de Assis has merged into one story the feelings of optimism and pessimism and the attitudes of creativity and practicality, the human traits which all people possess in varying individual degrees.

This personal story appears in the middle of the volume. It does not detract from the unique style of each story (We recall that in his preface the author stated they all belong to the short story "family" but that they are all individual "people") nor does it interfere with the author's leading the reader to a climactic moment later in the volume. "O Anel de Polícrates" contributes to the variety of short stories in Papéis Avulsos through its singular style, its portrayal of a character, and its glimpse at human nature; the same elements present in all the other stories with different degrees of emphasis.

"O Anel de Polícrates" and the previous story, "O

Segredo do Bonzo," together can be considered an interval between two stories which have more apparent similarities than any other two in Papéis Avulsos. They are the previously discussed "D. Benedita," and "O Empréstimo," the one following "O Anel de Polícrates." Both stories are conventional narratives with time and location in contemporary Rio de Janeiro. Both stories are character studies in which the actions, words, and even the thoughts of the characters reveal their personalities. Once again, in "O Empréstimo," the reader can identify with the theme and have compassion for one or another of the protagonists.

However, the structural and stylistic differences between "D. Benedita" and "O Empréstimo" are greater than their similarities. In "D. Benedita," the principal character is one woman whereas in "O Empréstimo" there are two men of equal importance. "D. Benedita" is divided into four chapters totaling seventeen pages which cover many weeks in the life of the character to determine her personality. In "O Empréstimo," a story of nearly six pages, the personalities of the two men, Vaz Nunes and Custódio, become apparent in less than one hour in their lives. As in the satire "Teoria do Medalhão," the time element is the same for the characters in "O Empréstimo" as well as for the reader.

There is humor and pathos in "O Empréstimo" but only pathos in "D. Benedita." Readers may chuckle at Custódio's attempt to solicit funds from Vaz Nunes and at the skill of the conservative notary in diplomatically refusing him, but

soon we realize the sadness of the situation and that Custódio is just a well-scrubbed beggar.

The necessary communication between the two men creates more dialogue than is found in "D. Benedita." However, in both stories, the movements and the thoughts of the characters are presented to the fullest extent. Twice now in Papéis Avulsos, Machado de Assis has demonstrated he understands the people of his city as well as human nature.

The structure of the satirical short story "A Sereníssima República" is not only unique in Papéis Avulsos but also in the creative work of Machado de Assis up to 1882. As of 1880, few short stories and no novels had been other than conventional narratives. With the completion of the first-person novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas in 1881, Machado began to vary the structures considerably in his short stories. In Papéis Avulsos, besides four conventional narratives, two stories completely in dialogue, one as Bible chapters, and one as if it were a chapter from a history text, all previously discussed, we now have "A Sereníssima República" in the form of a speech. The suspension of disbelief is reinforced by the fact that the speaker is a scientist and a clergyman, and therefore is represented as a twofold seeker of the truth.

In the first half of the story, Canon Vargas speaks directly to his audience of which the reader immediately becomes a part.

Minha descoberta não é recente; data do fim do ano de 1876. Não a divulguei então, . . .⁴¹

Ouço um riso, no meio do sussuro de curiosidade.
Senhores, cumpre vencer os preconceitos.⁴²

Sim, senhores, descobri uma espécie araneída que dispõe do uso da fala; coligi alguns, depois muitos dos novos articulados, e organizei-os socialmente.⁴³

In the second half of the story, in which the main theme of the satire on elections and electoral reforms is expounded, the use of the first person is dropped in favor of narration with the exception of a few "senhores" inserted at intervals so the reader can retain contact with the original structure.

"A Sereníssima República" is the third comedy-satire in Papéis Avulsos, the first, "Teoria do Medalhão," at the beginning of the book (the second story), the second, "O Segredo do Bonzo," in the middle (the sixth story), and "A Sereníssima República" (the ninth), coming after "O Empréstimo" and just before the climactic story, "O Espelho." "A Sereníssima República" is a study of human nature through humor and is between two humorless studies on the same theme.

Though "A Sereníssima República," "O Espelho," and "Uma Visita de Alcibíades" each have a story-within-a-story theme, they are all very different in structure. In "A Sereníssima República," the use of the speech format enabled Machado de Assis, through the words of his character Canon Vargas, to construct a satirical tale. "O Espelho," however, begins as a conventional narrative with the author setting the scene in contemporary Rio de Janeiro and at the same time attracting the curiosity of the reader.

A casa ficava no morro de Santa Teresa, a sala era pequena,

alumiada a velas, cuja luz fundia-se misteriosamente com o luar que vinha de fora. Entre a cidade, com as suas agitações e aventuras, e o céu, em que as estrelas pestanejavam, através de uma atmosfera límpida e sossegada, estavam os nossos quatro ou cinco investigadores de cousas metafísicas, resolvendo amigavelmente os mais árduos problemas do universo.⁴⁴

The problem under discussion is that of the human soul. One man, Jacobina, comments that every man has two souls and he will explain this only if he receives undivided attention and no arguments. In that dimly lit living room in quiet Santa Teresa, the reader, as part of a very curious audience, must agree to his terms.

From a calm beginning, the rhythm of "O Espelho" gradually increases until the climactic moment of the story is reached when Jacobina recaptures his definition of self as the lieutenant. In a style reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe, Machado takes Jacobina from a state of loneliness,

Minha solidão tomou proporções enormes. Nunca os dias foram mais compridos, nunca o sol abrasou a terra com uma obstinação mais cansativa. As horas batiam de século a século, no velho relógio da sala, cuja pêndula, tic-tac, tic-tac, feria-me a alma interior, como um piparote contínuo da eternidade. Quando, muitos anos depois, li uma poesia americana, creio que de Longfellow, e topei com este famoso estribilho: Never, for ever! - For ever, never! confesso-lhes que tive um calafrio: recordei-me daqueles dias medonhos. Era justamente assim que fazia o relógio da tia Marcolina: - Never, for ever! - For ever, never! Não eram golpes de pêndula, era um diálogo do abismo, um cochicho do nada. E então de noite! Não que a noite fôsse mais silenciosa. O silêncio era o mesmo que de dia. Mas a noite era a sombra, era a solidão ainda mais estreita ou mais larga. Tic-tac, tic-tac. Ninguém nas salas, na varanda, nos corredores, no terreiro, ninguém em parte nenhuma... .⁴⁵

to one of despair and possible insanity,

Olhei e recuei. O próprio vidro parecia conjurado com o resto do universo; não me estampou a figura nítida e inteira, mas vaga, esfumada, difusa, sombra de sombra.

A realidade das leis físicas não permite negar que o espelho reproduziu-me textualmente, com os mesmos contornos e feições; assim devia ter sido. Mas tal não foi a minha sensação. Então tive medo; atribuí o fenômeno à excitação nervosa em que andava; receei ficar mais tempo, e enlouquecer.⁴⁶

then to hope,

Continuei a vestir-me. Súbitamente por uma inspiração inexplicável, por um impulso sem cálculo, lembrou-me... Se forem capazes de adivinhar qual foi a minha idéia...

- Diga.

- Estava a olhar para o vidro, com uma persistência de desesperado, contemplando as próprias feições derramadas e inacabadas, uma nuvem de linhas soltas, informes, quando tive o pensamento...⁴⁷

and the climactic discovery,

- Lembrou-me vestir a farda de alferes. Vesti-a, aprontei-me de todo; e, como estava defronte do espelho, levantei os olhos, e... não lhes digo nada; o vidro reproduziu então a figura integral; nenhuma linha de menos, nenhum contorno diverso; era eu mesmo, o alferes, que achava, enfim, a alma exterior. Essa alma ausente com a dona do sítio, dispersa e fugida com os escravos, ei-la recolhida no espelho.⁴⁸

and finally to emotional stability.

Não era mais um autômato, era um ente animado. Daí em diante, fui outro. Cada dia, a uma certa hora, vestia-me de alferes, e sentava-me diante do espelho, lendo, olhando, meditando; no fim de duas, três horas, despia-me outra vez. Com este regime pude atravessar mais seis dias de solidão, sem os sentir...⁴⁹

The climactic moment of "O Espelho," reached when Jacobina recaptures his identity by dressing in his uniform and staring at himself in the mirror, can also serve as the climactic moment of Papéis Avulsos. After a tour through time and space, and into the human mind, touching upon ancient and contemporary eras, lands of the Bible, the Far East, and Machado's Rio de Janeiro, sanity, insanity, and dreams (both night and day), the author, in "O Espelho," has

now created one living human being, alone with himself, agonizing over his self-definition, and finally finding inner peace by recapturing his acquired role in life. Though not a complete analysis of man in the human condition, nevertheless the thoughts of Jacobina are similar to all man's reflections upon eternal questions. This story traces the steps for a solution to a universal problem by one individual, emotionally naked and forced to face himself. "O Espelho," the tenth story in a book of twelve, is the high dramatic point of Papéis Avulsos. The following two stories, "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" and "Verba Testamentária," serve as an epilogue to the collection.

Though the structures of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" and "Verba Testamentária" are totally different (The first is epistolary and the second is a conventional narrative), both stories are concerned with human nature and the relativity of reality. Despite differences in language, speech, religion, and dress, the character Alcibiades, from ancient Greece, is given the same personality traits as those of contemporary human beings. Nicolau, of "Verba Testamentária," may or may not be insane depending upon how the individual reader defines insanity.

In each story, an important character no longer living is analyzed in depth. Alcibiades and Nicolau are the only principal characters in any of the stories in Papéis Avulsos who are not alive. Alcibiades physically returns to life, not as Machado's creation but as the invention of a Chief

Magistrate, a man of impartial integrity, while Nicolau is kept alive through the writings of the narrator. Positioning these stories at the end of the volume not only augments their role as the epilogue of the book but also links Papéis Avulsos directly to the novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas published one year before. First as a novelist and now as a short story writer, Machado de Assis has left Rio de Janeiro in space and has advanced to the level of universality. He has also escaped from his present in time, and now views the world from the past, the present, and the future.

"Uma Visita de Alcibiades" unites the future with the past. The Chief Magistrate has lived his future and writes about a past age which materializes in the present. In "Verba Testamentária," as in Bras Cubas, the reader knows the future, and must live the past in order to reach this future which then becomes the present. The concluding story of Contos Fluminenses, "Frei Simão," written in 1864, had been a youthful experiment of Machado's in the manipulation of time. It was not until his illnesses during the summer of 1878-1879 and the subsequent writing of Bras Cubas did he again attempt to create different levels of time in the short story more intricately than he had done in "Frei Simão."

Following the dramatic "O Espelho," "A Visita de Alcibiades" and "Verba Testamentária," with their complexities of structure and time, form the symbolic epilogue of Papéis Avulsos in which every word, observation, and conclusion of the narrator cannot be accepted as fact by the reader. Since

in these last two stories, the words of the storytellers must be challenged as they also must be in the first story, "O Alienista," the reader is led from the end of the book back to its beginning thereby linking the past, the present, and the future in a continual circular flow. Therefore, Papéis Avulsos is revealed as a book of twelve short stories, carefully chosen for their literary excellence as individual stories, and organized in a compositionally balanced presentation which successfully demonstrates their variety of structures, styles, and themes.

Forty-three additional stories had appeared in periodicals between the publication of Histórias da Meia-Noite in November 1873 and Papéis Avulsos in November 1882 which the author had decided not to include in the volume. Though there were some fantasies, allegories, comedy-satires, and others where the creation of a character predominated for the purpose of studying either a total personality or a facet of human nature, the majority were conventional romantic narratives written prior to Bras Cubas. Many of them were written only for publication in the Jornal das Famílias, which was destined to close in 1878, and had little literary merit. Thirty-two stories were published in Famílias between November 1873 and its closing in December 1878, but Machado had not selected any of them for inclusion in Papéis Avulsos except a completely revised version of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades." Though the structure, style, or theme of an individual story printed in Famílias may be unique and the literary value of

several may be equal or superior to an individual story in Papéis Avulsos, nevertheless, Machado rejected all of them for the collection.

In nearly all of the thirty-two stories in Famílias, romantic love is the pivot around which the plot is centered. Character development is generally secondary, and no creativity is exhibited beyond the obvious narrative. This romantic love is usually between mature young men and innocent young women (or virtuous widows) with marriage as the intention. Many stories are long and episodic, and could have been extended or shortened at the will of the author. For the most part, the ending of the stories is in accord with the accepted moral values of the readers of Famílias. Virtue is rewarded and sin is punished. Whether a story begins as a study of a man or woman ("Conversação de um Avaro," "Miloca," "To be or not to be," "Silvestre"), as a fantasy ("Um Esqueleto," "Sem Olhos"), or as a comedy ("A Última Receita," "História de uma Fita Azul," "D. Mônica"), the love interest is either present from the beginning or eventually surfaces. In addition, many of these romantic stories have proverbial lessons. In "Antes que Cases," Alfredo, who has the soul of a poet, marries the beautiful but strictly practical Angela. He soon realizes their tastes and outlook are totally different, one from the other. The moral is to look before you leap. In "O Astrólogo," the setting of which is in the colonial era, Custódio Marques, the inspector of weights and measures, is concerned with discovering the improprieties of

everyone. While he is spying on a judge who is leaving a beautiful widow's house, his own daughter is running away from home with her young man. Machado's moral is that he who is absorbed in contemplating the stars can fall into a well.

The superior stories of the thirty-two in the Jornal das Famílias are those in which other elements of creativity exist in addition to good narrative plots. Examples of these aspects are shown in the use of symbolism in a character's actions or in spoken words, in the creation of one or two strong characters in an individual story who evolve in a consistent way, and in the use of irony either at the climactic moment in the story or as the pivot of the plot.

In "O Machete," appearing in Famílias in February and March 1878, Machado de Assis subtly combines a romantic situation with music. It is an old story, the plot of "O Machete," almost predictable, but the author hides the reader's perception of its conclusion by symbolizing the feelings of Inácio Ramos through the sad music he composes and plays on the cello. As Inácio sees but never states that his wife Carlottinha is falling in love with the ukulele-playing student Barbosa, his sadness increases until one day their mutual friend Amaral, another student, comes to Inácio's home and hears him playing the cello beautifully. Enthusiastically complimented by Amaral, Inácio answers:

- Não; machete é melhor.
- E deixou o violoncelo, e correu a abraçar o filho.
- Sim, meu filho, exclamava êle, hás de aprender machete; machete é muito melhor.
- Mas que há? articulou o estudante.
- Oh! nada, disse Inácio, ela foi-se embora, foi-se

com o machete. Não quis o violoncelo, que é grave de mais. Tem razão; machete é melhor.⁵⁰

The surprised reader remembers that no words had ever been exchanged between Carlotinha and Barbosa. But she had been listening and watching Barbosa as he played his ukulele one evening at their house, playing it sensually for her, with Inácio and Amaral in attendance.

. . . sentou-se Barbosa no centro da sala, afinou o machete e pôs em execução toda a sua perícia. A perícia era, na verdade grande; o instrumento é que era pequeno. O que ele tocou não era Weber nem Mozart; era uma cantiga do tempo e da rua, obra de ocasião. Barbosa tocou-a, não dizer com alma, mas com nervos. Todo ele acompanhava a gradação e variações das notas; inclinava-se sobre o instrumento, retezava o corpo, pendia a cabeça ora a um lado, ora a outro, alçava a perna, sorria, derretia os olhos ou fechava-os nos lugares que lhe pareciam patéticos. Ouvi-lo tocar era o menos; vê-lo era o mais. Quem somente o ouvisse não poderia compreendê-lo.⁵¹

We had been told by the author that Carlotinha formerly had lived only for parties and for amusement but had mellowed after marriage for the sake of economy and decorum. However, it was she who subsequently had spread Barbosa's name and talent throughout the neighborhood, and had arranged two musical evenings each week for Barbosa at her home, and had happily received him as a house guest for "algum tempo" while "o rosto de Inácio não tinha nenhuma expressão."⁵²

The value of "O Machete" lies in the development of the personalities of Inácio, Carlotinha, and Barbosa by their actions, and the author's descriptions of their actions as he adroitly conceals their thoughts or the decisions they make. It is left to the reader, as he reads, to speculate how the story will be resolved and what surprises, if any, will be

forthcoming. Upon a rereading, comes the realization that all the thoughts and actions of the characters would inevitably lead to the conclusion Carlotinha and Barbosa would run away together. In a story worthy of inclusion in Papéis Avulsos, Machado has developed the personalities of Barbosa and Carlotinha as shallow and ordinary people, and the personalities of Inácio and Barbosa in harmony with their music and the musical instruments they play. He has allowed the plot to evolve consistently with these portrayals. Perhaps the wordiness of the description of Inácio's youth at the beginning of the story, all unnecessary to its unfolding, was the reason Machado did not include "O Machete" in Papéis Avulsos. It is here in "O Machete," the most creative of the thirty-two stories in the Jornal das Famílias, that Machado de Assis has taken the standard story of the romantic triangle beyond the level of plot and even of character development.

"O Passado, Passado," written before "O Machete" and published in Famílias between June and August of 1876, also used music as symbolism. At a dinner party, forty-two-year-old naval Captain Luís Pinto, a widower, handsome and distinguished looking, and the beautiful, recently widowed Madalena Soares, happen to meet again eleven years after her father had positively forbidden them to marry. Now reunited by chance, and after several weeks of seeing one another at dinner parties and visits Luís Pinto makes to her home, they verbally waltz in circles recalling the past and discussing

the present and the future. In excellent dialogue, seemingly in step with the music heard at the party where they had met, they talk and talk, as others would dance and dance,

- Nunca pensou em casar outra vêz?
- Madalena estremeceu um pouco.
- Nunca! disse ela daí a alguns instantes.
- Nem casará?
- Silêncio.
- Não sei. Tudo depende. ..
- Novo silêncio.
- Depende? repetiu o oficial.
- Depende das circunstâncias.
- Quais serão essas circunstâncias? perguntou Luis Pinto sorrindo.
- Madalena sorriu igualmente.
- Ora! disse ela, são as circunstâncias que produzem todos os casamentos.
- Luis Pinto calou-se. Minutos depois:
- Lembra-me agora que a senhora podia estar casada.
- Como?
- A pergunta pareceu perturbar o moço, que não lhe respondeu logo. A viúva repetiu a pergunta.
- Melhor é não falar do passado, disse ele enfim.⁵³

and dance and dance.

- Quer que repita a palavra?
- Desejava.
- Pois sim.
- Repete?
- Repito.
- Vamos lá! Pode reproduzir-se o passado?
- Talvez.
- Por que não afirma?
- Nada se pode afirmar.
- Está em nossas mãos.
- O que?
- Sermos felizes.
- Oh! eu sou muito feliz! disse a viúva beijando o filho.
- Sermos felizes os três.
- Não é feliz?
- Incompletamente.⁵⁴

It would seem to be natural for Luís Pinto to propose marriage and Madalena to accept. However, the author intervenes and informs the reader that they are two friendly souls and fine sociable talkers who never specifically speak of

love for each other. Therefore, when it is announced Madalena will marry a Dr. Alvares, Luís Pinto is neither perturbed nor saddened. He had already realized he and Madalena had not recaptured their past love and that o passado, passado.

The dates of past events in the lives of Madalena and Luís Pinto are confusing to the reader, and perhaps to the author as well, the personality of Madalena is not as fully developed as Luís Pinto's, and the ending of the story appears to have been written hurriedly. Nevertheless, "O Passado, Passado" is a restrained romantic story free of artificial melodrama. The excellence of the dialogue, spoken with music in the background sometimes heard by the characters but always sensed by the reader, is an innovation in technique by Machado de Assis. "O Passado, Passado" has too many defects for inclusion in Papéis Avulsos, but is still a story worthy of his reputation.

"Um Almoço," appearing in Famílias between March and May 1877, is a study of two human beings who exemplify virtues and faults. José Marques is generous but boastful of his good deeds and later lives on the favors he granted years before to Germano Seixas. Seixas is appreciative and hard working but in time becomes ungrateful as he diplomatically but forcefully attempts to exclude José Marques from his now wealthy station in life. When Seixas was starving, Marques saved him from suicide by giving him a meal, a job, and a loan. But as the years passed, Marques seems to demand more and more from Seixas than Seixas can offer, and eventually

asks for his young daughter's hand in marriage as more of the price for his past generosity.

As in "O Alienista," regarding insanity, it is for the reader, based on his own personal values, to judge which character is behaving correctly toward the other and to what degree. As in Machado's later novel Quincas Borba, just as Rubião feels his thoughts and actions are being scrutinized by the dog, Quincas Borba, so Seixas feels he is constantly being haunted by José Marques who, now lonely and old, has moved himself into Seixas' house.

Foi morar com a família de Seixas. O que êste sentia não era já aborrecimento, era ódio. Deu-lhe um quarto escuro, em um recanto da casa, onde José Marques se acomodou. Seixas recebia em casa alguns amigos, que ali iam jogar o voltarete ou palestrar. Se faltava um parceiro, José Marques era convidado a supri-lo, mas nada mais. Nem por isso lhe dava o melhor lugar à mesa do chá, onde ninguém fazia caso dêle. José Marques, entretanto, não se fartava de elogiá-lo como homem grato, a quem êle matara a fome e salvara da morte.

- É um benefício de que nunca me hei de esquecer, acrescentava êle.⁵⁵

In Papéis Avulsos, "O Empréstimo" is a character study of two individuals, Custódio and Vaz Nunes, in which time and space are limited, thus allowing a sharper focus upon their personalities. "Um Almoço," however, evolves two characters gradually over a period of years and places the reader in a judgmental role, similar to "O Alienista" and "Verba Testamentária," rather than just as an observer. Because of the similarity in structure and narrative style, "Um Almoço" could have been included in Papéis Avulsos as a substitute for "O Empréstimo" without affecting the unity of the volume, but Machado's skillful use of time and brilliant dialogue

between Custódio and Vaz Nunes rate "O Empréstimo" the superior story.

"A Mágoa do Infeliz Cosme," printed in the Jornal das Famílias during August and September of 1875, shows Machado's potentiality as a short story writer at least six years before writing the majority of the stories included in Papéis Avulsos. It also demonstrates the weakness of a narrative in which the behavior of the characters was modified so as to be acceptable for publication in Famílias.

The reader shares the tears of forty-eight-year-old Cosme, whose young wife Carlota died suddenly just after three years of a happy marriage. Though sincerely comforted in his grief by his young friend, twenty-eight-year-old Oliveira, Cosme never knew Oliveira had fallen in love with Carlota, and that he had secretly wished for Cosme's demise so he could marry her.

The strength of the story is in the ironies. It is the young wife and not the older husband who dies. It is the young lover Oliveira, visiting Cosme, who sees and feels Carlota's presence but cannot express his own grief.

Cosme saiu e foi à sala; Oliveira ficou só no gabinete, onde tudo lhe recordava os tempos de outrora. Estava ainda ao pé da escrivaninha o banquinho onde Carlota pousava os pés; Oliveira teve ímpetos de beijá-lo. Tudo ali, até as gravuras de que Carlota gostava tanto, tudo ali parecia ter impressa a viva imagem da moça.⁵⁶

In the irony of his ignorance, it is grieving Cosme who gives Oliveira two flowers from Carlota's wedding crown, one for him and one for his sister, and then sells him Carlota's favorite jewel which Oliveira's sister had intended

to buy one year before.

. . . Oliveira contemplava e admirava o alfinête, com o coração palpitante, como se tivesse ali um pedaço do corpo que se fôra. Cosme olhava atentamente para êle. Seus olhos faiscavam às vezes; outras vezes pareciam apagados e sombrios. Seriam ciúmes póstumos? O coração do viúvo adivinharia o amor culpado, ainda que respeitoso, do amigo?⁵⁷

O infeliz Cosme continuou assim a elogiar ainda uma vez os dotes da finada espôsa, com a diferença que, desta vez, acompanhava o discurso com movimentos rápidos do alfinête que tinha na mão. Um raio de sol poente vinha brincar na pedra preciosa, donde Oliveira quase não podia arrancar os olhos. Com os movimentos que lhe dava a mão de Cosme, parecia a Oliveira que o alfinête era uma coisa viva, e que parte da alma de Carlota ali brincava e sorria para êle.⁵⁸

But Oliveira and Carlota had never actually been lovers. We are told early in the story that good, kind Oliveira, son of a childhood companion of Cosme, had never even declared his love to Carlota. She had merely perceived it, felt flattered, and reprimanded him for his attentions toward her. This proof of her virtue increased his respect and love for her. The non-relationship between Oliveira and Carlota, artificially created to conform to the policies of Famílias, weakens the tension between Oliveira and Cosme thus eliminating much of the possible suspense and conflict. In "A Mágoa do Infeliz Cosme," Machado de Assis constructed a story with ironies but sacrificed a logical plot to the exigencies of publishing. After his illnesses of 1878-1879, artistic consideration prevailed as the more important element in his stories.

Of the forty-three stories printed in periodicals between November 1873 and November 1882 that Machado de Assis

rejected for inclusion in Papéis Avulsos, there is only one story in which an important character is a politician. In "Valério," serialized in the Jornal das Famílias between December 1874 and March 1875, Colonel Borges, a former congressman, is depicted as a man of mediocre talent who manipulates others for his own gains.

"Valério," is the story of Valério, a young man doomed to failure in the harsh economic and politically hypocritical environment Rio de Janeiro was for him. Born at a time of hope for the country with the abdication of Pedro I in 1831, his parents' initial optimism for his success in later life was never realized. The author briefly summarizes Valério's childhood. He was orphaned at the age of seven, and following the death of his godfather seven years later, was literally cast out into the streets. Though highly intelligent, he had to abandon his desire for a career in law because of a lack of funds to pay for his schooling. After these facts of his early life were told, the actual story takes place during 1861 when Valério is thirty years old, economically deprived and holding two positions, a clerk in a notary office and a proofreader for a printing company, both paying meager wages.

Valério, self-educated in language usage and possessing a fertile imagination, is exploited by Colonel Borges, who befriends Valério just so he can use him as a ghost writer for his political pamphlets. After losing both his positions, the clerk's due to illness and the proofreader's because of a fire which destroyed the printing plant, Valério is ignored

by Borges who had always promised to arrange a government position for him. When he is slighted by Borges' daughter and son-in-law, whose marriage he had cajoled Borges into approving, Valério commits suicide.

The similarities in the fictional life of Valério and in the real life of Machado de Assis are too apparent to be mere coincidence. When "Valério" was written in 1874 Machado was thirty-five years old. During most of the story, Valério was thirty. Both had been orphaned at about the same age, Valério going to live with a kindly godfather, Machado with a benevolent stepmother. Self-educated, Machado became a proofreader at the age of seventeen for the government press and two years later for the Paula Brito Publishing Company. At the same time, he also was a cashier in the publisher's bookstore. He studied the use of language and began a literary career by writing poetry and essays, some highly political. In the story, Valério considered a career in letters but abandoned the idea, regarding it as an impossible way to earn a living. Just prior to writing "Valério," Machado, with only moderate success financially from working on various newspapers, obtained the bureaucratic position he had desired for many years. Valério, unemployed and betrayed by Borges, who he thought would be his benefactor, did not receive a government appointment.

Colonel Borges symbolizes the hypocrisy and pretense Machado associated with many of the people he knew who seemed to wield power and influence but were devoid of ideas and

even intelligence. Borges, "ex-deputado, ex-quase-ministro,"⁵⁹ projected an image of high social status and an affected air of importance in the field of politics. A forerunner of the pompous and prosperous person in reputation and appearance from "Teoria do Medalhão," written in 1881, Borges

Na câmara fêz um papel de mudo; mas o seu ar de gravidade era respeitado como um sintoma de sabedoria.⁶⁰

Deixou o parlamento sem fazer manifestação nenhuma; mas ficou-lhe a reputação de homem de bom conselho, qualidades políticas, gravidade de pensar, e recolheu-se à tenda, como Aquiles, disposto a não sair dela sem que lhe matassem um Pátroclo.⁶¹

"Valério" is a severe indictment of politics, politicians, and, by implication, of the system of education existing then in Rio de Janeiro. It is ironic that Borges, with limited ability, advanced to a position of considerable status while talented Valério failed absolutely in his attempt at success. If "Valério" had been written earlier so as to have been considered for inclusion in Histórias da Meia-Noite, it could have been substituted for "Aurora sem Dia" and still the unity and quality of the volume would have been retained. However, by 1882, the year Machado de Assis selected his stories for Papéis Avulsos, "Teoria do Medalhão" covered all "Valério" had implied, with added humor and a more innovative structure.

As previously stated in Chapter III, Machado had published five stories of fantasy in the Jornal das Famílias between 1869 and 1871. During 1875 and 1876, he returned to the theme of fantasy in four additional stories, three appearing in Famílias and one in A Época. They are: "Um

Esqueleto" (Famílias, 1875), "A Chinela Turca" (A Época, 1875), the first version of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" (Famílias, 1876), and "Sem Olhos" (Famílias, 1876). "A Chinela Turca" and a revised version of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" were selected for Papéis Avulsos and "Um Esqueleto" and "Sem Olhos" discarded.

In "Um Esqueleto," the narrator Alberto relates supposed remembrances of his eccentric German teacher, a Dr. Belem from Minas Gerais, to his young friends gathered together on a beach in Rio de Janeiro on a gloomy night. When Alberto begins his story of Dr. Belem and the skeleton, everyone, the reader included, is interested. Through Alberto's narration, which includes conversations between him and Dr. Belem, we learn that the skeleton of his late wife Luísa, covered with a green cloth, is hanging in a glass closet.

- E minha mulher, disse o Dr. Belem sorrindo. É bonita, não lhe parece? Está na espinha, como vê. De tanta beleza, de tanta graça, de tanta maravilha que me encantaram outrora, que a tantos mais encantaram, que lhe resta hoje? Veja, meu jovem amigo; tal é última expressão do gênero humano.⁶²

After Dr. Belem marries the widow Marcelina from Ouro Preto, Alberto tells us he is invited for dinner one evening. The skeleton is seated at the table between the couple. Dr. Belem says: "- . . . um hábito natural; janto com minhas duas mulheres."⁶³

In his brief story, Dr. Belem explains that after he had killed Luísa thinking she had been unfaithful, he realized she was innocent. Now he is beginning to threaten Marcelina without cause. Will the story of Othello be

repeated with her as the second victim? Alberto ends his tale by telling his friends there never was a Dr. Belem, and that he had invented the story only to amuse them.

In "Sem Olhos," there is another series of stories within a story. At a dinner party, a Chief Magistrate remarks that in his youth he once saw a ghost. He proceeds with an account of a brief friendship with physically and mentally ill Dr. Damasceno Rodrigues, whose own story of horror would follow. As Damasceno told it, Lucinda, the wife of a colleague of his, had glanced lovingly at him for an instant and her very jealous husband had noticed it. In an Othello-like rage, the husband had burned out her eyes with a hot iron saying, "'Os olhos delinqüiram, os olhos pagaram!'"⁶⁴ Lucinda had died soon after. In the middle of the night years later, in old, sick Damasceno's dark room, the future Chief Magistrate and he saw, next to the bed, an image of a woman with two empty bloody holes where her eyes should have been. He says that he fainted and the next day was told Damasceno had died overnight. Subsequently discovering that Damasceno's entire story was merely the invention of a deranged mind, the only explanation the Chief Magistrate can offer to his friends for seeing the ghost of Lucinda is that he witnessed the contagious part of Damasceno's illness.

We have already seen that "O Esqueleto" and "Sem Olhos" are similar in structure, style, and point of view. Within the framework of fantasy, both stories are romantic melodramas which appealed to the readers of Famílias.

Attention is held by the hints of the supernatural and by the possible insanity of Dr. Belem and Dr. Damasceno Rodrigues as they function through the eyes of their respective narrators. But the endings of both stories appear to be poorly planned. In "O Esqueleto," the reader is suddenly deceived by Alberto's declaration that he had invented everything, effectively destroying Dr. Belem with all his ironic humor and pessimistic philosophy. Our suspension of disbelief is shattered. In "Sem Olhos," the final discussion of contagious mental illness by the Chief Magistrate's friends leaves the reader confused. However, in "A Chinela Turca," the character Duarte always remains a live entity to the reader until the close of the story, as we see him emerge awake and alive from his own dream-created romantic melodrama. "A Chinela Turca" also has a simpler structure than "O Esqueleto" and "Sem Olhos," and thus conforms to the other stories in Papéis Avulsos.

By the time Papéis Avulsos was organized, the theme of insanity would appear in "O Alienista" (1881) and "Verba Testamentária" (1882). In these stories, it would emerge slowly through the actions and words of the characters as told by the narrator and not by another character. Insanity in "O Esqueleto" and "Sem Olhos" is not a relative concept involving only the reader and the narrator, is present from the beginning in each story, and also revolves around standard romantic tragedies in which the protagonists are involved. This type of plot was expected by the readers of Famílias.

The discarded version of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades,"

published in Famílias in October 1876, is decidedly inferior in structure, style, and character development to the revised story printed first in the Gazeta de Notícias and then in Papéis Avulsos six years later. In the earlier version, the author introduces Chief Magistrate Alvares as a lover of good coffee and an excellent storyteller. On Christmas night at a party, in exchange for a special cup of coffee, the Chief Magistrate begins his tale in the following way.

"- Não contarei uma anedota mentirosa, dessas que os redatores de folhinhas aumentam ou remendam para regalo dos fregueses. Vou referir o que me aconteceu sábado passado."⁶⁵

Through the use of spiritualism, Alvares summoned Alcibiades, invited him to an evening affair, and asked him to exchange his own clothing for contemporary styles. After many humorous comments about trousers, ties, vests, and coats, Alcibiades saw his host don a hat, was astonished by his appearance, and consequently fell to the floor dead. The Chief Magistrate ends his tale with the following words, which also end Machado's story.

Quando lhe pus a mão no peito, vi que estava diante de um cadáver. Que havia de fazer? Mandei-o para o necrotério."⁶⁶

Though the humorous critique of modern dress customs symbolizes the relativity of things viewed in the perspective of time, poor structure and character development do not permit the reader to suspend disbelief and to accept the plot. This Chief Magistrate has no credibility as a proponent of the truth since he is introduced as a storyteller who entertains at parties. Approximately one-fifth of the story is a

discussion on his love for coffee, irrelevant to the theme. Later, with the appearance of Alcibiades, neither he nor the Chief Magistrate show any curiosity, fear, or other human emotions toward each other. They merely talk about clothing, Alcibiades dies, and the story ends. This first version of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" was recognized by Machado as a hastily written and poorly organized story. Later, when it was revised, he corrected the defects.

The best of the stories of fantasy, "A Chinela Turca," was not published in Famílias but in A Época, whose demise after only four issues must have been a disappointment to Machado de Assis. As stated in his notes to "A Chinela Turca," he considered A Época to be ". . . elegante, literário, ático."⁶⁷ Machado's second and final story to appear in A Época was "O Sainete," printed in the issue of December 1, 1875. As befits the author's opinion of the magazine, "O Sainete" is also one of the better short stories he had written by that time.

"O Sainete" is a romantic story with the emphasis on symbolism and character development rather than merely the story of timid Dr. Maciel attempting to win the love of the beautiful widow Eulália Seixas, who has rejected him. Her sensuality and adroitness in matters of romance are known to Maciel. In his sadness of her rejection of him, he daydreams of her green eyes.

Eram verdes, de um verde igual ao das fôlhas novas, e de uma expressão ora indolente, ora vivaz, - arma de dois gumes, - que ela sabia manejar como poucas.⁶⁸

It is now Holy Week and on Thursday evening he goes to her home, tries to declare his love again, but is ignored. On Friday, he is certain he has lost her forever and so accepts a position in another city. On Saturday, he receives a card from her inviting him to her home that night. They have a wonderful evening and on the following Sunday morning he realizes he has won her heart. Unbeknown to Maciel, Eulália's change in attitude was the result of her conversation with Fernanda, a friend of hers who was secretly in love with Maciel and had highly praised him to her. In the words of Machado, "A viúva descobriu-lhe os méritos com os olhos de Fernanda; e bastou vê-lo preferido para que ela o preferisse."⁶⁹

Eulália Seixas is the most sensual of any female character created by Machado de Assis prior to the novel Bras Cubas. Here is his description of her preparing to retire one night.

Duas criadas - camareiras, - foram com ela para o toucador, onde a bela viúva se despiu; dali passou ao banho; enfiou depois um roupão e dirigiu-se para o quarto de dormir. Levaram-lhe uma taça de chocolate, que ela saboreou lentamente, tranqüilamente, voluptuosamente; saboreou-a e saboreou-se também a si própria, contemplando, da poltrona em que estava, a sua bela imagem no espelho fronteiro.⁷⁰

Even her name appears imbued with sensuality as its sounds roll off the tongue of the reader: Eu lá lia.

"O Sainete," not having to conform to magazine editorial policies, is one of the finest romantic short stories written by Machado de Assis before 1882 and the publishing of Papéis Avulsos. In the two stories appearing in A Época,

Machado has shown the esthetic level he was capable of reaching as early as 1875, when he placed art before monetary considerations.

There is evidence to indicate that some of the forty-three stories rejected for Papéis Avulsos seem to have been written several years before their first appearance in periodicals. Prior to 1873, when Machado's primarily romantic short stories lacked the refinements of his later ones, a story published years after it was written would be hard to date. In the era of "A Chinela Turca," "O Sainete," and "A Mágoa do Infeliz Cosme," stories such as "Brincar com Fogo" and "Encher Tempo" were just too inferior to have come from the pen of the same author at approximately the same time in his life.

"Brincar com Fogo," published in Famílias during July and August of 1875 under the pseudonym Lara, is a conventionally-structured romantic narrative of a young man simultaneously and insincerely courting two girls who are best friends. The style resembles Machado's romantic stories of the late 1860s and the era of Contos Fluminenses. "Casa Não Casa," published in Famílias between December of 1875 and January of 1876, six months after "Brincar com Fogo," has the same basic plot but is much more complicated in the creation of the personalities of its characters and in the use of time. The women of "Casa Não Casa" are bolder and more mature. The reader gains a deeper insight into the torments of young Júlio, in "Casa Não Casa," rather than merely following

his actions as with João dos Passos in "Brincar com Fogo." It is hard to believe that in six months Machado could have improved to such a degree in his technique. It is more than likely, after hurriedly submitting an old, unpublished story under a pseudonym just to meet a deadline, that he realized its weaknesses and then rewrote it as soon as possible, republishing it this time under his own name.

Another example of a story seemingly out of date with others published during the same year is "Encher Tempo," serialized in Famílias between April and July of 1876. Padre Sá, niece Lulu, nephew Alexandre, friend Emiliana, and her son Pedro are all commonplace characters of virtue. There is a sweet irony and a happy ending to this long and wordy fanciful narrative devoid of true drama which also seems to have been written during the time of Contos Fluminenses.

Throughout 1878, until its closing in December, Machado de Assis continued to publish short stories in the Jornal das Famílias. Concurrently, on January 1, 1878, he began a collaboration with a new daily newspaper, O Cruzeiro, in which an entire novel, Iaiá Garcia, was printed between January 1 and March 2, and in addition, five short stories in April and May, and a weekly column of commentaries from June 2 until September 1. The short stories and commentaries were under the pseudonym Eleazar, a name he had never used until writing for O Cruzeiro nor would he use again after September 1, the date of his final contribution to a newspaper that would continue to exist only through 1883.

The five short stories in O Cruzeiro between April 2 and May 28 of 1878 were either allegorical or satirical in style or a combination of the two. Satire had been in evidence in one degree or another in many of Machado's short stories, but the allegorical style was employed only twice before ("O País das Quimeras," 1862, and a revised version of the same story, "Uma Excursão Milagrosa," 1867). The best of the five stories was "Na Arca," the ironic and pessimistic view of human nature included in Papéis Avulsos and previously discussed.

In "O Califa de Platina," a satire directed against political leaders and restrictive economic trade policy, Machado used a mythical Arabian country and Brazil to make his point. A yellow dwarf, appearing to the Caliph in a dream, gives him one year to think of doing something original for his country or he would be sent to an abyss from where he would never return. The Caliph's original idea was to bar all imports from Brasilina. This invited local retaliation. Though the good citizens of Platina were angry, the dwarf was placated and the Caliph's life was saved. All commerce then returned to normal.

The allegory "Elógio da Vaidade" is a speech in praise of vanity delivered by Vanity herself in which poor Modesty is unmercifully attacked. In "Filosofia de um Par de Botas," two worn out boots abandoned on a beach, one representing optimism and the other pessimism, reflect upon their past owners and uncertain future. "Um Cão de Lata ao Rabo" is a

satire on literature itself wherein the author's device is merely to reprint three dreadful essays by students based on the theme of a dog with a can tied to its tail.

With the exception of "Na Arca" and some wry humor in "O Califa de Platina" and "Filosofia de um Par de Botas," Machado, in O Cruzeiro, once again seems to be writing hastily to meet deadlines and to be creating a specific literary style under his pseudonym Eleazar. "Elógio da Vaidade" and "Um Cão de Lata ao Rabo" appear to be pointless stories and simply fillers of space in the newspaper. After 1881, he published far better satires and allegories and would include some of them in definitive volumes.

It is known Machado became ill toward the end of 1878 and left Rio de Janeiro for the mountain area to recover his health. On January 15, 1879, the publisher Lombaerts founded a bimonthly magazine, calling it A Estação, to replace the Jornal das Famílias. In March of 1879, Machado returned to Rio de Janeiro. In July, he commenced publishing short stories in A Estação and, in December of 1881, in the newspaper the Gazeta de Notícias. This was the same newspaper that Ramos Paz had wanted him to join in 1876 as co-founder and editor.

By the end of 1879, Machado was hard at work on his novel Memórias Póstumas de Bras Cubas. It was first published beginning in March of 1880 in the magazine Revista Brasileira to which he had also been contributing poetry and literary criticism after June of 1879. With a return to his position

at the Ministry of Agriculture and his extensive renewed literary activity, it appears he simply did not have the time to write for O Cruzeiro.

In November of 1882, Lombaerts, the publisher of A Estação, published Papéis Avulsos. However, it is not known from what date the idea for Papéis Avulsos originated or if agreement existed between Lombaerts and Machado which had influenced Machado's decision not to collaborate any longer with O Cruzeiro and to shift his attention at least partially to A Estação.

Between January 1879 and November 1882, Machado had published a total of sixteen stories, dividing them equally between A Estação and the Gazeta de Notícias. Eventually, only two stories from A Estação appeared in Papéis Avulsos whereas he included eight that had been originally in the Gazeta de Notícias. (The two stories, "O Alienista" and "D. Benedita," are the longest of the twelve in the book, comprising almost half of it in number of pages.) Of the remaining six stories, one, "Um para o Outro," serialized in A Estação between June and October of 1879, has never been republished in its entirety since some of the 1879 editions of A Estação which contained parts of the story could not be located. Though the other five stories were published between January 1879 and September 1882, their themes characterize them all as belonging to Machado's romantic era and rightfully were inappropriate for inclusion in Papéis Avulsos.

"Curiosidade" was published successively in seven

issues of A Estação between January and June of 1879 and was one of Machado's finest romantic stories of the period between Histórias da Meia-Noite and Papéis Avulsos. To set the plot, ever-curious Carlota, engaged to sensitive and kind Conceição, becomes the marital objective of playboy Lulu Borges who is more interested in her father's wealth than in his professed love for her. Machado brilliantly portrays her attraction for Borges, personifying it by his pince nez which engages her attention and leads to the following description of how she became infatuated with him.

Fitara um ponto único, o ponto em que reluzia um pincenez de ouro, cobrindo um par de olhos que pareciam negros, e efetivamente o eram. A razão por que Carlota fitara êsse pincenez de preferência a outros, era difícil achá-la, desde que se ignorasse uma circunstância, a saber, que ela vira, oito dias antes, o referido pincenez a vagar pela praia da Gambôa. Ora, há certos pincenez que se veem e se esquecem; outros, pelo contrário, veem-se e não se esquecem mais. O de que se trata pertencia a esta categoria, - não pela matéria, que era simplesmente ouro, - não pela forma, que era a forma mais usada e comum, mas porque estavam diante de uns olhos grandes, bonitos, expressivos; os quais olhos ornavam uma bela cabeça, a qual cabeça era o remate de um corpo esbelto, vestido com certa arte.⁷¹

As Carlota is staring at Borges, "o pincenez torceu o bigode."⁷² That night Carlota has a nightmare ". . . de pincenez e bigode."⁷³ Three days later she receives an unsigned love letter. "E o pensamento ia ter com o pincenez e os olhos negros do Teatro de São Januário. Seria êsse?"⁷⁴ A week later Carlota and Borges meet at a party to which her fiancé Conceição conveniently is not invited, and Borges ". . . estava no trinquê; e nunca o pincenez lhe brincou melhor sôbre o nariz."⁷⁵

In the romantic tradition, realizations, confrontations, and much sadness occur but eventually there is happiness for Carlota and Conceição. "Curiosidade" is a well-planned short story probably having been written within a year of publication. By 1878, even in his romantic short stories, Machado de Assis had consistently begun to create more believable characters who think and act as human beings in accordance with their individual personalities, exemplified by Lulu Borges in "Curiosidade" and by Carlotinha, Barbosa, and Inácio in "O Machete."

"O Caso da Viúva," serialized in A Estação between January and March of 1881, though published the year after Bras Cubas is a story more than likely to have been written some five years earlier. In part, it is like the 1876 "O Passado, Passado." Just as Luís Pinto's proposal of marriage to Madalena Soares was opposed by her father, so Rochinha's desire to marry Maria Luísa is opposed also by her father who has arranged a marriage with wealthy, forty-year-old Vieira to which she cannot object. A few years later, Rochinha, who had been a model young man, communicates with Maria Luísa and tries to inveigle her into admitting she still loves him. This situation is similar to what occurred between Moreira and Eulália in "Onze Anos Depois," a story published in the Jornal das Famílias in 1875. Maria Luísa's passive acceptance of Vieira as her husband is identical to Eulália's acceptance of Alves as her husband. In "Onze Anos Depois," Moreira's deceit led Eulália to recognize the superiority of

Alves' character and made her realize she truly loved him. In "O Caso da Viúva," Vieira conveniently and suddenly dies. Maria Luísa thinks Rochinha will marry her but once again, o passado, passado as Rochinha says: "- Que não, que não tinha idéia de casar."⁷⁶

In 1875, Machado had published "A Chinela Turca." One evening Rochinha is seen staring at the tip of his "chinela turca"⁷⁷ and then gazing at a photograph of Maria Luísa. The only other photographs in any story written through 1882 were of Isabel and, coincidentally, of a Luísa, the two women in "Casa Não Casa," also from 1875. The many similarities of scenes and ideas in "O Caso da Viúva" to those from stories between 1875 and 1876 strongly suggest all were written at about the same time.

By contrast, "A Chave," serialized in A Estação from December 1879 through February 1880, and "A Mulher Pálida," in A Estação during August and September of 1881, seem to have been written after Machado's illnesses and during the period of Bras Cubas. Though showing evidence of his maturation as a writer, both stories contain passages and ideas which belong in novels and are irrelevant in short stories. They also have certain sections which do not fit together to form a unified work.

"A Chave" is one of Machado's few stories where the sea is of any consequence. The scene on the first page is set on the beach. There is a long description of Major Caldas reading his newspaper which has no significance at all

in the story. The remainder of the first half of the narrative concerns his beautiful, proud, and somewhat foolish daughter Marcelina who challenges the waves and would have drowned if young Luís Bastinhos had not rescued her. He falls in love with her but she is not interested in him.

The second half of the story is conventional romanticism. Luís looks for the key that will open her heart to him. At a party given by Major Caldaś, they suddenly discover a mutual affinity for the waltz and a talent for performing the movements. Luís' first dance of the evening is with a cousin of Marcelina, and the author's words in describing it appear to be in step with their steps.

Que delicadeza! que segurança! que acêrto de passos!
 . . . E ei-los unidos, a voltearem rapidamente, leves
 como duas plumas, sem perder um compasso, sem discrepar
 uma linha.⁷⁸

Everyone has been watching them, including Marcelina, and when the dancing ends she says: "- Com que então, só minha prima é que mereceu uma valsa!"⁷⁹

Two pages later they are married.

"A Mulher Pálida," published the year after Bras Cubas, contains ideas found in Machado's next novel, Quincas Borba. In "A Mulher Pálida," the student Máximo, just like Rubião from Quincas Borba, receives an inheritance and is also rejected by the woman he loves. Both characters slowly go insane, and so subtly does it come about that at first the reader has difficulty perceiving it. Just like Rubião and his statement about life and its struggles, "- Ao vencedor, as batatas!"⁸⁰, Máximo, upon realizing the extent of his new

wealth, coins the ironic phrase, "- Vivam os difuntos!"⁸¹

The story "A Mulher Pálida" is partly realistic, partly romantic, partly a satire on poetry, and partly a personality study of Máximo as insanity seizes him without apparent reason. The story is weak since there is no opportunity in it to develop and resolve all the complexities Machado has introduced.

Abruptly, well into the second half of the story, Machado writes a paragraph changing the entire direction of a story previously focused on Máximo, his inheritance, and the ridiculous love poems he had written to Eulália in an attempt to win her love.

Eulália, - e aqui começa a explicar-se o título dêste conto, - Eulália era de um moreno pálido. Ou doença, ou melancolia, ou pó de arroz, começou a ficar mais pálida depois da herança do Iguaçu. De maneira que, quando o estudante lá voltou um mês depois, admirou-se de a ver, e de certa maneira sentiu-se mais ferido. A palidez de Eulália tinha-lhe dado uns trinta versos; porque êle, romântico acabado, do grupo clorótico, amava as mulheres pela falta de sangue e de carnes. Eulália realizara um sonho; ao voltar de Iguaçu o sonho era simplesmente divino.⁸²

As Eulália has rejected Máximo, so he now rejects as a possible spouse all future acquaintances judging them not to be pale enough by his standards. As Máximo's obsession with paleness increases, the author reminds us with the following phrases that time is passing: "passaram-se quatro meses; . . ." ⁸³, "ao fim de quinze dias . . ." ⁸⁴, and "mês e meio depois, . . ." ⁸⁵. In what appears to be less than one year, and told in two pages, wealthy, young Máximo dies of a broken heart murmuring these last words, "- pálida... pálida..." ⁸⁶.

Neither "A Chave" nor "A Mulher Pálida" seem to have been intentionally lengthened to be serialized. Rather, Machado, now enthusiastically involved in new literary directions and having completed the novel Bras Cubas, appeared to have momentary difficulties redisciplining himself to the narrower sphere of the short story where descriptions must be brief, characters few, and the ideas presented must be limited and resolved rapidly.

From the eleven stories published in either A Estação or the Gazeta de Notícias from October 1881 to August 1882 (including the total revision of "Uma Visita de Alcibiades"), ten were selected for Papéis Avulsos and only one was discarded. The story not selected was "O Imortal," printed in A Estação from July to September 1882, and itself a revised version of "Rui de Leão," published in the Jornal das Famílias ten years earlier. Just as the improved "Uma Visita de Alcibiades" added the illusion of reality to a story of fantasy, so does "O Imortal," structurally and stylistically different from "Rui de Leão," convince the reader to suspend disbelief and accept the premise of the character Dr. Leão's first sentence, the opening words of the story. Speaking to a colonel and to a notary in a small town in the interior of the Province of Rio de Janeiro in 1855, he says: "- Meu pai nasceu em 1600, na cidade do Recife."⁸⁷ Naturally curious and hopeful of learning the secret if not of immortal life (for Dr. Leão tells them his father has died) then at least of an abnormally extended life span, the reader and Dr. Leão's two direct

listeners are all intrigued and eagerly awaiting his story. It covers over two hundred years in time, four continents in space, and adventures so incredible that, among others, Dr. Leão's father, Rui, almost becomes the King of England.

The earlier "Rui de Leão" supposedly had been a tale taken from secret, unpublished chronicles in the tradition of Don Quijote de la Mancha. The style of the narrative is in the romantic Indianist tradition of Gonçalves Dias. Since both stories basically treat the prolonged life of Rui de Leão with its accompanying adventures, each could have been lengthened or shortened at the will of the author by the elimination or the addition of episodes. Removing artificial Indianist descriptions and patterns of speech, and depending upon a reliable, first-hand narrator who possesses scientific knowledge, "O Imortal" becomes a good fantasy story to serialize in a magazine.

Lacking the ingenuity and brevity of "A Chinela Turca" and "Uma Visita de Alcibíades," "O Imortal" could not have added to the esthetic unity of Papéis Avulsos if it had been included in the book. In the closing sentence of the story, Machado appears to reject both the original and the revised version for any future republication by stating:

Tal é o caso extraordinário, que há anos, com outro nome, e por outras palavras, contei a este bom povo, que provavelmente já os esqueceu a ambos.⁸⁸

As can be observed from the analysis of the volume at the beginning of this chapter, the stories in Papéis Avulsos bear little resemblance to most of the discarded ones. From

a superior writer of mainly conventional romantic stories, Machado de Assis evolved into a skilled analyst of human nature through the creation of individual characters and situations. These situations may be humorous or serious, but in each instance the reactions of the characters are those of mortal and therefore imperfect human beings expressing their humanity and individuality of thought, generally echoed in the mind of the reader who is as human as the characters portrayed.

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Footnotes

¹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume II, Conto e Teatro (Rio de Janeiro: Editôra José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), p. 252.

²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 270. ⁵Ibid., p. 294.

⁶Ibid., p. 297. ⁷Ibid. ⁸Ibid. ⁹Ibid., p. 302.

¹⁰Ibid. ¹¹Ibid. ¹²Ibid., pp. 305-306.

¹³Ibid., p. 307. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 311. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 312.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 314. ¹⁷Ibid. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 315.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 364-365. ²⁰Ibid., p. 365.

²¹Ibid., p. 334. ²²Ibid., p. 335. ²³Ibid., p. 336.

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵Ibid. ²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Ibid., p. 338.

²⁸Ibid. ²⁹Ibid., p. 366. ³⁰Ibid., p. 348.

³¹Ibid., p. 366. ³²Ibid., p. 353. ³³Ibid., p. 357.

³⁴Ibid., p. 253. ³⁵Ibid., p. 295. ³⁶Ibid., p. 307.

³⁷Ibid., p. 323. ³⁸Ibid. ³⁹Ibid., p. 326.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 323. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 340. ⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 341. ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 345. ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 349.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 350. ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 351.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 351-352. ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 352.

⁵⁰Machado de Assis, Contos Esquecidos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), pp. 254-255.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 249-250. ⁵²Ibid., p. 253.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 142-143. ⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 144-145.

⁵⁵Machado de Assis, Relíquias de Casa Velha 2.º Volume (São Paulo: Livro do Mês S. A., 1962), pp. 148-149.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 58-59. ⁵⁷Ibid., p. 65. ⁵⁸Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 16. ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 25. ⁶¹Ibid., p. 26.

- ⁶²Machado de Assis, Contos Esquecidos, p. 76.
- ⁶³Ibid., p. 83.
- ⁶⁴Machado de Assis, Relíquias de Casa Velha 2.º Volume, p. 115.
- ⁶⁵Machado de Assis, Contos Esparsos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 203.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 207.
- ⁶⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 364.
- ⁶⁸Machado de Assis, Contos Avulsos, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), p. 214.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., p. 222. ⁷⁰Ibid., p. 218.
- ⁷¹Machado de Assis, Contos sem Data, organização e prefácio de Raimundo Magalhães Júnior (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A., 1956), pp. 133-134.
- ⁷²Ibid., p. 134. ⁷³Ibid., p. 137. ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 138.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 139. ⁷⁶Ibid., p. 34. ⁷⁷Ibid., p. 22.
- ⁷⁸Ibid., p. 122. ⁷⁹Ibid., p. 123.
- ⁸⁰Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Renard Pérez, Volume I, Romance, nota preliminar de Barreto Filho (Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Aguilar Ltda., 1959), p. 724.
- ⁸¹Machado de Assis, Contos sem Data, p. 49.
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 57. ⁸³Ibid., p. 59. ⁸⁴Ibid.
- ⁸⁵Ibid., p. 61. ⁸⁶Ibid.
- ⁸⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 887.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., p. 900.

CHAPTER V

HISTÓRIAS SEM DATA

Histórias sem Data was published by Garnier in August of 1884, only twenty-one months after Papéis Avulsos. Neither the exact date of publication nor the date when the contract was signed between Machado de Assis and Garnier have been documented in any of the numerous critical works consulted. During the twenty-one month period between the two volumes, and allowing approximately two months in which the manuscript for Histórias sem Data would have had to have been in Garnier's hands for its printing in Rio de Janeiro and for its release to the public in book form by August, thirty-seven short stories had appeared previously in magazines and newspapers: seventeen in the Gazeta de Notícias, seventeen in A Estação, and three in the Gazeta Literária. This was between one-fifth and one-sixth of all the short stories Machado had written in his lifetime and which he had published in little more than a year and a half. From this number, he selected eighteen for inclusion in Histórias sem Data. Fifteen of these had been in the Gazeta de Notícias, only two in A Estação, and one in the Gazeta Literária, a cultural review which had published twenty-four issues between October 1, 1883 and December 31, 1884.

In Histórias sem Data, the structure, style, and narrative point of view of the individual stories are far from being merely a continuation of the techniques used in the stories of Papéis Avulsos. In Histórias sem Data, there is more satire, crueler and more merciless in its criticism of Brazilian society and humanity in general, and more skillfully disguised in its presentation than in Papéis Avulsos. In Papéis Avulsos, the reader was occasionally teased or deceived ("A Chinela Turca," "O Segredo do Bonzo," "Verba Testamentária"), but the characters, with the possible exception of Nicolau from "Verba Testamentária," were not wholly deceitful people. In the stories of Histórias sem Data, not only are many of the characters liars, hypocrites, egocentrics, and sometimes insane individuals, but also is the narrator of a particular story sometimes purposely endowed by Machado de Assis with these same traits. Whether a narrator is the main character telling his own story, or whether Machado's device is relating the words of another in the manner of Cervantes in El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha or in his own short story "O Alienista," or whether the author as a presumed unbiased narrator is telling an impartial tale with the standard point of view of an omniscient author objectively portraying his characters, all their words must be constantly and carefully evaluated as to their veracity. Some of the narrators mislead, lie, and offer excuses for their own hypocrisy, moral decay, and intellectual failure in life while others seem subconsciously to develop identical traits in the

characters they create.

These innovations may explain Machado's prolific number of short stories written during 1883 and 1884. Having considerably advanced in his techniques with regard to structure, style, and point of view in this genre by the completion of Papéis Avulsos, he appears to have concentrated his efforts in these years to write as many short stories as was physically possible incorporating his new ideas wherever feasible. The majority of stories of this type had been published first in the Gazeta de Notícias and were selected for Histórias sem Data rather than those that had been published in A Estação since A Estação was too conservative to accept some of Machado's extremely sarcastic comments and subtleties of construction. It may be noted that some of the nineteen discarded stories were of considerable merit. Years later, in 1899, Machado did choose one, "Papéis Velhos," for inclusion in the collection Páginas Recolhidas.

Analyses of the stories in Histórias sem Data have been particularly inadequate through the years. The critics Lúcia Miguel Pereira, José Barreto Filho, and Mário Matos had correctly praised the stories in Papéis Avulsos as being innovative and representative of a change in Machado's literary direction as a short story writer. This is obvious and undeniable. However, they write very little about Histórias sem Data as a unique collection, and merely refer to it as a continuation of Papéis Avulsos. They also fail to examine critically the individual stories of both Papéis Avulsos and

Histórias sem Data.

Lúcia Miguel Pereira wrote the following:

Dessa época, a sua colaboração mais importante é a da Estação; nesse jornal, misto de revista mundana e figurino, saiu a maior parte dos seus contos.¹

Em 1882 saía um volume de contos, Papéis Avulsos, em edição da casa Lombaerts, em 1884 dava ao Garnier, que daí em diante passou a ser seu único editor, as Histórias sem data. Em ambos recolheu algumas das colaborações de Estação, de permeio com trabalhos inéditos, . . .²

In fact, only two stories from twelve in Papéis Avulsos and only two from eighteen in Histórias sem Data had first appeared in A Estação. Twenty-three of the combined total of thirty had first been printed in the Gazeta de Notícias, and of the remaining three, one was published in A Época, one in O Cruzeiro, and one in the Gazeta Literária. None of the thirty stories had been previously unpublished.

José Barreto Filho, who wrote a twenty-nine page chapter on Machado de Assis for the three-volume history of Brazilian literature entitled A Literatura no Brasil, organized by Afrânio Coutinho, also limited his study of both Papéis Avulsos and Histórias sem Data to one paragraph.

Depois de Brás Cubas decorreram dez anos até que êsse lento incubador publicasse o seu segundo grande romance. No intervalo aparecem os livros de contos e novelas: Papéis Avulsos (1882) e Histórias sem Data (1884). São coletâneas de trabalhos publicados, mas dispersos, obedecendo a uma seleção que exclui grande parte da produção dos respectivos períodos. Podem-se destacar entre êstes: "O Alienista", "Teoria do Medalhão", "A Chinela Turca", "Dona Benedita", todos no primeiro dos volumes citados. Histórias sem Data é uma coleção de pequenas obras primas, da mais variada qualidade.³

In fact, only one story, "O Alienista," the first in Papéis Avulsos, could possibly be considered a novelette.

The other twenty-nine are definitely short stories. In his brief list of the better short stories of both volumes, Barreto Filho has singled out the first, second, third, and fifth stories from Papéis Avulsos. By dismissing the stories in Histórias sem Data with the confusing statement ". . . uma coleção de pequenas obras primas, da mais variada qualidade,"⁴ he has demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the innovations adapted by Machado de Assis throughout the volume.

One of the most glaring examples of the continuance of inadequate critique in Brazil in the analyses of the short stories of Machado de Assis, aside from the critic Sílvia Romero (1851-1914), whose personal dislike of Machado produced his adverse judgment, is found in the introduction to the short stories in the second volume of his Obra Completa published in 1962 by Aguilar. This introduction had been previously written in 1939 by Mário Matos for his book Machado de Assis, o Homem e a Obra. He reproduced it verbatim twenty-three years later for inclusion in the most prestigious of all collections yet assembled of the writings of Machado de Assis. In addition to the usual total lack of recognition for the author's narrative points of view, Matos stated:

. . . são os contos, na quase totalidade, escritos de ocasião, feitos sob o compromisso da hora marcada. Disse, e aqui repito, que as histórias contadas por ele se ressentem dessa falha. O próprio título de algumas coleções assim o indica: Papéis Avulsos, Páginas Recolhidas, Histórias Sem Data, Relíquias de Casa Velha. Uma ou outra coletânea não tem unidade, juntando no mesmo volume o conto, a crônica, o discurso e a poesia. Recolheu o autor a vária produção, espalhada pelas folhas do tempo. E defende a diversidade da matéria, no rosto de uma das obras, com a palavra jovial de Montaigne: Quelque

diversité d'herbes qu'il y ait, tout s'enveloppe sous le nom de salade.⁵

Part of the above statement had been refuted by Machado de Assis in his own words. In one paragraph of a letter written to Joaquim Nabuco on April 14, 1883, Machado had stated:

Ve V. que se se lembra dos amigos, o correio não o deixa mal, e é pontual transmissor das suas memórias. Oxalá faça o mesmo com o livro que ora lhe envio, Papéis Avulsos, . . . Não é propriamente uma reunião de escritos esparsos, porque tudo o que ali está (excepto justamente a Chinela Turca), foi escrito com o fim especial de fazer parte de um livro. V. me dirá o que vale.⁶

As had been expressed in the previous chapter and now according to Machado himself, Papéis Avulsos was a careful selection of stories specifically chosen to form the volume. There is no reason to assume Histórias sem Data or any other collection was organized with less care and devotion to esthetic considerations whether it was a volume of only short stories or whether it included works in other genres as well. The statement by Montaigne with which Mário Matos closes his paragraph and used by Machado in his preface to Páginas Recolhidas has misled Matos just as Machado's innovative narrative techniques in the short story have been consistently misleading the majority of his critics commencing with the publication of Papéis Avulsos in 1882.

In 1961, Helen Caldwell, an American, in her book The Brazilian Othello of Machado de Assis, was the first critic to discuss the novel Dom Casmurro from the point of view of the mental condition of the character-narrator, Bento. Previous critics had failed to realize Bento's opinions and accusations of the supposed infidelity of his wife Capitu may

have stemmed from his own deranged mind and therefore could not be accepted as fact.

María Duke Dehn, a Salvadorian, in her book entitled Análisis e ilustración de ciertos tipos de personaje que se encuentran en los cuentos de Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, praises the Caldwell thesis but completely fails to grasp the transition of Machado's narrative innovations from his novels to his short stories. She also gives the stories Machado himself had selected for inclusion in collections the same attention as the discarded ones, and renders no critical judgment as to their respective worth. In her concentration upon the plots in the stories, María Duke Dehn consistently accepts all the words of the narrators as the truth. Without a thorough examination of the motives of the characters or narrators, her focus, concentrating erroneously on the plots, creates in the mind of the reader the idea that a particular story is somewhat analogous to a Lope de Vega drama, a contemporary television soap opera, or a comic film. Machado, being his own severest critic, had rejected for definitive volumes the stories that had little narrative technique and characters with stereotyped personalities. Stories included in his books and those he discarded are certainly worthy of a more discernible study than the one made by María Duke Dehn.

Throughout the text of Histórias sem Data, there are no explanatory notes such as Machado had included in Papéis Avulsos which aided in the interpretation of four of the twelve stories. Histórias sem Data has only a preface and

eighteen stories, sixteen of which are from five to seven pages in length (fifteen appearing first in the Gazeta de Notícias and one in the Gazeta Literária). The two stories originally published in A Estação, "Cantiga de Esponsais" and "Capítulo dos Chapéus," are three and ten pages respectively, the former having appeared in just one edition of the magazine and the latter serialized in three consecutive issues. Though Machado probably was allocated a certain amount of space in A Estação and the Gazeta de Notícias, the length of the stories varied sufficiently to conclude that their esthetic value prescribed the final number of pages. In all the thirty-seven stories, there is no evidence of wordiness employed to increase the length of any story (as had been apparent in some not selected for previous volumes), or of brevity to fit a story into the limited amount of space assigned to it.

The preface to Histórias sem Data is the most complex of all of Machado's prefaces to comprehend. In it, he attempts to explain the title of the book and to prepare the reader for what to expect in the stories.

De todos os contos que aqui se acham há dous que efetivamente não levam data expressa; os outros a têm, de maneira que este título Histórias sem Data parecerá a alguns inteligível, ou vago. Supondo, porém, que o meu fim é definir estas páginas como tratando, em substância, de cousas que não são especialmente do dia, ou de um certo dia, penso que o título está explicado. E é o pior que lhe pode acontecer, pois o melhor dos títulos é ainda aquêle que não precisa de explicação.⁷

Both the preface and the title complement the stories in which the reader is often led away from Machado's reality

as a result of his own personality interfering with his judgment as a critic.

In order to justify his title, Machado says that all stories in Histórias sem Data should be written without explicit dates, but then he states that only two "efetivamente não levam data expressa."⁸ A study of the complete volume indicates the two stories in question are the first and the last. In others, an exact month, date, or year may not be given but the context will provide enough information to disclose a specific time period. The author would agree with this when he states "os outros a têm."⁹ However, all dates have little significance to Machado, for as he said in a letter to Magalhães de Azeredo, his creative thoughts are directed toward a "preocupação exclusiva do homem que toma o papel todo nos meus escriptos."¹⁰ For Machado, mankind's characteristics are timeless and universal. As in Papéis Avulsos, Histórias sem Data also travels this entire world and beyond it, divulging and commenting upon people's thoughts and actions; as Machado stated it, "de cousas que não são especialmente do dia, ou de um certo dia, . . ."¹¹ Thus the title Histórias sem Data is a valid one since human traits transcend time. The last story takes the reader back to the first one, and he returns to Machado's labyrinth once again to discover new material for thought. Machado never permits the reader to discontinue this investigation of the human mind after having begun it.

The preface contains the words and phrases efetivamente,

parecerá, ininteligível, vago, supondo, em substância, cousas que não são, and penso que.¹² These are words which indicate that mental activity prevails over physical activity as well as acting as qualifiers in the sentences where they are found. The preface foreshadows the content of the short stories of Histórias sem Data, since in them it is not the physical actions of the characters or the narrators that are most important but why they perform as they do and how they think that is of prime significance.

Machado de Assis ends the preface with a judgment which does not solve its basic enigma for the reader. "E é o pior que lhe pode acontecer, pois o melhor dos títulos é ainda aquele que não precisa de explicação."¹³ Therefore, the reader is obliged to return to the beginning of the preface to look for the explicação which he thinks has probably eluded him. He passes through this small maze again, and possibly again, to try to find it before realizing the key to the riddle is to be found within the stories themselves. The reader must extricate himself from this minute complexity and enter a much larger one in the eighteen stories.

Conta um velho manuscrito beneditino que o Diabo, em certo dia, teve a idéia de fundar uma igreja. Embora os seus lucros fôsem contínuos e grandes, sentia-se humilhado com o papel avulso que exercia desde séculos, sem organização, sem regras, sem cânones, sem ritual, sem nada.¹⁴

In the opening paragraph of the first story in Histórias sem Data, "A Igreja do Diabo," quoted above, we can see that its structure is similar to that of "O Alienista," the first in Papéis Avulsos. ("As crônicas da vila de

Itaguaí dizem que em tempos remotos vivera ali um certo médico, ..."15) Just as the historical chronicles of Itaguaí, referred to in "O Alienista," existed only in Machado's imagination, so the Benedictine manuscript obviously was invented by him as a fictitious device. However, to be accepted as authentic because of the supposed status of its "author," the manuscript would necessarily have to expound wisdom and preach a moral lesson. The words "papel avulso,"16 the singular form of the title of the previous volume, also suggest Histórias sem Data is a continuation of Papéis Avulsos. With God and the Devil as characters, the reader anticipates a fable. But concepts of organization, money, and rules, opposed to those of sulphur and souls, and the dialogue between God and the Devil in which they discuss their relative points of view as two people, immediately humanizes them. Thus the reader is able to suspend partial disbelief toward this fantasy tale and to approach the characters as flesh and blood individuals. The result for the reader will be a Machadian web of perplexity when he begins to analyze the portrayals of God and the Devil. Then he must make a decision if it is the narrator of the story or the "author" of the fictitious Benedictine manuscript as to who is perceptive or who is naive in his ultimate judgment of human nature.

When the Devil informs God of his plans, he explains that even though a great part of human nature appears altruistic and self-sacrificing, there are always underlying selfish motives that govern people's actions, resulting in extreme

hypocrisy. The Devil hopes to use the earthly selfishness of individuals to attract all mankind to his church. Since the price to be paid for entrance into the Devil's Church is more in tune with man's personality than the self-denials necessary to enter God's realm, the Devil is extremely confident of success when he boasts to God that victory over Him will be easy.

God responds:

- Velho retórico!¹⁷

- Tu és vulgar, que é o pior que pode acontecer a um espírito da tua espécie, replicou-lhe o Senhor. Tudo o que dizes ou digas está dito e redito pelos moralistas do mundo. E assunto gasto; e se não tens fôrça, nem originalidade para renovar um assunto gasto, melhor é que te cales e te retires. Olha; tôdas as minhas legiões mostram no rosto os sinais vivos do tédio que lhe dás.¹⁸

God's answer may be interpreted in the following way.

It may be considered an attack by Machado on literary works of social criticism of this period which commented upon man's hypocrisies, and have been written over and over again by all the moralists and reformers of the world. As presently expounded by the new naturalists, especially Eça de Queirós, they are outmoded in plot, are conventional in structure, and contain scenes and vocabulary that offend the reader with their vulgarities. If the writers of this type of fiction do not have the creative talent to reshape this subject, present it with more originality, and create less offensive situations and dialogues, then it would be advisable for them to remain silent. God's legions, who symbolize the reading public, are showing signs of boredom with this theme. Machado de Assis

intimates that in Histórias sem Data he will attempt to avoid these objectionable faults.

In "A Igreja do Diabo," Machado uses his character God to speak on his behalf and voice his own opinion. In 1878, he had made identical charges against Eça de Queirós and his naturalistic style in two essays entitled "Eça de Queirós: O Primo Basílio," which had been published in O Cruzeiro. Using the term "Realismo"¹⁹ to denote naturalism, Machado had stated that the works of the naturalists could be truly artistic "quando se não despenha no excessivo, no tedioso, no obsceno, e até no ridículo."²⁰ However, he had continued, if works such as O Primo Basílio would continue to be written, whose plots "não passa(m) de um incidente erótico, sem relêvo, repugnante, vulgar,"²¹ whose characters Machado had classified as "títeres"²² devoid of essential human traits, and whose appeal to the reader was basically "a sensação física,"²³ then the naturalistic movement in the Portuguese language "será estrangulado no berço."²⁴

By convincing the multitude to join him by predicating his doctrine on the base instincts of humanity, which include pride, laziness, fraud, greed, egotism, and of course hypocrisy, the Devil's Church receives converts from the whole world. But just as when the word of the Kingdom of God had been accepted superficially throughout the world and people had exhibited their virtues while masking their sins, the Benedictine manuscript, interpreted by a narrator, tells us that at present, during the reign of the Kingdom of the Devil, the

reverse is now happening.

Certos gluttons recolhiam-se a comer frugalmente três ou quatro vezes por ano, justamente em dias de preceito católico; muitos avaros davam esmolas, à noite, ou nas ruas mal povoadas; vários dilapidadores do erário restituíam-lhe pequenas quantias;²⁵

And in layer upon layer of deception,

os fraudulentos falavam, uma ou outra vez, com o coração nas mãos, mas com o mesmo rosto dissimulado, para fazer crer que estavam embaçando os outros.²⁶

God claims this is the eternal human contradiction.

The Benedictine manuscript would like the reader to believe that if mankind cannot be faithful to the precepts of God, why should it be faithful to those of the Devil. However, it is not that people are secretly practicing the old virtues to be partially moral but are exercising them still for pretense and self-interest. According to a pessimistic Machado de Assis, there truly are no selfless virtues and there really is no possibility of a Kingdom of God on this earth. The Devil's Church, based upon deceit, hypocrisy, pride, egotism, and envy, is and always has been the guiding force in people's lives. If there is an initial display of goodness by an individual, it generally has a shallow veneer, easily penetrated by an observer. Man then hides his selfish thoughts or deeds on another level of simulated virtue which falsely exhibits some redeeming merit.

No Cairo (o Diabo) achou um perfeito ladrão de camelos, que tapava a cara para ir às mesquitas. O Diabo deu com ele à entrada de uma, lançou-lhe em rosto o procedimento; ele negou, dizendo que ia ali roubar o camelo de um drogman; roubou-o, com efeito, à vista do Diabo e foi dá-lo de presente a um muezim, que rezou por ele a Alá.²⁷

The Benedictine manuscript must be true to the faith

of its creators. In it, God must appear to triumph and the Devil must appear to lose. Although intellectually, God seems to have defeated the Devil, the observant reader knows which kingdom truly rules in the world of Machado de Assis. In "A Igreja do Diabo," he has given us an example of a short story of social criticism employing a unique point of view and a skillfully developed structure and style.

Não me perguntem pela família do Dr. Jeremias Halma, nem o que é que ele veio fazer ao Rio de Janeiro, naquele ano de 1768, governando o Conde de Azambuja, que a princípio se disse o mandara buscar; esta versão durou pouco.²⁸

This complex sentence, which opens the story "O Lapso," is apparently full of facts but actually will tend to lead the reader astray. From this quote, the reader can assume there will be a character called Dr. Jeremias Halma, and that the setting will be colonial Rio de Janeiro, either in the year 1768 or soon thereafter. However, the author who, with his rather decisive personality, has interjected himself into the story from its inception, is really advising the reader he will direct the story as he wishes. "Não me perguntem,"²⁹ are his first words. We are soon told that Dr. Jeremias was a physician, a modest, caring person, born and educated in Holland, and possessed numerous scientific, linguistic, and artistic accomplishments.

The reader is then informed that another citizen of the town, a Tomé Gonçalves, who perhaps was a city councilman, was wealthy but never paid his bills, neither because of carelessness nor with the intent to defraud. What other

reason could there be for this neglect, we muse. Since this is just a six-page story with two characters now having been introduced, it must be assumed a relationship will exist between the two men. Does or will Tomé Gonçalves owe money to Dr. Jeremias? The answer to this question will probably be disclosed to us when the author is inclined to reveal it.

Meanwhile, he makes a literary comment.

Realmente, não valia a pena dar-se ninguém à tarefa de escrever algumas laudas de papel para dizer que houve, nos fins do século passado, um homem que, por velhacaria ou deleixo, deixava de pagar aos credores.³⁰

Here, Machado de Assis is suggesting to the reader that a fresh approach to the universal and timeless situation concerning lenders and borrowers must be found so as to provide a more esthetically appealing story. A realistic plot would only result in the same type of story which has been written over and over again by many authors. What God had said in "A Igreja do Diabo," "é assunto gasto; . . ."³¹ is applicable also in "O Lapso." The reader still trusts the author's words, feeling secure they will guide him toward a correct analysis of the story.

Dr. Jeremias, in a chance encounter on the street with two of Tomé Gonçalves' very angry creditors, the tailor and the wigmaker, reproaches them for conspiring against Tomé. The doctor refers to Tomé as a very sick man but offers no further explanation of his illness. A week later, at a secret meeting of all Tomé's creditors, the tailor, the wigmaker, and the bootmaker are authorized by them to consult the good doctor and find out what sort of malady would impede a man from

paying his bills.

Subsequent scenes briefly recall to mind the story "O Alienista," from Papéis Avulsos. We begin to speculate that "O Lapso" also is a satire against positivism, with science once again being inappropriately applied, or that we are reading again of another possibly insane doctor. In "O Lapso," the great man of medicine himself receives the delegation at his front door. He had been busy studying a dead snake (How or why is never stated) but he puts that aside: humanity before science. Dr. Jeremias informs them that Tomé Gonçalves suffers from a special illness, a lapse of memory with regard to the whole concept of what it means to pay. That too would include paying a visit. The delegation is stunned yet believes the doctor's diagnosis. As Dr. Jeremias continues, citing a Spanish lady who had also suffered a lapse of memory he had cured, in which she had forgotten the idea of husband, confusing her short fat one with a tall thin lawyer, a captain, and a cleric, the reader realizes the absurdness of the entire story. Machado de Assis has tricked the reader into suspending disbelief and accepting the truth of his premise when in reality he has fictionalized fiction by creating a story that could not possibly have had any credibility from its beginning. Adopting this point of view, the reader can then comprehend why he should not have accepted the original idea that there ever could have been a man like Tomé Gonçalves who would lose the entire concept of paying. It is preposterous to think that nearly forty

creditors could have joined together to resolve such an unbelievable problem, that there were others who did not join them, and that some of these legions and legions of creditors had been owed money for as long as five years.

More than an attack on positivism, more than a satire on medicine and research, and more than a treatise on human nature (The very same pleading creditors later suffer from a similar lapse of memory since after Tomé Gonçalves is "cured" and they are all paid, none think of paying the doctor), "O Lapso" is a story in which the author adroitly pretends he is writing a conventionally structured short story of social criticism but actually is only creating the illusion of it. In "O Lapso," Machado de Assis has gone beyond the believable fiction of "O Alienista" and "A Igreja do Diabo" and has given us a fictitious story of fiction, one which cannot be believed from beginning to end.

Há entre os suicidas um excelente costume, que é não deixar a vida sem dizer o motivo e as circunstâncias que os armam contra ela. Os que se vão calados, raramente é por orgulho; na maior parte dos casos ou não têm tempo, ou não sabem escrever. Costume excelente: em primeiro lugar, é um ato de cortesia, não sendo este mundo um baile, de onde um homem possa esgueirar-se antes do cotilhão: em segundo lugar, a imprensa recolhe e divulga os bilhetes póstumos, e o morto vive ainda um dia ou dois, às vezes uma semana mais.

Pois apesar da excelência do costume, era meu propósito sair calado. A razão é que, tendo sido caipora em minha vida toda, temia que qualquer palavra última pudesse levar-me alguma complicação à eternidade. Mas um incidente de há pouco trocou-me o plano, e retiro-me deixando, não só um escrito, mas dous. O primeiro é meu testamento, que acabo de compor e fechar, e está aqui em cima da mesa, ao pé da pistola carregada. O segundo é este resumo de autobiografia.³²

Following the opening paragraph of "Último Capítulo,"

which begins as if it were an essay analyzing the concept of suicide, the narrator becomes the principal character in the story. He startles the reader by revealing he intends to take his own life within the hour. Though appearing to be objective and rational as he recounts the events in his life, which apparently have led to his decision to kill himself, fifty-one-year-old Matias Deodato de Castro e Melo, a lawyer, unwittingly shows he is a weak and shallow person, hypocritical, indulging in self-pity, and probably insane. As we read the story, we gain the impression that Matias, during his entire lifetime, has blamed other people and chance occurrences for his real or imaginary problems when actually it is the flaws in his own personality which have led to the feeling of failure in his life and in his relationships.

From the very onset of the story, the reader learns not to accept Matias' chronic and constant hindsight excuses and rationalizations. In his first paragraph, cited above, he mentions that a person who is about to commit suicide generally writes a note. Matias comments that later, when the press publishes the note, the departed is kept alive before the public sometimes for as long as a week. The challenge to Matias would be that if a person truly wishes physical oblivion (We are not discussing martyrdom), why would he want to live even a minute longer in the public's mind. Matias' twisted logic demonstrates his mental confusion, and prepares the reader to challenge all the incidents he considers to have contributed to his life of misfortune. He

states: "Repito, sou um grande caipora, o mais caipora de todos os homens."³³

The great trauma of his childhood (Only an unstable mind would regard the following episode to be of any profound significance) occurred one afternoon while he was napping. His hammock tore away from the wall and he fell, landing on his back. At that moment, a roof tile just happened to fall, striking him as he lay on the ground and breaking his nose. The teasing of his father and family friend Canon Brito evidently affected him adversely for a very long time and much more deeply than the actual physical wound.

In the two relationships with women that he mentions, the first with a wealthy widow and the second with his late wife, Rufina, Matias felt he had been betrayed by both. However, there are no allusions that he had had any love for either of them. The widow appears merely as a conquest for her money, as a source for exhibitionism to his friends, and as a boost for his weak ego. He considers Rufina to have been socially beneath him. She took care of their home and it seems this was all he wanted from her. He states that five months after her death, among her effects he found letters from his law partner, Gonçalves, but does not disclose their contents to us. In his mind, he believes there had been a relationship. However, no evidence of this is presented as Matias, hurrying to finish his suicidal note and supposedly to end his life before the servant's return at noon, abruptly changes the subject, ceasing to talk about the

letters any further. Is this merely an excuse for not having any tangible evidence to present?

As to the disposition of his property, the will states that his limited assets be used to buy and distribute pairs of boots. It happened just on this morning that a man who, Matias said, was beset by troubles, walked past his house, reveling in his beautiful new boots. Matias' impulsive and deranged mind rationalizes the man's happiness as the pair of boots. When Matias says that "os superficiais dirão que estou doudo, . . . mas eu falo para os sapientes e para os malfadados,"³⁴ the reader is truly convinced of his demented state.

In "Último Capítulo," Machado de Assis has written an excellent character study in which the protagonist exposes his personality and his dementia through his own words. In this respect, Matias is a forerunner of Bento in the 1899 novel Dom Casmurro. In this short story and in the novel, the characters as the storytellers write to justify their conduct. In their youth, the two of them almost became priests. Later on in their lives, they voiced similar opinions that their deceased wives had betrayed them. The irrationality of their reasoning is never obvious, but in studying "Último Capítulo" and Dom Casmurro, the reader slowly comprehends he is the only challenger to the characters' constant excuses and ravings.

"Cantiga de Esponsais," which first appeared in A Estação, is a story three pages in length wherein the author

initially captures the interest of his readers by showing his familiarity with their traditions. He then introduces his principal character, portrays him sympathetically, and concludes the story with sad ironies. Since the majority of the readers of A Estação were women, Machado de Assis immediately establishes a rapport with them by referring to specific scenes and familiar descriptions of the past. He awakens in them a feeling of sentimental nostalgia before presenting his fictional protagonist.

Imagine a leitora que está em 1813, na igreja do Carmo, ouvindo uma daquelas boas festas antigas, que eram todo o recreio público e tôda a arte musical. Sabem o que é uma missa cantada; podem imaginar o que seria uma missa cantada daqueles anos remotos. Não lhe chamo a atenção para os padres e os sacristães, nem para o sermão, nem para os olhos das môças cariocas, que já eram bonitos nesse tempo, nem para as mantilhas das senhoras graves, os calções, as cabeleiras, as sanefas, as luzes, os incensos, nada. Não falo sequer da orquestra, que é excelente; limito-me a mostrar-lhes uma cabeça branca, a cabeça dêsse velho que rege a orquestra, com alma e devoção.³⁵

Through the eyes of a truthful author, the reader is rapidly involved in the drama of sixty-year-old Maestro Romão, a fine conductor of music but a poor composer. During the three years of his marriage, Romão had begun to compose a wedding song inspired by the happy relationship with his wife. For thirty-one years following her death, the piece lay unfinished. Now seriously ill and dying, he tries desperately to finish his composition so as to leave ". . . um pouco de alma na terra."³⁶

As if watching a play in a theater, the reader sees Maestro Romão at his harpsicord struggling to find the correct combination of notes with which to complete his musical work

before death overtakes him. In the garden of the next house, he notices a recently married couple embracing each other. They remind him of his youth and his wife, and could possibly afford him the inspiration he needs to finish his composition. Still without success and frustrated, he leaves the harpsicord and destroys his work. At that moment, the woman in the garden begins to sing the very notes which would have made the perfect ending to his composition. He hears them sorrowfully, bows his head, and dies that night.

"Cantiga de Esponsais" is a sentimental story consisting of two ironies. The first and most apparent is that Maestro Romão was unable to arrive at the correct ending for his piece whereas a musically untrained woman, capturing the mood of his music, spontaneously created the proper notes. The second irony is that, once the notes were heard and recognized by him as perfect, he could not use them since they had not originated from his own thoughts. Tearing up his work is only symbolic of failure and is not a complete destruction of the composition which truly becomes lost only upon his death. This presentation of the universal and timeless theme of a mortal human being in a race with impending death, trying to immortalize a part of himself through his creative endeavors, has a predictable, sad ending. "Cantiga de Esponsais" is in accordance with a deepening philosophy of pessimism expounded by Machado de Assis in novels and many short stories beginning in 1881.

"Singular Ocorrência" is a short story written entirely

in the form of a conversation between two mature gentlemen on a street in Rio de Janeiro. Machado has left them nameless, but through the context of the story we can deduce that they are more than mere acquaintances. Possibly they are good friends but for less than ten years. The conversation begins when one of the gentlemen recognizes a woman entering a nearby church. He recalls their paths had crossed thirteen years ago through a mutual friend, Andrade. The reader is placed in the position of an unintentional eavesdropper, who overhears the first gentleman tell the second an improper story about Andrade and his former mistress, Marocas, the woman in the church. The second gentleman just listens, occasionally offering a comment or asking a question. In order to understand accurately the forthcoming analysis of "Singular Ocorrência," the first gentleman's story must be related in detail.

According to the gentleman's narrative, Andrade, a lawyer and an inveterate woman chaser, had a beautiful wife and a two-year-old daughter. However, Marocas was able to win his affection in two weeks following their chance meeting. Sometimes the four of them (Andrade, his wife, the gentleman, and Marocas) would dine together. The gentleman became the confidant of both Marocas and Andrade. On Saint John's Day, Andrade took his family on a two-day outing which began with an evening party, the gentleman accompanying them. Marocas, with no family of her own to join, dined alone that night with a portrait of Andrade for company. Andrade

appreciated her show of affection for him, praised her thriftiness to the gentleman, and said he was planning to save enough money to buy her a small house. Shortly after his return and back at his office, Andrade was visited by Leandro, a past aide of a law colleague, who now supports himself by imposing on the friends of his former employer. A smiling Leandro revealed to Andrade he had had a romantic adventure the previous evening. A lady from a higher social class had led him to her lovely house, but after a brief stay she was no longer interested in him. He described the woman and named the street where she lived. A shocked Andrade then offered him some money to take him to the house and acknowledge she was the one he had visited. At first, Leandro hesitated but then agreed. At the house, when Marocas saw Leandro she grew pale. Leandro affirmed to Andrade that Marocas was the woman who had seduced him. He received his payment and left. Marocas did not confess to anything but was clearly disturbed. Andrade screamed invectives at her. She begged at his feet but he stormed out in a rage.

The gentleman recounts that on the very same night a distraught Andrade had visited him and had told him the entire story. At ten o'clock, Marocas' maid appeared at his house and said that Marocas, after much weeping, had left home before dinner and had not returned. Andrade, alternating between feelings of guilt, doubt, remorse, and vengeance, searched all night for her with his friend but could not find her. The following day they received word a coachman had

driven a lady to an inn the night before. They rushed there. The innkeeper confirmed her presence and said the woman had not eaten. Andrade knocked at the door. Marocas answered weakly, opened the door, and they embraced deliriously.

The gentleman ends his story to his friend by saying neither Andrade nor Marocas ever again brought up the subject of Leandro. Andrade did buy her a small house. Soon after, he went north on a government mission and died there. Marocas considered herself a widow and mourned for him at least for three years. Ten years ago, the gentleman had lost contact with her and saw her today for the first time since then. "Singular Ocorrência" concludes with both gentlemen not having an answer to why Marocas had seduced Leandro. They merely agree it was just a strange occurrence.

The few remarks appearing in print about "Singular Ocorrência" that are supposedly literary criticisms, given by reputable critics, have been inadequate. The comments reiterate a total acceptance of the first gentleman's words, as if each reviewer were the second gentleman in the story. Mário Matos, in his analysis of the short stories of Machado de Assis, previously cited, not only again indicts himself for deficient scholarship but also involves Augusto Meyer by including a senseless comment concerning Marocas that Meyer had made.

Há, . . . uma história contada por (Machado de Assis), intitulada "Singular Ocorrência", que aparece absurda pelo tema. Tenho motivo para achá-la natural, por conhecer fato idêntico, acontecido com um político mineiro, cujo nome não me é dado revelar. A mulher que aí desenha o escritor não é inverossímil; como as outras, traz

também dentro de si, para empregar a comparação viva de Augusto Meyer, uma Eva primitiva.³⁷

Matos accepts as fact that Marocas is guilty of seducing Leandro since an acquaintance of his had experienced the same situation. The fault Matos commits is to equate an incident in life with an incident in fiction. He ignores the creative purpose of the author in writing the story and the whole question of narrative point of view.

Neither Matos nor Tristão da Cunha, in a 1939 article in the June edition of the Revista do Brasil (commemorating the centennial of Machado's birth), even question the accusation against Marocas. Witness the words of Tristão da Cunha.

Em "Singular Occurrence" vive um caso de psychopathia sexual, uma daquellas surpresas physiologicas, não tanto raras quanto occultas, que num momento suprimem longos seculos de convenções e longos habitos de recato.³⁸

Tristão da Cunha, Augusto Meyer, and Mário Matos appear to be commenting upon the story as if they too would savor an adventure with a woman like Marocas. In addition to overlooking the reality that this story is fiction and must be judged as such, they have disregarded the fact that Machado de Assis had evolved from a traditional writer of superior romantic fiction into, in the words of Jack Schmitt and Lorie Ishimatsu, a critic attacking the personalities of his characters and making devastating and penetrating assaults on his society's values.³⁹ Fifty years after Machado's death, literary reviewers were still discussing "Singular Ocorrência" as if it were an early Eça de Queirós novel in the naturalistic tradition, the school Machado had attacked in 1878 in his

criticism of Eça's novel O Primo Basílio. The critics had not become aware that the Machado de Assis in Histórias sem Data was now creating short stories with a style and literary point of view never before attempted by any other writer in Brazil. In the stories "A Igreja do Diabo" and "O Lapso," he had intimated he would pursue these innovations.

The most important character in the story is not Andrade, or Marocas, or Leandro, but the gentleman who is the narrator. From the very beginning of his story of Marocas and Andrade, he exposes himself to be a gossip, pretentious hypocrite. His friend is merely a counterpart of himself. To Machado, the two gentlemen represented the falseness the author had witnessed in many individuals of his own class.

As "Singular Ocorrência" begins, the beautiful Marocas is being leered at by both gentlemen. The first one does not deny the insinuation by the second one that he may have had an affair with her until asked to give an affirmative or negative response to a direct question. He wants to maintain an image in the eyes of his friend that he is a lady's man. For as long a time as possible, he avoids telling the truth that he had never really been directly involved with Marocas.

- Não ponha mais na carta. [^]Esse olhar está dizendo que a dama é uma sua recordação de outro tempo, e não há de ser de muito tempo, a julgar pelo corpo: é môça de truz.

- Deve ter quarenta e seis anos.

- Ah! conservada. Vamos lá; deixe de olhar para o chão, e conte-me tudo. Está viúva, naturalmente?

- Não.

- Bem; o marido ainda vive. É velho?

- Não é casada.

- Solteira?

- Assim, assim. Deve chamar-se hoje D. Maria de tal.

Em 1860 florescia com o nome familiar de Marocas. . . .
Na rua, com o vestido afogado, escorrido, sem espavento,
arrastava a muitos, ainda assim.

- Por exemplo, ao senhor.

- Não, mas ao Andrade, um amigo meu, . . .⁴⁰

Andrade is originally described as a family man with a sweet, submissive wife. He was also a man who "- . . . tinha em alto grau a paixão das mulheres,"⁴¹ and as someone who would "- . . . dava o cavaco por anedotas eróticas."⁴² There is not a word of disapproval from either gentleman of Andrade's involvement with Marocas though she is described with disparagement.

- Não era costureira, nem proprietária, nem mestra de meninas; vá excluindo as profissões e lá chegará.⁴³

Although it appears their love for each other was genuine and mutual, the gentleman blames Marocas for seducing Andrade.

He says, "- . . . , dominou-o."⁴⁴

The fact that the first gentleman is even telling the story of Marocas and Andrade shows a betrayal of confidence. In the past, he had behaved in a similar manner but did not recognize his action as such. He states to his friend that he "- tinha a confiança de ambos,"⁴⁵ but later tells him he had once informed Andrade of his discovery that Marocas had pawned her jewels to pay some bills. Returning to the present time, the second gentleman interrupts the story to say that Marocas is leaving the church. The first gentleman's reaction is "- . . . ; afastemo-nos da esquina."⁴⁶ He prefers to stay out of her view and continue his slanderous gossip rather than greet her.

A careful examination of the text shows that the whole

episode of Leandro and Marocas, which the gentleman has no doubt had occurred, is without any proof except for the word of a confirmed panhandler. Machado de Assis has written the incident with enough intimations to the contrary for an observant reader to question its veracity. (No critic has even gone this far in analyzing the story) However, to demonstrate this in detail would be to fall into a Machadian trap and overlook the main theme of the story. "Singular Ocorrência" is primarily an attack upon the distorted morality of these two gentlemen who are representative of people Machado knew very well. It is curious so many literary critics through the years have not been able to comment correctly upon the story. Perhaps a paraphrasing of some words by the critic Eugênio Gomes applies here. Sometimes an analysis of a piece of fiction by Machado de Assis reveals more about the person analyzing it than about the work itself.

The next story in Histórias sem Data is the equally complex and cleverly constructed "Galeria Póstuma." Though its two chapters were published in the Gazeta de Notícias on the same day (August 2, 1883), the point of view of the author is quite different in each of them. As the story opens, it is a day in June of 1879 and Joaquim Fidélis, the main character, had died suddenly at the age of sixty. He had been found dead one morning in his bed in the home he shared with his nephew Benjamim.

Não, não se descreve a consternação que produziu em todo o Engenho Velho, e particularmente no coração dos amigos, a morte de Joaquim Fidélis. Nada mais inesperado. Era robusto, tinha saúde de ferro, e ainda na véspera

fôra a um baile, onde todos o viram conversado e alegre.⁴⁷

For the better part of the first chapter, the all-knowing author functions partly as if he were an acquaintance or a neighbor of the popular deceased, participating in the general grief of the community and commenting in a superficial way about the life and fine reputation of Joaquim Fidélis. The second chapter, set a week after the funeral, takes place in Joaquim's and Benjamim's home. Now the author becomes more remote and objective. Benjamim has found a diary kept by his uncle. Among the various writings, there were extensive comments about his five most intimate friends and Benjamim. The author does not draw any conclusions from the notes in the diary or from Benjamim's reactions to his uncle's opinions. It is for the reader to deduce that the main objective of "Galeria Póstuma" is the disclosure of the true personality of Joaquim Fidélis.

In the pretentious and political world of Rio de Janeiro in which Joaquim and his friends functioned, a little of the falseness he exhibited in his life is evidenced by a flashback in the first chapter. On the night he died, Joaquim had gone to a party where he appeared to be thoroughly enjoying himself. He conversed happily with everyone, danced with the sixty-year-old widow of a good friend, and did not leave the affair until two o'clock in the morning. At home before retiring, he wrote in his diary a totally opposite opinion of the festivities from the one his countenance and actions had presented to the people in attendance. The author

does not comment on this contradiction.

"Em suma, baile chinfrim; uma velha gaiteira obrigou-me a dançar uma quadrilha; à porta um crioulo pediu-me as festas. Chinfrim!"⁴⁸

In a brief summary of Joaquim Fidélis' life, the author speaks of him in a complimentary tone. However, the perceptive reader continues to construct a markedly different personality for Joaquim from the one described.

Joaquim Fidélis tinha sido deputado até à dissolução da Câmara . . . em 1863. Não conseguindo ser reeleito, abandonou a vida pública. Era conservador, nome que a muito custo admitiu, por lhe parecer galicismo político. SAQUAREMA é o que êle gostava de ser chamado. Mas abriu mão de tudo; parece até que nos últimos tempos desligou-se do próprio partido, e afinal da mesma opinião. Há razões para crer que, de certa data em diante, foi um profundo céptico, e nada mais.

Era rico e letrado. Formara-se em direito no ano de 1842. Agora não fazia nada e lia muito.⁴⁹

For an indefinite period of time prior to 1863 when he was defeated in an election, Joaquim Fidélis had been a congressman. During the last sixteen years of his life, though healthy, wealthy, intelligent, and the possessor of a law degree, he had been totally inactive professionally. If the reader eliminates the eulogistic sentiment in the words of the author, then he becomes aware that for sixteen years Joaquim Fidélis had been a member of the idle rich class, not utilizing his talents, and merely preferring to

. . . escrever cartas, a falar a amigos, a concertar brigas, a emprestar dinheiro. Em casa dêle reuniam-se à noite alguns íntimos da vizinhança, e às vezes de outros bairros; jogavam o voltarete ou o whist, falavam de política.⁵⁰

Also in the first chapter, the author informs us that the five most intimate friends of Joaquim Fidélis were

intensely shocked and saddened by the news of his sudden death. In a paragraph reflecting the sorrow of the occasion, the author relates the many favors Joaquim had bestowed on all of them. It was thought these kindnesses had greatly improved their lives. The widespread knowledge of all this assistance in the community where Joaquim lived had greatly enhanced his prestige and influence.

- Não me digam isto! bradava daí a pouco um dos vizinhos, Diogo Vilares, ao receber notícia do caso.

Diogo Vilares era um dos cinco principais familiares de Joaquim Fidélis. Devia-lhe o emprêgo que exercia desde 1857. Veio êle; vieram os outros quatro, logo depois, um a um, estupefatos, incrêdulos. Primeiro chegou o Elias Xavier, que alcançara por intermédio do finado, segundo se dizia, uma comenda; depois entrou o João Brás, deputado que foi, no regímen das suplências, eleito com o influxo do Joaquim Fidélis. Vieram, enfim, o Fragoso e o Galdino, que lhe não deviam diplomas, comendas nem empregos, mas outros favores. Ao Galdino adiantou êle alguns poucos capitais, e ao Fragoso arranjou-lhe um bom casamento... E morto! morto para todo sempre!⁵¹

In the second chapter, the author permits the reader to see, along with Benjamim, the comments Joaquim had written in his diary about his five friends and nephew. Let us observe the remarks he wrote about Elias Xavier who, as the author had previously informed us, had received a commendation from the government. The popular feeling was that, although he had merited the award, it had been granted through the political influence of Joaquim Fidélis.

Elias Xavier - Este Elias é um espírito subalterno, destinado a servir alguém, e a servir com desvanecimento, como os cocheiros de casa elegante. Vulgarmente trata as minhas visitas íntimas com alguma arrogância e desdém: política de laçao ambicioso. Desde as primeiras semanas, compreendi que êle queria fazer-se meu privado; e não menos compreendi que, no dia que realmente o fôsse, punha os outros no meio da rua. Há ocasiões em que me chama a um vão da janela para falar-me secretamente do sol e da

chuva. O fim claro é incutir nos outros a suspeita de que há entre nós cousas particulares, e alcança isso mesmo, porque todos lhe rasgam muitas cortesias. . . . Um caso de 1865 caracteriza bem a astúcia d'êste homem. Tendo dado alguns libertos para a guerra do Paraguai, ia receber uma comenda. Não precisava de mim; mas veio pedir a minha intercessão, duas ou três vêzes, com um ar consternado e súplice. Falei ao ministro, que me disse: - "O Elias já sabe que o decreto está lavrado; falta só a assinatura do imperador." Compreendi então que era um estratagema para poder confessar-me essa obrigação. Bom parceiro de voltarete; um pouco brigão, mas entendido.⁵²

According to the diary, it seems Joaquim Fidélis believed Elias Xavier had been clinging to him publicly solely for the purpose of augmenting his own status in the eyes of his acquaintances.

Joaquim considered Diogo Vilares "le genre ennuyeux."⁵³ He referred to João Brás as an ambitious politician who would never attain the high position in the government that he coveted, and as a person who "mente com facilidade."⁵⁴ The marriage he had arranged for Frágoso "não . . . custou,"⁵⁵ and the money he had lent to Galdino was done "por motivo da família e porque . . . não fazia falta."⁵⁶ Toward his nephew and sole heir, Benjamim, Joaquim appeared to be quite diplomatic, acknowledging and appreciating Benjamim's love and loyalty, and only criticizing him for being "superficial."⁵⁷ That this evaluation by Joaquim was justified is demonstrated by Benjamim's failure to comprehend his uncle's reason for assuming two distinctly different faces: the one Benjamim and the public knew, and the other Joaquim secreted within himself. It was the hidden face that revealed itself physically at the time of his death as "um leve arregaço irônico ao canto esquerdo da boca."⁵⁸ Benjamim had immediately

corrected that strange facial expression because it was not in accord with the image of his uncle as he had known him. Although the ironic sneer haunted Benjamim after the discovery of the diary, yet he was unable to draw any conclusions from these new facts regarding his uncle's character. Benjamim's thoughts lay only in what Joaquim had written and about whom he had written, rather than trying to understand why Joaquim had showed both a public and a private personality.

The true portrait of Joaquim Fidélis which emerges is that he was an intelligent man able to perceive the shams of others but unable to address himself to his own faults. He appeared to have been possessed by an exaggerated concept of his importance. He seemed to encourage the constant visits and the adulation of people he considered shallow, pretentious, and of mediocre intelligence. They repaid his favors with the flattery Joaquim criticized but nevertheless continued to accept as a stimulant to his ego. His words reveal he was a purely political man in his relationships with his friends and with Benjamim.

Joaquim Fidélis appears to be a literary relative of the pompous and prosperous-appearing gentleman in "Teoria do Medalhão," from Papéis Avulsos, although Machado has pictured Joaquim as more of a complete human being with faults and virtues than he had the medalhão in his satirical portrait of that type. Nevertheless, Joaquim Fidélis has been used by Machado de Assis to attack the same society, in which Machado felt influence takes precedence over friendship and where the

currying of favors is rampant. This is not a new message by the author but once again it is presented in a uniquely creative way here in "Galeria Póstuma."

"Capítulo dos Chapéus" is the second and final story which had first appeared in A Estação that Machado included in Histórias sem Data. The story is humorous, expressing satire and irony, but purposely lacking the bitter and scornful derision of people and society censured in "A Igreja do Diabo," "Último Capítulo," "Singular Ocorrência," and "Galeria Póstuma." In "Capítulo dos Chapéus," Mariana's disapproval of her husband's hat and their subsequent argument form the basis of the plot through which Machado develops her personality.

One morning at home just after having eaten, a normally docile and submissive Mariana confronts her authoritative and stubborn husband, Conrado, with a demand he obtain a new hat to wear to his law office in the city. Out of character as seen by her husband, but nevertheless unwavering on this subject, she insists the hat he has been wearing since their marriage more than five years ago does not enhance his image as a professional man, and he must purchase a new one. Her request is actually on advice from her father. He had noticed what he considered to be Conrado's poor appearance the day before when he saw him on the street and had immediately counseled Mariana to speak to him about it. Dutifully, Mariana followed the instructions of the other male figure in her life, her father.

By utilizing the thoughts of Conrado, who is ignorant of the true source of her request but shocked by his wife's unexpected and forceful demand, so unlike her passive nature, Machado writes a preliminary description of Mariana.

(Conrado) conhecia a mulher; era, de ordinário, uma criatura passiva, meiga, de uma plasticidade de encomenda, capaz de usar com a mesma divina indiferença tanto um diadema régio como uma touca. . . . Sola às vezes, e a maior parte delas por instâncias do próprio consorte; mas só estava comodamente em casa. Móveis, cortinas, ornatos supriam-lhe os filhos; tinha-lhes um amor de mãe; e tal era a concordância da pessoa com o meio, que ela saboreava os trastes na posição ocupada, as cortinas com as dobras do costume, e assim o resto. Uma das três janelas, por exemplo, que davam para a rua vivia sempre meia aberta; nunca era outra. . . . Mariana dispunha de mui poucas noções, e nunca lera senão os mesmos livros: - a Moreninha de Macedo, sete vezes; Ivanhoe e o Pirata de Walter Scott, dez vezes; o Mot de l'Enigme, de Madame Craven, onze vezes.⁵⁹

Mariana's persistence causes Conrado to make caustic remarks about the connection between a man and his hat. As he mocks her, he uses philosophical expressions in phrases filled with sarcasm.

- A escolha do chapéu não é uma ação indiferente, como você pode supor; é regida por um princípio metafísico. Não cuide que quem compra um chapéu exerce uma ação voluntária e livre; a verdade é que obedece a um determinismo obscuro. . . . O princípio metafísico é este: - o chapéu é a integração do homem, um prolongamento da cabeça, um complemento decreto ab eterno; . . . Os sábios têm estudado tudo Você nunca leu Laplace? desde Laplace e a Mecânica Celeste até Darwin mas você reflita consigo e verá... Quem sabe? pode ser até que nem mesmo o chapéu seja complemento do homem, mas o homem do chapéu...⁶⁰

As Conrado stands before her, preparing to leave for his office, his hat on his head, Mariana perceives it as "torpe, ordinário, vulgar, nada sério."⁶¹ These appear to be the thoughts of her father, now inculcated in her own mind.

It is apparent she is easily influenced by the two males who dominate her. In an irony not perceived by a confused and humiliated Mariana, Conrado has unwittingly proven his point that the hat and the man do belong together by his comments to her which are nothing less than torpe, ordinário, vulgar, nada sério.

Her need to converse with someone about her husband's domineering attitude and her own passivity, the two factors which did not permit her to win her argument with Conrado, motivates Mariana to visit her good friend Sofia and to give vent to her feelings. Though happily married and always loyal to her husband (Can a character who first appeared in a story published in A Estação conduct herself in any other manner?), Sofia enjoys an independence Mariana does not have. She is constantly away from home, spending her time in the downtown section of Rio de Janeiro, and continually engaging in harmless flirtations. Uplifted by Sofia's self-assurance and angered over her dispute with Conrado, she accepts Sofia's invitation to spend this day in the city with her as a first step toward a less restricted life.

Mariana's dream of escaping the placidity of what she considered to be confinement in her home quickly gives way to a nightmare of reality. Her brief afternoon odyssey in downtown Rio de Janeiro, spent on the crowded Rua do Ouvidor and in a visit to the Halls of Congress, and with the memory of her dispute with Conrado still fresh in her mind, is a shock to her spirit. She is emotionally battered by the specter of

hoards of hats of all sizes and shapes, and from coping with the coquettish behavior of Sofia to which she is unable to adapt. Mariana is especially embarrassed by the chance encounter with a former suitor, Dr. Viçoso. He is a young and pretentious government official who apparently relishes mentioning his elevated social status and his European travels, all of which had occurred after the end of their relationship.

- E as corridas do Jockey Club? perguntou o (Dr. Viçoso).

Mariana continuava a abanar a cabeça. Não tinha ido às corridas naquele ano. Pois perdera muito, a penúltima, principalmente; esteve animadíssima, e os cavalos eram de primeira ordem. As de Epsom, que ele vira, quando esteve em Inglaterra, não eram melhores A conversação descambou em dous concertos daquela semana; depois tomou a barca, subiu a serra e foi a Petrópolis, onde dous diplomatas lhe fizeram as despesas da estadia.⁶²

In an effective play on words, Machado de Assis has portrayed Dr. Viçoso as somewhat vicious, demeaning in his attitude toward Mariana, and as somewhat corrupt in his political dealings. This could define the word vicioso, whose pronunciation is too similar to the name Viçoso to be merely a coincidence.

After this experience, an unnerved Mariana is now anxious to return to the tranquility of her own home. However, she realizes she must be a hypocrite and conceal her true feelings by flattering Sofia and pretending to enjoy the outing. Thus she would prevent Sofia from having any possible displeasure with her that might result in gossip about herself and Conrado.

At last the excursion is over and Mariana returns home, happy to have her copy of Ivanhoe on her lap once again and

not to feel any more emotional stress. However, one more strain is destined to occur when Conrado comes home. Mariana notices he is wearing a new hat. "Era a nota desigual no meio da harmoniosa sonata da vida."⁶³ Ironically, she asks him to wear his old hat again, which in her mind has become synonymous with her traditional peaceful existence.

Within the limited space of the short story, the use of a symbol can often lead toward an understanding of the narrative theme. In "Capítulo dos Chapéus," Machado de Assis has cleverly used a hat to symbolize the virile man in the subconscious mind of Mariana. Throughout her traumatic day, she was constantly aware of hats wherever she went but had little comprehension of their psychological significance.

De uma das vêzes que foi à janela, viu passar um rapaz a cavalo. . . . Na verdade, aquêles era afetado demais; esticava a perna no estribo com evidente vaidade das botas, dobrava a mão na cintura, com um ar de figurino. Mariana notou-lhe êsses dous defeitos; mas achou que o chapéu resgatava-os, não que fôsse um chapéu alto; era baixo, mas próprio do aparelho equestre.⁶⁴

Sofia, entretanto, contava-lhe a história de alguns chapéus, - ou, mais corretamente, as aventuras. . . . Mariana ouvia aturdida. Na verdade, o chapéu era bonito, trazia uma linda gravata, e possuía um ar entre elegante e pelintra, . . .

- Não juro, ouviu? replicava a outra, mas é o que se diz.

Mariana fitou pensativa o chapéu denunciado. Havia agora mais três, de igual porte e graça, e provavelmente os quatro falavam delas, e falavam bem. Mariana enrubesceu muito, voltou a cabeça para o outro lado, tornou logo à primeira atitude, . . .⁶⁵

Emotionally, Mariana was only able to have short-lived sensual thoughts before she reverted to her ingrained nature. If she would have pondered these thoughts, they would have symbolized the beginning of some independent thinking. But

since her personality had been formed strongly by her father and reinforced by her husband, this possibility was remote and indeed did not happen.

"Capítulo dos Chapéus" is a traditionally constructed short story in which the author as the narrator has no role to play other than that of the storyteller. Through his words, the reader participates in the inner thoughts and emotions of Mariana as she returns home to live and to think once again in a fashion that had been set for her by her father and her husband. The ultimate tragedy is she does not even understand she has no independent ideas of her own.

The short story "Conto Alexandrino" represents another devastating and caustic attack by Machado de Assis against using science to try to answer complex questions of human behavior. As the title suggests, the setting of the story is in Alexandria, Egypt, about 300 B.C., a scientific and scholarly Mecca. Egypt, Cyrene, Crete, and Cyprus at that time were ruled by Ptolemy I, ancestor of the astronomer and himself a devoted patron of learning. The word conto in the title suggests a tale, a fable, or a story which cannot possibly be accepted as fact. The reader is able to deduce this from the opening dialogue between Stroibus and Pítias, the principal characters.

- O que, meu caro Stroibus! Não, impossível. Nunca jamais ninguém acreditará que o sangue de rato, dado a beber a um homem, possa fazer do homem um ratoneiro.

- Em primeiro lugar, Pítias, tu omites uma condição: - é que o rato deve expirar debaixo do escalpêlo, para que o sangue traga o seu princípio. Essa condição é essencial. Em segundo lugar, uma vez que me apontas o exemplo do rato, fica sabendo que já fiz com êle uma experiência,

e cheguei a produzir um ladrão...

- Ladrão autêntico?

- Levou-me o manto, ao cabo de trinta dias, mas deixou-me a maior alegria do mundo: a realidade da minha doutrina.⁶⁶

The author then describes Stroibus and Pítias as metaphysicians and good friends, and men well versed in science. They had come to Alexandria from Cyprus to attempt to prove Stroibus' hypothesis in a more supportive atmosphere. He believes that in the blood of any animal is the substance which determines the trait by which the animal is identified (thievery in the rat, daring in the eagle, fidelity in the dove). After the hypothesis is proven (as Stroibus is convinced it will be), then the personality of any human being could be altered by ingesting the blood of the particular creature in question. "Eu violei o segredo dos deuses,"⁶⁷ Stroibus egotistically and pretentiously tells an excited, expectant public without specifically revealing any details except that he will soon be able to change human behavior.

According to Stroibus, the blood of the animal must be taken during vivisection and before the animal expires for it to contain the behavioral essence in an uncontaminated form. Though ridiculing Stroibus' entire theory, Pítias proposes a test which will prove or disprove it conclusively. For the sake of science, they, Stroibus and Pítias, two individuals far removed from the vice of stealing, would extract the blood of rats and ingest it themselves. If they would become thieves, then Stroibus' theory would be proven correct. Stroibus accepts the proposal and both proceed with the

experiment.

The author informs us that Stroibus is a skilled anatomist. He has studied the texts of the Greek physician Herophilus, presently conducting his own research in Alexandria. The author, paying attention to detail and in a tone as cold and unemotional as Stroibus and his scalpel, describes him vivisectioning scores of rats in order to obtain their blood.

Primeiro, atava uma tira de pano no focinho do paciente; em seguida, os pés, finalmente, cingia com um cordel as pernas e o pescoço do animal à tábua da operação. Isto feito, dava o primeiro talho no peito, com vagar, e com vagar ia enterrando o ferro até tocar o coração, porque era opinião dêle que a morte instantânea corrompia o sangue e retirava-lhe o princípio.⁶⁸

Ao lado dêle, Pítias aparava o sangue e ajudava a obra, já contendo os movimentos convulsivos do paciente, já espiando-lhe nos olhos o progresso da agonia. As observações que ambos faziam eram notadas em fôlhas de papiro; . . .⁶⁹

Ironically, and in time, Stroibus' absurd theory is proven correct as he and Pítias begin their pilfering by taking ideas from each other before becoming thieves of material things. With heavy satirical sarcasm, Machado de Assis interjects the opinion that the stealing of ideas is a natural beginning for incipient thieves since ideas are not bought and sold as goods but are perceived by people as free, to be used as public property. This extends to plagiarism of which Machado, in his capacity as a literary critic, had diplomatically accused Eça de Queirós in 1878.

The reader is then apprised that Stroibus and Pítias have become accomplished robbers. The observational phase of the experiment has been completed. Given the honor by

Ptolemy to help in organizing the famous library of Alexandria, they systematically steal priceless works of literature but are finally apprehended while preparing to return to Cyprus with the fruits of their plundering. Ptolemy orders their immediate execution.

"Conto Alexandrino" is divided into four chapters which portray the four parts of the scientific method for any investigation (hypothesis, experiment, observation, and conclusion). However, the final chapter, instead of depicting the conclusion as drawn from the experiments of Stroibus, shows the magnificently ironical demise of Stroibus and Pítias. Here, the theorizers become the theorizees, the experimenters become the experimentees, the vivisectors become the vivisectees as Stroibus and his loyal friend Pítias themselves become live human subjects (as their rats had been for them) for the experiments in this ironic instance of none other than the master anatomist, Herophilus.

The real Herophilus did make great contributions to medical science. However, the theories Machado's Herophilus wishes to prove and for which he asks Ptolemy to provide condemned criminals for him to conduct experiments are just as ludicrous as Stroibus'. As Stroibus thought that in the blood of the rat lay the essence of the criminal, so a disciple of Herophilus (not Herophilus himself) wanted to determine in what part of the hand lies the nerve controlling the act of thievery.

. . . , começaram pela experiência das mãos (de Stroibus), que produziu ótimos resultados, coligidos em livros,

que se perderam com a queda dos Ptolomeus. Também as mãos de Pítias foram rasgadas e minuciosamente examinadas. Os infelizes berravam, choravam, suplicavam; mas Herófilo dizia-lhes pacificamente que a obrigação do filósofo era servir à filosofia, e que para os fins da ciência, êles valiam ainda mais que os ratos, pois era melhor concluir do homem para o homem, e não do rato para o homem. E continuou a rasgá-los fibra por fibra, durante oito dias.⁷⁰

And as Stroibus and Pítias had sacrificed scores of rats to try to find out the ultimate color change in their retinas as they were dying, the eyes of the two unfortunates are now extracted for the purpose of disproving an equally preposterous idea (not elaborated upon by the author) about the eye's inner structure.

In ancient Sicily at the time ruled by Greece, Pythias, condemned to death by the tyrant Dionysius, was granted permission to leave the city of Syracuse temporarily to arrange his affairs before his execution. His friend Damon offered to take his place if Pythias would fail to return. Pythias was delayed, and as a result Damon nearly died. Dionysius, so moved by this act of friendship, spared them both. But in the cruel world as seen by Machado de Assis, which is indifferent to suffering, true friendship and self-sacrifice do not exist. In the context of fiction, neither Stroibus nor Pítias accept blame for their situation or try to save each other. They do not understand that their attempt to alter human behavior through the use of science led to this ultimate tragedy. "Conto Alexandrino" proceeds logically and inexorably toward the only conclusion possible in the irony-laden universe of Machado de Assis. His fiction can be more realistic than life itself.

"Primas de Sapucaia!" is a first-person short story in which the narrator as the author and principal character recounts a particular incident in his life. His attitudes and actions throughout the episode, and the descriptive words he uses, will unwittingly confirm him as a hypocritical schemer, an impractical dreamer, and an egotistical, impulsive, pretentious, and shallow person. He appears to be a spiritual younger brother of the two gentlemen in "Singular Ocorrência," and like them, his name is never revealed. As in "Singular Ocorrência," the superficial reader will become so absorbed in the narrative presented by the character that he will lose sight of the main theme of the short story. It is the intention of Machado de Assis to expose the personality of the narrator, with implied scathing criticism of the people of his time.

Before describing his experience, the character, in what appears to be casual remarks, briefly gives facts of his family and his background. From these seemingly offhand statements, we immediately sense some traits of his personality.

Sapucaia era a nossa pátria comum. Embora todos os parentes estivessem dispersos, ali nasceu o tronco da família. Meu tio José Ribeiro, . . . foi o único, de cinco irmãos, que lá ficou lavrando a terra e figurando na política do lugar. Eu vim cedo para a côrte, donde segui a estudar e bacharelar-me em S. Paulo. Voltei uma só vez a Sapucaia, para pleitar uma eleição, que perdi.

Rigorosamente, tôdas estas notícias são desnecessárias para a compreensão da minha aventura; . . .⁷¹

The family name of Ribeiro is a common one that infers limited social position and means. The men were working

farmers and the narrator's uncle was also involved in local politics. Most members of the family appear to have left Sapucaia probably in search of higher social status and economic progress. There is no criticism in this prospect for betterment. But the character states he had returned to Sapucaia just once after having left to pursue his studies and says his only reason for going back was to become involved in an election. The reader must deduce that his motive was purely selfish and was an attempt to use the people of his home town to obtain a political position. He never mentions any desire to serve his people. After he had lost the election, there was no need to visit Sapucaia ever again since any wish to see his remaining family does not appear to be in his thoughts.

Following this brief introductory part (which the casual reader might think has little significance), the narrator proceeds with his ironic account of how a hoped-for relationship with a certain woman never materialized. Throughout his entire story, he naturally attempts to present himself in such a way so as to make as admirable an impression as possible upon the reader. However, obsessive thoughts, compulsive actions, and a penchant to be less than honest not only in his dealings with others but also with himself become more and more evident.

As he escorted from church his two visiting cousins from Sapucaia, Claudina and Rosa, daughters of José Ribeiro, he again saw a woman whom he had first noticed two months ago

and had lost sight of in a crowd. This time she was alone, not as before when she had been with a man who, ". . . pelos modos, era seu marido, mas tanto podia ser marido como pai."⁷² Presumptuously, he adds that the first time they had seen each other "namoramos às bandeiras despregadas,"⁷³ but he presents no evidence in support of this assertion or that there even had been a reciprocal glance toward him. For the second time, he could not pursue her since it would have been very impolite to have left his cousins waiting at the church door. By the time he took them home and returned, the woman was gone.

In addition to loathing the two girls who he is convinced had denied him the opportunity to establish a relationship with this woman, the expression "oh, these cousins from Sapucaia!" becomes for him an expletive which he believes can be uttered by all. To him, the world is populated by multitudes of "cousins from Sapucaia" who will always thwart a person's chances in everything by their dogged presence at the wrong time.

. . . estas primas de Sapucaia tomam tôdas as formas, e o leitor, se não as teve de um modo, teve-as de outro. Umas vêzes copiam o ar confidencial de um cavalheiro informado da última crise do ministério, de tôdas as causas aparentes ou secretas, dissensões novas ou antigas, interesses agravados, conspiração, crise. Outras vêzes, enfronham-se na figura daquele eterno cidadão que afirma de um modo ponderoso e abotoado, que não há leis sem costumes nisi lege sine moribus. Outras afivelam a máscara de um Dangeau de esquina, que nos conta miudamente as fitas e rendas que esta, aquela, aqueloutra dama levará ao baile ou ao teatro. E durante êsse tempo, a Ocasião passa, vagarosa, cabisbaixa, apoiando-se no chapelinho de sol: passa, dobra a esquina e adeus...⁷⁴

To help convince himself the attraction between them

was mutual, he contradicts himself and exaggerates his own account of the incidents. He first states she reciprocated his glances and then hints they had thoughts about each other for "algumas horas."⁷⁵ How could he possibly know what she was thinking? According to previous statements, all that had really happened was they had passed each other on the street on two separate occasions. The second time she did not even see him since he had been inside the church door and she had walked past it. His tendency to fantasize and to reside in an imaginary world full of jealous thoughts is revealed when he states he could not bear the notion of sharing this woman with anyone she might have been coming to meet. "Sou exclusivo e pessoal; daria um triste amante de mulheres casadas. . . . Sou também imaginoso; . . ."⁷⁶ and impulsive, as he tells the reader he created ". . . uma aventura e um aventureiro, dei-me ao prazer mórbido de afligir-me sem motivo nem necessidade."⁷⁷ This section of the short story is not reached until after he accompanied the cousins back to his house, left hurriedly on a pretext, raced back to the church, went up and down several streets in futile pursuit of the woman, and ranted and raved some more about his "misfortune." Finally abandoning the search, he decided not to have lunch at home but in a restaurant so as not to have to see ". . . os demônios das primas, que . . . impediram de seguir a dama incógnita."⁷⁸ He began to daydream as he ate and read the newspaper.

In his imagination, the cousins were not present when

the lady he has named Adriana passed by the church, and he was able to meet her. The forthcoming relationship with her, which he establishes in his mind, is exactly in tune with his personality as previously bared. She is ardently passionate toward him and only him, and never truly loved her husband (a much older man) or anyone else. In his mind, this justifies the elimination of any possible motives for jealousy. In his dreams, he egotistically controls her life and her thoughts, asking her to abandon her family and live with him. Of course, she readily agrees to his wishes. In his happiness, his words become poetic. The story of their love is the truly divine manuscript ". . . tecido de sol e música; a linguagem compunha-se da fina flor dos outros vocabulários."⁷⁹

The illicit nature of the affair appears to increase his desire for her. His personality demands he be the exclusive object of her every thought.

Eu ensinei-lhe ao mesmo tempo o amor e a traição; é o que ela me diz nesta casinha que aluguei fora da cidade, de propósito para nós.

Ouçó-a embriagado. Não me enganei; é a mulher ardente e amorosa, qual me diziam os seus olhos, olhos de touro, como os de Juno, grandes e redondos. Vive de mim e para mim.⁸⁰

The daydream ended but his obsession for the lady continued ". . . durante muitas semanas,"⁸¹ until he was finally cured of it by the passage of time. A year later, the narrator traveled to Petrópolis with Oliveira, an old friend. Oliveira, a lawyer, had been a government prosecutor, but had abandoned his career after he had received an inheritance (once again the idle rich). Days later, the narrator heard

Oliveira had run off with a married woman and they had secluded themselves in a cottage in Petrópolis. In two unbelievable and shocking coincidences, he discovered that she was the woman of his dreams, and her name really was Adriana.

He tried many times to visit their house, perhaps to come between them and rob the robber. However, he was denied any invitation by an equally jealous Oliveira who worked diligently to protect their privacy. Months later, an emotionally drained Oliveira informed him of the serious difficulties in the relationship. Oliveira and Adriana were incompatible but irresistibly drawn toward each other. Still desirous of enticing Adriana from Oliveira, he was finally permitted to visit them. The great irony of his story was his discovery that the lady of his dreams was ". . . ferrenha, manhosa, injusta, muita vez grosseira; em alguns lances . . ." ⁸² he noticed in her "uma nota de perversidade." ⁸³ The narrator felt ". . . nojo da mulher e pena do pobre-diabo (Oliveira)." ⁸⁴ He concludes his story with oblique words of gratitude for his cousins from Sapucaia who unwittingly had saved him from Adriana. Now the meaning of the first sentence of the short story becomes clearly understood by the reader.

Há umas ocasiões oportunas e fugitivas, em que o acaso nos inflige duas ou tres primas de Sapucaia; outras vêzes, ao contrário, as primas de Sapucaia são antes um benefício do que um infortúnio. ⁸⁵

In "Primas de Sapucaia!," all the narrator's words must be evaluated in view of his personality as has been revealed to us by his thoughts and deeds. Throughout the story, his attitudes and actions picture him as an untrustworthy

individual and emotionally weak, not strong as he pretends to be. We see that he consistently disguises his true nature when he is with his cousins or Oliveira. At the conclusion of his story, when his purely hedonistic, selfish ideas and possessive, jealous tendencies clash with Adriana's personality, which he has really described as strong willed, a negative reaction between the two of them is bound to occur. His fearful response to a situation he cannot control is to flee from it. He states: "Tive medo e retraí-me."⁸⁶ From a safe distance, he then attacks her, calling her hypocritical, perverse, crass, and scheming.

Not only should we not trust his remarks about Adriana but also we should not involve ourselves in analyzing the ironies of the narrator's story. To do either would be to believe the words of an individual who is less than honest in his dealings with the other characters, with himself, and with the reader. Machado de Assis has created a character whose words are only important for what they reveal about himself. We must never lose sight of this observation to comprehend properly "Primas de Sapucaia!"

The short story "Uma Senhora" is a study of the personality of one woman, D. Camila. Though the narrative is concerned specifically with the traits of her character, the title, more generalized than if it had merely used her name, suggests D. Camila exemplifies many of the upper-class women of the era. The author hints that these women live constantly preoccupied with maintaining a youthful image in public.

Dir-me-á o leitor que a beleza vive de si mesma, e que a preocupação do calendário mostra que esta senhora vivia principalmente com os olhos na opinião. É verdade; mas como quer que vivam as mulheres do nosso tempo?⁸⁷

The author as the narrator places himself in the story as an acquaintance of D. Camila. As a subjective observer, his criticism of her actions and attitudes must therefore be subtle and gentle. The reader has to see through his diplomatic language and realize the author is attacking excess pride, vanity, jealousy, hypocrisy, and especially pretense; all part of her obsession to look ever young and to be considered it by others.

A primeira vez que a vi, tinha ela trinta e seis anos, pôsto só parecesse trinta e dous, e não passasse da casa dos vinte e nove. Casa é um modo de dizer. Não há castelo mais vasto do que a vivenda dêstes bons amigos, nem tratamento mais obsequioso do que o que êles sabem dar às suas hóspedes. Cada vez que D. Camila queria ir-se embora, êles pediam-lhe muito que ficasse, e ela ficava.⁸⁸

Mas ai triste! há um limite para tudo, mesmo para os vinte e nove anos. D. Camila resolveu, enfim, despedir-se dêsses dignos anfitriões, e fê-lo ralada de saudades. Êles ainda instaram por uns cinco ou seis meses de quebra; a bela dama respondeu-lhes que era impossível e, trepando no alazão do tempo, foi alojar-se na casa dos trinta.⁸⁹

However, D. Camila soon became forty years old and her daughter Ernestina nineteen. She knew marriage for her daughter would soon result in Ernestina having children. D. Camila would then be cast in the role of a grandmother and, in the depths of her mind, that would confirm her loss of youth. The narrator describes her strenuous and continual effort to hold back the future by rejecting on any pretext all possible suitors of Ernestina.

D. Camila farejou depressa a nova candidatura. Não podia alegar nada contra êle; . . . Mas haveria . . . defeitos,

devia haver. . . . D. Camila buscou-os com alma; indagou de suas relações, hábitos, passado. Conseguiu achar umas cousinhas miúdas, . . . e, finalmente, um grande excesso de amor-próprio. . . .

Houve um trimestre de respiro. Depois apareceram alguns namoricos de uma noite, insetos efêmeros, que não deixaram história. D. Camila compreendeu que êles tinham de multiplicar-se, até vir algum decisivo que a obrigasse a ceder; . . .⁹⁰

Throughout the story, the narrator is not omnipotent but a wise human being. He is a fatalist, conscious of the inexorable march of time. He is tactfully sympathetic toward D. Camila's attitude, but as a realist he knows she must eventually accept the inevitability of the passing of time and permit Ernestina to marry.

. . . , não me lembra em que página de Escritura, naturalmente nos Profetas, uma comparação dos dias com as águas de um rio que não voltam mais. D. Camila queria fazer uma reprêsa para seu uso. No tumulto desta marcha contínua entre o nascimento e a morte, ela apegava-se à ilusão da estabilidade.⁹¹

Os dias precipitavam-se. Crianças que ela vira ao colo, ou de carrinho empuxado pelas amas, dançavam agora nos bailes. Os que eram homens fumavam; as mulheres cantavam ao piano. Algumas destas apresentavam-lhe os seus babies, gorduchos, uma segunda geração que mamava, à espera de ir bailar também, cantar ou fumar, apresentar outros babies a outras pessoas, e assim por diante.⁹²

A year after her daughter's wedding, D. Camila is a grandmother. The narrator states this fact emphatically, forcefully, and reiterates it in three consecutive sentences. "Enfim, avó. Não havia duvidar; era avó. . . . a realidade existia; ela era, enfim, avó."⁹³ These words echo the inner thoughts of D. Camila as she strives emotionally to accept the new role she feels compelled to bear. However, the narrator hints that she possibly constructs one more dam in her mind which can provide her with many more years of self-

delusion. When D. Camila appears in public with the baby and the maid, and without Ernestina, she is always overly attentive to the needs of the infant. The logical impression conveyed to other people is that she is the mother of the child.

In 1868, Machado de Assis had written the story "O Segredo de Augusta" which had a theme similar to "Uma Senhora." "O Segredo de Augusta" had appeared in his first collection of short stories, Contos Fluminenses, published in 1869, and had been discussed previously. Augusta's "secret" reason for not wanting her daughter Adelaide to marry was also her fear of becoming a grandmother and thinking of herself as old. However, this earlier story concentrated more on her husband Vasconcelos, with his financial schemes and licentious conduct, rather than on Augusta and her vanity. As a conventional romantic story told by an all-knowing author whose principal intention, despite the title, was to criticize the immoral behavior of the husband, "O Segredo de Augusta" was a finely crafted literary composition for its time.

The many characters of "O Segredo de Augusta" were given stereotyped identities. There was the libertine husband, the vain wife, the innocent daughter, the kind uncle, the forceful creditor, and the insincere friend. They all acted and related to each other in accordance with the roles assigned to them by the author. At various times in the narrative, melodramatic confrontations occurred between two or more of them. No attempt was made by the author to examine

why any character behaved in the manner prescribed. In 1868, Machado de Assis was not yet the writer who in later years could create individual, human-like characters in his prose, reproduce their thoughts consistent with their personalities, and portray men and women toward whom a reader's reaction might be based somewhat on the reader's own partialities.

In contrast to "O Segredo de Augusta," "Uma Senhora" concentrates entirely upon the thoughts of the woman. Here, Machado focuses totally upon D. Camila's obsession with age and appearance, which is so uppermost in her mind that she is incapable of considering the feelings of her daughter or her rarely mentioned husband. The author effectively does not allow the personality of any other character to emerge and be developed thereby permitting this story to concentrate always on D. Camila. Isn't this how she would want it?

Just as "Uma Senhora" can be considered an improvement upon "O Segredo de Augusta," so the next story in Histórias sem Data, "Anedota Pecuniária," appears to be a masterfully constructed revision of another story, "Conversão de um Avaro." Therefore, prior to the discussion of "Anedota Pecuniária," it is necessary to digress and comment upon the earlier work.

"Conversão de um Avaro," published in the Jornal das Famílias in June of 1878, is one of the last pre-Bras Cubas romantic short stories and was not included by Machado in Papéis Avulsos or in any subsequent collection. It is the story of Gil Gomes, the wealthy owner of a mattress store,

fifty-two years old, round, red, and miserly. The plot centers about the efforts of his supposed good friend José Borges to arrange a marriage between Gil Gomes and Borges' cousin Rufina Soares, an attractive widow, twenty-seven years old, with a penchant for luxury. Her desire for sumptuous living would not reveal itself conclusively until the time of their wedding.

While Gil Gomes is enjoying Rufina's company at various affairs, other people, especially Borges and Rufina, cast him in the role of a suitor and soon expect him to propose marriage to her. The author artfully presents the conflict within Gil Gomes whose reluctance to spend money on himself and a future wife gradually recedes as his deepening and blind passion for the clever Rufina begins to govern him.

A situação do colchoeiro complicava-se; sem o pensar achava-se às portas de um casamento, isto é, de uma grande despesa que viria abalar muito o edifício laborioso de suas economias.

Passou-se uma semana . . . , e a situação de Gil Gomes não melhorou nada. Pelo contrário, agravou-se. No fim desse tempo, tornou a ver a viúva. Nunca lhe pareceu mais bela. Trazia um vestido simples, nenhum ornato, salvo uma flor ao seio, que ela em ocasião oportuna tirou e ofereceu ao colchoeiro. A paixão de Gil Gomes foi-se convertendo numa embriaguez; ele já não podia viver sem ela. Era preciso vê-la, e quando a via, tinha ânsia de lhe cair aos pés. Rufina suspirava, falava; quebrava os olhos, trazia arrastado o pobre Gil Gomes.

Veio mais uma semana, depois outra e mais outra. O amor trouxe algumas despesas nunca usadas. Gil Gomes sentiu que a avareza afrouxava um pouco as rédeas; ou, por outra, não sentiu nada, porque nada podia sentir; foi alongando os cordões à bolsa.

A idéia do casamento aferrou-se-lhe deveras. Era grave, era um abismo que ele abriu diante de si. Às vezes assustava-se; outras vezes fechava os olhos disposto a mergulhar nas trevas.

Um dia, Rufina ouviu ao colchoeiro o pedido em regra, ainda que timidamente formulado.⁹⁴

In the last few paragraphs of the story, the author informs us that, after a wedding celebrated in high fashion, their life becomes a succession of going to the theater, attending social gatherings, and purchasing jewelry for Rufina. Gil Gomes buys a carriage, gives dinner parties every Friday, and frequently lends money to José Borges who, of course, never repays him. As Gil Gomes spends more and more money on himself and Rufina, his happiness grows but his resources shrink. Finally, after an unnamed number of years have passed,

. . . , (Gil Gomes) tinha vendido o carro, suspendido os jantares e os teatros, diminuído os empréstimos a José Borges, . . . Quando a miséria chegou, Rufina retirou-se dêste mundo. O colchoeiro que já não tinha colchões, acabou a vida servindo de agente em um cartório de escrivão.⁹⁵

At the end of the story, the reader is uncertain as to what is its overall message. In the opening paragraph, the author had stated as a dictum:

Os vícios equilibram-se muita vez; outras vezes neutralizam-se ou vence um a outro. Há pecados que derrubam pecados, ou, pelo menos, quebram-lhes as pernas.⁹⁶

Neither frugality nor spending on the levels indicated in this story nor excessive dedication to a spouse can be connected with the words sin or vice. In contradiction, we are told the life of Gil Gomes was full of happiness after his marriage.

A ex-viúva encheu a vida do colchoeiro; ocupou em seu coração o lugar que até então pertencera à libra esterlina. Gil Gomes estava mudado; fôra uma larva; passava a borboleta. E que borboleta! A vida solitária da loja dos colchões era agora o seu remorso; êle mesmo ria de si. A mulher, só a mulher, nada mais que a mulher, eis o sonho da vida do colchoeiro; era o modelo dos maridos.⁹⁷

Gil Gomes may have been imprudent in his new prodigality and in lending money to Borges, but Rufina gave him an abundance of contentment and it does not appear any real swindling took place. The reader is supposed to see irony in the fact that Gil Gomes spent his last days as a poor man, the very circumstance he had tried to avoid during all his pre-marital years. However, this would have been true only if his marriage had failed to bring him joy and fulfillment. As presented by a truthful author, any possible irony can be weakened by Gil Gomes' happy memories.

Written at the close of the pre-Bras Cubas decade in which Machado had published four novels, "Conversão de um Avaro" suffers structurally from the novelist's tendency to elaborate extensively in the genre of the short story. Introduction of the secondary characters is too lengthy. Unnecessary sentences about José Borges' dreams of wealth and past business failures, his wife Ana and her chronic complaints (never in front of Gil Gomes), and their unkempt daughter Mafalda are only included for the reader to assume that Gil Gomes is so blinded by his infatuation for Rufina he does not notice the faults in her family. In another scene, a dinner guest, Pantaleão, is introduced in one sentence and spoken of by the author in two more as a man possessing no unique trait of character and as not essential to the story. The interjection of Pantaleão was an attempt by Machado, as the narrator, to place himself closer to the events of his own fiction by commenting upon a character he created. Here,

he did it with an irrelevant character in a part of the story where the interruption in the development of the theme disturbs the reader. He would be more successful with this technique in short stories written after 1881.

Another defect in "Conversação de um Avaro" would be corrected in "Anedota Pecuniária." The reader is told that the protagonist Gil Gomes is a miser but little evidence in his behavior shows this characteristic. All we see is the reluctance of Gil Gomes to spend money on items he considers extravagant, namely furniture and clothing beyond necessity, a box at the theater, and a carriage. In 1878, Machado de Assis was still more at the level of writing an elaborate, romantic short story for the readers of the Jornal das Famílias than in exposing through his fiction his concept of the obsessive foibles of the human race which he would later embody in individual men and women. He was not able to create in the thoughts and actions of Gil Gomes a haunting lust to possess, contemplate, and even fondle money with a lover's singular devotion as he would later do with the protagonist Falcão in "Anedota Pecuniária." Gil Gomes may be overly thrifty, but this one characteristic presented with an ordinary plot does not form the basis for a memorable short story.

The initial description of Gil Gomes gave us a brief glimpse of the frugal manner in which he had lived before marrying Rufina.

Ganhara um bom pecúlio, a vender colchões e a não usar nenhum. Note-se que não era homem sórdido, pessoalmente

desasseado; não. Usava camisa lavada, calça e rodapé lavados. Mas era a sua maior despesa. A cama era um velho sofá de palhinha; a mobília eram duas cadeiras, uma delas quebrada, uma mesa de pinho e um baú.⁹⁸

At the beginning of "Anedota Pecuniária," the reader is introduced to an emotionally upset Falcão berating himself, in the words of the author, for selling a niece for what would be our equivalent of ten thousand dollars. A superficial account of how he lives then follows, similarly described as Gil Gomes had been, albeit more briefly.

Ninguém lhe vá falar dos regalos da vida. Não tem cama fôfa, nem mesa fina, nem carruagem, nem comenda. Não se ganha dinheiro para esbanjá-lo, dizia êle. Vive de migalhas, . . .⁹⁹

In "Anedota Pecuniária," Machado, in addition, shows the all-consuming, passionate love Falcão has toward money by allowing the reader to see him in private contemplation of his hoard.

Vai muitas vezes à burra, que está na alcova de dormir, com o único fim de fartar os olhos nos rolos de ouro e maços de títulos. Outras vezes, por um requinte de erotismo pecuniário, contempla-os só de memória.¹⁰⁰

To complete the picture of this avaricious man, his public behavior regarding money, consistent with his private one, is described in two separate incidents that had occurred in the past when other people were present. The first had taken place when two boys cognizant of Falcão's reputation asked him whether a note they had received was a counterfeit. After advising them of its legitimacy, he continued to gaze at it while slowly folding it. Returning it to the boys, he turned to his friend and said: "- Dinheiro, mesmo quando não é da gente, faz gosto ver."¹⁰¹ The second episode had occurred when he was coming back with others from a funeral.

All his thoughts were directed toward adding up the total worth of the mourners and announcing it to his companions.

"- Justamente, três mil contos!"¹⁰² he concluded, after enumerating each one's assets.

Now that Falcão's obsession with money has been established by considering not only his material possessions but also his thoughts and words, Machado de Assis proceeds with the plot. The explanation of the author's shocking charge that Falcão had sold his niece, Jacinta, is given in a flashback which covers the first half of the story. She was an orphan and had come to live with him seven years ago at the age of eleven.

Onze anos, doze anos, treze anos, cada ano que passava era mais um vínculo que atava o velho solteirão à filha adotiva, e vice-versa. Aos treze, Jacinta mandava na casa; aos dezessete era verdadeira dona. Não abusou do domínio; era naturalmente modesta, frugal, poupada.

- Um anjo! dizia o Falcão ao Chico Borges.¹⁰³

At eighteen, she had fallen in love with Falcão's friend, forty-year-old Chico Borges (Gil Gomes' friend was also named Borges). Falcão rejected outright Borges' proposal of marriage to Jacinta partly from fear of living without a companion and partly because his greedy nature prohibited him from sharing with others anything that would even remotely resemble a possession of his. Two months prior to Borges' request to marry Jacinta, the two men had combined resources for a short sale of stock hoping to earn a profit of forty thousand in the period before they would have had to purchase the shares. But at the end of that time the price had unexpectedly risen and they had suffered a loss of twenty thou-

sand. Borges then offered to pay Falcão's share if he would permit the marriage. Falcão rationalized to himself.

Não quis; recusou três e quatro vezes. A primeira impressão fôra de alegria, eram os dez contos na algibeira. Mas a idéia de separar-se de Jacinta era insuportável, e recusou. Dormiu mal. De manhã, encarou a situação, pesou as cousas, considerou que, entregando Jacinta ao outro, não a perdia inteiramente, ao passo que os dez contos iam-se embora. E, depois, se ela gostava dêle e êle dela, por que razão separá-los? Tôdas as filhas casam-se, e os pais contentam-se de as ver felizes. Correu à casa do Chico Borges, e chegaram a acôrdo.¹⁰⁴

The flashback ends with Falcão at home alone after the wedding. Partly from guilt and partly from fear of loneliness, he cries out:

- Fiz mal, muito mal, bradava êle na noite do casamento. Tão minha amiga que ela era! Tão amorosa! Ia chorando, coitadinha... Fiz mal, muito mal.¹⁰⁵

The couple soon moves to Europe and he is left totally alone.

In the second half of "Anedota Pecuniária," another orphaned niece, eighteen-year-old Virginia, quite suddenly comes to live with Falcão. He happily accepts her, needing a companion in his advancing years. However, a suitor soon appears for her. He is Reginaldo, a cousin of Chico Borges, who has just returned to Rio de Janeiro from New York after having amassed extensive wealth during his seven years abroad. He never speaks to Falcão of his love for Virginia but enraptures him with his conversations about the riches of the United States. When he shows Falcão his huge collection of coins of the world purchased from an estate in Philadelphia for just five thousand, a fraction of its true value, Falcão

. . . saiu dali com a coleção na alma; falou dela à

sobrinha, e, imaginariamente, desarrumou e tornou a arrumar as moedas, como um amante desgrenha a amante para toucá-la outra vez. De noite sonhou que era um florim, que um jogador o deitava à mesa do lansquenet, e que êle trazia consigo para a algibeira do jogador mais de duzentos florins. De manhã, para consolar-se, foi contemplar as próprias moedas que tinha na burra; mas não se consou nada. O melhor dos bens é o que se não possui.¹⁰⁶

In a display of literary ingenuity, Machado de Assis now places the reader in the story as a character speaking directly to the author and anticipating the conclusion.

- Basta! interrompe-me o leitor; adivinho o resto. Virgínia casou com o Reginaldo, as moedas passaram às mãos do Falcão, e eram falsas... Não, senhor, eram verdadeiras.¹⁰⁷

The message of "Anedota Pecuniária," just the opposite of the one in "Conversão de um Avaro," is that a person's true nature will always dominate his thoughts and actions. There is no attempt to manipulate a change in the personality of Falcão by the introduction of any outside force, such as society's opinions or a possible mate (as Rufina was for Gil Gomes), which would exert an influence on him. As in the animal kingdom, exemplified by his name and other bestial references throughout the story, Falcão only responds to the basic instincts of fear and greed. Both are constantly battling for control of his mind but greed is always the victor.

In the next story, "Fulano," Machado de Assis, from the beginning, places the reader in the fiction as a direct listener to the words of the author as narrator. Immediately, this creates an intimacy of space shared by the author, the reader, and the main character, Fulano Beltrão.

Venha o leitor comigo assistir à abertura do testamento do meu amigo Fulano Beltrão. Conheceu-o? Era um

homem de cêrca de sessenta anos. Morreu ontem, dous de janeiro de 1884, às onze horas e trinta minutos da noite.¹⁰⁸

Since we know "Fulano" first appeared in the Gazeta de Notícias on January 4, 1884, fictional time and actual time were shared by the original readers of the story. Setting the precise hour and minute of Fulano Beltrão's death in a short story printed in a newspaper further reduces the gap between fiction and reality since the story somewhat resembles an obituary article.

While being literally taken by the arm and led down the street to the magistrate's office, we feel flattered the author has chosen us to be his confidant. We are disarmed by his attention and place total credence in his words. However, long before actually learning the terms of the will revealed on the last page of this four page story, the reader, through the author's recounting of his friend's life, perceives the continuing pretentiousness and self-serving manner with which Fulano Beltrão appeared to conduct his affairs after the age of forty. The words of the author always seem to approve of Fulano Beltrão's civic and private actions, repeatedly portraying them as altruistic and modest. Neither are the tactics Fulano used in the execution of his affairs ever questioned. It makes us realize the author too must be equally pompous and favors the ostentatious exhibitionism the reader soon discovers was characteristic of Fulano Beltrão in his later years.

According to the author, until the age of forty, Fulano

Beltrão was a private man content to live in quiet obscurity with his wife, son, and daughter. We are never informed of his occupation and can only assume through hints in the narration that he probably was a businessman. On his fortieth birthday, we are told an anonymous article appeared in the Jornal do Comércio mentioning the occasion and praising him in detail as a good family man, citizen, and friend. His wife discovered it was written by an old intimate, Xavier, who only had time to place the notice in one newspaper. When Fulano Beltrão, after reading it, egotistically decided to have it reprinted in two other daily newspapers, the author reports it to us as a most natural proceeding with just the minutest possibility he has misinterpreted Fulano Beltrão's motive.

Pode ser que me engane; mas estou que o espetáculo da justiça, a prova material de que as boas qualidades e as boas ações não morrem no escuro, foi o que animou o meu amigo a dispersar-se, a aparecer, a divulgar-se, a dar à coletividade humana um pouco das virtudes com que nasceu. Considerou que milhares de pessoas estariam lendo o artigo, à mesma hora em que o lia também; imaginou que o comentavam, que interrogavam, que confirmavam, . . . ouviu distintamente algumas vozes do público. Ouviu que lhe chamavam homem de bem, cavalheiro distinto, amigo dos amigos, laborioso, honesto, todos os qualificativos que êle vira empregados em outros, e que na vida de bicho do mato em que ia, nunca presumiu que lhe fôsem - tipograficamente - aplicados.

- A imprensa é uma grande invenção, disse êle à mulher.¹⁰⁹

From this moment forward, Fulano Beltrão opted to keep his name constantly before the public through charitable works and self-exposure. The underlying goal for any of his actions appears to be the attainment of a maximum amount of personal publicity though the author is almost certain it is

not. At first, the author's rationalizations for Beltrão's conduct are ignored. We sincerely believe his laudatory reflections on the life and deeds of this civic-minded citizen. With the telling of each succeeding incident, we realize more and more that two medalhões exist in this story: the late Fulano Beltrão and the author, our walking companion, who is extolling Beltrão's virtues directly to us.

Soon after the article had appeared on his birthday, Beltrão donated a Spanish lottery ticket to a local House of Providence, whereupon its director gave him a testimonial letter attesting to his generosity. Beltrão had it published in all the newspapers rationalizing to everyone that not to do so would have been an impolite act toward the institution. Whether the ticket won anything is never told but Fulano Beltrão received great publicity for his seemingly liberal donation.

A few years later, the author tells us, Beltrão bought a carriage.

. . . comprou uma linda vitória; e, para quem, só por modéstia, andou tantos anos às costas de mula ou apertado num ônibus, não era fácil acostumar-se logo ao novo veículo. A isso atribuo eu as atitudes salientes e inclinadas com que êle andava, nas primeiras semanas, os olhos que estendia a um lado e outro, à maneira de pessoa que procura alguém ou uma casa. Afinal acostumou-se; passou a usar das atitudes reclinadas, . . . (A mulher e a filha) não gostavam de sair de carro; mas êle teimava tanto que saíssem, que fôsem a tôda a parte, e até a parte nenhuma, que não tinham remédio senão obedecer-lhe; . . . (e) toda a gente dizia logo: - aí vem a família de Fulano Beltrão. E isto mesmo, sem que êle talvez o pensasse, tornava-o mais conhecido.¹¹⁰

The author's explanation for Beltrão's behavior with his carriage cannot be accepted. We must conclude that

Beltrão, in a vain display of himself and his family in his new possession, was publicly announcing that his name was now associated with wealth and its implied status and influence. Three years later, Beltrão conducted himself in a similar manner in his attempt to win a seat in Congress. He would strive to be seen by others in conversation with an influential member. Also, he would say to one politician the opposite of what he would say to another. All his maneuvers for electoral support were substitutes for genuine ideas. Even the author does not totally support Beltrão in this episode in his life.

Êste foi, talvez, o ponto mais fraco da vida do meu amigo. Não tinha idéias políticas; quando muito, dispunha de um desses temperamentos que substituem as idéias, e fazem crer que um homem pensa, quando simplesmente transpira.¹¹¹

However, neither can he seize the moment and forcefully attack the underlying attitudes of pretense and exhibitionism since they most likely motivate not only Beltrão's thoughts and actions but his own as well. After enumerating Beltrão's tactics in campaigning for the position, the author concludes merely by stating the simple fact that Beltrão ". . . perdeu a eleição, e deu de mão à política."¹¹²

Through the author's words, we are informed of the pertinent part of the last will and testament of Fulano Beltrão. In death, Beltrão surpassed all manifestations of egotism, pretense, ostentation, vanity, and exhibitionism he had practiced in life. As a final act, Beltrão's will left thirty thousand as the initial contribution to a fund, to be managed by his friends, eventually to collect enough money to erect a

bronze statue of Pedro Cabral, the discoverer of Brazil. On its pedestal were to be four busts (Ironically, the word in Portuguese for busts is medalhões) in relief bearing the likenesses of two important men in Brazilian history specifically mentioned in the will, and of two leading citizens of the day to be chosen by Beltrão's committee. This particular Fulano (a designation given to a person whose name one cannot recall at the moment), a man of ordinary accomplishments during his lifetime, had done his utmost to insure for himself a touch of immortality, though undeserving of the honor of being part of a memorial to Pedro Cabral.

"A Segunda Vida" is essentially a monologue by José Maria, a man about thirty years of age. In his recounting to Monsignor Caldas of what he says is the story of his life, José Maria reveals himself as mentally psychotic, as a person mocked by everyone since childhood, and as one who confuses reality with events created by his imagination. With an ever increasing fear for his own safety, the elderly priest can do no more than listen to José Maria whom he correctly judges as demented (and possibly inclined to violence) from ten minutes of conversation with him. After managing to tell his servant to summon the police, Monsignor Caldas and the reader must listen as José Maria, for the present in an amicable mood, begins to tell an improbable tale filled with lyrical descriptions of his supposed death, his ascent into the heavens, and his return to earth in a second body.

- . . . , morri no dia vinte de março de 1860, às cinco horas e quarenta e três minutos da manhã. Tinha então

sessenta e oito anos de idade. Minha alma voou pelo espaço, até perder a terra de vista, deixando muito abaixo a lua, as estrêlas e o sol; . . . Continuei a subir, e comecei a ver um pontinho mais luminoso ao longe, . . . Fui subindo, subindo, na distância de quarenta mil léguas, ouvi uma deliciosa música, e logo que cheguei a cinco mil léguas, desceu um enxame de almas, que me levaram num palanquim feito de éter e plumas. . . . Poeta que fôsse, não poderia, usando a linguagem humana, transmitir-lhe a emoção da grandeza, do deslumbramento, da felicidade, os êxtases, as melodias, os arrojados de luz e cores, uma coisa indefinível e incompreensível. Só vendo. Lá dentro é que soube que completava mais um milheiro de almas; tal era o motivo das festas extraordinárias que me fizeram, e que duraram dois séculos, ou, pelas nossas contas, quarenta e oito horas. Afinal, concluídas as festas, convidaram-me a tornar à terra para cumprir uma vida nova; era o privilégio de cada alma que completava um milheiro. . . . A única liberdade que me deram foi a escolha do veículo; podia nascer príncipe ou condutor de ônibus. Que fazer?113

José Maria told the priest he replied that since he realized his first life was unhappy because he was the victim of inexperience, his only desire was to return to earth retaining all the knowledge gained in his previous existence. José Maria said that everyone in heaven laughed at his request. Even Job, the only Biblical figure he names, considered his idea silly. However, he prevailed and was returned to earth as he had wished.

In relating to Monsignor Caldas events and thoughts in the childhood and adolescence of his so-called second life, José Maria unwittingly discloses the sources of his psychosis. When he does not want to explain correctly a certain behavioral action in the past, he rationalizes and invents an explanation for it which he finds acceptable in his present psychotic state. For example, first he said he could not remember anything about his second infancy because at that

period in a person's life experience is only instinctive. Then he stated he nursed poorly, cried as little as possible to avoid spankings, and began to walk at a late age for fear of falling. This, he said, contributed to the present weakness of his legs. As a boy, he never ran or climbed trees and was constantly dubbed a fool and a sissy by his peers. This, the reality of his true childhood, is an important factor which precipitated his flight into imagination. In spite of everything, José Maria said, those times were more pleasurable than today's. This is totally illogical.

José Maria also appears to be haunted by the memory of an episode of sexual impotence which probably occurred in front of his colleagues. He said that at the age of nineteen he had shocked his friends by expressing a wish to accompany them to an all-night affair of sexual activity. However, he was unable to perform with either of the two women who had approached him. His rationalization to Monsignor Caldas of the reason for his failure was that at the moment of physical contact with each of them he had remembered three adverse sexual experiences in his previous life and so was afraid to indulge once again. This explanation cannot be believed. It is more probable the women had rejected him and his friends were cognizant of it. We must recall that only against heavenly figures was he ever able to triumph over those who had laughed at him. Only in his imagination was he ever the center of everyone's attention.

Following this account of his past, his divulgence of

traumatic moments with rationalized, sometimes delusory responses to the events, José Maria spoke of the present and his relationship with Clemência, a twenty-six-year-old woman he had recently married. His demented mind had conjured up pretext after pretext which gave the appearance of his desire to terminate their association though actually demanding from her a greater and greater show of acceptance of him. Each time Clemência had granted him "clemency" and their relationship would resume, he would create another incident even more irrational in idea and more violent in expression than the previous one. By punishing Clemência, he was continually seeking to avenge the rejections experienced in his youth.

- Está disposta a fazer-me um grande sacrifício? disse-lhe eu. Clemência jurou que sim. "Pois bem, rompa com tudo, família e sociedade; venha morar comigo; casamo-nos depois dêsse noviciado."114

Clemência veio para minha casa, e não imagina as festas com que a recebi. "Deixo tudo, disse-me ela; você é para mim o universo." Eu beijei-lhe os pés, beijei-lhe os tacões dos sapatos. Não imagina o meu contentamento. No dia seguinte, recebi uma carta tarjada de preto; era a notícia da morte de um tio meu, . . . deixando-me vinte mil contos. Fiquei fulminado. "Entendo, disse a Clemência, você sacrificou tudo, porque tinha notícia da herança". Desta vez, Clemência não chorou, pegou em si e saiu. Fui atrás dela, envergonhado, pedi-lhe perdão; ela resistiu. . . . Então declarei-lhe que me mataria; comprei um revólver, fui ter com ela, e apresentei-lho: é este.

Monsignor Caldas empalideceu. . . .

- Cheguei a dar um tiro. Ela, assustada, desarmou-me e perdoou-me. Ajustamos precipitar o casamento, e . . . impus uma condição: doar os vinte mil contos à Biblioteca Nacional. Clemência . . . aprovou-me com um beijo. . . . Três semanas depois casamo-nos.115

The dream José Maria then recounted to Monsignor Caldas confirms that his present psychotic condition had originated from what can be considered an emotionally miserable childhood

and adolescence. In the dream, even the gospel was unable to offer him any security since it was read to him by the Devil. He gave José Maria twenty beautiful lilies to sniff, each one representing a year of his youth. As he happily lifted them to his nose, an offensive-smelling reptile emerged from inside of them. When he flung the lilies aside the Devil sardonically mocked him saying, "- 'São os teus vinte anos.'"116 Instead of confronting the serpent, he had thrown away the entire bouquet signifying failure all these years in facing his problems.

Upon awakening from the dream, he said he saw a disheveled and anguished Clemência standing in front of him. Now, in speaking to Monsignor Caldas and after telling him he had been driven to blood but not offering any further explanation, José Maria began to hallucinate. He thought Clemência was kneeling before him begging for mercy. Monsignor Caldas retreated in horror as José Maria, seeing only Clemência, appeared to be moving to attack him. The story ends abruptly as the police are heard ascending the staircase. Since the intention of the author was to depict the abnormal personality of José Maria, it is not necessary for the reader to know what might have happened to Monsignor Caldas before the police enter the room.

In "A Segunda Vida," Machado de Assis has once again created a person with a psychotic personality. His José Maria, having both false beliefs and hallucinations, is totally out of touch with reality. In 1884, at a time when the

study of abnormal psychology was in its infancy, Machado not only demonstrated advanced knowledge of the art but also possessed the literary skill to develop such a character whose personality remained consistent in its abnormality throughout the story. Machado's interpretation of the sources and manifestations of José Maria's psychosis, as revealed inadvertently by the character during his conversation with Monsignor Caldas, cannot be proven false by any information about mental illness learned in the past one hundred years. Once again, he has written a timeless and universal piece of short fiction.

"Noite de Almirante" is the portrayal of two individuals whose all too human frailties are evidenced through their thoughts and actions in relation to each other. From the title to the last sentence of this five page story, ironies abound as we accompany Deolindo, a sailor just having returned from duty at sea, on a visit to a young woman. She is Genoveva, whom he had been obliged to leave and whom he had expected to wait faithfully for him these many months. To appreciate fully this brief glimpse at human nature, the author as the narrator must be believed throughout the story. Yet he is not omnipotent but human too, demonstrating this early in the story by his momentary uncertainty regarding the length of time of Deolindo's absence. We are first told that "eram oito ou dez meses de ausência."¹¹⁷ Several lines later, the author is more exact, giving the time as "dez meses."¹¹⁸ Relatively speaking, it makes little difference to what actu-

ally occurs after Deolindo's return.

The affair between Deolindo and Genoveva had begun three months prior to his departure to sea. It was so intensely passionate that they had formulated plans for him to desert the navy and for them to flee to any small town far away. Nowhere was marriage mentioned nor how they would have lived. The reader recognizes that this mutual infatuation was impractical and, since it was accompanied by irrational ideas, would have had difficulty developing into a permanent, mature relationship. However, because their fidelity had been confirmed by a mutual recitation of oaths, Deolindo now anticipates his first night with Genoveva will be one fit for an admiral, declared as such by his envious shipmates.

Having maintained his loyalty to her in spirit if not entirely in body (Machado purposely leaves the reader in doubt with the following sentences:

. . . lembra as mulheres que viu por êsse mundo de Cristo, italianas, marselhesas ou turcas, muitas delas bonitas, ou que lhe pareciam tais. Concorde que nem tôdas seriam para os beijos dêle, mas algumas eram, e nem por isso fêz caso de nenhuma. Só pensava em Genoveva.119),

with his pocket full of small gifts and a pair of expensive earrings, Deolindo arrives at the small, weatherbeaten house she had shared with old Inácia. It was Inácia who had advised them ten months before not to run away together and that Deolindo should leave with his ship. Now, upon his return, Inácia informs him that Genoveva no longer resides with her. She has gone to live with José Diogo in his house nearby. He is a local peddler with whom she had fallen in love during

Deolindo's absence. Confused and angry, Deolindo locates the house. He and Genoveva see each other simultaneously and she politely invites him to enter but leaves the door open behind them.

The ensuing scene between Deolindo and Genoveva could have been written melodramatically by Machado de Assis. It could have been filled with accusations, counterattacks, and violent behavior by Deolindo whose preliminary thoughts did briefly include the expected images of ". . . a faca de bordo, ensangüentada e vingadora."¹²⁰ However, Machado rejects these excesses and allows his characters to interact as two human beings.

Genoveva promptly tells Deolindo he is a man of reason and good judgment. This form of flattery and the polite way he was received by her momentarily turns aside his rage and briefly encourages him to think that his "Admiral's Night" might yet take place. This possibility soon fades. However, as they continue to talk, his bursts of anger become less and less intense even though he slowly becomes resigned to the fact he has lost her. The passing of time is the great extinguisher of occasional violent thoughts emanating from a normally temperate individual. Genoveva understands this very well.

Machado's cynical and pessimistic thoughts about the lack of moral standards prevalent in people become apparent in Genoveva's explanation to Deolindo of why she broke her vows of eternal loyalty to him. Genoveva could not possibly

feel any remorse because she does not believe in any moral code by which she could judge her conduct.

(Genoveva) não sorria de escárnio. A expressão das palavras é que era uma mescla de candura e cinismo, de insolência e simplicidade, que desisto de definir melhor. Creio até insolência e cinismo são mal aplicados. Genoveva não se defendia de um erro ou de um perjúrio; não se defendia de nada; faltava-lhe o padrão moral das ações.¹²¹

Therefore, in the view of Machado de Assis, the statement of "- Quando jurei, era verdade. . . . Mas vieram outras cousas... Veio êste môço e eu comecei a gostar dêle..."¹²² must regrettably be considered as the truth. Deolindo counters with the argument "- Mas a gente jura é para isso mesmo; é para não gostar de mais ninguém..."¹²³ but her response of "- Deixa disso, Deolindo. Então você só se lembrou de mim? Deixa de partes..."¹²⁴ elicits no logical answer from him. He merely replies with a mild threat to harm the temporarily absent José Diogo. This is proof they both live by the same lack of moral standards further seen when Deolindo, in a silent, rationalized retort to her question, posed by the author in indirect form, "E êle que tanto enchia a bôca de fidelidade, tinha-se lembrado dela por onde andou?"¹²⁵ gives her the gifts he had brought from overseas. By this ploy, he implies he has kept his vows of loyalty to her and she should now feel guilty about her own conduct. In his mind, he then falsely translates her show of happiness at receiving the trinkets, especially the earrings, into another glimmer of hope that she would resume her relationship with him. Just as the peddler had replaced him when he was away, now he could replace the absent peddler. With Genoveva coaxing him to tell

her about the foreign lands he had visited, this possibility of renewed hope keeps him talking to her. When they are later joined by a friend from the neighborhood he finally realizes she truly is not interested in him any longer. By this time, his anger has completely subsided and he is sadly resigned to the fact there will not be an "Admiral's Night" nor any other one with Genoveva. As he leaves the house, his final word to her is that he will commit suicide but neither he nor Genoveva actually believe this will occur. The next day, when his shipmates congratulate him on his "Admiral's Night," he remains silent though his smiles intimate satisfaction. Thus he is able to preserve his manly pride.

In "Noite de Almirante," Machado de Assis has created two characters of the uneducated class. Both Deolindo and Genoveva would not be able intellectually to explain what responses their thoughts, words, and actions were attempting to evoke, each from the other. By the nature of their station in life, they should not and do not have any theoretical knowledge of human behavior. Whatever considerable perception they do possess would have had to have been acquired through practical experiences. Therefore, they are free to behave as ordinary human beings enjoying a certain dignity and having the wish to maintain it in their lives and in their image to the world. Their minds would be uncluttered by abstract theories of why they are acting and speaking as they do. As fictional characters in the universal and timeless situation in which they are placed by the author, they

function as nearly as possible at the level of the nature of what is human. In "Noite de Almirante," Machado de Assis has continued to explore human thought by creating fictional characters whose traits are recognizable in people with whom we associate every day.

"Manuscrito de um Sacristão," a short story narrated by a character whose name is not given, tells of Father Teófilo and Eulália, cousins who meet again after having led separate lives for more than twenty years. The narrator is now the sexton of a church in Rio de Janeiro to which Father Teófilo had come from the interior two weeks previously. By coincidence, Eulália was in the church to attend a private mass on the first anniversary of her mother's death. The story ostensibly is about the deepening love between the forty-two-year-old priest and his thirty-eight-year-old cousin who had never married. However, Machado de Assis has written a piece of short fiction in which an understanding of the narrative point of view and the personality of the sexton are far more important to the analysis and appreciation of the story than is the concentration upon the theme of a priest who has fallen in love. It must be remembered that six years before Machado had written "Manuscrito de um Sacristão," he had mercilessly criticized Eça de Queirós for what he had thought was the lurid treatment Eça had given to this particular topic in his novel O Crime do Padre Amaro. It is not difficult to believe that Machado had the Portuguese author's work in mind when he wrote "Manuscrito de um Sacristão." Not

only did Machado change the genre but he created a narrator who constantly brings into the story his own prejudices, pettinesses, self-interests, and an exaggerated concept of his abilities, thereby always leaving his words open to challenge.

The initial clue that this story is markedly different than a cursory reading would indicate is found in the title. From the point of view of Machado de Assis, the title clearly points to the importance of the sexton in the text since no one but he is mentioned or alluded to. Machado is also belittling his character's self-proclaimed superior intellectual ability by calling this work "A Sexton's Manuscript." Within the realm of fiction and from the point of view of the sexton, the title is weak and pretentious since it offers no hint at all as to the contents of the writing but reveals the sexton to be boastful and to fancy himself an intellectual.

The first of the character's five chapters follows in its entirety.

.....Ao dar com o Padre Teófilo falando a uma senhora, ambos sentadinhos no banco da igreja, e a igreja deserta, confesso que fiquei espantado. Note-se que conversavam em voz tão baixa e discreta, que eu, por mais que afiasse o ouvido e me demorasse a apagar as velas do altar, não podia apanhar nada, nada, nada. Não tive remédio senão adivinhar alguma cousa. Que eu sou um sacristão filósofo. Ninguém me julgue pela sobrepeliz rôta e amarrotada nem pelo uso clandestino das galhetas. Sou um filósofo sacristão. Tive estudos eclesiásticos, que interrompi por causa de uma doença e que inteiramente deixei por outro motivo, uma paixão violenta, que me trouxe à miséria. Como o seminário deixa sempre um certo vinco, fiz-me sacristão aos trinta anos, para ganhar a vida. Venhamos, porém, ao nosso padre e à nossa dama.¹²⁶

The sexton's use of the ellipsis is incorrect stylistically and is employed merely to attract the reader's eye.

The first few sentences of the chapter are intended to shock the reader and titillate the imagination. The sexton has set the stage of scandal by remarking that Father Teófilo and a woman were conversing softly in an otherwise empty church, and were sitting quite close to each other. However, at the time of writing the story, the sexton is fully aware they are cousins, and though they were in love they would never have an affair and would ultimately part when Father Teófilo returned to the interior. In the sexton's futile attempt to ascertain the nature of their conversation, he reveals himself as a snoop, eavesdropping in a sly manner. Immediately, because he feels a need to justify his actions, he rationalizes and tells us he is a "sacristão filósofo,"¹²⁷ a thinker who had once studied for the priesthood. (Later in the story, he calls himself both a gastronomist and a psychologist.) What truly emerges is that he is a pseudo-intellectual who never had a strong religious calling, drifted throughout his twenties, and became a sexton at age thirty out of desperation to earn a living. He is also a bit of a sneak, often helping himself to the sacramental wafers.

In his second chapter, still shorter than the first, important features present themselves the significance of which the sexton is not cognizant. In the first sentence, he informs us it was later he discovered Father Teófilo and Eulália are cousins. Though his initial reaction upon seeing them in the church may have been one of shock, conveying this to the readers merely to startle and excite curiosity without

immediately informing they are related continues to expose the faults in his character. Eulália and Teófilo were born in the same town, Vassouras. When she came to live in Rio de Janeiro with her family at age seven, Teófilo, who moved there at an unspecified time "depois,"¹²⁸ was then eleven years old. Therefore, in both places, they had spent a great part of their childhood and adolescent years living near each other. No mention is made that either one had brothers or sisters. Teófilo and the sexton had been classmates at the seminary but here a wrong impression is given (only partially corrected in subsequent chapters) that Teófilo was there just because "na família era uso antigo que um dos rapazes fôsse padre,"¹²⁹ and that in his generation it was his duty to enter the priesthood.

In his third chapter, the sexton makes an attempt to explain Teófilo's personality by recalling their days at the seminary. He begins by stating that Teófilo was weak in the subject of rhetoric but excelled in all others: theology, Latin, philosophy, and religious history. The sexton says Teófilo excused his poor scholarship in rhetoric by declaring that divine words did not need any adornments. He also says that Teófilo

vivia ansioso de tomar ordens para sair a pregar grandes cousas, espertar as almas, chamar os corações à Igreja, e renovar o gênero humano. . . .¹³⁰

Teófilo amava S. Paulo, adorava-o, estudava-o dia e noite, parecia viver daquele converso que ia de cidade em cidade, à custa de um ofício mecânico, espalhando a boa nova aos homens. Nem tinha somente êsse modelo, tinha mais dous: Hildebrando e Loiola. Daqui podeis concluir que nasceu com a fibra da peleja e do apostolado. Era um faminto de

ideal e criação, . . .¹³¹

However, nowhere is there any praise for Teófilo's idealism nor any agreement that his attitude was excellent for a young man studying to become a priest. There is only a statement by the sexton that Teófilo was already "um místico,"¹³² and then, couched in rhetoric, evidently the sexton's favorite subject of study, he gives a vague explanation of the term.

. . . ; achava em tôdas as cousas uma significação recondita. A vida era uma eterna missa em que o mundo servia de altar, a alma de sacerdote e o corpo de acólito; nada respondia à realidade exterior.¹³³

Three other seminarians, Vasconcelos, Soares, and Veloso, adept in rhetoric, are specifically mentioned by the sexton.

. . . , um Vasconcelos, um Soares e um Veloso, todos excelentes retóricos. Eram também bons rapazes, alegres por natureza, graves por necessidade e ambiciosos. Vasconcelos jurava que seria bispo; Soares contentava-se com algum grande cargo; Veloso cobiçava as meias roxas de cônego e um púlpito.¹³⁴

They are singled out for praise even though they are ambitious hypocrites. Instead of wanting to serve God, they merely crave power and glory within the bounds of their chosen profession. That this is a perversion of the office for which they are studying is totally unnoticed by the sexton. By using the following simile, he informs us of Teófilo's failure in his attempt to instill a sense of idealism in them.

Teófilo tentou repartir com êles o pão místico dos seus sonhos, mas reconheceu depressa que era manjar leve ou pesado demais, e passou a devorá-lo sozinho.¹³⁵

Teófilo is not commended for his effort nor are the three young men reproved for their attitude.

The sexton abruptly concludes this chapter with "até aqui o padre; vamos agora à dama."¹³⁶ These words indicate he has spoken long enough about the man and his ideals and wishes to move on to discuss the lady, always a more appealing topic than a priest.

In presenting his analysis of Eulália's personality and his explanation of why she had never married, the sexton again demonstrates intellectual weakness. Though he possesses all the clues enabling him to come to the correct conclusion, he cannot deduce it. He begins by saying that after Eulália had rejected her first three suitors, her friends and mother firmly believed she was secretly in love with someone and would not reveal who he was. Instead of pursuing this subject further, the sexton abandons it, leaving it unresolved. He then states that when Eulália was twenty-seven her mother finally "atreveu-se a perguntar-lhe se amava alguém e não era correspondida. Eulália respondeu que não."¹³⁷ What other response could Eulália have given unless she were to make a full confession. Furthermore, she would not accede to her mother's wish to accept any worthy man just so as not to be alone later in her life.

E, reclinando a cabeça, fechou um pouco os olhos para espiar alguém, para ver o namorado encoberto, que não era só encoberto, mas também e principalmente impalpável. Concorro que isto agora é obscuro; não tenho dúvida em dizer que entramos em pleno sonho.¹³⁸

Again the sexton has ignored what is becoming more and more obvious to the reader that Teófilo is the man she has always loved.

The sexton then offers an absurd interpretation of Eulália's thinking. First he agrees with her mother that Eulália is an "esquisita,"¹³⁹ an eccentric, or peculiar, person. This is a poor way to describe someone by one who calls himself a psychologist. Then he speaks of her as a dreamer, and adds this is a trait she had inherited from her late father who had died preparing an expedition to search for an abandoned city in the interior of Bahia.

Era na cabeça que ela descobria as cidades abandonadas. Tinha os olhos dispostos de maneira que não podiam apanhar integralmente os contornos da vida.¹⁴⁰

Because he has not been able to fathom the true reason for her not marrying, the sexton rationalizes about Eulália's behavior. He continues to be incorrect in his conclusions as Eulália appears from her actions to be a strongly idealistic young woman and not merely the impractical dreamer he has judged her to be. Since she could not marry the only man with whom she felt totally in accord, she had decided not to accept anyone. The sexton adds that she ". . . , continuou a esperar uma vida nova e um marido único,"¹⁴¹ not recognizing the fact that the marido único had come and gone and that there could never be uma vida nova for her.

In his fifth and final chapter, the sexton returns the reader to the time he saw Father Teófilo and Eulália together in the church. In relating all that had happened until Father Teófilo decided to go back to the interior, the sexton's attitudes, opinions, and actions substantiate what has previously been learned about him. He shows a strong preference

for the material world as opposed to the spiritual, continues his tactic of hinting at a scandal involving the priest purely for its shock value, and constantly acts for self-interest. In addition, he exaggerates his relationship with Father Teófilo and Eulália, and fails to understand why the priest would have to leave the city.

The only words of conversation between the cousins reported verbatim by the sexton are the following.

- Tudo o que me cerca é trivial e chôcho, dizia-lhe
ele.¹⁴²

- Também o senhor? perguntou ela.¹⁴³

These statements are separated by a paragraph in which the sexton erroneously judges the meaning behind Father Teófilo's remark.

Com efeito, gastara o aço da mocidade em divulgar uma concepção que ninguém lhe entendeu. Enquanto os três amigos mais chegados do seminário passavam adiante, trabalhando e servindo, afinados pela nota do século, Veloso cônego e pregador, Soares com uma grande vigararia, Vasconcelos a caminho de bispar, êle Teófilo era o mesmo apóstolo e místico dos primeiros anos, em plena aurora cristã e metafísica. Vivía miseravelmente, costeando a fome, pão magro e batina surrada; tinha instantes e horas de tristeza e de abatimento: confessou-os à prima...¹⁴⁴

As did his idol Saint Paul, Father Teófilo spent many years in missionary work. His statement that in all things about him there exists triviality and futility should not lead to the conclusion hinted at by the sexton that Father Teófilo is saying he has been wasting his life while his three classmates were attaining their goals. The sexton is presenting his own opinion of what success and progress signify to him. He is equating Father Teófilo's words with his

own attitude of materialism. Father Teófilo was and still is an idealist in a materialistic world in which few people were accepting his message. Naturally he would be living miserably poor and suffering periods of dejection. However, not only did he never abandon the course of his life on which he had embarked some twenty years before but also he would return to it shortly. His sadness and discouragement came from his inability to communicate to the world his spiritual values and not from the non-attainment of material success. To all of this, the sexton is oblivious.

In the mind of the sexton, Eulália's response of "- Também o senhor?"¹⁴⁵ to Father Teófilo's statement, "- Tudo o que me cerca é trivial e chôcho,"¹⁴⁶ reinforces his conception that the cousins' personalities make them compatible. However, in an analogy in which the sexton seems merely to be exhibiting what he considers his brilliant intellect, he states:

E as suas mãos apertaram-se com energia: entendiam-se.
 . . . Uma era a eterna noiva sem noivo, outro o eterno
 profeta sem Israel: ambos punidos e obstinados.¹⁴⁷

He has continued to criticize them, albeit very subtly, for not being materialistically ambitious. This is even after he has hinted to us that he had become their close friend.

The sexton says he had defended Father Teófilo's behavior with Eulália in the church to other clergymen, including the bishop, "com muito calor,"¹⁴⁸ and that Father Teófilo's appreciation led to a friendship which later included Eulália. The sexton's self-proclaimed assistance boastfully

reported does not alter the fact the cousins were socially and intellectually superior to him. There was no necessity for Father Teófilo and Eulália to regard the sexton as an intimate. There does not appear to be any mutual interests which would tend to link them to him. Therefore, it is difficult to presume they thought of him in the way he asserts. Rather, it is more logical to believe they merely tolerated his presence out of politeness. For him, a relationship was extremely beneficial because they were ". . . uma fina matéria de estudo . . ."149 and her home was a place to have ". . . jantares dominicais."150 Also, he no doubt enjoyed the role he could play in front of church officials and laymen; that of an intimate friend and therefore a prime source of information about the two who were the objects of everyone's gossip.

A careful reading of the last chapter shows it is the allusive words of the sexton which suggest a love affair between Father Teófilo and Eulália.

. . . o Padre Teófilo, com quarenta e dous anos tinha os cabelos grisalhos e as feições cansadas; as mãos não possuíam nem a maciez nem o aroma da sacristia, eram magras e calosas e cheiravam ao mato. Os olhos é que conservavam o fogo antigo, era por ali que a mocidade interior falava cá para fora, e fôrça é dizer que eles valiam só por si todo o resto.151

In the above description, he has stressed the masculine appeal of Father Teófilo. The sexton then adds that "as visitas amiudaram-se,"152 and this "convivência"153 has had some consequences, including

. . . - um caminho às avessas, porque a voz não baixou do céu, mas subiu da terra; não chamava a pregar Deus, mas a

pregar o homem. Sem metáfora, amavam-se.¹⁵⁴

His final innuendo is the repetition of the rumor that "sussurrava-se desde muito que as visitas do padre eram menos de confessor que de pecador."¹⁵⁵ Now, when this gossiping hypocrite finally states that "era mentira; eu juro que era mentira,"¹⁵⁶ his insinuations to the contrary have been so ingrained in the mind of the reader that his brief denial has little impact. In a blatant display of self-interest, the sexton then states he did not inform Father Teófilo and Eulália of the rumors circulating about their conduct for fear of losing the benefits he was receiving from associating with them. Moreover, he rationalizes about the gains for science as a result of his so-called studies.

Pensei em avisar o padre, não por mim, mas por êle mesmo; mas era difícil, e talvez perigoso. Demais, eu era e sou gastrônomo e psicólogo; avisá-lo era botar fora uma fina matéria de estudo e perder os jantares dominicais. A psicologia, ao menos, merecia um sacrifício; calei-me.¹⁵⁷

This remark confirms the sexton to be a literary relative of the two gentlemen from "Singular Ocorrência," Joaquim Fidélis from "Galeria Póstuma," Stroibus and Pítias of "Conto Alexandrino," the unnamed protagonist in "Primas de Sapucaia!," and Fulano Beltrão and the narrator from "Fulano." In the sexton, Machado de Assis has created a character who bares his soul unintentionally but slowly and steadily until suddenly he stands before us exposed as a pseudo-intellectual and a political machinator.

If any additional evidence be necessary to show that this is a correct analysis of the sexton's character, we have

only to study carefully the conclusion of his story.

Se o leitor me leu de corrida, conclui por si mesmo a anedota, conjugando os dous primos; mas, se me leu devagar, adivinha o que sucedeu. Os dous místicos recuaram; não tiveram horror um do outro nem de si mesmos, porque essa sensação estava excluída de ambos, mas recuaram, agitados de medo e de desejo.¹⁵⁸

After this last shrewd attempt to demonstrate his sagacity, here at the expense of the reader but once again resorting to rationalization to cover incomprehension, the sexton now offers three lines of dialogue which further expose him as an intellectual fraud with little understanding of psychology.

- Volto para a roça, disse-me o padre.
- Mas por quê?
- Volto para a roça.¹⁵⁹

His question to Father Teófilo of "- mas por quê?"¹⁶⁰ displays his ignorance. The sexton is so materialistically and secularly oriented he is unable to comprehend that the idealistic priest must leave Eulália or eventually be destroyed emotionally by the relationship. It can also be seen that, despite the sexton's avowal of an intimate friendship with Father Teófilo, the priest does not confide in him and is rather terse in his response to him. But the sexton appears unperturbed by his departure and continues ". . . a ir jantar com Eulália aos domingos."¹⁶¹

Within the first two pages of "Ex Cathedra," the author as the narrator introduces his three principal characters as quickly as possible. The first is Fulgêncio, humorously described as a man totally dedicated to reading and contemplation.

. . . ; (ele) lia com excesso, lia de manhã, de tarde e de

noute, ao almoço e ao jantar, antes de dormir, depois do banho, lia andando, lia parado, lia em casa e na chácara, lia antes de ler e depois de ler, lia tôda a casta de livros, mas especialmente direito (em que era graduado), matemáticas e filosofia; Últimamente dava-se também às ciências naturais.¹⁶²

The author informs us that even though excessive reading and the formulation of doctrines has somewhat addled Fulgêncio's thoughts, the resultant form of insanity, restricted to the concocting of absurd theories, is of a mild nature and he is harmless. However, once again the fine line between sanity and insanity may rest in the consciousness of the reader. A strongly idealistic person could agree with Fulgêncio's notion that "a liberdade não morre onde restar uma fôlha de papel para decretá-la."¹⁶³ Yet when he studies the anatomy of the eye to determine whether it really can see and he comes to an affirmative conclusion, we begin to accept the diagnosis. In "Ex Cathedra," the author is once more involved with science and the human mind, though here we find humor in his words and a character who invites our sympathy and is never mocked.

The second character in the story is Fulgêncio's god-daughter Caetaninha. She is fourteen years old and in the transition stage from a child to a young woman. In the isolated setting of the home in Tijuca she shares with Fulgêncio,

. . . ; (Caetaninha) não ia a teatros nem bailes; não fazia nem recebia visitas. Quando via passar na estrada uma cavalgada de homens e senhoras, punha a alma na garupa dos animais, e deixava-a ir com êles, ficando-lhe o corpo, ao pé do padrinho, que continuava a ler.¹⁶⁴

The third important character is Fulgêncio's nephew, the illegitimate son of his recently deceased brother. The

boy's arrival so delights Fulgêncio it causes him to interrupt his reading. In turn, the author is so pleased to have introduced his three characters so quickly he appears momentarily to forget to give the boy's name and age (It is Raimundo and he is fifteen years old) and to say that Fulgêncio had expected his arrival but had forgotten to inform the servants. This tends to humanize Fulgêncio and the author by developing an intimacy between them and the reader thereby narrowing the gap between fiction and reality.

With all the preliminary work of introducing the characters now completed, Machado directs his attention to his purpose in creating this story. At this point, first by summarizing what the reader must now be thinking, and then by rapidly providing the details of Raimundo's introduction into the household, the author implies he intends to treat this story differently from an ordinary tale of romance (He had written so many of this type during the 1860s and 1870s), and he wishes to proceed with it quickly.

Parece que até aqui nada há que destoe de uma história ingênuamente romanesca: temos um velho lunático, uma moçoinha solitária e suspirosa, e vemos despontar inopinadamente um sobrinho. . . . ; passo também por alto as circunstâncias da acomodação do rapaz, . . . o tio, à fôrça de viver lendo, esquecera inteiramente que o mandara buscar, nada havia em casa preparado para recebê-lo. Mas a casa era grande e abastada; uma hora depois, estava o rapaz aposentado num lindo quarto, donde podia ver a chácara, a cisterna antiga, o lavadouro, basta fôlha verde e vasto céu azul.¹⁶⁵

In the final four pages of "Ex Cathedra," Machado de Assis interweaves the budding romance between Caetaninha and Raimundo with a gentle ridicule of science and logic misap-

plied in this instance by Fulgêncio. In his desire to insure that they would eventually marry, Fulgêncio resolves to cause Caetaninha and Raimundo to fall in love only after he teaches them love's scientific base. Thus they would avoid the petty annoyances which generally result from love entered into strictly through emotion. Within three or four years, Fulgêncio reasons, they will learn to love each other just as one learns to read. He formulates his logical plan.

Compunha-se êste de vinte capítulos, nos quais entravam as noções gerais do universo, uma definição da vida, demonstração da existência do homem e da mulher, organização das sociedades, definição e análise das paixões, definição e análise do amor, suas causas, necessidades e efeitos.¹⁶⁶

As Fulgêncio conducts his scientific talks with them the relationship between Caetaninha and Raimundo is evolving naturally into love. For the present, there is a sharing of mutual interests and normal teasing and flirting. Soon a romantic attraction occurs.

- O entendimento, dizia o velho, o entendimento, segundo eu já expliquei...

Raimundo olhou para Caetaninha, e achou-a olhando para êle. Um e outro pareciam confusos e acanhados. Ela foi a primeira que baixou os olhos ao regaço. Depois, levantou-os, a fim de os levar a outra parte, mais remota, o muro da chácara; na passagem como os de Raimundo ali estivessem, ela encarou-os o mais rapidamente que pôde.¹⁶⁷

In the garden, the lessons continue, and in her mind, Caetaninha perceives romance among those creatures present: the butterflies, doves, and insects. One day, thoughts of love now in her subconscious are verbalized in her imagination. They become words of affection exchanged between two buzzing insects who have alighted on the wall of the house.

- Conheces a cantiga dos mistérios azuis?

- Vamos ouvi-la nas fôlhas verdes da laranjeira.
- As da mangueira são mais bonitas.
- Tu és mais linda que umas e outras.
- E tu, sol da minha vida?
- Lua do meu ser, eu sou o que tu quiseses...168

In his attempt to insure that a model love match between Caetaninha and Raimundo would take place, Fulgêncio proceeds with his program, reaching the part concerned with the organization of societies. However, his two charges have already fallen in love in the old-fashioned, emotional way Fulgêncio had tried to avoid by employing science. To the wild-life in the garden, the kisses shared by Caetaninha and Raimundo sounded like continual peels of thunder. An exaggeration, says the author. "Suponhamos dous; suponhamos três ou quatro."169 Ironically it was Fulgêncio, symbolizing the older generation, who originated the preposterous notion that science and logic should be a guide for the emotions, but it was Raimundo and Caetaninha, representing the younger generation, who remained untouched by the idea.

"Ex Cathedra" is one of the few short stories of romance written by Machado de Assis after 1881. In structure and style, it is far different from his pre-Bras Cubas episodic narratives which usually had melodramatic plots. In "Ex Cathedra," the development of the story is not dependent either upon conflict between the male and female protagonists or by the introduction of a third person who would disturb a couple's harmony. There is little portrayal of the personalities of Caetaninha and Raimundo nor was it necessary for Machado to develop them any more fully as they are merely

puppets the author has created for a specific purpose.

Machado has used his characters to satirize gently the misuse of science and logic. At the same time, it seems he wished to demonstrate his talent and maturation by writing a short story of a romance free of turmoil and with lyric moments.

Within the confines of the short story genre, little space is available for the author to accomplish his objective. In a specific story where character study is the dominant feature, he must focus his attention on one or, at the most, two characters. Their brief thoughts or actions must serve as the means to determine the personality traits the author wishes to convey. In "A Senhora do Galvão," three individuals are involved: the woman in the title whose name is Maria Olímpia, her lawyer-husband Eduardo Galvão, and the thirty-one-year-old widow of Brigadier General Tavares, a friend of Maria Olímpia known by the nickname of Ipiranga, with whom Galvão in 1853 is having a love affair. As befits the title, the character upon whom Machado de Assis directs the major part of his attention is Maria Olímpia. Though Galvão appears often in the story, he definitely has a secondary role. Ipiranga's function throughout is to be the cause of Maria Olímpia's distress. Her physical presence is restricted to two brief scenes and one sentence of dialogue.

The personalities of Galvão and Ipiranga are not developed. He is simply portrayed as a married man secretly having an affair and she as the merry widow, the object of his affection. In this five page short story, it is the per-

sonality of Maria Olímpia which is disclosed in the following scenes.

One day at home, Maria Olímpia was trying on shawls when she received an anonymous and vaguely worded letter hinting a certain widow (Ipiranga) had been seducing several men including Galvão. Her first reaction was to look at herself in the mirror and mentally compare her charms to those of the widow. She rationalized the following.

Nem os olhos nem a bôca eram comparáveis; a viúva tinha os ombros estreitinhos, a cabeça grande, e o andar feio. Era alta; mas que tinha ser alta? E os trinta e cinco anos de idade, mais nove que ela?¹⁷⁰

Then her thoughts returned exclusively to the shawls. The author as the narrator sarcastically reports:

Experimentou cinco xales dos dez que ali estavam, em caixas, . . . Concluiu que os dois primeiros eram os melhores; mas aqui surgiu uma complicação . . . tão subtil e profunda na solução, que não vacilo em recomendá-la aos nossos pensadores de 1906. A questão era saber qual dos dois xales escolheria, uma vez que o marido, recente advogado, pedia-lhe que fôsse econômica. Contemplava-os alternadamente, e ora preferia um, ora outro. De repente, lembrou-lhe a aleivosia do marido, a necessidade de mortificá-lo, castigá-lo, mostrar-lhe que não era peteca de ninguém, nem maltrapilha; e, de raiva, comprou ambos os xales.¹⁷¹

She had assumed the accusation was true and immediately enacted a rationalized, petty revenge against him.

That very afternoon Galvão was late in coming home, and Maria Olímpia waited anxiously for him. As she pondered whether it was an accident, an illness, a late court session, or the widow that caused his tardiness, Machado de Assis briefly describes episodes and attitudes in her youth when her present personality had previously been in evidence.

Maria Olímpia had been raised by a religious aunt who would often take her to churches where she was more interested in the "orquestra, canto, flôres, luzes, sanefas, ouros, (e) gentes"¹⁷² than in religion. Soon she began to attend dances and the theater, principally to be noticed and admired by others and to look upon them as well. Now the author returns his story to the present moment and has Galvão finally arrive home.

Maria Olímpia, que então passeava na sala, tão depressa lhe ouviu os pés, fêz o que faria qualquer outra senhora na mesma situação: pegou de um jornal de modas, e sentou-se, lendo, com um grande ar de pouco caso.¹⁷³

Though he arrived home in good spirits and was affectionate toward her, she was aloof toward him throughout the dinner hour. Then he announced a surprise. For this very evening, he had obtained tickets for an opera she had always wished to see. However, in spite of her delight, and now with a willingness to rationalize away the accusatory letter as an "invenção de inimigas,"¹⁷⁴ Maria Olímpia still acted coldly to Galvão's normal amorous teasings.

- E aí está por que me demorei. Que é que você merecia agora? Merecia que eu lhe cortasse a ponta desse narizinho arrebitado...

Como êle acompanhasse o dito com um gesto, ela recuou a cabeça: depois acabou de tomar o café.¹⁷⁵

Meia hora depois foi vestir-se. Galvão, quando a viu pronta daí a pouco, ficou encantado. "Minha mulher é linda" pensou êle; e fêz um gesto para estreitá-la ao peito; mas a mulher recuou, pedindo-lhe que não a amarro-tasse. E, como êle, por umas veleidades de camareiro, pretendeu concertar-lhe a pluma do cabelo, ela disse-lhe enfasiada:

- Deixa, Eduardo! Já veio o carro?¹⁷⁶

At the theater, Ipiranga and her mother (Coinciden-

tally, the author informs us) occupied the seats next to them. But Maria Olímpia's entrance, in her unwrinkled clothes, had been greeted by so many admiring glances that any thoughts about the widow were laid aside in favor of her vainly savoring the excitement her appearance had engendered. And as had occurred in the churches many years before, her attention was not centered for long upon the performance of the opera.

Lá vai ela, inquieta, vai direito ao clarão das luzes, ao esplendor dos vestuários, um pouco à ópera, como pedindo a tôdas as cousas alguma sensação deleitosa em que se espreguice uma alma fria e pessoal. E volta depois à própria dona, ao seu leque, às suas luvas, aos adornos de vestido, realmente magníficos.¹⁷⁷

At this point, the author assumes control of the story for almost a full page. He has Maria Olímpia and Ipiranga leave the theater together. As if standing in front of them, impartially observing and comparing the charms of both women, he emphatically corrects for the reader the impression of Ipiranga given by Maria Olímpia earlier that day.

A modéstia com que a viúva trajava podia realçar a magnificência da amiga. As feições, porém, não eram o que esta afirmou, quando ensaiava os xales de manhã. Não, senhor; eram engraçadas, e tinham um certo pico original. Os ombros proporcionais e bonitos. Não contava trinta e cinco anos, mas trinta e um; nasceu em 1822, na véspera da independência, tanto que o pai, por brincadeira, entrou a chamá-la Ipiranga, e ficou-lhe esta alcunha entre as amigas.¹⁷⁸

After this informative description of the widow, we are told that the anonymous letters continued to come one each week for three months and were divulging the truth about the situation. However, Maria Olímpia still wanted to believe Galvão was not having an affair with Ipiranga though he would come and go at odd hours. At this point in the story, the

reader is able to conclude she was too involved in social activities to want to provoke a confrontation with her husband, and yet too full of pride and vanity to accept the idea he could be interested in another woman.

Negava o que via; não podendo negá-lo, interpretava-o; depois recordava algum caso de alucinação, uma anedota de aparências ilusórias, e nesse travesseiro cômodo e mole punha a cabeça e dormia. Já então, prosperando-lhe o escritório, dava o Galvão partidas e jantares, iam a bailes, teatros, corridas de cavalos. Maria Olímpia vivia alegre, radiante; começava a ser um dos nomes da moda.¹⁷⁹

In this story of a standard romantic triangle involving a husband, a wife, and his paramour, Machado de Assis neither condemns nor condones the actions of any of his characters. The author presents his text without moralizing or preaching, allowing the actions and thoughts of Maria Olímpia to dictate the course of the narrative. By contrast, we know what Galvão is doing but it is not pertinent for the author either to depict graphically Galvão's affair or to explain his motives for involving himself with Ipiranga. In their conversations, we have noted Maria Olímpia's indifferent treatment of her husband and her rejection of his affectionate advances. On the other hand, his conduct has forced him to lie constantly and to act hypocritically. This couple, therefore, seems to live not in a state of love but in perpetual emotional combat.

From the imposing perch her name suggests, built upon layers of vanity, Maria Olímpia was unable to question Galvão's conduct directly. She avoided an opportunity to challenge him after he had noticed she had been receiving personal letters through the mail. Ironically it was he, the hypocrite,

who thought she had a secret admirer and was inwardly furious about it. He demanded she show him the next letter which arrived after a week of watchful waiting on his part. Though Maria Olímpia correctly expected to learn the truth by observing his reaction to the written accusations ("Que melhor ocasião para ler no rosto dêle a expressão da verdade?"¹⁸⁰), she subconsciously feared that any hint Galvão would proffer confirming its veracity would cause her to lose her pride completely and destroy her emotionally. Therefore, as she handed him the letter, she vocally denied its charges.

- Não queria mostrar esta, disse-lhe ela primeiro, como não mostrei outras que tenho recebido e botado fora; são tolices, intrigas, que andam fazendo para... Leia, leia a carta.¹⁸¹

Then, to avoid seeing the truth in his expression,

Ela enterrou a cabeça na cintura, . . . Não o viu empalidecer. Quando êle, depois de alguns minutos, proferiu duas ou três palavras, tinha já a fisionomia composta e um esboço de sorriso. Mas a mulher, que o não adivinhava, respondeu ainda de cabeça baixa; só a levantou daí a três ou quatro minutos, e não para fitá-lo de uma vez, mas aos pedaços, como se temesse descobrir-lhe nos olhos a confirmação do anônimo. Vendo-lhe, ao contrário, um sorriso, achou que era o da inocência, e falou de outra coisa.¹⁸²

The scene between husband and wife was not written melodramatically by Machado de Assis. Rather, as he had been doing throughout the story, he focused upon exposing the psychological needs and motives of Maria Olímpia.

A few months later in the chronology of the story, what Maria Olímpia perceived in her mind as a direct challenge to the pride she had in her beauty compelled her to comment upon the love affair. In keeping with her personality, a petty incident aroused her anger at Ipiranga. Ipiranga came

to a formal dance wearing the diamond-laced tiara Maria Olímpia had seen in a shop, had wished to buy, but had been informed had already been sold. At the dance, everyone's attention had been directed toward Maria Olímpia but upon the arrival of Ipiranga, she was no longer the center of attraction. Because her vanity could not permit her to endure this situation without her offering some form of retort, in this the final scene of the story, she reacted against Ipiranga by employing the one weapon she had.

• - Hoje quase não tenho tido tempo de estar com você, disse ela a Maria Olímpia, perto de meia-noite.

- Naturalmente, disse a outra abrindo e fechando o leque; e, depois de umedecer os lábios, como para chamar a êles todo o veneno que tinha no coração: - Ipiranga, você está hoje uma viúva deliciosa... Vem seduzir mais algum marido?

A viúva empalideceu, e não pôde dizer nada. Maria Olímpia acrescentou, com os olhos, alguma coisa que a humilhasse bem, que lhe respingasse lama no triunfo. Já no resto da noite falaram pouco; três dias depois romperam para nunca mais.¹⁸³

In "A Senhora do Galvão," Machado de Assis could have used the love affair as the central point, which might have ultimately led to scenes of confrontation among the various personages or to his opinion on the immorality of the situation. However, he chose not to write it as a romantic short story but as a definitive character study. He used the idea of the romantic triangle to explore the wife's flawed character from a psychological point of view, and eliminated both melodrama and emphasis on details in the plot. The source of the letters and the future relationship between Galvão and Maria Olímpia as well as any further alliance between Galvão and Ipiranga are not of importance and did not have to be

addressed. The letters were merely a contrivance to have Maria Olímpia learn about the affair. Any scenes between Galvão and either of the women after the night at the dance would have broken the unity of the story by wrongly augmenting Galvão's role without his having been presented as an individual. It would have opened the story to the question of morality and to the recourses available to a wife placed in this situation. In "A Senhora do Galvão," Machado de Assis has once again demonstrated his ability to limit the sphere of a short story to the creation of a character who thinks and acts throughout the narrative in a manner consistent with the very human faults in her personality.

A tactic commonly employed by a writer of satirical fiction is to begin his work in a setting, within a period of time, and with characters all of which the reader can comfortably relate to. This close link between the reader's and the author's worlds facilitates the suspension of disbelief and the acceptance of the verisimilitude of the tale. Having established this intimacy, the storyteller proceeds increasingly to exaggerate his truth until the mask of reality totally disappears and the object or person under consideration is exposed to the desired ridicule.

In the final story of the collection Histórias sem Data, "As Academias de Sião," Machado de Assis adopts the opposite strategy. In his opening paragraph, he immediately apprises the readers that he shall be telling a fictional tale.

Conhecem as academias de Sião? Bem sei que em Sião nunca houve academias: mas suponhamos que sim, e que eram quatro, e escutem-me.¹⁸⁴

The author has now given himself the literary license to direct his story in any manner he so chooses. He does not have to equate the universe of his reader with that of his characters. Furthermore, the world he creates can possess laws of nature unlike ours and they do not have to function in a consistent way. Therefore, at any time in this five and one-half page story, we can expect satire to emerge.

Immediately following the author's "announcement" of his forthcoming tale, he presents a brief fable already with satire in mind. White fireflies in multitudinous numbers, rising up toward the stars, represent the powerful thoughts of the four learned societies of Siam who boastfully declare possession of all the knowledge in the universe.

Uma noite, foram em tal quantidade os vaga-lumes, que as estrêlas, de medrosas, refugiaram-se nas alcovas, e êles tomaram conta de uma parte do espaço, onde se fixaram para sempre com o nome de Via-láctea.¹⁸⁵

In truth, Machado was attacking what he considered the egotism and pretentiousness of members of learned societies in Brazil, possibly of one particular organization.

On October 10, 1883, Machado had been elected to membership in a society of writers called the Associação dos Homens de Letras do Brasil. This group had been formed six weeks before.¹⁸⁶ It is curious that Machado, recognized by most critics as the finest writer of fiction in Brazil, had not been asked to be one of its original members. Possibly this was due to the fact that one founder was Sílvia Romero,

whose definition of modern poetry Machado in 1879 had summarily dismissed as lacking in an esthetic concept of the art.¹³⁷ In 1882, Romero had retaliated against Machado, not only attacking his prose but also viciously referring to him as a bootlicker of whatever government held power.¹⁸⁸ Though Machado had friends and defenders among members of the Associação, it can be surmised that the Academies of Siam collectively are the fictional representations of the Associação. The anger Machado doubtlessly held against Romero and his supporters seems to emerge in "As Academias de Sião," published for the first time on June 6, 1884 in the Gazeta de Notícias. This story appeared in print too soon after the disputes with Romero and the founding of the Associação to be merely a coincidence.

In the story, the academicians' cogitations about why there are effeminate men and masculine-willed women (A topic certain to attract interest in Brazil as well as in the fictional Siam of Machado de Assis) had caused the ascension of the hordes of fireflies. When the academicians were unable to agree intellectually on the validity of the hypothesis that souls are either masculine or feminine and occasionally their bodies had been mismatched, they resolved the question by force. Members of the one Academy in favor of this theory killed everyone in the other Academies. Now flushed with victory, their position and tactic used in "proving" this absurd notion had the approval of the beautiful Kinnara, the leading concubine of King Kalaphangko. She persuaded him to

grant the status of law to the theory. The obliging ruler complied with her request.

At this point in the narrative, the author's focus changes from the Academies to King Kalaphangko and Kinnara. She convinced him that their souls had been placed in the wrong vessels. The effeminate Kalaphangko then agreed to a transposition of their bodies but only for a limited period of time. By the use of a magical Hindu incantation which had been given to her by a Buddhist priest (In the exotic, far-off Siam of Machado de Assis' fiction, anything is possible), Kinnara effectuated the exchange.

Um e outro estavam bem, como pessoas que acham finalmente uma casa adequada. Kalaphangko espreguiçava-se todo nas curvas femininas de Kinnara. Esta inteiriçava-se no tronco rijo de Kalaphangko. Sião tinha, finalmente, um rei.¹⁸⁹

In Brazil at the time this story was written, there was great controversy over Princess Isabel's impending succession to the throne which would occur upon the death or abdication of her aging father, Emperor Pedro II. She was an intelligent and outspoken woman, deeply and vocally involved in favor of the abolition of slavery. Opponents of the monarchical form of government gave, as an excuse for opposing her eventual assumption of power, her marriage to a Frenchman who they said would dominate her and thus control the country. We can only speculate upon the thoughts of Princess Isabel but, in the years before the Revolution of 1889 established the Republic, she could have believed that if her soul were in the body of a man she could preserve the Monarchy as her

father had done some forty years earlier.

The next part of "As Academias de Sião" is filled with irony and sarcasm. The transformed ruler gave the highest non-military honors of the nation to the members of the triumphant Academy since they "eram mais homens de pensamento que de ação e administração, dados à filosofia e à literatura, . . ."190 He ordered a dozen Christian missionaries burned at the stake, imitating the old Spanish ways. Naturally he had to have a war so he provoked one on a pretext and won it gloriously. The people were ecstatic.

Na volta a Bangkok, (Kalaphangko) achou grandes festas esplêndidas. Trezentos barcos, forrados de sêda escarlate e azul, foram recebê-lo. Cada um dêstes tinha na proa um cisne ou um dragão de ouro, e era tripulado pela mais fina gente da cidade; músicas e aclamações atroaram os ares.191

Machado de Assis has exposed the negative values present in the souls of the entire population who rejoiced in the aggressive, wanton destruction of fellow human beings. Through the catalytic actions of their leader, these qualities were easily able to assume control of their thought and conduct.

However, it seems the author has saved his most vituperative satire for the final two pages of the story, using the fourteen members of the surviving Academy as the means for his ridicule of Brazilian intellectuals. (Apparently, the Associação in Rio de Janeiro had at least fourteen original members, including Sílvia Romero.192) Now the time had arrived for Kalaphangko and Kinnara to return their souls to their own bodies. However, human nature what it is, Kalaphangko with the soul of Kinnara wished to retain power. No

different than the citizenry with regard to moral standards,

. . . êle cuidava em iludir a cláusula, matando a linda siamesa. Hesitava por não saber se padeceria com a morte dela visto que o corpo era seu, ou mesmo se teria de sucumbir também. Era esta a dúvida de Kalaphangko; . . .¹⁹³

His doubt did not arise from the point of view of righteousness but of practicality. To help him solve the dilemma, he naturally turned to the Academy. The members appeared before him, first as a group of thirteen without their President U-Tong who was ill. Later, at the command of Kalaphangko, each one came to him individually, this time including U-Tong.

.When U-Tong was not present, all of them collectively referred to him as ". . . um dos mais singulares estúpidos do reino, espírito raso, sem valor, nada sabendo e incapaz de aprender nada."¹⁹⁴ However, as is the nature of academicians and their politics that Machado no doubt had observed, a person's intelligence may be attacked but diplomacy demands a positive statement usually be added affirming one's integrity. U-Tong can be called "um espírito raso e chôcho,"¹⁹⁵ but of course "o coração é excelente, caráter puro, elevado..."¹⁹⁶

Unsure of his Academy's judgment, Kalaphangko pondered the problem by himself. When Kinnara informed him she was pregnant, he decided that for the sake of the child he had to proceed with the reexchange of their souls. After this had been accomplished at dawn aboard the royal yacht, the fourteen academicians came sailing by on a splendidly adorned craft singing, "'Glória a nós, que somos o arroz da ciência e a claridade do mundo!'"¹⁹⁷ This farcical, cartoon-like episode closes the story. The author, pleased with his satire, rein-

forces his attack upon the egotism and hypocrisy of academicians by recording the couple's reactions upon viewing the bizarre scene.

(Kinnara) não podia entender como é que quatorze varões reunidos em academia eram a claridade do mundo, e separadamente uma multidão de camelos. Kalaphangko, consultado por ela, não achou explicação.¹⁹⁸

Even though Machado de Assis is ridiculing contemporary intellectuals in Brazil, he does not allude to any time period until the final sentence when he jokingly invites his readers to help Kinnara and Kalaphangko explain the academicians' behavior.

Se alguém descobrir alguma (explicação), pode obsequiar uma das mais graciosas damas do Oriente, mandando-lha em carta fechada, e, para maior segurança, sobrescritada ao nosso cônsul em Xangai, China.¹⁹⁹

Though the story is set entirely in the exotic, mysterious Orient, in the last sentence mention is made of a Brazilian diplomatic site actually located in the region and referred to by the author as "nosso cônsul."²⁰⁰ This serves to return the reader to his own time and space and closes the collection Histórias sem Data by implying that both author and reader truly are part of the same world and thus share like traditions and values. However, "As Academias de Sião" can take place effectively in any time period just as could "A Igreja do Diabo," the first story in the volume.

Although Kalaphangko, Kinnara, and the academicians do live in a fictitious world governed by natural laws different from ours, still their attitudes and actions are in accord with Machado de Assis' pessimistic view of human nature. In

"As Academias de Sião" as in other stories of Histórias sem Data, the author may be criticizing the human race for allowing certain traits of personality including egotism, hypocrisy, vanity, pretentiousness, selfishness, envy, and greed to motivate so much of its thought and conduct, yet he is not thoroughly damning it. Machado displays these characteristics by permitting the men and women he has created to act and think as he feels all of us do: the author, reader, and this critic included. In the last story of the collection as in the first, no love for one's fellow man is exhibited. Each individual conducts himself or herself purely for self-interest and only entertains an altruistic thought as a sham to help in the attainment of a personal, materialistic goal. As believed by Machado de Assis beginning with the writing of Bras Cubas in 1879, this is realism as a literary style and in life. The volume Histórias sem Data ends as it began, offering a very uncomplimentary picture of the human race.

Footnotes

¹Lúcia Miguel Pereira, Machado de Assis, 5ª edição, Coleção Documentos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro: José Olímpio, 1955), p. 181.

²Ibid., pp. 181-182.

³A Literatura no Brasil, Volume II, Direção de Afrânio Coutinho com a assistência de Eugênio Gomes e Barreto Filho (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1955), p. 90.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume II, Conto e Teatro (Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), pp. 20-21.

⁶Graça Aranha, Correspondência entre M. de Assis e J. Nabuco (Rio de Janeiro: F. Briguiet & Cia., 1942), p. 96.

⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 368.

⁸Ibid. ⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Graça Aranha, Correspondência, p. 138.

¹¹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 368.

¹²Ibid. ¹³Ibid. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 369. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 253.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 369. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 370. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 371.

¹⁹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, organizada por Afrânio Coutinho, introdução geral J. Galante de Sousa, Afrânio Coutinho, Renard Pérez, Volume III, Poesia, Crônica, Crítica, Miscelânea e Epistolário (Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Aguilar Ltda., 1962), p. 907.

²⁰Ibid., p. 908. ²¹Ibid., p. 906. ²²Ibid., p. 911.

²³Ibid., p. 907. ²⁴Ibid., p. 908.

²⁵Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 374.

²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Ibid. ²⁸Ibid., pp. 374-375.

²⁹Ibid., p. 374. ³⁰Ibid., p. 375. ³¹Ibid., p. 371.

³²Ibid., pp. 380-381. ³³Ibid., p. 381.

³⁴Ibid., p. 384. ³⁵Ibid., p. 386. ³⁶Ibid., p. 388.

³⁷Ibid., p. 23.

³⁸Tristão da Cunha, "Contos de Machado de Assis," Revista do Brasil, June 1939, p. 25.

³⁹Machado de Assis, The Devil's Church and Other Stories, translated by Jack Schmitt and Lorie Ishimatsu (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1977), p. x.

⁴⁰Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 390.

⁴¹Ibid. ⁴²Ibid., p. 392. ⁴³Ibid., p. 390. ⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 391. ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 392.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 395-396. ⁴⁸Ibid. ⁴⁹Ibid. ⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 397. ⁵²Ibid., pp. 399-400.

⁵³Ibid., p. 399. ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 400. ⁵⁵Ibid. ⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid. ⁵⁸Ibid., p. 396. ⁵⁹Ibid., p. 402.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 403. ⁶¹Ibid. ⁶²Ibid., p. 408.

⁶³Ibid., p. 411. ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 405.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 406-407. ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 411.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 412. ⁶⁸Ibid., p. 413. ⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 416-417. ⁷¹Ibid., p. 417.

⁷²Ibid., p. 418. ⁷³Ibid. ⁷⁴Ibid. ⁷⁵Ibid. ⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid. ⁷⁸Ibid., p. 419. ⁷⁹Ibid., p. 420. ⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 421. ⁸²Ibid., p. 423. ⁸³Ibid. ⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 417. ⁸⁶Ibid., p. 423. ⁸⁷Ibid., p. 424.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 423. ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 424. ⁹⁰Ibid., p. 426.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 424. ⁹²Ibid., p. 428. ⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Machado de Assis, Contos Fluminenses II (São Paulo: Livro do Mês S. A., 1962), pp. 303-304.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 309. ⁹⁶Ibid., p. 281. ⁹⁷Ibid., p. 308.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 281.

⁹⁹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 429.

- ¹⁰⁰Ibid. ¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 430. ¹⁰²Ibid. ¹⁰³Ibid.
¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 432. ¹⁰⁵Ibid. ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 435.
¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 436. ¹⁰⁸Ibid. ¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 436-437.
¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 438-439. ¹¹¹Ibid., p. 439. ¹¹²Ibid.
¹¹³Ibid., pp. 440-441. ¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 444.
¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 444-445. ¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 445.
¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 446. ¹¹⁸Ibid. ¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 446-447.
¹²⁰Ibid., p. 448. ¹²¹Ibid., p. 449. ¹²²Ibid.
¹²³Ibid. ¹²⁴Ibid. ¹²⁵Ibid., p. 450.
¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 451-452. ¹²⁷Ibid., p. 451.
¹²⁸Ibid., p. 452. ¹²⁹Ibid. ¹³⁰Ibid. ¹³¹Ibid.
¹³²Ibid. ¹³³Ibid. ¹³⁴Ibid., p. 453. ¹³⁵Ibid.
¹³⁶Ibid. ¹³⁷Ibid. ¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 453-454.
¹³⁹Ibid., p. 454. ¹⁴⁰Ibid. ¹⁴¹Ibid.
¹⁴²Ibid., p. 455. ¹⁴³Ibid. ¹⁴⁴Ibid. ¹⁴⁵Ibid.
¹⁴⁶Ibid. ¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 456. ¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 455.
¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 456. ¹⁵⁰Ibid. ¹⁵¹Ibid. ¹⁵²Ibid.
¹⁵³Ibid. ¹⁵⁴Ibid. ¹⁵⁵Ibid. ¹⁵⁶Ibid. ¹⁵⁷Ibid.
¹⁵⁸Ibid. ¹⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 456-457. ¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 457.
¹⁶¹Ibid. ¹⁶²Ibid. ¹⁶³Ibid. ¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 458.
¹⁶⁵Ibid. ¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 459. ¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 461.
¹⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 461-462. ¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 462.
¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 463. ¹⁷¹Ibid. ¹⁷²Ibid., p. 464.
¹⁷³Ibid. ¹⁷⁴Ibid. ¹⁷⁵Ibid. ¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 465.
¹⁷⁷Ibid. ¹⁷⁸Ibid. ¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 466.
¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 467. ¹⁸¹Ibid. ¹⁸²Ibid.
¹⁸³Ibid., pp. 467-468. ¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 468. ¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶José Galante de Sousa, "Cronologia de Machado de Assis," Revista do Livro, September 1958, p. 158.

¹⁸⁷Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume III, pp. 812-813.

¹⁸⁸Brito Broca, A Vida Literária no Brasil - 1900, 2.^a Edição, revista e aumentada (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1960), p. 213.

¹⁸⁹Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 470.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 471. ¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²Revista do Livro, p. 158.

¹⁹³Machado de Assis, Obra Completa, Volume II, p. 471.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 472. ¹⁹⁵Ibid. ¹⁹⁶Ibid.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 473. ¹⁹⁸Ibid. ¹⁹⁹Ibid. ²⁰⁰Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In this study of four volumes of short stories by Machado de Assis, we have seen how the individual stories in the two post-Bras Cubas collections differed greatly in their structures, settings in time and space, points of view, roles of the storyteller, development of the characters, and narrative intents from the two volumes of the pre-Bras Cubas period. Though satire on the philosophy of positivism and the misapplication of science, attacks upon the egotism, pretentiousness, and bankrupt behavior of so-designated influential citizens, especially politicians, and the vanity and intellectual vacuity of men and women were all present in an embryonic form in many short stories published before 1880, these elements were usually subservient to a romantic plot which held the attention of both the author and the reader. Following Machado's traumatic illnesses in late 1878 and 1879 and the completion of Bras Cubas in 1880, the short story became the vehicle in which he could quickly create a character with a serious flaw in his or her personality, ridicule contemporary values, institutions, and human nature either directly or analogously, create individuals whose behavior could be adjudged abnormal, or portray men and women attempting to find an anchor in life; something which would tie them physically or spiritually to this world as the relentless passing of

time oxidizes their flesh and obliterates their worldly accomplishments.

From the predominantly romantic narratives of Contos Fluminenses and Histórias da Meia-Noite, Machado de Assis narrowed his focus in Papéis Avulsos and Histórias sem Data to an analysis of human behavior and thought while expanding his study of men and women to the level of universality. In his earlier short stories, he had produced stereotypical characters and had placed them in romantic situations. Later he reached the point in his intellectual development where he wanted to and was able to create individual human beings who, by nature of their humanity, found themselves immersed in universal and timeless predicaments in which their fears and dreams controlled their thoughts and actions. As an added element, the storyteller too had evolved. From the all-knowing, conventional author in the first two volumes, in many stories written after 1880 Machado had also created narrators who had become as human as the characters. Their words about others must be judged by what they purposely or inadvertently reveal about themselves. The stories of Papéis Avulsos and Histórias sem Data, going in these new directions and exhibiting his perception and understanding of human nature, confirm the status of Machado de Assis not only as Brazil's most important writer of fiction but also as a major if still only partially discovered figure in the literature of the world.

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