

☐ Contemporary  
Literary Criticism

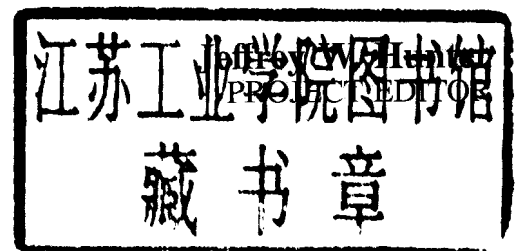
**CLC**

**232**

Volume 232

# Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works  
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,  
Short Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and  
Other Creative Writers



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## Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

### Scope of the Series

*CLC* provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

### Organization of the Book

A *CLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

## Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Thomson Gale, including *CLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *CLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, films, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces an annual cumulative title index that alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in *CLC* and is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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# Jorge Amado

## 1912-2001

(Full name Jorge Amado de Faria) Brazilian novelist, short fiction writer, children's writer, biographer, and nonfiction writer.

The following entry presents an overview of Amado's career through 2004. For additional information on his life and works, see *CLC*, Vols. 13, 40, and 106.

### INTRODUCTION

An internationally recognized and widely translated author, Amado wrote primarily about the cultural and political milieu of Brazil's Bahia region. Although critics have traced the influence of works by Honoré de Balzac, Guy de Maupassant, and the Brazilian modernists on Amado's style, the author's unique blending of social criticism, humor, sensuality, and Afro-Brazilian tradition is considered an unprecedented development in Latin American literature. Many of Amado's fictions have been adapted for film and television, and his overwhelming popularity in his homeland has helped foster his reputation as a national treasure.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Amado was born on August 10, 1912, in southern Bahia, a Brazilian state on the Atlantic coast. The son of João Amado de Faria and Eulália Leal, Amado grew up on his family's cocoa plantation, where he developed a lifelong sympathy for Brazil's working people. He became interested in classical literature while attending Antônio Vieira high school in Salvador, the capital of Bahia, and Ginásio Ipiranga boarding school, also in Bahia. Amado worked as a reporter in the late 1920s and early 1930s before enrolling at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. He earned a law degree in 1935, but decided against a legal career in favor of becoming a novelist.

His first book, *O paiz do carnaval*, was published in 1931. Two years later his second novel, *Cacáu*, in which he expressed sympathy for the newly formed Brazilian Communist Party, was banned by the government. That same year he married Matilde Garcia Rosa. Amado supported the left-wing National Liberation Alliance and spent two months in jail after the group staged a failed coup in 1935. Due to continuing problems with

the Brazilian government, Amado fled to Argentina in 1941, and later to Uruguay. In 1944 he divorced his wife after a long separation, and he married Zélia Gattai in 1945. After a regime change in Brazil, he was elected to Brazil's National Constituent Assembly on the Communist Party ticket, but he left the country again in 1948 when the Communist Party was outlawed. In 1951 Amado received the Stalin Peace Prize in Moscow.

After his return to Brazil in 1952 Amado began to distance himself from the Communist Party, quitting the Party altogether in 1955. Thereafter, Amado abandoned his militancy and his work became less political in tone. In 1959 Amado was inducted as a dignitary of Axé Opô Afonjá, a large Afro-Brazilian religious center in Salvador, and he was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters two years later. During the following three decades, Amado traveled and lectured throughout Europe, Africa, and North America. He was named a commander in France's Légion d'Honneur in 1984. Amado garnered the Prêmio Camões in 1994, the most prestigious award for Portuguese literature. Weakened by recurring heart problems, Amado spent his final years among family and friends. Brazil observed three days of mourning following Amado's fatal heart attack on August 6, 2001.

### MAJOR WORKS

Many of Amado's novels and stories focus on the plight of Brazil's working poor. They also emphasize Brazilian folklore and popular culture, particularly those of the Afro-Brazilian population of Bahia. Such early novels as *Jubiabá* (1935), *Mar morto* (1936; *Sea of Death*), and *Capitães da areia* (1937; *Captains of the Sands*) deal with the religious practices of the Afro-Brazilian people and the customs of the urban underclass. The pronounced political tone of these novels is interspersed with lyrical descriptions of the natural world and references to the region's cultural traditions. *Terras do sem fim* (1943; *The Violent Land*)—an epic novel acknowledged as Amado's most universal work—concerns the brutal territorial struggles between two powerful landowners, and presents a psychologically realistic portrayal of its main characters. With *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (1958; *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*) Amado began to downplay political themes in favor of a lighter, more comical tone. *Gabriela, Clove and Cin-*

*namon* features Amado's first strong female protagonist and highlights themes of sexuality and personal relationships.

Comprised of two novellas, *Os velhos marinheiros* (1961) is a work of social satire that examines the nature of identity. For example, the novella *A morte e a morte de Quincas Berro D'Água* (*The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell*) focuses on a respectable man's decision to abandon his family for a hedonistic lifestyle under an assumed name. *Os pastores da noite* (1964; *Shepherds of the Night*) is a narrative triptych set in the impoverished neighborhoods of Salvador. The novel incorporates elements of magical realism into its narrative episodes, which deal with the lives of vagabonds, call girls, and other outcasts. One of Amado's most popular novels, *Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* (1966; *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*) tells of a young Bahian woman who is torn between her dependable husband and the ghost of her passionate, yet difficult ex-spouse. In this novel, Amado reinforces his interest in magical realism and female sexuality.

In *Tenda dos milagres* (1969; *Tent of Miracles*), Amado returns to social concerns, centering on racial disenfranchisement in Brazil. Told from several narrative perspectives, *Tereza Batista* (1972) recounts the arduous life of a Bahian prostitute. This basic premise is revisited in *Tieta do Agreste* (1977; *Tieta the Goat Girl*), the story of a promiscuous girl who, after being expelled by her father, moves to São Paulo, where she runs a popular brothel. She later returns to her village and becomes a champion of populist causes. Written for Amado's son, *O gato malhado e a andorinha Sinhá* (1976; *The Swallow and the Tom Cat*) captures the author's childlike imagination as well as his ability to communicate with young readers.

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

Despite the widespread popularity of Amado's novels and the author's iconic status in Brazil, critical response to his work has been mixed. While many commentators have described him as a master storyteller, commending his complex narratives and enduring characters, others have accused him of surrendering to capitalism, calling his books formulaic, misogynistic, and even pornographic. The critical divisions extend to Amado's treatment of the theme of female sexual empowerment in his writings. According to commentator Linda B. Hall, Amado's depiction of women "illuminates the complex and shifting realities of human love itself." Some reviewers, however, have contended that Amado supports a patriarchal view of women by accentuating the sexual component of femininity. As critic Daphne Patai has argued, Amado "seems to want his women to be

ever better, lustier partners to his men. He is interested in establishing, first and foremost, his female characters' sexual desirability, and he depicts them as free agents in this sphere of life alone. . . . Amado seems to be saying that there is no risk here in upsetting the more fundamental domination to which women will continue to submit, if only their sexual needs are recognized."

In addition to the ongoing discourse about femininity in Amado's work, numerous scholars have studied his depiction of Brazilian society. Specifically, critics have viewed *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* as a meditation on technological progress from a Brazilian perspective, and have interpreted *Tent of Miracles* as a reflection of the author's sense of Brazilian history. Additionally, they have identified Amado's rendering of the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* religious festival as an important aspect of his oeuvre, and have contrasted his exploration of racial hatred with that of author Maria Alice Barroso. Scholars also have examined influences on the style and technique of Amado's fictions. For instance, they have analyzed mythological undertones of both *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* and its cinematic adaptation, and have underscored the surreal elements of *The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell*. Upon Amado's death in 2001, critics assessed his transition from Brazil's leading communist writer to an international best-selling author, appraising the significance and lasting influence of his seventy-year career in literature.

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## PRINCIPAL WORKS

- O paiz do carnaval* (novel) 1931
- Cacáu* (novel) 1933
- Suór: Romance* (novel) 1934
- Jubiabá: Romance* (novel) 1935
- Mar morto: Romance* [*Sea of Death*] (novel) 1936
- Capitães da areia: Romance* [*Captains of the Sands*] (novel) 1937
- ABC de Castro Alves* (biography) 1941
- Terras do sem fim* [*The Violent Land*] (novel) 1943
- São Jorge dos Ilhéus: Romance* [*The Golden Harvest*] (novel) 1944
- Homens e coisas do Partido Comunista* (nonfiction) 1946
- Gabriela, cravo e canela* [*Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*] (novel) 1958
- \*Os velhos marinheiros* (novellas) 1961
- Os pastores da noite* [*Shepherds of the Night*] (novel) 1964
- Dona Flor e seus dois maridos, história moral e de amor* [*Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands: A Moral and Amorous Tale*] (novel) 1966
- Tenda dos milagres: Romance* [*Tent of Miracles*] (novel) 1969

- Tereza Batista, *cansada de guerra: Romance* [Tereza Batista: *Home from the Wars*] (novel) 1972
- O gato malhado e a andorinha Sinhá: *Uma história de amor* [The Swallow and the Tom Cat: A Love Story] (juvenilia) 1976
- Tieta do Agreste: *Pastora de cabras* [Tieta the Goat Girl] (novel) 1977
- Farda, fardão, camisola de dormir, fábula para acender uma esperança: *Romance* [Pen, Sword, Camisole: A Fable to Kindle a Hope] (novel) 1979
- Sumiço da santa, uma história de feitiçaria: *Romance baiano* [The War of the Saints] (novel) 1988
- A descoberta da América pelos turcos: *Romancinho* (novel) 1994

\*Contains *A completa verdade sobre as discutidas aventuras do Comandante Vasco Moscoso de Aragão* [Home Is the Sailor: The Whole Truth Concerning the Redoubtful Adventures of Captain Vasco Moscoso de Aragão, Master Mariner] and *A morte e a morte de Quincas Berro D'Água* [The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell].

## CRITICISM

### Ann Pescatello (essay date 1973)

SOURCE: Pescatello, Ann. "The *Brazileira*: Images and Realities in Writings of Machado de Assis and Jorge Amado." In *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, edited by Ann Pescatello, pp. 29-58. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973.

[In the following excerpt, Pescatello observes the role of femininity in Latin American literature, and analyzes the social context of Amado's female characterizations.]

Woman is an object, sometimes precious, sometimes harmful, but always different.

Paz

In an attempt to define the experience of love in the dialectic of solitude, Mexico's Octavio Paz reflected on the *images* of woman and suggested that these images which man has made of woman and in which she is forced to conceal herself are a phantasm which poisons the relationship between the sexes and makes love "an almost inaccessible experience." Paz further noted—that what appears to be true of most Ibero-American cultures—that woman as an object is subject to the deformations which man's interests, vanity, anguish, and love dictate and thus is changed

into an instrument, a means of obtaining understanding and pleasure, a way of achieving survival. . . . And the same thing happens to her: she can only conceive of herself as an object, as something 'other' . . . this image has been dictated to her by her family, class,

school, friends, religion and lover. . . . Her being is divided between what she really is and what she imagines she is.

(Paz 1961:197)

This schizophrenia, this dichotomy between *realidad* and *fantasia* is a major concern to me as an observer of historical change and continuity in Latin America, especially in Brazil. How does one separate the image of mind and heart from the reality of flesh and blood? Will the real *brazileira* stand up? An important avenue to understanding the values and attitudes of a culture is its literature and Brazil possesses one of the richest storehouses of prose, poetry, journalism, and other literary genres in all of Latin America. But it is not so simple to select stories from the literary warehouse and build a discussion of images and reality about the female. Brazilian literary genres differ in time, geographical region, rural/urban foci; furthermore, the genres have been, at one time or another, the preserve of particular classes of ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Faced with the diversity of interests throughout Brazilian literary history I have, for this paper, elected to examine the novels of two outstanding Brazilian literati whose epochs, life-styles, and concerns were as different as the men themselves and in whose writings women are prominent characters: Joaquim Machado de Assis, whose personages reflect nineteenth-century urban bourgeois development in the Rio de Janeiro of southern Brazil, and Jorge Amado who writes about the twentieth-century earthy individuals who populate the Bahia of northern Brazil.

By analyzing literature, and especially the novels of two writers, I realize that I may be narrowing my purview to a particularized segment of the larger society but I believe that Assis and Amado reflect the concerns, not only of an intellectual element, specifically, but also of their respective societies, generally. I believe that through an analysis of their works, according to criteria listed below, we can reach some understanding, through general conclusions, about what is *real* and what is *image* in the *brazileira* of fiction. One other but important qualification may be made here: when an outsider looks at what one culture's spokesman says, the outsider is recording her observations not only of what the spokesman says but how she, through her own cultural baggage, perceives what the spokesman says. Recognizing the fallibility of this approach, I give you my impressions of two Brazilian men of letters and what *they* have said about the women of their society.

### BROADER IDEAS: LATIN AMERICAN LITERATI AND POINTS OF DEFINITION

First it is imperative to have in focus the attitudes which have been stated by *Latin Americans* in general about women in their own cultures, to observe the Latin

American milieus and the minds in which the female functions, and then to develop a set of criteria to be utilized in the examination of writings of the Brazilians Assis and Amado. Other than the occasional scholars' compositions from archival materials or our own and other travelers' eyewitness accounts, most of our impressions of the Latin American woman are generated in writings of the literati, the intellectuals. In some, the images are infused with an idealism which is too lofty for any earthly creature and which certainly reflects an unrealistic view of the female personage; for example, the great Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío considered woman to be not only the instrument of knowledge but also *knowledge itself*. On the other hand, the Argentine philosopher José Ingenieros noted that the struggle between the sexes involved constant use of pretense chiefly by women:

Women's modesty and morality are chiefly pretenses designed to interest men in their bodies, and their intellectual interests are usually assumed for the purpose of attracting men. They pretend affection, which has no other object than to lure a man into matrimony.

(as cited in Crawford 1961:121)

Octavio Paz observed that a woman never expresses her femininity "because it always manifests itself in forms men have invented for her" (Paz 1961:197), a sympathetic statement although one which supports Ingenieros's contentions. Thus there are the poetic ideal, the positivist illusion, and the empathetic observer, all offering images of the female. In Paz's statement, however, we have a deeper awareness of what impact on the entire society these male-constructed images have, for the confinement of feminine ideals into unassailable molds is an ordeal for all concerned:

Women are imprisoned in the image masculine society has imposed on them; therefore, if they attempt a free choice it must be a kind of jail break. . . . If she dares to love, if she dares to be herself, she has to destroy the image in which the world has imprisoned her.

(Paz 1961:198)

On the other hand

a man is also prevented from choosing. His range of possibilities is very limited. He discovers femininity as a child, in his mothers or sisters, and from then on he identifies love with taboos. . . . We have to adjust our profoundest affections to the image of what our social group approves of in a woman.

(Paz 1961:198-99)

One can say here: do not the realities design the images? Perhaps it is only possible to say that if at one time they did, it seems now that the images define the realities.

Paz also suggests that Latin American eroticism "is conditioned by the horror and attraction of incest" (Paz 1961:198); I suppose because of the inordinate proxim-

ity of family females during the impressionable male years. But the point is an interesting one, one which appears in Machado de Assis's writings; although the incestuous act is never committed in his works, Assis is preoccupied with that theme, poses the problem, and plays with its possibilities in a number of works. Although he comes close to allowing them several times, the incestuous relationships are solved "happily" in almost all of his works: in *Helena*, his lovers Helena and Estacio discover that they are *not* blood brother and sister; in his short story "Frei Simão," a passionate *feeling only* exists between the cousins Simão and Helena; in "Possível e impossível," Theophilo marries his *adopted* sister; in "A menina dos olhos pardos," the hero's father falls in love with his son's sweetheart; "Manuscrito de um sacristo" is a love story of cousins; *Casa velha* is a novelette of a love relationship similar to that in *Helena*; and "Anecdota do cabriolet" concerns the elopement of lovers of the same mother and fully aware of their relationship. (These works, incidentally, vary in time beginning with the 1860s and ending with the last story mentioned in 1905.) I have dwelt here on the problem of incest because in Catholic societies incest is a sin and in such societies where extended or large nuclear families have been the rule, perhaps the problem of *the sin* (of what, incidentally, may have been common forms of premarital sexual encounters) is uppermost in determination of the families to avoid since the possibilities of illicit offspring offend both God and social position. It certainly seems to be one reasonable explanation why women have been relatively protected in sexual activities.

To observers of Latin American women a primary image which emerges is the so-called "martyr complex," the self-denial, intellectual vacuity, and capacity for humility and sacrifice which characterizes the long-suffering sisterhood of submissiveness. There is also the "purity of name and honor" syndrome which sees marriage consummated by "suitable" partners, that is, sexually unblemished females, and which conforms to carryovers in modern Latin America of medieval marriage—that is, marriage as a legal contract for social considerations and economic advantages, *not* for purposes of love. As a result, chastity and its coeval concerns of status and class have become the preserve of, indeed are dominated by, the woman in the family, another interest of Assis's which will be dealt with at length.

There is also the impact of the cult of the Virgin and the distant Crusades. For the former, Mary, Guadalupe, almost any virgin saint will do, for she embodies all the "positive" attributes which a woman must possess and, indeed, is supportive of the "martyr complex" discussed above. The Christian forays into the Holy Land impressed on the West not only customs regarding women that the Crusaders brought home with them



from the East, but also patterns of authority that developed in Europe during male absences. Times were turbulent and in the relatively simple life-styles of medieval aristocracy, the wife assumed responsibility for castle keep; all who undertook her rule and protection—including a host of young men not of military age—were, in turn, obligated to the code of chivalric behavior, a pattern which hardened into permanency and which has remained an essence of both the protective seclusion of middle- and upper-class Latin American girls and their exclusion from public activities.

Whatever the multifarious roots of the female's image, it is fairly certain that she remains enigmatic to most males who undertake to analyze her. To them she has duality of personality: she is fertility and yet she is death, as symbolized in almost all cultures; she is the mystery of the universe and yet is the embodiment of the basic needs of life: "What does she think? Or does she think? Does she truly have feelings? Is she the same as we are?" (Paz 1961:66). Whatever she is, whoever she is, cannot be agreed upon; we can only agree on what woman *seems* to have conjured up to the men who wrote about her, or suggest what she *seems to be* by those who have observed her in daily activities (such as my fellow researchers in this book).

In my essay, as a historian, I shall examine and bring evidence to bear on the following criteria and points of definition which more clearly underscore the characterization of females in Latin American literature, how they are perceived by men who write about them, and what clues obtain regarding woman's *real* existence. The first entails what sociologists would define as *role models*, that is, the range of roles available for women and the variance of these roles, if any, in accordance with sociological distinctions such as class, rural/urban life-styles, race/color, European/non-European descent groups, and the like. From my analyses of the works of Assis and Amado we will determine whether or not it is possible to develop "stereotypes" of females which transcend sociological distinctions and which could be valid across cultures and novelists. To this end I have drawn a tight model by limiting myself to two novelists, but two who are not only particular but also are universal in their concerns, who represent particular regions, time periods, and genres. Additionally, we may be able to determine that there is a "traditional" feminine image which is much more viable than its counterpart in the United States, and one which may be impervious to the economic incentives of a society like the United States.

Another criterion will be the psychological background of the roles according to the literature I have used, that is, how do women perceive themselves, perceive their relationships with men and children, with power and authority; does this perception create conflict as

evidenced in the "tired mother syndrome?" (It is also possible that even if conflict occurs it is not expressed so dramatically in Latin American literature as it has been in European and North American writings.) Does Assis, for example, create a literary genre of feminist analysis for Brazil such as has been created by Lawrence, Ibsen, Hardy, Albee, Williams, Chopin, and others?

Another point is the observation of change. In addition to basic differences of setting and characters, does the position of women in Brazil change in the decades between Assis and Amado and is that change in condition perceivable in the writings of Jorge Amado? If there has been change, recognizable in Amado's work, this would or could be substantiated by other literary and nonliterary sources.

Is there a "passive feminine ideal?" If it does exist does it apply to any particular class, racial group, or other element? Is there a complementary image of the female as "Virgin" and all its related paraphernalia such as female chastity, the necessity of motherhood, the prohibition of abortion and other forms of birth control, and the double standard of moral behavior? Is motherhood manifested as a universal model for all females, woman's only honorable vocation? Can the women of Assis and Amado control their own lives? These are all crucial questions the answers to which can aid us in understanding the images of the Brazilian woman as she appears in fiction as well as enhancing our knowledge of the real *brazileira* and the changes and continuities of female life in a modernizing nation.

#### THE BRAZIL OF ASSIS AND AMADO: THE SOCIAL MILIEU AND LITERARY EVOLUTION

Brazil of the past century and a quarter has been a country of growth, in land and population; a nation endowed with and exploitative of a vast collection of natural resources; a beautiful, majestic congeries of regions which I love and about whose attributes I can wax eloquent; but Brazil is also a *pais* of paradoxes. In customs, its southern states are "modernizing" at a faster pace than the northern which remain more traditional; natural riches lie in the interior while human resources scallop the coastline in crabbed, crowded settlements; crop surpluses in some states never reach less fortunate areas due to the inadequacies of transportation; the urban areas have exploded in population yet Brazil remains, in many ways, a rural nation. The list of contradictions is long and has been getting longer since the so-called advent of modernization which Richard Graham assures us Brazil has been in the process of "for at least a century, despite the survival today of some characteristics of a traditional society" (Graham 1968:23).

As is usually the case, it is easier to observe changes in economic development than in social attitudes; thus the

onset of a modernizing economic process found nineteenth-century Brazil a patriarchal society in which man made

of woman a being as different from himself as possible. He, the strong, she, the weak; he the noble, she, the beautiful. But the beauty he prized was a somewhat morbid beauty. The delicate, almost sickly girl. Or the plump, soft, domestic, motherly woman, ample of hips and buttocks. Without a trace of masculine vigor and agility, with the greatest possible differentiation in figure and dress between the two sexes.

(Freyre 1963:73)

Freyre further suggests that preference for these types of women was dictated by the desire of men to eliminate females from competing for economic and political control of their society.

It was a society rife with a double standard of morality, a Catholic society which, in the Rio of young Assis, supposedly locked those fallow, sickly women inside mansions far removed from the madding crowds and heady enthusiasm of a burgeoning, bourgeois, urban atmosphere. Women of the upper classes were confined and coddled; on the other hand, servants and other lower-class women—Negroes, *mestiças*, and *mulattas*—had fair run of the streets and the cities.

Changes occurred, however, as foreign ideas filtered into the patriarchy; theaters, fashions, attitudes, and an increase in types and quantity of literary genres—for example, escape novels and newspaper serialized romances—all contributed to a “liberating” atmosphere. In the 1885 *Almanack de lembranças brasileiro*, novelist Dona Anna Ribeiro de Goes Bettencourt warned parents to keep their daughters away from such evil romantic influences as theater and novels, a warning prompted by “alarming” increases in elopements of “good” daughters with their sweethearts as well as by an overall tendency of the generation of the 1880s to insist on extricating itself by any means possible from the claustrophobia of the patriarchal family. Assis’s Rio de Janeiro was the embodiment of these cosmopolitan changes, of increased mobility induced by advances in urban services such as improved lighting and transportation, more cafés and theaters, introduction of cinemas. With these material changes women were able to move about at night, to acquire more freedom of public association; the advances also occurred in Amado’s Bahia and brought similar kinds of problems from modernizing influences in a traditional society, but at a later time.

\* \* \*

This changing socioeconomic milieu—earlier in Assis’s south, later in Amado’s north—is a basic ingredient in the mind-set of these two men and their development of

the images of their *brazileiras*. Another major element is the intellectual atmosphere, the literary currents of the times in which they lived and wrote. In the period from 1854 (when Assis began publishing) until his death in 1908, literary creativity and Brazilian ideology passed through phases to which Assis himself did not wholly adhere. Romanticism was the prevalent novelistic form in mid-nineteenth-century Brazil but soon that country’s literature was plunged into the psychological probings of the realist school. This “aesthetic of realism” found prose fiction, particularly novels, the best vehicle by which literati could attain realization of their creative goals. Brazilian prosaists altered writing schema; rather than emphasizing organization of plots, they stressed portrayal of characters and description of the actors’ lives. To achieve this end, novelists developed several patterns of prose: biographical, regional, environmental, and psychological. All of these patterns were conceived to convey currency; they reflected various social problems or urban and contemporary themes, drawing on common material from everyday life.<sup>1</sup>

From this, albeit with overtones of romanticism, was born the work of Machado de Assis, work which transfigured reality, creating stories similar to life rather than mere copies of existence. He utilized such methods of the realist-naturalist school as autobiography, organic structure, a certain slackness of plot; yet he transcended mere orthodoxy because he realized that literature required symbols, that the writer, to be an artist, needed them to create a special world, similar to but without actually being the real one. His consuming passion was the human spirit whose perspectives he plumbed and transfigured into myths and symbols. In his later writings he transcended reality, using allusion and symbolism, probing the inner being; introspective psychological fiction was a new kind of reality allied to a basic tragic vision of existence and Assis was its purveyor.

Assis, then, was chronicler par excellence of the realism of aesthetic truth, “pure realism of a skeptical sort,” and in time became a vociferous opponent of the Zola-influenced “realism of nature” or naturalistic movement which superseded the “realistic” school. Positivism had run rampant throughout Brazil and Assis used his pen, as novelist as well as journalist, to joust with adherents of that philosophy in all its phases, especially its literary form of naturalism. Assis felt that the naturalist novel, which dominated Brazil during the latter decades of his writing years, was in fact a superficial form which merely inventoried human actions and which seemed to have little or no motivation. Furthermore, he railed against naturalism’s reproduction of the sordid and seamy for shock-effect purposes, a principle of positivist philosophy that literature should serve the function of political and social propaganda.

A few years after Assis’s death Jorge Amado (1912-) was born in the land he writes about, Brazil’s northeast,

and specifically the state of Bahia. After a decade of material boom but creative conformity and intellectual stagnation (1910-1920), a desire for renovation, an avant-gardism, pervaded the world of writers.<sup>2</sup> Again, prose was the outstanding literary form, preoccupied with political, social, economic, human, and spiritual orders, encouraging a renaissance of the novel. Regionalism and social neonaturalism—a holding of The Land before all else—became the essence of literature; neorealism appeared in urban-based social documentaries while neonaturalism utilized political ideology as a substratum of its conception of reality. The changing social, economic, and political milieu affected literature and socialist realism became an instrument of revolutionary action through the novel. Some of Amado's work reflects this concern; he is the "proletarian" novelist, a scribe of neorealism who, along with his contemporaries, is less slavishly imitative of Europe than were his forebears and is more deeply attuned to the larger world of humanity.

Amado writes almost exclusively of the northeast but his world philosophy and his concern with universal emotions and aspirations provide great unity and power to his work which transcends mere parochial interests. From his first novel, *O país do carnaval* (1932), until the present, he has been concerned with the daily existence—joys, sufferings—of humanity and of the Bahianos; both literarily and in terms of social propaganda Amado has been steadfast in his dedication to the subjects of his writing as well as to the philosophy of the realism to which he adheres. In his works and those of his contemporaries of the realistic school, women play an even more important role, it seems, than they did in Assis's studies; and since most of Amado's novels are concerned with psychological insights into conditions of the socially and economically downtrodden, lower-class women figure prominently in the pages of northeastern novelists. Amado's women, as well as those born from his contemporaries' pens, are part of the northern landscape, are the rural proletariat and the rising urban bourgeoisie, are human conflicts between modernity and tradition. Amado's own view of his literature and its impact is summed up in his introduction to the 1965 edition of *Terras do sem fim* [*The Violent Land*]: "Cacao also produced a literature . . . a genre with its own well-defined characteristics. . . . I was the first of these writers. . . . I led the way" (1965:vi).

. . . . .

JORGE AMADO

Jorge Amado (1912-) is perhaps Brazil's most famous living writer and because of or despite that fact, critical books about him and his work are not so readily available as are those concerning Assis; the latter is a legend now, but Amado remains very much a living part of the

Bahian scene he loves so well, an intimate of Carybé and Caymmi, a practitioner at Didi's candomble house. Unlike the Cariocan Assis—attired in the clothing of a civil servant, meticulous in his work and dress, singularly devoted to the abstract realities of life and love—we can see Amado, tanned and gregarious, his stocky body clad in see-through net shirts the Bahiano men are prone to wear in succulent, steamy Salvador. These surface differences in life-styles are indicative of the directions their work takes and it is difficult to separate in one's own mind the living Bahian writer from the panoply of Brazilian males about whom he writes, men who might maintain a mistress and whose mistress might resemble one of the heroines of Amado's novels. His women are quite different from Assis's; we "know" that Amado must have known them.

Amado's ideas/attitudes about women, in terms of my criteria for examining them, are not so clearly delineated as are Assis's. In general, Amado's women follow in the few molds which he has devised for them; these "types" reappear in almost all his works and thus some or all of my criteria are applicable to each story. Also, Amado, as novelist, has been more prolific than Assis and thus the task of looking at his women is one which must be narrowed to those of his later and literarily more skillful novels. As Amado grew in his writing so did the attraction of his women; thus in terms of limited space and also my own interests in Amado's characters, I have chosen five of his novels and will discuss the female characters therein: *Terras do sem fim* [*The Violent Land*] (1943); *Gabriela, cravo e canela* [*Gabriela, clove and cinnamon*] (1958); *Os velhos marins* (1961), which includes two works—a novela, *A morte e a morte de Quincas Berra D'Água* [*The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell*], and a novel, *A completa verdade sobre as discutidas aventuras do Comandante Vasco Moscoso de Arração, Capitão de Longo Curso* [*Home Is the Sailor*]; *Os pastores da noite* [*Shepherds of the Night*] (1964); and *Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* [*Dona Flor and her two husbands*] (1966).

*Terras do sem fim* is essentially the story of a clash between two giant cacao growers for an area of virgin forest in early twentieth-century southern Bahia; it is Amado's favorite work and considered by many to be his greatest novel. In the epoch of the cacao colonels, the "frontier days" of northeast Brazil, women emerge to suffer and survive under the awesome domination of men lusting after the spoils of the earth. The unfortunate heroine here is Ester, in love with one man, married to another; the other major female character in the book is Margot, mistress of Ester's husband's opponent.

Margot had been the lover of the lawyer Virgílio from his student days in Bahia and she had accompanied him when he established his practice in the interior; on his rejection of her, she became the mistress of Juca Ba-