BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL BOOK CLUB
JORGE AMADO | DONA FLOR E SEUS DOIS MARIDOS /16TH FEB, 6.30-9 PM
2017- the year of #lovetoreadBrazil

JORGE AMADO (1912-2001)

Dona Flor e seus dois maridos (1966)
translated into English as
Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands (1969)
Are you getting ready for the fast approaching Brazilian Carnival this year (28th Feb)?
Dona Flor and her two husbands brings you closer to the floats & costumes, music and dance, sounds and flavours Bahian style!

A love story & morality tale: perfect magical + fantastic company for cold winter evenings!

Could the widow of a tawdry rogue (very good at love-making, though!) ever imagine that he would return (perhaps with a little help from cambomblé deities and priests…) when she marries her second husband, an honourable albeit obsessive compulsive pharmacist?

Feel ravenous for the taste of Bahia with recipes of the master chef and cookery master of the Cookery School of Flavour and Art (Sabor e Arte) - Floripedes Paiva Guimarães (=Dona Flor)!

The sound track of the narrative brings appearances of celebrated singers of modinhas and famous Brazilian composers and performers: Carlinhos Mascarenhas, João Gilberto, Dorival Caymmi, Sílvio Caldas & more!

Cameo appearances of authors and artists: e.g. Pierre Verger & Carybé & many more!

And our dedicated book club members, who read Memórias de um sargento de milícias (1852/3, 1854)[Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant]
WILL CERTAINLY HAVE SPOTTED THE LINKS BETWEEN JORGE AMADO AND THE EARLIER BRAZILIAN LITERARY MASTERS:

in the age-old archetypal characters depicted by physiognomy and attire, profession/occupation along with their manners

&

in the huge casts of characters depicting all manner of vices and villainy, debauchery, corruption with crooks and all manner of devious behaviour in Almeida with his penetrating witty satire; and, in Azevedo, in his cast of over seven thousand characters!

A prize for any reader who gets the right number of characters in *Dona Flor and her two husbands*!

DID YOU KNOW that this novel – explicit magical realism - was published one year before *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014)?

*Warning*: do not take offence at the choice of words in the translated text (quite old and unrevised).

**DETAILS OF AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS:**

**ENGLISH**

*Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* translated by Harriet de Onís with various reprints without any revisions:


& other


**PORTUGUESE**

Various editions (50+):

Currently published by Companhia das Letras ISBN 9788535911701

*Free download:*


**SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND TRANSLATIONS**
Dona Flor e seus dois maridos was published in 1966 by editora Martins and it was illustrated by Floriano de Araújo Teixeira* (Cajapió MA 1923 - Salvador BA 2000). Some of Araújo Teixeira’s illustrations are somewhat risqué (not reproduced here).

The novel has five chapters and an ‘intermission’ after the first chapter. The intermission is an account in the form of an anonymous poem, ‘An elegy for Waldomiro dos Santos Guimarães, Vadinho for the harlots and friends’ circulating about the town and creating a degree of polemic.

The chapters have a fair measure of local music and musicians as most Brazilian authors have done from 19th century: Chapter One evolves to the sounds of the cavaquinho by Carlos Mascarenhas; Chapter Two to the tunes of Edgard Coco’s violin, Caymmi’s guitar and Walter da Silveira’s flute; Chapter Four features amateur musicians playing various instruments and particularly Teodoro Madureira playing a bassoon and Chapter Five closes to the Afro-Brazilian sounds of atabaques (hand drums) and agogôs (bells).

The current publisher, Companhia das Letras, includes a bit of history about inspiration of the novel. Jorge Amado started writing the novel in 1965 in Salvador, capital of the State of Bahia, achieving great success on its publication the following year. The first edition of 75 thousand sold out promptly. It states that Jorge Amado used to give an account of a story he had heard of a widow, who remarried but continued longing for the first husband.
and this came to inspire him to write *Dona Flor e seus dois maridos*. Vadinho, was based on one of Amado’s friends from his youth who used ‘to lose money and win women’. A number of real life characters feature in the narrative (e.g. Dorival Caymmi, Pierre Verger, Master Didi, Silvio Caldas and Carybé). There are over fifty editions of this novel in Portuguese.

An interesting letter from the cookery teacher with a recipe for a *puba* cake appears in the narrative. *Puba* or *carimã* (*poleíno azedo*) is a paste extracted from fermented cassava (sour starch), made into a light fluffy cassava flour used in cakes, biscuits and other dishes of the Brazilian northeastern cuisine. This is completely lost in translation as it is rendered as ‘corn cake’.

![Manuscript featuring the puba cake (a type of cassava flour)](image-url)
The novel comes with a brief afterword by one of the Brazilian antropologists, Roberto DaMatta (1936-), who has authored various books (for example 1991 *Carnivals, Rogues and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*).

In addition, the original novel is a veritable record of the Bahian cuisine and could be read just for the purposes of the culinary history of Bahia and the northeast of Brazil. Regrettably, much has been lost in the translation into English and, possibly, other languages if the translators used the English text as their source.

*Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* was translated into English as *Dona Flor and her two husbands* published in 1969. It was reprinted many times since then both in the US and the UK.

The translator Harriet de Onís, neé, Harriet Wishnieff (date of birth unclear? 1895-1955), daughter of Jewish emigres from the Old Russian Empire, was born in New York, read English at the Barnard College graduating in 1916 (Barnard College Yearbook has a photo at the time: the Barnard College archives of the Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. archive, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.).

She appears to have studied Latin, French and German as well and married a Spaniard who emigrated to the US Frederico de Onís. He instigated her to translate from Spanish and Portuguese with some 40 titles published under her name. She started working for Knopf and had a significant impact on subsequent translators. She never studied Portuguese – allegedly she picked it up from her readings. Over the past few years, publications have been appearing offering a critical review of translations of Latin American Literature, including Brazilian, in the US in the 20th century (c.f., for example, 2013 *Style and Ideology in Translation* by J. Mundy, Routledge).

If one reads the original *Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* and compares it with translation by Harriet de Onís, it is clear that much was lost in her translation. To illustrate minimally, a significant proportion of local colour and culture are lost in the manner she used to translate. A simple example is
the rather disingenuous translation of Brazilian *cachaça*, which becomes the nondescript rum or *puba* cake which becomes a non-Brazilian corn cake. The name of the cookery school is translated rather oddly as ‘Cooking School of Savor and Art’… (1999: 1). Publishers never bothered to review the translation and kept on reprinting the 1969 translation. The short glossary at the end of translation mirrors the lack of local knowledge with some risible inventions such as *azeite de dendê* rendered as ‘olive oil’! Please ignore the useless glossary (named ‘Foreign words and expressions’!).

Harriet de Onis has been accused of doing lower quality work in her translations of Brazilian literature and other works. Notably, Gilberto Freyre voiced his disappointment with quality of her translation and claimed that his *oeuvre* failed to achieve proper recognition in the US because of the manner in which it was translated.

There are translations of the novel into various other languages including various editions.

The novel was adapted to TV, cinema and theatre multiplying the popularity of the original. The very successful 1976 film adaptation (released 1977), a comedy, by the notable filmmaker Bruno Barreto (1955- ), Eduardo Coutinho and Leopoldo Serran, has guaranteed that the story remained in public memory. Ten million Brazilian spectators saw the film with leading stars such stars Sônia Braga, José Wilker and Mauro Mendonça in the leading roles. Details [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077452/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077452/)

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

JORGE AMADO (10 Aug 1912 – 6 Aug 2001)

JORGE AMADO became a popular best-seller Brazilian writer with works translated into about 40 languages (only Paulo Coelho has sold more). His books about Bahian life are the most popular works and have disseminated a view and image of one of the states of Brazil, Bahia, often inadvertently conflated with Brazil, throughout the world.

His full name, Jorge Leal Amado de Faria, eldest son of Colonel João Amado de Faria and Eulália Leal, was born at the family cocoa farm Auricídia in the district of Ferradas in the state of Bahia. He attended the Jesuit College, Colégio Antônio Vieira, and Ginásio Ipiranga in Salvador and read law at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. He married Matilde Garcia Rosa (one deceased daughter) in 1933, but separated in 1944, and married a writer, Zélia Gattai, of Italian descent from S. Paulo (1916-2008) in 1945 and they had two children.

As a teenager in Salvador in 1928, he joined the ‘Academia dos Rebeldes’ – the Academy of Rebels, a group (led by the journalist and poet Pinheiro Viegas, with fellow writers as member João Cordeiro, Dias da Costa, Alves Ribeiro, Edison Carneiro, Valter da Silveira and Clóvis Amorim in addition to J. Amado) along the lines of other modernizing movements
emerging in Brazil in the early 1920s in literature and arts. The main target of scorn of the group was the acclaimed Brazilian Academy of Letters, which they fiercely refuted. Ironically, Jorge Amado would later accept the honour of becoming a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (1961), benefitting from the accolade.

Jorge Amado always highlighted the fact that he was a professional writer and journalist living off his books and articles. He would start writing early in his life, at the age of 14 as a police reporter for a local newspaper, Diário da Bahia, joining the bohemian life in Salvador. He started publishing his novels at the age of 19. As a professional writer, he displayed singular adroitness at positioning himself politically and ideologically and shifting loyalties throughout his life.

Jorge Amado moved to Rio de Janeiro, the then capital city of Brazil, in the effervescent 1930s period. In 1932, he would become a member of the Brazilian communist party and, subsequently, arrested for participating in the Communist Conspiracy in Rio de Janeiro in 1936. The Estado Novo (1930-45) was determined to suppress such conspiracies and a number of his books along with those of other authors were censored and destroyed in 1937.

Controversially, as the winds of international politics changed with the Molotov–Ribbentrop (Soviet-Nazi) Pact, Jorge Amado would take on the responsibility for editing the cultural literary supplement of the Meio-Dia newspaper (1939 -1942), one of the rare newspapers in Brazil, which supported Nazi Germany during the World War II. This would trigger off a sharp rebuke from one leading founders of Modernism, Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954), who accused J. Amado of spying for the Nazis urging him to leave São Paulo. Jorge Amado would follow the political pathway by becoming a deputy (Communist Party) in 1945 and participating in the drafting of the constitution until the party registration became revoked.

In 1948, he moved to Paris, where he met Sartre, Aragon and Picasso. In 1950 he moved to Dobříš, Czechoslovakia writing The World and Peace (on Lenin, Stalin, and Hoxha) and was awarded the 1951 Stalin International Peace Prize. He then travelled extensively in the Soviet Union, China, Western and Central Europe. Because of his militant writings, he was swiftly translated in China, Korea, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. However, it is thanks to J. Amado’s German translator, Curt Meyer-Clason (1910-2012), that the former German Democratic Republic published all of his works from the 1950s. Some have categorized his novels as socialist realism (under Soviet influence) but J. Amado tended to refute it. In 1956, after Stalin’s crimes were denounced by N. Khrushchev, Jorge Amado changed his approach to writing returning to his Bahian roots.
On his return to Brazil he worked for the Globo network. Adaptations of his works to *telenovelas* would make his best-selling fiction even more popular both in Brazil and abroad. *Gabriela, Cravo and Canela*, the soap opera, was first broadcast in 1975 and there was a remake as recently as 2012. Globo network sold the broadcasting rights to various countries. Portuguese-speaking countries learned a lot of Brazilian Portuguese via this medium. Local Bahian myths and history, Afro-Brazilian traditions brought by slaves from various parts of Africa, mixed races and religious syncretism (Catholic faith blended with Candomblé) pervade his fiction work. He was awarded the honour of ‘Obá de Xangô’ (Oba of Shango). Some of his stories are not suitable to young readers and many schools in Brazil do not include his novels in their *curricula*.

There is an interesting interview by Clarice Lispector of Jorge Amado (Manchete, 1975). In one of the exchanges, she asked him to describe his own books. J. Amado replied:

They are the books that I am able to make. I try to make them as good as possible. They are rude, without any shade of refinement or filigree of beauty; they are naïve at times without either psychological depths or universal anguish; their language is poor and loads more. They are simple books of a Bahian storyteller.

[São os livros que eu posso fazer. Busco fazê-los o melhor que posso. São rudes, sem finuras nem filigranas de beleza; são, por vezes, ingênuos, sem profundezas psicológicas e sem angústias universais; são pobres de linguagem e muitíssima coisa mais. São livros simples de um contador de história da Bahia.]

J. Amado always aimed at appealing to masses with his plain writing. Translations into other languages would be easier as well. An accomplished master of best-sellers, and a successful entrepreneur. He acknowledged the fact that few Brazilian writers would be able to live off their books, stating that only the editors were rich in Brazil.

**Further details about his life and works are available at the site of**

- The Brazilian Academy of Letters
  
  [http://www2.academia.org.br/abl/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm%3Finfo%3D13762%26sid%3D929?sid=244](http://www2.academia.org.br/abl/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm%3Finfo%3D13762%26sid%3D929?sid=244)

  and

- The ‘Fundação Casa de Jorge Amado’, launched on Jorge Amado’s 70th birthday, is housed in an impressive blue colonial building in Largo do Pelourinho (official name José de Alencar Square). Readers can view Jorge Amado’s archives and other materials there (multilingual website):  
  
  [http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/](http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/) &  
  
  [http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/?lang=en](http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/?lang=en)
See details about the illustrator and artist Floriano Teixeira at: http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/pessoa5509/floriano-teixeira


Attendance is free, but booking is essential:
nadia.kerecuk@itamaraty.gov.br

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