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Artificial Identity: Reading, Cultural Identity, and the Paths of Literature in Brazil

Artificial identity: reading, cultural identity, and paths of literature in Brazil

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Summary

The Brazilian landscape presents a series of changes and uncertainties in the fields of Literature, knowledge production, and science, justifying the need for a debate on the future paths of our culture in line with advances in the digital world. The objective of this study is to propose a reflection on the value of reading, autonomy in choices, literary taste, and critical thinking, as well as other aspects that shape the "cultural identity" of Brazilian students.

This study, using a bibliographic and qualitative research methodology, seeks to analyze the construction of an identity profile of the Brazilian reader as reflected in a social network such as *Instagram*, considering the phenomenon of "artificial identity" forged on social networks and streaming platforms .

"cultural." It is concluded that social networks constitute digital spaces that have the potential both to amplify cultural and social inequalities and to promote significant intellectual development. For the best perspective to prevail, we must teach/learn once and for all to combine technological awareness, critical thinking, responsibility, and ethics in our way of consuming the content of these virtual spaces.

Keywords: Artificial Identity. Taste. Reading. Brazilian Culture. *Instagram*.

Abstract

The Brazilian scene presents a series of changes and uncertainties in the fields of literature, knowledge production, and science, justifying the need for a debate on the future paths of our culture in line with advances in the digital world. The aim of this study is to propose a reflection on the value of reading, autonomy in choices, literary taste, and critical thinking, as well as other aspects that shape the "cultural identity" of Brazilian students. Through a bibliographic and qualitative research methodology, we seek to analyze the construction of an identity profile of Brazilian readers reflected on a social media, such as *Instagram*, considering the phenomenon of "artificial identity" forged on network and "cultural streaming" platforms. It is concluded that social media are digital spaces that have the potential both to widen cultural and social inequalities and to promote significant intellectual development. For the best perspective to prevail, we must teach/learn once and for all to combine technological awareness, critical thinking, responsibility, and ethics in the way we consume content from these virtual spaces.

Keywords: Artificial Identity. Taste. Reading. Brazilian Culture. Instagram.

1. Introduction

Not long ago, all of civilization was gripped by a severe upheaval. And the Brazil, in particular, went through bizarre moments, featuring scenes worthy of a true [example of a crime]. A horror book that would put an Edgar Allan Poe or a Mary Shelley to shame, as they say. Here. Such issues, at that time, echoed in headlines around the world.

Perhaps because of this pandemic saga, and so many other painful stories lived not only in Brazil, but also Latin America in general, Brazilian writers imagined in times past and Even today, people imagine a future for Brazil that is, to say the least, strange, if not frightening.



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This contradicts the famous slogan "Brazil, the country of the future," immortalized by the writer.

Austrian Stefan Zweig, in 1941.

And because life, at certain moments, is more fantastic and more compelling than life itself.

From this chaotic reality, one could see the emergence of some cultural material, generated from pain and...

People's outrage, perhaps repeating what has already happened in the past, when chaos and repression prevailed.

They made artists/authors more creative, leading them to seek out some extremely creative forms.

to reinvent reality through art.

A good example of this creativity forged in chaos was the predictive work of the Brazilian writer.

Ignácio de Loyola Brandão. The author of *Zero*, a revolutionary and courageous book about the military dictatorship,

Published in Brazil in 1975, it presented its readers with the features of a dystopian and unintelligent Brazil.

colors.

Zero is one of Loyola's best-known, most controversial, and most translated books. "It was the..."

The first Brazilian novel that confronted the dictatorship, that spoke about what the dictatorship was like in this country, with

"Prison, with torture, with disappearances, the armed struggle, with everything that was happening,"

said the author in an interview with *Jornal Cândido*, from Paraná. (LOYOLA, 2021)

The author-prophet, as he is called here in Brazil, also published another equally good work.

The important song " *You Will See No Country*," dated 1981, foreshadowed a fateful future for our country.

country. Loyola also published, in 2018, " *Nothing will remain of this land except the wind that blows over it.*"

She, a book that has become a reference point on the list of dystopian novels in Brazil, presents a

A futuristic and apocalyptic universe, where in addition to deaths from plague, euthanasia, and social chaos, people

They survive under the control of cameras and surveillance, even in their homes, as in the famous work.

1984, by George Orwell.

A few years ago, in 2019, Ignácio de Loyola Brandão was elected an immortal of the Academy.

Brazilian School of Letters.

Many others, like Loyola, also anticipated some social catastrophes that would shake

that old dream of a promising future for our "*Terra Brasilis*".

Despite all of this, historically speaking, in our gallery of magnificent writers, since

the satirical poetry of Gregório de Matos, passing through the romantic verses of Castro Alves, by

The foundational nationalism of José de Alencar's texts, followed by exquisite prose.

Machado-inspired and culminating with the world-renowned work of Jorge Amado, literature

Brazilian authors produced texts that were and still are quite emblematic in Latin American literature.

American and worldwide.

With the aim of developing an updated overview of Brazilian literary literature for a

When reflecting on the current state of this literature, at least two questions should be asked: what type of



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Literature is being produced and consumed more in Brazilian cultural spaces (physical or virtual).

Today? And who are the consumers of this literature?

For this purpose, the objectives of this study were proposed as a preliminary reflection on the following questions: 1) the literary and cultural system in Brazil today; 2) cultural identity: a "portrait" of reading in Brazil"; 3) *Instagram*: signs of an artificial cultural identity on social media and 4) a autonomy of choice: literary taste and critical thinking, these four aspects being seen as shapers of the "cultural capital" of Brazilian readers, to use Pierre Bourdieu's expression. (Bourdieu, 2007)

For Bourdieu, cultural capital is the set of skills, knowledge, and education. acquired throughout life, in addition to the way one relates to culture and art in society, which According to his theory, it is one of the forms of capital that could hierarchically define the position of an individual in society. (Bourdieu, 2007)

Thus, in order to answer the questions in a way that keeps pace with current trends in To understand the cultural consumption of Brazilians on social media and the internet in general, we undertake such an analysis. drawing on theories from sociology and literature to observe how profile construction occurs. The identity of the Brazilian reader as reflected on social media, starting with the *Instagram social network* and the The phenomenon of "artificial identity" forged on this network and on "*cultural streaming*" platforms .

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The literary and cultural system in Brazil today

What Gonzalo Aguilar and Mario Cámara apud Silva (2017, p.147) called "New The "literary and cultural ecosystem" of the 21st century perhaps best defines the medium and mode of publication. of books in contemporary Brazilian culture, which has been demanding an immense effort from the writer to Keeping up with the frenetic pace of the internet and social media, in addition to constant virtual engagement. on these networks so that your work grows and appears in the digital universe and your signature is... consequently recognized.

Brazilian authors are now much more dependent on their level of exposure in media and the proper use of technological devices. And even many of the most notable and Proficient users need to learn how to skillfully utilize the tools of social media marketing.

According to researcher Nadine Ferreira da Silva (2020), *Kindle Direct Publishing* (KDP) It's one of those places. An *Amazon* self-publishing platform that is one of the most prominent. channels for publishing texts, whether literary or not, of undefined genres, contemporary,



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demonstrating the strength of this trend towards greater use of technologies and virtual space. for the promotion of books in Brazil. (Ferreira da Silva, 2020)

Thus, both fiction and non-fiction authors have struggled to try to... keeping up with the pace and tastes of a hurried reader, eager for novelty and speed, is the responsibility of They now obey what the publishing market imposes on them.

Despite this rather dubious panorama of Brazilian culture, dystopian literature It continues to resonate in the Brazilian literary world and shares the spotlight with space. It is guaranteed and indisputable that it occupies Pop Culture, biographies, writings on Ancestry and Religion, Black and Women's Literature, Peripheral Literature that gives voice to the marginalized through society, in addition to some other less significant cultural experiments.

Fictional situations that reflected moments of anguish and hopelessness. experienced in recent times, especially from social distancing and the fear caused by The COVID pandemic has been, and still is, portrayed in many books and films.

On the other hand, the most recent research shows that the number of readers in Brazil, which It hasn't been on the rise for years; it continues to decline, giving way to apathy and disinterest. of the public in terms of literary creation and criticism, leaving little room for training. of literary taste and critical thinking.

This is perhaps justified because today it takes much more to stand out. Perhaps because to represent reality artistically or literarily, to please, to attract the attention of To reach people and readers, it may be necessary to invent new forms of writing that engage in some kind of dialogue. Perhaps through the language of the digital world, or through the most played songs on... Current platforms, with *Netflix* series or other streaming services and technologies. most recent on the market.

2.2 Cultural identities and reading in Brazil

Several structural transformations have modified cultural views of nationality, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race—the very things that, in times past, classified us. as social individuals.

For a scholar of identity issues such as Stuart Hall (1994), identities have left from being a question of "being" to being a question of "becoming." Not even the subject of the Enlightenment, whose Identity was fixed, and neither was the Subject of Socialism, for whom the construction of his identity would... Depending on their relationships with the "other" in the group, they approach this fragmented subject and multifaceted, as it presents itself in virtual spaces.



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Beyond these observations by Hall, technological transformations continued to occur. in the field of communication and new propositions, paradigms and approaches to constructions Identity issues emerge constantly. The dialogical nature of identity presupposes a search. I constantly rely on the gaze of others to confirm my existence. I exist because others know me.

The sociability of individuals is also consequently modified and influenced. due to technological resources and is a subject of wide discussion today. Hence the provisional state of Contemporary man in his ephemeral identity. Being touched each day by the other who... He inspires and advises. In his search for his own identity, he only sees himself through the eyes of others.

According to data from the 5th edition of the "Portraits of Reading in Brazil" survey, we had a loss of 4.6 million readers between 2015 and 2019. According to this survey, the biggest The decline occurred among readers in higher education. The research was conducted by the Instituto Pró Livro in Partnership with Itaú Cultural. (*Educa Mais Brasil Agency, 2021*).

The study's coordinator, Zoara Failla, stated that Brazilians read, on average, in A maximum of five books per year, citing the Bible as one of the most read. Most of them Respondents in the survey reported that, despite being mostly online and on social media... For a significant portion of their day, there is no time left for reading books. (*Educa Mais Brasil Agency, 2021*)

Now in its 6th edition, the most recent survey of "Portraits of Reading in Brazil" Developed with the intention of understanding the reading indicators and habits of all Brazilians. Over the past 5 years, including digital readers, it has interviewed 5,504 Brazilians. A study of literate and illiterate individuals in 208 Brazilian municipalities *yields the following results:*

One of the research objectives is to investigate the motivations and habits of reading. In 2024, the The main motivation for reading was "enjoying reading" (26%), followed by "distraction" (15%) and "Cultural update or general knowledge" (15%). The theme or subject of the book is the factor that most influences readers when choosing a book (33%), followed by the cover (12%) and by tips from other people (12%). Home is where most readers usually read (86%).

The research also addresses barriers to reading. Among readers, the main reason for The reason for not reading more books in the last 3 months was "lack of time" (55%). Among non-readers, the The main reason for not reading was "not liking to read" (33%). (*Portraits of Reading in Brazil, 2024*)

The research yields quite alarming results, where for the first time in the entire series of Research already conducted shows that the number of non-readers (53%) exceeds the number of readers (47%). The tables below:

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Table 1: Percentage of reading population (quarterly) in Brazil between the years 2011 and 2024, in relation to the total population divided by gender.

YEARS				
	2011	2015	2019	2024
TOTAL	50%	56%	52%	47%
Men	44%	52%	50%	44%
Women	54%	59%	54%	49%

Source: Author's own work, adapted from the book Portraits of Reading in Brazil, 2025.

Table 2: Percentage of reading population (quarterly) in Brazil between the years 2011 and 2024, in relation to the total population divided by age group.

YEARS				
	2011	2015	2019	2024
AGE				
5-10 (years)	66%	67%	71%	62%
11-13	84%	84% 81% 75% 67% 67% 59% 59%		81%
14-17	71%	55% 57% 53% 48% 45% 41% 38%		62%
18-24	53%	27% 26%	Source: Author's own work, adapted from the book	53%
25-29	47%		Portraits of Reading in Brazil, 2025.	51%
30-39	48%			45%
40-49	41%			41%
50-69	33%			34%
70+	24%			32%

Also with the intention of learning about Brazilian cultural habits, the Itaú Foundation In 2024, a survey was conducted with 2,949 people, aged 16 to 65, from all social classes, regions of the country and race/color, where it was necessary to:

The results are a snapshot of access, consumption, and possibilities for expanding habits and of cultural rights. The data reflect the particularities and, indeed, the inequalities related to carrying out cultural activities. (Itaú Foundation, 2024)

The research also reveals that:

[...] there is a strong inequality in access to art and culture in the country, where people with higher incomes Higher education levels and incomes lead to more participation in cultural activities. This points to the need for... We need to consider public policies aimed at greater democratization of access to culture and improvement.



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of the living conditions of the Brazilian population, so that culture is treated as a right and not as a privilege. (Itaú Foundation, 2024)

Based on this portrait of the Brazilian reading landscape, it is suggested that We urgently need to build a map of these readers' activities based on their... The most used social media platforms and *streaming services*, so that we can then think about strategies to increase... The number of readers and the consumption of literature in our country.

The challenge is enormous, but necessary, if we consider the convergences that have been most evident. regularly highlighted, insofar as these digital devices and *streaming services* (this Lastly, on a smaller scale, due to social inequalities that prevent access to the platforms. (paid) are becoming widely popular, reflecting the substantial decline in access to literary texts. and in the reading habits of our students.

This mapping of uses will possibly give us some clues as to how... We, as educators, should intervene to achieve better reading rates in... our country.

2.3 Instagram: Signs of an artificial cultural identity on social media

Instagram is now the perfect meeting place for people who want not *only* Interact, but also learn a little about everything. From culinary recipes, health and wellness tips to... Investment portfolios. In this space, and in many others similar to *Instagram*, such as *TikTok*, *YouTube*, etc., everyone aims to be creative, original, and even perfect.

In this environment, rapid debates and expositions of theories and ideologies take place. users, who, in a rather inconsistent and ephemeral way, express opinions and provide information that, Often, they can no longer be sustained the next minute.

Streaming platforms, on the other hand, specialize in preparing cultural *fast food* for... Because they are consumed and digested by their users, they promote a false sense of satiety. intellectual and the assumption of a personality equally imposed by the other, staying far away from a state of consciousness of individual memory and taste, as well as critical thinking.

It is therefore likely that we will soon go through (if we are not already going through) a the need to reinvent some new way of valuing the essence of humanity as something Unique to each individual. Something personal. We need to become much more interested in ourselves again. identity (both individually and collectively) as well as our ability to choose, that is based solely on what the algorithm has in the data.



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This reflection on the pillars of the formation of a possible new cultural identity.

Brazilian understanding is imperative for us, in order to try to understand through the "salespeople" and the "Buyers" of this culture, who are we today and what do we want to consume in terms of products? cultural.

According to a survey conducted by the Itaú Foundation on access to culture, the networks Social activities are the main source of information on cultural activities, followed by

from recommendations by friends or relatives, advertisements, and information published in newspapers, Magazines, TV, radio, or the internet. But even here, the differences in access between social classes begin to appear. (Itaú Foundation, 2024)

The lack of a technological critique that discusses the actions of the famous "advisors" and the endless "suggestions" of "taste" found on digital platforms and tools that give us They accompany us day and night and are, among other issues, at the heart of the problems surrounding... promoting this false identity, which we call here an "artificial identity," that will delay or to hinder, in many respects, the sociocultural growth of these people and contribute to the lack of... developing taste and critical thinking in our readers.

2.4 The autonomy of choices: literary taste and critical thinking

The digital age has brought, along with gigantic social development, immense challenges. related to security, privacy, human relationships, and more recently, fatigue and... People's mental exhaustion due to information overload and, in many cases, misinformation. broadcast daily across various media. As a result of all this innovation, we have had changes. profound changes in the forms of communication, learning, and consumption in general.

We live in a "virtual reality" in which the systems that culturally define our intellectual profile and consequently our identity (perhaps because we can't really do it). (to define it) work based on an algorithm. From our signals and daily uses of these systems And through networks, the definitions of our cultural domain and our tastes are drawn. Big data brings together Everything about us, as we gradually become aware of which paths and means to follow. used by these companies to arrive at this design or understanding of who we are or what We liked it.

Therefore, this study focuses particularly on this possible cultural identity. Brazilian as a construct of social networks and "cultural apps," generating the "phenomenon of

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"artificial identity," the result of which are identity profiles forged on *streaming* platforms.

cultural and accepted and recognized by their users as faithful representations of their choices and tastes.

The formula seems simple. It's as if whenever we want to eat something, we should... simply handing someone else our plate so that they can put something on it that we don't know if we want. But what we might like. And so we will increasingly lose our ability to choose. No. We know for sure what we want to consume or not, because according to our profile, the one that... It was designed for me; I was supposed to like this and not that.

In Canclini's ironic statement (2019), the algorithm not only thinks and decides better than we do, but It also has tastes. In other words, when we search for something on Google, it will satisfy the taste of... algorithm, instead of human taste.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (2007), taste defines and distinguishes us, and this distancing is increasingly... more than one state of consciousness and understanding of the definition of what "taste" is, thus as one of the factors that shape the formation and refinement of our choices are great dangers for Culture and society today.

We have at our disposal an artificial brain that tells us what our needs are. cultural consumption (whether of series, films, music, and in a few cases, literature books), helping to further impoverish our cultural curiosity.

Daniel Verdú (2016) tells us that, "in some way, the Internet and platforms *Cultural streaming* has brought to light a universe similar to what Borges described in *A Library of Babel*." I expand on this statement by Verdú, to add that, if for Borges the The entirety of the Library would be beyond our observable reach; equally beyond that... Our control over the Internet and social networks.

And, paradoxically, even though we have everything within our reach, we are unable to account for... To observe and understand this vast universe. Perhaps even out of the anguish of not being able to see it clearly. When we are exposed to excessive light and so much information, our vision has become... overshadowed by the vastness of things around us.

The writer Italo Calvino, foreseeing the future, in 1990, in his essay "Visibility", He wrote about the visual garbage offered by various media, from which we would become largely dependent. Hoarders. We will be (if we are not already) buried under the accumulation of disjointed and disconnected information in our immense repository of memories and learning. It is he who says:

Today we are bombarded with such a quantity of images that we can no longer cope. To better distinguish direct experience from what we saw just seconds ago [...]. In our memory



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Thousands of fragments of images are deposited in successive layers, resembling a garbage dump. where it is increasingly unlikely that one of them will gain prominence. (CALVINO, 1990, p. 107).

The Italian writer probably couldn't have imagined, some three decades ago, how quickly we would arrive. to this condition, buried not only by the images, but also by the incalculable quantity of General texts and information that circulate daily in digital media.

3. Research Methodology

In accordance with the requirements of scientific and academic research, this study followed some... The methodological approaches that must be made explicit are: bibliographic research and the approach. of a qualitative nature.

The research is bibliographic in nature because, as Gil (2002, p. 59) states, it stemmed from experience. the author's work was "compared with the experience of other authors in this field." To achieve this, certain requirements were met. the steps inherent to this study model, from choosing the topic, through research and reading. From the sources to the drafting of the final text.

The choice of a qualitative approach for this type of subject matter was essential and effective, because This allowed for an analysis in which it was possible to explore experiences, perceptions, and meanings related to study, focusing on the interpretation of the phenomenon analyzed, as here, in the analyses of the questions about reading, social media (the specific case of *Instagram*), cultural identity in Brazil and paths of culture.

Lakatos and Marconi (2003) further assert that the qualitative approach allows the phenomenon to be interpreted from the subjectivity of individuals, taking into account considering the perspective of the actors involved.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Several questions that arose during the study on construction were raised here. Identity and cultural behavior of Brazilian readers that could be investigated in Future research:

What correlations and general aspects of reading habits can be evidenced in the What should students do when using social media?



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The indifference of many students towards reading books stems solely from interaction with other types of entertainment, stimuli, and emotions, fueled by the networks that Do they end up absorbing and diverting more and more people each day? Are there other equally important factors?

It is, therefore, in an attempt to better understand the context of the mediatization process of practices. and interactions, which we argue here highlights the urgent need for more research analyzing the Reconfiguration of culture in the *streaming and social media scene*.

Even without intending to provide definitive answers to the problems investigated here, It can be inferred at this point that encouraging debate about the new directions in which culture is heading is crucial. Brazilian research will contribute to a more accurate observation of the uses of networks and platforms. by Brazilian students as primary sources of cultural consumption and in particular of literature.

Research to investigate important data such as age range, education level, and class. The social context of literature consumers in Brazil today will require additional information to... to broaden the understanding of this literature produced today in the country and of the artificial cultural identity of consumers that are emerging on the horizon of our country.

5. Final Considerations

Understanding the phenomenon of this artificial cultural identity, when it presents itself. intertwined with various platforms, artificial intelligence, and technological devices is something of This is a complicated matter, as the issue to be discussed goes far beyond literary taste and personal perspective. that each of us has of the world and of others.

In fact, what is concerning in the field of Education is that there is a perception on the part of We teachers realize that this false identity is becoming entrenched in students, especially in this... last decade.

It is undeniable that the power of digital influence has been enormous on people. Whether in In the fields of health, fashion, and politics. Whether in speeches, narratives, behavior, or... When choosing career paths, we are all very attentive to what digital "gurus" tell us.

That's why books and writers need to appear more frequently in digital spaces. Like *Instagram* and so many others. Literature needs more visibility. The reading of texts Literary interests need to be encouraged and brought to the forefront of these media, just like all other subjects. of everyday life. It is already known that no one becomes a reader outside of their context, because reading needs to be intimately linked to life experiences, individual sensitivity and events in Daily spaces, which are becoming increasingly virtual.



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This seems to be the main reason for the students' indifference towards reading.

Books. Interaction with other types of entertainment, other stimuli, other emotions.

Feeding content on social media ends up absorbing and diverting even more of this audience. As a result, a type of...

Sociocultural illiteracy seems to prevail. We learn to read, to write, to use technology, but

We are becoming less and less aware of our own culture, our own literature, our own history, and we are learning less and less.

still reflecting on our own cultural identity.

Thus, this excessive inertia regarding choices, leaving everything entirely up to the...

Artificial intelligence will influence what we read, listen to, and consume, just like any other type of excess.

irreversible damage.

In this context, we emphasize the need to reaffirm our commitment beyond the borders of...

University and within social networks and streaming services, a culture that revives the stimulus of

reflective capacity, critical thinking, inventiveness, and appreciation for our cultural memory.

thus promoting discussions, academic or otherwise, that are more participatory and engaging, such as

They are on all of these platforms.

The practice of critical reading is increasingly necessary at any age and in all fields.

of knowledge, as an imperative competence for accessing the world and for self-knowledge.

That is what is at stake, as is the future of Brazil, which we discussed at the beginning.

of this discussion.

It can be concluded that platforms like *Instagram* and other similar networks, such as, for example,

YouTube, the subject of another discussion that will continue this research, constitutes a resource.

digital technologies have the potential to both widen cultural and social inequalities and promote

Significant intellectual development. The choice of the best path is ours. And so that

If this last scenario prevails, we must learn once and for all to combine awareness.

Technology, critical thinking, responsibility, and ethics are essential in how we consume in these environments.

Only in this way will we be able to resist and prophesy, unlike those old heralds.

From chaos and ignorance, a more promising and hopeful future for our Brazilian people, where,

Perhaps the best way out is to "believe in literature and disbelieve in other remedies," adapting it to the...

Regarding the literary question, the words of Father Antônio Vieira, in his emblematic Sermon of the Mandate on

Love (1643). We also urgently need to rediscover this sensitive and seductive essence of ourselves.

This almost forgotten essence, which in other times led the Bahian writer Jorge Amado, the great

"friend of men" (as the German essayist Günter Lorenz wanted to call him), turning in a way

so passionate about the vivid, realistic, and enchanting description of the culture, religion, and customs of

A people, paradoxically so joyful and so oppressed.



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