**SP5:**

**Race, Romance and Nation Building in Brazil’s Foundational Novel**

***Iracema* (1865) by José de Alencar**

**Aims:**

**1.Outline process of independence and the birth of a Brazilian nation in the 1800s**

**2. Explore the role of literature in nation formation**

**3. Examine the novel’s romantic configuration of a new Brazilian nation**

**Objectives:**

**This will allow us to see the ideological role that race played in Brazil’s foundational fiction**

1. **The Birth of a Brazilian Nation**

**1.1 From Colonialism to Independence**

* 18th century: Brazilian creoles dissatisfied with peripheral status within Portuguese empire.
* Rise of liberalism throughout Latin America
* Spanish American revolutions and Independence
* Brazil’s independence was not to come from a revolutionary break with the motherland (as in Spanish America), but from a process that occasioned a few changes from and much continuity with the colonial period (Fausto 63).
* 1807: Napoleon invades Iberian Peninsula
* Portuguese King Dom João VI flees to Brazil
* 1808 Brazil is centre of Portuguese Empire
* International Trade opened up, new industries and culture
* 1814: Napoleon defeated
* 1815: D. João raises Brazil to status of a kingdom united with Portugal
* 1820: Portuguese Liberal revolution. D. João returns home, leaves son D. Pedro
* Changes in Brazil revolked and Lisbon returned to be capital of empire
* 7th September 1822: D. Pedro Declares Independence of Brazil
* Grito do Ipiranga, Independência ou morte
* Brazil – independent nation with a Portuguese monarch
* 1826: D.João dies – D. Pedro declared King
* 1831: Creoles convince D. Pedro to abdicate in favor of son Dom Pedro II
* 1831- 1840: Regency Years (D. Pedro II only 5 years old!)
* Years of conflict and instability - revolts and uprisings
* Political and ideological divisions/ conflicts between conservatives and liberals
* 1840: D. Pedro II assumes throne - moderating power
* 1850: Conciliation government - conservatives and liberals together.
* Political sacrifices on both sides

1. **The Birth of a National Literature**

**2.1 Brazilian Romanticism: Consolidating a National Literature**

* 19th century: Birth of an independent Brazilian nation/Birth of a Brazilian literature Political and Literary Autonomy: Writers free selves from European (Portuguese) models

*The period between 1800 and 1850 shows a great leap forward in Brazilian literature as it passed from the shadows of an undefined situation, a mixture of decadent neoclassicism, revolutionary enlightenment and nativist exaltation into an artistic manifestation by which a whole group of writers was brought together, consolidating in Brazilian literature the autonomy of its national tonality and its forms and themes and the technical and critical self awareness of that autonomy* (Coutinho 132)

* New National Consciousness in literature
* Literature previously dominated by neo-classcicism or Arcadism
* Registered submission to Portugal

**Canto Genetlíaco, Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto,**

Sou vassalo, sou leal;

Como tal,

fiel, constante,

sirvo à glória da imperante,

sirvo à grandeza real.

Aos ´lísios descerei,

Fiel sempre a Portugal,

Ao famoso vice-rei,

Ao ilustre general,

Às bandeiras que jurei. (Bosi 85)

* Local and national sources become sources of inspiration
* Anti-Lusitanian spirit

*Landscape and myth are fused to create an identity in opposition to that of the former colonial rule* (Treece)

## 2.2 Indianism

* **Romanticism**: turns to natural landscape, history, indigenous folklores, myths and legends
* Key is pre-cabralian (pre-portuguese) past.
* Indian crucial figure and gives rise to indianism within Romanticism

## I-Juca Pirama Gonçalves Dias (1823-1864).

No meio das tabas de amenos verdores

Cercado de troncos – coberto de flores

Alteiam-se os tetos d’altiva nação. [. . .]

Em fundos vasos de alvacenta argila

Ferve o cauim;

Enchem-se as copas, o prazer começa

Reina o festim. [.. .]

Sou bravo, sou forte,

Sou filho do Norte;

Meu canto de morte,

Guerreiros, ouvi.

* Indian is a combative warrior – stands for Brazil fighting against Portuguese
* Indianism part of the **Invention of Tradition** (Ranger and Hobsbawm)

*the history and society of the indigenous peoples were rediscovered, reinvented and adopted as a cultural heritage which a young and recently independent nation did not possess* (Treece 59).

* 1838: the Instituo Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro

There *was a great curiosity about the country, its history, social, economic and commercial life, its ethnology, flora, fauna* (Treece 135).

* Literature part of this:

*writers [were ] encouraged to establish the legitimacy of an emerging nation* (Treece7).

* Foundational Ficitons:

*Novels could teach people about their history and they barely formulated customs and about ideas and feelings that have been modified by still unsung political and social events* (Sommer 9)

Literature invents past and thus forges future contours of nation

* **Noble Savage** in **Europe**: Jean Jacques Rousseau and Michel de Montaigne Rousseau’s *Discourse of the Origins and foundations of Inequality amongst men* (1755): primitives not corrupted by the evils of the modern world
* The Indian is alternative to decadent European society
* Indian figure is sanctioned by Europe – seen as positive
* **Brazilian romanticism** inspired by **European romanticism** (Chateaubriand, Walter Scott) Romanticism in Europe: a transitional mode - emerged from contradictions of the industrial revolution and rise of new bourgeoisie
* Registered libertarian spirit or nostalgia for ancien regime
* Style: freer language (less emphasis on form, more excess of content
* Nature key source of inspiration – expressive (nostalgia?)

1. **Race and Romance in Iracema**

* Iracema - anagram of America: novel search for American identity
* Natural landscape and indigenous inheritance key

*Verdes mares bravios de minha terra natal, onde canta a jandaia nas fronds da carnauba; verdes mares que brilhais como líquida Esmeralda ao raios do sol nascente, perlongando as alvas praias ensombradas de coqueiros.* (237)

* Figurative, free poetic language, flexible grammar
* Homegrown references

*The Portuguese language is being revolutionized here… If Portuguese cannot progress it must transform itself into Brazilian* (Treece 148).

* **‘Argumento histórico:**’1603 – establishment of first colonial establishment in Brazil, Pêro Coelho, João Soromenho and Martim Soares Moreno
* Oral History:

*Uma história que me contaram nas lindas várzeas onde nasci, à calada da noite, quando a lua passeava no céu argenteando os campos, e a brisa rugitava nos palmares.* (238)

* **Iracema -** Female Indian: falls in love with colonial soldier, Martim
* Love story: No conflict between whites and Indians/ Europe and Brazil but productive encounter and romantic surrender
* No violence:

*De primeiro ímpeto, a mã lesta caiu sobre a cruz da espada; mas logo sorriu. O moço guerreiro aprendeu na religião, de sua mãe, onde a mulher é símbolo de ternura e amor. Sofreu mais d’alma que da ferida.*

*O sentimento que ele pôs nos olhos e no rosto, não seu eu. Porém a virgem lançou de si o arco e a uiraçaba, e correu para o guerrerio, sentida da mágoa que causara. A mão que rápida ferira, estancou mais rápida e compassiva o sangue que gotejava. Depois Iracema quebrou a flocha homicida* (239/40)

* Active heroine/ passive hero – heroine helps the Portuguese soldier
* Co-**operation** between indigenous and European
* Martim and Poti:

*Os dois irmãos encostaram a fronte na fronte e o peito no peito, para exprimir que não tinham ambos mais que uma cabeça e um coração* (chapter 16, p.270).

Incestuousness – no difference

*A boca do guerreiro pousou na boca mimosa da virgem. Ficaram ambos assim unidos como dois frutos gêmeos do araçá que saíram do seio da mesma flor* (chapter 9: page 254).

* **Iracema and Martin**
* Iracema – forges a new identity
* Iracema and Nature: she represents land and signifies harmony between people and nature, between Brazil and Europe.
* **External threats:**
* Dichotomy between Iracema and Martim’s Portuguese fiancé:

virgem branca (anjo puro dos amores infantis 247)

virgem de labios de mel, que tinha os cabelos mais negros que a asa da graúna

* Love is naturally but not socially sanctioned:

*A êsse monte subia o cristão, e lá ficava cismando em seu destino. Às vezes lhe vinha à mente a idéia de tornar à sua terra e aos seus; mas êle sabia que Iracema o acompanharia; e essa lembrança lhe remordeu o coração. Cada passo mais que afastasse dos campos nativos a filha dos tabajaras, agora que ela não tinha o ninho de seu coração para abrigar-se, era uma porção da vida que lhe roubava. (293 – end chapter 27)*

* Moacyr: child of suffering: *havia aí a predestinação de uma raça?* (start chapter 33 and page 303).
* Hope for future born from the union of Indian girl and white European colonizer
* David Treece: Iracema a **novel of conciliation**
* Indianism shifts from conflict to conciliation with Europe after 1850
* Linked to politics founded on conciliation between liberals and conservatives sacrifices key to politics
* Key sacrifice for Liberals is abolition
* Treece: Iracema as an allegory of national politics
* Doris Sommer& Renata Wasserman: novel’s romantic fusion proposes ***mestiçagem*** / mestizaje as the roots of Brazil’s identity