



Tent of Miracles

Jorge Amado, Barbara Shelby (Translator), Ilan Stavans (Introduction)

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A very rich and exotic novel . . . tells the story of Pedro Archanjo, mestizo, self-taught ethnologist, apostle of miscegenation, laborer, cult priest, and bon vivant. . . . Amado's joyous, exuberant, almost magical descriptions of festivals, puppet shows, African rituals, local legends, fascinating customs, strange and wonderful characters . . . result in a richness and warmth that are impossible to resist.

Tent of Miracles Details

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Author : Jorge Amado , Barbara Shelby (Translator) , Ilan Stavans (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Tent of Miracles for online ebook

David says

Americans are very familiar with the history of racial struggle in the U.S., from the days of slavery to Jim Crow to the Civil Rights era to the modern day which, while unquestionably better than previous eras, is still a long way from perfect. Most of us know a lot less about Brazil, though Brazil has gone through very similar (yet different) trials. Another large, wealthy country that once practiced slavery on a large scale, then eventually legislated a racial equality on paper that was generations from the reality on the ground, Brazil is also a colonial state with a racial consciousness across the color spectrum that, if you read this book, you will see is subtly different from our own, even if there are obvious similarities.

Tent of Miracles is the epic biography of a fictional character who seems compellingly, vibrantly, historically real, and Jorge Amado puts life and breath and blood into all the characters. They all seem like real people whose stories he might be fictionalizing a little, but surely they really existed, the events are real, the history is real? Well, I'm sure some of the events were real, or at least were based on real events, but this is a novel. Pedro Archanjo never existed, but he should have.

We are first introduced to Pedro Archanjo by way of James D. Levenson, a Nobel-winning American professor from Columbia University, who visits the Brazilian state of Bahia and is feted like a movie star. Brazilians fawn all over the prestigious gringo from North America. At a press conference, he's asked about some famous Marxist, and he says:

"That's an idiotic question and only a fool would venture an opinion on Marcuse's work or discuss present-day Marxism in the framework of a press conference. If I had time to give a speech or a class about it that would be something else again; but I haven't got time and I didn't come to Bahia to talk about Marcuse. I came here to see the place where a remarkable man lived and worked, a man of profound and generous ideals, one of the founders of modern humanism — your fellow citizen Pedro Archanjo. That, and only that, is what brings me to Bahia."

What a flurry of commotion and lionization and hagiographies follows the endorsement of the famous gringo! All of Bahia promptly goes into a year-long celebration of their most famous, esteemed, and scholarly native son. The College of Medicine where he worked proclaims him to represent the very bedrock of their mission! He is the pride of Bahia! Surely the most eminent man ever born in Brazil!

And then Amado tells us Archanjo's story, going back and forth in time, jumping to many different POVs, from the schoolchildren who write essays about the great national hero years after his death, to his real history that follows the history of Brazil through the early 20th century.

Pedro Archanjo was a humble *mestizo*, and his job at the College of Medicine was not professor, or even adjunct faculty, but runner. He was an errand boy. He lived and died in poverty. He lived in a slum, spent his life fighting white supremacists like Professor Niles Argolo, a professor at the College of Medicine who wrote treatises on the inherent criminality and degeneracy of the black race and the need to segregate and exterminate them in order to save Brazil. Archanjo fights back by writing his own treatises. Though

unschooled, Archanjo is brilliant, and a voracious reader, and over a period of several decades he and his friends basically self-publish four books: *Daily Life in Bahia*, chronicles the Afro-Brazilian candomblé cults and their influence in daily life (and coincidentally demolishes one of Niles Argolo's theories). He goes on to publish several more, including a meticulously researched genealogy of all the prominent families in Bahia, in which Archanjo is pleased to call the "pure European" Professor Argolo his cousin, after proving that he and Argolo shared the same Negro ancestors.

He's a clever, cunning, brave man who fights for the candomblés during brutal police suppression, even though he no longer believes. Students rally around him. He stirs up unrest but makes friends among the high and the low. He tweaks the noses of racists and perseveres. People (especially women) come in and out of his life, and everyone knows and remembers him. The people who really know him certainly don't remember the cross between George Washington, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein who's being celebrated in Bahia a hundred years after his birth and plastered on walls hawking cola.

Tent of Miracles is partly comic, as we see the glorious paeans to this great man and his works, followed by the real story behind it all. But it's also inspiring, and sad at times, and in the end, epic, covering a man's entire long life, a man who was never really appreciated until after some American dropped by and casually mentioned reading copies of his books that somehow made their way to Columbia University in New York.

Even in the English translation, Jorge Amado's prose is splendid, and full of Brazilian character. I feel like I was really walking the streets and watching the dances and tasting the food.

I give it 4.5 stars. It's a great book, but it is also a long literary book, not exactly a page-turner. And for all that Amado handles the question of race deftly, well, you can't help noticing that it's another one of those books where women are basically sex. All the men, the good men and the bad men, are pretty much strutting roosters. There are lots of women in the book, and they're interesting characters, but I don't think there are any who aren't described in terms of who's screwing them. (And Pedro Archanjo screws a *lot* of women.) Now, I am not usually up on my high horse about sexism in fiction (I admit to liking James Bond, after all), nor would I deny that Amado knows the Brazilian society he's writing about, but I call this a glaring gap for an author who goes out of his way to celebrate the personhood of whites, blacks, Negroes, mulattos, mestizos, and all the other people of the Brazilian color-caste system, but can't write women as anything other than lovers and mothers. Still, I'd call this oversight/blindness on the part of the author, not malice or contempt, which makes him better than, say, Ian Fleming.

This is a rich, warm, humanistic book with real characters, real people, and it will make you feel like you know a little tiny bit about Brazil's complicated history even if you've never set foot there.

Luís C. says

The newspapers were protesting against "the way has Africanized among us, the feast of carnival, this great civilization festival". During the first years of the new century, the press campaign against the afoshés grows violent and systematic, with each success of "processions of Africans" and every failure of the Great Carnival Societies - with ancient Greece, with Louis XV, Catherine Medici - favorites of "good" gentlemen, doctors, wealthy. "The authorities should prohibit these tambourinades and these candomblés currently our streets, which produce this unspeakable cacophony as if we were at Quinta das Beatas or Engenho Velho, as this masquerade dressed and turbaned intoning the abominable samba, because this is inconsistent with our state of civilization "

Onur B says

Life story of Pedro Arkanjo who is a special person from Bahia / Brazil. Everything can happens at the miracles shop. Sometimes sexual content and mysticism & magic be seen locally in the book. Racism and perspective of crossbreed be underlined especially in Brazil.

Shomeret says

The Tent of Miracles is the second book I've read by Jorge Amado. The first was The War of the Saints which was recommended to me as a book with a primary focus on the Yoruban spirit Oya who is widely known as Yansan in Brazil. I read The War of the Saints some time ago. It had tons of magical realism, but I remembered thinking at the time that I wanted more spirituality, ritual and folklore. That's when I was told to read The Tent of Miracles.

Although I had heard about the discrimination against Afro-Brazilian religions in the first half of the 20th century, I had not read about it before in either fiction or non-fiction. There are a number of scenes in The Tent of Miracles that depict instances of prejudice.

Yet religious discrimination is also shown in this book as being brought to an ignominious end. The central character Pedro Archanjo played a role in ending it. Archanjo says in this book that "One day the orixas will be dancing on the stage." The orixas are the spirits of Candomble, an Afro-Brazilian religion. This is a prediction that has come true in modern day Brazil.

I was very glad to learn so much about the history of Candomble and other significant aspects of Brazilian culture through reading The Tent of Miracles. I hope to read Amado's novel Jubiaba in the not so distant future.

For my complete review see my December blog post "The Tent of Miracles: Jorge Amado on Afro-Brazilian History" at <http://www.maskedpersona.blogspot.com>

Patricia Ferreira says

Marvellous! This is really an amazing book, Very beautiful. Long live Pedro Archanjo!

Jim says

Jorge Amado is a miracle. As I read through Tent of Miracles, I kept saying to myself: This is good, but is it really up to Amado's standard? As I read the last few chapters, I said to myself: "Yes, *meu bom*, this is a book well worth reading, as are all of Amado's books."

The book's hero, Pedro Archanjo, is a mulatto, practitioner of *candomblé*, self-taught scholar and writer, and man of the people. He comes to life so vividly that, for the first three hundred pages, I thought that Amado was basing it on an actual person. And what a hero! This is, in sum, a positive response to racism and bigotry, by Archanjo's living a life that proves that the genius of the African race wedded to the white race produces a beauty and intelligence that is pure Brazilian.

We see Archanjo die twice, first so that we can see the attempt to "sell" his life through a celebration of his centenary. By the time we see him die a second time, at the end of **Tent of Miracles**, we see the man himself.

Deanne says

Pedro Archanjo the hero of the tent of miracles is a difficult man to assign a part to. He's the writer of 4 books, which some twenty years after his death are seeing a revival.

As a result of the interest of an american academic interest is revived in Pedro's life. The result is the story of a man, his friends, the women in his life and the children. He's a likeable rogue, intelligent and a believer in saying what he thinks is right. Did love the section where he's a proofwriter, and the mistakes he allows into an article about Hitler.

Michi says

Maybe it was my lack of emotional connection to the subject matter, maybe the fact that I simply couldn't make sense of the narration style in many places and had to actively keep thinking back to what had just happened or maybe it was just the needless almost disgusting sexualisation of nearly all of the female characters, but I couldn't make it all the way through this book.

Katie says

Whew! Glad that one's finally complete. The beginning of this book was quite a challenge to get through. Just...not good, not engaging at all. Then, just as I was about ready to give up on it, it got interesting...about 150 pages in. The introduction to this book mentions that Amado was known to write his books on one sitting and then refuse to go back and make more than the slightest edits, and that is what this book is lacking - major editing. Because the second 150 pages are SO interesting. So many comments on race relations, miscegenation, class, what it means to be an academic or scholar, what it means to be learned, who owns culture, which is the true culture of Brazil; reactions to communism, to WWII and the idea of there being a superior race; illustrations of how those in power get to write history but only their side of history. Really, the ideas are intriguing and thought-provoking, but the execution is quite boring (most of the time).

Suhaila Abdel Latif says

3/5

Carla Soares says

Na verdade, li este há muitos anos, ainda em casa dos meus pais, num volume grosso e velho, de folhas amarelas e capa muito, muito gasta, com as pontas reviradas e vincos. Já não seria capaz de contar a história, mas penso nele e vem-me à ideia sol e música na rua. Não sei porquê, pode nada ter a ver.

Não hesito, porém, em dar-lhe as cinco estrelas, porque permanece na minha memória afectiva de forma intensa e perene, tanto que, entre a vontade de relê-lo e o receio de diluir o muito que gostei dele, e foi mesmo muito, prefiro nunca mais lhe pegar.

Gypsy Lady says

Is it the mixture of African rituals, local legends, fascinating customs, and strange and wonderful characters and/or its English translation of "Brazil's most illustrious and venerable novelist" that made *Tent of Miracles* such challenging reading for me?

When the English translation was published in 1989, (first published as *Tenda dos Milagres* (in Portuguese in 1969)) the *Washington Post* review included the words: "A richness and warmth that are impossible to resist".

Normally I do not enter any titles I value at less than two stars UNLESS it was a book club selection. I enter *Tent of Miracles* because I am hopeful that other readers will have some familiarity with the author and will be able to offer comments.

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I am not limited by what I know.

plavizec says

3.5*

Charles says

recommended by Lonely Planet as good way to understand Condomblé this was a major disappointment by the great writer Jorge Amado -- weak characters, plot, content and seemingly quickly thrown together

Özgür Oklap says

"Melezdir bizim yüzümüz, sizin yüzünüz."

Jorge Amado beni yine Bahia böggesinin ba? ?ehri Salvador'un sokaklar?na götürdü. Bu sefer melez Pedro Arkanjo'nun takibindeydim. Onun gezintilerinin, sohbetlerinin, a?k kaçamaklar?n?n ve hepsinden önemlisi kendi insanlar?n?, yöresini anlatt???, en yak?n arkada??, yolda??, mucizeleri resmederek hayat?n? kazanan ve atölyesine "Mucizeler Dükkan?" ismini veren Lidio Corro'nun bast??? dört kitab?n?n... "Bahia'da Halk Ya?am?", "Bahia Geleneklerinde Afrika Etkileri", "Bahial? Ailelerde Melezli?e ?li?kin Notlar" ve "Bahia'da Yemek Sanat?, Kökenleri ve ?lkeleri".

"Mucizeler Dükkan?", Bahial? melezlerin hikayesi asl?nda. Onlar?n zengin kültürleri, fakirlikleri ve Arkanjo önderli?inde, ?rkç?l?a kar?? yürekli mücadeleleri... Kültürlerini, dinlerini (Kandomble) kabul ettirme sava?lar?... Arkanjo'nun 1900'lü y?llarin ba??dan ölümüne kadar geçen süre boyunca derdi hep ?rkç?l?kk, melezlerin refah?, özgürle?meleri olur. Onun görüp?lerine göre Brezilya'n?n yüzü melezdir, kültürü melezdir. Ari ?rk diye bir olgunun varl??? söz konusu bile olamaz. Ancak, bu görüp?ler büyük sorunlar? da beraberinde getirir. Önce festalar? yasaklan?r, sonra da ?rklar aras? evlilik ?iddetle cezaland?r?lma noktas?na gelir. Melezler hayvanlar kadar de?er görmez! ?ste böyle bir zihniyet dünyas?n?n bask?n oldu?u ko?ullar alt?nda Arkanjo, kitaplar?n? basmak, melez kültürünü anlatmak için ç?rp?n?r durur. Gerçek bir kahramand?r o!

Beni Arkanjo kadar - kimi zaman ondan daha fazla - Lidio Corro etkiledi. Özellikle de yapt??? i?. Dü?ünsenize mucizeleri resmetti?inizi... Biri size geliyor ve ya?d???n? iddia etti?i mucizeyi dillendiriyor. Siz de renklendiriyorsunuz o mucizeyi tuvalinizde.

"Mucizeler Dükkan?", ayn? zamanda kültürel ö?elerle dolu bir kitap. Kandomble dinine özgü sermoniler, danslar, kapuera gösterileri, Bahia'n?n terminolojisi... Küçük bir sözlük eklenmi? kitab?n arkas?na ve Kandomble dinine ili?kin bir önsöz mevcut. Önsözü okuyup ba?l?yorsunuz romana zaten ve ara s?ra da sözlü?ü yoklay?p yolunuza devam ediyorsunuz.

Paulo Sousa says

Livro lido 4°/Dez//61°/2017

Título: Tenda dos milagres

Autor: Jorge Amado (Brasil)

Editora: @companhiadasletras

Ano de lançamento: 1968

Ano desta edição: 2008

Páginas: 320

Classificação: ????????????

um ano sem ler jorge amado é um ano perdido. para não perder de todo meu ano de leituras decido findar 2017 com “tenda dos milagres”, essa obra soberba e fundamental no imenso conjunto literário do escritor

baiano.

o livro é protagonizado pelo bedel pedro archanjo, mulato das bandas do pelourinho, empregado da faculdade de medicina da bahia, que constrói sozinho, apesar de opiniões contrárias, a mais importante obra antropológica do século XX. totalmente autodidata, archanjo, profundo conhecedor das gentes e costumes da bahia, traz nos quatro livros seus a tese da miscigenação total, fato que lhe custou ardorosa perseguição pro parte do doutor nilo argolo, o eminent professor daquela faculdade e claramente pró arianista.

o livro em si é a reconstrução da vida de archanjo, já após sua morte, provocada pela chegada ao brasil do prêmio nobel americano james levenson, que, ao chegar à salvador, profere à imprensa a grande importância dos livros do mulato em terras norte-americanas, o que causou furor e certo mal-estar entre a comunidade científica, alheia aos livros e pensamentos de archanjo.

jorge amado trata, no livro, do problema da intolerância e preconceito raciais, da famigerada máxima lombrosiana de que a tendência à criminalidade está intrinsecamente ligada à cor da pele. e ao criar dois personagens ambivalentes (archanjo e argolo) amado personifica o embate entre o cientifismo arrogantemente pedante e arcaico contra o o autodidatismo nascido dentro da comunidade baiana, negra e macumbeira.

jorge amado é mestre em criar heróis, muitos deles defensores de causas perdidas. diferente das histórias juvenis e românticas, onde o herói sempre casa com a princesa e “são felizes para sempre”, em jorge o herói é marcante por ser parecido com a gente comum e por isso fatalmente sujeito à ruína. jorge soube como ninguém retratar as gentes e costumes da bahia, toda a beleza e musicalidade (não me refiro ao ritmo axé, mas a algo mais amplo) das tradições baianas enraizadas nos ancestrais afrodescendentes, os sabores, a alegria, os desmazelados, foi um escritor cuja verve sempre me encantou. e seus heróis, homens e mulheres que antes de tudo souberam buscar o sentido de viver dentro de suas origens, proclamaram sem medo o que a bahia tem de melhor, até cientista antropólogo como foi o caso de archanjo. leitor disciplinado, o personagem vai rebatendo sem dó através de seus livros as “profetadas” sem embasamento científico de nilo argolo, branco de origem negra, mas que tenta esconder a todo custo suas origens africanas. como recompensa, morre pobre e velho num dos muitos becos do pelourinho, sem nunca ter conseguido o reconhecimento por ter produzido tão profícuo estudo de raças e matizes em seus livros, aliás, publicados a muito esforço na oficina tipográfica “tenda dos milagres, de seu amigo de toda a vida lídio corró.

gosto de errar pelas ladeiras do pelourinho. caminhar e absorver toda a atmosfera daquele lugar como que me transporta para dentro dos livros de jorge, esse mestre da literatura, só não maior que machado de assis, criador de livros a cujos heróis me fizeram rir, chorar, emocionar, como foi o pedro bala de “capitães da areia”, o guma de “mar morto”, o quincas berro d’água, o jubiabá do livro homônimo, a perdição de todo um povoado, tocaia grande e agora pedro archanjo, mestre cujo inglório desconhecimento o levou ao cabedal de meus personagens preferidos.

Sandra says

Ogni volta che leggo Amado vengo risucchiata nella storia dal ritmo travolente dei suoi libri, simile a quello della samba, che ossessivamente si ripete tra movimenti sinuosi e sfrenati, anche volgari ma mai violenti. Anche questa volta è andata così. Finalmente un personaggio maschile al centro della storia, Pedro Archanjo, contornato da tantissimi altri, ognuno con le proprie vite piene di povertà e di tristezza ma anche scanzonate e stravaganti, che li rendono unici e indimenticabili: Rosa di Oxalà, bellissima mulatta dallo

sguardo invitante, cosce alte e ventre piatto, amante di un ricco fazeindero e amata più che una sposa, Lidio Corrò, tipografo e pittore di miracoli, fratello o ancor più gemello di Archanjo con cui divide la Bottega dei Miracoli, luogo di incontro e di bevute, di feste e di danze, il Maggiore de Souza, leguleio autodidatta arringatore in tribunale e difensore dei poveri e degli oppressi, Zabela, una anziana signora di nobile famiglia che si diverte a raccontare le avventure di sesso e d'amore tra le bianche figlie delle famiglie in vista di Bahia e uomini neri fieri e dotati che le accontentano nelle alcove al posto di mariti debosciati; e ancora tanti tanti altri che animano le vie animate di canti e balli, festose e odorose di profumi di mare e di fiori di Bahia. Chi è Pedro Archanjo? Un mulatto “bohemien, abile suonatore di chitarrina e chitarra, per non parlare del berimbau da capoeira e degli atabaques, pastore di donzelle, seduttore di donne sposate, patriarca di puttane”, ed ancora “buon conversatore, buon bevitore, ribelle, sedizioso, organizzatore di scioperi, agitatore, innamorato, tenero amante, stallone, scrittore, scienziato, uno stregone....”.

Pedro Archanjo è uno e mille persone, tutte povere, tutte “con la pelle scura, e civili”, è Bahia, è il Brasile, terra di mescolamenti di razze e di uomini, orgogliosa del suo meticcio che è ricchezza e cultura, è vita.

Nicole Gervasio says

Ugh my god. Arduous. Plodding. Well-written, I'll give it that. And Archango's an inspiring character. The trouble is that, once you realize around page 50 that the entire book will pretty much consist of a series of reconstructions of the same life of one ordinary hero previously lost from Brazil's history, it's hard not to get bored with the pattern of nuanced changes that each new narration makes. For example, it's clever to use a fake nine-year-old boy's essay contest submission about said hero's life to demonstrate the numerous ways in which the truth has been misappropriated and poorly disseminated. It's less clever to unravel most of the plot in the first third of the book and then expect us to rehearse it through fifteen other genres. While I appreciated the author's inventiveness with the form of the novel itself, I had a lot of trouble finishing it without more plot (and less misogyny would have been nice, too).

Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly says

The University of the East (UE) here in the Philippines celebrates this year its 65th foundation anniversary with the theme "Jose Rizal: Nasa Puso ng UE" (Jose Rizal: In UE's Heart"). This is the type of bullshit Jorge Amado mocks in this novel.

Pedro Archanjo has the same amusing bawdiness, the same love for drink and women, as several of Jorge Amado's characters in his better works, "Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon" and "Dona Flor's Two Husbands." But he's tamer. For one, he's an intellectual. He wrote four books, all except one (a cookbook) championing miscegenation and/or promoting Bahian culture. These books were either ignored or ridiculed during his lifetime. He died poor, lonely, and did menial jobs towards the end of his life.

Years later, a Nobel Prize-winning gringo praised Pedro Archanjo's work and it was then that he posthumously became a literary hero and a demigod in his own country, his name being invoked in all sorts of manner, like here where UE students, who do not give a hoot about Rizal, supposedly studying in a university with Rizal inside its beating heart. Gabriel Garcia Marquez once suggested that there is an inferiority complex in Latin American intellectual circles such that not until Europe and the U.S. appreciate a certain author that he would likely be appreciated at home. Reading this tale of Pedro Archanjo, therefore,

may lead you to conclude that Rizal must be made into a Hollywood film, with Sean Penn in the role of the hero, for him to become really inside the heart of his countrymen. Then, maybe, even the world would begin to read his novels too!

Jelena says

Na momente kao da sam i sama zaplesala u ritmu bubnjeva - toliko je sve bilo živo, obojeno, melodi?no. Pri?a je protkana bogatim crna?kim naslije?em brazilske pokrajine Baije: samba, kapoeira, kandomble, oriše, vješti?arenje, procesije.

Bore se meštar Arkanžo i njegovi drugari kako rasna mržnja vise ne bi cvjetala na brazilskoj klimi. S jedne strane su crnci - tada smatrani bezvrijednom ljudskom podrasom - a s druge bijeli krstaši, ogrezli u želji da unište sav "crna?ki ološ" (a samim tim i sav baijanski folklor).

p.s. Upravo je narod Baije - bježe?i kako bi spasao živu glavu - i donio sambu u Rio.
