

Jorge Amado's Salvador da Bahia: Transcultural Place-Making and the Search for "Brazilianness"

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ABSTRACTS

Der Beitrag untersucht den Entwurf eines transkulturellen Orts und die damit verknüpfte Suche nach brasilianischer Identität in Jorge Amados (1912–2001) Werk. Amados bevorzugter Schauplatz ist der brasilianische Bundesstaat Bahia, der für seine kulturellen Verbindungen zu Afrika und seine afrobrasilianische Bevölkerung bekannt ist. In Amados Roman *Tenda dos milagres* (*Werkstatt der Wunder*) (1968) wird Bahias Hauptstadt Salvador zu einem Ort, an dem kulturelle Einflüsse afrikanischer, brasilianischer und europäischer Herkunft aufeinandertreffen. Mittelpunkt des Romans ist das historische Zentrum von Salvador da Bahia, auch bekannt als Pelourinho, den Amado mit einer Art afrobrasilianischer „Universität“ vergleicht. Der Pelourinho wird so zu einem Ort, an dem brasilianische Kultur als transkulturelle Kultur entsteht, praktiziert und erfahrbar wird. Indem Amado Salvador da Bahia als „Wiege brasilianischer Kultur“ be- und damit brasilianischer Kultur einen konkreten Ort zu-schreibt, leistet er einen Beitrag zur Definition brasilianischer Identität sowohl in einem nationalen als auch einem kulturellen Rahmen. Die Suche nach einer brasilianischen Identität bedeutet nicht zuletzt, die ehemalige Kolonie neu zu bewerten und zu emanzipieren. Amado weist Brasilien in seinem Roman eine Pionieraufgabe zu: Salvador da Bahia wird als „Nabel der Welt“ stilisiert und der *mestiço* als Ergebnis der interkulturellen Begegnungen wird zu einem „Menschen der Zukunft“ deklariert. Im Mittelpunkt des Beitrags steht also die Frage, wie ein Ort durch transkulturelle Prozesse gestaltet wird. Der Beitrag knüpft damit an Paul Gilroys Aussage an, dass transkulturelle Konzepte nicht nur Dynamik und Unruhe betonen, sondern vor allem auch die mit transkulturellen Prozessen verbundene Kreativität.

The contribution examines transcultural place-making and the search for Brazilian identity, Brazilianness, in Jorge Amado's (1912–2001) writings. Amado's preferred setting is the Brazilian federal state of Bahia, known for its strong cultural ties to Africa and its large Afro-Brazilian popu-

lation. In Amado's novel *Tenda dos milagres* (Tent of Miracles) (1968), Bahia's capital, Salvador, is portrayed as a place where cultural influences of African, Brazilian indigenous and European origin meet. Amado compares Salvador da Bahia's historic centre, also known as the Pelourinho, to a kind of Afro-Brazilian "university". The Pelourinho thus becomes a place where Brazilian culture as transcultural culture, in the form of Mestizo culture, develops, where it is practised and where it can be directly experienced. In describing Salvador da Bahia as the cradle of Brazilian culture, thus locating culture in a specific place, Amado contributes to defining Brazilianness. Transcultural place-making helps to construct Mestizo identity within a national and a cultural framework. Searching for Brazilianness moreover means to reevaluate and emancipate the former colony in attributing to Brazil a pioneering task: Salvador da Bahia is made into as the world's umbilicus, and "the mulatto", the result of intercultural encounters there, becomes the "man of the future". This raises the question how a place takes shape in transcultural processes. The contribution thus connects to Paul Gilroy's statement that transculturality accentuates not only dynamics and restlessness but above all the creativity of transcultural processes.

In the summer of 2016, the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* reported on a strange looking bundle found in a town near São Paulo in front of a bank.¹ When the bundle was found, it was suspected of being a bomb and police were called in to close off the area. In the end, it turned out that the package was not a bomb but a religious offering. The plant leaf filled with seeds and beans was ultimately ascribed to the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. Candomblé, which means "dance in honour of the gods", is a creolized form of Catholicism and traditional Yoruba, Fon, and Bantu beliefs brought from West Africa by enslaved captives of the Portuguese Empire. Their cosmologies and mythical convictions mixed with other African religious cults, elements of Christianity and indigenous mythical elements. Actually, many religious practices developed because African slaves had to practice their religion under the cloak of Christianity, inventing new creative forms of religiosity. Today, Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian religion, lifestyle and tradition.²

This cultural misunderstanding, the mix-up between religious offering and a bomb, shows how much Brazil as a former colony is a place of cultural diversity and intercultural

1 Polícia de Piracicaba acha pacote estranho e aciona esquadrão antibomba: era oferenda, in: *Folha de São Paulo*, 18 August 2016, <http://f5.folha.uol.com.br/voceviu/2016/07/10003185-policia-de-piracicaba-acha-pacote-estranho-e-aciona-esquadrão-antibomba-era-macumba.shtml> (accessed 26 February 2018).

2 "Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian religion of divination, sacrifice, healing, music, dance, and spirit possession. [...] Though this religion is headquartered in the coastal Brazilian state of Bahia, it has counterparts and offshoots all over urban Brazil. Believers attribute miraculous powers and exemplary flaws to gods known variously as orixás, voduns, inquices, and caboclos, depending on the Candomblé denomination. The adventures, personalities, and kinship relations of these superhuman beings are described in an extensive mythology and body of oracular wisdom, which also serve to explain the personalities and fates of their human worshipers, as well as the worldly relations among those worshipers. Through blood sacrifice and lavish ceremonies of spirit possession, the gods are persuaded to intervene beneficently in the lives of their worshipers and to keep the foes of those worshipers at bay." J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*, Princeton 2005, p. vii. See also footnote 13 referring to Macumba.

encounters. It is a heterogeneous place: Not every Brazilian is familiar with Candomblé, but some Brazilians are Catholic and at the same time adherents of Candomblé. While on the one hand cultural differences persist, practices originating in different cultural contexts are combined and mixed on the other hand. Thus, intercultural encounters not only bring forth cultural differences, but also homogenizing processes of transculturation, establishing hybrid forms, such as the religion of Candomblé. The concept of "transculturation" is fundamentally based on the assumptions that in a globalized world cultures are not territorially located and that completely homogeneous communities do not exist. Yet, cultural hybridization can produce new networks³ which may be interpreted as an attempt to homogenize. Following Mary Louise Pratt, transculturation is a typical phenomenon of "contact zones". As a place shared by people of different cultural backgrounds, Brazil was and still is a "contact zone", one of these particular "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today."⁴

As a paradigm in the field of cultural studies, "transculturation" is currently regarded as a concept which not only replaces the propositions of post-colonial studies but also the static conceptions of interculturality:

*Theories of 'intercultural' communication create the very problem they set out to solve: they posit 'cultures' as separate entities and people as 'belonging' to these separate entities, thereby failing to acknowledge the fact that in an increasingly interconnected world, cultures are increasingly intertwined, and people often constitute their cultural identities by drawing on more than one culture.*⁵

It might, however, be more useful to conceive inter- and transculturality not as mutually exclusive categories. They could instead be understood as complementary: whilst encounters generating perceptions of difference might be called intercultural, "products" of these intercultural encounters, such as art, architecture, people or places, might be labelled "transcultural". As the introductory episode has shown, Brazil as a contact zone offers room for manoeuvre, in which processes of transculturation, such as Candomblé, as well as cultural differentiations take place.

Against this background of intercultural encounters and transculturation in Brazil, above all mestizo culture, the question of what characterizes Brazil or, more exactly Brazilian-ness, forms the starting point of Jorge Amado's (1912–2001) fiction. Amado has been declared the Brazilians' favourite author because his novels not only reflect problems of Brazil's everyday life, but also leave room for Brazilian identification, as writer Mia

3 See H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London 1994; P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, Cambridge 1993.

4 M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London 1992, p. 4.

5 F. Schulze-Engler, Introduction, in: F. Schulze-Engler and S. Helff (eds.), *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, fictions, realities*, Amsterdam 2009, pp. ix–xvi, at xii.

Couto puts it: “Jorge Amado made us turn back towards ourselves.”⁶ As a writer who seems to “understand” Brazil, Amado becomes a writer for the Brazilian people. In creating folk culture through his works, he himself becomes part of Brazilian everyday life, as e.g. streets and squares in Brazil show: They are not only named after him, but also after his literary protagonists.

In his writing, Brazil’s most popular author seeks to transcend cultural difference by focusing on processes and products of transculturation, somewhat provocatively perceived as miscegenation.⁷ Amado, who describes himself as a mestizo with indigenous ancestors,⁸ valorises African culture as a constituent part of Brazilianness. His work, as I will argue, brings together different cultures to form a new mestizo culture, which is meant to help overcome racial boundaries and to define Brazilian identity. This mestizo culture is linked to a special place, the Brazilian city of Salvador da Bahia, characterized by processes of cultural intermixture. In Amado’s fiction, it thus becomes a place that represents the Brazilian nation as a whole.

Salvador, capital of the federal state of Bahia, is also known as “the blackest of Brazil’s cities” because 80 per cent of its population are Afro-Brazilian.⁹ Due to this significant presence of “black” population and the survival of African-derived traditions in this area, Bahia represents Brazil’s “umbilical cord to Africa”¹⁰. Both the city of Salvador da Bahia and the state of Bahia play an important role in Amado’s work: In the 1930s Amado wrote several novels, known later as the “Bahia cycle”¹¹. By focusing on this specific Brazilian region in his works, he followed the “Regionalist Manifest” proposed by sociologist Gilberto Freyre in 1926: Against the background of diverse regional cultures, a

6 “Esta familiaridade existencial foi, certamente, um dos motivos do fascínio nos nossos países. As suas personagens eram vizinhas não de um lugar, mas da própria vida. Gente pobre, gente com os nossos nomes, gente com as nossas raças passeavam pela páginas do autor brasileiro. Ali estavam os nossos malandros, ali estavam os terreiros onde falamos com os deuses, ali estava o cheiro da nossa comida, ali estava a sensualidade e o perfume das nossas mulheres. No fundo, Jorge Amado nos fazia regressar a nós mesmos.” M. Couto, *Sonhar em casa. Intervenção sobre Jorge Amado*, in: M. Couto, *E se Obama fosse africano? Ensaios*, São Paulo 2016, pp. 61–68, at 62.

7 Whilst in German discourse, the terms “race” and “miscegenation” are nowadays absent, as they remain taboo in the light of the Nazi regime, in Brazil, these terms are rather unproblematic. In his novel “Tenda dos milagres”, Amado ironically refers to Hitler’s policies of racial extermination: “[S]e Hitler ganhasse a guerra poderia ou não matar tudo que não fosse branco puro, acabando de vez com o resto do povo? Opina daqui, opina de lá, pode, não pode, ora se pode, o ferreiro se alterou: ‘Nem Deus, que fez o povo pode matartudo de uma vez, vai matando de um a um e quanto mais ele mata mais nasce e crescegente e há de nascer, de crescer e de se misturar, filho-da-puta nenhum vai impedir!’” J. Amado, *Tenda dos milagres*, São Paulo 1979, p. 43.

8 I. Goldstein, *Schuf Jorge Amado Bahia oder schuf Bahia Jorge Amado?*, in: P. Braun and M. Weinberg (eds.), *Ethno/Graphie: Reiseformen des Wissens*, Tübingen 2002, pp. 39–64, at 51.

9 E. Hordge-Freeman, *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma & Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*, Austin 2015, p. 15.

10 A. Cicalo, *Brazil and its African Mirror: Discussing Black Approximations in the South Atlantic*, Working Paper 24 (2012) <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:101:1-201304246513>, p. 4 (accessed 9 November 2018).

11 The Bahia cycle (1933–1937) includes the following works: “O País do Carnaval” (1931)/“The Country of Carnival”, “Cacau” (1933), “Suor” (1934)/“Sweat”, “Jubiabá” (1935), “Mar Morto” (1936)/“Sea of Death”, and “Capitães da Areia” (1937)/“Captains of the Sands”. E. Engler, *Der Bahia Zyklus von Jorge Amado*, in: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock* 14 (1965) 1/2, pp. 49–80.

genuine shared Brazilian culture should emerge.¹² In his cycle of novels, Amado deals with the life of the proletarian classes in Bahia. He describes their poverty and ongoing struggles against impoverishment from a communist perspective. Amado's "Bahia de Todos os Santos. Guia das ruas e dos mistérios da cidade do Salvador" (1945) is a guide to Bahia, in which information on Samba, culinary arts or religious traditions, such as the feast of Yemanjá, a Yoruba deity, is given. The novel "Jubiabá" (1935) tells the story of a 100-year-old so-called wizard, a practitioner of Macumba¹³ in Salvador da Bahia, who witnessed the emancipation of the slaves in 1888, which ushered in the end of the Brazilian Empire. The novel describes rituals of Candomblé and cantos in Yoruba. Jubiabá's figure is a reference to a culture brought to Brazil by "black" people. Despite forced Christianization, this culture feeds into a counter-religion promising consolation and escape for the descendants of the slaves. From the 1950s, Amado no longer bowed to a Marxist-oriented regionalism. Having diversified his worldview as much as the stylistic processes and genres he employed, Amado developed an ironic ambivalence in dealing with reality and history.¹⁴ Yet, in his later works, such as the novel "Tent of Miracles" (1969), on which I will focus, Amado returns to Salvador da Bahia and particularly its historic centre, the Pelourinho. Many pictures show Amado, himself a "Baiano" (i.e. born in Bahia), who has even been called the "secret governor of Bahia",¹⁵ in the streets of the historic centre, one of the town's most important landmarks and Amado's later home. Thus, it is no surprise that Ilana Goldstein asks: "Did Jorge Amado create Bahia or did Bahia create Jorge Amado?"¹⁶

In writing about (Salvador da) Bahia, Amado on the one hand refers to the real region and town. On the other hand, he creates a fictional draft of the latter, which aims not so much for a reproduction of the real town but rather for a performance of it. As a transcultural place where cultures meet, mix and generate new hybrid forms, Salvador da Bahia turns into a utopian place where a new mestizo culture is born. Amado thus becomes a "transcultural place-maker". Written by an ambassador of Afro-Brazilian culture, his work, as I will argue, might be read as a praise of miscegenation, extolling processes of transculturation.

In a first step, I take a look at Salvador da Bahia as a place which, due to its history and geographical position, is marked by miscegenation. I will investigate how, during Brazil's search for national identity in the twentieth century, it became "the cradle of Brazilian culture",¹⁷ according to Amado. Then, I will focus on transcultural place-making,

12 G. Freyre, *Manifesto regionalista* de 1926, Rio de Janeiro 1955.

13 The Afro-Brazilian religion of Macumba is characterized by traditional African religions, European culture, Brazilian Spirituality, and Roman Catholicism. There exist many Macumba groups, for example the above mentioned one of Candomblé.

14 G. Wild, Jorge Amado, in: H. L. Arnold et al. (eds.), *Kritisches Lexikon zur Fremdsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*, München, <https://www.munzinger.de/search/query?query.id=query-18> (accessed 11 August 2018).

15 E. Engler, Jorge Amado, München 1992, p. 7.

16 Goldstein, *Schuf Jorge Amado Bahia oder schuf Bahia Jorge Amado?*, pp. 39–64.

17 C. Meyer-Clason, *Die Menschen sterben nicht, sie werden verzaubert: Begegnungen mit Amado, Borges, Cabral de Melo Neto, Drummond de Andrade, García Márquez, J. U. Ribeiro, Guimarães Rosa*, München 1990, p. 15.

combining ideas of transculturation and writing as place-making. In a last step, I will analyse transcultural place-making in Amado's novel "Tent of Miracles". It is only in this fictitious draft, that Salvador da Bahia, as symbol of a Brazilian microcosm, becomes the place where the utopia of harmonious mestizo culture, even mestizo supremacy, is possible.

1. Salvador da Bahia as "the Cradle of Brazilian Culture": Searching for Brazilianness

Amado described Salvador as the centre of Afro-Brazilian culture, but accorded to it, at the same time, even greater significance as "the cradle of Brazilian culture". He declared the city a "lighthouse of understanding" for Brazilian culture, because this place allegedly brought forth a "mestizo culture", the characteristic element of Brazilian humanism.¹⁸ Until 1736, Salvador was the capital of Brazil and, due to its geographical position on the Atlantic seaboard, port of arrival for slaves imported from Africa.¹⁹ Here began what characterizes Brazil as a nation, namely a mestizo culture made up largely of African and European people in origin after the six million aboriginal population had largely been exterminated during the first period of colonialism.²⁰ Slavery in Brazil was not abolished until 1888 and "black" culture was oppressed until the 1930s. Even today, European ("white") supremacy and the marginalization of non-European culture have not been overcome.

In the second third of the twentieth century, two books helped to change the attitude toward black people and their culture: "Casa grande e senzala" / "The Masters and the Slaves" (1933) by Gilberto Freyre and "Raízes do Brasil" / "Roots of Brazil" (1936) authored by Sergio Buarque de Holanda. These Brazilian critics presented the idea of "miscegenation" in their major works. Amado regarded especially the first as a fundamental occasion for his country's transformation. Freyre's work exerted an important influence on Amado's representation of Brazil. This study was the "first scholarly examination of Brazilian national character that unambiguously told them [Brazilian readers, M.K.] they could be proud of their racially mixed tropical civilization."²¹ Pleading against racial inferiority and superiority, the work was also read as the most decisive objection to National Socialist race theories.²² According to Freyre, the influence of black and indigenous traditions on Brazilian culture should be appreciated as Brazilians are the result

18 Ibid., p. 15.

19 Engler, *Der Bahia-Zyklus*, p. 50.

20 Engler, *Jorge Amado*, p. 15.

21 T.E. Skidmore, *The Essay: Architects of Brazilian National Identity*, in: R. González Echevarría and E. Pupo-Walker (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, vol. 3: *Brazilian Literature*; bibliographies, Cambridge 2006, pp. 345–362, at 355.

22 H.M. Görden, *Gilberto Freyre – Versuch einer Einführung in sein Werk*, in: G. Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala*, [Herrenhaus und Slavenhütte: Ein Bild der brasilianischen Gesellschaft], L. Graf von Schönfeldt (trans.), Stuttgart 1982, pp. 7–18, at 7.

of miscegenation. They were said to live in a country of "racial democracy,"²³ with the most harmonious race relations in the Americas.²⁴ The mestizo should be regarded as "superior" because he unites different cultures. In establishing a positive attitude towards the mestizo and in creating this national myth, Freyre questioned the alleged Brazilian colonial inferiority complex. He deliberately defined Brazilian identity through mestizo culture, in the words of sociologist Renato Ortiz:

*Gilberto Freyre transforms the negativity of the mestizo into positivity, which allows to definitively complete the contours of an identity that had been drawn for a long time. The ideology of 'mestizaje', which was imprisoned in the ambiguities of racist theories, can be diffused socially and become common sense, ritually celebrated in everyday relationships, or in major events such as carnival and football. What has been mestizo becomes national.*²⁵

Further developing this idea of the mestizo as an expression of Brazilianness into a romanticisation and idealization of the mestizo, Amado's novel "Tent of Miracles" links it to a particular Brazilian place: the Pelourinho.

In "Raízes do Brasil" / "Roots of Brazil", Buarque de Holanda emphasizes the importance of the colonial era and states:

In the Brazilian case, no matter how unattractive it may seem to some of our compatriots, in truth we are still associated with the Iberian Peninsula, especially Portugal, through a long and active tradition, active enough still today to nourish our common soul, despite

23 "It thereby becomes possible to interpret the formation of Brazilian society in the light of a 'synthetic principle' – to make use of an expression consecrated by usage – such as, perhaps, could not be applied with a like degree of appropriateness to any other society. So viewed, our social history, despite the grievous and persisting imprint left upon it by the experiences of a feudal economic system, is undergoing a process whose direction is that of a broad democratization. A democratization of interhuman relationships, of interpersonal relations, of relations between groups and between regions. The fact of the matter is that miscegenation and the interpenetration of cultures – chiefly European, Amerindian, and African culture – together with the possibilities and opportunities for rising in the social scale that in the past have been open to slaves, individuals of the colored races, and even heretics: the possibility and the opportunity of becoming free men and, in the official sense, whites and Christians (if not theologically sound, at any rate sociologically valid ones) – the fact is that all these things, from an early period, have tended to mollify the interclass and interracial antagonisms developed under an aristocratic economy." G. Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala* [The Masters and the Slaves. A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization], S. Putnam (trans.), Berkeley 1986, pp. xiii–xiv.

24 "Hybrid from the beginning, Brazilian society is, of all those in the Americas, the one most harmoniously constituted as far as racial relations are concerned, within the environment of a practical cultural reciprocity that results in the advanced people deriving the maximum of profit from the values and experiences of the backward ones, and in a maximum of conformity between the foreign and the native cultures, that of the conqueror and that of the conquered." Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala*, p. 83.

25 Trans. by M.K. "Gilberto Freyre transforma a negatividade do mestiço em positividade, o que permite completar definitivamente os contornos de uma identidade que há muito vinha sendo desenhada. [...] A ideologia da mestiçagem, que estava aprisionada às ambigüidades das teorias racistas, ao ser reelaborada pode difundir-se socialmente e se tornar senso comum, ritualmente celebrado nas relações do cotidiano, ou nos grandes eventos como o carnaval e o futebol. O que era mestiço torna-se nacional." R. Ortiz, *Cultura brasileira e identidade nacional*, São Paulo 1985, p. 41.

*all that separates us. We can say that the present form of our culture came from there; all other elements were adapted as best they could to that culture.*²⁶

Actually, Buarque de Holanda does not focus much on these “other elements”, namely indigenous, African or other non-European elements. Yet, he likewise sees the roots of Brazil in a process of miscegenation:

*[T]he mixing of races, a significant element of adaptation to the tropical environment, was not a sporadic phenomenon but a normal process in Portuguese America. It was mainly due to the process of miscegenation, not to any superhuman effort, that the Portuguese were able to construct a new motherland far from their own.*²⁷

Miscegenation becomes the precondition for the construction of a new motherland, for successful place-making – this idea is adopted by Amado.

The concepts propounded by Freyre and Buarque de Holanda contributed decisively to what can be understood as Brazilianness, the quality and characteristics of being Brazilian. In the 1930s, different cultural elements were becoming more popular, for example the Candomblé cult mentioned above, but also Samba music and dance. Capoeira, a transcultural martial art and dance, developed in Brazil by African slaves,²⁸ was only legalized in 1937. Incorporating these elements, a distinguishable Brazilian identity emerged in contrast to that of other countries. Afro-Brazilian culture was revaluated in order to help defining Brazilianness.²⁹

The need for a Brazilian national identity had become urgent after the revolution in 1930. Literature turned into an important medium for the process of defining Brazilian identity. Since independence from Portugal in 1822, first in the romantic movement of the mid-nineteenth century and reinforced in the aesthetic movement called *modernismo* of the 1920s, literature had at the same time been a medium of expression and of the search for a definition of Brazilianness in post-colonial times. Defining identity in a former colonial country also meant the rejection of and emancipation from European influences. As Oswald de Andrade proposed in his “Manifesto Antropófago” (1928)/“Cannibalist manifesto”, European art should be devoured and digested so that innovative genuine Brazilian culture would emerge.³⁰

26 S. Buarque de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil* [Roots of Brazil], G. Harvey Summ (trans.), Notre Dame 2012, p. 11.

27 Ibid., p. 37.

28 Capoeira's basic aesthetic elements were brought to Brazil by West and West-Central African slaves and were recombined and reinterpreted by different Brazilian slave communities to create a unique means of self-defence. Capoeira was disguised as a dance and its musical accompaniment is characteristic. See: F. Merrell, *Capoeira and Candomblé: Conformity and Resistance in Brazil*, Frankfurt a. M. 2005.

29 Goldstein, *Schuf Jorge Amado Bahia oder schuf Bahia Jorge Amado?*, p. 42.

30 Although his namesake Mário de Andrade attempted to translate this poeology in the same year into the century novel “Macunaíma. A Hero without any Character” (1928), the aesthetic practice fell short because, despite the Brazilian setting, in drafting an anti-hero “without any character” Andrade refers to European genres as the picaresque novel and adventure literature. Therefore, a complete emancipation from Western culture seems impossible.

Jorge Amado actively supported this revaluation of Afro-Brazilian culture, as he shared the intention to define Brazilian culture, nationality and identity. Amado saw miscegenation as a medium against racism, stating: "In my life, which was dedicated above all to the fight against racial prejudice, I learned that there exists only one instrument to stop racism: namely the mixture of races."³¹ He personally took part in Candomblé rituals and, in 1959, was nominated as a candidate for the position of *Oba*, a high electoral office of a wise man in Candomblé. When Amado entered parliament as a congressman for the communist party, in 1946 he pushed legislation concerning liberty of religion, which also guaranteed unobstructed practice of animist religions and Afro-Brazilian cults.³² In this brief overview of Brazilian twentieth-century history, it becomes obvious that Amado's aim to build a national, cultural Brazilian identity goes hand in hand with his and others' efforts to define Brazilianness as Afro-Brazilian mestizo culture. In drafting Salvador da Bahia as a genuine Brazilian place, where mestizo culture as Brazilian culture is born, however, Amado successfully overcomes Brazil's "dislocation" as a nation and a culture. At least in fiction, he manages to act as a transcultural place-maker.

2. From "Spatial Dislocation" to Transcultural Place-Making

As the Brazilian example shows, slavery, in making people of diverse origins live together, among other things brought forth a complex new cultural formation. Paul Gilroy's concept of the "Black Atlantic" illustrates this well. He presents a space of transcultural relations, which is a product of colonialism. In using the metaphor of the Atlantic, Gilroy focuses on the experience of black slaves crossing the ocean by emphasizing the deterritorialized character of culture. He thus rethinks the relationship between cultures and a specific place. This conceptual reorientation is grounded in a broader exploration of theories of culture and its territorial and corporeal integrity. By using images of sea and water, Gilroy represents cultures as fluid, hybrid articulations implied in processes of interconnectedness and movement: The fluidity of the sea involves both interweaving and movement,³³ bringing to life less fixed planetary cultures.³⁴ A consequence of these processes for Gilroy is "spatial dislocation"³⁵, i.e. a characterization of culture that runs counter to the idea of national identity and that exists in space, but separated from any specific place. Transcultural processes in this sense are thus followed by a provisional abolishing of place. But yet, new intersubjective spaces still offer possibilities for the creation of new places, as culture is reconceptualised through "deterritorialization".³⁶ Similar

31 Trans. by M.K. Meyer-Clason, *Die Menschen sterben nicht*, p. 15.

32 Engler, Jorge Amado, p. 109.

33 P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* [*Der Black Atlantic*], T. Zacharias (trans.), in: *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* (ed.), *Der Black Atlantic*, Berlin 2004, pp. 12–31, at 13.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

thoughts are put forward by Doreen Massey and Pat Jess with regard to the age of globalization, which likewise grows out of colonialism and restructures places and cultures:

*[O]n the one hand, previous coherences are being disrupted, old notions of the local place are being interrupted by new connections with a world beyond; on the other, new claims to the – usually exclusive – character of places, and who belongs there, are being made.*³⁷

Regardless of whether reconceptualisations or reconstructions are in order – due to movement of people, intercultural encounters and the hybridity these engender, places become unstable and must be renewed. Creativity is a means of such renewal. As Gilroy states, space characterised by hybridity is a space where creativity is fostered in his words “transnational black Atlantic creativity”³⁸. After all, Gilroy’s concept can be read as one of transcultural place-making.

Gilroy’s concept might be transferred to Brazil in general and to Salvador da Bahia in particular. After the “spatial dislocation” experienced by black slaves coming from Africa to Salvador da Bahia, intercultural encounters allowed for the mixture, rejection, selection or appropriation, of different traditions. They engendered “new formations” such as mestizo cultures and their transculturally creative products, such as Candomblé and Capoeira.

As a consequence of the “spatial dislocation” of the descendants of the black slaves and as a response to cultural disjunctions like the one described above, bomb versus religious offering, Amado tries to fill the cultural gap creatively. He drafts Salvador da Bahia as a fictitious transcultural place. As literary scholar Jim Cocola writes:

*Place making is a central aspect of human experience. Whether through deliberate practice or simply as a matter of course, we make places every day simply by dwelling, more or less consciously, in the spaces we move through. Place making happens as we read and as we write, serving not only as a compositional approach for dramatists, essayists, novelists, and poets, but also as an interpretative approach for readers, a theoretical approach for critics, and a more general method for architects, filmmakers, landscape gardeners, painters, performance artists, and sculptors – not to mention anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and urban planners.*³⁹

Writing is a place-making activity among many. Place-making, in turn, might be regarded as a form of topography, the writing of a *topos*. The topography of a place in this sense is not a pre-existing reality which just waits to be described. It is rather produced by means of a performative speech act.⁴⁰ Literary descriptions of place have an addi-

37 D. Massey and P. Jess, Introduction, in: Ead. (eds.), *A Place in the World?*, Oxford 1995, pp. 1–4, at 1.

38 Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 16.

39 J. Cocola, *Places in the Making: A Cultural Geography of American Poetry*, Iowa 2016, p. xi.

40 J. Hillis Miller, *The Ethics of Topography* [Die Ethik der Topographie], R. Stockhammer (trans.), in: R. Stockhammer (ed.), *TopoGraphien der Moderne: Medien zur Repräsentation und Konstruktion von Räumen*, pp. 161–196, at 183.

tional figurative function: They may stand for something else, for example in reflecting a protagonist's state of mind or a general mood, or they may include utopic elements – as they are found in Amado's Salvador da Bahia. On the one hand, topography thus not only describes attributes of a place, but actually generates these very attributes. On the other hand, however, place-making cannot be analysed without taking into account the influence of "real" geographical place, if such a place exists. Without doubt, imagination and writing depend on the place where they are produced, Amado's case shows this in amazing clarity. The literary production of places therefore ranges continually between imaginary geographies and references to physical geography.

In writing about Salvador da Bahia, Amado not only reproduces the physical and social place familiar to him. By analysing his novel "Tent of Miracles", I will show how Amado drafts a utopian place where a powerful mestizo culture, a "new formation" in a Gilroyan sense, dominates over cultural and racial conflicts. The process, the presence and the ethic of the *mestiçagem* are described by Amado as an expression of spontaneous tolerance and solidarity.⁴¹

3. At the Pelourinho: Toward Mestizo Supremacy

The "Tent of Miracles" in the homonymous novel is a tiny workshop at the Pelourinho, the historic centre of Salvador da Bahia. It becomes the central place for the development of a mestizo culture. In the novel, the Pelourinho is transformed into a kind of arts and culture centre where different learning activities and practices take place. Amado explained that his youth in the streets of Bahia, mixing with people at piers and markets, in Capoeira circles and fairs, was his ideal "university"⁴². In his novel, he describes the Pelourinho as such a university:

*In the neighborhood of Pelourinho in the heart of Bahia, the whole world teaches and learns. A vast university branches out into Tabuão, the Carmo Gates, and Santo Antônio-Beyond-Carmo, into Shoemaker's Hollow, the markets, Maciel, Lapinha, Cathedral Square, Tororó, Barroquinha, Sete Portas, and Rio Vermelho, wherever there are men and women who work. And from the working of metal and wood, the blending of medicines from herbs and roots, and the cadence of quick-blooded rhythms, is created a fresh, original image of novel colors and sounds.*⁴³

41 I. Goldstein, Schuf Jorge Amado Bahia, p. 41.

42 Ibid., p. 43.

43 J. Amado, Tenda dos milagres [Tent of Miracles], B. Shelby Merello (trans.), Madison 2003, p. 3. "No amplo território do Pelourinho, homens e mulheres ensinam e estudam. Universidade vasta e vária, se estende e ramifica no Tabuão, nas Portas do Carmo e em Santo Antônio Além-do-Carmo, na Baixa dos Sapateiros, nos mercados, no Maciel, na Lapinha, no Largo da Sé, no Tororó, na Barroquinha, nas Sete Portas e no Rio Vermelho, em todas as partes onde homens e mulheres trabalham os metais e as madeiras, utilizam ervas e raízes, misturam ritmos, passos e sangue; na mistura criaram uma côr e um som, imagem nova, original." Amado, Tenda dos milagres, p. 15.

In these first sentences of his novel, Amado insinuates his idea of miscegenation: It is at the Pelourinho, Salvador da Bahia's heart, that by means of intermixture "new formations" develop and works of art are created by the Bahian people. Here, we also find for example Samba dancers and practitioners of Afoxé, a semi-religious carnival group singing songs in Yoruba and Portuguese, or a school for Capoeira. The Pelourinho becomes the place where hybridity is omnipresent and reflected in handmade artwork:

*In a doorway on the Rua do Liceu, Miguel the saint-carver pours forth a stream of gay and voluble chatter as he fashions angels, archangels, and saints. Catholic saints and churchly devotion, the Virgin of the Conception and St. Anthony of Lisbon, Archangel Gabriel and the Baby Jesus – how is it they are found so close to Master Agnaldo's orixás? The only thing the Vatican elect and the voodoo and caboclo gods have in common is their mixed blood. If Agnaldo's Oxóssi is a backlands gunman, so is the saint-carver's St. George. His helmet looks more like a leather hat, and his dragon might be a cross between a crocodile and the fabulous monster in the Christmas pageant of the Three Kings.*⁴⁴

Significantly, it is also at the Pelourinho that books about Bahian – as Brazilian – life are written and printed. Bahia thus becomes the cradle of Brazilian culture and the place where culture is created, documented and enabled to circulate through the whole country or even beyond. The author of such books and the main protagonist, Pedro Archanjo, might be seen as Amado's *alter ego*. Moreover, his figure is inspired by the pioneering writer of the anthropology of African culture in Bahia, Manuel Querino. He is quoted at the very beginning of the novel, providing a motto for the whole text, which presents the mestizo not only as the main driving force for Brazil but also as equipped with specific qualities, thus as an enrichment for the country: "Brazil has two real claims to greatness: the richness of its soil and the sharp wits of its mestizos."⁴⁵

The novel recounts the story of Archanjo, who died in 1943. Moreover, it focuses on the celebration of his one-hundredth birthday in 1968, thus dealing with different eras in Brazilian history. Archanjo is a self-taught Bahian mestizo, who works as a beadle at the medical faculty but at the same time as an "amateur" ethnologist. Ironically, he is only recognized and adored as an important Brazilian and Bahian personality and writer when a US-American professor visits Bahia to see the birthplace of Pedro Archanjo. This allusion to the supposed inferiority complex of the former colonized indicates that even in 1968, Brazil is still struggling for self-confidence.

44 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 7. "Na Rua do Liceu, numa porta de prosa alegre e franca, o santo Miguel faz e encarna anjos, arcanjos e santos. Santos católicos, devoção de igreja, a Virgem da Conceição e Santo Antônio de Lisboa, o arcanjo Gabriel e o Deus Menino – qual então o parentesco a ligá-los assim intimamente aos orixás de mestre Agnaldo? Há entre êsses eleitos do Vaticano e aqueles curingas e caboclos de terreiro um traço comum: sangues misturados. O Oxóssi de Agnaldo é um jagunço do sertão. Não o será também o São Jorge do santo? Seu capacete mais parece chapéu de couro e o dragão participa do jacaré e da caapora de reisado." Amado, *Tenda dos milagres*, p. 19.

45 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. vii. "O Brasil possui duas grandezas reais: a uberidade do solo e o talento do mestiço." Amado, *Tendas dos milagres*, p. 11.

Archanjo also has the function of a so-called *Ojuobá*, an African honorary title given to high priests and dignitaries of the cult of *Xangô*⁴⁶ in Candomblé. Born in 1880, the year when slavery was abolished in Brazil, he was growing up in a country which was slowly discarding its colonial slave-holding past but was still being inhabited by a highly colour-conscious society. Proud of being a mestizo and objecting to racism and arrogance, Archanjo fights against injustice and inequality and presents original ideas about miscegenation at a time when racist theories were circulating in Bahia. Scholars such as Archanjo's opponent, the racist professor Nilo Argolo, argued in favour of prohibiting Candomblé and of miscegenation.

In this situation, Archanjo published four books entitled e.g. "African Influences on the Customs of Bahia" or "Notes on Miscegenation in the Families of Bahia". To illustrate miscegenation, he himself – the mestizo par excellence – serves as an example:

*Pedro Archanjo Ojuobá, the conversationalist and the bookworm, the man who talks and argues with Professor Fraga Neto and the one who kisses the hand of Pulquéria the iyalorixá [Candomblé priestess, M.K.] – are they two different people, the white man and the black, perhaps? You're mistaken, Professor, if that's what you think. There is only one, a mixture of the two. Just one mulatto.*⁴⁷

Pedro Archanjo regards miscegenation also linked to Brazilian national consciousness:

*A mestizo culture is taking shape, so powerful and innate in every Brazilian that in time it will become the true national consciousness, and even the children of immigrant fathers and mothers, first generation Brazilians, will be cultural mestizos by the time they are grown.*⁴⁸

The point of origin or genuine place for this mixed culture is Bahia, where, as Archanjo says, "it would be hard to say who is not mestizo."⁴⁹

In presenting his ideas about miscegenation, Pedro Archanjo goes one step further than Gilberto Freyre. He develops the idea of the mestizo as a better human: "The mixture of races has given birth to a new race of so much talent and endurance, of such power, that it is able to rise above misery and despair in a daily creation of beauty and of life itself."⁵⁰

46 Shango is a deity of the Yoruba. As one of the orishas, the Yoruba gods, Shango is a deified ancestor as well as a natural force, he is the god of lightning, thunder and fire. The Afro-Brazilian cult "Xangô" is named after him. U. Beier, *Yoruba Myths*, London 1980, p. 22.

47 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 312-313. "Pedro Archanjo Ojuobá, o leitor de livros e o bom de prosa, o que conversa e discute com o professor Fraga Neto e o que beija a mão de Pulquéria, o iyalorixá, dois seres diferentes, quem sabe o branco e o negro? Não se engane, professor, um só. Mistura dos dois, um mulato só."

48 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 254. "Formar-se-á uma cultura mestiça de tal maneira poderosa e inerente a cada brasileiro que será a própria consciência nacional e mesmo os filhos de pais e mães imigrantes, brasileiros de primeira geração, crescerão culturalmente mestiços." Amado, *Tendas dos milagres*, p. 258.

49 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 294. "Na Bahia [...] é difícil dizer quem não é mestiço." Amado, *Tenda dos milagres*, p. 297.

50 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 288. "Da miscigenação nasce uma raça de tanto talento e resistência, tão poderosa, que supera a miséria e o desespero na criação quotidiana da beleza e da vida." Amado, *Tenda dos milagres*, p. 292.

Needless to say, this thesis might be (mis-) understood at first glance as a simple adaptation of racist concepts, but it should be considered in context: The idea of the *mestizo* as a better human should be seen as a response to contemporary racist theories through a fundamental revaluation of the *mestizo*. The *mestizo* symbolizes the dissolution of race, giving the term “new race” an ironic and provocative overtone. It is obvious that Amado’s wish is not the birth of a distinctive and static “new race”. Instead he proposes the *mestizo* – as a being in-between – as a possibility for overcoming race and racial problems. Thus, the superelevation and proclaimed supremacy of the *mestizo* must be interpreted not as a relapse into racial thinking but as a utopian prognosis for a peaceful future, in which all men will be *mestizo* and therefore racial problems will be solved.

Besides this harmonizing tendency, Amado’s novel also deals with cultural conflicts and prejudice, mentions the prohibition of African customs such as Candomblé and gives a voice to those who propose race theories. Yet, in “Tent of Miracles” the marriage between “black” and “white” people becomes possible and “white” people are welcome to join Macumba rituals, for example the aristocrat Zabela who is present at Ogun’s festival.⁵¹ Thanks to Salvador da Bahia’s port, located at All Saints Bay (Baía de Todos os Santos), the Pelourinho also becomes a place of further intercultural encounters. Archanjo thus meets the Finnish woman Kirsi at the Pelourinho. They fall in love, and when she leaves Salvador after several months on a ship to Scandinavia, it seems obvious that, “[i]n cold Suomi a bronze child made of sun and snow will play King of Sweden[sic!], holding in his right hand the *paxorô* [ornate staff surmounted by a bird, M.K.] of an African god.”⁵² Pedro Archanjo’s and Kirsi’s child, begot at the Pelourinho, becomes a symbol of miscegenation. Not only its skin colour reflects the synthesis of its parents, “coloured” Pedro and “white” Kirsi, “made of sun and snow” combines the climate of both countries. Furthermore, the child’s carrying the *paxorô* refers to the highest Yoruba deity, which is also the supreme authority of Candomblé. Thus, the child as a product of miscegenation represents cultural hybridity, a typical Brazilian characteristic. The encounter between Pedro Archanjo and Kirsi proves that miscegenation is not only reduced to a national project but transcends the Atlantic to become an international phenomenon. The *mestizo*-child conceived in Salvador, “made in Brazil”, but growing up on the other side of the ocean might be interpreted as a vision for the future: Sooner or later *mestizos* will dominate the whole world. The *mestizo* culture made in Salvador da Bahia becomes a future model for the whole world. Thus, Amado re-evaluates not only the *mestizo* and *mestizo* culture, giving it a Brazilian place, his novel also re-evaluates Brazil as a pioneer, namely as a country where trends of the future originate.

This biologist vision may appear somewhat problematic to current European readers, but this draft makes different sense as a post-colonial response from a country that is struggling for independent cultural self-confidence. The colonial power imbalance is

51 Amado, *Tent of Miracles*, p. 180.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 115. “Na fria Suomi brincarà um menino feito de sol e neve, côr de bronze, na mão direita um *paxorô*, o rei da Escandinàvia.” Amado, *Tenda dos milagres*, p. 125.

turned around in Amado's utopian vision: Salvador da Bahia, standing for Brazil, is no longer dominated by colonial forces. It is able to exert influence itself, or in other words, it becomes the world's navel. Moreover, Amado's prophecy of the mestizo anticipates something that is expressed years later in academic theories: Namely, that mixed forms of global entanglements are the normal case, not the exception. Europe only becomes aware of this through migration movements of the last few years.

4. Conclusion: Transcultural Place-Making and the Creation of Brazilianness

It is obvious that racial and cultural conflicts still haunt Brazilian everyday life. The killing of black, gay councillor Marielle Franco in March 2018, probably a carefully targeted shooting by professional killers, is e.g. forcing Brazilians to ask searching questions about their country's inherent racism. As the episode recounted at the very beginning demonstrates, even almost fifty years after the publication of "Tent of Miracles", Candomblé practices are not always recognized as such. They might provoke a bomb alert due to cultural misunderstanding and ignorance of Afro-Brazilian culture. Against this background, Amado's Salvador da Bahia emerges as an alternative draft, a utopia of mestizo culture, even mestizo supremacy, where the mestizo is romanticized as a better human. This is presented as an alternative for a Brazilian nation which still seems under construction, on the road towards a "new formation". Put differently, Brazil is still looking for its unique "place" in the world and searching for genuine Brazilianness. In this context, correlations of place-making and identity-construction in a multicultural society become obvious: In making or writing Salvador da Bahia as the cradle of Brazilian culture, locating culture in a special place, Amado helps to define Brazilianness. Thus, transcultural place-making helps to construct Mestizo identity in a national as well as in a cultural frame. It is, therefore, little wonder that Amado is one of Brazil's most popular authors. By his transcultural place-making through writing, he fills a social gap, producing the utopia of a coherent Brazilian culture, which is fundamentally based on heterogeneity.