"Um Repositório do Inconsciente Brasileiro:
Mario de Andrade e a Discoteca Municipal de São Paulo"

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Preface:

Over the past year, I have researched São Paulo’s Department of Culture in the period it was led by Mario de Andrade (1935-1938). In the course of my research I became quite confused over the nature of the cultural projects the Department chose to fund. The projects appeared completely unrelated. At best, the projects appeared to provide a groups of privileged (elite) young researchers with opportunities to practice social science methodology in random research projects. At worst, the projects appear a waste of government money easily yielding to the whims of a small group of young elites. The Department began by creating a course on ethnography and then sent out researchers to record religious music in the Northeast, to ask paulistas about food prohibitions, and to learn about national animals. None of the relevant historiography (mostly masters and doctoral theses) concerning Mario de Andrade and the Department of Culture have made any sense of these disparate projects. At best, the researchers have simply named them and moved on.

This article explains that Mario’s governmental project was rooted in (and inextricably bound up with) the social science work of the first generation of psychoanalysts and anthropologists, central among these being Sigmund Freud, Ribot, Frazer, and Tylor. It is only through

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understanding the literature regarding the unconscious, animism, totemism, and the primitive mentality that we can understand Mario de Andrade's goals, methods, and projects. By restoring this social science context, we realize that the myriad research projects actually formed part of a single, coherent project: creating a repository of the Brazil unconscious in order to understand national identity and pave the way for the creation of culturally authentic artwork.

Essay:

In 1933, Mario travelled to Rio de Janeiro to give a conference talk to the Brazilian Association of Music. Mario’s titled his presentation "Fetishist music in Brazil," referring to music from Afro-Brazilian religious communities in the Brazilian Northeast. While the talk was never published during Mario’s life, he asked his secretary and close friend Oneida Alvarenga to publish the talk along with several notes that Mario never had time to turn into a mature research project. The notes explains the loom that held bound the common threads of Mario’s wider folkloric projects. Yet, to my knowledge, no historian or literary scholar has ever discussed them.

This essay first zooms out to discuss Mario's larger project of interacting with Freudian psychology. Then I return to this historic moment in 1933 and analyze the "Fetishist Music" presentation. By recovering the ways in which Mario's thinking here was based in early social science work, especially in the writings of Sigmund Freud, Mario's essay will be better understood. As a result, Mario's myriad of ethnographic projects within São Paulo and across Brazil finally make sense; instead of seeing the Department's work as a series of disparate projects, we are able to recognize the common threads and the meaning; Mario was intentionally leading the Department through a networked project that, according to his understanding of national identity, would bring a full understanding of the Brazilian nation.

Mario de Andrade was born in 1893, born into a Republic just four years old. At the time of the Semana de Arte Moderna and Mario’s Pauliceia Desvairada, the young writer was still in his twenties. His cohort of modernists were coming-of-age, defining themselves, at the same time the Brazilian nation was coming of age and defining itself. Or rather, this group was trying to define the nation in order to define themselves. The similarity in age between self and Republic meant the question of national identity was much more intimate, personal, and important. We could even extend the metaphor to suggest that the modernist movement was a call for Brazil to, in psycholanalytic terms, kill its European father.
These are psychoanalytic metaphors. Historians tend to shy away from some language because, among other reasons, psychoanalysis lacks scientific metrics. But the metaphor and terminology seems valid here since São Paulo's modernist cohort themselves believed it to be true. The modernist generation, especially Mario de Andrade, took Freud seriously, and drew heavily on the concepts set forth by the father of psychoanalysis.

We see this clearly for the first time in Mario de Andrade's preface to *Pauliceia Desvairada*, the book of poems about the city of São Paulo, launched via public readings by Mario during the famous *Semana*. With gest and irony, Mario titled the book's preface "Most-Interesting Preface" and used the space as one of the early manifestos of the modernist movement (a movement marked by its many manifestos). It is in this preface that we first see the influence of Freud in Mario de Andrade. Mario encouraged his fellow modernists to use concepts from psychoanalysis to engage a new method of authentic cultural production. Mario urged the modernist to find a way to let his own subconscious have free reign as cultural creator. This would occur in some sort of writing or creative process that scholars today would generally call "stream-of-consciousness" production. Only once the subconscious had spoken its mind did Mario encourage the artist to resume his role as conscious critic, going through the work, cleansing it, censoring it, ordering the thoughts with concern for the aesthetic. Mario promoted a dialectic relationship between unconscious and conscious artist, believing that this would result in culturally authentic production.

Mario chose to explain the same process through a metaphor that everyone in São Paulo would understand (maybe he chose the metaphor the Brazilianize the process). The metaphor was that of the immigration port at Santos. Mario suggested the conscious minds acts as an immigration authority, detaining subjects that are unhealthy and contagious, isolating them until they are clean enough to enter Paulistano society.

Both the method and the metaphor were directly lifted from the work of Freud and the early psychologist Ribot. We see the method in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* where the father of psychology explains the process of making sense of our own dreams. Freud suggests we let our dreams flow and they have their own connections, which are frequently absurd. Then we awaken, and immediately our fragmented memories of our dreams are reassembled. This is the mind's

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2 I am thinking of W.I. Thomas here; the metaphor was real in its consequences.
"primary revision." Then, as conscious individuals, we undertake a "secondary revision" in which we 'render' the dream in both senses of the word: first we make the transitions smoother and sensible, and second we give meaning to the dream. (Totem/Taboo, 110-1).

The metaphor of the immigration official in Santos came from Freud’s watchmen at the gates, in *Interpretation of Dreams*, where Freud quotes a letter from Friedrich Schiller on the creative process:

> In the case of a creative mind, it seems to me, the intellect has withdrawn its watchers from the gates, and the ideas rush in pell-mell, and only then does it review and inspect the multitude. You worthy critics, or whatever you may call yourselves, are ashamed or afraid of the momentary and passing madness which is found in all real creators, the longer or shorter duration of which distinguishes the thinking artist from the dreamer. Hence your complaints of unfruitfulness, for you reject too soon and discriminate too severely.' [*Interp. of Dreams*, 161]

Mario’s shift from internal watchmen at the gates of the subconscious to the external immigrant official at the port of Santos may have been the embryonic stage of Mario's shift from applying the psychological system beyond the individual and onto society. Indeed, the traditional metaphor of Brazilian society in the colonial era was that of the Pauline *corpo mistico*. Freud’s work encouraged Mario to consider the body politic’s as having a psyche. And as Mario considered the culturally authentic self to be found in the dialectic exchange between subconscious and conscious, so too the nation ought tap into its subconscious to arrive at its own authentic identity and cultural production. This is what Mario would do over the next two decades: pursue the nation's subconscious.

Freud suggested multiple ways to investigate the subconscious, himself focusing on the tools of free association, dreams, and the investigation of totems and taboos. Mario would start with these, and then move on to discuss music and myth.

The analysis of the totem is complex because Freud was not the only one examining the concept. Durkheim ended up being an even more central source for Mario's writing on Brazilian totems. Freud had written that members of primitive societies had totems as personal and family symbols that would verify that in their sexual relations with others in the tribe, incest would be prevented. Durkheim, in his "Elementary Forms of Religious Life" looked instead at animals worshipped by the community. Durkheim argued that primitive societies "totemized" or deified
the animals that best exemplified what the core values in the society. They then worshiped these animals in order to create a society that embodied such virtues.

Just before penning *Macunaima*, Mario wrote the chronicles that would later form *Turista Aprendiz*, an anthology of essays from Mario de Andrade's 1927 trip through the Amazonian region that parodied Brazil’s colonial travel literature. Mario includes various experiences with an imaginary tribe, writing as if these were a real part of his trip. Mario acts as if he is engaged in an extended ethnographic encounter, as the Levi-Strauss couple would actually do a decade later. The satirical entries fit well into his modernist system: they are rooted in a Brazilian “totem” that embodies unconscious Brazil, but are revised to satirize racist European notions of a primitive Brazil.³

One day the Indian tribe, called the Do-Mi-Sol tribe (they sang instead of speaking), took Mario out to the jungle. In the middle of a huge area of composting leaves and plants, stood a towering Cecropia tree, more than two-thousand feet tall. The Indians proceeded to tell Mario an important story: "It was in the canopy of this tree that the famous fight between the Howler Monkeys and the sloths occurred, although no one ever found out why." Mario was confused and surprised that sloths would enter a war, considering how lazy and slow he took them to be. But upon voicing the observation, the Do-Mi-Sols laughed. Sloths were not actually lazy, they explained to the amateur ethnographer, having unjustly received that defamatory label. Sloths were actually quite capable of quick action, they just were wise enough to know the value of their action and that not every situation required a rapid response. Among the Do-Mi-Sol philosophers, two separate schools had debated the exact nature of the sloth. The "animalist" school had argued that sloths were extremely focused on the future, and had determined to save all their energy for situations in which their children needed aid. But the "totemist" school, by contrast, instead argued the sloths had simply achieved great wisdom. They understood that "happiness in life came not from the joy of life's pleasures, but rather from the complete understanding of their own movement." So they were willing to take hours to crawl down a branch just so they could be fully aware of their every movement.

³ These indians would serve as precursor to the larger project that would come from these short chronicles: Mario’s rhapsody-romance *Macunaima*. 
The Do-Mi-Sol Indian "totemic" school of philosophy -- suggesting that life's greatest pleasures were rooted in appreciating one's own movements -- have their roots in the work of the turn-of-the-century scholar of aesthetics Paul Souriau. Mario no doubt became familiar with Souriau's work in the period in which Mario was teaching courses on aesthetics at São Paulo's music conservatory. In 1889, Souriau had published "The Aesthetics of Movement," a text exploring how and why humans derive aesthetic pleasure from motion. For Souriau this pleasure came in three forms: the way that the mover adapts his motion to reach a certain goal, the use of movement for expression, and the perception of the movement by the spectator. Many readers today, especially those living in a sedentary society, might not consider movement to be one of the supreme pleasures in life; but others, such as a professional ballerina, can no doubt relate to the pleasures not only of moving with grace across the stage, but also in having high levels of control over the body in day to day life. By placing Souriau's work at the heart of the Do-Mi-Sol tribes "totemic" school of philosophy, Mario is arguing that a revindication of authentic Brazilian culture would maintain the "sloth" as a Brazilian totem. But instead of its previous pejorative associations with the racist "ideologia de vadiagem" and "tropical determinism" the sloth would instead be recognized as embodying a Brazilian aesthetics of movement. Mario was setting forth an argument that reinvidicated a less-mechanized lifestyle valuing the cultivation of an aesthetic remaining attached to the body in the face of two industrial alternatives: the subjection of the body to mechanization, or the transformation of the aesthetic to the machine itself, such as we would see in the article by Walter Benjamin so often referenced by social scientists in Brazil, appearing in 1936, less than a decade later. ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction").

To cap the story off, Mario allows the story to descend into one grand sexual joke. As the Indians continue to describe the sloth moving slowly, completely vertical, not “arriving” too quickly, it becomes apparent that the sloth is also the tribe's totem because he is fantastic in bed. Mario created the Amerindian myth that allow space for his ironic subversion of the assumptions of tropical and racial determinism, and its "ideologia de vadiagem." In this case, the totem was baptized by Mario himself. In his future studies however, Mario would look for totems and taboos already present in Brazilian society itself.
The trip through the Amazon occurred in 1927. At the end of the next year, Mario would finally get to realize a trip he had looked forward to for years. This was a trip through the Northeast. Mario was able to visit Pernambuco, Alagoas, Rio Grande do Norte, and Paraíba. His highlights from the trip included witnessing Carnaval in Recife, seeing some of Brazil's dramatic dances, (mostly occurring between Christmas and Kings' Day), taking part of Carnaval in Recife, collecting songs and folklore, and taking part in a Catimbó ceremony.

Mario de Andrade came back from the trip and spent considerable time reflecting on his experience, and then researching and reading. He read local texts such as those by Fernandes Goncalves, Nina Rodrigues, Sylvio Romero, Fernando Ortiz, Luciano Gallet, and Artur Ramos (if he had not already read them before); we see references to all of these guys in Mario's 1933 conference. That is proof enough that he had been doing his research to make sense of his experiences. The period of research, synthesized with Mario’s own experiences in the Northeast, allowed Mario to arrive at an articulation of his theory of a national psychology.

Mario framed his 1933 conference with his personal experience at a Catimbó ceremony during his 1928-9 trip to the Northeast. On the superstitious last Friday of 1928, in the city of Natal, Mario went through a "body-closing" ceremony. Mario portrayed this religious experience as coevalent to the Freudian psychoanalytic session, but occurring in particularly Brazilian way, and maybe more effective because of it. As Mario walked the audience through his experience of "closing his body," he defended [revindicar] the Afro-Brazilian religion by making it appear more modern in ends [accessing the unconscious] even if more primitive in means [jumping in circles and banging your head against the wall]. More importantly, the modernist poet outlined his argument of a national psychology.

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4 In addition, it would make sense that Mario could have picked up a copy of Freud's Taboo and Totem, and focused especially intensely on chapter 3: on animism and magic. If I can verify this, this is a fantastic transition to first discuss Freud's ideas on magic in the chapter and then work through Mario's 1933 conference on the subject. Regarding sources credited in Mario's 1933 essay, both text and bibliography reference Tylor and Levy-Bruhl. There is no reference to Freud in the bibliography but both Freud and Frazer are referenced within the text in Mario's notes on twins in mythology. In addition, since I know Mario was an avid reader of Freud and had multiple of Freud's books in his own private collection. IMPORTANT NOTE: Freud in his chapter 3 "animism" says up front that most of this thoughts on magic and animism come from Tyler and Fraser. Mario provides inumerous references to both Tyler and Frazer, so as I continue my research, I might find out that this chapter by Freud was not the key link for Mario, but rather it was Tyler and Frazer's texts, and Mario and Freud both just happened to be furthering the arguments of these two early anthropologists. The texts by Fraser are no doubt the works he wrote in 1910 and 1911: Totemism and Exogamy; The Magic Art; Taboo and the Perils of the Soul. Freud’s work was very much a direct glossing of Frazer: one chapter on each of Frazer's texts]. The work by Tyler - it is just one -- is the 1871 foundational text: Primitive Culture.
Mario's description of the body-closing ceremony aligns with the Freudian therapy session. Mario is directed to sit down in a chair, and allow the session to be carried out by the "master" Manuel (Mario, 33; compare with the method of the Freudian therapy outlined in Interpretation of Dreams, 160). The session commenced with various invocations of the help of the saints. Mario was then "hypnotized" by repetitive music. He writes:

"The rhythm of the refrain, the monotony of the soft, relaxing verses, the soothing shakee-shakee of the maraca, they all began to rock me, to wrap me up in ecstasy. Little by little my body warmed up in a dizzying musicality and I gradually abandoned my intellectual forces." (Mario, 37).

Mario, here making his own contribution to psychoanalysis, suggests music allows for the wearing down of the censoring ego. "It is precisely the principle of end of music that makes it the key companion of fetishism: its hypnotic force." (Mario 37). It is rhythm provides the core power of music's hypnotic power (as opposed to volume or melody). The reference given in the paragraph is to Paul Souriau, turning us back again to the concepts of the "Aesthetics of Movement." By integrating the Afro-Brazilian religious experience in the same paradigm as that of the Amerindian value system described above in the "Do-Mi-Sol" tribe, we see that Mario is building a case for particularly "national" aesthetic of movement and of the body.

The body-closing experience ended in an attempt to exorcise Mario of unclean spirits. Mario [verify this] most likely made sense of this through Freud’s argument in chapter 3 of "Totem & Tatoo" suggests what we see as demons and spirits are really the projections of our own subconscious. According to his argument, when we believe in demons and spirits it is because we recognize a second presence alongside us. But this presence is not actually "present" in the sense that we ourselves here, awake, self-aware. Rather, this second presence is "latent," something that could pop up at any time, but at the moment is just lying underneath the surface; something we feel but can't see or notice. This latent presence is our own subconscious. But primitive groups, according to Freud, assume that this is a spirit or demon. The recognition of a

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5 "O ritmo desse refrão, a monotonia das cantigas molengas, o chique-chique suave do maracá, já principiavam a me embalar, a música me extasiava. Aos poucos meu corpo se aquecia numa entorpecedora musicalidade ao mesmo tempo que gradativamente me abandonavam as forças de reação intelectual." (Mario, 37).
6 "E esse é justamente o destino principal da música que a torna companheira inseparável da feitiçaria: a sua força hipnótica." (Mario, 37).
second presence is the awareness of duality. Two persons within one. What we think is the spirit is really our own unconscious.

If Mario applied this framework to the Brazilian Northeast, he would saw the candomblé Catimbó spirits as manifestations of the Afro-Brazil and Amerindian unconscious. And it appears he did: in his notes, Mario labeled a quote with the words “Catimbo/Feitiçaria.” Here is the line: "Everything repressed from the stream of the conscious mind is perceived as action of demonic forces invading human life to either harm or help." Mario also left an outline "Historic Information of the Tendency towards Fetishism." The outline worked chronologically through the history of Brazil touching on contact, colonization, Jesuit missions and education, slavery, quilombos, and syncretism during the process of catholization. But in each of these categories, Mario pointed out how fetishist religion stayed present, never dying out. (Mario, pgs 160-163). It appears probably that Mario saw the mestres and orixás as ever-present in the formation of the Brazilian povo.

Let us return to Mario's 1921 Pauliceia Desvairada. What would occur if Mario applied his dialectical methodology of cultural authenticity rooted in his "Most Interesting Preface" on a national level (to understand national cultural authenticity instead of just being cultural authentic with himself and his own city)? Mario would find himself faced with a need to put together a team of researchers to collect, organize, and then critically and aesthetically organize the religions, totems, and music of the Northeast and the superstitions of the greater São Paulo area. And that is exactly what he did.

Suddenly, Mario's institutional project at the Department of Culture finally makes sense: the course on folklore, the São Paulo inquerito regarding taboos and superstitions, the research team sent in 1938 to collect and record music, focusing specifically on religious ceremonies (calling up the spirits of the national unconscious) and on dramatic dances that revolved around the totem of the Boi (Mario was obsessed with the Boi, seeing it as Brazil's central totem, even before the preguiça, which was more of a theoretical totem that Mario himself had selected as part of the modernist project to subvert/undermine racial and tropical ideologies). What follows is a brief discussion of the Mario’s own research projects in the 1920s and the institutional

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7 "todo represamento da corrente da consciência são pela imaginação concebidos como ação de forças demoníacas que invadem a vida humana de modo ora hostil ora adjutório." (Mario, 145).
projects funded by the Department of Culture in the 1930s. With the framework of national psychology, all of the projects make sense: Mario was building a repository of the Brazilian unconscious. He hoped that these stored artifacts (in the forms of books, surveys, and recordings) would allow Brazilian to better understand their own core self and provide fertile (unconscious) material for the creation of authentic Brazilian culture.

**Totems:**
- Preguiça in *Turista Aprendiz* and Macunaíma
- *Danças Dramáticas* – four-volume anthology on tunes from across Brasil about the *boi* and recording *bumba-meu-boi* ceremonies.
- "Musica de Feiticaria no Brasil" (pgs 196-204) we also see an inversion of the totem idea, in which the goat, the dog, and the black rooster all become symbols of the devil.
- Research by Sebastião Almeida Oliveira, published as "Proverbios e afins nos dominios da fauna." The article, published in the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* in 1935 exams Portuguese phrases and aphorisms which feature animals, focusing especially on the *boi*.

**Taboos & Superstitions** (the São Paulo inquérito). From São Paulo south, there is not the strength of music present in the Northeastern region, and the low spiritism and ideas of magic are most prevalent in superstitions ("Musica de Feiticaria" 23). As a result, Mario focused less on studying music, and decided instead to access the social subconscious through other Freudian mechanisms: by analyzing taboos and superstitions.
- Inquérito: *proibições alimentares*.
- Inquérito: *superstições: cura do anel*.
- Ex-votos and religious objects from Northeast

**Dreams & Daemons:** These include the trances and religious experiences of the Northeast, as recorded by Mario de Andrade in 1928/9, Camargo Guarnieri in 1937, and the Missão de Pesquisas Folclóricas in 1938]. The Freudian understanding went hand in hand with generational fears that new technologies would eradicate old practices. Freud writes: "It might be said that in the last analysis the 'spirit' of persons or things comes down to their capacity to remembered and imagined after perception of them has ceased." (Taboo & Totem, 109). For Mario, the recording of the "mestres" and "orixás" would be a chance to make sure Brazil's subconscious was not completely lost and forgotten. Such an amnesia would spell the end of cultural authenticity and the end of knowing the national self.
- Religious instruments
- Musical Recordings: babassué, catimbó, tambor-de-crioulo, tambor-de-mina, xangô.
Works Cited:


