Sarah Ann Wells, University of Notre Dame

**Mário Raul de Morais Andrade** (São Paul, 1893-1945).

Abstract:

Often called the pope of Brazilian Modernism, Mário de Andrade spearheaded several different phases of the movement, and is credited with introducing the term *modernismo* in Brazil. From pioneering the experimental first wave of Brazilian Modernism of 1922-1926 to sombre reflections on national identity in the mid-1930s-1940s and moving among poetry, short fiction, essays, musicology, travel writing, and the novel *Macunaíma* (1928), his output is extraordinary in both its volume and its influence. Despite his shifting registers and genres, the major preoccupations of his works remain constant throughout his lengthy career: Brazilian national identity, the fraught encounter among different cultures, ethnicities, and worldviews; linguistic experimentation, the relationship between writing and orality; and music.

Encyclopedia Entry:

**Mário Raul de Morais Andrade** (São Paul, 1893-1945). **[[JPG;** Images of Mário de Andrade by Brazilian Modernist painters Anita Malfatti and Candido Portinari]] Often called the pope of Brazilian Modernism, and credited with introducing the term *modernismo* (not to be confused with its Spanish-American counterpart) into Brazilian letters, Mário de Andrade is the central figure of Brazilian Modernism in its various phases. From pioneering the experimental first wave — also referred to as the “heroic” phase — of Brazilian Modernism of 1922-1926 to sombre reflections on national identity in the mid-1930s-1940s, and moving among poetry, short fiction, essays, musicology, travel writing, and one very important novel, his output is astounding. Despite shifts in register and genre, the major preoccupations of his works remain constant throughout his lengthy career: Brazilian national identity, the fraught encounter among different cultures, ethnicities, and worldviews; linguistic experimentation, the relationship between writing and orality; and music.

De Andrade’s two most famous works are a volume of experimental poetry and a novel. *Paulecéia desvairada* (*Hallucinated City)* was written at the dawn of the 1920s and published in 1922, thereby coinciding with **Brazil’s Modern Art Week [[link to other entry]]**. He was a central participant in this seminal event — his poem “Ode to the Bourgeois Gentleman” apparently elicited scathing boos when recited — as well as in the central modernist journals ***Klaxon* [[link to other entry]]** (1922-1923) and *Estética* (1924-1925). *Hallucinated City* was his second volume of poetry. The title suggests the poet’s delusional “hallucinations” were spawned by his beloved city of São Paulo. During the time of its publication, São Paulo was Latin America’s fastest-growing metropolis, undergoing rapid changes including immigration, industrialization, and shifting gender roles. After reading *Hallucinated City*, Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954;no relation), enthusiastically heralded him in an entitled “O Meu Poeta Futurista” (“My Futurist Poet,” 1921), an epithet he would approach warily. Yet, like Mário de Andrade’s other works from the 1920s, *Hallucinated City* is evidently in dialogue with European Modernist Movements, including **Marinetti**’s. Also influential were **Jean Epstein, Blaise Cendrars, Hans Arp, Wassily Kandinski**, **Guiallame** **Apollinaire,** **Stéphane** **Mallarme,** and **Jean Cocteau.**

The earliest of Brazilian Modernist experimental poetry, *Hallucinated City,* for the most part, rejects the reigning poetic model, the 19th-century French movement **Parnassianism**, with its emphasis on meter, craftsmanship, art for art’s sake, and an orderly nature. In 22 free-verse poems, the fragmented and multiplied poetic voice explores a diverse and dynamic, but also cruel, urban space. São Paulo becomes a character, just as Manhattan, Berlin, or Buenos Aires will become in the contemporaneous genre of city films, or in works by **John Dos Passos, Alfred Döblin,** or **Jorge Luis Borges**. Streetcars, cinema, the popular press, wireless telegraphy, machines, Brazilian popular music, and snatches of urban dialogue jostle together with specific neighbourhoods and streets names. A keen interest in the everyday juts up against the residual Romantic exploration of poetic subjectivity. Neologisms abound, including those that attempt to fashion a new language to mirror the city’s novel experiences, along with snatches of Italian, French, English and Spanish, reflecting the city’s immigrant and cosmopolitan makeup. Experimenting with parataxis and montage, he creates associative rather than thematic or causal links among images separated by frequent ellipses. The volume also contains several references the first of many references to the **Harlequin,** an important figure of Brazilian modernism:a representation of performativity and multiplicity, it is referenced in the cover of the first edition. **[[JPG 3:** image of first edition]]

The “Prefacio Interessantísimo” (“Extremely Interesting Preface”), written after the book’s publication and, in some sense, a response to the polemic it launched, is itself of interest as a manifesto and ars poetica. In it, he pokes fun at the proliferation of “isms” in the avant-garde period, but also implicitly yokes himself into that emergent tradition. He also draws analogies between his poetry and music, a major focus throughout his life.

De Andrade’s other most important reflection on modern poetics can be found in *A Escrava que não é Isaura* (“The Slave-Girl Who Is Not Isaura,” 1925), a work that grapples with the role of the Orphic voice in the tension between tradition and modernity.

His novel ***Macunaíma***(1928) — subtitled “the Hero with No Character” — is his other great work of literature. He named it a “rhapsody,” highlighting its musical construction, in which different elements juxtaposed to achieve an underlying unity. This bawdy, encyclopedic epic is both a critique and a celebration of Brazilian national identity. The eponymous hero, a trickster figure, is a black Brazilian born in the heart of the Amazon who embarks on a quest that covers multiple spaces and times in a kind of paratactic map of Brazil. In a sense, *Macunaíma* is a precursor of magical realism, with its nonchalant tone that interweaves the fantastic, mythic, and urban/modern without transitions; Macunaíma and those around him morph into different objects, animals, races, etc. The novel was influenced by anthropologist Sir James George Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* (1890), Sigmund Freud’s “Totem and Taboo”(1913), and German anthropologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg’s research on Tupi tribes. Highly experimental, the novel interweaves myths and popular speech from a variety of different regions, as well as lexicon from African and Amazonian languages and French, Italian, and English. Combined with its lengthy, experimental catalogues of flora and fauna unique to the Amazon, the book has proven notoriously difficult to translate.

While the two were written independently of one another, the publication of *Macunaíma* coincided chronologically with another major milestone of Brazilian Modernism, Oswald de Andrade’s “Cannibal Manifesto,” and were therefore linked retrospectively, inspiring experimental writers and musicians in the movements of the 1960s-1970s that also sought to challenge deterministic interpretations of Brazil’s uneven modernization and the legacy of colonialism. The director Joaquim Pedro de Andrade made a film version of *Macunaíma* in 1969. **[[JPG 4**: poster of film version of *Macunaíma*]]

Other important works include *Amar, verbo intransitivo* (“Love, an Intransitive Verb”; translated as *Fräulein*; 1927), an erotic coming-of-age novel, experimental and Freudian, and *Clã do Jabuti* (“Clan of the Jabuti,” 1927), which consecrated his interest in indigenous and African and regional Brazilian myths that were of great interests to Brazilian modernists more broadly. Like *Love, an Intransitive Verb* and *Macunaíma, Clã do Jabuti* is asearch for and exploration of Brazilian language, rhythms (including samba music), and cultural patrimony. While deeply invested in the national project, in Brazilian customs and speech, de Andrade consistently undermined simplistic and essentialist understandings of Brazil, underlying its hybrid nature and its construction of it by European travellers. This questioning comes to the fore in his experimental travelogue, *O turista aprendiz* (“The Tourist-Apprentice,” written in 1927 and published posthumously), which recounts his trips to the Amazon and Brazilian backlands.

Like many of his contemporaries, he grew progressively materialist and more explicitly concerned with social and political problems throughout 1930s and 1940s, a shift he explores in the volume *Aspectos da Literatura Brasileira*, (“Aspects of Brazilian Literature,” 1943). In the mid-1930s he became the director of Department of Culture for the Municipality of São Paulo, and set about creating orchestras, libraries, and influencing national policy on artistic patrimony. In what was to be a lasting legacy in Brazilian cultural history, he was also instrumental in bringing Diana Dreyfuss and her husband Claude Levi-Strauss to Brazil; together they founded the Society of Ethnography and Folklore of São Paulo (Brazil’s first ethnographic research centre).

He also published several other volumes of poetry, three short story collections, and various works on music, dance, and visual art, including *A Música e a Canção Populares no Brasil* (“Music and Popular Song in Brazil,” 1936) and *A Expressão Musical nos Estados Unidos* (“Musical Expression in the United States,” 1940).

Selected List of Works:

*Poesias completas* (1966)*,* São Paulo, Martins 1966 (Portuguese)

*Obra escogida: novela, cuento, ensayo, epistolario* (1979)*.* Souza, Gilda de Mello e.; Vergueiro, Laura de Campos., and others, eds, Caracas, Venezuela, Biblioteca Ayacucho. (Spanish)

[*Obra imatura* (1960)*.*](http://firstsearch.oclc.org.proxy.library.nd.edu/WebZ/FSFETCH?fetchtype=fullrecord:sessionid=fsapp1-39095-hp02m2ei-1qjg1h:entitypagenum=9:0:recno=32:resultset=2:format=FI:next=html/record.html:bad=error/badfetch.html:entitytoprecno=32:entitycurrecno=32:numrecs=1)*,* São Paulo, Martins. (Portuguese)

*Contos novos* (1972)*,* São Paulo, Livraria Martins Editora (Portuguese)

*Os contos de Belazarte* (1972), São Paulo, Livraria Martins. (Portuguese)

*O empalhador de passarinho* (1972)*,* São Paulo, Livraria Martins Editôra. (Portuguese)

*Apectos da literatura brasileira* (1943), Rio de Janeiro, Americ-edit. (Portuguese)

*O banquete* (1977), São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades. (Portuguese)

*Amar, verbo intransitive: idílo* (1972)*.* São Paulo, Livraria Martins Editora (Portuguese)

*Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* (1972)*,* São Paulo, Livraria Martins Editora (Portuguese)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Aspectos da música brasileira* (1991), Belo Horizonte: Villa Rica. (Portuguese)  *O turista aprendiz* (1976)*,* São Paulo, Livraria Duas Cidades*.* (Portuguese) |  |

[*Fräulein* (1933)*,*](http://firstsearch.oclc.org.proxy.library.nd.edu/WebZ/FSFETCH?fetchtype=fullrecord:sessionid=fsapp1-39095-hp02m2ei-1qjg1h:entitypagenum=13:0:recno=71:resultset=2:format=FI:next=html/record.html:bad=error/badfetch.html:entitytoprecno=71:entitycurrecno=71:numrecs=1)translated by Margaret Richardson Hollingsworth, New York, Macaulay Co. (English)

*Macunaíma* (1984)*.* New York: Random House. (English)

### *Macunaíma, o heroi sem nenhum carácter* (1996)*,* Nanterre, France, ALLCA XX: Université Paris X. (Portuguese)

*Hallucinated City/Paulicea Desvairada* (1978)*.* Translated by Jack E. Tomlins, Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press. (English)

For further reading:

Brotherston, Gordon (1975). “Brazilian Poetry.” *Latin American Poetry: Origins and Presence,* Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press: 77-93.

Foster, David William (2011). “Mário de Andrade: On Being São Paulo-Wise in *Paulicéia desvairada*.” *São Paulo: Perspectives on the City and Cultural Production*, Tallahassee, University Press of Florida: 13-27.

Haberly, David (1983). “Mário de Andrade: the Harlequin.” *Three Sad Races: Racial Identity and National Consciousness in Brazilian Literature,* Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press: 135-160.

Luiz Lafetá, João (1988). *Mário de Andrade: Literatura Comentada,* São Paulo, Nova Cultura.

Luiz Passos, José Luiz (2007). “*Macunaíma.”* In Franco Moretti, ed. *The Novel: Volume 2: Forms and Themes.* Princeton, Princeton University Press: 896-905.

Perrone, Charles A. (2002) “Presentation and Representation of Self and City in *Paulicéia Desvairada*.” *Chasqui* 31 (1): 18-28.

Read, Justin (2009). “The Reversible World: America as Dissonance in Mário de Andrade’s *Paulicéia desvairada.”* in *Modern Poetics and Hemispheric American Cultural Studies:* 59-102.

Rosenberg, Fernando (2006). “*Macunaíma* in the Mouth of the Cannibal.” *The Avant-Gardes and Geopolitics in Latin America,* Pittsburgh, Cultural Illuminations of the Americas, University of Pittsburgh Press: 77-105.

Schelling, Vivian (1988). Mário de Andrade: A Primitive Intellectual.” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 65 (1): 73-86.

Unruh, Vicky (1994). *Latin American Vanguards: the art of contentious encounters,* Berkeley, University of California Press.