

*Alberto Acereda. South Atlantic Review 66 (2004): 127-129*

***Mário de Andrade. The Creative Works.* By José I. Suárez and Jack E. Tomlins. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2000. 195 pp. \$ 40.**

Mário Raul de Moraes Andrade (1893-1945) is one of the most controversial authors in twentieth-century Brazilian literature. As the intellectual leader of the Modernist movement in Brazil since 1922, Mário de Andrade's creative works offer numerous critical possibilities, especially if we compare them to the other key figure in the period, Oswald de Andrade. José I. Suárez and Jack E. Tomlins carry out a long-overdue study of the poetry, novels, and short stories written by this towering literary author. This book offers a new comprehensive interpretation of Mário de Andrade's literary works, and both Suárez and Tomlins perform their task with great knowledge and critical excellence. Almost sixty years after Mário de Andrade's death, this well-crafted book follows up on the passionate critical discussion sparked by this author and the ensuing debates that were held by Haroldo de Campos during the 1960s. This book, however, keeps in mind the need to read Mário de Andrade as an author obsessed with language. Therefore, the investigation into the nature of language, and its use in the creation of a national Brazilian literature, lies at the heart of Mário de Andrade's poetics and of the entire Brazilian Modernist movement. Suárez and Tomlins's study of Mário de Andrade's creative works concentrates on the poetry, short stories, novels and other writings, consequently leading us to a better understanding of the artist's life.

The first chapter ("The Road to the Brazilian Vanguard") addresses Mário de Andrade's life and the nature of his first published poetic book. Indeed, some of the ideas established in it can be useful for a better understanding of the Avant-Garde movement not only in Brazil but also in other cultural regions in Latin America, especially of what is known as the *vanguardia*. The second chapter ("Early Modernist Poetics and Early Poetry") continues with the analysis of Mário de Andrade's early poetry, created as an outcome of the São Paulo's Week of Modern Art in February of 1922, and up to 1926. It is fundamental to place, as the authors do in this book, this early poetry against the artist's controversial summation of the

Modernist movement that Mário de Andrade pronounced in Rio de Janeiro in 1942, just three years before his death. The third chapter (“A Pan-Brazilian Trilogy”) analyzes the works *Clã do Jabuti* (1927), *Amar, verbo intransitivo* (1927) and *Macunaíma* (1928). The latter has often been called the “apex” of the author’s career as Brazilian Modernist and Vanguardist. Suárez and Tomlins’s analysis in this chapter is particularly accurate in regard to their attempt to read these works as an understanding of Brazil and its language as an instrument in the literary enunciation of nationality. The fourth chapter (“The Short Stories”) cover this same goal through the study of fundamental works such as *Primeiro andar* (1926), *Belazarte* (1934), and *Contos novos* (1947). The fifth chapter (“The Mature Poetry”) is concerned with the nature of poetry and, as such, studies several poetic works published between 1930 and 1946: *Remate de males*, *Carro da miséria*, *A costela do Grão Cão*, *Livro azul*, and *Lira paulistana*, the latter published one year after the poet’s death. The sixth and final chapter is a sort of balance sheet about Mário de Andrade where the authors show how this Modernist Brazilian was indeed a man in search of the limits and limitations of literature. They present a poet always seeking the utilitarian in the service of modernization and nationalization of Brazilian letters, who finally came to find an organic unity in the contradictions of his many selves. These six chapters are followed by interesting and well-documented notes, a select bibliography, a chronology and a useful index of names. One should note the fact that the bibliography is divided between a chronological bibliography of Mário de Andrade’s major writings and a critical bibliography with background studies.

All in all, this is a concise and direct scholarly work on a major author in Brazilian literature that will remain, for quite a long time to come, a much needed bibliographic reference in the study of Brazilian Modernism and, in a more general sense, of Brazilian Modern and Contemporary literature. Mário de Andrade’s works represent a joyous dedication to the problems of his time and his country. They offer us a new perspective of the language, in other words, of the possibilities of literature and the poetic art as a way of finding a reason for our existence. This particular area revolving around the philosophical connections between Mário de Andrade’s writings and the existential way of life, is an area which offers many possibilities for further research. Overall, this book clearly shows us the valuable legacy left by Mário de Andrade. In summary, those scholars and students interested in Brazilian Modernism, and in particular in Mário de Andrade, will find here a much needed volume of research.

Concomitantly, readers of this book will find very accurate translations of Mário de Andrade's works into English.

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