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The music of sorcery in Brazil

(Literary Conference)

Mário de Andrade

Abstract

“The music of sorcery in Brazil” was given as a lecture by Mário de Andrade to the Brazilian Music Association (Associação Brasileira de Música), in Rio de Janeiro, in 1933. The author never managed to complete its revision for publication. This was undertaken by Oneyda Alvarenga, who published the text of the lecture and a series of related documents in Volume XIII – *Música de Feitiçaria no Brasil* – of the Complete Works of Mário de Andrade (Editora Itatiaia/Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1983, p.23-70). The author is in search for the role of music, with its distinctive rhythms and melodic form, in the mystical trance of Afro-Brazilian religions. The text combines the flavour of his direct research experience in the *catimbó* of the Brazilian Northeast; his erudite bibliographical studies that were strongly influenced by evolutionary and diffusionist anthropology at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the twentieth; and an analysis of the music of *macumba* in the Rio de Janeiro around the 1930s as found in the recordings that Andrade so much enjoyed collecting and listening to.

Key words: Afro-Brazilian Religion, Music, Ritual, Sorcery and Magic.

Música de Feitiçaria no Brasil

Resumo

“Música de Feitiçaria no Brasil” resulta de uma conferência lida por Mário de Andrade na Associação Brasileira de Música, no Rio de Janeiro, em 1933. O autor não chegou a concluir a revisão para sua publicação. Disso se encarregou Oneyda Alvarenga, que organizou, com o texto da conferência e com parte da documentação conexa, o volume XIII – *Música de Feitiçaria no Brasil* – das Obras Completas de Mário de Andrade (Editora Itatiaia/Instituto Nacional do Livro em 1983, p. 23-70). Andrade busca compreender o papel da música, com seus ritmos e formas melódicas distintivas, no transe místico das religiões afro-brasileiras. O texto combina o sabor de suas pesquisas de campo sobre o *catimbó* no nordeste brasileiro; seus estudos bibliográficos eruditos, muito influenciados pela antropologia evolucionista e difusionista do final do século XIX e inícios do XX; e uma análise da música de *macumba* carioca do início dos anos 1930 tal como encontrada nos discos da época que o autor coletava e se comprazia em escutar.

Palavras-chave: Religiões Afro-brasileiras; Feitiçaria e Magia; Música; Ritual.

The music of sorcery in Brazil

Mário de Andrade

“Odorem suavissimum in conspectur Domini, quia oblatio ejus est”

Exodus, XXIX, 25

While travelling in the northeast with a keen desire to learn about the musical forms of that region I soon became interested in sorcery. This was logical, since sorcery and music have always gone hand in hand. One esoteric author¹ thought that music and alchemy were “the elder daughters of Magic” and Combarieu (Combarieu, 1913) in his *History of Music* left aside the technical proof that scientists have provided to explain the creation of an instrument’s sound and rhythm, indeed of musical art, choosing instead to seek the origins of music in magic. He wrote a number of chapters of finely woven erudition about this. Even if his thesis does not convince me altogether, it did have the effect of confirming the incontestable fact that music is an instinctive, immediate and necessary partner both of the practice of high magic in the spiritual civilizations and of the low sorcery of natural civilizations.

So I went to the Northeast with an enormous curiosity about musical sorcery, which in my own State no longer exists as it once did. The Brazilian peoples of the North and the South are very superstitious and given to the practice of sorcery. In these vast regions of diverse lands, however, low forms of propitiation, the worship or exorcism of demoniacal forces vary considerably even though all of them shelter under the protective canopy of the most elevated catholic spiritualism. From São Paulo southwards, a massively Europeanized superstition is applied peremptorily to the practices of low Spiritism. A more sceptical and infinitely less lyrical superstition, stranger or more timid than a lover, sings these days sotto voce, dominated by frightening trembling tables or curing waters. Sporadic references to *macumbas*, *catimbós* or *pajelanças*,² in the newspapers of São Paulo does not mean that such forms of sorcery really exist in the region. The vast majority of the São Paulo journalists come from other States, which means that they write about what they find in the police stations using the terminology they learned during childhood. Everyone knows that in Rio de Janeiro the dominant form of sorcery is *macumba*, which follows specifically African ritual forms and reaches as far as Bahia, and, with considerable and still lively variations throughout the Northeast. Rio-Bahia is where African sorcery thrives most strongly. In Bahia, however, I understand that the word *macumba* is unknown. There, they call the fetishist ritual *candomblé*, a term that also appears from time to time in the vocabulary of the people of Rio de Janeiro. This is the term that is used these days to refer to Afro-Brazilian sorcery. It is difficult to find the original meaning of the word *candomblé*. Most probably it originates from *candombe*, which is how the term persisted in the Hispanic-American languages of the South. When, in 1883, Victor Gálvez wrote about the few Africans who survived in Argentina (Vega, 1833) he claimed that there were no longer any “*candombes*”, which he described as “monotonous music and wholly African dances.” In fact, in Argentina as in Uruguay, *candombe* covers African dances as a whole. It seems unquestionable that this word also existed in Brazil. Lindolpho Gomes (Gomes, 1931) collected a story about the animal Pondê in Minas which contains a song that is also an example of the many bilingual texts that can be found in our country. The song is as follows:

¹ Alvarenga provides this reference: “Le Voile d’Isis”, Paris, n. 100, ano 33. Revista Esotérica. Special issue dedicated to music. All the following footnotes are Editors’ Note, with the exception of footnotes 21 and 26, which are indicated as Author’s note. For the editorial decisions taken please refer to our “Brazil’s music of sorcery according to Mário de Andrade: an introduction by the editors” in this same issue of Vibrant.

² All words in italics are defined in the Glossary at the end of the text.

Me abre a porta	Open the door for me
Candombe-serê	Candombe-serê
Minha madrinha	My godmother
Candombe-serê	Candombe-serê
Que o bicho Pondê	The animal Pondê
Candombe-serê	Candombe-serê
Quer me comer	Wants to eat me
Candombe-serê	Candombe-serê

In his “Vocabulary”, the folklorist doesn’t enlighten us as to what this refrain might mean. Indeed, the difficulty lies in the fact that the word could refer either to the dance or religious magic. The song’s form is obviously responsorial: a verse being sung by the soloist and the refrain by the chorus. Well, this kind of litany is very common among our people, both in their profane festivities and in their songs for sorcery. In the song for Ogun,³ which I shall cite later, one can see this responsorial form quite clearly. One might go further. The form of the bilingual song to which Silvio Romero (1897) drew attention and studied unsatisfactorily, is consistent with certain processes that are present in the songs of the natural religions, whether they were invocations or exorcisms. Phrases that no-one understands are commonly used in the music of sorcery as I shall show in my own examples. The songs cited by Silvio Romero, such as the Mandú-Sarará, and another cited by Barbosa Rodrigues,⁴ such as the Uacará, evoke unequivocally the idea that they are sacred totemic chants. The custom of responsorial refrains became widely dispersed throughout the country in all our profane dances. This makes it very difficult to interpret the document in question. One of the ideas that appears regularly in these verses is that they refer to the dance being danced. “Look at the coconut, Madame”, “Turn the coconut around, Madame” is a very common refrain among the *côco* dances in the Northeast. In the *samba* that is characteristically called *Don’t go to the candomblé over there* (Odeon 10719)⁵, the title is the responsorial refrain for the chorus. So, in the case of the strophe from Minas, I will not risk deciding whether the word “*candombe*” indicates a dance or sorcery. But we also have valuable evidence provided by the North-American traveller Ewbank, who lived in Rio in 1846, even though he often registered imperfectly the words he heard. But Ewbank had already written exclusively about practices of sorcery, describing ceremonial objects taken from a sorcerer’s cave by the police; “the apparatus of a wizard’s den” (Ewbank, 1858). Silvio Romero (1888) suggests that the word means festive dances, when he refers to the most popular “*sambas, chibas, batuques and candomblês*.” He writes the word with an e circumflex (*candombê*).⁶ But Nina Rodrigues (1900) writes it with an e acute and defines *candomblês* as “great public festivities within the Yoruba cult for whatever motive.” Artur Ramos (1932), who wishes to clarify matters, claims, although presenting no new data, that *candomblé* originally referred to “an African dance and, by extension, African religious practices.” Afranio Peixoto (1944) defines *candomblé* as “sorcery, practised by black Africans, with the beating of drums and commensality”. My own feeling is that it was Nina Rodrigues who best understood the meaning of the word: Brazilian Africans, joined together in religious groups, united more by the cult they practised than the tribe they came from, have

3 Ogun, god of metal working and war, is one of the divinities (orishas) of Yoruba origin who are worshipped in Afro-Brazilian religions. Others which will appear from time to time in this text are the goddesses Yansan, Yemanjá and Oshun, associated with thunder and lightning, the sea and the rivers respectively, and the gods Oshosi and Obaluaê, the former related to hunting, the latter to smallpox and other infectious diseases. The mighty Shango is related to thunder, lightening and justice. And, last but certainly no least, Eshu, the trickster god, messenger among the orishas and between them and the living. We have adopted the standard English spelling for these divinities.

4 This reference was not found by Alvarenga in Andrade’s library.

5 The numbering of this recording and others quoted by Mário de Andrade follows the catalogues of the recording companies. This samba was composed by Elói Antero Dias. On the other side of this record is a samba by Getúlio Marinho (Vasconcelos, 1985, pp. 236-239). These two musicians, together with the Conjunto Africano, perform the *ponto* for Yansan and the song for Ogun which Mário de Andrade analyses in his lecture. For more details see notes 26 and 27.

6 Here, Andrade refers to the different sounds of the phonemes “ê” and “é” in Portuguese, the former “closed”, the latter “open.”

given the generic term *candomblé* to all their musical festivities both sacred and profane. The first Christians did the same. They were encouraged to sing and dance, for, as Saint Paul said to the Colossians: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians III: 16) All the priests of the primitive church shared this opinion. The first Christians took such pleasure in obeying Paulo’s invitation, that, it seems, they did not notice, or noticed... too much, the “grace” that the apostle asked for. That is why they not only sang “before sunrise hymns in honour of Christ”, as Pliny the Younger informed Trajan, but their banquets all but fell apart with endless singing. Such excesses worried the leaders of the Church, for in the second century, Saint Clement laid down the rules as to when the faithful should sing so as to avoid being mistaken for the mimics and songsters who perform in profane carousals.

Another part of the country where, unexpectedly, Africa contributes to Brazilian sorcery is the Amazon, where the predominant cult is called *pajelança*. Amerindian influence is visible in this word, as well as in the fact that they call their religious leaders, *pajés*. Also, certain gods that are invoked in *pajelança* are redolent of Amerindian cosmology, such as *Boto-Tucuchi*, the perverse spirit *Boiúna-Mãe*, and principally *Boto-Branco* who is the Eros of the group. The same informant who told me of these gods also included another benevolent god, King Nagô. This divinity takes us straight to the Yoruba people, even though the song sung for him has nothing clearly African about it. In any case, one can detect a certain pentaphonism even though the occasional fleeting presence of a leading note detracts from it. This is what places us firmly within the musicality of Afro-Brazilian sorcery, as I shall show more clearly below. Dr. Gastão Vieira, a distinguished doctor from Belém, subjected himself, at my request, to a *pajelança* ceremony. The phrases that follow are extracted from a letter he sent to me: “At great cost I managed to get permission from the police chief to assist a *pajelança* together with a few local dignitaries. So, one night I ventured into the bush in the suburb of Pedreira to watch. Before the function began I called over the *pajé* and told him that he should be at his ease, not be shy because of my presence and that he should carry out his duties as usual. The man promised that he would but he did not keep his word. [I cite these preliminary phrases to show that the course of action taken by my friend who has no reason to know about the rules for collecting folklore were exactly the opposite of what they should have been.] No one fell into trance and all I heard were barbarous and clearly African songs. [...] The sessions are held in honour of Saint Barbara. There is a sort of throne over which hangs a picture representing the said saint. Sitting on each side of the throne, two men beat a *batuque*, or “*tambor de Mina*.” A little boy plays a “*cheque*”, or *ganzá*, a sort of elongated rattle. In his bare feet, the *pajé* follows the rhythm of the drums with strange writhings and intones barbaric songs. There are a few women, some in blue skirts, others in yellow ones. (...) During the songs, the *pajé* sweats through all his pores, such are his jumps, twists and turns and the disordered movements of his arms.”⁷ After this, Dr. Gastão Vieira transcribes the texts for Ogun, Oshosi, Yemanjá, Obaluaê and the Moor. Those who have some knowledge of *candomblé* and *macumba*, will perceive the profound black influence in what he describes. Oshosi, Yemanjá and Ogun are gods from Africa. Saint Barbara is the object of an important cult in the Bahian *candomblé*, where she is identified with the goddess Oshun,⁸ since both belong to the group of entities associated with meteorological beliefs.

7 Dr. Gastão Vieira’s letter may be consulted in Andrade., 1983, pp. 224-227.

8 Here Andrade commits his own mistake! Saint Barbara is associated with the Yoruba divinity, Yansan.

It would perhaps be interesting to see whether the African aspect of northern *pajelança* is a ramification of the Bahian *candomblé*, or of the sorcery of the Antilles. I am not sure of the answer, but I lean toward the second hypothesis. Cuba exerted enormous influence over the Atlantic coast of South America, above all during the nineteenth century, due mainly to intercontinental navigation. During his research into Brazilian folklore, Luís da Câmara Cascudo heard the word “cuba” used as a synonym for sorcerer. The word seems to come from the island of Cuba. There is no Amerindian equivalent of this word and Teodoro Sampaio does not refer to Cubatão, which is certainly an African word meaning principle house, augmentative of *cubata*. Both *cubata* and *senzala* refer to slave quarters (C. Figueiredo).⁹ In 1818 d’Alincourt designated the Cubatão of São Paulo as being the more ancient “Cubatra” (Taunay, 1924, p. 139). Teschauer, citing Benício in “O Rei dos Jagunços” (The King of the Henchmen), employs the word “cuba” to mean a “powerful, influential and wise individual”, and C. Figueiredo is clearly honoured in Teschauer’s interpretation. In fact, he frequently misinterpreted the texts at his disposal, and although this interpretation seems legitimate, maybe a more intimate knowledge of Benício’s novel (Benício, 1997 [1899])¹⁰ might have further enlightened the meaning of the term. It is similar to what happens with the word “China” used to mean a “Chinese person”. In São Paulo, it is very common for country people to say “a Japa” for “a Japanese person”. The word “cuba”, at least in its first etymology, should stand for “Cuban”, which confirms my own ideas about Cuban influence among us. Our music provides definitive proof. By extension, the word would come to signify an “important individual” and maybe a “sorcerer”, also considered a most important person. Luís da Câmara Cascudo spent some time studying northern *pajelança*. Whether his informant on the word *cuba* was an Amazonian informant, either born in Amazonia or an immigrant, I am sure it is definitive proof of Cuban influence over the Amazonian *pajelança*.

In both the French and Spanish Antilles, we find the *vodu* cult that “saves” the serpent. I use the word “save” (*salvar*) in the sense of “to honour” (to salute, *saudar*), as is the case in the songs of our sorcery. These two words are, by the way, synonyms in very old Portuguese. Nina Rodrigues states quite categorically that the *vodu* cult does not exist in Bahia (Rodrigues, 1932, p. 344 and following) and I’ve never heard of anyone who attested to the presence of this cult in the *macumbas* of Rio de Janeiro. In fact this cult spread widely from Haiti, reaching the US (White, 1928, p. 206) and becoming intermingled with Yoruba sorcery in Cuba (Ortiz, 1906). We also know that the Boni maroons of the Guianas (Rodrigues, op. cit. p. 261), who are strongly attached to totemic beliefs, worship the god Godu, in whom Nina Rodrigues believes to see, and with considerable reason, the same serpent divinity of *Vodu*. In effect, I possess particularly strong evidence that the word *vodu* is used very convincingly in Afro-Paraense *pajelança*. This is the text of a song for Yemanjá sent to me by Dr. Gastão Vieira.¹¹ Yemanjá is one of the water gods of the Bahian *candomblé*, and Nina Rodrigues does not think twice in identifying her with a mermaid as conceived in myth. We all know that the myth of the water serpent possessed of supernatural powers exists in Amerindian religion and that it is especially strong in Amazonia. *Vodu* is the serpent-worshipping cult of the blacks of Haiti that spread throughout the Americas. Nothing could be more natural therefore, than that the aquatic goddess Yemanjá should be identified in Amazonian *pajelança* with the regional snake-god which in its turn corresponds to the snake-god (*cobra-deusa*) of *Vodu*. This identification seems to me to be clear enough in the song for Yemanjá in Pará: “Dêrêcê Vodum, dêrêcê Amanjá”. Even if there is no such correspondence as I suppose, I will continue to believe that I am reproducing the only document that reveals the survival, however minimal, of *Vodu* in Brazil.

9 Neither Teodoro Sampaio, nor C. Figueiredo are listed in the bibliographical references to the conference organized by Alvarenga (Andrade, 1983, pp. 274-285).

10 Alvarenga observes that the book was found in the Fundo Villa-Lobos (collection of folklore documents).

11 See note 7.

But these are not the only examples of *pajelança* and the curing practices that were observed and described by José de Carvalho (1930, p. 30) such as *pajelança in the North and the north-eastern catimbó*. The Amerindian influence is present in both these two truly Brazilian institutions. The link between the two is natural, given the intense interchanges brought about by the north-eastern immigrants in their comings and goings in search of water. In any case, I couldn't find decisive evidence that the *catimbó* had been influenced by *pajelança* or vice-versa. Even so, I have a *catimbó* song that was collected in Paraíba invoking the spirit *Pombo Preto* (Black Dove) that seems to me to be symptomatic of such influence:

Oh meu Pombinho Preto	O, my little black dove
Daonde tu vem?	Where are you from?
Eu venho de Belém	I come from Belém
Aí, eu venho de Belém	Ah, I come from Belém

There is no question, then, that the two cults are linked by the Amerindian tradition that strongly permeates both. But this influence also exists in the *candomblés* and *macumbas*. Our folklorists, especially those who studied music, have long debated these issues. Some of them have categorically denied the persistence of Amerindian traditions among the Brazilian people. The evidence from Brazilian sorcery points in the opposite direction. Nina Rodrigues (1932, p. 300 and p. 362) refers to a Bahian rite, which differs from those influenced directly by Africa. It is called *candomblé de caboclo*. The great Bahian anthropologist found one of these *candomblés de caboclo* thriving in the Recôncavo, where they worshipped the mythical notion of *Boitatá* which they called “Meu Baitantã”. A vase full of a drink called *jurema* was listed among the numerous objects that were stolen by the police from one of these Bahian *candomblés de caboclo*. Artur Ramos (1932, pp. 20-26) insistently refers to the Bahian *candomblés de caboclo*, also now called religion of the *caboclo*.¹² Among the gods, he found Cabocla, Guarani, Maromba and one *caboclinho* (little *caboclo*) whose song is as follows:

Eu sou caboclinho,	I am a little <i>caboclo</i>
Eu só visto pena,	I only wear feathers
Eu só vim em terra,	I only come down to earth
Pra beber jurema.	To drink <i>jurema</i>

This insistence on *jurema* in the Bahian *candomblés de caboclo* links them to *catimbó*. In *catimbó*, the cult of *jurema* almost amounts to plant worship. A stimulating drink is made from *Jurema*. In the stupifacient ritual of *catimbosice* it is inhaled instead of being drunk. The Kingdom of *Jurema* is one of the most marvellous regions of the heavens.

In the *macumbas* of Rio de Janeiro, Amerindian tradition appears in the rite with the special name of “*linha de mesa*” (*Diário da Noite*. São Paulo, 24/12/1930). In these rituals, Manecuru, Caboclo Véio, Jiribimbá, Perekê, Caboca Tapemirim, João Curumi, names all too apparent in the charlatanism of the great city, are among the gods invoked.

What all the forms of sorcery, such as *pajelança*, *linha de mesa*, *candomblé de caboclo* and *catimbó* have in common is the practice of *baixo espiritismo*. Not all of them originated from a deep and ancient tradition as is the case of the Yoruban *candomblé*. Even though they retain strong aspects of Amerindian tradition,

¹² Alvarenga (Andrade, 1983, p. 63,) reproduces in a note part of the original text that Andrade crossed out in red ink: “This insistence seems to suggest that the new rite was already competing with Yoruban sorcery and that one day could supersede it”. After this phrase there is another one crossed out in black ink: “... a day which I cheer for... without wanting to”.

not only in their gods, but also in certain practices, they necessarily came under the influence of European culture that was the organizational principle of the life of the nation. And this European influence came with low spiritism. *Catimbó*, of which I have more intimate knowledge, is not yet a fully developed cult and with difficulty will it become such, given all the persecution it suffers and the influence that it endures. It is not idolatrous which distinguishes it profoundly from Afro-Brazilian sorcery with its earthenware or wooden idols, which are used as fetishes (Rodrigues, 1900, p. 39). The “princess” herself, a simple soup plate made of stone dust in the poorest *catimbós* seems more to have the function of a shrine, of an empty vessel, into which an unknown god might descend. The *catimboseiros* never know exactly which god is likely to come down from the enchanted kingdoms of the skies. They have nothing to do with idols or *grigri*, nor with amulets, even though amulets do appear in *catimbó*.

On the other hand, *catimbó* is most distinct from Amerindian religiosity in that it is frankly polytheistic, while most probably Guarani belief was monotheistic as Fariña Nuñez has shown so clearly in his “Conceptos Esteticos” (Nuñez, 1926).

Thus, when I arrived in Natal, one of my concerns was to discover the sorcerers of *catimbó*. And chance soon brought me into contact with two of them: Master Manuel and Master João.¹³ In *catimbó*, the *pais de santo* are called Masters, which is a traditional Portuguese usage. Cândido de Figueiredo attributes the same ancient meaning of doctor in Portugal to “Master”, adding that in Macau and Ceylon the word signifies healer; that sorcerers/healers were also called Masters in Portugal is shown in a 1630 manuscript that says “it is common for women, who under the title of Masters used to cure the sick with disapproved diabolical arts and superstitions...” (Vasconcellos, 1910, vol. 2, p. 33). The slyest Silvestre José dos Santos, who in 1819 founded a religion in Serra do Roncador (Pereira da Costa, 1908, p. 33) took the name of “Master Quiou”. The religious practices of his sect are very similar to those of *catimbó*. In *catimbó* the word Master is used as much for the sorcerers as for the gods that are invoked. They are distinguished by calling the former “material Masters”, or, “Masters in matter”, while the gods are called “dematerialized Masters”.

The material Masters’ function is to direct the sessions, for only they have the power to open them, to initiate the singing and receive in their bodies the dematerialised Masters. In the same way as in Cuban sorcery (Ortiz, op. cit., 191 and following), women occupy a subaltern position in the *catimbó* so they are not as important as they are in the Bahian *canbomblé* and the *macumba* of Rio de Janeiro. I know of no *mãe de santo* in *catimbó*, and however much Manuel pestered me with the intrigues of the local *catimbó*, my collaborators make no mention of female Mistresses in the flesh, or as spiritual agents. The *catimbó* seems to be much more Brazilian in this respect than *candomblé*, since as is the case of Brazilian sorcery as a whole women are not important. Witches remain only in fairy tales. Or otherwise this could be an example of the influence of the Catholic church where there are no priestesses. It is also possible that the *catimbó* has been influenced by Amerindian culture where women sorcerers do not exist.

As it happens, after having become intimate with my two Masters, I decided to “fechar o corpo” (close my body), one of the most important *catimbó* ceremonies. It was the last Friday of the year, and although on an even date (28 December), it was particularly propitious for the practice of sorcery. The session took place at night in the house of a certain Dona Plastina. The house was situated in a poor neighbourhood, with no illumination, no tram and where even cars did not risk traversing the shifting earth whitened by the sands of the dunes.

¹³ We reproduce Andrade’s notes on these two Masters in our “Brazil’s music of sorcery according to Mário de Andrade: an introduction by the editors” in this number of *Vibrant*”.

It is impossible to describe all that occurred during this preposterous ceremony, a mixture of sincerity and charlatanism, ridiculous, religious, comical, dramatic, unnerving, repugnant, yet extremely moving, all at the same time. And poetic. Today, now that the ridiculous things to which I subjected myself out of mere curiosity have passed by, that which I thought repugnant no longer lingers in my memory, and I feel overwhelmed only by the lyricism of the incessant songs, and more songs, that I heard.

Dona Plastina lived in a tiny house with a door and a window, a tiled roof with no ceiling, a floor of bricks and all very clean. The ceremony took place behind the house so as not to draw the attention of strangers, since no one can predict the noise that greets the arrival of the gods. Apart from this, the ceremony is woven out of songs that are quite distinct from profane ones. The room where the ceremonies are held is called “state” (*estado*) and when I was taken in, led by the two “material” Masters João and Manuel, the room was in total darkness. I was taken to a chair next to a table in one of the corners. After two little candles had been lit I was able bit by bit to distinguish things. Master João, a mulatto already getting on in years, was sitting on my right at the head of the table. Master Manuel, to my left, was Master João’s acolyte. In the shadows on the other side of the small room the ever-solicitous Dona Plastina and three other women reclined in silence. The table served as altar, and over the very clean white tablecloth lay the “princess”, a shallow bowl, that it is a kind of shrine for the ritual. Other ceremonial objects were placed upon it: pipes, a little wooden *maracá*, oil, holy water, and “*cauim*”. What they call *cauim* is sometimes a potion made from *jurema*. In fact I am not sure whether it is because it is disagreeable to drink or because of the difficulties of making it, but *jurema* is often substituted with *cachaça*. For the ritual Master João had taken off his jacket, with his shirtsleeves rolled up so that the *matter* of his arms might be most pure. The ritual began with songs and the ceremonies of invocation and exorcism. There is nothing noteworthy about the first songs. More often than not, they are rather vulgar, impregnated with the dizzy melodies of Brazilian Catholicism, or even usually profane songs with a vague symbolism that might be relevant to the ceremony. So, for example, in Paraíba, where the Master is also called “major for the day”, one of the opening songs begins with the words “I am a cavalry soldier”, and it sounds like a simple military march. Other songs of the opening ceremony are definitely choreographic with nothing particularly religious about them. In this overture, Master João invoked an abundance of Catholic saints, Saint Joseph, Saint Benedict and Saint Lucy, at whose name Master João made rattling crosses over his eyes with the *maracá*, asking her for the gift of seeing into the future. The use of the *maracá* here clearly signifies exorcism. Curt Sachs (1929, p. 2 and following) observes that to primitive people “the musical instrument, as a cult object, has no aesthetic importance. It has to act not as a medium for proportioning artistic pleasure, but as an appeal to the conservative forces of life, or to banish destructive forces. The instrument bursts, snaps, moos, hisses, whistles, snarls. There is no attempt to extract sounds in the musical sense. On the contrary, this kind of sound is avoided. Because men suffer feelings of horror when they hear certain natural noises, these may also serve to dispel evil powers”. According to Evans (“Religion Folklore and Custom in North Borneo and the Malay”)¹⁴, the people of Borneo use a percussion orchestra of gongs, drums and a kind of marimba. Frazer (1924, Chapter 56) gives numerous examples that show the use of such instruments for exorcism in some ancient civilizations. Ululations, screams, whistles, in other words, vocal emissions, may also be used to dispel evil spirits. Also in Paraíba, a song at the opening of the session ends in a whistle that starts on a high note and then descends in a glissando as low as possible. And in the ceremonies that follow, the Master pretends to grab a part of the smoke from previous incense purifications still in the air, throwing it back into space and curses:

¹⁴ Alvarenga tells us that she could not find this book in Andrade’s library (Andrade, 1983, p. 275).

- Go to the ends of hell! May Lucifer keep you company. The instruments of percussion, zabumbas, atabaques, *recos*, maracás and *cheques*, with their various noises and snores are ideal for these exorcisms. The atabaque is the most common instrument in the *macumba* of Rio de Janeiro. The individual who plays it is called *ogan* and is considered an authority, in the same way that in ancient Egypt, special mention was made of the crotalo players of the goddess Hator (Lavignac 1913, vol. I, p. 5). It is by the way interesting to recall that Mello Moraes Filho (date not identified, p. 340 and p. 373), in his description of the coronation of a Black king in Rio de Janeiro in 1748, listing the African instruments, he includes the “deafening rolling of the war drums, and the sounds of *rapa* (a scratching sound) of the numerous *macumbas*. One infers from this that the *macumba* was originally a black percussion instrument that worked on the same principle as the *reco-reco*. We have already seen that drums from Mina and a *ganzá* (kind of rattle) are present in *pajelança*. In *catimbó*, Câmara Cascudo (Revista Movimento Brasileiro, março de 1920) agrees with what I observed when he writes that “in some [catimbós] the atabaque is not used. They sing rhythmically with small maracás”. Among the Indians, the *maracá* is used systematically as an instrument of exorcism by the Caraiabas in their curing ceremonies since they consider that sickness is an evil spirit that has entered the sick person and that it must be expelled. In profane and sacred *candomblés* the principal instrument is the drum, whether a *batuque*, *batucajé* or *zabumba* as reported in the Brazilian Xavier Marques¹⁵ and the Argentinian Victor Gálvez (Vega, op. cit.). In the case of Bahian sorcery, Nina Rodrigues (1900, p. 58) lists five kinds of drums (*atabaques*) and four instruments that are similar to the *maracás*, except that instead of the little stones within, they have necklaces of glass marbles on the outside. It is interesting to recall that in the religious ceremony founded by Master Quiou at Serra do Rodeador in 1819, after praying and singing all the men leave the chapel firing their guns into the air. Pereira da Costa’s (op. cit., p. 34) superficial explanation is that this announces “the end of spiritual practices.” He was certainly influenced by the Catholic custom of ending certain religious feasts with the explosion of fireworks. In point of fact in urban Catholicism rockets signal the end of religious rites, yet in the case of both Catholic rockets and the shotguns of Pernambuco the idea persists that mortifying percussion exorcises demons. In effect, the mortifying effect of percussion is recognised by Saint Gregory himself (Oxford History of Music, vol. extra, p. 187)¹⁶ who interprets the sound of the tymbal “quia praedicant mortificationem carnis.”

But while percussion is interpreted as exorcism, wind instruments are always linked to invocation. I know of no wind instrument in our sorcery ceremonies, but the horn or the sea cowries utilised in our seas and on the ships of the river São Francisco (Oliveira, 1931, p. 24,99 and 139) were generally recognised as having the function of calling up the forces of the wind. Also the bagpipe is used for snake charming (Irajá, 1932, p. 152). It is interesting to observe that ophiolatry is as you might say universal. The Natchez of North America chose to worship the rattlesnake (Tylor, 1920, vol. 2, p. 312 and p. 313), the rattlesnake of the rattle as I heard in all its redundancy as a child. It would seem that the choice of snakes for deification was because of the noises they make. In effect, it is not rare for an instrument in itself to be taken for a deity and Léry (Tylor, op. cit. vol. 2, p. 201) asserts that the rattle was treated as a god by our *pajés*.

Master João continued to draw crosses over everything with the monotonous clicking of his rattle, blessing the princess and other signs, always with the intention of exorcising, for, as he told me later, they were gestures of purification. In its turn, the rattle defined the rhythm of the new songs that were to summon up the Masters from the spiritual world. As each song was sung, a huge cabalistic gesture was drawn in the air with the rattling of the mystical instrument and the deep refrain, shouted in a very rhythmic *parlato* by the two sorcerers: “Aiiiii... I Trumped [*trunfei*]... Trump riá...”. My collaborators

¹⁵ This reference was not found by Alvarenga in Andrade’s library.

¹⁶ This reference was not found by Alvarenga in Andrade’s library.

constantly used the verb “trunfar”.¹⁷ As far I could understand this was a very natural contamination of the verb to triumph (*trunfar*) with the verb *trunfar* which is used in card games and means to trump. Such games of chance and the *jogo do bicho* (numbers game) are a virtual obsession among the people of the Northeast. I brought with me one of the many variants of the Prayer to the Black Snake (*Oração da Cobra Preta*) which is guaranteed to bring luck in the numbers game. On the other hand, a pack of cards is so much appreciated in the Northeast that one of the most popular *sambas* played throughout the region is “Coconut of my Pack of Cards, Two of Hearts”. (*Coco do Meu Baralho, Dois de Ouros*). So, in a somewhat confused way the sorcerers conjured the importance of *trunfo* (trump) and *trunfar* (triumph) over the reluctant gods they invoked and who still refused to deign to come down among us, marking the rhythm in this way: “Aiiiii!... I have trumped! Trump! Trump riá!”.

The rhythm of this refrain, the monotony of the slow songs, and the soft clatter of the *maracás* now began to make me drowsy, the music enthralled me. Bit by bit, my body warmed to the numbing musicality while gradually my intellectual resistance wavered. Master João himself seemed to weaken also, his movements becoming more and more slovenly and his diction less clear as his voice thickened the syllables. Meanwhile, his assistant redoubled his ardour. I thought that Master João’s behaviour signalled some kind of despondency, because of the repetition of the songs of invocation, changing their direction as they appealed to one or other of the gods, because the endless libations had all but exhausted the pot of *cauim*.¹⁸ But what I thought was the despondency of the head sorcerer was in fact almost a state of hypnosis, due largely to the excess of numbing music and the monotony of the rhythms that were beaten and repeated with maniacal insistence.

And this is exactly the destiny of music that has become an inseparable companion of sorcery: its hypnotic force. Mainly through its performance with an excessive emphasis on rhythm, the music has a powerful influence over one’s body, drugging, having a Dionysian effect, so that it makes our body weak and out of control and our spirit quarrelsome, as if in a violent state of fury. Saint Augustine explained that the allelulatic tones of the Gregorian chant were moments when the soul, freed from its terrestrial prison, could sing with no words, no consciousness, foolish, dizzy with jubilation in contact with the Lord.

The main feature of this power of music is not exactly its sound, but its rhythm. One of the most interesting psychologists from the Nancy school, Paul Souriau, asserts that works of art exert an hypnotic and suggestive influence in the truly technical meaning of these words, and that this is mainly a result of rhythm (Baudoin, 1929, p. 197).

In our music of sorcery, I distinguish three ways of using rhythm. In sorcery of immediate African origin the violence of an insistent rhythm is preponderant. A short rhythmic motif is repeated hundreds of times in order to provoke obsession. The songs become eminently choreographic and are indeed generally accompanied by dancing. But the dance also brings about dizziness, which is why it is also utilised by all religions. Not even the most elevated Catholic religion escapes this... The so-called Dance Macabre, which Liszt and Saint-Saëns have left us are obvious examples. While these days it is associated with superstition and magic, it was originally a religious dance, which was performed in Catholic temples until the XV century. It was at first the Dance of Maccabees, *Chorea Macchabocorum*. Basically mimetic, it reproduced the resurrection of the dead, as told by Judas Macabeus (Tylor, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 460) about his soldiers who had died in combat. The mimetic choreography persists above all in propitiatory ceremonies. Such a dance imitates the life of a god, as in the primitive Greek dithyramb, or an animal from which the tribe believes

¹⁷ Alvarenga (Andrade, 1983, p. 65) provides the rest of this sentence. “My collaborators constantly used the verb “trunfar” not only during the ceremony but also in the songs they sung for me previously so that I could write them down.”

¹⁸ For a detailed description of this process, see Andrade, 1983, p. 65/66, note 32.

it descends. The *Canidé-Iune*,¹⁹ song of the *canindé* macaw, was probably once a choreographic totemic song. Until very recently, a survival of the ophilatric *Dança da Caninana* that remained extant in Brazil. In it, a water snake was symbolised by a vine placed in the centre of the ring of dancers.

One might also detect the survival of some kind of totemism among the *filhos de santo* of the *macumbas* and *candomblés*. Sons of Shango, for example, are sons of thunder. I didn't find any such totemic survivals in *catimbó*. And it may have been the abandoning of the pre-logical traditions of worshipping thunder and meteorites, becoming their sons, that led the sorcery of *macumba* to identify Shangos and Oguns with Catholic saints. For the mentality of urban blacks, that could not be described as exactly primitive, being the sons of Saint George or of Our Lady would be easier to comprehend... The choreographic ecstasies of the blacks of *candomblé* provoked truly choreiform epidemics in Bahia (Rodrigues, 1900, p.100 and following). In the great annual *candomblé* festivities that last for days, a considerable amount of time is spent in profane dances, simple *sambas* in the shade of the trees. But there are also religious dances which take place indoors. "These are organised according to the hierarchy of the saints and of the sorcerers, and are almost always initiated by some *pai de terreiro*, who is venerated for his knowledge of sorcery or on account of his age. Or, even because he is a visitor. The dances are not always for one person; in the middle of the circle formed by the spectators, many *filhas de santo* move around, with a wonderful swinging and swaying of their bodies, following the rhythm of the *batucajé* by lowering and raising their arms, while their forearms remain half flexed. This choreography is so typical of religious dancing that one can find it in all kinds of dance and it is frequently performed by many of the spectators who follow probably involuntarily the various developments of the dance. With the excitement that all this produces, one or another of the *filhas de santo* may leave the group of dancers to kiss and honour the *mãe de terreiro* and other dignitaries without, however, losing the rhythm of their movements nor the beat of the music" (Rodrigues, op. cit, p. 124).²⁰ Those who have watched a North-eastern *maracatu* will have seen how correct was Nina Rodrigues' observation on the transposition of this ceremonial choreography even to profane dances. One of the *maracatus* that I saw in Pernambuco followed exactly the choreography described by Nina Rodrigues. And, moreover, the North-eastern *maracatus* always carry a fetish that is brought by one of the important members of the group. This fetish is a richly dressed doll, carrying the name "doll" (*boneca*). Nina Rodrigues doesn't mention the existence of this doll in the Bahian *candomblé*, but Fernando Ortiz (op. cit.) tells of it in the sorceries of Cuba.²¹

As I was saying, the musics of Afro-Brazilian sorcery are not only strongly rhythmic but also decidedly choreographic in nature. This is one of their distinctive qualities. In *catimbó*, melodies called "lines" (*linhas*) and not points (*pontos*) as in *macumba*, are rarely accompanied by dancing. Indeed, dancing is rare in sessions of *catimbó*, and none took place during the ceremony I subjected myself to, and my collaborators only mentioned that Master Joaquim appeared dancing. In general the lines have a very free rhythm, legitimate recitatives. The Pernambucan line of the Enchanted Queen is an example of this free rhythm, more characteristic of the lines of *catimbó*. These free rhythms, with a slow beat, are eminently dubious, as you might say. They seem to be particularly indecisive, vague, quarrelsome—which is more in line with the psychic state proper to the manifestations of low spiritism. The famous song of Shango in the *macumba* of Rio de Janeiro, now known everywhere in Vila-Lobos' version, and also arranged by Luciano Gallet who

19 *Canidé-Iune* is also the subject of a short article on Brazilian folklore published on May 25, 1944, in the series "From my Diary" in the São Paulo newspaper *Folha da Manhã*.

20 Mario de Andrade translates this passage from the French version of Rodrigues' description and analysis of the Bahian *candomblé* (Rodrigues 1900).

21 Author's note: See my study of Calunga in "Danças-Dramáticas do Brasil, estudo "O Maracatu," or in "Estudos Afro-Brasileiros - Trabalhos apresentados ao 10th. Congresso Afro-Brasileiro reunido no Recife, 1934". Editors' note: This text was published posthumously by Alvarenga in the second volume of *Danças dramáticas no Brasil* (Andrade, Mário. 1982. Second Volume, p. 137-154).

was assisted by a well-known *macumbeiro*, is also built on a free rhythm.²² Even so, it is incisively rhythmic. Such songs, built on a free but incisive rhythm, are frequent in Afro-Brazilian sorcery if we are to judge from the remarks of a celebrated flautist who was once an *ogã* of *macumba*.²³ It happens, he told me, that sometimes a person into whom a saint has entered, becomes so possessed that he intones a new melody. Even though he knew our music pretty well, he told me of one song whose drum beat he had difficulty in following and which he found impossible to transcribe. Incisive rhythm is another characteristic of the musics of Afro-Brazilian sorcery. In the *catimbós*, one or other dematerialized Master is black, such as Master Joaquim, who very much enjoys working “on the left” (doing evil). It is significant, therefore, that it was exactly the line of Pai Joaquim that was the most incisively rhythmic of all the 40 *catimbó* melodies that I collected.²⁴ It is, furthermore, characteristically choreographic. And the fact is that one of Pai Joaquim’s qualities is to appear dancing in the sessions.

Apart from these two eminently hypnotic rhythms, the one with strong beats and the one with freer ones, I mention yet another, more or less intermediary between these two. In this one, slight accelerations in the beat are occasionally introduced within the dominant rhythm. This has the perturbing effect of displacing accents and bar lines. This subtlety is characteristic of the songs for Father Joaquim. With their choreographic bent, these songs go along at a 2/4 rhythm for eight bars and then, as they begin the second series of 8 bars, a fixed and purposeful extension of metric verse and timing creates a sudden ternary rhythm, shocking, unexpected, profoundly bewildering, and which never again reappears. This is in effect a very frequent occurrence in our rural choreographies. We transcribe them in binary form because of the accents and the shaping of the bars. But the ordinary person does not use our misleading rhythmic system that forces us to begin with the multiple to reach the unit. He employs the wise and logical principle of starting from the unit to reach the multiple, as the Greeks did. And this allows him a wealth of rhythms. If he has one more word, if he needs to breathe, if the melodic fantasy comes to him, he simply inserts the word, breathes or vocalises as he wishes, adding one more beat and moving the accent. In truth, the only legitimate bar that our people make use of for dancing is a unitary one.²⁵

A noteworthy *macumba* song admirably displays this rhythmic liberty; its melodic line oscillates and bewilders. It is the *ponto de Ogun* (Odeon 10690).²⁶ The rhythm is created furtively and presents a series of two ternary bars followed always by a binary one.

But this quality is still not the most admirable aspect of the *ponto* for Ogun. The hypnotic force of the music is truly much appreciated by the people. It comes into being through a very curious process, a veritable compromise between rhythm and harmony. The rhythm does not end at the same time as the melody. This makes us begin the song again so that it can reach its final tonal development. One might say that in music the Brazilian people have invented perpetual motion... Let me explain; in any given text,

22 According to Flávia Toni, this was the song for Shango transcribed by Villa-Lobos in 1927 and, in the following year by Luciano Gallet, both for voice and piano. Later, Villa-Lobos arranged it for choir. Elsie Houston Péret (1903-1943) provided both these musicians with the original song. Born in Rio de Janeiro, she was a soprano singer who had studied classical music in Europe. She sang as soloist in Villa-Lobos’ Paris concerts in 1927 and became widely appreciated for disseminating a considerable repertoire of Brazilian popular songs.

23 This celebrated flautist is Alfredo da Rocha Vianna, Jr., better known as Pixinguinha (April 23, 1897 – February 7, 1973), who was also a well known composer, arranger, flautist and saxophonist born in Rio de Janeiro. The written testimony of the “Macumba ceremonies” written by Pixinguinha at Andrade’s request is transcribed by Alvarenga in Andrade, 1983, p. 154-156).

24 Alvarenga (Andrade, 1983, pp.71-100) brought together in the second appendix 44 songs of *catimbó* collected and transcribed by Mário de Andrade. Thirty were collected in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte; fourteen in Paraíba and Recife, Pernambuco.

25 In Portuguese, Mario de Andrade wrote: “Compasso unário”. This term seems to be idiosyncratic, since we have been unable to find any reference to a “unitary bar”. We are grateful to Carlos Sandroni and to Michael Iyanaga who helped us with the translation of the musical terms used by Andrade in this and in the next two paragraphs.

26 For the sake of clarity we added to the text the catalogue number of the recordings which were not provided by Andrade himself (See the IEB Archives, and Toni, 2003). In this recording (Odeon 10690), the song is called *Canto de Ogun* (Song for Ogun). The performers are Elói Antero Dias, Getúlio Marinho (also called “Amor”) and the Conjunto Africano. This song, like the *ponto* for Yansan cited at the end of the next paragraph may be heard on: <http://www.goma-laca.com/portfolio/as-mais-antigas-gravacoes-de-temas-afrobrasilieiros>.

a rhythm of an exclusively musical order is established. It usually consists of the repetition of one or more rhythmic motifs. Grouped together by the accents these repetitions fix the binary nature of the rhythm and the strophic framing of the melody. Thus, when the text reaches its final point, the rhythm of the melody also reaches its final point. This brings about a sensation of restfulness that not only permits, but actually provokes the end of the singing. But it so happens that the harmonic development of the melody, when text and rhythm reach their conclusions, is not based on the tonal triad, but on one of the passing notes of the scale, thus producing a dissonant chord. If the melody had been also in the tonic or the third note in the scale, the sensation of restfulness, of finalization, would be complete and would result in a cessation of the repetition. But what the Brazilian psyche desires is repetition, innumerable repetitions that hypnotise or intoxicate, and for this reason, as text and rhythm end, the melody is at the leading note, at the second step, on the fourth, in general provoking precisely the chord of the seventh-dominant, that makes it necessary to continue with at least one last note. But for this note to be played, one has to begin the text and the rhythm again, and once they have begun it is absolutely necessary to go again to the end of both of them. But on reaching the end, the tonal development of the melody compels one to begin yet again. And this leads to the unending multiplication of the short phrase of the singing, and enhances, thus, physio-psychically speaking, all its hypnotic power. Also, the *ponto* for Yansan (Odeon, 10679) uses this process of intoxication through music. In the *ponto* for Ogun (Odeon 10690),²⁷ the rhythmic and tonal compromise which I have mentioned was interestingly established through a *neume* refrain “aê”, that is sung with a leap, leading from the second to the fourth grade and fixing the seventh of the dominant chord.

The *ponto* for Ogun has yet another interesting characteristic: the use of the principle of variation such as is used by singers throughout Brazil, principally in the *cocos* of North-eastern festivities. The concept of variation changes considerably over time, yet this is positively not the place for me to explain their diverse modalities, from the bass grounds of the virginal players to the symphonic variations of our time. Our people follow a process, which is not all that different from the one made popular by Grieg, in which in the repetition of a motif, or part of a phrase, the presentation can be slightly modified by the addition of a note or by a change in rhythm. In Brazil, the process of variation consists in the repetition of the melody, in changing two or three notes, or, because of the accentuations of the words of the text, altering the position of an accent. This process, that clearly began with lapses of memory, is nowadays practised systematically. In the *emboladas* that vary over the refrain, such variation may be truly beautiful. In general such variation is purposefully mediocre involving the change of a few notes, the moving of only one accent. In the *Congadas*, *Moçambiques* and the sambas of rural blacks or of the peasant immigrants of São Paulo, the phrases of the recitative between the dances are purposefully performed with such glissandi and portamenti with such prodigious melodic indecision that it is not possible to transcribe them. In fact the impression one has is that there is a theme, exclusively virtual, which is therefore impossible to determine with exactness, over which the singers always introduce quartertones, voluntary dissonance, indiscernible nasalization, with vocal *portamenti*. All of this, because it is so rudimentary, leaving the singer and the listeners in amazing indecision, totally disoriented and dizzy: because this is really the way in which the hypnotic power of music is made stronger and more efficacious. So, I insist on the hypnotic quality, which is sought by our popular music. Our people in various genres and forms of their principally rural music, *cocos*, *sambas*, *modas*, *cururus*, etc., aim for sonorous intoxication. Our people often use music not only for sorcery but in profane songs, especially choreographed, as a legitimate narcotic. In the same way as

27 As we have already pointed out, this *ponto* for Ogun is called on the recording “Canto de Ogun” (“Song for Ogun”) (Odeon 10690). The recording Odeon 10679 that contains the *ponto* for Yansan here mentioned by Andrade also contains another *ponto* for Ogun. All the songs mentioned by Andrade in the conference can be heard in the IEB’s archives. The Song for Eshu (Canto para Exu) and the Song for Ogun (Canto para Ogun) (Odeon 10690) e the *Ponto* for Yansan e the *Ponto* for Ogun (Odeon 10679) can be heard on line: <http://www.goma-laca.com/portfolio/as-mais-antigas-gravacoes-de-temas-afrobrasilieiros>. The performers are Elói Antero Dias, Getúlio Marinho and the Conjunto Africano, the recordings were made in 1930.

Huitota, or the grandson of the dethroned Inca always has coca leaves in his mouth, so the Brazilian man brings in his mouth the melody he dances that numbs and stupefies his entire being. Such music and dance is not only a form of an individual's sexual evasion or an expression of the social interests of a group. It stupefies, it brings about numbness and drunkenness which provoke, beyond fatigue, a temporary, or even permanent, onsumption, ah such lassitude!....²⁸

That is how one should observe the *ponto* for Ogun (Odeon 10690) which is nothing more than a single rhythmically indecisive melodic phrase, that can be intoned by a soloist with a different text each time, and repeated in response by the chorus, always with the same text-refrain "Oh êh Umbanda cagira-gira angulá". At the end of the phrase in C major which ends in the median, the rhythmic and tonal development terminates with the *neume* refrain "aê" the ascending interval D-F, fixing the dissonant chord and forcing the phrase to start again. This phrase begins again with the soloist's variation, a very slight variation, but sought after consciously and which exactly for being minimal establishes a hypnotic oscillation. It is possible that in a poorly recorded disc of bad singers this piece will not appear beautiful in the sense of an "e-lucevan-lestelle" of musical excellence,²⁹ but this *ponto* for Ogun is really a precious document, a masterpiece of originality, of Afro-Brazilian style and at the same time the prototype of the music of magic.

And it is its formidable hypnotic value that links together all music, from the most distant past that our knowledge can reach to the invocation, propitiation and the exorcism of supernatural forces. Music of sorcery and magical acts are not employed only as a means through which men may please the divinity; they enable men to enter into contact with the divinity, exercising almost the role of a spirit medium. And, more than this, they are considered as a generous, liturgical entity that has the eucharistic function of putting the individual into ecstasy, in communion with his god. So, if we manage to think, not with our own minds, but with the primitive mentality as conceived by Lévy-Bruhl, it becomes clear that the primary conception of music is perfectly consequent and coherent. Music is an occult force, incomprehensible by itself. It does not touch in any way our intellectual comprehension, such as do gestures, a line, a word and the volume in other arts. On the other hand it socialises more and is dynamic, the most dionysian and hypnotic, especially in its primary forms where rhythm predominates. Thus, music is terrible, incredibly strong and most mysterious. Yet it is also divine and unhuman, it is daimoniactal, and truly demoniactal in the sense that the gods created by primitive peoples are more evil than good. This is why music is identified with demons; it is not an art, it is not an element of pleasure, it is not an immediately unnecessary function because it is difficult to prove that primitive man (like ordinary people as well) could conceive the beauty of sound, as he clearly conceived of the beauty of colour and form. For all these reasons, no one considers music as a human creation. There is a quasi unanimity among the primitives and Ancients in attributing the invention of musical arts to the gods.³⁰ Among the Aztecs, Xochipilli is the god of music. But it was Texcatlipoca who threw a bridge between the earth and the sky to come and teach music to men (Combarieu, 1913). In India, it was the goddess Saravasti, the wife of Brahma, who invented

28 This phrase is a direct quotation from Mário de Andrade's novel "Macunaíma, hero with no character", published in 1928. As Macunaíma emerges from his mother's womb he immediately utters this expletive: "Ai! que preguiça!" (Andrade, 1928). It is perhaps the most often repeated phrase of Brazilian literature. In the only English version of the book the translator, E. A. Goodland, outrageously translates it as: "Aw! What a fucking life!" But, as Albert Braz has correctly pointed out, "The problem with Goodland's choice is not so much that it is not a literal translation, or that it is unnecessarily vulgar, but that it does not capture the stereotypes about Brazilian or tropical "listlessness, laziness, and sloth" so clearly evoked by Andrade (Ribeiro, 1999-2000 p. 75). For one of the reasons Macunaíma lacks character, and thus is such a problematic national or regional hero, is that he is incorrigibly lazy. Indeed, not only does Andrade's "hero" not apply himself but he does not approve of anyone else who does" (Braz, 2007). Steven Evans, who is fluent in English and the Portuguese of Portugal and Brazil, tells us that in Brazilian Portuguese, *preguiça* is not just laziness; it is *deliberate* laziness, a conscious state of mind. Our translation is the nearest we could get to this notion.

29 "E lucevan le stelle" is an aria from the third act of *Tosca* which is part of the standard repertory of most tenors. Mário de Andrade is here, therefore, referring to famous and/or oft-repeated melodies. We are grateful to Flávia Toni for this information.

30 All the information mentioned in the next paragraphs on the invention of musical art was taken by Andrade from *Die Kunst der Naturvolker* and from *The Oxford History of Music*, neither of which were found by Alvarenga in Andrade's library (Andrade, 1983, p. 275).

music; the veena, the national musical instrument par excellence is the invention of the son of this couple, the god Nareda; the seven notes in the scale are the seven gods, and the sons of the gods preside over different systems. As if that were not enough, the ragas like the Egyptian Maneros, the Phrygian Linoi and the Greek Nomoi, were at the same time gods (less the Greek one) and cult melodies had stupendous magical powers, one had darkness cover the earth, another brought flames from the earth, and another brought rain. Apart from this, the strong superstition among us that it rains because someone sang comes from the almost universal tradition of the cult song *ad pretendam pluviam*. The Sumerian goddess who answers to the lovely name of Nina was a musician, and with her art she excited the gods and their brethren to work for the happiness of the people; and among the Sumerians, musician priests were always highly valued, forming a special class of singers. In Syria not only were cult leaders obligatorily musicians, but also small shameless bands of visionaries called “men of god”, true antecedents of *clerici vagantes* of the high Middle Ages, passed through the country making terrifying prophecies to the sound of lyres. Persia is the only amazing exception to this unanimity, for at sacrifices the playing of music was prohibited. The flute is a demonic instrument throughout oriental antiquity. The poem *Istar’s Descent to Hell* tells that the sound of a sacred flute had the power of raising the dead that they might breathe the odour of incenses. Istar himself likes his followers to call him “melodious twelve note flute”. This proves the existence of chromatic flutes in the Assyrian-Chaldean civilization, as was also the case for ancient Egypt. The only two autochthonous Japanese instruments, the yamatagoto and the iamoto-buê were invented when the goddess Ama-no-Uzume went to dance before the cave where the sun goddess hid because of her fury with her brother. In Phrygia, which had such an important influence over Greek music, we find an enormous mixture of musical practice and mythical explanation; the three musical geniuses are mythical, Olympus, Hiagnis and Marsyas. In Greece also, the divinities were present at the birth of music and came to teach the mortals. The Muses of the sacred groves of Boeotia and Thessaly presided over the arts. Among them, Euterpe, lady of instrumental music. Orpheus came down from the North and with his singing accompanied on the fragile strings of the lyre calmed anger and entertained. They say that he founded a school and that among his students were Eumolpus and Musaeus, as fabulous as he. Amphion had the walls of Thebes built through the magic of song. Thamyris, Chrysostemo, the sitar player, Olem the first to sing in epic rhymes, Philemon and Chrysostom, Lino and Phemius who sang at the triumphal return of Agamemnon, Kepion and Aristonicus, who came from various places, are still haunting names, the first artists to teach the Greeks the divine magic of music. Because music was divine, yes, and those who cultivated it such as Eumolpus, the fathers of the Eleusis and the *aoidoi* themselves. “Call the aoidos Demodocus divine, since a god gave him the wonderful song of ecstasy” is in Homer. Among the gods themselves we find the music played by Apollo and his phorminx, his son Linus who transmitted his musical knowledge to Hercules; and Marsyas — Pixinguinha³¹ among others crowned with laurels — who picked up the *aulos* that had been abandoned on the ground by Athene because when she played it, it deformed the perfection of her face. The lyre was discovered by Hermes with the shell of a tortoise, while his son Pan used the stems of bamboo canes to invent the Syrinx, the flute of many tubes, on the banks of the Ladão. The magical music of the spheres that lent such lyricism to the Egyptians was of concern to the Hebrews themselves as one can infer from the book of Job. While in Genesis [Genesis, IV, 21] there is mention that the most special distinction of Jubal, head of the race, was to invent the kinnor and the ugab, in Numbers [Numbers, X, 1-10] it is the very God of Israel who commands Moses to make silver trumpets and to give them liturgical functions when played by priests, the sons of Aaron.

31 This is Andrade’s way of saying that Marsyas was, like Pixinguinha, a great flautist. See note 23.

Now among the Indians of Brazil, even though there is no indication that music was a divine invention, it is easy enough to verify that it is constantly associated with supernatural forces. In Amazonian legends, the flute *membí* is held to greet and bring cheer. According to an absolutely universal tradition, The Amerindian *pajé* does not perform without singing. Among the techniques which Iara uses to kill the Indians, the most visibly magical is to appear singing. In the legends this animal or supernatural being appears singing, just like the agouti that sang “Acuti pita canhém”—which no one understands. There is, however, a Kaingang legend that definitively affirms the supernatural creation of music. Thus: after the great flood that killed off all life on Earth, the few Indians who survived decided to get together and marry one another. They wished to give a party to celebrate the event but they still didn’t know how to sing and dance. It so happened that the followers of a Caiurucré chief who were out hunting came across a small clearing around a tree trunk. Leaning against the trunk were small sticks with leaves on them and a special one with a gourd attached to one end. They soon went to tell of their find and the chief imagined what this must be. He hid near the tree trunk and waited. Soon after the sticks began to move as if dancing and a voice sang:

Eminotim vê
 É, ê, ê!
 Andó xó cá ê vô a,
 A, a, a!

The Caiurucré chief got closer to see who was singing but the song came to an end and the little sticks stilled as he approached them. On the following day the chief returned with all his retinue and this time they heard a different song. Because the song ceased if anyone got close, they gave up trying to find out what was happening. They took the little sticks to their house and memorized the song. When the main festivities began the chief of the Caiurucré held the stick with the gourd and began singing what he had seen and heard. His followers imitated him and so song and dance came about in the tribe. But who taught them?... One day the chief came across an anteater in the forest and raised his club to kill it. The *cacrequim*,³² however, stood on its hind feet and showed whom he was, dancing and singing, what the chief knew. So the Caiurucré chief realised that the teacher of singing and dancing to the Kaingang had been that anteater. Yes, an anteater, but only now, because of course the animal belonged to the first peoples of the Earth who, being old and very wise, had taken the form of animals.

So, if music is divine and comes from God who teaches it to man, it follows that it is imagined to have extra-physical qualities.³³ The most important of these is to attribute to it moral strength, that even among Christian peoples persists in the proverb that music softens customs. The Greeks strongly developed their concern with the moral influence of music. They called these moralizing musical forces *Ethos* so that each scale, rhythm and genre had its own particular ethos. In China, with a mixture of astrology, cosmology and philosophy, religious books take their concern with the moralizing force of music to absurd limits. The *Yô-Ki* for example, shows that there are “essential relations between psychological, social and political phenomena and sounds, instruments and songs.” In India each one of the ragas, has its own ethos. The ethical force of music was occasionally held to be so violent during Antiquity that Alexander the Great couldn’t hear the sounds of the Phrygian mode without rushing immediately to take up arms.

32 In the Summer Institute of Linguists’ *Dictionary of the Kaingang Language*, *kak~ekin* is defined as small anteater (*tamandua-mirim*) (Weissemann, 2011, p. 38). We are grateful to Flávio Wiik for this information.

33 As already mentioned on note 30, the information cited in the next paragraphs was extracted from *The Oxford History of Music*, which was not found by Alvarenga in Andrade’s library (Andrade, 1983, p. 275).

And Aristotle for his part wrote that certain melodies with flutes among the instruments had “the power to create ardent and passionate affects in the soul.” It is not just by chance that the sensuous minstrels of Brazil favour the transverse flute to warm up the dreams of their loved ones... The first leaders of the Christian church went so far as to legislate on the moral quality of chromatism, of the instruments, and of the enharmony. In the bull of 1322 Pope John XXII rules against the modernist speed of the church singers, affirming with astute analysis that this would “intoxicate the senses”. But there is no need for us to cite ancient dates for this matter, since in 1886, a report prepared by the Tokyo Institute of Music, suggests that popular Japanese music should not be part of the ethical and physical culture of the race because it remained “very immoral in its scales and operated against the moral and social wellbeing of the people”.

Another magical power of music is that of curing. That this it is one of its most generalised functions in sorcery is not totally incorrect. “There is nothing to surprise us, says Dr. Vergnes, that since music is a vibration of the ether it may bring about more or less profound changes in the cells of our organism.” The Malays beat their drums to cure smallpox. In the folk singing of our people, the Romance of the Horse, these magical curative properties of music are admirably made use of and even made fun of by the poor yet sharp musician who has a fiddle that can even raise Lazaruses from their tombs. Combarieu (op. cit.) brings together plenty of evidence of the therapeutic power of music among the primitives and ancients, and even Christian civilization, so naturalist and materialist, is far from abandoning this tradition.

In fact, one should not think that by paying such attention to primitive people, our own people in general, and in antiquity, I wish to free Christian civilization from musical superstition. Indeed, Christianity provides us with edifying examples... In his recent introductory volume to the Oxford History of Music,³⁴ Edward Dent devotes a fascinating chapter to the social aspects of music during the first ten centuries A.D. It is interesting, for example, to note that the philosophers of the Roman Empire always attributed a religious character to music exactly when it was passing through one of its periods of great moral decline, a decadent accompaniment to festivities and pantomimes. They again spoke of the “music of the spheres”, like the Assyrians, the Egyptians and even the Hebrews. Plotinus related music closely to magic and to prayer, although he recognised its sensual pleasure. Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus thought that music “was not an end in itself, nor the satisfaction of the senses, but exclusively a means for attaining divinity through a condition that they called *ecstasy* or enthusiasm”. Music was always understood to have a hypnotic quality... The priests of the primitive church inherited the doctrines of the pre-Christian philosophers, considering music to be the most important of the arts. Even so, they were doubtful about it... and while they permitted it in the cult “to avoid feminine chatter”, they later took it out of ceremonies for a time “because the women enjoyed themselves as if they were at the theatre”. It is interesting to relate this concern with keeping music away from women, pursued in Catholicism to this day, with the customs of natural religions that often make religious music, especially when instrumental, a very taboo for women. Roquette Pinto, for example, reports that the Amerindian women of Mato Grosso are prohibited from seeing or even hearing certain sacred instruments. Schmidt and Koppers, in their most interesting volume on the society and industry of diverse peoples, explain this musical taboo as belonging to the period of transition from the patriarchal civilizations of hunters and herders to the matriarchal period of agricultural peoples. The matriarchate put such emphasis on the predominance of women that men had to counteract feminine superiority by reserving religious practice for themselves only.

And while esotericism and magic nowadays derive their musical practices from the ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians and Chaldeans, the Christian religion itself has not escaped from such esotericism. The psaltery was explained as the representation of the body of Christ. The sitar was the cross or, better,

³⁴ See notes 30 and 33.

in the interpretation of Bishop Nicet, the very image of Christ, hence the power that it had over the devil, by which David was able to expel the Devil that possessed Saul's royal body. The tymbal was the chastisement of the flesh as I have shown in the phrase of Saint Gregory, and this can be included in analogical superstitions. But the trumpet, the Roman tibia were interpreted as the very word of God.

But what about the closing of my body!... As I was saying, Master João showed signs of a rude somnolence. As he napped, he sang along half-heartedly with Master Manuel who had more energy and an agreeable voice. In the end, Master João bent his head and started quietly murmuring undecipherable words, sitting all the while with his back against the wall. I perceived behind me the fearful chattering of the women. For his part, Master Manuel, was flustered, he fumigated the enfeebled leader of the session, and began the invocation to Manicoré, who is the highest god, "Master of Masters, the great *pajé*". I was at this stage entirely at the mercy of Master Manuel, above all because Manicoré was famous for his strength, and his song was impressively beautiful. There's nothing I can say. Master João suddenly gave out a sharp hiss, quivered until he was stiff, straight, his face entirely transformed, a truly hideous sight. I got quite a fright.

- God save you, Master! murmured the charlatan acolyte, dutifully trembling.

Master João, epileptic, a horrible thing that I had never seen before, stiff, trembling, with his hands contorted close to his chest. He did not reply.

- God save you, Master! God save you!

And then, Master João, replied to the greeting. He so slurred his syllables, that I had difficulty in understanding what he was saying. But the timbre of his voice was completely distinct from that of João himself with whom I had become familiar over the previous days. I confess that I was very much impressed. But Manuel continued:

- Who art thou, Master? Art thou the great Manicoré?

- A-gi-sssscé...

It was Agicé, twin brother of the great Amazonian *pajé*, who had arrived. He stayed for about five minutes replying wrongly to everything. He had no desire to begin the closing of my body, and I ended up furious with him. Suddenly he would not reply to any further questions. Master João oscillated, oscillated, lost his balance, and ended up hitting his head against the wall, pam! Agicé had left. The singing started again and one or another god was invoked. Propitiatory melodies followed, their words recalling the qualities and lives of the Masters of the nether world of spirits. Among them the song of Master Antonio Caboclinho was curious in the sense that it had been composed in a legitimate pentatonic scale.³⁵ This seems to me to be one of the characteristics of the music of sorcery of African origin. The pentatonic scale, at least, is a singular presence in Afro-Brazilian sorcery. Of the five themes of the Bahian *candomblé* published by Manuel Querino in the *Annals of the Geography Congress of Bahia* (Querino, 1916), two are pentatonic, the Mofi-la-dofê and the Iá-mim-ô-êjê. I myself have an unpublished song that opens a *macumba* ritual in Rio de Janeiro and which is also pentatonic. The *pontos* for Ogun and Eshu on a *Parlaphon* record, are decidedly pentatonic, even though the second of the two uses only 4 notes of the scale. In a fantastically pedantic record with comical yet delicious and novel orchestral effects, *Na Gruta o Feiticeiro* (In the Sorcerer's Grotto) (Victor 33572) the choral section of the melody is yet another example of this defective pentatonic scale. The heptatonic solo line is superimposed, probably as an individualistic invention, bearing no relationship to the chorus.

³⁵ Before this sentence, there is a long stretch in the article *Geografia Religiosa do Brasil* in which Andrade (1941) analyses the *catimbó* songs that he collected. See Alvarenga's note in Andrade, 1983, p. 68/69. See our introduction to this essay in this same number of *Vibrant*.

Another characteristic example can be found on the record *No Terreiro do Alibibi* (At Alibi's Terreiro),³⁶ a true recording victory for Victor (33586), perhaps the most perfect Brazilian recording on disk. I cannot flee from the pleasure of citing this marvel. The solo melody, of an extraordinary purity, enunciated first by a woman and then repeated by a man, is constructed on a scale with no semi-tones. Meanwhile, the choral movement, which follows with another melody, is composed entirely in E flat major and “samba-izes” the recording. I say “entirely” in terms, because, as is the custom in Brazil, the tonic note itself is absent. And on the melody line, the leading note gives way to our classical lowered seventh.³⁷

In the *catimbó*, where black influence is minimal, and where the music is more Brazilian, the pentatonic scale appears only once among the forty melodies that I have collected. All the others, even though with extremely deficient scales, employ the Major-Minor that is our destiny. But while in *macumba* the major key predominates totally as our tradition demands, it's worth noting that in the forty odd *catimbó* pieces I collected, the major key is hardly predominant. The *catimbó* melodies exhibit a great mixture of influences. Sorcery was more or less invented randomly by literate urban charlatans from vague memories, with no deep roots in any tradition, not even a racial one. It's correct to say that many of the pieces that I collected in Rio Grande do Norte and two or three in Pernambuco, are very beautiful, similar to one another, and show a subtle rhythmic and melodic originality. This sets them apart even in relation to North-eastern musicality as a whole; on the other hand, there is no doubt that the pieces collected in Paraíba and about ten of those that I brought from Natal, are of the most uninteresting urban vulgarity. Some of them are similar to the drivel of Catholic praise songs that virgins, children and pious women descant in Brazilian Portuguese; others are short and rather monotonous songs through which the city falsifies the hinterland; others imitate or plagiarise even blatantly the sickly tunes of the *modinhas*, such as the detestable *linha* of Mistress Iracema, apparently a very protective spirit, but who didn't know how to protect herself from the plagiarism of her melody, that purloins the most dreadful phrases from the horrid *Mimosa* composed by Leopoldo Froes.³⁸ Maybe it is from this detestable urbanism that the minor mode appears in such abundance in the *catimbó*, so that it challenges the ubiquity of the major key in Brazil.

Apart from this, it is more than likely that what goes on in *catimbó*, is the same as we find in the *linhas de mesa* in Rio de Janeiro, the *candomblés de caboclo* in Bahia and *macumba* itself. So, just as the bodily Masters in each *catimbó* (*zungu*) has his own gods that make up a holy army that are greater in number than the eleven thousand virgins, it is more than probable that each religious group, each sorcerer, each Master, *pajé*, or *pai de santo* has his own melodies and even his own melodic system. In effect, while the *pontos de macumba* that have been revealed or even composed by Getúlio Marinho for the Odeon recordings, have the air of belonging to the same family,³⁹ this is also the case for recordings of João Carvalho and Gastão Viana at the Victor recording studio. But the kinship of the latter with the former is very slight or even non-existent. On the other hand, Brazilian discography itself shows that each god is propitiated by a different melody in one or another *terreiro*. The *pontos* for Eshu and Ogun sung by Elói Antero Dias (Odeon 10690),⁴⁰ are totally different from those sung by Felipe Neri Conceição (Parlaphon 13254). Yet there are traditional pieces. The song “Lá vai o sol e vem a lua” (There goes the Sun as the Moon rises”) which I transcribed

36 This song can also be heard at <http://www.goma-laca.com/portfolio/as-mais-antigas-gravacoes-de-temas-afrobrasilieiros>.

37 Andrade identified the lowered seventh as a constant feature of Brazilian popular music. We are grateful to Maurício Hoelz who helped understand this point, providing us with contemporary musical examples.

38 This song was composed by Leopoldo Fróes in 1922. A more or less contemporary recording of it can be heard at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICd6gSJB-8c>

39 The author refers to Odeon 10679 and Odeon 10690. See note 27.

40 As we have already observed, all the songs cited by Andrade are digitalized and can be found at the IEB Archives.

about eight years ago is only a small variant of a piece by Vila Lobos, and it was also recorded on the Victor label. Also within *catimbó*, certain melodies have spread widely, such as, for example the song for Tamandaré and especially the one for Master Carlos of which I collected identical versions in the three North-eastern states.

What is more likely is that the melodies of Brazilian sorcery are rarely what we scientifically call traditional or folkloric, even those that seem to be closely redolent of Africa.⁴¹ While some pieces have become widespread such as “Lá vai o Sol” (Victor, 33420)⁴² from *macumba* or the *linha* of Master Carlos of *catimbó*, this is not because they are what we may call traditional songs. The enormous popularity of the very likeable child spirit, Master Carlos, who works only for good, meant that only one of his songs could have spread widely quite recently, although we don’t know exactly when. This melody has become so popular in the Northeast that some of its phrases have become almost clichés of North-eastern music. These phrases appear in one of the most beautiful popular recordings we possess, the “Guriatã do Coqueiro” (Odeon 3671).

While Master Carlos is truly extremely popular in the Northeast, the Yoruba gods Shango, Ogun, Yemanjá, etc. in the areas of *candomblé*, *macumba*, and *pajelança* are no less so. Why do the melodies for the Yoruba gods differ so much within the same city? In my opinion, it is because they are still excessively African, and with texts that don’t appeal to popular taste that demands that songs be comprehensible so that all can sing them. While the incomprehensible song sung by a *pajé*, a *catimbozeiro* or a *mãe de santo* is what enchants and hypnotises the people, it is also the case that people have to understand something of the lyrics to be able to sing them. And not only this: they must also have an understanding of the music, its harmony and rhythm, and the sonorous arabesques that they can easily recognise, memorise so that they become familiar. A passage from *Il Guarani*,⁴³ a fox-trot, a tango or Neapolitan song are far more likely to be familiar to the Brazilian people and therefore recognised and traditionalised than a song for Shango or the pentatonic Mofi-la-dofé. This is because *Il Guarani* and the fox-trotters of the world have the same scales as those of our people, the same C Major and the same European or even American rhythms with which we were brought up and which move us. Our truly traditional melodies may be beautiful, but they are beautiful already from a European or Brazilian standpoint. The very original kinds of music that appear here and there in our perilously huge country, strange scales, the hypolidian mode, very odd rhythms, bars with seven or nine beats, arabesques redolent of Sweden and the Inca, are generally vague survivals of indiscernible traditions. They may also arise from individual idiosyncrasy. And when all these rarities become traditional, they are restricted to a very small region. I think that the songs for Master Carlos or the “Lá vai o Sol” would never have become traditionalised if they contained the strong Africanism of the song for Ogun or the scale of Master Pequeno.

And since Master Pequeno didn’t want to descend from his immaterial world, it was the mulatto João who went into trance and sang the song of Xaramundi lustily. And it was Xaramundi, the famous Indian chief, vengeful, defender, healer and cleanser who came among us. Master Xaramundi was good to me. He agreed to open the session and start closing my incorrigible body. It was the most painful moment of the ceremony. As I have stated, Xaramundi cleanses matter. He couldn’t discover that I was there through

41 Alvarenga [Andrade, 1983, p. 69] transcribes Andrade’s hand written observation on the back of the type-written version of the lecture: “I’m pretty sure that the ‘strangeness’ of Afro-Brazilian religious music in *macumba* and *catimbó* is a case of the differentiation of particular ‘castes’ or ‘groups’. At least partially so. This music resists becoming part of Brazilian popular music as a whole, and, at the same time has not become totally assimilated to the Afro-Black music [música afro-negra] we know. This is because, although it is because—although parting from such music—it has made use of difference as a sociological element of differentiation and the maintenance of distance. Through the music of *macumba* the babalorishas and their followers have kept themselves intangible, different and ‘divine’. This problem deserves closer study.”

42 The song is in fact called “E vem o sol”.

43 Andrade refers to the opera *Il Guarani* composed by Carlos Gomes (1836-1896).

simple ethnographic curiosity, but obviously thinking that being a person from São Paulo and a citizen of this Republic, I would be dirty (meaning being impure and a sinner), he dripped some hot wax on my hands so that through this simple symbolism I might suffer a slight burning of the purgatorial fires and be wholly cleansed. But that was not all! My body must have been tremendously dirty, because Xaramundi, now on foot, held upright by Manuel and Dona Plastina, sniffed the ends of my fingers, gave a look of disgust that after leaving me divinely downtrodden he then began a more energetic purification. Happily, as is also the case in *macumba* rituals, sacrifices of purification or punishment are determined by the spiritual entity on the body into which the she/he has entered. Xaramundi extended his stiffened right arm, and gave himself (the poor João) a tremendous punch. I was horrified. And my matter was so impure, my goodness gracious, that the punching continued with the same intensity. At the third punch João the mulatto's face was totally red. Master Manuel counted the punches, twenty-one of them, implacable, the last one as strong as the first, without mystification. Examining my matter being cleansed so nearby, I was revolted. Then, I felt sorry for him, and finally lost the composure of the neophyte. Nothing was cleansed! Xaramundi made the sign of the cross with oil on my hands, my forehead and neck, sniffed me again, didn't like it, didn't like me, and went away. Master João, always with the stiffness of an epileptic, fell like a piece of wood. Pow! He hit the corner of the tiny room and rolled onto the floor. Pam! Dona Plastina calmed me down:

- Don't worry yourself, doctor! That's the way it always is.

And that's exactly as it was. The fallings over, the songs and the sacrifices continued. The gods came and went away without wishing to close my so impure body. The savage king Eron arrived. Not only a practicing Catholic, he was also a contumacious proselytizer and teacher of doctrine. He won fame in Natal when he cured a lady whose right leg was just one pullulating sore. Not even the doctor had been able to treat the poor lady. King Eron entered into the body of the material Master and soon set off poking his nose into the wound. And he went on rubbing the sore with his face and hair with such force that when he had finished he was unrecognizable and absolutely disgusting. When King Eron left, the poor sorcerer just couldn't deal with the nauseous smell and fainted. They washed his hair with cane spirit. He came back to his senses but never again forgot the torture he had been through. The fact is that the woman soon began to get better and better. By 1929, as far as I know, she was still living gently and honestly in the suburb of Alecrim, nearby Camara Cascudo's family, my ever-kindly hosts in Natal. King Eron specializes in the cure of leprosy and other intractable wounds. Luckily for me, he departed. But others followed. Queen Jurema and Manicoré, and the enchanting Mistress Angelica, marriage broker and healer of quarrelling couples. I do believe that Master João was sincere. Manuel not so. He was an accomplished farceur, a cynical and turbulent charlatan. The gods that entered his body were badly performed, they always seemed to be trying to fall down, and after the first one, no less than Felipe Camarão appeared, but I believe that he hurt himself as he rolled over some embers stacked in a corner of the room. After that episode, Manuel fell down with greater caution.

In the end, in came the compliant Master Carlos whom I had liked ever since my journey to Pernambuco. Between making interminable signs of the cross and sending clouds of incense over my body with my feet in a basin of water symbolizing the sea, he finally closed my body with the help of Nanã-Giê whom he sang to invoke, since he himself had no control over the evils of the water. And so it was that I left Dona Plastina's little house, feeling somewhat lyrical and with an urge to laugh, stepping over the shifting sand in search of a motorcar that awaited me in the distance on terra firma. The darkness was total because the moon had gone away to rest. But nothing happened to me. I found the car quite easily and it took me

back to my friends who were waiting for me somewhat apprehensively. I didn't slip in the sand, nor did I break a leg, not a single dog barked at me and there were no brigands in Natal, because my body, through the musical force of the gods, was closed for ever against the dangers of air, land, underground and sea. Cost: thirty thousand réis.⁴⁴

Editors: Maria Laura Cavalcanti and Peter Henry Fry

Translation: Peter Henry Fry, with the assistance of Maria Laura Cavalcanti

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⁴⁴ This corresponds more or less to US\$53 in 2017.

⁴⁵ Andrade did not provide all the bibliographical details for his references. We completed all we could consulting Alvarenga's notes and bibliographical references.

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Glossary for The Music of Sorcery in Brazil

- Baixo espiritismo** – Literally “low spiritism”, a pejorative term used to denigrate certain ritual practices through which humans and spiritual entities communicate. It supposes that such Low Spiritism is less evolved than more “elevated” forms of spiritualism.
- Batuque, batucaré** – A general term for festivities where dance and singing are accompanied by drums.
- Caboclos** – Spirits of deceased Amerindian and their descendants.
- Cachaça** – A sort of rough rum, made from sugar cane. One of the most popular drinks for Brazilian people, living and dead.
- Candomblé** – The denomination of the variety of Afro-Brazilian religion that originated in Bahia.
- Candomblé de caboclo** – A variety of candomblé where the spirits of caboclos are also revered. Or a ritual in which the indigenous spiritual entities are present together with other divinities of African origin also associated to the catholic saints.
- Catimbó** – A syncretic religion based on spirit possession studied by Andrade on his travels in Northeastern Brazil
- Cauim** – tupi-guarani for fermented drink
- Coco** – A form of poetry performed through music in which soloist and chorus alternate in various ways. Mário de Andrade was particularly fond of this Northeastern musical tradition.

Congos, Congada e Moçambique – Popular dance festivals that celebrate in theatrical form the ancient kingdoms of Africa

Cururu – Dance and form of competitive singing in honour of such saints as The Holy Spirit and Saint Benedict.

Despacho – Spiritual attacks.

Embolada – Another popular poetic and musical form. Such by two coco singers who sing alternate versus, coming together for the refrain.

Fechar o corpo – Literally “to close the body”, this denotes a religious ritual designed to protect the individual from any form of attack, either material or spiritual.

Filhos(as)-de-santo – Literally sons or daughters of the saint, are the members of a *terreiro* who “received” orishas and other divinities

Gira – An umbanda session.

Grigri – A Voodoo amulet believed to protect the wearer from evil or brings luck.

Jogo do bicho – Number’s Game. A popular betting game that correlates a numeric series to an animal series, legal in Andrade’s times but now a contravention.

Jurema – The sacred beverage ritually used in the *pajelanças*.

Linha – The way of honoring and receiving a spiritual entity. Andrade himself in a note transcribed by Alvarenga, defines “Linha” as a prayer. (Andrade, 1983, p. 113.) Each entity has his or her special song, greeting and dance.

Linha de mesa – a form of spiritualism spiritualist influenced by the works of the 19th century French medium, Allan Kardek. It is so called because its rituals take place around a table with neither singing nor dancing.

Macumba – The popular designation of Afro-Brazilian religiosity in Rio de Janeiro in the first half of the 20th century.

Mãe(Pai) de santo – leader of a *terreiro* (lit. Mother or Father of Saint) Also Pai de terreiro or Mãe de terreiro.

Maracá, Cheques – Rattles.

Moda – A generic name for songs.

Ogã or Ogan – An honorific office bestowed upon important mem in *terreiros*. They do not “receive” divinities. They are responsible for sacrifice, playing drums and were historically responsible for defending the *terreiros* from police interference.

Pajé – Indigenous thaumaturge, who divines and carries out curing rituals (*pajelanças*).

Pajelança – Rituals that utilize a psycho-active drink, *jurema*.

Pai de Santo – Leader of a *terreiro* of either candomblé, macumba or umbanda. Women leaders are called mães de santo.

Ponto – Ritual song for a specific divinity.

Rapa, recos, reco-reco – Percussion instruments in which the sound is produced by rubbing together two pieces of wood or equivalent material to make a scratching sound.

Terreiro – The house and its surrounding areas where rituals either of umbanda, macumba, catimbó or candomblé are held.

Umbanda – The designation of a branch of Afro-Brazilian religiosity that can be considered the equivalent to *macumba* in Andrade’s essay. From the 1960’s on it refers basically to afro-Brazilian cults that have absorbed many elements of Brazilian Kardecism.

Zabumba – Drum.