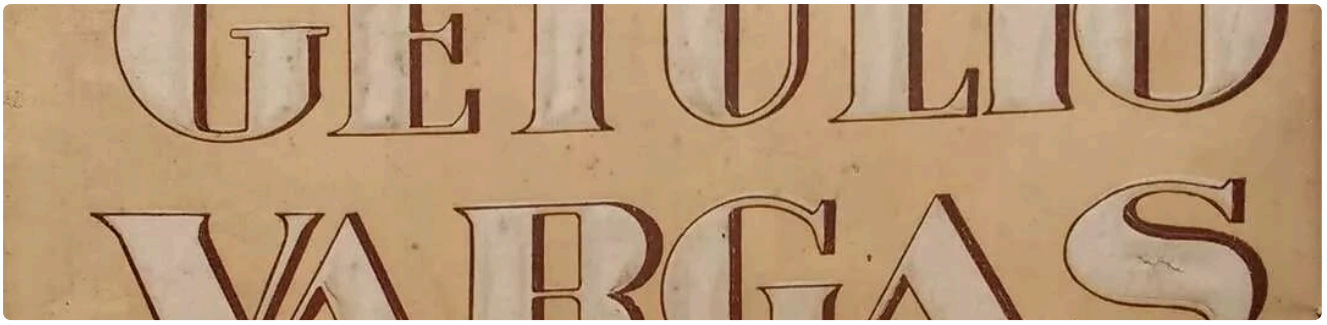
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Freud and Latin America: An Early Relationship

Mariano Ben Plotkin

Throughout the 20th century, psychoanalysis has generated a "culture", vastly overflowing its original scope. This article explores the condition existing, both in psychoalysis as a system of thought and beliefs and in the receiving cultures, related to the lasting relationship between the ideas inspired in Freud and some Latin American cities.

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In the last decades, some Latin American countries have become international centers for the practice and diffusion of psychoanalysis. In certain cities, psychoanalytic terms have been integrated into everyday speech, while “being in therapy” is considered a normal activity for large sectors of the middle class. When and how did the reception of Freud's ideas begin in the region? Certainly, it happened long before the establishment of the first psychoanalytic associations in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1930s, psychoanalysis was a broadly diffused cultural artifact in many Latin American cities. Generally speaking, the early diffusion of psychoanalysis in “peripheral areas” like Latin America has been left out of the general histories of Freud's discipline that focus mostly on the “north.” However, if we consider that the history of any system of ideas cannot be distinghished from the history of its multiple receptions and appropriation, then the history of psychoanalysis in Latin America is as relevant to the general history of psychoanalylsis as it is the history of its development anywhere else. Psychoanalysis constitutes an excellent case to study how a system of ideas originating as an expert form of knowledge, overflowed its original scope and become a broadly diffused cultural artifact in many parts of the world.

In 1931, Freud received a letter from Dr. Durval Marcondes from São Paulo, Brazil. In the letter, dated on October 20, Marcondes expressed his preoccupation about the presence in the city of a certain Maximilien Langsner, from Vienna. Langsner claimed that he was one of Freud’s dearest disciples and a close friend of his, and announced that he was about to open a psychoanalytic sanatorium in Brazil for the treatment of nervous diseases. However, what worried Marcondes most was the fact that, at the same time, Langsner was giving popular shows at a local theater in which he showed strange telepathic and “magnetic” capacities, including the ability of driving a car, blindfolded, on the stage. Marcondes was worried, he wrote to Freud, because the popularity of Langsner's performance went against his efforts, carried out for some years by then, to create a “fair and elevated” idea of psychoanalysis within the *Paulista* medical circles. By the time Marcondes was writing his letter, so he claimed, psychoanalysis had been accepted by many distinguished members of the local medical profession and had become the therapeutic method of choice for them. Therefore, by invoking psychoanalysis and Freud’s name alongside popular entertainment, not only was Langsner compromising the prestige that psychoanalysis and its creator had gained, but was also undermining Marcondes’ own efforts to establish psychoanalysis as a serious medical specialty in Brazil. To prove his point, Marcondes included in the envelope a newspaper clip announcing Langsner’s show and introducing him as “the one whom Freud considers as one of the highest powers of the psychoanalytic science.” Marcondes ended his letter by asking Freud that he expressed his opinion on Langsner in writing so that he (Marcondes) could lean on Freud's words to properly back up his own (obviously negative) views on Langsner’s status as a psychoanalyst. A word from Freud in this respect was crucial, said the Brazilian doctor, in order to “undo all confusions and misunderstandings about psychoanalysis, and to fight against possible accusations from [Freud’s] adversaries.” In a short and crisp note dated on November 15, Freud replied that he publicly authorized Marcondes to clarify “in any form that you see fit” that he (Freud) had not knowledge of anyone named Maximilien Langsner.

This exchange of letter between Freud and a Latin American medical doctor was by no means the first one. Since the second decade of the 20^th century Freud had been corresponding with Latin American doctors and intellectuals. Between the late 1910s and the 1930s, for instance, Freud regularly exchanged letters with Peruvian psychiatrist Honorio Delgado and, throughout his life, with many other Latin Americans. In particular, Freud and Marcondes (1899–1981) had been corresponding since 1926, when the latter sent to Freud his book titled *O symbolismo esthetico na literatura*, one of the counted books that Freud would eventually select to take with him when he parted to his exile in London in 1938. Marcondes, fluent in German (he translated into Portuguese Freud’s “Über Psychoanalyse. Fünf Vorlesungen” in 1931), was a

self-taught analyst who had been practicing psychoanalysis since the 1920s. Although his formal training was in medicine, he combined psychoanalysis with broader intellectual interests. The book he had sent to Freud was an attempt at using psychoanalysis for literary criticism. In 1927, Marcondes was one of the founding members of the short-lived Brazilian Psychoanalytic Society (Sociedade Brasileira de Psychanalyse), which published a single issue of *Revista Brasileira de Psychanalyse* which Freud, who received it enthusiastically, would also take to London. Later on, Marcondes became one of the first Brazilian analysts recognized as such by the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA).

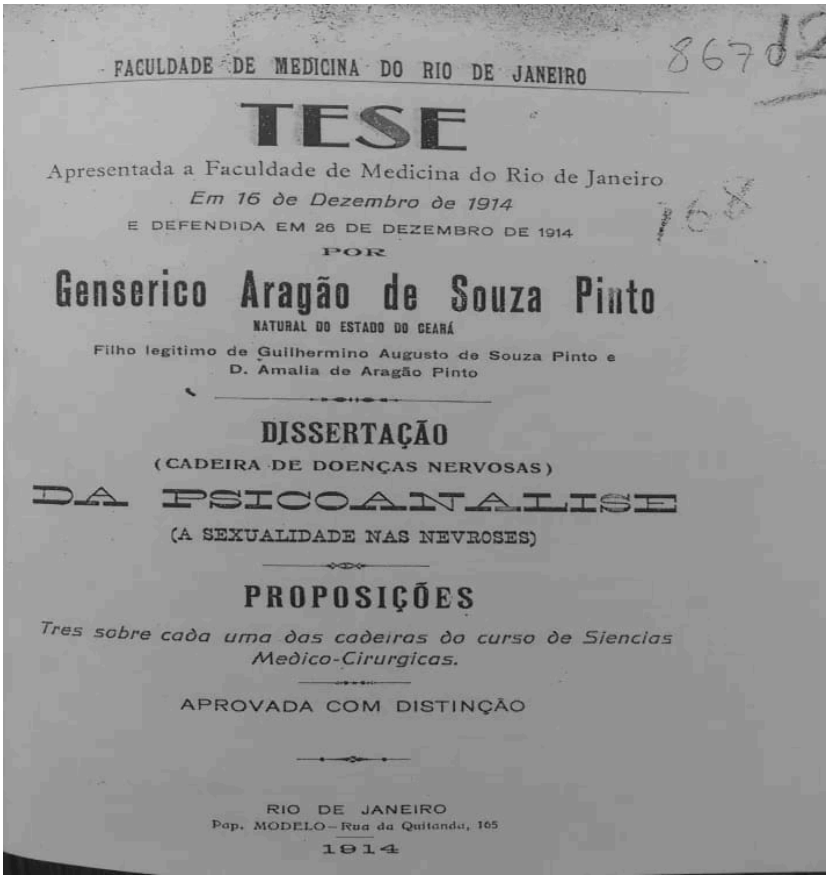
In parallel to his private practice, Marcondes, like other Brazilians interested in psychoanalysis, also developed a career as a state official in the areas of mental health and education. In 1926 he was hired as a doctor by the Education Department of the state of São Paulo, and a few years later, he became the first director of the newly created Section of Mental Hygiene of the school system. In 1936, he would be appointed to the position of psychiatrist in the Education Department. Marcondes also taught courses on psychoanalysis at the *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Politica*, a prestigious institution of higher education established in São Paulo in 1933.

I want to focus on Marcondes' letter because it is interesting for what it says and suggests, and also because it provides evidence about some aspects of the early reception of psychoanalysis in Latin America. The letter says, for instance, that by 1931 there was a group of doctors in São Paulo trying to make a profession out of psychoanalysis. Marcondes expressed not only his worries about the "Langsner affair," but also his interest in becoming "Freud's ambassador" in Brazil, the one who could legitimately circulate the Viennese master's opinions. The letter shows that there was a person (and he was not the only one, similar cases could be documented elsewhere) who, posing as a disciple and a friend of Freud's, was trying to make money through different means by using Freud's name and psychoanalysis. Thus, the letter suggests that, by 1931, the name of Freud was so well known among the general public in urban Brazil -and also in other Latin American cities-, that it could be used to "sell" different products. In return, it is clear that Freud's name was better known than his doctrine. By naming Freud, Langsner could attract to his shows people who had obviously heard of him. However, for this public psychoanalysis could still be easily associated with the kind of performances that Langsner was offering in theaters. It seems that Langsner´s public could hardly distinguish between psychoanalysis, magnetism and telepathy.

Latin America was one of the regions of the world (North America was another one) where psychoanalysis enjoyed an earlier diffusion. Within Latin America, Brazil stands out as the first country where psychoanalysis was known and discussed by prestigious medical doctors. Unlike their Spanish- speaking counterparts, who were mostly fluent in French and knew Freud's theories through French commentators –at least until the late 1920s, when the Spanish edition of Freud's complete works, one of the first ones in any language, became available-, many Brazilian scientists had a good command of the German language and were receptive to German science. Already in 1899, that is to say, *before* the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the foundational text of psychoanalysis, Doctor Juliano Moreira from Bahia had included Freud's early writings on hysteria in the bibliography of the courses on mental medicine that he taught at the local medical school. In 1914, a carioca doctor, Geneserico Aragão de Souza Pinto defended a dissertation devoted exclusively to psychoanalysis at the Rio de Janeiro Medical School. In the thesis, he mentioned several prestigious carioca psychiatrists who had been performing psychoanalytic treatment for years. In the late 1910s and 1920s there were other medical dissertations on psychoanalysis defended in Peru, Mexico and elsewhere in the region while, at the same time, intellectuals and artists were discussing different aspects of Freud's theories.



Dr. Juliano Moreira (1872-1932) was a descendant of African slaves. He is considered the modernizer of Brazilian psychiatry and one of the pioneers in the reception of psychoanalysis in Brazil.



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NATURAL DO ESTADO DO CEARÁ

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DA PSICOANALISE

(A SEXUALIDADE NAS NEVROSES)

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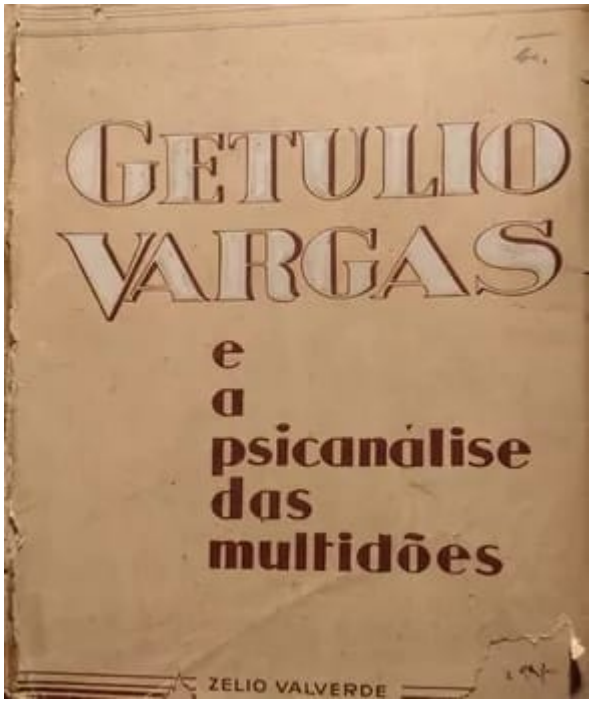
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Geneserico Aragão de Souza Pinto defended in 1914 the first thesis on psychoanalysis written in Latin America (and probably one of the earliest in the world).

The Multiverse of Psychoanalysis

By the early 1930s, psychoanalysis was a polysemic concept that meant different things to different people. In Latin America, psychoanalysis was sometimes associated to projects of construction or reformulation of national identity. In the particular case of Brazil, for instance, a group of progressive doctors and anthropologists used it in the 1920s and 1930s as a battering ram against pessimistic "racialist" theories that claimed that Brazilian development was hindered by the presence of "primitive" ethnic groups, such as blacks or mestizos, who were deemed as "inferior races." Some influential Brazilian doctors, such as Julio Pires Porto Carrero, Arthur Ramos, or Antonio Austregesilo pointed out (with different nuances) that if everybody, regardless of his or her ethnicity, was endowed, as psychoanalysis had shown, with a "primitive ego" which could be identified with the Freudian id and which needed to be disciplined, then the racial issue became irrelevant. Perhaps, so claimed the doctors, blacks or mulattoes's "primitive ego" was more visible than that of the European population. But this "problem" could be corrected through the usual means of social control, particularly education. Thus, what had been originally perceived as a "racial" problem became reframed as a social one. Marcondes, as we have seen, but also Arthur Ramos, Ulysses Pernambucano, alongside other doctors, anthropologists, and pedagogues interested in psychoanalysis, became active in the various provincial educational systems. Anthropologist Gilberto Freyre also used some psychoanalytic notions in his pioneering book *Casa grande e senzala* to redefine the role of the black population in the formation of Brazilian identity and culture. Psychoanalysis became, at least for some of its practitioners and promoters, an instrument for modernization and, at the same time, for disciplining the population. This was true not only in Brazil. Juan Ramón Beltrán, an Argentine forensic doctor and an early practitioner of psychoanalysis (he was eventually elected a foreign member of the Psychoanalytic Society of Paris), claimed in the 1920s that one of the main discoveries of psychoanalysis was that the child, far from being chaste and pure, was "immoral and impure." Only education based on psychoanalysis and an emphasis on moral customs would purify him. According to Brazilian Julio Porto Carrero (who also served as a forensic expert), once psychoanalytically oriented education was established, society could dispense of the whole punitive system of the judicial system. Similarly, in Chile social reformers were more interested in psychoanalysis than psychiatrists during the 1920s and 30s. For many, psychoanaysis was a tool for social reform, rather than a therapeutic technique.

At the same time, psychoanalysis was also appropriated by some avant-garde artists. One particularly clear example of this kind of reception of psychoanalytic ideas was the paulista "Modernist" movement, which emerged in the 1920s. Psychoanalysis became one of the theoretical foundations of the "Anthropophagic movement" led by Oswald de Andrade and Mario de Andrade (no relation between them). However, for the artists psychoanalysis was a theoretical tool that could be used to rediscover and exalt exactly what the doctors wanted to repress: the "primitive" features of the Brazilian culture. The horrors of World War I led some artists and intellectuals to reconsider such categories as "civilization," "barbarism" or "primitivism." Europe, which Latin American intellectuals had traditionally seen as the beacon of civilization, showed how deep humanity could fall into murderous barbarity. One decade later, in Mexico, a group of prestigious intellectuals and artists active in the 1930s and 40s, such as poet Salvador Novo, philosopher Samuel Ramos, painter Frida Kahlo, and essayist (and Nobel laureate) Octavio Paz, also got inspiration in psychoanalysis for their efforts to redefine post-revolutionary Mexican identity.

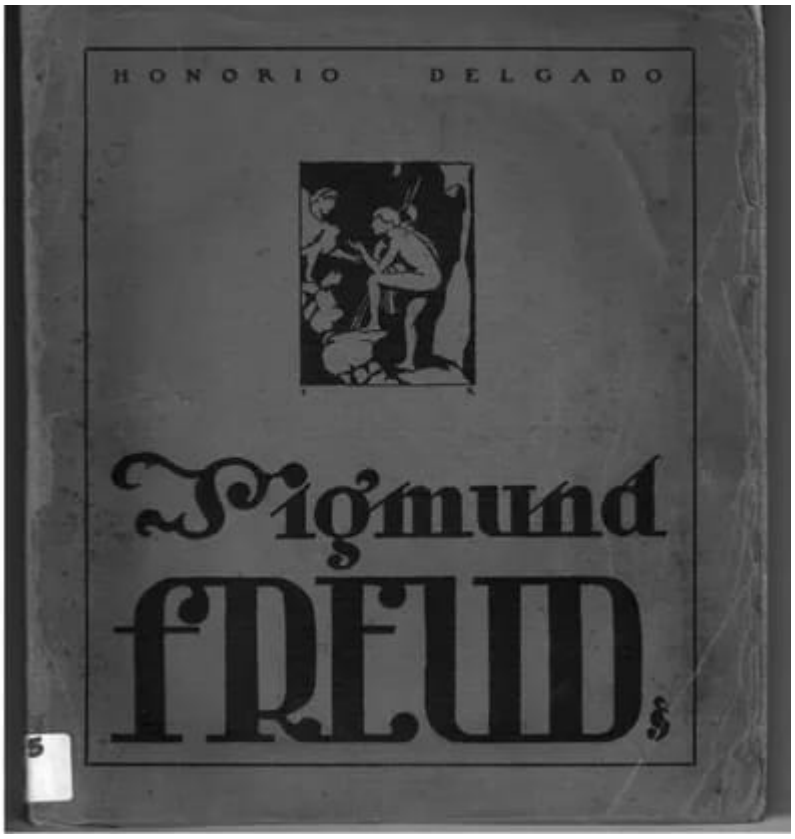


Cover of Gastão Pereira da Silva´s "psychoanalytic" biography of Getulio Vargas

Moreover, there was also a "popular reception" of psychoanalysis, as it was suggested by the "Langsner affair" discussed above. Since the 1930s, a large number of publications aimed at the popularization of psychoanalysis appeared in such cities such as Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago de Chile. In 1931, for instance, the newspaper *Jornada*, one of the most popular in Buenos Aires at that time, included a central section in which readers were encouraged to send letters telling their dreams, which would be analyzed by an "expert analyst" who signed as "Freudiano." One decade later, the women's photo-novel magazine *Idilio* (the most popular of its kind), included a similar section that was illustrated by photomontages made by the German exile photographer Grete Stern. In Santiago de Chile, *Alejandra*, another popular women's magazine included in the 1940s a consulting column written by a "prestigious Argentine psychoanalyst." At the same time, in Rio de Janeiro, Gastão Pereira da Silva, a doctor who also corresponded with Freud, and who was very active in the dissemination of psychoanalysis, ran a radio program on dream analysis. Pereira da Silva also wrote over one hundred popular novels with "psychoanalytic contents," and many books popularizing psychoanalysis, including a "psychoanalytic biography" of Getulio Vargas. In Peru, Dr. Honorio Delgado (who corresponded with Freud for over 20 years, visited him twice in Vienna, and whom Freud described as his "first foreign friend") wrote, in 1926, one of the earliest biographies of Freud in any language. Not only Freud read the book, but he also corrected some minor factual mistakes. This biography was translated into Portuguese and sold in Brazil a few years later. In the 1930s, Peruvian poet Alberto Hidalgo, who was living in Buenos Aires with limited economic resources, wrote under the pen name of Dr. Gómez Nerea a multivolume collection aimed at the popularization of psychoanalysis (he even invented "clinical cases"). The collection, *Freud al alcance de todos*, was republished many times, and was translated into Portuguese for its successful commercialization in Brazil.

Clearly, within a few years, psychoanalysis had overflowed its original scope and limits. How come that psychoanalysis, originally thought of as a medical specialty, became in a couple of decades a transnational doctrine, a profession, and a popular cultural artifact in places as remote from Vienna as Latin America? What factors internal to psychoanalysis could explain its fast transnationalization? What was there in the

receiving societies in Latin American that made psychoanalysis attractive, at least for some professional and social sectors? Of course, there is not a simple answer to these questions, but we could formulate some hypotheses that would help us to explain its early diffusion in Latin America.



Cover of Honorio Delgado´s biography of Sigmund Freud

Psychoanalysis as a Transnational System of Thought

Psychoanalysis is a clear example of a transnational system of beliefs and ideas. I suggest that a system of ideas could be considered transnational if it fulfills at least the following three criteria: first, if it circulates across national and cultural borders; second, if its theoretical apparatus is considered valid across cultural boundaries; and third, if its centers of production, discussion and diffusion, as well as the languages in which it is disseminated, change over time. Psychoanalysis clearly fulfills these requirements. Its theories and concepts have circulated around the world, with the explicit claim that its basic theoretical notions, such as the unconscious or the Oedipus complex, are universally valid (although this has been intensely disputed by anthropologists). Therefore, at least according to most of its practitioners, psychoanalytic concepts are not attached to any particular cultural setting. Finally, although it originated in the German-speaking world, the centers of production, diffusion and consumption of psychoanalysis shifted first to the English-speaking countries, and later to France and Latin America. Today, the majority of psychoanalytic treatments are probably carried out in French, Spanish, or Portuguese.

Scientific knowledge, some political ideologies and practices such as Marxism, as well as some religious movements like Christianity are obvious examples of transnational systems of ideas and beliefs. Nonetheless, psychoanalysis does not fit comfortably into any of these categories. On the one hand, it does not fit well among the sciences because its mechanisms of validation and evaluation are different from, and can hardly be compared to, those of the hard sciences. Generally speaking, psychoanalysis does not

accept forms of measurement of its clinical efficacy –or of the validity of its theoretical apparatus– that are external to it. The unconscious, as it is defined by psychoanalytic theory, can only be accessed through psychoanalytic methods and yet its existence is considered by analysts not as a hypothesis but as a natural fact. On the other hand, although it is possible to fruitfully apply methods of the sociology of religions to the study of some aspects of the development of psychoanalysis, no one would make a serious claim abouth psychoanalysis qualifying as a form of religion. Finally, while the relations between psychoanalysis and (both left and right wing) politics have been complex throughout its history, no one would consider psychoanalysis as a political movement either. Moreover, although it was born as an expert form of knowledge that claimed to be, at the same time, a therapeutic technique aimed at curing some forms of neuroses, and a method for the research of the unconscious, the reception and circulation of psychoanalysis worldwide, but particularly in Latin America, took place at different levels and on different time courses.

Decades ago, Sherry Turkle defined "psychoanalytic culture" as the way in which metaphors, concepts, and forms of thought inspired in psychoanalysis have penetrated everyday life, discourses, and practices. It can be argued that the ability of a specific system of knowledge to generate a "culture" is derived from certain qualities that are intrinsic to that system. Among those qualities, I would like to mention first, the capacity to address issues of everyday relevance like sexuality, fears, disease, or death, and second, the potential to generate an easily appropriable discourse that provides concepts that Turkle has characterized as "almost tangible." Dreams, slips of the tongue, etc. are intellectual objects that can be easily used and manipulated. Even Freud's more technical terms could be "translated into" everyday language, as anyone visiting today the city of Buenos Aires could easily corroborate.

Freudian texts define and involve their readers in a particular way. In the second edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1909), for instance, Freud pointed out that his target public was not limited to his colleagues or detractors, or even to his followers; his ideal readership, as John Forrester has noted, consisted of a broad circle of educated and curious people, that is to say, potential dreamers, patients, or Freudians who would become such as a result of reading Freud's book. Everybody could become a dream interpreter. As Forrester has put it: "The strategy of the dream book requires one to partake in the experience of analysis in both positions: as interpreter (which shades overt into the almost irresistible urge to one-up Freud) and as dreamer." Furthermore, it could also be argued that psychoanalysis had an additional quality: it took a modern view, legitimized in its supposedly (although contested) scientific character, of ancient human obsessions such as sexuality, death, dreams, and childhood. The interpretation of dreams had had a long tradition in both sides of the Atlantic as well as in many other parts of the world, and had been a permanent feature in many popular publications long before Freud. At the same time, by offering a supposedly scientific and specific discourse on sexuality, psychoanalysis contributed to removing it from the realm of religion. Some doctors, including Delgado, combined psychoanalysis with different forms of eugenics.

Finally, another characteristic of psychoanalysis that could also explain (at least partially) its fast diffusion is the existence of a body of "apostles" in various countries who were ready to spread the word in different cultural spaces and languages, and from a variety of disciplines. Freud himself played a role of paramount importance in the transnational diffusion of his own system of thought.

Freud and the “Exotic” World

From the early times of psychoanalysis, Freud had established a network of international contacts. He was interested in contacting people from remote regions of the world who could help him to disseminate psychoanalysis in their own countries. This is why he was so upset when, in 1924, he learned that Honorio Delgado’s journal *Revista de Psiquiatría y Disciplinas Conexas*, which had been published since 1918, would be discontinued. As Freud pointed out in a letter to the Peruvian doctor, dated on April 20^th of 1925, “… I would like to know the causes [of the journal’s demise] and if you have plans for compensating us through another periodical publication. We were very proud that your journal served our cause in such exceptional way.” The journal had by no means been devoted exclusively to psychoanalysis, but had published several articles on Freud’s doctrines, as well as works by European psychoanalysts in translation. Freud considered (and so he told some of his collaborators back in Europe) that Delgado’s *Revista* was an instrument of paramount importance for the diffusion of psychoanalysis throughout Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world in general.

Freud was very vigilant about the purity of his doctrine in Europe. The psychoanalytic movement has known many a secession from early times, and some of Freud’s former dearest disciples, such as Alfred Adler or Carl Gustav Jung, were excluded from officially recognized psychoanalysis when they became considered “heretics” as a result of their theoretical divergence from orthodoxy. A group of Freud’s associates even created –with Freud's approval- a secret circle to look after the purity of the doctrine and to denounce any transgression. In contrast, Freud was willing to tolerate all kinds of heresies in remote regions like Latin America. In his biography of Freud, for instance, not only did Delgado include ideas from Adler, but also his very picture at the end of the volume –alongside that of Freud–, among the portraits of pioneers of psychoanalysis. Freud did not complain about the content of the book, and only expressed to Delgado, in a private letter dated in October 1926, that he (Freud) would have been happier had the Peruvian avoided introducing “Adler’s grin” in the text: “I have the best motives to dislike this man,” wrote Freud. In other letters, however, Freud expressed his satisfaction about Delgado’s work.

Most Latin American people interested in psychoanalysis –even those who kept a more or less regular correspondence with Freud– could hardly be characterized as “orthodox Freudians.” Delgado himself acknowledged in his publications (most of which he sent to Freud) that he was not one of them. Many Latin Americans who approached psychoanalysis committed the kind of heresies that, in Europe, would have caused their immediate expulsion from orthodox psychoanalytic circles.

Freud was very proud of the fact that psychoanalysis (or some version of it) became known in remote regions of the world. In most of his correspondence with Latin American doctors or intellectuals, Freud limited himself to expressing his satisfaction about the diffusion of his ideas, but failed to engage in any kind of theoretical or clinical discussion, as he routinely did with his colleagues from the “north.” Freud saw Latin America as land of mission and not as a potential space for the production of psychoanaytic theory.

Since his youth, Freud had had a fair command of the Spanish language. He had learned Spanish as an adolescent, in order to be able to read Don Quixote in the original language. This is why he could reply (in German, though) letters written in Spanish, as well as read the texts sent to him by his Spanish speaking admirers. However, as he recognized many times, Freud was unable to read Portuguese. This is what makes surprising the fact that, when he was forced to leave Vienna for London in 1938 –and could only take with him a relatively small portion of his library–, he decided to retain over thirty volumes written by Latin Americans, including fourteen authored by Brazilians. These latter were books written in a language

that he could not –and would not be able to– read. Freud did not value those books for what they actually said, but because of their testimonial nature. In fact, he never even opened most of the books written by Latin Americans: their pages have remained uncut to this day. Nevertheless, the very existence of books published in Latin America about psychoanalysis, no matter their actual content, bore witness to the worldwide diffusion of Freud's ideas and name, and this is probably why he decided to take them with him.

For Freud, Latin America was part of an undifferentiated non-European world that also included India, another country in which psychoanalysis entered relatively early. It is well known, for instance, that Freud kept a valuable collection of small antique statues in his consulting room, and that he took at least part of this collection to London. Most statuettes were of Greek or Egyptian origins. However, the collection also included a few figurines from Latin America (Peru and Mexico). How those pieces made their way into Freud's collection has not been determined so far. Be as it may, being aware of Freud's interest in antiques, Indian psychoanalyst Girîndrashekhar Bose sent him an ancient ivory statuette of Vishnu in 1931. Freud thanked Bose for the present, but pointed out that he appreciated the statuette mostly because it reminded him of the progress of psychoanalysis worldwide and of its proud *conquest* of foreign countries. While Greek or Egyptian antiques had an intrinsic value to him, an Indian (or Latin American, for that matter) statuette was only valuable insofar as it was a testimony of the global expansion of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis and Latin America

Psychoanalysis, thus, features a series of characteristics that have favored its transformation into a transnational system of ideas. However, we still need at least some hypothesis that could explain its early popularity in some Latin American countries.

The very concept of Latin America is problematic, for it makes reference to a large subcontinent with an enormous cultural diversity which, in many cases is present even at the subnational level. The census of 1910 revealed that in Mexico, for instance, people spoke over one hundred different languages, Spanish being just one of them (although the official one). However, the diffusion of psychoanalysis has been an urban middle class phenomenon, which has been associated to international trends. There are some common features (and also many differences) in the way in which the process of reception of psychoanalysis took place in some countries of the region. I will focus on the similarities.

The first noteworthy characteristic of the "Latin American" path of reception (if there was a single one) is, as it was mentioned, its speed. In France, for instance, a well-established psychiatric tradition combined with a rejection of all things German (and to some extent, also Jewish), particularly after World War I, posed a barrier against the early diffusion of psychoanalysis within medical circles, although the first officially recognized French psychoanalytic institution dates from the 1920s. French literary circles were more receptive to Freudian ideas. Psychoanalysis would only become a broadly accepted theory after World War II, particularly in its French version promoted by Jacques Lacan. In Latin American countries, in contrast, there was nothing like an established psychiatric (or, for that matter, scientific) tradition that could pose a strong resistance against the entrance of new theories, and therefore, Latin American intellectual elites were very receptive of everything European. In Latin America, scientific (as well as religious) syncretism was far more common than in Europe.

Psychoanalysis had an additional advantage over other psychiatric currents of the first decades of the 20^th century: it offered a coherent theory. Generally speaking, until the invention of somatic forms of treatment, psychiatry had very little to offer in terms of sound therapeutic techniques. Mental hospitals, particularly in Latin America, were characterized as deposits to keep those who were excluded from society, rather than as actually curative institutions. Moreover, even the somatic therapies of the 1920s and 1930s (malaria therapy, different forms of shock therapy, etc.) were in general not grounded in theory, but on empirical results. Doctors knew that some therapeutic methods could alleviate certain symptoms, but they did not know exactly why. Psychoanalysis, on the contrary, offered a theory based on the centrality of unconscious desires: whether it was true or false, empirically demonstrable or not, psychoanalysis still had a theory to offer. For instance, electroshocks were widely used since the 1930s in Latin America and elsewhere to alleviate certain forms of schizophrenia. However, nobody knew exactly how or why it worked. Dr. Enrique Pichon Rivière, a founding member of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association and a pioneer in the use of shock therapy in Argentina, in contrast, developed a *psychoanalytic* theory to explain the usefulness of electroshocks. Therefore, psychoanalysis, to some extent, filled a void in psychiatric theory and practice in contexts that lacked established scientific traditions.

At the same time, psychoanalysis filled another gap. Nineteenth-century Latin American intellectuals and scientists were very much influenced by evolutionism and positivism (the motto "Order and Progress" of the Brazilian flag, for instance, is a positivist statement). In the first decades of the 20^th century, and particularly after World War I, positivism lost much of its previous prestige in favor of various "idealist" philosophical currents. Many Latin American intellectuals found in psychoanalysis (or at least in some versions of it) an instrument, based on the prestige of science, to fight positivism. Psychoanalysis's emphasis on unconscious phantasies offered explanations not only of the origin of mental diseases but, more importantly, of human behavior and of human nature in general, and thus provided alternatives to the traditional materialistic and monistic explanations that had been in fashion in the region since the 19^th century.

Moreover, psychoanalysis could be easily associated to a Lamarckian version of evolutionism. Freud himself adhered to Lamarckian evolutionism to the despair of some of his closest disciples, including Ernest Jones. Since that theory, originated in early 19^th century France, claimed that evolution took place as a result of adaptation to the changing environmental conditions, then the whole process of evolution could be, to some extent, manipulated by introducing changes in the environment, both social and natural. Freud's theory of the transmission of a collective unconscious, present in such works as *Totem and Taboo*, or in his book on Moses and monotheism, was strongly influenced by Lamarckism. Latin American elites, concerned with the construction of a modern state and with the modernization (meaning, the Europeanization) of society were very receptive to Lamarckism, as Nancy Stepan has shown. The interpretation that some Latin Americans made of psychoanalysis was perfectly compatible with the adoption of a Lamarckian vision of evolution. This could explain why, in some countries, people interested in psychoanalysis were involved in education and also in the administration of justice, two areas through which the environment could be manipulated. In Chile, Mexico, and elsewhere, there were judges who "psychoanalyzed" the suspects brought before them in order to detect the unconscious motivations that led them to crime. One of those judges was Samuel Gajardo the first Chilean judge of minors, and another one was Raúl Carrancá y Trujillo, a Mexican judge who also corresponded with Freud, and who was in charge of judging Ramón Mercader, the assassin of Trotsky. All in all, Mercader had to submit to more than 900 hours of "therapy" administered by the judge at his office.

Furthermore, for many, psychoanalysis was a key element of cultural modernity. The Buenos Aires newspaper *Jornada*, mentioned earlier, equated Freud to Henry Ford as paradigms of modernity. During the first decades of the 20^th century, Latin American urban populations (at least in some countries) went through a fast process of cultural modernization. Some Latin American countries, such as Argentina, and to a lesser extent Brazil (a country which, nonetheless, abolished slavery only in 1888), had received large waves of European immigrants since the last decades of the 19^th century, and so in those countries the process of social change was particularly fast and profound. In Argentina, in particular, the state played an important role in the process through its active educational policies. The levels of literacy boasted by the Argentine urban population easily matched (and in certain urban areas surpassed) those of many European countries. The increase in the level of literacy was accompanied by the expansion of the editorial market. Popular (and extremely cheap) collections of books that published translations of fashionable European texts proliferated in Buenos Aires, as well as in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo or Santiago de Chile from the 1920s on. Books by, or on, Freud were among those put out in large –and mostly pirate- editions at very accessible prices. Psychoanalysis provided a discourse of cultural modernity that, at the same time, addressed many ancient social concerns, thus becoming particularly appealing to populations that were going through what could be characterized as a "cultural transition."

Finally, in contrast to Europe or the US, the lack of orthodox psychoanalytic institutions in Latin America until the 1940s, institutions that would establish a canonical version of psychoanalysis –the first officially recognized psychoanalytic association in Latin America was the Argentine one, created in 1942–, and even Freud's own flexibility towards the early reception of psychoanalysis in the region turned his system into a malleable set of ideas that could be appropriated, reformulated, and selectively redefined for different purposes. In general terms, it could be said that since the 1920s, psychoanalysis was simultaneously, or alternatively, understood –at least in some Latin American big cities–, as a therapeutic technique and an instrument for the renovation of psychiatry; as an essential component of cultural modernity; as an intellectual instrument to be pitted against positivism; as a set of ideas that confirmed evolutionary theories; as an instrument for social control; as an emancipatory doctrine; as a theory of sexuality (for some it promoted sexual liberation, while for others it provided instruments for its control), and much more.

By the 1950s and 1960s, when psychoanalysis was finally institutionalized in many Latin American countries through the creation of local psychoanalytic associations affiliated to the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), it had been well known and discussed for decades. The creation of those associations changed the place of psychoanalysis in Latin America: it became an elite profession. Moreover, the associations soon acquired a virtually uncontested legitimacy to determine what could be considered as "true" psychoanalysis. Histories of psychoanalysis originated within the institutions, however they usually forget (or repress) that the history of psychoanalysis in the continent did not start with the creation of the associations or the establishment of orthodoxy. The reception of psychoanalysis in Latin America is just as long, and just as old, as the 20^th century itself.

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