



FROM DREAM TO MADNESS: PORTUGUESE IMMIGRANTS IN THE JUQUERY HOSPITAL, SÃO PAULO (1930)

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Abstract

During the 1930s the psychiatric discourse over immigration won capillarity. Influenced by science eugenic Brazilian psychiatric discourse positioned in favor of immigration control policy for selection of individual not only foreigners but also a selection of "racial groups". Psychiatrists believe that such measures benefit the "Brazilian race in training" to avoid landing in national ports of alienated aliens, as well as ethnic groups considered less assimilable. In this scenario, the immigrants from Portugal appeared in the eyes of the Brazilian authorities as the ideal white immigrant model the needs of Brazil, due to its compatibility with the ethnic composition of the country.

Alongside all this debate, the city of São Paulo went through a dizzying economic and demographic growth attracting hundreds of thousands of immigrants in search of work opportunities. The transformations in the city accelerated its contradictions and social problems: the unhealthiness of tenements, epidemics and the existence of people with mental and behavioral disorders led to the interference of the state combined with medicine for the construction of a modern and healthy city in order to regenerate "São Paulo race."

For the treatment of the considered crazy, the Insane Asylum of Juquery opened in 1898 and received hundreds of foreigners, including the Portuguese, attracted by promises of financial success in the former American colony.

It is intended to discuss here, through the clinical records of questioning on the admissions of this ethnic group, considered privileged by the Brazilian authorities. Bring to light some of the experiences of these historical subjects rather than fulfill their dreams of a better life in Brazil found a diagnosis of mental illness, in which case the Portuguese also represented the depreciation of their status as "preferred immigrants" for "degenerating agents of the race."