

Modernist Poetics between France and Brazil: Influence and Cannibalism in the Works of  
Blaise Cendrars and Oswald de Andrade

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## ABSTRACT

### Modernist Poetics between France and Brazil: Influence and Cannibalism in the Works of Blaise Cendrars and Oswald de Andrade

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This dissertation examines the collegial and collaborative relationship between the Swiss-French writer Blaise Cendrars and the Brazilian writer Oswald de Andrade in the 1920s as an exemplar of shifting literary influence in the international modernist moment and examines how each writer's later accounts of the modernist period diminished the other's influential role, in revisionist histories that shaped later scholarship. In analyzing a broad range of source texts, published poems, fiction and essays as well as personal correspondence and preparatory materials, I identify several areas of likely mutual influence or literary cannibalism that defied contemporaneous expectations for literary production from European cultural capitals or from the global south. I argue that these expectations are reinforced by historical circumstances, including political and economic crises and cultural nationalism, and by tracing the changes in the authors' accounts, I give a fuller narrative that is lacking in studies approaching either of the authors in a monolingual context.

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## Abbreviations

<i>ABBC</i>	<i>A Aventura Brasileira de Blaise Cendrars</i> : Eulalio and Calil's major anthology of articles, correspondence, essays, by all major participants in Brazilian modernism who interacted with Cendrars.
ALS	Archives littéraires suisses, Bern, Swiss National Library.
<i>CDA/MA</i>	<i>Carlos &amp; Mário</i> : complete correspondence between Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Mário de Andrade.
<i>CM</i>	<i>Cannibalist Manifesto</i> : citations from Leslie Bary's English translation of the <i>Manifesto Antropófago</i> . When necessary, I have provided the original wording from Jorge Schwartz's <i>Vanguardas Latino-Americanas</i> .
<i>FdR</i>	<i>Feuilles de Route</i> : the English translation in <i>Complete Postcards from the Americas</i> .
IEB	Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, at USP (University of São Paulo): location for the Arquivo Mário de Andrade and the Arquivo Oswald de Andrade.
<i>MA/MB</i>	<i>Correspondência Mário de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira</i> : complete correspondence between Mário de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira.
<i>MPBP</i>	<i>Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry</i> : citations from Stella M. de Sá Rego's English translation of the <i>Manifesto Pau-Brasil</i> . When necessary, I have provided the original wording from Jorge Schwartz's <i>Vanguardas Latino-Americanas</i> .
<i>PB</i>	<i>Pau-Brasil</i> : citations from the edition of the poetry book listed below, and the translations into English are mine.
<i>SPG</i>	<i>Serafim Ponte Grande</i> : untranslated version.
<i>SPGE</i>	<i>Serafim Ponte Grande</i> , in English: translation by Jackson and Bork.
<i>TADA</i>	<i>Tout autour d'aujourd'hui</i> : Denoël's 15-volume collection of Cendrars' complete works; should be accompanied with volume number.

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## Introduction

“The Swiss poet thought he had rediscovered Brazil and scalded his Brazilian friend in a cosmopolitan fondue pot. Oswald borrowed his camera and returned the favor by eating him.”<sup>1</sup>

The friendship and collaboration between Blaise Cendrars and Oswald de Andrade is both improbable and at the same time representative of the varied cultural encounters that were taking place in Paris in the 1920s, among the French and foreigners. The first was an established Swiss poet and world-traveler, or *bourlingueur*, who created a reputation for frequenting both the elite circles and underclass of every country where he went looking for a homeland, and the second was a young member of Brazil’s cultural avant-garde, striving to bring his nation out of the world’s cultural periphery and becoming progressively more interested in the politics of class struggle. The unlikely friendship began in Paris, included three trips by Cendrars to visit urban and rural Brazil with the rest of Andrade’s vanguardist cohort, and during this period they read and discussed each other’s writing, helped each other find professional opportunities, and made plans together for future projects in ballet and film. Within a decade of their meeting, however, both writers had disavowed their collaborative period and the value of the other’s contributions to what we today would call international modernism, from very different perspectives: Andrade had engaged himself in communist opposition to the Vargas dictatorship in Brazil and dismissed his own earlier writing as well as Cendrars’ as bourgeois formalism;

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<sup>1</sup> Haroldo de Campos, “The Rule of Anthropophagy: Europe under the Sign of Devoration,” *Latin American Literary Review* 14, no. 27 (Jan.–Jun. 1986): 44.



Cendrars, trapped in the nationalist doldrums of 1930s France, rejected his former friend's *modernismo* as less authentically Brazilian than the regionalist novels coming out at that point. Despite their mutual dismissals, the collaborative period resurfaced in the writing of each, which suggests that despite their protestation or revisionist histories, the encounter was a crucial period for both, a catalyst for change in the form and content of their literary production.

This collaborative transnational artistic relationship is interesting enough on its own as a case study in the aesthetic and cultural possibilities of early 20<sup>th</sup> century "world literary space"<sup>2</sup>; both authors engaged in debates about the literary future and questioned their relationships to national literary traditions. The partnership's dissolution, however, is equally interesting in how each writer justified its dissolution, how their justifications evolved over time, and how literary scholars from different periods and linguistic backgrounds have reacted to their revisionist histories.

By examining Cendrars and Andrade's own poetic and polemical writings, correspondence among them and the other Brazilian modernists, as well as their reception and their conditions of possibility, this dissertation seeks to demonstrate that this unusual exchange challenges commonly held ideas about influence and the flow of ideas between countries perceived as culturally dominant and those perceived as peripheral. General studies on Modernism tend to leave out or undervalue the Latin American (or more specifically Brazilian) contribution to it, and I argue that this is missing an essential part of the picture, and this lacuna reinforces problematic ideas of European cultural autonomy. This study illustrates how those problematic myths of European proprietorship over

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<sup>2</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

innovation were internalized by the Brazilian modernistas as anxiety over backwardness and anxiety over influence, and persist within the scholarship on them even years afterward. Lastly, this dissertation will draw attention to and analyze some of the language used in the push and pull for power – credit, debt, and owing – and examine how this language has changed over time.

### ***World Literary Space (and land grabs)***

Whereas much of the legend surrounding the friendship between Cendrars and Andrade is focused on their mutual appreciation, its initial motivation and eventual unraveling reveal a less friendly environment in which writers operate, a competitive world-wide system that Pascale Casanova has famously dubbed the “world republic of letters”:

“The world of letters is in fact something quite different from the received view of literature as a peaceful domain. Its history is one of incessant struggle and competition over the nature of literature itself – an endless succession of literary manifestos, movements, assaults and revolutions. These rivalries are what has created world literature.”<sup>3</sup>

Casanova argues that modern literature is produced, bought, sold, consumed and read in a vast market that constitutes a world literary space, an unromantic and materialist viewpoint that owes much to Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems theory from the 1970s positing that global capital has created a world united by exchange, albeit often unequal.<sup>4</sup>

Casanova applies the principle to literary exchanges, and also points out that these literary exchanges and balances of power do not necessarily line up with those that apply to other

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<sup>3</sup> *The World Republic of Letters*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> One advantage of Wallerstein’s theory is that it allows us to make sense of a world in which national economies interact continually despite changes in political regimes and national borders, like the movements away from traditional monarchies, or the end of official colonization. Whether we accept his theory about a global core and periphery as an accurate analysis of reality or not, it does express a world-view to which the authors I am studying seem to subscribe.

goods, nor to flows of capital or political power. The more controversial part of her argument comes in her characterization of literary time, in which a “present” is established by those who wield the most power, a “GMT” against which all other literary production is measured and measures itself. In this formulation, ideas for literary or artistic innovation (which modernist writers do prioritize) come from the center and are adopted by the periphery, sometimes adapted. This mirrors unequal balances of economic power, and is colonialism at the cultural level, even though the contours of the literary world and economic world do not line up. Many literary scholars have criticized Casanova’s concept of a unified timeline for literary innovation since *The World Republic of Letters* came out, but I would argue that the literary GMT does accurately reflect how the Brazilian modernistas *perceived* the artistic world that they wanted to participate in, as well as the relative position of their home country in 1922, the year of the Semana de Arte Moderna in São Paulo.

In presenting the modernistas’ initial perceptions of a literary world centered in Paris, I take into consideration what various contemporary scholars have written about the globalized power differentials that enable or obstruct the flow of ideas or the accumulation of literary credit.<sup>5</sup> Robert Stam points out, however, that there is an early version of this analysis already articulated by one of the modernists themselves, Mário de Andrade:

While “very optimistic about the creativity of our literature and other contemporary arts,” Andrade suggested that Brazilian texts would never win the applause they deserved due to factors having nothing to do with artistic merit. Some countries, he wrote, “weigh in with great force in the universal scale; their currency is valuable or pretends to be valuable, and their armies have the power to decide in the wars of the future. ... The permanence of the arts of any given country in terms of the

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<sup>5</sup> Some recent examples could include Kerry Bystrom and Joseph R. Slaughter’s *The Global South Atlantic* (New York : Fordham University Press, 2018), or Aleksandra Perisic’s upcoming book.

world's attention exists in direct proportion to the political and economic power of the country in question.”<sup>6</sup>

In Oswald de Andrade's and Blaise Cendrars' works themselves, I have attempted to identify the unconventional contributions that they were making to an ongoing conversation about literary value and the politics of calculating or claiming it, and to demonstrate that the unequal distribution of literary credit ends up shaping these unconventional writers' legacies.

### ***Methodology***

Since this dissertation investigates the nature, causes and effects of literary influence at the individual level as well as the transnational and translanguistic flow of ideas across wide geographic spaces, while taking into account the historical specificity of its subject matter, the project aims to arrive at the intersection of literary history and cultural studies. Sometimes this will require borrowing from theoretical texts written on other subjects and adapting them to the context of France's interaction with Brazil; Brent Edwards' *the Practice of Diaspora*, for example, in analyzing “necessary misrecognitions” among African American writers and artists in Paris provides a useful framework that might be applied to other foreign populations in Paris at the time. Sociological and anthropological theory (Anderson, Clifford) also inform the project, not only because these disciplines deal with the development and transfer of cultural models, but also because these disciplines were being formed at the very historical moment that I am studying, and

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, *Race in Translation: Culture Wars Around the Postcolonial Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2012). Citation from Mário de Andrade, *Poesias Completas* (São Paulo: Martins, 1972), 32–33.

French anthropological texts on “primitive thought” in Brazil or ethnographies of African tribes were being read by both Andrade and Cendrars.

The corpus of literary texts and primary sources for this study on influence and collaborative exchange contains a variety of genres, for two main reasons: firstly, the sources of inspiration (or the cultural capital pillaged) are not only literary material, and secondly, not all signs of influence make it to the published version or to the story told about the work later, and the gap in between the two is of particular interest. Therefore, in addition to doing comparative close readings of poetry and fiction, especially the poetry collections *Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil* and experimental novels *Moravagine* and *Seraphim Ponte Grande*, I also included aspirational or prescriptive works like Andrade’s manifestos, talks Cendrars gave on current writing, memoirs like *O Homem sem profissão* or *Trop c’est trop*, or essays that both wrote retrospectively on the period. My analysis of the influences in Cendrars’ and Andrade’s writing was also aided by examination in the Archives Littéraires Suisses and the Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros of the varied source materials used in preparing a work to be written – books, letters, articles, photos, notes and outlines – in order to take into account not only what was published or produced, but also what could be thought or attempted, if not completed.

### ***Review of Literature***

Despite not being part of a larger literary or artistic movement, there is however a significant amount of literary criticism written about Cendrars’ work, perhaps due to the place he holds as Switzerland’s best-known writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the essays and books published about him, however, seem to focus on the romanticized biographical

events, like seeing the beginnings of socialist uprisings in Russia or losing his arm in the trenches, of an author that seems to exist outside of any national boundaries and literary history. Studies that approach his work via more theoretical angles, like David Martens' recent book on "la poétique de la pseudonymie" in Cendrars' oeuvre, often devote their attention to questions of authorship, and the difficulty of separating the fictional from the autobiographical, and the real from the legend, which itself attests to the priority given to Cendrars' biography; in a special issue of *Europe* from 1976 devoted to Cendrars, the first five essays notably mention how unavoidable discussing his biography is.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, scholarship on his influences, contemporaries, and collaborators usually focuses on European writers or artists, especially French ones, whether well-known like Jean Cocteau, Fernand Leger, Sonia Delaunay or more obscure like Gustave LeRouge; most French or Brazilian scholars present his Brazilian colleagues as followers. Similarly, his novels, poetry or essays that have Brazil as their background are less often discussed than those centered in the U.S., Russia, or Europe. Scholarship on interactions between Cendrars and the Brazilian modernists has principally been initiated by Brazilian scholars, who produced several important works that are cited in almost all subsequent research, like Alexandre Eulalio's *A Aventura brasileira de Blaise Cendrars* in 1978, collecting correspondence between Cendrars and Andrade as well as his colleagues like Mário de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, Menotti del Picchia, and texts from the Brazilian press and conferences, as well as Aracy Amaral's *Blaise Cendrars no Brasil e os modernistas* (1970), which could most easily be categorized as literary history or biography. In French-language scholarship, Cendrars' Brazilian works are rather discussed as a special interest, in special issues or reviews like *Continent Cendrars* (1996) or *Méthode!* (2007), for example,

or in specially devoted colloquia, like the 1997 one in São Paulo that provided the material for *Brésil, l'Utopialand de Blaise Cendrars*.

Much literary criticism exists on Oswald de Andrade's works, not only by Brazilian scholars but also in English-language writings, which results in part from the continued relevance of his theoretical writings to Brazilian artists in the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the concrete poetry movement in the 1950s, and even more famously Tropicalia in the 1970s.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps because he has written about Brazilian literature in a more prescriptive way, work on Andrade deals more often with his nationality and the relationship of his work to the socio-economic conditions from which it emerged than studies of Cendrars have.<sup>8</sup> The great majority of scholarship on Andrade is produced by Brazilian academics and is in Portuguese, but many of Jorge Schwartz' articles and books on Andrade and the other modernists are translated into English, and the American K. David Jackson has published several studies on Andrade and translated several of his books into English. In French, Antoine Chareyre has translated and published several important works by Brazilian modernists, including Oswald's *Pau-Brasil* as *Bois-Brésil*.<sup>9</sup>

## **Chapter One**

The first chapter of the dissertation focuses on the Brazilian modernists' experience of trying to integrate themselves into an international community and dialogue, as well as

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<sup>7</sup> The first half of the 1995 collection of essays *Oswald Plural* put together from seminars given on the centenary of Andrade's birth are on reception of his work and its lasting influence. The last essay in the book is actually a commentary by a theater director who laments the fact that Andrade is so popular in Brazilian academic circles and that his plays are not produced more often and well-known by the public at large.

<sup>8</sup> See in particular Eder Silveira's *Tupi or not Tupi: nação e nacionalidade em José de Alencar e Oswald de Andrade*, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Bois-Brésil, poésie et manifeste*, translated and annotated by Antoine Chareyre (Paris: Editions La Différence, 2010).

on the cracks in the facade of Paris as a transnational cultural capital. I first present the historical conditions in 1920s Paris – increased immigration, xenophobia, and xenophilia – the coexistence of contradictory feelings or impulses and the acceleration of social change at that moment creating a fertile substrate for the growth of modernism as a climate of thought, feeling and opinion, and as an aesthetic movement. I argue that the Brazilian modernists' contribution to the Parisian avant-garde was real but under-acknowledged at the time by their contemporaries, and their original take on modernist ideas and style affected the works produced by European writers and artists, so that this was more of a conversation rather than an apprenticeship. In making this argument, I present several stories that are part of this worldview, that the Brazilians partially accepted, partially fought against: first, that cultural innovation happens first in countries that are older, richer, and usually more modernized, and afterward the less-developed, newer countries adopt and adapt these innovations as they struggle to catch up; second, that the question of nationality can be ignored by those whose nation's literature has already attained appreciation in the rest of the world, and that everyone else's writing inevitably focuses on national belonging or standing, which is a weakness and an obstacle to achieving true creativity.

The Brazilian modernistas do seem to think that this relationship can change, that the roles of unequal value are not permanent and they can play a part in changing them. Backwardness in comparison to a European (and more specifically French) chronology of development (economic, social, aesthetic) is a constant topic of discussion in the modernists' private and public writing, and the attitudes vary; Drummond de Andrade exemplifies fatalism about the Brazil's place and dismisses the value of all Brazilian artistic



production (rural/urban, popular/elite, from any subset of the population). I try to show that this anxiety regarding backwardness exists in other post-colonial Latin American writing of the same time, as well as in colonial Francophone writing of the same time. I also argue that Oswald's work applies a very different value judgment to Brazil's cultural production, but nonetheless he also frames things in terms of chronology and backwardness.

I describe how Brazilians of the educated class come to see themselves as mentally French, which explains the unexpectedly large Brazilian presence in Paris, and emphasize the post-colonial rationale for it. As much as the Brazilian writers in Paris share this self-description, they also share a similar frustration with how ignorant their host society seems to be about their specific history, and dislike blending into a vague category of otherness.

I also present the case that Paris serves as a site of consecration (where authors seek out recognition) for the Brazilians for pragmatic reasons, including the absence of direct colonialism and the access to a wider readership. Outside of the Francophone world, speaking French connotes access to the resources necessary for acquiring a language not imposed through colonialism. I situate the specific Brazilian preference for Paris within the context of Paris' utility to non-French writers more generally, emphasizing the contradiction presented by the relative ease of access for fluctuating waves of foreigners and the weighty cultural capital accrued by its literary history. In the case of the Brazilians, while they do seek recognition of their own work in Paris, they also often make it clear that they do not fully believe in the superiority of Parisian aesthetic judgment and cultural knowledge, and strive to separate themselves from more credulous Latin Americans.

Literary histories by Brazilian academics often present the modernistas' participation in the Parisian literary world as a failed aspiration to make their mark, but the reality of it is more complex. I give examples of visual artists and composers who were able to have their work shown or produced, writers whose work was translated into French in order to reach a French audience, but also of writers like Mário de Andrade who were ambivalent about pursuing a French-speaking audience. Popular music from Brazil exemplifies an even more complex infiltration of Parisian culture at the time; it was performed in many different milieus, but was frequently mislabeled or misattributed (by producers or consumers), or was reappropriated by performers of other nationalities. At the same time, recent work on the musical scene in Paris at the time also shows the type of collaboration between Brazilians and Europeans that took place, and the encounters between Brazilians of different regions and social strata that their presence in Paris made possible. In addition to realized collaboration, I also provide examples of planned but unrealized collaboration, in order to argue that the collaborative approach to artistic production was more prevalent at the time than even what publication, performance or exhibit records would show.

I conclude the chapter by reflecting on how the image of cannibalism recurs as a alternative way to conceptualize cultural influence and power relations, especially as artists from a less dominant culture seek an audience at home or elsewhere. Likewise, I argue that this struggle to participate on equal footing and to gain a cosmopolitan audience was a political act, despite the fact that many of these same Brazilian writers or artists later categorize that period of their work as apolitical (or insufficiently political).

## **Chapter Two**

Beginning with an anecdote linking Cendrars' primitivist views of both Africa and Brazil, this chapter describes how both Cendrars and Andrade used primitivism in their own works as a tool for critiquing modernization and its associated cultural developments. First I explain how primitivism appears to be one thing and is in reality many things, and I explain what makes it provocative and politically incorrect. Primitivism views the world dualistically and generalizes in order to maintain those binaries. In doing this, Cendrars' and Andrade's writing reflects some cultural categorization issues that are widespread at that moment in the art world, in the social sciences, etc. The 1920s are not the only time when primitivism is popular, but it coincides with the end of French colonial expansion, more prominent critique of the colonial mission,<sup>10</sup> the development of anthropology towards the discipline it is today, and accelerated technological modernization. At a time when urban metropolitan experience seems to be more and more mediated, primitivism holds out the possibility of immediacy.

First, I argue that primitivism simultaneously serves nationalist or anti-nationalist ideologies in Cendrars' and Andrade's formulations. The modernistas' primitivist works usually focus on the Brazilian *indio*, whereas Cendrars' primitivism includes blurry, de-specified Africans or Amerindians en masse. We might want to say this supports the argument that third-world literature tends to put national allegory ahead of aesthetic criteria, but I think a more helpful take-away is that Andrade's primitivist nationalism is equally committed to showing the non-universality of the European worldview, and that

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<sup>10</sup> On this topic, see J. P. Daughton, "Behind the Imperial Curtain: International Humanitarian Efforts and the Critique of French Colonialism in the Interwar Years," *French Historical Studies* 34, no. 3 (Aug. 2011): 503–528.

Andrade's and Cendrars' primitivisms both provoke national self-interrogation. Brazilian critics even today interpret the continued nationalist angle as the modernistas bobbing with the waves created by more powerful nations (the Casanova model) but that argument is weakened by looking at the wide variety of political ideologies that this primitivism served. Similarly, Andrade employs primitivist tropes both in *Seraphim Ponte Grande*, a novel that he later rejected as being excessively cosmopolitan in aim, and in his "Cannibal Manifestos," which were staunchly nationalist. In either case, primitivism permits critique of either a strong or weak national identity.

Secondly, I argue that primitivism relies on ideas about race to create projections of otherness, and Andrade and Cendrars are no exception. They do, however, invert the value judgments from time to time. Many of these primitivist works use terms that are clearly racial when they are making a primitivist critique of something modern, or when elevating something non-western, and that changes in skin color are a repeated plot element in their fiction, but very little of the scholarship on these writers brings up the idea of race as an important element in the construction of their literary universe. Cendrars and the modernistas were reading contemporary theories on race though, and at times directly insert themselves into debates, and even more frequently, descriptions of both minor and major non-white characters feature racialized characteristics, especially in the absence of further character depth. These authors don't necessarily aim for realism (one reason why non-primitivist authors have done the same), as evidenced especially when characters change skin color. Rather, the descriptions of non-whiteness serve as markers, often positive, of alterity, exoticism, and excitement.

Primitivism relies on a desire for authenticity (or an anxiety about not having it), but Cendrars' and Andrade's primitivism instead debunks perceptions about authenticity. Authenticity as a criterion for evaluating writing might overlap with Originality in that they both assume that imitation is a weakening process, but within primitivism it can stand as an alternative to originality, a point of view that Cendrars and the modernistas take, and that later critics have repeated. It doesn't matter if Cendrars or Mário has borrowed from other writers, from other writing, from other disciplines without adhering to that discipline's rules, as long as they have written something that feels authentic to the writer or to his readers. In his *Anthologie Nègre*, Cendrars has borrowed accumulated facts from ethnographers, but has removed explanation and translation, borrowed legitimacy and removed judgment. This might provide authenticity in that the content is authentically strange and opaque to the reader. On the other hand, Oswald de Andrade's writing was judged by his contemporaries to be less authentically Brazilian, in that his more playful formal choices reminded those in his cohort of European writers' choices. In either case, both authors' writing calls attention to the artifice of their primitivist works, in a way that makes the reader question their expectations of art and literature from the developing world or from the metropole.

I conclude by noting that Brazilian scholarship on Andrade's work continues to prioritize identifying the European sources of most of Andrade's ideas, and French-language scholarship on Cendrars, conversely, continues to accept his claims on authorship or originality, side-stepping the uncomfortable implications of some of his primitivist logic. Despite the fact that Cendrars and Andrade are such atypical examples of primitivist writers, through whom primitivism reveals its own defects, scholars still often rely on the

defective binaries of primitivism (primitive/modern, derivative/innovative) to situate them in literary history.

### ***Chapter Three***

This chapter narrows its focus to the poetry books that Cendrars and Andrade wrote during their collaborative period, which share important characteristics suggesting that the two writers were reading each other's work and influenced each other, a collaboration that most scholarship on the two authors either doesn't acknowledge or dismisses. I argue that the works not being read together or not being seen as collaborative results from scholars' expectations about influence continuing to be a one-way street, shaped or limited by socio-economic history.

I first enumerated the facts of the case, that both books came out around the same time, contain poems that refer to various specific places visited during a trip around Brazil the writers made together along with other members of the *modernismo* movement. Both are interspersed with drawings by Tarsila do Amaral and share stylistic characteristics: parataxis, lack of rhyming, inclusion of non-translated foreign words, etc. I then argue, borrowing terminology and concepts from *La fin de l'intériorité*, that both have latched onto photography's role in crystallizing the crisis of the lyric subject, and sought to incorporate the changes in perspective that photography offers into their own writing. They both seem to reject a first wave of modernism in their home countries (or continents) and both admire and mistrust the changes that technological modernization has brought, despite arriving at that point of view via different routes. For both authors, photography is a polysemic signifier, giving them a way to describe immediate experience, to abstract

landscapes and scenes into shapes and colors (visual stimuli) and pause a scene (taking one moment in time and freezing it or expanding it), to highlight the confusion caused by illusionism or expose the artifice behind imitations of reality that also work to interpret it.

The two books also share a common metatextuality, and in this I associate them with *Serafim Ponte Grande* and *Moravagine*. They refer back to their own existence as books in playful ways, Cendrars and Andrade placing themselves in the stories or vignettes from time to time. They also borrow text from other books and resituate it in overt ways, sometimes copying (or inventing citations) from much older travelogues, or borrowing techniques from more recent work like Dadaists and Surrealists. The combination of historical references to colonization and the borrowing from explorers' texts in order to make poems about places the two writers were visiting centuries later creates the impression that both perceive Brazil as an unknown place with unlimited potential for discovery and exploitation, a potential that Europe lacks. Especially in the case of *Pau-Brasil*, however, references, citations and parodies of older stories or songs are often done with ironic twists, hinting at the author's awareness that romanticizing the country is dangerous, that the greedy notation of things discovered en route doesn't lead to real ownership, and that much of the potential attributed to the land by early colonizers still remained at the potential stage.

The third area of literary strategy that Cendrars and Andrade share is what I call linguistic populism. Both Cendrars and Andrade, for differing reasons, are reacting to a persistent elitism in the literary scenes in both France and Brazil, something that they see persisting even within the avant-garde movements. Despite their revolutionary manifestos, their interest in appropriating language from different registers, and their rejection of

bourgeois morality, the difficulty of the avant-garde works themselves meant that they were written for a relatively restricted audience. Cendrars and Andrade were interested in broadening the field of potential producers and consumers of poetry, and at times provocatively reject the currently dominant producers and consumers. To this effect, Cendrars and Andrade borrow linguistic forms from non-traditional sources, ones that are closer and more familiar to a mass public, and embrace unconsecrated modes of expression, such as advertising, telegrams or puns. They both purposely make grammar or spelling mistakes, or mimic the speech patterns of the uneducated or popular classes, at times poking fun, but often exalting them.

Andrade is prescriptive while Cendrars is descriptive when it comes to the poetic destruction and construction imagined in their works from the collaborative period; Andrade is trying to build a movement and Cendrars' ideas about making poetry seem to only apply to his own. But they both embrace creative destruction when they witness it on a social level, with the hope that the end result can follow in the utopian Brazilian model, and this continues even after each has left behind writing poetry, or their collaborative relationship.

#### ***Chapter Four***

Where the previous chapters of this project focused on historical conditions, situated Cendrars and the Brazilian modernists within an international modernist movement, and presented evidence of their collaboration, the fourth and last chapter clarifies the chronology of the interactions between Cendrars and the Brazilian modernistas, including the personal along with the professional and the political, and in



doing so, often presses against the post-hoc narrative that the writers affirm in their later years. As the rehabilitated chronology unfurls, and more emphatically after the writers' story has passed from their own hands into those of literary scholars, I point to threads of academic analysis that have become tangled into the very big-picture stories about cultural influence and appropriation between Europe and the global South that Cendrars and Andrade had playfully or combatively written against.

In telling this story, the chapter also deals with 1929-30 as a turning point historically and culturally, a crisis in global capitalism after which national belonging changes its meaning both in the economic core and periphery, as well as in the republic of letters. The importance of social, economic and political changes at that moment is undeniable, from the economic crash to Getulio Vargas' taking control in Brazil and then eventually the popular front in France. By Andrade's account, he realizes around then that poetry "isn't worth a fart," founds the newspaper *O Homem do Povo*, and becomes active in the Brazilian Communist Party (partially also because of his involvement with radical activist and modernist writer Patricia Galvão). For his part, Cendrars gives up writing fiction and poetry in favor of journalism, and won't return to fiction until the 1950s. But the previous chapters should show that Cendrars and Andrade didn't just discover politics at this point, rather they were representing these crises of early globalization already; I would argue that it's rather a change in scale and terminology.

It is also important to look at how Cendrars and Andrade rewrite their accounts of the period; in later writings Cendrars said that Brazilian modernist project was a "vast misunderstanding," and likewise Andrade later claimed that he learned nothing from Paris other than an appreciation for his home country. In a sense this is a retreat back to where

they “belong” after a moment where they were working with similar aesthetic theories or practices. Of course, as individual people, there may be individual psychological reasons for the two writers drifting apart (White suggests that one possible reason was the realization that they had used each other), but I think it is useful to look at the rewriting in terms of what it reveals about the tensions created by expansion and unification of the global marketplace of ideas and by the reconfiguration of national belonging.

Finally, this chapter examines some of the economic language used among the critics and literary scholars of both Cendrars and Andrade, framing their literary relationship in terms of debts owed and credit given. Despite the caveats that the World Republic of Letters is not coeval with our geo-political maps and that economic power relationships are not sufficient to determine cultural valuation, the recourse to an economic vocabulary within literary criticism or academic studies reveals the extent to which those maps and power relationships can, consciously or not, place a thumb on the scale.

## Chapter One: Foreign Paris

On May 11, 1924 Oswald de Andrade gave a talk at the Sorbonne entitled “L’effort intellectuel du Brésil contemporain” that set off a wave of excitement among his modernista friends and colleagues, in Paris and Brazil. Mário de Andrade, the other principal figure of Brazilian modernism, wrote from São Paulo to Manuel Bandeira in Rio, to tell him how “engraçadíssimo” it was that in Paris Oswald had become friends with Blaise Cendrars, Jules Romains, Picasso, Jean Cocteau, and had talked about his compatriots at that august institution. The excitement elicited three exclamation points. Most of the modernistas in Paris at the time corresponded extensively with Mário, and most viewed the event as an important benchmark in their entry into a wider literary world. Sergio Millet, who had been embedded in French-speaking Switzerland for so long that he signed his letters “Serge,” pointed out the difficulty in accomplishing such a task in an intelligible way:

Good impression but one defect: subject too vast for one conference, from where an imperious need to summarize a great deal, which, given the quantity of names completely bizarre to the French, must have become incomprehensible to the multi-cephalic and discordant intelligence of the auditorium (Millet, letter, 22 may 1923).<sup>11</sup>

The difficulty remains in trying to give an account of this particular period of Brazilian literature, not only because so many writers and artists of completely different worldviews chose to adopt that mantle, but also because their writing was so often reflexive and argumentative. A “multi-cephalic and discordant” audience was perhaps appropriate in this case, as Paris in 1924 was increasingly open to unintelligibility and the unknown.

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<sup>11</sup> Letter to Mário de Andrade, in the Arquivo Mário de Andrade (IEB-USP).

The historical period in between the two world wars is a particularly target-rich environment for studying foreign presence and cultural activity in the Paris area, as immigration after World War I rose considerably. For example, in 1921, the non-French population of Ile-de-France was 5.3% (300,000), and by 1931 it had doubled to 9.2% (600,000) (Schor 14-15).<sup>12</sup> The inter-war period brought a much larger immigrant population than previous decades, because France had a more open policy than its European neighbors. Paris, in particular, offered immigrants easy access to the city, and an hourly wage that was 50% higher than elsewhere in France. The attractive immigration policy and working conditions for foreigners were due to its lower fertility rate, and to the fact that France then had sustained the most severe percentage of population loss in the war out of all the participating countries.<sup>13</sup> The favorable conditions for foreigners eventually eroded, however. Foreigners initially were not subject to special taxes, nor to particular restrictions on property ownership or business licenses, but these were imposed in the early 30s as a response to the economic crisis (Schor 18-19). From the 1929 economic crisis through the Second World War, immigration rates declined dramatically. The department of the Seine's foreign born population, for instance, plummets from 7.7% to 4.1% during WWII and its immediate aftermath - so the period of massive foreign presence in France is short, but gives a foretaste of the even more significant increases after WWII (Schor 15).

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<sup>12</sup> Ralph Schor, "Le Paris des libértés," in *Le Paris des étrangers*, ed. André Kaspi and Antoine Marès (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1989), 14-15.

<sup>13</sup> Maurice Agulhon, *La République, Tome 1: 1880-1932* (Paris: Fayard, 2011); Alec Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Brazil likewise faced war-related developmental and economic impacts: a lack of European goods during WWI led to increased industrial production. Brazil also experienced massive immigration at this time to man the factories (Johnson 189),<sup>14</sup> and while its immigration was spurred by new industry rather than to compensate for population loss like in France, both were experiencing diversification of the population as part of the modernization process.<sup>15</sup> The wartime and post-war financial developments also meant an increase in expendable income in Brazil, making travel to Europe more feasible in the 1920s.<sup>16</sup> Latin Americans with the financial means were able to go to Europe for studies in greater numbers. By 1925 the Cité Universitaire was founded to house foreign students in Paris, and Latin-Americans constituted half the foreign defenders of medical theses in France (Schor 15).

Both xenophobia and xenophilia metastasized during this time of increased contact with foreigners. In *Le Paris des étrangers*, Ralph Schor enumerates some of the negative conditions that underpinned the French reputation for indifference or hostility to immigrants: foreigners were more likely to need medical attention, making up about 10% of hospital intake in the 1920s and 30s (Schor 30), including 20% of admissions for venereal disease. They also had higher arrest rates than the population at large: from 1926-1931, they constituted only 9.2% of the population and 25% of arrests. Although without a forensic sociological study it would be hard to know how much of this was attributable to

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<sup>14</sup> Randal Johnson. "Brazilian Modernism: An Idea Out of Place?" In *Modernism and its Margins: Reinscribing Cultural Modernity from Spain and Latin America*, ed. Anthony Geist and José B. Monleón (New York: Garland, 1999), 186-214.

<sup>15</sup> Worker strikes took place in 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, and the PCF and PCB both start up not long after Russian revolutions. 1930 (post-crash) might have marked a time when they all retreated back to nationalism and xenophobia. In 1930s the Estado Novo becomes a dangerous place for communists, Paris reduces immigration and has less to offer foreigners anyway (Johnson 189).

<sup>16</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Brazil: A Land of the Future* (Riverside: Ariadne, 1941) has a very readable history of the country's economy.

relative poverty or different surveillance practices among the police in foreign neighborhoods, the knowledge of this became fodder for xenophobia or racism, most famously by Charles Maurras around 1920, who claimed that Jews were invading France with the plague, typhus and lice, and compared the immigrants to contagion itself (Schor 29).

A conservative pundit of the period describes with horror the equal and opposite reaction to the foreign population among his contemporaries:

“Paris is stricken with *xénophilie*, some say with *xénofolie*. It reserves its admiration for everything that comes from afar. Its own subsidized theaters are encumbered with Italian artists, Spanish, Romanian, Argentine, Portuguese. It’s going crazy for Russian music, Viennese operettas, American films, Sudanese orchestras, Mexican dances, German architecture, Czechoslovakian painting. It’s suffering, in short, from a severe personality crisis” (Schor 30).

Significantly, the welcome foreign contributions are centered in artistic production for Parisian consumption: “foreigners who, through their exotic origins, stimulated the imagination of Parisians were welcomed with favor” (Schor 21). Certain nationalities or exoticized groups became trendy. A Russian fad started in 1922, and hit its apogee in 1925-26, Josephine Baker and the *Revue Nègre* premiered in 1925 with overwhelming success, and the renewed Museum of Ethnography in 1928 and the Colonial Exhibition proved immensely popular (Jules-Rosette 10-11).<sup>17</sup> Although it is less quickly associated with Parisian nightlife than American jazz, Brazilian *maxixe* had a significant amount of success there. *Maxixe* performers came to Paris repeatedly from 1889 onward, mostly as performance (singers, orchestras and dancers), but also in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were Brazilian nightclubs, one of which, *l’Idéal*, banned the dance in 1914, indicating the

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<sup>17</sup> Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *Black Paris: The African Writers’ Landscape* (Urbana/Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1998).

extent of its popularity (Seigel 75).<sup>18</sup> Micol Seigel's *Uneven Encounters* highlights other Brazilian nightclubs in Paris, such as the Guibout, Chez Duque, and La Réserve de Saint-Cloud, and her historical account of this popular cultural phenomenon and the effects of its diffusion illustrate many of the strange promotion and reception issues that recur in cultural production by groups labeled as "exotic," from the most elite Brazilians from São Paulo to African American soldiers coming to Paris after the war.

### ***A) Modernism in the minority***

What, then, is the purpose of talking about shifting demographics in France and popular culture in a study on modernism? It's one of the constitutive paradoxes of modernism itself, to be defined so much by negation and discord, to contest majority opinion on aesthetic matters, to seek out the future in what is perceived to be backward. Peter Gay identifies the modernist's primary shared characteristic as the "lure of heresy," which applies even though it can be compatible with any political ideology or religious belief or lack thereof (Gay 3).<sup>19</sup> The paradox continues in that while adversarial in nature and tone, "... a substantial amount of credible evidence gathered across all the fields of high culture provides unity amidst variety, a single aesthetic mind-set, a recognizable style. [...] In short what I'm calling the modernist style was a climate of thought, feeling and opinion" (Gay 2-3). For all modernism's desire to distinguish and differentiate, it is always presented as collective, even despite itself; what Gay describes as a "far-flung family" is

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<sup>18</sup> Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2008).

akin to the ‘intellectual international’ imagined by Valery Larbaud, “who in the 1920s foresaw the advent of a small, cosmopolitan, enlightened society that would silence national prejudices by recognizing and promoting the free circulation of great works of avant-garde literature from all over the world” (Casanova 172).<sup>20</sup>

Gay emphasizes the mythical nature of the romantically marginalized artists, pointing out that many of them actually became fairly successful and were absorbed into bourgeois socio-economic groups, “modernists gladly confirm[ing] their status as pariahs by cultivating the painful pleasures of victimhood” (Gay 11). This is a more individualized version of the metaphor of avant-garde itself, the image of a small but brave contingent, valiantly charging ahead into the future, most likely with no army behind them (Calinescu 95).<sup>21</sup> Because the adversarial style was compatible with various political ideologies and value systems, however, this heretical inclination could as easily elevate popular cultural forms as mock or debase traditionally elevated ones. And because this is an inherently transnational literary phenomenon with an adversarial modus operandi, Pascale Casanova’s *World Republic of Letters* helps to conceptualize a ‘literature world’ as it was conceived of at the time, one in which power dynamics exist and are contested without necessarily adhering to socio-economic power differentials or even necessarily historically logical connections like those between colonies and metropolises (Casanova xii). This idea is particularly valuable in articulating how Brazilian modernists, who had given themselves a nationalistic task, fit into a cosmopolitan narrative.

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<sup>20</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Mattei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).



The corpus of literary texts and primary sources for this study of influence and exchange contains a variety of genres, for two main reasons: firstly, the sources of inspiration (or the cultural capital pillaged) are not only literary material but also visual and performative artifacts, and secondly, not all signs of influence make it to the published version or to the story told about the work later. It is this gap between the signs and the story that is of particular interest. As discussed in the introduction, over the course of the dissertation as a whole I will be discussing books of poetry and novels, but also their preparatory notes, and letters written by or to Oswald and Cendrars, and some of the principal actors surrounding them during the collaborative period.

In trying to understand the diverse corpus of written primary sources, I frequently turned to secondary sources that not only dealt with my topic directly, but also multiple other artistic media, like painting, music, ballets, plays, etc. This is necessary because this was a creative period in which a great deal of collaboration and sharing of ideas occurred among literary, visual, and performing arts. Because of this fact of history, in scholarship on aesthetic modernism some inter-disciplinary bleeding is common; visual art critics like Peter Gay bring up literary changes and literary critics like Mattei Calinescu refer to painters. I primarily focus on writing, but have found the examination of music, for example, to offer helpful ways to approach questions of influence and reception (Seigel, Vianna),<sup>22</sup> and letters back to Brazil from modernista painters express many of the same creative quandaries as those of the writers in their cohort. There are, of course, some limitations to how much can be taken from discourse about visual or performing arts and applied to literature, the most salient being that language itself is less of a barrier to

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<sup>22</sup> Seigel, *Uneven Encounters*; Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba: popular music and national identity in Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

consumption or reception of the former than of the latter. I will address this issue later in the chapter, while arguing that work on other media can reveal a great deal about the conceptual disruptions operated by a modernist ethos.

The international character of this tenuously defined movement was another diversity issue that I had to grapple with. The fact that modernism is international is a commonplace idea, but in my research, I found unexpected surprises in the ways modernist ideas moved and overlapped transnationally. Most general texts on modernism are fairly euro-centric (a limitation that is often replicated in the classroom), primarily focused on French, German, or English writers and artists, with forays into Italy and Switzerland for futurism and Dada, perhaps also going as far as the USSR for Russian futurism or constructivist painting, and the Americas are primarily represented by the US after the Armory Show.<sup>23</sup> By and large, the developing world is left out of this picture. Scholarship on these ‘peripheral’ modernisms seems to isolate the one area or linguistic region targeted; my field of inquiry was Latin America, but I could as easily have found work on Hebrew-language modernism, for example.

The work on Latin American modernism reveals similarities across the Spanish-language or Portuguese-language canon of that period, as well as particularities about how works from this area differ from those produced in Europe, coming from different historical and socio-economic conditions<sup>24</sup>, and generally scholars of Latin American

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<sup>23</sup> Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy*; Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*; Marjorie A. Beale, *The Modernist Enterprise: French elites and the threat of modernity, 1900-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Jorge Schwartz, *Vanguardas Latino-Americanas: Polemicas, Manifestos, e Textos Críticos* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1995); Wilson Martin, *The Modernist Idea: A Critical Survey of Brazilian Writing in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1971); Anthony L. Geist and José Monleón, *Modernism and the Margins, reinscribing cultural modernity from Spain and Latin America* (New York: Garland Publ., 1999); Vivian Schelling, ed. *Through the kaleidoscope: the experience of modernity in Latin America* (New York: Verso, 2000).

modernism are asking “whether dominant theories of modernism, normally based on European or ‘metropolitan’ experience, can account for the ‘peripheral’ expressions of Hispanic and Latin American modernism” (Johnson 186). Works on Latin America, and the Brazilian modernismo movement more specifically, present the artists as consuming and reacting to European modernism (especially that of France), eventually attempting to break away from it and produce something more indigenous.<sup>25</sup> Relatively absent, however, from this narrative is the Brazilian presence within European modernism, which was part of the upswing in foreign presence in Paris during the interwar period. I would like to fill in the gap, presenting Brazilian modernists as a constitutive part of international modernism, interacting with the European scene as agents, recognizing themselves to be taking part in a competitive environment and internalizing some of the myths about how that environment works but also challenging them. This type of analysis exists for many other “Othered” groups in Paris (African Americans, Caribbeans, etc), but not really for Brazilians as far as I have been able to tell. As a model for what this type of study could be, I have looked to studies of other foreign “colonies” or peripheral groups within the Paris literary scene, like Benetta Jules-Rosette’s *Black Paris*, Tyler Stovall’s *Paris Noir*, Brent Edwards’ *The Practice of Diaspora*, A. James Arnold’s *Modernism and Négritude*.<sup>26</sup>

In comparative modernism scholarship, the global South or third world is blurred into the background. This work is an attempt to bring part of it into focus. At the same time,

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<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey Needell, *A Tropical Belle Epoque: elite culture and society in turn-of-the-century Rio de Janeiro*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Aracy Amaral, *Blaise Cendrars no Brasil e os modernistas* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins editora, 1970); Erdmute Wenzel White, *Les années vingt au Brésil: le modernisme et l'avant-garde internationale*, (Paris: Éditions hispaniques, 1977).

<sup>26</sup> A. James Arnold, *Modernism and Negritude: the poetry and poetics of Aimé Césaire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Latin American modernism studies seem to opt out of testing the hypothesis that the periphery remains unseen by the metropolis: in his article “Brazilian Modernism, an Idea out of Place?” Randal Johnson makes the usual argument that “[o]bviously the focus must be on the periphery rather than the metropolis” (Johnson 187). This is an area where I am attempting to do something different; it’s possible to read the Brazilian modernistas as a part of the center, because the location of this center (Paris) doesn’t mean its content is the same (French). In a way, the periphery is already there, but for some reason it is difficult to see past a fascination with periphery in order to see the production by the periphery. In this chapter I will show the prevalence of a particularly one-sided conceptualization of power relations in the literary world, in particular how Brazil and France fit into the narrative. I will highlight certain conceptual myths upon which the narrative is built, and how the case of the Brazilian modernists makes those myths harder to uphold. Finally I will offer some evidence to fill the missing parts of the story.

### ***B) The temporal narrative about Paris and foreigners***

Through some comparative studies on peripheral modernism, a common narrative emerges: Latin American writers, or other writers from the world’s socio-economic periphery look towards places of aesthetic modernity (who have a longer tradition giving them credit). It is from these places that the “peripheral” writers obtain modern ideas and that facilitate their own secondary entry into modernity. Writers from more powerful linguistic regions get more credibility without the author needing to demand it (or needing to worry about his nation’s place in this schema), and peripheral writers first must struggle

through and past their national identities in order to get recognition. Nationalist sentiment fuels the fire, something that is like a dirty little secret because it means one's motives are not pure, one's commitment is not only to some ideal of innovation. The major conduit through which those peripheral writers get their credit is consecration by the deciders in the center, which, at this particular time, is Paris.

Casanova's book provoked criticism for presenting this narrative, because it's an old story, one that has essentially the same plot as medieval European men of letters arguing over *translatio studii et imperii*. But this general narrative arc is discernible in much of Brazilian scholarship on the modernismo movement, and the writers themselves at the time seemed to also view their prospects in this way, as can be seen in their letters to each other during the period in which many of them were actively participating in the Parisian literary scene. In sketching out the contours of this narrative, however, we can see some of the plot irregularities and inconsistencies, and moments where the actors seem to doubt the script.

As noted earlier, accounts of the modernist period are awash in adversarial language, to a large extent because the writers themselves used this frame in their manifestos. This isn't unique to the period; even Baudelaire complained about the overuse of military metaphors, and the Pléiade's *Défense et Illustration de la langue française* begins with a defense. Casanova's modern version of this genre borrows terminology from capitalist conflict - monopoly, relative advantage, annexation and colonization - but it matches the tone set by many of the manifestos or opinion pieces by avant-garde writers from Dada to Surrealism. Whereas the antagonistic ethos is common to almost all avant-garde writing about its own writing of the time, not all directly engage with their nation's

(or linguistic region's) place relative to others. In the case of Brazilian modernismo's self-promotion and self-analysis, Casanova's book is particularly illustrative. The idea that "literary frontiers come into view that are independent of political boundaries" allows an alternate map of the world to emerge, "whose linguistic areas are ordered by power relations that nonetheless govern the form of texts that are written in and circulate throughout these lands; a world that has its own capital, its own provinces and borders, in which languages become instruments of power" (Casanova 4).

The Brazilian modernists seem to share this view of the literary world, as evidenced in their manifestos, as well as in their personal conversations and correspondence. Even in the most subversive or ironic contemporary analysis of the Brazilian literary situation, Oswald de Andrade evokes his country's assets as raw materials: "vegetal riches, ore [...] gold and dance," and claims that they never managed "the exportation of poetry."<sup>27</sup> Andrade uses the image of Brazil's history as an exploitation colony as a metaphor for its place within a world market for culture. This aligns with Casanova's portrayal of the literary world where colonial relationships are perpetuated through annexation of culture: "[f]or a language no less than for the literary tradition associated with it, these outsiders [writers from the periphery] supply a new way of keeping up with modernity and thereby of revaluing the stock of literary capital" (Casanova 120). But where Casanova sees the production from the periphery continuing to be exploited without challenges to the center of a linguistic-cultural area<sup>28</sup>, the modernists seem to think that it is possible to decenter

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<sup>27</sup> Oswald de Andrade and Stella M. de Sá Rego, "Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry," *Latin American Literary Review* 14, no. 27 (Jan.–Jun. 1986): 184-187. In-text references use abbreviation *MPBP* as described in bibliography.

<sup>28</sup> Casanova takes the example of the authors of "Eloge de la Créolité" being subsumed into the French literary canon (120).

the lusophone one, and expect their center – industrial São Paulo rather than Rio de Janeiro or Lisbon – to foment as much debate as Paris had.

In response to Oswald's *Manifesto Pau-Brasil*, Manuel Bandeira published a harsh critique, but Bandeira's account of it reveals a certain amount of playfulness on both sides, and he hints that his and Oswald's bluster was intended to disrupt the status quo rather than advance a specific agenda. Responding to Mário de Andrade, who had called the manifesto "horrible and frivolous", Bandeira found it "admirable," but fell into the conflict between Oswald and Mário nonetheless, as if it were inevitable:

Seated at a table at the Bar Nacional, Oswald lamented the habits of mutual praise and deification of literary groups. Jokingly, he said that he would make attacks, plots. I conceded as much. I promised to do the same. The tone of my article in the paragraph about intrigues couldn't be distorted except by treacherous enemies. However it was misunderstood by my own comrades in arms.<sup>29</sup>

Here it is clear that what was meant to be healthy debate had somehow slid into disrupting what Bandeira saw as natural allegiances created by nationality.

Complementing Casanova's narrative about a geographic arrangement of relative literary power is a temporal arrangement, and using either the terms "avant-garde" or "modernist" immediately brings this temporal aspect to the fore. Her image of a literary GMT, a place that represents the far edge of modernity and from where others can measure how close or far behind they are, fairly accurately synthesizes the worldview of avant-garde writers and artists from developing countries, including the Brazilian modernists, and also persists in a great deal of Brazilian cultural scholarship. The sociologist Renato

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<sup>29</sup> My translation: "Sentados a uma mesa do Bar Nacional, Oswald lamentou os costumes de elogios mútuos e endeusamento dos grupos literários. Disse gracejando que ia fazer ataques, intrigas. Dei-lhe razão. Prometi fazer o mesmo. O tom do meu artigo no paragrafo das intrigas não podia ser desvirtuado senão por inimigos desleais. Entretanto foi descompreendido pelos próprios companheiros de batalha." Letter (17 Apr. 1924). From Mário de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira, *Correspondência: Mário de Andrade & Manuel Bandeira* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2000) 116-7n. Hereafter cited as "MA/MB."

Ortiz characterized Brazil's avant-garde moment as 'modernism without modernization', contrasting Brazil to Europe by saying they were anticipating modernity that they assumed was elsewhere, rather than reflecting or expressing something already there, in the hopes of precipitating socio-economic modernization through their cultural upheaval (Johnson 188-9). Roberto Schwarz takes this one step further, claiming that Brazil gets cultural whiplash because they adopt big changes in ideas from Europe but don't change anything in their society: "For the arts [...] there was always a way to adore, quote, ape, sack, adapt or devour these manners and fashions, so that they would reflect, in the imperfectiveness, a cultural embarrassment in which we would recognize ourselves" (*Misplaced Ideas*, 27-28).<sup>30</sup>

Two 1924 letters from Carlos Drummond de Andrade to Mário explicitly describe Brazilian backwardness as conceived of by many of the Brazilians themselves:

Nov. 22, 1924

Personally, I find tragic this story of being born between uncouth landscapes and under skies that are hardly civilized. I'm a terrible citizen, I have to confess. I was born in Minas when I should have been born (I don't see vanity in this confession) in Paris. I find Brazil worthless. Forgive my unburdening, which won't cause you or your clear-eyed intelligence a shock. Brazil has no mental atmosphere, has no literature, has no art, it only has vagabond politicians who are either imbeciles or crooks. I hate Brazil for being an environment that has stunted the growth of my mind. I am hereditarily European, or before: French. Today, as I find it indecent to continue being French in Brazil, I must renounce the only tradition I truly respect, the French tradition. I must resign myself to being indigenous among the indigenous, without illusions. An enormous sacrifice."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas*, trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> My translation: "Pessoalmente, acho lastimável essa historia de nascer entre paisagens incultas e sob céus pouco civilizados. Sou um mau cidadão, confesso. É que nasci em Minas, quando deveria nascer (não vejo cabotinismo nessa confissão) em Paris. Acho o Brasil infecto. Perdoe o desabafo, que a v., inteligência clara, não causará escândalo. O Brasil não tem atmosfera mental; não tem literatura; não tem arte; tem apenas uns políticos muito vagabundos e razoavelmente imbecis ou velhacos. Detesto o Brasil como a um ambiente nocivo à expansão do meu espirito. Sou hereditariamente europeu, ou antes: francês. Agora, como acho indecente continuar a ser francês no Brasil, tenho que renunciar a única tradição verdadeiramente respeitável para mim, a tradição francesa. Tenho que resignar-me a ser indígena entre os indígenas, sem



Dec. 30, 1924

But look: I'm with Oswald on one point. The quintessential expression of Brazilian-ness is stupidity. And if we want to be de facto Brazilians, let's be dumb, barbaric, primitive, let's not make psychological inquiries; let's not travel in Joyce, Conrad, Cendrars, Proust and other illustrious foreigners... Ah, if they held you to that, old buddy, you'd prefer to kill yourself"<sup>32</sup>

Despite the humor in his dramatic lamentations of the state of cultural development and opportunities in Brazil, it appears that Drummond has internalized not only multiple stereotypes of culture and society outside of the most industrialized world, and of France, but also a conception of the world where value is inseparable from modernity, and the potential for modernization is paradoxically contingent on depth and quality of "tradition." He identifies the main authors today categorized as "modernists" — Joyce, Conrad, Proust — but sees Brazilian art or literature as incompatible with this classification. Even worse, Brazil for him has *no* art yet; extant forms from any of its many cultures are dismissed equally. This creates an equivalence among indigenous tribes in the rainforest, rural farm communities, and the members of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. For Drummond, as for other writers and artists of his generation, being born outside the center but choosing to create a national literary scene within the margins meant necessarily embracing some fantasized and amalgamated version of the primitive. Drummond de Andrade's schema in which value is directly proportional to innovation and modernity is coherent with Casanova's formula, and if we adopt her economic terminology, being considered "behind"

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ilusões. Enorme sacrifício." From *Carlos & Mário, Correspondência Completa entre Carlos Drummond de Andrade e Mário de Andrade* (Rio de Janeiro: Bem-Te-Vi, 2002): 56-62. Hereafter cited as *CDA/MA*.

<sup>32</sup> My translation: "Pois olhe: estou com o Oswald num ponto. A suprema expressão de brasilidade e a estupidez. E se nós quisermos ser brasileiros de facto, sejamos burros, bárbaros, primitivos, não façamos pesquisas psicológicas; não viajemos em Joyce, Conrad, Cendrars, Proust e outros ilustríssimos estrangeiros... Ah! Se o obrigassem a isto, meu velho... V. preferiria suicidar-se." (*CDA/MA* 77-82).

is tantamount to being “impoverished,” or “unendowed” when the relative deprivation takes a Freudian turn (Casanova 39).

This behind-the-times story is also pervasive throughout Latin America; Octavio Paz, for example, sees Latin Americans as “intruders who have arrived at the feast of modernity as the lights are about to be put out” (Casanova 92). Similarly, Mario Vargas Llosa recalls discovering Sartre, which made him dissatisfied with what was being written in Peru; Sartre’s works “could save him from provincialism, immunize him against rustic views, make him feel dissatisfied with that local color, [with that] superficial literature with its Manichean structures and simplistic techniques” (Casanova 94). As a point of comparison, we can also see similar terms in common use among other groups in Paris during the same period of time who are also non-European and semi-colonial.<sup>33</sup> As Antonio Candido, while not as intensely critical as Schwarz, had lamented the “cultural weakness” of Latin America, Aimé Césaire in 1967, reflecting on his initial use of the *négritude* concept, explains his rationale for a concept that he felt he had outgrown by saying, “We were students at the Sorbonne then and we confronted a cultural void in the black world. It was a period when the notion of African civilization was very controversial” (Jules-Rosette 34).

In turn, extending the wealth metaphor, the relative “deprivation” of culture resultant from their distance from the aesthetic centers of the world seems to limit the amount of creative freedom available to writers from the periphery. Oswald de Andrade returns to this theme repeatedly in this period, wondering in the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* when Brazil would “reach the September 7<sup>th</sup> of our spiritual independence” (Carelli 296), and later in the *Manifesto Antropófago*, in which he inverts the time measurements, calls for the

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<sup>33</sup> The Jules-Rosette and the Stovall books show an approach to the material that maybe could be done in the Brazilian case.

actual declaration of Independence, and expels the “Bragantine spirit” that suppresses the more ancient and advanced cannibal spirit (*CM* 44).<sup>34</sup> The novelist Alcantara Machado presents the situation in a more banal manner but as perhaps hopeless, because even when a Brazilian has the opportunity to be present in the literary (and cultural) capital of the world, he or she is unable to engage with it as an equal and accurately read the environment. Bringing this capital metaphor full circle, this impedes Machado’s Brazilians from effectively participating even in the stock market in Paris: “marked by their obsolete Brazilian apprenticeship, they come to Europe seeking that which is the most retrograde and not what is most current” (Carelli 296).

This omnipresent concern, even fear, about backwardness confers an additional weight on the Brazilian modernists trying to establish the chronology of their movement, a concern that returns frequently in their letters. Another of Bandeira’s letters from 1924 responds to Mário de Andrade and Sergio Milliet, correcting Mário for locating the beginning of Brazilian modernism at Anita Malfatti’s 1917 solo show, who in turn was correcting Sergio for telling the French that Guilherme de Almeida had introduced free verse to Brazil. These details reveal that Bandeira, Andrade, Milliet were concerned from the very beginning with the philological work of situating themselves in literary history while it was still happening, trying to pin down firsts and beginnings, disputing others’ timelines.<sup>35</sup> In the same letter, Bandeira’s interest in correct attribution and timing, in that same letter, reveals another part of the narrative about the flow of ideas from the center to the periphery that he and the other modernists had internalized, namely, that their primary

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<sup>34</sup> Oswald de Andrade and Leslie Bary, “Cannibalist Manifesto,” *Latin American Literary Review* 19, no. 38 (Jul.–Dec. 1991): 38-47. In-text references use abbreviation *CM*, as described in bibliography.

<sup>35</sup> Letter (19 May 1924), in *MA/MB*: 124. Reference to Mário’s “Crônica de Malazarte – VII”

point of cultural reference was always France. In praising Ribeiro Couto's responsibility for pushing his cohort towards aesthetic modernity, Bandeira credits him with converting a non-believer who "stomped all over Apollinaire [*meteu as botas em Apollinaire*]" in 1920, and having introduced Bandeira himself to "the newest Italians and French, Cendrars and others."<sup>36</sup>

### ***C) Brazil as French:***

In his contribution to the collective volume *Le Paris des étrangers*, Mario Carelli deploys a commonly accepted explanation for the the significant Brazilian presence in Paris after World War I, writing that "Brazil was French the same way Europe was French in the 18<sup>th</sup> century" (Carelli 287). Carelli doesn't press further into the strategic reasons for this semi-colonial attraction, like rejection of cultural influence from Portugal and the Iberian peninsula, as well as averting the influence of their more (culturally) threatening neighbors in North America, but he does cite two decisive factors that reinforced the imbrication of Brazil's intellectual class and artistic elite with that of France: the majority of Brazilians with the means to do so start completing their secondary education in Paris instead of Coimbra in late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which only increases after the 1816 French mission to start a fine-arts academy in Rio de Janeiro, begun at the request of the Portuguese crown which had already decamped to Brazil.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> My translation: "O Couto vivia falando no Oswald, em Anita, em Brecheret. [...] Foi o Couto quem me revelou os italianos e os franceses mais novos, Cendrars e outros" (*MA/MB* 124).

<sup>37</sup> See Needell, *A Tropical Belle Epoque*, as well as the online collaboration between the Bibliothèque Nationale Française and the Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil: [www.bndigital.bn.br/francebr/frances/mission\\_artistique.htm](http://www.bndigital.bn.br/francebr/frances/mission_artistique.htm) (accessed Oct. 2014)

From this point on, France plays a significant role in Brazil's literary life. Romantics hoping to create a national literature publish the revue *Nitcheroy* in Paris, and wealthy patrons of the arts like Eduardo Prado (probably related to Paulo Prado), acquired massive Parisian apartments and hosted Brazilian or Portuguese writers (Carelli 288-9). Brazilian francophilia (or strategic use of French, depending on how one reads it) extended to writing in French. One of the most well known cases of the adoption of French was Joaquim Nabuco, whose Portuguese was also inflected with French structures and idioms. This practice of writing in French continued with most of the modernist cohort, especially in their earlier work. After spending 1912-13 in Paris, Oswald de Andrade had attempted to launch a new tradition of Brazilian theater in French<sup>38</sup>, and in 1925, the same year that Oswald published his *Pau-Brasil* book of poetry in Portuguese in Paris, his painter and poet colleague Rego Monteiro also published there *Quelques visages de Paris*, a book of poems in French. Similarly, Sergio Milliet had spent most of his young adult life in Geneva and published three books of poems in French, *Par le sentier* (1917), *Le départ sous la pluie* (1918) and *Oeil de boeuf* (1923), and only started writing in Portuguese in 1927. Bandeira mostly published in Portuguese, but also mentions a few that he wrote in French ("petit chat," "poème," "chambre vide"), and says in a letter to Mário in 1925 that he entered into the "feira modernista" on the "Verlaine-Rimbaud-Apollinaire express" (MA/MB 68-9, and 91n). And while Mário de Andrade and Carlos Drummond de Andrade never made it to Paris or Europe more widely, Drummond translated Laclos, Proust, and Mauriac (Carelli 298).

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Authors listed as Oswald "d'Andrade" et Guilherme d'Almeida, *Mon coeur balance" et "Leur âme"* (São Paulo: Typ. Asbahr, 1916). In the dedication to the prefect of São Paulo, Oswald and his co-author claim: "Nous avons voulu faire de cette première pièce notre écu de combat."

Despite this intense and intimate attachment to French literary patrimony, and the widespread belief that Brazil's culture among the educated was French culture, the relationship between the two patrimonies often proved asymmetric. Mario Carelli cites Gilberto Amado as among those Brazilians who learned from middle school onward about the world through France, who later went there, not so much to see France for its own sake but rather to verify what they've read about. The French ignorance of Brazil surprised Amado, in how they vaguely assimilated it to Latin America: "The need for clarity drives them to minimize the details. Brazil ... a detail!"<sup>39</sup> Amado's experience of departicularization, of his specific national identity not being recognized, is repeated in other writers' and artists' accounts of the period, and has some concrete effects. Turning to the case of maxixe, as a specifically Brazilian musical genre that became popular in Paris in the 1910s, Micol Seigel argues that one reason why maxixe failed to remain as consistently popular there as American jazz is that not much attention was paid to stressing its Brazilian particularity. Promoters abroad lumped it in with other Latin American performance types like tango, either specifically associating it with other countries or just using a hybrid vocabulary, and the music industry producers, performers, and audiences "sanded any Afro-associated edges to fit maxixe to the expected gamut of multiple generic exotics" (Seigel 84). Removing its specificity allowed it to be more easily marketed in the short term to an audience eager for exoticism, but reduces its staying power.

Amid many expressions of frustration with the lack of specific knowledge about their country among a nonetheless eager Parisian public, Antonio de Alcantara Machado's novel *Pathé-Baby*, a fictionalized version of his stay in Paris in 1925, reverses the point-of-

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<sup>39</sup> In *Mocidade no Rio e Primeira Viagem à Europa* (1956). Translation mine: "Le besoin de clarté les pousse à minimiser les détails. Le Brésil... un détail!" (Carelli 290).

view: “Enough with doctored exoticism. French ignorance is a relief to him” (Carelli 294). Instead of romanticizing Paris, he treats the Parisians as inscrutable Others as well, sharing some of the exoticists’ disgust with technological modernity: “[t]he avenues are twelve asphalt maws who eat people and vehicles, who vomit people and vehicles. Insatiable” (Carelli 295). The conceit of *Pathé-Baby* is that Alcantara Machado has tried to capture instantaneous scenes of life in Paris (and the other cities in the travelogue), and Latin Americans are fully part of the picture, as worthy of mockery as the Parisians: “Gare Saint Lazare. It’s cold. A couple of Brazilians step out. He with his panama hat, cane and coat; she, all in carnivalesque colors, like the window display of a dye shop. - They’re Argentinians. - Thankfully!” (Carelli 294). The Brazilian characters are participating in the modern city, and have internalized a fear of the ridiculous, and are also vigilant of how others from their region of the world reflect on them, realizing that they are perceived collectively.

Oswald de Andrade, who among the modernists most heartily embraced the ridiculous, nevertheless saw the primitivist modality that categorized Brazilian culture indiscriminately with any culture imagined to be as far away in time as in space from Paris. In his experimental novel *Serafim Ponte Grande*, which he had started writing while living in Paris but only published much later, there is a telling scene in a Paris nightclub, where the bourgeois Brazilian protagonist Serafim finds himself suddenly part of the entertainment:

The buzzing of atavistic forests fraternizes him silently to orchestras mulatto and colonial. Not even he can put on a costume. Over the skin undressed by Poiret, Patou, Vionet, Lanvin, grow lumps of pearls, verdant warts of saffires, screeches of blacks, luminous liquid bodies and teeth and animals from all dressed Africas rub up against white females.

Well, he’s from the vagabond race whose slothful pace accompanies chords of the guitar. Sambas and blues. The maid’s soft tangos. City waltzes.

— My dear friend, that is Brazil. Twenty years from now the United States will be imitating us.  
We only have one drawback: cockroaches. And then street names that don't mean anything at all! Peak Place!"<sup>40</sup>

In Andrade's scene, the clothing and accessories are of a specific economic and social class, the more adventurous side of the wealthy bourgeoisie, but the jewelry is likened to sickly growths or deformations on these put-together people. Nationality dissipates into racial imaginaries here. The black people in the scene are dehumanized - they're either bodies and teeth, or animals - but the white women dancing with them are also animalized - females rather than women. And where does Serafim fit into this picture? He's "fraternized" (*irmanar*) to the "mulatto and colonial orchestras" - not quite part of the African set, but definitely not part of the white or European set either: "Nem ele inutilmente disfarça" (*SPG* 95). But Andrade's characters claim in an off-handed way that their stereotyped aesthetic will eventually upset the innovation-imitation equilibrium, Andrade's ironic ambivalence undermining either side's claim to authenticity.

#### ***D) Consecration: access and credit***

Grafting French onto the Brazilian literary tradition served several purposes. Not only did this provide an entire alternate written patrimony for Brazilian writers to draw from, one that was free of the direct colonial links that tainted their Portuguese cultural inheritance, but also one with immense quantity of written material that could be historically dated, an advantage over the non-European sources of cultural patrimony

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<sup>40</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Seraphim Grosse Pointe*, transl. by Kenneth D. Jackson and Albert Bork. Austin: New Latin Quarter Editions, 1979): 75. Hereafter cited as *SPGE*. The same passage in the original is from *Serafim Ponte Grande* (São Paulo: Global Editora, 1984): 95.



available to them. Additionally, choosing to align with France's literary patrimony included the benefit of consecration, in which a group that is assumed to have already met some sort of standards of quality that are recognized outside of their own linguistic area is sought out for similar recognition by others. Milliet expresses this idea in exactly the same terms as Casanova, eighty years earlier; in his "Carta de Paris" (*Ariel*, mars 1924): "The French capital is consecration; works that are approved there spread out over the whole world" (Chareyre 281).<sup>41</sup> In this way, writing in French instead of Portuguese not only serves to reject their most oppressive cultural heritage or express themselves differently, but also enables reception by a different audience, not only the metropolitan French audience, but also the large number of second-language French speakers worldwide.

This idea of choosing to write in French for pragmatic purposes is already widely discussed within literature from former French colonies; whether their alternative choice of verbal expression is Arabic or Creole or another less well known language, many authors opt for French as a means to an end. Speaking about his participation in the review *Présence Africaine*, Jacques Rabemenajara asks "If I were content simply to write and speak in Malagasy, would you be sitting here in front of me?" (Jules-Rosette 46). Whereas the political implications of the decision to use the language of a former colonial power (reinforcing its cultural dominance and perpetuating it after decolonization), we know little about the implications of the use of French by writers who fall outside of that schema.

Adopting the French language, or even just certain linguistic tics and references, also had the strategic value of associating its adopters with a language and cultural tradition that was generally only accessible to those whose circumstances afforded the education

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<sup>41</sup> French bilingual edition of *Pau-Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Globo, 1990) with preface and annotation by Antoine Chareyre, *Bois-Brésil* (Paris: Editions La Différence, 2010).

necessary to master a foreign language well enough to fully understand and produce it. While French within the Francophone world isn't inherently classed, on an international basis it can carry an added value, because it is logistically exclusionary. It is a matter of debate whether to qualify the Brazilian modernists as elitists, but it is fair to say that they were claiming their right to participate in an exclusionary literary and cultural field, and using French was one way of opening the door. Writers from many other countries opted for the same solution, like Strindberg from Sweden, Beckett from Ireland, Huidobro from Chile.

There are not many letters to Mário de Andrade from Oswald de Andrade available, only 27 over the course of a nine-year friendship, after which Oswald and Mário had a falling out (Oswald might have written to Mário after 1929, but those may have been lost or destroyed). But the letters that exist do show an unusual take on the nature of the "world republic of letters." There is a considerable amount of name-dropping regarding the avant-gardists that Oswald was frequenting in Paris, perhaps an advertisement of bona fides.

Until sometime, through the distorting lenses of western modernity, I've been demoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> class novelist. Natural, logical, fair, that Menotti doesn't worry about you lot who see him as a 3<sup>rd</sup> class man of letters.

My conference made a good impression. In attendance were Jules Romains, Paul Morand, Juan Gris, Nicolas Baudouin etc. Ambassadors, countesses, artists, etc. I'm only sorry that I forgot to mention that [Bandeira's] "O Homem e a Morte" is our best modern work! Other people displaced from your home perfectly satisfy the requirements of Parisian modernity – Graça, Ronald, Tarsila. João Epstein, however, is considered junk.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> My translation: "Até em, pelo binoculinho as avessas da modernidade occidental (R. Lopes Chaves- Sao Paulo – Brésil – Amerique du Sud – 15 jours de mal de mer) fui enxegado romancista de 2<sup>a</sup> classe. Natural, logico, justo, que Menotti se despreocupe de voces que viram nelle homem de letras de 3<sup>a</sup>. A minha conferencia causou boa impressao. Na sala, Jules Romains, Paul Morand, Juan Gris, Nicolas Baudouin etc. Embaixadores, condessas, artistas etc. Coitado de mim se não disse no "Homem e a Morte" a nossa melhor obra moderna! Outras victimas da maçonariazinha da Rua Lopes Chaves satisfazem perfeitamente as exigencias da "modernidade de Paris" – Graça, Ronald, Tarsila. Ao contrario, Joao Epstein é considerado um traste." From letter in Mário de Andrade archive at the IEB: MA-C-CPL, no. 604.

But when it comes to consecration, Oswald himself takes the responsibility, or rather the credit, for putting his compatriots on the map, so to speak:

Brecheret, you, Menotti and the gang [*a corja*] will have your Paris début at my upcoming conference. Major excitement among the biggest Latin Americans in Paris and in the trenches of triumphant ronsardism.<sup>43</sup>

Along with Du Bellay, Ronsard played a major part in arguing for the value of writing literature in French in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a defense of the “vulgar” tongue at a time when Latin still had hegemony in the literary world; while calling his contemporaries’ work “triumphant ronsardism” may be an ironic jab at the preciousness of their poetry at that moment, Oswald’s reference to Ronsard might also suggest a parallel between the significant project of the Pléiade and that of the modernistas. It is worth noting as well that despite his claims for individual credit for creating a space for Brazilians within the avant-garde scene, his brief throwaway reference is to an individual – Ronsard – who was part of a group, maybe even a community, that worked individually with shared purposes.

### ***E) The Specificity of Paris: Emptiness***

Paris could serve as the unofficial headquarters of consecration operations because the city specifically had two assets that are seemingly contradictory and complementary:

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<sup>43</sup> My translation of letter from Apr. 18, 1923: “Todos os dias passam-se coisas novas. Estou ja ha bastante tempo na intimidade de Picasso, Cocteau, Romaines & Larbaud. Ha dificuldades em encontrar os outros. Max Jacob vive num convento do Loire. Cendrars é metteur-en-scene dum cinema. Ninguem sabe dele. Descansa, porém. A todos direi um admiração mineira. “Os Condenados”, ja que o Serge nao se mexe, estão sendo traduzidos em optima modernidade por Mathilde Pomes que, com Valery Larbaud, traduziu os “Echantillons” de Gomez de la Serna, publicados ha pouco. E uma intelectual e viva amiga nossa. Brecheret, você, Menotti e a corja serão lançados por mim em próxima conferencia. Grande agitação nos amigos da America Latina em Paris e nas trincheiras do ronsardismo triunfante.” Letter from Mário de Andrade archive: MA-C-CPL no. 603.

being a cosmopolitan and open place, and having a long and easily identifiable written tradition. The first part, its heterogeneity, allows for the assumption that success there signifies success in more than one national-linguistic audience or market (with the fantasy of “universality” being held out as possible), and the second, its supposed/imagined homogeneity - years of cultural production by artists who perhaps had the privilege of not needing to ask themselves as many questions about who the production belonged to or where it had come from. This supposed homogeneity, which is inaccessible to former colonies, allows it to make claims on innovations through primogeniture.

Casanova’s version of this literary Vatican trope holds that Paris was established “both in France and throughout the world, as the capital of a republic having neither borders nor boundaries, a universal homeland exempt from all professions of patriotism, a kingdom of literature set up in opposition to the ordinary laws of states, a transnational realm whose sole imperatives are those of art and literature: the universal republic of letters” (Casanova 29). Although she has presented this as something that is generally true about Paris in the modern era, it perfectly echoes the image of Paris that Harold Rosenberg conjures when talking more specifically about the interwar period in *The Tradition of the New*, saying that Paris was the “Holy Place of our time,” [...] “[n]ot because of its affirmative genius alone, but because of its passivity, which allowed it to be possessed by the searchers of every nation [...] by all artists, students, refugees... Paris represented the International of Culture [...] What was done in Paris demonstrated clearly and for all time that International culture could exist. Moreover, that this culture had a definite style, the Modern” (Rosenberg 209-10). Both Casanova and Rosenberg paint a picture of unity somehow emerging from diversity.

Continuing in his reflection on this international magnet-city, Rosenberg alludes to an important feature of the modernist period of artistic production in interwar France, the fact that so much of modernism's functioning rests on fantasies, constructions that are known to be false but remain powerful:

“True, the Paris Modern did not represent all of the claims of present-day life. Any more than its “Internationalism” meant the actual getting together of all the peoples of different countries. It was an inverted mental image, this Modern, with all the transitoriness and freedom from necessity of imagined things. A dream living in the present and a dream world-citizenship - resting not upon a real triumph, but upon a willingness to go as far as was necessary into nothingness in order to shake off what was dead in the real. A negation of the negative” (Rosenberg 212-3).

Histories of modernist art or literature are difficult to pin down, because the artists and writers are often commenting on the current narrative as they are participating in it, attempting to disrupt something in the order of things and establish a new order, undermining stories while using their language.<sup>44</sup> Oswald de Andrade, for example, has a more cynical version of Rosenberg's image, presenting the dream world-citizenship ironically, by putting it in the mouth of one of the many ridiculous characters of *Serafim Ponte Grande*: “But you should know that France today is not made up by us French, primogenitors of the Church – in spite of all the revolutionary velleities. What we have here is a kind of neutral zone, where the sexual calligraphy of liberated peoples is practiced” (*SPGE* 68).

Even a playful invocation of the consecration narrative by most of the modernist cohort usually yielded the way to demystification of the European capital's collective wisdom. While interest and recognition, or indeed consecration, from a French public was

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<sup>44</sup> Telling a different story about artistic production during this time period is already underway. The Centre Pompidou opened an exhibit in Fall 2013 called “Modernités plurielles” that brings to the forefront versions of modernism that are usually relegated to minor status, like Antropofagia or Indigenismo, with the goal of presenting a more global understanding of modern art.

desirable, at times the fetishization became too reductive. Alcantara Machado, for example, took umbrage at the image of his country painted in Abel Bonnard's *Océan et Brésil* (1929), where Bonnard saw little beyond Brazil's role as an exploitation colony: "The Brazilians show us the treasures of their land, and ask us for those of our culture. This recalls the naiveté of their previous exchanges: they offer us butterflies and ask us for ideas" (Carelli 296). In "Les Guaranis qui ont connu du pays", Alcantara Machado describes the sensation of reading Bonnard, and turns the viewpoint around in order to attack the deficit of culture in Bonnard. In this way he affirms that his place is of universal interest, and that old ideas about it are insufficient and ignorant, in which case the uninformed Bonnard becomes the barbarian, and behind the times. Machado argues that contradicting this type of image is a step forward for Brazilians who have too long been intimidated by Europe, "thus incapable of distinguishing real French values from parisian byproducts, which he [Machado] avoids confusing" (Carelli 296).

This tendency towards negative or condescending stereotype despite xenophilic fervor in Paris perhaps explains part of what endeared Cendrars to most of the modernistas. Whereas the Brazilian press presented Cendrars' eventual visit there as that of an ambassador of Parisian modernity, the Brazilian modernists seemed to recognize and appreciate him as alien from the refined intellectuals that were most visible in the Parisian art scene. In a letter to Mário de Andrade from June 1923, Sergio Milliet juxtaposed Cocteau and Cendrars as the Concorde Obelisk and the Eiffel Tower, the first is a "Parisian-style genius" with "little humanity and universality," the second is a "rustic and ill-bred and foul-mouthed beast," and Milliet makes it clear that he prefers the beast:

I agree with you how little humanity and universality there is to Cocteau. He is a Parisian genius. The most brilliant mind I have met. But Cendrars, rustic and ill-bred

and foul-mouthed is a beast. Next to Cocteau, Cendrars translates the impression made by the Eiffel Tower next to the Obelisk.

[...] It's another step backwards. The good taste of the French is an obstacle to modernism. They are afraid of the ridiculous. France becoming a monarchy again. An impression of order and power like there has rarely been. Action française, Leon Daudet, Maurras Bainville, the newspaper and politicians of the moment. Tremendous return of Catholicism. Only two powers in France: realists and communists. The rest just doesn't exist. Poincaré listens to Maurras' advice and "one only swears by the king!"<sup>45</sup>

Milliet argues that Cocteau and the French "good taste" that he represents – "they fear the ridiculous" – are a step backwards and an obstacle to modernism. He eventually, like Cendrars, decides that Paris is not all that its reputation promises, that his temptation to stay in Paris is practically non-existent, and that the only advantage to being there is being able to print his latest book in French. In this letter it is notable that Milliet transitions seamlessly from commenting on the rigid values of the art and literary scene to radicalizing developments in the political atmosphere. They are two manifestations of the same mental tendency, a tendency towards rigor, regulation, and a desire for the vanguard to finally find its army.

In response to Milliet's ambivalent pursuit of his literary career in Paris, Mário de Andrade laid out the philosophical basis for his cultural nationalism becoming more extreme than that of his counterparts. He argued that attempting to be recognized in Paris would require subscribing to a "chapel" or a sub-movement that has been predetermined by others, and limited autonomy as a Latin American:

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<sup>45</sup> Letter to Mário de Andrade, 6 June 1923, Arquivo Mário de Andrade, IEB. My translation: "Estou de accordo contigo sobre a pouca humanidade e universalidade de Cocteau. Cocteau é um genio parisiense. O espirito mais brilhante que conheço. Mas Cendrars, rustre e mal educado e desbocado é um bicho. Ao lado de Cocteau, Cendrars traduz a impressão do Torre Eiffel ao lado do Obelisco. [...] é um novo passo para atraz. O bom gosto francez é uma entrave ao modernismo. Tem medo do ridículo. A França monarchisa-se. Uma impressão de ordem e de força como raramente tive. Action francaise, Leon Daudet, Maurras, Bainville, Jornal e politicos do momento. Retour formidavel ao catolicismo. Só duas forças em França: realistas e communistas. O resto não existe. Poincaré escute os conselhos de Maurras e "on ne jure que par le roi!"

And that there - is mortally painful for those who, like you, have the virgin forest behind their house and can smell the cajú-do-campo. But the chapel is an absolutely necessary step here in France and Europe. Here it's different. Here there are no chapels. There are fights, insults, slander. And modernism had the solution. The perplexity of over there doesn't exist over here because there is a problem that solved all hesitations. A current problem. The problem of being something. And it can only be by being national. We have the current, national, uplifting, and human problem of how to Brazilianize Brazil. This current problem, modernism attends to it well, because now only national arts are worthwhile. The Frenchman is increasingly French, the Russian increasingly Russian. And that's why they have a function in the universe and matter, humanly speaking. We will only be universal on the day that our Brazilian coefficient competes for universal riches [*concorrer pra riqueza universal*]. (...) Here in Brazil you have your rank and your destination. Man is only happy the day that he reaches his post and realizes his destiny."<sup>46</sup>

Paris is recognized here as an important place for consecration, as the Vatican of the literary world, but here Mário questions the value of this type of consecration. He maintains a belief, similar to Casanova's, in a kind of universality that can be achieved by literature, but paradoxically he presents nationalism as the only path to this universality, the myth ruptured by the wide variety of experiences of the Brazilians in Paris.

### ***F) From Consecration to Collaboration?***

The Brazilians realize that looking to Paris for consecration is problematic (as exemplified by the moral conundrum Mário de Andrade identified in his letter to Sergio), and most of their subsequent works took a more nationalistic turn. These two things weren't mutually exclusive, but it does seem clear, however, that as much as Oswald or Tarsila are making a place for themselves alongside the other participants in the avant-garde scene in Paris, they also clearly foreground their national identity as Brazilians (or

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<sup>46</sup> Letter from Dec. 10, 1924. On Sergio's relationship with Europe and decision to leave, Renata Rufino da Silva, "Sergio Milliet: um projeto modernista de literatura, entre o Brasil e a Europa," XXVII Simposio Nacional de Historia, ANPUH, 22-26 July 2013. [www.snh2013.anpuh.org/resources/anais/27/1364772241\\_ARQUIVO\\_textoanpuhnatal.pdf](http://www.snh2013.anpuh.org/resources/anais/27/1364772241_ARQUIVO_textoanpuhnatal.pdf).



more vaguely as Latin Americans) in their work from this period – it is “nossa poesia” rather than “minha poesia.” Anita Malfatti and Sergio Milliet in the same time period also speak collectively about the Brazilians and the impression they’re making: Milliet told Mário, “The propaganda we’re doing for Brazil here is enormous.”<sup>47</sup> This version of the nationalist perspective is a confirmation of Paris’ centrality for their cohort as the primary place for consecration and approval, but also shows their desire to affect the site and its “authorities.”

This goal of having an impact on the Parisian literary world is often presented as a failed one. Aracy Amaral, who wrote one of the earliest literary histories of Blaise Cendrars and the Brazilian modernists, claimed that while Cendrars’ work showed a fascination with Brazil in the abstract, it remained unaffected by the actual intellectual production of his Brazilian colleagues.<sup>48</sup> To prove her point, she cites the fact that Cendrars mentions Oswald less in *Feuilles de Route* than Oswald mentions him in *Pau-Brasil*, and acknowledges that it’s no less true that Oswald “fascinated” Cendrars, quoting her interview with Tarsila: “[h]e was shocked, strongly impressed, when he heard read aloud some of the poems that would become part of *Pau-Brasil*, when Oswald read them at my house at a get-together.”<sup>49</sup> But Amaral opts not to examine some of the thematic and aesthetic crossover between those two books, on which the third chapter of this dissertation will focus.

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<sup>47</sup> “A propaganda que fazemos aqui do Brasil é enorme.” Malfatti’s Feb 1924 letter says that Matisse, Derain and Picasso told her that “voltamos à mãe natureza” is the current phrase in Paris, suggesting implicitly that her positive reception in Paris is part of a wider interest in something seen as more natural than what is Parisian, c’est-à-dire something primitive or exotic. But at the same time, “primitiviste” is used by Sergio Milliet in June ’23 as a negative description of Rego Monteiro, so there is something already objectionable about framing pre-modern inspiration as an -ism. This will be addressed further in the next chapter.

<sup>48</sup> “Moreover, that Cendrars influenced the Brazilian poets is certain. But the well-spring of influence received by Cendrars wouldn’t be from the modernists themselves, but rather from Brazil itself, which from 1924 onward occupied a major place in his oeuvre” (Amaral 1970, 90).

<sup>49</sup> My translation: “Ele ficou chocado, fortemente impressionado, quando ouviu a leitura de poemas que fariam parte do “Pau Brasil”, quando Oswald os leu em minha casa, numa reunião” (Amaral 1970 89).

While the quantity of Brazilian cultural production that made it into the Paris market is limited, it is still revealing. Certain Brazilians had many successes there, like Elpídio Pereira's operas, or Victor Brecheret who won first prize at the Salon d'Automne. There was certainly interest not just in the works that Brazilians wrote themselves in French, but also in works meant for a Brazilian audience. Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*, for example, a satirical, fantastic, and experimental novel that plays with Brazilian folktales and archetypes, as well as Brazilian speech, came into the possession of Valéry Larbaud, who then asked Jean Duriand to look into obtaining the rights to translate it. Apparently Mário, possibly the most prolific letter writer of the whole modernist cohort, never wrote back to Larbaud, and in relating this story, Casanova explains his silence as proof that he, "like all literary founders concerned to resist systematic central annexations of national work" had no interest in translation into French (Casanova 290). Casanova sees Europe's ignorance of this book as proof of Europe's ethnocentrism; *Macunaíma* stayed untranslated for a long time, and the French translation didn't happen until 1979 (despite the interest of Roger Caillois and Raymond Queneau). Despite Mário's ambivalence about foreign recognition, much of his cohort (Oswald, Tarsila do Amaral, Milliet) was indeed invested in the idea, and this did not make them any less interested in revolutionizing the literary production of Brazil. Oswald's letters to Mário from Paris show enthusiasm that his "Os Condenados" was being translated, and even more so that he was to give a conference at the Sorbonne on the contemporary Brazilian literary scene.

The language barrier makes literature the most difficult artistic medium in which to gain recognition abroad, but even Brazilian musical contributions were (and are) sometimes misread or mis-attributed. Micol Seigel recounts a particularly amusing

instance of this: the American Josephine Baker had another Parisian success in the song “Pauvre Noir” and a Brazilian journalist goes to the Revue Nègre show, only to recognize the most popular song as a Brazilian one, by one of the founders of samba: “Maybe Ari Barroso himself doesn’t know that he is currently the composer of the biggest hit in France” (Seigel 92). In a similar vein, Cendrars had recounted a story in which another founding father of samba - Donga - runs an idea for a song through Cendrars to pass on to Darius Milhaud, the composer from the Group of Six. But in Cendrars’ story, he cites the sambista saying that he had never been to Paris, while in reality Donga had spent six months in Paris touring with Pixinguinha in the Oito Batutas (Vianna 73).<sup>50</sup> Cendrars is known to be somewhat loose with the truth in his autobiographical writing, but this is perhaps representative of the wider difficulty of Brazilian music to get full recognition in Europe.

Part of the mis-recognition stems from the fact that the influences are complex, or filtered through multiple people or collaborations. Darius Milhaud was the point of entry into Paris for a lot of Brazilian music, the most famous instance being his orchestral ballet “Le Boeuf sur le toit.” In this piece Milhaud had worked together melodies and rhythms from 28 contemporary popular maxixes and tangos (which in turn were Argentine pieces re-worked by Brazilians) by 14 different composers that he had encountered while serving as the secretary for Paul Claudel in Brazil.<sup>51</sup> Jean Cocteau then created a scenario for the ballet, which had little to do with the original lyrics of the songs, and then, in turn, the name

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<sup>50</sup> Cendrars recounted this particular anecdote in a radio interview that became part of the 1952 book *Blaise Cendrars vous parle* (Vianna 129).

<sup>51</sup> Daniella Thomson’s website “The Boeuf chronicles” has not only histories of each Brazilian song reappropriated, but also audio and video clips of the Milhaud versions and the originals. [http://daniellathompson.com/Texts/Le\\_Boeuf/boeuf\\_chronicles.htm](http://daniellathompson.com/Texts/Le_Boeuf/boeuf_chronicles.htm) (accessed Oct. 2014).

was borrowed for a bar-restaurant-cabaret, frequented by Cocteau and many other artists, European and otherwise. As in the case with Cendrars having introduced the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre and the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos to the Oito Batutas, the European reinterpretation served often as a bridge between expatriate Brazilians and other regions of their own country. In 1921 Sergio Milliet went to hear “L’Homme et son désir” written by Claudel and Milhaud in Brazil:

I got goosebumps because 80 male voices were chanting “O meu boi morreu.” It had been three years since I had had any news from Brazil and that melody transported me in an instant to a mysterious sertão that I had known although I wanted to forget everything, and which reminded me of long days on horseback crossing the mountains in Minas Gerais, from Campinha to Paredes, Machadinho, Ouro Fala, São Gonçalo do Sapucaí and the other tranquil little towns with mellifluous names (Carelli 291-2).

The process of returning aesthetically to his homeland that Mário de Andrade had encouraged Milliet to undertake had already begun to a certain extent through the hybridized version of Brazilian popular culture that he and his cohort encountered in Paris, one that might have remained out of sight or earshot had they remained in São Paulo.

Some of the collaborative projects never materialized, but the exchanges and the planning around them are still worth investigating. Letters between Manuel Bandeira and Mário de Andrade reveal that the Brazilian review *Klaxon*, which had been the main organ for disseminating modernista work after the 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna, was going to be phased out in order to replace it with another called *Knock-out*, which would be more international in collaborative contributions. *Klaxon* had had contributions from some Europeans, like L.C. Baudouin (Swiss) and Roger Avermaete (Belgian), but for *Knock-out* Milliet had enlisted contributions from Ivan Goll, Marc Chagall, and Cendrars, and Oswald

had enlisted Cocteau and Paul Morand.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Oswald de Andrade's notes in his archive reveal preparation for "Un Ballet brésilien," which he had planned to put together with Tarsila do Amaral in charge of the decor and Heitor Villa Lobos writing the music. The project was supposed to be performed by the Ballet Suédois, and Cendrars was supposed to collaborate with Oswald on the scenario, as he had done for *La Création du Monde*, a Milhaud ballet inspired by his exposure in New York to American jazz.

Anita Malfatti, along with Tarsila do Amaral, was one of only two women who gained a prominent place among the modernistas, and both were painters. In one of her letters to Mário de Andrade from 1924, when Cendrars was in Brazil with most of the modernists for his first visit, Malfatti reveals a somewhat cynical but perceptive view of the awkward power dynamics involved in creating a readership outside of one's homeland:

You like Cendrars? He's a simple and good man. I was dying of fear that you all would ruin him in Brazil with literary vainglory. Because he was striving to "do" America like we strove to "do" Paris.<sup>53</sup>

Despite Cendrars' relatively more prominent role in the literary world – as Drummond's letters show, he could be grouped with the canonical writers of European modernism – Malfatti recognizes a similarity in their outsider statuses, and their shared desire to claim a place for themselves, and the slippery meaning of the verb "fazer," like "faire," suggests that in claiming a space outside one's homeland somehow also changes (or even remakes) the new location.

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<sup>52</sup> While this particular review never made it to publication, Cendrars was still interested in reaching a Brazilian public: Rosário Fusco's 1927 letter to Mário de Andrade says Cendrars submitted a poem to *Verde*.

<sup>53</sup> My translation: "Gostastes do Cendrars? E um homem simples e bom. [...] estava morrendo de medo que voces o estragassem no Brazil [sic] com as vanglorias litterarias. Pois o que ele ambicionava era fazer a America como nos ambicionamos fazer Paris (não monetariamente porem (falo dos brasileiros [sic] daqui))." Letter from Feb. 23, 1924 at the Mário de Andrade archive at the IEB: MA-C-CPL no 4472.

## *Conclusions*

Most literary histories of the Brazilian modernist period at some point cite the passage in Paulo Prado's preface for *Pau-Brasil* in which he describes the Brazilian cohort gathering at Tarsila do Amaral's studio at the Place du Clichy in Paris, "the navel of the world," and there discovering their own home country. While this expatriate shift in perspective is of course a crucial point in the writers' and artists' creative development in the 1930s, this scene can easily create the impression that the modernistas were politically disengaged or even elitist before the change in mentality brought about by struggles in Paris. It could also leave the impression that the Brazilians were somehow disconnected from the creative activity of the Parisian scene, but this study has hopefully illustrated how their varied levels of participation and the ideological concerns both confirm and problematize the stereotypical narrative of consecration, and of the flow of ideas in an increasingly global market.

Returning to our comparison of the modernistas to the Pleiade of seventeenth century France, Casanova cites a fascinating passage from du Bellay in which he uses a cannibalism metaphor to explain how the Romans absorbed the Greeks:

[I]mitating the best Greek authors, transforming themselves into them, **devouring** them; and after having well **digested** them, **converting them into blood and nourishment**, taking for themselves, each according to his nature, and the argument he wished to choose, the best author of whom they observed diligently all the most rare and exquisite virtues, and these like shoots, as I have already said, they grafted and applied to their own tongue. (*emphasis mine*)

Du Bellay had wanted French to likewise consume and absorb the Latin classics, and in turn, Oswald de Andrade certainly would have read Du Bellay's *Défense et Illustration* before advocating that Brazil do the same to Europe in his own *Manifesto Antropófago*.

Other analyses of the modernist period bring up the fact that the trope had circulated a bit in European avant-garde circles before. Randal Johnson points out that since 1902 it had been used by Jarry, Apollinaire, Cendrars, Marinetti, the Dadaists, Francis Picabia.

“For Dada, cannibalism was an aggressive, anti-bourgeois element used to shock and insult. In Marinetti, cannibalism has the purely ritual sense of the absorption of primitive values. According to Heitor Martins, cannibalism is the ultimate degree of primitivism and is shocking ‘to the Western spirit recently freed from Parnassian Hellenism and the ‘sickly finesse’ of art nouveau” (Johnson 204).

Oswald clearly understands the logic attaching value to the first innovators and those who stake their claim based on wealth of heritage, and he uses it to his advantage. Instead Andrade credits his own country with all philosophical reappropriations of the Cannibal figure, because Brazilian cannibals were at work before du Bellay or Montaigne interpreted them, much less European avant-gardes from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because their concept of cannibalism cannot exist without the New World, Oswald gives his country’s cannibals credit for the European enlightenment, and he thus takes the argument that European critics use to maintain dominance, in the World Republic of Letters, as a lever to upend their dominance. Furthermore, when he claims that “Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically. The world's single law. Disguised expression of all individualism, of all collectivisms. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties” (CM 38), Andrade is taking the quality of universality, which theoretically Paris should bestow, and attributing it himself.

## Chapter 2: Primitivisms and Modernity

On May 29, 1924, Blaise Cendrars gave a lecture at the Villa Kyrial in São Paulo. The event had been arranged by his Brazilian modernist friends (partially in order to help Cendrars fund his trip to Brazil). They had stirred up interest in the press about the avant-garde poet who had come from Paris, and most attendees were expecting a lecture about the current artistic and literary scene in Paris. Cendrars, however, chose to deliver a lecture called “Sur la littérature des Nègres,”<sup>54</sup> a topic that fit within his recent literary interests, as he had published his *Anthologie Nègre* in 1921, but was very different from his more famous poetic work, such as “La Prose du Transsibérien,” and “Pâques à New York.” The lecture drew upon the work of Africanists in the social sciences and linguistics, especially, in order to speak more widely about the culture transmitted by the African folk tales that he had included in his Anthology, lamenting the inability of Western audiences to gain full access to their original languages, and thus their inability to fully experience their cultures, and their literature:

We know what languages were spoken by the men of Asia, Europe and Egypt during the 10 centuries that precede the Christian era, and during those that followed; from this we know what type of men they were ; but of the language used by the people of Africa during long mute centuries, we know nothing more than the buzzing of their insects and the roaring of their wild beasts. It is grave indeed to think that generations of human beings have lived uselessly, if one values life by the invention of art or the propagation of an idea (*TADA* 10, 478).

This talk is, on the one hand, a proclamation of love, and on the other, a dismissive evaluation of African culture. The dismissive half is no different from the way most European writers would talk at that historical moment; it may be shocking to read

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<sup>54</sup>Blaise, Cendrars. *Tout autour d'aujourd'hui*. vol. 10, *Anthologie nègre suivi de Petits contes nègres pour les enfants des Blancs, Comment les Blancs sont d'anciens Noirs et de La Création du Monde*. Paris: Denoël, 2005.



Cendrars calling the centuries “mute” or saying that the Africans lived “uselessly” because their cultures did not reach Europe or produce things for Europe to decode, but in a way, he is also characterizing Africa as having internal history, politics, and cultural shifts that many Europeans might not have recognized at all, thinking of it rather as being timeless and unchanging. The proclamation of love is more unusual, and was much more surprising a choice for addressing a Brazilian public that would have expected a European writer to come talk about Picasso and Cocteau. The subject reflected not only the direction of his most recent work, but also his view of the country he was visiting, signaling that his irrational and romanticized love for Brazil was linked to his romantic and fantasy-based love of Africa, in that they are both primitivisms.

In this chapter I will describe primitivism as a trope, and philosophical tool, that gained popularity in modernist literary production in the 1920s, focusing primarily on how Blaise Cendrars and Oswald de Andrade used it as a means of critiquing the culture that they associated with modernization in both Europe and in the developing world. Like modernism itself, the term is at once easily understood and difficult to define, so I will discuss its plural nature and some of the issues that make it a somewhat uncomfortable subject to probe more closely. Then I will investigate three tensions highlighted by their primitivist works: nationalist or anti-nationalist ideology within literature, race as a projection of otherness, and authenticity as a primary casualty of modernity. In each of these cases I hope to show that Cendrars and Andrade’s interpretations of these tensions share much with each other’s that distinguish them from their peers. I will focus on multiple works by Cendrars and Andrade from the 1920s that fit the primitivist criteria in different ways. In the case of Cendrars, this is the three works collecting African tales

(*Anthologie Nègre*, *Petits contes nègres pour les enfants des Blancs*, and *Comment les Blancs sont d'anciens Noirs*) and the novel *Moravagine*, and in the case of Andrade this is writing from his “Anthropofagic” period, as well as the novel *Serafim Ponte Grande*. These do not constitute an exhaustive list of their primitivist work, but rather a representative sample.

### **A) Some theoretical implications of primitivism(s)**

In her book, *Gone Primitive*, Mariana Torgovnick points out that in all of the most well-known scholarly works on “the primitive” — *La Mentalité primitive*, *The Mind of Primitive Man* — there is always a “the” in front of the term, which “wrongly implies singularity, universality, a truth about primitives not only available but comprehensive” (Torgovnick 3).<sup>55</sup> Torgovnick’s study starts with concepts developed within the social sciences, but primarily focus on the concepts use within literary works, where the denotations and connotations of words become more slippery, and their associations more unexpected. Primitivist discourse and its basic tropes are “fundamental to the Western sense of self and Other” (Torgovnick 8), easily creating binaries that are never fully uniform: primitive/civilized, natural/artificial, ancient/new, masculine/feminine, etc. Cendrars’ lecture is a prime example of this, claiming that “All negro literature is characterized by lyricism,” or that “[t]he civilized mind is more apt to abstraction than the primitive mind, because the conditions of civilized life orient the mind toward abstract considerations to the detriment of the concrete” (*TADA* 10, 479). Cendrars argues that this concrete orientation is closer to the source of poetry itself — “This is why we do not have

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<sup>55</sup> Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

the right to consider a rational and abstract language, because it is ours, as superior to a concrete and mystic language” (*TADA* 10, 479-80). At the same time, by validating binaries between black and white, between African and European, Cendrars finds a mental commonality even with Gobineau, despite disagreeing with the value judgment within this worldview. Where Gobineau sees the source of art in the “blood” of the black race, and presents this as the minimal contribution of an entire category of people, Cendrars sees this contribution as the most important one of all.

The unreliable simplicity and contextual contingency of these racialized categories is particularly visible in this situation; whereas Cendrars framed his lecture as a recommendation to his Brazilian audience to capitalize on the poetic possibilities opened to them based on their country’s exotic history of colonial encounters between the civilized and the primitive, the audience would have identified themselves very little with the African diaspora. The plastic arts, the way in which Parisians at the time might first encounter objects from African culture, are a principal location for such shifts in meaning. Christine Le Quellec Cottier describes in her preface to the *Anthologie Nègre* how in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the term “art colonial” is replaced by “art nègre” as a category; the art critic André Warwood in 1910 coins the term “art nègre,” and initially it designates African statuary, but it begins to take over for “art colonial” and eventually comes to mean “all that isn’t white” (*TADA* 10, xxiii). J.P. Blachère explains that Apollinaire’s 1917 article “Mélancolie ou Mélancolie” was the first instance in France where the term is used to mean something beyond art produced by black Africans (Blachère 38),<sup>56</sup> and in Cottier’s timeline, Apollinaire’s article was instrumental in convincing a gallery owner to remove

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<sup>56</sup> Jean-Claude Blachère, *Le modèle nègre: aspects littéraires du mythe primitiviste au XXe siècle chez Apollinaire, Cendrars, Tzara* (Dakar: Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1981).

ethnographic references to the origins of pieces from Africa and Oceania, and both she and Torgovnick give Apollinaire credit (or blame) for approaching “primitive” art as aesthetic objects divorced from their functionality, facilitating appropriation by European artists of foreign forms in the next few decades. As the previous chapter highlighted, increased foreign presence within Paris and xenophilia in both avant-garde and popular culture shaped the experience of Brazilian artists who came to work and study there, and their work reflects their more complicated place within the nexus of imperfect binaries.

Both early 20<sup>th</sup> century classification and consumption of “primitive” art and primitivism as a mode within non-“primitive” art perhaps reveal more about the viewing and consuming culture than the one (or really many) viewed and consumed. As Torgovnick points out, however the modern subject perceives the present, the primitive is usually constructed as the opposite (Torgovnick 8-9). If the present is too repressed, for example, the primitive shows us how to not be afraid of our bodies. If the present is too promiscuous, the primitive shows us that limits on sexuality are inevitable and normal, as with the incest taboo. Along with most studies on primitivism, we can place primitivist works in a long tradition including Montaigne, Rousseau, and Diderot in French literature, and José de Alencar and Olavo Bilac in Brazilian literature, but this particular iteration of it is particularly interesting, being contemporaneous with the late stages of official colonialism, increased visibility of anthropology as a discipline, and wildly ambivalent reactions to rapid modernization in the industrialized world after the first world war. At a moment when empirical knowledge becomes increasingly important for the Western anthropologist, primitivism within the arts holds out the attractive promise of an immediate and “intuitive” aesthetic experience. An often-cited example of this is Picasso’s

claim that he did not need to know the context or purpose of an African mask in order to properly evaluate its quality, and Cendrars' presentation of African literature is no exception, claiming that despite their lack of "dusty archives" that the stories "bring us, often in pared-down and easily assimilable form, thought itself and the ways of being of our most faraway ancestors" (*TADA* 10, 482).

Implicit in enthusiastic primitivisms is a critique of the primitive Other's equally constructed Other, the modern Western subject, and in critiquing Western thinking on progress, historical models, and possibly also colonial relations of power, the primitivist artist imagines alternative aesthetic and social models. Contrasting with the awed tones in which he describes the African culture and literature, Cendrars' portrayal of Moravagine, a deformed serial killer devoid of moral orientation, is a dystopian fantasy of the end-product of modernity:

[W]e were men of action, technicians, specialists, the pioneers of a modern generation dedicated to death, the preachers of world revolution, the precursors of universal destruction, realists, realists. And there is no reality. What then? Destroy to rebuild or destroy to destroy? Neither the one nor the other. Angels or devils? No. You must excuse my smile: we were automats, pure and simple. We ran on like an idling machine until we were exhausted, pointlessly, like life, like death, like a dream. Not even adversity had any charm for us (*Moravagine* 85-86).<sup>57</sup>

*Gone Primitive* identifies similar discomfort in the positions of Western writers like Henry Morton Stanley and DH Lawrence, who engage with and explore the non-Western world from which they inherit a position of privilege, and "they tend to posit primitive Others who feel no need to master the self or the world – a 'them' to counterbalance the repressive, self-repressing 'us'" (Torgovnick 173). Against a pointlessly violent and alienated modern subject, primitivism creates the foil of either a peaceful existence, free of

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<sup>57</sup> Blaise Cendrars, *Moravagine*, trans. Alan Brown (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

the bondage of self, or violence that retains transcendent meaning, as is the case in  
Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*:

The struggle between what we might call the Uncreated and the Creation --  
illustrated by the permanent contradiction between Man and his Taboo.  
Everyday love and the capitalist way of life. Cannibalism.  
Absorption of the sacred enemy.  
To transform him into a totem. The human adventure. The earthly goal.<sup>58</sup>

### ***B) "Tupi or not tupi" nationalist?***

The previous section argued that primitivist work ultimately reveals more about the needs and desires of the observer than the perceived Other. Both the artist and audience imagine themselves as separated from this primitive other, as opposed to the exotic other, principally by time rather than by distance. The primitive other satisfies a desire to know and possibly return to an older form of one's own culture, and plays an important role in descriptive and prescriptive critique within European literature. For Brazilian modernists, including Oswald de Andrade, in comparison with Blaise Cendrars, primitivism can serve a wide variety of political ideologies; in prioritizing temporal difference, primitivism can cohere to a nationalist worldview as easily as a cosmopolitan one.

Generally, Andrade's primitivist works, as well as those of other members of the modernista cohort, focus on the figure of the indigenous Brazilian, who is as fantastical a construction as the primitives grouped together in "art nègre." However, the indigenous figure is specifically attached to Brazil's history and present as a nation, and has a

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<sup>58</sup> Oswald de Andrade and Leslie Bary, "Cannibalist Manifesto," *Latin American Literary Review* 19, no. 38 (Jul.-Dec. 1991): 38-47.

prominent place in nationalist discourse beginning from the earliest affirmations of a lusophone Brazilian identity. Indeed, the modernistas' work is a continuation of this tradition. On the other hand, Cendrars' primitivism is more diffuse: in his Africanist works he removed the indicators of geographic, tribal, or linguistic particularity. In his novels Amerindians frequently appear en masse, with little distinction between tribes or individuals, and references to primitive others are almost always employed in order to mark deviation from European social or psychological norms. While this difference between Cendrars and Andrade's primitivisms seemingly confirms Fredric Jameson's argument about literature from developing or third-world countries tending towards national allegory at the expense of stylistic modernity, I would argue that Andrade's version of primitivist nationalism reveals the non-universalism of the "western" worldview, as well as the national self-interrogation inherent to any modernist primitivism.<sup>59</sup>

Brazilian scholarship on the modernist movement is generally very focused on nationalist politics, although there is some disagreement on the timeline. Luis Madureira and Renato Ortiz, for example, cite the 1924 *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* as the inauguration of modernismo's "nationalist period" (Madureira 27).<sup>60</sup> But then again, one could look at the anti-academic discourse in the speeches given at the 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna as nationalist, in that most modernistas criticized the institutional power of the Brazilian

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<sup>59</sup> Here I am referring to the debate in reaction to (from biblio) Jameson, Fredric: "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15, no. 15: 65-88. For my analysis I'm leaning on the response in Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 15, no. 17 (Autumn 1987): 3-25.

<sup>60</sup> Luis Madureira, *Cannibal Modernities: Postcoloniality and the Avant-Garde in Caribbean and Brazilian Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005).

Academy of Letters as impeding Brazilian writers and artists from achieving a level of creativity worthy of the independent nation whose centennial they were celebrating.<sup>61</sup>

In his study of modernist primitivism,<sup>62</sup> Abel Guerra points to an even longer association between primitivism and Brazilian national identity, seeing a common thread between modernists and José de Alencar's romantic vision of the Brazilian people emerging from a tragic but necessary encounter between the male European colonizer and the colonized female Indian. Guerra points out that although critics remain divided on whether the modernist period was truly original or a mere imitation of foreign modernist forms and ideas, they do seem to share the assumption that imitation is the rule for Brazilian production, that the country's intellectual production is continually following behind Europe on a teleological creative path.<sup>63</sup> Pascoal Farinaccio explains the nationalist preoccupation of the modernists as inevitable, because local literary criticism was only minimally developed in that period, with the modernists needing to both create and serve as their own critics (Farinaccio 40).<sup>64</sup>

Even within the category of nationalist modernist primitivisms in Brazil, however, there is diversity in the political ideologies served.<sup>65</sup> Verde-amarelismo, a right-leaning literary and political movement emerged in response to Andrade's Pau-Brasil, viewing it as "nacionalismo afrancesado," or/and excessively cosmopolitan in nature. Like Andrade's

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Graça Aranha's and Menotti del Picchia's speeches, in Teles, *Vanguarda Europeia e Modernismo Brasileiro*, p 280, 287.

<sup>62</sup> Abilio Guerra, *O primitivismo em Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade e Raul Bopp, Origem e Conformação no Universo Intelectual Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Romano Guerra, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Guerra's generalization about Brazilian literary scholarship suggests that the internalization of a narrative like Casanova's, as discussed in the previous chapter, continues even with contemporary thinkers.

<sup>64</sup> Pascoal Farinaccio, *"Serafim Ponte Grande" e as Dificuldades da Crítica Literária* (São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial, 2001).

<sup>65</sup> "Raymond Williams has noted that modernist and avant-garde appropriations of the primitive and the popular follow disparate political orientations as they develop: either toward 'socialist and other radical and revolutionary tendencies [or] very strong national and eventually nationalist identifications, of the kind heavily drawn upon in both Italian and German fascism' (*Politics of Modernism* 58)" (Madureira 34).



*Manifesto Antropófago* (1928), the *Manifesto Nhengaçu Verde-Amarelo* (1929) reappropriates the figure of the Tupi Indian in order to proclaim a political destiny for the nation, but emphasizes instead the land struggle between the Tupi and Tapuia tribes, as opposing forces within the Brazilian character.<sup>66</sup> The aspects of the indigenous figure that are highlighted here are very different from the Antropofagia version: instead of a matriarchy, the verde-amarelistas emphasize Tupi masculine strength; instead of cannibalizing Europeans, these Tupi are fighting for territory with another tribe (whose presence on the territory is equally ancient and ‘natural’). Madureira links this particular strain of primitivism with similar nationalist discourses in the Caribbean, equating the Carib with Spaniards, rationalizing the colonizing spirit as natural to the environment (Madureira 31). Outside the left/right split between antropofagistas and verde-amarelistas, Mário de Andrade’s version of primitivism focused more on popular culture, “balancing between dual expectations to capture the national essence as well as elevate it” (Guerra 251). However, he resisted Oswald de Andrade’s readings of his works that subsumed him into his own ideological tribe.

As Cendrars’ primitivistic approach to “literature nègre” contains its own contradictions, Oswald de Andrade’s primitivist works from the mid to late 1920s offer divergent paths toward a Brazilian national literature. Although he published it in 1933 with a preface rejecting it as a relic of bourgeois decadence, Andrade was still writing *Serafim Ponte Grande* around the same time as his work on the *Revista de Antropofagia* (1928-9), his most aggressively nationalist work. *Serafim Ponte Grande* centers on a

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<sup>66</sup> The manifesto’s authors include Menotti del Picchia, Cassiano Ricardo, and Plinio Salgado, who became the leader of the Integralista party. Jorge Schwartz, *Vanguardas Latino-Americanas: Polemicas, Manifestos, e Textos Críticos* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1995): 148.

picaresque world-traveling Brazilian, whose sexual partners change as rapidly as the writing styles pastiched. While the novel gained scholarly interest in the 1960s more from its formal and structural inventiveness, it is equally interesting as a counterpart to Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*, which is more regularly identified as Brazil's primitivist nationalist Odyssey. Like *Macunaíma's* "herói sem caráter," Serafim Ponte Grande is a caricature of a Brazilian - childlike, indolent and sensual, in Guerra's formation - and whereas Macunaíma's travels take him to every corner of the country, Serafim wanders in Europe and the Middle East. Where Macunaíma is populist, Serafim proves his Brazilian bourgeois bonafides by lamenting his country's primitivity at every opportunity. During an unnamed insurrection in São Paulo, Serafim exclaims, "[m]y country has been sick for some time. It suffers from cosmic incompetence. All modesty aside, I myself am a national symbol. I own a cannon and can't fire it. How many revolutions will it take for the ballistic rehabilitation of all Brazilians?" (*SPGE* 33).<sup>67</sup> But in his encounters with European women, Serafim capitalizes on their primitivist projections onto him, while in the Holy Land he fixates on the sterility of the environment and the robbed museums, leaving one Old World for the next and returning to the New World with an altered set of values.

In contrast, Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago" starts with an inversion of European primitivist stereotypes, rejecting them outright: "Down with all the importers of canned consciousness. The palpable existence of life. And the pre-logical mentality for Mr. Lévy-Bruhl to study [...] The paterfamilias and the creation of the Morality of the Stork: Real ignorance of things + lack of imagination + sense of authority in the face of curious offspring" (*CM* 39, 42). Beyond rejecting features of "western civilization," the Antropófago

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<sup>67</sup> Oswald Andrade, *Serafim Grosse Pointe*, trans. Kenneth D. Jackson and Albert Bork (Austin: New Latin Quarter Editions, 1979). Hereafter cited as *SPGE*.

claims Brazilian authorship or ownership on the European ideas that are worth keeping: “We already had Communism. We already had Surrealist language. The Golden Age [...] Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness” (CM 39, 40). Returning to the beginning of the manifesto, the first lines can be read as an act of cannibalism: “Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically. The world's single law. Disguised expression of all individualism, of all collectivism. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties” (CM 38). Andrade has taken the idea of a universal subject, Europe’s role in a way, and re-assigned its role to the cannibal.

### ***C) Race and categorization***

Whereas talking about primitivism in relationship to a specific nation can be taken as a creative and useful political abstraction, there comes a point when a primitivism that generally separates the civilized world from the uncivilized one is inevitably talking about race. This part is particularly difficult, because relatively few scholars of these particular writers focus on this aspect of their writing. There are several plausible reasons for this: one, they do not see it, two, they share some of the misperceptions, or three, they don’t think race is an interesting enough aspect of these oeuvres. Both Cendrars and Andrade reproduce some racist discourse within their primitivism, often in a way that ambiguously parodies it, and in doing so accepts the generalization while flipping the value judgment of it. It is possible that the returning trope of race-shifting is an ingenious demonstration of race as a social construct. It is equally true that their pieces in which they claim to speak for

another (whole) group, especially about their essence, contradict their critique of colonial reason.

As discussed in section A, there are particularities to the historical context of primitivism within Brazil and France at this moment, with some overlap, but also some significant differences. One commonality is that anthropological texts, both 19<sup>th</sup> century regional studies and contemporary social scientific theory were available and of significant interest to writers in both France and Brazil. Although he may not have read the farcically high number of texts cited in his lecture on African literature, Cendrars was certainly consuming everything from Gobineau to Lévy-Bruhl, and Andrade and his cohort were reading and reacting to the same. Where Cendrars was somewhat ecumenical in the primitive regions that interested him, the modernists were more focused on Brazilian culture(s), and several of them ventured past social commentary into active research. Mário de Andrade, for example, devoted a large part of his career to documenting folklore and popular music. K. David Jackson points out that the theme of “three sad races” is not just a literary tradition, but also a subject of social debate regarding the country’s capacity for development (Jackson 96). Within the wider context of Latin America, pan-Americanist treatises on the potential or destiny of “la raza cosmica” were also of interest to the modernistas. As discussed in Chapter 1, fascination with the world outside of Europe also manifested itself in Paris and among French-speaking writers in both consumption of popular culture and academic interest. Jean-Claude Blachère’s *Le Modèle Nègre* addresses the fact that critical reactions to material that would today be considered racist were rare, but examines the subset of writers whose primitivism signals their rejection of hierarchies that judge ‘primitive’ cultures to be inferior (Blachère 18-19).

As Blachère points out in relation to primativists in general, race is a recurring theme for Cendrars and Andrade, who, along with their cohorts, reproduce a great deal of the generalizations about 'primitive' people that were circulating at the time, having read the material selectively for confirmation of their own ideological orientation. In reproducing these generalizations, at times they outright reject the value judgments or inverse them, at times they parody the discourse, but these generalizations remain intact. Cendrars' fictional encounters between European characters and the primitive world often resemble the type of traditional primitivism that Togovnick identifies in Conrad, Lawrence, or Stanley. The picaresque duo in *Moravagine*, for example, are stuck on a boat in the Amazon, unable to land for the profusion of dangerous Indians:

Nine times out of ten when we did this the underbrush opened to make way for a party of hostile Indians. They were powerfully built, tall, with loose-flying hair, their nostrils pierced by sharp sticks, their ear-lobes elongated by the weight of heavy discs of vegetable ivory, their lower lips decorated with tusks and claws or bristling with thorns. They were armed with bows and blow-tubes which they fired in our direction. As they were reputed to be cannibals we would quickly paddle back to mid-stream and resume our dream of the damned" (*Moravagine* 179).

The description of the Indians and of the environment seems to blend the two, as if the Indians were just another menacing part of the oppressive excess of biological material all around them, of unstoppable birth and decay.<sup>68</sup> After the two anti-heroes are captured, the narrator describes in a vaguely ethnographic way the physical features of the tribe, complete with a sexually-transmitted disease that turns their skin blue, but at no point does any individual character come out of the collective, in contrast to the hundreds of named characters that populate the European segments of their worldwide wandering.

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<sup>68</sup> A similar atmosphere of vague danger, related to indigenous North Americans this time, takes place in *L'Or* (*TADA 2*), written after Cendrars' first trip to Brazil.

The titular character takes a Conradian turn, and manages to integrate into the cannibal tribe and become their leader, even a god. When Raymond La Science comes out of his malarial fever, Moravagine's face appears as if in a photo negative, his skin black and his mouth and eyes in white, and he has piercings and a face tattoo (*Moravagine* 190). His appearance as a photo negative confirms Torgovnick's thesis, that the primitive, as written by Europeans, is an imaginary category or character that exists beyond any tribal particularity, amalgamating visible differences into the opposite of all that is western, its negative. But at the same time, this adoptive primitive is born into the heart of darkness, already revealing himself to be an indiscriminate serial killer, created by and defective for Western Europe. Throughout the novel, the most modern technology is likened to the intense aesthetic experience provoked by primitive art or the intensity of a psychological break, and it's hard to tell from one moment to the next whether the reader is meant to be disgusted or to admire the psychopath's vitality.

Similarly, Andrade's *Serafim Ponte Grande* can at times seem to reproduce some of the primitivist clichés, most of the time in an ambiguously ironic manner: he describes, for example, Istanbul's population as a "mistura negra," and like in the case of Cendrars, "negro/a" seems to be shorthand for whoever is racially different from him, or "not white" and not the typical sense of descendance from the African diaspora (*SPGE* 91).<sup>69</sup> At times his parody goes over the top, as when Serafim is observing an insurrection, cheering on the rebels with "Viva a negrada" (Long live the pack of blacks) [...] "Fogo, indaiada de minha terra tem palmeiras" (Fire, you band of Indians from my home on the range!) (*SPGE* 34).

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<sup>69</sup> The citations here are from the English translation by Jackson and Bork (marked as *SPGE*), but when relevant I have provided the original wording as well from *Serafim Ponte Grande* (São Paulo: Global Editora, 1984).

Serafim's strangest primitivist encounter, however, takes place at a Bal Nègre in Paris and it is unclear whether he is the role of the anthropological observer, or that of the primitive object of study:

“The buzzing of atavistic forests fraternizes him silently to orchestras mulatto and colonial. Not even he can put on a costume. Over the skin undressed by Poiret, Patou, Vionnet, Lanvin, grow lumps of pearls, verdant warts of saffires, screeches of blacks, luminous liquid bodies and teeth and animals from all dressed Africas rub up against white females.

“Well, he’s from the vagabond race whose slothful pace accompanies chords of the guitar. Sambas and blues. The maid’s soft tangos. City waltzes.

- My dear friend, that is Brazil. Twenty years from now the United States will be imitating us.
- We only have one drawback: cockroaches. And then street names that don’t mean anything at all! Peak Place!”

The tribe that Serafim observes there is the more adventurous side of the wealthy Parisian bourgeoisie but the jewelry is likened to sickly growths/deformations on these put-together people. Race uncomfortably dominates the scene, and the black people there are dehumanized (they’re either bodies and teeth, or animals), but also the white women dancing with them are animalized (females rather than women). And where does Serafim fit into this picture? He’s “fraternized” (*irmanar*) to the “mulatto and colonial orchestras” – so not quite part of the African set, but definitely not part of the white European set either.

More so than the ironic and ambivalent reappropriation of a primitivist cliché, Cendrars prefers to aggressively flip the developmentalist script, even if he periodically contradicts his own message. A central excursus called “La Principe de l’Utilité” is added to the middle of *Moravagine*, in which Cendrars waxes philosophical about “utility” as a universally uniting principle for both modern man and primitive man before unveiling a theory about the history of the planet and of humankind. At the time Cendrars wrote this, the out-of-Africa theory about the origins of humankind had not yet been fully accepted by

the scientific community, but he claims with the tone of relative certainty that an “africo-brazilian” continent and a Europe-Siberia continent preceded our current continental configuration, and he says that the cradle of prehistoric man is along the banks of the Amazon (*Moravagine* 148), and of modern man is Central America (*Moravagine* 149). At this point in the text, Fluckiger has pointed out that Cendrars has copied from his own discussion of “Negro literature” that he gave in São Paulo in 1924, so it is possible that he was being creative with facts to please his audience, but this might also have been commonly thought at the time. This rewriting of history recalls Andrade’s manifestoes, in arguing that something his readers think of as very European and modern is indeed completely learned from the Americas: “[...] this is why the white race, disembarking in America, discovered as in a single flash the sole and unique principle of human activity, the principle that educates and subjugates: the principle of utility” (*Moravagine* 149). Cendrars claims that this knowledge lets (old) European countries “regain consciousness, let fall their shackles” and lets big new countries in the Americas turn their backs on the European way of operating: “The classical formulas are insufficient, not only in art, but in politics and general economics. Everything is cracking, giving way, the most time-honored stays of society and the most audacious experimental scaffoldings. In the forge of a war of liberation and on the sonorous anvil of the press the whole framework of the body politic is being recast and forged anew” (*Moravagine* 150).

This desire to account for the conditions in the present and find lessons for the future by producing a fantastical origins story could be interpreted as the continuation of the impulse that drove Cendrars to produce the *Anthologie Nègre* and its two follow-up volumes. Both projects are motivated by a recognition of a cultural inequality between the



primitive and modern, but where “La Principe de l’Utilité” enacts a “scientific” explanation for why the inequality should be re-evaluated, *Comment les blancs sont d’anciens noirs* claims to provide the mythical rationalization for how this inequality came to exist.<sup>70</sup> Like the two previous volumes, this relatively short book has African tales taken from 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropological accounts, but Cendrars has isolated three different stories that account for the separation of Europeans from Africans. The plots vary – in the first Whites are resurrected corpses in league with the devil, in the second the predecessor of the Blacks is too sociable and indolent to win the race with his white brother, and in the third, one bad choice at the beginning of a quest ruins the black predecessors’ chances at winning the better land. On the one hand this book is trying to let African literature convey its take on history, but on the other hand it reinforces a problematic binary, and gives the impression that the unequal distribution of wealth and power is older than time itself and immutable.

#### ***D) Ambivalence toward authenticity in culture and literary production***

The previous sections have addressed the contours of primitivism (A), the motivations for employing it (nationalism or anti-nationalism, B), the basic components of the machine (race, C), and this section will address one of its primary sources of friction. Among the many features of the imagined primitive other - purity, power, masculinity, femininity, naturalness, honesty, peacefulness, aggression, simplicity, originality, communal bonds, freedom — Authenticity (and anxiety about having lost it in the modern

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<sup>70</sup> Also from *TADA* 10.

era) stands out as a paradoxical catalyst for primitivism; inauthenticity is an inevitable constituent part of primitivism, because it's always a desire for what one doesn't have (and imagines that others do have). While "authenticity" would not figure among the main criteria for interest in literary or artistic modernism, it is an omnipresent question in analysis and criticism of 1920s modernist primitivisms, both among the writers themselves and their contemporaries, and among later critics approaching them as objects of literary history. Both Cendrars and Andrade play with the concept of authenticity in their work, and recognize it as a tension or anxiety in the zeitgeist, but have a practically postmodern acceptance of its impossibility.

Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* is probably the Brazilian modernist work that elicits the most contradictory opinions regarding its purported authenticity. The most negative charge levied against the book is of plagiarism, a charge that Abel Guerra dismisses but attributes to Mário de Andrade's reliance on European ethnography for access to 'authentically' Brazilian folklore (Guerra 250). Andrade's "rhapsody" is a composite of many different stories from a recently published work by Theodor Koch-Grünberg,<sup>71</sup> but weaves threads tying it to his urban and cosmopolitan environment in São Paulo (including an appearance by Cendrars at a macumba ceremony). In his later accounts of the modernist period, Andrade himself estimated that the value of *Macunaíma* was not so much in its "originality" but rather in its "authenticity", a point of view that Guerra supports, locating

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<sup>71</sup> From K. David Jackson's article "Three Glad Races" *Modernism/Modernity* 1, no. 2 (1994): 89-112.: "Andrade's 'rhapsody,' composed in six days in 1926 on a São Paulo plantation, praises the jungle and condemns the city in a magical folktale of linguistic, thematic, and narrative virtuosity. Its Amazonian lore is based on an ethnography of the Taulipang and Arekuná Indians of the upper Northwest Amazon published in Germany in 1924 by Theodor Koch-Grünberg, whose fieldwork dates from 1911-13."

the creative work in the manipulation of existing material in order to create a new narrative (Guerra 250).

In a way, Mário's technique parallels Cendrars' in the *Anthologie Nègre*, and both authors were subject to criticism for the line they walked between the diffusion of ethnographic knowledge and literary creation. Both writers take material that was collected by anthropologists and re-purpose it, and literarize it; both works gravitate towards seeking recognition as scholarly material, stopping short of demanding it outright. The principal vector of criticism in Cendrars' case was from actual Africanist ethnographers, who critiqued his sloppy citation, with incorrect titles and author names for his ethnographic source books, and thought his divisions were arbitrary (*TADA* 10, xviii). Where Andrade was critiqued for taking recourse in academically approved outside sources, Cendrars was critiqued for taking too much license with attribution.

While it appears that Cendrars intended precisely to present African tales as literature, he still plays with the trappings of scientific legitimacy. The very long bibliography is still a signifier of authentic source material, despite the fact that it does not reliably link the stories to their sources. His preface to the *Anthologie* furthers the fiction that authentic stories are faithfully transported to their French recipients; he claims to have made the effort to “exactly” cite everything in the bibliography, to have reproduced the tales “as the missionaries and explorers brought them to Europe” (*TADA* 10, 4). He also apologizes for the quality of explorers' transcriptions and translations, something about which he would have no idea, having never been to Africa, nor learned any African languages — “Il est bien à regretter que l'exactitude littéraire ne soit pas le seul souci

légitime de ces voyageurs lointains” — and thus foreshadows exactly the critique that would be leveled against him.

In each section, Cendrars does have a list of the tale titles in each chapter, along with the supposed tribal provenance, and each chapter includes a list of the characters, or a list of themes discussed. The original version had a glossary where he would translate object words (like the bean example). The paratexts reveal a desire to list, inventory, accumulate, document, an inclination duplicated in his own fictional characters when they find themselves amongst primitive people. This impulse reinforces the strangeness of a story, rather than translating the content in order to be transparent to a European or francophone audience, and also imparts a scientific or documentary authenticity to the work. Steering toward strangeness is a surprising decision on his part, because as discussed in the first section of this chapter, the aspect of “primitive” literature that Cendrars (and other primitivist writers) celebrates the most is the supposed immediacy of the language and stories. If European primitivists claim that “we” can approach African cultural material intuitively, with little foreknowledge, then choosing the trappings of scientific rigor constitutes a step in the opposite direction, and runs counter to the effect of removing the ethnographer’s presence from the stories. Blachère's analysis offers an explanation; Cendrars claims later that in removing the anthropologist, he removed his value judgments (Blachère 84), and in this way Cendrars paradoxically borrows the ethnographer’s legitimacy, while theoretically bypassing his ideology.

As controversial as the use of western social science appears to be in the production of primitivist literary works, drawing from the well of western literary canons provokes an equally suspicious reception. Other Brazilian modernists of Oswald de Andrade’s cohort

characterized his work as less authentically Brazilian, and more European (which he can't authentically be either). The verde-amarelistas' accusation of "nationalismo afrancesado" previously mentioned is fairly representative of common contemporaneous critique of Antropofagia, as well as Andrade's own self-critique in subsequent years, which will be addressed in Chapter 4. Andrade's more fluid interpretation of his own movement's parameters also allows him to annex other works that he considered Anthropophagic. In the *Revista de Antropofagia*, no. 5, from Sept 1928, p. 3, Oswald claims *Macunaíma* for the Antropofagists, even though his and Mário's world-views and artistic principles were diverging at that point: "Two purely Anthropofagic books have come out. Mário has written our Odyssey and created, in one thwack of a wooden club, the cyclical hero and for 50 years our national poetic idiom" (Guerra 265). Mário de Andrade, for his part, complains about being subsumed into a group he does not adhere to, pointing out in a letter to Alceu Lima that his *Losango Caqui* had been absorbed into Pau-Brasil (Guerra 266). Even in more receptive recent criticism, this discrepancy in attachment to 'authenticity' between Oswald and Mário is seen to make the Antropofagic type of primitivism less uniquely relevant to Brazil, and more useful as a general peripheral critique of the Western subject. Jackson, for example, seems to argue that the "Manifesto Antropófago" is authentic in its *inauthenticity*:

In the Brazilian case, although the writing ascribed to the primitive voice from the outside is similarly feigned and inauthentic, the illogic and surreality of a cannibal's manifesto falls within the spirit of Andrade's project and thus constitutes a convincing text. Andrade seems keenly aware of the irony of his appropriations as an outsider; he justifies them by changing European prime materials into a different language, a savage discourse.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Jackson, "Three Glad Races":107.

The primary manifestation of both Cendrars' and Andrade's distance from the expected authenticity of primitivist ideology is playfulness, both in their literary production and in their self-presentation. Mário de Andrade lamented this aspect of Oswald through a comparison with Graça Aranha: "a little humanistic poem from Pau-Brasil by Oswald de Andrade [sic] is much less primitivist than one chapter of *Esthetica da Vida* by Graça Aranha. Because this chapter is filled with interested preaching, full of ritual and deforming idealism, full of magic and fear. The lyricism of Oswald de Andrade is a knowing joke. The deformation taken up by the paulista [Oswald] doesn't ritualize anything, only destroys with ridicule. In the ideas he proposes there is no idealism at all. No magic. Can't be confused with practice. It's disinterested art. Because all socially primitive art even ours is social, tribal, religious, commemorative art" (Guerra 252).<sup>73</sup>

Another way that these primitivist authors give their readers an approximation of an authentic primitive experience is paradoxically through necessarily inauthentic representation of orality, modifying texts to give readers the impression of orality requires a suspension of disbelief. The bulk of the modifications that Cendrars makes to the ethnographer's source text for the stories in the *Anthologie Nègre* are with the purpose of achieving this effect. Suspending their disbelief, the readers should imagine that the story "C'est bon. C'est bon," for example, was originally told in an African language and then translated on paper into French, but instead of providing the writing of a supposed anthropologist/scribe, we can see that Cendrars has modified the spelling in order to approximate the sound of a non-native French speaker pronouncing something incorrectly in French while speaking: "Des mille-z'yeux et des mille-souffles" (*TADA* 10, 389). If we're

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<sup>73</sup> Quotation from Mário de Andrade's "Essay on Brazilian music": 18.

being uncharitable, we'd say he's writing in "petit nègre." This is meant to make the French reader feel like they are getting the oral/aural experience of African tales, but this is one that would not or could not exist in reality. Conversely, Cendrars also removes pieces of original dialogue in which the ethnographer's text conflicts with the imagined authentic experience of African storytelling that he wants to create for the reader. For example, in the last story from *Comment les blancs sont d'anciens noirs*, Cendrars removed, in addition to other references to the "pagayeur," a line of dialogue that was clearly said by a white child who is in the audience: "so Jean-Felix, you mean I used to be black like you and have a big nose just like yours?" (*TADA* 10, 504). Cendrars wants his readers to imagine that they are listening to an ancient tale unadulterated by reminders of colonialism, and the presence of a white child asking that question (in French or another European language), would most likely be explained as the offspring of a colonist who is getting some local entertainment.

## **Conclusions**

Finally, after this analysis of nationalist ideology, unstable categories of race and anxieties surrounding authenticity within these instances of modernist primitivism it might be illuminating to take a step back and examine certain ways that misperceptions present at the time of their writing persist in contemporary criticism of these authors. Specifically, Brazilian scholarship on Oswald de Andrade's version of primitivism (Amaral, Schwarz, Ortiz, and Guerra) continues to be overly invested in discrediting his concept of cannibalism by identifying European authors from whom he theoretically derived many of his ideas. Conversely, scholarship of Cendrars' primitivist works today tend to be under

invested in exploring the uncomfortable implications of some of his primitivist logic.

Luis Madureira, for example, talks about the “absolute modernity” claimed by the Antropofagistas, only in terms of a reappropriation of Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*, or Apollinaire’s *Zone* (Madureira 25-6). Similarly, in discussing “Pau-Brasil” as the choice of name for Andrade’s 1924 nationalist manifesto, Madureira places the sole source of the idea in Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (1578), because Léry had talked about writing his book with brazilwood ink (Madureira 28). Indeed, Andrade is harkening back to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century ‘discovery’ claims and colonial extraction, and also claimed to be part of a continuity including Apollinaire and Rimbaud, but restricting one’s analysis to finding the French source of Andrade’s ideas does not give the reader the opportunity to take in good faith the Antropofagista contestation of those discovery claims. If the reader is willing to entertain the idea that Europeans didn’t really “discover” the New World, Andrade’s equivalency should be imaginable, that Europeans do not have exclusive claim on modernism or modernity. Furthermore, the logical extension of the cannibal metaphor, in this tongue in cheek rendition, is disputing the validity of any authorial claims on ideas, an idea with a liberating promise for the cultural consumer.

Cendrars’ authorial claims on his primitivist texts, on the other hand, are rarely questioned by scholars of his work, when their very borrowed nature would almost seem to require it. Christine Le Quellec Cottier’s critical edition of the Africanist works, for example, does take the necessary steps in order to properly attribute the various stories to the ethnographic text that they were copied from, but her presentation of the material accepts Cendrars’ own framing of his role regarding the texts. In uncritically repeating the explanation that “discovering Negro tales signified for him reinventing them, giving them



(back) life by appropriating them through writing” (*TADA* 10 xxvi), Cottier chooses not to engage with the reader in a discussion of whether or not said texts in fact needed life to be given back to them, whether Cendrars’ impulse to bestow literary status upon tales told by unnamed griots is based on a historically-contingent understanding of literary status and the literary world in colonial context.

### Chapter 3: Collaboration and Cannibalism

In his book of essays, *Misplaced Ideas*, Roberto Schwarz examines Oswald de Andrade's poem "Poor Brute," in which a horse and cart have gotten stuck in a tramline. Schwartz sees the image as representative of a central paradox in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazil, the co-existence of a "pre-bourgeois society," sometimes uncharitably called backward, and areas of complete modernization. He argues that Brazil's easy adoption of the advantages of modernity "pre-figures post-bourgeois society" (Schwarz 111).<sup>74</sup> This utopian conception of Brazil, or of Brazil's future, was not just a case of Andrade "chasing the mirage of an innocent progress" (Schwarz 121), but rather was a shared fantasy, evolved in a time of collaboration with Blaise Cendrars. This chapter will sketch out the ideological project motivated by this utopian fantasy in Cendrars and Andrade's books of poetry, *Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil*.

Both books share striking similarities in terms of style and content and theoretical concerns and yet in most of the criticism, only one book was addressed at a time for each author. Each book is analyzed with only minimal attention given to the author's relationship with the other and thus the books' interdependence is not taken into consideration. Aracy Amaral is one of the few scholars who address the collaborative period between the Brazilian modernists and Cendrars. Her *Blaise Cendrars no Brasil e os Modernistas* tells the story of the personal relationships between these parties but refrains from most textual analysis and furthermore claims that while Cendrars is tremendously

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<sup>74</sup> Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas*, Translated by John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992).

influential on the Brazilians, their works had little to no effect on his writing. Fortunately, not all scholars of this period arrive at the same conclusion – Haroldo de Campos is just one example – but I have yet to encounter textual analysis that deals with both authors' writing at this juncture. This is what I seek to do here. While I agree with de Campos that attempting to pin down a verifiable trail of influence would be a misguided enterprise, I believe that by identifying the shared literary and ideological project of these writers at this time of convergence can help us articulate an alternative account of the relationship between the literary world's supposed core and supposed periphery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

First I will describe the historical circumstances around the genesis of these two works, marking them each as a critical juncture in each writer's career. Second, I will investigate the central polemic within contemporary literary thought with which each of the writers was engaging, explore the various ways that Cendrars and Andrade contributed to that conversation in theory and practice. In also reflecting on how scholarship afterwards has interpreted their contributions, I will identify some theoretical issues that make situating these authors difficult. Third, I outline how Cendrars and Andrade make metatextual references to previous literature about Brazil, their canonical predecessors. Lastly, I will show how both authors practice a form of linguistic populism in order to open up the categories of what kind of language can be considered literary and of who can produce or consume literature.

## ***A) Historical Context***

*Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil* are like fraternal twins, conceived at the same time and sharing mostly the same genetic material. Some of the similarities are obvious, like the fact that they both have illustrations by Tarsila do Amaral, and that many of the same places that are described or give titles to the poems are present in both. The relationship between the two authors is explicit from the dedications of each book: Cendrars dedicated *Feuilles de Route* to his “bons amis” in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul, including Oswald (*FdR* 116-7),<sup>75</sup> and in turn Andrade dedicated his “to Blaise Cendrars, on the occasion of the discovery of Brazil” (*PB* 61).<sup>76</sup> *Pau-Brasil* and *Feuilles de Route* are both broken up into sections, eight and three respectively, that are separated by Tarsila’s drawings and are noticeably asymmetrical, undercutting any attempt to uncover a deeper logic to the divisions as well as any aesthetic balance.

Both books also follow more or less chronologically the path of Cendrars’ first visit to Brazil accompanied by the modernists in 1924: both works move from São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, through Minas Gerais, with passages on the plantations São Martinho and Morro Azul, and finally the Northeast, both the states of Bahia and Pernambuco, including the island Fernando de Noronha. In fact, the last poem of *Pau-Brasil*, in which the poet sneaks his *saudades*, or homesickness, for Paris through customs, might be the first point where it becomes clear that the whole book of poetry is set in Brazil itself, and while Europe is

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<sup>75</sup> The citations from *Feuilles de Route* are from the English translation by Monique Chefdor, and in-text citations use abbreviation *FdR*, as noted in bibliography: Blaise Cendrars, *Complete Postcards from the Americas: Poems of Road and Sea*, translated and edited by Monique Chefdor (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>76</sup> This dedication was removed from later editions of the book after their split. This will be addressed further in Chapter 4. The citations marked *PB* are from *Pau-Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Globo, 1990).

almost always present as a comparison, it does not get to be the center. Europe becomes peripheral in *Feuilles de Route* as well; there are a few poems set in Europe, but it's only leaving France from Le Havre and passing through or by Spain and Portugal. Details from the trip that are present in these books echo even in later works from after the authors parted ways. For example, in the section "São Martinho" Andrade mentions the "torre Eiffel noturna e siderale," a constellation "invented" by the owner of the "Morro Azul" fazenda, and Cendrars in turn later in his career titles an essay "La Tour Eiffel Sidérale".<sup>77</sup> While the geographic itinerary followed by the writers is the primary shared organizational feature of the two books, it is important to note that Andrade's first two sections leave the present and instead evoke different periods in Brazilian history, which is a divergence that I will address in the following section of this chapter.

The timeline of the production these works suggests that the works were being written concurrently. We do not have written commentary by either author on early drafts of the poems. Most scholars of Cendrars and Andrade's work conclude that the two were reading and inspired by each other's work. Although both writers had a habit of starting projects that were only finished many years later, the two poetry books were released in varying parts over the next few years. Cendrars' first section "Le Formose" was published by Au Sans Pareil in 1924 on its own, the second, "São Paulo" was in the catalogue for Tarsila's first Parisian exhibit in 1926, and the last untitled section was published in the review *Montparnasse* in 1927 and 1928 (*FdR* 251). Andrade's book was published all in one piece in 1925, also by Au Sans Pareil, as the first book of Brazilian poetry published in France, but the first section is actually a reduced version of the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* which

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<sup>77</sup> The Morro Azul owner was Oswaldo Padroso. See Philippe Enrico, "L'Orangé et le bleu, simultanément" in *O Eixo e a Roda*, v. 18 (2009): 168.

he had published in March of 1924 (in the *Correio da Manhã*), and Paulo Prado's introduction was written in May of that year. While acknowledging that any attempt to definitively determine the direction of influence would be misguided, Haroldo de Campos has pointed out that the timing means that Oswald would have laid out the conceptual basis for his poetry collection and have completed a fair amount of it during Cendrars' visit.<sup>78</sup> De Campos also cites a remembrance of Andrade's in which he claims that Cendrars was "consciously writing" Pau-Brasil poetry (*PB* 31).

Indeed, the goals set forward by Andrade's *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* do seem to account for much of the thematic content of both books and their linguistic register, despite the fact that there is a clearly national meaning to the "us" to whom the manifesto is addressed. In advocating for Brazilian writers to seek out an audience outside of the elites in Rio and São Paulo who had been educated in Europe, as well as finding an audience outside of Brazil, he argued that they should write in a "Language without archaisms, without erudition. Natural and neologic. The millionaire-contribution of all the errors. The way we speak. The way we are."<sup>79</sup> The manifesto also exhorts writers to be faithful to the equal and paradoxical co-existence in Brazil of both technological modernity and pre-modern societies, of the very new and the very old, of high tech and low tech. In much of the language used in the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil*, one can see the seeds already sown for the *Manifesto Antropófago*, a more radical turn towards primitivism: "Barbarous, credulous, picturesque and tender. Readers of newspapers. Pau-Brasil. The forest and the school. The National Museum. Cuisine, ore and dance. Vegetation. Pau-Brasil" (*MPBP* 187). Andrade accumulates

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<sup>78</sup> Haroldo de Campos, "Uma poetica da radicalidade," introduction to *Pau-Brasil. Obras completas*, de Andrade, O. (Sao Paulo: Editora Globo, 1974), 32.

<sup>79</sup> I am using the English translation of the manifesto by Stella M. de Sá Rego ("Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry"), cited in-text as *MPBP*.

adjectives and nouns without including the verbs, leaving the reader to create the connection between them, something that Cendrars also does in his poems from this period. He uses language that is immediately recognizable as the words Westerners have used to essentialize indigenous tribes in Brazil, for better or for worse – “barbarous” and “credulous” – but immediately pairs this with “readers of newspapers,” or the nascent mass culture that the more powerful writers in Brazil refused to acknowledge. The combination of the forest and the school, or the natural resources of the continent paired with the tools acquired from modernity, would theoretically allow for the creation of something new, that is not possible to find elsewhere

### ***B) Objectivity and Photography***

In this section, I will place Andrade and Cendrars within a broader philosophical conversation taking place amongst artists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century about the relationship between the self and an outside world that was undergoing significant changes, and what poetry can or should contribute to that conversation. Like other writers of their time, both Cendrars and Andrade adopted photography as a metaphor for their approach to writing poetry. Whether it was to move towards an ideal of objectivity, as in the case of Andrade, or towards subjectivity, as in the case of Cendrars, both believe that the photographic metaphor was useful in attempting to convey a kind of reality that goes beyond just representation.

In a way, they are engaging with similar questions as other writers and poets from this time period but arrive at different answers. I will be using Laurent Jenny’s book *La fin*

*de l'intériorité* to understand the stakes of rejecting interiority or subjectivity during this particular time period.<sup>80</sup> Jenny offers a convincing macrostructure narrative of poets dealing with the question of interiority from the mid-nineteenth century through World War II, in which the subjectivity so important to “modern” writers becomes unimportant to “modernist writers” and makes a return appearance with the surrealists. Jenny describes a certain current of modernism<sup>81</sup> in the late 1910s, out of which the Dadaists and Surrealists grew, and against which the Surrealists later established themselves, personified in large part by Apollinaire and also by Pierre Reverdy, whose poems were characterized by “rarefaction syntaxique, dispersion verbale sur la surface de la page avec usage des blancs, parataxe thématique” (Jenny 122). These traits are paradoxically inherited from the formal experimentation of the symbolists, whose focus on interiority and the lyrical expression of the self was one of the principal features that the modernists were jettisoning from their ship.

In the same year that Reverdy's journal *Nord-Sud* began publishing, Cendrars expressed a certain frustration with the Parisian literary scene; citing from *L'Homme foudroyé*, Chefdor explains that in 1917 Cendrars wanted to renounce poetry, convinced that “the poetry then prevalent in Paris seemed to become the foundation of a spiritual misunderstanding and a mental confusion which [...] would poison and paralyze all the activities of the French nation before it spreads to the rest of the world” (Chefdor 33). The

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<sup>80</sup> Laurent Jenny, *La fin de l'intériorité: théorie de l'expression et invention esthétique dans les avant-gardes françaises (1885-1935)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002.

<sup>81</sup> Jenny's use of the term “modernist” is not typical in French scholarship on this particular time period; where Anglo-American scholars have included French writers in an international aesthetic trend/tendency labeled as “modernism”, French scholarship tends to use the word ‘moderne’ to label a much larger time period and identifies early 20th century writers or poets as avant-garde or according to narrower labels. But Michel Murat's review of Jenny's book doesn't take issue with the terminology, so perhaps “modernist” is becoming more accepted.



spiritual misunderstanding that Cendrars found so objectionable was the continued attempts to manipulate language and keep pace with technical modernization while disregarding the human source of them. The outsized negative effects that he believed this artistic strain would have on society was perhaps so intense because of his traumatic experience of World War I, coming into close contact with the horrors rendered possible by the same technology that had seemed to promise so much before the war.

Cendrars was not always against the first wave of modernism and its excitement about the mechanization of the human experience. For example, he was part of the simultaneist movement, in which poets or artists attempted to capture in art the changes in human perception of time rendered possible by technological modernization in areas such as travel and communication.<sup>82</sup>: “[l]e vers libre traduit un flux bergsonien d’états continus et en perpétuel devenir. Ce flux de pensée est conçu comme à la fois mouvant et stratifié par la multitude des perceptions simultanées qui viennent s’y composer en images” (Jenny 78). But as the earlier citation from *L’Homme foudroyé* would attest, he eventually decided to find a different path than those forged by the first wave of modernism.

The expression of interiority characterized both modern poetry (symbolist etc) in France and the poetry of the Brazilian belle-époque.<sup>83</sup> Thus Jenny presents interiority as the major *bête noire* for the modernists in France, and de Campos sees it as the primary rejection by the modernistas. This is not, however, a case of an idea simply being

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<sup>82</sup> Jenny does not consider Cendrars to be in fact simultaniste, because the “Prose du Transibérien” is narrative and successive, even if there is some echo and transposition in the relationship between the poem and its visual accompaniment (Jenny 77). But because we are focusing more on the artists’ ideas rather than the execution of those ideas, the label is still useful.

<sup>83</sup> The most prominent examples would be Olavo Bilac, Alberto de Oliveira and Raimundo Correia, the “Parnassian Triad.”

transmitted from one place to another though, because the different groups arrive at it for different reasons and purposes (WWI in Europe, nationalism in Brazil).

In *Pau-Brasil* and *Feuilles de Route* the analogies to the creative process of photography not only suggest formal innovation in a way that was previously impossible, but also show their thematic engagement with the development of mass culture. Most secondary literature or criticism on the books focuses on these photographic methods, as a handy way of describing the poems to an audience who has not read them yet and also in order to articulate a fundamental link between the forms chosen and messages suggested by the poems about what poetry could or should express at that particular historical moment. The choice of the photographic metaphor is fortuitous, because it allows the writer or poet, depending on what role he is taking on, to pose some difficult questions about whether poetry can be objective, whether modern ways of viewing the world provide access to something that is beyond the scope of an individual's subjective point of view.

Jenny insightfully observes that the metaphors that writers use in his selected time period to describe their writing process shift frequently, from music in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to cubist painting in the 1910s to photography; in the case of Cendrars the functional metaphors also include postcards and telegrams. As is usually the case in *La Fin de l'intériorité*, this discussion will focus more on how the poets talk about or rationalize their work rather than on whether they actually accomplish this or not in practice. He effectively outlines the metaphorical purchase of photography: the mass access of the Kodak, the automaticity of the image-capturing process, the miniaturization or inversion of an image through the camera obscura, revelation of invisible images through chemical baths, using a negative image to produce a positive image through development

(negativizing the negative), revealing things the naked eye cannot see, such as the stop-phase of movement (Jenny 141-2). The photographic or postcard metaphor engenders a reflection on objectivity and subjectivity, which Jenny argues is the site of the most important shifts in between “modern” writers (symbolists), Modernists (Apollinaire and his ilk), and the surrealists. So in taking on this question, Cendrars and Andrade are inscribing themselves in a wider conversation/movement in literary history.

In *Blaise Cendrars vous parle*, a collection of interviews with the author, Cendrars referred to the poems he was writing in *Feuilles de Route* as “photographies mentales” or “mental photographs” (*FdR* 33)<sup>84</sup>. It is perhaps worth noting that André Breton and the surrealists, who were also working together around the same time that *Feuilles de Route* was published, also described their automatic writing process as “photographies de la pensée” or “photographs of thought.” At the same time that these Parisian writers were considering the possibilities of photography, so was Andrade. In the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil*, Andrade associates the camera with “aesthetic democratization” in the visual arts and advocates for the same to happen in poetry (*MPBP* 185). The camera is democratic in that the machine is mass-produced and available to all, and unlike painted portraits or sculptures, each negative can produce an infinite number of equally valuable and widely accessible copies. Consequently, a greater variety of classes are likely to be the subjects of photos than of paintings.

What using a photographic technique in poetry actually means in practice remains somewhat vague, and thus can be construed in different ways by different readers. De

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<sup>84</sup> In Blaise Cendrars and Michel Manoll, *Blaise Cendrars vous parle: propos recueillis par Michel Manoll* (Paris: Denoël, 1952), 28.

Campos for example, provides the following explanation of Andrade's use of a photographic technique, in a way that is clearly distinct from, for example, the Surrealists' use:

But precisely in order to speak of an anti-illusory process, of an objectivizing technique, the poetry thus produced is objective. Instead of wrapping up the reader in a chain of expected solutions and making him drunk on the stereotypes of a sensibility of already-codified reactions, this poetry, in quick takes and cuts, breaks the sad expectations of the reader, forces him to participate in the creative process. Nor are we dealing with an exclamatory plunge into the irrational or the oracular conjurings of mystery (so subjective and cathartic), but rather a poetry from a critical posture, from realization, and from the objectivization of consciousness through and in language" (de Campos 17).<sup>85</sup>

What Andrade is supposedly borrowing from photography here is its limited and nonjudgmental witnessing of visual reality, without emphasizing one object in its field of vision over another, or imposing a narrative logic on them.

One method that Cendrars and Andrade employ to achieve this photographic technique is to record what they see around them in terms of shapes and colors. Andrade explains the reasoning behind this method in his *Manifesto Pau-Brasil*: "Reaction against the invader subject, unlike finality. The theatre of ideas was a monstrous arrangement. The novel of ideas, a mixture. History painting, an aberration. Eloquent sculpture, a meaningless horror./ Our age announces the return to *pure meaning*./ A picture is lines and colors. A statue is volumes under light" (MPBP 186). Here it appears that Andrade is frustrated with poetry whose primary purpose is to convey ideas, and rather prefers that poetry present objects in their physicality, letting the interpretation and reconstitution of reality be done by the reader, if at all. This reductive method seems appropriate to describe many of

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<sup>85</sup> My translation from de Campos: "Mas, justamente por se tratar de um procedimento antiilusorio de uma técnica de objetivação, é que a poesia assim resultante é objetiva. Ao invés de embalar o leitor na cadeia de soluções previstas e de inebriá-lo nos estereótipos de uma sensibilidade de reações já codificadas, esta poesia, em tomadas e cortes rápidos quebra a morosa expectativa desse leitor, força-o à participar do processo criativo: Não se trata tampouco de um mergulho exclamativo no irracional, do conjuro oracular do mistério (este sim subjetivo catártico), mas de uma poesia de postura crítica. de tomada de consciência e de objetivação da consciência via e na linguagem."

*Feuilles de Route's* poems, although Cendrars does not speak so explicitly about his methodology.

We can see a “Pau-Brasilian” reduction of a scene to shapes and colors in “Lands,” which drops the reader into a scene of a banal argument about a boat in the distance, at which point he sees the coast, “It is a rounded land surrounded by chromed mists and topped with three mother of pearl plumes/ Two hours later we see triangular mountains/ Blue and black” (*FdR* 160-1). The colors become even more disconnected from any narrative in “Landscapes” (*PB* 183) – “Red earth/ Blue sky/ Dark-green vegetation” – and in “On the Train” (*PB* 183-5) – “Nature is a much darker green than at home/ Copper colored/ Closed in/ The forest has the face of an Indian/ Whereas yellow and white predominate in our meadows/ Here celestial blue colors the flowering campos.” Cendrars also explores more explicitly the varied way that human perception naturally takes a foreign landscape and tries to relate it to something that one knows; the mountains in “Rio de Janeiro” are variously compared to pears, the recumbent corpse of Napoleon, Richard Wagner, and when they try to identify the Sugar Loaf (itself proof of explorer’s desire to compare and name), they find it in “a hundred different locations. Andrade’s “Atelier” presents a landscape in a similarly color- and shape-oriented way, putting the rural landscape in primary colors, also incorporating city elements: “Locomotives and domestic animals / Geometrifying clear atmospheres / Congonhas discolors under the palladium/ The processions of Minas/ The greenery in klaxon blue / cut / Above the red dust/ Skyscrapers / Fords/ Viaducts / An aroma of coffee / Framed in silence” (*PB* 118)<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> My translation: Locomotivas e bichos nacionais/ Geometrizam as atmosferas nítidas / Congonhas descora sob o pátio / Das procissões de Minas/ A verdura no azul klaxon / Cortada / Sobre a poeira vermelha / Arranha-céus/ Fordes / Viadutos/ Um cheiro de café / No silêncio emoldurado

Multiple senses are brought in, smell and hearing joining sight, and Andrade, like Cendrars, compiles sensorial elements without making them speak intelligibly of ideas.

While both *Pau-Brasil* and *Feuilles de Route* seem to strip scenes and images down to the elements that would be visible through the objective of a camera, it would be a mistake to say that they reject interiority in the manner of the modernists described in *La Fin de l'intériorité*. In the case of Cendrars, despite using many of the same impersonalizing techniques as Andrade, he still places a significant emphasis on his personal and subjective experience, and his individual perspective; in a meta-poem about the relative idiosyncrasies of handwriting vs typewriting, he says “there are blank spaces that I alone know how to make” (*FdR* 125),<sup>87</sup> and in the next solidifies the link between the words on the page and his inner thoughts: “My beautiful typewriter which prevents me from dreaming port or starboard and makes me follow an idea to the end/ My idea (*FdR* 126). Generally Andrade does follow through on his call for objectivity and his poems avoid expressing obviously subjective thought that could be attributed to the poet himself, but it is not as completely objective as de Campos claims above. Some poems from *Pau-Brasil* resemble Cendrars’ postcard poems, like “Menina e Moça,” which reads like an offhand comment to a friend about how sad Andrade would be to leave the spectacle of the masses and processions in Minas Gerais and instead waste away “with the damn palm trees/ of the fazenda” (*PB* 130). Even more noticeably, Andrade’s poem “Walzertraum” (from the section “rp1”) resembles Cendrars’ observational poems, accumulating facts and details,

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<sup>87</sup> The physical appearance of these poems is not particularly experimental; the visual appearance or typographical arrangement of these poems is less important than it was in previous works, like “Le Prose du Transiberien” or in other modernist writers like Apollinaire in his calligrammes, or futurist/Dadaist poetry, or even moderns, like Mallarmé’s “Un Coup de dés.” It is perhaps a return to the interiority of the poet, but in a more democratized way.

allowing the reader to sort out what the relationship between them is or what importance they might have.

**Walzertraum**

Aqui dá arroz  
Feijão batata  
Leitão e patarata  
Passam 18 trens por dia  
Fora os extraordinários  
E o trem leiteiro  
Que leva leite para todos os bebês do Rio de Janeiro  
Apitos antigos apitam  
Sentimentalmente  
Eu gosto dos santuários  
Das viagens  
E de alguns hotéis  
O Bertolini's em Nápoles  
O d'Angleterre em Caen  
Onde Brummel morreu  
O hotel da Viúva Fernando na Aparecida  
E um hotel sem nome  
Na fronteira de Portugal  
Onde uma mulher bonita  
Quis fazer pipi  
Pela primeira vez

**Walzertraum**

Here you can get rice  
Beans potato  
Suckling pig and laddidah  
18 trains a day pass  
Apart from the extraordinary ones  
And the milk train  
That brings milk for all the infants in Rio de Janeiro  
Old whistle whistles  
Sentimentally  
I like the shrines/sanctuaries  
Of travels  
And of some hotels  
Bertolini's in Naples  
Or the Angleterre in Caen  
Where Brummel died  
The hotel of the widow Fernanda na Aparecida  
Is a nameless hotel  
On the border of Portugal  
Where a lovely lady  
Decided to go pee  
For the first time

But halfway through he switches modes and lists a number of hotels throughout the world, an itinerary that can't fully be pictured by anyone other than the person who went there.

Finally, Andrade briefly dips into the Cendrarsian register of recounting a personal memory that might not mean anything to anyone but him.

So in understanding the way that Andrade and Cendrars were situating themselves in relation to the first wave of modernism, the use of the photographic metaphor is important, but the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity that can dominate thinking around photography alone does not adequately account for the similarities in Andrade and Cendrars' poetic reactions to modernism. For an alternate lens through which to read their work, we can look back to the first poem of *Pau-Brasil*, "Falação." In portraying himself and his cohort as dismantling the principles governing the previous generations of

Euro-centric Brazilian writers, he emphasizes both their rejection of naturalism along with their adoption of the photographic metaphor: “It was necessary to take things apart. Deformation through impressionism and symbolism. Lyricism in leaves. The presentation of the materials. The coincidence of the first Brazilian construction in the movement of general reconstruction. Pau-Brasil poetry. Against naturalist cleverness and synthesis. Against copy, invention and physical miracles in art. Stars shut into photographic negatives”.<sup>88</sup> This passage’s paratactic structure is purposely ambiguous and it is hard to tell if the necessary dismantling denotes that which was done (or threatened) to the belle époque Academy by the first wave of modernism (1922). He might be claiming that his own work is the “first Brazilian construction,” or that the first wave of *modernismo* is what needs to be taken apart. But the opposition between copy and “physical miracles” is the more solidly interpretable part. This fragment, coupled with his reference in the corresponding manifesto to Paolo Ucello, the father of renaissance perspective suggests that equally important to Andrade is a distinction between naturalist representation (mimesis, *trompe l’oeil*, illusionism), and a type of artistic conveyance of reality through the poet to the reader that doesn’t rely on conventions of realism, or some sort of trickery either like a realist painting that hides the brushstrokes or like a calligramme that focuses the reader’s attention on the surface of the page. Andrade, and I would argue Cendrars for that matter, prefer to make the reality around them present for the reader, as much as a photo can.

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<sup>88</sup> My translation from *PB*: “Foi preciso desmanchar. A deformação através do impressionismo e do símbolo. O lirismo em folha. A apresentação dos materiais./ A coincidência da primeira construção brasileira no movimento de reconstrução geral. Poesia Pau-Brasil./ Contra a argúcia naturalista, a síntese. Contra a copia, a invenção e a surpresa./ Uma perspectiva de outra ordem que a visual. O correspondente ao milagre físico em arte. Estrelas fechadas nos negativos fotográficos.”



This distinction between naturalism and a more present reality can find the common points between commentary about Cendrars and Andrade by people who, at the outset, seem to be saying completely different things about them. To wit, compare Decio Pignatari's description of Andrade's works as ready-mades, or "realism without realistic themes or schemes, just transplants of what exists." (de Campos 24) with Chefdor's description of *Feuilles de Route*: "life on board a transatlantic liner and in South America are brought to the readers in their immanence" (*FdR* 40). Chefdor's continued analysis applies just as much to Andrade's poems that are located in the past just as much as Cendrars' in the present:

[...T]he poet conveys, in 'postcard' after 'postcard' written along his journey, a world full of things, not registers or conductors of anything, which have nothing to do but exist, organically intact and immediate in his pages. To reflect upon them would be for Cendrars to betray the instantaneous plenitude of being which vibrates through the poetry and gives the effect of life caught untouched, in the transparency of itself (*FdR* 41, emphasis mine).

Since Cendrars and Andrade seem to be in alignment on this central issue of how they situate themselves in relationship to the first wave of modernist writers in Paris and in Brazil, it is hard to understand why some critical reception has interpreted their wider projects as so fundamentally different. Haroldo de Campos, for example, claims that Andrade had become a cornerstone of the foundation for contemporary Brazilian literature because of a "critical edge" that he developed in the poems themselves that was lacking in Cendrars', citing the minimal attention that current (meaning in the 1960s) avant-garde literary reviews in France were paying to Cendrars' work as proof that Cendrars had not entered the discussion of what literature should or should not be. Instead, he argues that Cendrars, "with his obsessive taste for the exotic, he almost always ended up limited to the availability of the colorful, the details, the picturesque" (de Campos 32). Furthermore de

Campos argues that in Andrade's oeuvre makes significant statements about the interaction between "destruction of the old" and "recognition of the new," unlike Cendrars' recognition of the new which was "confined to a modern vocabulary of trams, trains and telephone [but did not extend] to the whole mood and structure of the poem."<sup>89</sup> As this section has hopefully indicated, Cendrars was indeed engaged in the same larger questions as Andrade about the responsibility of literature to make reality present for its readers, and to take lessons from the aesthetic democratization of the photograph. But this critique is perhaps harder to discern because Cendrars, unlike Andrade, was not arguing prescriptively about how anyone else should write, either in Paris or elsewhere. This philosophical difference is reinforced not so much because of the poems that they actually wrote, but by the roles that their personas played. Andrade created a persona for himself as an engaged intellectual rabble-rouser, and Cendrars created a persona for himself as an idiosyncratic lone wolf with no national identity, but multiple national affinities.

### ***C) Metatextuality - invoking literary predecessors***

If we use Gerard Genette's terms, metatextuality is the commentary within a text on a previous or other text, but in many writings that could be classified as "modernist,"

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<sup>89</sup> Translation mine, except that I retrieved the TLS quote from the source: "O decisivo é notar que, enquanto a poesia de Oswald é fundamental para a nova literatura brasileira, justamente pelo gume crítico que o poeta soube dar a seu "estilo-montagem", a de Cendrars, à qual falta este ingrediente essencial não tem sido objeto de semelhante reivindicação pela atual vanguarda de expressão francesa ("Tel Quel", "Change"), certamente porque, com seu gosto obsessivo pelo exótico, acabou quase sempre limitada à disponibilidade colorida, ao detalhístico e ao pitoresco. Depois de registrar na poesia oswaldiana a interação de dois pólos, a "destruição do velho" (p. ex., as paródias de peças de "antologia") e o "reconhecimento do novo", The Times Literary Supplement ("Brazil Wood", Londres, 24-11-1966) repara: "Todavia, diferentemente de alguns escritores de vanguarda europeus — entre os quais seu amigo Blaise Cendrars — esse reconhecimento do novo não se limitou ao moderno vocabulário dos transportes, trens e telefone, mas estendeu-se integralmente ao tom (mood) e à estrutura do poema" (de Campos 32).

metatextuality (or reflexivity) can also be interpreted as conscious transgressions of conventional practices in narration, such as order, frequency, duration, voice or mood.<sup>90</sup> The deviation from “normal” practices draws attention to the literary work’s existence as such, and forecloses the possibility of suspending one’s disbelief, losing oneself in the story. This is typically a concern for works of fiction, but in the case of two works that are centered in one particular environment following a particular chronology, we might apply some of these criteria to poetry. Both Cendrars and Andrade are playful in their reflexivity, which in itself is not uncommon; Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* is an example of a modernist text *avant la lettre*. The practice of writing literature ends up satirized within the work of literature, as well as its relationship to the real world and to its writer. In the case of Cendrars’ and Andrade’s novels *Moravagine* and *Serafim Ponte Grande*, written around the same time as *Pau-Brasil* and *Feuilles de Route*, the author can be a character, or characters can be authors or have traits that tempt the reader into seeing the work as autobiography.

The most overt type of reflexivity is writing about writing itself, and Cendrars constantly returns to his self-awareness as a writer, which often devolves into self-mockery. At times he writes about the physical means of his writing; the typewriter is practically another passenger on the ship in “Lettre” (*FdR* 125) and again in “Adrienne Lecouvreur and Cocteau” (*FdR* 217). In between the irritating affirmations of his status as a writer, one can also see fissures in the façade: in “Bagage” (*FdR* 153) he lists all the works-in-progress that he has brought with him, their physical weight perhaps suggesting their psychological weight as well. In “Ecrire,” he describes covering his mirror so he cannot

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<sup>90</sup> Genette books related to this: *Narrative Discourse: an essay in method*, *Palimpsests: literature in the second degree*, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*.

watch himself write (*FdR* 205). At one point Cendrars has animalized both writer and reader, as the birds he has bought in Brazil can imitate his typewriter's sounds and he is writing for his monkeys to watch (*FdR* 217). Another poem reflects on travel writing itself, critiquing cliché in others' poetry about sunsets, but Cendrars then immediately takes up the cause of sunrises, every bit as much a cliché, but saying that he's "à poil" to watch them, which suggests humoristically that he knows this is a cliché too (*FdR* 149).

Andrade also enters the tricky territory of overt discussion of writing itself and of poetic language problems in the "Falação" (*PB* 66), but this is of course prescriptive, a modified version of his *Manifesto Pau-Brasil*. Unlike Cendrars, the poet doesn't refer specifically to himself writing, but since it is the first poem, it is reasonable to assume the following work is meant to reflect the principles laid out. Where Cendrars restricts his reflection to his own literary production, Andrade immediately looks outward and backward: "Donde a nunca exportação de poesia. A poesia emaranhada na cultura. Nos sípós das metrificações" (*PB* 65). He equates expectations about appropriate and traditional aesthetics in poetry to lianas tangling it and preventing it from moving forward and freely outward from the jungle. But in much of the collection, the most traditional literature (from a country that has "no tradition," in the words of Cendrars) is still present, albeit transformed. Sometimes this takes the form of parody of a particular piece or a pastiche of a particular style; sometimes it's the reappropriation of words or ideas into a collage, turning prose into poetry. But while his modified manifesto in the "Falação" compares his literary inheritance to restrictive tropical vines, he hasn't removed the debris after chopping them up. With the constant references to the practice of writing or the reflections on the purpose of writing, readers are primed to see and search for meaning in

the references to outside works, from the tradition out of which the modernistas' works have emerged.

The totality of the cumbersome literary tradition against which Andrade and his cohort have chosen to struggle is playfully represented by the poem "Biblioteca Nacional" (PB 120). At first glance, the poem seems to be merely a list of book titles that one might encounter at the National Library, but the lack of context incites the reader to find a logic to the group of titles chose, or make the titles come together in order to tell a story, like an abandoned child who goes away with Dr. Coppelius to become Miss Spring, or a joke about how the Brazilian legal code is like playing the lottery for great speakers:

***Biblioteca Nacional***

*A Criança Abandonada*

*O Doutor Coppelius*

*Vamos com Ele*

*Senhorita Primavera*

*Código Civil Brasileiro*

*A arte de ganhar no bicho*

*O Orador Popular*

*O Pólo em Chamas*

***National Library***

*The Abandoned Child*

*Doctor Coppelius*

*Let's Follow Him*

*Miss Springtime*

*Civil Code of Brazil*

*The Art of Winning the Lottery*

*The Popular Orator*

*The Pole Aflame*

In a way, this is related to the Surrealists' "cadavre exquis" exercise because the ingredients seem relatively random and the reader has the freedom to make sense of them, and it is also related to the Dadaist "ready-made"; they are both situations where the author has turned over some of the authorship or control of the poem to outside sources of verbal production (on a mass level, incidentally) but then takes away those authors' intent, in order to let the whole poem be guided by chance, or the poet's subconscious or conscious intentions. The primary difference is that where others have used newspaper or poem fragments, Andrade uses book titles, presumably from the National Library. Of course, this "ready-made" game relies on the reader accepting that the rules have been

followed. The titles might be real entries in the library's catalog or Andrade might have made them up, but its authenticity has already been so compromised by the game itself that fact-checking feels like a silly exercise.

In approaching this "National Library," or cumbersome inheritance, Andrade begins with the very earliest texts that gave his country a sense of itself. The first section of *Pau-Brasil* – "Historia do Brasil" – is the largest, and is divided up into the most sub-sections, most titled with the names of men who played a significant role in colonizing Brazil, as well as the written record of that time period. It is unclear whether Andrade composed the poems in the style of prose from that period, then broke the short passages up into poems, or if the text was actually taken from authentic writings by those historical figures. This would not be outside the norm for Andrade; he utilized this strategy a few times in *Serafim Ponte Grande*, quoting from Christopher Columbus' travelogues and at times inventing citations. One might expect that the subtitles with the explorers' names would, as normal paratexts, lead into poems about those explorers, but instead they are mostly descriptions of scenery and people, which could as easily have been taken from the modernists' diaries during their visit to the Northeast (the reference to Easter week, when the modernists and Cendrars were in Bahia, suggests that it's not just Cabral that the reader is supposed to imagine). The language, however, is antiquated; Andrade uses some old spelling, in order to recall older Portuguese, some appears to be Spanish and he has also included the conjugations that modern Brazilian Portuguese often leaves out. The subsection titled "O Capuchinho Claude d'Abbeville" is even written in French with some old French spellings. Whether in French or Portuguese or Spanish, the poems describe the landscapes and flora and fauna, and even the local women and their adornment habits, reporting like a 16<sup>th</sup> or

17<sup>th</sup> century explorer's travelogue. Pineapples and a sloth (*ananazes* and *preguiça*) are described as if exotic, which they wouldn't be to a modern Brazilian. The similarity between colonial description and the tourist's postcard suggests the desire for ownership that even the appreciative tourist might have, the acquisitiveness that seems to reveal itself even in naming the animals in the jungle.

Cendrars also alludes to Columbus' logbook; he sets up a parallel between himself and the explorer, claiming to be following the exact opposite path:

**Christopher Columbus**

As I sail eastward today I am losing sight of what Christopher Columbus discovered when sailing westward  
It is in these areas that he saw the first black and white bird which made him fall to his knees and thank the Lord  
With such emotion  
And improvise that Baudelairian prayer which is entered in his logbook  
And where he asks to be forgiven for lying every day to his companions indicating to them a false position  
So that they may not find his route again

An anecdote about Columbus having lied to his shipmates about the route they had taken in order to keep that route a secret from them (and thus his property) is called a "Baudelairian prayer which is entered in his logbook" (*FdR* 221). The lie, or attempt to keep this journey as his private property, ultimately proves ineffective, since the route is clearly available to Cendrars and anyone else who has that inner desire to see, know, and own. The lie also proves to be completely poetic and contemporary; as a telegram or an advertisement can be poetry (as we will see in the following section), so a colonial explorer's logbook can be Baudelairian. Andrade's "Historia do Brasil" section functions similarly, creating a sense of awe for the boldness of people who set out for the unknown, and try to claim some of it.

Cendrars also refers to another explorer, this time fundamental for Brazil, in “Pedro Alvares Cabral” (FdR 160). As poetry, the composition is somewhat anti-poetic, merely stating historical facts: “The Portuguese sailor Pedro Alvares Cabral embarked in Lisbon/ In the year 1500/ Bound for the East Indies/ Contrary winds took him westward and Brazil was discovered.”<sup>91</sup> But as Claude Leroy points out in the critical dossier to *Feuilles de Route* in *Tout Autour d’Aujourd’hui*,<sup>92</sup> some poems in the book are collages of material taken from Auguste de Saint-Hillaire’s *Voyage dans les provinces de Saint-Paul et Sainte-Catherine* (1851), and it turns out that the dry poem about Cabral is actually the first two sentences of the botanist’s book.<sup>93</sup> Where this particular borrowing is word for word, a direct challenge to a reader’s expectations of originality, most of the borrowing is not a direct copy, but rather a cutting and pasting, perhaps with some hidden method. Certain facts have been replicated, like that the Serra do Mar is also called Paranipiacaba (St. Hillaire 83), and words or concepts, like “végétation variée” (in “Paysage”). The poem “Botanique” borrows “myrtées”, “térébinthacées” and “Alecrim do Campo” in their order from St Hillaire (St. Hilaire 95), but nothing else in the sentence structure is the same, while “Ignorance”(FdR 188) borrows the name of *pterus caudata* (St. Hilaire 91).

The poem “Piratininga” (FdR 186) has the greatest amount of copied text, which I have shown here; the words in boldface are repeated word for word, those in italics are approximately the same or moved into a different position:

Quand on franchit la crête de la Serra et qu’on est sorti des brouillards qui l’encapuchonnent **le pays devient moins inégal**

<sup>91</sup> *Le Portugais Pedro Alvarez Cabral s’était embarqué à Lisbonne / En l’année 1500 / Pour se rendre dans les Indes Orientales / Des vents contraires le portèrent vers l’ouest et le Brésil fut découvert* (FdR 160).

<sup>92</sup> *Poésies complètes*. Vol. 1 of *Tout autour d’aujourd’hui*. Paris: Denoël, 2001.

<sup>93</sup> Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Tableau général de la province de Saint-Paul, Extrait d’un voyage dans les provinces de Saint-Paul et de Sainte Catherine* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1851), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011607771>



**Il finit par n'être plus qu'une vaste** plateau **ondulée**, borné au nord par des montagnes bleues  
 La terre est rouge  
 Ce plateau **offre des** petits **bouquets de bois peu élevés, d'une étendue peu considérable très rapprochés les uns aux autres**, qui souvent se touchent par quelque point et sont disséminés **au milieu d'une pelouse presque rase**  
 Il devient difficile de déterminer s'il y a plus de terrain couvert de bois qu'il n'y en a de pâturages.  
 Cela fait une **sorte de marqueterie de deux nuances de vert bien différentes** et bien tranchées  
 Celle de l'herbe d'une couleur tendre  
 Celle des **bois, d'une teinte foncée.**

What does the borrowing and copying from Saint-Hilaire accomplish? We know that Cendrars had copied and pasted before from other texts; in *Kodak (Documentaires)* he lifted text from Gustave Lerouge, and in the *Anthologie Nègre* he lifted text from ethnographic accounts (as discussed in Chapter Two). Saint-Hilaire was not a literary figure, he was a botanist from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century who had spent a few years exploring Brazil's backlands and "discovered" thousands of plant and animal species there, bringing thousands of specimens back to Europe, and spent years afterwards describing them, many of which had not been described before by a European. The inclusion of Saint-Hilaire's writings in modified form hints at the persistent appeal of exploration, claiming ownership of a place through knowledge (and naming and describing, like Adam in the garden of Eden). To the reader today, this might reveal the vanity of a desire to conquer, or the fallacy of discovery; Saint-Hilaire was no more the first person to have seen those plants than Cendrars was the first to have recognized Brazilian culture's potential. The betrayal of authenticity involved in copying and collaging is a similar discovery to that made by other modernists: that there is no discovery, in Europe or elsewhere, other than re-discovery.

Andrade also moves from the period of political colonization of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the period of cultural colonization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His poem "Canto de regresso á patria" (PB 139) is a parody of the nationalistic poem "Canto do Exílo" by the 19<sup>th</sup> century

romantic and nationalist poet Gonçalves Dias, which starts with “Minha terra tem palmeiras” and has been parodied by many other writers (in fact Andrade does so again in *Serafim Ponte Grande*):

**Canto de Regresso á Pátria**

My land has palm groves  
Where the sea sings  
The birds here  
Do not sing like those from there  
My land has more roses  
And almost more love  
My land has more gold  
My land has more land  
Gold Earth Love and Roses  
I want all of it  
God forbid I die  
Without going back there  
God forbid I die  
Without going back to São Paulo  
Without seeing 15th Street  
And the progress of São Paulo

**Canto do Exilo**

My land has palm trees  
Where the thrush sings.  
The birds that sing here  
Do not sing as they do there.  
Our skies have more stars,  
Our valleys have more flowers.  
Our forests have more life,  
Our lives have more love.  
In dreaming, alone, at night,  
I find more pleasure there.  
My land has palm trees  
Where the thrush sings.  
My land has beauties  
That cannot be found here;  
In dreaming — alone, at night —  
I find more pleasure there.  
My land has palm trees  
Where the thrush sings.  
May God never allow  
That I die before I return;  
Without seeing the beauties  
That I cannot find here;  
Without seeing the palm trees  
Where the thrush sings.

The initial lines of the poems are almost the same, listing the desirable attributes that make the speaker’s homeland superior to the foreign place from where he sings. But where Dias was celebrating Brazil as a whole, and was expressing homesickness from abroad, Andrade’s version makes urban São Paulo seem to be his own real homeland. The poem is situated in the “Loide Brasileiro” section of *Pau-Brasil*, which is the one most focused on the rural part of Brazil that Andrade is exploring with the other modernists and Cendrars, so we can infer that in Andrade’s case, the rest of Brazil is a strange and exotic land for him, in which he is as much of an outsider and explorer as Cendrars.

Also in the “Loide Brasileiro” section, Andrade makes a reference to another giant of 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian literature, José de Alencar. In the poem “Versos Bahianos,” apostrophizing the region in an old-fashioned ode, the speaker says “You’re the end of Robério Dias’ treasure map/ Novel by Alencar/ Bound in gold/ inside/ Grandeur than São Pedro/ Cathedral of the New World,” referring to a plot point in Alencar’s novel *O Guarani* (1857).<sup>94</sup> While most of the section seems sincere in its admiration of the region, the reference to Alencar is ambiguous, because as one of the founders of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and the exemplar of naturalism, he represents everything in the officially consecrated literary world against which Andrade was rebelling. As one of the principal proponents of Indianism, however, Alencar also laid the foundation for Andrade’s turn to Antropofagia in 1928, a movement that would recast the figure of the indigenous cannibal as a cultural model for Brazil’s future. Additionally, *O Guarani* became “Il Guarany,” the first Brazilian opera to become popular outside of Brazil, an accomplishment that would seem to prefigure the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil’s* goal of creating “literature for export.” Although the opera wasn’t written by Brazilians, and is in a traditionally European art form, a very specifically Brazilian story serves as the raw material for an artwork of wider interest.

In this section, most of what Cendrars and Andrade are reappropriating into their own work, either sincerely or ironically, is already inscribed into a canon of “important literature.” But their willingness to enter into the realm of mockery confirms that they are critical of this canon in its current formation, and it is hard to tell whether they are trying to carve out a place for themselves within it or destroy it completely.

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<sup>94</sup> What I’ve translated as a “treasure map” is in the novel supposedly directions for finding a large silver mine.

## ***D) Linguistic Populism***

The previous sections discussed how Cendrars and Andrade conceive of literature and what it is supposed to do (B), then what it has been and can become (C). In this section I will describe how the two authors are opening up the definitions of literature, and widening the idea of who can make or read poetry. Both Cendrars and Andrade, for differing reasons, are reacting to a persistent elitism in the literary scenes in both France and Brazil, something that they see persisting even within the avant-garde movements (the 1922 modernist group in São Paulo and Cendrars' pre-war modernist cohort in Paris). Despite their revolutionary manifestos, their interest in appropriating language from different registers, and their rejection of bourgeois morality, the difficulty of the avant-garde works themselves meant that they were written for a relatively restricted audience. Cendrars and Andrade were interested in broadening the field of potential producers and consumers of poetry, and at times they provocatively reject the currently dominant producers and consumers. To this effect, Cendrars and Andrade borrow linguistic forms from non-traditional sources, ones that are closer and more familiar to a mass public, and embrace unconsecrated or even unsanctioned modes of expression in an ideological viewpoint that I call linguistic populism.

In a similar way to how he and Cendrars have reappropriated older literary texts, cutting them up and rearranging them or parodying their style in order to create new ones, Andrade reappropriates the intellectually derided language of advertising, and, as in *bricolage*, taking something out of context and putting it in a new context adds a different layer of meaning. Where lyrical expression or formal ingenuity might be the value-added

of appropriated literary sources, the primary purpose of advertising is of course to sell a product. Citation or pastiche of a literary text reinforces its literary value, but ironically doing the same to a commercial text both incites the reader to search for aesthetic value in the commercial text and forces him or her to reconsider the conventional value attributed to literary texts. Within a poetry book, an apartment rental ad can become commentary on shifting values in Brazil (as in “Agente,” [PB 103] or “Ideal Bandeirante” [PB 121]), and stringing together the names of various food brands and slogans can highlight the branded consumption overwhelming the visual stimuli of the city dweller (as in “Aperitivo” [PB 121] or “Nova Iguaçu” [PB 103]). One particularly interesting example of this is “Reclame” from the “Postes da Light” section:

**Reclame**

*Fala a graciosa atriz  
Margarida Perna Grossa  
Linda cor – que admirável loção  
Considero lindacor o complemento  
Da toaleta feminina da mulher  
Pelo seu perfume agradável  
E como tônico do cabelo garçone  
Se entendam todas com Seu Fagundes  
Único depositário  
Nos E. U. Do Brasil*

**Complaint**

*Said the graceful actress  
Margarida Fatlegs  
Linda cor - what a wonderful lotion  
I use lindacor as complement  
To my feminine beauty regime  
Because of its pleasant fragrance  
And as the tonic for the flapper haircut  
Everyone can agree on Seu Fagundes  
Exclusive trademark  
In the United States of Brazil*

In this poem Andrade has cited a citation, an advertisement (probably not an authentic one, but it doesn't matter) in which an actress's words are used to sell beauty products, in which she serves as an authority but probably did not say the actual words – a fiction that relies on an authorial voice, that is known to be fiction but is also effective. The last lines with the trademark, something that would ordinarily be a paratext to the advertisement, are brought into the main text, suggesting that the protection of this product by “the United States of Brazil” is as important as its physical properties, and the phrasing (rather than

“Industria Brasileira,” for example) implies that this mode of consumerism is linked to that of the other United States.

Similarly, Cendrars treats forms of writing done without the purpose of publication as artistic material in its own right. The post-card poem operates under this idea. Most of the poems in *Feuilles de Route* contain a salutation of some sort - “Hello” “good-bye,” “I love you,” “So long, so long” (*FdR* 169), etc. The leaving or reuniting that serve as the basis for sending a postcard or telegram takes on a grander importance when treated as poetry. Cendrars has not modified the style of speech to make it more literary; instead it stays in a paratactic style. His poem “Lettre-océan” (*FdR* 136-7), explains the thinking behind this approach to poetry, although not putting it into practice:

*La lettre-océan n'est pas un nouveau genre poétique  
C'est un message pratique à tarif régressif et bien meilleur marché qu'un radio  
On s'en sert beaucoup à bord pour liquider des affaires que l'on n'a pas eu le temps de régler avant  
son départ et pour donner des dernières instructions  
C'est également un messenger sentimental qui vient vous dire bonjour de ma part entre deux escales aussi  
éloignées que Leixões et Dakar alors que me sachant en mer pour six jours on ne s'attend pas à recevoir  
de mes nouvelles  
Je m'en servirai encore durant la traversée du sud-atlantique entre Dakar et Rio-de-Janeiro pour porter  
des messages en arrière car on ne peut s'en servir que dans ce sens-là  
La lettre-océan n'a pas été inventée pour faire de la poésie  
Mais quand on voyage quand on commerce quand on est à bord quand on envoie de lettres-océan  
On fait de la poésie*

*The Ocean letter is not a new poetry genre  
It is a convenient message with decreasing rates and much cheaper than a radiogram.  
It is used a great deal on board to wind up business there was no time to settle before leaving and give final  
instructions  
It is also a sentimental messenger who comes and gives you my greetings between two ports of call was  
distant as Leixões and Dakar when knowing I am for six days at sea one does not expect news from me  
I will use it again during the South Atlantic crossing between Dakar and Rio de Janeiro to send messages  
backward for that is the only direction in which it can be used  
The ocean letter has not been invented to write poetry but when doing business when on board when  
sending ocean letters  
One writes poetry*

In Cendrars' view, the telegram's or the ocean letter's value comes from its convenience and utility, rather than from any aesthetic qualities, either in sound or sight, which is a

value that Cendrars espoused in “Le Principe de l’utilité,” an essay that he had presented at a conference in Brazil and also included in *Moravagine* in modified form. It is perhaps strange for a poet who often collaborated with visual artists to sing the praises of a writing form that prioritizes neither the visual nor the sonorous, and is especially noteworthy when the other and more well-known “Lettre Océan” is one of Apollinaire’s calligrammes. The calligrammes, including “Lettre-Océan,” are poems whose visual appearance is just as important as the words on the page, and in this respect Apollinaire’s methods could not be more different from Cendrars’. The last line claims that poetry happens whether it is intended or not, and this reduces the elevation of the poet while expanding the field of writing that can be claimed by poetry.

In addition to rejecting literary correctness, the literariness of one’s language, Cendrars and Andrade reject linguistic correctness, embracing instead the potential for novelty inherent in making mistakes. Cendrars explicitly embraces errors in speech or writing, both conscious and not. In “Coquilles” (*FdR* 213) he says, “Spelling mistakes and misprints delight me/ Some days I feel like making some on purpose/ That’s cheating/ I am very fond of mistakes in pronunciation speech hesitations and all local accents” (*FdR* 213). In this excitement about incorrect writing, he also has ignored any and all rules of versification: he uses free verse with no punctuation, no meter, one line having only two words, the next with too many to fit on one line. This resistance to linguistic conventions is further developed in “Le Poteau Noir.” The ship is passing through the area that is usually called the “pot au noir” (the Doldrums in English, or Intertropical Convergence Zone, an equatorial area of the ocean where two trade winds meet, and calms and squalls are equally likely) and the passengers call it instead the “poteau noir” (the black pole).

Cendrars invents a few fanciful reasons why the area could reasonably be named after a pole rather than a pot, alternative histories that sound like they came from nautical folklore, and finally gives a populist reason for preferring the term that his fellow passengers use rather than the correct one: [...] "D'ailleurs meme si j'ai tort j'écrirai le poteau noir et non le pot au noir car j'aime le parler populaire et rien ne me prouve que ce terme n'est pas en train de muer/ Et tous les hommes du Formose me donnent raison (*FdR* 160). Without much rhetorical flourish, Cendrars declares himself in favor of common language, for reasons both affective and pragmatic; he thinks it is likely that the term is changing through a mutation in the common usage, and thus mass opinion determines what is correct, rather than an outside authority. The accident of the misunderstanding of the term "pot au noir" created the possibility of imagining different alternative histories, and the alternative meaning is shared collectively by the passengers on the ship, united in incorrectness. While the poem could be overlooked as a minor anecdote, I argue that, considered within the wider context of the book, the poem points towards his growing linguistic populism.

While the linguistic populism in *Feuilles de Route* is situated entirely in the present, *Pau-Brasil* extends this feature into the past. Andrade follows his section imitating the travelogues of European explorers of Brazil with another section that draws upon his country's history, this time centered on slavery. Where the previous section was called "Historia do Brasil", a title that suggests an overall survey (and colonizers' travelogues are dominant documents in establishing the "official' history), this one has another misleading title, "Poemas da Colonização," in which one might expect odes to heroic exploration. One finds instead poems that are like snippets of an oral history of slavery; the short poems tell



stories of events, disturbing or sometimes amusing, in the lives of men without last names, “Narciso marceneiro,” “Casimiro da cozinha,” “o Ambrosio que atacou,” or slaves who are unnamed, a stark contrast with the previous section in which most subsections are named after specific explorers.<sup>95</sup> These events are told in a not so distant past tense, as if someone were recounting recent anecdotes to someone who is present on the fazenda, like a fugitive slave being captured or others having been whipped for eating more than their share. They aren’t framed by commentary, and their quick succession gives the impression of routine. While occasionally a somewhat more distant and poetic voice takes over, explaining for example the situation of a plantation owner who traded in his slave-run fazenda, “O ouro da carne preta e musculosa/ As gabiobas e as coqueiros [...]” to invest in coffee, most of this section is written with a tone, vocabulary and grammar of common everyday speech.

Andrade includes many words that are spelled how one might commonly mispronounce them, or spells some words phonetically (“peredoa” instead of “perdoa,” “coa” instead of “com a,” “comê” instead of “comer”), or uses informal words that are not befitting the person saying them or the matter discussed.<sup>96</sup> In the poem “Senhor Feudal,” for example, one character says of the emperor Dom Pedro II, “eu boto ele na cadeia” (*PB* 88), or “I toss him in the slammer”; in proper speech one should say “colocar” instead of “botar,” and not use the present for a hypothesis. In “O Gramático”, language is humorously demonstrated to be a power tool: “Os negros discutiam/ Que o cavalo sipantou/ Mas o que mais sabia/ Disse que era/ Sipantarrou” (*PB* 86). The characters, likely slaves given the

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<sup>95</sup> It’s possible that Andrade was also taking inspiration from cordel poems; these are similarly short, popular, simple in vocabulary, focused on the struggles of commoners, and more associated with the rural Northeast. The cordel comparison has its limitations though, as they have a very traditional rhyme scheme, and usually have a happy ending, which the “Poemas da Colonização” do not have. The visual aspect of both is worth considering, as the cordel is accompanied by woodcuts, while Andrade’s poems have Tarsila’s drawings.

<sup>96</sup> In order to understand the mispronunciations, I used Patricia de Freitas Camargo, “A Ficção da Língua na Literatura Brasileira”, <http://simelp.fflch.usp.br/sites/simelp.fflch.usp.br/files/inline-files/S3204.pdf>.

placement in the book, are having a disagreement about the correct conjugation of a verb, the “one who knew the most” or perhaps the one who affirms his relative education the loudest, embellishes the conjugation to “sipantarrou.” The irony is that what the characters are conjugating as “sipantar” which isn’t really a verb, most likely is meant to be “espantar-se,” or “to be frightened,” and the character who claims to be the grammarian of the title is actually the furthest from the real conjugation. Out of the context of the rest of the book, this poem could be taken as a joke on the incorrect speech of a particular group from Brazil’s history, but within *Pau-Brasil* as a whole, both the book and the larger project, it appears to be a denunciation or mockery of propriety in language, or perhaps even cultural correctness more widely, being wielded as a weapon of soft power.

Even more explicitly, the poem “Pronominais” from the section “Postes da Light” demonstrates the difference between how one is taught and expected to speak in literary or public language, and how people actually speak<sup>97</sup>:

*Dê-me um cigarro  
Diz a gramática  
Do professor e do aluno  
E do mulato sabido  
Mas o bom negro e o bom branco  
Da Nação Brasileira  
Dizem todos os dias  
Deixa disso camarada  
Me dá um cigarro*

The racial aspect of this demonstration is interesting, because it illustrates the confusion between race and socio-economic class that happens in discussions of right and wrong speech, but also complicates the categories. Proper speech is upheld by the “mulato sabido,” while the “bom negro” and the “bom branco” use a less formal phrasing (no

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<sup>97</sup> Even in letters, Andrade sometime purposely chose to “falar errado”: from Paris he would write “wrong” Portuguese to Mário and this was practice for the parts of *Pau-Brasil* that were to be written later. Reprints available in issue of *Veja* from 1997.

imperative, no moving the object pronoun). Is the “bom” ironic? It would suggest that there’s something transgressive about the “mulato” using proper grammar, as though something in his behavior could change his place in society, move him upwards.

Andrade’s poetry reflects an awareness of power dynamics in culture, and more specifically how language is used to exert power over others or reinforce class divisions, and that in Brazil race is involved in the language/class dynamic. Andrade is able to make the connection between popular language and race in Brazilian culture because Brazilian culture is expressed in Portuguese, his native tongue. Race takes on a whole different charge when we look to Cendrars’ work; Cendrars is unable to make those connections or observations because he is speaking as a cultural and linguistic outsider. While this does not necessarily have to lead to more superficial observations, there is a limit to how many dimensions of Brazilian culture would have been available to him.

Monique Chefdor points out that Cendrars shared a taste for travel with many other French writers at the time like Segalen, Supervielle, Claudel, Michaux, or Morand, but in only comparing his work to that of other French-speakers, she overstates his access to the culture he was observing. She claims that:

he discarded, however, the typical exoticism in vogue in the twenties and did not uphold its aesthetics of diversity. His poems do not read like reports or memoirs of a foreign visitor impressed with the difference, the otherness, of a country. Cendrars lived and wrote with completely transnational consciousness; every part of the world is felt from the inside, made present by his very presence there.

Chefdor’s argument that Cendrars’ poems reflect a “completely transnational consciousness” misses the limitations of Cendrars’ ability to capture fully the Brazilian experience. I think that a misinterpretation of Segalen is part of the problem because Segalen, in fact, argues against the colonial gaze. His concept of an “aesthetics of diversity”

centers on appreciating the experience of “otherness” or of “difference” which does not necessitate going outside of one’s own country.<sup>98</sup> I would argue rather that Cendrars’ imperfect outsider’s fascination with this particular country at times approaches the kind of positive exoticism for which Segalen was advocating, but that this also led to some of Cendrars’ more objectionable fantasies.

Cendrars’ evocations of race, both overt discussions and casual allusions, are provocative, but not only in the way he might have intended. He extols the virtues of black men and women, upending the value judgments of traditional, euro-centric racism, in which African or black culture is seen as inferior. But in the process of claiming that black culture is far superior, he reinforces a monolithic conceptualization of black people as a transnational “other.” His conflation of African and black, a recurring issue in his oeuvre that I discussed in Chapter 2, is a continuation of a certain type of racism, despite the reversal of value judgments.

Cendrars’ pattern of problematically racialized populism is best exemplified in the poem called “Les Boubous”; in this poem he praises the attractive appearance of black women, unfortunately completely essentialized, comparing them favorably to an assortment of women from an assortment of countries, almost all of which are white: “No woman in the world has such distinction such nobility such a way of walking such bearing such carriage such elegance, such casual poise such refinement such neatness, such cleanliness, such health such optimism such irresponsibility such youth such taste” (*FdR* 143). After listing the many nationalities of women who do not measure up to black beauty, he describes their elaborate and ornate clothing and accessories from head to toe,

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<sup>98</sup> Victor Segalen, *Essay on exoticism: an aesthetics of diversity*, translated and edited by Yaël Rachel Schlick (Durham : Duke University Press, 2002).

interwoven with descriptions of racialized physical attributes, such as the proportions of their bodies and their “perfect teeth.” The racialized characteristics that are described in this particular poem are a reoccurring presence in the book, reminiscent of a longer history of exoticism, and the positive generalizing portrayals of colonial subjects. The stereotype is not limited to the elegantly adorned women, but also includes impoverished black men to whom he casually refers with problematic language like “negrillon” (*FdR* 194) or “moricaud” (*FdR* 177) as easily as he praises them, resulting in a sort of racism and essentialism done in the name of populism.

As we have seen in this section on linguistic populism, the impetus to expand the potential readership and authorship of literary language is shared by both Cendrars and Andrade, although it is practiced in different ways. We have also seen that the varied manifestations of this populist inclusivity can take some problematic turns when it enters the realm of exoticism. Returning to this quotation from Andrade affirming that his and Cendrars’ purposes coincided in this particular moment, it is important to remember that exoticism used in a populist sense is still one of the features of *Pau-Brasil* that he believed to exist in both his and Cendrars’ writing,

The primitivism that in France appeared in the form of exoticism was for us, in Brazil, primitivism itself. So I was thinking about creating poetry for exportation and not for importation, rooted in our geographic, historical and social environment. Since brazil-wood was the first Brazilian natural resource to be exported, I called the movement Pau-Brasil. Its aesthetic traits coincided with the exoticism and 100% modernism of Cendrars, who, by the way, was also consciously writing Pau-Brasil poetry.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> My translation of the following statement by Andrade in 1949 in a testimonial given to the literary critic Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos: “O primitivismo que na França aparecia como exotismo era para nós, no Brasil, primitivismo mesmo. Pensei, então, em fazer uma poesia de exportação e não de importação, baseada em nossa ambiência geográfica, histórica e social. Como o pau-brasil foi a primeira riqueza brasileira exportada, denominei o movimento Pau-Brasil. Sua feição estética coincidia com o exotismo e o modernismo 100% de Cendrars, que, de resto, também escreveu conscientemente poesia pau-brasil.” (de Campos 31).

Andrade singles out the fundamental paradox at the heart of his aesthetic principles, which is that primitivism and exoticism are somehow inextricable from modernism and its imperative for innovation and creative destruction.

## Conclusions

Creative destruction may be a key concept in understanding the utopian and fantasized view of Brazil that brought Cendrars and Andrade to write *Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil* at the moment that they did. Despite claiming to aspire to “100% modernity,” both authors appear to have an ambivalent attitude towards modernization as demonstrated up to that point in Europe, a combination of fascination and mistrust, excitement and disgust. As Roberto Schwarz points out in another essay from *Misplaced Ideas*, asking if there exists a “third-world aesthetic”: “Any charm that backwardness may have for someone who doesn’t suffer from it is another proof of dissatisfaction with the forms that progress has taken” (Schwarz 174). The fantasy that sets the environment for both *Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil* is rooted in frustrations with the type of “progress” that the center of the cultural world has to offer. Andrade is more overt about linking Brazil’s industrialization to slavery, and horrific parts of the past are less present in Cendrars’ poems. On the other hand, Cendrars seems to include more of what is desirable about the past (and which shares the present with modernity in Brazil): hard-working bodies in manual labor, energetic religious festivals, and cohabitation with nature. As the other side of the picture, Andrade’s comparisons of São Paulo to Paris in the “Postes da Light” section are usually negative – bourgeois parties, pointless romances, and

consumerism - and Cendrars' love poem to São Paulo is not uniformly positive:

“Nothing matters but that furious greed that absolute confidence that optimism that daring that work that toil that speculation which have ten houses built per hour in every style ridiculous grotesque beautiful big small northern southern Egyptian Yankee cubist” (*FdR* 195).

Andrade is prescriptive while Cendrars is descriptive when it comes to poetic destruction and construction; Andrade is trying to build a movement and Cendrars' ideas about making poetry seem to only apply to his own. But they both seem to embrace creative destruction on a social or aesthetic level, with the hope that the end result can follow in the utopian Brazilian model, and this continues even after each has left behind writing poetry, or their collaborative relationship.

## Chapter 4 – Un vaste malentendu

In *Trop c'est trop*, the last book that Cendrars ever published (during the writing of which he had his first stroke), he compiled some of the last essays that he had written on Brazil, which he called his “second spiritual homeland.” The people who brought him to this spiritual homeland, the modernistas, are more or less absent from *Trop c'est trop* until the chapter titled “La Voix du Sang,” and the portrait he draws of them is unflattering:

Ah, those youngsters from São Paulo, they made me laugh and I liked them [...] But in the meantime my friends were unbearable, because it was after all a cenacle, and *paulista* writers, journalists, and poets were aping from afar what was being done in Paris, New York, Berlin, Rome, Moscow. They despised Europe, but they couldn't have lived one hour without the model of its poetry. They wanted to be up-to-date, the proof was that they had invited me...<sup>100</sup>

In this portrayal of his hosts, Cendrars characterizes their revolutionary impulses as understandable and laudable, but he judges their attempts to catch up to European modernity and set their own records (or even invent new measures) as a complete failure, because of their inability to escape the mental framework that Europe provided for them. Continuing the focus on Brazil described in the previous chapters, Cendrars is giving what he believes to be the final judgment on a question that continued to preoccupy the minds of his Brazilian interlocutors – whether it would be possible for them to emerge from the periphery of a literary world that seemed to center on Paris. This question persists within subsequent Brazilian criticism of *Modernismo*, which spends a great deal of time evaluating

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<sup>100</sup> Ah! ces jeunes gens de São Paulo, ils me faisaient rire et je les aimais bien [...] Mais en attendant, mes amis étaient insupportables, car c'était tout de même un cenacle, et écrivains, journalistes et poètes paulistes singeaient de loin ce qui se faisait à Paris, New York, Berlin, Rome, Moscou. Ils honnissaient l'Europe, mais ils n'auraient pas pu vivre une heure sans le modèle de sa poésie. Ils voulaient être à la page, la preuve: c'est qu'ils m'avaient invité... (*TADA* 11, 382-3).



the movement's level of literary indebtedness to particular European authors or movements, or to broader postcolonial politics.

Cendrars' story of a bickering cenacle, aping European avant-gardes, ignoring truly important regionalist literature of the time, turning to political propaganda, and producing little of lasting value (*TADA* 11, 383-7) does not, however, account for the works studied in chapters two and three, and their clear exchange of ideas with his own works. Additionally, the story does not fully account for the complex and profound relationships he had with these writers, nor how or why he collaborated with them on projects that did or did not come to fruition. In this chapter, I will establish a clearer chronology of the period in which Cendrars and the modernistas, especially Oswald de Andrade, but also Paulo Prado and Mário de Andrade, and I will show how the participants' narrative accounts of this period either become fuller over time, or shift entirely. When possible, I will also show where later literary critics have grasped a segment of the story, but allowed the other parts to be erased, in a way that often returns to the center-periphery narrative paradigm described in the Introduction.

### ***A) First encounters, discoveries, and a maiden voyage***

The Modernistas were first introduced to Cendrars in Paris in 1923, one year after the *Semana de Arte Moderna* that most scholars take as the inaugurating moment of Brazilian Modernism. At that point Oswald de Andrade, and Sergio Milliet were there writing and meeting people, the visual artists Tarsila do Amaral, Anita de Malfatti, Emilio diCavalcanti, and Victor Brecheret were variously working with or for Paris-based painters

and sculptors, the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos was writing but also having his work performed, and as mentioned in Chapter 1, Brazilian popular music was being performed in Paris (the Oito Batutas, maxixe groups, etc). The popular musicians don't appear to have been part of the modernistas' "Brazilian colony" in Paris, which may have resulted from class distinction. Significantly, Mário de Andrade was not in Paris, although being a principal interlocutor with the expatriate Modernistas, and it is thanks to this absence that we have much of the correspondence documenting this period of discovery. This correspondence has personal stories and inquiries, but also casual reporting on professional developments, and occasional name-dropping, tinged with self-deprecating irony or joyful enthusiasm.

Paulo Prado clearly participated in circulating ideas among the Modernistas, and in introducing people to each other who might have aesthetic concerns in common or who might delight each other, his participation is more difficult to characterize than that of the others. His family's fortune and his position within the coffee-production cartel enabled him to bankroll not only some of the Modernistas' work while in Paris, but also Cendrars' subsequent trips to Brazil. Oswald de Andrade introduced Cendrars to Prado by bringing him to the bookstore Americana in October 1923, and the two became fast friends. Cendrars' friendship and correspondence with Prado long outlasted his regular contact with the other Modernistas, partially because Prado had the funds and ability to regularly travel back to Europe, despite economic crises and political upheaval in the Americas and in Europe (the Tenente uprising in 1924, the stock market crash, the resultant coffee crash, dictatorship in Brazil, fascism in Western Europe, World War II, etc.). Where other participants like Cendrars and Andrade were limited by their incomes, their own political

development and work in journalism, Prado was able to continue the in-person contact that sustained his creative and personal affinity with Cendrars. But it is also possible that the friendship was easier to maintain because Prado's writing style, subject matter, and point of view did not contradict Cendrars' idea of what Brazilian literature really had to offer the world at large, and there were not as many convergences between his style and Cendrars' as there were in Oswald's.

The modernistas invited Cendrars to come visit them in Brazil, and he accepted their invitation and took off in 1924. Cendrars' first visit lasted eight months, during which time he was working on fiction pieces that he had already started like *Moravagine* and *L'Or*, and during which time he started the first part of *Feuilles de Route, Le Formose*. During this time Oswald also would have started writing *Pau-Brasil*, and the stand-alone version of the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* was actually published in São Paulo early into Cendrars' trip.<sup>101</sup>

In *A Aventura Brasileira de Blaise Cendrars*,<sup>102</sup> Alexandre Eulálio constructed a chronology of the visit, further enhanced by Carlos Augusto Calil's 2001 re-edition, from letters and telegrams that Cendrars and the modernists sent to people back in Paris, and from letters and postcards sent between other Brazilian writers and Cendrars and whichever friends he was spending time with in São Paulo, in Rio de Janeiro, at Prado's fazenda in the state of São Paulo, and along the way to Minas. The correspondence tends to show *alegria* and playful joking, with a certain consciousness that this is an important time in their development, and some of the correspondence seems to show that Cendrars was someone that a Brazilian writer could or should show his or her work to (the reason why

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<sup>101</sup> In the *Correio da Manhã*, 18/3/1924 (ABBC 274).

<sup>102</sup> Alexandre Eulálio and Carlos Augusto Calil, eds., *A Aventura Brasileira de Blaise Cendrars*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: University of São Paulo Press, 2001). Subsequent references use the abbreviation ABBC.

so many people ended up sending him their books). Calil and Eulalio seem to be able to tell what was or wasn't opened and read, and Aracy Amaral dismisses the idea that Cendrars was reading them at all or could read them, although his Portuguese language skills were not as bad as she claims.<sup>103</sup> An interview that Aracy Amaral conducted herself with Tarsila do Amaral, in which she discusses Cendrars' fascination with Oswald, only makes sense if Cendrars were able to understand Portuguese: "He was shocked, strongly impressed, when he heard the reading of poems that would have been part of "Pau Brasil," when Oswald read them at my house in a meeting."<sup>104</sup>

Where dates themselves are not present, references to historical events help Eulalio and Calil to establish their timeline. For example, the 1924 Tenentes' rebellion caught Cendrars and Oswald in the newsroom of the *Correio Paulistano*, and Cendrars' later accounts describe taking shelter at Prado's fazenda, but a copy of his *Anthologie Nègre* that he dedicated to Prado and his wife as a thank-you at the end of the three-week rebellion commemorates the event in real time (*ABBC* 287). The letters and their timing reveal details to support the idea that interactions with his Brazilian colleagues influenced what Cendrars wrote during that period. The day that Oswald's *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* came out, Cendrars wrote to his editor to tell him that *Moravagine* would not be ready when expected but that he would continue to work on it from Brazil. Soon afterward the group went to

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<sup>103</sup> The idea that Cendrars couldn't speak or read Portuguese may have taken root because of some joking comments made by the Brazilians, one example of which is how Rubens Borba de Moraes dedicated his book to Cendrars: "à Blaise Cendrars/ En avez-vous de la veine! Vous ignorez le portugais!! / Rubens de Moraes / Cela veut dire que ne sachant pas le portugais vs ne lisez pas toutes les bêtises qu'il y a ds ce livre (commentaire de Couto de Barros)" (*ABBC* 288). On the other hand, some of Cendrars' first-person narratives give the impression that he was able to speak it well enough to have unsupervised conversations with criminals in Portuguese. Based on his efforts to translate Brazilian works and the time he spent there, it's most likely that his "ignorance" was mostly in comparison to the Brazilians' familiarity with French, which they would have studied from an early age and mostly spoke fluently.

<sup>104</sup> "Ele ficou chocado, fortemente impressionado, quando ouviu a leitura de poemas que fariam parte do "Pau Brasil", quando Oswald os leu em minha casa, numa reunião" (Amaral 1970, 89).

Prado's fazenda, and a week into the stay, Cendrars sent the originals for *Le Formose* to René Hilsum and Jacques-Henry Lévesque, and his letter asks Lévesque to edit and publish them "com urgência," reminding him to be careful with Indian words' spelling<sup>105</sup> and with the tilde in Portuguese words (*ABBC* 277). The timing of these publications leaves open the possibility that Cendrars' interactions with his Brazilian friends and colleagues were not just diverting his time from writing, but also that they may have affected some of the choices that he made either in the novel or in the poetry collection, and certainly that they were available to verify things about which Cendrars was uncertain (which is unusual given his casual relationship with facts or empirical knowledge). More directly, Cendrars' letters to Paulo Prado, when sending the prospectus for a "propaganda film" for Brazil that never materialized, reveal that Oswald has already signed on to write the script (and is too impatient) and that Oswald is involved in writing the third talk that Cendrars would give in São Paulo (*ABBC* 284).

We can also construct the chronology through articles, essays, or reviews that the modernistas published in newspapers or reviews, as well as articles that were written by staff writers just on the event of Cendrars arriving in Brazil. The attention from the general public was far less than Cendrars made it out to be in his writing at the time or in subsequent writing: in both fiction and memoir, Cendrars refers back to getting his photo in the paper, getting headlines, and he exaggerates for effect, but the primary published writing about him there is by his friends in the literary circles (Mário, Oswald, Sergio, et al). Likewise, Cendrars gave three paid talks in São Paulo during that visit, but it is not clear

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<sup>105</sup> The manuscript at the ALS reveals that Cendrars himself was uncertain of the spelling of some words, and had left certain spaces blank to write in a name later, once he could get one of his Brazilian friends, probably Oswald or Prado, to help him.

how well attended they were, any more than Oswald's presentation at the Sorbonne. But the essays or articles that Mário, Oswald or Sergio wrote about these talks reflect how they *wanted* Cendrars to be evaluated, perhaps what their personal viewpoints were, and comparing these articles with their subsequent accounts reveals some stark differences, suggesting that hindsight had either lifted an overly positive filter or perhaps added on a much more negative one. In the case of these paid talks, additional materials, like the notes that Oswald took during the presentation, can attest to his positive viewpoint at the time, and Cendrars himself re-purposed the texts of his talks for publishing later (in the newspaper or in books),<sup>106</sup> that were reviewed or reacted to by the Brazilians in a different historical (and personal) context.

### ***B) Returning to Paris to write Brazil, collaborative hits and misses***

The visit having gone so well personally and productively led Cendrars to make plans for a next one, undertaken a little over a year later (January to June 1926). Returning to Paris in 1924 did not, however, mean returning to the same collaborative dynamic with the "Brazilian colony": the whole group's schedules did not align in the same way as in 1923 in Paris, although Oswald and Tarsila were back in France and spending a lot of time with Cendrars, Raymone and Prado. But this period does lead to both *Feuilles de Route* and *Pau-Brasil* being published in Paris, and further works being planned but not completed, including a film project and a "Brazilian ballet."

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<sup>106</sup> The first one (2/21/24) is about modern poetry and later becomes part of *Aujourd'hui* (1931), as does the third one (6/12/24), of which a couple sections found their way into newspapers or into *Moravagine* in the meantime. The second one (5/28/24) on "Littérature nègre" borrows from his 1921 anthology but he only used the text in order to give a similar talk in Madrid later.

Thanks to the relative ease (and technological fascination, probably) of the pneumatic letter system in Paris, the ALS has messages sent from Cendrars to Tarsila and Oswald even while they were in the same city, leaving a trace of Cendrars' difficulties re-adapting to Paris: "I think of all my good friends of São Paulo and Paris just disgusts me more and more" (Oct. 25, 24); "Do you have any news from São Paulo? I haven't yet had the courage to write. Whenever I think of my good friends there, I feel so discouraged that I leave my letter to the next day "(27 Oct 24).<sup>107</sup> Cendrars wrote to Prado at that time saying that he was having difficulty returning to writing, but once Oswald returned to Paris to rejoin Tarsila the situation seems to have changed, on a personal level and in terms of collaborative work.<sup>108</sup>

Cendrars' *Feuilles de Route* came out Dec. 6, 1924 and he gave Oswald the first copy (allegedly), and soon after Oswald writes to Prado that Cendrars is totally crazy, but is writing, and calls his writing "totally pau-brasil." It's not explicit whether Andrade thus intended to claim that his own writing or ideology has influenced Cendrars, or that the two writers' styles happen to align, but it is explicit that here Oswald has attached his own label to Cendrars, rather than putting a Cendrarsian label on himself (*ABBC* 294-5). Oswald did not do this only to Cendrars; Mário de Andrade also complained later on to Manuel Bandeira that Oswald would get worked up enough to write a manifesto on some principle, and Mário's next book would be declared to follow the marching orders of Oswald's latest

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<sup>107</sup> My translation: "Je pense à tous mes bons amis de S. Paul et Paris me dégoûte toujours de plus en plus" (25 oct 24); "Avez-vous des nouvelles de S.Paul? Moi je n'ai pas encore eu le courage d'écrire. Chaque fois que je pense à mes bons amis de là-bas, je suis pris d'un tel découragement, que je remets ma lettre au lendemain" (27 oct 24).

<sup>108</sup> Eulalio and Calil's book includes a collective letter that Raymone, Cendrars, Oswald and Tarsila sent to Prado, written on the back of a bill from a restaurant and that reads like a drunk text, perhaps representative of the warmth and playfulness of relations at that time: "Cendrars e você são os dois maiores brasileiros vivos (maiores de idade)", and Cendrars adds "et autres choses aussi" (*ABBC* 293). Oswald also took advantage of his staying with Cendrars in Tremblay sur Mauldre to write to Tarsila to ask her to marry him.

manifesto.<sup>109</sup> Oswald may have attached his “Pau-Brasil” label to Mário and Cendrars without asking permission, but Tarsila took it on voluntarily, and the label even works its way into the name of a party at the Mirador de Pigalle: “Armistício Pau-Brasil” (ABBC 300). I do, however, think that Oswald marking Cendrars with his own label represents a different kind of act, because it directly contradicts how almost all of the critical literature characterizes their relationship, Oswald as rambunctious disciple and Cendrars as avuncular master.<sup>110</sup> Oswald’s idea of claiming Cendrars as his own disciple persists beyond the period of their close contact – even in 1949 he repeats the claim that Cendrars was “consciously writing Pau-Brasil poetry” – and I would argue that this claim that some might read as provocation or contrarianism should also be read as containing a sincere claim for credit.

Both Cendrars and Andrade continued to write, and Cendrars even signed a contract with Au Sans Pareil to make *Feuilles de Route* into a seven-volume series (6 Jan. 1925, ABBC 296). Meanwhile, copies of *Feuilles de Route* reached Sergio Milliet and Mário de Andrade relatively quickly, and both reviewed it favorably in journals. During this period in which Tarsila and Oswald were spending most of their time in France with Cendrars, with periodic visits from Milliet and Prado, Oswald published *Pau-Brasil*, the realization of the ideas that he had laid out in the manifesto he wrote during Cendrars’ eventful first visit to Brazil (and analyzed more at length in Chapter 3). Editions Au Sans Pareil (where Cendrars

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<sup>109</sup> From Martins’ *The Modernist Idea*: “Oswald comes back from Europe, gets himself Brazilwooded, and I’m just then bringing out my Losango Cáqui, because I was very low on cash, and I turned brazilwood like the very devil.” In Wilson Martins, *The Modernist Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 180.

<sup>110</sup> Aracy Amaral took this position the most definitively: “De qualquer forma, até aqui desconsiderada, aparece bem claro hoje que mais que uma influencia Cendrars foi um mestre para Oswald: desde sua orientação colocando-o em contato com a vanguarda literária parisiense (de Supervieille, Jules Romains, Valéry Larbaud, Cocteau, às conversas de café ou introduzindo-o na livraria de Mlle. Monnier, na Rua de l’Odeon), como transmitindo-lhe sua vivencia intensa com o mundo das artes plásticas” (Amaral 1970, 86).



had an editorial role) published the book, and it was the first published in Portuguese by a French press. Cendrars certainly had a role in creating the opportunity for Andrade; in his letter to Prado from November 1924, Cendrars mentions that Au Sans Pareil and Stock are interested in publishing a collection of young Brazilian writers, which would come out in Portuguese, and the best ones would be published in French: “It was I who had the idea and I had no difficulty moving it forward. I think that this could interest Oswald; when he arrives in Paris, he could take up its direction. Tell him to move forward in this business and to bring a complete plan” (ABBC 177).

Once the book came out, Oswald gave Cendrars a copy, signing it with a dedication, and there is no indication of what Cendrars thought of it, but he did scribble on the cover the number of the page where he himself was mentioned. The book does, however, end up being one of the few from the cohort that Cendrars later cites with admiration,<sup>111</sup> and even later critics like Martins, who don’t see Oswald as one of the great writers of that cohort, recognize the book as one of the most significant of the era.

From the earliest reaction to *Pau-Brasil* among other modernistas, however, the problem of identifying influences is at the forefront. Correspondence between Manuel Bandeira and Mário de Andrade, for example, shows that they acknowledged that this was an important book, but Bandeira’s primary focus is on what Oswald’s book owes to Cendrars’ previous work and to European avant-gardes in general:

Be patient. The Formose technique was started in Kodak. When Oswald was in the Oropa [sic] and did that conference at the Sorbonne, remember? The lecture was published in the same issue of the *Revue de l’Amérique Latine* as Cendrars’ poems that were part of Kodak - three years ago I translated three of them for the *Illustrated Idea*. Neither Oswald nor Sergio did anything like that. The technique of

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<sup>111</sup> He mentions it in his 1926 interview with *Terra Roxa*, underlines a mention of it in a book by Tristão de Athayde (ABBC 317).

both was taken from Cendrars: it is undeniable - and for this I am ready to play the documented critic with dates, only bumping into one 'word of honor, I didn't know' (which I wouldn't believe, by the way!). This is undoubtedly of no importance, for the technique is admirable, it has a classic character, and it wonderfully served the needs of Oswald's expression. If I talked about it (and I told him all this with the frankness that we have the courage and the pleasure to use with the people that we sincerely admire - with the others you don't bother, right?), it was because I was bothered by this thing of playing the innovator on top of us.<sup>112</sup>

Bandeira here (and in his previous letter) has identified the uncomfortable question of influence that is underpinning Oswald's nationalistic poetic projects, from *Pau-Brasil* through Antropofagia, and he has made clear his theory of the case. In saying that *Pau-Brasil* is just a translation of *Bois-brésil*, (whereas Mário's poetry is more "Ibirapitanga" – the Tupi word for the same plant), Bandeira rejects Oswald's work as insufficiently authentic, and grants ownership of certain poetic techniques to Cendrars. The previous chapter on *Pau-Brasil* and *Feuilles de Route* hopefully has provided another perspective on the authors' relative indebtedness.

Part of the difficulty in determining how collaborative Andrade and Cendrars' work was during this time resides in the fact that what they produced were single-author printed books. The projects where collaboration would have been more visibly evident – the ballet idea and the film idea – never came to fruition. By examining the notes and correspondence

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<sup>112</sup> Translation mine: "Tenha paciência. A técnica de Formose estava começada em Kodak. Quando Oswald esteve no Oropa e fez aquela conferencia no Sorbonne, lembra-se? a conferencia foi publicada no nº da Revue de l'Amérique Latine onde vinham uns poemas de Cendrars que faziam parte de Kodak – Há três anos traduzi três para a Idea Illustrada. Nem Oswald nem Sergio tão pouco faziam nada assim. A técnica de ambos foi tirada de Cendrars: é inegável – e para isso estou pronto a bancar o critico documentado com datas, esbarrando apenas numa 'palavra de honra que não conhecia' (em que alias eu não acreditaria!). Sem duvida isso não tem importância, pois a técnica é admirável, tem caráter clássico e serviu maravilhosamente às necessidades de expressão de Oswald. Se falei nisso (e falei a ele com a franqueza que a gente tem a coragem e o gosto de usar com as pessoas que sinceramente admira – com os outros se tem pena, não é?) foi porque me aporrinha essa coisa de bancar o inovador em cima da gente." Sept. 19, 1925 letter cited from book of correspondence between Mário de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira, p. 241. Also available in IEB archive (MA-C-CPL no 1016).

related to these projects, however, we can get impressions of the dialogue that was taking place during this time, dialogue that can be reasonably assumed to have infiltrated and affected the written works that both writers produced at the same time.

The idea of collaborating to produce a Brazilian ballet conformed to tastes in Paris in the mid-twenties, as dance companies like Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and de Maré's Ballets Suédois created and produced many ballets that used a particular foreign culture as its principal theme. The earliest allusion to the idea that I found was a 1923 letter from Sergio Milliet to Yan de Almeida Prado, in which he mentions the idea of creating a 'brazilian ballet' for the Ballets Suédois, to be called "Morro da Favela" (ABBC 271). In this first imagined version, Brazilians were in charge of all aspects: Paulo Prado would write the libretto, the painter di Cavalcanti would design the set and costumes, the composer Villa-Lobos would write the music. Milliet also reports that Oswald had asked Cendrars, whose collaboration with the Ballets Suédois "La Création du Monde" the group had gone to see, about the concept, and he thought the idea was "good and possible" (ABBC 271). This confirmation would have been important not only because of Cendrars' recent work with de Maré, but also because Cendrars' thematic choice to set "La Création du Monde" in Africa (and his *Anthologie Nègre*) reflected the Parisian interest in non-European cultures that the Brazilians had recognized as powerful and professionally useful.

The ballet idea went through several permutations once Cendrars and the modernistas had traveled together within Brazil, and when they returned to Paris, Cendrars was on board as a collaborator. In an Oct. 1924 letter [pneu] to Tarsila, Cendrars encouraged her to make sure to stay in Paris around the opening of the Ballet Suédois

season, so that they could speak to de Maré about the project (*ABBC* 291).<sup>113</sup> It's clear from his wording (“dont je n'abandonne pas l'idée”) that Tarsila doubted whether the ballet would be produced, but he wanted her participation for the set design and costumes. In a letter to Prado a month later, Cendrars complains that in his absence, de Maré and Erik Satie had gone ahead with “Relâche,” the new ballet on which Cendrars was supposed to collaborate, and which opened the season. Cendrars also conveys, however, that he thinks the avenue is still worth pursuing:

In any case, I didn't cut ties with the Suédois and can offer them the Brazilian ballet. I already talked about the idea with de Maré and Borlin, without insisting too much and I think I did all right, but the season this year is really bad, they're getting everything wrong, the new pieces are below expectations, and the Ballet Nègre, which went back on the billboard last Friday, fell apart completely. Starting tomorrow Relâche premieres, the Satie-Picabia ballet. I have a strong impression that it will be another fiasco” (*ABBC* 178).

Cendrars thinks that the Ballets Suédois will have to rebuild their reputation after a string of screw-ups, and for this reason they'll be more likely to accept the Oswald-Tarsila ballet. “I have an appointment Saturday on the topic and I'll send a telegram if it's accepted. If not, I'll talk with Diaghilev” (*ABBC* 178). Scheming further, Cendrars contacts Oswald, who had just arrived in Paris, and tells him to take his tickets for “Relâche” and to take Tarsila and Washington Luís, the governor of São Paulo, with him.<sup>114</sup> Further letters show that

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<sup>113</sup> “Les Suédois commence le 20 novembre; il serait bon que vous soyez à Paris à cette date et nous pourrions causer à De Maré du ballet brésilien, dont je n'abandonne pas l'idée. Travaillez-vous?” (*ABBC* 291).

<sup>114</sup> 26 nov 1924: letter to Oswald, who had only just arrived in Paris: “Mon cher Oswald, Que je suis heureux de savoir que tu es là et que je suis impatient de te voir. Voilà comment nous pourrions faire. Je n'irai pas à la première de Relâche. Comme j'ai une loge tu pourras en disposer, en invitant Washington Luís. Moi, je ne veux voir personne tant que je t'ai pas vu. J'ai tant de choses à te dire et à te demander et j'ai surtout une grosse envie de te serrer dans mes bras. Tâche de venir me voir vendredi ou samedi à la campagne. Passe à la maison, Raymone te dira comment faire pour venir ici et te remettras le billet de ma loge. Si tu ne viens pas, je viendrai lundi à Paris pour toi seul, je serai vers 10 heures rue du Mont-Doré et ne me fais pas attendre, je suis impatient de te voir. Comment va Noné? Embrasse-le, ce cher gamin. Lembraces [sic] [*maybe meant Lembranças*] Blaise. On pourrait déjeuner avec Tarsila si elle est à Paris” (*ABBC* 293).

Cendrars had tried to arrange meetings with de Maré later that winter and his notes show sketches he did himself for the project, but the pieces never come together.<sup>115</sup>

The ballet idea, however, does not fully disappear, and among Oswald de Andrade's notes in the IEB archive, we can see the idea in transition. On stationery from a hotel in France, Oswald had written down some ideas, titling it "Histoire de la fille du roi: Ballet brésilien" and marking his name, Tarsila's, and Villa-Lobos' as the authors. In the same file, the IEB has a typewritten version in Portuguese - "Historia da filha do Rei" - on which he had listed his name, that of his son Oswald de Andrade Filho for the scenarios, and Mignoni<sup>116</sup> for the music.

Another large collaborative project that Cendrars and Andrade aspired but eventually failed to realize was the "great propaganda film" on Brazil.<sup>117</sup> They had started working on the prospectus for the film during Cendrars' first visit to Brazil, and in June 1924 they sent that prospectus to Paulo Prado, who was in Paris at the time. In the letter he asks Prado to orient him before he goes further, mentions that the project interests Oswald ("Oswald est trop impatient"), and that he would write the script based on Washington Luís' *Capitania de São Paulo*.<sup>118</sup> In November of 1924, shortly after returning from Brazil, Cendrars wrote to Prado and although he confessed to not having done much on the film project, it's clear that he had taken some steps:

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<sup>115</sup> Cendrars tried to arrange meetings with Rolf de Maré in December to discuss the Brazilian ballet idea with Tarsila and Oswald, Calil/Eulalio book has some pencil-drawings that Cendrars did for the ballet (ABBC 292). The project probably seemed realistic because a program from 27 november lists "La Création du monde" among the repertoire for upcoming performances (ABBC 293).

<sup>116</sup> Probably Francisco Mignone (1897-1986).

<sup>117</sup> In the special issue of *Europe*, Pierre Rivas said that the movie idea had died with the disruption caused by the 1924 Revolt (*Europe* 55), but it's clear from the correspondence afterward that the idea was still alive.

<sup>118</sup> The letter and the first page of the prospectus are in ABBC, p. 284. The prospectus itself is at the ALS, as well as the letters to Prado.

“In any case, I looked into two directions; the two sides found the project very interesting and are disposed to participate with half of the capital, following my cost estimate, or even with the whole thing. Tell me if this is the right moment to make the deal or if it’s better to wait a little longer. One is Pathé, who would give half, and the other is the World Bank (the Stinnes trust) who might go in for all of it. Tell Oswald that I’m still waiting for his draft for the script. (They proposed to me to do a propaganda film and a series of documentaries in Colombia at the cost of the government. On this there’s no hurry, I didn’t say yes or no. I’m going to wait for your response regarding the Brazilian film before following up on the Colombia movie.)” (ABBC 177).<sup>119</sup>

Once he had been reunited with Oswald, theoretically they had been talking about the project but didn’t finalize things, and by April 1925, Cendrars had written to Prado, asking him to clear up with Oswald “this cinema business” (ABBC 300): “For if I am engaged in this cinema business, I would make it even more a matter of seeing you [when you get to Paris]. Even though Oswald here has tied everything up in such an inextricable way, with Washington [Luis], a Belgian banker and his own business, that I no longer understand anything. Oswald follows at the end of the month, you’ll see him and maybe understand where he wants to go (ABBC 180).<sup>120</sup> It seems that Oswald had also taken his own initiative to try to fund the film, and the arrangements that Oswald and Cendrars had each started were incompatible. Again, despite the miscommunication, neither seems to have fully given up on the idea. In *Les Cahiers du Mois* 16-17 (probably Dec. 1925), Cendrars does an interview in which he claims that he is going to Brazil in a few weeks to make an epic film, “l’Histoire du Brésil,” changing the name once again (ABBC 302). During this second trip that Cendrars had mentioned to the journal, Alcantara Machado mentions the film project obliquely in the dedication of *Pathé-Baby* to Cendrars (April 1926): “Para Blaise Cendrars –

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<sup>119</sup>Letter is at ALS. Calil put his translation into Portuguese in the Eulalio volume.

<sup>120</sup> “Pois se estou empenhando nesse negócio de cinema, faria ainda mais questão de vê-lo. Mesmo porque aqui Oswald embrulhou tudo de uma maneira inextricável, com Washington [Luís], um banqueiro belga e os seus próprios negócios, que já não entendo mais nada. Oswald segue no fim do mês, você o verá e talvez compreenda onde ele quer chegar.”

grande especialista em fitas de documentação – , com o entusiasmo do Alcantara” (ABBC 309). Eulalio explains this comment as a double reference, first, to his poetry collection *Kodak (Documentaires)*, second, to his frustrated desire to make movies, that nonetheless inspired Alcântara’s approach to writing his own book (ABBC 309).

This principally collaborative period was not only hindered by logistical issues regarding location, time, and cooperation (financial and otherwise) from outside actors, but also by the personal vulnerability required in order to collaborate. This aspect is difficult to account for, and a certain amount of it is inherently unknowable, including how much we should attribute to an individual’s specific point of view and how much we should attribute to reigning expectations or preconceived notions of how influence works or who has ownership over an idea. Certain letters from 1925 reveal this friction more fully. In February of 1925, Cendrars wrote to Prado about how he would not have finished his novel *L’Or* (though he had been working on it for 15 years) if he had not stayed so long in Brazil and had such long conversations with him.<sup>121</sup> As a parenthetical aside in the same letter, he expresses annoyance that Oswald was in Paris for a month without contacting him before recounting their latest adventures together. He minimizes the snub’s importance, but this may explain why he writes to Tarsila that same month, “Tell Oswald that I’m not angry, and both of you should come see me in the country, when Oswald is back.”<sup>122</sup> Likewise, Eulalio cites a July 4, 1925 letter that Oswald had written to Tarsila while she was in São Paulo, implying that Oswald recognized and disliked his secondary position in Cendrars’ mind: “Cendrars não Blaise continua muito meu amigo, mas não precisa de mim por enquanto,

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<sup>121</sup> 13 Feb. 1925 (ABBC 179-80).

<sup>122</sup> “Dites à Oswald que je ne suis pas fâché et tâchez de venir tous les deux me voir à la campagne , quand Oswald sera de retour” (ABBC 298)

mesmo até o ano que vem” (ABBC 300). When Aracy Amaral cites the same letter more fully in *Tarsila, sua obra e seu tempo*, it seems that instead of generalizing about their relationship, he is referring more specifically to their collaboration on the ballet:

Cendrars, not Blaise, remains very much my friend, but does not need me for now, even until next year. I hope, if nothing unusual happens, to stay here until this time. And you? Are you still coming with Dona Olivia? If you're with X, tell him that ... As for the other heavyweights I mentioned in the last letter, the relationships continue to narrow solidly. They are the biggest financiers who have business with Brazil.<sup>123</sup>

The letter indicates that Oswald hoped to stay long enough to be there when Cendrars reached the point where he would need Oswald's participation, and it is thus possible to understand the comment as frustration over needing to negotiate with financiers, just as much as frustration over his part in the authorship of the eventual production.<sup>124</sup>

### ***C) Crossing ships and cannibalism, credit and conflict***

Cendrars returned to Brazil a second time in 1926,<sup>125</sup> and during this trip he was working on subsequent parts of *Feuilles de Route; Sud-Américaines* is published a few months after his return. He also worked on “John-Paul Jones ou l’ambition”, did corrections

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<sup>123</sup> My translation: “Cendrars não Blaise continua muito meu amigo, mas não precisa de mim por enquanto, mesmo até o ano que vem. Espero, se nada houver de extraordinário, ficar aqui até essa época. E você? Vem sempre com D. Olivia? Se estiver com o X diga-lhe que... Quanto ao outro pessoal forte ao qual me referi na última carta, as relações continuam a se estreitar solidamente. São os maiores financistas que têm negócios com o Brasil.” From Aracy Amaral, *Tarsila, sua obra e seu tempo* (São Paulo: Sau Paulo University Press, 2003), 198.

<sup>124</sup> Amaral's commentary reflects this point of view: “An obvious despondency could be seen in Oswald during his stay in Paris, all of it absorbed by the business. This plan was still, according to all indications, the idea of the projected ballet. Oswald's text gives the impression of hope for its realization, and its dependence of Cendrars for such.” (“*Um evidente acabrunhamento se reflete em Oswald nessa sua estada em Paris, toda ela absorvida pelos negócios*” [...] “*Esse plano prendia-se ainda, segundo tudo leva a crer, à idéia do projetado balé. Pelo texto de Oswald, tem-se ainda a impressão de uma esperança de sua realização, e sua dependência de Cendrars para tal*”) (Amaral 2003, 198). Her 1970 citation of it, however, privileges the frustrated-student interpretation (Amaral 1970, 139).

<sup>125</sup> The trip there was 7-25 Jan. 1926 on the Flandria ; the return trip was 6-25 Jun. 1926 on the Arlanza.



on *Moravagine*, and started translating parts of the Portuguese explorer Fernão Cardim's "Tratado da terra e da Gente do Brasil."<sup>126</sup> As with the previous trip, he does a magazine interview (this time with Sergio Milliet for *Terra Roxa*), attends Carnaval in Rio, and meets interesting people, including this time Donga, the samba musician who toured Europe in the 1920s with the Oito Batutas.<sup>127</sup> A significant difference, however, is that Tarsila and Oswald were not in Brazil during this trip, instead staying in Paris, where they continued to prepare Tarsila's first solo show outside of Brazil, and where Oswald continued to write *Serafim Ponte Grande*.

Much as Tarsila had done illustrations for Cendrars' *Feuilles de Route* and Oswald's *Pau-Brasil*, Cendrars wrote poems that were intended to accompany her upcoming show's catalogue. At the beginning of April 1926, Cendrars wrote to the couple from São Paulo, and it appears that he had sent them earlier letters but they were lost in the mail. Cendrars promised to write others, but "São Paulo ne m'inspire pas cette fois-ci, que vous n'y êtes pas, ni vous ni Oswald" (*ABBC* 308). In a separate letter to Oswald, he writes more specifically about their strategy for presenting the show, recommending that the show be "French, Parisian, and not a South-American manifestation": "The danger for you is officialdom. Shame I'm not there [...] It's a matter of dexterity. In this case use your indigenous senses and don't forget everything I told you on the topic" (Amaral 2003, 409).<sup>128</sup> A few weeks later Cendrars sent more poems, along with a letter for each, and his

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<sup>126</sup> 1 Mar. 26: he starts translating "Tratado da Terra e Gente do Brasil" by Fernão Cardim, and he got to 62 typed pages, putting the words he didn't know in parentheses...

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music and National Identity in Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

<sup>128</sup> The Apr. 1 1925 letter in its entirety contains some paternalism, but it's mostly directed towards Tarsila as a woman, rather than towards the couple as non-Europeans: "C'est le premier avril et c'est une sale blague d'être ici sans toi. / Je pense rentrer prochainement. / Je pense que tu vas t'occuper activement de l'exposition Tarsila et compléter mes listes. Faites une exposition FRANÇAISE, PARISIENNE et non pas une

message for Oswald also suggests that if these poems proved inadequate for the occasion, Oswald should write more and then sign Cendrars' name to them.<sup>129</sup> How one interprets this suggestion may be a bit of a critical Rorschach test. One could take this to mean that Cendrars trusted Oswald's ability to write poems in French that would fit the occasion, to the point that he wouldn't mind his own name being put on them, or one could read this as Cendrars treating Oswald as a disciple in a great artist's studio in the Renaissance, whose mission would be perfect imitation. Aracy Amaral's interpretation in 1970 reflects the view most commonly shared among Brazilian commentators: "Moreover, that Cendrars influenced the Brazilian poets is correct. But the influence-wellspring received by Cendrars would not be from the Brazilians, but from Brazil itself, that since 1924 occupies considerable space in his work."<sup>130</sup> In any case, Tarsila's show in Paris was June 7-25, so Cendrars only just missed the window to see it, despite having consulted with Tarsila frequently in Paris before leaving,<sup>131</sup> and having contributed material for the program, poems that would later become part of his own *Feuilles de Route*, as the second part ("São

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manifestation sud-américaine. Le danger pour vous c'est l'officialité. Dommage que je ne sois pas là. Mais vous avez des amis à Paris, sur lesquels vous pouvez compter pour être reçus comme des frères. C'est une affaire de doigté. Use cette fois-ci de ton flair d'Indiens et n'oublie pas tout ce que je t'ai déjà dit à ce sujet. / Tarsila recevra mes poèmes dans quelques jours, ils arriveront à temps. Je suis bien heureux qu'elle fasse son exposition et je suis sûr de son succès. / Quand nous nous reverrons, nous échangerons l'Orient contre l'extrême Occident et nous aurons un fameux compte à régler, tous les deux. / Tu sais que je t'aime comme un frère. / Ma main amie, Blaise.

<sup>129</sup> 25 apr 26: "J'aurais pu faire une préface pour le catalogue de Tarsila. Voici quelques poèmes. Fais-en d'autres et signe-les (de mon nom) si ceux-ci ne conviennent pas. Tout ce que vous ferez sera bien. Je n'ai pas fait de Préface me réservant à mon retour d' ENGUEULER tout le monde si tout Paris n'a pas dit que Tarsila a du talent, qu'elle est la plus belle et le plus grand peintre d'aujourd'hui. QUI T'AIME DOIT AIMER TARSILA DO AMARAL. (Tu parles d'un sonnet! Fais-le.) Je t'embrasse Blaise" (ABBC 309).

<sup>130</sup> Translation mine: "Além do mais, que Cendrars influenciou os poetas brasileiros é certo. Mas a influencia-manancial recebido por Cendrars não seria dos brasileiros e sim do Brasil, que desde 1924 ocupa lugar considerável em sua obra" (Amaral 1970, 90).

<sup>131</sup> Anita Malfatti had written to Mário de Andrade on 17 Dec 1924 about Oswald and Cendrars collaborating on putting together Tarsila's first solo show in Paris. (Archives at IEB, MA-C-CPL no. 4485).

Paulo”). In November and December after returning to Paris, Cendrars published “Sud-Américaines,” a group of poems meant to serve as the next part of *Feuilles de Route*.

Cendrars’ third and last trip to Brazil was in autumn 1927, from September until the following January.<sup>132</sup> Once again, he did an interview as part of his visit, this time with Sergio Buarque de Hollanda at *O Jornal* in Rio de Janeiro, an interview titled “the Future of the white man is in South America” (Amaral 1970, 26). In a departure from precedent, in this interview Cendrars decided not to focus not on the work produced by his friends’ cohort, but rather on the cultural possibilities of South America in general, contrasting sharply with social and political developments in Europe. The only writers he mentions are French ones, the attention is negative, and in implicitly referring back to his previous interviews, he insinuated that he had praised Oswald in a semi-ironic manner. During this time, Oswald and Tarsila had left on a road trip to Amazonas, Bahia, and Minas with Mário de Andrade and a few other friends that lasted several months. Although participants joined and left the trip as they needed, the arrangement showed some striking similarity with the previous trip through the countryside that they had undertaken with Cendrars in 1924, with the notable exception that Cendrars was not with them, despite being in the country for a great deal of that time: the initial group set out in May 1927, Cendrars arrived in September, and Mário only returned from the trip in December. Much about these trips is not clear from the documentation, for example whether the possibility of reuniting the previous group was discussed or not, or whether Cendrars actually made it down to São Paulo during that visit or not. Cendrars wrote to Mário in January about working on translating some of his poems (praising “Noturno de Belo Horizonte” as one of the best he

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<sup>132</sup> The trip there was 12 Aug - 5 Sept 1927 on the Lipari, the return trip was 28 Jan 1928 on the Lutetia.

had read in the last ten years), and in his letter apologizes for not making it to São Paulo during this stay, but Fonseca's biography of Oswald de Andrade mentions Cendrars accompanying Oswald to his publisher in São Paulo to look at the proofs of *A Estrela absinta* (Fonseca 186).<sup>133</sup> It does seem clear, however, from their missed connections and from the different directions in which their literary interests were headed, that their period of active collaboration was over.

The end of Cendrars' last trip coincides with the birth of the Anthropofagia idea, with which Oswald de Andrade would be most commonly associated in retrospect. Although the modernista cohort did have a story to tell about the origins of the idea, involving eating frogs' legs on Oswald's birthday (Fonseca 206), the idea had several precursors: Francis Picabia had already created a "Manifeste Cannibale" in 1920 and two issues of a *Cannibale* revue; many avant-garde groups used violent language or images; several of the Brazilian modernist movements already looked to the indigenous cultures in Brazil for compelling images and concepts they could use as inspiration for their own work; and in 1927, two days before Cendrars' boat arrived, Brazilian police arrested the murderer Febrônio, who was suspected of eating the hearts of his victims.<sup>134</sup> In *Vida e Morte da Antropofagia*, Raul Bopp, one of the movement's co-founders, described Oswald's *idée fixe* to have frogs' legs that evening in January 1928, and shared some wild theories about amphibians being direct ancestors of humans in recent evolutionary theories, to which Tarsila joked that this would make the whole lot of them quasi-cannibals. The Brazilian literary critic Wilson Martins has explained that the amphibian theory most likely

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<sup>133</sup> If this is accurate, it would have to be sometime between September and December of 1927, and Oswald could not have made the entire journey Northward with Mário, although he did return with him.

<sup>134</sup> Benedito Nunes describes many of these precursors in *Oswald Cannibal*. Febrônio also fascinated Cendrars, who ended up writing about him in *Histoires Vraies*.

originated in Jean-Pierre Brisset's *Les Origines humaines*, and has argued that Cendrars was likely the connection that brought the idea to Oswald.<sup>135</sup> This is likely true, but the next step of his argument is less certain, and illustrates the kind of revisionist (or pre-determined) reading that I am pushing back on: Martins investigates this anecdote in order to prove that "[...] Oswald de Andrade also owed to Cendrars the initial idea of Anthropofagia, which, I believe, would have occurred by sinuous trajectories" (Martins 1992, 985), in addition to owing his "Pau-Brasil" ideas to Cendrars.

The question of "owing" or "debt" regarding ideas returns frequently in Brazilian criticism regarding the Modernist cohort, but the same question does not seem to be applied when writing literary histories of Cendrars. Since these critics are usually specialists in Brazilian literature, some might not consider it their purview to determine the genealogy of Cendrars' work, but as we have seen from the previous citation of Aracy Amaral's 1970 book, some critics specifically claim that the modernistas had no influence on Cendrars' writing, other than having facilitated his falling in love with the country itself.<sup>136</sup> To reinforce his claim that Brisset's theory could not have entered Oswald's mind before Cendrars, Martins points to Cendrars having written about some of Brisset's stranger ideas in *Moravagine*, but he identifies *Moravagine* as a 1917 book, when in reality Cendrars had started it then, but was still re-writing and adding to it during his first trip to Brazil: he had given the advance for the book to his first wife in 1924, but did not publish it until 1926, at which point Oswald was his closest literary interlocutor. If timing is indeed a

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<sup>135</sup> Wilson Martins, "Cendrars e o Brasil," *Hispania* 75, no. 4, (Oct. 1992): 979-987. Martins first made the argument in *A História da Inteligência Brasileira*. Translation mine.

<sup>136</sup> Later in this chapter, I will address the fact that the recurring question of literary debt is not one that French or Swiss critics apply to Cendrars, at least in the case of his interactions with Brazilian writers, despite the presence of that type of language in Cendrars' own letters.

key part of this issue in literary debt negotiations, it may be equally important that Cendrars wrote to his publisher to say that *Moravagine* would be delayed on the same day that Oswald's *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* came out in the newspaper (ABBC 274).<sup>137</sup> In terms of the idea itself, one could also argue that Tarsila's leap from a discussion of evolution to riffing jokes on cannibalism was the most important turn in the anecdote. Whether one considers the evolution idea, the cannibalism joke, or the recent sensational stories about Febrônio as the primary seed for the Antropofagia movement, the idea took root as a result of interactions between the modernistas and their adopted European, and with the literary culture at home as well as in the center of the literary world.

The Antropofagia idea gripped Oswald and several other modernistas quickly, and became the language in which they would write for the next two years. In May 1928, they launched the *Revista de Antropofagia*, Oswald's *Manifesto Antropófago* appearing in the first issue, Alcântara Machado serving as director, Raul Bopp as manager, Oswald as "idealizador," and Manuel Bandeira, Yan de Almeida Prado, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Ascenso Ferreira, and others as contributors. Despite the nationalist ideology underpinning the *Revista de Antropofagia*, the same month as the launch Oswald left the country in order to return to France for Tarsila's second solo show, which included some of her new "cannibalist" works, and he did an interview with Nino Frank for the *Nouvelles Littéraires*, in which he announced Antropofagia's birth and raison d'être: "I affirm that the ethnic independence of Brazil has not yet been proclaimed."<sup>138</sup> In the interview Oswald adopts an

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<sup>137</sup> 8 mar 1924: Oswald publishes the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* in the *Correio da Manhã*. The same day Cendrars writes to his editor to say *Moravagine* isn't going to be ready when expected because of a setback related to something else, but he says he's going to keep working on it from the interior of Brazil.

<sup>138</sup> My translation: "J'affirme que l'indépendance ethnique du Brésil n'a pas encore été proclamée" (ABBC 425). Subsequent translations are mine as well. Le Brésil a eu deux grands ennemis, les missionnaires et les gouverneurs généraux portugais. Ceux que nous ne désavouons pas, ce sont les aventuriers, les forçats, les

aggressive tone, and draws dividing lines between whom he represents (the movement adherents, but also Brazil itself), who his comrades are not (the “West” or the “East”), and their enemies (Portuguese missionaries and governors general), as well as the categories of people whom they “do not disavow” or whom the “cannibalists” even incorporate into themselves: “the adventurers, the convicts, the negroes.” When driving home the primary purpose of the initiative – “that the bygone Brazil be reborn” – he gives Tarsila and Villa-Lobos as examples of artists who have “refound this sense of ethnicity of which we have made ourselves apostles,” he mentions Cendrars, who had arranged for this interview to happen: “From this point of view, Blaise Cendrars, by his influence and especially by his example, was very useful to us.” Although Andrade singles him out here as the only European whose influence is recognized, his use of the past tense and of the word “useful” does not incorporate Cendrars into the movement, as Oswald had so often done in the past, with or without permission, and rather relegates him to the role of a bridge, essential to the tribe’s movement, but not welcome in the new territory.

The *Revista de Antropofagia* has a first incarnation, or, as they phrased it, a “first dentition,” that lasts from May 1928 to February 1929. On March 17, 1929, the *Revista* goes into its “second dentition,” which is a weekly full page in the *Diário de S.Paulo* which continues for a total of 15 issues, until Aug. 1, 1929. Mário de Andrade did give them a poem for the first issue and *Macunaíma*’s first chapter, but he refused to join into the group, even though Oswald claimed *Macunaíma* as a “Cannibalist book.” As was the case with *Pau-Brasil*, Mário did not appreciate his work being amalgamated into a larger movement, and

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nègres. [...] Bien entendu je ne repousse pas les belles choses que vous nous avez apportées: la machine, l’auto. Mais je veux que le Brésil d’autrefois renaisse [...] A ce point de vue, Blaise Cendrars, par son influence et surtout par son exemple, nous a été bien utile” (ABBC 425).

during this period he had more and more disagreements with Oswald, on a wide array of topics: religion, politics, personality issues, and Tarsila (Fonseca 214). As a result, the *Revista* (and by extension Oswald) attacked or mocked Mário, and eventually Alcântara leaves the group. Despite provoking conflict with many writers and social groups within Brazil at the time, they still brought on new collaborators, like the French surrealist Benjamin Peret, but eventually they went too far. The *Revista* team also angered regular *Diário de S.Paulo* readers by making fun of Catholicism, and some readers started giving the page back. In their last provocation, they printed in huge type a supposed quotation from the New Testament, in which God says “you can get to Heaven on Judgment Day if you do what I tell you to do,” and they title it “Suborno,” at which point the editor in chief of the *Diário de S.Paulo* puts an end to the *Revista* in August (Fonseca 216-17).

The frequent literary conflicts around principles and personalities raised the level of tension between writers in São Paulo and elsewhere who earlier in the decade had been much more open to collaborating with each other, reading each other’s work and building on ideas. These literary conflicts coincided with political instability in Brazil, and the massive economic crisis that started on Wall Street on Oct. 29, 1929, then choked the Brazilian coffee market, and spread from the Americas outward. Plans that were underway for an International Cannibalist Congress and for a “Bibliotequinha Antropofágica” had to be scuppered, and letters between Paulo Prado and Cendrars show the steadily increasing realization that the economic crisis was likely to radically change life within their respective countries, and within their personal and professional spheres.

The remaining Antropofagia adherents further splintered at that time because of some personal events that most critical accounts of the time do not explain in much detail,



but that Maria Augusta Fonseca's 2007 biography of Oswald de Andrade clarifies with information from Tarsila do Amaral's biographies and later interviews.<sup>139</sup> At some point in the first half of 1929, someone brought an 18 year-old *normalista* student and poet named Patricia Galvão to a party at Oswald and Tarsila's home in São Paulo, and her beauty and cleverness made her an instant hit with the couple and their invitees. Galvão, or Pagu as she was more widely known, was from a working-class family and active in left-wing politics at school, and Tarsila and Oswald took her on as a protégée, buying her clothes and inviting her to dinner, inviting her to participate in the *Revista de Antropofagia*. The relationship with Oswald turned into a romantic one, with significant consequences, or as Raul Bopp elliptically put it: "The emotional reaction was carried out in series, with several misadjustments in the domestic sphere" (Fonseca 218, citing *Vida e Morte da Antropofagia*). The hidden relationship caused Oswald to withdraw from some of his responsibilities at the *Revista*, and near the end of the year Pagu told him that she was pregnant. Since he was still with Tarsila, Oswald arranged for Pagu to marry Waldemar, a cousin of Tarsila's, and Oswald and Tarsila were witnesses at the wedding. Then Waldemar and Pagu left for Santos, pretending that they were going to Paris for their honeymoon, instead annulling the marriage there, at which point Waldemar went to Europe, and Pagu to Bahia, where she expected to carry out her pregnancy in secret. A month later, however, Oswald had left Tarsila and proposed to marry Pagu.<sup>140</sup> Friends and colleagues took sides, Pagu's family disowned her, and at the exact same time the Brazilian coffee market, which

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<sup>139</sup> Maria Augusta Fonseca, *Oswald de Andrade, Biografia*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Editora Globo, 2007).

<sup>140</sup> Fonseca's biography of Oswald goes into more detail (Fonseca 219-21), including Pagu's later accounts of how her personal and professional relationship with Oswald started and ended.

accounted for the majority of the country's exports, was cratering, taking with it the income of most residents of the state of São Paulo, Oswald included.

Most books or articles on the Brazilian Modernist period locate the beginning of the end in late 1929, and as a study of the collaboration between Blaise Cendrars and Oswald de Andrade, the time frame also applies here. Most studies, however, emphasize one particular cause for the break or another, without including some of the other factors that I believe to be interdependent. Jorge Schwartz, for example, attributes the break primarily to the principal actors deciding to turn towards politics rather than literary disputes, due to the political and economic factors of the Crash and the subsequent military intervention to prevent the president-elect from taking office, installing instead Getúlio Vargas; this is also the version of events that Oswald himself claims in his 1933 preface to *Serafim Ponte Grande*. Other scholars attribute the rift between Cendrars and Andrade to a philosophical divergence compounded with loyalty; Oswald had attacked Paulo Prado's *Retrato do Brasil*, which came out in 1928 and presented a pessimistic outlook on Brazilian culture that clashed with Oswald's energetic nationalist project, and in the end Cendrars' aesthetic sensibilities and loyalty had shifted towards Prado's seigneurial perspective on the massive and still wild country. When Eulálio's book cites Cendrars' Dec. 1929 letter to Prado with concern for his well-being and their friendship, he takes the somewhat cryptic inquiry into "the fallout from the mess,"<sup>141</sup> that he either learned of or encountered (the language itself is vague), and interprets it as being either about Prado's father passing away or about Prado's break with Oswald, understood as being related to the literary dispute. It is also possible that the break was significantly motivated by personal anger about how Tarsila

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<sup>141</sup> My translation: "D'où vient cette crise chez vous? répercussion du krach à New York, élections présidentielles ou la suite du gâchis que j'ai connu?" (ABBC 203).

had been treated, since the correspondence shows how invested Cendrars had been in her work, in her as a person, and in the relationship with Oswald (who, after all, had proposed to Tarsila while staying with Cendrars in Tremblay).

I hope this chronology has shown that the causes of friction are multiple and complex, and range from completely personal relations to global socio-political shifts, from literary clashes of a specific moment to larger power dynamics between literary nations. Furthermore, I hope to at least cast some doubt on whether the participants in this collaborative period can serve as reliable narrators of their own literary history, especially as their stories change and critics accept retrospective points of view as the truth.

#### ***D) Collaboration yields way to chaos, nationalism infiltrates the narrative***

Once the catastrophes of 1929 have been fully realized, a negative outlook infiltrates the tone of Cendrars' and his Brazilian comrades' writing (correspondence or essays), whether they are reflecting back on past events, observing the present or speculating about the future.

Around Christmas 1929, Mário wrote two articles in his regular column for the *Diário Nacional* (SP) that started off as a review of Cendrars' most recent book, *Les Confessions de Dan Yack*, but very soon he turns to look backward, to how a previous review he had written of a previous work by Cendrars was affected by the power dynamics that were underlying what he may have hoped at the time appeared as an exchange of ideas among peers: "I wrote it from the heart, as they say. It's even possible that I wrote very stupidly, I can't remember anymore, but it was worth the feeling I wrote with. And the

underlying desire to show to the Master who knew him in depth" (ABBC 426).<sup>142</sup> Mário declares that he's not going to write any more criticism of the "mestre," Cendrars (ABBC 427), admitting how in his previous attempts at it he was always thinking about how he would react, trying to prove himself. Here in 1929 he reveals that the article he had written in 1924 for the *Revista do Brasil* had this tension underlying it, and he reports that the reaction he got was a laughing dismissal: "It's just awful: the end anyhow is total nonsense, but it moved me deeply."<sup>143</sup> Elsewhere, however, the line is remembered as "Your article is almost idiotic because of all the praise, but I like you a lot."<sup>144</sup> In any case, the portion of the comment that was just tamping down the praise (out of requisite modesty) carries less weight than the negative phrasing ("awful" or "idiotic"), as does the positive portion.

Cendrars' writing projects likewise turned their focus towards the past in his somewhat inappropriately named *Aujourd'hui* from 1931. The book collects previously written essays that more or less fit into the genre of social commentary, describing various aspects of modernity with excitement or awe, but they were all pieces that he had written during the collaborative period of the '20s: "Éloge de la vie dangéreuse" recounts (and embellishes) an encounter with a Brazilian prisoner in 1924, "la Métaphysique du café" was a 1927 article he had written after witnessing massive monoculture on then-thriving Paulista coffee farms, and "Principe de l'Utilité" was on its third tour of duty after serving as part of a conference given in São Paulo and as a chapter in *Moravagine*. These essays also

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<sup>142</sup> Mário de Andrade, "Táxi: Blaise Cendrars" *Diário Nacional*, SP, 25 Dec. 1929 [in *Táxi e Crônicas do Diário Nacional* São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1976)]. Translation mine.

<sup>143</sup> My translation: "Está muito ruim: o final então é burrada grossa; mas me comoveu profundamente" (ABBC 426).

<sup>144</sup> My translation: "Votre article est presque imbécile à cause des éloges, mais je vous aime bien" (ABBC 274).

had in common that the “today” illustrated within was definitively over by the time they emerged in book form.

Whereas *Aujourd'hui* remained in a recent past of speculative potential, Cendrars' correspondence with Paulo Prado reveals what seems to be a growing realization that his window of opportunity for visiting Brazil was closing, without a clear sign as to when or if it would reopen. In 1931, before and after publishing *Aujourd'hui*, Cendrars wrote to Prado on a fairly regular basis, and kept up corresponding and exchanging books with Yan, Drummond, Alcântara, and Lasar Segall, and asks about Oswald in somewhat indirect ways, and had visits from Tarsila and Sergio. But whereas his printed interviews or his personal correspondence used to project forward to grand and often unrealistic plans, ones written in the aftermath of the Crash look backward as well: “So São Paulo really exists and not only in my imagination as I think some days ... God bless you for the beautiful trips that I owe to you.”<sup>145</sup> The uncertainty of Prado's financial future likely played a part in his nostalgic tone at this point, and he continues to describe the total economic paralysis in Tremblay, and in Paris, and express gratitude to be able to work. At Christmas of that same year, Cendrars turns down an invitation from Prado to accompany him on a trip “pelo Norte” claiming that it is because he needs to return to his writing desk, and stay close to friends faring badly during the economic crisis, but it is likely that he was also thinking of the prohibitive cost that would likely be assumed by Prado (*ABBC* 213).

Apart from his former modernista comrades, Oswald made some efforts to move forward into newer terrain, but encountered obstacles and pushback at each turn. After

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<sup>145</sup> From Aug. 13, 1931 letter to Prado: “Donc São Paulo existe réellement et non seulement dans mon imagination comme je le pense certains jours... Que Dieu vous bénisse pour les beaux voyages que je vous dois” (*ABBC* 332, translation mine).

the collapse of the *Revista de Antropofagia* and the other Cannibalist projects, Oswald and Pagu started their short-lived political weekly, *O Homem do Povo*, on Mar. 31, 1931. In *O Homem do Povo*, Oswald channeled his anti-establishment energies into a more traditionally political publication, aligning with the Brazilian Communist Party's platform (which had encountered its own obstacles, being illegal for the majority of its existence at this point). The provocative humor that had characterized the *Revista de Antropofagia* remained, which may have contributed to its early shuttering. After only seven issues, the journal had attracted the ire of conservative law students who violently vandalized its offices. The police were unwilling to pursue the vandals, instead holding Oswald and Pagu responsible for provocation, and suggesting non-explicitly that they might amend their report to include shots being fired by Pagu, despite there being no firearms on the premises. The next day Andrade published an editorial, arguing that the students had been manipulated by capitalists to attack the weak, the small, but in the end the paper had to close (Fonseca 227-31).<sup>146</sup>

During this period from 1931 to 1933, Oswald's writing continued to be out of step with his ability to publish it. He finally decided to publish *Serafim Ponte Grande*, which he had written during his time with Tarsila (and Cendrars), but he replaced the preface he had originally written for it in 1926 with one that harshly critiqued not only the form and content of the novel, but also the ambitious ideological project behind it: "The anarchy of my education was joined to the lettered stupidity of our semicolony. [...] The "revolutionary" situation of our South American mental bullshit was this: the opposite of

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<sup>146</sup> After closing the newspaper, Oswald and Pagu went to Montevideo, Uruguay, where they met Luis Carlos Prestes, the longtime leader of the PCB and namesake of the Prestes Coluna, and they spend three days being radicalized by him (Fonseca 231-2).

the bourgeois wasn't the proletarian, but the bohemian!" (SPGE 3). Along with this particular novel, Andrade repudiates his previous frameworks "Pau-Brasil" and "Antropofagia" as equivalent to the "imperial operation" of coffee subsidies, and the failed projects of all the other "Brazilian 'vanguardist' literature". For an explanation of why he chose to publish the book despite his current revulsion, he offers it as a museum piece:

"Of my work only this book is left. A document. A graphic. A Brazilian cast loose on the high seas of the last stage of capitalism. Servile. Opportunistic and revolting. Conservative and Sexist. Married at the police station. Going from petit bourgeois and fairweather bureaucrat to dancer and tourist. As a solution, transatlantic nudism. At the historic apogee of bourgeois fortunes. Of ill-gotten fortunes. [...] I'm publishing this novel in its integral text, finished in 1928. Necrology of the bourgeoisie. Epitaph of what I once was." (SPGE 4-5)

The style of the prose retains the paratactic structure and paired nouns and adjectives that characterized his *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* and his *Manifesto Antropófago*, but where those essays turned their critical indignation towards Brazilian academicism or European literary primogeniture, this essay turns it inward, focusing its critique on Modernismo's pretensions or limitations of scope, by accusing it of having no political consciousness at all. Further complicating Andrade's efforts to move forward as he shifted into writing political essays and theater, his political affiliation with the PCB attracted greater attention from the Vargas regime's censors, and his three (now) most well-known plays, *O Homem e o cavalo*, *A Morta*, and *O Rei da Vela*, could not be published until 1937, four years after he had written them, and the censorship police kept them off the stage for the entirety of the regime.

The economic insecurity of Europe in the mid-'30s, combined with rising extremism in political discourse and nationalist policy, led Cendrars to seek solutions in escapism. On

a practical level, this included encouraging his son Rémy to try to leave the continent and move to Brazil. For nearly two years (July '33-April '35), Rémy attempted to obtain the necessary documentation to immigrate, under continuously changing immigration policy in Brazil. During this time Cendrars wrote often to Paulo Prado, with increasing desperation, asking for help with arranging a job for Rémy, and then with obtaining a guarantee of income, both having become requirements in order to enter the country.<sup>147</sup> In the meantime, Cendrars had begun working for the right-wing newspaper *Gringoire*, and his outlook on Western Europe had grown more apocalyptic: "It's a strange era when everyone has their new economic plan to save the world, while a bit of technology in the hands of one person (a maniac? a sage?) can destroy a city like Paris or London in one night!"<sup>148</sup> In this context, it is all the more understandable that in writing the two volumes of *Histoires Vraies*, he returned to the subject of Brazil, or Latin America more broadly. But the Brazil that he described here was a big departure from the one that he had actually witnessed, and in deviating from the truth and dwelling on outlaws and violence, Cendrars ended up infuriating the "Brazilian colony" in Paris, and disillusioning some of his former modernista comrades.

The incident started when Cendrars published a series of articles for *Paris-Soir* called "Les Pénitenciers des noirs," four articles appearing between May 30 and Jun. 2, 1938 that became the chapter called "Febrônio" in *La Vie dangereuse* (the second volume of *Histoires vraies*). The articles were a first person narrative of accompanying the reputable

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<sup>147</sup> Cendrars must also have communicated his idea that Brazil would offer a safer and brighter future for his son to others, as Mário de Andrade received a similar request from Jean Bazin, citing Cendrars in asking Andrade to help him and his two children immigrate to Brazil, to escape the "continent démoniaque" (IEB archive, MA-C-CPL no 1322, Jean Bazin, Paris 3/07/1936).

<sup>148</sup> My translation: "Drôle d'époque où chacun a son plan économique nouveau pour sauver le monde, alors que la technique entre les mains d'un seul (un fou? Un sage?) peut détruire toute une ville comme Paris ou Londres en une seule nuit!" (ABBC 336).



journalist Albert Londres into a massive prison entirely populated by Afro-Brazilians who had been convicted of murder, leading up to an encounter with Febrônio, the cannibal-prophet whose 1927 capture may have partially inspired the birth of Antropofagia. *Paris-Soir* introduced the articles thusly: "Today we begin his extraordinary report on the famous black penitentiaries of Brazil that Blaise Cendrars was the only journalist to visit, and where he met strange varieties of murderers."<sup>149</sup> In reality, however, the stories were fabrications inspired by the real story of Febrônio, as well as a visit to a rural prison that Cendrars had made in 1924 during his first trip to Brazil. Albert Londres had indeed gone to Brazil in 1927 in order to interview Febrônio, but Cendrars was not involved with that trip in any way, and it is unclear whether Cendrars had made any other visit to a prison of the size or type that would be comparable or that would have led him to believe that this specific type of prison existed. As the Cendrars character leads the Albert Londres character, he explains aspects of the prison that surprise him, starting with a raucous scene where prisoners are allowed relative freedom to occupy themselves as they wish, playing football or playing music and dancing, smoking, making things and selling them to one another, followed by the even more surprising revelation that the convicted murderers are granted regular day passes to leave the prison, and always return. Cendrars explains these relatively lax regulations and their effectiveness with some essentializing arguments about a mentality seemingly universally shared by these Afro-Brazilians: "You are ignorant of all about these people, especially of the little people whose fundamental goodness, innocence,

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<sup>149</sup> My translation: "Nous commençons aujourd'hui son extraordinaire reportage sur les fameux pénitenciers nègres du Brésil que Blaise Cendrars fut le seul journaliste à pouvoir visiter et où il a rencontré des types étranges de meurtriers" (*TADA* 8, 489).

and gentleness are legendary, as well as their carefree nature, which is expressed in their songs. It may be due to the climate and the mixture of blood [...]."<sup>150</sup>

I was unable to locate information about the precise objections made by the Brazilian population in Paris, but their reaction was such that the Brazilian ambassador (signed “un brésilien ami de la France”) wrote a letter to the editor in which he points out “numerous factual errors” in the article (*ABBC* 342). Souza Dantas, the ambassador, who had met Cendrars in 1923 and regularly invited him to have coffee at the embassy, also wrote to Cendrars on the 31<sup>st</sup>, to apologize for intervening: “il ne faut pas m’en vouloir” (*ABBC* 343). It’s not clear whether the complaints from the Brazilians centered on the idea that murderers in Brazil would be so numerous that they could fill a massive prison, or that security in them would be so loosely enforced, or if they took umbrage at his characterization of various racial groups within Brazil or the portrayal of murderers who had eaten human flesh. But their anger was such that Cendrars wrote an apology to accompany the third article, in which he starts by saying all countries have monsters in them, studied by doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, and priests: “But I am not aware of having lost any of the respect and love that I have for Brazil, because if every man has two homelands, his own and then France, every Frenchman who knows Brazil has two: France and then Brazil”.<sup>151</sup>

Despite the controversy, Cendrars chose to include those stories in *La Vie dangereuse*, and when coupled with “L’Actualité de Demain” from the first volume of

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<sup>150</sup> My translation: “vous ignorez tout de ce peuple, surtout du petit peuple dont la bonté foncière, l’innocence et la mansuétude sont légendaires autant que son insouciance qui s’exprime dans ses chansons. C’est peut-être dû au climat et au mélange des sangs...” (*TADA* 8, 227).

<sup>151</sup> My translation: “Mais je n’ai pas conscience d’avoir manqué au respect et à l’amour que je porte au Brésil, car si tout homme a deux patries, la sienne et puis la France, tout Français qui connaît le Brésil en a également deux: la France et puis le Brésil” (*TADA* 8 490).

*Histoires Vraies*, a sort of optimistic racial determinism seems to emerge as a defining advantage for Brazil as it moves into the future:

“The future of humanity is in the West, in the Far West. The pendulum of civilization moves to the west. It is a return to the origins, because the human races were born on the Brazilian *planaltino* [...]. For four centuries the fusion of the races, red, black, white, and for some decades, yellow, is manifesting in South and Central America. Here is the new historical fact that nobody cares about and which will be the news of tomorrow (and not the liquidation of the war or the future of the League of Nations).

“Unlike the United States of North America, in the United States of Brazil the question of *color* does not arise [...] and it is the absence of this question of color that gives the South American democracies such a great impression of deep humanity, aware of their historic mission.”<sup>152</sup>

Cendrars' preferences for exoticism and for outlaws and the dispossessed are clear from his earliest writing, but here he has laid out a grand theory of what makes Brazil such an object of fascination for him, and the fantasized alternative to all that disappoints or repels him in Europe. Although his interlocutors from the '20s were an essential part of creating his relationship to the country and its culture, this grand theory excludes them, their milieu, and their passion for modernization from this optimistic generalization. Tarsila do Amaral wrote to defend Cendrars, explaining the function of embellishment in Cendrars' work in general and sharing the story of his one verified encounter with a Brazilian prison:

Reality only interests him as a starting point for his narratives. His local impressions are transplanted to the frame that the imagination requires. Thus, when he says that he saw in the penitentiary of Rio de Janeiro the famous "prisonnier aux violettes",

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<sup>152</sup> “L’avenir de l’Humanité est en Occident, en Extrême-Occident. Le pendule de la civilisation se déplace vers l’ouest. C’est une retour aux origines, car les races humaines sont nées sur le *planaltino* brésilien [...]. Depuis quatre siècles la fusion des races rouge, noir, blanche, et depuis quelques décades, jaune s’accomplit dans l’Amérique du Sud et du Centre. Voici le nouveau fait historique auquel personne ne prend garde et qui sera l’actualité de demain (et non pas la liquidation de la guerre ou l’avenir de la Société des Nations). Au contraire des Etats-Unis de l’Amérique du Nord, aux Etats-Unis du Brésil la question de *couleur* ne se pose pas [...] et c’est l’absence de cette question de couleur qui donne si grande allure d’humanité profonde aux démocraties sud-américaines, conscientes de leur mission historique” (*TADA* 8, 111).

who had ripped out and eaten the heart of his enemy, he will get his character from very far away, in a modest prison in Tiradentes. On an excursion to Minas, in a group of artists of which I was a part, we stopped in front of the barred window of the prison. We spoke with the prisoners who had ended, as was the custom, asking for our intercession for them, before the authorities. Our guide, pointing to a Negro, recounted to us the crime of the devoured heart. “Quelle merveille!” exclaims Cendrars. “Yes indeed, that’s revenge! Crosses the line into the fantastical.”<sup>153</sup>

But while this explanation of Cendrars’ autobiographical fiction is generally accepted among Cendrars scholars as an aesthetic approach that sets him apart from other writers in the canon, Cendrars’ modernista colleagues did not initially receive this portrait with the same philosophical distance. From Cendrars’ correspondence from the time, we can see that the incident impeded his contact with his prior friends, and although Cendrars does not say explicitly that this connection is lacking, or that it was the cause of his low morale, it seems to be a logical inference to make. In a letter from June or July of 1938 to Paulo Prado, Cendrars states that he found out (by running into Sergio Milliet on the street) that Prado has been in Paris for a month but hasn’t contacted him: “Et voilà que vous êtes enfin arrivé, Paul. Quelle émotion!” (ABBC 225). It’s clear that he wanted to be contacted, but he does not complain outright, and instead apologizes for not having reached out to him himself: “Ma vie est encore si profondément bouleversée et je suis moi-même dans un état moral si précaire et si fragile que j’évite les rencontres, et que je fuis surtout mes vrais et rares amis qui, comme vous, m’ont connu content, insouciant, rieur” (ABBC 225). Cendrars reports on the other Brazilian projects he’s doing (a radio show, maybe a “grand spectacle brésilien”) in what appears to be a gesture: “Voyez que je ne vous oublie pas, ni tout ce que je vous dois” (ABBC 226).<sup>154</sup> Relations with Prado are restored afterwards, but regular

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<sup>153</sup> Tarsila do Amaral, “Blaise Cendrars” *Diario de São Paulo*, 19 Oct. 1938 (ABBC 437).

<sup>154</sup> The post-script says that he had just finished writing that letter when Prado called on the phone: “Merci Paul, de m’avoir donné signe de vie”.

contact is never reestablished, and when Prado passes away on Oct. 3, 1943, Cendrars does not find out about it until almost a year later.

The onset of World War II only further reduced the opportunities for these previous interlocutors to remain in contact. Many of the modernista cohort took on new roles; Oswald continued writing plays and working in support of the illegal Communist Party, Tarsila and several others became journalists, Ribeiro Couto and Cassiano Ricardo took on diplomatic and bureaucratic roles. Before the end of the war in 1945, Paulo Prado (the patron of modernismo), and Mário de Andrade (the “pope” of modernismo) would both pass away, and after the war ended, Oswald’s political activity would no longer impede him from participating in cultural life, and enough time had passed that his relationships with his various “enemies” were no longer as contentious.

### ***E) Rewriting the story in hindsight***

Oswald, who had been disavowed by his friends at the end of the 20s, and whose work was censored by the state during most of the 1930s, emerged from World War II like many communists in France had: with newfound respectability. The PCB returned to legality and Oswald even ran to be elected as *deputado federal* in 1945. He did not win that seat, but he did gain opportunities to participate in literary institutions and official culture that had been closed off to him before; his archive at the IEB has letters from the 1940s showing that UNESCO asked him to contribute to a book on “universal literature,” that he represented Brazil at the 1939 PEN writers’ congress, that Paul Rivet had come to him for help when setting up the Institut Français des Hautes Études Brésiliennes, and that during

1949-50, he had a contract with the state of São Paulo to write a book about the previous 25 (or 30) years in Brazilian history. It is difficult to describe how significant an about-face Andrade makes from all his previous stances in opposition to cultural establishments. During the Semana de Arte Moderna in 1922 Andrade had given speeches against academicism, and in 1925 and 1940 he had ironically written open letters to claim his spot in the Academia Brasileira (in which he critiqued their ideology and their practices), but once the whole world had shifted, Andrade decided to participate in cultural institutions from the state level and up.

During this time Oswald also entered the academic world, (Professor at USP, and at the Instituto Brasileiro de Filosofia), wrote some conference papers on the history of the modernist movement (that don't include his European collaborators in any way), and started writing the first (and only) volume of his memoirs, *O Homem sem Profissão – sob as ordens de Mamãe*, which came out only after he had passed away, and only covered his childhood up through his first stay in Europe in 1912, at the end of which he raced home to see his ailing mother, only to get there a day after her death. Though this book does not cover the later time abroad that led to many of his writing projects, we can see the ambivalent relationship he had with the continent, which he longed to escape to, but later felt to be an inescapable burden. In a typewritten manuscript of the memoir,<sup>155</sup> Oswald talks about arriving in Europe, wishing he could find just one author in Brazil who wanted to change Brazilian lit (m.s. 48): “Not only did I deceive myself about the possibility of, with

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<sup>155</sup> Arquivo Oswald de Andrade at IEB (USP): Caixa 2, Posta 4: Grupo Literatura, Serie Memórias, *Um Homem sem profissão*, 1954-1957. Doc 203. My translation: “Não só me enganei sobre a possibilidade de, com o exemplo de Paris, ver modificadas as diretivas da literatura brasileira, [...]fui eu que tive de recuar e me abater diante do atraso do meio.”

the example of Paris, seeing the directives of Brazilian literature modified, [...] I was the one who had to retreat and collapse in the face of the backwardness of the milieu.”<sup>156</sup>

Andrade passed away in 1954 and his memoir came out shortly afterward, and in 1956 Cendrars had his first stroke, just after submitting the manuscript for *Trop c'est trop*, the memoir-essay collection mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. From the “Voix du Sang” chapter, a footnote makes clear that Cendrars didn't know that Andrade had passed away when the book first came out, but marked the death in subsequent printings.

When discussing the reasons for which he had let drop his contacts with the Modernistas, Cendrars says that their literary quest had become oppressive:

[T]heir movement had become a propaganda thing, with a central office, revues, newspapers, publishing, exhibits, conferences, and since propaganda's just one step away from tyranny, the Paulista pope, Mário de Andrade wrote manifestos every day containing more and more excommunications,<sup>157</sup> and the prophet Oswald [sic] de Andrade, less formalist, every night held forth with palaver, palaver that degenerated into confusionism where one ended up unable to recognize oneself any longer, in sessions where there was such a “bal nègre” racket that one couldn't even hear oneself or each other anymore. Despite bailiff services and scandals, I couldn't say when or how it all ended, if it ended, which I sometimes doubt because it may very well have fallen into the hands of diligent and silent civil servants... In any case, that doesn't matter any longer today or hardly, life is elsewhere, and so is modernity! Which the Paulistas can't admit (*TADA* 11, 388).<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> This idea ended up in the printed book in this form: “But the scythe of [Antônio] Defines made me throw away the poem and with it any hope of seeing our literature renewed. Between old and new, I did not find a single writer who at that time encouraged me with the intention of renewing letters and arts. (*Homem Sem Profissão* 134).

<sup>157</sup> From his correspondence with Manuel Bandeira and others, we can see that Mário in fact disliked Oswald's propensity for writing manifestos, and even more so Oswald's habit of conscripting Mário's writing into the service of his movements without his permission.

<sup>158</sup> My translation: “[L]eur mouvement étant devenu une affaire de propagande, avec un bureau central, des revues des journaux, des éditions, des expositions, des conférences, et comme de la propagande à la tyrannie il n'y a qu'un pas, le pape pauliste, Méario de Andrade, lançait tous les jours des manifestes comportants des exclusives de plus en plus nombreuses, et le prophète Oswald de Andrade, moins formaliste, tenait toutes les nuits des palabres, palabres qui dégénéraient en confusionnisme où l'on finissait par ne plus s'y reconnaître, séances où l'on faisait un tel boucan de bal nègre qu'on ne s'y entendait plus. Malgré exploits d'huissier et scandales, je ne saurais dire ni quand ni comment tout cela s'est terminé, si cela s'est terminé, ce dont parfois je doute encore car cela a très bien pu tomber entre les mains de fonctionnaires diligents et silencieux... En tout cas, cela ne compte plus aujourd'hui ou plus guère, la vie est ailleurs, et la modernité! Ce que les Paulistes ne peuvent pas admettre.”

Instead of São Paulo or Rio, with which he actually had become familiar, Cendrars calls Bahia and Pernambuco the two “mammelles” of Brazilian literature, aligning his tastes more with sprawling regionalist novels and with the rural areas still dominated by a semi-feudal economy, even after the reforms and modernization brought about by the Vargas regime and subsequent democratic governments. Cendrars mentions that many of the modernista cohort had moved on to other professions and projects, but that the “only one to not deflate is the prophet. Oswald still prophesies here and there but, like old Montparno in Mexico, the painter Diego Rivera in the extreme-left revolution, he gentrified himself in the bohemian avant-garde, the worst of the romanticisms” (*TADA* 11, 388). Interestingly, the way that Cendrars dismissed Oswald’s development after 1929 (“bohemian avant-garde”) is almost the exact same wording that Andrade used to dismiss his life and work prior to that year in his 1933 retrospective preface to *Serafim Ponte Grande*.<sup>159</sup> This might suggest that Cendrars’ evaluation of Andrade’s subsequent work is based more on personal differences rather than on the substance or value of the texts themselves, as much as Andrade’s reading of his own previous work may have been colored by his different social and political circumstances in the 1930s. In any case, the image of a prophesying bohemian avant-garde is very different from the one Andrade sketched out for himself in the preparatory notes for his memoir:

The career of writer Oswald de Andrade (Jose Oswald de Souza Andrade) placed him in the Encyclopédie Française (Tome XVI ---) next to Graça Aranha, Manoel [sic] Bandeira, and other poets of our literature. He was one of the leaders of the modernist movement, taking part prominently in the 1922’s Semana de Arte [...]. In

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<sup>159</sup> “With little money, but outside the revolutionary axis of the world, ignorant of the Communist Manifesto, and not wishing to be bourgeois, naturally I became a bohemian” (*SPGE* 3)



1923 he gave a lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris, representing the Brazilian intelligentsia, alongside the poet Eugenio de Castro who represented Portugal.<sup>160</sup>

Where Cendrars focused on the nativist militant and sensualist, Andrade starts off his contemporaneous self-description with his inclusion in the *Encyclopédie Française* and having presented at the Sorbonne, before quickly moving on to his academic work in the '40s and '50s.

Like any author, even those who write memoirs, neither Andrade nor Cendrars would have final say on how their work would be presented to later readers. Nevertheless, the different ways that their work has been read at different times by different readers reveals the historical filter that subsequent readers have attached to each. When readers in the 1960s rediscovered Andrade and his play “O Rei da Vela” was finally produced in September 1967, the press recognized its new timeliness:

Today Oswald is being rediscovered, which is not by accident. The country seems to demand, for its objective essence to be unveiled, an intellectual posture like his. For a long time his work was stifled, silenced. His uncontained desire to destroy a heap of dead, sacralized and official traditions, defended tooth and nail by a band of pseudo-men of culture, the typical products of mixing mental underdevelopment with a good dose of colonial passivity, had its price. Oswald spared no institutions or personalities. He inveighed against what he deemed urgent to destroy. Mockery for him was a penetrating weapon. And it cut deep<sup>161</sup>

In addition to seeing Andrade’s Vargas-era satire as relevant to Brazilians three years after military dictatorship had been established, Peixoto rejects the reputation that had later

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<sup>160</sup> From the notes in the Arquivo Oswald de Andrade (IEB-USP): “A carreira de escritor de Oswald de Andrade (Jose Oswald de Souza Andrade) o colocou na Enciclopédie Française (Tomo XVI ---) ao lado de Graça Aranha, Manoel Bandeira, e outros poetas da nossa literatura. Foi um dos líderes do movimento modernista, tomando parte destacada na Semana de Arte de 1922 [...]. Em 1923 fez uma conferência na Sorbonne, em Paris, representando a intelectualidade brasileira, ao lado do poeta Eugenio de Castro que representava Portugal.”

<sup>161</sup> Translation mine. IEB Caixa 4, pasta 4: *Grupo literatura, serie teatro, 1937-1967*, Doc. 265: Artigo, 23/09/1967, “Quem é o Rei da Vela”, suplemento literário do Folha de São Paulo. Article by Fernando Peixoto, “De como se alimenta e se preserva um cadáver gangrenado.”

been attached to all of the modernistas (including by 1930s Andrade himself), the reputation of formalism for formalism's sake.

***F) Selection bias in reception, literary debts and credits***

When Cendrars or Andrade is read in relationship to the other modernista writers, it is noticeable that readers who specialize in one author or the other will usually interpret the relationship between these two authors as a narrative similar to the one Pascale Casanova lays out in *La République mondiale des lettres*, one in which the writer associated with sub-development (either by others or by himself) struggles to bring himself up to date. When comparative critics adopt this formula of a global "literary GMT," I would argue that there is a corollary "literary IMF," which calculates the relative debt of one literature to another and who deserves credit, and as in the case of the real-world IMF, the debtor-creditor relationship resists change, and appears impervious to new information or different approaches for calculating.

The aforementioned books by Wilson Martins and Aracy Amaral repeatedly use the language of debt, owing, and credit when placing the modernists in context with Blaise Cendrars, primarily in tracing particular themes, ideas, or turns of phrase. Likewise, when French-language scholars (or scholars who specialize in Cendrars' works) refer to the Brazilian writers with whom he had shared so much in the 1920s, literary debt language sometimes emerges, with Cendrars in the role of creditor and the Brazilians as debtors. Claude Leroy's preface for *Aujourd'hui* is a particularly illustrative example. After describing the first essay of the book as a response to the Surrealists (a real set of

interlocutors), Leroy talks about the time spent with the modernistas, and frames that time and attention as a good given to them, for which payment was due: “Were these chosen affinities repaid? Cendrars’ presence remains discreet in today’s Brazil. [...] The apparent ingratitude of Utopialand for its utopian doubtless a delayed effect of the misunderstandings that the triumphant arrival of the ‘beau poète’ in early 1924 was concealing.”<sup>162</sup> The task of collecting Cendrars’ complete works was massive, and Leroy could not be expected in completing that task to have familiarized himself with the entirety of the Brazilian books that Cendrars read or with whose authors he was interacting, but it is worth noting that he does not ask the inverse question – “what might Cendrars owe to the modernistas?” – and this means that he likely accepts Cendrars’ later accounts of the period, despite his propensity for blending fiction and autobiography, as well as his habit of copying whole passages from other writers’ books without attribution.

Martins recognizes that individual economic factors shaped the development of Andrade’s oeuvre: “Oswald de Andrade’s revolutionary literature found its deep roots in the resentment of the now adult little rich boy who was wiped out by the incomprehensible machinations of ‘capitalism’; a name, naturally, that covered everything from his parents’ lamentable real estate operations to the wild dissipation of the son” (Martins 257). He seems less willing, however, to examine the “lasting literary value” of how Antropofagia identified and synthesized a number of truths about cultural production and consumption and argued its way around them. Claude Leroy, on the other hand, sees a value to the manifestos, but it’s defined by political expediency:

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<sup>162</sup> My translation: “Ces affinités électives ont-elle été payées de retour? La présence de Cendrars reste discrète dans le Brésil d’aujourd’hui. [...] L’ingratitude apparente de l’Utopialand pour son utopiste est sans doute un effet retardé des malentendus que l’arrivée triomphale du ‘beau poète’, début 1924, dissimulait” (*TADA* 11 xxii).

“What good would it do to swap one recognition of debt for another? Changing creditors is not emancipation. Beyond a tactical alliance, it was necessary to liberate oneself from the liberator. [...] Beyond the 1920s, through a curious changing of the guard, the gauntlet of nationalism was sometimes taken up by certain historians of modernism who were less attentive to analyzing the complex web of reciprocal influences than to clearing the Brazilian avant-garde of all debt to the ‘pirate of Lac Léman’” (*TADA* 11, xxiv).<sup>163</sup>

But Leroy’s and Martins’ analyses do not recognize that the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* and the *Manifesto Antropófago* are still compelling because they tap into something that can’t be accounted for in just the personal anecdotes, which is the larger collective anxiety about influence and the master-student dynamic that lost its rigid form during that period, and temporarily appeared open to change, despite the fact that afterward the participants return to their roles and perceive them as inescapable and immutable.

A certain amount of this literary IMF structure might have to do with the structural realities of that “world republic of letters,” in that Brazilian scholars are more likely to have studied French than French ones are to have studied Portuguese; thus a Brazilian is more likely to read Cendrars’ writings when they are studying Brazilian modernism than a French scholar is to read Brazilian writers in order to study Cendrars. But challenging the expectations of what was worth reading and where the future would come from is precisely what separates Cendrars’ work from that of his contemporaries: despite the facts of his post-hoc rejection of his Brazilian modernist friends, Cendrars made the effort to read in other languages, and viewed non-European cultures was a worthwhile investment of his time and energy, even worth pirating or pillaging.

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<sup>163</sup> Translation mine: “À quoi bon troquer une reconnaissance de dette contre une autre? Changer de débiteur n’est pas s’émanciper. Au-delà d’une alliance tactique, il fallait donc se libérer du libérateur. [...] Au-delà des années vingt, par un curieux passage de témoin, le gant du nationalisme fut parfois relevé par certains historiens du modernisme moins soucieux d’analyser l’écheveau complexe des influences réciproques que de dédouaner l’avant-garde brésilienne de toute dette envers le pirate du Lac Léman” (*TADA* 11, xxiv).

## Conclusion

At various times in writing this dissertation, especially in the unplanned pauses in the process, it has felt like returning to arguments that were supposed to have been resolved already. Looking through manuscripts in order to verify the specific permutations of a text that produce the published version felt like engaging in old-school philology. Trying to identify poetic coincidences within the oeuvres of two writers and attempting to sort collaboration out from influence of questionable directionality seemed like a passé way of approaching literature after the Death of the Author, or after postmodern criticism shook up hierarchical notions of originality. Even the specific intellectual tool of Casanova's World Republic of Letters is now supplemented by the many responses to it that posit alternative ways of mapping world literary space. In trying to figure out how to explain rereading back into methods and arguments that seemed outdated, I felt a bit like the "belated author" that Harold Bloom talked about in *The Anatomy of Influence*: "All literary influence is labyrinthine. Belated authors wander the maze as if an exit could be found, until the strong among them realize that the windings of the labyrinth are all internal. No critic, however generously motivated, can help a deep reader escape from the labyrinth of influence. I have learned that my function is to help you get lost."<sup>164</sup>

This idea of belatedness, whether imputed externally on authors or internalized, still leapt out at me time and again when reading the poetry or fiction in my corpus, the authors' own accounts of their trajectories in either private letters or published memoirs,

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<sup>164</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 31.

or the scholarship on these writers' work after the authors were literally dead. In each of the chapters of this dissertation, there is a sort of unseen clock whose ticking can be heard, but whose timekeeping is strangely variable. In Chapter One I laid out some of the beliefs about backwardness that some Brazilian authors had brought to their interactions with the Parisian literary scene at a moment when it did function as the literary GMT. Chapter Two describes primitivism as an artistic exercise in projecting a fantasized past as a means of reckoning with the present. Chapter Three takes multiple works whose timelines of production overlap and analyzes their characteristics that problematize declarations of primogeniture. Chapter Four takes on a wider timeframe and studies the metamorphosis of an authorship story over time, its structural integrity over time being compromised by side effects of History with a capital H, and various moments from that past story finding acceptance as fact, other moments from the story being dismissed.

Even if we accept that literary time is a construct, and that the ticking clock's unreliability is inevitable, analyzing the patterns within its irregularity reveals how the clock's functionality changes as it is applied to a broadening literary map, and as it is read from differing positions of power. Turning again to Harold Bloom, as he describes how his obsession with influence was received by the critical public over time, we can see a generationally particular point of view struggle to account for the critical public being more diverse than his corpus:

My emphasis on agon as a central feature of literary relationships nevertheless encountered considerable resistance. Much seemed to depend on the idea of literary influence as a seamless and friendly mode of transmission, a gift graciously bestowed and gratefully received. The *Anxiety of Influence* also inspired certain marginalized groups to assert their moral superiority. For decades, I was informed that women and homosexual writers entered no contest but cooperated in a community of love. Frequently I was assured that black, Hispanic, and Asian literary

artists too rose above mere competition. Agon was apparently a pathology confined to white heterosexual males.<sup>165</sup>

From the many manifestos or other combative writings produced by non-male or non-white writers inside or outside of the European or American context, including Casanova's book itself, we can instead conclude that many writers from varied milieux do fight for a place within a literary ecosystem, but their perceptions of the struggle and their strategies for participating in it can vary immensely. To take one example from this study, where Cendrars' later reflections on his interactions with the Brazilian modernistas saw their reliance on their status as a group as a throwback to a 19<sup>th</sup> century cénacle, another point of view could have seen their collective identification as analogous to the collective bargaining structures that allowed 20<sup>th</sup> century workers to more effectively negotiate for better conditions within institutions where they do not (yet) have individual power to sway decisions.

This project has attempted to show a particular segment of this world literary space within its historical context, highlight some of the multiple power dynamics that shaped it, and illustrate how the topography shifted over time, as well as the recollections of those who traveled it. Finally, the project attempts to demonstrate that the scholarship on this territory, the cartographers within the metaphor, have approached the material with different sets of tools and with different expectations for the terrain, and thus have produced maps that differ more than I had expected from the academic distance of hindsight.

Robert Stam's *Race in Translation* addresses the difficulty of this area of scholarship, stating that "[a] basic nonreciprocity has often marred the intellectual relationship

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<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

between Brazil and its non-Brazilian interlocutors,"<sup>166</sup> but argues that the imbalance creates other opportunities:

According to the regnant division of intellectual labor, the “periphery” is not supposed to study the “center”; rather, it is supposed to learn from the center how to study itself. While Brazilian students migrated to France and the United States in order to study Brazil or Brazil-related topics, French and American students did not flock to Brazil to study their own societies. Yet as a consequence of these asymmetries, the periphery also has less need to study the center; the periphery is already familiar with the center, which is why the center is called the center. At the same time, the center/periphery dichotomy can become an impediment in charting the more multidirectional exchanges that we address here. Despite the generally asymmetrical flows of information, Brazilian intellectual and artistic movements have often impacted cultural and political life in the United States and France, as occurred with dependency theory in economics (where future president of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso played a major role), social geography (Josué de Castro’s “geography of hunger”); education theory (Paulo Freire’s “pedagogy of the oppressed”), radical theater (Augusto Boal’s “theater of the oppressed”), cinema (Glauber Rocha’s “aesthetics of hunger”), anthropology (Viveiros de Castro’s indigenous “perspectivism”), and music (bossa nova, Tropicália).<sup>167</sup>

This is not to say that the Brazilian scholarship on this dissertation’s chosen territory provides the complete picture, but rather to show the value of a comparative approach to the material, as a corrective measure in the case of blind spots created by inequities in literary valuation. Suggesting the analogy of a “literary IMF” as a substitute for Casanova’s “literary GMT” is an effort in this direction; the analogized institution does not create the perception of a neutral universal standard, and while it was not designed with the purpose of reinforcing inequality, its structure reflects the ideologies of the groups that have accumulated the most credit and who historically have been able to invest the most.

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<sup>166</sup> Robert Stam and Ella Shohat. *Race in Translation: Culture Wars Around the Postcolonial Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), p.272.

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*



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L180: Leopoldo de Freitas, prof et historien de la litt bresilienne (1938)  
O40: Emile Laport, export/import RdJ  
O210a: C. de Ouro Preto, ambassador du Brésil a Paris  
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L431: Samuel Putnam, American translator of Brazilian lit  
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P40: photos de sanctuaires brésiliens non identifiés  
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##### Caixa 1

- Manuscripts of poetry and drawings, 1935-54
- Political writing
- Artistic production of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties (i.e. Pagu's writing)
- Theater (mostly articles about Rei da Vela)
- Active professional correspondence (1949)
- Passive professional correspondence (1929-54)
- Correspondence from father
- Correspondence from mother
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##### Caixa 2

- Literature, Anthropofagia, 1928-1962
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