

FIG. 1
Letter from Fernand Léger
to Le Corbusier written in
1926, FLC E2 (8) 36.

19-26 ^{E2-9}
E2 08 36

Brière
Mon cher Jamur

Il y a ici en ce moment un de
mes amis brésiliens - Monsieur
Prado qui a une des plus grandes
situations commerciales et politiques
à S'-Paul -

Il m'a parlé d'un projet de
ville entièrement neuve qui
se fera à S'-Paul -

Il m'a demandé si il
croit intéressant de
se rencontrer avec un jeune
architecte français -

Il connaît il a esprit nouveau et
votre effort urbaniste - et
cela l'intéresse de causer avec
LQ

^{E2 08}
E2-9

vous -

Si vous avez intérêt à
cahier. Un mot de
vous et nous ferons un
déjeuner ou dîner ensemble.

Je pense que l'affaire vaut
le déplacement -

cordialement
Léger

169 86 Rue Notre Dame
de Charms 86

F
LQ

ANTHROPOPHAGIC AFFAIRS

LE CORBUSIER, PAULO PRADO AND NEW WORLD REVOLUTIONS

Daniela Ortiz dos Santos

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Abstract: This paper explores Le Corbusier's relation to the American continent, yet with a particular focus on the visions he created before his trip of 1929. Not only did his vision go far beyond the sphere of the United States, but it also proved to be influenced by individuals with whom he shared admiration and affinity. This web of people encompassed patrons, politicians, painters and poets. Brazilian businessman Paulo Prado is here revealed as crucial protagonist, and for the first time amply discussed through this approach to Le Corbusier and the Americas. Prado went beyond the agency of those engaging lectures and housing commissions overseas. Primarily linked to the image of a financial patron, Prado's ideas of modernity and São Paulo identity were often obfuscated by the work of Antropofagia movement founding member Oswald de Andrade. And yet, Prado's social, political and intellectual capital was critically important for the 1920s economic and cultural exchanges between Europe and Brazil. While examining the encounters between Prado and Le Corbusier, a new window of investigation and periodization is opened in order to construct Le Corbusier's connections with an elite eager to create a fresh interest in the cultural economy of the Transatlantic scene.

Keywords: Le Corbusier, Paulo Prado, São Paulo, Brazil, Antropofagia.

Résumé : Cet article analyse les rapports entre Le Corbusier et le continent américain et plus particulièrement, il se penche sur ses visions du nouveau monde avant le voyage de 1929. Les images, les imaginaires et les représentations de l'Amérique chez Le Corbusier dépassent largement le contexte états-unien; ils demeurent, en fait, un champ ouvert aux investigations de l'histoire de Le Corbusier dans la période d'entre-deux-guerres par le biais d'une approche des réseaux sociaux, c'est-à-dire, des artistes, des écrivains, des mécènes et des politiciens, brefs d'acteurs du monde franco-brésilien avec lesquelles Le Corbusier partagea des affinités électives et des admirations. Parmi eux, se trouve l'homme d'affaires brésilien Paulo Prado, qui a eu une influence directe sur le séjour de Le Corbusier au Brésil, en l'impliquant dans des conférences et dans des projets résidentiels. Sa participation active au champ politique et intellectuel du modernisme et de l'anthropophagie brésilienne, à l'ombre de la figure fondatrice d'Oswald de Andrade, de même que ses notions sur la modernisation de São Paulo, font de Prado une figure clé encore méconnue. Prado ne fut pas seulement un simple mécène chargé de financer le mouvement anthropophage et les traversées transatlantiques des artistes, mais son capital social, politique et intellectuel fut d'une importance majeure pour les échanges économiques et culturels entre l'Europe et le Brésil. C'est ainsi que Prado prend une importance particulière, pour la première fois, pour les études de Le Corbusier et des Amériques. Avec ces nouvelles pistes d'investigation et de périodisation, à partir des rencontres entre Prado et Le Corbusier, un nouveau récit historique s'ouvre dans les études sur les relations entre l'architecte et une élite désireuse de susciter un intérêt nouveau pour l'économie culturelle du monde transatlantique.

Mots-clé : Le Corbusier, Paulo Prado, São Paulo, Brésil, Antropofagia.

Resumen: Este artículo explora la relación entre Le Corbusier y el continente americano. Propongo como enfoque principal, una investigación de sus percepciones previas al viaje transatlántico de 1929. En los años veinte, la visión de América creada por Le Corbusier, se extendió mucho más allá de la esfera estadounidense. Tuvieron influencia en sus representaciones, imaginarios e imágenes del nuevo mundo sus conexiones en el ámbito intelectual, político y artístico franco-brasileño. Los resultados de este trabajo muestran que existía una amplia red de contactos formada por diversos actores, con los cuales Le Corbusier compartía admiración y afinidades. Entre ellos, se destacó el empresario brasileño Paulo Prado como protagonista, quien tuvo influencia directa en la estada de Le Corbusier en Brasil, involucrándole en ponencias y en proyectos residenciales. Las ideas de Prado sobre la modernización de São Paulo y su participación en el campo intelectual del modernismo brasileño y de la antropofagia -cuyo nombre más destacado es el de Oswald de Andrade-, hacen del empresario una figura relevante, a pesar de poco conocido. Prado no solo fue un simple mecenas responsable por financiar el movimiento antropofágico y los cruces transatlánticos de artistas, sino que su capital social, político e intelectual fue de vital importancia para los intercambios económicos y culturales entre Europa y Brasil, en los años de entreguerras. Es así como Prado toma una especial importancia, por primera vez, para los estudios de Le Corbusier y las Américas. Con estas nuevas líneas de investigación y periodización, a partir de los encuentros entre Prado y Le Corbusier, se abre una nueva narrativa histórica en los estudios sobre las relaciones entre el arquitecto y una elite dispuesta a crear un fresco interés en la economía cultural del de la escena transatlántica.

Palabras clave: Le Corbusier, Paulo Prado, São Paulo, Brasil, Antropofagia.

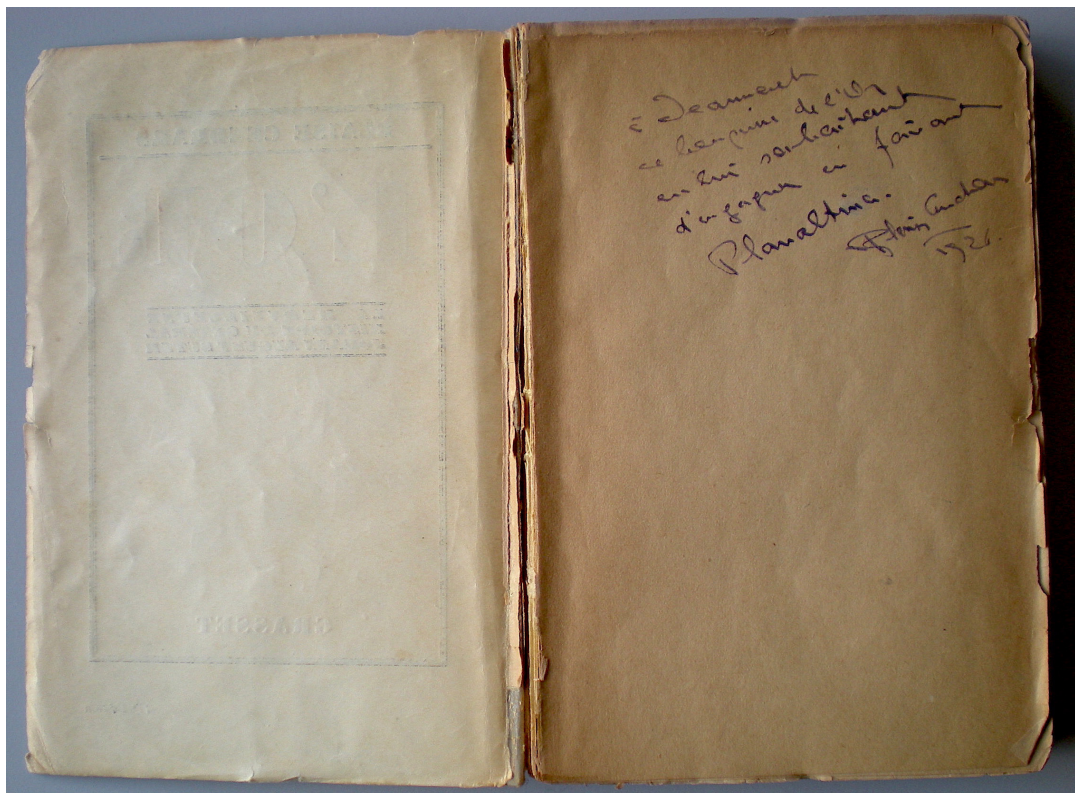


FIG. 2
Pages of Cendrars, *L'Or*,
from Le Corbusier's
library, with Cendrars'
notes "wishing him to
gain and make Planaltina
[à Jeanneret, ce bouquin
de l'Or en lui souhaitant
d'engagner en faisant (sic.)
Planaltina, Blaise Cendrars
1926] FLC.

"Mon cher Jeanneret, Il y a ici en ce moment un de mes admirateurs Brésiliens, Monsieur Prado qui a une de plus grosses situations commerciales et politiques à St Paul. Il m'a parlé d'un projet de ville entièrement neuve qui [...] Je lui ai demandé s'il croyant intéressant de se rencontrer avec un jeune architecte français. Il connaît l'esprit nouveau et votre effort l'urbaniste - et cela l'intéresserait de [...] Si vous avez intérêt à la chose, un mot de vous et nous ferons un déjeuner ou un dîner ensemble. Je pense que l'affaire vaut le dérangement. Cordialement"¹.

In a letter from 1926, painter Fernand Léger encouraged Le Corbusier to meet Brazilian businessman Paulo Prado². Known as a generous patron of modern art among Parisian circles in the mid-twenties, Prado soon attracted Le Corbusier's attention. "In fact, the dream of [making the future capital of Brazil] Planaltina is running through my mind," Le Corbusier revealed to Prado in July 1929³. The announcement of the construction of a new capital in Brazil⁴, as initially revealed by Blaise Cendrars to Le Corbusier in the same year of Léger's letter is the motivating push for Le Corbusier to invest in the exchange with Prado. Coming from one of the wealthiest and powerful families of São Paulo⁵, Prado was also a successful entrepreneur and a very cultivated man. In Léger and Cendrars' eyes, Prado could not only open doors for Le Corbusier in Brazil, but he could also give him the credit and support he needed to design the future capital of this country.

"Mon programme c'est Sao Paulo Brésil (mon amie Prado, roi du café). Séjour chez lui, visite des plantations, rencontres éventuelles avec des serpents de douze mètres de long (Cendrars !) et conférence à dix mille francs l'une. Éventuellement travaux là-bas"⁶.

Beyond the evident benefits revealed in an almost anecdotal tone to his mother, a more serious issue seems to be at play here. Why would Prado and Le Corbusier have been interested in such an encounter? After all, these two men came from apparently very different worlds with limited contact until that point. Rather than viewing this encounter as a mere opportunistic situation for Le Corbusier to secure commissions outside of Europe, this article proposes an alternative approach.

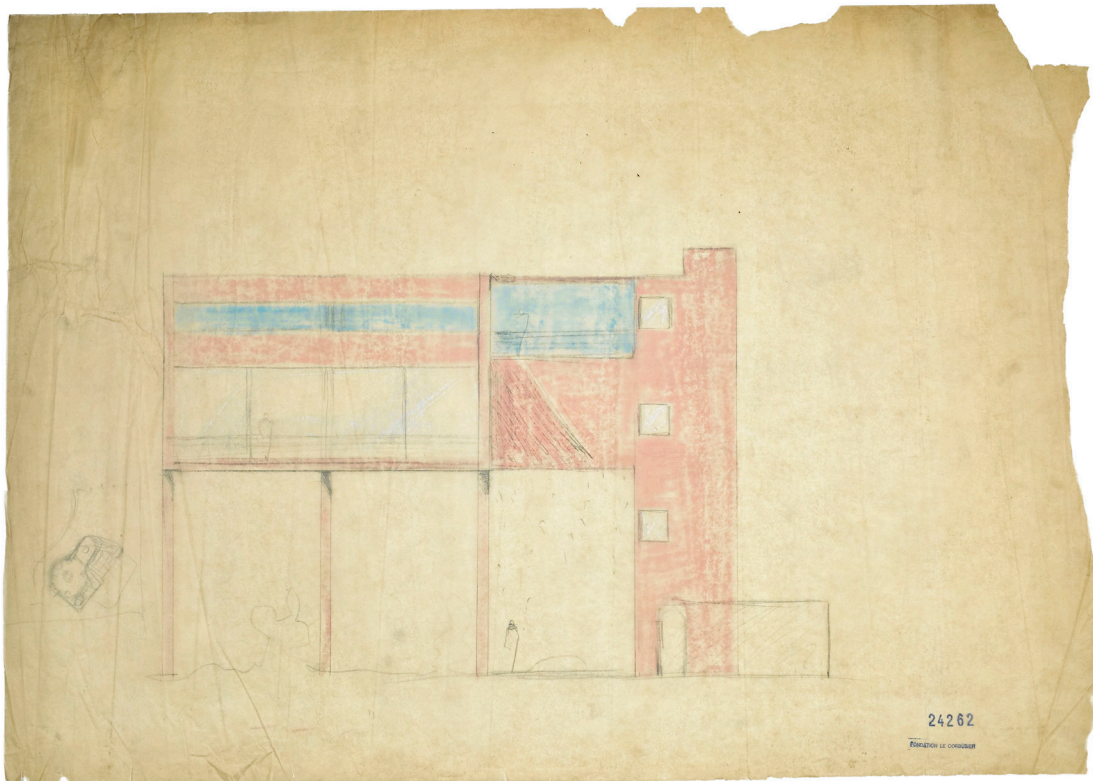


FIG. 2
Drawing of the façade of
Le Corbusier's project for
the extension of Prado's
house in São Paulo (1929).
FLC 24262.

It explores the intellectual affinities and mutual interests built between Le Corbusier and Prado and repositions Le Corbusier's visions of the new continent. Between 1928 and 1929 Le Corbusier gained new knowledge of the Americas, concerning Brazil in particular. What started as a vague but attractive enterprise to be undertaken overseas, became a more carefully prepared plan of action. Le Corbusier's diaries and letters show that his interest in questions of Brazil was shaped before the trip. Not only became Prado a potential client and the sponsor of the architect's trip to Brazil in 1929, but he also played an essential role in forming Le Corbusier's politico-cultural awareness regarding Brazil. Furthermore, he was responsible for the architect's agenda in this country, i.e., the conferences, official meetings and dinners with the local artistic and political milieu. And he also organized spontaneous visits and tours by car, boat or even by plane over the city centers and outskirts of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

However, Prado's writings present important evidence for the argument that their worldviews and interests converged on several levels, and sympathy between Prado and Le Corbusier doubtless grew, despite the limited documentation available. The fact that Le Corbusier referred to Prado as a friend in his introductory chapter of *Précisions*, shall not be ignored⁷. With this in mind, then, which of the ideas about Europe defended by Prado could have intersected with those of Le Corbusier? Or even, to what extent did Prado's representations of Brazil affect the architect?

This paper demonstrates that many of Prado's visions of Europe, of Brazilian identity and of urban policy making, find critical intersections with the discourse produced by Le Corbusier in the twenties. Moreover, Prado's thesis for São Paulo as the Capital of economic and social growth of Brazil -or even, of the southern cone of the Americas- found echoes in Le Corbusier's expectations of the new continent before his South American trip of 1929.

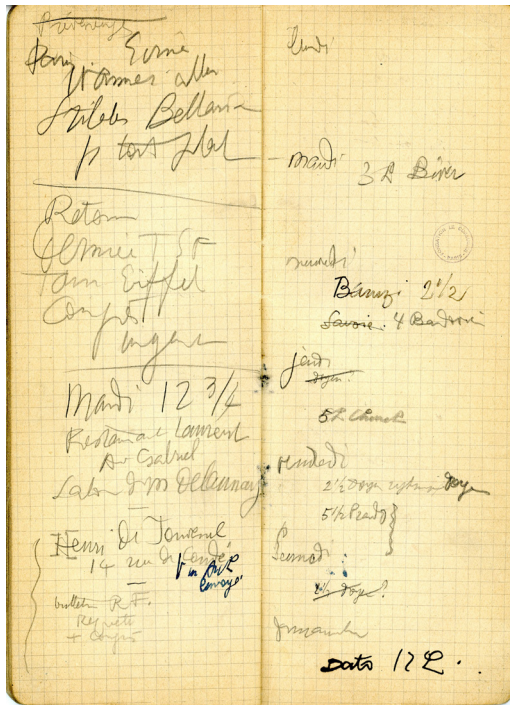


FIG. 4
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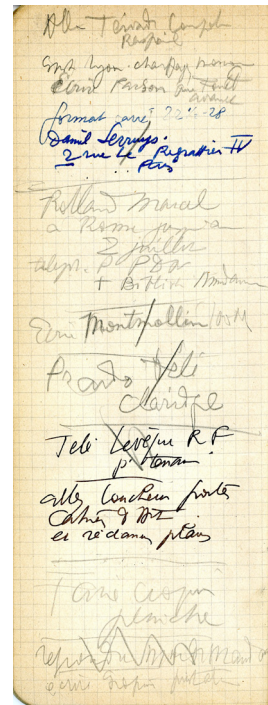
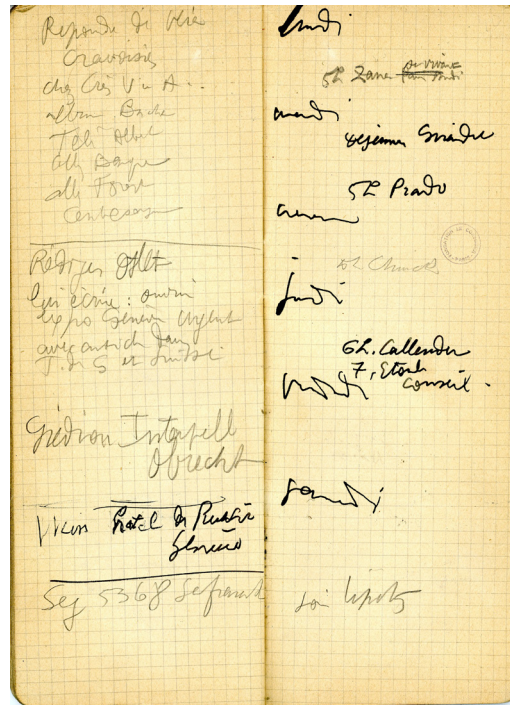
FIG. 5
FLC F3 (4) 6-040.

FIG. 6
FLC F3 (4) 8-037.

FIG. 7
FLC F3 (4) 8-038.

FIG. 8
FLC F3 (4) 8-039.

Pages of Le Corbusier's diary showing meetings and phone calls between Le Corbusier and Paulo Prado (1928).



En Route to Revolution: Intellectual Intersections

Poesia Pau-Brasil was Prado's introduction to Oswald de Andrade's poems related to the literary manifesto under the same name. Published in Paris in 1925 by *Au Sans Pareil* -the same publishing house that printed several novels by Cendrars- *Pau-Brasil* set forth constitutional elements of de Andrade's *manifesto antropófago*. Prado's preface is clear in pointing out that "it was about time to renew the modes of expression and inspiring sources of the Brazilian poetic feeling"⁸. His efforts towards a renewal were in consonant with those coming from Paris, this city having been defined as the "navel of the world"⁹. Accordingly, his emphasis on the fact that de Andrade 'discovered' his own land once in the French capital reveals a lucid awareness of the impact of the ebullient city of Paris of the twenties. Yet this stance, very much to be expected of individuals raised in wealthy and traditional Brazilian families, appeared to have been taken simultaneously with the adoption of another apparently inconsistent approach, which was based on the idea of a "diseased"¹⁰ and "old"¹¹ Europe.

"Oswald de Andrade, numa viagem à Paris, do alto de um atelier da Place de Clichy - umbigo do mundo - descobriu, deslumbrado, a sua própria terra. A volta à pátria confirmou, no encantamento das descobertas manuelinas, a revelação surpreendente de que o Brasil existia" [...] A mais bela inspiração e a mais fecunda encontra a poesia "Pau Brasil" na afirmação desse nacionalismo que deve romper os laços que nos amarram desde o nascimento à velha Europa, decadente e esgotada"¹².

By claiming for the construction of a national poetry that ought to untie the knot that bound Brazil to the "old, decadent and drained"¹³ Europe, Prado's discourse gained much more importance. His conclusion shed light on the risks involved in simply importing ideas from the old continent as models to be followed, devoid of critical reflection. Despite addressing different actors and institutions far apart -Prado speaking from São Paulo to Brazilians¹⁴, Le Corbusier from Paris to the Francophone world- both spoke of a crisis while arguing for a new aesthetic agenda in the late twenties.

"O grupo que se opõe a qualquer ideia nova, a qualquer mudança no ramerrão das opiniões correntes é sempre o mesmo [...] Deixemo-los em paz, no seu contentamento obtuso de pedra bruta, ou de muro de taipa, inabalável e empoeirado"¹⁵.



“Que nous sommes loin des Académies! Nous sommes au cœur même de la responsabilité. Que nous voici loin du Prix de Rome, du «Palais», dans toute son affreuse, lâche et démoralisante acception !”¹⁶.

Like Prado, Le Corbusier insisted on the fact that the academy and its dogmatic rules were the enemy. And these institutions could no longer give answers to the new phase in history that was about to be written. The manifesto tone of both authors challenged the idea of modern as a style. Poets and painters such as their common friends Cendrars and Léger were claimed to be among the first to understand the ‘situation’ and to take the new aesthetics of the machine to an extreme. For example, one predominant Corbusean statement, according to Tim Benton, was that *l'esprit nouveau* -resulting from a material crisis and later a spiritual one due to the brutal effects of the machine- directly led to a new vision of architecture¹⁷. Correspondingly, Prado also drew attention to the harmful effects of intellectual productivity that was not in accordance with its own time¹⁸.

Both authors also attended to solutions to a crisis situation; they resorted to revolution as an allegorical operation for demonstrating their theories towards a socio-aesthetic renewal¹⁹. Despite becoming popular among numerous literary texts in the twenties, the appeal to revolution shall not be taken for granted. Far from being a mere coincidence or modish, rather, the allusion to this term on the part of both authors is considerably more complicated²⁰. If it was occasionally described as drastic, “to be avoided” or even “surgical”²¹, this attitude was also deemed inevitable if the crisis of the modern man was to be overcome.

“A great disaccord reigns between a modern state of mind that is an injunction and the suffocating stock of centuries-old detritus. [...] Society has a passionate desire for something that it will obtain or that it will not obtain. Everything is there; everything will depend on the effort made and, on the attention, paid to these alarming symptoms. Architecture or revolution. Revolution can be avoided”²².

“Apesar da aparência de civilização, vivemos assim isolados, cegos e imóveis, dentro da própria mediocridade em que se comprazem governantes e governados. Neste marasmo pode ser necessário fazer tábua rasa para depois cuidar de renovação total. ...a ideia de Revolução, não sendo confusa, é pelo menos complexa. Exprime a síntese de duas tendências opostas: esperança e revolta”²³.

The choice to culminate a discourse by calling for a revolution evoked the dramatic context with which both authors were confronted. It indicates, on the one hand, a profound disappointment with their fields of action; and on the other hand, confidence in change. The intersections presented above point to a sharing of a web of terms and meanings and this is determinant in arguing for the construction of an intellectual affinity between Prado and Le Corbusier. This shared world vision is an important indication of mutual appreciation, respect and even the adoption of each other's ideas and interests. The attempt here is not to prove whether or not Le Corbusier and Prado read each other's books. Rather, the challenge is to extract from the texts ideas that were in effect part of their concerns in those years 1928-29, and to locate those areas that could have contributed to Le Corbusier's judgment of Brazil.

Beyond the bounds of pinpointing resemblances or equivalences in their texts, what becomes most relevant is how this analysis enables to see the emergence of new understandings with respect to Le Corbusier's activity overseas in the late twenties. This agenda beyond Europe, which aimed at strengthening alliances with both patrons and businessmen, was strategically critical to Le Corbusier during the years of the CIAM formation.

In this sense, Prado and Le Corbusier's attack on the academy and, most importantly, their defense of a revolution towards a new social, political and aesthetic agenda were not detached from their agendas for Brazil, each to a certain degree. It is tempting to consider Le Corbusier's determination to accept Prado's invitation to Brazil in terms of his favorable response to the Brazilian's revolutionary arguments for this country, and vice versa. By choosing to sponsor Le Corbusier's trip, Prado may have also found in Le Corbusier those characteristics that the Brazilian saw in himself when defining a revolutionary: "a constructor of a new order, an optimist who still believes in making the present time a better one"²⁴.

Prado's Portrait of Brazil

1928 was the year in which Prado began to cultivate a more regular exchange with Le Corbusier, having just concluded his most important study of Brazilian society²⁵. *Retrato do Brasil: Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira* (Portrait of Brazil: Essay on Brazilian Sadness) was both acclaimed and condemned by his peers and the Brazilian press and quickly gained popularity in the Southern Cone of the Americas and in France. Cendrars, for example, was among the first to be willing to translate this work²⁶ into French and to have it published in Paris²⁷.

Published in Portuguese in November 1928, the essay depicts a bitter panorama of the Brazilian society and its history. By using methods based on an analysis of the local political and cultural reality of the twenties and articulated with a selection of historical evidence, *Retrato* argued the case for São Paulo as the major capital city and powerhouse of Brazilian development. The book was developed at different moments in time and written in two parts. The first part displays a careful selection of documents to unveil the reasons for socio-political change. The second part shifts from analytical thinking to more perceptual strategies and proposals for intervention. Carlos Augusto Calil draws attention to the fact that Prado was profoundly disappointed with the national government and its policymaking²⁸. According to Calil, Prado's liberal ideology was anchored in history, since the Brazilian entrepreneur ended up becoming convinced that the development of his country had been promoted by private initiative, exclusively²⁹. For it is not rare to come across sentences in the book reinforcing the idea that the occurrence of bureaucracy in Brazil was rooted in the political machinery, given decades of bad administration³⁰.

Moreover, the centralization of the decision-making and tax policy in the hands of the national capital, at that time Rio de Janeiro, was no longer compatible with the agenda of young fortune makers in São Paulo, such as Prado. At the time he occupied positions of leadership in the Immigration Office, Railway Company and coffee agribusiness all at once, São Paulo played a fundamental role in the Brazilian economy, with 40% of the country's total amount of economic production concentrated in the city³¹. His achievements in

business contributed to the development of São Paulo, and Brazil, ultimately. Despite these unprecedented and remarkable entrepreneurial activities and development in São Paulo, Prado claimed that the whole country suffered from “great maladies”³² and “backwardness”³³; therefore, all efforts to free Brazil from isolation, ‘blindness’ or even from ‘delay’ had become imperative, following his words, in order to finally ‘meet modernity’. This line of thinking not only contributed to shape an identity of São Paulo people, but also, a discourse of *Paulista* supremacy to the detriment of all other cultures and regions across the country. As noted by Weinstein, “even as discourses of civilization, modernity, and progress replaced earlier preoccupations with race mixture and degeneration, notions of difference based on race, far from fading, flourished in new discursive contexts”³⁴.

Prado’s efforts to support trips of Brazilian modern artists and intellectuals to Europe, to welcome prominent names from Europe to the Americas -here we include Cendrars and Le Corbusier- and to acquire pieces of art from both Brazilian and French artists were not isolated from initiatives directed towards the new continent. The incorporation of debates having taken place in Paris linking modernity, urban life and cosmopolitanism was a practice among a number of well-off individuals around the American continent, with agendas tied to political and cultural change in their own countries. Like Victoria Ocampo in Argentina, Prado in Brazil adopted a discourse interwoven with practices rooted in the French-European culture. Thus, it is not rare to find arguments in *Retrato* based upon an idea of ‘reluctance’ and ‘lateness’ within a certain Brazilian cultural and political apparatus, and which did not include São Paulo culture.

In this book, Prado’s claimed that São Paulo was an exceptional case in the history of Brazil, due to its natural boundaries. These borders meant that the city had avoided being affected by the misfortunes of the capital, Rio de Janeiro, and had preserved the ‘superiority’ of the *Paulistas* inhabitants, defined by Prado as *mestiços*. Following the arguments of both Calil and Ornelas, the idea Prado attempted to maintain was that the development of Brazil was linked to the efforts of São Paulo’s people. São Paulo, in his eyes, functioned more than any other city as a mirror of all the achievements and progress of its local inhabitants. While arguing for São Paulo supremacy, Prado’s narratives reinforced stereotypes of Europe’s gaze towards the other, as it suited the “internal colonial” ambitions of the hegemonic elite³⁵. However, rather than continuing with an analysis of Prado’s thesis, what becomes critical here, precisely, is the fact that these ideas implied that São Paulo was the center of Brazil - that is, the place where business, as well as modern cultural events, took place; and the fact that these same ideas would in effect be those incorporated by Le Corbusier. In this context, São Paulo was depicted unlike any other city from Brazil. São Paulo was introduced to Le Corbusier not only as being the center of decision-making, but also the place where economic power and modernity met.

Furthermore, the notion of São Paulo as the essence of Brazil, which was arguably encompassed by Prado’s vision of the country, was often raised in Le Corbusier’s correspondence with Cendrars from 1926 onwards³⁶. Still, it was particularly after 1928 that Le Corbusier decided to undertake a trip overseas, keeping in mind that Prado’s invitation to give lectures in Brazil was meant initially for São Paulo only: “Ici, à São Paulo, on s’occupe beaucoup d’urbanisme. Notre ville a une croissance trop rapide, et ces problèmes intéressent tout le monde. On vous attend avec impatience”³⁷.

Prado’s projection of São Paulo as the heart of the country produced echoes in Le Corbusier’s agenda for Brazil. Nevertheless, the issue of the construction of a new Brazilian capital, the theme that initially led Le Corbusier to write to Prado, gradually lost its central place in their correspondence as time passed. During dinners together in Paris or visits to Le Corbusier’s private houses in the outskirts of the French capital, as revealed in his diaries³⁸, the chances are that another type of conversation began to take place and arrangements made, most probably surrounding the possibility of private commissions in São Paulo, such as the project of extending Prado’s own house.

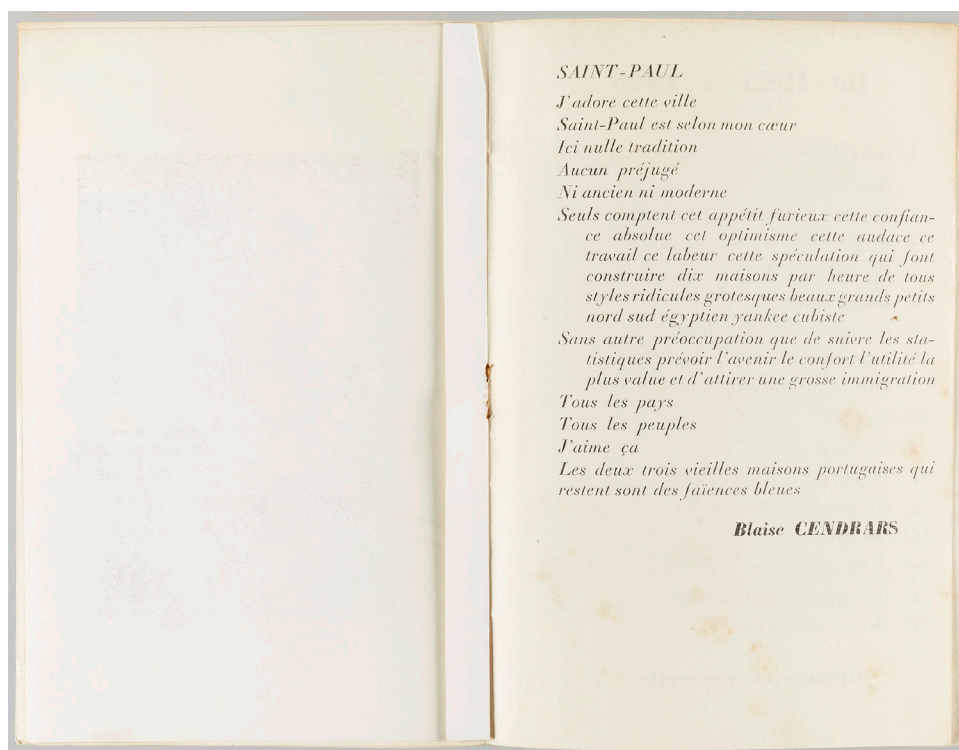


FIG. 9
Page of Tarsila do Amaral's exhibition catalogue of 1926, with poem "SAINT-PAUL" by Blaise Cendrars. Fonds Blaise Cendrars, Swiss Literary Archives, O 39.

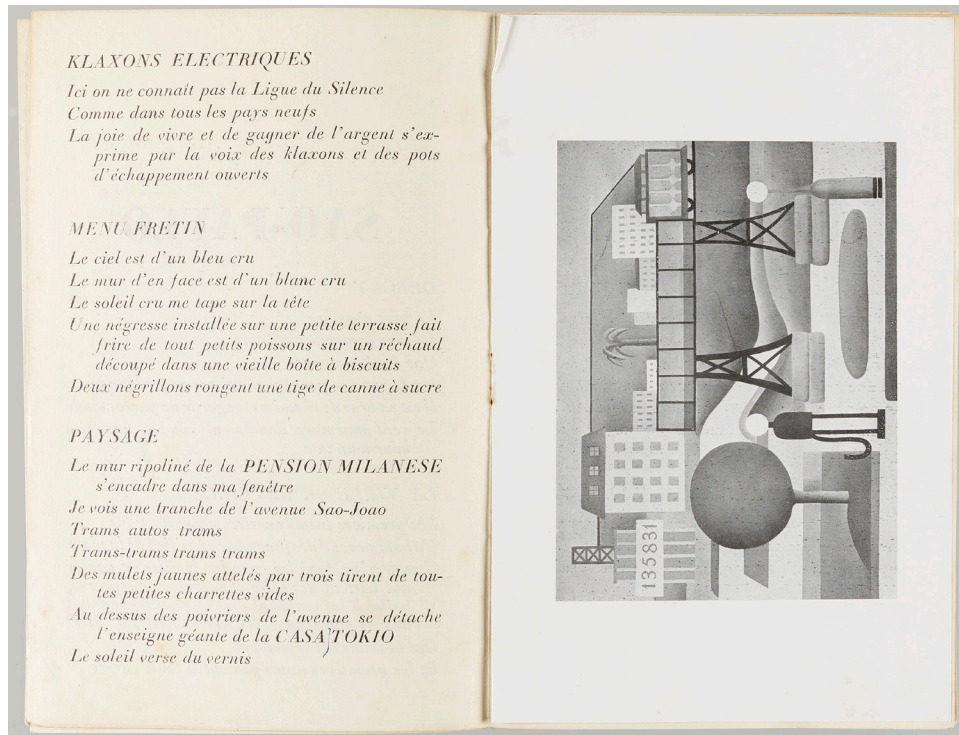


FIG. 10
Page of Tarsila do Amaral's exhibition catalogue of 1926, with with poems "KLAXONS ELECTRIQUES", "MENU FRETIN" and "PAYSAGE", by Blaise Cendrars and an image of Tarsila do Amaral's painting "São Paulo" (1924). Fonds Blaise Cendrars, Swiss Literary Archives, O 39.

The indications above are evidence that Le Corbusier's plans overseas shifted in focus during the months in which he exchanged letters with Prado. What at first was the only center of attention -the project for a new capital of Brazil- evolved into a more complex agenda, with other interests added. Accordingly, Le Corbusier in 1929 was aware of the driving role of São Paulo in steering the future of Brazil, to the detriment of Rio de Janeiro.

A wealth of sketches, notes and plans leaves no doubt that the city that attracted Le Corbusier most during his stay in the Americas in 1929 was Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, before his arrival São Paulo was largely the main reference and focus. Prado's theories on São Paulo, as well as his network of people from the city, were therefore essential to the construction of Le Corbusier's understanding of (and projections onto) the new continent. He noted to Prado: "C'est que je suis venu à St Paul à cause de vous, pour vous voir...voir un peu du Brésil, voir une ville que pousse [...] C'est chez vous que j'étais, et avec vous. Et c'est là mon impression de St Paul et le souvenir que j'en emporte"³⁹.

Commonly agreed as the center of Brazilian modernity, São Paulo was often the subject of artistic concern and creation in 1920s Paris⁴⁰. São Paulo was depicted in poems, paintings and books⁴¹. The industrialization process of the city, its impact on urban forms and its multifaceted structure in which tradition and modernity meet, were some of the issues raised by Prado and other artists in contact with Le Corbusier, such as Cendrars, Tarsila do Amaral and Oswald de Andrade.

To conclude, compared to other places in the southern part of the Americas, Le Corbusier's closer familiarity with the city of São Paulo is plausible, not only given these exchanges with Prado, but also with other artistic figures to whom Le Corbusier was introduced in Paris. In fact, the great majority of these Brazilian names originally came from São Paulo. These were also names that grounded a new artistic movement in São Paulo in 1928 by claiming themselves to be *antropófagos*. Prado himself was a pioneer in supporting this movement; moreover, he showed no hesitation in promoting such a notion among Francophone friends. "Mon pays est anthropophage. Il en a déjà absorbé bien d'autres que vous", Prado declared in a letter to Cendrars⁴². Not yet popularized in the European scene, the term *anthropophagie*, which was just about to be re-performed by these Brazilians in May 1928, was however quickly incorporated by Le Corbusier⁴³.

"Je ne suis point mangé par les anthropophages. Mais j'assiste à la naissance d'un monde nouveau, bâti sur la logique et la foi et qui me plonge dans les réflexions les plus sévères"⁴⁴ are the words written by Le Corbusier to his mother in October 1928. The impressions he revealed to the mother of the new world were nothing but positive. "*Les gens d'ici repartent à zéro, et construisent pierre par pierre*"⁴⁵, he informed. Le Corbusier once described his impressions of Moscow, the first New World where he stepped foot, and the vocabulary he used revealed the extraordinary moment in which Le Corbusier was confronted with an awareness of the potential and strength beyond European borders. "Ô Europe aveugle qui se ment à elle-même pour caresser ses paresseuses"⁴⁶, the architect concluded.

Le Corbusier's use of the term *anthropophage* is therefore exemplary evidence. It was deep-rooted in the debates held by the São Paulo group, and therefore not an arbitrary choice. Accordingly, these are revealing indicators of Le Corbusier's space of enunciation within a wider and interconnected web of circulation of ideas, and they help to argue that the notion of the New World for Le Corbusier in 1928 was in fact much more broadened and complex. It transcended geography and its political dimension. It branded a relation between cities never before interrelated: Moscow, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and New York. It incorporated words and buildings constructed elsewhere.

Author _____

Daniela Ortiz dos Santos is an Assistant Professor at the Art History Department of the Goethe University Frankfurt and a scientific coordinator of the Center for Critical Studies in Architecture. Her PhD from the ETH Zurich examined the complex dimensions of travel in architectural modernity, focusing on Le Corbusier's voyages immobiles to the Americas in the 1920s. Her research, teaching and curatorial activities are committed to develop alternative ways to the dominant narratives in architectural history. She was a PhD Fellow at the CCA in Montreal (2012) and a fellow at the Fondation Le Corbusier (2005). Her most recent publications include: "Invisible Files in Visible Institutions: Notes on Max Cetto's Papers" (CRITIQUE D'ART, 2020), "Blaise Cendrars et Le Corbusier: villes et voyages utiles" (KOMODO21, 2018), "Rewriting Landscapes of the Honorable Cannibal: Le Corbusier and Modern Visions of the World to Come" (forthcoming), and the co-edition of *Bauhaus Clouds* (forthcoming).

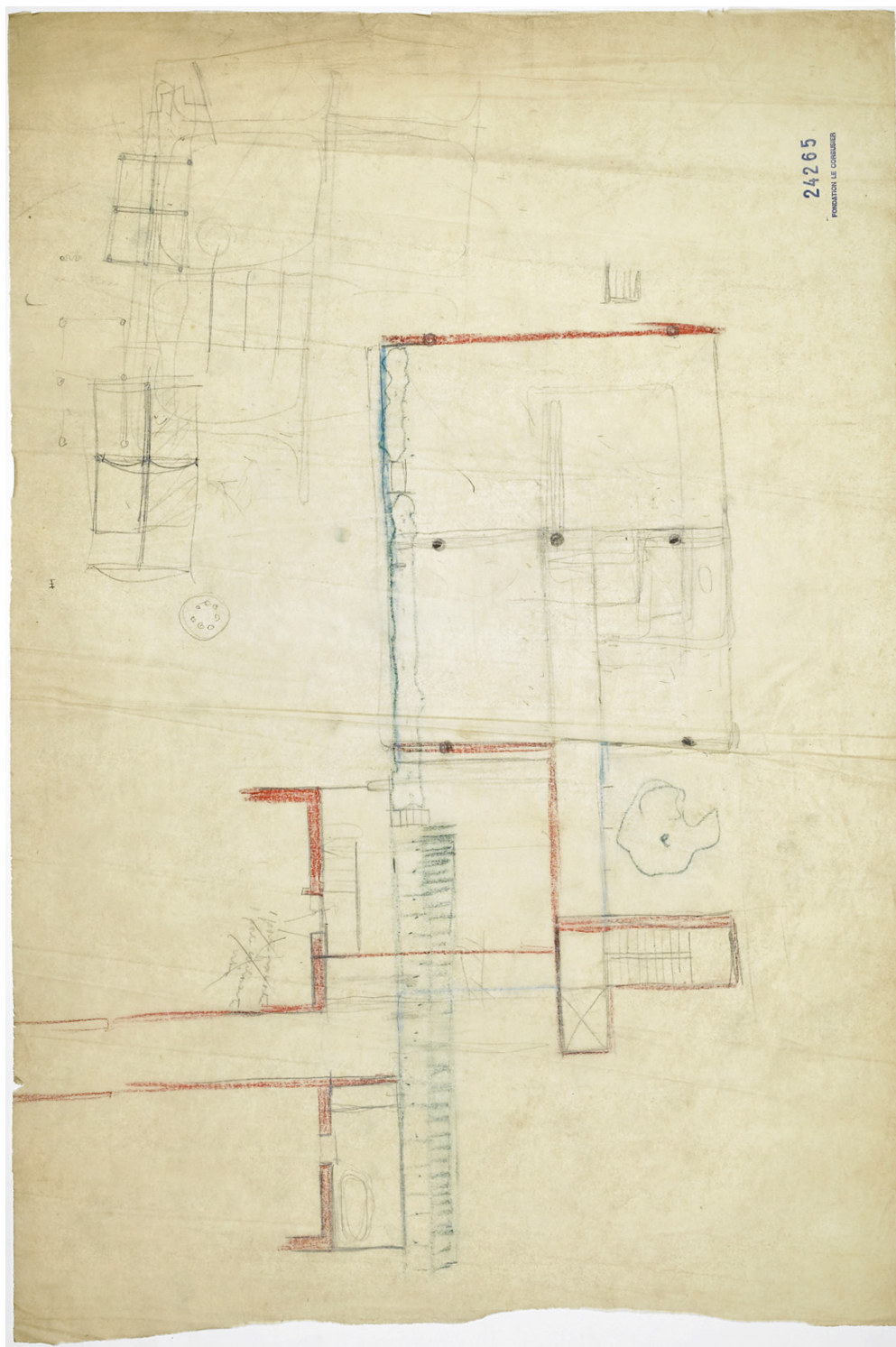


FIG. 11
Skecht study of a floor plan.
Le Corbusier's project for
the extension of Prado's
house in São Paulo (1929).
FLC 24265.

Notas

1. Letter from Fernand Léger to LC of 1926, preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris FLC E2 (8) 36.
2. Born in 1868 among a traditional, wealthy and highly educated family of politicians in São Paulo, Paulo da Silva Prado became one of the most important figures in the history of this city and ultimately of Brazil during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Fluent in the English and French languages, Prado's education and youth in Brazil and France amid important intellectuals from the Portuguese and Brazilian literary milieu allowed him to build a wide network in different fields of the arts, business and politics. While he was still an undergraduate student at the respected Law School of São Paulo, he co-founded three large companies, which made a significant and positive impact on the Brazilian economy. During WWI, he played a crucial role in securing the stability of the national economy by negotiating with the French government for the acquisition of two million sacks of coffee. Aside from his success in conducting business, Prado became not only one of the most important art patrons in Brazil, but also an active participant of the Brazilian modern movement. He co-directed two literary magazines and wrote extensively on São Paulo and the history of this city. His most renowned 1928 book *Retrato do Brasil* was chosen by the National Department of Education to be translated into several languages, following the conventions of the League of Nations, in order to be vastly distributed abroad. Prado was a *bon vivant*, with only one son from a non-marital relationship, and for more than two decades he lived with the French-born Marie Lebrun and often made long trips to Paris. His personal library was donated to the Municipal Library in São Paulo, and his private files are mainly held by Prado's family.
3. «En effet, le rêve de "Planaltina" me trotte en tête.» To Prado, Le Corbusier continued: «J'aimerais pouvoir entreprendre dans vos pays neufs quelques-uns de vastes travaux dont je me suis tant occupé ici et dont la léthargie continental ne provoquera certainement jamais la réalisation». Letter from LC to Paulo Prado on 28 July 1929, preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier (E2-17 and E2-19 files), Paris.
4. There is substantial literature indicating that Léger and Cendrars introduced Le Corbusier to influential names in politics and cultural affairs in the Americas. These were envisioned by Le Corbusier as potential clients or even supporters to welcome in their local contexts his ideas and projects in architecture and urban design. Prado is recognized as one of them. Between 1928 and 1931 Le Corbusier received a number of commissions to design private projects for this elite from overseas. Le Corbusier's files in Paris show that between those years a number of projects were in the process of being discussed, namely: a tower in the Palermo neighborhood, a group of houses by the golf club and two private housing projects for Victoria Ocampo in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Villa Ocampo and Villa Martínez), a summer housing project for Matías Errázuriz in Zapallar, Chile, a project for a private library to extend Prado's main house in São Paulo, Brazil and a private port club with facilities by Mr. Esterday in Oklahoma. See: Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, *Le Corbusier y Sur América. Precisiones en torno a un viaje, unos proyectos y algo más* (Santiago de Chile: Escuela de Arquitectura, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1987); Jorge Liernur y Pablo Pschepiurca, "Le Corbusier en Argentina. Significado de algunos proyectos", in *Hommage à Le Corbusier. Buenos Aires 60 ans après* (Lausanne: EPFL-FADU, 1989) and Ramón Gutiérrez (ed.), *Le Corbusier en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires, CEDODAL, 2009). Studies that revealed for the first time the triangular exchange between Cendrars, Léger, Le Corbusier and Prado were made by Pietro M. Bardi, Augusto Calil and Margareth Pereira, respectively. See: Pietro M. Bardi, *Lembrança de Le Corbusier. Atenas, Itália, Brasil*, (São Paulo: Nobel, 1984); Margareth da Silva Pereira, *Le Corbusier e o Brasil* (São Paulo: Tessela: Projeto, 1987); Carlos Augusto M. Calil, "Translators of Brazil," in *Brasil 1920-1950. De la Antropofagia a Brasília* (Valencia: IVAM, 2000), 563-78. More recently, an exhibition on Le Corbusier and São Paulo housed in the Maria Antonia Cultural Centre in São Paulo, 2012, showed the architect's project of a private library to be built as an extension of Prado's main house in Avenida Higienópolis, São Paulo.
5. For further reading on São Paulo's political elite see, Joseph L. Love, Bert J. Barickman, "Regional Elites," in *Modern Brazil. Elites and Masses in Historical Perspective*, Michael L. Conniff, ed., (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 3-22.
6. Letter from LC to his mother dated 2-9 November 1929, preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. This letter was reproduced in Rémi Baudouï and Arnaud Dercelles, *Le Corbusier. Correspondance. Lettres à la famille 1926-1946* (Gollion: Infolio, 2013), 260.
7. The mid-twenties proved to be years that saw an initiative to establish relationships with authorities beyond continental Europe. See, for example, Mary McLeod, "Architecture or Revolution: Taylorism, Technocracy, and Social Change", *Art Journal* 43, N.2 (1983): 132-147. Accessed November 27, 2016, available at www.jstor.org/stable/776649.
8. Paulo Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil," Preface to *Poesia Pau Brasil*, by Oswald de Andrade (Paris: Au Sans Pareil, 1925). The edition adopted here is the 2nd edition published by Editora Globo in 2003. Paulo Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil", 89.
9. Paulo Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil", 89.
10. Paulo Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil", 92.
11. Paulo Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil", 92.
12. [Author's translation: "Oswald de Andrade, on a trip to Paris [and] from the heights of an atelier in Place de Clichy, -the navel of the world- discovered, and dazzled, his own land. Under the enchantment of the Portuguese Manueline discoveries, the return to his homeland confirmed (to him) the surprising revelation that Brazil existed [...] The most beautiful and fecund inspiration encountered in "Pau Brasil" poetry lies in its affirmation of a nationalism that ought to break the bonds which have tied us to the old Europe since the birth (of Brazil)] Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil," 89-93.
13. Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil", 93.
14. In arguing Prado's critical stance on the traditional

institutions of Europe, Ornelas Berriel's studies are illuminating. He refers to Prado's awareness and denouncement of centuries of suffocation and doctrines inflicted on Brazil by European academies. He speaks of an idealism advocated by Prado, which defined history as being an "exclusive product of the spirit;" and therefore any crystallization of cultural practices, or even their institutionalization in space and time, would risk ruining "the free enlargement of the artistic thinking in Brazil." Carlos Eduardo Ornelas Berriel, "Tietê, Tejo, Sena: a obra de Paulo Prado" (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1994), 164.

15. [Author's translation: The group that opposes any new idea or sign of change suggested in the usual rigmarole of words (without really reacting) is always the same. [...] Let's leave them aside in their own obtuse contentment which is like brute stone, or a wall of mud, [always] unshakeable and dusty]. Paulo Prado, «Poesia Pau Brasil,» 93.

16. Le Corbusier, *Une maison – un palais* (Paris: Les Editions G. Crès et Cie, 1928), 170.

17. Tim Benton, *The Rhetoric of Modernism: Le Corbusier as a Lecturer*, (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag 2009), 53-88.

18. Prado, "Poesia Pau Brasil," 91.

19. Le Corbusier's explicit use of the word revolution would appear in the first articles of *L'Esprit Nouveau* and later published in *Vers une Architecture* – both of which were very much familiar to Prado, as one of the few Brazilians who subscribed to the magazine. Le Corbusier's use of the word would persist throughout almost all of his writings during the twenties. *Vers une architecture* was originally published in Paris by G. Crès in 1923. The edition adopted here *Toward an Architecture* is the translation of the 1928 printing of Le Corbusier (2nd edition), published in Los Angeles by the Getty Research Institute in 2007.

20. It is important to note that by the turn of the century, there was an uprising of the São Paulo against the president Getulio Vargas government, known as the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution. And here, Prado's words towards a revolution seem to be not a mere rhetoric.

21. Paulo Prado, *Retrato do Brasil. Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira*, 8th edition (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).

22. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, 307.

23. [Author's translation: Despite [preserving] an appearance of civilization, in effect we live isolated. Unable to see (things) and to move, (we are stuck) inside our own mediocrity, in which both governing and governed people satisfy themselves. In this putrid marasmus, we ought to make a tabula rasa (of all models hitherto proposed, and therefore only) afterwards (may we) be concerned with conducting a total renovation. [...] The very idea of Revolution, if not confused, is at least complex. It manifests a synthesis of two opposing tendencies: hope and revolt]. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 210-11.

24. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 212.

25. Although only a limited number of documents exist in Le Corbusier's files - less than a dozen letters and a number of notes found in his diaries dated between 1925 and 1930 – they nonetheless prove that the exchange between Prado and Le Corbusier occurred, and furthermore reveal meaningful information on the dates and places of the two encounters in Paris 1928, the friendly tone of their correspondence and the topics discussed. Prado's private archives were fragmented after the death of his grandson Eduardo Prado. However, Blaise Cendrars' files in the Swiss Literary Archives in Bern (ALS), Mario de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade's archives at the Institute of Brazilian Studies in São Paulo (IEB) and secondary sources (such as dissertations on Prado and books on Prado and Cendrars) offered the necessary tools and material for analyzing Prado's biography, agenda and connections with the Francophone world, with Le Corbusier included.

26. Maria Teresa de Freitas has shown that Cendrars was very familiar with Prado's texts, even possessing copies of Prado's books and essays in his private library. Moreover, de Freitas demonstrated that uncountable examples have been found in Cendrars' work that embody Prado's concepts of- as well as proposals for- Brazil. Maria Teresa de Freitas "Portrait de Paulo Prado" in Maria Teresa de Freitas, Claude Leroy, ed., *Brésil. L'Utopialand de Blaise Cendrars*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998) 29-46.

27. These are strong indications that allow us to expect that conversations between Le Corbusier and Cendrars about Prado not only involved issues related to the strategic position Prado held in Brazil, but also, and sporadically, issues concerning Prado's reasoning and ideas for Brazil.

28. Carlos Augusto Calil, Introduction to the 8th edition of *Retrato do Brasil. Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira*, by Paulo Prado (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 16.

29. Calil, Introduction, 16.

30. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 207.

31. In a study of São Paulo's urban verticalization process, Maria de Souza reveals that in 1915 São Paulo represented 40% of Brazil's economic production. Maria Adélia Aparecida de Souza, *A identidade da metrópole. A verticalização em São Paulo* (São Paulo: HUCITEC; EDUSP, 1994), 50.

32. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 199.

33. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 208.

34. Barbara Weinstein, *The color of Modernity: Sao Paulo and the making of race and nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 118.

35. While analyzing the construction of São Paulo identity, Weinstein's adoption of the concept of 'internal colonialism' are of great relevance to our study on Prado's writings and moves, forming alliances and constructing hegemony, within the region and abroad. Barbara Weinstein, *The color of Modernity: Sao*

Paulo and the making of race and nation in Brazil (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 22.

36. See, Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, "Blaise Cendrars et Le Corbusier: villes et voyages utiles", *Komodo21* N.9 (2018). Accessed March 30, 2019, available at <http://komodo21.fr/blaise-cendrars-corbusier-villes-voyages-utiles>.

37. Letter from Prado to LC dated 21 September 1929, preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

38. See, for example, the following pages of LC's diaries preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier: pages 37, 38 and 39 of the folder F3 (4) 8, (1928) and pages 38 and 40 of the folder F3 (4) 6 (02-08.1928).

39. Letter from LC to Prado dated 2 December 1929. Source: Caio Prado's collection, São Paulo. Reproduced in Margareth da Silva Pereira, *Le Corbusier e o Brasil*, 1987, 97.

40. The most illustrative example is Tarsila do Amaral's exhibition at Galérie Percier in Paris in 1926.

41. São Paulo is the title of a 1924 painting by Tarsila do Amaral and of a poem by Cendrars published in *Feuilles de route* by the Parisian publishing house *Au sans pareil* in 1924. The poem

also appeared in 1926 Tarsila do Amaral's exhibition catalogue. A copy of the catalogue is preserved in Blaise Cendrars' files in the Swiss Literary Archives in Bern.

42. Fragments of this letter were published in Carlos Augusto Calil, *A aventura brasileira de Blaise Cendrars*, (São Paulo: Edusp, 2001), 173.

43. An in-depth investigation on Le Corbusier's exchanges with the Brazilian Antropofagia appears in the author's PhD dissertation "Routes of Modernity or the Americas of Le Corbusier: Voyages, Affinities and Anthropophagy", completed at ETH Zurich in 2017.

44. Letter from LC to his mother dated 16 October 1928, preserved in the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. This letter was reproduced in Baudouï and Dercelles, *Le Corbusier. Correspondance*, 182.

45. Letter from LC to his mother dated 16 October 1928. Reproduced in Baudouï and Dercelles, *Le Corbusier Correspondance*, 182.

46. Letter from LC to his mother dated 16 October 1928. Reproduced in Baudouï and Dercelles, *Le Corbusier Correspondance*, 182.

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