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**CORRESPONDENTE**

**ANALYZING TARSILA DO AMARAL'S PAINTINGS FROM A SOCIAL**  
**SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE**

por

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**ABSTRACT****ANALYZING TARSILA DO AMARAL'S PAINTINGS FROM  
A SOCIAL-SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE****MARIA ISABEL TUBINO GRUNSCHY****UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA  
2007**

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This thesis investigated three of Tarsila do Amaral's paintings *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú*, and *Operários* from a social-semiotic perspective, with the purpose of studying how visual arts, like any other kind of visual communication, convey meanings related to socio-cultural aspects of the society in which they are produced. The study highlights the importance of art in the history of humankind and its relation with cultural paradigms from Prehistoric to Postmodern art. Tarsila do Amaral's artworks were chosen in an effort to study a Brazilian painter who managed to connect Brazil to Modernism in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century despite any prejudice her style could give rise to. The analysis was supported by Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design which was based on Halliday's (1978, 1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (SFL). As such, the study first describes the Context of Culture in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when she started her painting career and then the three structures (Representational, Interactional and Compositional meanings), operating in the paintings. The analysis helped to unveil important socio-cultural meanings conveyed in the paintings, such as the presence of Modernism and the social problems related to industrialization in Brazil. Other academic fields, besides linguistics, such as Art History, History and Visual arts, were taken into account in the analysis of the paintings in an interdisciplinary approach. The results suggest a) that Tarsila do Amaral's paintings (as any other kind of visual communication) are related to socio-cultural contexts, conveying meanings from the society in which they were produced and b) that becoming visually literate can, thus, contribute to our better understanding of meanings in contemporary society.

Key words: Systemic Functional Linguistics, Context of Culture, grammar of visual design, visual communication, paintings, Tarsila do Amaral.

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## RESUMO

### ANALISANDO AS PINTURAS DE TARSILA DO AMARAL SOB UMA PERSPECTIVA SOCIO-SEMIÓTICA

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2007

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Esta dissertação investiga três pinturas de Tarsila do Amaral, *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú*, e *Operários* a partir de uma análise no âmbito da semiótica social com o propósito de estudar como as artes visuais bem como outros tipos de comunicação visual transmitem significados relacionados com os aspectos sócio-culturais da sociedade em que são produzidos. O estudo enfatiza a importância da arte na história da humanidade e sua relação com paradigmas culturais desde a arte pré-histórica até a arte contemporânea. As obras de Tarsila do Amaral foram escolhidas como objeto de estudo desta dissertação com o objetivo de investigar a arte de uma pintora brasileira que se esforçou para conectar o Brasil ao Modernismo europeu no começo do século XX, mesmo tendo que enfrentar eventuais preconceitos que seu estilo de vanguarda pudesse causar. A análise visual teve como apoio a gramática visual de Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) a qual é baseada na gramática sistêmica funcional (SFL) de Halliday (1978,1994). Com esta base teórica, o estudo faz uma descrição do Contexto da Cultura no qual Tarsila do Amaral estava inserida quando iniciou sua carreira de pintora e depois também descreve as estruturas (os significados Representacionais, Interacionais e Composicionais) que operam nas três pinturas acima mencionadas. Esta análise contribuiu para a descoberta de importantes significados sócio-culturais inseridos nas pinturas de Tarsila do Amaral, tais como a presença do Modernismo e os problemas sociais relacionados com a industrialização no país. Outras áreas acadêmicas, além de lingüística, tais com História da Arte, História do Brasil e Artes Visuais foram usadas na pesquisa aqui desenvolvida num trabalho interdisciplinar. Os resultados sugerem: a) que as pinturas de Tarsila do Amaral (como qualquer tipo de comunicação visual) estão relacionadas com o contexto sócio-cultural da sociedade na qual foram produzidas e b) que o letramento visual pode, então, contribuir para que tenhamos uma melhor compreensão da sociedade contemporânea.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world, our own, we see it multiplied and as many original artists as there are, so many worlds are at our disposal, differing more widely from each other than those which roll round the infinite (Proust, cited by McRae & Nardi, 2004, p.10).

The history of humankind has been closely tied to art since primitive cave paintings when men started to communicate through images. Through these cave paintings it has been possible to analyze our ancestors' lives, their daily habits, physical appearance and the weapons they used for hunting. For instance, the discovery of the *Lascaux* caves (about 200) in 1940, in France, unveiled a very impressive amount of paintings on the walls. These paintings were found preserved in excellent conditions in a demonstration of human desire to create images and to express oneself with extreme ability in a naturalistic way, leading researchers to the conclusion that "as early as 17.000 BC painting was already a 'fine art'" (Milosh & Showns, 2003, p.9).

This early human desire to express oneself through paintings has kept a close relation between art and humankind through centuries of History involving social, cultural, political and religious aspects of life from prehistoric to postmodern movements of art.

This close relation between artistic movements and socio-cultural aspects of humankind has allowed "art teachers and educators to understand how broad-based cultural movements are related to art, and try to transmit that art processes operate within a context of a cultural paradigm<sup>1</sup> rather than in a vacuum" (Cary, 1998, p.326). Moreover, Cary (1998) states that art forms such as paintings, music and literature act

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<sup>1</sup> A paradigm is a set of assumptions about reality held in common by a group of people; it is a cultural phenomenon, not individual ([webmaster@tapetryweb.org](mailto:webmaster@tapetryweb.org)). According to Cary (1998, p. 327), "paradigms tacitly organize methods and concepts for producing truth and value claimed in art".

upon and influence the history of cultural paradigms: art and cultural paradigms interact and have the power to affect one another. It is, in fact, in this sense, that Geertz (1997, cited in Franz, 2003, p.3) has come to consider “postmodern art<sup>2</sup> as part of a particular system called art and this art system as part of a general system of symbolic forms called culture”. According to him, “art is nothing other than a department of culture; not an isolated form of enterprise”.

On the account of this relationship between art and culture, social-semiotics has attempted to unveil meanings produced by artworks, including photographs, films, paintings and other kinds of visual communication. One of the approaches used in the analysis of paintings is the one on linguistics developed by O’Toole (1994) and later Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). They hold a view in which language and visual communication express meanings belonging to and structured by cultures in our society.

Taking into account this congruence between language and visuals, O’Toole (1994) and Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) adapted the functional socio-semiotics theory from Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics to the analysis of visuals.

Halliday’s (1978, 1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) considers “semiotics as a system of signs or network of relationships, which like any other sign system, gets its meanings from oppositions within” (McAndrew and McAndrew, 2002 p. 115). In other words, Halliday (1978, 1994) gives “emphasis on the idea of choices and sees language as a large network of interrelated options, from which speakers unconsciously select when speaking or writing” (Martin, 1984, p.151).

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<sup>2</sup> According to Cary (1998, p. 326), “postmodern art visualizes, translates, theorizes, forms meanings, uncovers, confronts, and challenges all in order to make art objects or events somehow ‘belong to’ a given cultural or intellectual mode. Postmodern art is constructed in social context, rich with interactions, complexities, influences, causes, effects, possibilities, and impossibilities, like most other human enterprises”.

According to Halliday (1978) language makes meaning through the three metafunctions, Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual which are related to the variables of the Context of Situation, Field, Tenor and Mode (see chapter 2), respectively.

The Ideational metafunction employs language “to encode our experience of the world and to convey a picture of reality” (MacAndrew and MacAndrew, 2002, p.1), having processes, participants and circumstances (realized, linguistically, by the Transitivity system) as options for the realization of meanings (Heberle, 1997). The Interpersonal metafunction brings language to express interaction, such as power and hierarchy between participants, participants and readers, and writers and readers having meanings realized, linguistically by the Mood system. Finally, the Textual metafunction is responsible for the organization of the text; the way written or spoken texts link words, clauses and paragraphs in order to achieve coherence, cohesiveness and linearity. This metafunction has its meanings realized, linguistically, by the Theme system (Martin, 1984; MacAndrew and MacAndrew, 2002; Ferreira, 2003).

Adopting Halliday’s metafunctional organization, O’Toole (1994) and Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) make use of Representational (processes, participants and circumstances), Interactional (contact, social distance and attitude) and Compositional (information value, salience and framing) metafunctions instead of Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual, respectively (see Chapter 2), for the grammar of contemporary visual design.

Aiming at studying how paintings, like any other kind of visual communication, convey meanings related to socio-cultural aspects of the society in which they are produced, this study analyzes three of Tarsila do Amaral’s paintings from a social-semiotic perspective making use of the systems available in the Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) grammar of visual design. These paintings are *Carnaval em*

*Madureira* (1924), *Abaporú* (1928) and *Operários* (1933). Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973) was one of the key representatives of Modernism in Brazil who aimed at applying modernist ideas from Europe to an original Brazilian art. This analysis, besides drawing upon the Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design, describes the Context of culture (Chapter 3) in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when started her painting production. The description of the Context of culture leads viewers/writers to understand the importance of some aspects which influenced the painter when producing her artworks.

This study takes into account the fact that visual communication has been expanded in our contemporary society becoming part of our daily lives through television, internet, video games, movies, photography, artworks, advertising and other kinds of images. According to Callow (1999, p.12), these visuals are “influenced by cultures, values, ideologies<sup>3</sup> and world views in and through which they are created and consumed – just as spoken and written texts are”. In this sense, besides being a source of pleasure and consuming, images can be considered mediators of social meanings, demanding critical analysis from different approaches in interdisciplinary studies (Hernandez, 2000).

## **1.1. Objectives**

### **1.1.1. General objective**

The general objective of the present thesis is to investigate three of Tarsila do Amaral's paintings within a social-semiotic framework, relating these paintings to the Brazilian socio-cultural context from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century aiming at studying how visual arts like any other kind of visual communication convey meanings

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<sup>3</sup> According to Fairclough (1992, p.88), “Ideology is an accumulated and naturalized orientation which is built into norms and conventions, as well as in discourse events”.

related to socio-cultural aspects of the society in which they are embedded. This study also aims at contributing to the development of the studies in visual communication.

### **1.1.2. Specific objectives**

To achieve the general objective, the following specific objectives have guided my investigation:

- a. describe the Context of culture in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when she started her painting career.
- b. discuss and analyze the three paintings, *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú* and *Operários*, under the perspective of the grammar of visual design of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996).
- c. ask questions and answer accordingly in order to clarify the intrinsic aspects of the paintings, as suggested by Franz (2003).

### **1.2. Significance of the research**

Every day, students are asked to read a variety of textbooks, newspapers and to carry out research on the internet. These materials involve visuals, such as web signs, films, pictures, maps and artworks. In order to deal with these kinds of multimodal texts, involving different modes of communication (such as sounds, gestures and visuals) students must be aware of the codes they emanate (Stengling and Iedema, 2000).

Considering the necessity of teaching students how these codes operate in our contemporary society, this work intends to contribute to the understanding of visual communication from a social semiotic perspective, as already pointed out. According to

Unsworth (2001), Callow (1998) and Heberle (2004<sup>4</sup>, 2006<sup>5</sup>) social semiotics can help students to become visually literate and, consequently, to have a more critical interpretation towards what is communicated in our society.

Furthermore, this study shows how interdisciplinary studies have gained ground, increasing in number and in the expression of interrelations among different fields.

Another important consideration is the fact that once this study is concerned with Brazilian modern art, it grants readers the chance to unveil meanings conveyed by such a well known Brazilian painter. Yet, why Tarsila do Amaral?

I chose Tarsila do Amaral's paintings as the subject of my research due to the fact that despite being an artist from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when women used to play a minor role in society, Tarsila do Amaral and other painters (such as Anita Malfatti) were strong enough to start changing this reality. They were up-to-date with the European modern art and, at the same time, concerned with the necessity of creating a Brazilian original art despite any prejudices that could eventually occur against their concepts of art.

### 1.3. Research questions

A social semiotics of art tries to discover, systematically, the particular meanings of a given painting, unveiling the options the artist had at his/her disposal to construe these meanings (O'Toole, 1994). Thus, in this study, I intend to answer the following questions:

1) What are the Representational, Interactional and Compositional structures operating in the three paintings (*Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú* and *Operários*)?

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<sup>4</sup> PGI 3403-000 *Tópicos Especiais em Análise do Discurso* – Course on visual and verbal grammar at *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês, UFSC*.

<sup>5</sup> Plenary section at the IX *Convenção de Professores de Língua Inglesa dos Estados do Sul* – *APLIEPAR, APLISC e APIRS* in Florianópolis, SC, from 02 to 03 of June 2006, at Hotel Praiatur: Integrating perspectives in teaching and learning English.

- 2) What kinds of major concerns are represented in her paintings?
- 3) What kind of meanings do the three paintings share, if there are any?

## **1.4. Method**

### **1.4.1. Data**

As I have already pointed out, the data of my study is composed of three paintings produced by Tarsila do Amaral, within the period of 1924 to 1933, related to her art phases: *Pau-Brasil*, *Antropofagia* and *Social*. The paintings are *Carnaval em Madureira* (1924), *Abaporú* (1928) and *Operários* (1933), respectively. For the purpose of this study, I chose the first painting of each phase.

### **1.4.2. Procedures for the analysis**

Before analyzing the data, a description of the Context of culture (Chapter 4) is made to enlighten viewers with social, cultural and political aspects of society when the paintings were produced by the time Tarsila do Amaral initiated her artistic career.

The paintings are then analyzed under the perspective of Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design. During this step, the aspects of the image to be analyzed are related to the systems available in the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Within this semiotic analysis, questions are made in order to clarify some points which are not explicit in the images as suggested by Franz (2003). During the analysis, some research is made in fields other than linguistics, such as Critical art pedagogy, Brazilian History and Art History.

### **1.4.3. Organization of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into five chapters according to the subjects to be developed.



In this chapter it is offered an overview of what is going to be studied in the research, its objectives, significance, research questions and organization while the second describes the literature to be used in this study.

The third chapter is concerned with the Context of culture in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when she started her artistic career while the specific visual analysis is the subject of chapter four.

Finally, chapter five describes the findings and discusses them taking into account the research questions and the objectives of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Teaching the rules of writing has not meant the end of creative uses of language in literature and elsewhere, and teaching visual skills will not spell the end of the arts. Yet, just as grammar creatively employed by poets and novelists is, in the end, the same grammar we use when writing letters, memos, reports, so the 'grammar of visual design', creatively employed by artists, is, in the end, the same grammar we need when producing attractive layouts, images, diagrams, for our course handouts, reports, brochures, communiqués, and so on (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.3).

This chapter starts presenting a review of previous research at PGI which provided me with some background on the study of images from a social-semiotic perspective. Next, it makes a description of Critical art pedagogy, the subject of a course I took at UDESC<sup>6</sup>. The chapter also brings a description of language as social-semiotics, visual grammar, O'Toole's (1994) semiotic model and, finally, a summary of Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design. The literature here described is the support of this research in an effort to contribute to the study on visual communication from a social semiotic perspective.

#### **2.1. Review of previous work at PPGI**

Research from the perspective of the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) at the Post-Graduate Program in English (PPGI) includes those by Grimm (1999), Ferreira (2003), Veloso (2002; 2006), Bernardon (2005) and Almeida (2006). All of them analyzed images and language from a social-semiotic perspective. Grimm, Bernardon and Almeida were advised by Dr. Viviane Heberle, while Veloso

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<sup>6</sup> *Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina* (The state University of Santa Catarina)

and Ferreira were under the supervision of Dr. José Luiz Meurer and Dr. Gloria Gil, respectively.

In her study, Grimm (1999) aimed at analyzing the prominent and persuasive discourse type of advertisements in women's magazine. The study examined the verbal and visual language of advertisements in two magazines: the Brazilian women's magazine *Nova* and the corresponding North-American *Cosmopolitan*. Her main objective was to "verify what such ads encode about male-female relationships, describing how this takes place and explaining how it relates to social practice" (p.v). The visual analysis was drawn on Kress and van Leeuwen's work (1996), which came to be very helpful for my own analysis, since she was also engaged in seeking meanings conveyed by these magazines through images.

Ferreira (2003) aimed at contributing to the understanding of multimodal meaning-making. At a macro level of analysis, she examined twenty-four *Newsweek* cover stories and identified the main verbal and visual components of their structures. And at a micro level of analysis, she analyzed two *Newsweek* cover stories, investigating how the verbal and the visual modes constructed functional meanings and how these meanings modulated, thereby constructing the cover stories' central meaning. In this thesis, as in Grimm's (1999), language analysis was drawn upon Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1978) and the visual analysis on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design.

Veloso (2002) analyzed language and images from a social-semiotic perspective. His work had the intention of analyzing the meanings conveyed in the comic book *Superman Peace on Earth*. The work was based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978), Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design, and Critical Discourse Analysis. Veloso (2006) aimed at investigating the representations of

09/11, the identity of participants involved in the event – US citizens and terrorists’, including the discourse on terror by the US, in a set of super-hero comic books. The study was also based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978), Kress and van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual design, and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1978).

Bernardon (2005) was interested in gender studies. In her thesis, she investigated Brazilian magazines dedicated to secretaries and executive women (*Secretária executiva* and *Mulher executiva*) to examine social identities in a business context at three levels: text, discourse practice and social practice, based on Fairclough’s (1978) social theory of discourse. In her study Bernardon analyzed the three covers of the magazines specialized in executive woman applying Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) grammar of visual design, which also contributed to my understanding of this kind of analysis.

Finally, Almeida (2006) investigated the discourse of ten Brazilian and ten North-American doll advertisements available on the websites of best-selling dolls *Suzi* and *The Bratz* in a comparative manner. She examined how verbal and visual choices of these advertisements reflect the social practices of the two countries and how they reinforce the ‘status quo’ of existing social structures.

Although the studies above are drawn upon the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) for the development of visual analysis, none of them deals with paintings.

## **2.2. Critical art pedagogy**

The course *Educação para uma compreensão crítica da arte*, taken at the Post-graduate program in visual arts at UDESC, gave me important art resources to develop

this work on Tarsila do Amaral's paintings. The course dealt with Critical art pedagogy (Cary, 1998; Freedman, 1999; Hernandez, 2000; Franz, 2003) which is engaged with the postmodern concept of art education briefly described in this subsection.

Hernandez (2000) claims that interpretation of what is produced in art, according to the postmodern paradigm<sup>7</sup> implies deconstruction of the object in order to discover its coherence and to give meaning to parts, keeping, however, the whole object of study in mind. Besides visual aspects, an artwork analysis has also to take into account aspects related to geography, circumstances and external issues related to identity, gender and values. In this sense, Critical art pedagogy, according to Cary (1998), claims that the interpretation of an artwork engages art with the contemporary world and also builds a connection between past and present, relating art to the context of a socio-cultural paradigm. This connection gives significance to the artwork since "the development of a critical interpretation of artworks is considered, by art educators and scholars, the main aim of art teaching today, including high art and popular art" (Efland quoted by Franz, 2003, p.1). Furthermore, Freedman (1999) states that art educators, based on the postmodern paradigm, aim at analyzing and teaching art within a context. This context includes cultures, countries, communities, institutions, schools and socio-political conditions under which art is produced, seen and studied, giving the students conditions to study art, having in mind that the artist produces art to express not only his/her feelings but also feelings related to his/her environment (Freedman, 1999).

One of the approaches, related to Critical art pedagogy in Brazil, is the one developed by Franz (2003) called *Educação para uma compreensão crítica da arte*. In her work, Franz (2003) advises her students to analyze visuals from different fields of

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<sup>7</sup> Postmodern paradigm is concerned with context and social facts (Cary, 1998) while Modern paradigm was concerned with scientific proof and aesthetical aspects of art.

research<sup>8</sup> (my translation) which are historical, aesthetical, biological, pedagogical and social or critical. During the analysis, in the present study, questions based on these different fields have contributed to the organization of the study. These fields of research, however, are not isolated from one another, in fact, they are interconnected. According to Franz (2003), the description of these **fields of research** above mentioned is as follows:

### **2.2.1. Fields of research:**

**2.2.1.1. Historical field:** to understand an artwork it is necessary to study the context in which it was produced. Studying the aspects of the social historical moment outside the artwork will generate important data for a better analysis.

**2.2.1.2. Aesthetical field:** in this area, the analyst explores the comprehension of art as products of the representation systems of the art world. These products are codes, cultural references constructed and institutionalized by certain social groups. However, to explore this field, it is necessary to have some high degree of knowledge concerning art. For example, if the artwork was produced in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Brazil, we must be aware of the context in which this artwork was produced. During the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, most Brazilian artworks followed the concepts of academic art copied from Europe.

**2.2.1.3. Biographical field:** art teachers (Franz, 2003) must take into account the personal relation between the artist and his/her values, considering the impact artworks have on identities and values in the construction of reality. In this sense, questions are asked on artists' lives and, at the same time, these questions will help them to have a critical eye over the society in which they live in.

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<sup>8</sup> Original in Portuguese: *âmbitos de compreensão*.

**2.2.1.4. Social/critical field:** the postmodern cultural critique has begun to cause impact on educational discourses through Critical art pedagogy (Efland, 1988 in Franz, 2003). Critical art pedagogy states that knowledge is constructed based on cultural values and shaped by power concepts. For Cary (1998), this statement has been taken as the fundamental basis for Critical art pedagogy.

Thus, art education is deeply connected with the aspects of life without any boundaries among art and contexts.

### **2.3. Language as social-semiotics**

The analysis of images in this thesis follows Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design which adopted from Halliday's work (1989, p.3) the concept of "language in a social semiotic perspective". This concept states that the semiotic aspect of language has a correspondence with the network of signs through which individuals make meaning in a process of choices according to their contexts. In this sense, language is made of a network of signs which individuals use to make their choices in order to convey specific meanings according to their culture and social context. Thus, Halliday (1978) developed a study on contexts in which he described the Context of situation and the Context of culture.

#### **2.3.1. Context of situation and Context of culture**

The idea of Context of culture, for the purpose of my study, follows the SFL concept (Halliday, 1978; Meurer, 2004) which sees it as above the linguistic system<sup>9</sup>. According to Halliday and Hassan (1989), it makes a description of the cultural

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<sup>9</sup> System is understood as "a set of different choices which contribute to the formation of the structure of a text... Therefore, a text is the product of ongoing selection in a very large network of systems – system of network. Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures. In other words, a language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic pattern of choice" (Halliday, 2004, pp.23 - 24).

assumptions of the context and in what ways it influences the interpretation of the Context of situation of a specific text. Eggins (1994, p.32), claims that the Context of culture “can be thought of as a general framework that gives purpose to interactions of particular types, adaptable to many specific Context of situation”. “It provides a precise index and catalogue of a relevant social occasion of a community at a given time” (Kress, 1985, p. 20), allowing critical studies which take into consideration the aspects of the environment in which the texts (in this study, paintings) were produced.

Context of situation is made up of three variables: what is being spoken about (Field), who is talking to whom (Tenor) and, finally, the role of language (Mode) (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). In other words, the Context of situation is determined by its three variables: Field, Tenor and Mode. Field of discourse is related to what the text is about (the ongoing social activity) Tenor is concerned with the type of relationship developed by the participants. Finally, Mode is concerned with how parts of the text are organized in order to have cohesion and coherence (symbolic or rhetorical channel) (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, by McAndrew & McAndrew, 2000).

According to Halliday (1978, pp.116-177), these three situational variables have their correspondence in the semantic stratum which are the metafunctions Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual. These metafunctions correspond to Halliday’s (1978) point of view that language use depends on the topic to be developed, the people involved in the communication process and the way the communication happens.

### **2.3.2 Halliday’s (1978) three metafunctions: Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual**

In the Ideational metafunction, language is used to talk about what people are doing. In the Interpersonal metafunction, language is used to describe the relationship among participants, writers and readers. And, in the Textual metafunction, language is



used to organize the other metafunctions in a coherent and cohesive text (Halliday, 1978). In the clauses, the Ideational metafunction is realized by the lexicogrammatical Transitivity linguistic system, the Interpersonal is realized by the Mood system and, the Textual metafunction by the Theme system, see Table 2.1.

| <b>Context of Situation</b>                          | <b>Semantics</b>   | <b>Lexicogrammar</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Features of the context</b>                       | <b>Language Function</b>   | <b>(rank: clause)</b>   |
| <b>Semiotic structures of situation</b>              | <b>Functional component of semantics</b>   | <b>Lexicogrammatical choices</b>  |
| <b>Field of discourse (what is going on)</b>         | <b>Ideational metafunction (who is doing what, to whom, in what circumstances)</b>   | <b>Transitivity structures<br/>Clause as representation (processes, participants and circumstances)</b> |
| <b>Tenor of discourse (relationships involved)</b>   | <b>Interpersonal metafunction (personal interaction: what is the relationship established among participants and, writers and readers)</b> | <b>Mood system (clause as exchange)</b>   |
| <b>Mode of discourse (role assigned to language)</b> | <b>Textual metafunction (textual structure)</b>  | <b>Theme system (clause as message: theme and rheme)</b>  |

**Table 2.1:** Context of situation, semantics and lexicogrammar (from Halliday and Hassan, 1989, 1973, 1978; Ventola, 1988. Adapted from Heberle, 1997)

The Transitivity system, in a clause, is composed by Processes, Participants and Circumstances. “Process is the action around which the clause is structured”. Participants “are the elements that are involved in the action”. And, Circumstances “are the additional information of the event: when, where and how” (Ravelli, 2000, pp. 35-36).

In relation to the Mood system, Halliday (1994, cited by Ravelli, 2000, p.44)

suggests that of all the things we do in language, there are four key distinctions which explain interpersonal communication: As speakers/writers, we can be either *giving* or *demanding*. What we give/demand is either *goods and services* (actual actions) or *information*.

The Theme system is concerned with the

choices available in terms of how organize our language: which part of the message to foreground, which to background, which part to signal as being of most interest, what connections to create between different parts of the message" (Ravelli, 2000, p.51).

It is realized by the choices *Theme and Rheme*, which are recognized as the first and second position of the sentence. The *Theme* is usually recognized by the first Participant, Process and Circumstance of the clause while the remainder of the clause is called *Rheme* (Ravelli, 2000).

This Halliday's metafunctional organization applied to the grammar of visual design (O'Toole, 1994; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), leads this study to follow that, images, in the same way as language, are produced by people from different Contexts of culture in different Contexts of situation.

The concepts above described are not directly used in this dissertation but they are explained to give readers an overview of the metafunctional organization background.

#### **2.4. Visual grammar**

Aiming at extending the concepts of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1978, 1994), O'Toole (1994) and later Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), developed a visual grammar. They propose a way of analyzing images, systematically, to bring about what is communicated by means of images and visual designs, since they understand that what is expressed in language through the choices among different kinds of words, is, in visual communication, expressed, for example, through the choices of different uses of color and different compositional structures (O'Toole, 1994).

As mentioned before, according to Halliday (1978, 2004), communication through language makes, simultaneously, three kinds of meanings which are: Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual. In O’Toole’s (1994) and Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) works these meanings are called: Representational, Interactional and Compositional structures respectively. **Representational** meanings construe the nature of events and participants involved, and the circumstances in which they occur (Unsworth, 2001), corresponding to characters, action, details about species, size and material qualities. **Interactional / Modal** “verbal and visual resources construe the nature of the relationship among speakers, listeners, writer/readers, and what is viewed” (Unsworth, 2001, p.72). In images, Interactional meanings are realized through gaze, angles and shot distance. **Compositional** meanings, in visual communications, are “concerned with the distribution of the information value or relative emphasis among elements” (Unsworth, 2001, p.72). They are related to decisions about arrangements of forms within space, because the place where elements are disposed in an image influences the meaning conveyed by the image-maker (Unsworth, 2001).

In order to better explain these three structures, Representational, Interactional and Compositional, Callow (1999, p.12) summarizes them in three questions (Table 2.2):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • What is happening?   | • Action qualities or concept qualities.           |
| • How is the relationship between the viewer, the image and the image-maker? | • Angles; shot distances; color; offer or demands. |
| • How is the image composed?   | • Reading paths: lines and vectors.                |
|  | • Layout: Top/bottom; Left/right                   |

**Table 2.2.:** “Some features that can allow us to describe how image may be structured” (Callow. 1999, p.12)

#### **2.4.1. O'Toole's semiotic model**

As already pointed out before, O'Toole (1994) proposes a functional semiotic model for paintings based on the conceptions of Halliday's (1998, 1994) linguistic theory. For paintings, he adopts the terms Representational, Modal and Compositional to cover the Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual metafunctions, respectively. The Representational metafunction, according to O'Toole (1994), conveys basic information about character, social status, action and position of each element depicted. The Modal metafunction is concerned with the relationship among participants and between painter and viewer. The Compositional metafunction is related to decisions about formal arrangements within pictorial space, about line, information value, salience and framing made by the artist to convey the represented object more memorably.

O'Toole (1994) emphasizes that his intention is to show that a social semiotic analysis complements other approaches to art. He says he always relates his analysis to what art historians have said about a certain painting. In other words, he tries, at each stage of the analysis, to include relevant bibliography on art history and other information on social and cultural aspects. For O'Toole, "semiotics and art history need to collaborate, not compete" (O'Toole, 1994 p.170).

#### **2.4.2. Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design**

Despite the various works developed by semioticians on image interpretation, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have developed a way of interpreting meanings through signs which could encompass language and images. Developing the grammar of visual design, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) look for a descriptive framework which could facilitate the analysis of images from a linguistic model, holding the view that

both, language and visual communication, express meanings belonging and structured by cultures in the society and this results in a considerable congruence between the two (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996 p.17).

Concerning artworks, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) claim that they include artworks in social semiotic analysis not only because of the important role of art in the history of conventions but also because art is not something to be considered only beautiful or exotic, but as something that must be understood in its context. Once you know the context, the depicted image becomes clear and communication is realized.

Considering the Representational, Interactional and Compositional metafunctions, below there is a description of the structures through which they realize meanings:

#### **2.4.2.1. Representational structures: narrative and conceptual representations**

In order to describe what is happening in the world, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) stated that there are two kinds of images: portraits or landscapes and snapshots or action shots. The first ones are called **conceptual** images while the second are called **narrative** images. According to Steinglin and Iedema (2000, p. 1999),

**Conceptual** images include those images which set out an object and its various parts such as labeled diagrams; a range of objects, such as taxonomies; or objects which are symbolically related.

**Narrative** images show represented participants engaged in either an action such as serving a ball on a tennis court or, through the direction of their glance engaged in reaction. Action images are realized by something that points, that is a vector.

**Narrative representation structures** are realized by three elements:

**1) Participants:** people, things and places depicted in images; **2) Processes:** the vectors<sup>10</sup> present in the image; and, **3) Circumstances:** secondary participants related to the main participant. There are three types of circumstances: locative circumstances which relate participants to a setting; circumstances of means, tools used by a participant in order to execute an action; and circumstances of accompaniment, which

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<sup>10</sup> According to Callow (1999, p.124), vectors are lines – abstract or actual – that guide the viewer's eyes across an image. They may be objects or parts of objects (such as arms, legs, a pole, the side of a house) or invisible lines, such as the direction of gaze from a represented person's eyes to another person or object.

are the other participants in a narrative process without vectors related to the main participant (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996)

**Processes** (represented by vectors): When the vector is present, the representation is a narrative, when it is absent the representation is conceptual.

There are six types of **narrative representational processes**, depending on the kind of vectors and participants. However, here, for the purpose of this study, I will consider only the action and reaction processes. **Action processes** can be transactional and non-transactional. The transactional ones are either unidirectional or bi-directional. When a process is unidirectional transactional, the vector is formed by a depicted element, or an arrow, connecting two **participants**. One is the **Actor** and the other is the **Goal**. The **Actor** is the one from which the vector comes, and the **Goal** is the one at which the vector is aimed. Notice that there is only one vector and one direction. A bidirectional transactional process is represented by two vectors connecting two participants (**Interactors**), but each of them aiming at the other participant. Non-transactional processes are unidirectional action processes in which a vector formed by a depicted element or an arrow emanates from a participant, the **Actor**, but do not point at any other participant. As an example see Fig.1 where the vectors are represented by the women's arms and legs. The two arms (**vectors**) connect the two women (**interactors**), but each one point at the other in a narrative representation, standing for a bi-directional action process. The other arms and legs (**vectors**) emanate from the women (**Actors**) in non-transactional unidirectional action processes since it is not possible to see the **Goal**. These vectors, therefore, give viewers the sensation of movement and action in which the two women are engaged (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).



**Figure 2.1:** *Deux femmes*  
Pablo Picasso  
Narrative representation: action processes.

The second type of **narrative representational processes**, **Reaction processes** can be of two kinds: transactional reaction and non-transactional reaction. Transactional reaction processes are represented by invisible vectors: eye lines connecting two participants, the Reacter and the Phenomenon. Non-transactional reaction processes occur when an eyeliner vector comes from a participant, the Reacter, but does not point at any other participant (Phenomenon) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Below, Fig. 2.2 is an example of a transactional reaction process because there is an eye liner vector coming from the mother, pointing at the baby. The mother (Reacter) feeds her baby looking at him (Phenomenon) with love. It is not very clear in the image if the baby is looking at his mother, but, if he were looking at her, he would be the Reacter and she would be the Phenomenon in the other process. In order to organize the concepts explained above, Table 2.3 shows the types of narrative representations, processes (action and reaction) and the types of participants related them.



**Figure 2.2:** *A familia*, 1933  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Narrative representation: reaction process

| Type of representation             | Processes   | Types of participants   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Narrative<br>(presence of vectors) | <b>Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bidirectional Transactional</b></li> <li>• <b>Unidirectional Transactional</b></li> <li>• <b>Non-transactional</b></li> </ul> | <b>Interactors</b><br><br><b>Actor/Goal</b><br><br><b>Actor</b> |
|                                    | <b>Reaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transactional (eye line vectors)</b></li> <li>• <b>Non-transactional (eye line vectors)</b></li> </ul>                      | <b>Reactor/Phenomenon</b><br><br><b>Reactor</b>                 |

**Table 2.3:** Types of narrative representation: action and reaction processes, and types of represented participants' roles (adapted from Ferreira, 2003, p.23).

Regarding the third element of the narrative representation, it is possible to point out three types of circumstances, which are secondary participants related to other participants. The first one is circumstance of setting which is related to foreground and background contrast. It can be realized in the following ways:

- 1) when participants in the foreground overlap and obscure the setting; 2) when the setting is painted in less detail, having a softer focus; 3) when the setting is weak in color tending to the same hue (ex:



blue, indicating distance) 4) when the setting is darker than the foreground or lighter (suggesting an ethereal look). The second type of circumstances is the one of means which is realized by ‘tools used in the action process. These tools may also be the vectors which realize the action. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.72).

Concerning the representations with lack of vectors representing concepts, **conceptual representations**<sup>11</sup>, there are three processes to be described. They are classificational processes, analytical processes and symbolic processes.

**Classificational processes** relate participants to each other in terms of their kind of relation. It can be classified as taxonomy, when at least one set of participants will be the subordinate, whereas (at least) one or another set of participants will be the Superordinate. Taxonomies can be 1) Covert or 2) Overt.

1) They are Covert taxonomies when

participants are put together in order to be seen as part of the same class. Covert taxonomies are often used in advertisements: a set of participants is distributed symmetrically across the picture space at equal distance from each other, equal size, and oriented towards the vertical and horizontal axes in the same way (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 89).

Fig.2.3 is an example of Covert taxonomy: the framed images (or scenes) are the Subordinates. They belong to the same overarching category (Superordinate) which is not explicitly shown in images classified as Covert taxonomies. In this case, the Superordinate “is either only indicated in the accompanying text, or inferred from such similarities as the viewer may perceive to exist between the Superordinates” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 81). The scenes, for instance, in Fig. 2.4 were put together, by the painter, to be seen as part of the same class: they are all classified as the scenes of the *Dreams and lies of Franco* (the Superordinate). Another consideration is that “the framed images are shown against a neutral background and arranged in a symmetrical fashion” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.113).

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<sup>11</sup> “Some pictures do not have obvious action occurring, yet we understand them by conveying meaning about the world” (Callow, 1999, p.5).

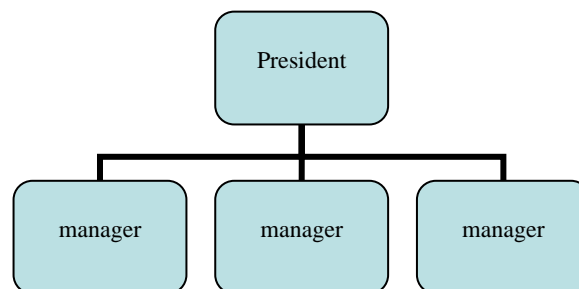


**Figure 2. 3:** *Dreams and lies of Franco*  
 Pablo Picasso, 1937  
 Etching and aquatint – 13.75 X 17.5 inches

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.81), this kind of images are

often used in advertisements where photographs may, for instance, show arrangements of bottles that represent the variety of products marketed under a brand name, or arrangements of different people who use the same products who all use the same product.

Images are 2) Overt taxonomies when they “have levels, and participants at the same level are represented as being, in some sense ‘of the same kind’” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 89), which are explicitly identified. Tree structures (see Fig.2.4) showing hierarchical organization of companies are good examples of overt taxonomies where participants are Superordinate in relation to other participants and, at the same time, Subordinate with respect to others. This explanation has the intention to only clarify the concept of Overt taxonomy as I do not deal with it in the analysis of the data.



**Figure 2.4:** Example of Overt Taxonomies (a Company organization)

Another kind of process in **conceptual representations** is **Analytical** which “relate participants in terms of part-whole structure. They involve two kinds of participants: One Carrier (or Carriers representing the whole) and any number of Possessive Attributes (parts)” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 89). Fig.5, in the painting *Segunda classe*, people are the Carriers assuming the position of “whole” and the train, their skin color and poor clothes are their Possessive Attributes (analytical process in a conceptual representation). In this painting there is a family of workers arriving at a train station (we do not know where they are coming from). The family looks miserable. Its members, adults and children were depicted in poor clothes, with skinny legs and big heads (Possessive Attributes); a picture of the tragic aspect of Brazil in the 30’s (Gotlib, 2003) which is not far from the picture of Brazil in the present.



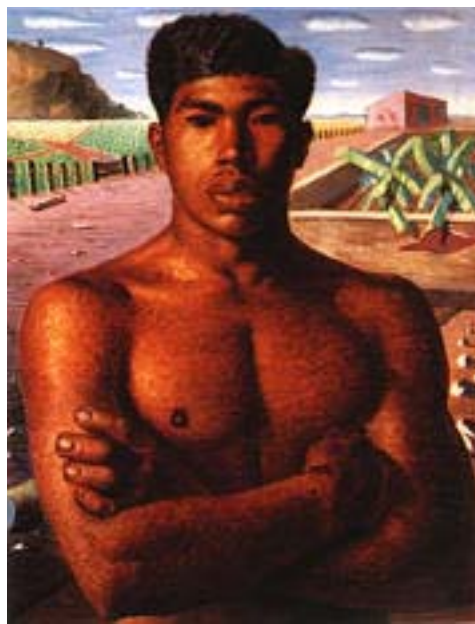
**Figure 2.5:** *Segunda classe*, 1933  
Tarsila do Amaral

Regarding **Symbolic processes**, Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996) claim that they are about what a participant means or is. They can be either 1) Attributive or 2) Suggestive.

1) Symbolic Attributive processes can have two kinds of participants: the Carrier, which is “the participant whose meaning or identity is established in the relation” (Kress

and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 108), and the Symbolic Attribute, “the participant which represents the meaning or identify itself” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.108). Symbolic Attributes are, most of the time, objects which are associated with symbolic values. They are made salient by being placed in the foreground, for instance. In relation to human participant (as Carrier) in Symbolic Attributive processes, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.109) state that

they usually pose for the viewer, rather than being shown as involved in some action. This does not mean that they are necessarily portrayed front-on and eye level, or that necessarily look at the viewer, even though all of these will often be the case. It means that they take up a posture which cannot be interpreted as narrative: they just sit or stand there, for no reason other than to display themselves to the viewer.



**Figure 2.6:** *O Mestiço*, 1934  
Cândido Portinari  
Oil on canvas

As an example of Symbolic Attributive processes, see Fig.2.6, where the Carrier poses for the viewer having the Symbolic Attributes in the background referring to him as a person who does the hard work in agriculture.

2) “Symbolic Suggestive processes have only one participant, the Carrier, and represent meaning and identity as coming from within” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996,

p.112). In this kind of images, “details are de-emphasizing in favor of overall effects” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 112) such as color or light imbuing the Carrier with symbolic meanings. As an example, see Fig. 2.7, where schooner Estelle is the Carrier and other details and secondary participants in the background are de-emphasized in favor of the effects emanated from sky light and dark clouds giving the image a certain mood of storm and danger. Furthermore, the schooner Estelle is depicted in the foreground and in big size, conveying power to it over the other secondary participants (from other secondary processes) in the background. In other words, the schooner Estelle possibly symbolizes strength, being able to go over the problems which could come with the storm.



**Figure 2.7:** *Schooner Estelle*, 1878  
James Edward Buttersworth  
Oil on board

Below, Table 2. 4 is a summary of the types of conceptual representations above described:

| Type of representation     | Processes   | Type of participants                                       |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Conceptual<br>(no vectors) | <u>Classificational</u>   |  |
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covert taxonomy</li> <li>• Overt taxonomy</li> </ul> | Superordinate /Subordinates<br>Superordinate/ Subordinates |
|                            | <u>Analytical</u>   | Carrier/ Possessive Attribute                              |
|                            | <u>Symbolic</u>   |  |
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attributive</li> <li>• Suggestive</li> </ul>         | Carrier / Symbolic Attribute<br>Carrier                    |

**Table 2. 4:** Summary of the types of conceptual representation: classificational, analytical and symbolic (adapted from Ferreira, 2003)

#### 2.4.2.2 Interactional structures: contact, social distance and attitude

Interactional structures, which correspond to the Interpersonal metafunction in Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional linguistics, shows the relationship between participants, participants and viewers and, image-maker and viewers. These structures are composed of three systems which are interconnected: **contact, social distance and attitude.**

**Contact** is related to gaze; when represented participants look directly at the viewer's eyes, vectors formed by participants' eyes connect the participants with the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.122- 124).

This way, contact is established: when the direct gaze is addressed to the viewer, it shows intimacy and the image is called a demand, "the participants gaze demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her"(Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 122).. However, if the image

does not address any gaze to the viewer, it means detachment and the image is an offer which is offering participants to the viewers as items of information or contemplation. As an example of intimacy through demand, see Fig. 2.8 in which Tarsila is looking directly at viewers (demanding) from an intimate distance shot, showing intimacy while Fig.2.9 is an example of offer since Oswald de Andrade is not looking at the viewers: he is just posing for them as if he were an item of contemplation.

The next system of the Interactional metafunction is called **social distance**, which is concerned with the shot distances in the image. This kind of distance enables viewers to make a distinction between intimates, friends, acquaintances or strangers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.131). In order to demonstrate intimacy, people must be seen at a close shot, which shows the head and shoulders of the subject. The medium shot cuts off the subject approximately at the knees, realizing a more social type of distance.

Finally, the long shot, which the figure occupies about half the height of the frame, shows the subject in a more public type of distance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).



**Figure 2.8:** *Auto Retrato*  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Contact system: demand  
Social distance: intimate distance



**Figure 2.9:** *Oswald de Andrade*  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Contact system: Offer  
Social distance: Close personal distance: a “friend”

Table 2.5, below, shows a detailed description of the shot distance possibilities and their meanings.

| <b>Interactional system:<br/>social distance</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Field of vision</b>                           | <b>Meaning</b>   |
| Face or head only                                | Intimate distance<br>“people who have an intimate relation with each other”<br>(Example fig.5)             |
| Head and shoulders                               | Close personal distance<br>“a friend”<br>“one can still hold or grasp the other person”<br>(Example Fig.6) |
| Waist up   | Far personal distance<br>“distance at which subjects of personal interests and involvements are discussed” |
| Whole figure                                     | Close social distance<br>“impersonal business occur”   |
| Whole figure with space around it                | Far social distance<br>“more formal impersonal business occur”   |
| The torso of at least 4 or 5 people              | Public distance<br>“people who are to remain strangers”  |

**Table 2.5:** Interactional system: social distance<sup>12</sup> (table adapted from Ferreira, 2003, p.31)

<sup>12</sup> All concepts within Table 2.5 are based on Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, pp. 130-135).



**Attitude** is the system of the Interactional metafunction related to the perspective from which participants are depicted.

There are two types of important information to determine attitude. The first one is related to whether the represented participants' *frontal plane* run parallel to the viewers' *frontal plane* or not; and the second, whether the *angle* from which the image was shot is *high*, *low* or at *eye level*. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996)

In relation to *frontal planes*, when they run parallel, it means some involvement between image and viewers while if they do not run parallel, it means that participants and viewers do not belong to the same world, implying detachment (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

Regarding *shot angle*, which is the angle from which the image was shot, the high angle gives power to the viewers in relation to represented participants while the low angle gives power to the represented participant in relation to viewers. And, finally, the eye level angle implies equality between represented participants and viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

As an example of **attitude**, Figure 2.10 shows involvement between participant and viewers because the participant's frontal plane runs parallel to the viewers' frontal plane. Being depicted from a low level (bottom up) and from a far personal distance (waist up) contributes to give the woman (Tarsila) power over viewers and a certain mood of seduction.



**Figure 2.10:** *Manteau Rouge* ( 1923)  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Oil on canvas 73X 60 cm  
Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, RJ.

In order to summarize the attitude system, Table 2.6 shows the meanings in relation to frontal planes and shot angles:

| <b>Interactional structures: <u>attitude system</u></b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><u>Frontal planes</u></b>  | <b><u>Meaning</u></b>                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement:<br/>when represented participants' frontal plane run parallel to the viewers' frontal plane</li> </ul>        | They belong to the same world                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detachment:<br/>When represented participants' frontal plane do not run parallel to the viewers' frontal plane.</li> </ul> | They do not belong to the same world           |
| <b><u>Shot angles</u></b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High angle</li> </ul>  | Power to the viewers over participants         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye level angle</li> </ul>   | Equality of power between participants         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low angle</li> </ul>   | Power to represented participants over viewers |

**Table 2. 6:** Interactional structures: attitude system (adapted from Ferreira, 2003).

### 2.4.2.2.1 Modality

The term modality comes from linguistics and refers to the truth value or credibility of statements about the world, in other words, the more a picture can create an illusion of touch, taste and smell, the higher is its modality. In this sense, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.161) explain how important the concept of modality is in the account of visual communication:

The concept of modality is essential in the account of visual communication. What is regarded as real depends on how reality is defined on the basis of how much correspondence there is between the visual representation of an object and what we normally see of that object with the naked eye

In relation to Modern Art, to which naturalistic representation lost its importance due to the invention of the photographic camera, representing reality started to have different objectives, bringing different discussions on modality. For Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.166)

The issue of modality becomes particularly complex in Modern Art, because it has, to a large extent, been the project of Modern Art to redefine reality, and to do so in contradistinction to photographic naturalism.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.180) also say that

the modern drawing, by contrast, leaves out the settings and simplify the forms, concentrating on the relation between them, rather than on the representation of the experimenter and the mirrors.

In this sense, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) open a discussion in respect to reality expressing the degrees of modality in Modern Art, taking into consideration the concepts the modernists have on reality (see chapter 3).

However, considering *modality* in a naturalistic pattern scale, for instance, the relation between *Modality* and *color saturation* is that “the more that is taken away, abstracted from the colors of the representation, the more color is reduced, the lower the modality” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.164): black and white means low modality (not naturalistic). Realistic (photography) means highest modality; *Maximum color saturation* means low modality (not naturalistic). According to Kress and van Leeuwen

(1996, p. 165), other modality markers are contextualization, representation, depth, illumination and brightness. In relation to coding orientation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.170) modality can be seen from the perspective of technological coding orientation, sensory coding orientation, abstract coding orientation and the commonsense naturalistic coding orientation.

#### **2.4.2.3. Compositional structures: information value, salience and framing**

Compositional structures, which correspond to the Textual metafunction in SFL, are concerned with

the way in which representational and interactional elements are made to relate to each other; the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 181).

Compositional structures are composed of three interrelated systems; information value, salience and framing.

Information value is concerned with the placement of represented participants within pictorial space. Thus, the left, right, center, margin, top, bottom position of participants have direct influence on the meaning given to them. For example, participants positioned on the left side of the image are called **given** since they convey information already familiar to the viewer, whereas participants on the right are called **new**, as they contain new information. Top position gives the participant the meaning of **ideal** (the way things should be), while bottom position gives the participant the idea of **real** (our everyday lives) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). As an example of given/new, see Fig. 2.11, where there are two women: one is on the left side in a position that allow us to see her face and part of her body; probably she is already familiar to the painter while the other is in a position of something new to him. These are only possibilities to be taken into account in a visual analysis of paintings.



**Figure 2.11:** *Duas mulheres na varanda*, 1961  
Emiliano Di Cavalcanti  
Oil on canvas: 7,3 X 9,2 cm

Saliency, another compositional resource, is involved with visual weight of the represented participants in a composition where some elements call more attention than others. Saliency can be realized through a number of factors, such as size, sharpness, tonal contrast as well as by the contrast between saturated colors (exaggeration in the use of colors) making elements ‘attractive to the viewers’. Perspective can also be used for foregrounding objects or people (to make them more salient than the background ones) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

Framing is used when “elements or groups within layout may be disconnected and marked off from each other or connected, joined together” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996 p.214). There are many ways to realize framing, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 214),

such as by frame lines, by discontinuities of color or shape or by the absence of color. In some paintings, for example, the outlines of depicted objects or human beings, strongly demarcated from their environment, are considered framed. In other styles, for example, Impressionism, depicted elements are drawn apart from their environment by transition of colors (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.214).

As an example of framing, Fig.2.12 shows four framed participants. These participants were framed to be highlighted among other participants in the image. In this case, participants are strongly demarcated by the colored frames around them showing that they are important. They are images of Mary, Jesus' mother.



**Figure 2.12:** *Religião brasileira* – 1927  
Oil on canvas 36 X 76 cm  
Tarsila do Amaral

This chapter described the bibliography which guided my research. Critical art pedagogy relates the study to art in a contemporary concept, SFL (Halliday, 1978) provided O'Toole (1994) and later Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) with the metafunctional organization, showing that images and language make meaning through systems of choices and are related to the socio-cultural context in which the image was produced.

Through the choices available in the systems of Representational, Interactional and Compositional structures, it is possible to analyze, systematically, how participants are represented and the way they interact with viewers in a certain pictorial space.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONTEXT OF CULTURE: Modernism and Tarsila do Amaral's paintings

Contexts of production are part of works of art; they provide the conceptual connections that make art worth studying (Freedman, 1999, p. 318)

Even when analyzed under a defined network of systems such as the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), paintings and any other kinds visual communication “are open for an interaction with the environment in which they were produced”(O’Toole, 1994, p.216). For this reason, it is of great relevance to develop a description of the Context of culture in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when she started her painting career.

The description of the Context of culture in which the paintings were produced follows Halliday’s (1978, 1994) concept from Systemic Functional Linguistics applied to visuals that “you cannot understand the meaning of what someone says or writes unless you know something about the context in which it is embedded” (Malinovsky (1923; 1935, cited by Martin, 1984, 151). According to Halliday & Hasan (1989, p. 6), Malinovsky

saw that in any adequate description, it was necessary to provide information not only about what was happening at the time but also about the total cultural background, because involved in any linguistic interaction, in any kind of conversational exchange, there were not only the immediate sights and sounds surrounding the event but also the whole cultural history behind the participants, and behind the kind of practices that they were engaging in, determining their significance for the culture.

This concept, as already mentioned before, is seen as above the linguistic system and is discussed in terms of Context of culture which “provides a precise index and catalogue of a relevant social occasion of a community at a given time” (Kress, 1985, p.20). In this chapter, it refers to aspects of Modernism in Brazil and in Europe as a

cultural paradigm from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which influenced Tarsila do Amaral's artworks.

Thus, in this chapter, I describe the Context of culture (Halliday, 1978) regarding Modernism and Tarsila do Amaral so as to lead viewers to understand the paintings through the description of some aspects which influenced the painter when producing the artworks. This chapter starts with a brief description of Modernism in Europe in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Afterwards, there is a short description of an important tendency called Cubism which had great influence over Tarsila do Amaral art phases mentioned in this study.

Modernism in Brazil is the following topic to be summarized in this chapter together with what is considered the first Modern event in Brazil: The Week of Modern Art. Despite not having attended this important event, Tarsila do Amaral was considered one of the artists who followed the principles launched by the Week (Zílio, 1944).

### **3.1. Modernism**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the term Modernism, many artistic tendencies (such as Cubism and Expressionism) gave support to the economic and technological progress yielded by the industrial revolution. According to Argan (1992, p. 184, my translation), these modern tendencies withheld the following characteristics:

1. the deliberation to produce an art in conformity with its time and to relinquish the invocation of classical modules , as much in theme as in style.
2. the desire to diminish the distance between the “greater” arts (architecture, painting and sculpture) and their “applications” to the diverse fields of economic production (civil construction, decoration and dressing).
3. the quest for a decorative functionality.
4. the inspiration for an international or European style or language.



5. the effort to interpret the “spirituality” which was taken as an inspiration to redeem industrialism ( somewhat of naive and hypocrite).

Supported by this technological and industrial progress, Modernism, as a cultural paradigm, considered “the ability to reason the essence of human nature giving value only to what could be scientifically proved and truth could only be known by observing the physical world” (Cary, 1998).

This physical world together with the Industrial revolution brought to art events of a modern era and the concepts based on the machine analogy such as independence. This concept of independence comes from the idea that the machine, as both the result and the tool of science, operate independently from the human presence. This assumption leads to a concept of art not as socially situated, but as an individual expression of the artist’s creativity and inspiration, independently from the outside world (Cary, 1998).

In this sense, pictorial illusion of representing nature through lines, perspectives and other art conventions started to be questioned by artists: “If the art object was to be independent, it required no validation according to how closely it resembled the ‘out there world’” (Cary, 1998, p.330). Thus, the photographic camera made naturalistic paintings become something absolutely common, giving no reasons for paintings to be real pictures of the real outside world (Lynton, in Stangos, 2000). At this point, Manet and Cézanne, well-known French painters, claimed that art creates its own reality, being this way, de-contextualized and its value intrinsic, independent of the world (Cary, 1998).

Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism are some of the Modern tendencies which influenced the western culture by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. However, in order to focus on what is relevant to my study, I will

draw upon Cubism, a modern tendency which had a great influence on Tarsila do Amaral's paintings.

### 3.2. Cubism

Cubism made its debut in Paris around 1907 when Pablo Picasso painted *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.K. G. version) (Fig.3.1) (Golding in Stangos, 2000). In this art work, Picasso depicted naked women, differently, substituting the round forms for geometrical ones. Despite not being designated cubist, *Les Femmes d'Alger* then stood as the announcement of a new era in art and, until today it is considered the highest point of Picasso's career. Analysts, however, state that in order to accredit *Les Femmes d'Alger* a cubist prediction, one must focus on two major characteristics (Golding, in Stangos, 2000, my translation) as follows.



**Figure 3.1:** *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907  
Pablo Picasso  
Oil on canvas – 244 X 234  
New York Museum of Modern Art  
New York

First, it came close to Cézanne's (Cézanne was considered the most influential painter of the XIX century) artworks in terms of its composition, such as in the deformation of the bodies (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000). The African art is the second influence noticed in Picasso's artworks, in the sense that thematic and aesthetical ideas were more important than the naturalistic representation which led him to abstraction. This characteristic can be seen in the deformation of parts of the bodies depicted in his art works. However, his main objective was to show that the human figure and the objects could be seen from a variety of angles, simultaneously, as if one could go 360 degrees around the image and synthesize all these angles in one single image (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000). For Picasso, his paintings would, thus, be better understood if conceived as sculptures (Golding, 1968 in Stangos, 2000). From this point on, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque<sup>13</sup> rejected the naturalistic perspective as the only way of materializing objects. To express this rejection, Picasso decided to show the multiplicity of information about the depicted object;

forms were drastically simplified and, mainly in the landscapes, resources were adopted to deny the idea of depth; rocks, mountains and trees were organized in piles instead of being behind or in front of each other (Golding, 1968 in Stangos, 2000, pp 42-43).

Color also granted less importance and monochromatic images were favored by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque as both valued the sculpture concepts of the objects more important than color. Braque also stated that color could affect the spatial sensations (Golding, 1968 in Stangos, 2000, p.42-43).

Violin and Candlestick (see Fig.3.2) is an example of this phase, presenting a monochromatic painting and depicting objects as if they were sculptures as mentioned above.

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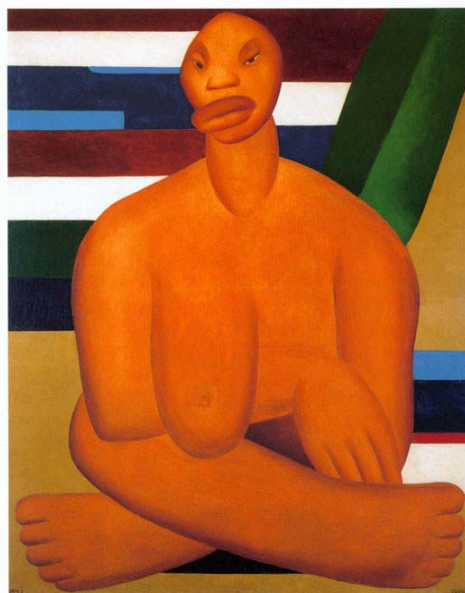
<sup>13</sup> George Braque (1882-1963): "French painter and sculpture who, with Pablo Picasso developed Cubism and became one of the major figures of the twentieth-century art" ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges Braque](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Braque))



**Figure 3.2.** Violin and Candlestick  
Georges Braque, 1910  
Paris

Not merely Picasso but other modern painters who followed this tendency were also influenced by African sculptures, highlighting the exotic. Tarsila do Amaral, for example, painted *A Negra* (1923) already thinking of something anthropophagic and exotic, consequently following her masters. *A Negra* (Fig. 3.3) reminds Tarsila of the Afro-Brazilians who lived in her family's farm. Most of them used to feed the babies from the big house.

Historically speaking Cubism was composed of two periods: analytical up to 1912 and synthetic from there on. The first period was characterized by moderated colors and geometric forms which were not easy to be understood. The second (from 1912 on), a reaction to the first, had geometric forms as well; however, now forming recognizable images (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000).



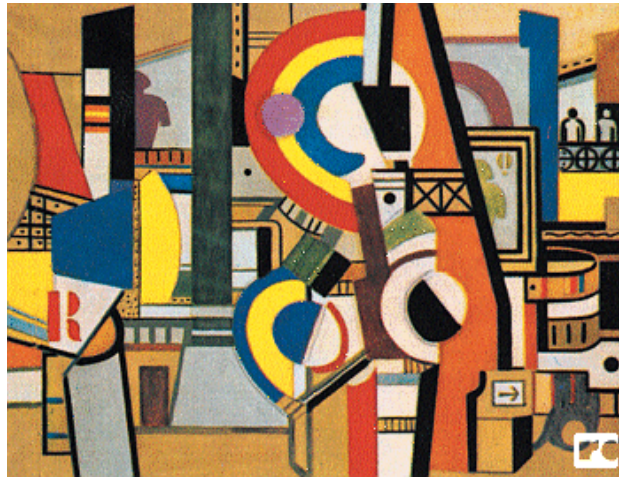
**Figure 3.3:** *A Negra*, 1923  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Oil on canvas, 100 X 80 cm  
Museu de arte contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo

Most of the important artists who followed this artistic manifestation were from Europe. Some of the well-known were: Gris, Braque, Albert Gleizes, Fernand Lèger, Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Robert Delaunay, Roger de La Fresnaye e Juan Gris (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000).

In Brazil, Tarsila do Amaral had a great influence from Fernand Lèger (a Russian cubist who lived in Paris), who had taught her painting during her stay in Paris. Other Brazilian painters such as Di Cavalcanti and Anita Maffalti were also influenced by Cubism.

Fernand Lèger (a modernist painter engaged with Cubism in France) was strongly influenced by Picasso's synthetic Cubism during the 20's. In his canvas, objects and human figures were simplified and, sometimes, there was no connection between them in a desire of giving them some movement, as can be seen in Fig. 3.4. He was

concerned with contemporary subjects as the machine speed, industries and urban life (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000).



**Figure 3.4:** Fernand Lèger  
The Discs in the City  
Paris, 1910

In sum, Cubism was a movement, different from and in opposition to naturalism<sup>14</sup>, which developed an original way of figuration and contributed to the revelation of a different kind of reality, hence, inaugurating a new age in art and in social perceptions (Golding, 1968, in Stangos, 2000).

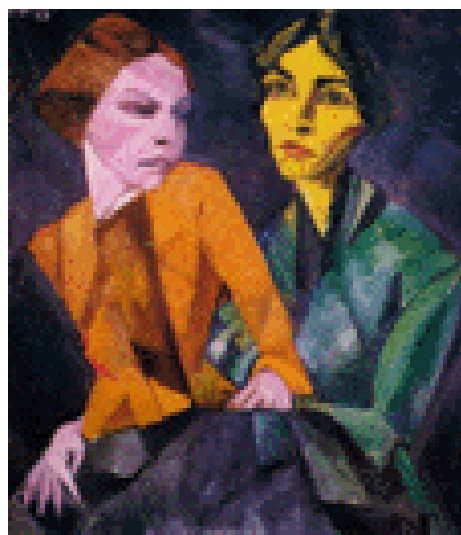
### 3.3. Modernism in Brazil

Modernism in Brazil not only comprised an artistic movement but a very special historical moment for the country. Many changes had occurred in Brazil in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: slaves had been freed, the First Republic had been established, coffee was a high investment, cities had grown and many people were killed in the World War I (not in Brazil), industrialization and immigration were underway (Alambert, 1992).

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<sup>14</sup> Naturalism: in the arts, generally, an approach that advocates the factual realistic representation of the subject of a painting with no stylization ([www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopedia](http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopedia)).

There are some artistic and cultural events that are considered the first manifestations which predicted Brazilian Modernism. In 1912, Oswald de Andrade arrived from Europe influenced by the futuristic manifest written by Marinetti<sup>15</sup> and started working on a newspaper called *O Pirralho* (The Kid) criticizing academic art in Brazil. A year later, Lazar Segall, a Russian painter, arrived in São Paulo carrying with him a new, non-academic expressionist Modern tendency of art (Zílio, 1944). Expressionism was an artistic modern tendency which intended to express images emotionally strong, mostly, by means of strong colors and figurative distortion (see *Duas Amigas*, Fig. 3.5). It was essentially anti-naturalistic (Lynton, in Stangos, 2000).



**Figure 3.5:** *Duas Amigas*, 1913  
Lazar Segal – São Paulo

In Brazil, Anita Mafalhti's works stand as good examples of Expressionism (see Fig. 3.6). She was the first Brazilian modernist to expose her artworks to the public (which were quite criticized) after a long period in Germany and in the USA. Her

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<sup>15</sup> Marinetti (1876-1944) is most noted for his authorship of the Futurist Manifest, first published in the Paris newspaper *Lê Figaro*. In the Manifest of futurism Marinetti declared that Art (...) can be nothing but violence, cruelty, and injustice. Since this text proclaims unity of life and art, Marinetti understood violence not only as a means of producing aesthetic inherent in life ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinetti](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinetti)).

paintings, of an unprecedented kind in Brazil, aroused great public and artistic discussions. For painters and writers who then held Symbolism, Impressionism and Art-nouveau as their boundaries of rebellion, Malfatti's exposition certainly represented a radical change, a rupture with the past (Zílio, 1944).

In order to show his disagreement in relation to that different kind of artwork, Monteiro Lobato in his article *Paranóia ou mistificação* in *Estado de São Paulo*, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917 criticizes Anita Malfatti (quoted by Zílio, 1944, p.41, my translation):

There are two kinds of artists: one, composed by people who see things in a normal way and, consequently, make pure art, obeying the eternal rhythms of life and adopting from the great masters, their classical processes of concretizing aesthetical emotions. The other kind is formed by the ones who see nature in an abnormal way and, interpret it based on ephemeral theories, under the cross-eyed opinion of rebellious schools coming from everywhere as furuncles of an excessive culture. They are products of tiredness and sadism from all other periods of decadence: they are fruit from the end of the season, rotten<sup>16</sup>

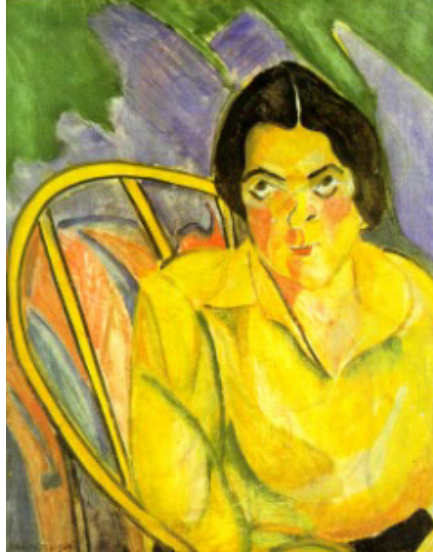
The exposition had already been seen as something strange by the public in general, but after Monteiro Lobato's publication, some of the paintings were rejected and returned by the buyers. Despite critiques, from there on, Brazilian art would no longer be the same: the new way of seeing the world caught the attention of Brazilian artists in a desire to break the rules. Rupture with the past was definitely installed (Zílio, 1944).

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<sup>16</sup> Original in Portuguese:

*Há duas espécies de artistas. Uma composta dos que vêem normalmente as coisas e em consequência disto fazem arte pura, guardando os eternos ritmos da vida, e adotados para a concretização das emoções estéticas, os processos clássicos dos grandes mestres (...) A outra espécie é formada pelos que vêem anormalmente a natureza, e interpretam-na à luz de teorias efêmeras, sob a sugestão estrábica das escolas rebeldes, sugeridas cá e lá como furúnculos da cultura excessiva. São produtos do cansaço e do sadismo de todos os períodos de decadência: são frutos de fins de estação, bichados no nascedouro.*





**Figure 3.6:** *A Boba*, 1917  
Anita Mafalhti

This rupture was also confirmed by Oswald de Andrade saying that it was up to the writers and artists to show the country that the Brazilian Independence was not only political but also mental and moral. Along with this new concept of independence, communist ideas started then to germinate, and in 1922, the communist party (PCB) was formally founded, giving Brazilians options of political changes as well (Amaral, 1998).

In opposition to Monteiro Lobato's critiques mentioned above, Mario de Andrade (1922) writes about his ideas, launching the aesthetical basis of Modernism in *Prefácio interessantíssimo* which is the first part of his book called *Paulicéia desvairada*. *Paulicéia desvairada* is still a reference for those rebellious days. His poems broke the rules already established in literature, showing poems without rhymes and having words written the way they are orally.



**Figure 3.7:** Cover of the book *Paulicéia Desvairada*, 1922  
(Hallucinated City)  
Mário de Andrade

Ultimately it became clear that there definitely were two different kinds of people: the ones who wanted to keep the pre- established rules of art (copy of reality) and the others who wanted freedom for the artist creativity, such as Di Cavalcanti who asked for “a week of literary and artistic scandals” (Amaral, 1998, p.129)

### 3.4. The Week of Modern Art

“We will be absolutely beautiful! – Totally insulted! – Extremely celebrated! We will have our names eternalized in the newspapers and in the History of Brazilian Art” (Part of the invitation written by Mário de Andrade to Mennotti del Picchia, 1922 (quoted by Amaral, 1998, p.231, my translation)<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Original in Portuguese: “Seremos lindíssimos! Insultadíssimos! Celebérrimos. Teremos nossos nomes eternizados nos jornais e na História da Arte Brasileira”.



**Figure 3.8:** Cover of the exhibition catalog  
Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, 1922  
*Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros*  
*Universidade de São Paulo*

The Week of Modern Art took place in the evenings of February 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, and on February 15<sup>th</sup>, in the afternoon. Di Cavalcanti was the artist who created the catalog. Although there are still some doubts about who really took part of the Week, it is believed to have counted with the following participants:

**Music:** Villa-Lobos, Guiomar Novaes, Paulina D'Ambrósio, Ernani Braga, Alfredo Gomes, Frutuoso and Letícia Villa-Lobos. **Literature:** Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, Ronald de Carvalho, Álvaro Moreira, Menotti Del Picchia, Luiz Aranha, Sérgio Milliet, Guilherme de Almeida, Plínio Salgado and others. **Sculpture:** Victor Brecheret, Hildegardo Leão Veloso and Haaberg. **Painting:** Anita Malfatti, Di Cavalcanti, Zina Aita, Martins Ribeiro, Regina Graz, John Graz. **Architecture:** A. Moya and George Przyrembel (Amaral, 1998, p.135).

The Week of Modern Art had three festivals: February 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. The modern artworks were exposed in the hall of the Theatre (*Teatro Municipal de São Paulo*) and the public was allowed to admire them anytime within the eight days of the event (Amaral, 1998).

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, the *Correio Paulistano* (*Paulistano* newspaper) made the following comment on the event:

Our artists have never consecrated in bands, tying up in one same bond painting, sculpture, music and poetry. These emotive forms of expression have always gone if not in a divorced, at least, in an isolated and independent way. From this point of view, the Week of Modern Art is worthy of note.<sup>18</sup>

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, the festival began with Graça Aranha giving a speech on The Aesthetic Emotion in Modern Art (*A emoção estética na arte moderna*), followed by Ronald de Carvalho in Modern painting and sculpture in Brazil (*A pintura e a escultura moderna no Brasil*).

During the event, the writers were the most famous for their modern way of making poetry and for their ideas on literary changes. In the second evening Menotti Del Picchia tried to explain the characteristics and aims of Modernism:

Nothing fake, excessively sentimental, artificial nor twisted: we want to write with blood – which is humanity; with electricity – which is movement, dynamic expression of the century; violence – which is São Paulo’s energy. This way a genuine Brazilian art will arise, daughter of the heavens and earth, of man and mystery (Menotti Del Picchia, 1922, in Amaral, 1998, p. 277, my translation).<sup>19</sup> Continuing...

. . . we want light, air, fans, airplanes, workers’ demands, idealisms, motors, blood, velocity, dreams in our art. That the pounding of an automobile on the tracks of two verses startle from poetry the last Homeric God which has anachronically remained sleeping and dreaming, in the Jazz band and movie era, with the flutes of the pastors of Arcadia and the divine breasts of Helen (Menotti Del Picchia, 1922, in Amaral, 1998, p.199, my translation).<sup>20</sup>

Mário de Andrade was also quite criticized after having read some of the poetries from his book *Hallucinated City (Paulicéia desvairada)*, such as “The slave who was not Isaura” (*A escrava que não era Isaura*). At the end of the presentation, Oswald de Andrade cited some of his modern poems, claiming at the end: “Carlos Gomes is

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<sup>18</sup> Original in Portuguese: *Nunca os nossos artistas se consagraram em hostes, ligando num mesmo elo a pintura, a escultura, a música e a poesia. Essas formas de expressão emotivas andaram sempre, se não divorciadas, pelo menos isoladas e independentes. Sob esse ponto de vista, a Semana de Arte Moderna é digna de nota.*

<sup>19</sup> Original in Portuguese: *Nada de postiço, meloso, artificial, arrevesado, precioso: queremos escrever com sangue – que é humanidade; com eletricidade – que é movimento, expressão dinâmica do século; violência – que é energia bandeirante.*

<sup>20</sup> Original in Portuguese: *queremos luz, ar, ventiladores, aeroplanos, reivindicações obreiras, idealismos, motores, sangue, velocidade, sonho em nossa arte. Que o rufo de um automóvel nos trilhos de dois versos espante da poesia o último Deus homérico que ficou anacronicamente a dormir e a sonhar na era da jazz band e do cinema, com a flauta dos pastores da Arcádia e os seios divinos de Helena*

horrible” (*Carlos Gomes é horrível*), making the audience jeer with great agitation (which was, probably, his very objective).

Tarsila do Amaral did not take part of this first important event of Modern Art in Brazil, but she received some letters from her friend Anita Malfatti describing the Week.

When Tarsila arrived in Brazil on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1922, Anita Malfatti introduced her to the three artists who, alongside with the two women, would later compose *The Group of Five* (*O Grupo dos Cinco*). They were Mário de Andrade, Menotti Del Picchia and Oswald de Andrade. They lived what they would later call the best time of their lives. They were young, rich, intelligent and charismatic. They were the Brazilian vanguard (Amaral, 2003).

Poetry and painting worked side by side during The Week of Modern Art, claiming for a genuine Brazilian identity; however, taking European modern art into account as well. Later on, when Oswald de Andrade wrote about this combination in the *Manifesto Antropofágico* (Appendix 3), he highlighted the idea of a Brazilian cannibal who believed that in eating the European he could ultimately assimilate the victim’s culture. This cannibalistic act was to include all other cultures which came to Brazil and merged with the natives. According to Oswald de Andrade, in his manifest, we had necessarily to digest all these cultures in order to transform them into something originally Brazilian. As an example of ‘*Antropofagia*’ in Literature, there is *Macunaima* by Mário de Andrade (Gotlib, 2003). Still today, the idea of ‘*Anthropophagism*’ is considered contemporary, according to Farias (2006)<sup>21</sup> who considers Oswald de Andrade up-to-date in this sense.

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<sup>21</sup> Dr. Agnaldo Farias – organizer of the *Bienal of art in São Paulo, 2006*. – Lecture at the CTC Auditorium, UFSC, September 28, 2006.

### 3.5. Tarsila do Amaral and Modernism

According to Amaral (2003), when *The Group of Five* started meeting at Tarsila's studio in 1922, she was not yet a modernist; however, she was quite interested in coming to terms with those new friends who were so enthusiastic about Modernism. For her, Anita Malffati was the reference, the modernist. Although Tarsila had not taken part of The Week of Modern Art, her artworks started undergoing a transformation; despite not being any longer so academic, they were not yet quite modern enough.

For Tarsila, 1922 was the year in which she discovered Modernism: "I discovered Modernism in Brazil"<sup>22</sup> (Amaral, 2003, p.80). However, she only got in touch with European Modernism when she met Pablo Picasso and Fernand Lèger and others in Paris in 1923. These artists would have a great influence on Tarsila's artworks.



**Figure 3.9:** *A Gare* – 1923  
(The station)  
Oil on Canvas 84,5 X 65 cm  
Tarsila do Amaral

<sup>22</sup> Original in Portuguese: "Vim descobrir o modernismo no Brasil".

Tarsila do Amaral studied art with Fernand Léger in 1923. At this moment, Leger was interested in the synthetic cubist composition, exploring daily, habitual scenes and objects, such as ashtrays, bottles and books on a table. He exercised deconstruction and construction with rhythm and colors. He was also interested in the role of the machine in modern industrial cities -- ideas which influenced Tarsila. As an example of Leger's influence, there is a Tarsila's painting *The Station (A Gare)*, see Fig. 18), 1923 (Amaral, 1997).

This chapter has provided a brief description on the Context of Culture in which Tarsila do Amaral was inserted when she started her artistic career. Through this description, it was possible to relate the paintings to the social, historical and political aspects which interfere in the images depicted demonstrating that “without context, a painting is just paint on canvas; with context, a painting is a work of art” (Freedman, 1999, p.318).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### VISUAL ANALYSIS OF THE THREE SELECTED PAINTINGS: *Carnaval em Madureira, Abaporú and Operários*

Discourses not only provide versions of who does what, when and where, they add evaluations, interpretations and arguments to these versions (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p.15).

Chapter four presents the analysis of three paintings produced by Tarsila do Amaral from a social semiotic perspective, taking into account the systems of the grammar of visual design (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). In order to develop interpretations of the aspects related to the paintings, some questions are asked to help viewers to have a more complete knowledge about the works. These questions are based on suggestions made by Franz (2003) in her work on critical art education, relating art to context (see chapter 2).

Three sub-parts organize the chapter in terms of art phase and first artworks: 4.1) *Pau-Brasil: Carnaval em Madureira* (1924); 4.2) *Antropofagia: Abaporú* (1928) and 4.3) *Social: Operários* (1933), following a chronological line. Each of these paintings is analyzed in terms of Representational, Interpersonal and Compositional structures which make meaning simultaneously (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), but are presented separately for didactic reasons.



4.1. PAU-BRASIL, the first art phase, represented by *Carnaval em Madureira* (1924),  
Fig.4.1.



**Figure 4.1:** *CARNAVAL EM MADUREIRA*, 1924  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Oil on canvas, 76 X 63 cm

In 1924, Tarsila do Amaral and a group of friends spent carnival<sup>23</sup> holidays in *Rio de Janeiro* and Easter in *Minas Gerais*. This journey stimulated the artist's perceptions in relation to Brazilian traditions and colors such as blue, pink, yellow and green. Landscapes, small towns and carnival festivities were observed by the artists of the group and then transformed in modern paintings and poeties as well, starting a new art phase in Tarsila do Amaral's paintings. This new phase was called *Pau-Brasil* (an analogy to the famous native tree called *Pau-Brasil*; the origin of the name *Brasil*).

This new movement or art phase was exposed by Oswald de Andrade in a manifest (called *Pau-Brasil*) published in *Correio da manhã*, on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1924 (see appendix 2). In this manifest, he defined the principles concerned with revealing not merely the Brazilian traditions, highlighting primitive Indian and Afro-Brazilian elements, but also the 'Brazilian language'. The idea was to write the way Brazilians express themselves orally in an effort to give the language a true Brazilian identity. Some time later, in 1925, Oswald de Andrade and Tarsila do Amaral published, in Paris, a book called *Pau-Brasil* (Fig.4.2.) containing several poems; most of them written during the trip to *Rio de Janeiro* and *Minas Gerais*, illustrated by Tarsila do Amaral (Gotlib, 1997). Below, there is an example of *Pau-Brasil* poetry, *RELICÁRIO* (Oswald de Andrade, in *Pau-Brasil*):

*No Baile da Corte  
Foi o Conde d'Eu quem disse  
Pra dona Bemvinda  
Que farinha de Suruí  
Pinga de Parati  
Fumo de Baependi  
é comê, bebê, pitá e caí*

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<sup>23</sup> Carnival is considered the most popular festival in Brazil. It has its origin in Portugal in an event called *entrudo* when groups of people used to throw flour, water and eggs on each other. This *entrudo* came to Brazil at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was influenced by the carnivals in Europe where people on the streets used to wear costumes and masks. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first groups called *blocos*, *cordões* and *corsos* started to become popular. The objective of these groups was to wear costumes and ride on decorated cars down the streets in a very happy parade which gave origin to the big parades there are today in Brazil (Nass, 2003).



**Figure 4.2:** Cover of the book *Pau-Brasil* (illustrated by Tarsila do Amaral)  
Oswald de Andrade, 1925

Below, this study starts the visual analysis of *Carnaval em Madureira* according to the grammar of visual design (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

#### **4.1.1. Representational structures: types of representations, processes and participants' roles.**

The canvas *Carnaval em Madureira*, 1924, stands for a concept: a **conceptual representation** and the **process** is **symbolic suggestive** taking two important factors into account 1) the Eiffel Tower is the main **participant** (the **Carrier**), and 2) “Details are de-emphasized in favor of what could be called mood or atmosphere” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.110). The image of the Eiffel Tower in Brazilian suburban community also suggests that the painter intended to confer a symbolic meaning to the image. What did the Eiffel Tower mean for Tarsila?

In Paris, 1923, Tarsila met Fernand Lèger (with whom she had painting classes and was deeply influenced by, as already pointed out in Chapter 3), Pablo Picasso, De Gleizes, Blaise Cendrars, Delaunay and other important modern painters. During this

period in Paris, Cendras gave Tarsila a canvas painted by Delaunay of the Eiffel Tower, generating a great effect on her. When referring to this artwork, she said:

among the artworks of my modern collection, Robert Delaunay's Eiffel Tower is the one which attracts most discussions and ugly faces..., imposing itself by great dimensions, cubist conceptions and aggressive composition. Did he really see the Eiffel Tower this way, falling apart? No. Delaunay was integrated in Cubism, the dynamic fever, the hieroglyphic design created by a recent aesthetic, the anxious desire of concretizing the new effervescent spirit. Delaunay painted the Eiffel Tower in a Venetian red, all disjointed, among discretely yellow and green saucers, which were completely lost in the predominant grey. It was scandalous for common visitors. After all, the Eiffel Tower is the symbol of Paris, in the same way The Sugarloaf Mountain is the symbol of Rio de Janeiro and The Bridge of Sighs, the symbol of Venice (Tarsila do Amaral, 1936, quoted by Gotlib, 2003, p.94, my translation).

Tarsila had also stated that since the beginning of Cubism, Delaunay painted the Towers evolving from the absence of color in favor of forms to finally return for colors and abstraction. This would be his style up to the end (Gotlib, 2003).

In terms of visual grammar, the **process** involving the Eiffel Tower (the vector and the Carrier) is **Symbolic Suggestive** which according to Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p.110) "pictures its genericity, its quality of depicting not a specific moment but a generalized essence". It is dominant in *Carnaval em Madureira* since it occupies a large pictorial area and attracts viewers' attention, making the viewers' eyes move from bottom to top (since it has vectors which point to the sky). Other processes (involving the people on the streets) which follow are all embedded in the major one, constructing secondary meanings, in the same way as language when a sentence with several clauses and correspondent processes are coordinated with or subordinated to each other (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.112-113). Note that when two or more processes occur in the same image, "the major structure is determined by relative size and relative conspicuousness of the element" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.113).

Furthermore, the major structure (the Eiffel Tower) has a triangle format, which is "angular, like the square – an element of the mechanical, technological order". But unlike the square, the triangle is a fused structure of a **participant** and a **vector** because

it can convey directionality; it can point at things (Dondis, 1973, quoted in Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.53).

As pointed out before, the other processes occurring in *Carnaval em Madureira* are, thus, secondary: the three women and the boy (as we look at the canvas, on the left side of the Tower), for instance, are **Actors** (“the active participants in action from which the vector emanates” Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.74); their arms, are **vectors** ( they connect two elements) standing for a **non-transactional action process** since the **goal** (the participant at which the vectors are directed” Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 74) is not visible for the viewer. These and all the other people, represented in the image, also stand for various **analytical processes** (“relating participants in terms of part-whole structure” Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.89) in which participants (as a whole) are the **Carriers** and the **possessive attributes** are their houses, skin color, clothes and hats or bundles of clothes on their heads, rendering visual concepts of social class and ethnicity and indicating they are common people, some of them slaves’ descendants, hard workers from *Madureira*. Most of the Carriers seen in the image (people on the streets of *Madureira*) are carrying bundles of clothes on their heads, thus possibly alluding to *lavadeiras* (laundry ladies who informally wash clothes to make a little money). Yet, who exactly are they?

As Tarsila did not detail participants’ faces, people depicted in *Carnaval em Madureira* may be connoted as anonymous (Unsworth, 2006)<sup>24</sup>; common people from *Madureira*, presumably descendants of slaves (as the painting was produced in 1924) who came to work in this particular community. But, as slaves’ descendants, they were not qualified to work in industries, they were committed to the available heavy work, such as farming, housework and construction. According to IBGE, *Instituto Brasileiro*

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<sup>24</sup> Workshop at *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*, CCE b, room 405, on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006: *Point of view and inter-image relations in conventional and electronic narratives for children: towards a systemic functional description.*

*de Pesquisas* (accessed through the site [www.ibge.gov.br](http://www.ibge.gov.br)), after being released from the farms, most slaves, who did not want to keep on working in the same place, migrated to urban communities. Notwithstanding their freedom from slavery, they were not prepared to live on their own, and were left, by the government, in a marginal position.

#### **4.1.2. Interactional structures: Contact (offer or demand); social distance (shot distance) and attitude (planes and angles)**

Concerning **social distance**, the Eiffel Tower in *Carnaval em Madureira* is depicted in a **middle distance** (for objects) as the whole figure appears in the canvas, “revealing it as the viewer’s destination” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 134). Such choice of distance makes sense considering that Tarsila do Amaral was engaged with Modern art from Paris.

In relation to the **attitude** (the system related to the perspective from which participants were depicted), the **frontal plane**<sup>25</sup> of the Tower and the one of the viewer run parallel, hence expressing **involvement** between them. This involvement demands some previous knowledge from the viewers to recognize The Eiffel Tower as a symbol of Paris and of Modern Art.

The absence of eyes on the participants’ faces in *Carnaval em Madureira* may be related to their anonymous position: they are common people who do not establish contact with viewers. However, in my opinion, there is some doubt whether the painter intended to dissociate the viewers with the people depicted or simply to paint within Modernist style, de-emphasizing details.

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<sup>25</sup> When the viewers’ frontal plane runs parallel to the participants’ frontal plane, it indicates that both belong to the same world meaning some involvement between them, otherwise it indicates detachment (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996)

People from both sides of the Tower are depicted at a **public distance** (the torso of at least 4 or 5 people), remaining strangers. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 130) when people are depicted from a public distance, it means that the image maker wants participants to remain strangers: “These people are to remain strangers”. The other participants have their bodies depicted, but details are not defined either, giving them, this way, an anonymous meaning too.

In sum, people depicted without pictorial details and from a public distance seem to be strangers to viewers; as if viewers and participants did not belong to the same world.

#### **4.1.2.1. Considerations on Modality in *Carnaval em Madureira*.**

Visual modality markers (see chapter 2, p.35) which guided me to say that *Carnaval em Madureira* has low modality, are: color saturation, lack of pictorial details, no naturalistic perspective and artificial background (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 170-180). What also contributes a lot to low modality is the reduction of participants and other objects to schematized shapes (such as circles and triangles) what makes the image unrealistic.

According to the analysis so far, *Carnaval em Madureira* demands from viewers knowledge of intellectual and economical facts of the 20's since the painter depicts a huge and absurd Eiffel Tower in a suburban town, meaning Paris, Modernism and the power of geometric shapes. Therefore, when texts and images have codes which only a selected group is able to understand, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.170) use the term called by Bernstein (1981) **abstract coding orientation** described as

sets of abstract principles which inform the way in which texts are coded by specific social groups, or within specific institutional contexts such as ‘high art’, academic and scientific fields. In such contexts modality is higher the more an image reduces the individual to general, and the concrete to its essential qualities. Thus, the ability to produce and/or read texts grounded in this coding orientation is a mark of social distinction, of being an ‘educated person’ or a ‘serious artist’.

#### **4.1.3. Compositional structures: information value (right/left; top/down); salience and framing.**

Compositional structures, previously presented in chapter two, are concerned with the organization of the image. Thus, when a certain image is painted, the manner in which participants are placed within the scene may convey a specific meaning. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p.181), “composition of the whole is the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other”.

The placement of the Eiffel Tower on the left side of the image somewhat indicates that the viewers already know it as given information (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). However, its ‘almost’ central position also makes it the ‘nucleus of information’ while the other participants are taken as ‘contextualizing information’.

**Salience** given to The Eiffel Tower operates by means of many elements, such as foregrounding, exaggerated **size** in relation to other elements portrayed in the painting, **color contrast** (light and contrasting colors which characterizes Tarsila do Amaral’s paintings). Salience to The Tower is also activated by **information value** (related to the position of the elements in the image). The position of The Tower almost in the center of the image makes it important, consequently salient. Furthermore, contrast of realities such as Paris / *Madureira* is another way of making The Tower salient. In this sense, The Eiffel Tower in *Madureira* is quite incoherent but, in this case, absurdity just makes The Tower even more salient. Being salient makes it also **framed**. Another way of framing, considered part of Tarsila’s style is the use of different, stronger or lighter colors to frame and define the structure of the participants, giving them “individuality and differentiation” (Unsworth, 2001 p.109).



The other participants depicted in *Carnaval em Madureira* (women and children) are distributed in groups, what is considered framing by Kress and van Leeuwen(1996).

When analyzing the image background, one may notice that Tarsila do Amaral made use of curves to draw mountains suggesting nature. Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996, p. 53) claim that “circles and curved forms generally are the elements we associate with organic and natural order, with the world of organic nature – and such mystical meanings as may be associated with them derive from this”.

In return, the landscape (the background) in *Carnaval em Madureira* represents nature, identified by the curves, the green color and also by the Brazilian palm tree ( a modern composition of the *Pau-Brasil* art phase).

According to the analysis, Modernism seems powerful in *Carnaval em Madureira* and a little detached from social and political problems. Tarsila do Amaral seems to be interested in depicting the exotic people from Brazil as well as its exuberant nature, represented in the Tarsila do Amaral's paintings by schematized mountains, cactus, banana leaf and colors such as green and yellow As far as I could notice from the research, her concerns were rather aesthetical, much more than social at that moment. She was interested in a Brazilian art engaged with Modernism.

4.2. ANTROPOFAGIA, the second art phase, here represented by *Abaporú* (1928), Fig.

4.3.



**Figure 4.3: ABAPORÚ, 1928**  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Oil on canvas, 85 X 73 cm  
Eduardo Constantine collection  
*Museu de Arte Latino-Americano de Buenos Aires*

“*Abaporú* is a very strong symbol in our culture, identified with Brazilian people, taking an important role in our folklore” (Amaral, 2004 p.129, my translation). For Oswald de Andrade, it gives the idea of earth, native Brazilian man, savage and anthropophagic. The anthropophagi reminded Oswald de Andrade of the episode involving *Bispo Sardinha* from Portugal, who, in our history or folklore, was killed and eaten by Brazilian Indians after shipwrecking on our seaside. According to anthropophagic beliefs, if someone eats human flesh, this person absorbs the attributes of the ingested body (Amaral, 2004).

Influenced by the anthropophagic or cannibal beliefs, Oswald de Andrade decided to lay the foundations for a cultural movement, called *Antropofagia*, based on the anthropophagic analogy. For Oswald de Andrade, Brazilians had to digest other people’s cultures, mixing them with the native culture to have, as a result, a new and original culture. In order to explain his ideas on this new artistic phase (in literature and paintings as well), Oswald de Andrade wrote a manifest, called *The Anthropophagic Manifest* (*Manifesto Antropófago*, see appendix 2) which deals with diversity, nationality and identity.

During this first part of Modernism, art, music and literature were independent from the serious aspects of radicalism in politics. Modernists were supported by oligarchies which had the economic power. They were rich, intelligent and educated people; modernists were not concerned with either social or political problems. There were other concerns such as meetings, vanguard, cultural events and Europe (Zílio, 1944). However, as time passed, modernists started engaging in social and political problems in a very slow process.

#### 4.2.1. Representational structures: Types of representation, processes and represented participant roles

The main process occurring in *Abaporú* is **Symbolic suggestive** in a **conceptual representation** for the main participant (the **Carrier**) is alone (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.110), practically occupying the whole canvas and presenting a tropical landscape as background. “Expressionist landscapes diminish the detail of representation, in favor of overall color effects evolving strong mood, and imbuing the **Carrier** with symbolic meanings” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.112).

The other **processes** occurring in *Abaporú* (secondary ones) belong to **narrative** representations and are realized by three **vectors** which are: (1) the arm which holds the tiny head, joining them together in a **bi-directional transactional action** (in this particular process arm and head are the participants), (2) the second arm and (3) the creature’s leg, **both** in **unidirectional transactional actions**. According to Tarsila, the creature (the **Actor**) is “a lonely figure of a monster holding his tiny head with his hand. The arm is bent and his elbow is supported by his knee (Tarsila do Amaral, 1939, cited in Amaral, 2003, p.280, my translation). Who is this creature? Tarsila also said that it came from her dreams when she was a child and the Afro-Brazilian women used to tell the children horror stories about monsters and haunted houses to make them get scared. However, Oswald de Andrade (1928, cited in Amaral, 2003, p.279) interpreted the creature as a man stuck on the ground. “It is extraordinarily different”, he said. Finally, after some time looking up for a name in the dictionary, they decided for *Abaporú*, which means a man who eats humans (*homem que come gente*).

Tarsila uses the monstrous figure as a metaphor to suggest the mixture of earth and primitivism in Brazilian nature, represented by the blue of the sky, the sun (which looks like an absurd flower) and the green, very green of the vegetation (Amaral, 2003).

**Circumstances**, in **narrative** representations, encompass secondary participants, which are related to the main participant not by means of vectors. These kinds of participants could be left out without causing much difference in the narrative; although their absence could cause lack of information (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.71). **Locative Circumstances** “relate other participants to a specific participant called **Setting** when there is a contrast between foreground and background” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.71). In *Abaporú*, the **Setting** stands for an **embedded analytical process** it could have been left out without having changed the situation: the sky, the sun (or flower), the cactus and the ground as **attributes**, but these representations are de-emphasized in favor of the main process (here, Symbolic Suggestive).

#### 4.2.2 Interactional structures: contact, social distance and attitude

Due to its modern characterization, Tarsila did make use of the eyes to establish **contact (offer or demand)** with viewers. However, despite the eyes being merely represented by two small traces, their oblique position gives the viewers an idea of sadness and tiredness. Concerning **social distance**, which is related to the viewers’ field of vision and how much they can see of the participant, it is possible to determine that *Abaporú* was depicted from a close social distance as viewers can see the whole figure of the participant from a **low angle** (from bottom to the top), empowering the participant (the creature).

What kind of power does this creature embody?

For Tarsila, *Abaporú* was part of a world of monsters from the horror stories told by Afro-Brazilian women to scare children and make fun of them. These monsters, in the children’s imagination, were ugly, big and strong, representing, this way, a great danger for them.

Regarding **attitude**, which is related to the involvement or detachment caused by the plane in which participants are depicted, the plane used for the creature is not parallel to the one of the viewer, meaning **detachment**. This attitude means that the creature is not part of the viewers' world. Monsters were only part of Tarsila's dreams; pure imagination of her childhood (Amaral, 2004).

#### 4.2.2.1 Modality in *Abaporú*

On the one hand, “[a] social semiotic theory of truth cannot claim to establish the absolute truth or untruth of representations. It can only show whether a given ‘proposition’ (visual, verbal or otherwise) is represented as true or not.” On the other hand, according to a naturalist theory, **modality** is measured based on how much correspondence there is between the represented object and the real one (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.163).

Despite considering that there are different realities for different social groups, if one takes naturalism into account, one may state that the greater the abstraction, the lower the modality (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 p.164). In artworks such as the ones here analyzed, schematized shapes for the details as the *Abaporú*'s eyes, grants low modality to the image, in the direction of ‘less than real’. Furthermore, color differentiation reduced to brown, green, orange and blue and the exaggeration in representing parts of the body such as arm, leg and foot contrasting with the tiny head are other aspects which contribute to give low modality to *Abaporú*.

#### 4.2.3. Compositional structures: information value, salience and framing

Despite being considered the starting point of *Antropofagia*, *Abaporú* had its characteristics first presented in *A Negra* (1923) (see chapter 3), which I have already

referred to in chapter 2 and 3. *A Negra* was painted in 1923, when Tarsila was influenced by Léger, Picasso, Braque and other European modernists. The use of African art and exotic nature in Cubism was part of a Modern thematic; however, for Tarsila it was a way of giving expression to a Brazilian identity (Amaral, 2003). Both canvases carry such characteristics of exaggerated size of members, vibrant colors and elements that also take part of Brazilian nature (a banana leaf and a cactus). Moreover, both are figures (*A Negra* and *Abaporu*) related to Tarsila do Amaral's childhood in the countryside.

**Information value** in relation to the participant in *Abaporú* is **given** (left side of the image) but slightly centered, meaning that it was already known by the image-maker (in this case, viewers' do not know the participant). This slightly centered position along with other characteristics, such as deformations of body's parts and huge size define what is called **salience**, a resource used to call the viewers' attention to the participant characteristics.

#### 4.2.3.1. Modernist composition in *Abaporú*

As an expression of Brazilian identity, *Abaporú* stands as an icon of Brazilian Modernism. Its modernist composition is revealed by the exaggerated size, geometric sun (or flower), presence of Brazilian nature (cactus) and the use of "country colors" such as blue, pink and yellow along with the intention of showing a Brazilian identity. Another important modern element is the triangle (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) which had already been employed in *Carnaval em Madureira*. If a line is drawn linking the extremities of the creature, a triangle shape is found, empowering the creature through this geometric form. The viewers' eyes move from the huge foot and big hand, to the

tiny head which points to the sun (flower? or orange?) and then go down to the cactus, getting, finally, back to the foot.

The *Antropofagia* art phase (presided by *Abaporú*) was a synthesis of Brazilian Modernism, from which Oswald de Andrade wrote the manifest, already mentioned in this chapter, called *Manifesto Antropófago* (Cannibal manifest). Once more, literature follows art to encompass a cultural movement in order to identify Brazilian potentialities and construe a modern and original identity (Amaral, 2004).



4.3. SOCIAL art phase, in this study represented by the canvas *Operários* (1933),  
Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4:** *Operários*, 1933  
Tarsila do Amaral  
Oil on canvas  
150 X 205 cm

The year of 1929 was marked by the end of political and economic power of the landowning in Brazil, specially the ones who dealt with coffee plantation (coffee price decreased drastically in the stock market of New York). Tarsila do Amaral's family started to have financial problems. Therefore, she decided to work at the *Pinacoteca do estado de São Paulo* invited by Júlio Prestes, vice-president of Brazil. However, when the Revolution of 1930 changed the political scenery, replacing the president and the vice-president of Brazil, Tarsila lost her job (Gotlib, 2003).

Life had changed and so had Tarsila who changed the focus of concerns. She was now interested in social issues (Gotlib, 2003).

Going to The URSS in the 30's demanded a great effort from Tarsila do Amaral since her economic life was no longer the same. However, the possibility of having her own exposition in The URSS made her sell part of her private collection of artworks and go to The URSS with Osório César, with whom she was in love (Amaral, 2003).

The objective of the trip, declared Tarsila do Amaral in an interview to the newspaper *Diário da Noite* (Amaral, 2003) was also to get in touch with the soviet socialism through their intellectual processes. Despite not being very interested in politics, Tarsila was living a soviet social phase in her own enthusiastic way (Amaral, 2003). This interest was part of a transition which Brazilian intellectuals were going through in an effort to redefine their cultural and political conceptions. These new conceptions would give a crucial weight to the social, relevant issue in a society dominated by industrial production and consumption (mainly in the big cities) resulting in an exclusion of the lower social classes (Zílio, 1944). In 1933, still influenced by these new concepts of social concerns, she painted *Operários*, a pioneer artwork with social thematic.

#### **4.3.1. Representational structures: types of representation, processes and represented participants roles:**

As for the third painting to be analyzed in this study, *Operários*, it is possible to consider that there are two processes which are equally important in the image. The first one is a classificational process which “relates participants in terms of ‘kind of’ relation: a taxonomy” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 81). The participants (subordinates) play the role of subordinate to at least one other participant (the superordinate). The subordinates are hard workers of a factory depicted in a neutral background. They have a superordinate (the capitalist industrial system, here represented by the factory). However, there are some other factors which guided this analysis to establish that this image as a covert taxonomy, according to Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 81):

The subordinates (people) are visually realized by a symmetrical composition and placed at equal distance from each other, given the same size and the same orientation towards the horizontal and vertical axes.

In this sense, participants (subordinates) are judged to be members of the same class and are to be read as such meaning that they have something in common such as their profession: They are the workforce. Different in appearance, the faces, however, are equal in poverty and suffering (Gotlib, 2003). In order to give real appearance to the faces, Tarsila depicted familiar people from real life by heart. Some of them were identified by her later as Mario de Andrade, Anita Malfatti and a farm employee.

According to Amaral (2004), Tarsila had the intention to represent 53 different peoples of the earth in the same image, probably showing that all peoples are equal. They represent the concerns of modernism related to the machine and to the social problematic in the beginning of the century: man versus machine in a duel for power.

#### **4.3.2 Interactional structures: Contact (offer or demand), social distance (shot distance) and attitude (planes and angles).**

The Interactional metafunction, as it was mentioned before, is concerned with the relationship between participants, participants and viewers, and image-maker and participants. Considering this idea of relationship, in *Operários*, Tarsila do Amaral depicts people in piles, in a frontal plane, most of them looking directly to the viewers, demanding. They were demanding actions from the viewers in relation to their lives. According to Freyre (1933), after 1888 when there were no longer slaves in Brazil, the same economic order persisted. Instead of slaves, industries had their workers making money for the capitalists who could buy expensive cars, travel to Europe and live in real palaces in the cities. Thus, what kind of actions are the participants, in *Operários*, demanding from the viewers? They are probably demanding social actions from viewers. They are demanding social justice.

The people depicted in *Operários* are hard workers from a lower class, oppressed by the industrial system. According to Zílio (1944) their look to the viewers is anguished and sad; they have no reasons to smile.

In the painting there is a relationship established between the people depicted and the machine (the industry) as if they were the parts of intricate machinery which made one dependent on the other (Zílio, 1944).

#### **4.3. Compositional structures: information value, salience and framing**

Compositional structures are concerned with the placement of participants within pictorial space. Depending on the position a participant occupies in the image, it can convey different meanings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

In relation to information value, the image is equally divided in two parts (two triangles): the one on the left (the industry) represents the machine and contrasts with the other side on the right (new) which represents the hard workers (anonymous people). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 187), the left side (the new) can be considered 'problematic', 'contestable', 'the information at issue'. In *Operários*, the problematic side is the left side which presents the industry, the origin of the problems.

Saliency in *Operários* is made by foregrounding the people as well as by their pyramid organization. They are well organized as if they were part of a sequence in a mechanical work. Their format makes them framed as well (depicting people in groups is a way of framing them).

In conclusion, following the grammar of visual design and linking the meanings to context leads this analysis to give rise to important meanings of Brazilian socio-cultural environment of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through Representational, Interactional and Compositional structures this study tries to develop a descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing image as strategic, meaning making resource, the same as in language as described by Halliday, 1978 (in Eggins, 1993, p.1).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINAL REMARKS

Not only the mass media, the pages of magazines and comic strips for example, but also the documents produced by corporations, universities, government departments etc., have required color illustrations and sophisticated layout and typography. And not only cinema and semiotically exuberant performances and videos of popular music, but also the avant-gardes of the 'high culture' arts have begun to use an increasing variety of materials and to cross the boundaries between the various art, design and performance disciplines, towards multimodal *Gesamtkunstwerke*, multimedia events, and so on (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p.1)

As pointed before, this thesis investigates three of Tarsila do Amaral's paintings: *Carnaval em Madureira* (1924), *Abaporú* (1928) and *Operários* (1933) from a social-semiotic perspective, giving first an overview of the socio-cultural context (Context of culture: chapter 3) from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to develop such a complex study, an interdisciplinary analysis was conducted, integrating linguistics, visual grammar, History and art studies.

The visual analysis was drawn upon Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) grammar of visual design which intends to provide inventories of the already established conventions of visual semiotics to see how image-makers use them to make meaning in our contemporary western society. Besides the visual analysis, this study made a description of the Context of culture (Halliday, 1978, 1994, 2004), in a global concept, encompassing social, political and artistic aspects of life from the beginning of the 20th century which could have influenced Tarsila do Amaral in her painting production (see chapter 4).

Concerning art studies, an approach suggested by Franz (2003) was of great help for the development of the analysis, in which she suggests viewers to ask questions related to the outside of the image in order to link images to context.

Considering the approaches described above and taking into account general / specific objectives and the three research questions which guided my study, this chapter intends to discuss the most important findings of the study.

The approaches above mentioned allowed me to analyze the paintings *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú* and *Operários*, thus answering, the three research question of this thesis: 1) What are the Representational, Interactional and Compositional structures operating in the three paintings? 2) What kind of major concerns are represented in the three paintings? And, 3) What kind of meanings do the three paintings share, if there are any?

*Carnaval em Madureira* (1924) presents the Eiffel Tower as the main participant in a symbolic process; it symbolizes Paris, Modernism and Tarsila do Amaral herself. She was trying to integrate France and Brazil by having an Eiffel Tower in the middle of *Madureira*, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro. The other processes, such as the action of the people surrounding the Eiffel Tower as if nothing was happening, represent the distance between Modernism and people from *Madureira*.

The main process occurring in *Abaporú* (1928) is also Symbolic Suggestive in a conceptual representation. *Abaporú* reminds Tarsila of her childhood when Afro-Brazilian women used to tell children horror stories before going to sleep. However, Oswald de Andrade identified it as a man stuck in the ground, suggesting a mixture of earth and primitivism, what led him to call the monster *Abaporú* (man who eats humans), a kind of anthropophagic man. The other process occurring in the image is secondary and it is represented by the Setting, having the sky, the sun, the cactus, the

sun and the ground as Attributes which could be left out despite emphasizing the idea of Brazilian nature. From *Abaporú* came the idea of *Antropofagismo*; the idea of digesting other cultures to mix them with ours.

*Operários* stands for a conceptual representation following the other paintings; however the process is not symbolic, but classificational which relates participants in terms of 'kind of' taxonomy, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). The capitalist system is the Superordinate and people are the subordinates realized by a symmetrical composition (see page 67 of this study). They are judged to be members of the same class: the workforce. The other process is action non-transactional; the vectors are represented by the chimneys, the industry: the capitalist system.

The three paintings share the fact of being conceptual representations, *Carnaval em Madureira* and *Abaporú* have symbolic meanings while *Operários* has classificational meanings. This probably means that Tarsila had changed and her concerns had changed as well. When she painted *Carnaval em Madureira* and *Abaporú* she was interested in Modernism and in connecting it to the Brazilian thematic. When she painted *Operários* she was concerned with social issues after having visited the URSS (where she met only the good side of communism) and having become engaged with the communist party, what did not last long (Amaral, 2004). She did not stand the way communists wanted to change her way of thinking about life and broke up with the communist party (Amaral, 2004).

In relation to the Interactional metafunction which is concerned with the relationship established among participants, image-maker and viewers in the images, *Carnaval em Madureira* has the main participant (the Eiffel Tower) depicted in a middle distance as if the Tower was the viewer's destination. Perspective in the image shows that the frontal plane of the viewer and the frontal plane of the Tower run



parallel, meaning some involvement between them. This kind of involvement demands some previous knowledge from viewers who must be able to recognize the Eiffel Tower as a symbol of Paris and Modernism.

People from both sides of the Eiffel Tower are considered strange since they are depicted at a public distance, remaining strangers.

In *Abaporú*, the eyes establish contact with the viewers despite being represented by two small oblique traces (characteristic of primitivism) which show some kind of sadness and tiredness. Another important point to be considered in the relationship between *Abaporú* and the viewers is that *Abaporú* was depicted from a low angle, which gives him power over viewers. This power comes from the fact that Tarsila, in her childhood, was afraid of the monsters created by Afro-Brazilians to scare children. Despite having power over the viewers, it is possible to see that it is not part of the viewer's world because their frontal planes do not run parallel.

The relationship between participants and viewers in *Operários* is very strong when considering that the participants are directly looking at the viewers' eyes, demanding something: probably some action in relation to their situation as people explored by the capitalist system. The frontal plane also makes contact since the participants' frontal plane run parallel to the viewers' frontal plane, indicating that viewers know who these people depicted by Tarsila are.

In fact, some of the faces depicted in the image are from real people such as Mário de Andrade, Anita Malfatti and one of her employees (Amaral, 2003).

In relation to the **Compositional** metafunction which is concerned with the organization of the image, *Carnaval em Madureira* shows that the painter wanted to give salience and importance to the Eiffel Tower placing it in a left position (almost central) in red color. The background, *Madureira*, represents Rio de Janeiro and the

Carnival (despite having just a few people dressed up for the party). To conclude, Tarsila was very interested in Cubism but at the same time she was interested in depicting something Brazilian, something that could be Modern and Brazilian. Hence, she managed to deal with both concepts; being able to depict The Eiffel Tower in *Madureira* possibly means her desire to have both Brazilian thematic and Modernism in her artworks.

Compositional structures in *Abaporú* are also concerned with Cubism. During the analysis, it was possible to find a triangular shape drawing a line to link the extremities of the creature; showing that Tarsila do Amaral once again used the triangle to give power to the participant. This power is also determined by its size relating the creature to a monster.

Still influenced by the Cubist tendency, *Operários* has two triangles dividing the canvas in two parts. The first, on the left side, encompasses the industry which is taken as the element of a problematic issue. The second, on the right, shows the people who are the workforce of the industries. What calls the attention in this composition is the way these two parts fit together to form a whole, as if they were part of an engine.

Comparing the structures of the three paintings leads me to say that from 1924 to 1933, Tarsila do Amaral was concerned with geometrical shapes and deformation of the bodies and objects, producing her artworks from a modernist perspective, in an effort to follow the modernist tendencies of art. However, her social concerns changed, because in the third painting (*Operários*) she was not only interested in the aspects of an exotic Brazil but also in the socio-cultural aspect of it. Still interested in triangular shapes, but aware of the concerns related to the capitalist system and its consequences, in her third phase, Tarsila do Amaral was interested in depicting the workforce versus the machine (or the capitalist system).

As mentioned above, the general objective, specific objectives and the three research questions guided me in this study. Therefore, describing the Context of culture (chapter 3), discussing the analysis, answering questions during the analysis to clarify the intrinsic aspects of the image, and showing how images and language make the three kinds of meanings Ideational/Experiential, Interpersonal/Interactional and, Textual/Compositional what is a congruence between them (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), allowed me to achieve my general objective. This general objective was to investigate three of Tarsila do Amaral's paintings (*Carnaval em madureira*, *Abaporú* and *Operários*) from a social semiotic framework relating them to the Brazilian socio-cultural context from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, aiming at contributing to the development of studies in visual communication.

Considering the analysis developed in this study, the results suggest a) that Tarsila do Amaral's paintings (as any other kind of visual communication) are related to socio-cultural context from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, conveying meanings from the society in which they were produced and b) that becoming visually literate can, thus, contribute to our better understanding of socio-cultural meanings in contemporary society.

### **5.1. Pedagogical implications**

The diversity of visual texts used in classrooms by students in our contemporary society leads them to the necessity of being able to understand the meanings this kind of texts conveys. Thus, developing a way of reading these meanings conveyed by images, related to written texts or not, may allow students to enjoy and learn from them, thus, having a better performance in the classroom and in our society. So, in order

to acquire these essential and complementary literacy skills, teachers themselves need to become aware of these issues. They also need to acquire the tools for informed visual analysis together

with language for discussing the meanings construed in the visual learning materials with their students (Stenglin and Iedema, 2000, p.195).

## **5.2. Limitations of the research**

Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p.1)

intended to provide inventories of major compositional structures which have become established as conventions in the course of the history of visual semiotics, and to analyze how they are used to produce meanings by image-makers.

These inventories, which constitute the systems available to construct the meanings of a given image, offer analysts choices for a systemic analysis of images. However, when comparing two analysis of the same image, it is common to find different interpretations for it due to different points of view even when there is a standard and scientific methodology for the analysis. According to O’Toole (1994, p. 177),

sciences recognize that even with the most empirical measurement of data there is a stage where intuitive interpretation takes over and that this is central to scientific enterprise; there is no ‘final’ answer.

In this sense, this thesis had its limitations in relation to interpretation of the paintings selected. This systematic approach of meaning making for images, developed by O’Toole (1994) and later Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), guided me in the analysis of *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abaporú* and *Operários*, but I believe that it is not the end of the analysis. It remains open for discussion.

## **5.4. Suggestions for further research**

This thesis has, as part of the main objective, the intention of contributing to the development of studies in visual communication. Thus, I hope other studies can give continuation to the development of issues of this kind, so important for becoming proficient in our own multimodal contemporary society.

Having developed an analysis of *Carnaval em Madureira*, *Abapurú* and *Operários* from a social-semiotic perspective to link these paintings to socio-cultural aspects of Brazil from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can influence the investigation of other paintings reinforcing the idea that images convey meanings from the culture in which they are produced.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil (1924)

A poesia existe nos fatos. Os casebres de açafrão e de ocre nos verdes da Favela, sob o azul cabralino, são fatos estéticos.

O Carnaval no Rio é o acontecimento religioso da raça. Pau-Brasil. Wagner submerge ante os cordões de Botafogo. Bárbaro e nosso. A formação étnica rica. Riqueza vegetal. O minério. A cozinha. O vatapá, o ouro e a dança.

Toda a história bandeirante e a história comercial do Brasil. O lado doutor, o lado citações, o lado autores conhecidos. Comovente. Rui Barbosa: uma cartola na Senegâmbia. Tudo revertendo em riqueza. A riqueza dos bailes e das frases feitas. Negras de Jockey. Odaliscas no Catumbi. Falar difícil.

O lado doutor. Fatalidade do primeiro branco aportado e dominando politicamente as selvas selvagens. O bacharel. Não podemos deixar de ser doutos. Doutores. País de dores anônimas, de doutores anônimos. O Império foi assim. Eruditamos tudo. Esquecemos o gavião de penacho.

A nunca exportação de poesia. A poesia anda oculta nos cipós maliciosos da sabedoria. Nas lianas da saudade universitária.

Mas houve um estouro nos aprendimentos. Os homens que sabiam tudo se deformaram como borrachas sopradas. Rebentaram.

A volta à especialização. Filósofos fazendo filosofia, críticos, crítica, donas de casa tratando de cozinha.

A Poesia para os poetas. Alegria dos que não sabem e descobrem.

Tinha havido a inversão de tudo, a invasão de tudo : o teatro de tese e a luta no palco entre morais e imorais. A tese deve ser decidida em guerra de sociólogos, de homens de lei, gordos e dourados como Corpus Juris.

Ágil o teatro, filho do saltimbanco. Ágil e ilógico. Ágil o romance, nascido da invenção. Ágil a poesia. A poesia Pau-Brasil. Ágil e cândida. Como uma criança.

Uma sugestão de Blaise Cendrars: - Tendes as locomotivas cheias, ides partir. Um negro gira a manivela do desvio rotativo em que estais. O menor descuido vos fará partir na direção oposta ao vosso destino.

Contra o gabinetismo, a prática culta da vida. Engenheiros em vez de jurisperitos, perdidos como chineses na genealogia das idéias.

A língua sem arcaísmos, sem erudição. Natural e neológica. A contribuição milionária de todos os erros. Como falamos. Como somos.

Não há luta na terra de vocações acadêmicas. Há só fardas. Os futuristas e os outros.

Uma única luta - a luta pelo caminho. Dividamos: Poesia de importação. E a Poesia Pau-Brasil, de exportação.

Houve um fenômeno de democratização estética nas cinco partes sábias do mundo. Instituiu-se o naturalismo. Copiar. Quadros de carneiros que não fosse lã mesmo, não prestava. A interpretação no dicionário oral das Escolas de Belas Artes queria dizer reproduzir igualzinho... Veio a pirogravura. As meninas de todos os lares ficaram artistas. Apareceu a máquina fotográfica. E com todas as prerrogativas do cabelo grande, da caspa e da misteriosa genialidade de olho virado - o artista fotógrafo.

Na música, o piano invadiu as saletas nuas, de folhinha na parede. Todas as meninas ficaram pianistas. Surgiu o piano de manivela, o piano de patas. A pleyela. E a ironia eslava compôs para a pleyela. Stravinski.

A estatuária andou atrás. As procissões saíram novinhas das fábricas.

Só não se inventou uma máquina de fazer versos - já havia o poeta parnasiano.

Ora, a revolução indicou apenas que a arte voltava para as elites. E as elites começaram desmanchando. Duas fases: 1a) a deformação através do impressionismo, a fragmentação, o caos voluntário. De Cézanne e Malarmé, Rodin e Debussy até agora. 2a) o lirismo, a apresentação no templo, os materiais, a inocência construtiva.

O Brasil profiteur. O Brasil doutor. E a coincidência da primeira construção brasileira no movimento de reconstrução geral. Poesia Pau-Brasil.

Como a época é miraculosa, as leis nasceram do próprio rotamento dinâmico dos fatores destrutivos.

A síntese

O equilíbrio

O acabamento de carrosserie

A invenção

A surpresa

Uma nova perspectiva

Uma nova escala.

Qualquer esforço natural nesse sentido será bom. Poesia Pau-Brasil

O trabalho contra o detalhe naturalista - pela síntese; contra a morbidez romântica - pelo equilíbrio geométrico e pelo  
acabamento técnico; contra a cópia, pela invenção e pela surpresa.

Uma nova perspectiva.

A outra, a de Paolo Ucello criou o naturalismo de apogeu. Era uma ilusão ética. Os objetos distantes não diminuam. Era uma lei de aparência. Ora, o momento é de reação à aparência. Reação à cópia. Substituir a perspectiva visual e naturalista por uma perspectiva de outra ordem: sentimental, intelectual, irônica, ingênua.

Uma nova escala:

A outra, a de um mundo proporcionado e catalogado com letras nos livros, crianças nos colos. O redame produzindo letras maiores que torres. E as novas formas da indústria, da viação, da aviação. Postes. Gasômetros Rails. Laboratórios e oficinas técnicas. Vozes e tics de fios e ondas e fulgurações. Estrelas familiarizadas com negativos fotográficos. O correspondente da surpresa física em arte.

A reação contra o assunto invasor, diverso da finalidade. A peça de tese era um arranjo monstruoso. O romance de idéias, uma mistura. O quadro histórico, uma aberração. A escultura eloquente, um pavor sem sentido.

Nossa época anuncia a volta ao sentido puro.

Um quadro são linhas e cores. A estatuária são volumes sob a luz.

A Poesia Pau-Brasil é uma sala de jantar domingueira, com passarinhos cantando na mata resumida das gaiolas, um sujeito magro compondo uma valsa para flauta e a Maricota lendo o jornal. No jornal anda todo o presente.

Nenhuma fórmula para a contemporânea expressão do mundo. Ver com olhos livres.

Temos a base dupla e presente - a floresta e a escola. A raça crédula e dualista e a geometria, a álgebra e a química logo depois da mamadeira e do chá de erva-doce. Um misto de "dorme nenê que o bicho vem pegá" e de equações.

Uma visão que bata nos cilindros dos moinhos, nas turbinas elétricas; nas usinas produtoras, nas questões cambiais, sem perder de vista o Museu Nacional. Pau-Brasil.

Obuses de elevadores, cubos de arranha-céus e a sábia preguiça solar. A reza. O Carnaval. A energia íntima. O sabiá. A hospitalidade um pouco sensual, amorosa. A saudade dos pajés e os campos de aviação militar. Pau-Brasil.

O trabalho da geração futurista foi ciclópico. Acertar o relógio império da literatura nacional.

Realizada essa etapa, o problema é outro. Ser regional e puro em sua época.

O estado de inocência substituindo o estado de graça que pode ser uma atitude do espírito.

O contrapeso da originalidade nativa para inutilizar a adesão acadêmica.

A reação contra todas as indigestões de sabedoria. O melhor de nossa tradição lírica. O melhor de nossa demonstração moderna.

Apenas brasileiros de nossa época. O necessário de química, de mecânica, de economia e de balística. Tudo digerido. Sem meeting cultural. Práticos. Experimentais. Poetas. Sem reminiscências livrescas. Sem comparações de apoio. Sem pesquisa etimológica. Sem ontologia.

Bárbaros, crédulos, pitorescos e meigos. Leitores de jornais. Pau-Brasil. A floresta e a escola. O Museu Nacional. A cozinha, o minério e a dança. A vegetação. Pau-Brasil.

OSWALD DE ANDRADE  
Correio da Manhã, (Rio de Janeiro)

18 de março de 1924.

SOURCE: Museu de arte contemporânea da USP, retrieved on April 16th, 2007, from

[www.mac.usp.br/exposicoes/02/semana22/manifestacoes/manifestos.html](http://www.mac.usp.br/exposicoes/02/semana22/manifestacoes/manifestos.html)

## APPENDIX 2

### **Manifesto Antropófago (1928)**

Só a antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente.

Única lei do mundo. Expressão mascarada de todos os individualismos, de todos os coletivismos. De todas as religiões. De todos os tratados de paz.

Tupy, or not tupy that is the question.

Contra todas as catequeses. E contra a mãe dos Gracos.

Só me interessa o que não é meu. Lei do homem. Lei do antropófago.

Estamos fatigados de todos os maridos católicos suspeitosos postos em drama. Freud acabou com o enigma mulher e com outros sustos da psicologia impressa.

O que atrapalhava a verdade era a roupa, o impermeável entre o mundo interior e o mundo exterior. A reação contra o homem vestido. O cinema americano informará.

Filhos do sol, mãe dos viventes. Encontrados e amados ferozmente, com toda a hipocrisia da saudade, pelos imigrados, pelos traficados e pelos touristes. No país da cobra grande.

Foi porque nunca tivemos gramáticas, nem coleções de velhos vegetais. E nunca soubemos o que era urbano, suburbano, fronteiro e continental. Preguiçosos no mapa-múndi do Brasil.

Uma consciência participante, uma rítmica religiosa.

Contra todos os importadores de consciência enlatada. A existência palpável da vida.

E a mentalidade prelógica para o Sr. Levi Bruhl estudar.

Queremos a revolução Caraíba. Maior que a Revolução Francesa. A unificação de todas as revoltas eficazes na direção do homem. Sem nós a Europa não teria sequer a sua pobre declaração dos direitos do homem.

A idade do ouro anunciada pela América. A idade de ouro. E todas as girls.

Filiação. O contato com o Brasil Caraíba. Oú Villegaignon print terre. Montaigne. O homem natural. Rousseau. Da Revolução Francesa ao Romantismo, à Revolução Bolchevista, à Revolução surrealista e ao bárbaro tecnizado de Keyserling. Caminhamos.

Nunca fomos catequizados. Vivemos através de um direito sonâmbulo. Fizemos Cristo nascer na Bahia. Ou em Belém do Pará.

Mas nunca admitimos o nascimento da lógica entre nós.

Contra o Padre Vieira. Autor do nosso primeiro empréstimo, para ganhar comissão. O rei analfabeto dissera-lhe: ponha isso no papel mas sem muita lábia. Fez-se o empréstimo. Gravou-se o açúcar brasileiro. Vieira deixou o dinheiro em Portugal e nos trouxe a lábia.

O espírito recusa-se a conceber o espírito sem corpo. O antropomorfismo. Necessidade da vacina antropofágica. Para o equilíbrio contra as religiões de meridiano. E as inquisições exteriores.

Só podemos atender ao mundo orecular.

Tínhamos a justiça codificação da vingança. A ciência codificação da Magia. Antropofagia. A transformação permanente do Tabu em totem.

Contra o mundo reversível e as idéias objetivadas. Cadaverizadas. O stop do pensamento que é dinâmico. O indivíduo vítima do sistema. Fonte das injustiças clássicas. Das injustiças românticas. E o esquecimento das conquistas interiores.

Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros.

O instinto Caraíba.

Morte e vida das hipóteses. Da equação eu parte do Kosmos ao axioma Kosmos parte do eu. Subsistência. Conhecimento. Antropofagia.

Contra as elites vegetais. Em comunicação com o solo.

Nunca fomos catequizados. Fizemos foi Carnaval. O índio vestido de Senador do Império. Fingindo de Pitt. Ou figurando nas óperas de Alencar cheio de bons sentimentos portugueses.

Já tínhamos o comunismo. Já tínhamos a língua surrealista. A idade de ouro.

Catiti Catiti

Imara Notiá

Notiá Imara

Ipejú.

A magia e a vida. Tínhamos a relação e a distribuição dos bens físicos, dos bens morais, dos bens dignários. E sabíamos transpor o mistério e a morte com o auxílio de algumas formas gramaticais.

Perguntei a um homem o que era o Direito. Ele me respondeu que era a garantia do exercício da possibilidade. Esse homem chamava-se Galli Matias. Comi-o.

Só não há determinismo, onde há mistério. Mas que temos nós com isso?

Contra as histórias do homem, que começam no Cabo Finisterra. O mundo não datado. Não rubricado. Sem Napoleão. Sem César.

A fixação do progresso por meio de catálogos e aparelhos de televisão. Só a maquinaria. E os transfusores de sangue.

Contra as sublimações antagônicas. Trazidas nas caravelas.

Contra a verdade dos povos missionários, definida pela sagacidade de um antropólogo, o Visconde de Cairu: -É a mentira muitas vezes repetida.

Mas não foram cruzados que vieram. Foram fugitivos de uma civilização que estamos comendo, porque somos fortes e vingativos como o Jabuti.

Se Deus é a consciência do Universo Incriado, Guaraci é a mãe dos viventes. Jaci é a mãe dos vegetais.

Não tivemos especulação. Mas tínhamos adivinhação. Tínhamos Política que é a ciência da distribuição. E um sistema social-planetário.

As migrações. A fuga dos estados tediosos. Contra as escleroses urbanas. Contra os Conservatórios, e o tédio especulativo.

De William James a Voronoff. A transfiguração do Tabu em totem. Antropofagia.

O pater famílias e a criação da Moral da Cegonha: Ignorância real das coisas + falta de imaginação + sentimento de autoridade ante a pro-curiosa (sic).

É preciso partir de um profundo ateísmo para se chegar à idéia de Deus. Mas o caraíba não precisava. Porque tinha Guaraci.

O objetivo criado reage como os Anjos da Queda. Depois Moisés divaga. Que temos nós com isso?

Antes dos portugueses descobrirem o Brasil, o Brasil tinha descoberto a felicidade.

Contra o índio de tocheiro. O índio filho de Maria, afilhado de Catarina de Médicis e genro de D. Antônio de Mariz.

A alegria é a prova dos nove.

No matriarcado de Pindorama.

Contra a Memória fonte do costume. A experiência pessoal renovada.

Somos concretistas. As idéias tomam conta, reagem, queimam gente nas praças públicas. Suprimamos as idéias e as outras paralisias. Pelos roteiros. Acreditar nos sinais, acreditar nos instrumentos e nas estrelas.

Contra Goethe, a mãe dos Gracos, e a Corte de D. João VI.

A alegria é a prova dos nove.

A luta entre o que se chamaria Incriado e a Criatura-ilustrada pela contradição permanente do homem e o seu Tabu. O amor quotidiano e o *modus vivendi* capitalista. Antropofagia. Absorção do inimigo sacro. Para transformá-lo em totem. A humana aventura. A terrena finalidade. Porém, só as puras elites conseguiram realizar a antropofagia carnal, que traz em si o mais alto sentido da vida e evita todos os males identificados por Freud, males catequistas. O que se dá não é uma sublimação do instinto sexual. É a escala termométrica do instinto antropofágico. De carnal, ele se torna eletivo e cria a amizade. Afetivo, o amor. Especulativo, a ciência. Desvia-se e transfere-se. Chegamos ao aviltamento. A baixa antropofagia aglomerada nos pecados do catecismo-a inveja, a usura, a calúnia, o assassinato. Peste dos chamados povos cultos e cristianizados, é contra ela que estamos agindo. Antropófagos.

Contra Anchieta cantando as onze mil virgens do céu, na terra de Iracema-o patriarca João Ramalho fundador de São Paulo.

A nossa independência ainda não foi proclamada. Frase típica de D. João VI:- Meu filho, põe essa coroa na tua cabeça, antes que algum aventureiro o faça! Expulsamos a dinastia. É preciso expulsar o espírito bragantino, as ordenações e o rapé de Maria da Fonte.

Contra a realidade social, vestida e opressora, cadastrada por Freud-a realidade sem complexos, sem loucura, sem prostituições e sem penitenciárias do matriarcado de Pindorama.

Oswald de Andrade  
Em Piratininga  
Ano 374 da deglutição do Bispo Sardinha.

Revista de Antropofagia (São Paulo), n.1, ano 1, maio de 1928.

SOURCE: Museu de arte contemporânea da USP. Retrieved on April 16th, 2007, from [www.mac.usp.br/exposicoes/02/semana22/manifestacoes/manifestos.html](http://www.mac.usp.br/exposicoes/02/semana22/manifestacoes/manifestos.html)