

Damned Words: The Use and Disuse of "Modern" as an Attribute for the Interpretation of Folk Customs in Theatrical Revue Stage and Costume Design at the Turn of the 1930s in Portugal¹

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Abstract

O Notícias Ilustrado was published from 1928 to 1935, coinciding with the emergence of Salazar's dictatorship. Reporting the cosmopolitan life, it described itself as "the only graphic newspaper of modern and European appearance". Its collaborators included figures from among the Modernist generation that would later be associated with the regime's cultural policy. On its pages one can see a renewal of the theatrical revue format, it covered elements that were a repercussion of the Modernists' interest for folk art and the rediscovery of the national heritage. A straightforward analysis reveals that this reinterpretation of folk traditions was mainly addressed as *modern* up to the moment when an official culture policy was set; from 1933 onwards this *modernity* was veiled. In this analysis it could be perceived how similar works, by being addressed differently, could imply the different contexts of 1930s Portugal.

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¹ This article is a revised and extended version of the paper "Damned Words: The Use of Modern and Regional as Attributes of Folklore Modernist Rendition in Stage and Costume Design at the Turn of the 1930s" presented at the international conference *Southern Modernisms: Critical Stances Through Regional Appropriations*, ESAP, Oporto, 19-21 February 2015.

Introduction

[1] Between the 25th of March 1928 and the 6th of October 1935, one of the most important Portuguese daily newspapers, *Diário de Notícias* [Daily News], published an illustrated magazine supplement on Sundays entitled *O Notícias Ilustrado* [The Illustrated News]. This came to visually complement a newspaper that is usually referred to as the first Portuguese independent newspaper that was free from sectarian propaganda and political agendas.²

[2] Coincidentally, the magazine appeared only a month before António de Oliveira Salazar's appointment as Finance Minister, after the 28th of May 1926 military coup that eventually brought about his dictatorship and ended the liberal-democratic efforts being undertaken since around a century before by the monarchy and the First Republic (1910-1926). *O Notícias Ilustrado* was printed for the next seven years accompanying Salazar's subsequent seizing of power, with its publication coming to an end after the stabilising of the New State regime, accomplished with the ratification of the 1933 Constitution (promulgated on the 22th of February 1933).³

[3] Like its competitors, *O Notícias Ilustrado* reported periodically on social, political, cultural and artistic life, but, relatively to others, focused mainly on contemporary urban life in a more light-hearted way: sports, novelties,

² Published since December 1864, "It was the first attempt to make an industrial periodical. It was presented as a popular, independent and mainly reporting periodical, pointing out in the presentation of its program: '*Diário de Notícias* will be a careful compilation of all the news of the day, of all countries and all specialties, eliminating the opinion pieces, politic stances, and controversies. It will report, with the possible truth, all the events, leaving to the reader, whatever its principles and opinions, the freedom to comment'." See: Mário Lemos, *Jornais Diários Portugueses do Século XX: Um Dicionário*, Coimbra 2006, 262. – Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine. – It was also technically innovative, as one of the first periodicals to be printed on a high-speed rotary press, and the first, in 1904, to use a *Linotype* typesetting machine. See: José Tengarrinha, *História da Imprensa Periódica Portuguesa*, Lisboa 1965, 188 and 206-207.

³ Since 1928, Salazar gradually secured ever more prominent roles in the government until he reached the office of Prime Minister in 1932, incarnating a stoic *persona* that carried out the divine duty of being a father to the country. From 1933 onwards, power was exercised through a corporative regime and Salazar held his position, in practice, as a dictator, balancing out the different factions of the Portuguese far right. For the equilibrium of these forces (from the poles of the *ancien régime* to the 'pro-fascists'), Salazar, himself a Conservative Catholic close to *Integralism*, created a single-party regime that congregated the reactionaries with the modern-authoritarians while responding to the desires of the different sectors of society, all of which were against a single enemy: the 'social-liberal-democratic' system. Fernando Rosas, "A crise do Liberalismo e as origens do 'Autoritarismo Moderno' e do Estado Novo em Portugal," in: *Penélope, Fazer e Desfazer a História* 2 (February 1989), 98-114.

entertainment, the life of the rich and famous and other mass culture phenomena, only faintly alluding to politics. This way the magazine managed, like the newspaper, to maintain a more neutral – almost permissive – stance on the national political turmoil occurring at the same time.

[4] Obviously the political situation would emerge from time to time in its pages. If during the first years references to Salazar were sparse, after 1931 he appeared more frequently in the magazine's pages and on its covers. Mentions to Salazar were mainly in articles reporting his actions, but also in texts about his personality, portraying him as an elusive, yet forceful, dictator. This shift happened around the time a report mentioning his likeness with one of the characters of the *Saint Vincent Panels*⁴ was published (December 1932), probably not by chance, and concurrently with the publishing of a series of long interviews with the dictator, at the time Prime-Minister, in the *Diário de Notícias* newspaper.

[5] In *O Notícias Ilustrado*, a freer use of photography (mainly), drawing and modern typeface (geometrically hand-drawn) – all cropped, juxtaposed and reorganized in dynamic photomontages through the innovative use of rotogravure technology – allowed for the appearance of a more contemporary layout (Fig. 1). This was almost in tune with modernist experiments carried out throughout Europe, mainly the developments through the use of photography and typography by Piet Zwart, Paul Schuitema, Karel Teige, El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, Jan Tschichold, Ladislav Sutnar, Herbert Matter, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer.

⁴ The *Saint Vicente Altarpiece*, a 15th century polyptych attributed to Nuno Gonçalves, features St. Vincent surrounded by an assembly of 58 characters representing the court and different strata of the Portuguese society of the time. It was discovered circa 1880 and it became a paramount object of study in Portuguese art, not only due to the mystery surrounding its origin, author and characters, but also through its elevation, in a period of strong nationalist awareness, to one of the masterpieces of Portuguese art and a symbol of the magnificence of the nation throughout the period of the Discoveries.



1 Various experimental graphic layouts on covers and pages of *O Notícias Ilustrado*: n. 106 and 107 (22 and 29 June 1930), covers; n. 173 (4 October 1931), pp. 12-13; n. 180 (22 November 1931), pp. 16-17; n. 225 (2 October 1932), cover. (Photograph provided by the author)

[6] Nevertheless a more thoughtful analysis of the magazine indicates that only one side of the printed paper sheet was composed in that way, the verso being done according to more traditional printing techniques, mainly columns of texts with titles, smaller photographs, vignettes or drawings (illustrations or cartoons) conforming to a strict grid of typographic presentation. On the whole, and after a cover with an emphatic photo, the magazine was formed by sequenced pairs of more discreet text pages and bold photomontage ones, thus permitting the normal presentation of texts – essays, chronicles, interviews, reviews, short novels, ads or small news – continuously intertwined with strong graphic pages. This facilitated its perception as a *modern* magazine, mainly featuring dynamic images, which allowed the magazine to boastfully refer to itself as "the only graphic newspaper of modern and European appearance".⁵

[7] The magazine was directed by and relied on the collaboration of several figures of the Portuguese Modernist generation. This was a multidisciplinary group of artists – from the fine arts to literature, photography, architecture, etc. – which since the mid-1910s, sometimes subdivided into different periods or groupings, had practised an approach to some of the ideals and attitudes of the latest foreign art movements, developing more or less similar outcomes and thus more or less violently fighting against the established art scene. Within this, one could find not only the results of extraneous influences (for instance Cubism, Futurism, Orphism, or even rationalism in architecture through the twenties), but also the effects of a critical reflection on the Portuguese identity. These imports developed from direct contacts – through travelling, studying or working abroad, mainly in

⁵ "O Notícias Ilustrado é o único jornal gráfico de aspecto moderno e europeu", in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 43 (7 April 1929), 7.

Paris; or through the development of friendship with foreign artists –, but also thanks to an easier accessibility of the main European culture centres through faster and effective means of communication.

[8] The people running *O Notícias Ilustrado* were José Leitão de Barros, a man of many talents – artist, architect, writer, journalist and renowned art, theatre and film director – who had collaborated on several other newspapers and was even the director of other illustrated magazines; and Carolina Homem-Christo, a female journalist – still a rare occurrence in the Portugal of the 1920s – belonging to a family of writers and politics (from a republican father to a fascist brother) who in 1939 became the director, and then owner, of *Eva* [Eve], the main feminine magazine in Portugal throughout the middle of the 20th century.

[9] Among the long list of collaborators it is possible to find poets, novelists and journalists like António Ferro, José Gomes Ferreira, Norberto Lopes, Norberto de Araújo, Artur Portela, António Lopes Ribeiro, Augusto de Santa-Rita, Reinaldo Ferreira (known as Repórter X) and even Almada Negreiros or Fernando Pessoa – signing with his proper name or as Álvaro de Campos, who, from among the several heteronyms used by Pessoa, each with its own personality, would be considered the most modern; illustrations, cartoons and drawings were provided by artists such as Carlos Botelho, Thomaz de Mello (Tom), José Tagarro, Stuart Carvalhais, Júlio de Sousa, Emmerico Nunes and even by the Mexican-American Miguel Covarrubias;⁶ and it displayed the work of a new generation of photographers like Salazar Diniz, Deniz Salgado, Ferreira da Cunha, José Lobo, Marques da Costa, Mário Novaes, Silva Nogueira, Manuel Alves de San Payo and Judah Benoliel. Some of these authors were to become associated, more or less officially, with the formulation of the cultural policy of the new regime and its definition of identity. Among them it is necessary to single out Ferro⁷ who became the main character after his appointment as director of the *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional* – *SPN* [Bureau of National Propaganda] on 25th September 1933.

⁶ Some of Ferro's American travel chronicles were illustrated by Covarrubias's drawings of Harlem nightlife characters, rightfully acknowledging the prior publication in *Vanity Fair* magazine.

⁷ In 1915, at the age of 19, Ferro edited *Orpheu*, the avant-garde magazine that laid the foundations of the Portuguese Modernist movement, with Fernando Pessoa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Almada Negreiros, among others. While working as journalists, Ferro wrote novels, poems and plays (some creating public outrage). As a reporter he interviewed d'Annunzio, Maurras, Pétain, Rivera, Mussolini, even Hitler, but also Cocteau, Mistinguett and Poirer. Politically he began as a Republican Party sympathizer, evolving to the authoritarian modern Sidonists and the Conservative Republicans, while progressively admiring contemporary authoritarian regimes, especially Mussolini's. In 1932, interviewing Salazar, the political role of culture was discussed; months later Salazar would invite him to create the *SPN*.

[10] Due to the coincidence of *O Notícias Ilustrado* with this particular period of Portugal's political history, it is possible to observe throughout its pages 'collateral effects' of these political circumstances on the more mundane world: mainly the shift from a rather progressive and cosmopolitan view of society's interests to a search for a new identity implemented by the dictatorship during its emergence and founded on new social, moral and political values.

A cosmopolitan magazine

[11] As stated before, most of the magazine reported on contemporary urban society, lost in the allure of fame and glamour so characteristic of the Roaring Twenties: novelties were applauded; the foreign, as usual, praised; and the focus was on celebrities, first and foremost the heroes and stars from the world of Portuguese or international sport and entertainment (Fig. 2).



2 Covers of *O Notícias Ilustrado* about the boxing champion Santa Camarão and carnival parties, n. 34 and 35 (3 and 10 February 1929). (Photograph provided by the author)

[12] Therefore, *O Notícias Ilustrado* reported on people rushing to *premières* at *Avenida* to idolize *vamps*, *stars*, and *cowboys* on cinema *ecrans* [screens]; men were going to theatre *matinées* and *soirées* hoping to meet *divettes* at the *foyers*, while enjoying *scenas* [scenes, acts] with actresses and actors in funny *travestis*; at the *clubs*, *bars*, *casinos* and *dancings*, appearing everywhere; *jazz* of electrifying rhythm was listened to, and the *charleston*, *black-bottom* or *jive* were danced; the chorus girls were now known as *girls*, and the athletes as *sportsmen*, and *foot-ball* and *box* were the most popular *sports*; both of these groups, the *girls* and *sportsmen*, appeared in the *clichés* [photos] of *magazine* pages more bare than dressed, announcing a

new body-related moral, where the suntanned and gymnastically modelled figure reigned supreme. Overall, the dream of every *midinette* [seamstress], *dactylo* [secretary, stenographer] or *vendeuse* [saleswoman], fantasising on movies and novels, was to secure a *chic* gentleman that could fulfil her wish of a luxurious and frenzied *high-life*. All the words emphasised in italics in this paragraph were used that way – both in their original British, American or French version or in an adapted version – in the middle of texts written in Portuguese in *O Notícias Ilustrado*. The use of Anglicisms – many of them *Americanisms* – outdoing the use of Gallicisms was also a sign of a shift in international cultural hubs, from the Francophone world to the Anglo-American one, denoting the beginning of the 20th century supremacy of popular mass culture over the erudite one.

[13] This [ab]use of foreign words in writings proves that what was normally understood and desired as foreign was now viewed, and desired, as common inside the country's borders; and when this was not an accurate truth, it could always be exaggerated or even invented, as with the imaginative reports-chronicles of Repórter X that described Lisbon or Oporto low-life at the fascinating level of any American capital of gangster crime, following examples of cinema and crime fiction.⁸ Inventions, electricity, technology, cinema, cars, airplanes and zeppelins, progress and velocity, luxury, newness, fashion and glamour were everywhere. Finally, it looked like Lisbon was an international city (Fig. 3) and Portugal an up-to-date country.

⁸ Luís Queirós, "Repórter X, Reinaldo Ferreira nasceu há um século: Memórias de um repórter," in: *Público* (10 August 1997).



3 Architects' interview "Lisboa quer pertencer à Europa!" [Lisbon wants to belong to Europe!], in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 70 (13 October 1929), p. 20-21. (Photograph provided by the author)

A New Theatre

[14] In this *cosmopolitan world* entertainment reigned supreme and the blossoming Portuguese cinema, with its meagre group of stars, had front page every time anything relevant happened,⁹ in this way trying to challenge the European or American industry present at almost every edition. Even so, the Portuguese theatre – more prolific in productions, companies, rivalries, stories, 'scandals' and gossip – was more recurrent on the magazine's pages. Throughout *O Notícias Ilustrado* attention focused mainly on lighter entertainment – comedies, musical theatre, and other commercial theatrical genres –, and not so much on the erudite legitimate theatre, understood as reminiscent of an elitist and tedious past, perfectly criticised, one decade before, in Almada's futuristic *Manifesto Anti-Dantas e por extenso* [Anti-Dantas Manifesto and in full].¹⁰

⁹ The magazine attentively followed Portuguese cinema life as an obvious sign of contemporaneity and another attempt to measure up to the rest of the world. It goes without saying there was a predominance of reports on the movies done by the magazine director Leitão de Barros: the urban eulogy documentary *Lisboa, Crónica Anedótica* [Lisbon, Anecdotal Chronicle] (1930), following Ruttmann's *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* [Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis] (1927) or Vertov's *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [Man with a Movie Camera] (1929); the 'fake' ethnographical documentary *Maria do Mar* (1930), closer to the work of Robert Flaherty; and the historical and literary dramas *A Severa* (1931) – first Portuguese all-talking sound film – and *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor* [The Dean's Pupils] (1935).

¹⁰ This manifesto, a virulent futuristic attack on the Establishment in the person of Júlio Dantas – on the occasion of his latest theatre play presentation, *Soror Mariana Alcoforado* – was Almada's answer to recent reactionary criticisms made by many, but personalised in Dantas, on the occasion of the publication of the second issue of the modernist magazine *Orpheu*. Through irony, sarcasm or simple iconoclastic

[15] Theatrical revue was an international genre developed in the 19th century as a light, unpretentious, fast-moving and sophisticated form of entertainment. Made up of a collection of short sketches, songs, dances, comic interludes and even short plays, it differed from variety theatre in that the acts were linked by a topical idea or theme, over time with increasing emphasis on wit and style rather than music and spectacle.¹¹ As a theatre form, it had been successful in Portugal since the mid-19th century. In spite of this acceptance, from 1925 onwards, the Portuguese scene began to present some signs of renovation and modernity, in part supported by Ferro's campaign, in his *Diário de Notícias* theatre review column, against the lethargy that reigned on the "frozen and inexpressive [stages], twin brothers of chromolithographic prints".¹² This way the theatre detached itself from outdated models, mostly founded on Belle-Époque references, absorbing instead the latest ones: from the more popular American or European theatre genres such as music hall, variety or revue to more erudite visual sources such as the avant-garde movements and its outcomes on the graphic and decorative arts. All of this was happening years after the *Ballets Russes* presentation (1917-1918) in Lisbon¹³ – nevertheless still

insults, all written in capital letters, with abundant use of onomatopoeias and typographic dingbats, the manifesto would be one of the primary examples of this generation's violent guerrilla warfare on its accepted predecessors and one of the primary examples of the actions of the Portuguese futurist generation (Almada Negreiros, *MANIFESTO ANTI-DANTAS E POR EXTENSO POR JOSÉ DE ALMADA-NEGREIROS POETA D'ORPHEU FUTURISTA E TUDO*, Lisboa 191[?]).

¹¹ *Theatrical Review*, London 2014, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/theatrical-revue/> (accessed 24 January 2015).

¹² Quoted in Vitor Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, exh. cat., Lisboa 2000, 5.

¹³ The influence of the Serge Diaghilev company, which was received with a mixture of astonishment and indifference in the course of the mayhem of the Sidonist revolution, would be perceived and admired only by part of the Portuguese intellectual elite more receptive to avant-garde experiments, notwithstanding the continuous appearance of news and reviews in the Lisbon press (see Maria João Castro, ed., *Lisboa e os Ballets Russes*, Lisboa 2014). Over the following decades the effect of its passing through Lisbon continued to be felt in the work of several creators who understood the modern potentiality of dance and the possibilities of contemporary artistic intervention on it, formalised with the creation of the *SPN's Bailados Verde Gaio* [Green Jay Ballets] dance company, a creation by Ferro that was openly inspired by the *Ballets Russes* (see António Ferro, *Bailados Portugueses "Verde Gaio", (1940-1950)*, Lisboa 1950, 19). Several of the dance plays presented at the *Coliseu dos Recreios* and the *S. Carlos Theatre* were inspired by tales from Slavic ethnography, an influence revealed not only in the music score but also in the sets and the wardrobe design: *Les Danses polovtsiennes du Prince Igor* [Prince Igor's Polovtsian dances] (1909) with sets and costumes by Nicholas Roerich (see John Bowlit, Zelfira Tregulova and Nathalie Giordano, eds., *Étonne-moi!: Serge Diaghilev et les Ballets Russes*, exh. cat., Monaco 2009, 116-119); *Sadko* (1911) by Boris Anisfeld and Natalia Gontcharova (see Bowlit et al., *Étonne-moi!*, 162-167);

present in the memory of many of the modernist players – and following the stir caused by the recent passage of the Spanish theatre company *Hermanos Velasco*. Some artists who beside the 'pure' artistic activity worked, to earn their livelihood, for the advertising, graphic arts or entertainment industries – shifting back and forth from these different disciplines and thus making them permeable to each other's influences –, began working occasionally, and experimentally, for the theatre stages. Such was the case, for instance, of Eduardo Malta in the *Tiroliro* revue (1925) or of Almada for *Chic-Chic* (1925), *Actualidades de XPTO* [XPTO's News] (1927),¹⁴ and, along with Jorge Barradas, for *Pomada de Amor* [Love Pomade] (1926), while some others collaborated more frequently with the world of the stage.¹⁵

and *Le Festin* [The Feast] (1909) and *Thamar* (1912) by Léon Bakst (see Jane Pritchard, ed., *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909-1929*, exh. cat., London 2010, pp. 8, 71 and 136-137). Photographs of *Thamar* dancers in costume appeared in the *Ilustração Portuguesa* magazine announcing the presentations ("Os Bailes Russos de Diaghilew," in: *Ilustração Portuguesa*, vol. II, 615 (3 December 1917), 453).

¹⁴ Vitor Santos, *A Companhia Rey Colaço Robles Monteiro (1921-1974)*, exh. cat., Lisboa 1987.

¹⁵ Briefly working as set or costume designers: António Soares, Leitão de Barros, Sarah Affonso, Raquel Roque Gameiro, Júlio de Sousa, Tom, Botelho, Stuart; and on a more constant level: Barbosa, Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz, Armando Bruno, António Amorim, Jorge Herold, Mário Gomariz, Laierte Neves and Pinto de Campos (Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, passim).



4 "Espectáculos: *Água-Pé*" [Shows: *Pomace Brandy*] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 2 (1 April 1928), p. 12. (Photograph provided by the author)

[16] Between applause and reactionary indignation, the theatrical revue managed to regenerate itself, and the show *Água-Pé* [Pomace Brandy], presented by the Luísa Satanela and Estevão Amarante company in the Summer of 1927 (Fig. 4), is understood to have been the first completely *modernist* play of this genre, "a triumph of modernity and good taste".¹⁶ The play presented a music score by Frederico de Freitas, sets and costumes by José Barbosa and choreography by Francisco Graça (Francis) which, for the first time, transformed the decorative chorus girls in a real *corps de ballet*. In 1928, a critique by Ferro stated that the "clothes have life and colour but speak too much Russian",¹⁷ referring to an act entitled *Bonecos Russos* [Russian Dolls] where Satanela and Francis danced dressed in 'traditional' Slavic costumes probably inspired by previous presentations by the Serge Diaghilev company.¹⁸ The play was updated with a new opening for the second act, which became an immediate success, presenting a group of actresses dressed as *the national provinces* coming to greet a more cosmopolitan *Lisbon*. Following earlier sporadic experiences with this subject, both the design of the backdrop curtain and the dresses freely adapted national folk elements taken from the forms and features of traditional costumes up to iconographic details typical of embroidery from the Minho region or printed chintz scarves from the town of Alcobaça.

[17] These characteristics were perceivable in other revue plays – just to mention, for example, Barbosa's costumes for the act *Arredores de Lisboa*

¹⁶ Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, 6.

¹⁷ Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, 6.

¹⁸ "Espectáculos: *Água-Pé*" in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 2 (1 April 1928), 12.

[Lisbon Outskirts] in *A Rambóia* [The Romp] revue (1928);¹⁹ costumes and sets by the same author for the *Beiriz* act – a true product placement by the Beiriz carpets company written in the verses on the backdrop curtain, associating the Minho *Vira* folk dance with the industrial production²⁰ –, and António Soares's set for the final number *O Arraial Português* [The Portuguese Village Fair], both in the *Chá de Parreira* [Grapevine Tea] revue (1929);²¹ sets and costumes by António Amorim for the *Riquezas de Portugal* [Portugal's Riches] act in *O Tremoço Saloio* [The Hillbilly Lupin Bean] revue (1929),²² or for *Belezas de Sintra* [Sintra Beauties] in *Feira da Luz* [Luz District Fair] revue (1930),²³ on which Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz also collaborated;²⁴ Armando Bruno's costumes for the singer Corina Freire in the *Nina del Portugal* act from Maurice Chevalier's *Parade du Monde* revue, presented at the Paris casino in 1937;²⁵ and Jorge Herold's work for the *Santo António está no Trono* [Saint Anthony is on the Throne] act in the *Fanfarras* [Fanfarre] revue (1938).²⁶ As one may note, the titles of the acts, and even of some plays, addressed popular terms, themes or references, most of the time with ironic undertones. Despite their emergence and success, these folk-based acts continued to appear mingled with acts of a completely different nature, a common situation in a theatre genre characterised as a series of unrelated independent musical, comedic or dancing scenes that reviewed the latest events, stories or fads. As an example of this mixture, in the *Cantiga Nova* [New Song] revue (1933) the act entitled with the same name and a dancing duet act were inspired by national folk customs; nevertheless another act called *Habanera* was of Andalusian *flamenco* inspiration; another presented exotic oriental costumes; two more were done according to Hollywood musical models, one of them an amorous dancing duet in the Astaire manner; yet another was set in a romantic neo-rocaille mood, and one last act with Satanela and all the *girls* was a Dietrich-style transvestite number, the "curious number 'Good by boy'".²⁷

¹⁹ Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, [cover].

²⁰ Vitor Santos, *Gente do palco: as colecções do Museu*, exh. cat., Lisboa 1985, 8.

²¹ Santos, *Gente do palco*, [cover].

²² "Teatro: uma brilhante colaboração dos Modernistas," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 70 (13 October 1929), 11.

²³ Santos, *Gente do palco*, 26.

²⁴ "Os figurinos modernistas de Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz e António Amorim," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 86 (2 February 1930), 20-21.

²⁵ Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, 12-13.

²⁶ Santos, *A Revista Modernista*, 17.

²⁷ "*Cantiga Nova*, a grande revista do Politeama: O público quer espectáculos alegres," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 257 (14 May 1933), 10-11.

[18] Between more or less naked *girls*, actors with witty remarks, funny up-to-date songs and dialogues, or glamorous and spectacular acts that tried to copy the spirit of the Broadway *Ziegfeld Follies* (or the Champs-Élysées *variétés* theatres and the most recent Hollywood musicals), a succession of merry fantasies was developed with music and dance inspired by the most cheerful folk customs – *viras, fandangos, corridinhos*, etc.²⁸ –, performed by popular characters – *varinas* [fishwives] and *saloios* [rural peasants from the Lisbon outskirts], the ones most recognised by the inhabitants of the capital –, and presented on stage in costumes and sets that stylised the traditional arts. This set the theatrical revue apart from the serious dramatic arts where vernacular references were used every time the narrative required it, although never in a stylised distorted manner, but rather respectfully towards what was authentic.²⁹

[19] Indeed, since the 1910s, the *oxymoronic* interest of the avant-garde in elements from the vernacular cultures – "valued at that age through all Europe as an escape from academic discipline"³⁰ – had made possible the release from this grasp. This was allowed by a research into naïve or, to a certain extent, exotic archetypes,³¹ and by the development of new

²⁸ Francis (famous for the duet *Francis and Ruth* with Ruth Walden) and the dancer and footballer Eugénio Salvador (in a dancing duet with Lina Duval as Lina & Salvador) would create repertoires inspired on folk dances that were presented, originally, in revue theatres or cinema *live complements* (during movie intermissions) and that would eventually be developed as autonomous performances. This genre of dance acts would contribute to the popularization of ballet/ dance as an art in itself – away from the elitist classical ballet; and it would eventually promote the social perception of the dancers, particularly the male dancer until then understood as a mere support role and commonly identified as an undesirable effeminate occupation (see Vitor Santos, ed., *Verde Gaio: Uma companhia portuguesa de bailado (1940-1950)*, exh. cat., Lisboa 1999; Filomena Chiaradia, *Iconografia teatral: acervos fotográficos de Walter Pinto e Eugénio Salvador*, Rio de Janeiro 2011).

²⁹ Ex. g. the *Maria do Mar* movie by Leitão de Barros (1930) subtitled "A Documentary of the Race" ("Cinema Portuguez: Um documentário da raça," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 100 (11 May 1930), 4-5), or Abílio's sets and costumes for the *Tá Mar* play by Alfredo Cortez, presented at the Dona Maria II National Theatre by the *Robles Monteiro Rey Colaço Company* (1936) (see *Abílio: Pintura, desenho, cenários, figurinos*, exh. cat., Lisboa 1990, 36-37), both stories centred on the adverse lives of Nazaré fishermen.

³⁰ See *Eduardo Viana: 1881-1967*, exh. cat., ed. Fundação de Serralves, Simonetta Affonso and Raquel Silva, Porto 1992, 90 (with reference to *Louça de Barcelos* by Eduardo Viana).

³¹ Since the 19th century the attempt to escape academic grasp had induced, throughout Europe, artists to seek inspiration in their local vernacular roots, or even in civilizations outside the classical western world, thus the immersion into late medieval or Japanese art by the English Pre-Raphaelites, the Aesthetic Movement or the French *Nabis*; a general curiosity in Oriental, African or several other arts by

"exercises of formal and colour schemes, enabling also the broadening of themes and a revolution in Art memories through contact with popular aesthetics".³²

[20] In the plain Portuguese theatrical revue, the modernist artists – adopting the same references and analytical-synthetic methods used by the avant-garde, distant from the veracity of the vernacular cultures or their noble aesthetic exploratory reasons and oblivious to possible wrongful mixtures, provenances, or misrepresentations – merely reduced the original features to a collection of simple, refined decorative elements. These were used and recombined at the artist's whim, sometimes with other diverse and odd references – from foreign folk customs to expressionist or even abstract references –, as fanciful decorative elements over more mundane objects: sets and costumes. Consequently, through this dreamy notion of tradition, these adulterated references were cheerfully presented to the urban masses. Thus the audience identified with a national era or place not that distant, but now invariably conceived as pretty and joyful. This fondness for these faultless and picturesque reinvented national fantasies, a mix of pride and nostalgia, was interpreted as *modern* by comparison to the stagnant classic codes or the mouldy historical strictness of a national Establishment subservient to foreign influences. However the genuine sources of reference for these fantasies were not that important, and so their ancestral *vernacular, regional or popular* origins were dismissed, and only the originality of the outcome or its methods of development were announced. Their sublimation was a sign of modernity and of discontinuity with [academic] traditions.

A New State

[21] The use of the vernacular as an inspiration by modernist artists was a reaction to the seriousness and severity of the academic world and of a progress-ridden society. Nevertheless, rescuing these age-old innocent elements from years of being looked down upon condescendingly as products of brutish and ignorant people seems to have been done free from any political agenda, at least an official one. It should not be forgotten that, when Romanticism reacted against the restraints of Classicism rejecting the

indigenous peoples; the research into rural vernacular origins carried out by many European architects; a similar research into vernacular forms and production methods by the Arts and Crafts designers; the rediscovery of national folk customs that provoked a renovation of European music and dance (with the *Ballets Russes* being a major example); and the interest in popular arts artefacts by many of the avant-garde artists. In Portugal, this leaning produced not only the discussion around the *Casa Portuguesa* [Portuguese House] (1880s onwards); in fact, consequences of it were also perceivable in works by Eduardo Viana, Amadeu de Sousa Cardoso and Almada, and later in works by artists from the following generation like Bernardo Marques, Barradas, Botelho, or the older Emmerico.

³² *Eduardo Viana: 1881-1967*, 90.

rationalism of the Enlightenment and emphasising the primacy of the individual, one of the consequences was the cradling of nationalist yearnings. These yearnings had grown up by the incessantly belligerent socio-political and economic state of affairs in the Western world since the Great War.

[22] In Portugal, in the final decades of the 19th century, the promotion of nationalism partially led to the appearance of ethnographic studies,³³ even though their results would only become visible outside the closed scientific circle some decades later. Officially, the state continued to favour the glorified styles associated with the periods of national greatness, thus perpetuating an academic historical stance and refusing to praise, or at least acknowledge, the production by simple peasants understood as the work of the illiterate and overlooked by the domineering globalised civilizational progress.

[23] Notwithstanding this, with the outcome of the 28th May 1926 *coup d'état* and the emergence of the ultra-right regime, Portugal, like similar contemporary regimes, inflamed its autonomic and nationalist principles, dutifully campaigning against the *internationalisms*: either political (communism, socialism or liberal-democracy), economic (capitalism), moral (atheism, individualism) or of social posture (progress, modernity, cosmopolitanism). For the new regime *modern* would become a bad word – as bad as many others from the *modern* progressive world. Instead, the regime identified itself, to some extent, with the motto of the ephemeral political right-wing magazine *Ordem Nova* [New Order], which was published between 1926 and 1927:

*anti-modern, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-bourgeois and anti-Bolshevik, counter-revolutionary; reactionary; Catholic, Apostolic and Roman; monarchic; intolerant and uncompromising; unsympathising with writers, journalists and any professional of the letters, arts and press.*³⁴

[24] The exaltation of national values rooted in the nation's mythical origins served to celebrate Portugal's history and uniqueness, from now on validating the [re]discovery of folk arts as the, now honoured, innocent expression of the character of the Portuguese people, the founding basis of the nation. This policy would be strongly supported by Ferro's concern as to the national cultural and artistic development:

A conscious and deliberate development of art and literature is, after all, as necessary for a nation's progress as its development of sciences, public

³³ Adolfo Coelho, Teófilo Braga, Consiglieri Pedroso and Leite de Vasconcelos were the first, in the 1870s, to promote the emergence of anthropology as an autonomous scientific domain, mainly related to philological studies and the recollection of oral traditions; see João Leal, *Etnografias Portuguesas*, Lisboa 2000, 27-61.

³⁴ *Ordem Nova*, vol. 1, 1-12 (January 1926 – February 1927), [cover].

infrastructures, industry, commerce and agriculture. [...] The Política do Espírito [Policy of the Spirit]³⁵ [...] is not just necessary for the Nation's prestige abroad, although of the utmost importance from such point of view. It is also necessary for its inner prestige, its reason to subsist. A country that does not see, read, listen or feel, does not walk out of its material life, and becomes a useless and bad-tempered country.³⁶

[25] This question, which was previously discussed with Salazar in the 1932 *Diário de Notícias* interviews, would found the programme that Ferro officially developed at the head of the SPN [Secretariat for National Propaganda] in 1933, then envisaged as more than a mere propaganda department. There, he established culture as one of the Nation's priorities, and so the ethnographical study of folk arts was now conscientiously developed, promoted and reconfigured. The friendlier and more approachable popular culture – or its somewhat [in]direct outcomes – would be officially presented as a valuable alternative to an aloof erudite culture, the customary heir to international influences.

[26] Collaborating with Ferro in the SPN was "a bunch of lads full of talent and vigour that wait anxiously to be useful to their Country!"³⁷ – most of them old modernist comrades. Among the team of *artistas-decoradores* [artists-decorators] responsible for most of the initiatives of the regime were Bernardo Marques, Botelho, Eduardo Anahory, Emmerico, Estrela Faria, José Rocha, Manuel Lapa, Maria Keil, Fred Kradolfer, the Novaes brothers, Paulo Ferreira, and Tom. Working with these "lads", numerous activities were developed by Ferro: several popular competitions; the creation of theatre and ballet companies, travelling cinema and library services; diverse editorial lines (from tourism guides and art catalogues to propaganda pamphlets in various languages); an extensive programme of national prizes; the development of an ethnographic collection presented all over the world; the production of a large number of exhibitions; and the significant task of presenting Portugal abroad in different events and media.

[27] This official search for the genuine aspect of the regional, this *return to the roots* or creation of re-invented ones was the result of this teamwork between arts and politics, and would turn out to be fundamental to the formulation and promotion of the values and ideals of the regime that supported the creation of a *New State*, that was, however, no longer *modern*.

³⁵ Ferro mentioned the homologous conference presented just days before by Paul Valéry at the *Université des Annales*, 15 November 1932, "*La politique de l'esprit, notre souverain bien*" (published in 1936).

³⁶ António Ferro, "Política do Espírito," in: *Diário de Notícias* (21 November 1932), 1.

³⁷ António Ferro, *Entrevistas a Salazar*, Lisboa 1932, 59.

Damned words before ...

[28] During the first years of publication, in the pages of *O Notícias Ilustrado* the word *modern* could be a common attribute for almost everything: from a new invention to a new hairdo or the most recent momentary fad. Nevertheless, it obviously identified the latest trends of architecture, cinema, theatre, dance or the arts in general, which were frequently reported denoting a more or less accurate use of the term in the context of the present-day definition or characterization of the avant-garde arts movements.

[29] Through the pages of the magazine, the Portuguese reader had an almost synchronous perception of, for instance, the architectural works of Erich Mendelsohn (Fig. 5),³⁸ Paul Tournon,³⁹ Mallet Stevens,⁴⁰ or the work of the brothers Hans and Oskar Gerson, Fritz Höger and the collective of Klophaus, Schoch and Putlitz;⁴¹ but also of the cinema of Abel Gance,⁴² Fritz Lang,⁴³ Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau,⁴⁴ or the Russians Tourjansky, Pudovkin and Eisenstein,⁴⁵ visible in the numerous movie theatres arising all over Lisbon – or not, as an article by Lopes Ribeiro would explain the greatness of the Soviet cinematographic experience but also its necessary censorship for the Portuguese audience.⁴⁶ In the case of these two artistic areas, architecture and cinema, the Portuguese authors were also presented in numerous articles and interviews: on the one hand, Portuguese modernist architects such as Carlos Ramos (Fig. 5), Cristino da Silva, Pardal Monteiro, Cottinelli Telmo, Jacobetty Rosa, etc. with great photographic coverage of finished works and of models and projects; on the other hand, predictable reports

³⁸ The models of the *Industriegewerkschaft Metall* building in Berlin (1929-1930) and the *Schocken* department store in Chemnitz (1927-1930), reported on 15 December 1929.

³⁹ *Église de Sainte-Thérèse-de-l'Enfant-Jésus* on the outskirts of Paris (1927-1928), denoted as the "first modern reinforced concrete church" in an article of 22 July 1928.

⁴⁰ The Paris 16th arrondissement group of residence buildings now known as Rue Mallet Stevens (1927), reported on 27 May 1928.

⁴¹ Respectively *Ballinhaus* (1924), *Chilehaus* (1922-1924), *Sprinkenhof* (1927) and *Mohlenhof* (1928-1929) buildings in the Kontorhausviertel area of Hamburg, reported on 3 January 1932.

⁴² *Napoleon* (1927), reported on 2 June 1929.

⁴³ *Metropolis* (1927), reported on 8 April 1928 and *Frau im Mond* [Woman in the Moon] (1929), reported on 5, 12, 19 May 1929.

⁴⁴ *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), reported on 3 March 1929.

⁴⁵ Respectively *Volga Wolga* [Volga Volga] (1928), reported on 10 and 31 March 1929; *Potomok Chingiskhana* [Storm over Asia] (1928), reported on 25 August 1929; and *Staroye i novoye* [The General Line] (1929), reported on 23 November 1930.

⁴⁶ "Filmes russos que Lisboa não verá," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 52 (9 June 1929), 4-5 and 7.

about Leitão de Barros's movies, but also about Lopes Ribeiro's and Chianca de Garcia's films, or even about Artur Costa Macedo's documentaries and the experimental Manoel de Oliveira's *Douro Faina Fluvial* [Labour on the River Douro] (1931).



5 (left) Eric Mendelsohn's work in "A estranha arquitectura moderna" [The Unusual Modern Architecture] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 79 (15 December 1929), p. 9; (right) "Carlos Ramos: Um grande arquitecto modernista" [Carlos Ramos: A Great Modernist Architect] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 104 (8 June 1930), p. 12. (Photograph provided by the author)

[30] In the case of the stage arts, dance and national theatre were the most reported ones as foreign theatre was more difficult to report due to the language factor. In a country with an almost inexistent dance scene all the new dancers or choreographers, whether foreigners or locals, who appeared with a rush of fresh air and a scent of the contemporary, even if just importing the latest trends of the musical theatre from abroad, were immediately called *modern[ists]*.

[31] The Portuguese modernist artists and authors got more space than the foreign ones in articles reporting exhibition openings, editions or just praising their work. As such there were also contributions from leading authors, like Almada and Pessoa, but also from many of their contemporaries or from those of a younger generation, like Sarah Affonso, Tagarro, António Botto, Tom, etc.

[32] One issue of the *O Notícias Ilustrado* magazine (24 February 1929) was almost completely devoted to the Portuguese Modern[ist] scene, with diverse articles and photographic essays on the different arts; the cover heralded: "In this issue - the Portuguese 'Futurists': the modernist masterpieces and an historical summary of all the modern art movement in Portugal." Throughout this issue the terms *modern* or *modernist*, and even *futurist*, were used in an indistinct manner, sometimes oddly. The front-page headline unusually announced the theme, placing the *futurists*, perceived as

more outrageous, in the main title. The artists were mainly called *modernists*, as so was their art, but Santa-Rita's poem was *modern* and Almada's '*sensationist*', and if the art presented on stages was *modern* in the title, in the text it was referred to as *modernist*. Nevertheless, efforts to define the artistic term were simultaneously jeopardized in a peripheral article about a radio and broadcast exhibition as the event was referred to as having "honoured the higher life of the capital city, displaying signs of a progressive modernism".⁴⁷ Curiously, the cover presented *Rapaz das Louças* [The Pottery Boy], a 1919 painting by Eduardo Viana in an almost Orphist style⁴⁸ depicting a county fair seller surrounded by pottery, holding a painted clay whistle shaped as a pair of bulls typical of artisans from the town of Barcelos.



6 (left) Portraits of the first generation of modernists in "Os precusores do Modernismo em Portugal" [The Precursors of Modernism in Portugal] article; (right) The modernist intervention on the decor of the *Café Brasileira* at Lisbon in "O Café dos 'Futuristas'" [The 'Futurists'' Cafe] article; Marques's frieze for Ferro's apartment illustrating folkloric dancers in "Os Modernistas nos 'interiores'" [The Modernists on Interiors] article; and Carlos Ramos's decoration of *Bristol* nightclub with works by Ernesto do Canto, Soares and Almada in "O Clube dos Modernistas" [The Modernists' Club] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 37 (24 February 1929), p. 8-9). (Photograph provided by the author)

[33] On the inside pages there were: a critical essay about the [Portuguese] "futurists of all times" commenting on the eternal inevitability of new 'isms' by Feliciano Santos, and a Ferro article recalling the forefathers of the

⁴⁷ "TSF," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 37 (24 February 1929), 13.

⁴⁸ A consequence of the foreign influence on Portuguese artists: Viana, a student in Paris with Amadeu and Emmerico while more conservative in his approach, would assimilate the modern styles in his work from 1916 on, an effect of his close friendship with the *simultanéist* Delaunay couple, war refugees in Portugal (Vila do Conde), sharing with Sonia an interest in the ingenuous purity of popular artefacts – mainly the colourful Barcelos clay figurines – bought at local markets and fairs.

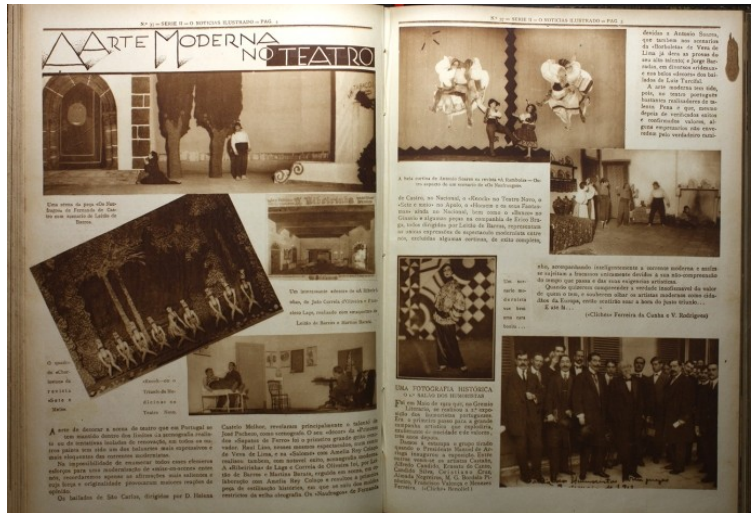
modernist movement, singularly honouring Mário de Sá Carneiro, enunciating the history until then; pages with portraits of the precursors of modernism in Portugal – Almada, José Pacheco, Amadeu de Sousa Cardoso, Santa-Rita Pintor, Sá Carneiro, Raul Leal, Alfredo Pedro Guisado, Ferro, and four repeated portraits of Pessoa, as himself and as his heteronyms Álvaro de Campos, Ricardo Reis and Alberto Caeiro (Fig. 6); photos of the main contemporary modernist sculptors, painters, architects, poets and writers, including, among others, Soares, Stuart, Emmerico, Raul Lino, Ramos, Carlos Carneiro, Mário Novaes and Cottinelli; a representation of two 1913 'cubist' paintings by Santa-Rita Pintor and Amadeu de Sousa Cardoso (both of whom died in 1918); poems by Almada (illustrated by himself) and Santa-Rita (with an illustration by Cottinelli); an article on the 1929 *Seville Ibero-American Exposition* with modernist paintings by Barradas, Lino António and Abel Manta;⁴⁹ a page with several examples of *modernist* or *futurist* interiors (Fig. 6); and, last but not least, an article about modern art in the theatre presenting sets by Soares and Leitão de Barros with Martins Barata and mentioning the stage design work of Raul Lino, Pacheco, Barradas and Luiz Turcifal.

[34] Following the development that took place in revue theatre during this period, many other articles emphatically referring to its intrinsic modernity appeared throughout these earlier years. The most interesting for this study are those that, while depicting re-enacted well-known folk acts – thus evoking tradition –, termed them *modern* or *modernist*, dismissing references to their vernacular sources.

[35] The above-mentioned article about interventions by modern artists in the theatre, entitled *Modern Art in the Theatre* (Fig. 7), presented Soares' set for the *A Rambóia* [The Romp] revue, with a photograph of two dancers in regional costume dancing in front of a backdrop curtain depicting expressionist pairs of twisting folk dancers surrounded by a zigzag border, and more realistic rustic interiors by Leitão de Barros for other *serious* theatre plays.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Overall, these were genre scenes depicting peasants and markets. The paintings and authors were called *modernists* and praised for the "healthy bravado of their aesthetic creations; the psychoanalysis that the works reveal compel us all to admire modern art as well apprehended and executed" ("Exposição de Sevilha: A pintura modernista [...]," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 37 (24 February 1929), 17). Lino was singled out for his primitive spirit giving the works a charming ingenuity of expression, and Barradas as the artist able to record the Portuguese people in different stylised attitudes.

⁵⁰ "A arte moderna no teatro," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 37 (24 February 1929), 4-5.



7 "A arte moderna no teatro" [Modern Art in the Theatre] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 37 (24 February 1929), p. 4-5. (Photograph provided by the author)

[36] Another set by Soares, for the *Chá de Parreira* [Grapevine Tea] revue, presented in an article entitled *Modern Décor in the Theatre* (Fig. 8), was illustrated by a photo of the chorus girls dressed as peasants from the Minho region and as the *saloias* from the outskirts of Lisbon in front of a backdrop curtain showing a fête in the main square of a rural village, all of it described as a "good and stable example of a modern scene decoration". Although the costumes more or less accurately followed the originals, the set was once more done in Soares' characteristic style.⁵¹



8 Set of António Soares for the *Chá de Parreira* revue in "As modernas decorações no teatro" [Modern Decor in the Theatre] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 63 (25 August 1929), p. 14. (Photograph provided by the author)

⁵¹ "As modernas decorações no teatro," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 63 (25 August 1929), 14.

[37] The photographic essay *Theatre: The Brilliant Collaboration of the Modernists* (Fig. 9)⁵² featured four different sets from the 1929 revue *O Ricocó*, two of which were once again carried out according to an unmentioned Portuguese folk theme depicted through a modernist mind-set: The first, by the sculptors Ruy Roque Gameiro and Salvador Barata Feio, for an act entitled *No Reino da Trapolândia* [In the 'Ragland' Kingdom], presented a group of houses and several popular characters on the side drapes in an almost cubist style patchwork/ collage of geometric flat pieces of cloth; the second, by Stuart (?), was a distorted high-angle shot of a county fair surrounded by festoons of coloured paper rosettes and traditional clay jugs and chestnut roasters.



9 Sets by Ruy Roque Gameiro with Salvador Barata Feio, Stuart Carvalhais, and Luiz Benavente with Vasco Marques in "Teatro: uma brilhante colaboração dos Modernistas" [Theatre: The Brilliant Collaboration of the Modernists] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 72 (27 October 1929), p. 11. (Photograph provided by the author)

[38] The article entitled "The Modernist Costumes of Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz and António Amorim" (Fig. 10) presented drawings from these two artists – "vanguard of the young artists from our country" – mostly inspired by shapes and details of regional costumes. The text expressed the hope that "the direction of their work does not stray from the modernism championed by the best painting schools and the boldest pictorial conceptions".⁵³

⁵² "Teatro: uma brilhante colaboração dos modernistas," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 72 (27 October 1929), 11.

⁵³ "Os figurinos modernistas de Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz e António Amorim," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 86 (2 February 1930), 20-21.



10 "Os figurinos modernistas de Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz e António Amorim" [The Modernist Costumes of Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz and António Amorim] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 86 (2 February 1930), p. 20-21. (Photograph provided by the author)

[39] Still in 1933, on a back cover photograph (Fig. 11), Francis and Ruth Walden were pictured dressed as peasants dancing with an accordion in a scene from *A Cantiga Nova* [New Song] – almost certainly a humorous reference to the recent designation of the regime as *Estado Novo* [New State] – in front of a *Dr. Caligariesque* skewed street view, with the caption "A grand note of Modern Art: Francis and Ruth; the remarkable dances of 'Cantiga Nova', colossal success in Politeama".⁵⁴



11 "Uma grande nota de Arte Moderna: Francis e Ruth" [A Grand Note of Modern Art: Francis and Ruth], in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 257 (14 May 1933), back cover. (Photograph provided by the author)

⁵⁴ "Uma grande nota de arte moderna: Francis e Ruth," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 257 (14 May 1933), [back cover].

[40] Until 1932, articles about Francis had referred to him as *modern*, as dancing "bizarre choreographic modern motives, American, Indian and African, but also beautiful classic evocations";⁵⁵ they mentioned the "Modern Artists § Francis the elegant and stylised dancer";⁵⁶ and they labelled him as "Francis: a rehearsal master of modern dance performances"⁵⁷ or as the "Legs Dictator [...] creator of new rhythms and brand new horizons for the Portuguese theatrical dances" stating "that others have followed these modern tendencies".⁵⁸

[41] None of these articles mentions the local, popular, regional, traditional character, not even alludes to the picturesque representation of a scene. In spite of this, these kind of remarks appeared in other articles about country fairs, annual religious processions or rural festivities, events happening outside the urban space, in the countryside. At best they would be mentioned in accounts of Lisbon presentations of peasant folk groups or of some fantasised re-enactments, but never in reports on the cosmopolitan stages of the capital. The conclusion one may draw is that things could not be misunderstood, given that the latter were spaces of modernity.

... and after

[42] From approximately 1933 onwards, about the time the SPN was set up, the situation became different and allusions to the *modern* would eventually disappear from articles about revue theatre while the regional, popular or traditional references began to be evoked in relation to the same kind of presentations. In an article reporting on the revue *O Fim do Mundo* [The End of the World] (Fig. 12), a folk act with a backdrop curtain representing a mishmash view of the colonial exhibition and a group of chorus girls dressed with mini-skirted pseudo-traditional costumes was now described as "the final act, a stylisation of costumes from our provinces".⁵⁹

⁵⁵ "Francis, um grande bailarino português," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 14 (16 September 1928), 17.

⁵⁶ "Artistas modernos," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 21 (4 November 1928), 12.

⁵⁷ "Francis: um mestre ensaiador de bailados modernos," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 62 (18 August 1929), 15.

⁵⁸ "Uma revolução no teatro Português: Os ditadores das pernas," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 92 (16 March 1930), 12-13.

⁵⁹ "*O Fim do Mundo* no Coliseu: o grande exito da actualidade, a super fantasia de 1934," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 335 (11 November 1934), 14-15.



12 "O Fim do Mundo no Coliseu: o grande êxito da actualidade, a super fantasia de 1934" [*The End of the World at Coliseu: Nowadays Big Hit, a 1934 Super Fantasy*] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 335 (11 November 1934), p. 14-15. (Photograph provided by the author)

[43] The *Zé dos Pacatos* [Easy-going Joe] revue was "a great popular entertainment"⁶⁰ – the use of *popular* was from here on lost between the dual meanings of *widely accepted* and *of folk origin* – with scenes inspired by the most recent cinema successes: *Severa* and *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor* [The Dean's Pupils], both movies dealing with traditional themes: the first based on the story of a famous 19th century *Fado* singer and the other on Júlio Dinis' rural romance. In these scenes, and in others named *Terra Portuguesa* [Portuguese Land] and *Traje Português* [Portuguese Costume], the costumes once again followed this folk origin but, as before, with altered proportions and enhanced decorative features that would re-create stereotyped versions of the original garments.

[44] The work of Lima Cruz, one of the *vanguard* artists mentioned before, was once again the subject of a report on the occasion of her exhibition in Paris (Fig. 13). Her drawings "marvellous of picturesque, of fantasy, of decorative beauty"⁶¹ were again founded on traditional costumes and in every manner similar to the ones presented as *modernist* in February of 1930. But now the report included a careful reference to the region or province from which came their inspiration, whereas their earlier characterisation as *modernist* was no longer mentioned.

⁶⁰ "Zé dos Pacatos no Apolo," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 343 (6 January 1935), 12-13.

⁶¹ "Uma grande decoradora de Teatro: Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz vai expôr em Paris," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 311 (27 May 1934), 4-5.



13 "Uma grande decoradora de Teatro: Maria Adelaide Lima Cruz vai expôr em Paris" [A great theatre decorator: Maria Adelaide Lima da Cruz will exhibit in Paris] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 311 (27 May 1934), p. 4-5. (Photograph provided by the author)

[45] Even Francis, who after 1932 continued to be mentioned due to the excellence of his choreographic work and the mastery of his dances, lost his customary *modern* epithet.⁶² From 1933 onwards his choreographic reinterpretation of folk dances would be praised as the recalling of the tradition of a "genuine Portuguese festivity",⁶³ as during the SPN-sponsored presentations in Paris (Fig. 14). That same year, reporting the duo's return from Rio de Janeiro and the following trip to Paris, Francis would be praised as the

*distinguished stylist of the Portuguese popular dances [...] art, in its essence as Portuguese as the motives he developed and perfected. [...] Our popular dances, as beautiful and picturesque as any others, were just waiting for someone to add the civilized beauty that was missing.*⁶⁴

[46] From 1940 onwards he would be the main choreographer of the Diaghilev-inspired SPN-sponsored *Bailados Verde Gaio* [Green Jay Ballets] dance company.

⁶² "Francis acabou de crear notaveis bailados com música de Frederico de Freitas," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 227 (16 October 1932), 12-13.

⁶³ "Portugal no Estrangeiro," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 307 (29 April 1934), 12-13.

⁶⁴ "Os grandes bailarinos Francis e Ruth voltaram do Rio e vão em breve para Paris," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 334 (4 November 1934), 8.



14 "Portugal no estrangeiro" [Portugal Abroad] article, in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 307 (29 April 1934), p. 12-13. (Photograph provided by the author)

[47] In one of the last issues of the magazine, the revue *Sardinha Assada* [Grilled Sardine] was once again presented as *popular*, but it was explained that popular was not an attribute relating to cheapness, modesty or an easy-going attitude to gain audiences, as had previously been the case. Now *Sardinha Assada* was *popular* because it was what the audience wanted: an excellent, even luxurious presentation, one of the best presented to date.⁶⁵ Reference to *popular*, once overlooked on behalf of the attitude of *modernism*, was now aggrandized and, as the situation was now reversed, *modern[ity]* was damned.

Final considerations

[48] Although only a small group of examples is presented here, there was an uninterrupted appearance on the pages of the magazine of analogous objects with considerable linguistic differences in their characterisation.⁶⁶

[49] A similar case was found in two brief reports about the sale of Jorge Barradas' edition of lithographs reproducing folk scenes: In March 1933 these were referred to as "curious edition [...] ideal for modern interiors, where its spirit astonishingly merges with the restraint of elegance and the modern aesthetic".⁶⁷ Less than a year later, in January 1934, another small note would now say that the "folk characters fixed by his pencil, of such

⁶⁵ "*Sardinha Assada*: uma grande revista popular no Teatro Variedades," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 381 (29 September 1935), 17.

⁶⁶ Until July 1933, 18 out of 37 articles found about theatrical revues presented photos of scenes influenced by national folk customs; the denomination *popular* was used only twice (ambiguously) and *picturesque* once. In no other case were the inspirational sources mentioned. Conversely, the *modernity* of the theatre is alluded to in eight articles. After July 1933, 16 more articles were published. In those the word *modern* appeared only twice (as attribute to an artist and the musical theatre in general), while references to its *regionality* or *popularity* abound in nine cases.

pure and pleasant inspiration, are superior fine taste documents. In today's interiors, so deprived of nationalist art elements, Jorge Barradas' paintings are precious partners."⁶⁸

[50] Another analysis could be derived from the pages of *O Notícias Ilustrado*: the disappearance of references to the boldest modernist artists, which had been usual until 1933, as well as references to the more experimental cinema or architecture – except for Portuguese buildings associated with a cosmopolitan milieu like those of tourism, bars, casinos or restaurants, or the 1934 article about the modernist *Nossa Senhora de Fátima* church – the cause of reactionary criticism – which stated a necessary development in style and already forewarned of future controversy.

[51] The coincidence of the transition from this intense use of *modern* to its fading with the resurgence of references to *popular* or *regional* origin on the pages of the magazine is evident; and this unavoidably followed the moment an official culture was set out by the regime through the SPN development of the *Política do Espírito* supporting the values and morals of the regime.

[52] Although this should not be interpreted as irrefutable proof, it is, nevertheless, a remarkable occurrence that could be viewed as a representative case of how similar works, through their description in such different and almost contradictory terms, could have implied and expressed the different political contexts unfolding in 1930s Portugal.

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⁶⁷ "O grande artista que é [...]," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 250 (26 March 1933), 16.

⁶⁸ "Os desenhos de Jorge Barradas," in: *O Notícias Ilustrado* n. 293 (21 January 1934), 16.

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