

REDESIGNED CANNIBAL MODERNITY BETWEEN RESCUES AND KIDNAPPINGS

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Abstract

This article takes a close look at the tortuous critical fortunes of Oswald de Andrade's 1928 *Cannibal Manifesto*. Where is the line that divides a historiographic literary rescue from a historiographic literary abduction? There is no easy answer to this question. To revisit the history of the reception of Oswald de Andrade's manifesto and the movement, I establish four key moments. The first involves the wide-ranging group of writers and artists that published in the *Revista de Antropofagia*, the publication that displayed the manifesto in its first issue until the end of the group's sounding board in 1929 and the emphatic repudiation of its principles by Oswald de Andrade himself 1930s with an individual attempt at a change of mind in the 1940s. The second moment starts in 1956 with the *Concretistas* (the most accomplished post-WWII avant-garde in Brazil) who gathered around manifestoes and other texts that repeatedly referenced Oswald de Andrade, although not necessarily the *Manifesto Antropófago* – there was an early predilection for the rhetoric of modernization of *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (1924). This second moment follows the changes in the references to Oswald de Andrade as we move into the 1960s and some *concretistas* readjust their views and their rhetoric. A third moment happens in 1967 when a group of artists, filmmakers, musicians, dramaturges, and writers gathered around the *Tropicália* and succeeded in reviving Oswald de Andrade's never-before-staged play *O Rei da Vela* contending with a repressive military regime and the rise of the cultural industry in full force. Finally, we come to last moment in the reception of the *Manifesto Antropófago*, following its triumphant reappearance in 1998 during the 24th São Paulo Bienal, which was curated entirely around the concept of *Antropofagia*.

Keywords

Modernism, Manifestos, Anthropophagy, Brazilian *Modernismo*, Historiography, Oswald de Andrade, Tropicália, São Paulo Art Biannual

Asked a few years ago to present about Brazilian *Modernismo* in a study-group on modernist avant-gardes, I had no doubt that I should work on *Antropofagia* because of its relevance for Brazilian culture and arts. As I was preparing myself, I ran into an eighteenth-century manual written by the Jesuit Manuel Ribeiro Rocha (1687-1745). The book's title: *Etiópe resgatado, empenhado, sustentado, corrigido, instruído e libertado* caught my attention immediately: six past participles with constructive connotations referred to the stages of the process by which free Africans were transformed into slaves in the Americas. The first and the last of them described what was in fact their diametrical opposite: *rescue* referred to *kidnapping* and *liberation*, to *social death*.

Antropofagia made no secret of its appropriations and in fact avoided the kind of dubious use of language you find in a manual for slaveholders written by a Jesuit. *Antropofagia* was the opposite of doublespeak and euphemism: its emphatic injunction was to seize the best of whatever is spatially or temporally foreign and gobble it up. The references and appropriations in the Manifesto, most of them explicit, are well known. In the 1940s, Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954) made disappointing attempts to elaborate on *Antropofagia*, these attempts at least elucidate further on the sources, for instance, of his concept of matriarchy (*Obras Completas* 6 201-209).¹ In 1928, these sources were not treated as a cache of themes and textual mannerisms to be copied in the manner of the epigones of old-fashioned theories of cultural transmission. Modernism in its widest sense was especially useful to Brazilian writers and intellectuals as a new manner of observing and interpreting reality and a new approach to representing and signifying this reality (including the past) and their own identity.

I thought of rescues and kidnappings considering the reception of Oswald de Andrade and his 1928 *Cannibal Manifesto*. Shortly after its publication, the manifesto, its journal, and the movement were abandoned and denied by its main proponents. For decades *Antropofagia* and almost everything Oswald de Andrade wrote in the 1920s was dismissed as

¹ Literature was undoubtedly Andrade's forte. While many of the *crônicas* are worth reading, the essays that attempt at a philosophic prose are filled with gross simplifications and perfunctory reasoning. The following passage from *Marcha das Utopias* should suffice as an example: "Os judeus, julgando-se povo eleito, detentor exclusivo dos favores de Deus, criaram o racismo. Os árabes, povo exogâmico, aberto para as aventuras do mar e para o contato exterior, criaram a miscigenação. E a luta desenvolvida por milênios, tanto no campo étnico como no campo cultural, foi essa — entre o racismo esterilizador mas dominante dos judeus e a mistura fecunda e absorvente dos árabes. Aqueles deram longinquamente a Reforma, estes a Contra-Reforma. Aqueles produziram Lutero e Calvino, enquanto estes, os jesuítas, que foram feridos pelo Vaticano na sua plasticidade política, filha da miscigenação da cultura que adotavam."

a *divertissement* of a bourgeois inconsequent writer from São Paulo before the reality call of the Wall Street Crash. Very few took any heed when Oswald de Andrade tried to recover the term *antropofagia* twenty years later, not in the modernist language of aphorisms, but in essayistic prose collected in the sixth volume of his *Obras Completas*. Only a few years after his death in 1954, the literary standing Oswald de Andrade – but not yet *antropofagia* – underwent a slow, hesitant process of recuperation. The story of the transformation of Oswald de Andrade and *Antropofagia* as presented in his 1928 manifesto is what I want to reflect on with the ideas of rescues or kidnappings in mind. We are always bound to project our own contemporary concerns over the past, but the thin line that divides a historiographic rescue from a historiographic abduction can still be traced. Recuperating that which has been forgotten or has become invisible always brings back to our field of vision the distressing otherness of the past. The past which serves convenient, self-congratulatory mystifications is bound to have been kidnapped. The story of the reception of Oswald de Andrade and *Antropofagia* is the story of a change from oblivion to a cultural centrality that is unique among twentieth century avantgardes, fitting perhaps a little too comfortably the imagination and sensibility of certain circles in the 1960s and in contemporary Brazilian culture, to the extent of becoming the guiding principle of such an institutional behemoth as the 24th São Paulo Art Biennial in 1998.

I believe the *Manifesto Antropófago* is unique among modernist manifestoes, even though some of its preoccupations and its rhetoric are typical. Modernist manifestoes must be read with a grain of salt, with a clear understanding that they refer to a moment and place that no longer exists and tend to express an authoritarian, prescriptive animus. While we may identify with their acute feeling of a unique cultural crisis, many of them tend to at least pretend to know exactly how to overcome that crisis in the manner of their models, the political manifestoes that marked the era of the revolutions since the end of the eighteenth century. Oswald de Andrade was a master of the aphoristic and the epigrammatic and he was able to build complex arguments over a wide range of issues in his 1928 manifesto. Perhaps looking into the way *antropofagia* has been rescued *and* kidnapped since the late 1920s is also the best way to understand Oswald de Andrade's unique talents.

In this article I want to focus on four key moments of this long trajectory. The first moment lasted barely a couple of years and involves the writers and artists that gathered around the publication of the *Revista de Antropofagia*, which displayed Oswald de Andrade's manifesto in its first issue. It entails well-documented radical changes of direction and leadership after ten issues and a host of public controversies such as its unrequited love affair

with Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma* – whose opening paragraphs appeared in its second issue. The abrupt end of the group's sounding board in 1929 followed the emphatic repudiation of its principles (and those of *Modernismo* in general) by Oswald de Andrade himself in the 1930s. Oswald de Andrade's brief (and mostly unsuccessful) attempt at returning to *antropofagia* in the 1950s constituted a melancholy coda to this first phase.

The second moment started after Oswald de Andrade's death. In 1956, young writers united around *Poesia Concreta*, the most accomplished and cohesive of the post-WWII avant-gardes in Brazil, repeatedly referenced Oswald de Andrade. At first these first references are brief and do not mention the *Manifesto Antropófago* – in fact, there was a predilection for the rhetoric of modernization of the manifesto and poems known as *Pau-Brasil* (1924). The role of Oswald de Andrade and *antropofagia* in the circle of *Poesia Concreta* changed in the 1960s, as they adjusted their views and rhetoric to a different context and to debates against defectors such as Ferreira Gullar. These changes are not explicitly announced as *concretistas* continued to proclaim their unshakeable belief in the power and relevance of the modernist avantgarde.

A third moment in the reception of Oswald de Andrade and *Antropofagia* started in the second half of the 1960s when his works were re-edited, sometimes after being out of catalogues for decades. That is the moment of full redemption of Oswald de Andrade, formerly the modernist *maudit*. *Antropofagia* became central to artists involved in the exhibition *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* and to the musicians involved in the collective album *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*, Oswald de Andrade's never-before-staged play *O Rei da Vela* electrified audiences and critics. The group of young artists, filmmakers, musicians, dramaturges, and writers gathered around the newly coined term *Tropicália* all acknowledged their debt to Oswald de Andrade, now first and foremost the author of the *Manifesto Antropófago*. These events became a hallmark of the way Oswald and *antropofagia* came to contend with a repressive military regime, a wave of sexual liberation that included a new wave of feminism, and the encroachment of the cultural industry. A varied and highly qualified scholarship and new editions of Oswald de Andrade's works followed up in the 1970s.

Finally, the last key moment in the history of the reception of the Oswald de Andrade and *Manifesto Antropófago* was the 1998 24th São Paulo Bienal – a paradigmatic event since the 1950s, when it was created to affirm São Paulo as “centro natural do modernismo brasileiro e do progresso industrial” (Oliveira 19) and counted with the support of the families that sponsored the *Semana de Arte Moderna* in 1922. Curators Adriano Pedrosa and

Paulo Herkenhoff uses *Antropofagia* as the organizing concept for the gigantic biennial, and it became the point of contact between Brazilian artists that, having been long dead, reached at that time the highest levels of global visibility: Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), Lygia Clark (1920-1988), and Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980).

The New Cannibal is Born

In 1928, the first issue of *Revista de Antropofagia* – then a monthly magazine – came out featuring the famous manifesto, signed by Oswald de Andrade and illustrated by Tarsila do Amaral. The manifesto was not the only text that explained *Antropofagia* and what the new literary magazine stood for. On page 1, the magazine’s editor Antônio de Alcântara Machado published a text called “Abre Alas,” name of the leading, opening section of *Escolas de Samba* in the *Carnaval* parade. Machado defined the magazine as an ecumenical and eclectic vehicle for all those who joined the *modernismo* after 1922: “Até 1923 havia aliados que eram inimigos. Hoje há inimigos que são aliados.” Indeed, the nine pages of its first issue featured poems, news, and reviews of a veritable who’s who in Brazilian *modernismo*: Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, Jorge de Lima, Guilherme de Almeida, the Cataguazes *Verde* group, Augusto Meyer, and Álvaro Moreyra. Nothing expresses better the eclectic and ecumenic attitude of this first iteration of *Revista Antropofágica* than the fact that, between pages 3 and 7 that contain Oswald de Andrade’s famous manifesto, there lies a long pseudo-scholarly essay about *Tupi* written by the right-wing nationalist Plínio Salgado, one of the leaders of the nationalist *Grupo Anta* and the future founder and leader of Brazil’s fascist movement, *Integralismo*. Even so, on its last page, the first issue of *Revista de Antropofagia* featured an aptly named “Nota Insistente” (a persistent note), again signed by Machado, now in conjunction with the magazine’s manager Raul Bopp. This “persistent note” reaffirms the lack of commitment from the magazine with any of the groups the 1922 modernists had later formed:

A Revista Antropofágica está acima de quaisquer grupos ou tendências; (...) aceita todos os manifestos mas não bota manifesto; (...) aceita todas as criticas mas não faz crítica; (...) nada tem que ver com os pontos de vista de que por acaso seja veículo” (...) “não tem orientação ou pensamento de espécie alguma: só tem estômago. (9)

The last page of the first issue of *Revista Antropofágica* there was also a piece called “A ‘descida’ antropófoga,” signed by Oswald Costa (1900-1967), a scarcely acknowledged but important member of Oswald de Andrade’s group, who abandoned literature after *Revista Antropofágica*, moved to Rio de Janeiro, and joined the Communist Party. For Geraldo

Ferraz (manager of the second phase of *Revista Antropofágica*) Costa was “uma figura importante e preponderante” (Boaventura 10) and for Jayme Adour da Câmara (co-director of that second phase), *Antropofagia*’s “maior teorizador.” For Carlos Jáuregui,

Oswaldo Costa, one of the most important leaders of the group and certainly the one who articulated (...) an Antropofagia intellectually engaged in what we will call a cannibal critique of colonial modernity and Occidentalism. (Jáuregui 2)

In terms of style Costa’s direct prose contrasts with Oswald de Andrade epigrammatic style. He echoes Oswald de Andrade’s ideas in the manifesto, but narrows down its focus by framing *Antropofagia* in explicitly primitivist terms as a double-edged return to a more authentic, pre-colonial past. *Antropofagia* is for Costa a return to the “natural man” (8) against the conventions of etiquette, catechism, and “colonial submissiveness” and a return to “natural beauty – ugly, brutish, rough, barbaric, illogic.” The primitivist category of the natural in Costa’s text is set over against colonial history, against the artifice and contrivance of a society produced by this history, and against modern rationalism in terms similar to those of Breton’s Surrealism. The term *descida* in the text re-signifies a term for the colonial process of acculturation, the abandonment of indigenous culture in favor of a European one. Costa hails the time for a new *descida*, a disembarking, this time, from the artificial colonial condition – “what we have is not European culture but only its experience” – back into sovereign otherness.

Costa published numerous texts in *Revista de Antropofagia*, some under his own name and some under the pseudonym *Tamandaré*. He even came to have a fixed column entitled “Moquém” (name of the grill used by the *Tupinambás* for cooking). In the first issue of the second phase of *Revista de Antropofagia*, Costa reaffirmed the need to reinterpret Brazilian history without Eurocentric prejudices: “o Brasil ocidentalizado é um caso de pseudomorfose histórica.” Here Costa re-signified Spengler, who had defined *pseudomorphosis* as a dissonance between formal surface and the deep message of a text, the result of a culture superimposing itself so massively over another that the latter fails to develop fully its own self-consciousness. The primitivism of *Antropofagia* is for Costa the answer to this state of affairs in Brazil and, in this case, a clear metaphor for the destruction of the Eurocentric status quo.

Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* is a literary feat, deftly weaving with verve and concision four related topics, creating that “potential, conjectural and manifold” text that characterizes Italo Calvino’s “Open Encyclopedia” (Calvino 127). I would briefly characterize these four main topics as follow. There is a defense of a dialectical relation

between that which is alien to that which belongs to the self in the context of national identity – an analogy between the process of selection and appropriation and pre-colonial ritual cannibalism (for example, fragments 3, 5, 11, 32, 33, 43, 44, 51, 52, 63). This analogy is part of a revision of pre-colonial past as an idyllic, primitivist golden age that went beyond any modern utopias such as communism in promoting happiness and freedom from repression (for example, fragments 13, 17, 23, 24, 25, 38, 41, 42, 46, 49, 50, 53). The idyllic pre-Hispanic past serves as the background for protesting the yoke of religious-based social and sexual repressions that the Portuguese colonizers brought and imposed – cultural, social, and sexual oppression that is identified with modern patriarchalism (for example, fragments 5, 7, 8, 29, 62, 64). The negation of the colonial and neo-colonial patriarchalism leads to a call for a new revolution capable of bringing about a new golden age of daring self-confidence in relation to foreign cultures and complete freedom from repression: “sem complexos, sem loucura, sem prostituições e sem penitenciárias” (Puntoni 19). Each of these four main topics is developed epigrammatically but comprehensively as fragments spread throughout the text add to and complement each other. In support of his arguments, Oswald de Andrade builds three networks of concise and ironical textual references: one with works by modern philosophers, anthropologists, and psychologists from Montaigne and Rousseau to Freud and Nietzsche, another with historical references pertaining to the history of Brazil, especially its colonial past, from José de Anchieta, Hans Staden, and Antonio Vieira to Dom João VI and the viscount of Cairu, and the last one with figures from indigenous myths such as Guaraci, Jaci, the Tortoise, and the Big Snake. In his careful analysis of the 1928 manifesto within the works of Oswald de Andrade, Benedito Nunes writes about the need to take into account the use of the term “antropófago” in “três modos da linguagem e em duas pautas semânticas” (*Obras Completas* 6 xxvi). At times emotional, exhortative or referential, the language modes in the manifesto oscillate between anti-Eurocentric ethnographical and anti-colonial historical approaches. All this is crammed into 50 short fragments filled with sarcastic sense of humor and verve. This makes Oswald de Andrade’s manifesto a remarkable accomplishment in modernism. By contrast Picabia’s “Cannibal Manifesto,” to which Heitor Martins (27-34) pointed as a model for Oswald de Andrade, exhausted itself quickly in the iconoclastic gesture of “épater la bourgeoisie.” Andrade’s manifesto is a much more complex, rich, libertarian articulation of primitivist, Nietzschean, Freudian, and nationalist ideas.

After ten issues under the eclecticist direction of Antônio Alcântara Machado, Oswald de Andrade and his circle (Jayme Adour da Câmara, Tarsila do Amaral, Raul Bopp,

Oswald Costa, Geraldo Ferraz, Patrícia Galvão) took over *Revista Antropofágica* and started a “segunda dentição” in March 1929. In this second iteration, *Revista Antropofágica* became a vehicle for the ideas of the group – “órgão do clube de antropofagia” – including frequent irreverent attacks against its perceived enemies and changed its format: it became a weekly Sunday page in the recently created newspaper *Diário de São Paulo*.² Although a few selected poets such as Jorge de Lima, Augusto Meyer, Murilo Mendes, and Manuel Bandeira appear in this phase, most of the page is filled with journalistic, aggressively opinionated prose signed with pseudonyms. Often these columns aimed jabs at perceived enemies (all of them former fellow modernists): Graça Aranha, Trystão de Athayde, Mário de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Cassiano Ricardo, and Augusto Frederico Schmidt.

The last issue of the “segunda dentição” of *Revista Antropofágica* came out less than five months later in August 1929 – the group’s increasingly acid criticism of Catholicism and Christianity was too much for Rubens do Amaral, editor of *Diário de São Paulo*, who put an abrupt end to the Sunday page. According to Raul Bopp, the group still had ambitious plans for a *Congresso de Antropofagia* in 1931 and a book series (*Bibliotequinha Antropofágica*) (Bopp 78). Nevertheless, the movement was abruptly dissolved when Oswald de Andrade ended his marriage to Tarsila do Amaral and started an affair with nineteen-year-old Patrícia Galvão – they would marry in 1930. The collapse of Wall Street and the Revolution of 1930 signified the thorough change of scenery that followed the dissolution of *Antropofagia*.

In 1933 Oswald de Andrade wrote a short preface to his novel *Serafim Ponte Grande* calling his former *modernista* self a “palhaço da burguesia” and the movement he led a mere “sarampão antropofágico” (measles, although highly infectious, lasts no more than 10 days) (*Obras Completas* 2, 132). When his former wife Tarsila do Amaral held a solo exhibition in Rio de Janeiro in 1933, she presented new paintings, social-minded collective portraits of the Brazilian proletariat such as *Workers* and *Second Class*, as a change of direction.

By the time Oswald de Andrade died in 1954, his ostracism was described in these terms by his daughter Marília de Andrade:

Os pais de minhas amigas, mesmo os mais intelectualizados, nunca haviam lido nenhum de seus livros, não havia exemplars deles na biblioteca da escola e depois que eu entrei no ginásio constatei, desoladamente, que seu nome sequer constava das antologias de literatura brasileira, no capítulo sobre o Modernismo. (*Antropofagia Hoje?* 43)

² Assis Chateaubriand started the newspaper in support of Getúlio Vargas’s campaign for the presidency with an ambitious marketing strategy: for one month daily issues were distributed for free to a host of potential subscribers. This way *Diário de S. Paulo* quickly attained a readership of 90,000 (Sodré 368).

In a letter to Antonio Candido published in *Vários Escritos* (89-92), Oswald de Andrade's son Rudá referred to his old, ailing father as a man anguished by his condition as “um criador de vanguarda semi-isolado” (91). Instead of poems or manifestos, in his later years Oswald de Andrade wrote a series of short essays published as *A Marcha das Utopias* and a philosophy text, *A crise da Filosofia Messiânica*. They were mostly ignored.

At the time of Oswald de Andrade's death Carlos Drummond de Andrade published a heartfelt *crônica* later collected in the book *Fala, Amendoeira*. In this text, Drummond de Andrade characterized *Antropofagia* simply as an excuse for the free exercise of Oswald de Andrade's voluble, incoherent personality, which oscillated between the iconoclastic provocateur and the wounded sentimental since the 1920s: “Oswald de Andrade construiu toda uma filosofia da vida, e uma teoria sociológica, para justificar o exercício de sua tendência ao sarcasmo” (*Fala, Amendoeira* 117). Unlike his peers (Drummond included) Oswald de Andrade was for Drummond de Andrade a modernist impervious to accommodation or evolution, who maintained “uma atitude tipicamente modernista, não isenta de sabor, sobretudo notável porque implicava o culto à indisciplina e ao desrespeito, que infelizmente não caracteriza os moços de hoje” (118).

At the same time, Antonio Candido wrote “Oswald Viajante” and paid a touching (and brief) posthumous homage to the old *modernista* with “sua fome antropofágica de sonho e liberdade” (*Vários Escritos* 56). Candido had met Oswald de Andrade first when he was a young student in 1940 and his advocacy about the importance of *modernismo* started at that time. *Modernismo* and several of its participants consistently gained cultural capital in following decades. Carlos Drummond de Andrade became the most influential Brazilian poet in the 1940s and Manuel Bandeira edited influential anthologies and entered the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* around the same time. In the meantime, Oswald de Andrade remained downplayed as a minor *modernista* or even ignored in anthologies such as Cláudio Brandão's *Antologia Contemporânea: prosadores e poetas brasileiros e portugueses* (1931), Jonathas Serrano's *Antologia Brasileira* (1943) and Manuel Bandeira's *Apresentação a literatura brasileira* (1965).³

An admirer of the novel *Mentiras Sentimentais de João Miramar*, only in 1970 Antonio Candido wrote a longer essay on the author of the *Manifesto Antropofágico* – “Digressão Sentimental Sobre Oswald de Andrade” (57-88). Candido reaffirmed the

³ Manuel Bandeira thinks of Oswald de Andrade primarily as a novelist and as a primitivist cultural agitator. His poetry are made “menos por verdadeira inspiração do que para indicar novos caminhos” and his poems are “versos de um romancista em férias” (137).

contrast between the undisputed prestige of *modernistas* such as Mário de Andrade and Sérgio Milliet in the 1940s and Oswald de Andrade, who “ficava meio à margem” (63) and emphasized the appeal of his sarcastic, irreverent primitivism and the deft use of the modernist aesthetic of fragmentation in the novel. Times had changed as Candido felt the need to address *Antropofagia* in 1970. For him, it was a vague concept – the natural result, he implies, of a concept developed by a writer characterized by “a elipse, a alusão, o corte, o espaço branco, o choque do absurdo” (78) – which was fit into a Brazilian literary tradition:

É difícil dizer no que consiste exatamente a Antropofagia, que Oswald nunca formulou, embora tenha deixado elementos suficientes para vermos embaixo dos aforismos alguns princípios virtuais, que a integram numa linha constante da literatura brasileira desde a Colônia: a descrição do choque de culturas. (84-5)

Candido’s understanding is that the clash between indigenous and Portuguese cultures was systematized first in colonial literature by Basilio da Gama and Santa Rita Durão. The same clash was registered by Oswald de Andrade (and by Mário de Andrade in *Macunaíma*) with critical acumen, sarcasm, and irreverence, reinterpreting their contemporary Brazil through the lenses of primitivism. Thus, rather than a radical rupture, *Antropofagia* constituted at the most the culmination of a Brazilian tradition. Even in this second assessment of Oswald de Andrade, which took place amidst a sudden burst of enthusiasm about *Antropofagia* among young artists, musicians, and writers, Candido preferred not take into account the writings that return to the concept of *Antropofagia* after 1945. It is implicit that Candido still agreed with Drummond’s assessment in 1954: the later writings added nothing substantial to Oswald de Andrade’s works from the 1920s.

Oswald de Andrade, the avantgarde hero

A couple of years after Oswald de Andrade’s death, however, the *modernista mandit* started to be mentioned in texts written by the most important post-WWII Brazilian avant-garde, *Poesia Concreta. Teoria da Poesia Concreta*, which collects texts by Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Décio Pignatari from the 1950s and the early 1960s, showcases how their view evolved. The three introductory verses from the 1928 poem “Hip! Hip! Hoover” (41)⁴ were quoted (without any commentary) by Décio Pignatari in 1956 as he posits the crisis of the traditional verse and rejection of expressionist, subjective poetry – two constant concerns of the *concretistas* in the 1950s. This first Oswald de Andrade of the

⁴The poem – illustrated by Tarsila do Amaral – mocks certain official enthusiasm with the trip of US president Herbert Hoover to Brazil in that year.

concretistas was far from being one of the stars of their constellation, where Stéphane Mallarmé, Guillaume Apollinaire, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and e.e. cummings reigned supreme. In 1957, Haroldo de Campos briefly mentioned Oswald de Andrade (and João Cabral de Melo Neto) as “raridades que nadam contra a maré” (51), exceptions to a rule of mediocrity that *Concretismo* had come to abolish. In same tenor, Décio Pignatari referred to Mário⁵ and Oswald de Andrade as authors of “raras e casuais realizações” (65) of interest and set João Cabral as the “primeiro ataque lúcido contra o jargão lírico e a peste metafórico-liriferante que assola a poesia nacional e mundial” (65) in the same year. In 1960, Haroldo de Campos again brought Oswald de Andrade and João Cabral de Melo Neto together, now affiliating them to William Carlos Williams and the “vertente ‘objetivista’” (139).

In these texts from the 1950s the *concretistas* could still be sometimes condescending towards *Modernismo*, speaking of the 1922 movement as taking much later in terms of the European avantgardes of the time, in contrast with *Poesia Concreta*, “pela primeira vez (...) totalmente contemporânea” (152). As far as Oswald de Andrade, the focus in the 1950s was ostensibly on the short poems – the “poemas-minuto” and “poemas-pílula” of the times of the *Pau-Brasil* (1924) manifesto and book (153-156). Oswald de Andrade was at the time no more than a valid example of the very few Brazilian inventive poets worthy of attention because of his application of Futurist methods of rupturing syntax.

Gradually, the cast of paragons of *Concretismo* was expanded with the ostensive incorporation of Brazilian literature: Gregório de Matos, Sousândrade, Qorpo Santo, Oswald de Andrade, João Cabral de Melo Neto, and João Guimarães Rosa deserve their critical attention.⁶ These incorporations are all framed as critical rescue operations in which writers supposedly ostracized by reactionary forces firmly ensconced in academia and mainstream journalism were revalued and promoted by the *concretistas* for anticipating or corroborating modernist avant-garde principles as defined by the formalist the constructivism defended by the group. This new modernist *paideuma* signified the construction of a sort of nationalist cosmopolitanism whose enthusiasm for Brazilian literature contrasted sharply with Antonio Candido’s apologetic idea of national literature as

⁵ In 1957 Décio Pignatari treats Mário de Andrade condescendingly as someone who theorized about the existence of the “harmonic verse” (86) without realizing that its systematic use would imply the destruction of the conventional verse (87), a constant *bête noire* of the *Concretistas*.

⁶ Guimarães Rosa (138-140) – directly related to Joyce – appears in “A temperatura informacional do texto” in 1960 as well as Machado de Assis (141) and again in “A temp(138-9)

“a secondary branch of Portuguese literature, which in its turn is a second-class shrub in the Garden of the Muses” (*Formação da literatura* 9).

In the 1950s, the group of *Poesia Concreta* was completely smitten with the myth of formal progress in art. The group had set itself as the harbinger of only possible future for art and literature composed by aggressive modernizing trailblazers capable of forcibly bringing Brazilian literature and art up to date with the relentless promotion of “the most advanced” formalistic approaches. Without changing, the group gradually claimed models for this aesthetic revolution to be found in Brazil’s own past. These investigations and inclusions followed in the footsteps of their hero Ezra Pound: appropriating by translating and editing or re-editing the work of those who could serve as models from a distant time or place.

A historiographic work played a fundamental role in this process with regards to Oswald de Andrade. In 1958, Mário da Silva Brito published *História do Modernismo – Antecedentes da Semana de Arte Moderna*, an extensively documented account of the five years preceding 1922. The book established categorically the central importance of Oswald de Andrade for *modernismo*, highlighting his role as disseminator of European Futurism in São Paulo, as an encourager of hesitant companions such as Mário de Andrade and Anita Malfatti, and as a champion of their work against their detractors in the public opinion arena. In 1960, Haroldo de Campos was ready to bring Oswald de Andrade to center stage and describe *Serafim Ponte Grande* as “um dos marcos da invenção verbal, da manipulação qualitativa do léxico e da sintaxe” (141).

I think a good way of understanding the changes within the group of *Poesia Concreta* as they entered the 1960s is the vivid contrast between the art used on covers of the five issues of *Noigandres* (1952) and on the cover of *Teoria da Poesia Concreta* (1965):



While the 1950s magazine favors either monochromatic covers or geometric abstract art, the book cover featured classic cartoon characters such as Mandrake and the Brazilian *Amigo da Onça*, in the manner of early 1960s Pop Art icon Roy Lichtenstein with sarcastic speech bubbles. The first cartoon character Alley Oop declares that “A poesia é concreta e participante” – the addition of the term *participatory* is noteworthy. As early as 1962, Haroldo de Campos had responded to critics of his group in “A Poesia Concreta e a Realidade Nacional” incorporating new issues to his eminently avant-garde modernist positions. There is a dislocation from a more restricted formal criticism to one that incorporates ideas of culture that resonate with political and social meaning.

The change in style denote a move away from a strict adherence to the tenets of High Modernism in the manner of Clement Greenberg as a response not only to the encroachment of the consumerist cultural industry onto every aspect of culture in the world at large, but also to a specifically Brazilian cultural situation in which the Cold War culminated with the establishment of an authoritarian military regime after almost two decades of democracy. These changes demanded a commitment to some form of political relevance from performers, composers, artists, poets, novelists, critics, and intellectuals. The rupture in the discourse of the protagonists of *Poesia Concreta* was never acknowledged. For them Pop Art was simply a new avantgarde, another iteration of the modernist tradition of ruptures. Their commitment to modernism was not challenged by the addition of an explicit preoccupation with issues such as eurocentrism, cultural imperialism, and national identity. Décio Pignatari spelled out the connection between these new issues and the continued idealization of the heroic modernist avant-garde in the following terms:

... a atual pop art norte-americana (também batizada de "neo-dadaista"...) — o primeiro movimento de vanguarda autêntico dos Estados Unidos para o mundo: também uma rebelião contra a cultura européia. Uma arte antropófaga. (Pignatari 53)

The appearance of Dada in this context was relevant. It was a sign of the beginning in the shift of emphasis from more formalistic constructivist modernism to an anarchic, parodical cultural iconoclasm. In context of Brazilian *modernismo*, this move favored the view of the movement as a rebellion against Eurocentric, middle-class values instead of the introduction of the latest in formal techniques for the production of Brazilian literature for export, on a par with the most advanced in the world. In the specific case of Oswald de Andrade, the focus of interest moved from the synthetic, concise language of *Pau-Brasil* and its poems built from fragments of colonial historical texts in the manner of Marcel Duchamps' readymades to the anarchic, libertarian, primitivist iconoclasm of *Antropofagia*.

In the larger context of Brazilian thought, these shifts happened in tandem with the transition of the critique of imperialism from CEPAL's *desenvolvimentismo* based on import substitute industrialization to the more radical criticism of the Theotonio dos Santos's *Theory of Dependence*.

Long live the Cannibal!

In 1960s there were clear signs that the view of Oswald de Andrade underwent a change. In the last of the compilation of texts organized in the early 1960s by the group Decio Pignatari typically paired Oswald de Andrade with Sousândrade as examples that “poesia é linguagem (& não língua)” (170), but also welcomed a new edition of *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar* (1964) with a preface written by Haroldo de Campos 14 years after the death of its author. In 1964, Pignatari published an essay not included in *Teoria da Poesia Concreta – Textos Críticos e Manifestos*, “Marco Zero de Andrade.” It was dedicated entirely to Oswald de Andrade, who became a full-fledged avantgarde hero, the radical, original creator “of a new, irreversible language, unintelligible to the pre-existent language already stratified as a code” (41). For Pignatari, it was Oswald de Andrade's groundbreaking, courageous, uncompromising attitude of an avant-garde hero that was the source of mainstream Brazilian culture's resistance to him:

Tem-se uma idéia clara da situação oswaldiana quando se vê que as suas obras não são reeditadas; a última obra que dele se editou — o volume de memórias — data de há 10 anos.

In 1964 there came the new edition of *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar*, with a cover by artist Flávio de Carvalho, a short preface by Antonio Candido, and an introduction by Haroldo de Campos. The book commemorated 10 years of Oswald de Andrade's death and the 40th anniversary of the first and only edition of the novel. Candido announced that that was the first book of the reedition of Oswald de Andrade's “obras tanto quanto possível completas” (5) under his supervision by invitation of the publisher *Difusão Européia do Livro* and Oswald de Andrade's estate. The project was delayed until the 1970s, but a *Poesias Reunidas* came out in 1966 with another cover from Flávio de Carvalho and another preface from Haroldo de Campos. Comparing Oswald de Andrade's *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar* with Joyce's *Ulysses* and Thomas Mann's *Magi Mountain*, Haroldo de Campos claim this book as “capital para as experiências literárias que refundiram a literatura brasileira, inclusive algumas em curso atualmente” (*Memórias Sentimentais de João*

Miramar 7). These two reeditions made Oswald de Andrade's prose and poetry available to the general public in the second half of the 1960s.

With his work back in print, Oswald de Andrade's position was further consolidated in 1967, coinciding with a particularly fertile moment in Brazilian culture. That year Haroldo de Campos edited *Trechos Escolhidos*, a small anthology of Oswald de Andrade's poetry and prose for the pocketbook series *Nossos Clássicos*.⁷ In the critical introduction to this anthology – heavily based on Pignatari's 1964 piece – Oswald de Andrade is consistently compared favorably to Mario de Andrade as a true defender of the “aesthetic revolution” (*Trechos escolhidos* 8), but the *Manifesto Antropofágico* only deserves one paragraph framed as the “the natural complement” (17) of the 1924 *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* and as “um indianismo às avessas” in the manner of Sousândrade's *O Guesa* – another literary “rescue operation” promoted by the group of *Poesia Concreta*.

In that same, busy 1967, José Celso Martinez Correa's *Teatro Oficina* staged for the first time Oswald de Andrade's 1933 play *Rei da Vela* to great acclaim – Hélio Eichbauer's scenography explicitly draw inspiration from Tarsila do Amaral's *Antropofagia* paintings and drawings. The groundbreaking exhibition *Nova Objetividade Brasileira*⁸ at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio features Hélio Oiticica's participatory installations (*penetráveis*) called *Tropicália*. Oiticica wrote an introductory text, “Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade,” which mentions *Antropofagia*, as Oiticica wilyly observed, “antes de virar moda, o que aconteceu após a apresentação do Rei da Vela” (106). Oiticica's text cites Oswald de Andrade and *Antropofagia* as examples of the “vontade construtiva geral” of Brazilian artists and writers since *modernism* – Oiticica admired the *Concretos* despite his involvement with the *Neoconcretos*, a group critical of their rigidity and formalism in the 1950s. In this foundational text, Oiticica defines Brazilians as “um povo à procura de uma caracterização cultural” and their culture as eminently “antropofágica, ou seja redução imediata de todas as influências externas a modelos nacionais” (Oiticica 85). After forty years of relative ostracism, Oswald de Andrade and *Antropofagia* resurfaced and ran into counterculture and

⁷ The collection *Nossos clássicos* consisted of inexpensive pocketbook paperbacks with around a hundred pages divided into biographical data, a presentation, a selection of texts, a bibliography, a critical bibliography, a selection of short critical blurbs from various critics, and a questionnaire meant for use in high school literature classes. Hundreds of Brazilian and Portuguese authors were included in the collection.

⁸ 1967 also saw the release of Glauber Rocha's groundbreaking *Terra em Transe*. It is radical film based on Rocha's 1965 manifesto “The Aesthetics of Hunger,” which bears interesting parallels with Oswald de Andrade's “Manifesto Antropofágico” as it treats hunger as the foundational concept for a new, truly Latin American aesthetic.

anti-imperialism in a triumphant return, now as the culmination of modernism, as a national tradition of fighting imperialism, and as a strategy against the encroachment of the production from the first-world cultural industry:

Antropofagia seria a defesa que possuímos contra tal domínio exterior, e a principal arma criativa, essa vontade construtiva, o que não impediu de todo uma espécie de colonialismo cultural, que de modo objetivo queremos hoje abolir, absorvendo-o definitivamente numa superantropofagia. (Oiticica 85)

This anti-imperialist reading of *Antropofagia* is not entirely different from Antonio Candido's nationalist assessment three years later, but here Oiticica did not see *Antropofagia* as a vague concept or a reiteration of *Poesia Pau-Brasil*. Here Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropofágico* became central to an attitude that was simultaneously anti-imperialist and cosmopolitan, the defining moment of a tradition that was crucial to the present and the future of Brazilian culture.

Deeply impressed by Helio Oiticica's *penetráveis*, the singer/composer Caetano Veloso and his producer Guilherme Araújo organized the collective music album called *Tropicália ou Panis et circensis* with an iconic design by Rubens Gerchman loosely inspired by the cover of The Beatles's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The emphasis for Caetano Veloso and the Tropicalistas was the enthusiastic embrace of vernacular Brazilian culture as well as popular, commercial Kitsch. The injunction of Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago* to be vividly interested in everything that is not one's own meant to be equally interested in the sophisticated *Bossa Nova*, in the *Banda de Pífanos de Caruaru*, in comic books and cartoons such as those on the cover of *Concretista* book, in the overly dramatic hit "Coração Materno" (1937) sung by Vicente Celestino, and in the anarchic radio show host *Chacrinha*. None of these were to be seen as part of the despised cultural rear-garde, the nemesis of High Modernism, but as appetizing material to be freely appropriated – cannibalized – by artists interested in demolishing boundaries set by elitist notions of good taste and sophistication.

The military coup d'état in 1964 had happened with the full support of the United States and with a discourse deeply immersed in the rhetoric of the Cold War. Some in Brazil had seen a link between the ascendance of youth rock'n'roll culture through radio and TV and an imperialist global project of ideological domination. More traditional forms of nationalism (which were also part of 1920s *modernismo*) inspired those to organize a demonstration against the use of the electric guitar, characterizing those who emulated *The Beatles* in Brazil as victims of ideological alienation. *Tropicalistas* such as Oiticica, Veloso, and

Gilberto Gil were excited by counterculture and converged around the label *Tropicália*, preferring to absorb and subvert mass-market, foreign influences into our modernist traditions, “cannibalizing” them.

To elaborate this new synthesis of the national and the foreign, the tropicalistas relied on reading Oswald de Andrade as Oiticica had done, as “a certain strategy toward cultural production, which ‘cannibalizes’ both local and foreign styles and technologies in a process of ironic appropriation and recycling” (Dunn 118). In Veloso’s own words, the Oswald de Andrade of *antropofagia* became “o ponto de união entre todos os tropicalistas e seus mais antagônicos admiradores” (Veloso 114), shared by ardent admirers of *Sgt. Pepper’s Heart Club Band*, Jimi Hendrix as well as Roberto Carlos and by Bossa Nova fans and devoted researchers of Brazilian folklore.

In *Tropicália ou Panis et circensis*, composer and conductor Rogério Duprat’s arrangements mixing northeastern traditional rhythms, avant-garde dissonance and psychedelic rock reflected in musical terms the disjointed, cubist-like lyrics of Veloso’s “Tropicália,” which accumulate citations with dazzling speed in a curious mixture of national epic euphoria and a sense of looming violent menace. Those involved in *Tropicália ou Panis et circensis* (Rogério Duprat, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Nara Leão, Gal Costa, Tom Zé, *Os Mutantes*, Torquato Neto, and Capinam) started to be called *tropicalistas* just as television had started to grow in influence in the media. All of them had notable participations in the many competitive music festivals broadcast by television since 1965 and Veloso and Gil even became hosts of a provocative, improvisational TV show called *Divino Maravilhoso*.

Only a few months later the debut of the TV show, in December 1968, hardliners in the military regime took over and sparked a new, harsher wave of persecution, intimidation, censorship, torture, and assassinations. Paranoically suspicious of any kind of irreverence toward their official gung-ho patriotism, the military regime cast their net more widely than ever before: they arrested student and union activists, journalists, opposition politicians, and cultural figures such as Veloso and Gil. During a show in a nightclub in Rio, they had displayed Oiticica’s 1967 screenprint on fabric that featured the image of the dead body of a wanted criminal nicknamed “Cara de Cavalo” (who had been executed by a death squad in Rio) and the message “Seja marginal, seja herói.” The police closed the nightclub and Veloso and Gil remained in custody for two months namely for “disrespecting the Brazilian flag and the national anthem.” Both, as well as Oiticica, the filmmaker Glauber Rocha, and many others were driven into voluntary or forced exile at that time.

The political and social context that led to the 1964 coup d'état had forced all cultural agents in Brazil – including the group of *Poesia Concreta* – to respond by moving beyond strictly formal discussions. In this context, two aspects of Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago" struck a chord with Brazilian artists and intellectuals in the late 1960s as they were experiencing simultaneously the exhilarating possibilities of third-world revolution, sexual liberation, counterculture, and student activism, the new mass media and its global village, and the claustrophobic tension of an encroaching military dictatorship deeply immersed in cold war paranoia.

Antropofagia metaphorical cannibalism proposed a post-colonial active absorption of the unwanted and the foreign into a new national identity and his call for a matriarchy fit the contestation of traditional family and relationship mores, instigating “a imaginação a uma crítica da nacionalidade, da história e da linguagem” (Velo, 181). The manifesto's fragmentary style also guaranteed there was enough space for its new readers to redefine it according to their own temperament and needs, signifying “a fragmentação radical, a força intuitiva e violentamente iconoclastica” (Velo, 178) they needed to break through the divisions between nationalist traditionalism and 1960s pop, between high and low brow, and between political relevance and aesthetic acumen.

While the role of *Antropofagia* in triggering some of the most interesting cultural production in Brazil in the late 1960s was universally admitted, some thought the same could not be said about critical analysis. Writing in 1968, Heitor Martins grumpily complained that the renewed interest in Oswald de Andrade and Tarsila do Amaral had originated only studies of “caráter laudatório ou memorialista” (11). For Martins, *Antropofagia* was derivative of European movements. Furthermore, in an explicit jab at Haroldo de Campos's preface to *Trechos escolhidos* Martins claimed the ostracism of Oswald de Andrade was not a plot against the avantgardes, but simply the result a commercial decision – a specious argument.

From the *Tropicalista* lyricists/poets Capinam and Torquato Neto to the new generation of poets from *Poesia Marginal* in the early 1970s, Oswald de Andrade's influence only grew. Instead of being considered a minor member of the *modernistas*, Oswald de Andrade became equivalent to avant-garde modernism: irreverent, sarcastic, steeped in the vernacular, fast-paced, eminently synthetic and omnivorous. Over the 1970s Oswald de Andrade's complete works were published in 10 volumes by Civilização Brasileira (the most influential literary publisher in Brazil in that period) with critical introductions by Mário da Silva Brito, Haroldo de Campos, Benedito Nunes, and Antonio Candido.

A series of important critical contributions followed the advent of *Tropicália* and now constitute an inescapable critical canon of Oswald de Andrade's work: essays by Antonio Candido (1970), José Guilherme Wisnik (1974), Benedito Nunes (1978), again Haroldo de Campos (1980), and Silviano Santiago (1982). Starting in 1969, the art historian Aracy Amaral started publishing consistently on Tarsila do Amaral and other *modernista* artists – her carefully researched biography of the painter, *Tarsila – sua obra e seu tempo* is a landmark. The rise of Tarsila do Amaral took place after decades of enthusiasm for geometrical abstract art on the part of the *Concretos* and the dominance of Emiliano Di Cavalcanti and Cândido Portinari as quintessential figurative modernist stars. Tarsila do Amaral's belated triumph is another proof of the consolidation of the prestige of *antropofagia*.⁹

Although Haroldo de Campos frames the 1980 “Da razão antropofágica: diálogo e diferença na cultura brasileira” as a continuation of his previous essays on Oswald de Andrade, it is a quite different image of the modernist, now not first and foremost the author of the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (to which the *Manifesto Antropófago* provided a mere continuation) and the writer of poems that anticipate the “death of the verse;” but first and foremost the creator of *Antropofagia* as a proposal to “pensar o nacional em relacionamento dialógico e dialético com o universal (...) tanto de apropriação como de expropriação, desierarquização, desconstrução” (*Metalinguagem e outras linguagens* 234). Once in tune with anti-imperialism, sex liberation, and counterculture in the late 1960s, Oswald Andrade reached the 1980s in tune with a decentered, peripheral take on post-structuralism and deconstruction. In Silviano Santiago's eloquent words:

Oswald de Andrade, dentro do movimento de 22, era o único que falava da influência como autonomia do influenciado, dos débitos sem dúvida na conta corrente do autor e dos créditos que embaralham as colunas no livro de contas. A visão oswaldiana do passado visa a colocá-lo em condição de força para a criação dependente, e é por isso que a sua teoria não pode ser compreendida por certos historiadores da literatura brasileira que ainda primam pela busca da "objetividade" a todo preço, sem se preocupar em saber para quem ela trabalha. Oswald embaralha os dados cronológicos, propondo antecedências liberadoras e procedências castradoras. Liberação

⁹ As a telling sign of the canonization of Oswald de Andrade as a cultural prophet, Jacob Grinsburg's review Aracy Amaral's book complains about her less than flattering portrait of Oswald de Andrade: “uma silhueta de homem de negócios com vinculações políticas nas altas esferas, de esnoberado que se realiza na ostentação da alta costura, da prataria e da decoração, a do gozador inveterado que troca um amigo por uma piada, a do festeiro canibal da celebração modernista, e não a do destemido lutador por uma nova estética, a do original inventor de uma nova linguagem e estrutura literárias, e a do intuitivo mas nem por isso menos notável pioneiro de uma nova visão de Brasil, cuja redescoberta em profundidade empreendeu e cujos problemas mais entranhados e dolorosos ousou procurar...” (Grinsburg 566).

e castração se dão num idêntico compasso, significando a realidade de uma situação de "dependência", a própria razão da sua existência precária, que, descrita de outra forma, apenas falsearia os dados que estão em jogo. (Santiago, 98)

Santiago made another important contribution when he argued for a differentiation between *modernismo* as a set of avantgarde movements in the 1920s and expressions of modernity. *Modernism* cannot be understood in formalistic terms without a broader cultural analysis. Only when disengaged from a strict equivalence with the 1922 *Semana de Arte Moderna em São Paulo*, the concept of modernism can illuminate the works of Machado de Assis and Guimarães Rosa. The avant-gardes were perhaps the most exasperated and radical expressions of modernism, but *modernism* was more than that. Modernism – with its acute sense of cultural crisis and its experimental confrontation of artistic and cultural conventions – was an aesthetic approach that allowed for a new perspective on reality and new modes of representation. The dialectic mediation between fragment and cohesion in the best moments of Oswald de Andrade’s literary works invite us to think of Calvino’s “potential, conjectural and manifold” view of totality and challenge us to read into the many textual spaces as we see fit.

A notable example of the powerful cultural capital of *Antropofagia* in Brazil is the issue of the reception of Gregório de Mattos in the 1970s and 1980s. The rescue (or kidnapping) of the Baroque poet can be summarized as follows. In 1969, James Amado edited a multi-volume and all-inclusive *Obras Completas*;¹⁰ Caetano Veloso adapted the sonnet “Triste Bahia” into the namesake song for his album *Transa* in 1972; and José Miguel Wisnik edited a shorter anthology of poems named *Poemas escolhidos* in 1974.

Notable is the cultural capital of *Antropofagia* by that time. In 1974, Augusto de Campos published “Arte Final para Gregório” in *Bahia-Invenção: Antiantologia da Poesia Baiana* and calls the Baroque poet “o primeiro antropófago experimental da nossa poesia” (156). In “Da América que Existe: Gregório de Matos,” Augusto de Campos describes Gregório de Matos thus:

Sem a boca do inferno de nosso primeiro antropófago, esse baiano e estrangeiro que deglute e vomita o Barroco europeu e o retempera na mulatália e no sincretismo tropical, não há formação — por mais bem-intencionada — que informe o que há de vivo por trás dessa coisa engraçada chamada literatura brasileira. (95)

¹⁰ Amado cleverly defined his edition as the complete works of the “poesia da época chamada Gregório de Matos.”

In a typical nationalist outburst, Augusto de Campos compares the exuberance of Matos to the literary paucity of the Puritans in North America. Even Wisnik's 1974 preface to his anthology (in its original version explicitly critical of such appropriations as ahistorical) characterized linguistic procedures in a certain poem by Gregório de Matos as "uma espécie de antropofagia linguística" (26).¹¹

In 1989, Haroldo de Campos opened the essay *Sequestro do Barroco na formação da literatura brasileira* claiming as his fundamental inspiration – by then heavily inflected with post-structuralism –Oswald de Andrade's *Antropofagia* (9). The title of the book indicated that this was a *rescue* mission: Gregório de Matos had been *kidnapped* by Antonio Candido's historicism in *Formação da Literatura Brasileira* in the 1950s. Academic historicism responds in kind in João Adolfo Hansen's *Sátira e Engenho* (1989):

Categories como "pessimismo", "ressentimento", "plágio", "imoralidade", "realismo", "oposição nativista crítica", "antropofagia", "libertinagem", "revolução", que vêm sendo aplicadas por várias críticas desde o século XIX aos poemas ditos da autoria de Gregório de Matos, podem ter algum valor metafórico de descrição de um efeito particular de sentido produzido pela recepção. Não dão conta historicamente, contudo, do seu funcionamento como prática discursivo de uma época que, desde a obra de Heinrich Wölfflin, o século XX constitui neokantianamente como "barroca": como categorias analíticas, são apropriadas antes para o desejo e o interesse do lugar institucional da apropriação do que propriamente para o objeto dela. (33)

Gregório de Matos *antropófago* is lumped together with a long list of post-Romantic ahistorical labels that reveal more about the appropriation and the reception than about the text itself, which was produced under a completely different discursive practice. With a careful study of the seventeenth century "agudeza engenhosa" in Gregório de Matos, including its elitist and prejudiced views of colonial subjects, Hansen frames that which claimed to be a literary rescue as a literary kidnapping, denounced in the "anacronismo de noções interessadas" (41).

When not truncated by heated exchanges and name-calling, this debate circled a fundamental disagreement over the boundary between ahistorical and transhistorical approaches to literary past. On the one hand, a consistent dissatisfaction with what was perceived as a rushed glossing over temporal specificities, all of them collapsed into a flat, eternal present; on the other, an insistence on the need to find and amplify strategies from the past for a sort of decolonial tradition.

¹¹ Afterwards, Gregório de Matos was the object of three works by Ana Miranda: the awarded novel *Boca do Inferno* in 1989, a film in 2004, and a biography, *Musa Praguejadora* in 2014.

Set free from its immediate context and restricted to the manifesto, *Antropofagia* has become something alike a myth as defined by Levi Strauss, a narrative able to “provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if as it happens the contradiction is real)” (*Structural Anthropology*, 229). Interpretations of this mythical *Antropofagia* have become the “theoretically infinite number of slates will be generated, each one slightly different from the others” and those will, according to Levi-Strauss, grow “spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted.” The intellectual impulse to overcome somehow the contradictions of a fractured identity profoundly Western and not quite Western is certainly far from being exhausted.

Antropofagia enters the 21st Century

Antropofagia became universally influential in Brazil: an equally valuable currency among so-called cosmopolitans and nationalists, among different defenders of modernism and of post-modernism. In 1998 the gigantic *Bienal de São Paulo* was curated around the concept of *Antropofagia* as “a crucial strategy in the process of the constitution of an autonomous language in a country with a peripheral economy” (40). This turn-of-the-century *Antropofagia* is repackaged as encompassing neo-Baroque and post-structuralist concept by none other than Haroldo de Campos:

A antropofagia é o filosofema básico, o operador cultural por excelência, o legado fundante do modernismo brasileiro. Uma forma brutalista de “desconstrucionismo”, avant la lettre. Através da devoração, que é polêmica (isto é, crítica) e antológica (isto é, seletiva, no sentido de que o canibal só devora o inimigo valoroso, capaz de fornecer-lhe o nutrimento do tutano), o tabu se transforma em totem. O terceiro excluído, o ex-cêntrico, através do ritual antropofágico, apropriando-se do que lhe interessa na cultura egocêntrica do opressor, pratica uma espécie de festim eucarístico dos ex-comunicados. É a “contraconquista”, de que fala o cubano Lezama Lima. O coup de dents marxilar. A mastigação crítico-antológica da outridade, que produz a diferença criativa no caldeirão xamânico do antropófago. (Um e/entre outro/s 101)

At once foundational and deconstructive, ex-centric and appropriating, festive alterity and cultural operation, *Antropofagia*, one example of early twentieth-century iconoclastic avant-garde discourse from the 1920s has become the absolute center of Brazilian culture and its main contribution to the world at large – the *Bienal de São Paulo* is an eminently modernist project of insertion of Brazil into the international circles of global capitalist culture from its local center in São Paulo.

In the introductory text to the historical part of the *Bienal de São Paulo*, one of the curators, Paulo Herkenhoff¹² maps out his own encompassing reading of *Antropofagia* (22-49). It is a “tradição cultural brasileira” (23), its “lente (...) para visitar a arte contemporânea e a história” (23) and its “estratégia de emancipação cultural” (22) through symbolic appropriation. While for the *concretistas* Oswald de Andrade came to represent the principles of the avantgardes applied to a post-colonialist perspective, Herkenhoff’s *antropofagia* becomes an all-encompassing concept of artistic appropriation. As Herkenhoff goes through the many different components of the historical exhibition, one gets the feeling that practically anything related to Brazil can be turned *Antropofagia*.

Two paradigmatic examples should suffice. The first is the fact that Antonio Vieira, one of the main *antagonists* of Oswald de Andrade’s *Antropofagia* – which claimed, quite explicitly, “Contra o padre Antonio Vieira” – became a spiritual cannibal for Herkenhoff, who concludes that “o processo colonial foi uma guerra de canibalismos” (26-7). If the Christian, European mechanisms of moral repression and colonial exploitation in Brazil are just another kind of cannibalism, what could possibly exist outside *Antropofagia*? The second example is Herkenhoff’s description of the colonial racial order of Dutch Brazil in the seventeenth century portrayed by the oil painter Albert Eckhout. Herkenhoff saw the portrait of *Tapuia* woman as an illustration of the “matriarchy of Pindorama” (27). The matriarchy of Pindorama is a term Oswald de Andrade coined after a creative reading of Johann Jakob Banchofer’s theory of motherhood as the keystone of human society. How can Vieira and Eckhout, two consummate agents of colonial projects in Brazil, fit into *Antropofagia*, an avant-garde that casts a radical critique of colonization at the center of its own idea of an uber-revolution that should go beyond 1917.

Herkenhoff’s arguments are an involuntary pastiche of a Baroque alchemy of opposites, a dialectic that confronts and fusions opposing concepts into one glorious, all-encompassing whole. The rhetorical strategy follows a set of interlinked steps. First, all difference is framed in oppositions. Then, these oppositions are framed as symmetries. Finally, these symmetries constitute an identity. Ultimately, in this discursive practice all difference is subsumed into identity. The other and the self become one and the same. This is how rescues and emancipations and kidnappings and enslavements become indistinguishable.

¹² Before curating the São Paulo Bienal, Paulo Herkenhoff was director of the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) in Rio de Janeiro from 1985 to 1999 and curated the Brazilian pavilion at the 47th *Venice Biennale* in 1997.

In the 21st century we have witnessed the belated rise of three twentieth-century Brazilian artists in the global stage, signified by comprehensive retrospectives at important cultural and economic world centers: Tarsila do Amaral was the sole protagonist of *Inventing Modern Art in Brazil* at MoMA in 2018; Hélio Oiticica, the star of *Body of Color* at Tate in 2007 and *To Organize Delirium* at the Whitney in 2017, and Lygia Clark, the subject of *The Abandonment of Art* at MoMA in 2014. All three of them are related, through different readings, with *Antropofagia*. The strongest association, as it should be expected, appears in the case of the most recent show, dedicated to Tarsila do Amaral, who was a leader of the group and contributed to *Revista Antropofágica*.

MoMA's retrospective consisted of close to one hundred paintings and drawings by Tarsila do Amaral and nearly fifty historical documents, accompanied by texts and letters, many of them translated for the first time into English. The three critical texts of *Tarsila do Amaral – Inventing Modern Art in Brazil*, the book that accompanies MoMA retrospective exhibition, were written by the show curators, Stephanie D'Alessandro and Luis Pérez Oramas. The curators from MoMA and the Art Institute Chicago did not engage in the sort of eclecticism of those in charge of the 1998 *Bienal de São Paulo*. D'Alessandro and Perez-Oramas do an excellent work, considering and acknowledging the best of scholarship on the subject, overwhelmingly written in Portuguese by Brazilian critics. Both curators wrote a general introduction to the artist and her work called "Tarsila do Amaral: Devouring Modernist Narratives" (16-25). D'Alessandro carefully reconstituted the history of the composition of Tarsila do Amaral's three most iconic paintings in "A Negra, Abaporu, and Tarsila's Anthropophagy" (38-55). Finally, Perez-Oramas tackled the place of Tarsila do Amaral within *modernismo* and *antropofagia* in "Tarsila, Melancholic Cannibal" (84-99). As their titles demonstrate, *Antropofagia* played a central role in all of these three essays.

In the general introduction, the belatedness of Tarsila do Amaral's recognition beyond Brazil was discussed in familiar terms. The curators framed it as a scandal of sorts in sentiments similar to those of Susan Sontag when she wrote about Machado de Assis's *Posthumous Memoirs*:

... how is it, exactly, that we have not known about them in North America and are only introducing her art monographically nearly a century after it was made? What structures, invisible or not, have inscribed Tarsila's art as a local one, a feminine one, or a decorative one, and what strictures do we operate under that compel us to make the judgements we have – and will continue to have – about her work today? (Tarsila do Amaral 23)

The omnivorous appetite of *Antropofagia* (especially in its *Tropicalista* iteration) contrasts sharply with what can be described as a general lack of appetite for whatever is “produced in communities that fall outside the cartography of hegemonic countries” (23-4). Exhibitions such as this one seemed to have been made to whet the appetite of the metropolises for the cultural delicacies of the periphery.

In “A Negra, Abaporu, and Tarsila’s Anthropophagy,” D’Alessandro carefully contextualizes these three seminal works painted in the period between 1922 and 1930, investigating Tarsila do Amaral’s explorations of the modernist avantgardes in Paris and of Brazilian vernacular country in her travels guided by Mário de Andrade or in her own incursions into the countryside in São Paulo.

In “Tarsila, Melancholic Cannibal,” Perez-Oramas sees clearly the pitfalls of overstretching *Antropofagia*:

The cannibal [...] is a weak metaphor for symbolic assimilation because it is too general: should we conclude that every attempt to assimilate modernity in Latin America was a sort of symbolic cannibalism? (...) The challenge lies in finding the codes specific to Brazilian anthropophagy, beyond the obvious and necessary kinds of assimilation inherent in cultural migration since time began. (89)

Tarsila Amaral’s trio of paintings – *A Negra*, *Abaporu* and *Antropofagia* – offers us a path away from such overarching generalizations; not just for what these images are, but also for what is absent in them.

As important as it is to read between the lines of fragment and cohesion for the outmost reaches of those potential, conjectural and manifold totalities, it is equally important to acknowledge the many other things that were left out of them. After a century, taking into account temporal specificities may help us see the shortcomings, the silences that ultimately complicate our own decolonial tradition. The narrative must evolve to deal once again with our fractured identities and to find new strategies to move forward.

An example of such cultural thrust away from mere repetition can be found in Michel Melamed’s “Regurgitifagia” (*Antropofagia hoje* 65-70). Melamed mentions Oswald de Andrade’s manifesto and then provocatively asks:

E hoje? Continuamos a “deglutir vanguardas” ou tem-nos sido empurrada goela abaixo toda a sorte de informações? Conceitos? Produtos? Em suma, o que fazer com a impossibilidade de assimilação, o estado de aceleração, a síndrome do excesso de informação (dataholics), os milhões de estímulos visuais, auditivos, diários, que crescem em ritmo diametralmente oposto à reflexão? Regurgitifagia: “vomitar” os excessos a fim de avaliarmos o que de fato queremos rediglutir. (70)

Our discomfort with our self-conscious, fractured identity is compounded by a different context. In the hypercommodified, information saturated, performance-driven world of twenty-first century capitalism we are force-fed by a constant deluge of information where the increasingly trivial and the cheap artifice reign supreme. Melamed may be right: it is time to start focus on regurgitation rather than cannibalizing.

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