

Bachelor Thesis

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Cultural Anthropophagy
On Monsters, Cannibals, and the Ingestion of the Other as
Cultural Strategy from Brazil

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Abstract

The cannibal, this monster.

The history of Latin America has been inextricably linked to the figure of the cannibal since early colonization. It quickly became an icon and marker for the Other, the barbaric, the monster projected onto the native population.

The *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) and the subsequent *Movimento Antropofágico* announced by it, reappropriated the figure of the cannibal as a productive cultural force and metaphor for processes of transculturation and national identification. This research engages with the concept of anthropophagy proposed by the Brazilian Modernists and asks what it entails, how it circulated and how it aggressively challenges the Self/Other and Center/Periphery binaries.

Ingestion. the Other in the Self, the Self in the Other. Devouring.

The multilingual desktop movie “Brasilcore,” which I co-created with Anna Marie Aquino Lutz, mobilizes anthropophagic strategies in order to think through cultural identification from the perspective of the second-generation half-Brazilian art student Duda.

Hoc est corpus meum.

Die Diskussion über Transfertauglichkeit antropophager Ideen und Strategien ist fast unumgänglich angesichts der enormen Verdauungsprobleme der westlichen Kultur in ihrer Angst vor dem Anderen/Fremden.
(aus dem Moore, 2007: 102)

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1 Amuse-Gueule: Introduction

Latin America is inextricably bound up with the (hi)story of the Cannibal since first colonial encounters in the 15th century. For European invaders anthropophagic—that is to say cannibalistic—practices of the native population were proof of “their” barbarism and savagery and the figure of the cannibal was soon mobilized as icon of the Other, this monster. A tool to highlight alterity in order to justify domination, enslavement, and the extraction of land and labor. Yet, *Modernismo*, Brazilian Modernism in the 1920s and more specifically the anthropophagic movement with its foundational *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) written by Oswald de Andrade reappropriated the figure of the cannibal as a productive cultural force, establishing itself as one of the hallmarks of Brazilian self-identification up to today.

The following thesis will provide an overview of anthropophagy in Brazil from a historical and anthropological lens, understanding the figure of the cannibal as a monster and tool of Othering. It will then discuss the *Manifesto Antropófago*, its historical context and central claims, as well as rhetoric strategies. In a last step, the thesis will explore anthropophagy as a concept, attempting to highlight its central strategies and points of convergence by cross-examining literature on the topic. I will argue that anthropophagy deploys anti-hegemonic¹ practices that destabilize fixed cultural identities through metaphorical ingestion/inclusion rather than rejection/exclusion. In doing so, it provides a critical and creative strategy to challenge fixed notions of identity and deconstructs colonial cultural hierarchies, though its limitations and applicability beyond Brazil necessitate ongoing reflection. In doing so, this thesis moves across disciplines to allow for a dialogue at the intersection of transcultural studies, anthropology, philosophy, and art history.

It seems paradoxical to analyze a fundamentally anti-academic text—or rather one that strictly criticizes Western epistemologies based on rationality, logic, and categorization—within an academic framework at a European art university. Yet, I believe that the integration of multiple, specifically non-Western perspectives and epistemologies that directly criticize Western academia, is an important act of rethinking,

¹ In reference to Carroll (2009, 32) I employ the term anti-hegemonic instead of counter-hegemonic accounting for the lack of strategic political organization behind the *Manifesto Antropófago*. Additionally, the prefix accounts for the rejection of hegemony altogether instead of aiming for a mere shift in positions.

reconfiguring and deconstructing the latter's dominant position in knowledge production. As a white member of the Brazilian diaspora raised in Europe, my perspective on this topic is shaped by both my proximity to and distance from Brazilian cultural discourse. Writing from within European academic institutions while engaging with Brazilian intellectual traditions, I acknowledge the complexities of my position.

2 From the Belly of the Beast: On Monsters, Cannibals, and Anthropophagi

To be able to thoroughly engage with the cannibal as a figure and metaphor, as is the goal of this paper, it is important to ground the term cannibalism within its historical context and engage with its genealogy and its discursive shifts. The following chapters will contextualize the emergence of the term within colonial Latin America, distinguish between the often interchangeably used terms of cannibalism and anthropophagy, and demonstrate how the figure of the cannibal was established as a tool by the colonial powers to constitute the savagery of native populations on the American continent.

2.1 The Invention of the Cannibal

The common factor in the history of cannibal allegations is the combination of denial in ourselves and attribution of it to those we wish to defame, conquer, and civilize. (Lindenbaum 2004, 491)

It was precisely with the arrival of Christopher Columbus on the American continent that the term cannibal first emerged (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 21). In his log entry on November 23, 1492, Columbus speaks of *caníbales*,² referring to the mythical one-eyed, dog-faced, man-eating, and blood-drinking native population of the “New World” (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 21–22; Strasser 2023, 9–10). The term itself wasn't just a freely invented neologism but is assumed to have been based on a misunderstanding of the terms “[c]aribe, cariba, caniba” (ibid, 9) used by the native populations as self-denomination. Through the dissemination of the reports by Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci on their encounter with and subsequent colonization of the “New World,” the term was quickly spread throughout Europe as a universal descriptor for the native populations of the Americas as a whole.

² Etymological discussions on the term cannibal are widespread and include references to *canis* (from Latin: “dog”), *carne* (from Latin: “meat, flesh, the body”), Cain (derived from the biblical account of Cain and Abel). (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 21; Strasser 2023, 9)

Additionally, further attributions such as the lack of shame, lack of property rights, and lack of faith—or more generally speaking: the lack of Western civilization—became synonymous with cannibalism (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 22). As such, cannibalism was made a generalized marker of a lack of humanity that would be invoked by the colonial powers to justify intervention in the existing social order and subsequent exploitation through the construction of a cultural Other (King 2000, 109; Lindenbaum 2004, 477).³ As Strasser pointedly summarizes: “Der Kannibale steht aus Sicht des europäischen Kolonialherrn schließlich für das radikal Andere, von dem man sich radikal abzuheben sucht” (Strasser 2023, 74).

2.2 Cannibalism and Anthropophagy

The notion of the consumption of human flesh did not first emerge during the colonization of the Americas. Long before, it was a widespread image throughout European literary history by the likes of Herodotus and Shakespeare, mobilizing the figure of the cannibal as a signifier of the distant, uncivilized Other (King 2000, 108), but was more broadly known by its Greek term anthropophagy⁴ (Strasser 2023, 10).

While the terms cannibalism and anthropophagy have widely been used interchangeably throughout the last centuries, it is valuable to highlight some historical key differences relevant for today’s discourses: On the one hand, cannibalism describes the act of indiscriminate murder and consumption of humans within their species with no specific purpose focusing on the act of material ingestion (Lagnado 2015, 13; Strasser 2023, 27). On the other hand, anthropophagy highlights the spiritual and ritual dimension of the consumption of human flesh and follows specific sets of rules concerning who and how human flesh is consumed, often focused on the selective transcendental ingestion of positive attributes of the one that is consumed and sometimes connected to an act of revenge (Lagnado 2015, 13; Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 37; Strasser 2023, 27).

The key difference between the two terms fundamentally lies in the act of dehumanization through the usage of the term cannibalism, since “cannibalism takes place among members of the same species, anthropophagy among humans” (Strasser

³ One part of this intervention was the replacement of human cannibalism with the ingestion of the Eucharist imposed by the missionary colonial regime (Lagnado 2015, 13–14).

⁴ From Greek ἄνθρωπος *anthrōpos* “human” and φαγεῖν *phagein* “eat”.

2023, 13, own translation).⁵ This distinction is significant since the Brazilian Modernists of the 1920s would later adopt the term anthropophagy instead of cannibalism, rejecting with it the colonial origin and practice of dehumanization inherent to the latter.

2.3 The Cannibal, this Monster

The monster always escapes because it refuses easy categorization. (Cohen 1996, 6)

After their appearance in Columbus' logbook, cannibals quickly became an icon of radical Otherness—an unstable, polymorphous figure onto which fears, fantasies, and colonial ideologies were projected, used to mark the “barbaric” in opposition to the “civilized.” Since this icon was used to argue that the native population was less than human, it becomes viable to me, to think of the cannibal as yet another rendition of a monster. What a monster is precisely, remains impossible to answer, since Lee et al. (2019, 18) claim “that the category of monsters is *itself* intrinsically amorphous and unstable.” It seems paradoxical, yet while rejecting strict categorization, many monsters share characteristics, of which I will discuss a selection relevant to the figure of the cannibal.⁶

By analyzing literature, folklore, movies, and popular culture Lee et al. constitute that monsters inhabit border regions, whether speaking of literal geographic borderlands or conceptual ones, such as between “‘wilderness’ and ‘civilization’” (Lee et al. 2019, 31). The binary of the latter is precisely where the figure of the cannibal is grounded as a marker for the “barbaric” in opposition to the “civilized,” *something* less than human that nonetheless presents itself in anthropomorphic form. In the context of the colonization of Latin America, this procedure can also be read as a strategic intervention to make killable. Building on Donna Haraway, Tuck and Ree constitute that “making-killable” is the act of creating a sub-human to create objectified masses (in this case the native population of Latin America) to allow for “violence, genocide, and slavery” (Tuck and Ree 2013, 649). The notion of monsters or rather the act of monstrification is then employed as a tool to dehumanize the Other because of and through their alterity. As such the monster is made to be a “master’s tool” (Lorde 2007, 123) of the hegemonic Center to exaggerate “any kind of alterity” (Cohen 1996, 7), be it “cultural, political, racial,

5 “[...] Kannibalismus findet unter Artgenossen statt, Anthropophagie unter Menschen.” (Strasser 2023, 13)

6 For an etymological discussion of the term monster, refer to Lee et al. (2019, 21-24)

economic, [or] sexual” (ibid., 7) to justify domination and extermination through dehumanization.

Lee et al. (2019, 41) further point out, that monsters are inherently polymorphous both figuratively and metaphorically—that is to say in their material appearance and in their immaterial conceptualization. They change and change yet again, can switch between forms, and are often a conglomeration of human and animal forms. Similarly, the concept of monstrosity—in other words, what is deemed as monstrous—is always in flux and rejects strict definition (ibid., 41). Yet even within this understanding of monstrosity as polymorphous, the cannibal occupies an ambiguous position: it appears in human form, yet is dehumanized, and its metamorphosis doesn’t happen on an external visual level but rather through the internal act of ingestion. The devouring of human flesh symbolizes the transgression of bodily boundaries and at the same time shows how two become one, the synthesis of two beings, one dead and one alive. As such I conclude that cannibals are not mixtures of human with non-human forms but are the literal mixture of (sub-)humans *through* sub-humans, both in the same anthropomorphic form where one literally becomes part of the other. This ambiguity in both being human and inhuman at the same time—anthropomorphic, but barbaric—might explain the anguish and horror often provoked by cannibalism, since it not only points to the violent act of intraspecies consumption but also fundamentally challenges the category “human.” As Strasser notes (2023, 17): “[Der Kannibale] steht paradigmatisch für die Überschreitung des Tabus. Dies liegt wohl auch daran, dass er Ausdruck des Elementarsten überhaupt ist: des Körpers.”

What I aim to show is that one aspect of monsters lies in their highly political potential in creating figures of alterity that allow for—but do not have to result in—dehumanization and subsequent material consequences such as the violent colonization of an entire people. My understanding here is very specific and tied to processes of Othering within colonial history, but this is merely one application of the complex of meanings that the monster entails.⁷ The connections I draw between Otherness/Othering and the monster are not at all new, but hallmarks of many

⁷ Monsters are everywhere, in literature, folklore, oral stories, maps, movies, and children’s books. These monsters don’t necessarily evoke the violence that I call on concerning the cannibal, but often have differing functions ranging from educatory measures to mere entertainment. Yet, based on Cohen’s reading of monsters, I do believe that they always stem from some sort of fear and/or desire surfacing within and directly mirroring specific cultural moments (Cohen 1996, 4).

disciplines engaging with processes of subjectivization in connection to ontology, whether in feminist, queer, postcolonial or Black studies.⁸ My understanding of the monster highlights the violent process of Othering through monstrification. Where the monster becomes a tool that was applied by the colonial powers in Brazil to dehumanize an Other, in this case the native population of modern-day Brazil by using the figure of the cannibal that deliberately exaggerated the act of consuming flesh to highlight alterity and prove the lack of civilization. Yet both Cohen (1996, 6) and Lee et al. (2019, 31) point out that monsters always provide the possibility of resistance by refusing classificatory systems that in my reading, the Brazilian Modernists mobilize by reappropriating the figure of the cannibal.

3 *Antropofagia* in Brazil: A Historic Overview

Die Figur des Anthropophagen hat seit der Entdeckung Brasiliens im Jahr 1500 eine wesentliche Rolle sowohl für die fremde als auch für die eigene kulturelle Wahrnehmung Brasiliens gespielt. Zunächst als Motiv des abschreckenden, fernen und unfassbaren kulturell Anderen, später als ins Positiv verkehrte Basiselement des brasilianischen Selbstbewusstseins. (Sperling 2014, 188–89)

The first reports of anthropophagic rites among the native population of Brazil were written and disseminated by European “discoverers” and colonizers throughout the 16th century. The Brazilian historians Schwarcz and Starling (2015, 37–38). note that the most influential reports significantly impacting the European vision of Brazil were those of Nicolas Durand de Villegaignon, André Thevet, Hans Staden, Jean de Léry, and Michel de Montaigne, as well as the illustrations by Théodore de Bry published in an edited collection of reports on the “New World” including Staden and de Léry. They further highlight that one image repeatedly surfaces throughout these reports: That of a beautiful, colorful paradisaic flora in opposition to the savage, vengeful, and cannibalistic native population (ibid., 38–40). These reports must not be understood as objective and factual. Essentially, they are what the European colonizers believed they understood of what they claimed to be observable reality. That is to say, the reports are written from a

⁸ Sara Ahmed’s discussion of the “abject” in *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2010) is an example within queer studies, while Zakiyyah Iman Jackson’s *Becoming Human. Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (2020) focuses on discussing how Blackness is rendered as the infinitely malleable Other within Black Studies. While both do not speak of monsters directly their discussions on Othering and Otherness converge with discourses on monsters, making the borders between the Other and the monster quite porous.

European lens and its epistemology.⁹ While it is almost impossible to fact-check these reports in hindsight, more recent scholarship, namely that of the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, has engaged with anthropophagy in connection to contemporary native populations in modern-day Brazil and provided an elaborated understanding of anthropophagy beyond the flattened image produced by the colonial descriptions.

3.1 Indigenous Anthropophagy

Castro goes on to show the centrality of anthropophagy within two exemplary Indigenous peoples: the *Araweté* living in the Eastern Amazon and the *Tupinambá* on which much of the early colonial reports are based on. In his research, the author claims that the anthropophagic rites found within these two groups are fundamentally present a reevaluation of the relation between the Self and the Other. In other words, ritual anthropophagy has to be understood as the reevaluation and transgression of border phenomena concerning group boundaries (e.g. two Indigenous peoples) or between the material and the immaterial world (e.g. transcendence of bodies to be consumed by the celestial deities). This argumentation builds on his central observation: the *Araweté* people and their “mystico-funerary cannibalism is a structural transformation of the bellico-sociological cannibalism of [...] the *Tupinambá*” (Castro 2014, 140). The mystico-funerary cannibalism refers to the posthumous spiritual cannibalism of the *Araweté* member’s dead bodies by the celestial deities (*Mai*) which allow entrance into heaven as the first step towards immortalization (Castro 2019, 169). The bellico-sociological cannibalism refers to the *Tupinambá*’s elaborate system of capture, imprisonment, subsequent murder, and collective consumption of members from enemy tribes in the 16th century which culminates in an initiation rite of the one that murdered the victim, including the acquisition of new rights and a new name (ibid., 170). In both cases one element is central: the enemy. After the enemy’s death, with the *Araweté* and the *Tupinambá*, their respective murderers would wait for a song brought to them by their enemy that they would subsequently sing among their peers (ibid. 174, Sztutman 2015,

9 What I aim to point out here, is similar to discussions of sexuality within native populations of Latin America. European colonizers' descriptions of observed sexual acts are already shaped by their historically constructed concepts of sexuality and ethics, whereas the very notion of sexuality might be defined quite differently by members of native populations themselves. For a detailed discussion on this topic, refer to *Existe índio gay? A colonização das sexualidades indígenas no Brasil* (Fernandes 2019).

213). Essentially an elaborated system of singing with the voices/through the bodies of their dead enemies, incorporating the enemy's accounts of the murderer's people themselves (Sztutman 2015, 213).¹⁰ In other words, the murderer functions as a medium through which the victim speaks as if through their own body, often commenting on the murderer themselves; a perspective on the Self through the eyes of the Other. Based on these accounts of seeing oneself through the Other following a sort of synthesis of the murderer and their victim as a Self-Other, Castro would go on to conceptualize *Perspectivismo*, *Perspectivism* and *Multinaturalismo*, *Multinaturalism* (See Castro 1998; 2017; 2019).

[W]as gegessen wurde, war die Beziehung des Feindes zu seinem Verschlinger oder, anders gesagt, sein Status als Feind. Was man vom Opfer aufnahm, waren die Zeichen seiner Alterität, und das, worauf man es abzielte, war diese Alterität als Standpunkt mit Blick auf das Ich. Der Kannibalismus und die mit ihm verbundene indigene Art der Kriegsführung implizierten eine paradoxe Bewegung der wechselseitigen Selbstbestimmung vom Standpunkt des Feindes.(Castro 2019, 173)

At once, the act of devouring causes the undifferentiability between the murderer and the victim fundamentally deconstructing the relation between the two in an attempt to come closer to identifying the Self through the ingestion of the Other (ibid., 183). What Castro goes on to argue is that through anthropophagy a switch in perspectives is evoked “whereby the ‘I’ is determined as other through the act of incorporating this other, who in turn becomes an ‘I’ ... but only ever *in* the other—literally, that is, *through* the other.” (Castro 2014, 142) What is consumed then, is the relation between the Other and the Self, “[...] in other words, *his condition as enemy*” (ibid., 142).

10 Castro provides an impressive example for one of these songs sung by a member of the *Araweté*. Within it three subjects come to word through the body of the *Araweté*: “Ein toter Feind zitiert sein Opfer aus dem Stamm der *Araweté* (Vers 1), um anschließend seinen eigenen Mörder zu zitieren (Vers 5-8) und er sagt all das durch den Mund des Letztgenannten [...]” (2017, 240):

“‘Ich sterbe’
So sagte der Verstorbene *Moiwito*
So sprach meine Beute
So sprach der Verstorbene *Koiarawi*

Auf seiner weiten Lichtung
‘Eeh!’ – sagte der *Towaho*,
‘Das ist mein Gefangener
Hier auf der Lichtung des großen Vogels.’” (ibid.)

3.2 Brazilian Modernism and the *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928)

In the following, the emergence of *Modernismo* in Brazil during the 1920s demanding autonomy from Europe and attempting to conceptualize the country's own cultural identity will be discussed. Central to this movement was Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*, published in São Paulo in 1928, which reappropriated the colonial trope of the cannibal as a figure of self-identification and conceptualized anthropophagy as a productive cultural force. Drawing on Janet Lyon's framework of manifestoes as polemical, anti-hegemonic texts, the analysis explores how Andrade's manifesto constructs a collective "we," subverts Eurocentric historiography, and demands a decolonial redefinition of Brazilian identity through intertextuality, irony, and symbolic reversals. Despite the anthropophagic movement's brief lifespan, its concepts circulated in later cultural movements like *Tropicália* and continue to influence contemporary art, postcolonial theory, and transcultural studies, affirming its role as a foundational discourse in Brazilian culture.

3.3 Historical Context

Brazil, like many other Latin American states in the 20th century, continued to economically and culturally depend on its former colonial power even after having fought for independence (Maroja 2019, 3). As Brazilian historians Schwarcz and Starling (2015, 337–38) constitute, the 1920s marks an era in which Brazil questioned these relations of dependency causing broad societal disillusionment with the Republic and its traditional institutions (such as the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* modeled after the *Académie française*). The issue of Brazil's national cultural identity came to the forefront, challenging colonial notions of what constituted culture and who had the authority to define it. At the same time, the country's inherent cultural heterogeneity made the search for cohesion difficult, as there was no singular unifying mythology, folklore, literature, or artistic tradition to bind it together (Maroja 2019, 3).

This general reconsideration of the European colonial legacy in Brazil and the question of national cultural identity, as well as the contact and exchange of the Brazilian cultural elites with the European avant-gardes during the 1920s (Buchmann 2007, 231; Islam 2012, 165), resulted in the cultural movement of *Modernismo*, Brazilian Modernism. One of its central preoccupations lay in the conceptualization and construction of a national cultural identity detached from the European hegemony, and

was tackled by a wide variety of independent collectives, publications, and movements throughout the late 1920s and 30s.¹¹

One central figure of *Modernismo* is the writer and publisher Oswald de Andrade¹² who, together with the painter and his partner Tarsila do Amaral, developed the concept of anthropophagy as a metaphor and cultural method (Maroja 2019, 9). Andrade wrote the foundational text for the anthropophagic movement, the *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928),¹³ and published it in the *Revista de Antropofagia* (1928–1929),¹⁴ marking the beginning of the anthropophagic movement in Brazil that reappropriated the colonial figure of the cannibal as a productive cultural force. While the manifesto was primarily written as a way to legitimize the cultural production of the cosmopolitical couple mingling with the cultural elites in Paris and interchanging and reacting to European Modernism, as is exemplified by the usage of the manifesto as a literary form (Maroja 2019, 9–10), anthropophagy would go to sustainably influence the self-perception of Brazil and its cultural identity and turn into one of its hallmarks.

3.4 On Manifestoes

In order to engage with and analyze the manifesto, I turn to Janet Lyon's *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (1999) which provides an overview of constitutive factors of manifestoes from the perspective of literary studies. Lyon (1999, 12–13) states that manifestoes are not a fixed literary genre but unite several converging characteristics. One of which lies in the goal of insistently demanding a reconfiguration of power hierarchies within the current political and social status quo in favor of and voiced through an oppressed and marginalized group (ibid., 15). As such, manifestoes vocalize and aim at mobilizing the struggles of a collective or group against dominant powers, concluding in a set of demands and a call to action to achieve and upset said power hierarchies (ibid.).

11 E.g. Revista Klaxon, movimento Verde Amarelo, Manifesto Pau-Brasil

12 Andrade participated in the *Semana de Arte Moderna* in São Paulo in 1922 which was foundational for Brazilian Modernism, and would continue to work within the context of the *Grupo dos Cinco* consisting of Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, Mário de Andrade, Anita Malfatti, and Menotti del Picchia (as dem Moore 2007, 89). Like most of the other members of the *Grupo dos Cinco*, Andrade was a member of the cultural and economic elite in São Paulo and partially educated in Europe (Islam 2012, 165). This allowed Oswald direct contact with the European avant-gardes, specifically Surrealism, Dada, and Futurism, and the subsequent development of anthropophagy (Strasser 2023, 54).

13 The *Manifesto Antropófago* marks the second phase of *Modernismo*, preceded by the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (1924), also written by Oswald de Andrade (Madureira 2004, 100).

14 Among others, contributors to the publication include Oswaldo Costa, Raul Bopp, and Antônio de Alcântara Machado (Cardoso 2019, 149).

Concerning language and style, writers of manifestoes mobilize a polemic and often aggressive rhetoric originating from a “passional state (frustration, disappointment, aggressive resolve)” (Lyon 1999, 12). For this reason, manifestoes cannot be understood as arguing with reason, but rather as an emotional outburst of frustration concluding in demands. This is not to say that manifestoes are not articulately written but rather to put into focus the moment of crisis of a specific group of people that results in the writing of univocal manifestoes.

To be able to direct the inherent frustration, manifestoes rhetorically build on the construction of a universal, yet often indeterminate “we” (Lyon 1999, 26) in opposition to a universal and similarly indeterminate “you,” constituted by the marginalized group and their allies struggling against the hegemonic forces. The latter can be defined as loosely as the “bourgeoisie” or as specifically as a single person in power to whom the content of the manifesto is directed (ibid., 15).

In shifting the cultural position of a marginalized group, the manifesto yields an alternative historical narrative, one that foregrounds the group’s grievances and thereby struggles squarely within but also in opposition to a culture’s foundational narratives. “Our history is the unthought chapter in your history”, declares the typical manifesto to its opponents, “and now your history will be justly superseded by our unfolding future”. (ibid.)

To be able to upset the current power structure, manifestoes and the respective groups for which they (claim to) speak, often chronicle historic events that have led to the marginalization and oppression by the addressees (ibid., 14). In doing so the dominant historical narrative constructed by the oppressor is put into question and revised by a counter-history that often selectively constructs an alternative, sometimes mythical narration (Lyon 1999, 15–16). As the prior quote suggests, this is done to be able to think of an autonomous future for the marginalized group speaking, reclaiming power over their own past and future narration (ibid., 15).

3.5 Claims and Content of the *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928)

Sem nós a Europa não teria sequer a sua pobre declaração dos direitos do homem.
(Andrade 2016, 38)¹⁵

A luta entre o que se chamaria Incriado e a Criatura – ilustrada pela contradição permanente do homem e o seu Tabu. O amor cotidiano e modus vivendi capitalista. Antropofagia. Absorção do inimigo sacro. Para transformá-lo em totem.
(ibid., 54)¹⁶

Turning to the *Manifesto Antropófago* itself, and drawing on Lyon’s analysis of manifestoes as a genre, the manifesto’s content and its central claims will be analyzed, along questions such as: Who is the “we” that is spoken for here? What does this “we” turn against? How is the dominant narration of history refigured and criticized and what specifically are the demands made by the manifesto? The following chapter will engage in a close reading of sections of the manifesto, aiming at providing grounds on which to partly answer these questions and shed light on how they are rhetorically treated throughout. I use the original Portuguese version of the manifesto published in Oliver Precht (2016, 34–67) and the German translation by Precht in the same volume. For the sake of remaining as close to the original text as possible, I will work with the original Portuguese text and refer to the German translations of Precht throughout the footnotes. Some passages are directly translated by myself, and if so, marked as such with “own translation” in the reference. The manifesto is written non-linearly, the selection of topics present in this chapter are deliberately picked out and connected for my argumentations and do not represent the entirety of the manifesto’s content.

First and foremost, the *Manifesto Antropófago* is a polemical text. Similar to the *Dada Manifesto* (1918), it announces the birth of a new movement. While Dada celebrated the beginning of an anti-bourgeois history, Anthropophagy celebrated the beginning of an autonomous postcolonial and anti-hegemonic Brazilian history.

3.5.1 Universalism

In its first and second paragraphs, Andrade universally claims: “Só a antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente. Única lei do mundo [...] Só me

15 “Ohne uns hätte Europa nicht mal seine armselige Menschenrechtserklärung.” (Andrade 2016, 38, own translation)

16 “Der Kampf zwischen dem, was man das Ungeschaffene nennen könnte und dem Geschöpf – veranschaulicht durch den ständigen Widerspruch zwischen dem Mensch und seinem Tabu. Die alltägliche Liebe und der kapitalistische modus vivendi. Anthropophagie. Den heiligen Feind in sich aufnehmen. Um ihn in ein Totem zu verwandeln.” (Andrade 2016, 55)

interessa o que não é meu. Lei do homem. Lei do antropófago” (Andrade 2016, 34),¹⁷ proclaiming a new universal order based on the act of devouring, equating being human with being anthropophagous and self-identifying with the figure of the *antropófago*. Within the first sentences, it becomes clear that this Manifesto calls for a reevaluation of the category human by thinking through the cannibal. Although, it remains without saying that this proclamation of human universality based on anthropophagy is not much different than the totalizing and universalizing knowledge regime imposed by colonial powers on their former colonies.¹⁸ Yet, the latter quoted sentence points to the interest of incorporating what is not yet his, already pointing to the desire for the Other within the Self, conceptually collapsing the strict binary between the two. But who is this Self extended into a collective We?

3.5.2 We (?) – And our Demands

Mas não foram cruzados que vieram. Foram fugitivos de uma civilização que estamos comendo, porque somos fortes e vingativos como o Jabuti (Andrade 2016, 48)¹⁹

The verbal structure *estamos comendo*, we are eating, is conjugated in the first-person plural, suggesting a “we” that surfaces implicitly and explicitly throughout the manifesto, constructing a univocal collective voice. Yet, it is quite hard to trace what and who this “we” refers to, which connects to Lyon’s (1999, 15) argument of the indeterminate “we” found in manifestoes discussed earlier. Yet, through a series of positively attributed references, it is possible to reconstruct a faint idea of the anthropophagic “we”. What the prior quote goes to highlight is the reversal of the Center/Periphery roles. The imperial colonizers are framed as refugees of civilization that are predatorily devoured by the collective “we” implicitly rejecting the subaltern position, as Gazi notes (2012, 164). What unites this “we” which I understand to be the entire modern Brazilian population, is anthropophagy, the rejection of colonial imposition, and a connection to the Indigenous

17 “Nur die Anthropophagie vereint uns. Sozial. Ökonomisch. Philosophisch. Das einzige Gesetz der Welt [...] Mich interessiert nur das, was mir nicht eigen ist. Gesetz des Menschen. Gesetz des Anthropophagen” (Andrade 2016, 35)

18 This universalism is one of the grand paradoxes of manifestoes as Lyon notes, “[...] giving with one hand, what it takes away with the other: equality for everyone except those who are naturally unequal. This paradox is of course familiar as the paradox of Western Universalism [...]” (Lyon 1999, 45).

19 “Aber es waren keine Kreuzfahrer, die kamen. Es waren Geflüchtete einer Zivilisation, die wir dabei sind aufzuessen, weil wir stark und rachsüchtig sind, wie der Jabuti.” (Andrade 2016, 49) The Jabuti, as Precht explains, refers to a common tortoise species, often viewed as vengeful in Brazilian Indigenous mythologies (ibid., 65).

and Caribbean ancestry (Andrade 2016, 34, 36, 38).²⁰ The central demand of the manifesto lies in the insistence on the “necessity of the anthropophagic vaccination” (ibid., 40–42) framing the act of anthropophagy as cure against the “meridian religions” (ibid., 42), which I read as both the literal institutionalized religion and Western epistemology and academia as quasi-religious institutions.

3.5.3 Reconfiguration of Power Hierarchies

Contra o mundo reversível e as ideias objetivadas. Cadaverizadas. O Stop do pensamento que é dinâmico.

[...]

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

[...]

Contra a verdade dos povos missionários [...] – É a mentira muitas vezes repetida. (Andrade 2016, 42, 46, 48)²¹

Throughout the manifesto Andrade directly proclaims the rejection of a series of procedures connected to the European colonization of Brazil. The author positions himself and the *Movimento Antropofágico* as being against catechesis,²² religion, the separation of body and mind, the idea of objectivity, and Eurocentric history (ibid., 34, 40, 42, 46), or more generally put, hallmarks of European culture, knowledge production, and history imported and imposed on the Brazilian population. Similarly, the *Pater Familias*,²³ standing in for the patriarchal societal organization invoked by the colonizing

20 Concretely, Andrade mentions the impossibility of thinking the body and mind as separate (Andrade 2016, 40), the implicitly Indigenous knowledge of anthropophagy as codified vengeance (ibid., 42), a respectful relation with nature (ibid., 44) and a precolonial history focused on the equal distribution of material and immaterial goods (ibid., 46). He further specks the text with mythological Indigenous figures, such as *Jabuti*, *Guaraci*, and *Jaci* (ibid., 48). How these connections romanticize precolonial Indigeneity and are nonetheless built on colonial epistemology (such as the separation of nature and culture invoked by Andrade) needs to be assessed critically, but goes beyond the aim of this paper.

21 “Gegen die umkehrbare Welt und objektive Vorstellungen. Kadaverisierte. Der Stopp des dynamischen Denkens. [...] Gegen die Geschichten der Menschheit, die am Kap Finisterre beginnen. Die undatierte Welt. Unrubriziert. Ohne Napoleon. Ohne Cäsar. [...] Gegen die Wahrheit der missionarischer Völker [...] – Sie ist die häufig wiederholte Lüge” (Andrade 2016, 43, 47, 49). The Cape Finisterre is the most western point of the European continent located in today’s Galicia and translates to “the end of the earth” from Latin. Additionally, the original wording of “O stop do pensamento que é dinâmico” (ibid., 42) comes closer to the translation “the stop of thinking that is dynamic”, which highlights the process of thinking as a fundamentally dynamic process, having been brought to a halt.

22 Catechesis refers to missionary Christian education, often focused on children and youth, and was one of the central strategies in the colonization of Brazil by means of missionary procedures by the Jesuits such as the division into villages and their obligatory Jesuit administration. (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 41–42)

23 Referenced in Andrade (2016, 50).

powers and its subsequent violence is revoked and instead replaced with the demand to establish (again) the “matriarchy of Pindorama” (ibid. 2016, 52).²⁴

The conglomeration of all these antitheses of the colonial hegemony finds its epiphanic proclamation in “Contra todos os importadores de consciência enlatada.” (Andrade 2016, 38).²⁵ The importation highlights the colonial imposition from an outside, while the latter neologism frames European epistemology, history, and ontology as something prepared, pre-cooked, and served as an enclosed, “canned” entity, which points to its self-contained existence. At the same time the metaphor of canned food picks up on the rhetoric of consumption, devouring, and excretion.

3.5.4 Intertextuality and Rhetoric

Turning towards the intertextuality and rhetoric strategies found in the manifesto, it becomes clear that Andrade deliberately quotes and alters phrases of the European literary canon. Instead of the ubiquitous Shakespearean quote “to be, or not to be: that is the question” Andrade writes “Tupi, or not tupi that is the question.” (Andrade 2016, 34) replacing the ontological verb “to be,” with the denomination of one of the largest groups of Indigenous peoples in pre-colonial Brazil, the Tupis. By doing so he at once parodies the original quote and centers Brazilian Indigeneity as foundational ontology. A similar approach is used in dealing with Freud’s seminal publication *Totem and Taboo* that Andrade promptly reverses to “Taboo into Totem” (ibid., 42, 50, 54). The taboo then either refers to anthropophagy as a taboo reversed into a totem by means of reappropriating cannibalism (ibid., 42) or to the foreign enemy/the European colonizer as taboo turned into a totem by means of incorporating the “holy enemy” (ibid., 54, own translation).

It further becomes evident, that Andrade refers to thinkers and influential figures of the European academic and historical canon as synecdoche,²⁶ name-dropping them whilst not engaging more deeply with their respective contents. The entire manifesto is specked with historical, literary, and academic references, ranging from Goethe, to Freud, to Napoleon and Caesar. In my understanding, the author does so to construct

²⁴ *Pindorama*, refers to the Indigenous denomination of Brazil harkening back to *Nheengatu* from the language family *Tupi* (Andrade 2016, 66).

²⁵ “Gegen alle Importeure des Konservenbewusstseins.” (Andrade 2016, 39)

²⁶ A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole. E.g. the cannibal as marker for the entire native population of Latin America.

the European and colonial Other by means of symbolic invocation of these canonical figures. It has to be understood that any of these thinkers don't stand in for just themselves but as representatives of entire disciplines and as such for the Western academy as a whole, elements of which are partially rejected and partially accepted for self-identification. E.g. Andrade name-drops Montaigne, Lévy-Bruhl, and Rousseau (ibid., 38) as central representatives of anthropology, ethnology, and enlightenment; Freud as representative of psychoanalysis and psychology (ibid., 36); William James and Serge Voronoff (ibid., 50) as representatives of philosophy and surgical medicine. The same is done by the author with historical figures directly connected to Brazilian colonization, many of whom are often unknown outside of Brazil. Among others these include Villegagnon, founder of one of the first colonies on Brazilian territory, France Antarctique (ibid., 39), Antônio Vieira, an influential Jesuit priest (ibid., 41), José de Silva Lisboa, vice-count of Cairu who opened Brazilian ports to international trade under João VI (ibid., 48, 65) Antônio de Mariz, co-founder of Rio de Janeiro (ibid., 53), and the latest king of Brazil Dom João VI (ibid., 55). What the author does, is draw out the hegemonic European history with the first set of thinkers, while drawing out the specific history of Brazilian colonization with the second. This focus on historicizing the colonization of Brazil corresponds with the function of manifestoes, proposed by Lyon, in offering counter-narratives from the perspective of the oppressed group.

In conclusion, Andrade ambiguously mocks Western academia while at the same time using it as a reference point for counter-narratives, providing a manifesto that is insistently playful in its use of language. This is evidenced by puns, for example the consumption of a certain "Gali Mathias" (ibid., 46) after having asked him what the law was (ibid., 46). Both the scholar of romance languages David Dalton (2018, 7) and the translator and editor of the German edition of the manifesto, Oliver Precht (2016, 65), note that *Gali Mathias*, more commonly known as and listed in dictionaries as *galimatias*, is an outdated reference to nonsense and gibberish. By proposing that Gali Mathias is a human to be devoured in reference to the law, Andrade suggests that the concept of Western laws cannot be directly transferred to or applied in colonial Brazil—in other words, the act of doing so is essentially nonsensical (Andrade 2016, 65; Dalton 2018, 7).

3.5.5 And a New Narrative

The final signature reads:

Oswald de Andrade
Em Piratininga
Ano 374 da Deglutição de Bispo Sardinha
(Andrade 2016, 58)²⁷

In alignment with European history and understanding of time, the signature would read “In São Paulo. In the year of 1928,” since *Piratininga* refers to the Indigenous denomination of the modern-day state of São Paulo before the settlement of Jesuit missionaries (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 47), and Sardinha refers to Pero Fernandes Sardinha, an early bishop in today’s Alagoas, who was devoured by the *Caeté* in 1556 (Schwarcz and Starling 2015, 42). Thus, 374 refers to the year 1930. This deviation of the original date of publication might be explained by a confusion of dates, whereas Andrade might have referred to the bishop Pedro Correia devoured by the *Carijó* in 1554 (ibid., 42). What this goes to show is that Andrade proposes an entirely new calendar positioning the first reported act where a European colonizer was devoured by the native population as the origin of the anthropophagic time calculation. This strategy of proposing new calendars and systems of time is not at all unique, but has been historically employed by revolutionary movements, such as the French Revolution and its Republican/Revolutionary calendar. Similarly, the act of renaming cities back to their precolonial denominations or finding names in the native language is a widespread postcolonial practice evident for example in South Africa. This aligns with Lyon’s argument that manifestoes often engage in counter-history, where the hegemonic narration is replaced with a counter-narrative focused on the oppressed group, in this case, Brazilians.

Beyond just analyzing the content and form of the manifesto the question arises: Is the manifesto itself an anthropophagic act of writing? Is it not the playful style, the fragmentary connection of historical moments and figures, from both continental Europe brought together on one page with Indigenous cosmologies that constitute anthropophagy? Is it not the mixing and matching and rewriting the history non-linearly?

27 “Oswald de Andrade
In Piratininga
Im Jahre 374 nach der Verschlingung des Bischofs Sardinha”
(Andrade 2016, 59)

And who picked up on these ideas? Did they find fertile grounds beyond the circle of people around Oswald and Tarsila in the late 1920s?

3.6 Circulation

While the anthropophagic movement quickly collapsed, evidenced by the fact that the *Revista de Antropofagia* stopped being published only one year after its first edition in 1928 and the group was dissolved thereafter (Madureira 2004, 98),²⁸ and the manifesto and its author would only be revisited in the 1950s (Oliveira 2015, 178), it had and continues to have great impact throughout Brazilian cultural production and beyond.

Most notably within the Arts, key figures of the late 1960s *Tropicália/Tropicalismo*²⁹ movement—such as Hélio Oiticica and Caetano Veloso—referred to anthropophagy advocating for absorbing cultural elements of European and US American origin through Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Brazilian roots (Buchmann 2007, 231). This time around, the satirical mimicry and parody of cultural elements from outside Brazil, primarily engaged with US-American popular culture due to its hegemonic position within the Americas in the 1960s. It is important to note that this took place during the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985), forcing a broad range of cultural actors to subversively criticize the government through their artistic production (ibid., 229). As such, unlike during *Modernismo*, the critique of Brazilian national identity—rather than its construction—was central to the *Tropicalistas* (Islam 2012, 167).

Among many others, artists like Lygia Clark,³⁰ Adriana Varejão,³¹ and more recently Denilson Baniwa continue to engage with the concept up to today through

28 For further details on the collapse of the anthropophagic movement, largely due to economic and political shifts such as the economic crisis of 1929 and subsequent changes in Brazilian politics, refer to Madureira (2004) and Buchmann (2007, 232).

29 *Tropicália/Tropicalismo* is a cultural movement consisting of political activists, writers, directors, musicians, and artists, operating throughout the late 1960s and early 70s as a response to the Brazilian Military dictatorship established in 1964 (Buchmann 2007, 229). The denominative term stems from Hélio Oiticica's 1967 environment "Tropicália" (ibid., 229).

30 In her widely disseminated participatory live Art projects "Baba Antropofágica" (1969) and "Canibalismo" (1969), that were recently exhibited in the retrospective "Lygia Clark: Projeto para um planeta" (2024) in the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Clark engages with anthropophagy as a participatory artistic practice in the context of art therapy and experimenting with interrelations between humans.

31 In her sculptures and paintings Varejão engages with historical colonial depictions of Brazil found in etchings and *mapamundi*. Through mimicry, she exposes their violent colonial histories via interventions, such as a large cut in the painting "Língua com padrão sinuoso" (1998) that reveals a bloody wound below the surface that mimics Portuguese *Azulejos*. In "Varal" (1993) and "Entrance Figure II" (1998) she directly references the figure of the cannibal, and in "Alegoria da América" (2015) the artist mimics historical colonial depictions of Brazil to point toward their phantasmatic nature, appropriating these images and their corresponding colonial projections.

various media including performance, sculpture, and painting. Especially Baniwa is important to highlight for being one of the few Indigenous artists working with anthropophagy, critically examining the historical exclusion of Indigenous cultural production in the context of anthropophagy in the Visual Arts. His curated exhibition “ReAntropofagia” (2019) with the exclusive participation of Indigenous artists, and its central piece, a painting of the same name (2018) created by Baniwa, account to this engagement in repositioning Indigeneity in the center of anthropophagy and criticizing its exclusion from and historical peripheral role in the discourse of anthropophagy in the Arts (Sardiglia 2022, 105–106, 109).³² Beyond Brazil, especially the 24th São Paulo Biennial curated by Paul Herkenhoff in 1998 granted *antropofagia* its first international stage and allowed for the wide reception of the *Manifesto Antropófago*. It further mobilized anthropophagy as a curatorial strategy to counter historicizing and linear narratives by insisting on the multiplicity of “[...]‘histories’, ‘stories’ and ‘cannibalisms’ in the plural [...]” as leading principles for the curation of the exhibition (Lagnado 2015, 16).³³

Because anthropophagy essentially deals with questions of cultural contact and how postcolonial Brazil deals and could deal with its colonial legacy, it is no wonder the concept has found wide reception within cultural academic disciplines. Buchmann (2007, 230) notes that the anthropophagic movement had a significant impact on decolonial movements through the 1930s and 40s, and on theoretical-political discourses of Postmodernism and Postcolonial studies. As such, it is not surprising that anthropophagy is often discussed among other postcolonial concepts of transculturation, including hybridization, miscegenation, and creolization (Sperling 2014, 168–72; Sztutman 2015, 182). How these concepts converge with and complement anthropophagy precisely remains to be studied. Within academia, it has further been adapted by Villém Flusser and Haroldo de Campos³⁴ as a theoretical framework to think through translational studies in the 1990s, as discussed in Guldin (2008) and Campos

32 For further details concerning the exhibition and a detailed analysis of the painting “ReAntropofagia” (2018) refer to Sardiglia (2022).

33 See Lagnado (2015, 19–20) for further elaboration on the curatorial principle of contamination developed in the Bienial.

34 Especially Haroldo de Campos concept of *transvalorization*, understood as a “critical view of History as a negative function [...] capable of appropriation and of expropriation, de-hierarchization, deconstruction” (Campos 2010, 321) seems productive in thinking anthropophagy as a strategy of postcolonial historicization.

(2010). Contemporary literature including Strasser's *Kultureller Kannibalismus: Übersetzungen der Anthropophagie* (2022) continues this line of thought within translation and transculturation up to today. More recently, the Brazilian philosopher and psychologist Suely Rolnik adapted anthropophagy as a conceptual framework to understand processes of subjectivization in contemporary financial capitalism at the intersection of political theory and psychology.³⁵

This goes to show that anthropophagy allows for a wide variety of interpretations and applications throughout disciplines because it offers productive ways to think through alterity. Islam Gazi notes that the resurfacing of *antropofagia* happened in key moments in Brazilian history, where Brazilian identity is called into question due to processes of “social and cultural transformation” (Islam 2012, 164). He goes on to constitute that because of this reaction to transformation, a critical self-reflection and reassessment of cultural identity and identification³⁶ is demanded that subsequently engages with the figure of the cannibal (Islam 2012, 164), establishing it as one of the central reference points for Brazilian cultural identification.

4 Core Principles of *Antropofagia*

Even though it is clear that the *Manifesto Antropófago* and the *Revista de Antropofagia* were the origin of rethinking cannibalism/anthropophagy—or ingestion more generally—as a cultural tool, it only marks the starting point of conceptual anthropophagy that was continuously refigured, reinterpreted, and adapted throughout the last century. It is not a hermetically defined concept by one or more thinkers with one central visual or poetic language. This understanding was already established in the first publication/*dentição*³⁷ of the *Revista de Antropofagia* and later proven by the diverse interpretations and applications of anthropophagy: “A ‘Revista de Antropofagia’ não tem orientação ou

35 See Rolnik, *Zombie Anthropophagie: zur neoliberalen Subjektivität* (2018).

36 On thinking through “identity” Stuart Hall notes, that it seems more viable to think of “identification” as a “[...] discursive approach [...], a construction, a process never completed—always ‘in process’” (Hall 2011, 2), to counter naturalizing, essentializing and fixed conceptions of identity.

37 The Editions of the magazine were published as *dentições*. A neologism and wordplay that combines *dente*, tooth with *edição*, edition.

pensamento de espécie alguma: só tem estômago.” (Alcântara Machado and Bopp 1928, 8)³⁸

The following chapter aims not at defining *antropofagia* as such, but at finding points of convergence that repeatedly surface in discussions on anthropophagy to get a better understanding of what it entails and how the relationship between the Self and the Other is fundamentally challenged through metaphorical anthropophagic practices. I have compiled these points of convergence based on my analysis of the *Manifesto Antropófago*, its later circulation, and by cross-reading historic and contemporary references on anthropophagy.

4.1 Auto-Exoticization, Reappropriation, and Resistance

For Oswald and Tarsila, cannibalism became a sign of agency, autonomy from Europe, and an intentionally adopted primitive identity. (Maroja 2019, 8)

The cannibal does not deny otherness outright, but devours it in order to transform and absorb it. (Guldin 2008, 121)

In the center of anthropophagy, its foundational manifesto, and later circulation, stands the figure of the cannibal, once imposed on Latin America by the colonial regime, it was reappropriated as a productive cultural force and legitimate figure of self-identification. In anthropophagy, being the Other, the cannibal, the monster becomes a strategy from which the exertion of power and agency is possible, the taboo of cannibalism becomes a totem of agency. The foreign representation as “savage” is thus not rejected but accepted and refigured for one’s own needs and means as a constitutive element in constructing a Brazilian self-identity (Sperling 2014, 195).

Harkening back to historical accounts, Gazi notes that in early Brazilian colonial history, native populations deliberately played into the constructed role of the uncivilized and barbaric Other to consciously terrify the intruders (Islam 2012, 163). The performative appropriation and play with the projection of the Center (in this case the European colonizers) onto the Other (the native population) becomes a form of resistance.

The same mechanism is central to anthropophagy and was mobilized by Tarsila do Amaral and Oswald de Andrade. Both used the image of primitive Brazil and its codes such as the cannibal, to adhere to the romanticization of “primitivism” in modernist

38 “The ‘Revista de Antropofagia’ has no orientation or thought whatsoever: it only has a stomach.” (Alcântara Machado and Bopp 1928, 8, own translation)

Europe. It was a form of auto-exoticization to gain legitimization in the eyes of the cultural Center Europe, and more specifically Paris (Cardoso 2019, 134) whilst at the same time providing grounds for resistance through the resignification of the monstrified cannibal, critically reevaluating hegemonic history, and regaining control over the projected image.³⁹ As such anthropophagy becomes an exercise in seeing and understanding oneself through the eyes of the Other, to consciously alter this image in the next step, which harkens back to the importance of seeing oneself through and within the other highlighted in Indigenous anthropophagy. A similar approach is mobilized by the queer theorist and philosopher Paul B. Preciado in a speech held at a psychoanalytic conference in the *École de la Cause Freudienne*.

And so, it is from the position assigned to me by you as a mentally ill person that I address you, an ape-human in a new era. I am the monster who speaks to you. The monster you have created with your discourse and your clinical practices. I am the monster who gets up from the analyst's couch and dares to speak, not as a patient, but as a citizen, as your monstrous equal. (Preciado 2021, 19)

Preciado deliberately claims and speaks from the position of the monster assigned to him by the pathologization of gender dysphoria within institutional psychology. In a subsequent step he claims complete equality of speech while remaining in the position of the monster, turning latter into a space of agency. It is at once the acknowledgment of the outside pathologization/identity construction (mental illness/the cannibal as the savage), the reclamation of this imposed place of speech as legitimate, and subsequently the leveling of power hierarchies between the academy/colonial power

39 While not directly reacting to the *Manifesto Antropófago*, the Martinican writer and politician Aimé Césaire's *In the Guise of a Literary Manifesto* (1942), reverberates striking similarities to Andrade. Again, the image of the cannibal surfaces besides other negative attributions linked to the lack of civilization as a trope projected by the European colonizers onto the native population. Just like Andrade, Césaire calls for claiming this image as one's own:

"Because we hate you, you and your reasonableness, we stick to our precocious dementia, our flaming folly, our stubborn cannibalism.

Let's count:
madness with memory
madness shouting
madness seeing
madness on the make.

Enough of this taste of tasteless corpse!" (Césaire in Caws 2001, 484–88)

These attributions are not simply rejected but accepted as constitutive parts of identification derived from the foreign construction of the native inhabitants. Furthermore, the last sentence of this fragment can be interpreted as describing the European colonizer's corpse as being tasteless and flavorless, which I link to Andrade's description of "consciência enlatada" (Andrade 2016, 38), canned consciousness. This can be understood as the outright rejection of imported material and immaterial goods from Europe.

and the mentally ill person/savage by claiming equality in their own right. Nevertheless, this also demonstrates the double bind of at once accepting the imposed monstrosity (not rejecting but appropriating, reiterating the outside's ascriptions) in an attempt to claim resistance. Essentially what is rejected is not the imposed and constructed image of the outside, but only its subalternity/powerlessness. This has to be viewed critically, since—in the case of Tarsila and Oswald—it reiterates and plays into the already existing images of Brazil in Europe, which are taken advantage of for their own sake, subsequently reaffirming the European Center's position of power, making the movement “less militantly anti-European than has been presumed” (Cardoso 2019, 134).

4.2 Eating Inside Out: Inversion of the Center/Periphery Relation

One central goal of anthropophagy lies in toppling imposed hegemonic narrations of history through rejection, and instead constructing a differing narration by solely accepting and incorporating selected elements from the Center. By doing so, the Periphery—from where anthropophagy originates—reclaims power over historicization and especially over the own image of the Self. Europe and later the US, in any case, the hegemonic centers of power, are inverted, moving them away from their position of domination to become foreign prey that is partly being rejected and partly incorporated and transformed. In summary, this turns around the subaltern position and inverts the power relations between the Center and the Periphery (Madureira 2004, 115; Islam 2012, 169; Maroja 2019, 2) in exercising the *Deutungshoheit*, power, and sovereignty of interpretation and definition.

4.3 Buffet: Pick and Choose

Based on the prior paragraph, selectiveness of what is consumed to be digested becomes central to anthropophagy: “not everything is eaten, only that which is lacking for the constitution of an ideal identity.” (Lagnado 2015, 13) Agency lies within the one that consumes to choose to reject and expel indigestible elements (Sperling 2014, 194), or in corporeal words, excrete or throw them up, placing power within the one who devours. Anthropophagy calls for Brazilian artists and intellectuals to disrespectfully appropriate and incorporate European culture through local traditions (Buchmann 2007, 231). Digestion is then theorized for the purpose of finding new meaning and possibilities through the ingestion of a multitude of cultural elements in a transformative process,

allowing the alteration of cultural aspects of the Center for the sake of Brazilian cultural identity, removing the former from its untouchable position. The usage of the word anthropophagy and its underlying implications replaces the word cannibalism to focus on this ritual and transcendental reevaluation.

4.4 Heterogeneity Instead of Homogeneity

In his [Oswald de Andrade's] view, the solution had to be a dialectical synthesis of past and present, to take advantage of all sorts of influences, wherever they may have come from, devouring and critically re-elaborating them in terms of local conditions, all the while trying not to be culturally submerged in the process. (Guldin 2008, 111)

Anthropophagy aims not at the creation of a homogenous cultural identity that discredits cultural and racial differences (Refskou, Amorim, and Carvalho 2019, 7; Buchmann 2007, 231; Sperling 2014, 205), but instead at toppling the hegemonic position of European Center in defining culture in Brazil. This position is then to be replaced by a horizontal structure that allows a multitude of cultural elements from different cultural and racial backgrounds to mingle and intersect, influence, and syncretize with each other. The idea that cultural elements, wherever they stem from, influence each other is not seen as a dangerous loss of the Self, as it is often framed in contemporary discussions of immigration in Europe, but as a societal fact in Brazil (Sperling 2014, 194). Following this line of thought, anthropophagy doesn't aim at a total rejection of all elements from European culture, but calls for a critical choosing, repositioning the latter as equally important, influential, and powerful as any other notion of culture present in Brazil. In summary, stable (cultural) identities and their hierarchies in relation to one another are rejected and dismantled by reaffirming their relational, continuously, and mutually influenced character (Rolnik 2018, 16). Anthropophagy can thus be understood as “[...] Modell für kreatives Assimilieren vom Fremden und als Absage an Vorstellungen kultureller Reinheit sowie für die absolute Bejahung kultureller Pluralität” (Sperling 2014, 189).

4.5 Never-Ending Ingestion

This instability and continuous reconfiguration points to another central aspect of anthropophagy: its process-based nature. One of the defining characteristics of monsters is their polymorphous existence, that is always in flux. Similarly, the Self/Other relationship is never stable, since the Center/Self always reconfigures the

Periphery/Other to fit its projections (Jackson 2020, 81).⁴⁰ As such both who devours and what is devoured need to constantly adapt to the current historical moment, whether the need for autonomy from Europe during *Modernismo*, the subversive criticism of US imperialism and the Brazilian military dictatorship during *Tropicália*, or contemporary artistic practices reacting to the exoticization of the Other in the Art market. In conclusion, anthropophagy itself in reacting to the dynamic monster and Self/Other relationship cannot be understood as stable and universally applicable but rather as a continuous process that has to react to current historical and political moments. Any encounter with the Other provokes changes in the Self and the same goes the other way around. This is precisely what anthropophagy accounts for when understood as process-based and infinitely malleable.⁴¹

4.6 Digesting: *Antropofagia*

Der Gestus der Anthropophagie impliziert eine kritische Neubewertung der Geschichte, indem er die Hierarchie zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem, Kolonisator und Kolonialisiertem, Identität und Differenz unterminiert. Das Stigma des Kannibalismus erfährt eine Wandlung in ein Positives, eine Umeignung, eine Resignifizierung – Anthropophagie ist somit selbst ein genuin performativer Akt. (Strasser 2023, 25)

The metaphor of the cannibal is precisely so productive as a response to the hegemonic culture imbued in Brazil through colonization because it remains violent and transgresses the moral Axioms of the European Center. It brings the very theoretical discussions of culture to a corporeal level through the metaphor of ingestion. This metaphor allows for an immense variety of reinterpretations and adaptations, promoted by the clear rejection by anthropophagy of a fixed definition of itself, reverberating notions of the monster and demanding a constant reconfiguration based on the current historical moment. Anthropophagy centrally acknowledges that the Self does not and cannot exist in opposition to the Other, because the mere confrontation with one another, even when attempted to separate the two, already changes both in an act of border transgression. The Brazilian linguist Trindade Menezes de Souza further points

40 See Jackson (2020, 81) and her understanding of Blackness as infinitely malleable, since the Other is consistently refigured in order to provide the negative mold against which the positive Self and its project of civilization and humanity is modeled.

41 Similar discussions exist concerning *brasilidade*, Brazilianness as the foundational question of the *Manifesto Antropófago*, in other words, the answer to the question of what Brazilian cultural identity is, seems to be impossible to answer, indefinitely deferred and consistently reconfigured (Oliveira 2015, 183)

out that the Other is not an external or separate entity, but always a construction of the Self:

I think it's important in this relationship between the self and the other to always remember that the other does not exist, the other is an attribution of the self; because every other is another self. Transculturality, then, is the relationship between two "selves" and not between the "self" and the "other". And alterity is not a characteristic of the other. Alterity is the characteristic that each subject has in and of themselves. The other is inside of us, not out there. (Souza, Hashiguti, and Mattos Brahim 2023, 103, own translation)⁴²

Nonetheless, anthropophagy engages in a game of seeing oneself through the Other, of performing for the Other but decidedly resisting subalternity that is historically imposed by Otherness. It aims at inverting the hegemonic relation between the Center and Periphery and does so by rejecting dominant narrations imposed by the Center and drafting counter-narratives. At its core anthropophagy is a creative act of transformation that stems from the necessity to find a way to deal with the reality of miscegenation and its resulting processes of transculturation originating from the violent colonial regime in Brazil. This has to be stressed to avoid a detachment of anthropophagy from its socio-political context, especially since Brazil already has a long and problematic history of claiming racial democracy, far from reality. It is first and foremost an act of regaining agency over the construction of cultural identity as a postcolonial country by rethinking, reframing, and reconstructing its colonial legacy. Yet, further research must critically engage with questions of anthropophagy's romanticization of Indigeneity, and the question of who gets to speak for the anthropophagi, since the concept itself stems from the cultural elites of Brazil and historically excluded Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian voices. As a conceptual idea, anthropophagy is incredibly convincing, yet, the practical application beyond the Arts and transculturation and translation studies remain comparably unexplored, which is surprising concerning the ravenous claim for anti-hegemonic practices. How anthropophagy might be utilized within socio-political contexts beyond academia has yet to be explored, with critics repeatedly pointing toward danger of depoliticizing the concept (Oliveira 2015, 186). This is evidenced by the manifesto itself, where the powerful rhetoric and anti-hegemonic claims clash with the impossibility to develop concrete strategies and construct larger imaginaries beyond a

42 "Acho importante nessa relação entre o eu e o outro, lembrar sempre que o outro não existe, o outro é uma atribuição do eu; porque todo outro é um outro eu. Transculturalidade, então, é a relação entre dois 'eus' e não entre o 'eu' e o 'outro'. E a alteridade não é uma característica do outro. A alteridade é a característica que cada sujeito tem em e de si mesmo. O outro está dentro de nós, não lá fora." (Souza, Hashiguti, and Mattos Brahim 2023, 103)

vague and univocal call for autonomy. Nevertheless, I demonstrated the concept's centrality within Brazilian culture by providing a brief overview of the wide variety of adaptations and its continued resurfacing. This fact alone, the manifesto's avant-gardist claims, its disillusionment with the hegemonic Center and its tools of knowledge production and domination, as well as the call to confidently claim agency over the own narration, reverberate up until today's contemporary discussions of post- and decoloniality.

5 Digestif: Conclusion and further Outlooks

Anthropophagy is fundamentally a reaction to deal with processes of mixture and configurations of cultural differences within postcolonial Brazil (Rolnik 2018, 15), affirming its Indigenous roots whilst allowing for the creative appropriation of the foreign (Islam 2012, 160). As such anthropophagy is first and foremost a concept and metaphor to think of cultural border phenomena through transgression by means of metaphorical ingestion: to eat what is outside in order to produce something in its own right as a reaction to violent processes of colonization. This ingestion substitutes the material consumption of human flesh from Indigenous rituals with elements of hegemonic culture that are to be transformed through mimicry, parody, sarcasm and disrespectful appropriation (Buchmann 2007, 231; Sperling 2014, 190). To do so, the master's tool—the monstified figure of the cannibal having been used by European colonizers to justify exploitation—is reappropriated, removed from its subaltern position connected to the Other in the eyes of the hegemonic Center and reconfigured as a place of agency that confidently acts in its own right.

How anthropophagy can be thought of and applied beyond postcolonial contexts remains to be studied and critically examined, although thinkers such as Islam (2012), Refskou et al. (2019), and Strasser (2023), among others, provide fertile grounds for the adaptation of conceptual anthropophagy beyond Brazil. Nonetheless, great care should be taken in dealing with anthropophagy not to romanticize it as yet another concept to think through transculturation while being separated from its historic context of violent coloniality. Anthropophagy fundamentally originated from the necessity to find ways to productively deal with the violent legacies of the colonial regime and the clashing of cultural differences between the European settlers, the native populations, and the Black

population as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. Yet, adaptations in translational and transcultural studies, and especially in curation—as exemplified by the *24th Bienal de São Paulo* in 1998⁴³—have proven fruitful, and further expansion in those fields could provide rich discussions.

Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) laid the groundwork for anthropophagy as a cultural strategy, decidedly rejecting hegemonic historical narratives and proposing counter-narratives that center the postcolonial history of Brazil, highlighting its Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian roots. Although the manifesto lacks concrete political strategies and remains vague in its claims, its style, rhetoric, and the underlying anthropophagic metaphor have seen various readaptations throughout Brazilian philosophy, art, and transculturation studies. Anthropophagy provides a rich conceptual framework and methods to aggressively claim the position of the othered cannibal—this monster—as legitimate place of speech, inverting the power hierarchy between the Center and the Periphery. Ingestion is never-ending. As such anthropophagy can indefinitely be reactivated, allowing for a strong foundation of resistance to self-confidently speak from the periphery—not as a subaltern, but as equal actor that has the invaluable vantage point of recognizing, playing with, and thus being able to deconstruct hegemonic projections and narratives.

43 See Lagnado et al., *Cultural Anthropophagy. The 24th Bienal de São Paulo* (2015).

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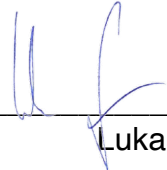
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Vienna, June 9, 2025



Lukas Frank

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“He can do some things that you can't do.
You can do some things that he can't do.
I can do some things that neither of you can do.
I know that I can't drive a truck.
And I can't run a bank.
And I can't count.
And I can't lead a movement.
But I can fuck up your mind.”

James Baldwin in
Dixon, Terence, dir. 1970. *Meeting the Man: James Baldwin in Paris*.
min 18:31-18:55.

obrigado
to my mães e pais
to my my families
both in blood and in spirit

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thank you to Exú
and all the tricksters of these worlds.

Axé