

HANS STADEN AND THEREAFTER

HANS STADEN E DEPOIS DISSO

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ABSTRACT: Hans Staden's book *Hans Staden, The True History of His Captivity* is responsible for the development and growth of the idea of anthropophagy in Brazil to this day. In this article we will explore its historical and social relations with modern Carnival in Brazil while paying special attention to Mikhail Bakhtin and Roberto da Matta's theories.

KEYWORDS: Anthropophagy. Carnival. Hans Staden.

In this paper we will be looking for traces of anthropophagy that can be directly connected with Hans Staden's work and that are to be found in and beyond the literary canon. We will be connecting Staden with Da Matta's notion of Brazilianness with the intent of establishing a theoretical link between the later/Carnival, and the cannibalistic indigenous ritual.

The book from Hans Staden, *Hans Staden, The True History of His Captivity*, was successfully published in the 16th century. In fact, it counted 3 re-editions in the same year it was published, that is 1557. The book will again be published in Germany in 1859 and later in the beginning of the 20th century in Brazil. It was translated to Flemish in 1558, to Latin, in 1593, to Dutch, in 1563, to French, in 1837, to English, in 1874 and, finally, to Portuguese in 1892. Among its numerous popular editions its worthwhile mentioning its adaptation to children and to the movies, respectively in 1926 in the "Diário da Noite," São Paulo, Monteiro Lobato first published, in chapters, the adventures of Hans Staden, and in 1999 it was adapted to the movies by the director Luís Alberto Pereira, in Brazil.

Anthropophagy in Brazilian literature is not a new topic of study, and the reader should consider among others the work by Maria Cândida Ferreira de Almeida, *Tornar-se Outro: o Topos Canibal na Literatura Brasileira* (Becoming Another: the Canibal Topos in Brazilian Literature²) (2002), that stands out as one of the most detailed studies on the subject. The author analyzes the issue in *Macunaíma*, in José de Alencar and Machado de Assis' works, to mention only a few. Beyond metaphorical studies of the subject stands the anthropological study by Forsyth³ (1985) of the adventures of Hans Staden, a study that deals

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² Unless otherwise noted all translations are from the responsibility of the author.

³ Forsyth is the author of another article of extreme importance for the matter in that he translates excerpts of Jesuits letters otherwise unavailable to English readers: FORSYTH, Donald W. "The Beginnings of Brazilian

with the anthropological links of cannibalism but that also, very much in the same line of the work by Staden himself, reflects on the veracity or not of the text of 1557. Vanessa Dutra Santana's thesis "Lobato e os Carrascos Civilizados, Construção de Brasilidade via Reescitura de *Warthafte Historia*, de Hans Staden"⁴, dated from 2007, deals with the deconstruction of Brazil's image. Dutra argues that Monteiro Lobato recreates Brazilianness when inverting Staden's account from the point of view of the Indian – this reading is particularly interesting to us as it also presents cannibalism on the core of Brazilianness from a positive point of view⁵. Specifically to the point of view that interests us is the study by Mario Klarer "Cannibalism and Carnavalesque: Incorporation as Utopia in the Early Image of America."

Klarer analysis a series of images in which cannibalism is presented side by side with a utopian, paradise like image of the early Americas and refers the approximation of Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque with cannibalism (1999, p. 403-405). Both concepts point to a notion of an upside down world and to a utopian idea of unity between the subject and the object. We will develop Klarer's ideas on what concerns the connection between Carnival and the cannibalistic ritual endeavoring to show how crucial it is for the celebration of Carnival in Brazil in that it allows a link between Carnival and the indigenous culture in another wise essentially European and African celebration. Essential to the point in study is also Johan Verberckmoes "Amerindian Laughter and Visions of a Carnavalesque New World"; in this text the author considers the manner by which Hans Staden and Léry (among others) and further re-editions of his work re-write the cannibalistic ceremony as a carnivalesque experience. This text basically conveys to our thesis in that it is not Staden that chooses to convey his experience as a carnival but that the experience itself contained the carnivalesque elements. That is, Verberckmoes contends that Staden chose to illustrate his experience by means of carnivalesque images that would undermine the repugnance of an European audience vis-à-vis cannibalism. The carnivalesque would be the means by which to lend sense to an otherwise completely foreign imagery.

While one has to agree there is a definitive carnivalesque element on Staden's account that can be traced to his own cultural background, it is hard to accept that all accounts retell the same details under the same assumption: that the observer's account is "tainted" by his

Anthropology: Jesuits and Tupinambá Cannibalism." *Journal of Anthropological Research*, v. 39, n. 2, New World Ethnohistory (Summer, 1983), p. 147-178.

⁴ Available electronically <<http://cutter.unicamp.br/document/?code=vtls000416829>>.

⁵ Further references such as Frank Lestringant's *The Cannibals* while interesting to the subject matter do not deal with Hans Staden's specifics, the same being said of Barker's *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* and Jáuregui's *Canibalia*. Frank Lestringant's text while a source on the matter presents a disquieting and misleading classification of all of the native Brazilian Indians as "the Brazilians" which as we see it promotes the same exotic primitivism of 16th century observers.

own biases without any real basis. In fact, this essay pretends that, if Verberckmoes thesis is correct, it is not only because of the cultural substrata of the observer but because what the observer sees is indeed there. The carnivalesque details exist beyond the eyes of the observers and the indigenous carnivalesque elements were there, ready to be assimilated into the culture of the colonizer as much as the colonizer imposed his own culture. Furthermore, Verberckmoes focuses on the issue of laughter as the mark of Carnival and supports his thesis mostly with examples taken from Peru and Mexico's indigenous encounters. Throughout this essay, and focusing on Brazilian indigenous alone, one will articulate the several carnivalesque elements, and not just laughter, in Staden's account, as in the Jesuit priests' accounts of the cannibalistic ceremonies. After all, as Verberckmoes himself acknowledges, "we can not be certain, for instance, of the historical reality of the cannibalism jokes Staden allege the Tupi were cracking at him" (2003, p. 276), but we can clearly place more veracity on accounts details that are repeated by several observers on several different occasions.

The work of Hans Staden is the first worldwide *oeuvre* to describe in detail the anthropophagic practices of the Tupinambá, one of the major groups of Brazilian natives. The description is provided by Hans Staden himself and accompanied by vivid pictures. This book will be the origin of an entire cannibalistic imagery set that remains true to this day. As time went by it also originated serious discussions around a metaphorical cannibalism able to reinvent Brazilian culture. In fact, as Whitehead mentions in "Hans Staden and the Cultural Politics of Cannibalism" (2000), this text is essential to whomever wants to study 16th century Brazil. It is equally essential to whomever wishes to understand its ramifications onto the 20th century: the Modernist movement of 1922, Oswald Andrade's "Manifesto Antropofágico" (The Anthropophagic Manifesto), the first specifically stated cannibalistic metaphor of Brazilian culture⁶, the Tropicalist movement of the 60s and a pervasive popular psyche that deserves a study of its own.

Brazil, the land, had from the very beginning offered itself as a changing metaphor. In fact, the Land of Sta Cruz (Holy Cross), as it was denominated in 1500 by the Portuguese, was paradise, and its inhabitants edenic beings, sinless. In the first document written by the Portuguese, *A Carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha* (Letter of Pêro Vaz de Caminha) dated of the 1st of May of 1500 one can read: "They go naked with no sort of covering. They attach no more importance to covering their parts than they do to showing their faces. They are very

⁶ Among others Cf. PERRONE, Charles A. "Pau-Brasil, *Antropofagia, Tropicalismo: The Modernist Legacy of Oswald de Andrade in Brazilian Poetry and Song of the 1960s-1980s,*" in *One Hundred Years of Invention: Oswald de Andrade and the Modern Tradition in Latin American Literature*. Austin: Abaporu Press, 1992. p. 132.

innocent in that matter” (1947, p. 22). Another passage from the *Letter of Pêro Vaz* reads: “They seem to be such innocent people that, if we could understand their speech and they ours, they would immediately become Christians” (1947, p. 25). This heavenly vision is also accompanied by an imagery of abundance: “There is a great plenty, infinitude of water. The country is so well-favored that if it were rightly cultivated it would yield everything” (1947, p. 28). The *Letter* soon finds its imaginary crumbling down toward hell. Paradise, confronted with the lack of understanding of the Other turns into a demoniac space, where the same edenic beings described in the *Letter* are now roasting and eating themselves, and the Portuguese. Thus, the Land of the Holy Cross turns into Brazil, the fiery, red wood, object of greed and desire. The metaphor turns into the country itself, and the negative character of cannibalism permeates all and every perception of the indigenous and the behavior of the Portuguese/Brazilian.

In 1576, Pêro Magalhães de Gândavo, in *A Primeira História do Brasil* (The First History of Brazil), insists that Brazil should be called Land of Sta Cruz – 1512 was the date in which “Brazil” had been mentioned for the first time in a letter from Afonso Albuquerque to D. Manuel (GÂNDAVO, 2004, p. 43). The first chapter of this work is, in fact, entitled “De como se descobriu esta província e porque se deve chamar Sta Cruz e não Brasil” (How this province was discovered and why should it be named Sta Cruz and not Brazil) and his final remarks conclude:

So that we hurt the demon, who has worked so hard and still works to extinguish the memory of the holy cross [...] and banish it from the heart of men, let us give it back its name, and call it, just like in the beginning, province of Sta Cruz (GÂNDAVO, 2004, p. 43-44).

As Gândavo’s work proceeds, we will find the image of the Indians changing together with the name of the land. He dedicates chapters ten, eleven and twelve to the description of the “gentile”. Their qualities are summarized in the fact that they have no greed for gold, silver, precious stones or anything else for they live barefoot and naked, hold no land and no pomp. Gândavo compares their life with the Portuguese concluding that they live much better, barely working at all, and enjoying a lot more leisure than the first. He appreciates how they are all equal and live in harmony with nature. However, all they can think of is eating, drinking and killing people. All the themes that Staden will develop are already here: lustfulness, excess of imagination (animism), the permanent desire for revenge over anything, and their extreme cruelty whether to others or their own.

About a hundred years later, Sta Cruz has been erased off and Brazil turned into the opposite of itself, the land of plentiful has become the land of nothingness. São Vicente do Salvador (1564-c.1635) provides the connections that link the fiery land to the cannibal Indians:

just like the demon with the signal of the cross lost all its dominion over men, fearing to loose the strong dominion he had over the men of this land, he worked his ways so that one forgot the first name of the land and gave it the one of Brazil, because of a wood of the same name, of fiery, red color [...] and it was called the state of Brazil. It turned so unstable, that in less than a hundred years, when I write this, that it started to be populated, already some places are unpopulated, and being the land so big, and fertile [...] not even because of that is growing bigger, but instead smaller (SALVADOR, 1918, p. 3-4).

São Vicente do Salvador follows enumerating the bad use of the riches of Brazil to end up in the description of the cannibal Indians. His description is similar to Hans Staden's, but as it proceeds he starts associating with the idea of evil, something that Staden does not imply. One of the first descriptions reads:

As soon as the prisoner dies the elders from the village immediately tear him to pieces, removing his intestines and fat, which as soon as they are washed are boiled to be eaten, and the meat is divided by every house, and by the guests who came to the killing, and from this meat they immediately eat, roasted, and boiled, and they keep some of it very roasted, and shrunk, to which they call moquéim, wrapped in balls of cotton threads, dried over the smoky reeds, so that later they can renew their hatred, and make more parties (SALVADOR, 1918, p. 22).

The later could be read as almost a paraphrase of Staden's words but it does not follow the spirit of the *oeuvre* since some pages later, after a description of the different administrative land divisions in Brazil, Salvador commences to associate the natives to concupiscence and barbary. A little further ahead the demoniac is finally made explicit:

this is the kind of people that is easier to convince more through the means of fear than love, so much so that as soon as they saw that what they feared was gone they started acting out, killing, eating as many whites and its black slaves as they found on their way, and the worse is that this didn't prevent them from going to their homes with their belongings, saying that they didn't do it, but instead some creeps had done it, whom they felt as their business, to punish well (SALVADOR, 1918, p. 33).

The natives don't respect Christianity and they are astute, hypocrites, hateful, and above all eaters of human flesh indifferent to class or race⁷. Since the Tupis do not convey history by means of the written word it is São Vicente do Salvador who detains the description and controls its consequences. In fact, it is mostly through Jesuit priests that knowledge over several Indian tribes reaches us and this image is a constant throughout the accounts of priests Manuel da Nóbrega and José de Anchieta to mention only a couple of names.

In the sequence of these reports, one finds Hans Staden and his successful account. Staden had initiated his voyages in 1547, leaving Holland for Lisbon. From Lisbon he will leave to Brazil, still in the same year. He will return to Portugal 16 months later, and back again in 1549. From the three ships that leave the harbor two will sink. The survivors land in the island of Sta Catarina where they will stay for two years exchanging everything they had in the ship for food, and eventually feeding off roots and insects. Part of the crew decides to get back on the hopes of returning with a bigger ship to rescue the others. The ones that stay, walk to Assunção, a Spanish colony, distant 6 months.

Staden embarks on the ship. However, this one will also sink. At this point he stays in the island of Santo Amaro, east of São Vicente and informs the reader of the good relations the Portuguese entail with the Tupiniquins and the bad ones with the Tupinambá. Staden will remain as captain of the Portuguese fort of the island for a little more than two years when the Tupinambá capture him. Hans Staden is taken for a Portuguese and in spite of being able to speak Tupi he cannot convince them that he is French, (in fact, German) and thus a friend. The book develops as Staden describes its surroundings with the interest of an anthropologist and conjures tricks in order to delay his death. Years later the Portuguese come for Staden. The book describes in detail not only the cannibalistic ceremony but the lives of the natives; the land (STADEN, 1929, p. 129-131), the houses (p. 131-133), how they make fire (p. 133-134), how they sleep (p. 134), how they hunt (p. 134-6), their appearance (p. 136), etc. and obviously his greatest fear, the anthropophagic ritual (p. 155-163).

⁷ We should mention that while the Indians make no difference between men and women, black or white, the European gaze on cannibalism tends to dehumanize more the women than the men. On that respect Gândavo's description of the native women represents a stark contrast since they are the "humanized" ones by contrast to the men in the midst of the cannibalistic ceremony. Gândavo mentions that the women will sometimes abort in order to save their children from being eaten later in life. He also mentions how sometimes they run away with their "husbands" / prisoners when they fall in love with them. This humanization is operated by contrast with the hellish character of cannibalism and the fact that women leave their origins behind while saving some of the captured Portuguese. The women are thus less diabolical by means of their willingness to surrender to love and join Portuguese communities (GÂNDAVO, 2004, p. 114-115).

The book can also be seen as a critique of a united, civilized Europe. First, when Staden pretends to be French – the Tupinambá are mortal enemies of the Portuguese but they keep cordial, commercial relations with the French – it immediately shows the opposition between Portugal and France, and later again, when a visiting Frenchman chooses to cruelly maintain that Staden is Portuguese, “Kill him and eat him, the good-for-nothing, for he is indeed a Portuguese, your enemy and mine” (STADEN, 1929, p. 76). French civilization will again be ridiculed when the crew of a French ship refuses to receive Staden invoking fear of the natives. Right from this moment, we are free to interpret Staden’s account as “the world upside down”, the inversion of what is expected, the ridicule of all the rules established by “civilized” societies set the tone for the report of a carnivalized situation:

Carnival, at least in Brazil, manifests itself as a social episode, which demands a splendid coherence between hidden (or internal) sentiments and all that, which is explicitly presented. When we speak of a carnivalesque activity in Brazil, we are referring to an event during which it is possible to unite what we do with what we want and think (DA MATTA, 1982/1983, p. 164).

Carnival is re-enacted by the secondary participants in the story, the powerful Europeans, be it French or German, picture no ethics and no sympathy toward Staden. If the cannibalistic ritual can be understood as carnivalesque, the description of the “civilized” world is no less, even the Portuguese return for the sake of Staden can be read as the extension of the reversed logic that informs the text since it is the Portuguese who are in real danger of being eaten, not the French or the German. To the point in question, it is also interesting the way Christianity is permanently used by Staden from a magical point of view. Staden’s actions preclude the beginning of a typically Brazilian space: the unity between the religion of the colonizers and the colonized who will respect and worship simultaneously two distinct, self-excluding spheres of the sacred, and which will find its best expression in Carnival.

Hans Staden introduces himself as the most ardent believer, permanently leaving his life in the hands of God while at the same time, in a sneaky, intelligent way, uses a Portuguese book and his own religious rituals to cause fear and respect among his captors – a strategy that indeed allows him to escape death. Interestingly he is aware of his heresy:

“O Lord God, rescue me from this danger and bring it to a peaceful end.” Then they asked me why I looked so intently at the moon, and I replied: “I perceive the moon is wrath” for the face of the moon seemed to me to have (God forgive me) so terrible an aspect that I imagined God and all creatures must be angry with me. [...] Then

the king who desired to kill me, by name Jeppipo Wasu, one of the chiefs of the huts, enquired of me with whom the moon was angry (STADEN, 1929, p. 83).

If one were to doubt Hans Staden's word there is a series of details, names, and an actual advocate who confirms his truthful character, Dr. Dryander, who at the same time endeavors to excuse Staden's poor use of God's name. Dr. Dryander is responsible for the introduction to Staden's book. He was a reputable well-known professor in Marbourg and he seems to have repeatedly questioned Staden, together with other well known historical figures. In fact, many of Staden's statements are corroborated by Jean Léry⁸, who was in Brazil at the time Staden was writing his work (1556-58.) Also, as we have seen, the Jesuit letters corroborate his report. One should mention again Forsyth's study who, in his article "Three Cheers for Hans Staden, the Case for Brazilian Cannibalism" (1985), offers a response to doubts of truthfulness aroused by William Arens in *The Man-Eating Myth* (1979).

Dr. Dryander, who also knew Staden's family, asserts that the author wants no money for his book nor does he pretend to fool no one. Above all, "Lest Hans Staden should be regarded as a man ready to forget his mercies now that God has seccoured him, he desires in printing his history to give honour and praise to God alone" (sic) (STADEN, 1929, p. 28).

Staden's preamble reveals thus the need to assert the truth of a report that is seemingly unbelievable. It is indeed, but not simply because of the cannibalistic practices that it describes. It is unbelievable as well in its descriptions of the random actions of the Europeans, and Staden's animistic use of God. In fact, that he needs to have himself credited is not only part of an authority obsession or a need to re-assert his thanks to God, it is also part of a power play between the civilized and the savage in which the first has to make clear he holds the reigns of the account, and remains at the center of a world that, according to himself, is on the verge of changing drastically. The change that his account envisions as we are able to devise it, is part of the carnivalesque spirit. The random actions of the Europeans point to a place where civilized and savage aren't that different, both moved by primal instincts be it pleasure or fear. Moreover, confrontation between Portuguese and French at the time Staden is rescued reveals nothing closer to senselessness: the Portuguese arrive to rescue Staden (they had come before in vain a couple of times), immediately after the French. Staden, however, was already among the Frenchmen, who then resolve to attack the Portuguese. Staden himself – after warning the Portuguese to surrender – takes part in the battle in which not only him but also several others are wounded. Before this event, another one also points to an Old World in

⁸ Other works from the same time period to deal with the subject are Jean Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* (1578) and Montaigne's "The Cannibals" in *Essays*, chapter IV (1575.)

dissolution, caught up in internal economical conflicts that erase and take precedence over any ethics, in which Portuguese and French alike behave in manners way too close to the cannibal Indians. The following quote is self evident on how a carnivalesque mode grows parallel among inhabitants of both the New and Old World:

The savages now told me that the French ship [...] which I had wished to join, had departed, having taken in a cargo of Brazil wood [...]. Also that the crew had captured a Portuguese ship [...] and had given a Portuguese sailor to a king called Ita Wu who had eaten him (STADEN, 1929, p. 117).

The Indians accuse the Portuguese themselves of similar behavior when they offer their prisoners to another tribe who will eventually eat them.

Also, Staden's use of God and the Indians' reaction to it reveals their inevitable acculturation process as they surrender to the figure of a new God that seems to resemble their own so much: "it began to rain heavily [...] I replied that it was their own fault, for they had angered my God by pulling the wooden stick in front of which I used to speak with him [...] my master's son helped me to set up another cross" (STADEN, 1929, p. 114). In spite of putting himself at the center of his own account, lest doubts of Europe's superiority should arise, the fact is acculturation is running in both directions: at the time of his departure – infinitely delayed due to the Indians' need for his divination powers – not just the tribe chief cries but he himself cries:

Thereupon he began to howl and cry in the ship, saying that if they took me away I must return with the first boat, for he looked upon me as his son, and was wrath with those of Uwattibi for threatening to eat me. And one of his wives [...] began to cry over me, according to their custom, and I cried also (STADEN, 1929, p. 119-120).

Not that the crying reveals the acculturation process but certainly that he did it "according to their custom", that he knows and follows. The beginnings of what defines Brazilianness – be it through Gilberto Freyre's lusotropicalism or Roberto da Matta's Carnival is right here. A kind of racial democracy is already on its way: "Among those who were roasted that night were two of the mamelukes who were Christians; one was a Portuguese named George Ferrero, the son of a captain by a native woman. The other was called Hieronymus" (STADEN, 1929, p. 108). "Mameluke" means a mixture of Portuguese and Indian, fruits among others, of the cannibalistic ritual⁹.

⁹ Anthropologically the politics of assimilation of the Portuguese that resulted in the classification of "mamelucos" and "caboclos" (a mixture of European and Indian) among others, might theoretically support *de factum* the historical continuity of the cannibalistic ritual onto Carnival. In fact, while the Portuguese witness the

In the cannibalistic ceremony, the women were the first to “use” the prisoner. One must mention that immediately after his capture the prisoner had freely chosen a woman of his liking. The hierarchy of the process is thus reverted, creating a full satirical merriment that Carnival will recover: “I was forced to hop thus through the huts on both feet, at which they made merry, saying: ‘Here comes our food hopping towards us’” (STADEN, 1929, p. 80) – it is a permanent party and the victim himself should be if not happy with his destiny at least indifferent. While not being specific to Carnival alone, the fact that the executioner would take a different name after the death of his victim, that is, he would assume a new identity in order to be cleansed of the profane contact embodied in the victim accentuates the carnivalesque character of the ceremony. After the execution of each victim, the executioner would be further exalted in his new identity, which clearly relates to the theme of the mask in Carnival:

The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to (40) oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphosis, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames. It contains the playful element of life (BAKHTIN, 1929, p. 40-41).

It is Carnival, this anthropophagic party, in which all the rules are suspended, including the ones that pertain to the sexual realm. Part of the ritual included, as we noticed before, sexual gratification. This gratification obviously entailed no responsibilities or limits. However, in case of pregnancy, and be it a boy, he would eventually be sacrificed (the Indians believed that paternity happened only through the father’s lineage and that women were nothing but the vessel). The child would be nurtured and well treated until reaching adult age, when it would be eaten. There is then a period of suspension of the Carnival mode, which in fact reinforces it. The temporary suspension of life as we know it lasts for a specific period of time, just like the cannibalistic feast in itself:

Brazilian Carnival is crucial to this inquiry precisely because it does not create a secular and explicit order, the order which one learns at school, at church, and in sacred civic spaces, but rather a type of chaos – a carnivalesque chaos, it is true, with a defined and controlled duration-that can produce a juncture of home with street, of body with soul, of desires hidden by the repressions of order with the open and uninhibited manifestation of them which Carnival permits (DA MATTA, 1982/83, p. 165-166).

cannibalistic ritual, the Indians, and certainly the “mamelucos” and “caboclos” witness the “Entrudo”, an earlier, crude form of Carnival that comes to Brazil with the Portuguese.

According to Roberto da Matta, Carnival stands at the core of Brazil's national identity consciousness. The celebration, according to him, implies that one celebrates in the street what is normally hidden inside the house, subverting the hierarchical order of the world outside. Carnival would explicit the negation of the power structures as they are associated with economical productivity. Carnival is the manifestation of pure joy as long as the later is understood in opposition to a concept of work that entails hardship and punishment. Carnival is the moment in which rational predictability is suspended in the name of an "extra-ordinary" moment where the realm of emotions predominates and thus night becomes day, walking becomes dancing and the rhythmical collective body becomes indestructible.

One already had the opportunity to pay attention into a number of ways in which Hans Staden book and the cannibalistic ritual in general precludes Carnival. There are, however, more ways to continue this association with the general description of Indian society as it reaches us through the Portuguese accounts. Let us go back to Gândavo description of the Indians:

But the life they look for and the produce from which all of them live off is attained with little work, and it is a lot more leisure than ours; for they possess no goods, nor do they look to possess it as other men, and thus they live free of all greed and uncontrolled wont of riches, something that other nations do not lack. It is so much so that nor gold, silver or precious stones have any value among them (GÂNDAVO, 2004, p. 102).

The life the Indians live is in itself out of the capitalist mode and devoid of all economic imperatives that characterize "other nations." The Indians live thus in a state that according to Da Matta is already characteristic of Carnival when viewed by opposition to "other nations." While one may argue that this is a situation similar to all of the pre-capitalist societies as they are observed through the eyes of the 16th century witnesses it is however a particular situation to Brazil in the sense that it is possible to trace an historical continuity from the native Brazilian to the Brazilian "(anti-)hero." If we were trying to explain the figure of the "Malandro", that the same author considers to be the vital symbol of Carnival, maybe we could trace its origins to pre-colonial Brazil. Da Matta's "Malandro" embodies the coherence between feelings and actions in the home and in the street. He doesn't wish to work and he doesn't work. He doesn't respect or believe in authority and power nor does he wish to dominate in any way. The "Malandro" is the Indian when he privileges leisure, negates status and creates his own lifestyle with his own values dissociated of the world around him. The

“Malandro” is the person by opposition to the individual as a clog in the capitalistic machine. The “Malandro” is the symbol of Carnival in its three days of equalitarianism:

In this way live all the Indians without any goods, nor produce to work for, nor else honor states or opinions, nor pomp or reasons for it; because all (as I say) are equal, and in all conditions so equal that they live rigorously in accordance to the laws of nature (GÂNDAVO, 2004, p. 103).

On what concerns the cannibalistic ceremony we can continue to associate it to Carnival in its predominance of the feminine. According to Da Matta, Carnival is predominantly feminine in the sense that it constitutes a universe out of the patriarchal cosmogony, that is the juridical, economical, political and religious universes controlled by men. Let us then be reminded of the pivotal role of women in the cannibalistic ceremony:

As we landed, all the women, young and old, came running out the huts, [...] to stare at me. The men went into their huts with their bows and arrows, leaving me to the pleasure of the women who gathered round and went along with me, some in front and some behind, dancing and singing the songs they are wont to sing to their own people when they are about to eat them. They then carried me to a kind of fort [...]. When I entered this enclosure the women fell upon me and beat me with their fists, plucking at my beard and crying out in their speech: *Sehe innamme pepikeae*, which is to say: “With this blow I avenge me of my friend, that one who was slain by your people.” After this they took me into the huts where I had to lie in a hammock while the women surrounded me and beat me and pulled at me on all sides, mocking me and offering to eat me. Meanwhile the men had assembled in a hut by themselves [...] but for half an hour none of the men came near me, and I was left with the women and children (STADEN, 1929, p. 70).

The women initiate the ceremony; they laugh, dance, sing, and symbolically assume the man’s role, the aggressive avenger while men retire to their huts allowing women to take the leading in all realms. The same had happened as Staden first arrived to the site and was forced to start off the Carnavalesque mode: “I was forced to call out to them and say: *A junesche been ermi vramme*, which means: ‘I your food have come’” (STADEN, 1929, p. 69-70). In this manner a ritual of which Staden is an integral part commences, and the equalitarian spirit of Brazilian Carnival is in place. The “food” is as happy to be eaten as the ones who will eat him. As one proceeds reading the next chapter, “Hans Among the Women”, the reader is told that the women lead Staden into a dance in which he stands in the center of a circle of women together with two other women, “Then the women commenced to sing altogether, and I had to keep time with the rattles” (STADEN, 1929, p. 73).

Fernão Cardim (c. 1549-1625), another Portuguese Jesuit, describes the dancing in the most interesting manner:

On the third day they make a dance of men and women, all with harmonicas made out of reed and at the same time all of them hit on the ground first with one foot, then with the other, without discrepancies. Together and in the same compass they blow into straws, and there's no singing or talking. Since there are many and some of the straws are thicker than others, beyond roaring through the forest it makes as if an harmony from hell, but they enjoy it as if it were the softest sound in the world; and these are their parties, apart from others in which they make much laughter and guessing games (1980, p. 97).

Dancing is an integral part of Carnival, a moment in which the body takes precedence over hierarchies installing a feeling of parody, the parody of body pleasures, since it is the counterpart of everyone's equality in death. The body that dances is the same body that will perish for everyone alike. The body that dances is the sensual body that horrified European travelers in Brazil and that it is a constant presence in Carnival and the anthropophagic ritual alike: "[The house] is filled with people, and as soon as they start to drink it is a labyrinth or hell to see them and hear them since the ones that dance and sing bear with utmost passion for how many days and nights the wine lasts" (CARDIM, 1980, p. 98). The sound of the feet on the ground that together with the blowing instruments makes a harmony from hell is on the other hand a percussion sound on the level of Bakhtin's drum. Mikhail Bakhtin writes: "The image of the drum is also characteristic. [...] To beat this drum or *any other similar instrument* meant to perform the sexual act" (italics of the author) (1984, p. 204). It is thus the more clear Cardim's association with hell as the sexual connotations implied in the cannibalistic ceremony become more evident. Also, during Carnival, dancing is accompanied by an orgiastic sense that complements the equalitarian mode: everyone is free to enjoy sex alike¹⁰.

In Brazil the symbolism of the body, of gestures, and of sexuality unites home, street, and the other world. It is this concrete unity which creates the semantic field of Carnival, and because of it these sexual symbols can function with power. The orgy permitted during Brazilian Carnival carries the connotation of democracy and equality (DA MATTA, 1982/83, p. 168).

Staden makes no mention of the fact that he was likely given a woman, as all others were, possibly due to fear of destroying his Christian image. Sinful sex among the Indians is not really present in Staden's description, due to his omission, but it is mentioned in several

¹⁰ It is worthwhile calling the attention of the reader to the fact that during the cannibalistic ritual the prisoner did not enjoy sex with all and every woman alike, on the contrary he was mated with a particular woman. But this is a particular situation, relevant to few – as we mentioned before, Gândavo feels the need to call the attention to the exceptional character of these women who not only lived in a matrimonial like state as some of them experienced the urge to save their offspring of the cannibalistic fate. This is clearly an exception that does not erase the orgiastic look lent by the "civilized" ones. To the point that matters here it is this orgiastic feeling, especially prevalent during the banquet, that translates to contemporary Brazilian Carnival.

other accounts. Priest Manuel da Nóbrega says: “When they capture someone they bring him with great festivity with a rope around his throat and they give him as wife the daughter of the chief or any other that makes him happier” (1931, p. 100). The same Jesuit priest writes further ahead: “They are very attached to sensual things” (NÓBREGA, 1931, p. 101). In fact sensuality permeates not just the cannibalistic ritual but especially the *modus vivendis* of the Indians: “Among them, there are marriages, however there is many doubts to their veracity, not only because they have many women but because they easily leave them” (CARDIM, 1980, p. 88). Cardim’s account corroborates Gândavo’s: “Some of them have three, four women” (2004, p. 101). To the point it is irrelevant that the priests are biased by their own standards, what matters to us is that it was this lustful look that enveloped the understanding of the Indians culture and that allowed for a “clear” association between cannibalism and the pleasure of the flesh. An association that remained true to this day, independently of any anthropological study. We are here referring to a general 16th century catholic understanding that became ingrained in the collective psyche. It is not in vain that in Portuguese slang “vou-te comer” “I’m going to eat you”, does not mean to eat you, but to have sex – it is also not a coincidence that biblically to die is connected to eat (“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Gn 2:16-17))¹¹, bringing to full circle the association between sex, food, cannibalism, and Carnival. Priest Manuel da Nóbrega further makes an interesting association to the point in question: “And in these two things, that is having many wives and killing [and eating] their enemies is all of their honor and it is their happiness and desire” (193, p. 90). And if sex and eating are common features of Carnival and cannibalism, so is happiness. In Roberto da Matta’s words: “Brazil’s Carnival reveals, in this juncture of sentiment, action, intention, and possibility of fulfillment, all the pleasure that people have the right and, at times, the duty to enjoy (DA MATTA, 1982/83, p. 168). To eat and to have sex follow on the same category of primal pleasures and are present both in the cannibalistic ceremony and Carnival:

Tripe, stomach, intestines are the bowels, the belly, the very life of man. But at the same time, they represent the swallowing, devouring belly [...]. The bowels are related to defecation and excrement. Further, the belly does not only eat and swallow, it is also eaten, as tripe. [...] Further, tripe is linked with death, with slaughter, murder, since to disembowel is to kill. Finally, it is linked with birth, for the belly generates [...] this is the center of bodily topography in which the upper and lower stratum penetrate each other (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 162-163).

¹¹ For more information on the subject cf. among others Villas Bôas, Luciana. “The Anatomy of Cannibalism: Religious Vocabulary and Ethnographic Writing in the Sixteenth Century” *Studies in Travel Writing* (Routledge), Vol. 12, Issue 1 (March 2008): 7-27.

Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* divides the carnivalesque into three forms: ritual spectacles, comic verbal compositions, and various genres of billingsgate or abusive language, in the present case it is mostly the first form that interests us even though the question of laughter will also be raised. Although Bakhtin separates the forms of the carnivalesque, they are often conjoined within the carnival. By carnivalesque he means a mode that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humor and chaos achieved mostly by means of the grotesque body. This grotesque body presents a dual nature, negative in that it implies degradation, decay and death; and positive in which through the mocking of the later it will be possible to achieve renewal and regeneration of an entire social system. For Bakhtin, Carnival stands for a theory of resistance and freedom from all domination and during which it is created a different form of human societal behavior that “lies beyond existing social forms” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 280). Exactly what Da Matta says concerning Brazilian Carnival. Exactly what cannibalism entailed. During the cannibalistic ritual it is quite obvious how the 16th century spectator perceives freedom beyond the expected, European hierarchies; and it is this perceived freedom that in its turn will allow for a reading of regeneration. Let us observe the different forms of hierarchical freedom present in the cannibalistic ritual: first the prisoner complies with the captors social rules and becomes them, second, it is the women who take the lead reversing the patriarchal order¹², and third the use of abusive language and laughter in face of the grotesque body about to be eaten: “I had to lie in a hammock while the women surrounded me and beat me and pulled at me on all sides, mocking me and offering to eat me” (STADEN, 1929, p. 70). According to Bakhtin, laughter itself is connected with the idea of regeneration: the prisoner who laughs surpasses fear, and the women who laugh break the norms. When both prisoner and captor laugh together it expresses the same consciousness of being part of the same body that lives and dies. This communal laughter “is one of the essential differences of the people's festive laughter from the pure satire of modern times. The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 12). Something that clearly does not happen in the cannibalistic ceremony as we just saw, or Carnival: “Profanities and oaths were not initially related to laughter, but they were excluded from the sphere of official speech because they broke its norms [...]. Here in the carnival atmosphere they acquired the nature of laughter and became ambivalent” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 17). And continuing our series of associations we must again stress that another form of

¹² “The savages have the custom for a man to give away a wife when he is tired of her, and they make presents also of their daughters and sisters” (STADEN, 1929, p. 146).

regeneration is also present in the new identity/mask assumed by the executioner. To add to the feeling of regeneration, the executioner will go through a period of fastening and seclusion after having been tattooed and scarred immediately after the killing of the prisoner¹³.

The cannibalistic banquet, the excess of sensuality, the hellish music and dancing, all of it combines to explain the sense of the underworld that permeates most of the Jesuits accounts. Once again, also “hell” is a source of analogy with Carnival: “one of the indispensable accessories of carnival was the set called hell”. This “hell” was solemnly burned at the peak of the festivities” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 91).

In conclusion, theoretically speaking it is possible to trace a link between the 16th century readings of the cannibalistic ceremony and Brazilian Carnival thus presenting a dialogism between the two cultures, that of the natives and the Portuguese – “a fundamental aspect of the carnival – a plurality of ‘fully valid consciousnesses’” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 9). The ability to read Staden’s account and all others under this light allows for the understanding of a vision in which Cannibalism and Carnival come together to the centre of Brazilianness. This reading retrieves the anthropophagic ceremony – arguably one of the most distinct features of Brazil’s identity – *per se*, apart from all the metaphorical interpretations it gained over time. On the other hand, its intrinsic connection with the Carnival that Da Matta established as an essential trait of Brazilian identity, strengthens Da Matta’s ideology as it establishes a link with the metamorphosis of the Terra de Sta Cruz into Brazil, and allows for the full integration of its native heritage. The grotesque of cannibalism as it was perceived is thus transformed in a positive light since as Bakhtin points out the bodily grotesque is “an all-people’s character” (1984, p. 19), the people in a continuous process of renewing:

Thus the outsidenedness of groups marginalised by a dominant ideology within non-carnival time not only gain a voice during carnival time, but they also say something about the ideology that seeks to silence them. Thus two voices come together in the free and frank communication that carnival permits and, although “each retains its own unity and open totality they are mutually enriched” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 56).

RESUMO: O livro *Hans Staden, The True History of His Captivity*, de Hans Staden, é responsável pelo desenvolvimento e crescimento de antropofagia no Brasil para este momento. Neste artigo, exploraremos suas relações históricas e sociais com o carnaval moderno no Brasil, conferindo especial atenção às teorias de Mikhail Bakhtin e Roberto da Matta.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Antropofagia. Carnaval. Hans Staden.

¹³ For a complete description cf. GÂNDAVO (2004, p. 114). Staden also describes the process but in minor detail, cf. STADEN (1924, p. 162).

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