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Cannibalist Manifesto

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Source: *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 19, No. 38 (Jul. - Dec., 1991), pp. 38-47

Published by: [Latin American Literary Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20119601>

Accessed: 18-03-2016 19:12 UTC

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"CANNIBALIST MANIFESTO"<sup>1</sup>

BY

OSWALD DE ANDRADE

TRANSLATED BY LESLIE BARY

Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically.

\* \* \*

The world's single law. Disguised expression of all individualism, of all collectivism. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties.

\* \* \*

Tupi or not tupi, that is the question.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

Down with every catechism. And down with the Gracchi's mother.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

I am only concerned with what is not mine. Law of Man. Law of the cannibal.

\* \* \*

We're tired of all the suspicious Catholic husbands who've been given starring roles. Freud put an end to the mystery of Woman and to other horrors of printed psychology.

\* \* \*

What clashed with the truth was clothing, that raincoat placed between the inner and outer worlds. The reaction against the dressed man. American movies will inform us.

\* \* \*

Children of the sun, mother of the living. Discovered and loved ferociously with all the hypocrisy of *saudade*,<sup>4</sup> by the immigrants, by slaves and by the *touristes*. In the land of the Great Snake.<sup>5</sup>

\* \* \*

It was because we never had grammars, nor collections of old plants. And we never knew what urban, suburban, frontier and continental were. Lazy in the *mapamundi* of Brazil.<sup>6</sup>

A participatory consciousness, a religious rhythmic.<sup>7</sup>

\* \* \*

Down with all the importers of canned consciousness. The palpable existence of life. And the pre-logical mentality for Mr. Lévy-Bruhl to study.<sup>8</sup>

\* \* \*

We want the Carib Revolution. Greater than the French Revolution. The unification of all productive revolts for the progress of humanity. Without us, Europe wouldn't even have its meager declaration of the rights of man.<sup>9</sup>

The Golden Age heralded by America. The Golden Age. And all the *girls*.

\* \* \*

Heritage. Contact with the Carib side of Brazil. *Où Villegaignon print terre*.<sup>10</sup> Montaigne. Natural man. Rousseau. From the French Revolution to Romanticism, to the Bolshevik Revolution, to the Surrealist Revolution and Keyserling's technicized barbarian.<sup>11</sup> We push onward.

\* \* \*

We were never catechized. We live by a somnambulistic law. We made Christ to be born in Bahia. Or in Belém do Pará.<sup>12</sup>

\* \* \*

But we never permitted the birth of logic among us.

\* \* \*

Down with Father Vieira.<sup>13</sup> Author of our first loan, to make a commission. The illiterate king had told him: put that on paper, but without a lot of lip. The loan was made. Brazilian sugar was signed away. Vieira left the money in Portugal and brought us the lip.

\* \* \*

The spirit refuses to conceive a spirit without a body. Anthropomorphism. Need for the cannibalistic vaccine. To maintain our equilibrium, against meridian religions.<sup>14</sup> And against outside inquisitions.

\* \* \*

We can attend only to the orecular world.

\* \* \*

We already had justice, the codification of vengeance. Science, the codification of Magic. Cannibalism. The permanent transformation of the Tabu into a totem.<sup>15</sup>

\* \* \*

Down with the reversible world, and against objectified ideas. Cadaverized. The stop of thought that is dynamic. The individual as victim of the system. Source of classical injustices. Of romantic injustices. And the forgetting of inner conquests.

\* \* \*

Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes.<sup>16</sup>

\* \* \*

The Carib instinct.

\* \* \*

Death and life of all hypotheses. From the equation "Self, part of the Cosmos" to the axiom "Cosmos, part of the Self." Subsistence. Experience. Cannibalism.

\* \* \*

Down with the vegetable elites. In communication with the soil.

\* \* \*

We were never catechized. What we really made was Carnival. The Indian dressed as senator of the Empire. Making believe he's Pitt.<sup>17</sup> Or performing in Alencar's operas,<sup>18</sup> full of worthy Portuguese sentiments.

\* \* \*

We already had Communism. We already had Surrealist language. The Golden Age.

\* \* \*

Catiti Catiti  
Imara Notiá  
Notiá Imara  
Ipejú.<sup>19</sup>

\* \* \*

Magic and life. We had the description and allocation of tangible goods, moral goods, and royal goods.<sup>20</sup> And we knew how to transpose mystery and death with the help of a few grammatical forms.

\* \* \*

I asked a man what the Law was. He answered that it was the guarantee of the exercise of possibility. That man was named Galli Mathias.<sup>21</sup> I ate him.

\* \* \*

Only where there is mystery is there no determinism. But what does that have to do with us?

\* \* \*

Down with the histories of Man that begin at Cape Finisterre. The undated world. Unrubrified. Without Napoleon. Without Caesar.

\* \* \*

The determination of progress by catalogues and television sets. Only machinery. And blood transfusers.

\* \* \*

Down with the antagonistic sublimations. Brought here in caravels.

\* \* \*

Down with the truth of missionary peoples, defined by the sagacity of a cannibal, the Viscount of Cairu:<sup>22</sup>—It's a lie told again and again.

\* \* \*

But those who came here weren't crusaders. They were fugitives from a civilization we are eating, because we are strong and vindictive like the Jabuti.<sup>23</sup>

\* \* \*

If God is the consciousness of the Uncreated Universe, Guaraci is the mother of the living.<sup>24</sup> Jaci is the mother of plants.<sup>25</sup>

\* \* \*

We never had speculation. But we had divination. We had Politics, which is the science of distribution. And a social system in harmony with the planet.

\* \* \*

The migrations. The flight from tedious states. Against urban scleroses. Against the Conservatories and speculative tedium.

\* \* \*

From William James and Voronoff.<sup>26</sup> The transfiguration of the Taboo into a totem. Cannibalism.

\* \* \*

The paterfamilias and the creation of the Morality of the Stork: Real ignorance of things + lack of imagination + sense of authority in the face of curious offspring.

\* \* \*

One must depart from a profound atheism in order to arrive at the idea of God. But the Carib didn't need to. Because he had Guaraci.

\* \* \*

The created object reacts like the Fallen Angels. Next, Moses day-dreams. What do we have to do with that?

\* \* \*

Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness.

\* \* \*

Down with the torch-bearing Indian. The Indian son of Mary, the stepson of Catherine of Medici and the godson of Dom Antonio de Mariz.<sup>27</sup>

\* \* \*

Joy is the proof of nines.

\* \* \*

In the matriarchy of Pindorama.<sup>28</sup>

\* \* \*

Down with Memory as a source of custom. The renewal of personal experience.

\* \* \*

We are concretists. Ideas take charge, react, and burn people in public squares. Let's get rid of ideas and other paralyses. By means of routes. Believe in signs; believe in sextants and in stars.

\* \* \*

Down with Goethe, the Gracchi's mother, and the court of Dom João VI.<sup>29</sup>

\* \* \*

Joy is the proof by nines.

\* \* \*

The struggle between what we might call the Uncreated and the Creation—illustrated by the permanent contradiction between Man and his Taboo. Everyday love and the capitalist way of life. Cannibalism. Absorption of the sacred enemy. To transform him into a totem. The human adventure. The earthly goal. Even so, only the pure elites managed to realize carnal cannibalism, which carries within itself the highest meaning of life and avoids all the ills identified by Freud—catechist ills. What result is not a sublimation of the sexual instinct. It is the thermometrical scale of the cannibal instinct. Carnal at first, this instinct becomes elective, and creates friendship. When it is affective, it creates love. When it is speculative, it creates science. It takes detours and moves around. At times it is degraded. Low cannibalism, agglomerated with the sins of catechism—envy, usury, calumny, murder. We are acting against this plague of a supposedly cultured and Christianized peoples. Cannibals.

\* \* \*

Down with Anchieta singing of the eleven thousand virgins of Heaven,<sup>30</sup> in the land of Iracema<sup>31</sup>—the patriarch João Ramalho, founder of São Paulo.<sup>32</sup>

\* \* \*

Our independence has not yet been proclaimed. An expression typical of Dom João VI: "My son, put this crown on your head, before some adventurer puts it on his!"<sup>33</sup> We expelled the dynasty. We must still expel the Bragantine spirit,<sup>34</sup> the decrees and the snuff-box of Maria da Fonte.<sup>35</sup>

\* \* \*

Down with the dressed and oppressive social reality registered by Freud—reality without complexes, without madness, without prostitutions and without penitentiaries, in the matriarchy of Pindorama.

OSWALD DE ANDRADE  
In Piratininga, in the 374th  
Year of the Swallowing of  
Bishop Sardinha.<sup>36</sup>

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Translation of Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago," *Revista de Antropofagia* 1:1 (São Paulo, May 1928). I want to thank Margaret Abel-Quintero, Wilton Azevedo, Aloísio Gomes Barbosa, José Niraldo de Farias, Dalila Machado, Sonia Ramos, and Lisa Fedorka-Carhuaslla at *Latin American Literary Review*, who read and commented on earlier versions of this translation.

<sup>2</sup> In English in original. *Tupi* is the popular, generic name for the Native Americans of Brazil and also for their language, *nheengatu*.

<sup>3</sup> A student of Greek and Latin literature, Cornelia is said to have been virtuous, austere, and extremely devoted to her sons. In the *Manifesto* she is the bad mother who (in contrast to the mother-goddesses Jaci and Guaraci) brings her children up as subjects of a "civilized" culture.

<sup>4</sup> *Saudade* or yearning, homesickness, nostalgia, is a sentiment traditionally associated with the Portuguese national character.

<sup>5</sup> In his annotated French translation of the *Manifesto*, Benedito Nunes points out that the sun is a maternal diety here. As Nunes points out as well, The "Great Snake" (*Cobra Grande*) is a water spirit in Amazonian mythology, and is the theme of Raul Bopp's poem *Cobra Norato* (1928). See Oswald de Andrade, "Le manifeste anthropophage," trans. Nunes, *Surréalisme péri-phérique*, ed. Luis de Moura Sobral (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 1984) 180-192, esp. 181, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Nunes writes, "Oswald establishes an analogy between the absence of grammatical discipline and the absence of a split between Nature and Culture [in Brazil]. [As they were] so close to nature, [Brazilians] did not need to gather herbs (collections of old plants) as Rousseau and Goethe did" ("Le manifeste anthropophage" 182, n. 4). "Old plants" (*velhos vegetais*) also seems to allude to the entrenched, inactive, vegetative attitude of the Brazilian literary and cultural establishment Oswald wants to displace.

<sup>7</sup> References to the work of Lévy-Bruhl on the structure of "primitive" thought. See below, n. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, French philosopher and ethnologist (1857-1939). Among his publications are *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910), *La mentalité primitive* (1927), and *La mythologie primitive* (1935). The "primitive" mentality, according to Lévy-Bruhl, is not a deformation of the "civilized" one, but rather a completely different structure of thought. The primitive mind is mystical, collective and pre-logical.

<sup>9</sup> Neil Larsen writes, "The *Manifesto* itself plays ironically on the 'theory' that the Enlightenment discourse of natural right, leading from Locke through Rousseau and ultimately to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the Bourgeois Revolution as such, has its origins in Montaigne's "noble savage," based on the first reports from Brazil of 'cannibalism' among members of the Tupinamba tribal aggregate. *Modernism and Hegemony* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) 80.

<sup>10</sup>In Montaigne's essay "Des cannibales," "où Villegaignon print terre" is Antarctic France (the French mission in Brazil). Montaigne argues in this essay that ritual cannibalism is far less barbaric than many "civilized" European customs.

<sup>11</sup>Count Herman Keyserling, German philosopher, world traveller and Orientalist, (1880-1946). His works propose the (Spenglerian) ideas that the Western world must be compenetrated with Eastern philosophy and that Latin America will rise as a world power while Europe declines. Nunes informs us that Keyserling, whose "visit to São Paulo in 1929 was welcomed by the *Revista de antropofagia*, set forth the idea of *technical barbarism* in his book *Die neuentstehende Welt*" ("Anthropophagisme et surréalisme," *Surréalisme périphérique*, ed. Luis de Moura Sobral, Montréal: Université de Montréal, (1984), 159-79, esp. 173, n. 15). Oswald inverts Keyserling's idea that a soulless "technical barbarism" is the sign of the modern world. In Oswald's utopia, primitive man enjoys the fruits of modernization.

<sup>12</sup>The Brazilian city of Belém, or Bethlehem (state of Pará). Christ is thus not *brought* to the New World in Oswald's text, but born in His own Bethlehem.

<sup>13</sup>Antonio Vieira (1608-97), Portuguese Jesuit instrumental in the colonization of Brazil. He came to be known as "the Judas of Brazil." In the war between Portugal and Holland over Pernambuco, Vieira negotiated a peace treaty by which Pernambuco was given to Holland so that Portugal would not have to pay Holland to end the war (with money made in Brazil). A noted orator and writer, Vieira is associated with formal, elegant rhetoric—a language directly opposed to the poetic idiom Oswald is forging for Brazil. Nunes writes that Vieira "is for Oswald the strongest of all emblems of Brazilian intellectual culture....Oswald refers to Vieira's 1649 proposition to organize a company to exploit the sugar produced in the state of Maranhão" ("Le manifeste anthropophage" 183, n. 11).

<sup>14</sup>According to Nunes, "meridian" religions are religions of salvation. See "Antropofagia ao Alcance de Todos," in Oswald de Andrade, *Do Pau-Brasil à Antropofagia e às Utopias* (1972); Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, (1978) xxxi. *Meridian* as a dividing line seems, in the context of the *Manifesto*, to connote the divisions body/soul, native/foreign, and so on, which Oswald is attempting to dismantle.

<sup>15</sup>In *Totem and Taboo* (1913, tr. 1918), Freud argues that the shift from "totemistic" to "taboo" systems of morality and religion consolidated paternal authority as the cornerstone of culture. Subjects of the taboo system are

"civilized" because they have internalized the paternal rule. Oswald's advocacy of totemistic cannibalism, then, constitutes a rejection of patriarchy and the culture of the (Portuguese) "fathers." See also Nunes' more detailed explanation in "Anthropophagisme et surréalisme," 169-70.

<sup>16</sup>The original *roteiros* (from *rotar*, to navigate) can also signify ships' logbooks or pilots' directions. Oswald can thus be construed here as referring to a rediscovery of America.

<sup>17</sup>William Pitt, (1759-1806), British statesman influential in the formation of colonial policy for India.

<sup>18</sup>José de Alencar, Brazilian writer and conservative politician, (1829-77). His Indianist novel *O Guarani* (1857) was turned into an opera, with music by Carlos Gomes (1836-96), which opened in the Teatro Scala, Milan, 2 December 1870. Nunes points out that "Peri, the hero of *O Guarani*, [has] civilized manners, imitating the great Portuguese lords" ("Le manifeste anthropophage" 186, n. 18).

<sup>19</sup>In a footnote, Oswald provides a Portuguese translation of this Tupi text, running "New moon, oh new moon, blow memories of me into [the man I want]." The note gives the source of this text as *O Selvagem*, an anthropological work by Couto Magalhães, the politician and anthropologist (1836-98). Nunes quotes Couto de Magalhães' complete translation of the Tupi text: "Lua Nova, ó lua Nova! assoprai em...lembranças de mim; eisme aqui, estou em vossa presença; fazei com que eu tão somente ocupe seu coração." [New moon, oh new moon! Blow memories of me into...; I stand here before you; let me and no other fill his heart. "Le manifeste anthropophage" 186, n. 19].

<sup>20</sup>The original here reads "dos bens físicos, dos bens morais, dos bens dignários." Oswald is playing with legal terms for various kinds of property, so as to ridicule "civilized" European institutions and show that they are superfluous to Brazilian culture. *Bens físicos* are probably the land and natural resources of Brazil, and *bens morais* the native culture. *Bens dignários*, property granted by the king, suggests both the aspects of Brazilian culture held in common with Portugal and also property "granted" by the Portuguese king that was in fact originally Brazilian.

<sup>21</sup>"Galli Mathias" is a pun on *galimatias*, or nonsense.

<sup>22</sup>José de Silva Lisboa, Viscount of Cairu (1756-1835), Brazilian politician. After Dom João VI established his court in Rio de Janeiro (1808) in the wake of Napoleon's invasion of Portugal, the Viscount of Cairu convinced him to open Brazilian ports to "all nations friendly to Portugal."

<sup>23</sup>Tortoise of northern Brazil; in the popular culture of the Indians, he is a trickster figure. The jabuti is astute, active, comical, and combative.

<sup>24</sup>Tupi sun goddess, mother of all men.

<sup>25</sup>Tupi moon goddess, creator of plants.

<sup>26</sup>William James, American philosopher (1842-1910), is the author of *Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), and *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909). Serge Voronoff, Russian-born biologist (1866-1951), is the author of *Étude sur la vieillesse et la rajeunissement par la greffe* (1926) and *La conquête de la vie* (1928), a method of rejuvenation by the grafting of genital glands. James' demystifying interpretation of religion can be contrasted to the *catachesis* Oswald rejects, and Voronoff's interest in grafting, as well as the return to youth and defiance of death, has affinities with Oswald's project. Nunes writes that "one could consider [Voronoff] to represent a biological pragmatism, towards which the

*Anthropophagy Manifesto* leans" ("Le manifeste anthropophage" 188-89, n. 26).

<sup>27</sup>Nunes writes that this is a "[s]uperimposition of three images: that of the sculpted Indians of the chandeliers of certain Baroque churches, that of the Indian Paraguassu, who went to France in the 16th century, accompanied by her husband, the Portuguese Diogo Alvares Correia, and [that of] D[om] Antonio de Mariz, the noble rural lord, father of Ceci, with whom Peri falls in love, in *O Guarani*. Paraguassu was baptized as Saint-Malo. A false version [of the story], spread through schoolbooks, made Catherine of Medici the godmother of this native" ("Le manifeste anthropophage" 189-90, n. 28).

<sup>28</sup>*Pindorama* is the name of Brazil in the Tupi language. It may mean "country or region of palm trees."

<sup>29</sup>Dom João VI, King of Portugal (reigned 1816-26). As Prince Regent, he fled the Napoleonic invasion of Portugal (1807) and installed the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro (1808-21). He made Brazil a kingdom (1815), equal in status to Portugal, and was Brazil's last colonial monarch before independence (1822).

<sup>30</sup>Father Anchieta, (1534-97), Jesuit missionary among Indians; known as "The Apostle of Brazil" and generally considered to be the first Brazilian writer. He helped found São Paulo in 1554, after founding a Jesuit school at Piratininga (São Vicente). Anchieta is the author of a long Latin poem to the Virgin Mary, which he composed and committed to memory while a captive of the Indians, and a dramatic poem in Portuguese about the arrival of a relic of the Eleven Thousand Virgins (legendary companions of St. Ursula, martyred at Cologne in the early 4th century, after whom the Virgin Islands are named) in Brazil. Anchieta thus embodies the catechesis, importation of culture, and inscription of Brazil as colony that Oswald rejects.

<sup>31</sup>Indian heroine in Alencar's novel of the same name (1865).

<sup>32</sup>João Ramalho was one of the first Portuguese colonizers of Brazil. Shipwrecked off the coast near São Paulo in 1512, he made friends with the Tamoia Indians, married the daughter of a chief, had many children by her and other Tamoias, and created a small empire. He founded what is now Santo André and also the village of Piratininga. He was opposed to the Jesuits' founding of São Paulo, and organized the Indians' resistance against the missionaries.

<sup>33</sup>Dom João VI's son, Dom Pedro I, became Emperor of Brazil when Independence was declared in 1822. According to tradition Dom João, already sensing that Brazil would separate itself from Portugal, had given Dom Pedro the directions Oswald quotes here before returning to Lisbon in 1821.

<sup>34</sup>The Portuguese kings of the period were of the Bragança dynasty.

<sup>35</sup>The legendary figure Maria da Fonte became the symbol of a popular rebellion in the Minho (1846) against higher taxation to finance the improvement of roads and reforms in public health. The uprising strengthened conservative forces in Portugal, associated with absolutism and colonialism. In the context of the *MA*, Maria da Fonte is an emblem of allegiance to Portuguese tradition and a patriarchal woman, parallel to the Gracchi's mother and opposed to Jaci and Guaraci.

<sup>36</sup>Sardinha was Bishop of Bahia from 1552 to 1556, when he was killed and apparently eaten by the Caltis Indians, into whose hands he fell when the ship that was taking him back to Lisbon sank in the São Francisco River. Sardinha had favored punishing Portuguese settlers who, enraged at the Jesuits' opposition to the enslavement of Indians, attacked the school at Piratininga in 1554.