

## THE MAKING OF TRAVEL LITERATURE IN BRAZIL: ILLUSTRATIONS OF MONSTERS AND MONSTROSITIES

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**ABSTRACT:** This article engages with a series of discussions surrounding the making of the colonial experience in the New World through the lenses of Hans Staden and Jean de Léry. The vast inclusion of illustrations in their diaries differs in how sociocultural traits, religious practices, as well as the physical representation of Tupinambás were constructed. Therefore, this communication will be divided into two distinct parts. The first one will deal with Hans Staden's *Duas Viagens ao Brasil* and the depiction of his trips as an officer for both Spanish and Portuguese empires. From his commentaries and illustrations about women, and cannibal tribes in Northeastern Brazil, I want to identify what motivates a simplistic, while rich in symbols, illustration of Brazil in the logic of a German traveler. The second part will approach Jean de Léry's *Viagem à Terra do Brasil* within the French written framework, and his perspective of life in colonial Brazilian lands. Here, the artistic renaissance characteristics are undoubtedly visible in the muscular bodies, and in the nature Léry urges to portray. At this point, some questions are raised: What makes Staden's and Léry's diaries so distinctive if they were contemporaries? Does the political relationship among Portuguese, French, and Tupinambás speak through the drawings? In other words, how can both narratives' pictures be so aesthetically different if they were edited and published in Europe around the same time? These are some of the questions that motivate the crafting of this article.

**KEYWORDS:** cannibalism; monsters; monstrosities; travel diaries; Brazil.

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo aborda una serie de discusiones en torno a la creación de la experiencia colonial en el Nuevo Mundo a través de las lentes de Hans Staden y Jean de Léry. La amplia inclusión de ilustraciones en sus diarios difiere en la forma en que se construyeron los rasgos socioculturales, las prácticas religiosas y la representación física de los Tupinambás. Por lo tanto, esta comunicación se dividirá en dos partes distintas. La primera tratará con *Duas Viagens ao Brasil* de Hans Staden y la descripción de sus viajes como un oficial de los imperios español y portugués. De sus comentarios e ilustraciones sobre mujeres y tribus caníbales en el noreste de Brasil, quiero identificar qué motiva a una simplista, aunque rica en símbolos, ilustración de Brasil en la lógica de un viajero alemán. La segunda parte abordará *Viagem à Terra do Brasil* de Jean de Léry en el marco escrito francés, y su perspectiva de la vida en las tierras coloniales de Brasil. Aquí, las características artísticas del renacimiento son, sin duda, visibles en los cuerpos musculosos, y en la naturaleza que Léry insta a retratar. En este punto, surgen algunas preguntas: ¿Qué hace que los diarios de Staden y Léry sean tan distintivos si fueran contemporáneos? ¿La relación política entre portugueses, franceses y tupinambás habla a través de los dibujos? En otras palabras, ¿cómo pueden las imágenes de ambas narrativas ser tan estéticamente diferentes si se editaran y publicaran en Europa casi al mismo tiempo? Estas son algunas de las preguntas que motivan la elaboración de este artículo.

**PALABRAS-CLAVE:** canibalismo; monstruos; monstruosidades; diarios de viaje; Brasil.

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**RESUMO:** Este artigo envolve uma série de discussões em torno da realização da experiência colonial no Novo Mundo através das lentes de Hans Staden e Jean de Léry. A vasta inclusão de ilustrações em seus diários difere na forma como traços socioculturais, práticas religiosas, bem como a representação física dos Tupinambás foram construídos. Portanto, esta comunicação será dividida em duas partes distintas. O primeiro lidará com *Duas Viagens ao Brasil*, de Hans Staden, e a representação de suas viagens como oficial dos impérios espanhol e português. A partir de seus comentários e ilustrações sobre mulheres e tribos canibais no Nordeste do Brasil, quero identificar o que motiva uma simplista, enquanto rica em símbolos, ilustração do Brasil sob a lógica de um viajante alemão. A segunda parte abordará *Viagem à Terra do Brasil*, de Jean de Léry, dentro da estrutura escrita francesa e sua perspectiva de vida em terras coloniais brasileiras. Aqui, as características do renascimento artístico são, sem dúvida, visíveis nos corpos musculosos e na natureza que Léry urge retratar. Neste ponto, algumas questões são levantadas: O que torna os diários de Staden e Léry tão distintos se eles foram contemporâneos? A relação política entre portugueses, franceses e tupinambás fala através dos desenhos? Em outras palavras, como as imagens de ambas narrativas podem ser tão esteticamente diferentes se foram editadas e publicadas na Europa na mesma época? Estas são algumas das questões que motivam a elaboração deste artigo.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** canibalismo; monstros; monstruosidades; diários de viagem; Brasil.

The discovery of new lands in the Americas and the increasing amount of traveling ships in the Atlantic reconfigured the notions of otherness amongst humans. First and foremost, these new territories offered, at first sight, the view of nature's abundance, and the probable connection to achieving heaven. Second because this paradisiac space was not as peaceful as imagined: it was savage, and replete of cannibals. Travelers from different parts of Europe were, in great account, responsible for documenting the encounters between whites and Amerindians. The imagery and exoticism about the native indigenous people in the New World had much to do with the religious conflicts lived by European societies, and the urge for commercial expansionism, and extractivism. In the case of Brazil, innumerable diaries of travelers helped shaping the origins of what we consider the Brazilian nation nowadays. Jean de Léry and Hans Staden are crucial to understand such sociological process.

Historically known to be the birth certificate of Brazil, the *Carta de Achamento do Brasil* by Pero Vaz de Caminha depicts a very distinct image of the indigenous people from the ones crafted after 1500. The diverse encounters between travelers and Brazilian natives were essential for the settlement of the new Portuguese colony in the New World. However, this research points out divergences between the written descriptions of the native people and the graphic works added to them throughout history. The inclusion of illustrations in two major works of Jean de Léry, and Hans Staden: *Viagem à Terra do Brasil*, and *Duas Viagens ao Brasil*, respectively, suggest violent, polygamous, and cannibal traits among the Tupinambá's tribes alongside the Brazilian coast. The goal of this study is to analyze how

such diaries written by non-Portuguese travelers focus on the Tupinambá tribes as a way to degrade humanity, and ethnic, cultural identity in the New World. Such comparative analysis foments discussions about the contrasting beauty of nature and the monsters/monstrosities found in the ultramarine lands of Portugal's empire.

The several disparities in the portrayal of native cannibal tribes in coastal Brazil during the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the diaries of Hans Staden and Jean de Léry prove to be a displacement of Europe's own sociocultural, and religious monstrosities. Most of what was documented about the new discovered territories of Spain and Portugal in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries derived from travelers who joined expansionist expeditions. Some of them worked for the Portuguese, or Spanish crowns and were citizens of those nations. On the other hand, adventurers, and missionaries of all sorts were not excluded from taking part in the writings of the transatlantic experience. Hans Staden, Jean de Léry, and André Thévet are some of the non-Portuguese writers who, interestingly, became iconic names in the history of Brazil.

Massive critique has been done with regards to the diaries of travel of both authors. In the case of Staden, Eve M. Duffy and Alida C. Metcalf (2012) analyze, in detail, most of the illustrations in his book and propose distinct similarities between witchcraft in Germany and the role of women as shamans in the Tupinambá tribe. They also point out the constant presence of Christian symbolism among the drawings (crosses, prayers, etc.), as well as the discrepancy of styles, which would suggest a collaborative relation between Staden and another sketcher while crafting the drawings. A lot of the criticism related to Léry's work has to do with the religious struggles between Protestants and Catholics in Europe. Michel de Montaigne (1603) acknowledges the displacement of Europe's own monstrosities (slavery, envy, treason, hatred) while recognizing the intricate justifications of the cannibal rituals in comparison to a dubious more civilized Eurocentric discourse.

Although such disparities amongst the illustrations in both travel diaries, it is possible to identify preliminary common traces with regards to the behavior of the locals, and their relation to monsters and monstrosities – or monstrous acts of violence, and cannibalism.

The aforesaid disparities will be analyzed according to how the natives' bodies and spaces are depicted. The perspectives of the illustrations (from which angle they are being seen), the muscular physique (mostly in Léry's drawings), the diabolic and profane suggestions added to both books are some examples of such divergences. All of them will help us contrast the German and French sociopolitical perspectives, as well as the impact they might provoke in the imagination of the new Portuguese/French territories, and the participation of the indigenous people in the making of the Brazilian nation.

## 1. THE GERMAN PERSPECTIVE: HANS STADEN IN BRAZIL

In *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (1986), Michel de Certeau dedicates chapter five to “Montaigne’s ‘Of Cannibals’: The Savage ‘I.’” This text is important to my discussion for two reasons: 1) because it revalidates Montaigne’s critique on the portrayal of cannibals in Brazil, and 2) because it discusses the role of the travel diaries’ configuration.

Certeau introduces the three questions proposed by Montaigne right in the beginning of his essay: “Who is the barbarian?” “What is a savage?” and “What is the place of the other?” All these questions are answered, according to Certeau, due to the natural configuration of a travel narrative. Such text presupposes three steps that are the search for the other, this strange to the writer’s culture, the description of the savage (that is witnessed), and then the return to the traveler’s home.

The fundamental basis for the travel diary to gain authority remains in the fact that the departure needs the new lands, and vice-versa. The question (what Europe wants to know) cannot exist without the answer (what the savages, and the lands of Brazil have to offer). In the middle, rest the diaries of travelers as Staden and Léry. With the observations, and conclusions written down – or even illustrated – the text is the space of the other. It determines, or deconfigures the cultural boundaries, establishing its own space by “exercising” the space of the other. Certeau also adds that the construction of a discourse about the other, authorized by the other, is a heterological tradition.

Such tradition is better exemplified by the third step of the travel narratives: the return. It is then and where that the savage returns with the text – sometimes even the real subject, as Léry mentions the enslaved locals sent to France. The return, subsequently, brings the words, the opinions, and the chants of the other. The narrative starts to be what is said/written about the other, and almost the other (CERTEAU, 1986, p. 73). Furthermore, the diaries become a one-sided reality. The outsider attempts to apprehend a complex universe that is limited to his knowledge. The illustrations enter here as part of this attempt to decipher the other.

The constant usage of the word “savage” is perceived throughout Staden’s narrative. What is interesting, nonetheless, is that the descriptive account he gives about the adventures in Brazilian lands constantly offers a divergent idea of the indigenous people he addresses as

such. This is noted in the fourth chapter<sup>44</sup>: “But the savages had placed great trees across the narrow stream, and crowded both shores to prevent us from traveling” (STADEN, 2008, p. 27). Here, the simple fact of blocking the access to the Portuguese village already demonstrates some of the indigenous’ expertise in combating. It is in *The Art of War* where Sun Tzu mentions the famous quotation “the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” Even though historians debate about the book being crafted 512 BC, or during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, what I want to argue here is that the so-called *savages* demonstrated more advanced war techniques than their colonizers.

As a matter of fact, in the third chapter, Staden communicates that the battle only happened due to the Portuguese: “It so happened that the savages, who inhabit this place, had become rebellious against the Portuguese, which they had not done before. This happened because of the Portuguese” (STADEN, 2008, p. 26). Staden never mentions the reason why it is the Portuguese’s fault, but his narrative, especially in chapter four, is self-destructive for two important reasons. First, because it describes the native people more prepared for war. Second, the constant portrayal of Tupinambás as cannibals throughout the book never acknowledges the spiritual, transcending experience of anthropophagy. Chapter four gives us a very important piece of information with respect to cannibalism in Brazil.

Related to the first case, let us take a look into what Staden writes about the closure of the battle in Igarauçu:

If the savages had not shouted, they (*companions*) would have heard us. We brought the provisions to the settlement, and when the savages saw that there was nothing they could do about it, they sought peace and withdrew. The siege lasted almost for a month. Several of the savages were dead, but we Christians had lost no one. When we saw that the savages had departed in peace, we returned to our main ship at Marin and took in fresh water, manioc flour for provisions. The commander of the settlement of Marin thanked us (STADEN, 2008, p. 28).

The duration of such battle was definitely related to the weakening of the Portuguese power by the Tupinambás. Not only the instance with the trees, but also other skills made the indigenous more talented than the Portuguese: the construction of forts, dug pits, the use of fired arrows, and shouts as a way of blocking the screams for help. The illustration that follows the description of the battle is in attachment 1.

attachment 1

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<sup>44</sup> In the second half of Staden, Hans. *Hans Staden’s True Story: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*. Ed. Neil L. Whitehead and Michael Harbsmeier. Duke UP: Durham, 2008.

The illustration itself proves to be focusing on the vast amount of Tupinambás, showing the Portuguese settlement surrounded by the natives. However, it depicts the ritual of cannibalism, which is not narrated by Staden in the text. On the left indigenous fort, we can see the fire, the smoke, and what seem to be pieces of a human body (which follows the exact pattern of the cannibal arrangement Staden will analyze and portray in the following chapters). What urges to be answered is that if there is someone being roasted, who is it? In this specific chapter, Hans Staden makes it very clear that no Christian was killed, and also that the battle only happened between those two groups I have mentioned so far. The illustration of this particular detail does not correspond to the written text.

Furthermore, in any moment Staden makes a connection between the importance of fighting and the spiritual powers of the warriors for the cannibal rituals to take place. So by affirming that “there was nothing they could do about it, they sought peace and withdrew” is equally saying that the Tupinambás were the ones who actually won the war for not seeing value in the enemy’s qualities. Given all the indigenous’ enterprises mentioned in the diary, and also the pivotal fact that the Portuguese were outnumbered by the Tupinambás (160 Portuguese and their slaves against 8.000 Tupinambás), it could not be seen as a surprise that the so-called savages decided not pay any tribute to the Portuguese coward and unfair use of firearms and vessels.

Another significant fact is that the Igarau settlement “only had a palisade of stakes surrounding us (*the Portuguese colony*)” (STADEN, 2008, p. 26). Staden makes it very clear that the Tupinambás had two forts built out of thick trees. What would prevent them from invading, and annihilating the 160 people who were fighting against them? A new example is found on chapter 15, as the Bertioga battle became a disaster for the Portuguese:

In the end, however, the enemy prevailed and burnt the settlement of Brikioka [Bertioga]. They captured all the savages, but had not been able to do any harm to the Christians, numbering about 8, and the Mamelukes, for God decided to protect them. As for the friendly savages, which they [the enemy savages] had captured there, they immediately cut them to pieces and divided them up. Then they returned to their own lands (STADEN, 2008, p. 44-5).

Again, we have a discrepancy with regards to the number of survivors. In this battle, Staden mentions that 70 canoes of Tupinambás attacked the small place named Bertioga and that the eight Christians (Portuguese) survived because they had defended themselves inside a



house “built of earth” (STADEN, 2008, p. 44). The image for this scene helps us understand the logic of cannibalism and why, again, the few survivors were spared.

Even though Staden does not mention the exact number of participants in the battle, he says that the village was inhabited by the Braga family (seven people total) and the friendly natives who lived there, and also that the invaders (Tupinambás) arrived in 70 canoes. Staden’s information is enough to tell us that the Tupinambás outnumbered the colonizers again. What the traveler does not account for is that the Portuguese did not proceed to battle. They hid, instead. He adds: “The other [friendly] savages had crowded together in their huts and defended themselves as best they could. Hence many enemies were killed” (STADEN, 2008, p. 44). In this specific battle, only the Tupiniquins were rendered to the cannibal practices before the whole settlement was set on fire, except for the house where the few survivors were. Why did the enemy leave without setting fire to the house? The narrative proposes that the Tupinambás “had not been able to do any harm to the Christians” (STADEN, 2008, p. 44) and that the Mamelukes were deprived from death “for God decided to protect them” (STADEN, 2008, p. 44) as I mentioned before, but it is clear that the survival of the Portuguese was not granted by a Christian god as Staden insinuates. Rather, it was granted by the indifference of the indigenous towards them. In both cases, no colonizer was harmed. During the battle of Igarapu, Tupinambás sought for peace. In the Bertioga one, they only killed and ate Tupiniquins.

If cannibalism for Tupinambás was restricted to the ingenuous act of killing for eating, they would not have hesitated to take over the Portuguese settlement and prepare a huge flesh-for-everyone festivity. Staden says: “they threatened to eat us, if and when they got a hold of us” (STADEN, 2008, p. 27), where the threat could be understood as a sign that anthropophagy was related to bravery, and honor – an invitation to a fair combat, where the loser is praised and his virtues eternalized in the eyes (and mouth!) of his victor.

## **2. A DIARY BY THE ENEMY: JEAN DE LÉRY’S PERCEPTIONS**

In 1555, with the construction of the Coligny Fortress in the current Rio de Janeiro, Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon inaugurates the Antarctic France. Because Villegagnon had conquered an island in the Guanabara Bay, it was possible for Jean de Léry, a protestant missionary, to visit the settlement and observe the Tupinambás’ customs from a perspective of an ally (to the cannibals). We also notice a drastic change in the style of illustrations as a result from this relationship in Guanabara Bay. Duffy & Metcalf (2011) say that

The original woodcuts for *Les Singularités* are more artistic than those in Staden's book, but they also reveal that the artist must have worked together with either Thevet or another who had been to Brazil [...] in his images, the naked Tupinambá adopt statuesque poses and are placed in scenes with foregrounds and stylized backgrounds (DUFFY & METCALF, 2011, p. 40).

This piece of this information is important for the comparison between Staden's and Léry's illustrations in the sense that the French diary seems to have had more influences than the German one. The following passage refers to a harsh description of the Tupinambás. It is to this particular report that Montaigne will establish a relationship between Europe's own lack of values and their emergence in the Amerindians:

[...] havia gente arisca e selvagem, sem nenhuma cortesia nem humanidade, muito diferente de nós em seus costumes e instrução; sem religião, nem conhecimento algum da honestidade ou da virtude, do justo, e do injusto, a ponto de me vir à mente a ideia de termos caído entre animais com figura de homens (LÉRY, 1980, p. 39).

However, at the end of chapter XV, Léry acknowledges the presence of cruelties even more atrocious in Europe than anthropophagy practiced by the Tupinambás in Brazil. He says "Existem entre nós criaturas tão abomináveis, se não mais, e mais detestáveis do que aquelas que só investem contra nações inimigas de que têm vingança a tomar" (LÉRY, 1980, p. 204). Although Montaigne and Certeau precisely address the matter of the colonizer's point of view, and the distorted imagery of the savage, Léry does not ignore the presence of monstrosities amongst the Christians.

According to Liz Rountree (2005), "In *Histoire d'un voyage*, Léry's criticism of the French Reformation begins with a study of nudity and culminates in a comparison of cannibalism to the Saint-Barthelemy's Day Massacre" (ROUNTREE, 2005, p. 3). The perspective from what we see the description of the Tupinambás may follow the aforementioned logic Rountree talks about, but it may also fit into a different project. On the one hand, as many critics have said, the delocalization of Europe's own horrors into the figure of the indigenous in Brazil happens through the pen of Jean de Léry. On the other hand, the portrayal of the Tupinambás in the fashion Léry offers us can be seen as an advertisement of the French presence in the Americas, its alliance to the strongest, fearless, and dominant native people of Brazil. Perhaps the critique of the European lack of values contrasted with the Tupinambás' barbarities is an attempt to equalize both their iniquities, and virtues –



making it smoother for the reader to feel acquainted with the Brazilian cannibals – their allies in the new lands.

Therefore, if we take a look at how, in the same diary, Léry balances out the description of plants, random healthy eating habits of the locals, and the vast wild life within a dual significance strategy, it makes it easy for him, as a writer, and advertiser, to deal with the question of anthropophagy. By offering the term dual significance, I want to analyze how Léry draws his conclusions of a given fact, or behavior, according to a twofold opinion about them. Let us analyze the example of the lizard:

[...] conservam-se em geral nas margens dos rios e nos lugares pantanosos, tais quais as rãs, e não são em absoluto perigosos [...] A princípio, em verdade, repugnava-me esse manjar, mas depois que o provei não cessei de pedir lagarto (LÉRY, 1980, p. 139).

Here, as the text shifts from offering the repugnant narrative of the lizards' skin, and the swampy habitat where they are found, to a tender, white, and tasty description of the meat, we can detect the dual significance strategy I proposed above. Additionally, the indigenous custom of painting the body both prevents the use of clothes (which can be seen as primitive), but also keeps mosquitoes away, as well as being water resistant (which is technological). In sum, Léry lays out several examples of how he changes his mind (and taste) throughout the diary. Such process is extended, of course, to the social, and ethnic organization of the Tupinambás. With the narration of cannibal practices as the result of regional wars, the text also provides the honorable motivations of such:

Os selvagens se guerreiam não para conquistar países e terras uns aos outros, porquanto sobejam terras para todos; não pretendem tampouco enriquecer-se com os despojos dos vencidos ou o resgate dos prisioneiros. Nada disso os move. Confessam eles próprios serem impelidos por outro motivo: o de vingar pais e amigos presos e comidos, no passado [...] (LÉRY, 1980, p. 183)

Throughout the chapters where Léry specifically presents the ethnographic analysis of the indigenous people (not nature and other sparse annotations), the vast majority of observations are dedicated to how angry, irritable, and vindictive the locals are in general. According to Léry, it did not take much from them to escalate from being calm to furious – to the point of kicking objects, and breaking things.

In the case of the previous citation, completely denying the justification for the exercise of war would be contradictory for Léry. First because war had been an ancient practice that was still very much in use by his contemporaries in Europe. Secondly, we must

not forget that the wars between Tupinambás and Tupiniquins were motivated, even more, by the tensions between the French and the Portuguese. Léry, after watching a battle between Tupinambás and Tupiniquins, even writes:

Nós, franceses, nada mais fizemos que empunhar as nossas espadas e dar alguns tiros de pistola para o ar para estimular a nossa gente, mas nada podia causar maior prazer aos nossos aliados do que irmos à guerra com eles e isso nos engrandeceu perante os velhos das aldeias que frequentávamos (LÉRY, 1980, p. 190).

I urge to point out the usage of “confessam eles próprios” in the first passage above. As Certeau indicates, the traveler appropriates the voice of the other, which is what helps giving authority to the text. Here, Léry is putting the words in the mouth of the Tupinambás. He is validating the narrative by presenting the voice of the other while crafting what he judges to be significant for the diary.

What the excerpt offers to the reader is a heroic, legitimate reason for why the native Brazilians went to war. There was a debt with the past that was reified by war, a cyclic process in which the winner tribe would expect to be under attack in a short future. The beauty, and the value of the act of killing each other are transmitted by the diary as a way to compensate the imagery of Tupinambás as horrendous flesh-eaters. It works in the same logic as the previous reassurance of the lizard’s meat in comparison to the nasty outside of it (mud, hard, dark skin, etc.). The illustration of the war is the one that follows on attachment 2.



attachment 2

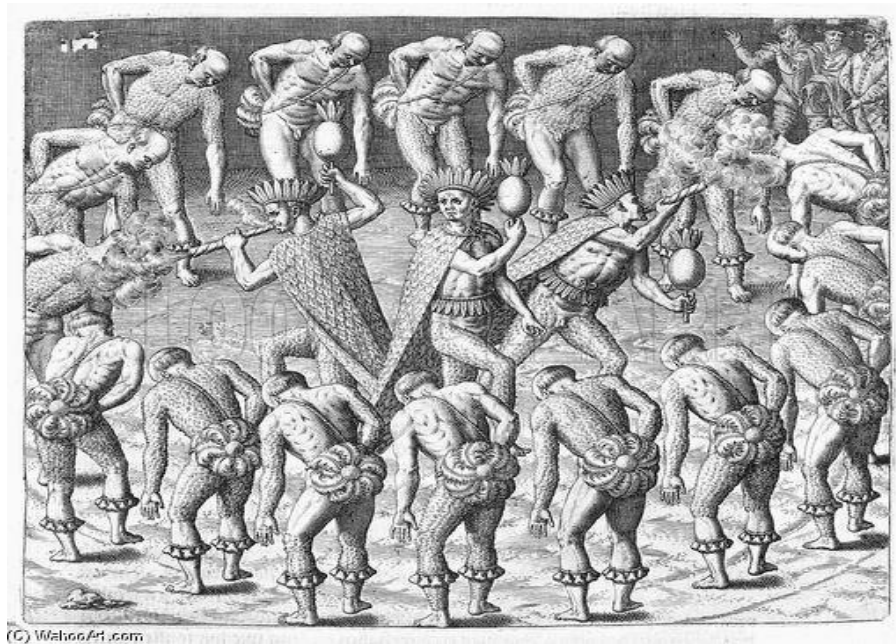
At the same time the written narrative of Jean de Léry suggests the bravery and endurance of the Amerindians during the battle he observed, the illustration of it includes a partial distortion. As the picture simultaneously depicts the combat and the practice of cannibalism, it attempts to include very distinct parts of the Tupinambá experience. We can notice that the movement of bodies, arrows, and clubs point to the center of the picture. The closer to the center, the more deformed the Tupinambás (the ones on the right side) appear. As two of them manage to bite the opponents, their faces do not resemble the same traits as the ones still fighting. The one on the left, biting the opponent's hand, is presented disproportional in terms of body measurements. His head is almost somewhat smaller than his forearm; the way he stands induces us to see him as an animalesque creature since almost all Léry's illustrations show human beings posing in a decent statuesque position.

Besides, in the background we find the Tupinambás' settlement, since on the top left corner there is a grill where human pieces are being roasted. The distortion of facts is translated into the urge to portray them all together. As Léry himself notes, the anthropophagic rituals happened after Tupinambás brought their prisoners home, and never at the moment the combats were taking place: “[...] levam-nos de regresso às suas tabas onde são os prisioneiros executados, moqueados e finalmente devorados” (LÉRY, 1980, p. 188). He even mentions that after the return to the tribe “Embora os selvagens temam a morte natural, os prisioneiros julgam-se felizes por morrerem assim publicamente e no meio de seus inimigos, não revelando nunca o mínimo pesar [...]” (LÉRY, 1980, p. 196). Therefore, most prisoners awaited the rituals (which could take months), some were eaten quickly, but never during a war.

The scorpion (chapter XI) emblemizes what I have been arguing so far: it is a mortal insect in Brazilian lands, as described by the diary, but if caught, mashed, and rubbed on top of their own bite as soon as one is attacked, then it becomes its own cure. Flora and fauna are intermittently renegotiating the meanings of good and bad/evil, disgusting and delicious, safe and dangerous, primitive and humane. And so is the native Brazilian. The portrayal of the Tupinambás is in constant renegotiation in Léry's diary. I want us to take a look at what I consider the crucial illustrations in Léry's work. The first one will be about the *cauinagem*, and the second about the evil spiritual forces.

On chapter XVI, when L ery talks about the major reunion among Tupinamb as and the Cara bas,<sup>45</sup> he notices the importance of invisible spiritual forces that guide the reunion. In this passage, he not only communicates his astonishment due to the chants, and the involvement of the whole community, but he also mentions how feared he was as he witnessed spirit possession among the natives. To this particular information, he adds the following illustration on attachment 3.

attachment 3



The solidity of the bodies is impressive, making the locals almost all identical. Although, we must understand that the conditions in which they are seen by L ery involves the massive repetition of chants, sayings, and movements. This ceremony includes the constant use of smoke as a rite of exchange of power and strength. The shamans in the center are the ones supposed to offer the spirits to the surrounding ones, as translated by an informant: “Para que ven ais os vossos inimigos recebei o esp rito da for a” (L ERY, 1980, p. 214). It must be acknowledged that the beauty of this depiction has much to do with the bewilderment of L ery towards the whole arrangement of the *cauinagem*. He writes:

Se, como disse, no in cio dessa algazarra, me assustei, j  agora me mantinha absorto em coro ouvindo os acordes dessa imensa multid o e sobretudo a cad ncia e o estribilho a cada copla: *H , he ayre, heyr , heyrayre, heyra, heyre, u h*. E ainda hoje quando recordo essa cena sinto palpitar o cora o e parece-me a estar ouvindo (L ERY, 1980, p. 214-5).

<sup>45</sup> Which implies the religious ceremonies involving the high consumption of *cauim*, an alcoholic local beverage made specifically for the *cauinagens*. Such even happened every three or four years.



Again, the dual significance phenomenon is verified. If the beginning of the ritual is marked by strange, demoniac forces as women and children seem to be possessed, then the climax of the reunion is manifested by the transposition of bravery, and strength through the symbolic herbal smoke. To the first instance, the author says:

Ao mesmo tempo urravam, saltavam com violência, agitavam os seios e espumejavam pela boca até desmaiar como vítimas de ataques epiléticos; por isso não me era possível deixar de acreditar que se tivessem tornado repentinamente possuídas pelo Diabo (LÉRY, 1980, p. 212).

Although this menacing view is experienced as the rite begins, Léry takes much more account of the brighter side of the event. The narrative does not mention if Léry participated in the ceremony as did the locals, nor if he drank the consecrated beverage, but the experience of such ritualistic forces had, indeed, a positive impact in the missionary. It could be argued that the respect given to the *cauinagem* had much to do with the empowerment of the French allies, than to the deterioration of the indigenous practices. Jean de Léry undeniably cherishes the sense of community throughout his diary, indicating that what was considered heinous practices in the eyes of the colonizers only happened ritualistically. Brazil would, then, not be an inhabitable place after all if cannibalism, and the presence of demoniac forces were only related to certain moments of congregation. There was “cure” for Brazil according to the French, protestant optics.

In correspondence to this logic, the last illustration I want to analyze is the one below. It is related to the description of evil spirits that surrounded the Tupinambás according to Léry’s diary. For the natives, some physical pain, and hallucinations could be explained by the presence of the evil forces that manifested to them. In the illustration below, we can identify the demoniac portrayal of such forces. It is interesting to notice the animalesque forms: most of them are able to fly; some have mammal features (the head, legs, tails), others have aquiline paws, and the capacity to beat the natives with bats (see attachment 4).

## attachment 4



The depiction also suggests that several of the evil forces attack at the same time, which also coincides with the presence of the flying fish that both Staden and Léry mention during the travel to Brazil. Whilst terror and despair take over the scene, the spirits do not perturb the two French, who speak with the Tupinambá on the left. The miscellaneous arrangement of this illustration, even with the provided information that the spirits were only seen by the indigenous, offers a horrendous image of Brazil. On the bright side, the presence of the French could signify a promise of “cure” for them, since they are portrayed standing serenely while horror only extends to the locals, and their nature.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In reading Rogério Miguel Puga’s (2012) article “Amansar’ o selvagem edênico: a retórica do achamento do Brasil na *Carta* de Pêro Vaz de Caminha,” we have the notion that, addressed and attributed to D. Manuel I, the *Carta* had the main function of detailing the sequence of events in relation to the Portuguese enterprise. Therefore, according to the author, Caminha uses writing to rhetorically delineate and color the events that follow during the voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral’s fleet before the king’s eyes. Linked to this thought, Alfredo Bosi (1972) reveals that,

O que para a nossa história significou uma autêntica certidão de nascimento, a *Carta* de Caminha a D. Manuel, dando notícia da terra achada, insere-se em um gênero



copiosamente representado durante o século XV em Portugal e Espanha: a literatura de viagens (BOSI, 1972, p. 16-17).

Puga, in his article, not only deals with the myth of lost paradise that is rediscovered, but also with the myth of the good savage. In this way, Puga mentions this discovered paradise being populated by human beings who appear naked and innocent, possessing a close relationship with Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden, hence the explanation for the nomenclature ‘selvagem edénico.’ The author mentions that Caminha slightly ponders about two primordial focuses: the nature and the native. Nature, which presents itself as exuberant, beautiful, and inviting, is the space where the Portuguese foot is placed and where the cross of the first mass on Brazilian soil would be established. The natives appear as a complement of this space; Consubstantially attached to purity, naivety, and beauty.

Puga analyzes how Pêro Vaz de Caminha does not limited himself at only questioning the undressed natives, and the body paintings of those people who inhabited the discovered land. Puga reveals that the new reality, discovered by the Portuguese, “é representada através do olhar-filtro do viajante, que transpõe referentes europeus para um novo mundo ao tentar (des)codificar novas formas de ser e interagir socialmente” (PUGA, 2012, p. 82). According to him, Caminha’s letter interestingly centralizes the matter of colonizing Brazil because of one urgent issue: that of catechizing the natives. The last words of Caminha’s letter says:

Porém o melhor fruto, que nela se pode fazer, me parece que será salvar esta gente. E esta deve ser a principal semente que Vossa Alteza em ela deve lançar. E que aí não houvesse mais que ter aqui esta pousada para esta navegação de Calecute, bastaria. Quando mais disposição para se nela cumprir e fazer o que Vossa Alteza tanto deseja, a saber, acrescentamento da nossa santa fé (CAMINHA, 1500, p. 14).

Having in mind the analysis of Staden and Léry’s travel diaries, we could argue that the main motivation of making Brazil into a Portuguese colony fails with the presence of the Tupinambás, as documented by future travelers. The conditions under which Léry and Staden write only reveal the failure of Caminha’s main project. The illustrations of the locals in Brazil by Staden and Léry are controversial in general, but the remaining aspects about religious rituals, daily practices, and cannibalism, for instance, reveal some truths about the Tupinambás.

W.J.T. Mitchell, in *Picture Theory* (1994), gives attention to the relationship between pictures and power. He affirms that “if we want to understand the power of pictures, we need to look at their internal relations of domination and resistance, as well as their external relations with spectators and with the world” (MITCHELL, 1994, p. 324). His fundamental

observations come from Foucault's way of approaching power as "how" and less as "what," which, in the case of Mitchell, are translated into the two traditions of pictures: the illusionism, and the realism. For him, the relations of powers in the case of illusionist, and realist ones are what should be addressed. The former proposes a relation in which the spectator is dependent on the picture because it is an illusion. The latter provides the view of reality as it is, handing the power to the observer, who knows what he sees. He is able to say "this is the way things are" (MITCHELL, 1994, p. 325).

In the case of the analysis of Léry's and Staden's illustrations, we may take his proposition that "the discourse of illusionism seems inevitably to engage the sphere of nature of the spectator understood as a body with sensory, perceptual, and emotional automatism – 'buttons' that may be pushed to activate the individual beholder" (MITCHELL, 1994, p. 325) and that, in this sense, illusionism and realism would intend to develop some sort of agency in the spectator. The core argument of his last chapters converges into a dual relationship: representation and responsibility. For him, there is a constant danger of the representation being able to drain power/value from the represented and that it is our responsibility to detect these intrinsic, and invisible forces. In other words, he points out the representation of the Vietnam War as a replacement of the Vietnamese memory by a "fantasy replay of the World War II" (MITCHELL, 1994, p. 425). Representation here is exercising its power over the represented. His metaphorical use of the Washington's D.C. plate's message "taxation without representation" proposes that, contrariwise, representation without taxation would signify irresponsibility.

What we come to understand, after all, is that the indigenous depiction only serves to justify three different projects throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Brazil: of Catholic expansion in the case of Caminha, of credibility to personal diaries (Staden), and of Protestant power, in the case of Léry. The matter of monsters and monstrosities, verified in Staden's and Léry's diaries, find their justification in the usage of the local's bodies and practices to only camouflage other interests. The curious aspect here is that, even without reading each other's works, they all explore and distort the native's physical and spiritual existence, which implies the consistent creation of a contradictory, amusing other(ness).

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