

In June 2019, I held the workshop *cooking, playing and sharing* at the symposium *sharing/learning: methods of the collective in art, research and activism* by the DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste", Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), at/in cooperation with District * School without Center.

I invited guests to explore how to come together spontaneously, creatively and intuitively for preparing a feast without previously knowing the recipe and without a recipe. The main idea was how to make a meal with the ingredients, we would have available, and share it between the participants of the event. Noncooking Knowledge was required. As it usually happens in my proposals, the practice has taken other directions.

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My writing is a puzzle giving clues and showing traces. It is a box with varied themes that interconnect and go through me, concerned to unfold the complexity of frames, layers and references behind my artistic propositions. So, let me show you some things until I get you to the workshop's experience.



Fig. 1. Pêdra Costa setting up

Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

In the first semester of 1998, I began my bachelor's degree in Social Sciences at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, Northeast Brazil. In the seminar *Introduction to Anthropology*, I had contact with a book that was considered the first account of a First Nation in Brazil, the Tupinambás. The book, published in 1557 in Germany, by the German mercenary Hans Staden, was originally called *True Story and Description of a Country of Wild, Naked, Grim, Man-eating People in the New World, America*. It is currently called *Hans Staden's True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*.

Wahrhaftig

Historia vnd beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der Wilden/Nacketen/Grimmigen Menschfressen Leuthen/in der Newenwelt America gelegen/vor vnd nach Christi geburt im Land zu Hessen vnbekant/bis vff dise ij. nechst vergangene jar/ Da sie Hans Staden von Homberg auß Hessen durch sein eygne erfahrung erkant/ vnd yetzo durch den truck an tag gebr.

**Dedicirt dem Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen herren/
H. Philipsen Landtgraff zu Hessen/Graff zu Catzenelnhogen/Dietz/Ziegenhain vnd Nidda/seinem G. H.**

**Mit eynrer vorrede D. Joh. Bryandri/genant Eychman/
Ordinarij Professoris Medici zu Marpurgh.**

Inhalt des Buchlins volget nach den Noueden.



Getruckt zu Marpurgh/ im jar M. D. LVII.

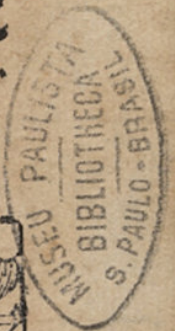


Fig. 2.

Cover of Hans Staden's publication

Source:

http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/view/staden_landschafft_1557?p=1

The book basically describes the “ritual of cannibalism”, as he called it. It is also known as anthropophagy. He was a captive of the Tupinambás for nine months. Then he managed to escape and returned to Germany. From his point of view, his catholic god saved him. I always wondered: why didn't the Tupinambás eat him? The response is as follows: he was not brave, he was not smart, he was not strong, he was not wise, he was not a warrior, noone would honor his death. He had no positive qualities to be absorbed. He was an indigestible German.



Fig. 3.

Still from the film *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1971 Source:

<https://thecannibalguy.com/2020/09/13/how-tasty-was-my-little-frenchman/>

Was cannibalism a lie or a truth? Was it a creation of European invasion in America to justify colonial violence?



Fig. 4.

Image by Theodor de Bry

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodor_de_Bry_-_Canibais.jpg

In Brazil, Staden's account was first translated only in 1892. The publication influenced Oswald de Andrade, who in 1928 published his "Anthropophagic Manifesto".² The Anthropophagic Movement³ was a Brazilian modernist artistic manifestation of the 1920s, founded and theorized by Oswald de Andrade and Tarsilado Amaral, in São Paulo. They also founded *Anthropophagy's Magazine*. It is the best-known Brazilian artistic movement in Europe, mainly in academies and art institutions. It has brought the ideals of "swallowing" or "critical devouring". Oswald wrote in his manifesto "only anthropophagy unites us" and I wrote in my manifesto "anthropophagy does not unite us anymore."⁴

REVISTA DE ANTROPOFAGIA



Fig. 5.

Cover of the Anthropophagy's Magazine

Source:

https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revista_de_Antropofagia#/media/Ficheiro:Revantrof.png

In 2012, I was invited to the academic conference *Vomit and Not: Anthropoemic Practices in Art and Culture* at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ). We discussed how anthropophagy, eating the other, absorbing their knowledge and transforming it, no longer served us. In this case, the Anthropoemy –the vomit– interrupts digestion and evacuation: it reverses dialectics by not allowing synthesis to take place.⁵

In the book *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) by Claude Lévi-Strauss, there would be two types of society, the anthropophagic ones “[...] which practise cannibalism – that is, which regard the absorption of certain individuals possessing dangerous powers as the only means of neutralizing those powers and even of turning them to advantage – and those which like our own society, adopt what might be called the practice of anthropemy (from the Greek *émein*, to vomit); faced with the same problem, the latter type of society has chosen the opposite solution, which consists in ejecting

dangerous individuals from the social body and keeping them temporarily or permanently in isolation[...].”⁶ Having been investigated and experimented in the field of art and culture, anthropoemy remained almost untouched as a social and cultural concept.

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PRÁTICAS ANTROPOÊMICAS
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Fig. 6.

Poster from the conference *Vomit and not - anthropoemic practices in art and culture*

Source: <http://ivseminarioppgartesuerj.blogspot.com/2012/08/>

In 1973, the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark proposed the *Anthropophagic Slobber*, a psychophysical experiment at the fine-arts faculty of the Sorbonne's Centre St. Charles. She and her students deepened the notion of collective creation, expanding it into sets of propositions called, for example, "Collective Body". Clark's seminars were aimed not at creating artworks or performances but, in her words, at creating a "living culture, in which the artist cuts himself off from the traditional base and gives the body its central position again. This is a living form of production for this productive society [...]. To get there,

one needs to make the deinstitutionalization, both of the body as of all concrete relationships.”⁷

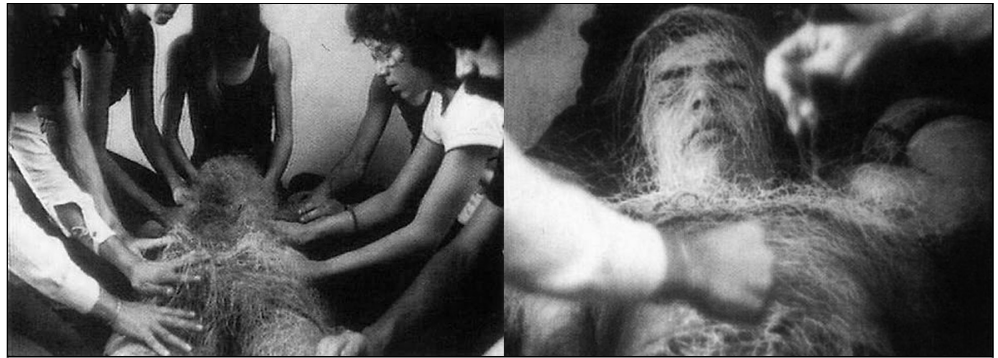


Fig. 7.

Lygia Clark's proposition *Anthropophagic Slobber*, 1973

Thread Courtesy "The World of Lygia Clark" Cultural Association, Rio de Janeiro

Source: <http://www.diegorambova.com/Performance-Spirituality>;
<https://post.moma.org/part-3-affective-geometry-immanent-acts-lygia-clark-and-performance/>

In 2011, at the integration's course, the teacher asked us to write a recipe from typical food from our countries. I wrote the recipe that Hans Staden described in his book:

Ingredient: you need an enemy captive.

1st step: kill him.

2nd step: put him over the fire.

3rd step: scrape off the skin, making it all white.

4th step: place a piece of wood in his arse to prevent a discharge.

5th step: cuts off the legs above the knees and the arms at the body. The men take these parts.

6th step: keep the innards, simmer them and make a mush in the broth.

Women and children drink and eat this.

7th step: the brain, the tongue, and whatever else is edible, is eaten by the youngsters.

My teacher asked me WTF that was. I said, it was my country's best-known recipe written by a German. I, on the inside, thought: *Ist das ein Integrationskurs oder was?*



Fig. 8.
Original woodcut by Hans Staden, 1557
Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans Staden, Tupinamba portrayed in cannibal](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Staden,_Tupinamba_portrayed_in_cannibal)

Staden's book created a strong and negative imaginary about the First Nations from Brazil that has spread across Europe, influencing people such as William Shakespeare. In his play *The Tempest* (probably written in 1610-1611) one of the main characters is Caliban. This play has been put to different interpretations, but I prefer the version that considers it as the colonization of the Americas by Europeans. Caliban is a product of nature, the offspring of the witch Sycorax, and the devil. Some authors bring the idea that Caliban is an anagram for the cannibal.⁸

Rodrigo Garcia Alves, a Brazilian choreographer and theatre director based in Berlin, has created the work *Studio Disorder's La Maison Baroque* as his final work in the "SODA - Solo, Dance, and Authorship" Master's program at the Berlin University of Arts (UdK). The work was also based on Staden's book, on the *Anthropophagic Slobber* and on the *Anthropophagic Manifesto* in addition to other works. I was a performer and researcher in this piece, in the same way that all the other performers were, because the choreographer's concept was precisely to create from the curatorship and selection of our works, as well as of other artists.



Fig. 9.
Studio Disorder's La Maison Baroque. Choreography by Rodrigo Garcia
Alves. Tanztage Berlin, Sophiensæle, 2016. Still Video
Photo: © Walter Bickmann

And, finally, about the workshop.

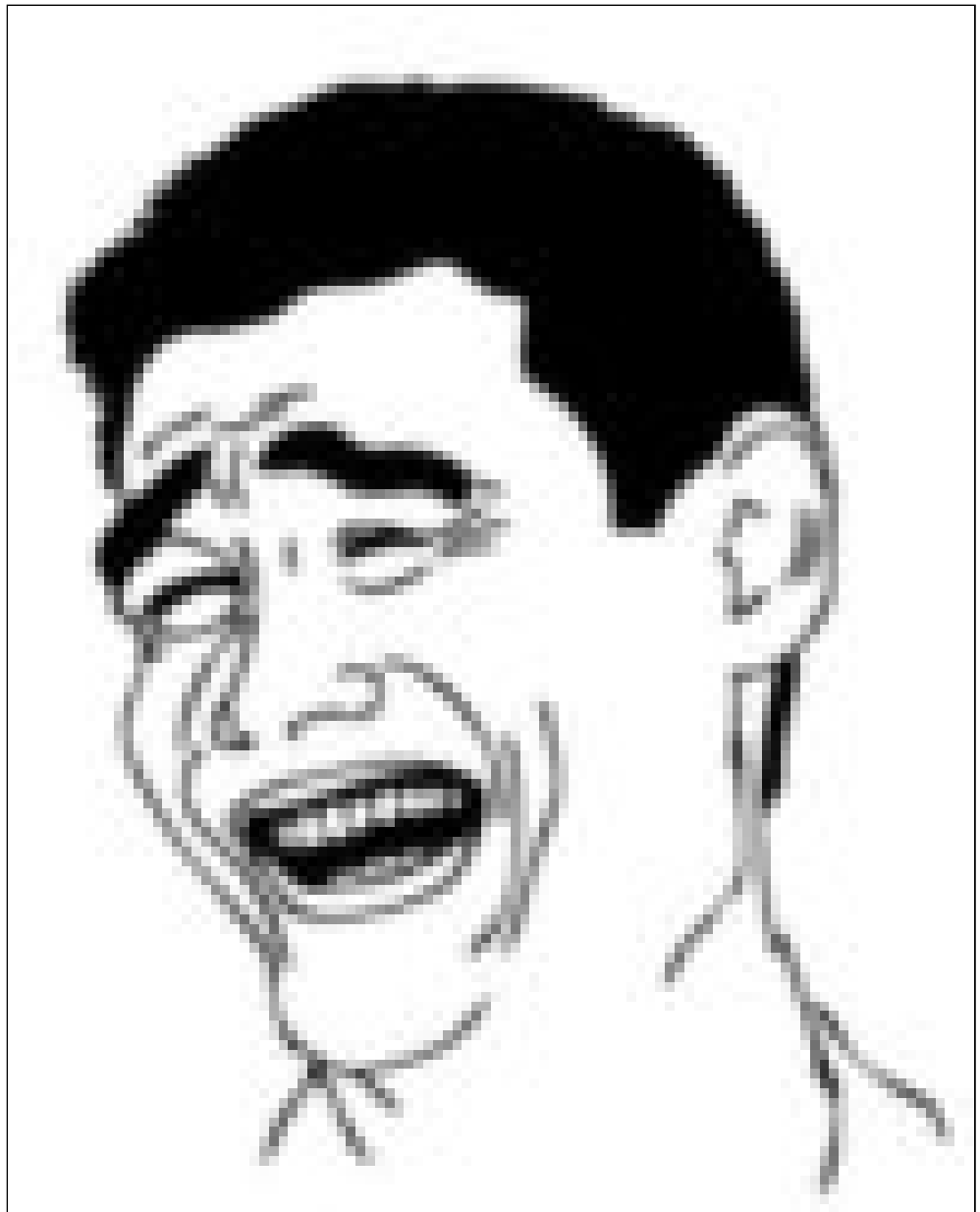


Fig. 10.

Meme from Internet

Source: <http://www.pngall.com/yao-ming-face-png>

In the end, I decided to divide the workshop into two parts.

The first part, a sensory and collective experience with reference to the work of Lygia Clark's *Anthropophagic Slobber*, was divided into two parts. It was out of the room. In it, one person at a time laid down on the grass, blindfolded. The others put fruit and vegetables on their bodies. The lying down persons had to feel the weight, the smell, the texture, the temperature, and the touch of the fruits and vegetables on their body and skin. Breathing and feeling the experience.

The second part needed more courage and not everyone took part in it. The experience had the same principle as the first, but instead of fruits and vegetables on the body, we chewed them before and let it fall from our mouths to the bodies. Slobbered fruits and vegetables.



Fig. 11. Pêdra Costa setting up the workshop
Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

The second part of the workshop took place inside a room, and the idea was to decorate four cakes with a white man's face, to be shared and devoured between all the people of the event. At least, it was supposed to be. One of the cakes was the face of Donald Trump.



Fig. 12. Resulting cake
Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"



Fig. 13. Resulting cake

Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"



Fig. 14. Resulting cake

Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"



Fig. 15.
 Screenshot from Facebook
 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Graduiertenkolleg-Das-Wissen-der-Künste-1676842259201069>

I believe the knowledge, which comes from meetings and exchanging experiences has to be embodied. At the same time, I do not believe in learning from something exclusively formal, serious and academic. If our machine-bodies have so many learning options, let's involve them all: the emotional, the mental, the physical, and the spiritual. And, to be honest, everyone gets happy when there is something to eat.⁹ *Happiness is our revenge.*¹⁰



Fig. 16. Getting ready to slice the cake
 Photo: Maximilian Haas. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

1 “[...] the brilliance of Tupinamba resistance may not have been in
eating the enemy.” in: Martel, H. E.: *Hans Staden’s Captive Soul: Identity, Imperialism, and Rumors of Cannibalism in Sixteenth-Century Brazil*, Northern Arizona University, 2006.

2 The manifesto was first translated into English in 1991 by Leslie Bary:
http://writing.upenn.edu/library/Andrade_Cannibalistic_Manifesto.pdf

3 “[...] recovers the cannibal as an anticolonialist sign, much in the manner of the Brazilian anthropophagic movement, as a mark of liberty in the face of colonial oppression.” Whitehead, Neil L.: “Hans Staden and the Cultural Politics of Cannibalism”, in: *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 4, 2000

4 Costa, Pêdra: “The Southern Butthole Manifesto”, in: Imayna Caceres, Sunanda Mesquita & Sophie Utikal (ed.): *Anti*Colonial Fantasies - Decolonial Strategies*, Vienna, 2017.

5 Free translation of the conference’s concept. All the material produced is in Portuguese.
<http://ivseminarioppgartesuerj.blogspot.com/2012/08/sobre-o-seminario-version1.html>

6 Lévi-Strauss, Claude: *Tristes Tropiques*, London 2012, p. 388.

7 Lepecki, André: “Affective Geometry, Immanent Acts: Lygia Clark and Performance”, in: *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment Of Art, 1948-1988*, MoMA, 2017. <https://post.moma.org/part-1-affective-geometry-immanent-acts-lygia-clark-and-performance/>

8 There are many academic texts reflecting from a post-colonial point of view on *The Tempest*.

9 Watch the short documentary *Because of What Is*, where at the end of it, I talk about the importance of cooking and sharing food.
<https://vimeo.com/269084343>

10 Sentence created by Mujeres Creando. <https://youtu.be/FR5ioZa0RGU>