

CANNIBAL ROUTES:  
MAPPING THE ATLANTIC AS A NETWORK OF APPROPRIATIONS

by

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*For Jen and Dax*

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## ABSTRACT

By analyzing texts from different moments of Atlantic colonialism, “Cannibal Routes: Mapping the Atlantic as a Network of Appropriations” presents a new way to see how literary works act in history. The theory of complex networks provides the analytical framework: the transhistorical comparison between four focal texts allows for a schematic rendering of the Atlantic itself as a cultural and economic network that grows in complexity from Columbus to the present. The metaphor of cannibalism models the appropriative mechanism by which links in this Atlantic network are established. Cannibalism—as an illustration of appropriation from “over there”—links points on a map, facilitating the analysis of transatlantic appropriations as a geographic network.

Chapter one explores the rhetorical uses of anthropophagy in Jean de Léry’s 1578 *Histoire d’un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*. A series of map diagrams in chapter two forms the basis of an analysis of the transatlantic network of voyages developed in the 1789 *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. Chapter three uses the notion of the complex network to discuss Oswald de Andrade’s 1933 satirical novel *Serafim Ponte Grande*. Chapter four shows how Maryse Condé’s 2003 novel *Histoire de la femme cannibale* uses network dynamics to defuse the dehumanizing history of the Atlantic triangle, symbol of the slave trade.

Besides contributing to the literary critical scholarship on each of the four authors considered, this dissertation adds to the interdisciplinary study of the Atlantic. Envisioning the Atlantic of the colonial-postcolonial period as a network of movements—of ships, people, texts, and ideas—provides insight into the literary and historical significance of mobility. Here, the study of literature adds to geographers' and historians' understanding of how networks function and what mobilities can mean. As opposed to colonialism's dehumanizing significance, diaspora models mobility's positive associations. Diaspora, constituted as a network of *affiliations*, contrasts with a network of *appropriations* illustrated by trade, intertextual borrowing, and, most vividly, slavery and cannibalism. The discussion of diaspora and mobility in a network framework provides a new perspective on the power of literature to address large-scale economic patterns.



## INTRODUCTION: NETWORKS, CANNIBALISM, AND THE ATLANTIC

Só a antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente.  
— Oswald de Andrade, *Manifesto antropófago* (1928)

Chapter 37 of *Moby-Dick* opens with a stage direction: “*The cabin; by the stern windows; Ahab sitting alone, and gazing out.*” Captain Ahab sits looking aft, in the direction his ship has come from, and speaks. His soliloquy suggests that, in gazing backward, he is reflecting on the past: “I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where’er I sail. The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them; but first I pass” (Melville 142). In the following chapter, the first mate, Starbuck, remarks on the contrast between the “revelry” of the “heathen crew” forward and the silence of the captain’s cabin aft: “Methinks it pictures life” (144).

The crew of the *Pequod* is famously diverse and egalitarian (see Rogin; Morrison). In this scene, the international, non-hierarchical, largely non-white crew up forward “pictures life” in that it signals a future less determined by racial divisions. Meanwhile, tyrannical Ahab broods on his whiteness aft while looking at the wake flowing away into the past. His one aim is to retain authority long enough to fulfill the prophecy of his destruction. He seeks to destroy the white whale, and in so doing he will destroy himself (as well as his crew and ship).

In this dissertation, I seek out examples of literary billows that “sidelong swell to overwhelm” the track laid by the forces of colonial power and racial hierarchy concentrated and embodied, for example, in the character of Ahab. Beginning in the sixteenth century with the Catholic colonial project and the Huguenot diaspora that undercut that project, and ending with the global reach of what I call the anti-postcolonial fiction of Maryse Condé, I focus on moments in the history of the Atlantic world when sidelong billows overwhelm the seemingly inevitable track of the dominant powers.

Such billows are not “envious,” as Ahab would have them, but rather aspirational. What draws together the authors I read here—Jean de Léry, Olaudah Equiano, Oswald de Andrade, and Maryse Condé—is the willingness and ability to reconceive the structures of power that make up the Atlantic world. If the history of the Atlantic consists of the accumulation of a series of patterns—of mercantilist trade, enslavement, racist and segregationist thinking, capitalist appropriation, colonial administration, followed by neocolonial interdependence—then these authors can be seen to share the tendency to deviate from those patterns. Disruptive billows cause the colonial and neocolonial ship to veer off course.

Such disruptions are exactly what Ahab wants to avoid. At the end of chapter 37, Ahab concludes his speech with an apostrophic challenge to some unspecified gods: “Swerve me? ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve yourselves! man has ye there. Swerve me? The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run” (143). The iron rails that guide Ahab’s trajectory obviously represent rail transport, a technology still new in 1850-51 when Melville writes *Moby-Dick*. And

yet the linearity and fixity of the iron rails also represent a system set in place well before Ahab's time: a system with grooves worn into place by repeated tracing. Ahab considers his soul fashioned to follow a particular track (that is, toward Moby Dick, the embodiment of his irrational desire for destruction); his itinerary is his destiny.

Ahab cannot be "swerved" from his "fixed purpose" without upsetting the whole system that created him ("ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve yourselves!"). But what is that system, and how did it come to be configured in the way it was? What are the rails upon which colonialism came to be grooved to run, and what are the processes that led to the establishment of its fixed purposes?

In an effort to begin to answer such questions, and to conceptualize and visualize the transnational and transhistorical structures that make up the Atlantic as it has developed as a cultural and economic space over centuries, I make use of two seemingly unrelated conceptions: that patterns emerge from a network as it grows in complexity, and that ritual cannibalism models a mode of appropriation that establishes links between groups of people across distances.

The first conception draws on the theory of complex networks, discussed below, to reconsider Atlantic history. I envision the Atlantic world—from Columbus to the present—as a network of cultural, commercial, and textual links created through acts of appropriation—of ideas; of goods; of words, phrases, and images; and, most unfortunately, even of people. That network of appropriative links necessarily grows in complexity as the Atlantic is crossed and re-crossed through the colonial-postcolonial era. This conception expands and redirects Antonio Benítez-Rojo's notion of the

Caribbean archipelago as a complex cultural system. For Benítez-Rojo, the Caribbean is not only a literal archipelago but also a “meta-archipelago”: a complex system with “neither a boundary nor a center” (4). Just as a physical archipelago consists of a series of discrete islands both separated and connected by water, this meta-archipelago system or “machine” operates by way of a “discontinuous conjunction” of “uncertain voyages of signification; in short, a field of observations quite in tune with the objectives of Chaos” (2). Here, though my investigation is not limited to the Caribbean, and while network theory takes the place of Chaos, this project draws on Benítez-Rojo’s work mapping complex cultural systems through literary readings.

The second conception provides a model for how the large-scale network that makes up the Atlantic operates. The metaphor of cannibalism illustrates the appropriative mechanism by which links in the network are established. The idea that ritual cannibalism involves the ingesting and incorporation of the foreign, regardless of the historical veracity of European reports about such ritual systems (see relevant notes in the discussion below), provides a powerfully charged metaphor for appropriation.

The conjunction of these two conceptions provides a way to read texts from different centuries and cultures in terms of the same transhistorical, multilingual, macrohistory of the Atlantic. Each of the four texts around which the four chapters of this dissertation revolve sheds light on a very different moment in the Atlantic world. Read together, the discussion of these texts suggests a schematic, rather than a comprehensive, history. While paying careful attention to historicize each text separately within each chapter, I show through the transhistorical juxtaposition of the four texts how vital literary analysis

can be for Atlantic studies. My readings bring out the way each of these focal texts draws on, reacts to, and deviates from the network patterns—the fixed rails—of its respective century.

This dissertation, then, contributes not only to the literary critical scholarship on each of the four authors considered, but also to the interdisciplinary study of the Atlantic over the *longue durée*. I enlist concepts from network theory to elucidate the relation between cultures, between texts, and between text and culture. And by envisioning the Atlantic of the colonial-postcolonial period as a network of movements—of ships, people, texts, and ideas—I concern myself with the literary and historical significance of mobility. The network I describe, as it grows in complexity from the sixteenth century to the present, is a diagram of mobilities.

This dissertation uses literature to add to geographers' and historians' understanding of how networks function and what mobilities can mean. The workings of networks aids in the reading of literary works, and the reading of literary works in historical context sheds new light on the workings of networks. Literature rarely represents any historical moment accurately,<sup>1</sup> but it can aid in mapping significance. In contrast to colonialism's dehumanizing significance, diaspora models mobility's positive associations.

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<sup>1</sup> Two of the four texts I consider (by Jean de Léry and Olaudah Equiano) fall under the category of travel narratives, and both purport to be non-fiction. I approach these texts not, as a historian might, with concern for the accuracy with which the authors portray historical events, but rather with an eye to the conditions of possibility that the texts both are subject to and, subsequently, create. That is to say, my line of inquiry begins: what might conventions of genre, religious affiliation, or the polemics of the time lead this author to say, and what does he or she in fact write instead? My approach to the travel narratives, then, aligns with my approach to the novels (by Oswald de Andrade and Maryse Condé), in that my interest lies in the possible significance of what each author represents, not in the accuracy of the representation.

Here at the outset, however, I must define the terms that drive this project. By *cannibalism*, first of all, I do not mean any and all human consumption of human flesh. Rather, I use the word to refer to a specific kind of ritual practice supposedly witnessed by European travelers to the New World beginning in the sixteenth century. Jean de Léry, along with others in his century and beyond, described a ritual cannibalism by which a group of people—such as the Tupinamba of coastal Brazil—would capture, kill, and eat a member of a rival group. The captors in that scenario would then claim to incorporate the power of the vanquished warrior, and the ritual would automatically invoke a reciprocal action on the part of that fallen warrior’s group, should its members have the opportunity to capture one of their enemies in the future. That specific kind of ritual cannibalism took on particular significance for Léry and other writers of his time, and it is in light of that sixteenth-century reading of that supposed practice that writers in later eras—especially Oswald de Andrade and Maryse Condé—use cannibalism as a metaphor for various kinds of cultural and textual incorporation.

By *network*, I mean any system made up of links (connections or associations) between nodes (that is, people, places, or things). Network theory, developed in physics and discussed in the next section, can be used to explain the behavior of such systems in all kinds of different realms, from the level of molecules to international trade. In my application of network theory to the reading of literary texts, I describe links between texts (through intertextual borrowing or association, for example) as well as people and places. Those links may be established in history or fictionally—that is, solely through the author’s invention. By seeing links as *associations*, as well as in my consideration of

non-human as well as human nodes, I align my study with the methodologies of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), developed by Bruno Latour and other sociologists as a way of investigating “social” phenomena without recourse to explanations that identify “social forces” at work. In ANT, any component (or node) of a system (network) is considered an “actor”; that is, it is seen to have agency in the system (Latour 10). Though this is a literary rather than a sociological investigation, I consider the nodes in the literary-historical network I describe to have a similar agency. Texts themselves, in the ways they shape subsequent texts through intertextual association, as well as the ways they affect the actions of readers, have agency in the Atlantic system sketched here.

For social scientists working in an ANT framework, the “progressive composition” of the object of study (the sociology of science, for example) can be explained without adding a “hidden social force” (Latour 11). That absence of a guiding plan or principle is central to my understanding of the development of colonialism in the Atlantic. What I call *network dynamics* has to do with the tendency of complex networks to develop recognizable patterns. The historical pattern associated with colonialism that I focus on is the *Atlantic triangle*, which I propose can be seen as an emergent network pattern, rather than as the result of government mandate or other predetermined “social force.” The “progressive composition” of the Atlantic over the colonial period is increasingly triangular.

The particular triangle I refer to is that which connected Europe, West Africa, and the Americas (in particular the Greater Caribbean, from the southeastern coast of what is now the United States to the northeastern coast of Brazil). The second leg of that

clockwise triangular trajectory (from Africa to America) is what is known as the Middle Passage: the voyage enslaved Africans were subjected to, and which many thousands of them did not survive. Historians discuss other Atlantic trade triangles: for example, the triangle that connected New England to Africa and the British Caribbean. A similar network analysis of that and other emergent economic and cultural patterns is conceivable; my focus here is on the triangle pattern that brought French, British, Dutch, and other European colonial powers into geographical alignment.

In that vein, I refer to the workings of an inter-colonial system (one that included several waves of colonization projects by different European powers) that spanned the Atlantic beginning in the fifteenth century as *Atlantic colonialism*. Of course, the development of Atlantic Studies as a discipline has highlighted the artificiality of regional boundaries. Slavery, to take the most horrific and perhaps most widespread of colonial practices, certainly did not begin or end in the Atlantic. By describing the Atlantic as a system, I do not mean to suggest that that system was in any way geographically sealed. The patterns I describe and which the texts I read react to—the triangle first of all—center on this particular ocean, however, and it makes sense for that reason to focus on this one (though still vast) geographic area.

One other terminological entanglement that lurks behind all of the readings that follow is that between the terms *colonial* and *postcolonial*. As Richard Serrano points out in *Against the Postcolonial*, the meaning of the word “postcolonial” has become more and more “elastic and ahistorical” (3). Whereas the word used to refer to a period in history after the independence or decolonization of a specific nation, the “post” in



postcolonial generally now indicates the resistance to colonization in various forms, official and otherwise. The postcolonial, defined in this way as “a critical stance indicating that...colonization and de-colonization—in short, state-sponsored or -supported oppression and its neo-oppressive forms—are the central organizing principles of human existence” (Serrano 4), can thus be chronologically coextensive with the colonial. By this definition, Jean de Léry and other Protestant writers of the sixteenth century could be seen as postcolonial because of their criticism of Catholic colonial practices.

While I do not contest this conventional critical definition of the postcolonial, I also do not find it particularly useful for elucidating the workings of colonialism in all of its subtle insidiousness. Nor do I see the strictly chronological distinction between the period of official colonization and neocolonial economic practices (most notable perhaps in the Francophone and Anglophone Atlantic) as definitive. Each of the authors considered here, whether writing during or after official European colonization, writes *against* colonial dominance in his or her own way. The idea that this “writing against” constitutes postcoloniality does not make sense. The “post” in postcolonial cannot but re-inscribe colonial patterns. Rather, I see these authors, as Richard Serrano sees the authors he brings together in his study, as writing “against the postcolonial.” In chapter four in particular, I bring out the ways Maryse Condé, writing in the last decade, both explicitly and implicitly challenges the postcolonial critical apparatus.

The aim of this introduction is to explain the thought process that brings networks and cannibalism together in the service of a literary reading of Atlantic history. To that

end, I discuss the two concepts separately in the next two sections before elucidating how they work together in the chapters that follow.

### **Networks: the Atlantic Triangle and Diaspora**

Alison Games, in a 2006 review article assessing the state of the field of Atlantic history, writes that the Atlantic region “enjoyed a coherence for almost four hundred years, creating a viable unit of analysis” (747). This dissertation, while not rejecting the Atlantic as “a viable unit of analysis,” does question the “coherence” of that unit. Coherence suggests linearity. A linear history is the narrative told by the victors of a conflict, be it discursive, political, or violent.

What might be an alternative to a linear history? What might the value be of a model that posits incoherence as a fundamental attribute of the Atlantic region, even while upholding that region as a viable unit of analysis? My answer draws, first, on the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose *Thousand Plateaus* [*Mille Plateaux*] provides several interconnected terms that can be useful in theorizing Atlantic history in its complex incoherence.

We might, for example, think of the Atlantic region over the colonial period as a *rhizome* or *multiplicity*: that is, a collection of connections with no center and stemming from no one root. The Atlantic Ocean is rhizomatic to the extent that it *connects* continents, rather than separates them. The ocean becomes a rhizome or multiplicity when ideas, individuals, and groups of people cross it in multiple directions for different and even contradictory reasons. Furthermore, the Atlantic over time becomes an

*assemblage*, which Deleuze and Guattari define as an “increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections” (8).

Though Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of their terms is often more suggestive than it is definitive, they do make clear that the conceptions of the rhizome, multiplicity, and assemblage are meant to refocus our attention away from a linear, genealogical model of history. To that end, literary examples abound in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. Literature allows for what might have been and what might still occur, rather than strictly what happened and when. Likewise in this dissertation, I see literature as an essential tool in reconceptualizing history. Not because literature represents history, but because literary works *act in* history, just as history acts on literature. Deleuze and Guattari put it this way: “[C]ontrary to a deeply rooted belief, the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world” (11).

In order to conceive of what a rhizomatic relationship between book and world, literature and history might mean, we have to investigate the structure of the rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari are ambiguous on this point: they tell us that “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (7), but also that “[t]here are no points or positions in a rhizome...only lines” (8). What is most useful about the rhizome for my purposes here is the authors’ claim that the rhizome “brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states” (21). The rhizome or multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari often seem to use the two terms interchangeably) relates all things on a single “plane of consistency.” That is to say, in the rhizome, all

things—movements in all directions, signifiers from all signifying systems, people, and ideas—connect (or potentially connect) on the same plane.

In conceiving of Atlantic history schematically, this idea of a single plane in which seemingly incomparable things exist and connect comes in handy: the two-dimensional surface of the ocean itself comes to stand for this plane of consistency in which events of various kinds—voyages, ideas, wars, novels, poems—take place.<sup>2</sup> The ocean is not a metaphor; it is, of course, real, but it also serves to illustrate the theoretical plane on which a rhizome of people, places, events, and thoughts proliferates.

There is a problem, however, with conceptualizing the Atlantic as a rhizome. Not only is Deleuze and Guattari's definition elusive and perhaps contradictory, it is also outdated. The rhizome dates from the pre-Internet era, before the explosion of research on the nature of networks informed our understanding of how complex systems can and do function. The rhizome is Deleuze and Guattari's answer to the hegemony of the tree structure that dominates all aspects of Western culture, especially in the realms of linguistics and psychoanalysis. The tree "stems" from a central point, and its branches can only bifurcate, never deviating from the pre-established pattern.<sup>3</sup> The theory of complex networks similarly assumes a universal connectivity that is fundamentally opposed to tree structures. Complex networks resemble Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome in the way both emerge without a predetermined pattern. Yet real-world networks exhibit certain tendencies as they grow, while it is not clear, in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

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<sup>2</sup> The ocean also, of course, has depth: the realm of the whale and also of the bodies of those who die at sea, including those enslaved Africans who did not survive the middle passage. Thanks to Corine Tachtiris for illustrating this dimension in this way.

<sup>3</sup> See Moretti for a discussion and examples of the use of tree schemas in the study of literature.

what patterns the theoretical rhizome is subject to. As it turns out, it is much easier and more useful to imagine the Atlantic as a complex network of cultural and economic linkages than as a rhizome.

A network like the worldwide web consists of nodes (for example, web pages) and links. The crucial discovery in network research of recent years is that the distribution of links between the nodes of a complex network is not random. Before the web provided such a vast and fertile object of study for network theorists, the standard model held that complex networks consisted of a collection of nodes connected by a randomly distributed set of links (see e.g. Barabási 23-24). The “random graph” of Paul Erdős and Alfréd Rényi dominated from the 1960s to the late 1990s. Erdős and Rényi’s model first illustrated the most famous and beguiling behavior of complex systems, known as the “small-world” effect. Coined by Stanley Milgram in 1967, the term “small-world” refers to the fact that even in a network of many thousands or millions of links, the average “path length” between any two nodes is surprisingly short.

Milgram’s experiment involved sending 160 letters from Massachusetts to Kansas requesting that the recipients pass the letter along to someone who might know a certain person in Massachusetts. The resulting average “path” length was 5.5: that is, the letters had to pass through the hands of fewer than six people on average.<sup>4</sup> Erdős and Rényi’s graphs also display this small-world effect, in that when more and more links are randomly added to a set of nodes, those nodes eventually all become connected to each other. The usefulness of the Erdős and Rényi model to explain real-world systems ends

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<sup>4</sup> Although Milgram himself did not use the phrase, the idea of “six degrees of separation” made famous by John Guare’s 1991 play of that title began with Milgram’s experiment (Barabási 29).

there, as random graphs cannot account for the clustering or “community structure” that takes place in actual networks (Newman 21-22). In random networks, the chance that any given node will be connected to any other node is the same for all nodes, since the distribution is random. To account for clusters or communities within the network as well as the growth of the network (that is, the introduction of new nodes or the establishment of new links) requires a different model wherein the distribution of links is not random but rather occurs according to a certain logic.

The particular mechanisms at work in growing networks were first studied by Derek De Solla Price, who analyzed the network of citations between scientific papers. Price found that the best predictor of whether a paper will be cited in the future is the number of times it has already been cited. Therefore, the papers most likely to garner new citations are those with the most citations already. Price named this phenomenon “cumulative advantage” (“General Theory”), though the phrase “the rich get richer” illustrates it more directly. As Mark Newman points out, the idea that papers with more citations attract even more makes intuitive sense: “The probability that one comes across a particular paper whilst reading the literature will presumably increase with the number of other papers that cite it, and hence the probability that you cite it yourself in a paper that you write will increase similarly” (30).

Albert-László Barabási and Réka Albert rediscovered Price’s phenomenon a quarter-century later and renamed it “preferential attachment.” Using examples such as the world-wide web and the network of Hollywood actors in addition to citation networks, Barabási and Albert show that two aspects of real networks—growth and preferential

attachment—contribute to the tell-tale mathematical signature of complex networks: a “scale-free” or “power-law” distribution. The term “power-law” refers to a certain distribution of data such that the average of that data is not salient. A random graph maps onto a bell-curve distribution; since the majority of nodes have close to the average number of links, the graph of the distribution of links per node forms a bell shape. It is extremely unlikely in a random graph that any node has significantly more or less than the average number of nodes. In a random network, therefore, the average number of links nodes have is *typical*; the average is salient in describing a typical node.

“In contrast,” Barabási explains, “the absence of a peak in a power-law degree distribution implies that in a real network there is no such thing as a characteristic node” (70). Because there will be nodes with many times the average number of links, as well as nodes with only a fraction of the average, a network displaying a power-law distribution cannot be said to have a scale. Scale-free networks have “a continuous hierarchy of nodes, spanning from rare hubs to the numerous tiny nodes” (Barabási 70).

Barabási and Albert’s breakthrough in 1999 was to realize that the combination of network growth and preferential attachment explains the creation of the large “hubs” that make networks scale-free. Nodes with more links gather even more links, as new nodes tend to connect to their most connected predecessors. Such networks are not only complex but dynamic and *self-organizing*. That is to say, complex networks develop patterns and hierarchies naturally, without external organization. The same principle of self-organization applies to growing networks from the microscopic to the global level.

Molecular networks and social networks appear to follow the same patterns of preferential attachment and hub development.

As an updated version of the rhizome, the complex network appears more restricted and predetermined than Deleuze and Guattari's model. If the first principle of rhizomatics is that "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be," the behavior of complex networks illustrates the contradiction in Deleuze and Guattari's statement between "can" and "must" [*peut* and *doit*]. Any node in a network *could* be connected to any other (and the two nodes need not be of the same size or type), but preferential attachment makes it *more likely* that a new node in the system will link up with certain nodes and not with others. It cannot be that every point "must" be connected to every other point. The probability that a certain node will attract links, according to Bianconi and Barabási, is the result of both the number of links the node already has and the node's "fitness."

In the sixteenth century, at the start of the colonial period, the balance of cultural influence clearly tipped toward Europe. Europe's cultural nodes therefore held a seeming monopoly of linkages. By the twentieth century, the hubs in the Atlantic network were more evenly distributed. The fitness (an elastic term not tied to any particular rubric of quality) of American cities (e.g. New York, São Paulo), cultural forms (e.g. jazz, tango, Hollywood films), products (Coca-Cola, McDonald's), and literary works (e.g. by Twain, Borges, or Césaire) drew links away from Europe. Despite Pascale Casanova's contention that Paris still exerts control as the capital of the "World Republic of Letters," it is clear that the cultural as well as economic network that makes



up the Atlantic region has hubs in more diverse places than it used to. Lagos, Johannesburg, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Havana, Montréal, New York, and other African and American cities constitute major cultural capitals in today's Atlantic, along with European cities such as Paris, London, and Amsterdam. The theory of complex networks accounts for the rise to prominence of new hubs over time, whereas the rhizome does not.

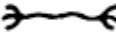
Deleuze and Guattari's theory equates order and hegemony with genealogy. The complex network model accounts for the way disorder *tends toward* order, as well as the way hegemony develops, without recourse to a genealogical tree. Deleuze and Guattari cite a 1974 paper that promotes replacing the "command tree" with "acentered systems, finite networks of automata in which communication runs from any neighbor to any other, the stems or channels do not preexist, and all individuals are interchangeable" (Rosenstiehl and Petitot, qtd. in Deleuze and Guattari 16-17). If the rhizome is based on a network model, therefore, that model appears to be the random graph. Both random and self-organizing networks are acentered, and in neither model do the "stems preexist." The breakthrough in more recent network theory has been to show that individuals are not interchangeable. Some people, states, and texts come to dominate, not because of an inherited right to rule (as in a genealogical tree system), but through the workings of the network itself. The shift from random to complex networks allows for a clearer understanding of where hegemony comes from.

For Deleuze and Guattari, hegemony or control always represents a genealogical structure, just as Chomskyan tree diagrams force sentences to conform to the model of

the family tree. “The rhizome,” they write, “is an anti-genealogy” (11). Growing, self-organizing networks also contradict the genealogical, linear, tree-based view of history, but the complex network model in particular shows how some nodes become hubs and come to dominate the system. Both the rhizome and the complex network are systems continually in the process of becoming: either becoming-chaos or becoming-structure. Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome as “a model that is perpetually in construction or collapsing” (20). Barabási describes how the power-law signature of complex networks resembles the state of a liquid just at the point of freezing (76-78). The molecules of a liquid are more or less randomly distributed, compared to the orderly structure of a solid. The “phase transition” from liquid to solid requires that the molecules of a liquid about to freeze reach a certain “critical point.” A power-law distribution is the signature of such a critical point. That critical arrangement of molecules signals the immanent passage from disorder to order. Growing networks are continually at that critical point; scale-free characteristics and self-organization are the signs that a system is about to freeze up.

In my schematic characterization of the *longue durée* of Atlantic history, the network of cultural and economic connections across the ocean tends toward structures of power, even as it develops in complexity. As the colonization of the Americas leads to the establishment and growth of the transatlantic slave trade, a pattern develops which comes to be known as the Atlantic triangle. From the sixteenth century through the nineteenth, ships travel clockwise around the Atlantic, following the prevailing wind pattern, and establish certain hubs on the west coast of Africa, in the Caribbean, and on

the mainland of North and South America through the network of their accumulated voyages.

The triangle, geometric symbol of the Atlantic slave trade, cannot be traced with any precision on a map. It represents a historical tendency, over centuries, for goods to travel from Europe to Africa, for slaves to be taken from Africa to America, and for raw materials to be shipped from America to Europe. Édouard Glissant draws the slave trade this way, in a footnote at the opening of his *Poetics of Relation*:  “African countries to the East; the lands of America to the West” (5). Lines forking on the right (East) side come from various African hubs, while lines forking on the left (West) side distribute that human cargo to various American hubs. Glissant’s diagram traces the Middle Passage: the middle leg of the Atlantic triangle. We can imagine a similar sketch with three lines instead of one.

What Glissant’s figure illustrates is the accumulation of many voyages, with many different specific origins and destinations, into the historical impression of a single line. In order to conceive of the triangle as a pattern in the Atlantic network, we have to agree that “Europe,” “Africa,” and “America” come to serve as macro-hubs over the course of the colonial and slavetrading era. The various lines traced by specific ships from specific ports in Europe, Africa, and the Americas meld together into a clockwise, triangular tendency. And the more links these macro-hubs accumulate, the more likely it is that they will garner even more links. The triangle pattern that emerges is self-organizing and self-reinforcing; the stronger it gets, the closer the entire system comes to freezing.

Of course, thousands of voyages across the ocean, conducted by thousands of sailors, carrying millions of slaves, cannot and should not be made to seem inevitable by way of network phenomena. That is not my aim. Some individual or group of individuals perpetrated each slavetrading voyage with an aim to personal financial gain; the magnitude of that human tragedy will still be felt on both sides of the Atlantic for generations. On the contrary, describing the Atlantic triangle—and through it, colonial power and racial hierarchy—as a pattern in the network allows us to avoid seeing that pattern, power structure, and hierarchy as historically inevitable and totalizing. A network displaying a power-law structure is constantly on the verge of freezing, which means that it is not frozen. Hubs exert greater pull as they grow, but that pull is not absolute.

The works that I read in the chapters that follow have been chosen for their geographic and chronological diversity (authors from all around the Atlantic—France, West Africa, Brazil, and Guadeloupe—writing in four different centuries), but more so for their work in establishing anti-triangular (or in Léry’s case, ante-triangular) patterns. Rather than start, as many postcolonial critiques of European hegemony do, with the idea of decentering the metropole (as in e.g. Chakrabarty), I follow Glissant in seeing the world as a network with no center to begin with.

Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation* draws on the figure of the rhizome specifically to envision a poetic mode to combat the legacy of colonialism and slavery (11-12). “The movements of this poetics,” Glissant argues, “can be located in space as trajectories, their poetic import being aimed at completing these trajectories in order to abolish them.

These trajectories link the places of the world into a whole made up of peripheries” (28). The works I read in this dissertation, and in particular Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* (discussed in chapter 2) and Maryse Condé’s *Histoire de la femme cannibale* (chapter 4), make Glissant’s observation geographically literal. In my readings, I bring out the ways in which these authors trace trajectories in their works that, through linking place to place, simultaneously show the world to be made of peripheries and work to abolish the power of the trajectories that make up the triangle.

So if the Atlantic is a network that grows in complexity over the colonial period, and if the connections that make up that network consist of trajectories, what is the nature of those trajectories? I am talking, in the first case, of trajectories made by ships crossing the ocean, but those are not the only trajectories traced in the network. There are trajectories made by fictional ships in literary works, as well as the trajectories of ideas and thoughts. What I call trajectories here, after Glissant, correspond to what researchers in the fields of transport geography call “mobilities.” Larsen, Urry, and Axhausen write about “five interdependent mobilities that form geographies of networks and mobilities in the contemporary world.” Each of these, with the exception of virtual travel (which could be seen as an extension of “imaginative travel”), also describes a kind of trajectory in my networked conception of the colonial-postcolonial Atlantic:

- *Physical travel* of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration, and escape;
- *Physical movement* of objects delivered to producers, consumers and retailers;
- *Imaginative travel* elsewhere through images and memories seen on texts, TV, computer screens and film;
- *Virtual travel* on the Internet;

- *Communicative travel* through person-to-person messages via letters, postcards, birthday and Christmas cards, telegrams, telephones, faxes, emails, instant messages, videoconferences and “skyping.” (4)

Three major differences appear between the mobilities of Larsen et al. and the trajectories I place in the Atlantic network. First, for all of the authors I treat here with the exception of Condé, technology limits the transatlantic conveyance of people, products, and ideas to ships and texts. In Paul Gilroy’s memorable formulation, “ships were the living means by which the points within that Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected” (*Black Atlantic* 16). Everything and everyone tangible that traveled across the ocean, before airplanes, the telephone, and Skype were invented, did so by ship. But not everything that travels is tangible; intangibles (such as ideas) traveled between the covers of books.

The second difference is that the trajectories I study need not actually take place in the world; in fact, the trajectories I discuss are mainly those written into the network as they are written into literary works. As this is a literary study, the kinds of relevant mobilities are not only potentially imaginative (intangible)—as described above—but also imagined. That we read about a trajectory in a work of fiction rather than a historical document makes it no less real; in fact, it is my contention that the historical veracity of a particular voyage is not at all directly relevant to its potential effect on the structure of the network (see my comments in chapter 2 on the probable historical fabrication of parts of Equiano’s *Narrative*).

Ships travel in texts, just as texts travel in ships. And ideas travel in both. Roberto Schwarz, in his reading of nineteenth-century Brazilian literature, describes how ideas came “from Europe every fortnight, by steamship, in the form of books, magazines, and newspapers, and everyone went down to the harbour to wait for them” (*Misplaced Ideas* 34). Nineteenth-century Brazilians, according to Schwarz, were eager to take the European ideas that washed up on their shores and to make them their own. Which brings me to the third important difference between the mobilities listed above and the trajectories in the Atlantic network I am describing. While the people and ideas Larsen et al. study travel by many different modes and for an infinite number of reasons, the connections I analyze in this dissertation generally fall into two categories: affiliative and appropriative.

Links of affiliation are what sustain social networks. In this dissertation, the kind of large-scale social network of interest is diasporic. Diasporas, as far as I am concerned in this dissertation, are networks of correspondence, tradition sharing, storytelling, and language maintenance between members of a community separated by distance. Gilroy defines diaspora similarly in *Against Race*: “[D]iaspora is an outer-national term which contributes to the analysis of intercultural and transcultural processes and forms. It identifies a relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal and reluctant scattering” (123). More specifically, I propose that we see the links in such a “relational network” as links primarily of affiliation.

How does affiliation build a network? In *The Practice of Diaspora*, Brent Hayes Edwards derives his characterization of diaspora from a particular meaning of the word *articulation*, borrowed from Stuart Hall:

...Hall points out the word articulation has two meanings: “both ‘joining up’ (as in the limbs of the body, or an anatomical structure) and ‘giving expression to.’” He suggests that the term is most useful in the study of the workings of race in social formations when it is pushed away from the latter implication, of an “expressive link”...and toward its etymology as a metaphor of the body. (14)

For his part, Edwards notes that such articulations of diaspora (what I am calling links of affiliation) not only take place across geographical distance, but also often across linguistic barriers and in spite of other differences between communities and individuals. The term diaspora, Edwards realizes, “forces us to articulate discourses of cultural and political linkage only through and across difference” (13).

The model of diaspora as a network of links—established and maintained across distance and in spite of difference—stands out distinctly from the predominant model of network formation that I discuss throughout this dissertation: that of linkage by appropriation. The metaphor of cannibalism represents the violence of appropriation, whereas affiliation represents solidarity and an antidote to violence. However, the two kinds of links, I argue, exist in the same network, the same plane of consistency. In fact, as the first chapter illustrates with the example of Jean de Léry and the Huguenot diaspora that came after him, links of textual appropriation can also function as links of affiliation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Tina Campt and Deborah Thomas point out that research on the African Diaspora has long characterized the formation of diasporic links as both affiliative and appropriative (though they do not use those terms): “African Diaspora Studies has historically attempted to theorize both



### **Cannibalism: Linking Through Appropriation**

This entire dissertation could be seen as an extended meditation on the line that serves as epigraph to this introduction, the first line of Oswald de Andrade's 1928 "Cannibalist Manifesto": "Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically" (Andrade and Bary 38).<sup>6</sup> As the opening volley of a clearly contentious manifesto about the value of Brazilian culture, this line appears to call all Brazilians to rally around and embrace the idea of cannibalism. We Brazilians are all cannibals, Oswald appears to be saying, let us acknowledge that that is what unites us.

And yet I see a broader applicability to the phrase. The "we" can be read not only within the national frame of Brazil, but also globally. Cannibalism read metaphorically as the appropriation of others unites us all—socially and economically at least, if not philosophically. Cannibalism unites, but how exactly? In a network. In the geographic context of this dissertation, cannibalism is the figure which informs and illustrates the appropriative mechanism that forms the bulk of the cultural and economic network that makes up the Atlantic as I describe it.

Cannibalism is not only another word for appropriation; it also includes a sense of

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material *links of kinship, community, and culture* that people maintain (i.e., existing links and concrete modes of exchange between people in sites of origin and settlement), and the strategic and existential forms of *borrowing* that black communities imagine and construct transnationally (i.e., the creative modes of exchange through which individuals 'borrow' or 'seek inspiration' from other communities by making use of cultural, political, and intellectual resources unavailable in their own communities)" (2, emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> The words "anthropophagy" (*antropofagia* in Portuguese) and "cannibalism" are not synonymous, as the discussion that follows makes clear. I have gone along with convention and with Leslie Bary's translation in referring to Oswald's manifesto here.

incorporation—of foreign elements, of difference, and of the power of the predecessor.<sup>7</sup>

The word includes a distinct directedness of action: from the present into the past. In addition, cannibalism has a particular association with the first interactions between Europeans and the people of the Caribbean. What cannibalism “means” in colonial history is the eating of human flesh specifically in the space beyond the borders of the known: in the realm of the Other. The claim that the colonized are no better than cannibals serves as a justification for the capture, domestication, and assimilation of that “different” space into the European “same.”<sup>8</sup> The accusation of a “savage” appropriation (cannibalism) masks and justifies the pattern of appropriations—of bodies, cultures, languages, and goods—systematized as colonialism.

Peter Hulme treats in detail how cannibalism comes to signify (in the colonial imagination) the eating of human flesh specifically by non-Europeans, starting with the word’s purported first usage in Columbus’s journal entry of 23 November 1492.

Approaching an island, Columbus is told of a people who live there who are violent and

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the psychoanalytic definition of incorporation and its relevance to cannibalism in Brazilian and Caribbean literature, see especially Matibag 159 and Zita Nunes 33-35.

<sup>8</sup> Moreover, “anthropophagy” served in the same way to mark out otherness within Europe before cannibalism became a word. Peter Hulme speculatively traces the persecution of supposed anthropophagists to the fourth Lateran Council of 1215, when Pope Innocent III settled the debate over the eucharist by declaring that, in the course of the mass, the host becomes the flesh of Christ (85). The taking of communion subsequently became the most important way of demonstrating one’s Christianity, and Jews who did not participate were not only routinely killed but often accused of anthropophagy. Because of Pope Innocent’s declaration, celebrants of the eucharist now literally ate Christ’s flesh, and yet the eating of human flesh became an excuse for the persecution of non-Christians. Hulme explains the logic of such hypocritical behavior in the following way: “[B]oundaries of community are often created by accusing those outside the boundary of the very practice on which the integrity of that community is founded” and adds: “This is...the central regulating mechanism of colonial discourse” (85). “Cannibalism” takes over from “anthropophagy” when the distinction between “us” and “them” gets mapped onto “Europe” and “America.”

have eaten people, and he records the name *canibales*. Hulme ventures to designate the *Journal* a “beginning text” of cannibalism, though he quickly acknowledges how problematic such a designation is, not least because the original journal disappeared only decades after Columbus’s voyages. The text Hulme quotes from is “a transcription of an abstract [by Bartolomé de Las Casas] of a copy of a lost original” (17). Even a well-documented first use of “cannibal” could not be a true beginning, though, as the power of the word comes from its association with existing discourses. Through a careful analysis of Columbus’s textual negotiations in the last weeks of 1492, Hulme makes a convincing case for the word *canibal* as a pivot point between two competing discourses: one about Asia and the other about savagery (21). The syllable *can* that Columbus records on 23 November appears to relate both to the Cynocephali or man-eating, dog-headed people of Herodotus and Mandeville (through the Latin word for dog) and to the Grand Khan (*el Gran Can*), the ruler of the Orient whom Columbus desperately hopes to find (Hulme 22; cf. Todorov 30).

The discourse of savagery wins out over that of the Orient before Columbus sets sail for home in early 1493. The link with *el Gran Can* fades as the *n* changes to *r*. Hulme is careful to note that “‘Carib’ could not exactly be said to *mean* ‘anthropophagous’ as yet,” so much as it signifies a place: an island (Puerto Rico) that the fleet does not visit (41). The term cannibal originates in Columbus’s voyage to what will be called the Caribbean and maintains its geographic specificity, while at the same time linking up with an existing discourse about anthropophagy already in use in Europe for the formation and defense of boundaries. Meanwhile, the act of eating human flesh

continually recedes from view in a process parallel to that which Columbus's testimony itself undergoes, gaining importance even as it becomes harder to prove.<sup>9</sup>

Thus "cannibal" appears to be that rare kind of word originating in a particular text. Hulme's reading leads him to observe that "reference is always present, either implicitly or explicitly, in any recorded use of the word 'cannibal' from Columbus's on 23 November 1492 onwards" (19). Such a claim makes sense from the point of view of Barthes's intertextuality,<sup>10</sup> and yet, just as cannibalism is not synonymous with anthropophagy, neither is it limited to the discourse of Columbus's first voyage. Cannibalism as a literary and cultural reference point has developed through associations with other texts. Today cannibalism may be more likely to bring to mind *The Silence of the Lambs* than Columbus. To most people, the word still represents

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<sup>9</sup> Anthropologists and historians in recent decades have debated the previously undisputed history of cannibalism, especially following the publication of William Arens's *The Man-Eating Myth* in 1979. Arens is not interested in denying that cannibalism took place, as his detractors have claimed. Rather, he points out how suspiciously beneficial the accusation of cannibalism (as synonymous with anthropophagy) has been for the discipline of anthropology (see Hulme 7-8). In Arens's view, anthropology "could not exist" without anthropophagy (162). Cannibalism is central to the history of colonial discourse—to which anthropology is related—in the sense that the accusation of anthropophagy returns again and again in the *story* Europeans told about non-Europeans. The history of the word cannibalism is really that of the development of a fictional or mythical narrative of savage natives that gained authority by repeated reference over five centuries. The ethnographic "truth" about sixteenth-century cannibalism is unrecoverable, but it is the history of the European story of cannibalism that really matters for this analysis anyway.

<sup>10</sup> In Barthes's view, intertextuality describes a given text as a network of paths that lead back to origins, yet the vast majority of those paths cannot be followed. As Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein point out, "Barthes's vision of intertextuality...highlights the frequent anonymity of the 'sources' of intertextual quotations" (22). All that even the most fastidious reader has access to is "le jalon d'une digression virtuelle vers le reste d'un catalogue (l'*Enlèvement* renvoie à tous les enlèvements déjà écrits)" (Barthes 25) [the mark "of a virtual digression toward the remainder of a catalogue (*The Kidnapping* refers to every kidnapping ever written)" (20)]. The "catalogue" is the collection of everything that is "déjà écrit": the authorless accumulation of text that constitutes a language. Every word in a text references every other usage of that word.

everything that is antithetical to social norms: savagery, depravity, and incomprehensibility. At the same time, the discourse of cannibalism has developed, in places like Brazil and the Caribbean, as a tool of resistance to the long-standing binaries of Europe/colonies and Old World/New World.

Over the course of the twentieth century, cannibalism (*cannibalisme* in French and *antropofagia* in Portuguese) has become a theory. Writers and critics from formerly colonized places have appropriated the violence and deviance—as well as the colonial associations—of cannibalism. By identifying and incorporating an Other, and especially by traveling to the place of the Other to do so, cannibalism simultaneously highlights and collapses a separation between “here” and “there.” In the case of textual cannibalism, the writer from “here” eats another’s writing, brought back from “over there.” As a metaphor for appropriation, cannibalism models the linking of points on a map, facilitating the analysis of transatlantic appropriations (colonial and postcolonial) as a geographic network.

What literary cannibalism celebrates is what Harold Bloom rues and psychologizes in *The Anxiety of Influence*: namely, the idea that no work is truly original. Even if a text does not appear to take directly from other specific texts, it must partake of known words, turns of phrase and textual forms in order to be read. Every writer is necessarily beholden to those writers who came before. Literary cannibalism, starting with Oswald de Andrade and the other Brazilian *antropofagistas*, reevaluates the intertwined processes of writing and reading. The potential for creativity, for making new, lies in the

cannibalization, incorporation, and digestion of the preexisting body of texts, as well as of language itself.

The aim of Oswald's *Antropofagia* in the 1920s was relatively specific. Oswald's cannibal reader-writer was not interested in eating just anyone; the target was European literature and culture. Oswald himself traveled back and forth between France and Brazil several times. Both of his anthropophagic novels, *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar* and *Serafim Ponte Grande*, take dislocation, exile, and specifically transatlantic travel as themes. In the view of the critic Antônio Cândido, travel (to Europe especially) provided Oswald with a vantage point from which to experience more deeply a Brazilian national sentiment (90). *Serafim Ponte Grande* in particular, according to Cândido, describes the "utopia of the permanent, redemptive voyage" ["a utopia da viagem permanente e redentora" (91)].

Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei updates and expands Cândido's 1956 reading of Oswald's transatlantic mobility. For Bellei, the utopic ideal of the permanent voyage has to do with the destruction of national boundaries, the neutralization of differences, and a desire for a "being-between...a being-double that permits [the *antropófago*] not only to arrive in Europe but, most importantly, to mark his presence there" ["O antropófago deseja, ontem como hoje, uma viagem que é um estar-entre...que seja um estar-duplo, que lhe permita não apenas chegar à Europa, mas, principalmente, lá marcar presença" (48)]. *Antropofagia* makes use of travel to achieve its goal of "denying the centrality of the center" ["negar a centralidade do centro" (Bellei 48)]. Oswald's cultural cannibalism requires a voyage. As Bellei puts it, "to be *antropófago* is...to be a traveler" ["Ser

antropófago é, também e principalmente, ser viajante” (47)]. Cannibalism describes the conjunction of appropriation and mobility.

But why *cannibalism*, of all things? Why attempt to rehabilitate for theoretical use a term so loaded with violence and racism? And what historical anthropophagi might we be reductively glorifying in the process?

Luis Madureira, in *Cannibal Modernities*, condemns Oswald de Andrade’s *Antropofagia* movement through a transitive property of Eurocentrism. The *antropofagistas* appropriate an image of the anthropophagous Tupi from sixteenth-century European travel narratives of Brazil. The sixteenth-century chroniclers before them appropriate Tupi culture by writing it down. The early modern travelers are guilty of forever occluding the historical Tupi, and the Brazilian modernists who borrow from the travelers are guilty by association. Oswald reclaims the Tupi, along with the wood known in the colonial period as “Brazil” and the practice of ritual cannibalism, as symbols of a particularly “Brazilian Brazil” in an effort to shift the cultural balance from the Old toward the New World.

Citing Oswald’s 1924 *Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil*, Madureira laconically notes that the nationalist metaphor of “brazilwood poetry,” at the heart of the *Antropofagia* movement, “may well have been borrowed from Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1578), which the celebrated ‘proto-ethnographer’ claims to have reconstructed from his ‘memoirs...written with brazilwood ink, and in America itself’” (*History of a Voyage* xlv, qtd. in Madureira 28) [“...les memoires que j’avois, la

pluspart escrits d'ancre de Bresil, et en l' Amerique mesme..." (*Histoire d'un voyage* 61)].<sup>11</sup> Then mustering the authority of Michel de Certeau's reading of Léry from *The Writing of History*, Madureira condemns Oswald's collection of *Poesia pau-brasil* for reiterating "not only the very fifteenth- and sixteenth-century 'discovery' claims whose historical primacy it seeks to displace, but colonial extraction itself" (Madureira 28).

In Certeau's words, Léry's text is "a raw material doubly drawn from the tropics, since the very characters that bring the primitive object into the textual web are made from a red ink extracted from the *pau-brasil*, one of the principle imports to sixteenth-century Europe" (*Writing of History* 218, qtd. in Madureira 28) ["...matériau doublement tiré des Tropiques puisque les caractères mêmes qui ramènent l'objet sauvage dans le filet d'un texte sont faits d'« encre » rouge extraite du *pau-brasil*, ce bois qui fut l'un des principaux articles d'importation en Europe au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle" (*L'écriture de l'histoire* 257)].

Engaging the internal contradictions and ambiguous redemptive value of the *Antropofagia* movement is the aim of the third chapter. Before we can adequately investigate the *antropofagista* appropriation of the Tupi, however, it is important to uncover what it is that Oswald actually appropriates when he references the Tupi and a tradition of ritual cannibalism purportedly particular to Brazilian history. In light of Madureira's critique, Oswald's witty reworking of Hamlet's dilemma (see the epigraph to the first chapter) becomes more than a rhetorical question. If sixteenth-century travel writing cannot be disentangled from the nascent colonialism of its era, then "Tupi" can

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<sup>11</sup> Madureira quotes from Whatley's translation.



only be an empty marker of European appropriation, signifying “precisely nothing” (Madureira 32). If, on the other hand, a reading of certain sixteenth-century texts provides a more nuanced (if still ambivalent) view of the European use of the category “Tupi” in the sixteenth century, then we cannot say with Madureira that “the negativity that conventionally attaches itself to these inaugural representations of primitive cultures becomes transitive in Oswald’s philosophical reformulation” (41). We cannot accuse twentieth-century modernists for the faults of sixteenth-century chroniclers without first assessing that sixteenth-century writing in its own right.

Thus the first chapter asks: what does “Tupi” mean in one of the most often-cited travel narratives about Brazil from the sixteenth century? What constitutes the “textual web” that Certeau refers to, and what is the “primitive object” ensnared in that web? As Certeau (and through him Madureira) would have it, the fact that Léry wrote of his experience at the expense of the silenced Tupi groups his account with all other travel narratives. The act of writing enacts a one-way appropriation that encapsulates the colonialist ideology of expropriation. “Tupi” can therefore only have meaning as an invented category in a European conception of the world. European writing in such a context can only ever be the record of an absence, the symbolic violence done to a silenced people.

Another, more ambiguous possibility is that Léry’s 1578 *Histoire d’un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* records not only an appropriation of the Brazilian by the European but also the reverse. Certain scenes in Léry’s account suggest moments of equilibrium, where the European has been appropriated, if only temporarily, by the New World.

“Tupi,” in this sense, though still mediated by an appropriative system of European writing, marks a momentary link of affinity enacted as an experience of reciprocal appropriation or shared reading.

Chapter two, “Mobility, Freedom, and Appropriation in the *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: A Network Analysis*,” is a case study in network dynamics. The eighteenth-century voyages of Olaudah Equiano serve as data for an analysis of the transatlantic network of appropriations established in Léry’s era. Through a series of map diagrams that trace the development of the network of Equiano’s voyages over the course of his 1789 *Interesting Narrative*, I show how a pattern of transatlantic connections can have literary, including intertextual, significance.

Chapter three, “The Endless Cruise: *Antropofagia* and the Voyage in Oswald de Andrade’s *Serafim Ponte Grande*,” uses the expanded notion of the complex network developed in chapter two to shed light on the Brazilian modernist movement known as *Antropofagia*. Whereas chapter one uses the image of cannibalism to explain the linking mechanism that constitutes the network I describe, chapter three conversely puts the dynamics of complex networks to use in teasing out the significance of the cannibal (or anthropophagous) metaphor for *Antropofagia*. For Oswald de Andrade, author of the “Manifesto antropófago,” the relation of the cultural cannibal to the appropriated Other is dyadic. There is only eater and eaten. As we see in the first two chapters, however, the history of the Atlantic over the colonial period is the development of a complex network of appropriations. This alternative view comes to inform a new reading of Oswald’s 1933 satirical travel narrative *Serafim Ponte Grande*.

The last chapter, “‘Le triangle s’était inversé’: Reconfiguring the Postcolonial in Maryse Condé’s *Histoire de la femme cannibale*,” shows how a novel can use the network dynamics discussed throughout the dissertation to simultaneously highlight and defuse the dehumanizing history wrought by the development of a network of appropriations over five centuries. The triangle, symbol of the slave trade discussed in chapter two as the result of a network pattern, becomes in Condé’s 2003 novel a figure to be unraveled. Cannibalism in all its ambiguity as a linking mechanism becomes a theme. I show how Condé uses that theme to take on postcolonial criticism as well as the history that it critiques.

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Chapter 37 of *Moby-Dick* is entitled “Sunset.” If we read Ahab gazing aft as a reflection on the colonial past of the Americas and the Atlantic more generally, we might interpret the title to refer to the sunset of colonial power through racial hierarchy. Through the long chronological scope of this dissertation, we can see that the fight against systems of colonial hierarchy goes back to the beginnings of such systems. Léry rejects the Catholic colonial attitude toward the sixteenth-century America he comes to know, as Equiano rejects the slave trade of his era, as Oswald de Andrade and Maryse Condé reject the neocolonial hegemony of their own. But though the “billows”—literary and otherwise—have sought to “sidelong swell to whelm” the track laid by colonialism for centuries, what this progression of texts illustrates is that the sun of colonial power has been very long in setting.

CHAPTER 1: NETWORKS OF APPROPRIATION AND AFFINITY IN JEAN DE LÉRY'S  
*HISTOIRE D'UN VOYAGE FAICT EN LA TERRE DU BRÉSIL*

Tupi, or not Tupi that is the question.  
— Oswald de Andrade, *Manifesto antropófago*

Jean de Léry is not representative of his age, his national affiliation, or his religion. He was many things in his life: shoemaker, Protestant minister, and polemicist. He survived the French Wars of Religion, two dire famines, and a botched attempt at French colonization in Brazil. His biography is no more representative of the average sixteenth-century Frenchman than his most famous text is representative of colonial-era travel narratives. And yet he is best known as the travel writer who most clearly established the absolute difference between Western observer and non-Western observed that formed the foundation of classic ethnography.

For Michel de Certeau, most notably, the passage wherein Léry reflects on writing (the peoples of America lack it, while the rest of the world possesses it) marks a separation between “them” and “us” that is not only one of geography and culture, but also of power: “Between ‘them’ and ‘us’ there exists the difference of possessing ‘either sacred or profane’ writing, which immediately raises the question of a relation of *power*” (*Writing of History* 215) [“Entre ‘eux’ et ‘nous’, il y a la différence de cette écriture ‘soit sainte soit profane’ qui met immédiatement en cause un rapport de *pouvoir*” (*L’écriture*

*de l'histoire* 253)].<sup>1</sup> The Atlantic that separates Léry's *par-delà* (over there, i.e. Brazil) from his *par-deçà* (over here, i.e. France) comes to represent not a daunting yet bridgeable distance, but rather an unbridgeable difference between peoples.

The implication of the standard reading of Léry's text, exemplified most eloquently by Certeau, is that the difference Léry the proto-ethnographer sees between his culture and that of the Tupi models the divide between European and Other underpinning the power relations of the four centuries of Atlantic colonialism that follow him. One aim of this reading is to separate Léry's text from a blanket condemnation of sixteenth-century travel narratives as colonialist. His is worth highlighting among a forest of contemporary travel narratives because of its especially sympathetic representation of the American Other. And yet saying that Léry is not representative of his period does not necessarily romanticize the author's view as singularly enlightened. Léry is also undoubtedly the product of his age, and noting the ways that his *Histoire d'un voyage* is conditioned by the texts it interacts with is essential to any reading.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Certeau reads Léry's passage about writing through the lens of Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes tropiques* (1955). Certeau's reading of Léry depends on an epistemological continuity between early modern accounts of New World peoples and twentieth-century ethnography. Certeau treats Léry's description of Tupi astonishment at the power of writing "as if it were the equivalent of a primal scene in the construction of ethnological discourse" (*Writing of History* 211) ["comme à l'équivalent d'une « scène primitive » dans la construction du discours ethnologique" (*L'écriture de l'histoire* 248)]. Jacques Derrida's critique, in *De la grammatologie*, of the interpretation of cultural difference by way of a prototypical "leçon d'écriture" (which may or may not have been inaugurated by Léry), also proceeds from a reading of Lévi-Strauss.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Lestringant, the most prolific Léry commentator of the past thirty years, often argues for Léry's non-uniqueness in the body of sixteenth-century French writing on the New World. Léry's account might be "the best written" [*le mieux écrit*] account of its time ("Calvinistes et cannibales" 77), but Lestringant does not condone privileging the *Histoire d'un voyage* to the point of dehistoricizing it. While taking heed of Lestringant's warning, I use the text to theorize a distinction between appropriation and affinity without treating the text as an ahistorical laboratory for theoretical ideas.

My aim in this chapter is to show how Léry's text participates in and adds to a transatlantic network of cultural and textual connections that by the second half of the sixteenth century has already begun to proliferate and grow in complexity. The links in that network fall into two categories: links of appropriation and links of affinity. The central image in Léry's depiction of the Tupi—cannibalism—is not the mark of absolute cultural difference it would become in later eras, but rather serves as a model for violent appropriation on several levels: textual and cultural as well as physical. Cannibalism as a ritual practiced by one group on another group illustrates the way appropriation (of flesh, of text, or of custom) simultaneously highlights and erodes the distinction between groups. The most important divide in Léry's worldview does not stand between Europe and America; his world is most starkly divided between Catholic and Protestant. He therefore establishes links of affinity in his text between himself and the Tupi, as well as between himself and other Protestants. Both kinds of links contain a geographical aspect that is essential to the reading of the network that the text is involved in. The transatlantic network of affinity and appropriation of the sixteenth century constitutes at the same time the context and in large part the subject of Léry's narrative.

### **Situating Léry in his context**

There are several ways to situate Léry's text: in the context of the sixteenth-century colonization of Brazil and other travel narratives in French and Portuguese that describe those colonization projects; in relation to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonization (English, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and French) more broadly; in the context of the Wars of Religion and the parallel war of words between Catholics and

Protestants; or in terms of a more theoretical, abstract sense of the European's encounter with a Native American Other. Historians and anthropologists as well as literary scholars have done this work admirably.<sup>3</sup>

In order to see the text as both determined result of complex circumstances and as unique expression, I situate Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* at the intersection of two networks of people, places and texts. As "proto-ethnography," Léry's text participates in a network of cultural appropriation coextensive with the European colonial project. As Protestant polemic, Léry's text borrows from and is borrowed by other authors, both Protestant allies and Catholic foes. It is possible to trace the construction of a complicated network of textual appropriation through the five editions of Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* that appeared during his lifetime. At the same time, Léry's text engages with a second kind of network: a network of affinity. As the record of an attempt to found a Huguenot "refuge" far from the battlegrounds of the French Wars of Religion, Léry's work performs what Brent Hayes Edwards has named "the practice of diaspora." Edwards notes the way that diasporas are "articulated" (as in, fit together like a joint) by dispersed individuals making connections with each other. Here I extend Edwards's notion by recasting diaspora as a network based on and maintained by links of affinity. By living among the Tupi on the coast of Brazil, if only for a few months,

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<sup>3</sup> For a comparison of French and Portuguese travel accounts, see Carneiro. For an introduction to travel writing of the period, see Mancall. For an overview of early French colonization projects as challenges to Iberian hegemony in the Americas, see Boucher, ch. 2. For theorization of the European encounter with the Americas, see especially Greenblatt and Hulme. For a transnational reading of Protestant travel writing, see Scanlan. As for Léry's Protestantism in particular, no one has paid more attention to situating Léry in the context of the Wars of Religion than Lestringant.

Léry and his Protestant companions prefigured the Huguenot diaspora that took shape in English and Dutch New World colonies in the seventeenth century. Léry's text not only records but enacts links in a transatlantic Huguenot diasporic network.

The work of distinguishing networks of appropriation from networks of affinity motivates this dissertation as a whole. The discussion of texts by Oswald de Andrade and Maryse Condé in chapters three and four, respectively, relies on the image of cannibalism or anthropophagy to illustrate the distinction between appropriation and affinity. By beginning with the first century of European transatlantic colonialism, I do not intend to add to historians' understanding of the *Histoire d'un voyage*. Rather, I am interested in what Léry's sixteenth century illustrates about the establishment of textual and cultural networks. Léry's theorization of anthropophagy as a metaphoric basis for cultural comparison initiates a discourse that has engaged with images of cannibalism and simultaneously performed a kind of textual cannibalism in various ways for four centuries and more. With Léry, anthropophagy becomes not only a marker of savagery, but also a vivid image of cultural appropriation.

Returning to Certeau's 1975 reading of Léry enables me to unravel the oral-written distinction at the heart of *The Writing of History*. The oral-written binary, so important for structuralist and post-structuralist thinking in anthropological as well as literary study, does not allow for a full appreciation of Léry's text either in its sixteenth-century context or in terms of its usefulness for an investigation of textual appropriation. Léry, as observer and chronicler, does appropriate the oral (Tupi) by way of a written (European) code. And yet when multiple people or groups of people read the same text,



writing can also be the basis for affinity. The distinction between writing as appropriation and reading as affinity provides the opportunity to see Léry's record of interactions with the Tupi as an illustration of both kinds of network. Here I follow Janet Whatley's impression of Léry's text as "a brief and privileged moment when two technologies encounter each other in an elated equality of exchange" (281). The elusive equality Whatley sees in Léry's account is made possible by "a reciprocal reverence" between European and American peoples.<sup>4</sup> I extend Whatley's reading by situating the possibility for reciprocity in terms of Léry's Protestantism. The Calvinist emphasis on textuality frames the distinction between writing and shared reading, appropriation and affinity.

### **Networks of Appropriation**

It is the figure of the Cannibal or Anthropophagus that allows Oswald de Andrade and his fellow modernists to lay claim to appropriation as a positive aspect of Brazilian culture. Rather than see Brazilian culture as passively derived from Europe, *Antropofagia* validates the active "digestion" of influences. In order to frame cannibalism as appropriation, rather than as violence or perversion, Oswald in the *Manifesto antropófago* draws on descriptions of Tupi cannibalism by sixteenth-century authors. Ritual cannibalism, as Léry and Montaigne famously stress, is not the eating of

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<sup>4</sup> Whatley takes the phrase from Urbain Chauveton's 1579 French translation of Girolamo Benzoni's 1565 *Historia del mondo nuovo*. According to Benzoni/Chauveton, the Indians of Spanish America and the Spanish should have had "a reciprocal reverence between them, like true friends and allies" ["une révérence réciproque les uns aux autres comme parfaits amis et alliés" (qtd. in Whatley 275, my translation)]. Whatley notes that, as opposed to Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage*, "Benzoni's book is about what happened instead of that alliance."

human flesh out of hunger or preference but rather a system by which the cannibal appropriates the force (and often the name) of a vanquished foe. The act of appropriation creates a link between eater and eaten, and the network of such links over time constitutes a system of relation between groups engaged in perpetual war. Likewise, colonialism is a system of appropriation of land and of the people who inhabit that land. Spanish and Portuguese colonialism establishes a transatlantic network of appropriation in the sixteenth century that only grows in complexity in subsequent centuries. What Oswald draws from Léry is the idea that Tupi cannibalism might serve as a countervailing mode of appropriation particular to the New World. My reading treats colonial and cannibal appropriation as similar linking mechanisms in the same transatlantic network of appropriation.

Officially, the colonial network in the Americas of the sixteenth century consists almost entirely of links to Spain and Portugal. The Treaty of Tordesilhas (1494) divides the world into Spanish and Portuguese hemispheres. The line of longitude intended to bisect the Atlantic leaves most of modern-day Brazil in Portuguese hands, and so Portugal begins its own project of American colonization in tandem with Spain. At the same time, the other European maritime powers scheme to disrupt Iberian hegemony in the New World. Though France does not establish successful colonies in the hemisphere until the seventeenth century, French presence in the Caribbean and along the coast of South America begins very shortly after Columbus's voyages. The first French expedition to Brazil is that of de Gonneville in 1503-5 (Vidal 19-20)—that is, only three years after Cabral claims the territory for Portugal. Beginning in the first decade of the

century, Norman sailors begin spending years with the Tupi of coastal Brazil learning the language while profiting from the transatlantic brazilwood trade (Vidal 22). While this informal system of *truchements* (intermediaries or translators) facilitates commerce and aligns the French with certain native groups (while other groups ally with the Portuguese), it never coalesces into official, permanent settlements.

The colonization mission that Léry participates in is one of three attempts by the French to establish colonies in the Americas during the sixteenth century. As Lestringant notes, each fails for a different reason (*Le huguenot et le sauvage* 22-32). Settlers in the St. Lawrence Valley in the 1530s and '40s find Canadian winters inhospitable. Huguenot settlers in Florida in the 1560s find the Catholic Spanish inhospitable.<sup>5</sup> The French mission to settle an island in Guanabara Bay (present-day Rio de Janeiro), the second of the three ventures, ought to be the one to succeed. Led by Nicholas Durant de Villegagnon, a knight of Malta and veteran of previous international engagements, “la France Antarctique” (1555-60) has the advantage of a beneficent climate and an immense coastline not yet fully secured by the Portuguese.

The downfall of Fort Coligny (as the island in Guanabara Bay is named, after Villegagnon’s Huguenot patron Gaspard de Coligny) stems from a religious dispute between Catholics and Protestants on the island. Villegagnon leaves France in 1555 with a contingent of convicts and outcasts and begins construction of his island fort with the help of Norman *truchements* already established in the area. The *truchements* do not take well to the new authority, especially when Villegagnon forbids them from

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<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the Spanish soundly rout the French in 1565, even if the Protestant legend of the time overstates the defeat as a massacre (Boucher 50-51).

cohabiting with native women, and they return to the mainland after attempting to assassinate its governor. Desperate for reinforcements, Villegagnon writes to Jean Calvin (whom he knows from law school in Orléans) asking that the leader of the reformed church in Geneva send a delegation (Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 32). Jean de Léry is one of fourteen French Protestants who travels, along with close to three hundred other settlers, to the newly founded colony in 1556 (Léry 33). They hope to found a Protestant “refuge” in the New World, away from the religious civil war brewing in France.

On their arrival, the Calvinists soon find Villegagnon to be much more of a religious and political opportunist than a dedicated Protestant. Léry suggests that Villegagnon’s religious convictions shift depending on which side—Protestant or Catholic—appears most likely to provide the most or the quickest funding or manpower at any given moment (46). Lestringant argues that Villegagnon aims to obviate religious dispute in the colony by negotiating a compromise between the two dogmas (*Le huguenot et le sauvage* 33). This effort to create a new state religion by decree backfires. Villegagnon threatens the dissenting Protestants with imprisonment and eventually drowns three of them. Léry and several others, after only eight months on the island, flee to the mainland to wait for the next ship back to France. It is largely during the two or three months Léry lives on the mainland with the Tupi that he compiles the observations that make up the central, “ethnographic” section of the book. The story of the Protestants’ expectations and disillusion at the hands of Villegagnon represents more than just a frame for the

description of the American Other, however. Understanding Léry's approach to the Tupi requires an appreciation of his conception of Catholics.

Two discussions of anthropophagy anchor Léry's account. The first comes in chapter 6, which recounts the Protestants' sojourn on the island and the religious dispute between Protestants and Catholics. The very first time that the new community attempts to take communion together, Villegagnon and the colonist Jean Cointa (whom the Protestants suspect of secret Catholicism from the beginning) raise theological problems. Villegagnon and Cointa agree with the Calvinists that both the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (the claim that the bread and wine transform into the body and blood of Christ at a certain moment during the mass) and the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation (the coexistence of bread and body, wine and blood) should be rejected. However, Villegagnon and Cointa also reject the Calvinist explanation: namely, that "these words and expressions are figures—that is, Scripture is accustomed to calling the signs of the Sacraments by the names of the things signified" (41) ["ces paroles et locutions sont figurées: c'est à dire, que l'Escriture a accoustumé d'appeler et de nommer les signes des Sacremens du nom de la chose signifiée..." (176)].

Léry notes with exasperation that no fourth alternative emerges from the debate and recognizes that Villegagnon and Cointa never in fact left their Catholic beliefs behind. Because they insist on taking Jesus's words "This is my body; this is my blood" literally, Léry equates their practice of the Eucharist to cannibalism.<sup>6</sup> In fact, he compares them to

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<sup>6</sup> Hoffmann (209-10 and 217n2) notes that the Protestant accusation of Catholic theophagy neither begins nor ends with Léry. Several Huguenot pamphlets make similar rhetorical moves

the worst of the mainland cannibals: “they wanted not only to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ grossly rather than spiritually, but what was worse, like the savages named *Ouetaca*...they wanted to chew and swallow it raw” (41) [“ils vouloyent...non seulement grossierement, plustost que spirituellement, manger la chair de Jesus Christ, mais qui est pis estoit, à la maniere des sauvages nommez *Ou-ëtacas*...ils la vouloyent mascher et avaler toute crue” (176-77)].

The other major discussion of anthropophagy comes in chapter 15, in the midst of the section of the narrative devoted to Tupi customs and religion. The chapter title alone suggests that Tupi anthropophagy constitutes a system of *observances* comparable with the Catholic (anthropophagic) Eucharist: “How the Americans Treat Their Prisoners of War and the Ceremonies They Observe Both in Killing and in Eating Them” [*Comment les Ameriquains traittent leurs prisonniers prins en guerre, et les ceremonies qu'ils observent tant à les tuer qu'à les manger*].<sup>7</sup> The chapter describes how the Tupi favor their prisoners with food, shelter and even a temporary wife (if the prisoner is a man) for an indefinite period leading up to the day of execution. The prisoners, male and female, that Léry cites as examples are without exception brave and defiant to the end. Only the old women among the Tupi are accused of enjoying the taste of human flesh (they “find it such a delicacy”); the rest of the community pursues the ritual “more out of vengeance than for the taste” (127) [“plus par vengeance, que pour le goust (hormis ce que j'ay dit

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in the years before Léry publishes his *Histoire*, and Montaigne hints at the idea in his essay “Des cannibales” (1580).

<sup>7</sup> The nature and historicity of Tupi anthropophagy has been very widely disputed, especially in the wake of William Arens's 1979 *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology & Anthropophagy*. See e.g. Forsyth.

particulièrement des vieilles femmes qui en sont si friandes)” (366)].<sup>8</sup> A system of vengeance pits one Tupi group against another in a cycle of perpetual warfare. The rituals associated with anthropophagy represent a codified set of observances that both sides reliably follow. Except for its last two pages, chapter 15 resembles most closely the ethnographic style of twentieth-century observers such as Lévi-Strauss, who looks to Léry for a model of how to describe a culture’s system of thought in seemingly neutral terms.

Chapter 15 ends with a series of comparisons between Tupi anthropophagy and various instances of European cruelty. More cruel than the Tupi savages are, in the first case, “big usurers,” who metaphorically suck the blood and marrow of “widows, orphans, and other poor people” (132) [“nos gros usuriers (sucçans le sang et la moëlle, et par consequent mangeans tous en vie, tant de vefves, orphelins et autres pauvres personnes...)” (375)]. The mention of usury invokes a commonplace early modern condemnation of Jews as economic bloodsuckers. Later editions of Léry’s work expand the anti-semitic commentary in this chapter to include reference to actual, as opposed to symbolic, anthropophagy by Jews (see Lestringant’s notes in Léry 361-3, 374-5).

On the other hand are “those who bear the name of Christian” [“ceux qui portent le titre de Chrestiens”], who not only kill but actually eat their enemies:

[H]ave we not found people in these regions over here, even among those who bear the name of Christian, both in Italy and elsewhere, who, not content with having cruelly put to death their enemies, have been unable to slake their bloodthirst except by eating their livers and their hearts? (132)

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<sup>8</sup> Especially in the later editions of his narrative (1585 onward), Léry equates the old Tupi women with European witches and with the diabolical in general. See Lestringant’s notes in Léry (366n1).

[N]e s'en est-il point trouvé en ces regions de par deçà, voire mesmes entre ceux qui portent le titre de Chrestiens, tant en Italie qu'ailleurs, lesquels ne s'estans pas contentez d'avoir fait cruellement mourir leurs ennemis, n'ont peu rassasier leur courage, sinon en mangeans de leur foye et de leur cœur ? (375)

Along with a vague reference in this passage to anthropophagic cruelty “in Italy as well as elsewhere” [“tant en Italie qu'ailleurs”], the main example of non-metaphoric, European anthropophagy decried at the end of chapter 15 concerns Catholic violence against Protestants in France. Léry makes explicit reference to the St. Bartholemew's Day massacre (beginning 24 August 1572), during which human body parts were reportedly sold and eaten. With such examples of senseless cruelty “over here” in mind, Léry concludes:

So let us henceforth no longer abhor so very greatly the cruelty of the anthropophagous—that is, man-eating—savages. For since there are some here in our midst even worse and more detestable than those who, as we have seen, attack only enemy nations, while the ones over here have plunged into the blood of their own kinsmen, neighbors, and compatriots, one need not go beyond one's own country, nor as far as America, to see such monstrous and prodigious things. (133)

Parquoy qu'on n'haborre plus tant desormais la cruauté des sauvages Anthropophages, c'est à dire, mangeurs d'hommes : car puisqu'il y en a de tels, voire d'autant plus detestables et pires au milieu de nous, qu'eux qui, comme il a esté veu, ne se ruent que sur les nations lesquelles leur sont ennemies, et ceux-ci se sont plongez au sang de leurs parens, voisins et compatriotes, il ne faut pas aller si loin qu'en leur pays, ny qu'en l'Amérique pour voir choses si monstrueuses et prodigieuses. (377)

The Tupi only fight outsiders, while the civil war raging in France pits “compatriots” against each other. The Tupi cycle of vengeance may be endlessly violent, but at least it validates, and even strengthens, the circumscription of communities. Confessional violence in Europe is more barbaric because it causes strife within communities. As a form of anthropophagic communion, then, Tupi anthropophagy resembles the Catholic



interpretation of the Eucharist. Though Léry does not explicitly draw a parallel between his accusation of Catholic theophagy in chapter 6 and his discussion of Tupi ritual anthropophagy in chapter 15, the two chapters are importantly linked.

According to Léry, both Catholics and Tupi apparently consider the eating of human (or even divine) flesh to be an acceptable part of their performance of community.<sup>9</sup> If both rituals involve similar acts of the appropriation of flesh, it is not immediately clear why Tupi anthropophagy compares favorably with Catholic practice. How is it that the violent behavior of “savages” ranks as a lesser evil in Léry’s Huguenot hierarchy? One explanation is that Tupi anthropophagy represents a reciprocal relationship between enemy groups. Léry reports that the captured enemy’s standard provocation promises that the role of eater and eaten shall once again be reversed:

He will add, “Of you Tupinamba that I have taken in war, I have eaten so many men and women and even children that I could not tell the number; and do not doubt that, to avenge my death, the Margaja, whose nation I belong to, will hereafter eat as many of you as they can catch.” (123)

[B]ref, adjousterai-il, J’ay en general tant mangé d’hommes et de femmes, voire des enfans de vous autres *Toïoupinambaouls*, lesquels j’ay prins en guerre, que ie n’en sçaurois dire le nombre : et au reste, ne doutez pas que pour venger ma mort, les *Margajas* de la nation dont je suis, n’en mangent encores cy apres autant qu’ils en pourront attrapper. (356)

In contrast, there is no room for reciprocity in Catholic theophagy. By eating of their god, so the Huguenot logic goes, Catholics desecrate what they should be worshipping.

A second possible explanation for the privileging of Tupi over Catholic anthropophagy turns on the distribution of signifier and signified. Tupi anthropophagy

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<sup>9</sup> See Hoffmann’s discussion of how the incorporation of another’s flesh (in the Eucharist and in ritual anthropophagy) recalls the original meaning of the word “communion” (213).

turns human flesh into a symbol—of an enemy group, of revenge, and of group solidarity. The appropriation of the enemy takes place in the semiotic realm of Tupi community, not in the act of eating *per se* (except in the case of the deviant and dangerous “old women”). The internal consistency of the ritual, as well as the agreement on the part of both aggressor and victim as to the meaning of that ritual, saves Tupi anthropophagy from complete condemnation. Catholic theophagy, on the other hand, turns a symbol into flesh. What makes transubstantiation worse than Tupi anthropophagy is that the former misapprehends a sign as the “thing signified.” At the Protestants’ arrival at l’Île Coligny, Villegagnon promises that the sacraments will “be administered according to the pure Word of God, without any human addition” (35) [“il vouloit et entendoit que sans aucune addition humaine les Sacremens fussent administrez selon la pure parole de Dieu” (166)]. His subsequent claim for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist represents a “human addition” to the “pure Word of God.” In other words, for the Calvinists, a belief in transubstantiation results from a misinterpretation of scripture. And distortion of the text by those who should know better is worse than an exotic ritual system.

That Catholic anthropophagy (both symbolic, in the Eucharist, and actual, as in the 1572 St. Bartholemew’s Day massacre still fresh in Léry’s mind when writing his *Histoire*) compares negatively to Tupi anthropophagy signals the primacy of religion over all other markers of difference. But the fact that Léry so readily compares European and American anthropophagy in the first place also interrupts the otherwise straightforward opposition between cannibalism and colonialism emblematic of

European colonial discourse. Rather than the epitome of savage behavior that justifies colonial appropriation, as in most European rhetoric about non-European peoples from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, anthropophagy in L ery’s account acts as a mode of appropriation common to both hemispheres.

The word “cannibal,” as discussed in the introduction, originates in the diary of Columbus’s first voyage.<sup>10</sup> As a marker of the horrific and the savage, the term is born with the inception of the European conquest of the New World. Etymologically linked to the people called “Caribs” and to the region that bears the same name, the word “cannibal” itself performs an act of colonial appropriation. As a sloppy transcription of what Columbus thought he heard, the word implies: “I don’t care what you really are—my description of you will serve.” By the time of L ery’s voyage to Brazil (1556-58), “cannibal” was already convenient shorthand both for the peoples of the Americas and for unrepentant savages.

Through most of the sixteenth century, “cannibal” referred to people who ate human flesh for food, while “anthropophagous” people such as the Tupi were those who consumed humans solely for revenge (Carneiro 99).<sup>11</sup> For Andr e Thevet, who visited Brazil shortly before L ery’s arrival, the distinction was geographic as well as moral. The savage cannibals lived to the north of the more systematic anthropophagi, who also happened to be friendlier to the French (Lestringant, *Le cannibale* 89-96). That L ery

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<sup>10</sup> Along with Hulme’s tracing, in the first chapter of his *Colonial Encounters*, of the complicated semantic trajectory the word follows during the last months of 1492, see also Todorov’s discussion (36-37) of Columbus’s ignorance or arrogance.

<sup>11</sup> Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (99n9), citing Mich le Duchet, notes that the semantic equivalence between the two terms may begin with the publication of Montaigne’s “Des cannibales.”

does not use the word *cannibale* most likely indicates a similar understanding of the geographical distribution of South American peoples. After critiquing Thevet, his Catholic nemesis, for making broad statements about lands and peoples Thevet has not actually seen, Léry limits his commentary (at least in the first two editions of his text) to the “anthropophagous” Tupi in the coastal region that he visited. For the purposes of this discussion, it is important to note that Léry’s reference to anthropophagy also allows for a clearer comparison between Old and New World modes of appropriation than reference to cannibalism would. “Anthropophagy” is geographically neutral, while “cannibal” is inextricably tied to the history of European subjection of American peoples. Léry’s parallelism of European and American anthropophagy critiques Catholic colonial appropriation as well as the violent Tupi appropriation of fallen enemies.

For though he was a participant in a colonial enterprise, Léry does not promote an ideology of colonialism. He does not call for an expanded program of permanent settlements, nor for a fleet of missionaries. He traveled as a colonist, but his text is not colonialist. After fleeing Villegagnon’s island, he no longer wishes to settle permanently in America, and he does not even really attempt to convert anyone during his stay on the mainland. In the dedication of his book to comte François de Coligny, Léry salutes the memory of the comte’s father, Gaspard, for sponsoring a mission that “extended both the reign of Jesus Christ...and the boundaries of his sovereign prince, into so distant a land” (xli) [“qui tout à une fois ait estendu le regne de Jesus Christ, Roy des Roys et Seigneur des Seigneurs, et les limites de son Prince Souverain en pays si lointain” (48)]. But Léry contains his praise for the colonialist aspect of Villegagnon’s mission to the

past. Rather than a prospectus for future colonial endeavors, such as Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590), L ery's document treats the colonial experiment of France Antarctique with an ambiguous nostalgia:

[I]t is also very certain that if the affair had been as well pursued as it had been auspiciously begun, the two reigns, spiritual and temporal, would have been so securely founded in our time that more than ten thousand persons of the French nation would be there now, as fully and surely in the possession of it for our king as the Spanish and Portuguese are, in fact, now established there in the name of theirs. (xlii)

[A]ussi est-il tres-certain, que si l'affaire eust est e aussi bien poursuivy, qu'il avoit est e heureusement commenc e, que l'un et l'autre regne, spirituel et temporel, y avoyent si bien prins pied de nostre temps, que plus de dix milles personnes de la nation Fran oise y seroyent maintenant en aussi pleine et seure possession pour nostre Roy, que les Espagnols et Portugais y sont au nom des leurs. (48)

Given the "black legend" of the cruelty of Iberian colonialism, it is odd that L ery would draw an analogy here between a French colonialism that might have been and an all-too-real Iberian presence. Even if, in general throughout the text, L ery implicitly critiques the drive to colonize, it is anachronistic to say, as Juall does, that L ery "calls into question the imperialist ideology of sixteenth-century France" (53), since that ideology only began to coalesce in the years following the above dedication.<sup>12</sup> At the time L ery is writing, French colonialism remains an abstraction.

Rather than celebrate colonialism, L ery's text situates both Tupi and Huguenot as colonized by Catholicism. Published twenty years after his return—that is, right in the midst of the French Wars of Religion (1562-98)—L ery's *Histoire d'un voyage* does not

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<sup>12</sup> French imperial projects begin in earnest with the efforts of the regent Catherine de M edici to capitalize on the scramble for the Portuguese succession (1578-82) and in the rhetoric of Protestant publications of the 1580s onwards (Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 108-10 and 124-25).

question imperialist ideology from the place of empire so much as theorize the place of the colonized. Neil Kamil, in his magisterial history of the Huguenot diaspora, describes sixteenth-century Huguenot enclaves in France as if they were French colonies contiguous with the *Héxagone*. The idea of a Huguenot diaspora comes into being before French Protestants even leave the country.<sup>13</sup> From a Protestant point of view, the colonial experiments in Guanabara and in Florida project an already existing dream of a Protestant “refuge” across the Atlantic.<sup>14</sup>

At Fort Coligny, the refuge fails not only because Villegagnon reverts to Catholicism, but also because he subjects both Tupi and Huguenot to violent and inhumane treatment. Léry sympathizes with the Tupi who say, “If we had thought that Paycolas (for so they called Villegagnon) would treat us this way, we would have let ourselves be eaten by our enemies rather than come to him” (47) [“Si nous eussions pensé que *Paycolas* (ainsi appelloyent-ils Villegagnon) nous eust traité de ceste façon, nous nous fussions plustost faits manger à nos ennemis que de venir vers luy” (190)]. Once again, Tupi anthropophagy appears a lesser evil than Catholic colonialism. French Catholic violence, directed toward other French people such as at the St. Bartholemew’s Day massacre, undermines the cohesiveness of society. Tupi violence, on the other hand, constitutes a process by which Tupi groups consolidate and cohere.

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<sup>13</sup> The most prominent Huguenot stronghold, La Rochelle, declares itself an independent republic in 1568 and maintains political and religious autonomy until the fortress is destroyed in 1628. Meanwhile, Huguenot artisans living outside the walls of La Rochelle create a spiritual diaspora: “the Huguenots’ New World would be located on both sides of the Atlantic” (Kamil 49).

<sup>14</sup> Lestringant and Blair trace how the idea of a Huguenot refuge abroad fades in the last quarter of the sixteenth century (286-88). Conversely, Kamil shows how Huguenots keep the idea alive as they emigrate to English and Dutch New World colonies in the seventeenth century.

Recasting anthropophagy as appropriation rather than savagery allows Léry to compare his status as Huguenot directly with the Tupi and the Catholics. Catholic appropriation (of Tupi humanity, of Huguenot life and property, or of the flesh of Jesus) is inexcusable. Tupi appropriation is reprehensible but understandable. Huguenots are blameless, not only because of their divine election, but also because they are victims of Catholic hegemonic appropriation. “Tupi” comes to stand for an ambiguous middle term between Catholic and Protestant. The Tupi appropriate through ritual anthropophagy but are also appropriated by Catholic colonial cruelty. Only the Huguenots are appropriated without appropriating others.

### **Reconfiguring Certeau’s Circle**

Certeau’s reading elides this identification of Huguenot and Tupi as victims of appropriation by focusing on the appropriation inherent in the act of writing. Léry has writing at his disposal while the Tupi do not; therefore the former appropriates the latter. The Tupi remain victims of appropriation, but in Certeau’s conception, Léry is the appropriator. Certeau maps Léry’s narrative in terms of a circle, in which the first half is a journey out from Europe into alterity and the second half is a bringing back, an appropriation of the foreign. The first five chapters of the *Histoire d’un voyage* relate the voyage out: the trip overland from Geneva to Paris, the departure by ship from the Norman port of Honfleur, and the exotic marine animals and birds seen along the way. The last two chapters tell the tale in reverse: the departure from Brazil, the famine that nearly kills the passengers *en route*, and the eventual safe return to Europe. In Certeau’s

conception, chapters 1-5 and 21-22 together serve as a frame for the description of the natural world of Brazil (chs. 7-13) and of Tupi society (chs. 14-19) [“Le récit des actions qui traverse le monde encadre le *tableau* du monde tupi” (*L’écriture de l’histoire* 267)].

The travel narrative establishes a break [*coupure*] between the European and the American, “the other” and “the same.” The distinction between the customs, objects, animals and plants “over there” [*par-delà*] and what can be found “over here” [*par-deçà*] structures Léry’s prose throughout. For Certeau, this division of the world, made possible by the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean, allows Léry to activate an “operation of return” (*The Writing of History* 219). The exotic is domesticated and nature brought into the fold of culture as the protagonist ventures out into the unknown and returns to write up his experiences. The rhetorical structure of the narrative encodes colonial appropriation in that “[f]rom over there it brings back a literary object, the Savage.” What is lost in the appropriative process of writing is Tupi speech, “that part of the other that cannot be retrieved”:

[H]is *Histoire* casts the movement of departure that had gone from over here (in France), to over there (among the Tupis), into circular form. It transforms the voyage into a cycle. From over there it brings back a literary object, the Savage.... Yet something still remains over there, which the words of the text cannot convey; namely, the speech of the Tupis. It is that part of the other that cannot be retrieved.... (213)

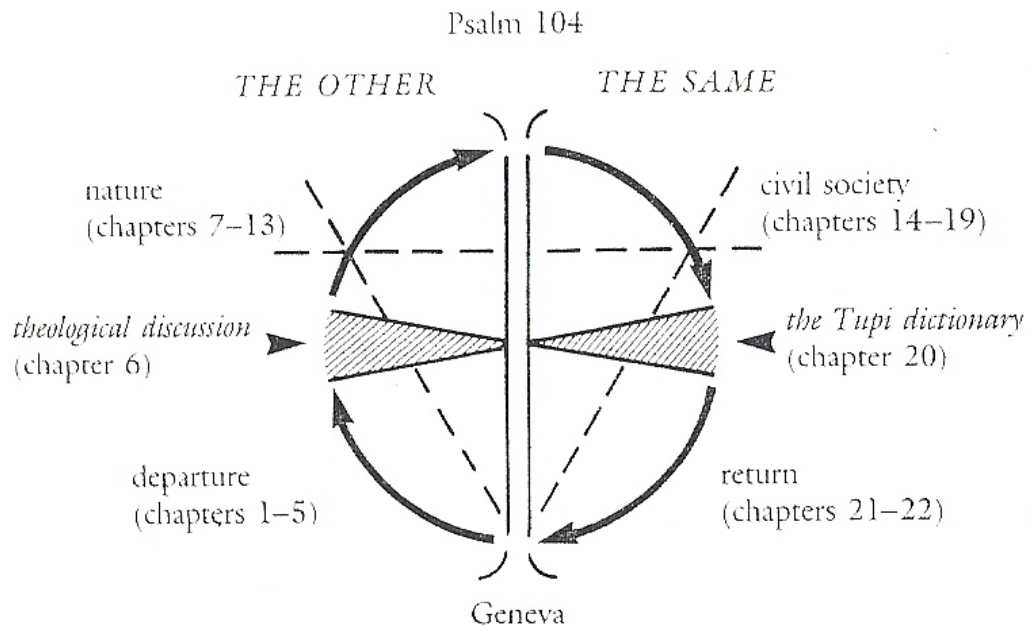
Son *Histoire*...change en une forme circulaire le mouvement de partance qui allait de *par-deçà* (ici, la France) à *par-delà* (là-bas, les Tupis). Elle mue le voyage en un cycle. Elle ramène de là-bas un objet littéraire, le sauvage.... Mais quelque chose reste là-bas, qui échappe au texte : la parole tupie. Elle est de l’autre ce qui n’est pas récupérable. (250)



The figure reproduced below from Certeau (222) illustrates his conception of Léry's text as a circle broken into several sections. Geneva, at the bottom, is the point of both departure and return. The triangle inscribed within the circle joins Geneva with the two descriptive sections of the narrative: the strange sights of the natural world of Brazil and the surprisingly organized society of the Tupi.

On the horizontal axis, separating "here" from "there," the two thresholds are chapter 6—the episode on Île Coligny and the dispute over transubstantiation—and the primer in Tupi language that makes up chapter 20. Chapter 6 represents for Certeau "the confusion of languages" ["la confusion des langues" (263)]. Villegagnon and the Protestants cannot or will not understand each other, and the result is the chaos of Babel.

**fig. 1.1. Michel de Certeau's diagram of Léry's text**



The “Tupi dictionary” chapter, on the other hand, represents linguistic order enacted through a Calvinist belief in the possibility of successful translation. The Tupi-French dialogue in chapter 20 tames the foreign by matching it with the familiar. Meanwhile, the vertical axis of the figure separates confusion from order, nature from culture, and “the other” from “the same.” Psalm 104, set opposite Geneva, comes to represent the experience of alterity.

The endpoint of Léry’s journey, the moment he is farthest from the known, comes at the close of the last “nature” chapter, right before the start of the “society” section.

Chapter 13 (“Of the Trees, Herbs, Roots, and Exquisite Fruits...”) ends with an exclamation of praise for the natural diversity in evidence in the New World:

[E]xcept for three herbs... I have seen no trees, herbs, or fruits that are not different from ours. Therefore every time that the image of this new world which God has let me see presents itself before my eyes, and I consider the serenity of the air, the diversity of the animals, the variety of the birds... in short, the riches that adorn this land of Brazil, the exclamation of the Prophet in Psalm 104 comes to my mind: “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.” (111)

[E]xcepté... trois herbes... je n’y ay veu arbres, herbes, ny fruicts qui ne differassent des nostres. Parquoy toutes les fois que l’image de ce nouveau monde, que Dieu m’a fait voir, se represente devant mes yeux : et que je considere la serenité de l’air, la diversité des animaux, la variété des oyseaux, la beauté des arbres et des plantes, l’excellence des fruicts : et brief en general les richesses dont ceste terre du Bresil est decorée, incontinent ceste exclamation du Prophete au Psaume 104. me vient en memoire.

*O Seigneur Dieu que tes œuvres divers  
Sont merueilleux par le monde univers :  
O que tu as tout fait par grand sagesse !  
Bref, la terre est pleine de ta largesse. (334)*

Having traveled, through a series of “retreats” [*retraites*], from Geneva further and further into the unknown, Léry finds in Psalm 104 a religious language with which to

grapple with difference. Certeau describes the function of the poem as the “vanishing point opening onto alterity, what is out of this world and unspeakable” (220) [“Le poème (le psaume 104) ouvre un point de fuite vers l’alterité hors monde, indicible” (261-62)]. The encounter with “total alterity” splits the new world into an exteriority (that of “esthetic or religious experience” [“l’expérience *esthétique ou religieuse*”]) and an interiority (“the social space...where an ethics is developed” [“l’espace social...où une *éthique* se développe”]) and marks the beginning of the process of appropriation, of bringing back to Europe—the central motion of ethnography (220/261).

Certeau’s circle diagram provides a useful way of presenting the “plot” of the narrative. The text is broken into sections that build upon each other in a logical order, and the whole appears subject to a beautiful though devastating symmetry. The drawback of Certeau’s circular reading is that it describes a closed system. Writing for Certeau is not only an act of appropriation; the closed nature of the appropriative system negates difference. Writing cannot be distinguished from appropriative structures such as colonization. Certeau describes several moments in Léry’s text in which the young Huguenot is “ravished” [*ravi*] by what he sees or hears. I read these “ravishments” as moments when Léry is the appropriated rather than the appropriator. He is changed by his experience. Certeau notes that “[s]omething of Léry himself does not return from over there” (227) [“Quelque chose de Léry lui-même ne revient pas de là-bas” (269)], and yet the circle diagram does not allow for modification of the protagonist. Léry, as avatar of writing, represents “the *same*,” which, Certeau contends, “extends without undergoing any modification”:

Writing designates an *operation organized about a center*: departures and dispatches still depend on the impersonal will which is developed there and to which they return. The multiplicity of procedures in which “declarations” of this will are written elaborates the space of an organization around the *same*, which extends without undergoing any modification. (217)

L’écriture désigne *une opération conforme à un centre* : les départs et les envois restent sous la dépendance du vouloir impersonnel qui s’y développe et auquel ils reviennent. La multiplicité des procédures où s’inscrivent les « déclarations » de ce vouloir construit l’espace d’une occupation par le *même*, qui s’étend sans s’altérer (256-7)

Recasting the text as a network, rather than a circle, of appropriation allows us to see Léry’s work as part of an open system. Léry’s text does appropriate and therefore occlude Tupi speech in two ways: by the fact of writing and by reconciling the Tupi with biblical stories. “The same” that emanates from Geneva is Christian scripture, which the Calvinist Léry believes to be universally applicable. Léry appropriates Tupi cosmology (“the other”) into his universalist understanding of God’s creation (“the same”). At the same time, the text need not be read solely within the frame of Protestant doctrine. The link “Tupi-Léry” does not represent the only link of appropriation to be drawn into the diagram. Not only is Léry the protagonist periodically appropriated (“ravished”) in the narrative, Léry’s text also appropriates from and is appropriated by other written sources. Léry the author takes from other writers, and other writers cite, plagiarize, and contest his writings in turn.

In *Le huguenot et le sauvage*, Frank Lestringant illustrates the extent to which Léry’s *Histoire* of 1578 is a Protestant polemic. The *Histoire d’un voyage* is specifically structured to counter the writings of André Thevet while also borrowing a large part of Thevet’s naturalistic and ethnographic description. Léry devotes the preface to his

narrative almost entirely to condemning Thevet, whose *Cosmographie universelle* appears three years before, in 1575. The section of the *Cosmographie* dealing with the New World expands Thevet's description of the Tupi first published in his *Singularitez de la France Antarctique* of 1557. In the *Cosmographie universelle*, Thevet adds the remark that Villegagnon would have been successful if it were not for the meddling Protestants. As a Catholic (a former monk, in fact) and especially as official royal cosmographer after 1560, Thevet has an interest in turning public opinion against this particular group of heretics.

It is no surprise, then, that Léry publishes his book when he does. Though he claims in his Preface to have twice lost and twice recovered a manuscript of his voyage written in 1563 (xlv-xlvi), Léry clearly does more borrowing than he does remembering.<sup>15</sup> Léry's memory of his encounter with the Tupi has been overcoded by Thevet's written accounts in two ways. In one sense, Thevet's accusation motivates Léry to write his version of events in order to set the record straight. In another sense, Léry's ability to access the memory of his own experience of twenty years past has been clouded by what his Catholic nemesis has written.

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<sup>15</sup> Lestringant goes as far as to claim that "Léry adds little to his predecessor: the 'Colloquy in the Savage Language and in French' that forms chapter 20 of the 1578 edition and the musical notations introduced in 1585, which attempt to transcribe the songs chanted by the Indians during their shamanistic dances, constitute the only original material added to the monumental Brazilian corpus collected" by Thevet. ["Léry ajoute peu à son devancier : le « Colloque en langage sauvage et François », qui forme le chapitre XX dans l'édition de 1578, et les notations musicales introduites en 1585, qui tentent de transcrire les chants psalmodiés par les Indiens durant leurs danses chamanistiques, sont les seuls apports originaux au monumental corpus brésilien réuni en deux temps par l'Angoumoisain" (*Le huguenot et le sauvage* 54-55).]

That Léry's account derives most of its material from Thevet's writings obviously calls into question Léry's authority as an ethnographer. It would clearly be a mistake to take Léry's descriptions of Tupi combat (ch. 14), anthropophagy (ch. 15), religion (ch. 16), marriage (ch. 17), government (ch. 18), or funeral practices (ch. 19) as accurate. Lestringant's revelations of Léry's debt to Thevet worsen Certeau's already pessimistic assessment that Léry forever occludes the Tupi by reducing their oral culture to writing. If Léry appropriates from Thevet, in what way does he also appropriate from the Tupi? The picture is suddenly more complex. Certeau's circle figure does not in fact describe the motion of Léry's narrative at all. The "out and back" plot does not frame an appropriation of the American oral so much as an appropriation of the Catholic written. Perhaps because of the twenty intervening years, or perhaps because of the absoluteness of his Protestant worldview, Léry in 1578 appears unable even to occlude the Tupi himself.

Must we then agree with Luis Madureira that "Tupi" is an empty category in sixteenth-century discourse (Madureira 32)? Should we accept, with Claude Lévi-Strauss, that the people of the sixteenth century were simply "deficient in powers of observation" and that descriptions of what we now know to be fanciful (such as mermaids) constitute "lapses in taste" rather than errors (77)?<sup>16</sup> From the point of view of twentieth-century social science, Léry's text appears little better than the rest of

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<sup>16</sup> Madureira titles his chapter on the *Antropofagia* movement "Lapses in Taste: *Antropofagia* as the Primitive Aesthetic of Underdeveloped Brazil" and uses the relevant passage from *Tristes tropiques* as an epigraph.

sixteenth-century travel narratives, which cannot be said to depict Brazilian culture, flora or fauna reliably.

In terms of the theorization of difference, however, L ery’s text remains fundamental. L ery’s appropriations of Thevet allow us to trace a continuous and open network of appropriations—textual, colonial, and anthropophagic—that includes Protestants, Catholics, and New World peoples.<sup>17</sup> Appropriation, illustrated most vividly by anthropophagy, becomes a key concept in the modeling of difference. As Maggie Kilgour puts it, “cannibalism involves both the *establishing* of absolute difference, the opposites of eater and eaten, and the *dissolution* of that difference, through the act of incorporation” (“Function” 240; *Communion* 7). L ery’s status as a Huguenot during the Wars of Religion makes the question of difference a primary concern. L ery, of course, does not equate his textual borrowings to Tupi anthropophagy, but his willingness to consider the logic of Tupi ritual and to set Tupi practices alongside European behavior invites such comparisons.

The difference between L ery and his predecessor is one of presentation. Thevet is dismissive of the Tupi, while L ery is ambiguously appreciative. Though L ery suspects the Tupi to be wholly and unrepentantly without God,

they are perhaps not utterly condemnable: in admitting and confessing somewhat their misfortune and blindness—although they do not understand it in such a way as to be troubled by it, nor to seek a remedy even when one is presented to them—they do not pretend to be other than what they are. (lx)

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<sup>17</sup> The series of textual appropriations does not begin with L ery. Thevet’s works, especially the *Cosmographie universelle*, compile information gathered from various sources. Thevet did not even write most of the work that bears his name; he used his prerogative as royal cosmographer to hire scribes (Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 41-42).

[t]outesfois en ce point sont-ils peut-estre moins condamnables : c'est qu'en advouant et confessant aucunement leur malheur et aveuglissement (quoy qu'ils ne l'apprehendent pour s'y desplaire, ni chercher le remede quand mesme il leur est presenté) ils ne font semblant d'estre autres que ce qu'ils sont. (92-93)

By allowing for the category “not utterly” or “less” condemnable [“peut-estre moins condamnables”], Léry opens a space for reprehensible but nonetheless *legitimate* difference. The non-European is not necessarily a deviant object to be molded into conformity or disposed of. This Protestant view does not presuppose a hierarchical relationship between European and American; rather, it compares the European and the non-European directly. For Léry, the two cultures and environments exist on the same plane: the plane of Christian doctrine. What ensures the comparison of Brazilian and European is the universality of the Bible. Scripture includes all people, whether they know it or not. By legitimate difference, therefore, I mean difference that exists within the same (in the Protestant worldview, “the same” being God’s creation). In relation to this religious logic, the over here/over there [*par-deçà/par-delà*] distinction Léry establishes throughout his text comes to resemble not so much a hierarchy as a set of lateral relations. Things “over there” are not the same as things “over here,” but the universality of God’s creation includes both sets of things.

This belief in the universal applicability of the Bible provides Léry a frame for understanding the Tupi. Certeau’s apt phrase for Léry’s “Christian exegetical apparatus” [“l’appareil exégétique chrétien”] is “a hermeneutics of the other” [“une *herméneutique de l’autre*”] (221/262). The relevant question for this discussion is: does that Protestant frame represent a colonial project in religious guise? In one sense, the answer is yes. Léry incorporates the Tupi into his religious system without permission, just as



European colonial powers annexed conquered lands into their overseas empires. In another sense, however, the analogy of Léry's Protestant worldview with colonial expropriation does not work. The universality of scripture in Léry's understanding paradoxically allows for difference. If the Tupi and their strange Brazilian environment belong to God's creation just as Europeans and Europe do, then it makes no sense to ask the foreign to conform to the familiar. The strange is always already appropriated, with no conformity necessary. Additionally, the Calvinist belief in predestination precludes salvation through conversion. If the Tupi are condemned in the eyes of God (which Léry believes), then changing their behavior would have no effect on the result in the afterlife. A colonialist Christian belief system would require that the non-conforming other *become* Christian. Calvinism suggests that the other, however different, is already Christian, even if damned.

In the Wars of Religion, Huguenots fought for recognition of their own legitimate difference from Catholics. In 1573, Léry witnessed the siege of the town of Sancerre by Catholic forces. The first publication to bear his name is his *Histoire mémorable du siège de Sancerre* (1574), in which he attests to the death of hundreds of Protestants from hunger.<sup>18</sup> Léry's account of the siege informs his later *Histoire d'un voyage*. Both works defend the legitimacy of Huguenot difference, and the later work finds in the Tupi a powerful example of the non-standard and yet "not utterly condemnable."

Anthropophagy becomes, of course, the most vivid and most difficult Tupi behavior to

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<sup>18</sup> That siege culminates in an act of cannibalism: a mother and father eat part of their young daughter after she dies of starvation (Nakam).

explain away. Ultimately, however, anthropophagy serves as the most effective example of Léry's proto-relativism, as well as the most powerful metaphor to result from his text.

Léry both condemns and validates Tupi anthropophagy. Because they eat human flesh, the Tupi cannot be elect. But because they "attack only enemy nations," the Tupi are better than Catholics (Léry 133). What rescues the Tupi somewhat in his eyes is that their anthropophagy enacts a network of appropriation. The Tupinamba capture and eat a Margaia, and that Margaia's family members eventually eat a Tupinamba in retaliation. The links of appropriation proliferate between the two groups, both knitting Margaia and Tupinamba together while solidifying the difference between them. Appropriated victims come exclusively from enemy groups, and the ritual of eating performs a function: it creates solidarity among the victorious. Paradoxically perhaps, Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* unleashes a similar process of Protestant group formation through textual appropriation. The same text that allows for an analysis of anthropophagy as appropriative system also models the workings of a textual network of appropriation.

Léry's attack on Thevet, primarily in his Preface but also throughout the text, picks up where a war of pamphlets between Protestants and Catholics involved in the downfall of France Antarctique left off. The colony folded under attack by the Portuguese shortly after Villegagnon left his nephew in charge and returned from Brazil in 1559. Villegagnon blamed the divisive Protestants for the colony's failure, and a vicious exchange of letters and pamphlets ensued. The *Refutation* (1561) by Pierre Richer, one of the two Protestant ministers to accompany the expedition, constitutes the most

notable publication in that vein. Richer introduces the notion of Villegagnon as *anthropophage* by vividly depicting the colony's ruler as the Cyclops. Much of L ry's sixth chapter, dealing with the Protestants' experience on  le Coligny, is taken more or less directly from Richer's *Refutation* (see Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 64, 89). By the time L ry comes to put together his *Histoire d'un voyage* in the 1570s, the ideal target for Protestant polemic has shifted away from Villegagnon. Thevet fills the role of perfidious Catholic overlord for L ry's purposes.

As soon as it appears, the *Histoire d'un voyage* takes on what Lestringant calls a "nodal role" in the "Huguenot corpus on America."<sup>19</sup> L ry's text proliferates intertextually in two ways. The text itself grows, through successive editions that add references to a number of works by other writers. Though in its first two editions (1578 and 1580) the *Histoire d'un voyage* relies on the authority of L ry as eyewitness, the later editions (1585, 1599, and 1611) resemble more of a "compilation" or the "sum of convergent testimonies" ["Le texte de l'*Histoire* change d s lors de nature. Il devient une somme de t moignages convergents" (Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 83, 84)]. The series of examples of European cruelty that ends chapter 15, for example, balloons to a twenty-page synthetic essay comparing Tupi anthropophagy to mass executions in the wake of the Ottoman capture of Constantinople (1453), Spanish atrocities in the New World, as well as French confessional violence. By the 1599 edition, this discursus drawn entirely from other written sources has become its own chapter.

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<sup>19</sup> Lestringant gives credit for the phrase "le corpus Huguenot relatif   l'Am rique" to Marcel Bataillon (*Le huguenot et le sauvage* 103).

At the same time that it gains internal complexity, Léry's *Histoire* also produces intertextuality externally. The text's success throughout Protestant Europe inspires a series of like-minded accounts of the New World. Urbain Chauveton first picks up the thread by referencing Léry in the introduction to his 1579 translation of Benzoni. Léry reciprocates in the 1585 edition of his *Histoire*. The network soon spreads beyond the French-speaking Protestant community. Théodore de Bry combines Léry's account with the German Protestant Hans Staden's 1557 narrative of captivity at the hands of the Tupi in a 1592 installment of his series *Grands Voyages*. Léry is read all over Protestant Europe, and his text contributes to the momentum building in Holland and England toward overseas expansion (see Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 119-29).

By far the most famous appropriation of Léry's text is performed by Montaigne in his essay "Des cannibales." Though officially a Catholic, Montaigne rehearses Léry's argument against Catholic violence with reference to Tupi anthropophagy.<sup>20</sup> And Montaigne even includes a not-so-subtle jab at Thevet: he prefers the testimony of a guest of his "who had lived for ten or twelve years in that other world" rather than "inquiring what the cosmographers say about it" (151-52) ["J'ay eu long temps avec moy un homme qui avoit demeuré dix ou douze ans en cet autre monde" (231), "...je me contente de cette information, sans m'enquerir de ce que les cosmographes en disent" (234)]. Montaigne builds on the suggestion of Eden that Léry's description of Tupi society evokes. The resulting description of utopia in Montaigne's essay of 1580

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<sup>20</sup> The scholarship on Montaigne's most famous essay is understandably immense. For a recent reading that takes Montaigne's implied religious subversion into account, see Hoffmann. The classic exposition of Montaigne's intertexts is Weinberg's.

finds its way, translated almost word for word, into Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (II.i.148-57) in 1611.

The growing textual network that proliferates within and around Léry's text represents not only a particularly fruitful manifestation of intertextuality but also an effective response to Iberian approaches to colonialism.<sup>21</sup> Lestringant characterizes the difference between Thevet and the Huguenot writers who follow him as the opposition between a "totalizing and closed body of knowledge...that Thevet inherits...from the Spanish historiography of the Conquest" and "an open, collective, and progressive conception of knowledge" ["A un savoir totalisant et fermé...ce en quoi Thevet se montre l'héritier...de l'historiographie espagnole de la Conquête, s'oppose et succède une conception ouverte, collective et progressive de la science" (Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage* 43)]. The Huguenot open system consolidates anti-Iberian, anti-Catholic sentiment by adding two different kinds of links to the network. The first kind of link metaphorically recalls the act of Tupi anthropophagy; Huguenot writers, such as Léry in his Preface, appropriate the name of the Catholic enemy (Thevet) into the text and thus neutralize that enemy's power. The second kind of link appropriates the name of a friend so as to establish a public solidarity. For example, Léry adds a long reference to Benzoni's voyages to the third edition of his *Histoire* (1585), noting that Benzoni's account had been "expertly translated from the Italian...by M. Chauveton, my good and particular friend" ["...son Histoire ayant esté premierement, traduite doctement d'Italien

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<sup>21</sup> Lestringant also describes the Huguenot corpus as "a network of interdependent writing that, while denouncing the capture of the New World by the Spanish, outlines a counter-model" ["un réseau d'écrits interdépendants qui, tout en dénonçant l'accaparement du Nouveau Monde par l'Espagnol, dessine un contre-modèle" (*Le huguenot et le sauvage* 18)].

en latin par M. Chauveton, mon bon et singulier amy, et depuis par luy-mesme en François” (Léry 542-43n2, my translation)].

Through this second kind of appropriative link, Léry and his coreligionists establish a network of affinity within the network of appropriation. Writing still represents appropriation, as it does for Certeau, but the web of textual references that make up the Huguenot corpus shows how appropriation can also be the basis for affinity. What remains to be seen is the role that Léry’s representation of his experience with the Tupi plays in defining what it means to be a Huguenot abroad.

### **Networks of Affinity**

In the course of his discussion of Tupi religion, Léry relates an opportunity he had while on the mainland to witness a “solemn ceremony” only held “every three or four years” (140) [“ayans ceste coustume que de trois en trois, ou de quatre en quatre ans il s’assemblent en grande solennité” (396)]. Léry watches quietly in a corner as the *caraiibes* (religious leaders—Léry calls them “false prophets” [“faux Prophetes”]) lead several hundred men in singing and dancing. Entranced, Léry transcribes the words (and in later editions the music) of a song he cannot understand: “*Heu, heuaure, heura, heuaure, heura, heura, oueh.*” After remaining momentarily “transported with delight” [*tout ravi*], he then turns to his translator [*truchement*] and finds that part of the ceremony has retold the story of a great flood that long ago drowned much of the world’s population (144/405).

This brief passage traces three important steps in the establishment of a link of affinity between Huguenot and Tupi. The first step is incomprehension, which L ery experiences as delight or “ravishment.” The second step transforms nonsense into meaning: in this case, the *truchement* translates what L ery does not understand into words he can. The third step is recognition: at the mention of a great flood, L ery immediately equates Tupi mythology with Christian scripture. Certeau highlights this same passage in his analysis but prioritizes the second of these three steps. In the “passing to meaning occurs the task that transforms the ballad into a product that can be put to good use” (213) [“Alors s’effectue, avec ce passage au sens, la t ache qui transforme la ballade en produit utilisable” (251)]. The third step is entirely expected: a “return...to the West and to writing,” the work of a “deft translator” (213-14) [“De ces voix, l’habile truchement tire le r ecit d’un d eluge initial...: retour   l’Occident et   l’ criture...” (251)]. And the first step cannot be theorized: for Certeau, L ery’s moment of incomprehension constitutes a “rift in time” (213) [“Ce qui est trou dans le temps, c’est l’absence de sens...” (251)]. What counts for Certeau is the appropriation of the oral by the written.

While I grant that the translation of the chant represents an appropriation of the American by the European and that that appropriation is inextricable from the technology of writing, the first and third steps in the above process (incomprehension and recognition) are to my mind just as important as the second (appropriation). L ery’s ravishment, rather than a rift in European historical time, can instead be seen as a moment in which the European is appropriated by the foreign. The moment of

incomprehension suggests the possibility for reciprocity between Huguenot and Tupi. Likewise, the moment of recognition, in addition to marking the return to the West and writing, also establishes a link of affinity between European and American in the sense that both, at least to Léry's Calvinist sensibility, are equally subject to scripture.

For Léry (even more as embattled minister in 1578 than as 24-year-old adventurous shoemaker in 1557), writing has two separate aspects: it is both a tool for the conveyance of meaning and the vehicle for religious truth. The distinction between text (*écriture*) and scripture (*Écriture*) is more salient than the distinction between the oral and the written. The two kinds of writing are always kept separate. Léry notes that the Tupi “know nothing of writing, *either sacred or secular*” (134, emphasis added) [“Quant à l'écriture, *soit sainte ou profane*, non seulement aussi ils ne savent que c'est, mais qui plus est, n'ayans nuls caracteres pour signifier quelque chose” (380)]. Secular writing—that is, writing as tool—appears to the Tupi to be the effect of witchcraft:

When I was first in their country, in order to learn their language I wrote a number of sentences which I then read aloud to them. Thinking that this was some kind of witchcraft, they said to each other, “Is it not a marvel that this fellow, who yesterday could not have said a single word in our language, can now be understood by us, by virtue of that paper that he is holding and which makes him speak thus?” (134)

[Q]uand du commencement que je fus en leur pays pour apprendre leur langage, j'escrivois quelques sentences leur lisant puis apres devant, eux estimans que cela fust une sorcelerie, disoyent l'un à l'autre : N'est-ce pas merveille que cestuy-cy qui n'eust sceu dire hier un mot en nostre langue, en vertu de ce papier qu'il tient, et qui le fait ainsi parler, soit maintenant entendu de nous ? (380)

The proto-ethnographer Léry records here what will become a standard topos of the encounter between West and non-West, civilized and savage, ethnographer and native.

The discovery of the “talking book” occurs in slave narratives of the eighteenth and



nineteenth centuries, such as that of Olaudah Equiano discussed in the next chapter,<sup>22</sup> as well as in the writings of anthropologists. Lévi-Strauss recounts a very similar “writing lesson” scene with the Nambikwara of Brazil in *Tristes Tropiques* (296-300), which Certeau draws on in his reading of Léry.

In Léry’s text, the anthropological implications of the Tupis’ lack of writing are subordinate to the religious. It makes sense to Léry that the Tupi would be fearful of a technology they have never seen. His conclusion is simply to praise God for giving Europeans the “advantage, by means of writing and the letters that we send,” of declaring “secrets to whomever we choose, even to the ends of the earth” (135) [“nous...avons cest avantage, que sans bouger d’un lieu, par le moyen de l’écriture et des lettres que nous envoyans, nous pouvons declarer nos secrets à ceux qu’il nous plaist, et fussent-ils esloignez jusques au bout du monde” (382)]. God has blessed Europeans and not Americans with the gift of writing as a tool for communication, but this discrepancy has no bearing on the applicability of sacred writing. Hence Léry’s interest in relating the Tupi chant to the biblical flood story.

Given the Protestant emphasis on direct exposure to the text of the Bible, Léry has to account for the occurrence of the flood story in a Tupi context devoid of writing. If the Bible is the “pure Word of God,” then the story the Tupi tell of a flood long ago must relate to the text Léry knows. Léry explains the Tupi deviation from scripture this way:

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<sup>22</sup> Equiano writes, “I had often seen my master and Dick employed in reading; and I had a great curiosity to talk to the books, as I thought they did; and so to learn how all things had a beginning: for that purpose I have often taken up a book, and have talked to it, and then put my ears to it, when alone, in hopes it would answer me; and I have been very much concerned when I found it remained silent” (68).

[M]ingled in their songs there was mention of waters that had once swelled so high above their bounds that all the earth was covered, and all the people in the world were drowned, except for their ancestors, who took refuge in the highest trees. This last point, which is the closest they come to the Holy Scriptures, I have heard them reiterate several times since. And, indeed, it is likely that from father to son they have heard something of the universal flood that occurred in the time of Noah. In keeping with the habit of men, which is always to corrupt the truth and turn it into falsehood, together with what we have already seen—that, being altogether deprived of writing, it is hard for them to retain things in their purity—they have added this fable (as did the poets), that their ancestors took refuge in the trees. (144)

[I]ls avoyent entremeslé et fait mention en leurs chansons, que les eaux s'estans une fois tellement desbordées qu'elles couvrirent toute la terre, tous les hommes du monde, excepté leurs grands peres que se sauverent sur les plus hauts arbres de leur pays, furent noyez : lequel dernier poinct, qui est ce qu'ils tiennent entre eux plus approchant de l'Escriture sainte, je leur ay d'autres fois depuis ouy reiterer. Et de fait, estant vraysemblable que de pere en fils ils ayent entendu quelque chose du deluge universel, qui avint du temps de Noé, suyvant la coustume des hommes qui ont tousiours corrompu et tourné la verité en mensonge : joint comme il a esté veu ci-dessus, qu'estans privez de toutes sortes d'escritures, il leur est malaisé de retenir les choses en leur pureté, aussi ont-ils adjousté ceste fable, comme les Poetes, que leurs grands peres se sauverent sur les arbres. (405-6)

The Tupi story lines up with the story of Noah, except for the added detail about hiding in the trees. Where could such a deviation have come from? In the midst of the difficult last sentence above, Léry compares the illiterate Tupi to “the poets” [*les Poetes*].

Purveyors of oral tradition, like some writers, are subject to the degenerate “habit of men...to corrupt the truth.” The Tupi’s difficulty (note he does not say inability) in retaining the purity of truth is related only incidentally to their lack of a writing system.

In adding the fable to the biblical story, the Tupi are succumbing to a universal temptation, rather than suffering from a lack of knowledge or power.

Compare Léry’s version of the Tupi flood story with that of Thevet from his *Singularitez de la France Antarctique* of 1557:

[T]he water was so extraordinarily high in this flood that it covered the highest mountains in the land, so that the people were submerged and lost. They hold this as true, just as we believe what is contained in the holy scripture. It is always too easy for them to fail, given that they do not have any means of writing to remember things other than what they hear from their elders...

[L]'eau fut si excessiuement grande en ce deluge, qu'elle surpassoit les plus haultes montagnes de ce païs: & par ainsi tout le peuple fut submergé & perdu. Ce qu'ils tiennent pour asseuré, ainsi que nous tenons celuy que nous propose la saincte escriture. Toutefois il leur est trop aisé de faillir, attendu qu'ils n'ont aucun moyen d'escriture, pour memoire des choses, sinon cōme ils ont ouy dire à leurs peres... (Thevet, *Les singularitez* f. 101-2, my translation)

Thevet does not mention the ancestors being saved in the trees in this version, but he does in his *Cosmographie universelle*. This set of passages makes clear how indebted Léry is to both works. A close comparison of the passages from Léry and Thevet, however, shows a subtle change taking place through the appropriation. Thevet's account appears to link falsity and orality in a more straightforward way. If we take the phrase "It is always too easy for them to fail" to mean that the Tupis' lack of writing puts their retention of scripture at risk, this passage suggests that the Tupi flood story comes from the biblical source. On the other hand, the previous sentence does not equate the stories, but rather presents them as parallel ("They hold this as true, *just as [ainsi que] we believe...*"). Thevet's text does not require that the two stories be traced back to the same text, but rather suggests that both might be different accounts of the same event. For Thevet, a Tupi relationship to the biblical text is not necessary in order to establish their place in the Christian universe.

In Léry's world, the relationship of people to text is of the utmost importance. One of his aims among the Tupi is to determine whether or not they should be excused for their sinful behavior because of ignorance of scripture. Once he establishes links

between Tupi cosmology and Christian doctrine (the discovery of the flood story is important in this regard), he decides that they will in fact be held accountable for their degeneracy. As in the “talking book” scene discussed above, the two types of writing (sacred and profane) remain separate. In the passage treating the flood story, he makes a point of noting that the Tupi are “privez de *toutes sortes* d’écritures” (Whatley’s translation “being altogether deprived of writing” does not bring out the mention of “kinds” of writing). Contrast this with Thevet: “ils n’ont aucun moyen d’écriture” [they do not have any means of writing]. The difference is subtle but telling. Thevet’s comment does not isolate the *means* of writing from the eternal truth of doctrine, whereas Léry consistently separates the utility of writing for secular use (writing as a tool or process) and the absolute, atemporal fact of sacred writing.

Certeau conflates these two kinds of writing in his reading of Léry:

[T]he decisive element is the possession or privation of an *instrument* that can at the same time “keep things in all their purity”...and stretch all the way “to the other end of the world.” In combining the power to keep the past...with that of indefinitely conquering distance...writing *produces history*. (215)

L’élément décisif est ici la possession ou la privation d’un *instrument* capable à la fois de « retenir les choses en leur pureté »...et de s’étendre « jusqu’au bout du monde ». En combinant le pouvoir de *retenir* le passé...et celui de *franchir* indéfiniment la distance...l’écriture *fait l’histoire*. (253-54)

The two quotations from Léry that Certeau makes use of here come from separate discussions of Tupi orality. The first comes from the passage regarding the flood story, which is concerned with deficient maintenance of sacred text through time: that is, from generation to generation. The second comes from the earlier discussion of the relative, technological advantage that secular text affords Europeans. By permitting

communication to the ends of the earth [“jusques au bout du monde”], secular writing transcends space. The Tupi who note that Léry is suddenly able to speak their language do not describe this paper sorcery in terms of bringing yesterday’s speech into the present, but rather as a spontaneous utterance: “Is it not a marvel that this fellow, who yesterday could not have said a single word in our language, can now be understood by us, by virtue of that paper that he is holding and which makes him speak thus?” Only scripture maintains meaning through time. The degeneration of the flood story in Tupi mythology is blamed on an inadequate method of transmission (the lack of a physical copy of the Bible). Secular writing is indeed an “instrument” for (imperfectly) “conquering distance,” but given the distinction apparent in Léry’s text, we cannot accept the conjunction of space and time that Certeau claims “produces history.” The writing that transcends time—that is, scripture—does so by being eternal. The authority over truth lies not with an instrument that preserves speech and therefore produces history but rather with a *particular* writing that lies outside of history.

Lestringant describes the methodological conflict between Catholic and Protestant as the difference between the New World as blank slate and the Tupi world as a “forest of signs.” Thevet proclaims in his “portrait” of Francisco Pizarro that the Americans “merely served as paper, bronze or marble upon which to inscribe the immortal memory” of the deeds of the conquistadors (Thevet, *Portraits* 23) [“ces peuples ne leur ont servy que de carte, airain ou marbre, pour engraver l’immortelle memoire de leurs proüesses” (*Les Vrais Pourtraits et Vies des Hommes illustres*, qtd. in Lestringant, “Calvinistes et cannibales” 87)]. Léry, on the other hand, reads the New World as a text

to be deciphered (Lestringant, “Calvinistes et cannibales” 82). More importantly, the text he expects to find is the same, sacred text he already knows. At the end of the chapter dealing with Tupi religion, for example, L ery wonders which of the three sons of Noah the Brazilians descended from (150-51). He does not doubt for a moment that scripture can account for New World people. In this sense, what is important to L ery is not that the Tupi have only the oral and not the written (as Certeau would have it), but that they belong to * criture* without knowledge of * criture*. To find scripture in America is not a return to the West and writing, but rather the apparent confirmation that scripture applies to a previously unknown world.

The particular scriptural example that represents the ubiquity of sacred writing is the same psalm that for Certeau marks “the opening onto alterity” and the endpoint of L ery’s journey into the New World: Psalm 104. The moment that splits Certeau’s circle figure into “the other” and “the same” comes at the end of chapter 13 (on plants, just before the beginning of the chapter on Tupi warfare). The same psalm returns three chapters later, in the chapter on Tupi religion (in fact, L ery mentions this same psalm four times throughout the narrative). At the end of chapter 16, L ery recalls walking in the forest with a group of Brazilians and feeling moved to sing the psalm out loud in its entirety:

[A]s I was passing with them through a great forest, contemplating so many different trees, grasses, and flowers, all green and fragrant, and hearing the songs of the countless birds warbling through the woods in the sunlight, I felt impelled to praise God, and feeling gay of heart, I began to sing aloud Psalm 104, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” My three savages and the woman who walked behind me took such delight in it (that is, in the sound, for they understood nothing of the rest) that when I had finished, the Oueanen, stirred

with joy, his face beaming, came forward and said to me, “Truly you have sung wonderfully; your resounding song has recalled to me that of a nation that is our neighbor and ally...I entreat you to tell us what your song was about.” (149)

[A]insi qu’avec eux je passois à travers d’une grande forest, contemplant en icelle tant de divers arbres, herbes et fleurs verdoyantes et odoriferantes : ensemble oyant le chant d’une infinité d’oyseaux rossignollans parmi ce bois où lors le soleil donnoit, me voyant, di-je, comme convié à louer Dieu par toutes ces choses, ayant d’ailleurs le cœur gay, je me prins à chanter à haute voix le Pseaume 104. Sus, sus, mon ame, il te faut dire bien, etc., lequel ayant poursuyvi tout au long, mes trois sauvages et la femme qui marchaient derriere moy, y prindrent si grand plaisir (c’est-à-dire au son, car au demeurant ils n’y entendoient rien) que quand j’eu achevé, l’*Oueanen* tout esmeu de joye avec une face riante s’avançant me dit, Vrayement tu as merveilleusement bien chanté, mesme ton chant esclatant m’ayant fait ressouvenir de celui d’une nation qui nous est voisine et alliée...je te prie de nous dire ce dequoy il a esté question en ta chanson. (417-18)

Rather than the start of an appropriation of the unknown into the known, Léry’s celebration of nature at this moment recognizes the work of the divine in its unnamability. Everything around him is already God’s. Note too that in this scene, Léry transmits a part of his tradition orally, from memory, and that he then translates the sense of the psalm into Tupi, rather than expecting or commanding his listeners to understand his language. To Léry’s Protestant sensibility, the text remains constant, though the mechanism (speech, translation) may be inexact.

The setting of this scene in nature, away from both European and Tupi settlement, is crucial. Though Kamil does not mention it in his analysis, this scene presents additional evidence for his claim that Léry’s text exhibits the influence of Huguenot natural philosophy. Kamil shows the importance and prevalence of natural humanist philosophical thought in the Huguenot community of Léry’s era, as derived from the writings of Marsilio Ficino in the fifteenth century and those of Paracelsus in the early

sixteenth. For this religious natural philosophical tradition, nature both served as the setting and provided productive metaphors for religious practice and faith. As a contemporary of the Huguenot artisan philosopher Bernard Palissy, Léry may well have shared Paracelsian influences with the “rustic” of Saintonge, at least by the time the *Histoire* is finally put to paper (Kamil 136). The scene of singing Psalm 104 in the Brazilian forest adds credence to Kamil’s assertion that “The rhetoric of the *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* pays homage to the Huguenot branch of the Paracelsian artisanal tradition” (136).

More specifically, the “vanishing point opening onto alterity” of Certeau’s conception can be recast in the terms Kamil uses to evoke the epiphany of the natural philosopher able to view the world with “soulish” eyes, as in Ficino’s philosophy:

In this brief, prophetic moment of unity between macrocosm and microcosm, grief and disquiet were replaced by joy and calm; diffuse rays of divine light, once distanced from their source, emanated to suffuse the bodily vessel in flames of revelation; and soulish eyes allowed the mind to perceive universality in the true form of things hidden beneath the shadows of empirical reality. (Kamil 173)

Léry feels “impelled” to sing the psalm while passing through the forest with “three savages and the woman who walked behind” him. All present are drawn together by the song, the effect of which is immediately felt by “the Oueanen,” despite the unintelligible words. This is indeed a moment of profound unification between humans and nature, but also between European and Brazilian. The impulse to sing comes from “feeling gay of heart,” allowing the possibility that the Léry of this moment is filled with “joy and calm” directly through his soulish observation of nature, as in Kamil’s description of the natural philosopher’s moment of religious ecstasy. To Léry, the universality of scripture



is here exhibited in the common reaction both Frenchman and Oueanen have to the recitation. This religious enthusiast needs no proof of the applicability of his religion to the Brazilians, and yet this scene solidifies the images he endeavors to create for his audience of a population with an innate Christian sensibility waiting to be brought out.

The Brazilian forest of this scene can be mapped onto the *désert* of La Rochelle's hinterland central to Palissy's philosophy of "artisanal security." This *désert*, being critically outside of the fortress walls, is also necessarily a natural setting: "In the southwestern French countryside, after all, the scene of reading was Nature itself" (Kamil 185). Léry's "scene of reading" (in this case, a reading of nature as well as an oral reading of Psalm 104) puts the young Léry in the role of the rustic Huguenot philosopher of the Rochelais hinterland:

These lay wanderers were left to their own spiritual devices, seeking evidence of God's presence without the protection of an established *place de sûreté* or a pastoral guide in an ambiguously open, contested, and vulnerable liminal space. Located in history between an already (destruction of the visible Church) and a not yet (the millenium), this was an earthly Purgatory dominated by laymen. The geography of such an unstable space was most often conceptualized as wild and uncultured, or even unmapped and unnamed hidden territory. (Kamil 189)

At the time of his trip to Brazil, Léry is still among the ranks of the Huguenot artisans, though he would be an ordained minister by the time he writes his *Histoire*. In describing his experience of twenty years before, the older Léry uses this scene in the forest to epitomize the "natural experience, amplified by the enthusiastic lay spiritualism of the Paracelsian natural philosopher" (Kamil 188). The young shoemaker of the narrative is indeed a "lay wanderer" left to his own "spiritual devices," and he manages to master the soulish perspective while bringing enthusiastic native listeners along with

him. The walk in the forest is posed in the narrative after the “already” (the dissolution of the ecumenical community at Fort Coligny) and the “not yet” (the repeated failure of Protestant missions to the New World, the siege of Sancerre). The Brazilian hinterland is indeed an “earthly Purgatory” with only a young Protestant layman to carry (and translate) the message.

Not only does the content of the psalm fit the setting, in that it celebrates the natural world and God its author, but the particular psalm represents the movement to create a Huguenot refuge. Bernard Palissy writes in his *Recepte veritable* (1563) of a walk he takes along the Charente River, near his hometown of Saintes in the Rochelais hinterland. He hears a group of virgins singing Psalm 104 in a grove of trees and is inspired to build an intricately organized garden. Alongside the garden he decides to build “a palace, or amphitheater of refuge...to take Christians exiled in times of persecution” (qtd. in Kamil 281-82) [“...je trouvay que tout par un moyen, je pourrois aupres dudit jardin edifier un Palais, ou amphitheatre de refuge, pour recevoir les Chrestiens exilez en temps de persecution” (Palissy 58)]. Though there is no evidence to suggest that the scene Léry describes in his 1578 *Histoire* directly references Palissy’s *Recepte*, the parallel is striking.

Kamil notes that Psalm 104 gained particular importance among Huguenots in France during the Wars of Religion as well as in the diaspora in the seventeenth century (292). That Léry may have read Palissy is less important than the indication that the two Protestant writers appropriated a text in common. Both writers found a similar inspiration in the same text and felt compelled to construct a forest refuge in their own

writings. This parallel appropriation of Psalm 104 places L ery and Palissy in the same Huguenot network of textual appropriation, and it also creates a link of affinity between them. Shared reading unites two theorists of the Huguenot diaspora who may never have heard of each other.

To go further, we could say that the Huguenot diaspora comes into existence in L ery's and Palissy's writings as a network of affinity based on shared reading or textual communion. In the sixteenth century, as we have seen, the Huguenot dream of an actual overseas refuge fizzles following the collapse of France Antarctique and the defeat in Florida. The diaspora begins in earnest following the fall of La Rochelle in 1628, as thousands of Huguenots emigrate to colonies newly founded by the Protestant states of England and Holland. Before that physical dispersal, however, the Huguenot diaspora exists on a spiritual plane while the embattled French Protestants hide and wait for the periodic violence to subside.

Palissy would instruct his followers to copy down a particular biblical text and to read it out loud to the secret assemblies of Huguenots in their various communities. Kamil describes this system of directed preaching through shared reading as a blending of oral and written traditions, as literate but "unlettered" artisan-preachers use the technology of writing to extend the voice of the preacher throughout the "transatlantic *d sert*" (169). The young L ery in the forest does not read but recites from memory, though as far as the reader of the *Histoire* is concerned, the resulting oral performance is the same. We have already seen how the 1578 text fabricates rather than recalls L ery's actual memory of Brazil (and the later editions widen the gulf between the text and his

experience). It is clear that the scenes in which Léry quotes from Psalm 104 do not precisely recreate what he said at the time, since at the time of Léry's stay on the Brazilian mainland (1557) Clément Marot's 1562 translations of the psalms (which Léry quotes throughout) do not yet exist. However fictional, the importance of Léry's scene of reading in the forest is twofold: it evokes the dream of a Protestant refuge as a spiritual rather than a political project, and it includes a native Brazilian as a fellow reader.

The "Oueanen" (a member of a tribe allied with the Tupinamba) shows an interest in Léry's song and asks the meaning of the words. Just the sound of the psalm fills him with joy and recalls a song he has heard sung by a neighboring nation. The passage does not describe an attempt at conversion on Léry's part, but rather a spontaneous attempt by his interlocutor to understand and relate to a foreign song. The initiative for the link of affinity between Brazilian and European originates with the Oueanen. In this way, the forest recitation represents a scene of reading, even though no physical text is read from. Léry describes himself helping the Oueanen to partake of an absent text. This is literacy without books, or what Srinivas Aravamudan calls "metaliteracy":

Scenes of reading are mobile dramatizations of the abstract process of literacy. In response to colonialist arguments that foreground, fetishize, and falsify the relationship between literacy and civilization, scenes of reading generate a kind of metaliteracy, enabling the reconceptualization and tropicalization of that purported relationship. (289)

In Aravamudan's view, just focusing on texts and the people who read them reinforces a colonialist hierarchy of civilizations. "Scenes of reading" and "metaliteracy" help the theorist get past the fact that not everyone in history could read. Civilization is therefore

not limited to the authors and intended audience of texts.

The Oueanen participates in Calvinist textual practice unwittingly through biblical metaliteracy. Meanwhile, the artisan-preachers wittingly practice metaliteracy by reading out what has been written for them in secret Huguenot meetings in southwest France. By describing the Brazilian forest in a mostly fictional scene that recalls the dream of a Protestant refuge, Léry places himself retrospectively in a Huguenot diaspora that does not yet exist. By having the Oueanen respond in the way he does to the sound and meaning of the psalm, Léry incorporates the Brazilian into that diaspora. The network of affinity joins Huguenot and Brazilian, at least at that moment, just as it joins all Huguenots dispersed in the transatlantic *désert*.

### **Conclusion**

Two ways of reading Léry's discussion of writing represent two kinds of links in the text's network. The distinction of the oral from the written, as interpreted by Certeau, results in an unequal power relation between European and Other and, in this case, the occlusion of the Tupi voice through appropriation by writing. The idea of metaliteracy, on the other hand, allows for links of affinity through a kind of textual communion. That second kind of link—established in defensive response against the threat of Catholic appropriation—joins Protestant to Protestant in a transatlantic diaspora as well as Protestant to Tupi.

Interestingly, both links of affinity and links of appropriation often rely on reciprocity, or at least the possibility of reciprocity between groups, in order to be meaningful. In their ongoing feud, the Tupinamba and the Margaia count on the other

group to reciprocate after one group captures and eats a member of the other group.

Likewise, the nemeses Léry and Thevet blatantly borrow from one another. At the same time, the sharing of Psalm 104 in the woods between Léry and the Oueanen only works because both draw significance from the moment, and in the textual realm, the Protestant alliance between Léry and Chauveton is strengthened when both cite each other in successive editions of their works.

In the workings of both diaspora and colonialism, through affinity and appropriation respectively, the expansion of a transatlantic network of potentially reciprocal cultural and textual links characterizes an epoch of violent contradictions that stretches from Léry's sixteenth century to Condé's twentieth. Certeau's emphasis on the unequal power relations that result from a eurocentric writing of history are of course correct and immensely important in understanding how cultural divides come to be seen as absolute and coded in our very physiognomy. My contention is that such solidifying of difference—across borders and oceans—might be explained to some extent by looking at how networks of relations between peoples, places, and texts develop across a vast space like the Atlantic and through the course of the colonial era.

Reading Léry's text in terms of the links it proliferates (to other texts and between European and Tupi) begins to give us a sense of how a text, and in particular a travel narrative, can help us map out the development of such a network. Certeau's circle diagram serves as an ideal starting point in visually schematizing how a text can model a network of appropriations that unfolds in geographic space. The downside of the circle is that it represents a closed system. The appropriation and affinity that takes place in

and through L ery’s text does not operate simply in one direction, as Certeau would have it: from “there” back to “here.” Another kind of diagram is necessary.

In the next chapter, I show how a different travel narrative builds a network of geographic links, and I read the significance of that network’s development over the course of the text. In a series of visualizations, I show how a series of connections between “here” and “there” can develop meaning as it grows in complexity. Drawing the diagram of the network of appropriations and affiliations coming in and out of L ery’s text would be daunting if not impossible, seeing as how the links it performs and describes are at once textual, cultural, religious, and physically cannibalistic. The network of Olaudah Equiano’s travels has the advantage of being eminently drawable. My aim in the next chapter is to draw that network, which, as I discuss, represents a subset of the same network of transatlantic connections that L ery helps to inaugurate.

CHAPTER 2: MOBILITY, FREEDOM, AND APPROPRIATION IN THE *INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO*: A NETWORK ANALYSIS

For history tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they have never been self-executing...  
— President Barack Obama, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Two hundred years after Léry, under very different circumstances, another man crosses the Atlantic, discovers new cultures, and eventually writes a memoir of his travels that sells well in Europe. According to *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself*, first published in 1789, a boy named Olaudah Equiano is kidnapped in the 1750s from his home what is now northern Nigeria and forced to endure the middle passage.<sup>1</sup> He is sold into slavery in Barbados, brought to Virginia, and sent to England. From there Equiano, now known as Gustavus Vassa, sets out to serve in the British Navy during the Seven Years' War, only to be sold again into slavery in the Caribbean. Through perseverance, strategy, and keen

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent Carretta's research has cast doubt as to whether Vassa/Equiano was indeed born in Africa. He has located a birth certificate and other documentation that strongly suggest that the man known as Gustavus Vassa was born in South Carolina. I am not interested in weighing in on the debate as to the historical veracity of the narrative, though it is of course interesting to consider the significance of Carretta's findings for a literary as well as a historical reading of the text. I will discuss later in the chapter the author's fashioning of an African self, for which the initial section dealing with his childhood in Africa and experience of the middle passage obviously serves a crucial rhetorical function. In the meantime, I will accept the autobiographer's challenge to refer to him throughout by the name he has chosen to (re)claim: Olaudah Equiano.



business sense, Vassa/Equiano eventually manages to buy his freedom, becomes a Calvinist Methodist, and settles down to write his memoir.

Though both Jean de Léry and Olaudah Equiano find explanatory power in Calvinism, and though both men edit multiple editions of their travelogues in their lifetimes, the parallels between sixteenth-century shoemaker-refugee-pastor and eighteenth-century slave-sailor-merchant end there. Equiano's autobiography brings to life the height of slavery-based Atlantic colonialism, an economic and political system on a scale and of a dehumanizing comprehensiveness that Léry and his contemporaries could never have dreamed of.

I aim neither to compare Equiano's era with Léry's nor to attempt to bridge the gulf of centuries between them. My interest is rather to show how the networks enacted in and by each text react to and act on the particular cultural configuration of each author's period. In the case of the *Interesting Narrative*, I show how visually tracing Equiano's extensive travels around the Atlantic uncovers a network of geographic connections that adds to a reading of the text in several ways.

Olaudah Equiano was an extraordinary man, and his narrative of slavery and emancipation is an extraordinary text. Beyond the improbability of his singular rise to prominence as an African at the height of the era of African slavery, the most extraordinary thing about Olaudah Equiano is the extent of his voyages. His descriptions of many trips across the Atlantic as well as to Turkey and the Arctic dispense with readers' expectations about where an eighteenth-century ex-slave could go. This chapter

analyzes Equiano's travels as a network, using GIS visualizations,<sup>2</sup> to show that his geographic range not only makes for a good story but also suggests an analogy between mobility and freedom.

Seeing Equiano's journeys as a network highlights, above all, his extraordinary mobility. In this chapter, I consider the possible significance of that mobility. By breaking up Equiano's narrative into stages and analyzing the growth of his geographic network through those stages, I read the text schematically in order to explore the idea of relative freedom. I ask: does it make sense to read freedom from slavery not in absolute terms, but rather relatively, in proportion to Equiano's relative mobility in different periods of his life? If so, what is the significance of such an analogy between freedom and mobility, and is it particular to Equiano's text?

Mobility, of goods and information as well as people, makes possible the connections that create and sustain human networks. Visualizing how Equiano's geographic connections grow over the course of the second half of the narrative illustrates John Urry's idea that increased mobility translates to what Urry calls "network capital." On the level of societal relations, Equiano's acquisition of network capital equates mobility with freedom. On the rhetorical and intertextual level, the expansion of Equiano's network parallels the structure of the biblical intertexts underpinning the rhetoric of salvation that comes to the fore toward the end of the *Interesting Narrative*. It is in discussing the function of Equiano's Christianity in the last

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<sup>2</sup> GIS stands for Geographic Information System. The software I used, ArcGIS (a trademark of ESRI, Inc.), allows for the mapping and analysis of any geographic information: that is, any data that can be plotted in geographic space.

part of this chapter that the ambiguity of the author's position in relation to appropriation emerges. Equiano's network is primarily an appropriative one, though at any given moment it is not clear whether he appropriates the culture he encounters for his own purposes or is instead appropriated by a culture that ultimately welcomes him but only at the expense of his African selfhood.

In reading both emancipatory and intertextual significance into Equiano's accumulation of network capital, I ask a question of an eighteenth-century text that James Clifford poses in relation to contemporary global society: "How are people fashioning networks, complex worlds, that both presuppose and exceed cultures and nations?" (10). I argue that Equiano's travels both presuppose and exceed the triangle pattern associated so strongly with his century, giving visual credence to the idea that narratives can unravel or undermine entrenched patterns of thought, action, and social relations. At the same time, Equiano's increasing mobility goes hand in hand with his acculturation into and tacit acceptance of a transatlantic culture's systems of capital accumulation, slaveholding, and patriarchy. (Indeed, validating mobility as a key factor in the emancipation, fame and fortune of the main character in a particularly male-centered narrative might appear to confirm Clifford's fear that "a focus on travel inevitably privilege[s] male experiences" [6].) The growth of Equiano's personal network of travels builds on the network dynamics of the eighteenth-century triangular trade, while simultaneously undermining the self-reinforcing patterns of that trade network by *refusing to be triangular*. The relentless pull of the Atlantic triangle is the

backdrop against which Equiano struggles to gain his freedom, gradually, by adding to his mobility.

### **The Triangular Atlantic**

Throughout this dissertation, but particularly in this chapter, I seek to respond to Christopher Miller's depiction of the Atlantic triangle trade as "an internalized cultural logic" (5). In *The French Atlantic Triangle*, Miller traces the legacy of the triangular pattern of trade between France, West Africa, and French Caribbean colonies in literary works by eighteenth-century female French abolitionists, nineteenth-century male French colonialists, and twentieth-century Caribbean authors. In Miller's interpretation of the history of French colonial trade, seventeenth-century policies establishing a government monopoly over trade in the Atlantic "solidified the triangle" (4). The economic logic of the triangle pattern, solidified by political mandate, infiltrated the psyche of French subjects on three continents. Miller sees the lasting mark of the triangle in French and Francophone works from the eighteenth century to the present. Despite Miller's nuanced and comprehensive reading, the question remains: what basis does the cultural logic of the triangle have in the history of transatlantic trade? How does a pattern of trade become internalized as a cultural logic, and what avenues are available to authors and readers to replace the triangle as a cultural model or to defuse its dehumanizing effects?

The history of the two centuries that passed between L ry's and Equiano's voyages is that of the rise of a complex transport network that brought Europe, Africa and the

Americas (as well as the Mediterranean and Asia) in closer contact than ever before. Equiano's voyages take place in an eighteenth-century Atlantic criss-crossed by this well-established network. The system known as the triangle trade can be seen as a result of this complex transport network. To explain how this could be, I draw on the empirical study of complex networks and their situation in geographical space. Social scientists, using models of network behavior developed in physics, have come to be able to characterize and explain the workings of various kinds of networks with some precision. The field of transport geography relies on the modeling of complex networks to make sense of patterns of shipping, commuting and traveling. The authors of *The Geography of Transport Systems* therefore mean something specific by "complex" when they note that "[b]y the early 18th century, a complex network of colonial trade was established over the North Atlantic Ocean" (Rodrigue, Comtois, and Slack ch. 2).

A network is complex not only in that it is complicated or that it consists of a certain density of points (nodes) and connections (links). Complexity is a measurable phenomenon, and networks of a certain degree of complexity exhibit certain emergent characteristics, such as hierarchization and self-organization. Rodrigue et al. endeavor to explain the structure and behavior of transport systems in terms of an intersection between network phenomena and geography. The authors posit that "[t]he specific purpose of transportation is to fulfill a demand for mobility," but that "spatial constraints" such as distance and the elements of a specific landscape shape the way a transport network will develop to meet that demand (ch. 1). When it comes to the North Atlantic in the eighteenth century, the demands of the European economy called into

being a transcontinental network of maritime transport largely influenced or constrained by the clockwise pattern of prevailing winds in the North Atlantic (ch. 2).

To characterize the triangle trade as the inevitable manifestation of European economic demand in a triangle pattern as guided or constrained by wind patterns would evacuate all individual or collective blame for the enslavement of millions of Africans. The fundamental property of complex systems, however, is that the behavior of the system as a whole does not follow straightforwardly from the behavior of, for example, individual molecules (see Prigogine) or actors (see Latour 24). As in economics more generally, the structure of transport networks develops over time through the *accumulated* choices of individuals and groups. Historians Ralph Austen and Woodruff Smith, for instance, propose that the association of sugar with respectability in the late eighteenth century largely created that society's outsize demand for the product that drove the triangle trade (105-7). Rituals that combined sugar with coffee in coffeehouses and with tea in private homes to create respectability, performed by members of different classes in different ways, sent more ships to Africa and the Caribbean. Placing the middle passage in the context of a complex economic system in no way excuses the actions of slave traders, but it does help explain the scale of the trade and its continuation over hundreds of years.

The advantage of a network approach to large-scale systems in history, in the Atlantic in particular, is well established. Miles Ogborn, for one, contends that attention to the historical networks that "allowed, shaped and channelled movements of capital, people, ships, commodities, information and ideas around the globe" adds nuance to

Wallerstein's world-systems theory (Ogborn 52). Whereas Wallerstein bases his historical systems approach on the interaction between territories—nations and regions defined as core, periphery and semiperiphery—a networks approach focused on movements avoids the reductionism and determinism that often result from world-systems analysis (Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism*; Ogborn 52).

From a world-systems perspective, the dynamics of territorial entities creates history; geopolitical power or trade dominance flows and ebbs between countries along with the flows of goods and capital (see Wallerstein, *Modern World-System*). Despite the explanatory power of world-systems analysis, it is important to note that that flow of power over time from core to periphery (for example, from Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century to the Netherlands in the seventeenth) can never be more than an informed abstraction. The movements traced as lines on a map or links in a network, on the other hand, record concrete events. Regardless of historical accuracy or precision, a network of movements—of ships, people, goods, and information—is not an abstraction. It is the aggregation or generalization of such movements over time into recognizable patterns that leads to abstractions such as the triangle trade. I do not mean to suggest that abstractions lack reality or explanatory value; I would simply observe that abstractions are harder to place on a map than are events.

Equiano's narrative takes as its backdrop the network of movements of ships around the Atlantic. It would theoretically be possible to display all of the recorded voyages that took place during a period of time—say, the eighteenth century—and to analyze the diagram of those voyages as a network. The editors of the *Transatlantic Slave Trade*

Database, for example, have done scholars an invaluable service in compiling the available records for all of the slave trading voyages perpetrated in Iberian, Dutch, English, and French ships from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth. Plotting all of the eighteenth-century voyages recorded in that database would provide a large subset (the ship movements that carried slaves) of the total number of voyages that traversed the Atlantic in Equiano's era.

Equiano's own voyages represent another subset of that same network. My reading of the *Interesting Narrative* assumes that the network of Equiano's journeys (whether historically factual, exaggerated, or fabricated), as described in the text, constitutes part of the larger network of voyages accumulated over the course of the eighteenth century. Of course, Equiano does not have control of where he goes most of the time, especially when enslaved. The choice to go to a certain place, whether it is his choice or someone else's, does not in itself have a noticeable effect on the pattern of Atlantic trade. It is possible, however, to see a pattern in Equiano's travels over the course of the narrative that, read in terms of network dynamics, adds to the rhetorical effectiveness and intertextual subtlety of the text. To explain what I mean I must first review some aspects of the study of complex networks.

While no one has modeled maritime trade of the colonial era as a network in the way I have just described, Ducruet et al. have analyzed the network of Atlantic shipping for the period 1996-2006. Ducruet's team of transport geographers reports that the network of Atlantic maritime shipping is not only complex but can be characterized as a scale-free network (Ducruet, Rozenblat, and Zaidi 512). The signature of a scale-free network



is the presence of a few large hubs with many links and many smaller nodes with a few links each. Scale-free networks contrast in particular with “regular networks,” in which each node has the same number of links, and “small-world networks,” which consist primarily of dense clusters of inter-linked nodes with few long-distance links between clusters (Rodrigue et al.). What is intriguing about scale-free networks is the process by which a minority of nodes grow to become hubs.

As explained in the introduction, Barabási and Albert coined the phrase “preferential attachment” in 1999 to explain what they also call the “rich-gets-richer” phenomenon particular to scale-free networks. As a network grows—that is, gains more links—the nodes that already have the most links will tend to attract the new links as well. Barabási explains preferential attachment by way of an example of behavior on the Internet: “When choosing between two pages, one with twice as many links as the other, about twice as many people link to the more connected page. While our individual choices are highly unpredictable, as a group we follow strict patterns” (85). Preferential attachment results in a process of self-organization that leads to a hierarchy of nodes. The term “scale-free” refers to the distribution of the number of links among the various nodes. A regular distribution of links would provide all the nodes in a network with roughly the same number of links. The scale of such a network would therefore be the average number of links any node has. In a scale-free network, Barabási writes, “there is no such thing as a characteristic node. We see a continuous hierarchy of nodes, spanning from rare hubs to the numerous tiny nodes” (70).

In Ducruet et al.'s diagrams, Rotterdam looms largest as the most connected port in shipping data for the Atlantic of both 1996 and 2006, followed by a few other cities such as Antwerp, Hamburg, Le Havre, New York, and Santos, Brazil. The dominance of some hubs has clearly developed over a long period: the connections between French ports such as Rouen and multiple West African ports appear to be the legacy of colonialism, as may be Lisbon's lasting connections with Brazilian and Angolan ports (514). However, while the largest hubs maintain their dominance between 1996 and 2006, some shuffling occurs among the second-tier ports: for instance, Kingston eclipses Houston as the main hub of Latin American trade, and Algeciras surpasses Abidjan as the primary hub for Africa (512). Overall, the authors find that over the period of the study, the hierarchization of Atlantic ports decreases slightly; that is, the hierarchy of nodes characteristic of scale-free networks becomes flattens out somewhat by the coming to prominence of new hubs in an era of "growing regional integration" (517). The consolidation of links in larger and larger hubs, which is the expected result of preferential attachment, is in this case mitigated by the rise of new regional ports. As the number of dominant ports increases, the hierarchy of ports becomes less severe (512).

If one were to gather and analyze the complete records of transatlantic voyages in the eighteenth century in the way Ducruet's team has done for those of the contemporary period, the resulting diagram could shed light on the nature of the network of movements in that period. It seems clear that the slave trade was dominated by a small number of hubs in Europe (for example Lisbon, Amsterdam, London, Nantes, Bordeaux, and La Rochelle), along the west coast of Africa (for example Luanda, Benguela,

Whydah, Cape Coast, Bunce Island, Gorée), and in the Americas (for example Salvador, Barbados, and Port-au-Prince). A diachronic network analysis could determine whether these or other hubs and the patterns of trade between them developed over the course of the colonial period through a process of preferential attachment. Such a network could demonstrate whether the triangle trade existed in reality or merely serves as historical shorthand.

Relatedly, Miller contests Herbert Klein's contention that the triangle trade is a myth. Klein makes clear that different ships were used more often than not for the third leg (Americas-Europe), and that while "this trade can be considered to have had a triangle-style relationship," it would be inaccurate to call the pattern of trade conducted by the average ship of the colonial period triangular (Klein 97; Miller 4). I agree with Miller that Klein's objection need not lead us to discard the notion of the triangle altogether, as what imprinted on circum-Atlantic culture was the accumulated pattern of movement, not the most characteristic itinerary of individual ships. I submit that there is an empirical basis for what Miller calls the "cultural logic" of the Atlantic triangle, though it would take fleshing out the network analysis I have just outlined to prove it.

The triangle could be said to be historically real if, for a given period of years, certain probabilities hold in the linkages between nodes in the Atlantic network. If the probability is greater that a given eighteenth-century ship leaving a major European port will land at an African hub than anywhere else, if the probability is greater that the same or a different ship sailing from an African port will land at an American port than anywhere else, *and* if the probability is greater that a ship sailing from an American port

will land at a European port than anywhere else, then the trade pattern in the aggregate can truly be called triangular.

Regardless of the specific trade patterns in development or decline at any given moment in history, three macro hubs emerge for the colonial period overall: “Europe,” “Africa,” and “America.” Preferential attachment in this system is uni-directional: that is, new links (ocean voyages) originating at point A (Europe) are drawn by the dynamics of the system, reinforced over time, toward point B (Africa). Links originating at point B tend toward point C (America), and those originating at point C tend to head back to point A.

Assuming for the purposes of my argument that both phenomena I have just described (preferential attachment and a set of probabilities leading to a triangular pattern) are verifiable, the network of Atlantic trade in Equiano’s period could be characterized as a scale-free network. The characteristic aspect of scale-free networks is self-organization; the hierarchy of nodes and hubs in such networks does not develop as a result of planning (Barabási 221). The reason that it is important for my reading of Equiano’s travels to establish the scale-free nature of the network of eighteenth-century Atlantic trade is precisely because a self-organizing network is composed of the actions of individual elements within the system, rather than determined by an overarching design. Christopher Miller, for one, assumes that the French Atlantic triangle resulted from the mandates of the French government. In studying the history or cultural legacy of one particular empire in isolation, it makes sense to assume that patterns of trade conformed to government policy and that subversion of mercantilist monopolies

constituted the exception rather than the rule. However, all of the European powers that took over dominance of the Atlantic trade in turn—Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century, the Netherlands in the seventeenth, and Britain and France in the eighteenth—found government monopolies over trade hard to enforce. Both Britain and France established monopolies over the slave trade in the 1660s that did not even last to the end of the century. Klein notes that the *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales*, established in 1664, “was already granting licenses to private traders by the end of the decade” and that “by the 1690s most of France’s African trade was in the hands of private entrepreneurs” (78-79). England’s newly restored King Charles II formed the Company of Royal Adventurers to Africa in 1663. The monopoly shifted to the Royal African Company in 1672 but disintegrated by 1689 (Blackburn 254-55). Both government monopolies soon crumbled under the pressure of private traders.

Although government money was necessary for establishing overseas trade in each case, the shape of that trade was self-organizing rather than planned. French traders did not stick to French ports, nor did British ships dock only in British ports. Julius Scott has shown that formal and informal trade, as well as communication between sailors and slaves, regularly took place between Caribbean islands belonging to different European powers. Though supposedly locked into mutually exclusive patterns, the nearness of, say, Jamaica and St. Domingue (or Montserrat and St. Eustatia, in the *Interesting Narrative*) often trumped the policy of the government far away in Europe (Scott ch. 2). Equiano’s voyages, as we will see, attest to inter-colonial Caribbean trade.

Transatlantic voyages as well often connected ports claimed by different empires. David Hancock describes how eighteenth-century Scottish traders established a trading network to produce and distribute Madeira wine. This network brought wine produced on a Portuguese island and fortified with French brandy to British North American ports, and it grew in the way it did not because of government mandate but through the personal relationships developed between individual producers and traders. The network's "memory" guided traders' decisions based on the success or failure of previous connections (Hancock 479-80), a prime example of preferential attachment influencing the pattern of growth of a trade network. If the overall pattern of the Atlantic system was triangular in the probabilistic way I have described, that triangle most certainly developed and persisted in spite of, rather than because of, government policies of monopoly and mercantilism.

My reading of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* builds on the macro-geographic analysis of Atlantic trade networks just discussed. I argue that because the pattern of Equiano's journeys deviates from the triangle, his story defuses, if only in a small way, that entrenched pattern and the hierarchy of hubs clustered at its three points. Simply put, he travels beyond where one would expect an eighteenth-century ex-slave to go, and in so doing expands the horizon of possibility for the movement of Africans. In Equiano's text, freedom from slavery is not absolute, but rather relative, incremental, and realized geographically. Freedom is proportional to mobility.

In Susan Marren's reading, the power of the *Interesting Narrative* stems from the "transgressive self" that Equiano fashions over the course of the text. Equiano's status as

freed person, as ambiguous and vulnerable as it is, allows him to see beyond the social order. Freed persons' "estrangement from definable social categories," Marren argues, "freed them to imagine—if only fleetingly—radically new subject positions to occupy within radically new networks of social relationships" (95). My aim in analyzing Equiano's movements in the narrative is first of all to visualize his "radically new networks" in purely geographic terms. Equiano's text is fascinating first of all in that the reader can plot on a map Equiano's increased mobility: the change from an immobile, enslaved self to an increasingly mobile, free self. That change can be seen to stand for what would otherwise remain an abstraction—that is, the new networks of social relations Marren describes. In Marren's helpful formulation, "the transgressive self must be thought of not as a stable identity or essence in itself but rather as a fluid positioning, a mode of articulation of newly imagined, radically nonbinary subjectivities" (95). In the visualization of Equiano's narrative that follows, "fluid positioning" becomes literal: the narrative progresses in relation to Equiano's increasingly fluid position around the ocean.

In addition to the "transgressive self," I also take from Marren the idea of Equiano's text as a counternarrative: Equiano "continually evokes and erases the totalizing boundaries that demarcate social subjects and objects in eighteenth-century England, having the same effect on his new milieu as the counternarratives described by Homi Bhabha have on nations" (95). In "DissemiNation," Bhabha describes the process by which nations continually create "a signifying space that is archaic and mythical" (300). Bhabha's counternarratives undermine the coherence and the boundedness of nations.

Equiano's counternarrative does not push against the territoriality of a nation so much as the transatlantic triangle patterning of empire, which is mapped onto a network formation, rather than onto a "signifying space." What Equiano transgresses are not boundaries per se, but rather established patterns of movement (and by extension, social relations). His counternarrative takes the form of a counter-movement.

Ogborn cites Equiano's text as an example of a "counter-movement" in relation to the system of movement geared toward the accumulation of capital in the eighteenth-century Atlantic (61-66). My aim in visualizing the network of Equiano's journeys as a subset of the as-yet undrawn complete network of eighteenth-century transatlantic travel is to make Ogborn's observation more precise. If Equiano's itinerary represents a counter-movement, what does that movement look like? According to Miller, "the very persistence of the triangle has incited certain artists to think outside its lines and to seek other logics" (5). Equiano certainly qualifies as such an artist. But what form does his "other logic" take?

### **Equiano's anti-triangular voyages**

To begin to analyze Equiano's voyages as a network, I entered all of the voyages mentioned in the text into a table and produced a dynamic map diagram using ArcGIS.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows all of the voyages together with direction markers, though without any labels as to location or date.

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of chronological completeness, I used the last edition produced during Equiano's lifetime (the 9th ed., 1794). Many thanks to Giselle Kolenic for her help with the GIS visualizations.

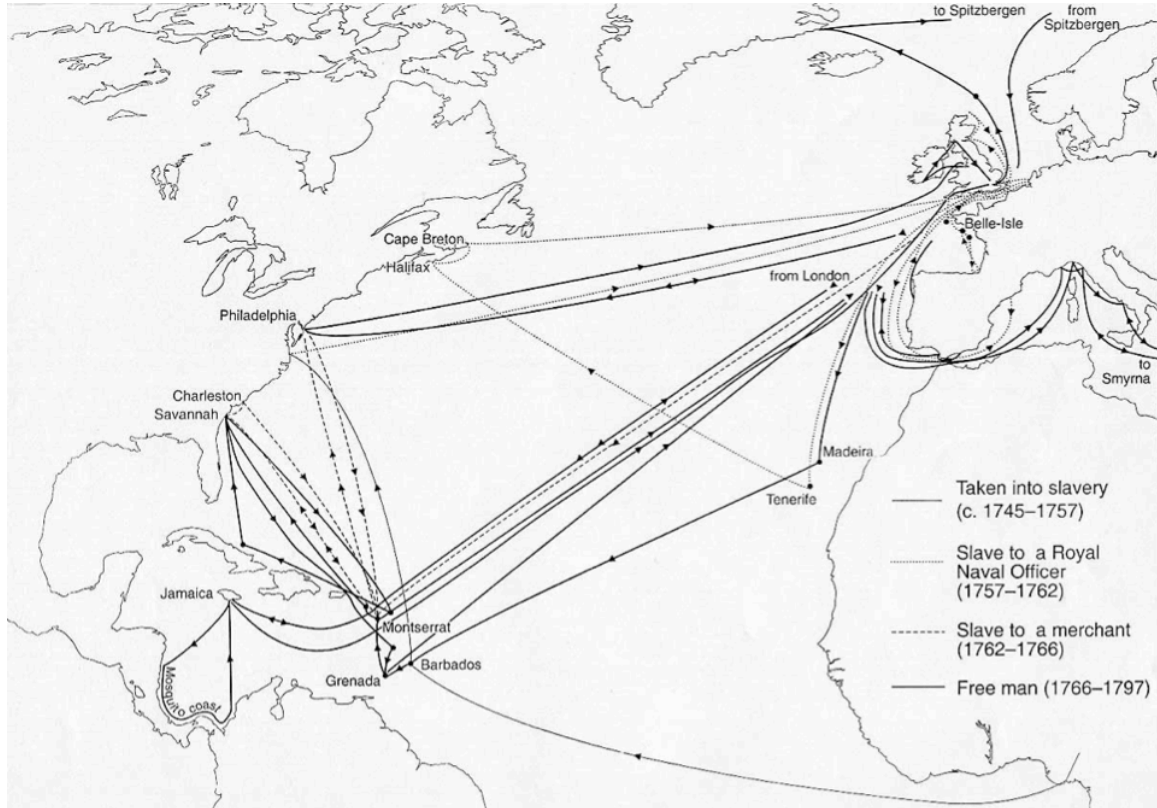




**fig. 2.1. Equiano's complete travels, 1750s-1792**

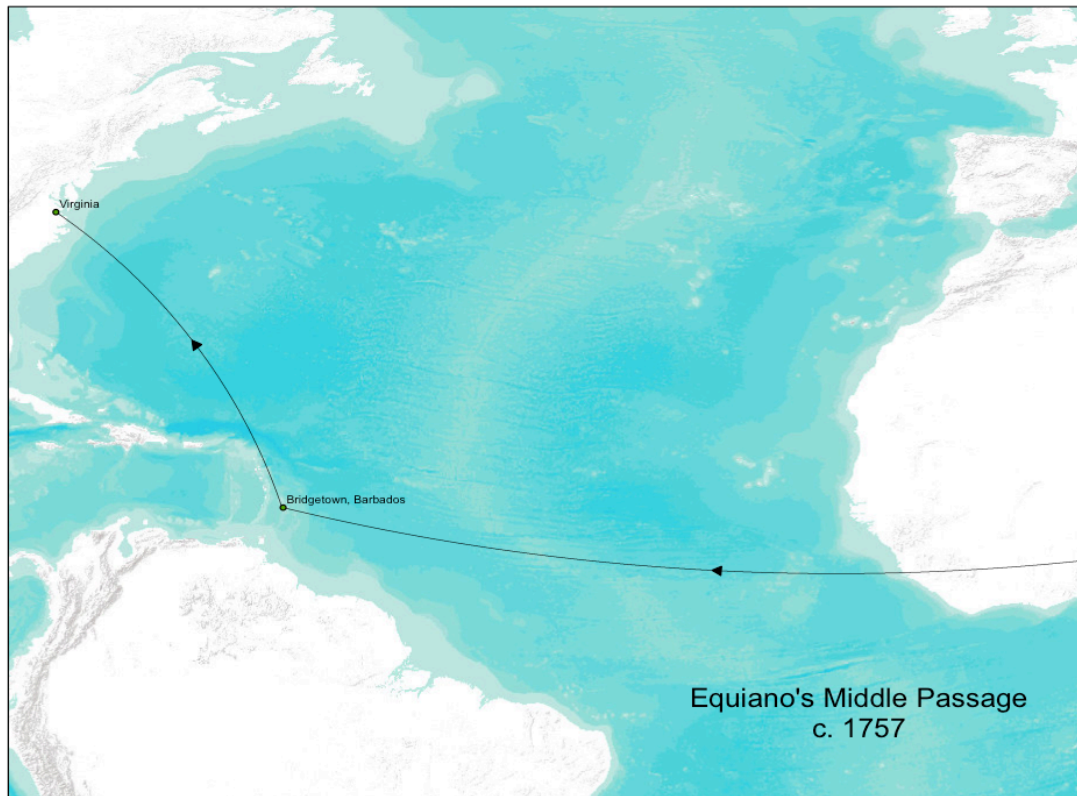
It is easy to see this mass of lines as a network; there even look to be some clustering effects, or perhaps even hubs, in the Caribbean, at a couple of locations on the North American coast, and in Northern Europe. Having all these lines displayed at once, however, makes it hard to use Equiano's travels to do a close reading of the text. Making sense of this GIS "data" requires separating different stages of the narrative.

Mine is certainly not the first attempt to map Equiano's travels. The map in figure 2 (taken from Ogborn) also displays the entire *Interesting Narrative* as a series of voyages.



**fig. 2.2. Equiano's travels** (Ogborn 64)

The key indicates four separate stages of Equiano's life: his initial capture and enslavement, his time in the Royal Navy, his enslavement to a merchant, and the period after his emancipation. With all four stages displayed together, however, it is not easy to see the patterns that emerge as the narrative progresses. The advantage of maps produced using GIS is that different subsets of voyages can be isolated. I was able to filter the database by stage in order to show voyages from only one period at a time. Figure 3, for example, displays only the first stage of Equiano's life, as described in the first section of the text.

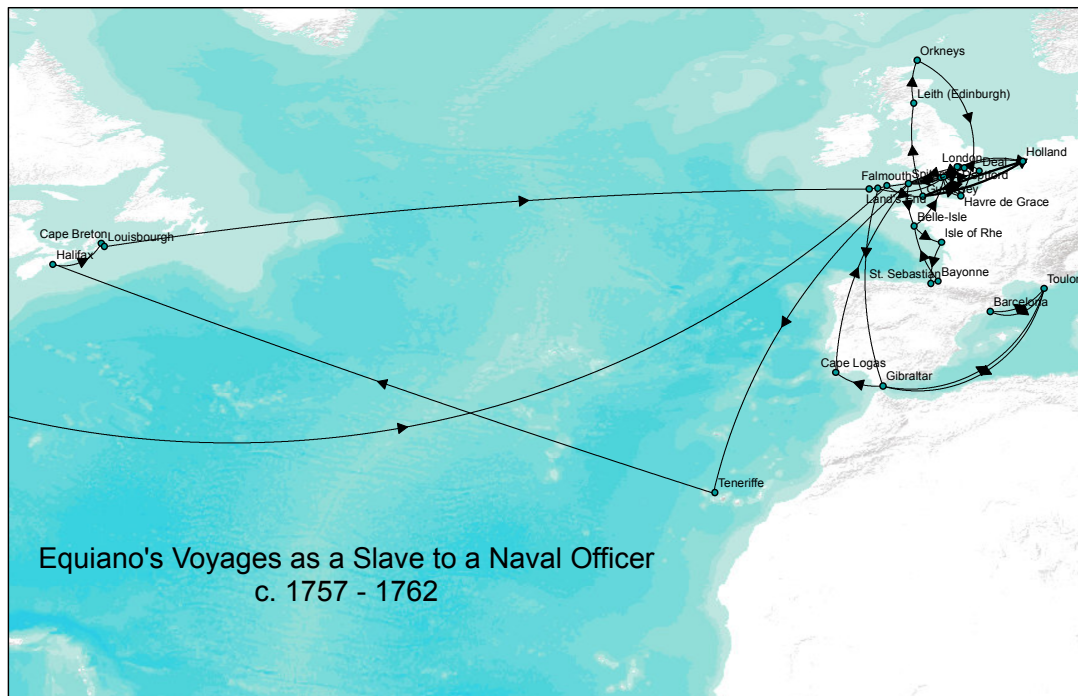


**fig. 2.3. Equiano's travels, stage 1**

At the beginning, Equiano's movements could not be more constrained.<sup>4</sup> After briefly describing an idyllic childhood in "Eboe," Equiano relates in chapter 2 how he is captured and eventually brought to the coast and taken aboard a slave ship bound for the West Indies. His is the first detailed description of slavery in Africa and the middle passage written by a (purported) native of the continent. After Equiano's friend and colleague Quobna Ottobah Cugoano decided not to linger on his experience of the middle passage in his 1787 *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of*

<sup>4</sup> Here and in what follows I have kept to the dating indicated in the *Interesting Narrative*. Vincent Carretta has meticulously shown this first section to be the most apocryphal. Regardless of whether Equiano was in fact born in Africa or in the Carolinas, it seems clear that he misdates his voyage from Virginia for England by at least two years. He states that he arrived in England "about the beginning of the spring of 1757," though Carretta shows that would have to have been 1755 ("Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa?" 99-101; *Equiano, the African* 40-4).

*the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, Equiano may have felt it all the more important to highlight this aspect of his own autobiography (Carretta, *Equiano, the African* 3). Figure 3 shows the route of Equiano's forced journey from Africa to Barbados and onward to Virginia.

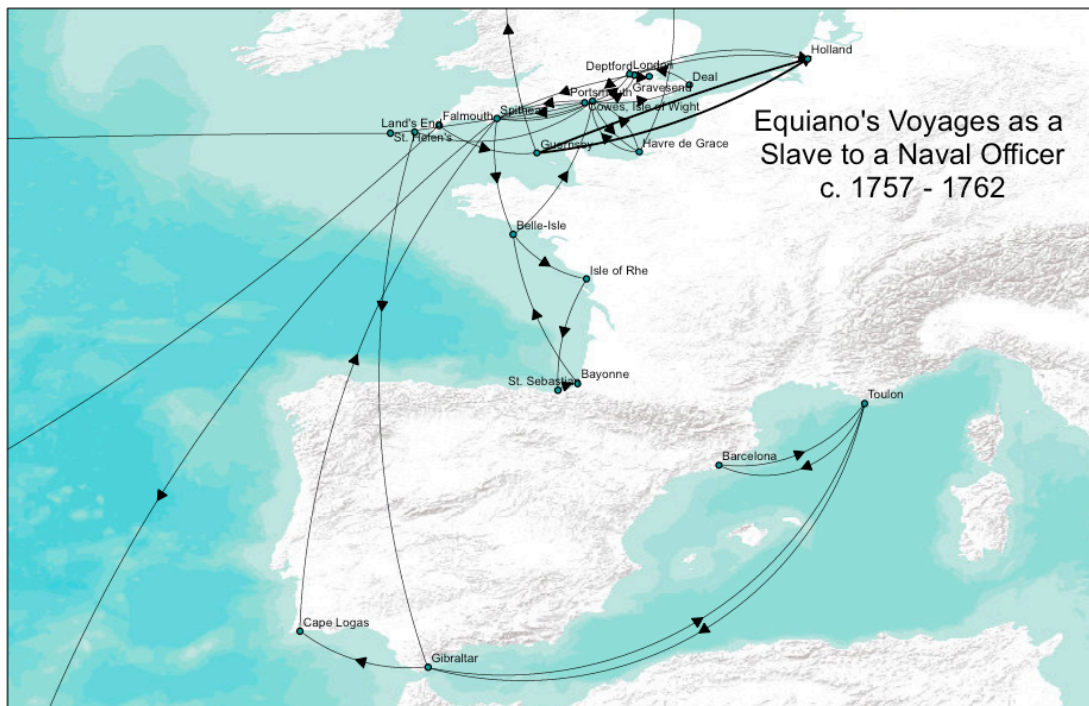


**fig. 2.4. Equiano's travels, stage 2**

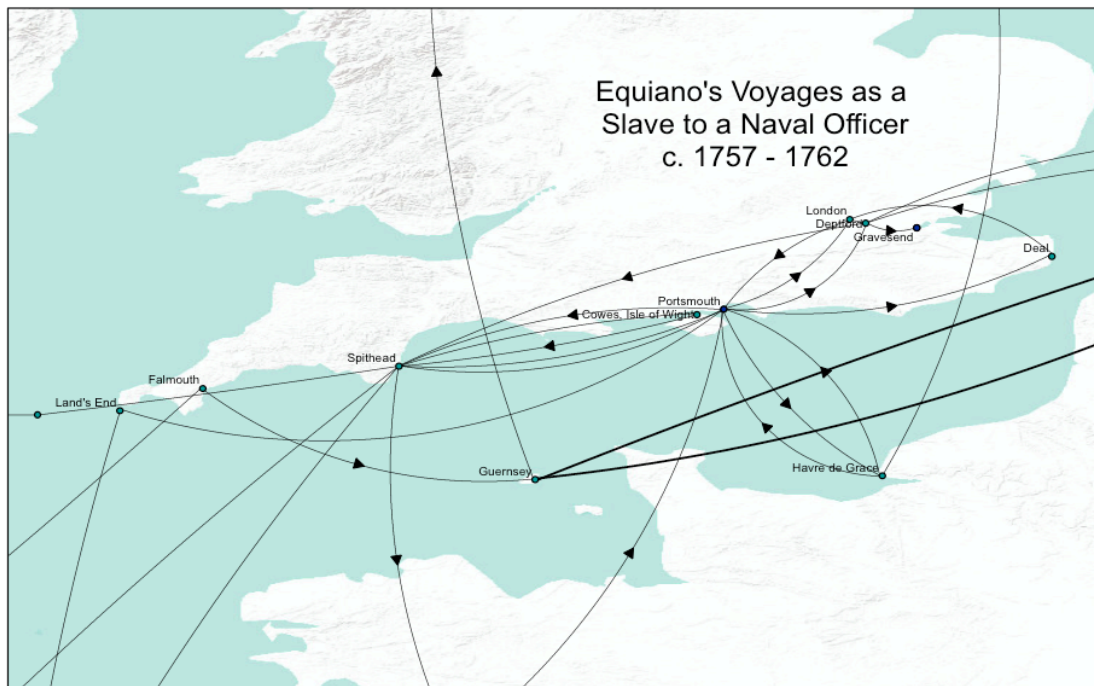
Equiano's trajectory does not dead-end, as did that of so many millions of other Africans, with the middle passage. The next stage of his life (as described in the narrative, and following the four-stage division of Ogborn's map) follows paths that do not conform to the pattern of European colonialism. In Virginia, he finds himself sold to lieutenant Pascal, who takes him to England. Equiano, though still enslaved, serves as a

sailor in diplomatic and military missions to Guernsey, Holland, France, and even to the French fort of Louisbourg in present-day Nova Scotia. Figure 4 includes all of the voyages described in this second stage of the narrative.

Each line on the maps represents a voyage described in the *Interesting Narrative*, including a marker for the direction of travel. The GIS tables (not shown here) underlying these lines also include other information, including page number and date, when available. A line of double thickness represents two voyages between the same two points mentioned together in the text, as in “we were twice in Holland” (70). Figure 5 shows the voyages in Europe for this period, and figure 6 focuses on England.



**fig. 2.5. Equiano's travels in Europe (stage 2)**



**fig. 2.6. Equiano's travels around England (stage 2)**

One way to read the difference between Equiano's experience of slavery in Barbados and Virginia and his enslavement in the navy is in terms of increased mobility. Of course, the middle passage takes the young Equiano thousands of miles from his home and family, but that movement is intended to be uni-directional and final. He certainly does not receive any benefit from that trajectory. Equiano's time in the navy allows him the relative freedom to capitalize on his movements. Figure 6 shows how Equiano returns to certain locations multiple times while serving Pascal: Guernsey, Spithead, Portsmouth, and London. Though he does not control his movements, he is able to establish and maintain relationships with people in these different locations. Besides

shipboard companions such as Richard Baker, with whom he sails for years, he befriends a “black boy” on the Isle of Wight, and he makes several lasting connections in London. It is there he learns to read and write, having already learned English aboard ship. Pascal’s cousins, the Miss Guerins, whom Equiano meets on his first trip to London, arrange for his schooling and have him baptized on his second visit.

Whereas previously he feared Europeans and despised their foreign customs, in the course of his time at sea he comes to appreciate the customs of his kidnappers:

It was now between three and four years since I first came to England, a great part of which I had spent at sea; so that I became inured to that service, and began to consider myself as happily situated...I now not only felt myself quite easy with these new countrymen, but relished their society and manners. (Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* 77)<sup>5</sup>

Part of the reason this young slave comes to reconcile himself to the culture of his captors is that he is able to “improve himself” by gaining skills and status in society. Besides learning to read and write, he also becomes a skilled hairdresser and an experienced sailor. By the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1762, Equiano has been promoted to able seaman, the highest rank below an officer in the Navy (Carretta, “Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa?” 102; *Equiano, the African* 72).

While Equiano is able to gain cultural capital, his mobility also garners him network capital. John Urry calls for a new “mobilities paradigm” for social science, which would take into account the diversity of mobilities—from tourist to migrant worker—in order to “make social phenomena across the world comprehensible” (12). Analyzing social phenomena through the lens of mobility means “all social relationships should be seen

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<sup>5</sup> Quotations from Equiano are taken from the 2003 revised edition that Vincent Carretta has edited, combining and notating the text of the nine editions published during Equiano’s lifetime.

as involving diverse ‘connections’ that are more or less ‘at a distance’...and more or less involving physical movement” (46). Urry distinguishes network capital from Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital to highlight the importance that connections between people across distances have for individuals and for society more broadly. Mobilities alone, Urry claims, are not significant: “What are key are the social consequences of such mobilities, namely, to be able to engender and sustain social relations with those people (and to visit specific places) who are mostly not physically proximate, that is, to form and sustain networks” (196). During his time enslaved in the navy, Equiano gains cultural capital by learning to speak and read English and dress hair, by being promoted to able seaman, and by being baptized. At the same time, he gains network capital by making (and sometimes sustaining) connections in ports along the coast of England and beyond.

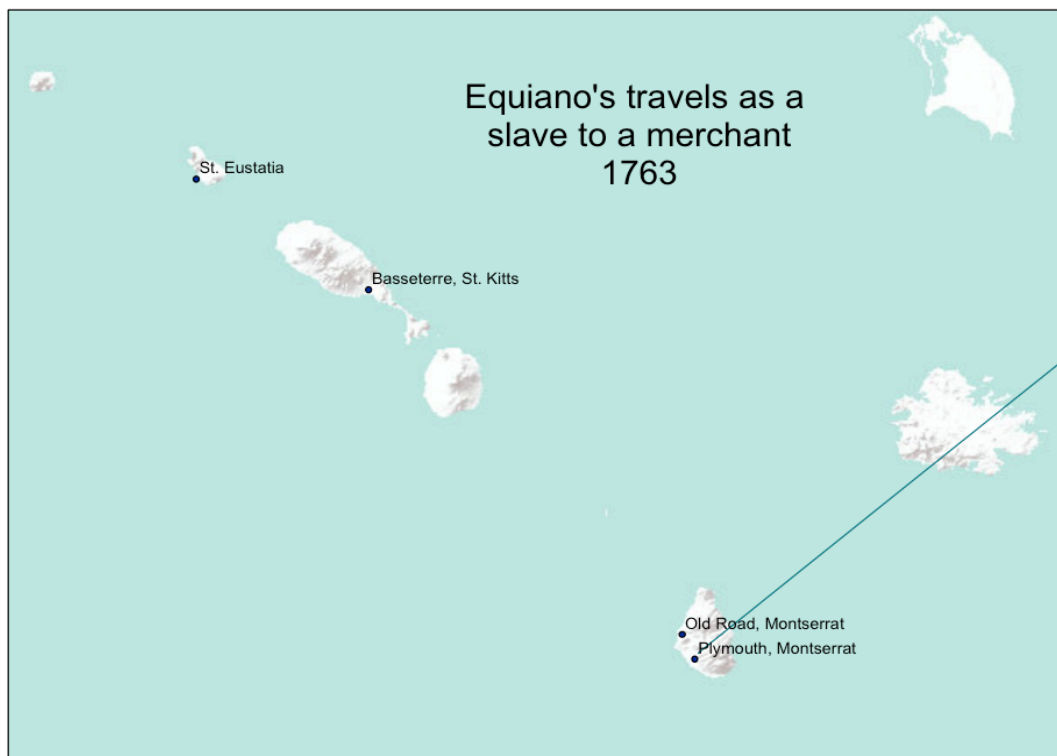
At the end of 1762, with the war ended, Equiano expects to be freed upon his return to London, as he is under the assumption that English legal precedent would free him upon his touching land in England (Carretta, *Equiano, the African* 85). Captain Pascal, however, does not allow Equiano to touch land; he is sold in the Thames at Deptford to a West Indian trader instead. It is striking to compare the traces of Equiano’s travels in his five years with the Navy (figure 4) to his travels in the following year, 1763 (figure 7).

Urry cites the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 as an example of “the extraordinary distributional consequences of uneven levels of network capital.” While the middle class of New Orleans was largely able to leave the city before the storm “because of their ownership of cars, contacts, and communications,” the predominantly



black poor saw their network capital fall “to zero” (Urry 203). For a brief moment, Equiano believes his network capital will save him from Caribbean slavery. He hides the nine guineas he has saved while aboard ship,

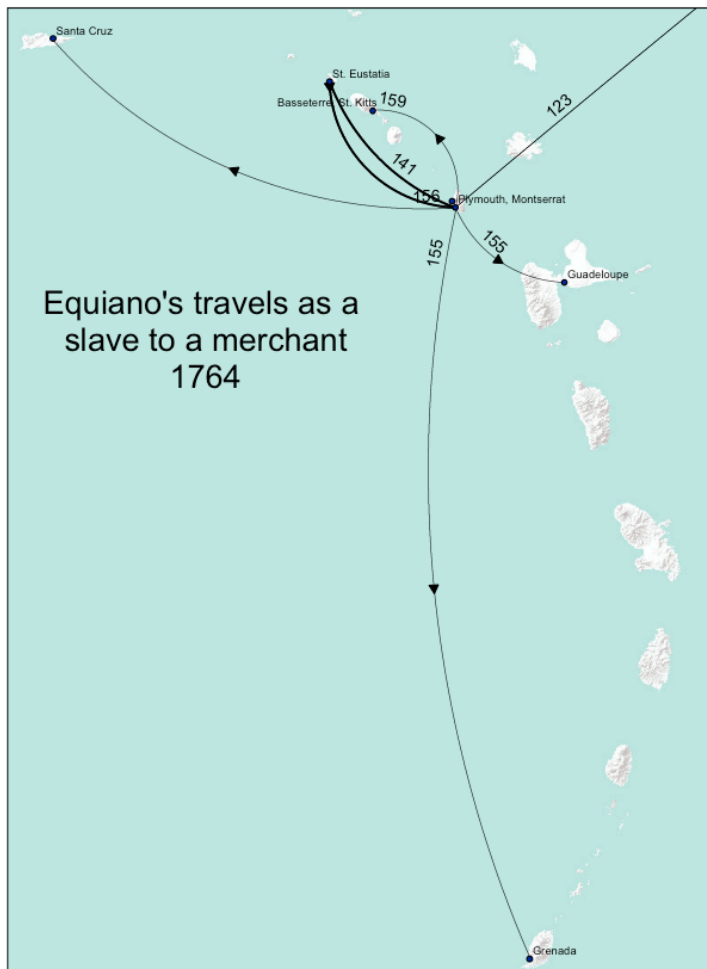
still hoping that by some means or other I should make my escape to the shore, and indeed some of my old shipmates told me not to despair, for they would get me back again; and that, as soon as they could get their pay, they would immediately come to Portsmouth to me, where this ship was going. (94)



**fig. 2.7. Equiano’s travels, beginning of stage 3 (1763 only)**

His shipmates do send him word (and oranges) at Portsmouth and promise to rescue him the next day, as does a woman from Gosport, across the harbor from Portsmouth, who is a former mistress of Captain Pascal’s (96). Unluckily for him, the West India convoy sails the very next day. Though the communications and transport technology of

Equiano's era differs drastically from that of the victims of Katrina, Urry's example provides an apt analogy for Equiano's situation. The network capital he has gained in his years in the navy collapses at the moment of his departure from Portsmouth. Figure 7



**fig. 2.8. Equiano's travels, stage 3 (1764 only)**

shows only one line, which marks Equiano's arrival from England in Montserrat, in the West Indies, on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1763 (98). He does not leave the island for the rest of that year.

Compared to his experience aboard ship with Pascal, he sees his arrival in the Caribbean as a kind of reenslavement:

“Thus, at the moment I expected all my toils to end, was I plunged, as I supposed, in a new

slavery: in comparison of which all my service hitherto had been perfect freedom” (95).

Although he is spared the horrors of plantation work, he is forced to do back-breaking

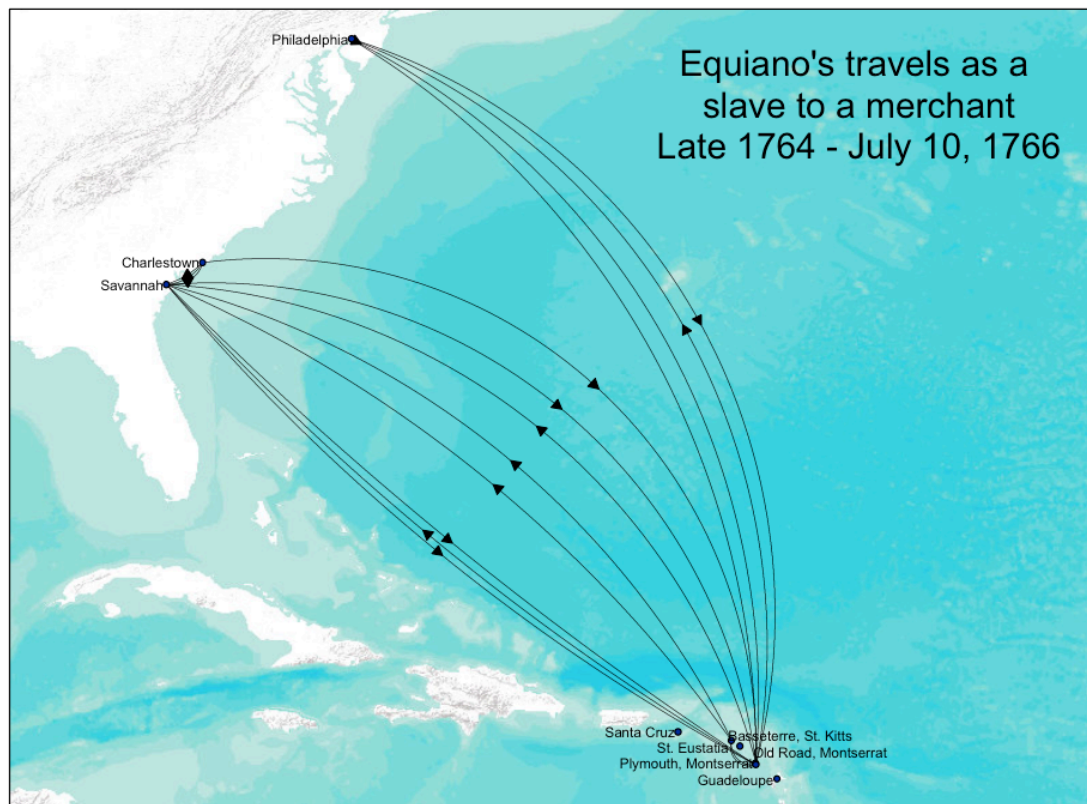
and dangerous work in the harbor, rowing boats and loading and unloading ships. He eventually convinces his master, the Quaker Robert King, to allow him to work as a sailor aboard a ship trading to other Caribbean islands. This allows him relatively more autonomy, including the possibility to bring goods of his own to trade on the other islands. He eventually uses the money he earns to buy his freedom.

During this period, shown in figure 8, Montserrat is clearly the hub, but links begin to radiate outward. Note that his voyages during this period take him not only to other British islands, such as St. Kitts, but to French Guadeloupe, Dutch St. Eustatia, and “Santa Cruz,” which must be Danish St. Croix. From there, his travels expand further outward to the North American mainland. He describes several trips to Georgia and Carolina and two trips to Philadelphia between 1764 and 1766, as shown in figure 9.

From a low point of both mobility and self-determination in 1763, Equiano is able gradually to rebuild his network capital from a new hub at Montserrat. The accumulation of network capital correlates with an accumulation of social capital as well as economic capital. King promises Equiano his freedom in exchange for forty pounds sterling, the same price King originally paid for him (125). This promise only comes, however, after the captain of the trading ship (King’s employee) assures the master of Equiano’s fidelity. Equiano has had the opportunity to escape several times, especially once in Guadeloupe, when all of the white sailors deserted their ship to be hired aboard a French merchant ship (122). The captain confirms to King that Equiano had the opportunity to sail to France and did not take it, and that “he had tried different times to see if I would make any attempt of this kind, both at St. Eustatia and in America, and he never found

that I made the smallest.” Equiano’s gamble in Guadeloupe pays off in a validation of King’s trust in Equiano: King responds to the captain’s testimony by calling Equiano a “sensible fellow” (126). That validation, as a sign of social capital, directly leads to greater expediency in the accumulation of both economic and network capital. He hears King say that

but for the entreaties of the captain, and his character of me, he would not have let me go from the stores about as I had done; that also, in so doing, he thought by carrying one little thing or other to different places to sell I might make money. That he also intended to encourage me in this, by crediting me with half a puncheon of rum and half a hogshead of sugar at a time; so that, from being careful, I might have money enough, in some time, to purchase my freedom...he also said that he had two amiable sisters in Philadelphia, from whom I might get some necessary things. (126)



**fig. 2.9. Equiano’s travels, stage 3 (late 1764 to manumission)**

King provides Equiano means to make money faster and to establish contacts in a new city. Small recompense for continued enslavement, though crucial for his eventual emancipation. What is interesting to note about this passage is that increased mobility around the Caribbean and to the North American mainland (network capital), which Equiano negotiates on his own behalf, leads to trust and validation of his character (social capital), which in turn allows him to increase his income and expand his network (more network capital).

Of course Robert King does not actually expect Equiano to be able to raise the forty pounds' price he has put on his freedom. When confronted with the money, he has to be convinced again by the captain to have the manumission drawn up (135). After buying his emancipation in July of 1766, and though he would much rather move to London, Equiano signs on as an "able-bodied sailor" on his former master's ship for another year (138). The first stage of his life as a free man, therefore, looks largely like the last stage of his enslavement, including voyages to Savannah and to islands near Montserrat as well as those further down the Caribbean chain (figure 10).

As he adds to the links in his geographical network, he multiplies his connections to people in various places. After being shipwrecked in the Bahamas, Equiano finds himself in the well-established free black community of New Providence for several weeks (158), where he could even have met Crispus Attucks (Rediker 35). When during his last voyage to Savannah the men of the town watch capture Equiano and threaten to

flog him for having a light on after nine o'clock,<sup>6</sup> he is able to seek assistance from a Dr. Brady, whom he knew from having been seriously beaten on a previous trip to the same city (130, 159).<sup>7</sup>

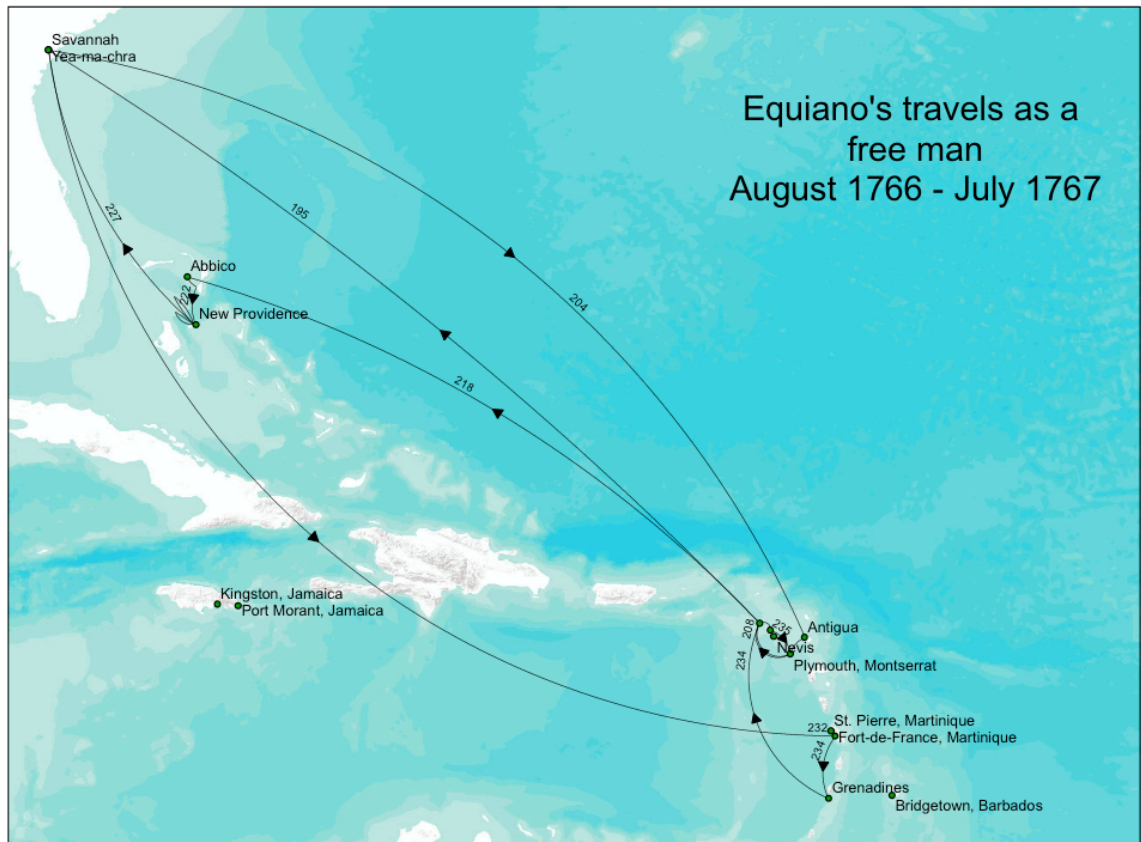
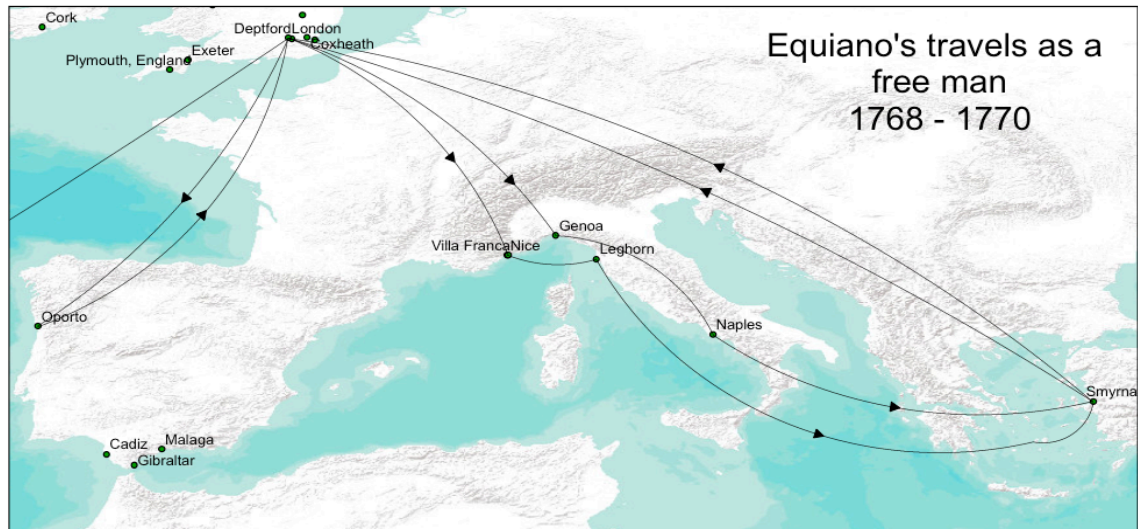


fig. 2.10. Equiano's travels, stage 4 (manumission through 1767)

<sup>6</sup> The watchmen do not threaten the man whose house Equiano is visiting because, paradoxically, that man is a slave and therefore under the protection of his master.

<sup>7</sup> At one point, Equiano fails to save a black cook, John Annis, from being sent back from London to his former master in St. Kitt's (179). In recounting this episode, Linebaugh and Rediker suggest that it is only by discovering the "rich spiritual resources of proletarian London in the 1770s" that Equiano is saved from despair at this "personal defeat" (245). Increasing his network capital among the Methodists in London helps Equiano assure that Annis's fate does not await him as well.



**fig. 2.11. Equiano's travels in the Mediterranean (stage 4)**

From 1767 onward, Equiano's travels take him farther and farther afield. After finally taking up residence in London, Equiano ships as a sailor on merchant voyages around the Mediterranean, including to Turkey, as shown in figure 11. In 1771 he goes back to the Caribbean, this time to Jamaica. In 1773 he participates in an Arctic expedition in search of a northeast passage to Asia. In 1776 he goes to the Mosquito Coast, where he briefly works as the manager of an estate with slaves. And in the 1780s he goes to New York and returns to Philadelphia. Meanwhile, he periodically continues to travel around Europe. Figure 12 shows the voyages from the last part of the *Interesting Narrative*, encompassing the widest geographic range.

Figures 7 through 12 form a series that illustrate how Equiano's travels inscribe a growing geographic network. That network gradually expands in concentric circles. From 1763, when he is trapped in the worst slavery of his life in Montserrat (fig. 7), Equiano adds locations first in the surrounding islands, then more broadly throughout the Caribbean (fig. 8), then to the North American mainland (figs. 9 and 10), to Europe and Turkey (fig. 11), and finally to Central America and the Arctic (fig. 12).

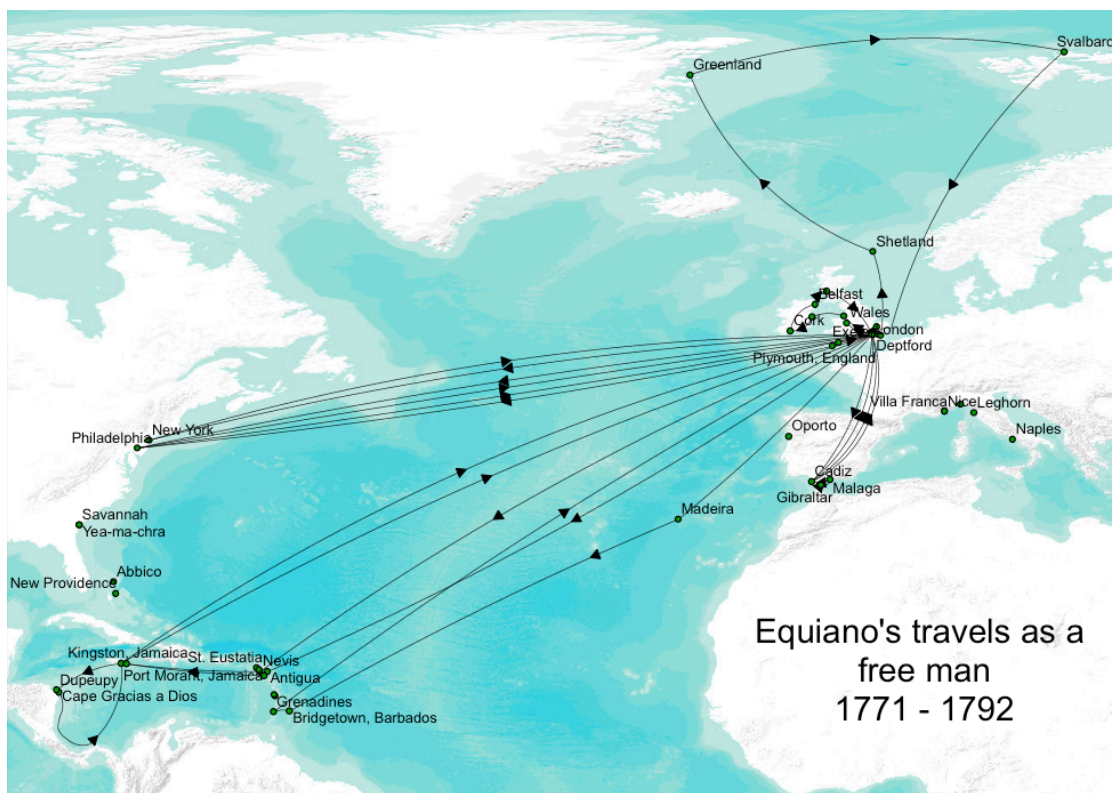


fig. 2.12. Equiano's travels, stage 4 (1771 to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> ed.)

There are at least three ways to interpret this pattern of concentric circles. One way is in terms of network dynamics. Equiano's network grows, shrinks, and grows again over the course of the narrative. The first period of growth, his career in the navy, defies



the triangle pattern of Atlantic trade, but only because it follows the dictates of another system: the British imperial war machine. After collapsing into the insular imprisonment that is his time on Montserrat, Equiano's network begins to grow outward from the Caribbean in a new pattern that both builds on and subverts the patterns of preferential attachment that structure the Atlantic shipping network as a whole. Among the many connections between London and the Caribbean, New York and Philadelphia that network dynamics would predict, there are also the Arctic expedition and the trips to France, Italy, Turkey, and Spain.

Conspicuously absent from the map are any returns to the African continent. Equiano does attempt to go to Africa twice while based in London. He writes to the Bishop of London in 1779, requesting that he be ordained and sent to Africa as a missionary and is denied (220-22). In late 1786, he is appointed Commissary to the British government program to send the "black poor" of London to settle in Sierra Leone. He is fired from that position before the expedition sets sail after expressing reservations about how the project was being carried out (226-28).

Regardless of the circumstances that lead to each link (or absence of links) in Equiano's network, the pattern that emerges as the network grows over the course of the narrative is decidedly not triangular. In this way, the traces of his purported voyages can be seen to undermine the self-reinforcing triangle pattern synonymous with the economic system of the transatlantic slave trade. In his non-standard "fluid positioning," to use Marren's terms, Equiano establishes a "transgressive self" through movement.

Of course, though his writings would eventually become associated with the

mounting national discourse that led to the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807, Equiano's actions as related in the *Interesting Narrative* are not consistently abolitionist. In fact, his relation to the slave trade appears to develop along with his network of journeys. After having been a slave for so many years, he participates in the trade himself during his voyage to Central America. On their way to the Mosquito Coast, he and his employer and friend Dr. Irving stop at Jamaica to buy slaves from a "Guineaman," that is, a slave ship coming from Africa (Equiano 205, 293n569). Later, partly perhaps because of his increasing involvement in the abolitionist religious communities of London and Philadelphia, Equiano comes not only to renounce the trading in slaves but becomes one of the most prominent anti-slave-trade spokespeople writing in English. My argument here is that the pattern of Equiano's travels as a growing, *non-triangular* network, seen from a historical and network-oriented point of view, subtly reinforces the abolitionist force of the narrative regardless of the intentions of Equiano the historical actor and writer.

### **The Relationship of Mobility and Freedom**

A second way to interpret the expansion of Equiano's geographic range is that this expanding network illustrates Equiano's actualization of his freedom. Not only does he become legally free, his freedom is visible on the map. His mobility around the Atlantic is his performance of freedom. Notice that the expansion of his network begins before his official emancipation; in fact, it is his travels around the Caribbean and to the American mainland that allow him to accumulate the economic capital that he needs to

buy his freedom. The manumission document that he receives from his master in Montserrat is therefore a validation of a freedom that Equiano has already made for himself (or shown to be self-evident).

What frees Equiano from slavery, therefore, is freedom of movement. However, neither the network capital Equiano accumulates nor his official manumission in any way signal absolute freedom, as the lived opposite of enslavement. Though legally free, Equiano does not travel directly to England upon his emancipation; he stays on in the Caribbean for an additional year. He writes:

[M]y worthy captain, and his owner my late master, finding that the bent of my mind was towards London, said to me, “We hope you won’t leave us, but that you will still be with the vessels.” Here gratitude bowed me down; and none but the generous mind can judge of my feelings, struggling between inclination and duty. However, notwithstanding my wish to be in London, I obediently answered my benefactors that I would go in the vessel, and not leave them. (138)

We may take Equiano at his word here, that duty binds him to stay on. Or we may surmise that he needs to raise funds in the Caribbean to buy his passage to London and start a life there. Or perhaps his expression of gratitude toward his now former master is a euphemism for a more definitive restriction. In any case, the point is that Equiano’s experience of freedom, both before and after King signs the manumission, is gradual, just as his mobility is relative. In this text at least, mobility and freedom exist in a proportional relation.

A third way to interpret the concentric geographic circles of the second half of the story relates to the second: that is, Equiano’s increasing mobility can be seen not only in relation to his freedom but also as parallel to a particular biblical text. In the portrait of the author facing the title page (shown in figure 13), Equiano is holding a bible open to

the book of Acts, chapter 4, verse 12 (“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”).<sup>8</sup>

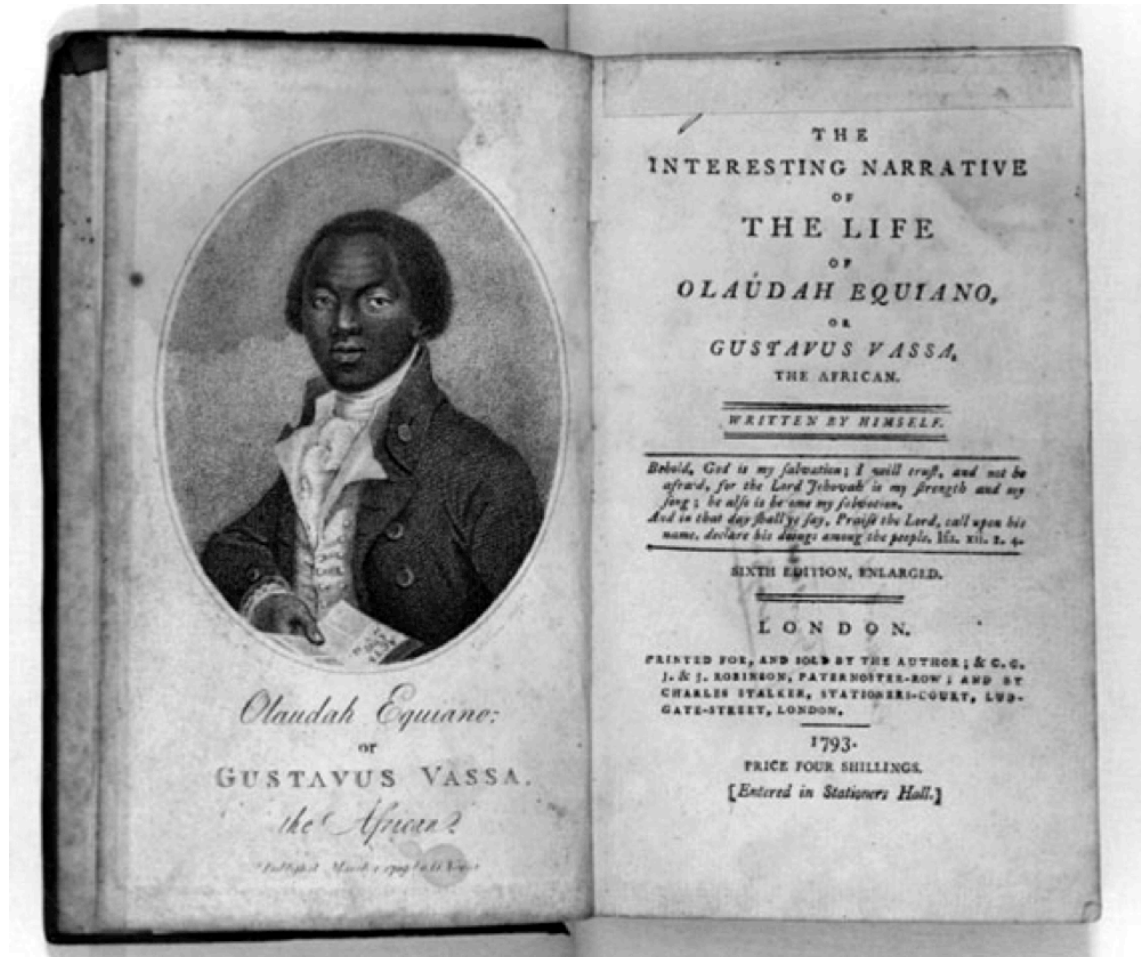
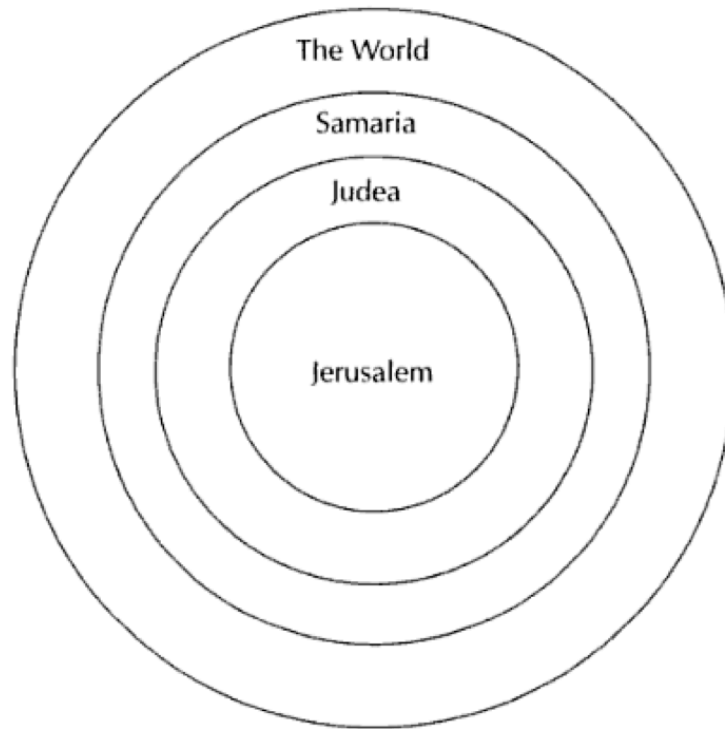


fig. 2.13. Title page and facing author portrait

The book of Acts comes back again and again in Equiano’s text. At the moment when, shortly after his emancipation, Equiano is shipwrecked in the Bahamas, he includes three relevant quotes from Acts (along with two from Job) on a separate page at the end of a chapter. Later, when on a trip to Spain Equiano is born again, it is

<sup>8</sup> This and other biblical quotations are taken from the 1769 King James Version.

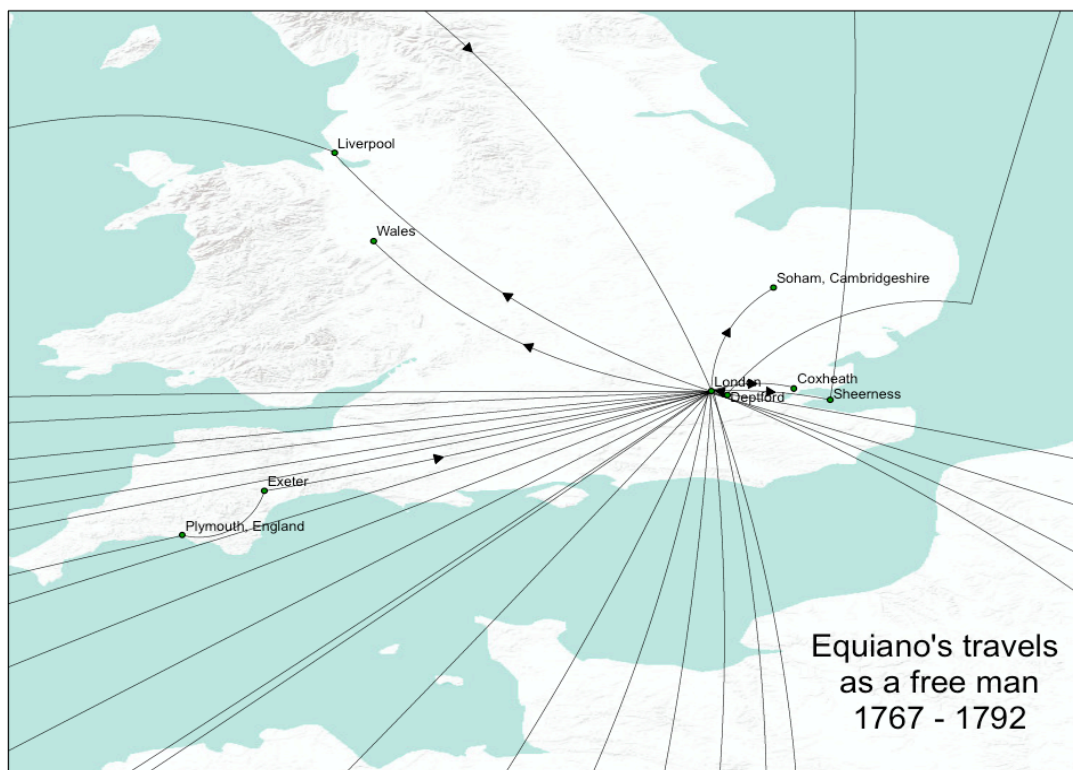
meditating on Acts 4:12 that catalyzes his conversion. Besides the strictly theological, there is also a geographical aspect to the centrality of Acts to the *Interesting Narrative*.



**fig. 2.14. Outline of Acts 1:8 (Patzia 80)**

Biblical scholars generally consider the book of Luke and the book of Acts to be two halves of the same narrative. Luke begins with Jesus’s birth in Galilee and narrows in on Jerusalem. Acts begins in Jerusalem and gradually opens out in a series of concentric circles, as shown in figure 14 and laid out in Acts 1:8 (“ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”). Lukan scholars therefore discuss the “chiastic structure” of the two-book work. That is to say, the geographic narrowing of Luke is mirrored by the expansion of Acts

(Allen 9-10). Equiano's narrative also has a chiasmic structure if we consider his relative freedom under captain Pascal to be mirrored by the freedom he creates for himself later in his life. Whereas the Luke-Acts story has Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension in Jerusalem as its narrative and geographic pivot, Equiano's narrative has his slavery and emancipation in Montserrat. The structure of the second half of the *Interesting Narrative* parallels the structure of Acts 1:8. Substitute Montserrat for Jerusalem, the Caribbean for Judea, Europe for Samaria, and "the Atlantic world" for "the world," and the above diagram nicely illustrates the progression of figures 7-12.



**fig. 2.15. Equiano's travels around England (stage 4)**

Also, the book of Acts traces the expansion of the early Christian church from Jerusalem to Rome, those being the two hubs of that story. The second half of Equiano's

narrative shows a shift of focus from Montserrat to London. Compare the map of Equiano's travels into, out of, and around England during the period he is free (stage 4, as shown in figure 15) to the comparable map from the period he is enslaved in the navy (stage 2, as shown in figure 6). In the later section of the narrative, the hub of Equiano's network has clearly become London.

In order to see a geographic chiasmus in Equiano's narrative, we have to agree that during two periods in his life—before and after Montserrat—Equiano experiences a similar amount of relative freedom. Compare his voyages under Captain Pascal—that is, before he is shipped off to the Caribbean (figures 4-6)—to those of the first two years after his return to Europe (figure 11). In both periods, Equiano travels extensively around, as well as in and out of, Europe. During the earlier stage, he is a slave, though also an able seaman in the British Navy. In the later stage, he is a free man. Despite the crucial difference in legal status between these two stages, Equiano's experience of both relative mobility and relative freedom during these two periods *contrasts similarly* to his complete lack of both mobility and freedom in Montserrat. As far as the diagram of his movements is concerned, the two periods of travel in Europe correspond in terms of geographic range, relative mobility, and network capital. Therefore, the geographic pattern of the *Interesting Narrative* (the contraction then expansion of freedom as expressed by mobility) schematically corresponds to the chiasmus of Luke-Acts.

The biblical parallel in the structure of the *Interesting Narrative* represents more than just a subtle intertextual mirroring. While the relative mobility shown in Equiano's gradually expanding network of voyages signals an idea of relative freedom from

slavery, the *Interesting Narrative*'s intertextual relationship to the book of Acts references freedom from a second, spiritual kind of bondage. As the critic Angelo Costanzo points out, the "quest" many formerly enslaved autobiographers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century write about is "to seek deliverance from both kinds of slavery": namely, physical slavery and sin (Costanzo 10). So we can see Equiano's text as modeling freedom in two ways: a temporal freedom by the expanding network of his movements, and a spiritual freedom by the biblical parallel of that expanding network. While the latter kind of freedom would in Equiano's conception be absolute, the former can only be relative, gradual, and contingent.

One literary critic who has considered the potential usefulness of maps in literary criticism points out that maps are never themselves explanations of a text. At best, Franco Moretti writes in *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, a map "may bring some hidden patterns to the surface" (53-54). What a map (or more often a diagram, as Moretti admits most of his maps actually are, and as the figures in this chapter most likely are as well) shows us is "that there is something *that needs to be explained*" (39, emphasis original). The intertextual relationship between Equiano's text and the book of Acts, whether intentional on the part of the author or not, is something that only a series of map-diagrams such as I present here can uncover. The parallel structure between slave narrative and biblical text invites an explanation, and it is in discussing possible explanations that I enter into a debate over the role of Christianity in the *Interesting Narrative* that reached its climax in an interchange between Adam Potkay and Srinivas Aravamudan in a 2001 issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.



### **Equiano as Christian: Appropriator or Appropriated?**

At stake for Potkay and Aravamudan is whether, by converting to and promoting Christianity, Equiano forsakes his African self. Potkay argues that Equiano's conversion is complete and sincere, but that that conversion does not foreclose access to the African tradition he inherits. Equiano therefore becomes a true Christian without being "digested" by Christianity: "The fear that the black self will be assimilated into a larger white corpus is no less real than the eleven-year-old Equiano's persistent fear of being 'eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair'" (*Interesting Narrative* 55, qtd. in Potkay, "Spiritual Autobiography" 680). Once again, cannibalism stands in for cultural appropriation, or at least in Potkay's reading, the fear of appropriation is mapped onto a fear of cannibalism. Luckily, Potkay concludes, the white men and their culture neither literally nor figuratively appropriate Equiano. Christianity becomes like a tool in Equiano's toolbox: "His final home, in the *Interesting Narrative*, is thus Christianity and its exegetical methods: methods that allow him to read his life as a progress, without closing off the paths that circle back to where he began" (Potkay, "Spiritual Autobiography" 692).

Aravamudan is equally reluctant to admit that Equiano is "digested" by the white man's religion, though he is also unwilling to see Equiano's appropriation of Christian discourse as purely or even primarily religious. In *Tropicopolitans*, Aravamudan objects to the centrality Potkay and Sandra Burr give to religious language when they write in their introduction to the volume *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century*: "[S]urely it was evangelicalism that gave these Africans an English voice, but,

conversely, these voices gave evangelicalism a new resonance, by making it clear that each Christian self is rooted in cultural pasts that cannot and ought not to be forgotten” (Potkay and Burr 3, qtd. in Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans* 392n9). Aravamudan counters:

Constructing a “Christian self” as something in the *present* that is, in turn, rooted in a cultural *past* that is “African” makes for an Enlightenment narrative that subsumes more interesting contradictions. Even though Equiano endorses such evolutionism, critics ought to look harder at his *performance* of Christianity for an English audience. (392n9)

For Aravamudan, Equiano’s political aim—to advocate for the abolition of the slave trade—is the end that justifies his biblical rhetorical means. For Potkay, Equiano’s religious conversion provides the backbone of the story; the narrative tells of an African who becomes Christian without ceasing to be African.

I believe that the structural parallel between the *Interesting Narrative* and the book of Acts represents a performance of Christianity such as Aravamudan calls on critics to examine while also reinforcing the theological resonance of Equiano’s text. If he begins life as a (non-Christian) African, he ends up a Christian, and in that sense he is appropriated by someone else’s religion (as well as systems of writing and capital accumulation) over the course of the narrative. But his text simultaneously appropriates the Bible for rhetorical and political ends.

Frank Kelleter wholeheartedly subscribes to the idea that Equiano assimilates to Western culture, though he takes the seemingly paradoxical position that assimilation itself has an “emancipatory potential” (70). From this point of view, assimilation to European thinking is the best weapon against the evils of European hegemony, since the

rationality of the enlightenment provides the tools for undoing the violence and inequality that have accreted in the system. Kelleter calls Equiano's discourse "enlightened" because of "the text's strategic correlation of Western universalism with a consciousness of cultural difference." He deems the text's political position one of "differential universalism" in the sense that Equiano "calls for free and equal intercourse between dissimilar nations, persons, and bodies" (80). The problem with this interpretation is that the logic of Equiano's "differential universalism" is inextricable from the Christian rhetoric it is drawn from.

Pauline universalism is an important tenet of Equiano's Methodism. Potkay locates Equiano's identification with this universalism (especially associated with the book of Acts) at various points in the *Interesting Narrative*, including the following passage:

I remember in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment, there were several brothers who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God? who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling likewise be sacrificed to your avarice? (61)

"In this context," Potkay comments, "the question 'might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God' signals not so much the perspective of a cultural outsider as a confirmation that the Christian universe knows no outside; it is all inclusive, and is itself the surety of eventual salvation" ("History" 606). Aravamudan, in turn, sees Potkay's move to subsume Equiano's worldview into the universalism of the Christian bible as "the best way to dismiss any possibility that Equiano possesses any relationship of alterity to his audience" ("Equiano Lite" 617). Aravamudan seems to

suggest that Equiano himself should be seen as a “nominal Christian,” under the assumption that any conversion that is more than nominal would imply a digestion or appropriation of Equiano’s African self by another culture.

Equiano’s universalist approach, drawn from Calvinism, to his own difference from the norm (that is, his Africanness) saddles us with the same dilemma of interpretation as Léry’s approach to the difference of the Tupi did in the previous chapter. If we take Christian universalism seriously, diversity does not appear to be a problem, as all difference is always already part of the Christian universe. Potkay appears satisfied with such an interpretation, while Aravamudan rejects it outright.

The problem with universalism is that it is all-encompassing. That which is encompassed includes the infinity of things and people that may not want to be encompassed and may not even know that they are encompassed by someone else’s worldview. A true universalism enacts the most complete appropriation possible. The contention that Christianity enfolds everything and everyone in the universe represents the cannibalization of that universe. What that contention erects is a frame (or gaping maw) large enough to enclose (or swallow) all of existence. Equiano’s (as well as Léry’s) conception and acceptance of difference is contained within a universalizing Protestantism that simultaneously allows for and negates the most radical alterity. For the Calvinist Methodist Equiano, there is no contradiction in claiming an African name for a Christian selfhood, as, from a certain point of view, all names can be Christian names. There can be no doubt that his African self has been thoroughly digested by the time he comes to write his memoir, and yet it is the publication of the memoir, with his

African name printed before his European one on the title page, that restores or instantiates his Africanness.

In Aravamudan's reading of the caption below the frontispiece, the phrase "Olaudah Equiano, the African" parenthetically contains within it the name "Gustavus Vassa" (see figure 13). In this way, he claims, "the caption... suggests that 'Gustavus Vassa' is the secular kernel of 'Olaudah Equiano, the African'" (*Tropicopolitans* 245). This is significant for Aravamudan because he wants to show that the conversion story has a political as well as a personal (and generic) function. Equiano speaks for "his suffering countrymen" (from Equiano's preface, qtd. in Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans* 246) to validate their humanity and plead for the cessation of the slave trade, not primarily to show his piety. And yet, as Aravamudan also notes, "the author adopts his pre-Christian Igbo appellation as his postevangelical spiritual name" (*Tropicopolitans* 244).

A more subversive reading of the frontispiece and accompanying caption would be that Equiano is appropriating the language of the particular verse he points to in the portrait, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other *name* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," to refer not to the name of his savior but to his own name. The *only* name by which he *must* be saved, from slavery and racism as well as from perdition, is the African name he has reappropriated for himself. It is certainly true that Equiano in his *Interesting Narrative* constructs a "transgressive self" that we must see as a "fluid positioning, a mode of articulation of newly imagined, radically nonbinary subjectivities" (Marren 95). But it is equally crucial that we recognize the name of that mode of articulation as itself transgressive: Olaudah Equiano,

the Europeanized ex-slave, who finds in the King James Bible the text through which he becomes reborn as an African. Therefore it is not that Equiano appropriates the Bible as an African, but rather that he becomes an African by appropriating the Bible.

It is optimistic to think that any exile, assimilated into a foreign culture and religion as completely as Equiano has been by the time he writes his memoir, could still access the “paths that circle back to where he began,” as Potkay puts it. And yet, read chronologically, the caption to the frontispiece does suggest such a “circling back” of a Europeanized convert to his recovered African roots. Born with an African name in Africa, taken to Europe and to the West Indies and renamed several times, Equiano reclaims his original name and his African origins only once he becomes an author. Or it may be, as Vincent Carretta’s archival research suggests, that “Olaudah Equiano, the African” is entirely a fabricated frame (chronologically, rhetorically, and typographically in this case) for a Gustavus Vassa born into slavery in South Carolina. The uncomfortable tension that the author’s double name presents to the reader stems from a paradox: this “son of Africa” in European dress, holding a Bible, has been completely assimilated into European ways of thinking (commercial as well as religious), and yet he does not allow himself to be undifferentiated from the rest of his fellow Christians. That is the force of “Olaudah Equiano...the African.” The phrase, accompanied by the author’s bold look in the portrait, says to the reader: “I am like you, and yet not like you.”

Rather than say, with Kelleter, that the “emancipatory potential” of Equiano’s text stems from his “enlightenment,” I read the *Interesting Narrative* as unsettling the

patterns of European thought, both religious and otherwise, that it participates in.

Equiano does not attempt to subvert the system of capital accumulation that has led to his enslavement. He assumes the role of capitalist appropriator (for all trade networks are networks of appropriation) and combines network capital with social and economic capital to free himself from slavery and begin to defuse the preferential attachment perpetuating the triangular system. To reroute the Atlantic network, if only with a small subset of atypical links, is to unsettle the system. Likewise, even in giving himself over to Christianity, Equiano finds a way to unsettle the entrenched associations of that religion with Europe by choosing an African name after his rebirth.

His experience of being born again takes place aboard a merchant ship anchored off Cadiz. He is in his cabin, “reading and meditating on the fourth chapter of the Acts, twelfth verse” when he feels a veil being removed: “I saw clearly, with the eye of faith, the crucified Saviour bleeding on the cross on Mount Calvary: the Scriptures became an unsealed book” (190). The crucial word in this passage about Equiano’s spiritual rebirth is “unsealed.” The word is significant in multiple ways. In the first place, it suggests that Equiano is now able to see inside a work that was previously opaque to his reading. The veil is a reference to Isaiah 25:7, but perhaps a more relevant verse, which he does not cite, is Isaiah 29:11: “And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which [men] deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it [is] sealed.” Marren points out that the unsealing of the Bible in this passage corresponds to and provides an answer to the “talking book” moment from his childhood (102), most famously discussed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

“Unsealed” also suggests that a work that had been cohesive (as in singular, whole) has now been unglued. In the way that a book’s binding might be taken apart and important pages removed and carried around as talismans or pasted elsewhere, the Bible in this moment has come apart for Equiano. He has broken the seal of the binding, and the book before him is now open to his interpretation. Helen Thomas goes further in her interpretation of “unsealed” in this passage to say that the word “identifies him as a literal embodiment of the divine seal, blessed with the power of hermeneutics” (248). The moment of his religious rebirth also marks his becoming an appropriative reader.

Of course, biblical analogy, as in the series of concentric circles in the *Interesting Narrative* that draw an analogy with the book of Acts, does not in itself represent subversive appropriation. Early on in the narrative, Equiano explicitly draws a connection between the culture of his birth in Africa and Jewish tradition, suggesting that “the one people had sprung from the other” (44). As Angelo Costanzo points out, that analogy allows Equiano’s later conversion to Christianity to be seen as “a reenactment of a biblical pattern...a spiritual progress from the old law to the new” (64). Potkay identifies the biblical analogy drawn in the narrative as a common exegetical practice: “In early modern Britain, writing one’s life as a figural gloss on key Biblical passages was no more than all good Puritans were apt to do” (“Spiritual Autobiography” 681). And yet, both Costanzo and Potkay recognize, as I have already mentioned, that for Equiano and the other previously enslaved autobiographers, the salvation at issue is not solely spiritual.

Clearly, biblical interpretation provides a useful explanatory framework for



eighteenth and nineteenth-century black autobiography. Critics like Aravamudan need not be so worried that conversion means the loss of an African self, at least when it comes to the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> For eighteenth-century Africans like Equiano, the infinitely more damaging moment for African selfhood comes at the moment the enslaved person is loaded onto the slave ship. For Equiano, Christian scripture and scriptural interpretive techniques provide a way to get beyond slavery and to reconstruct an African selfhood that is not defined by the racist logic of the slave system.

### **Conclusion: Mobility and Diaspora**

The analogy between the *Interesting Narrative* and the book of Acts signals the way that Equiano's expanding network provides the blueprint for an African diaspora as social network to be constructed and lived in millions of different ways over the following centuries. Just as, in Acts 1:8, Jesus calls for the gradual expansion of the church in concentric circles outward from Jerusalem, Equiano's text maps a gradual expansion of freedom from a point of historical and geographical immobility.

Although Paul Gilroy refers to the black Atlantic as a network or "webbed network" several times in *The Black Atlantic* (13, 29, 94), it is in the course of his discussion of Equiano in *Against Race* that Gilroy defines diaspora itself as "an outer-national term which...identifies a relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal and reluctant scattering" (123). Diaspora enters into Gilroy's discussion of the *Interesting Narrative* via the analogy between Africans and Jews mentioned above.

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<sup>9</sup> As Hofmeyr shows, Christianity and in particular Protestant textuality came to be a tool for the widespread Europeanization of Africans in the nineteenth century.

Though he does not explicitly make a connection between Equiano's *voyages* and the notion of diaspora as network, Gilroy does see in Equiano an early representation of the anti-national power of the black Atlantic. He locates the productive conflict in the text "in the contrast between encamped nations, rooted in one spot even if their imperial tendrils extend further, and the very different patterns of itinerant dwelling found in the transnational, maritime adventures of Equiano" (*Against Race* 121). In the preceding analysis, I have built on Gilroy's observation to show more precisely how Equiano's "patterns of itinerant dwelling" work to defuse the power of imperial nations, not as they are "rooted in one spot" but rather (to borrow Clifford's homonymy) *routed* around the Atlantic. The African diaspora, then, as the continuation of Equiano's work to connect people and places, can be seen not only as a transatlantic social network, but one that undermines the power of empire. Diaspora, as a network of affinity, follows from Equiano's participation in and undermining of the eighteenth-century Atlantic (appropriative) network of trade.

Diasporas work through the continual maintenance of links between disparate places. In that sense, mobility—of information, if not always of people—is crucial to the survival of diaspora. Interestingly, Clifford's formulation of diaspora as "ways of sustaining connections with more than one place while practicing nonabsolutist forms of citizenship" (9) closely resembles Urry's definition of network capital: "to be able to engender and sustain social relations with those people (and to visit specific places) who are mostly not physically proximate, that is, to form and sustain networks" (196). Of course, the question of *who* can move and communicate is at issue in any scenario

involving the creation and maintenance of links across distance.

Equiano's story of emancipation through mobility is, of course, extraordinary. Though the most glaring factor in the determination of the course of his life is his enslavement on the arbitrary basis of his skin color and continent of origin, Equiano is extraordinarily lucky in that circumstances allow him eventually to earn enough money to buy his freedom. Not least among the factors that allow for his success are his business sense, his diplomacy, and his gender. We cannot ignore the fact that Equiano would not have had the same experiences if he had been a woman. The story of Equiano's sister, from whom he is separated by slave traders before leaving Africa, has yet to be written. She would not have been able to work her way up the naval hierarchy nor to negotiate an arrangement allowing her to trade on her own behalf around the Caribbean. Mobility, in the *Interesting Narrative*, is very much gendered male.

Tim Cresswell, who, along with Urry promotes a "mobilities turn," warns against the romanticization of mobility especially in light of the entrenched association of travel with men's experiences. He cites Janet Wolff's observations about the gendering of mobility, as does James Clifford, when discussing the gendering of diaspora experiences: the "suggestion of free and equal mobility is itself a deception, since we don't all have the same access to the road" (Wolff 235, qtd. in Cresswell 18; Clifford 258-9).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Significant work has been done in recent years to add a gendered dimension to the study of diaspora. Jacqueline Nassy Brown, in her detailed depiction of "Black Liverpool," makes space for "inquiry into how men and women, as travelers, are differently valued as producers of diasporic space" (315). And Tina Campt and Deborah Thomas have done the field a great service in compiling a special issue of *Feminist Review* entitled "Gendering Diaspora." As

And yet the rhetorical power of Equiano's text is to expand the horizons of possibility for Atlantic mobility. As Equiano grows his network, he redefines the eighteenth-century mobile self. What Aedin Ní Loingsigh writes about the context twentieth-century African transcontinental travel writers deal with also holds true for Equiano's era: "[The] refusal to recognize Africans as either travelers or narrators of travel encounters undoubtedly feeds into a vision of them as somehow incapable of contributing authoritatively to transcultural debate" (9). Equiano's text undoubtedly changed the terms of "transcultural debate" forever. His autobiography paved the way for a wave of slave narratives written in the nineteenth century. That the *Interesting Narrative* does not begin to consider female experiences of mobility or freedom is not excusable, but it is perhaps understandable. Drawing attention to the gender dynamics of mobility, freedom, networks, and appropriation becomes central for writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Maryse Condé, whose work is discussed in chapter four.

At the same time, the straightforward way that relative mobility maps onto relative freedom in Equiano's narrative (as illustrated by the gradual expansion of his geographical network) should remind us that such an easy mapping is not usual. Equiano's life and autobiography, in this regard, represent the exception that perhaps proves the rule, and not only for the enslaved Africans of the eighteenth century. In

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Campt and Thomas note in their introduction to the volume, "scholarship on the African Diaspora...often privileges the rubrics of travel/migration and Middle Passage/common origin as formative and defining elements of diaspora in ways that, at times, reify binary frameworks of analysis like home/host or displacement/homeland. Such analytic formulations...can privilege the mobility of masculine subjects as the primary agents of diasporic formation, and perpetuate a more general masculinism in the conceptualization of diasporic community" (2).

general, to be a sailor is to be mobile but relatively unfree. In Equiano's case, his time at sea with Captain Pascal represents a relative freedom compared to his time on Montserrat. Likewise, living on a Caribbean island could signal the epitome of freedom to some. In that case, freedom would be expressed by relative immobility. For Equiano, immobility in Montserrat represents the least free period of his life. The extraordinary correspondence between freedom and mobility built into the structure of Equiano's narrative conveys a particular, rather than a general significance. The significance of the correspondence has everything to do with the subversion of the self-reinforcing pattern of the Atlantic triangle performed by Equiano's expanding network. In that sense, the association of mobility with freedom in this text in particular resonates with the subversive network dynamics at work. Freedom from slavery in the eighteenth-century Atlantic meant freedom from the dictates of the triangle. Much of what makes Equiano's story extraordinary is that he achieves that freedom through increased mobility.

CHAPTER 3: THE ENDLESS CRUISE: ANTROPOFAGIA AND THE VOYAGE IN  
OSWALD DE ANDRADE'S *SERAFIM PONTE GRANDE*

Il n'y a que l'argent qui ne meurt pas, il part seulement en voyage.  
— Francis Picabia, *Manifeste cannibale dada* (1920)

Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros.  
— Oswald de Andrade, *Manifesto antropófago* (1928)

The system of anthropophagic appropriation that most defines the Atlantic world is capitalism. We first saw with Léry how the accumulation of capital (by bloodsucking usurers, in particular) can be negatively compared with the ritual anthropophagy of the Tupi. The network of appropriative links that creates the Atlantic sphere as we know it in the colonial and postcolonial era is textual and cultural, but primarily economic. Léry's and Equiano's projects share at least one important aspect: both elaborate an alternative to the appropriative system—via links of affiliation (the start of a diasporic formation to come)—within the network of appropriations itself. Rather than seek to disassemble a dehumanizing system through revolutionary action, Léry's and Equiano's texts subvert the system by adding to it.

In similar fashion, though in the radically different context of early twentieth-century Brazil, Oswald de Andrade subverts the dominant economic patterns of his day through satire. His *Serafim Ponte Grande* (1933) takes satiric aim at the system of global

capitalism from the perspective of 1920s São Paulo: a city built on coffee wealth, trapped in a colonial-era social hierarchy, yet developing an industrial sector manned by immigrants from around the world. With his 1928 *Manifesto antropófago*, Oswald<sup>1</sup> shows himself to be the modernist author most convinced of the potential for paradoxical redemption in the anthropophagic metaphor. Of all of Oswald's literary works, according to Benedito Nunes, *Serafim Ponte Grande* best represents the *Antropofagia* movement inspired by the manifesto, which in turn informed Oswald's revolutionary period (52). The work, written in the 1920s, is not published until 1933, after Oswald has become a devout Communist. Even though (or perhaps because) Oswald the Communist rejects the decadence of Serafim's 1920s in the 1933 preface, the text remains instructive as an early twentieth-century effort to subvert the transatlantic system of capital accumulation and appropriation by satirizing it.

Like Léry's and Equiano's texts before it, *Serafim Ponte Grande* illustrates how to build an alternative structure by adding to the existing one. In the case of Oswald's text, however, no redemptive network of affiliation comes into view; rather, this anti-novel provides a purely cynical illustration of what an escape from the established patterns might look like. *Serafim Ponte Grande* provides a stark but instructive contrast to Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, and not only because the two texts come from different centuries and traditions. Both texts take travel and freedom as central themes and use the former to realize the latter. However, both travel and freedom carry very different

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<sup>1</sup> In keeping with Brazilian convention—and to avoid confusion between the two most important figures of Brazilian modernism, Oswald de Andrade and Mário de Andrade (no relation)—I will refer to the authors I discuss in this chapter by first names.

connotations in the two texts. In Equiano, travel is either directly coerced (as during his years as a slave to Captain Pascal) or chosen as the solution to economic necessity (the need to make money as a merchant). Equiano, as discussed in the previous chapter, takes freedom very seriously in both spiritual (freedom from sin, and therefore punishment) and earthly (freedom from slavery) senses.

The eponymous protagonist of *Serafim Ponte Grande*, on the other hand, seeks freedom from the bourgeois strictures of family, morality, and patriarchy. As a middle-class government functionary with a wife and kids, Serafim longs to free himself from the societal structures he has found himself bound to. In the radical fragmentation of its form, in its audacious combination of genres (diary, letters, poetry, travel narrative), as well as in its depictions of unfettered sexuality and gratuitous tourism, *Serafim Ponte Grande* replaces Equiano's seriousness with cynicism, coherence with incoherence, cohesiveness with fragmentation, and morality with immorality. The idea that voyages can break bonds—not just for an individual, but systematically—remains.

My reading of the text begins with its final image. The last section of the novel,<sup>2</sup> significantly entitled “Os Antropófagos,” takes place after Serafim Ponte Grande's heroic (and comically impossible) self-immolation by lightning strike. His former sidekick, Pinto Calçudo, carries on Serafim's revolutionary legacy, so to speak, by commandeering the cruise ship *El Durasno*. The ship becomes the vehicle for “a purely

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<sup>2</sup> Haroldo de Campos refers to the parts of *Serafim Ponte Grande* as “large syntagmatic units” [“*grandes unidades sintagmáticas*”] rather than chapters (“Serafim: um grande não-livro” 10-12), building on the idea that continual formal reinvention [“*uma espécie de continuum da invenção*”] is an essential theme of the *romance-invenção*, or “novel invention” (8, 5). While not questioning this analysis, I will refer here to the text as a novel and to its parts as sections.



moral revolution” against “‘the moral coercion of clothing’ and ‘the lack of imagination of civilized peoples’” (*SGP* 108, 110) [“uma revolução puramente moral...contra ‘a coação moral da indumentária’ e ‘a falta de imaginação dos povos civilizados’” (*SPG* 159, 161)].<sup>3</sup> Pinto Calçudo leads his “recalcitrant” passengers on what promises to be an endless cruise of global appropriation:

They proceeded to flee the ports’ policed contagion, because they were humanity liberated. But because of demanding radiograms, *El Durazno* through its antennas proclaimed plague on board. And the ship dressed in averse underwear and forgotten pajamas to act out a faked quarantine in Southampton. All the passengers refused to disembark. Without money, they took on cargo on credit. And they shipped out suddenly before surprised semaphores. They docked against Bahia’s mango groves. Still with the plague. Afterwards in Sidney, Malaca, in the Fiji Islands, in Bacanor, Juan Fernandez, and Malabar.... (*SGP* 110)

Passaram a fugir o contágio policiado dos portos, pois que eram a humanidade liberada. Mas como radiogramas reclamassem, *El Durasno* proclamou pelas antenas, peste a bordo. E vestiu avessas ceroulas e esquecidos pijamas para figurar numa simulada quarentena em Southampton. Todos os passageiros se recusaram a desembarcar. Sem dinheiro, tomaram carregamentos a crédito. E largaram de repente ante os semáforos atônitos. Encostaram nos mangueirais da Bahia. Sempre com peste. Depois em Sidnei, Málaga, nas ilhas Fídji, em Bacanor, Juan Fernandez e Malabar.... (*SPG* 161)

As a vehicle that connects far-flung places primarily for the purpose of appropriating goods, the ship *El Durasno* traces the organizing figure of this dissertation: a complex network of appropriative links situated in geographical space.

Antônio Cândido, the critic who began, in the 1940s and ‘50s, to rehabilitate this previously forgotten work, connects the dots between the permanent cruise of *El*

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<sup>3</sup> *SPG* stands for *Serafim Ponte Grande* and *SGP* for Jackson and Bork’s 1979 translation *Serafim Grosse Pointe*.

*Durasno*, the liberating sense of travel, the significance of mobility, and the dream of utopia:

Liberation is the theme of his [Oswald's] travel book par excellence, *Serafim Ponte Grande*, where the crust of bourgeois conformism is swept away by the utopia of the permanent and redemptive journey, by the quest for wholeness through mobility.

Libertação é o tema do seu livro de viagem por excelência, *Serafim Ponte Grande*, onde a crosta da formação burguesa e conformista é varrida pela utopia da viagem permanente e redentora, pela busca da plenitude através da mobilidade. (91)<sup>4</sup>

“The quest for wholeness through mobility” sums up the analysis of Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* in the previous chapter. There I propose that the pattern of Equiano’s travels across the Atlantic inscribes a growing network, which in turn actualizes his freedom from slavery and at the same time invokes a biblical intertext. Equiano’s mobility over the course of the narrative represents his spiritual wholeness as well as his earthly wholeness as a free person. Cândido draws a similar message from the thoroughly cynical and irreverent image of a bunch of naked, freeloading cruise ship passengers. Mobility, in both Equiano’s and Oswald’s texts, has a liberating and redemptive force. And, in both, this message of redemption has to be set within the network of transatlantic appropriations in order to be deciphered. What is at issue is not mobility in the sense of pure freedom of movement, but rather a pattern of mobility that rejects the pull of established patterns in the network. Resistance to conformity takes the form of new links, new paths.

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<sup>4</sup> In referring to this 1956 essay by Cândido as “the first thematic reading of the book” [“a primeira interpretação temática do livro”], Kenneth Jackson cites this passage in particular (31).

The differences in form, period, and outlook between Equiano's and Oswald's text requires a difference of approach. One way to think of the difference between the *Interesting Narrative* and *Serafim Ponte Grande* might be as analogous to the difference between the field of transport geography and the "new mobilities paradigm" for the humanities and social sciences developed in the past few years. As Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman outline in their introduction to *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects*, transport geography developed in the 1960s and '70s as a positivist approach to understanding the meaning and workings of movement in geography. Transport geographers invented a "'rational-mobile-person'... who was seen to make careful decisions about when and how to move." In the "influential transport geography text" (White and Senior) they cite as an example, transport is a means to a rational end. Those who move for any other purpose but the efficient extraction of value are seen, in Cresswell and Merriman's words, to be "quaint and unpredictable exceptions to law-like behaviour" (2-3). White and Senior's "unpredictable exceptions" include: "motorists who simply drive into the country, passengers on cruise liners and 'railfans'" (White and Senior 1, qtd. in Cresswell and Merriman 3).

The essays in Cresswell and Merriman's collection refocus the attention of geography on the movement of "marginal figures" ignored by White and Senior's brand of transport geography. To bracket off forms of mobility that do not fit into models of productivity—and to label such "marginal" movement as "irrational"—is, Cresswell and Merriman argue, to consider movement as "dead time." The new mobilities paradigm, by contrast, considers movement that would otherwise be seen as "dead, irrational and

dysfunctional” in order to ask: “How is mobile time and space filled with liveliness?” (Cresswell and Merriman 4-5).

Whereas in the previous chapter I treated travel as a means to an end in Equiano’s narrative, I take the opportunity in reading *Serafim Ponte Grande* in this chapter to consider the irrational, frivolous, even ridiculous “liveliness” of movement itself. The ship *El Durasno* has no destination. In fact, the longer it spends going from port to port appropriating supplies on credit, the less able it would be to discharge its passengers anywhere without risking their imprisonment. The ship’s goal, as Cândido points out, is a permanent voyage [“viagem permanente”]: travel is here an end in itself, not a means to an end.

Transport geography makes sense as a structure upon which to build an analysis of Equiano’s movements. He is the “rational-mobile-person”—his character in the narrative is built as such. The accumulation of his travels across the Atlantic attests to his mobility competence; in fact, it can be seen as constitutive of the freedom from slavery that he realizes through work, intelligence, and dedication. *Serafim Ponte Grande*, especially in its final image of the endless cruise, parodies the idea of rational, productive travel. And it does so, significantly, by way of one of White and Senior’s categories of “marginal figures”: namely, “passengers on cruise liners.” By its own reasoning, transport geography as a theoretical frame has no purchase here.

What is more, the difference between Equiano’s instrumental network and Oswald’s parodic one represents the difference between a record of the past and an envisioning of the future. The diagram of Equiano’s travels marks the incremental steps toward

freedom that Equiano the narrator (who may or may not faithfully represent Equiano the historical figure) follows over the course of his life. The network is retrospective. On the other hand, the complete network of transoceanic connections that Oswald's fantasy cruise ship may trace is crucially left to the reader's imagination. The passage cited above gives a suggestive list of far-flung places ("Sidnei, Málaga, nas ilhas Fidji, em Bacanor, Juan Fernandez e Malabar") that appears to be representative, rather than complete. The network of geographic connections, we presume, continues to come into being after the end of the last page and in that way represents a perversely optimistic outlook for the future.

We cannot but enjoy the idea of limitless travel. At the same time, the ship's mechanism is that of unrestrained appropriation; in that sense the image is a wholly negative one. The flip side of the lack of restraint on the ship is the prospect of an endless, delicious future: the ship lives happily ever after. Utopia is a theme that returns again and again in Oswald's writings, always in relation to the anthropophagic metaphor. In this case, the cruise ship becomes a negative iteration of an Oswaldian utopia.

Mobility in Equiano straightforwardly represents the actualization of freedom through the accumulation of various kinds of capital. The voyage, for Equiano, is instrumental; it is useful for his purpose. The voyages depicted in *Serafim Ponte Grande*—and in Oswald's other modernist novel from the 1920s, *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar* (1924)—provide a contrasting image of the useless voyage. And yet, in Antônio Cândido's reading, Oswald's image of the "viagem

permanente” is also redemptive [*redentora*]. The idea of the voyage, through its very uselessness, becomes abstracted, and that abstraction paradoxically becomes useful for envisioning a redemptive utopia. In this chapter, I discuss depictions of travel in works by Oswald de Andrade in order to ask: how can the voyage, seen in the abstract as a geographical link of anthropophagic appropriation, have redemptive significance?

### **The Abstract Voyage**

Oswald de Andrade first travels to Europe in 1912, at age 22. That trip, which Jorge Schwartz calls his “batismo inicial” (160), and especially the three extended trips to Paris from 1923 to 1925, provide Oswald a thematic frame in which to construct his most daring works of fiction, *Miramar* and *Serafim*. Travel, and in particular tourism, becomes a theme through which to critique a bourgeois ideology of appropriation.

Both *Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar* and *Serafim Ponte Grande* tell the story of a young, wealthy man from São Paulo who travels to Europe, though the two books diverge widely in terms of their tone and style. *Miramar* consists of a satirical preface by the fictional literary critic Machado Penumbra, followed by 163 fragments of a few sentences or lines of poetry each. Together the fragments relate how João Miramar passes through school, takes a trip after graduation to France, England, and Italy, then returns to São Paulo to marry, have a daughter, have an affair with an actress, and write his memoirs.

*Serafim* also traces the life and times of its title character; we follow Serafim Ponte Grande through adolescence, marriage, fatherhood, and disillusionment. In the second

half of the latter novel, however, an insurrection in São Paulo provides Serafim the opportunity to leave his life in Brazil behind. He kills his boss with a cannon and departs on an extended voyage to Europe and the Middle East aboard the ship *Rompe-Nuve*. It is after his eventual return to Brazil that Serafim dies and Pinto Calçudo carries on his legacy aboard *El Durasno*.

In both books, travel—specifically travel for pleasure—represents a change of perspective in an ideological as well as geographical sense. As Haroldo de Campos remarks, “Seaborne...is a naïve Ulysses...for whom the journey represents an initial possibility, even if vague and undefined, of an opening to the world and of a ‘critical’ stance” (*Novas* 209) [“Miramar é um Ulisses ingênuo...para o qual a viagem representa uma primeira perspectiva, se bem que ainda imprecisa e indefinida, de abertura para o mundo e de ‘situação’ crítica” (“Miramar na mira” 20)].<sup>5</sup> The young João Miramar does not just see more of the world by traveling; his voyage provides an “opening to the world” that allows for the possibility of criticism.

That same criticism of a received worldview—that of a Paulista elite with a transatlantic inferiority complex—explodes in *Serafim*, both in the events of the narrative and in the form of the text. Though *Miramar*, written in the decade between Oswald’s first and second trips to Europe and published in 1924, is entirely made up of fragments, it does contain “a rarefied chronological thread, traced from a residual form of the *Bildungsroman*” (Haroldo de Campos, *Novas* 211) [“um rarefeito fio condutor

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<sup>5</sup> “John Seaborne” is the name given to the character of João Miramar in Niebuhr and Bork’s 1972 translation.

cronológico, calcado no molde residual de um *Bildungsroman*” (“Serafim” 7)]. The fragmentation of the language of the text disrupts the reader’s experience of the story, but the story itself is largely linear.

Miramar’s trip to Europe, though formative for the character and suggestive of a cosmopolitan opening of the mind toward criticism, remains a narrative element among others. *Serafim*, on the other hand, disrupts the linearity of narrative on another structural level. Haroldo de Campos explains it this way:

In *Seaborne*, we can recognize a cubist style, or at least a metonymic one, in the manner in which Oswald recombined the phrasal elements at his disposal, arranging them in new and unusual neighboring relationships, altering them through a tie of contiguity. It is as if he were a cubist painter disjoining and conjoining through a new optics the fragmented objects on his canvas. Now, in *Serafim*, that cubist technique, that metonymic treatment, seems to operate at the level of the general architecture of the work itself, hence, at the macrolevel. *Serafim* is a composite, hybrid book made up of pieces or “samples” of various possible books.... (*Novas* 212)

No *Miramar*, pudemos reconhecer um estilo cubista ou metonímico, na maneira pela qual Oswald recombina os elementos fráasicos à sua disposição, arranjando-os em novas e inusitadas relações de vizinhança, afetando-os em seu nexos de contigüidade, como se fosse um pintor cubista a desarticular e rearticular, por uma ótica nova, os objetos fragmentados em sua tela. Agora, no *Serafim*, essa técnica cubista, esse tratamento metonímico, parece ocorrer no nível da própria arquitetura geral da obra, na macroestrutura portanto. O *Serafim* é um livro compósito, híbrido, feito de pedaços ou “amostras” de vários livros possíveis.... (“Serafim” 8)

In other words, the formal innovation in *Miramar* takes place on the level of the sentence, whereas *Serafim* reflects that same verbal “cubism” on the macrolevel of its narrative structure as well.

There are at least a couple of elements of Haroldo’s reading that prove useful in the context of this dissertation. First, the idea of *Serafim* as a composite book made from



“pieces or ‘samples’ of various possible books” suggests not only stylistic innovation but also the appropriation of diverse genres into the frame of the ostensible novel. Each new section of the book takes the form of a different kind of text: poetry, dialogue, personal diary, press release, editorial, address book, travel narrative, and “cloak and pistol novel” [“romance de capa e pistola” (*SPG* 125)]. The result is a text seemingly constituted by the appropriation of other texts. Rather than the citation of existing texts, here appropriation means the incorporation of genres. As Haroldo summarizes, the text’s various “excerpts or ‘trailers’ of virtual books” allude to “a literary mode *that could be but isn’t*” (*Novas* 212, emphasis original) [“Cada um desses excertos ou *trailers* de livros virtuais...acena...com um modo literário *que poderia ser e que não é*” (“Serafim” 8)].

Second, the idea of both *Miramar* and *Serafim* as “nexo[s] de contigüidade” reiterates the way a text can articulate a network of relations. We saw in the first chapter how Léry’s *Histoire* came to enact links of appropriation both antagonistic (with Thevet) and affiliative (with his fellow Protestants), as well as how those links proliferated as the text grew in successive editions. Léry’s text becomes a “nexus of contiguity” through intertextuality. Haroldo argues that the “nexus of contiguity” operates primarily on the syntactic level in *Miramar*, but that Oswald complicates the picture in *Serafim* by making the juxtaposition of genres between the various sections of the novel as jarring as the word and sentence combinations.

To extend Haroldo’s reading even further, I would add that the theme of travel, while important for both narratives, becomes a crucial element in the “macrostructure”

fragmentation of *Serafim Ponte Grande*. Note that João Miramar takes his European voyage as a young person, before his disastrous marriage and disillusionment with middle-class life in São Paulo. Serafim, on the other hand, only ventures abroad after his middle-class life has disintegrated along with his marriage, when he appropriates money left in his son's bedroom by the retreating revolutionaries (*SPG* 78). Travel comes to represent not only an implicit "opening to the world," but an explicit escape—from the strictures of prose genre as well as of middle-class life. The voyage as an instrument of geographic connection—that is, as a link connecting place to place—functions in *Serafim* like the unusual combination of "phrasal elements" in *Miramar*. The text becomes a "nexus of contiguity" on multiple levels: that of syntactic, generic, and geographical juxtaposition at the same time. Putting things together in new ways makes a network of the text.

If in Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* the merchant sailing ship serves as the vehicle through which geographical links and appropriative transactions are realized, in *Serafim* that vehicle is the cruise ship. The network of paths that the *Rompe-Nuve* and *El Durasno* trace is not definite and finite as is the network of Equiano's travels. Rather, Serafim's itinerary is geographically impossible, as we will see, and Pinto Calçudo's travels aboard *El Durasno* are potentially infinite. The last section of the novel ("Os Antropófagos") ends with the line: "On *El Durazno* they only dock to stock avocado cases in tropical places" (*SGP* 110) ["*El Durasno* só pára para comprar abacates nos cais tropicais" (*SPG* 161)]. While the narrative generally proceeds in the past tense through the rest of the text, this last line switches into the present tense, suggesting that the ship's

anthropophagic voyages of appropriation continue to this day. In *Serafim*, travel as escape becomes more than a theme; it constitutes a structuring element of the narrative. As Adria Frizzi puts it, the novel “achieves an irreducible plurality by practicing a sort of tourism in the territory of writing” (61). The mode of travel for this experiment in textual tourism is the cruise ship.

### **Vehicles: Cruise Ship and Streetcar**

In the 1920s and ‘30s, cruise ships or ocean liners served a more functional transportation purpose than the five-day, all-inclusive, out-and-back Caribbean vacation packages familiar today. The word Oswald generally uses for such ships is “transatlântico.” Nevertheless, even in this era before widespread passenger airline service, ocean liners represented more than just a way of getting from one continent to another. Traveling by cruise ship did and does signify decadence and leisure: in a word, tourism.

Wealthy Brazilians like Oswald and his character Serafim traveled to and fro across the Atlantic just as their North American and European counterparts did. Heather Norris Nicholson describes the centrality of ocean liner travel during the inter-war period by analyzing footage taken by amateur British filmmakers aboard ship from 1928 to 1934 (almost exactly the period in which Oswald composes, renounces, and eventually publishes *Serafim*). Norris Nicholson describes the ships of the period as “floating hotels” that became “distinctive filming locations...well-suited to murder, mystery, intrigue, romance, or comedy” (49). The ship provides an enclosed space in which to

stage various human dramas or follies, while meanwhile the whole travels from here to there, connecting locations on the map. As Norris Nicholson points out, ship travelers move while appearing not to move: “The cruise-ship as floating entity travels through, defines, and connects space as a series of places on an itinerary...[expanding] horizons within motionless journeys...whilst also controlling the kinds of transformative encounters conventionally associated with the process of journeying” (50).

As a tool that facilitates “motionless journeys,” then, the cruise ship represents the perfect vehicle for a kind of touristic travel that will bring the spectator somewhere exotic while leaving him or her unchanged. The amateur filmmaker on board ship can *take* footage while having the “transformative encounters conventionally associated with the process of journeying” conveniently controlled. The cruise ship passenger imposes himself on foreign others, without having to be inconvenienced, shocked, or threatened in return. Mark Twain mocks this kind of hegemony through tourism in *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims’ Progress* in 1869. Twain’s reports for an American newspaper of a pleasure cruise through the Mediterranean to the Middle East provide a devastating critique of the appropriative impulse of the American tourist, who takes what he wants in the form of souvenirs from a world seen to be hilariously old. By the 1920s, that desire to partake of someone else’s history and culture for one’s own entertainment had gained an invaluable tool: namely, the camera.

Norris Nicholson recognizes that the cruise ship passenger armed with a camera has an excellent vantage point from which to film the foreign in safety: “[As the passenger vessel’s] protective bubble transports tourists safely to ‘exotic’ places, it is also a

refuge” (54). Serafim travels by ship, equipped with a camera. In fact, as Pascoal Farinaccio observes in quoting the following passage, Serafim not only travels with a camera—he becomes one:

The chauffeur read aloud from a sign: —Pa-les-tai-ne!  
 Our hero quickly searched for his passport, baedeker, Kodak, and Bible.  
 The countryside streaked with green peanuts. His eyes filmed smoke-colored trees between now and again cubic house shadows, with the first figurines out of Biblical History. (*SGP* 92)

O chauffeur leu alto num rótulo: — Pa-les-tai-ne!  
 Nosso héroi procurou depressa o passaporte, o baedeker, a kodak e a Bíblia.  
 A paisagem rajava-se em verde-amendoim. Seus olhos filmavam árvores cor-de-fumaça entre uma e outra sombra de casa cúbica, com as primeiras figurinhas saídas da História Sagrada. (*SPG* 139)

Upon crossing the border into Palestine, the hero-tourist checks to make sure he is equipped with the essential tools of the intrepid traveler: passport, guidebook, camera, and Bible (in this situation, another kind of guidebook). In the phrase that follows, however (“Seus olhos filmavam...”), it seems that Serafim has incorporated the properties of the camera. Farinaccio goes further in noting that the form of the text itself seems to capture images the way a camera does:

[F]ilming does not constitute merely a *theme* for the modernist Oswald; rather, typical features of film are incorporated into the form of the writing: narrative discontinuity, analogical syntax, the assembly of fragments, intercuttings, simultaneity.

[O] cinema não constitui mero *tema* para o modernista Oswald, mas tem seus recursos típicos incorporados à forma da escrita: descontinuidade narrativa, sintaxe analógica, montagem de fragmentos, interpenetrações, simultaneidade. (Farinaccio 164, emphasis original)

My interest here lies less in analyzing exactly how the syntax of the novel works like film and more in the way the filmic aspect of the text works together with the images of

the camera-wielding tourist and the cruise ship to appropriate the foreign. Norris Nicholson makes the analogy of camera lens and cruise ship in exactly this way—in terms of appropriation: “As the amateur lens appropriates and domesticates unfamiliar places, the cruise-ship’s bulk, towering over foreign quaysides...dominates foreign space” (54). Appropriation, domestication, domination: clearly there is more to what a tourist does than simply traveling to a new place and recording the experience on film.

The lens of the camera appropriates an image for the photographer’s use, but it also records the presence of the tourist (his perspective, if not always his image) in the foreign place. In that sense, the photo or film image instantiates a geographical link between the tourist’s destination and his home space. Through a photo, the traveler can say with conviction: “This is me in Palestine (or wherever). I brought this (visual) piece of that place back with me.” The circle diagram with which Michel de Certeau sketched Léry’s trajectory (see chapter 1) can now be represented by the circle of the camera lens. Relatedly, the cruise ship’s primary function is to bring the tourist “there and back again.” Along the way, in each port where the ship docks, its bulk records the tourists’ collective presence.<sup>6</sup>

Nowhere in *Serafim* do the metaphors of text-as-film-image and ship-as-foreign-presence converge as neatly as in the final passage of the travelogue section of the novel, before Serafim’s return to Brazil:

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<sup>6</sup> Stroll down any street toward the water in any major Caribbean port town from Nassau to Port of Spain between the hours of 9am and 4pm and you are likely to notice that the high-rise building at the end of the block is in fact a “floating hotel.”

In Alexandria, a ship came by like a trolley. Seraphim caught it. The Orient closed up. Everything disappeared like a city in the sea, its brilliance, its whites, its points of land, sphinxes, caftans, fezzes, camels, dragomen, pyramids, harems, minarets, habits, pilafs, deserts, mosques, temples, carpets, acropolises, Englishmen, Englishwomen. (*SGP* 99)

Em Alexandria, um navio passava como um bonde. Serafim tomou-o. O Oriente fechou-se. Tudo desapareceu como a cidade no mar, seus brilhos, seus brancos, suas pontas de terra, esfinges, caftãs, fezes, dragomãs, pirâmides, haréns, minarettes, abaias, pilafs, desertos, mesquitas, templos, tapetes, acrópoles, ingleses, inglesas. (*SPG* 146)

For Farinaccio, this passage represents the clearest example of “*o camera eye* oswaldiano” and its voracious desire to film everything (165). Going further, we can note that the verb “fechar” [to close], as in “O Oriente fechou-se,” recalls the action of a camera lens. The narrative eye closes on the “Orient,” and what we are left with are one-word impressions, in memory as on film. The ridiculous list that ends the paragraph and the section—from sphinxes to pilafs to Englishwomen—successfully reduces Serafim’s travels across the Atlantic and Mediterranean to a series of clichés (in the French double sense of the word, as photographic images as well as stereotypes). The text models here the appropriative process through which tourists dominate and domesticate the foreign by reducing what they have seen into snapshots and postcard platitudes, while also mixing in a strong dose of orientalism.

Furthermore, what “closes up” the “Orient” is the arrival of a ship, which becomes the mechanism that closes the lens. The ship serves as a vehicle in two senses: literally, as the conveyance that transports tourists to where they can view the foreign, as well as figuratively, as a narrative device that represents the process and contradictions of tourism itself. Norris Nicholson (66) makes reference to a farcical drama published in

1928 by Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell entitled *All at Sea: A Social Tragedy in Three Acts For First-Class Passengers Only*, which takes place on an ocean liner. The Sitwells' characters have names as ridiculous in their way as those in *Serafim* (for example: "Francis Noel Marmaduke Malmesbury Blundell-Bludyer, Fifth Earl of Playstruck, known as 'Frankie'"). As *All at Sea* is in fact a play, the ship literally sets the stage for a particular kind of shenanigans that simultaneously performs and ridicules class divisions. *Serafim*, though more cinematic than dramatic, similarly makes of the cruise ship a figurative vehicle for satirizing the exclusivity of the upper classes.

With this cinematic and peripatetic perspective (what Farinaccio calls "o *camera eye* oswaldiano"), the text puts into action the enigmatic call from the *Manifesto antropófago* that serves as the epigraph to this chapter. The word *roteiros* means both "itineraries" and "screenplays." By repeating the word seven times in a non sequitur of a line, the manifesto commands us to pay attention to both routes and scripts. My strategy in making sense of *Serafim Ponte Grande* involves heeding this line from the manifesto by focusing on the significance of the figure of the ship: where it goes and what it makes visible.

The analogy ship-lens is just the first interpretation. In the passage quoted above, the ship is also presented as analogous to a trolley: "um navio passava como um bonde." What does it mean for a ship to pass like a trolley? In the first place, the analogy ship-trolley makes particular sense at this point in the narrative. The trolley image encapsulates the nostalgia for São Paulo that draws Serafim home at the end of his extended travels. The section that immediately follows, "Fim de Serafim" begins with a



few lines of nostalgic poetry: “Tired/Of my travels on the earth/By camel and taxi/I seek you/The road home...” (*SGP* 102) [“Fatigado/Das minhas viagens pela terra/De camelo e táxi/Te procuro/Caminho de casa...” (*SPG* 149)]. A trolley represents a regular connection between places, since its path is fixed in the ground by rails. As a conveyance that reliably, even inevitably, brings you back to the same place, the trolley lends itself to nostalgic surrender. A ship that comes by like a trolley is a ship you know will bring you home.

On another level, the trolley or streetcar as a vehicle illustrates the way travel traces links between places. There is no better way to visualize the network of voyages that criss-cross a cityscape than by looking at the web of streetcar lines. The rails themselves show the points of intersection, the nodes, links, and hubs that organize the internal workings of the city. In Brazil, the history of another kind of connection is also built into the word for trolley: *bonde*. The streetcar marks a connection between places in the city, but it also recalls the bonds issued by the Canadian Light & Power Company in order to finance the first electric streetcars in São Paulo and other Brazilian cities at the turn of the twentieth century (Tosta 36).

A bond is an economic link, specifically a link of indebtedness. *Bonde*, then, as a word borrowed from English, represents a linguistic appropriation from north to south that semantically marks an appropriation of money from south to north. Matching the *bonde* with the *transatlântico* illustrates the way geographical links, realized by travel conveyances, can mark potentially reciprocal relationships of appropriation and indebtedness both on the local and the global scale.

Aside from the ship-trolley simile in the passage cited above, Oswald de Andrade also uses the image of the *bonde* in several poems, as do Mário de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, and other Brazilian writers of the period (see Tosta). One of Oswald's poems in particular plays with the imagery relevant to this discussion:

O transatlântico mesclado  
 Dlendlena e esguicha luz  
 Postretutas e famias sacolejam (*Pau-Brasil* 101)<sup>7</sup>

In this poem, entitled “Bonde,” a young bourgeois idealist sits in a city streetcar and imagines it as a transatlantic ocean liner. The association of the streetcar with the ship unites the geography of the city with that of the ocean. More than that, it illustrates the way a voyage is always a connection through space. But the *bonde* in the poem is not only a *transatlântico*. It is “o transatlântico mesclado.” The ocean liner is “mixed up” [*mesclado*], a result of its being shaken up (as in the verb “to shake up” [*sacolejar*] in “Postretutas e famias sacolejam”).

Roberto Schwarz, in his mention of this poem, suggests that “postretutas e famias” are aspects of a not-totally-modernized Brazilian metropolis jostled “against their will” by the mockery of the “cosmopolitan poet” as, presumably, the streetcar jostles its passengers (*Misplaced Ideas* 121). Antonio Luciano de A. Tosta considers the reference to the ship as “mixed” [*mesclado*] to be a symbol of São Paulo as a city—and Brazil as a country—full of immigrants (46). I read the poem more specifically in terms of the metaphoric association of *bonde* to *transatlântico*. To that end, the last word of the first

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<sup>7</sup> A translation of this short poem into English would be counterproductive here, since most of the words are poetic neologisms. I discuss each in turn in what follows.

line, *mesclado*, can be read as the result of the process indicated by the last word of the last line, *sacolejam*. Both other words of that last line, though, are clearly also subject to a “shaking up” that leads to mixing. *Postretutas* can be seen as the conglomeration of *prostitutas* and *postres* [desserts]: both products representative of decadent consumption, one human and the other confectionery. Likewise, *famias* can be read as the combination of *famílias* and *fama* [fame]: both societal ambitions, one banal and the other grandiose.

Travel as an abstraction not only connects places on the map; it also shakes up and mixes up the established order both in the city and on the ocean. Reciprocal indebtedness and reciprocal appropriation necessarily result in variegation, in mixing. The *transatlântico* is an international *bonde*, just as the *bonde* is the *transatlântico* of the city. The elaboration of a network of travels works similarly on both scales. What is particularly complex about the multi-level imagery in this poem is the way the two conveyances simultaneously signal the fixity and the flexibility of social relations. Once laid, the tracks of the streetcar permanently mark the possible trajectories through the city. Likewise, the cruise ship promises tourists a round-trip voyage to the foreign land and back again; no passengers are exchanged along the way. At the same time, complexity by its very nature breeds the unexpected. As the city-wide and ocean-wide networks of connections grow in complexity, the amount of mixing and shaking up in the system of social relations increases.

The middle line of the poem, “*Dlendlena e esguicha luz*,” illustrates how the *bonde* signals something up ahead, both with sound and light. *Dlendlena*, as Tosta indicates, must be “an onomatopoeic word resembling the sound the streetcar makes when it stops

to call the passengers” (47). Meanwhile, the streetcar “gushes light” [“esguicha luz”]. On the one hand, the streetcar straightforwardly illuminates the linearity of progress, as represented by the line of the tracks before it. On the other hand, this mention of the shedding of light precedes the most mixed-up elements of the poem: the *postretutas* and *famias*. The poem is ultimately contradictory, in that it presents the *transatlântico-bonde* as both cause of and solution to the stratification and divisiveness of society. *Serafim Ponte Grande* as a whole also exhibits this contradiction.

### ***Antropofagia and Revolution***

Oswald famously wrote two different prefaces to *Serafim*. The first, published in the *Revista do Brasil* in 1926, strikes the sarcastic and bombastic tone of Oswald’s manifestos of the period: the *Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil* (1924) and *Manifesto antropófago* (1928). In short sentences and sentence fragments, he states that the aim of his work is criticism [“a minha finalidade é a crítica”] and that the character of *Serafim* represents the corrupt culture he is criticizing:

The new world produced the Seraphim-man, whose axis is ill-gotten riches....Great-grandson of the conqueror, opposite of the *bandeirante* [colonial-era explorer of the interior of Brazil], [Seraphim] is the prodigal son who intervenes in the paternal home because he saw the world, fought bad relationships and knows weird things. Shock. Confusion. Unadaptable return. (My translation)

O novo mundo produziu o homem serafiniano, cujo eixo é a riqueza mal adquirida....Bisneto do conquistador, avesso do *bandeirante*, [Serafim] é o filho pródigo que intervém na casa paterna porque viu mundo, travou más relações e sabe coisas esquisitas. Choque. Confusão. Regresso inadapável. (SPG 33-4)

The novel's main character and the supposedly cosmopolitan wealthy class he represents cannot save Brazil, Oswald argues, since Serafim's "riqueza mal adquirida" (the result of capitalist appropriation) is nothing other than the legacy of colonial appropriation.

In the second preface, which introduces the novel when it is finally published in 1933, Oswald repudiates not only the character of Serafim, but also the text that tells his story and the former version of himself who wrote the book. He criticizes what he sees as the naïve pseudo-revolutionary stance of his younger, bohemian self, fresh from European epiphanies: "The 'revolutionary' situation of our South American mental bullshit was this: the opposite of the bourgeois wasn't the proletarian, but the bohemian!" ["A situação 'revolucionária' desta bosta mental sul-americana, apresentava-se assim: o contrário do burguês não era o proletário — era o boêmio!"] From a wealthy background but for the time being "com pouco dinheiro," the younger Oswald thought himself free of the patriarchal baggage of his class. Meanwhile, the older, Marxist Oswald remarks that the masses were "totally forgotten and like today subject to the complete economic depravity of the politicians and the rich" (*SGP* 3) ["As massas, ignoradas no território e, como hoje, sob a completa devassidão econômica dos políticos e dos ricos" (*SPG* 37)].

The Oswald of the second preface condemns his former self for confusing freedom of movement with freedom from class structure and oppression:

I had taken a trip. I had seen the "peaceful" Europe of 1912. A sincere liking for Montmartre's nocturnal rabble confirmed my boozing tendencies, while back in Brazilian bars my screwed-up economic situation clashed with the feudal society that I sensed. (*SGP* 3-4)

Tinha feito uma viagem. Conhecera a Europa “pacífica” de 1912. Uma sincera amizade pela rale noctivaga da *butte* Montmartre, me confirmava na tendência carraspanal com que aqui, nos bars, a minha atrapalhada situação econômica protestava contra a sociedade feudal que presentia. (*SPG* 37-38)

Having gone to Europe, bohemian Oswald thought he knew how the world worked.

Marxist Oswald belittles that mistaken confidence.

On the last page of the novel, after the ship *El Durasno* has sailed out of the text in search of “avocados in tropical places” [“abacates nos cais tropicais”], a notice indicates: “This book was written from 1929 (era of Wall Street and Christ) backwards” (*SGP* 111) [“Este livro foi escrito de 1929 (era de Wall-Street e Cristo) para trás” (*SPG* 163)]. The stock market crash and the start of the depression clearly mark a turning point in the history of this text. Between the first preface (1926) and the second (1933), as the worldwide economy contracts, Oswald the author becomes “possessed of a single desire. To be at least the Knight in Armor of the Proletarian Revolution” (*SGP* 5) [“...possuído de uma única vontade. Ser pelo menos, casaca de ferro na Revolução Proletária” (*SPG* 39)].<sup>8</sup>

The Oswald of the second preface sees the Brazilian literature “de vanguarda” of the 1920s as having been built on a shaky economic scaffold. Both the market value of coffee [“A valorização do café”] and his own literary-political stance [“A poesia Pau-Brasil”], he claims, necessarily had to collapse with the global economic system: “All that had to crumble with the trumpets of economic crisis” (*SGP* 4) [“Isso tinha que ruir

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<sup>8</sup> Note that, here in the second preface, Oswald frames his turn to Communism as a reaction to the collapse of the global economic system, not the more proximate Brazilian revolution of 1930.

com as cornetas da crise” (*SPG* 38)]. He presents the text of *Serafim Ponte Grande* as a document or diagram [“Um documento. Um gráfico.”] of that former way of being (38).

As Mário da Silva Brito notes, the first preface already includes a scathing, sarcastic critique of Serafim the character and the society he stands for. What is missing is the political aspect of the critique (31). In the second preface, speaking as the “casaca de ferro na Revolução Proletária,” 1930s Oswald appears to equate Serafim the character and the 1920s Oswald who created him. Both are implicated in the preface’s condemnation:

A Brazilian cast loose on the high seas of the last stage of capitalism....Going from *petit bourgeois* and fairweather bureaucrat to dancer and tourist. As a solution, transatlantic nudism. At the historic apogee of bourgeois fortunes. Of ill-gotten fortunes. (*SGP* 5)

O brasileiro à toa na maré da última etapa do capitalismo....Passando de pequeno-burguês e funcionário climático a dançarino e turista. Como solução, o nudismo transatlântico. No apogeu histórico da fortuna burguesa. Da fortuna mal-adquirida. (*SPG* 38-9)

Between the first and second prefaces, the author appears to lose a certain confidence in the power of sarcasm and satire to unravel harmful structures. Bohemian Oswald appears no better to Communist Oswald than the facetious character in the novel. Whereas in the first preface, Serafim is presented as an instructive satiric example of an exploitative society propped up by “riqueza mal adquirida,” the second preface mocks the naïveté of a satire written at the “apogeu histórico” of such a society.

Of course, we cannot take the author’s rejection of his own work too seriously, since it serves as a preface to a text that he does in fact publish. A cynical reading of the second preface would see such a strongly worded condemnation of the text as a

backhanded promotional move. The reader is drawn in by the invective and invited to think: if he hates it so much, it must be worth reading.

I am interested in the way the text, however naïvely and counterproductively, serves as a diagram (“gráfico”) of a phenomenon presented as both example of and solution to a destructive system of global appropriation. Riding the tide of the “última etapa do capitalismo,” Serafim realizes his perverse potential by going from *petit bourgeois* bureaucrat to tourist. Tourism, in this text, represents capitalism at its most pointlessly exploitative. And yet that representation of “o nudismo transatlântico,” through its ridiculousness, aims to derail the very system it represents. As in the poem “Bonde,” *Serafim Ponte Grande* presents transatlantic travel both as a prime example of societal stratification and as a way of counteracting that stratification. I make sense of that contradiction by reading the text as a diagram of a network of appropriative links in geographic space. The text acknowledges the complexity of the network of transatlantic links that precedes it and works to unravel some of its divisive patterns by adding to that complexity. The next section addresses the clearest example in *Serafim* of an unexpected geographical link, introduced into the network as a detour in the form of a food run.

### **Eating as Appropriation**

A detour denotes deviation from a pattern or established path. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, Édouard Glissant’s notion of the detour as disruptive to the linearity of capital-H History (*Discours antillais*) illustrates in geographical terms



how deviant links can unravel hegemonic network patterns.<sup>9</sup> The power of the detour to disrupt (or at least highlight) patterns in geopolitical power relations infuses both *Miramar* and *Serafim*. Fragment 141 of *Miramar* ends with the line: “And mine was the turn to hear in a naturalist novel the dactylated dossier of my detailed detours” (Niebuhr and Bork 151) [“E foi minha a vez de ouvir num romance naturalista o dossier dactilado de meus detalhados desvios” (95)]. More than the rest of *Miramar* itself, *Serafim* realizes that “dossier dactilado” in a pseudo-naturalist novel full of detours.

On their outbound voyage from Brazil to Europe aboard the ship *Rompe-Nuve*, Serafim and Pinto Calçudo find that their itinerary has been unexpectedly altered. The ship’s owner announces to the passengers that they are “in sight of an uncharted continent and perhaps far from frequented courses” (*SGP* 48) [“...à vista de um continente ignorado nas cartas e talvez longe dos roteiros habitados” (*SPG* 91)]. The explanation for this detour has already come by way of the heading for this section of the narrative: “*Of how Fos’ Dick,*<sup>10</sup> *wanting to get some exercise, sticks a long stick in the cabin porthole and rows, producing a serious detour in the course of the liner, which unexpectedly docks in the Belgian Congo*” (*SGP* 47) [“*De como Pinto Calçudo querendo fazer esporte, enfia no óculo da cabina um pau comprido e rema, produzindo um grave desvio na rota do transatlântico que aporta inesperadamente ao Congo Belga*” (*SPG* 91)]. Rather than a straightforward transit from south to north, the *Rompe-Nuve* unexpectedly adds Africa—an unknown continent—to its *roteiro*.

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<sup>9</sup> That is, patterns established through network dynamics—particularly preferential attachment—such as the Atlantic triangle (see chapter 2).

<sup>10</sup> Jackson and Bork’s translation interpolates invented English names to approximate the ridiculousness of the names in the Portuguese original.

Not only does the ship end up tracing two legs of the original Atlantic triangle in reverse; the ingenuous pair of tourist-adventurers illustrate the appropriative aspect of their voyage by stopping off to get some food: “To have a souvenir from the town called Belgian Congo, Fos’ Dick and his boss negotiate a tasty large couscous, before embarcation” (*SGP* 48) [“A fim de trazer uma recordação do povoado chamado Congo Belga, negociam Pinto Calçudo e seu amo um saboroso e gran cuscuz, antes do embarque” (*SPG* 91)].

This one example from the text models appropriation on several levels. First, there is the appropriation of the ship’s itinerary by Pinto Calçudo for the sake of his own personal fitness.<sup>11</sup> Then there is the reduction of a vast existing country to a fictional village (“o povoado chamado Congo Belga”), placed in an unknown continent far from the beaten track. Such a marginalizing mention of Africa calls our attention, if only fleetingly, to the way the rest of the world’s willful ignorance perpetuates the one-way flow of material resources out of that continent. As tourists, Serafim and Pinto Calçudo not only visit the village but come away with a souvenir. The pair do not simply buy the couscous; they “negotiate” it in the way tourists abroad often feel justified in bargaining for everything rather than paying fair prices to merchants in less “developed” economies.

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<sup>11</sup> Over the course of the ship’s voyage, Pinto Calçudo appropriates progressively more of our attention as well. At the end of this travel sequence, in a nicely metafictional moment, Serafim asks his sidekick: “Who’s the main character in this book? You or me?” (*SGP* 55) [“Quem é neste livro o personagem principal? Eu ou você?” (*SPG* 99)]. Pinto Calçudo is then thrown out of the novel, only to return triumphantly after Serafim’s death to claim *El Durasno*.

Perhaps most importantly for this reading, the souvenir the two come away with is edible. In true anthropophagic form, here the mode of appropriating the foreign is eating. In the following mini-section of the narrative, wherein it is discovered that the ship has run out of cookies, Serafim offers up his couscous to his fellow passengers. It is divided into slices and mistakenly offered not only to the Commander's table, but to all the tables (*SPG* 92). Class hierarchy unravels at the dinner table, as everyone becomes an appropriator.

The word *comer* has distinct connotations of conquest, particularly sexual. Throughout his travels, Serafim practices an aggressive style of sexual tourism. He finds French, Italian, and English women to have sex with while in Europe and on board ship. When he travels to Constantinople and Cairo, it is in pursuit of two girls recently graduated from high school. There are relatively subtle references to homosexuality as well. At one point, before leaving Brazil, Serafim dreams that he has changed sex and become Pinto Calçudo's girlfriend (*SPG* 70). Once arrived in Paris, he joins up with the beauty queen Dona Branca Clara, who introduces him around town. At tea at Branca Clara's, in a fragment entitled "Moralidade," Serafim "admires up and down that sumptuous Russian prince..." (*SGP* 63) ["Serafim admira de alto a baixo aquele suntuoso príncipe russo..." (*SPG* 109)]. The text fragment that follows, entitled "Class" ["A Aula"], places Serafim together with a student learning Portuguese: "Student—Too eet we seat before the table we poot a napkeen over our breast" (*SGP* 63) ["*A aluna — Pará comêr nos sentamôs diante da mesá nos pomôs uma guardanapô nos pêtos*" (*SPG* 109)]. Directly following the line about the "sumptuous Russian prince," this sexually

loaded dialogue suggests that the student (though indicated grammatically as female [*“A aluna”*]) is in fact the prince himself. The use of the word *comer* in this context ties the theme of sexual conquest abroad present throughout the novel together with the appropriation of the Congolese couscous.<sup>12</sup>

The sense—implicit in the word *comer*—that eating and sex constitute similar modes of appropriation pervades the novel from beginning to end.<sup>13</sup> The passengers of *El Durasno* (the second ship, headed by Pinto Calçudo) resolve in the pantry of the ship to found a new “corporate body with a priapic base” [*“uma sociedade anônima de base priápica”*] on board and proceed by appropriating food from port to port (*SGP* 109, *SPG* 160). In that light, we might see the title of the final section of the narrative—“Os Antropófagos”—as much in terms of sexuality as anything else. The band of nudists that sails off into the sunset represents as closely as possible the image of infinite appropriation. No one in the novel practices anthropophagy in the original sense, as in the eating of human flesh, but the process of cultural, material, and sexual appropriation comes through in the actions of the characters as well as the structure of the text itself. As Farinaccio remarks, the novel’s “basic mode of operation is the critical devouring of history and culture” [*“O seu modo-de-operar básico é a devoração crítica da história e da cultura”* (117)].

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<sup>12</sup> Pinto Calçudo’s use of a *pau* [“stick,” but also “penis”] to change the boat’s course also adds a sexual connotation to the detour, but integrating that particular play on words into the argument might take us off track....

<sup>13</sup> Another work that makes extensive use of the sexual connotation of eating in Portuguese—particularly as it relates to Tupi anthropophagy in fact—is Nelson Pereira dos Santos’s 1971 film *Como era gostoso o meu Francês* (translated as “How Tasty was My Little Frenchman”).

But if the novel's modus is devouring and its aim is criticism, what is the object of its critique? Considering the geographical range of the narrative, as well as the perhaps gratuitous incorporation of words from French, English, Italian, and German,<sup>14</sup> what is the scope of the culture and history being devoured? In Brazilian criticism, the novel is primarily read in the context of Brazilian cultural and literary movements of the 1920s. To a great extent, those movements, including *Antropofagia*, promote a Brazilian literary nationalism and the development of an autonomous literary culture for the modernizing nation. My reading puts the *transatlântico* at center stage in order to highlight how the theme of international dislocation (and the geographical links of appropriation that result) parallels the formal fragmentation and genre mixing of the text itself to produce a broad critique of a global system of appropriation.

### **Conclusion: Toward an International Reading of a National Novel**

Farinaccio summarizes the comparison that previous critics of Brazilian modernism have made between *Serafim Ponte Grande* (1933) and Mário de Andrade's more famous masterpiece, *Macunaíma* (1928). Both novels have been characterized as "portraits" [*retratos*] of Brazil, its culture and history: *Macunaíma* being a positive portrait (Darcy Ribeiro, cited in Farinaccio 43) and *Serafim* reflecting the negative portrait painted by Paulo Prado in his 1928 *Retrato do Brasil: ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira*. Whereas *Macunaíma* has appeared to critics to celebrate what is original and joyous about

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<sup>14</sup> One compact but illustrative example is the tri-lingual neologism used to describe one of several of Serafim's Parisian lovers: "A Girl-d'hoj'em-dia..." (*SPG* 136).

Brazilian culture, *Serafim* has appeared to perpetuate negative stereotypes about Brazilians' laziness, immorality, and desire to copy European culture.

Farinaccio goes on to make the important point that the very notion of a work of fiction as a portrait of a nation reveals untenable assumptions about the nature of representation in fiction. Such an idea "supposes a structure that preexists the work, a structure that the portrait would then (re)present, in its original form, as if it *were already there* prior to being appropriated fictionally" ["a postulação do 'retrato'... supõe uma estrutura prévia à obra, a que essa última (re)apresentaria, em sua configuração original, vale dizer, como *já estava* antes de ser apropriada ficcionalmente" (41)]. The stitched-together nature of *Serafim* makes clear the way all fiction converts a certain (necessarily ideologically charged) vision of the world into an "*objeto de percepção*" (Farinaccio 42). Farinaccio claims, reasonably, that *Serafim* cites negative stereotypes of Brazil and Brazilians "*parodicamente*" in order precisely to subvert Paulo Prado's *Retrato*, concluding that "parodic citation is, in fact, the primary expedient in the construction of the Oswaldian text, a text that cannibalizes other texts" ["a citação paródica é, de fato, o recurso básico de construção do texto oswaldiano, texto canibal de textos outros" (45)].

Beyond the comparison of the two novels in terms of their positive or negative reflection of the Brazilian nation, another axis of comparison presents itself in light of the current reading. The two works, and the two authors who wrote them, present very different attitudes about Brazil's connection to the rest of the world.

*Transatlânticos* also appear in *Macunaíma*, but the eponymous “hero with no character” never succeeds in departing in one. In chapter 12, Macunaíma plots to travel to Europe as a painter on a government stipend in order to retrieve his amulet from his nemesis. After finding out how many other artists were also waiting for such a deal from the state, he declares: “No! I won’t go to Europe, after all. I’m an American, and my place is here in America. Without a doubt, European civilization would play havoc with our unspoiled nature” (108) [“Não! não vou na Europa não. Sou americano e meu lugar é na América. A civilização européia de-certo esculhamba a inteireza do nosso caráter” (104)]. In the following chapter, the hero sees a *transatlântico* appear out of the fountain in Anhangabaú Park: that is, in the middle of São Paulo. When Macunaíma climbs up to board the ship, he realizes that it is no more than an apparition conjured by the *Mãe d’água* to tempt him (107-8). In both instances, international travel is revealed to be a mirage; the promise of cosmopolitanism loses out to the notion of national authenticity. In fact, the text mocks those Brazilians who would attempt to realize themselves as artists abroad.

Benedito Nunes makes clear how both leaders of the Brazilian modernist movement make use of the aesthetic innovations taking place in Europe in different ways. While Mário stays in Brazil, he nevertheless keeps up with what is going on abroad.

Meanwhile, Oswald travels to Paris to see European modernism up close:

Mário and Oswald were two forms, two styles of participation in European sources for our modernists: the former exclusively by way of meditative journeying through texts, complemented by two voyages within Brazil, to Minas and to the North; the latter more by atmospheric impregnation, by that intuitive

reception that familiarity with people and things makes possible. Each of them had his irreducible way of being: concentrated in Mário, dispersive in Oswald...

Foram eles, Mário e Oswald, duas formas, dois estilos de participação dos nossos modernistas nas fontes européias: o primeiro tão-somente pela viagem meditativa através dos textos, que se completou por duas outras viagens pelo Brasil, a Minas e ao Norte; o segundo, mais por impregnação atmosférica, por essa captação intuitiva que se faz através da convivência com pessoas e coisas. Tanto um como outro, e cada qual dentro de seu irredutível modo de ser, concentrado em Mário, dispersivo em Oswald... (25)

Nunes suggests that both authors' interest ultimately concerns the future of Brazilian literature, and that both look to Europe for inspiration as literary revolutionaries. The difference between them has to do with where they travel. Mário keeps his focus on the territory of Brazil, while Oswald stitches personal and aesthetic ties between São Paulo and Europe—primarily Paris.<sup>15</sup> What Oswald absorbs through “impregnação atmosférica” is the idea of textual cannibalism.

In 1920s Paris, the image of the cannibal is, as Nunes says, “in the air” [“no ar” (18)]. Most notably, Francis Picabia’s “Manifeste cannibale dada” of 1920 puts forward a suggestive but elusive notion of violent literary iconoclasm. Nunes sees Oswald’s appropriation of the dadaist cannibal image not as a derivative copy by an artist from the margins of world culture, but rather as the Brazilian contribution to a global modernism.

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<sup>15</sup> Why Paris? you might ask. Pascale Casanova would certainly say: because Paris is where any writer must go to become consecrated as an international writer. She quotes an article about the long history of Brazilians in Paris, which in turn quotes Paulo Prado’s preface to the *Poesia Pau-Brasil* collection: “Oswald de Andrade, on a trip to Paris, dazed in a studio above the Place Clichy—the world’s navel—discovered his own country” [“Oswald de Andrade, numa viagem a Paris, do alto de atelier da Place Clichy — umbigo do mundo — descobriu, deslumbrado, a sua própria terra” (*Pau-Brasil* 57, qtd. in Carelli 290, qtd. in Casanova 32, my translation)]. Serafim, like the author who creates him, does travel to Paris, but that link becomes one among many inscribed in the novel. It remains for others to say whether Oswald needs Paris in order to become an international writer.



Furthermore, Nunes argues that European vanguardist experiments, especially dadaism and primitivism, open a mutually beneficial dialogue with Brazilian culture in the work of the *modernistas*. The cannibal image, which comes out of a purely violent dadaist impulse, discovers its historical instantiation in the Tupi of Oswald's manifesto. Where "o espírito de vanguarda" in Europe is "impulsivo e incoerante" (23), in Brazil it becomes political and historical. Brazilian modernism finds a language of revolt in European vanguardism, and European vanguardism finds a context for that revolt in the history of Brazil. To be more specific, in Oswald's *Manifesto antropófago*, the Brazilian anthropophage is far from an image of pure violence. Anthropophagy becomes a mechanism through which to analyze long-standing relations between peoples constituted by global forces: of colonialism, of capitalist exchange, and of religion.

This transatlantic interchange of ideas and language suggests that literary cannibalism—or cannibalism as a literary idea and practice—is itself forged out of a network of appropriations. In Oswald's work in particular, that network is illustrated by the voyage. *Serafim Ponte Grande* models the kind of anthropophagic text called for in the *Manifesto*. It performs transatlantic appropriation on various levels: linguistic (the incorporation of foreign words), generic (the juxtaposition of genres), material (the couscous, for example), and sexual. The mode of travel that brings these levels together in the text is tourism, most notably by cruise ship.

While the critical stance made possible by the text's "tourism in the territory of writing" (Frizzi) is rooted (routed?) in the long history of Brazil's engagement with Europe, it is important to note that the network of appropriations the text instantiates is

open-ended. Perhaps one of the most famous lines in the book actually appears before the start of the text. In place of the standard reservation of copyright notice on the reverse of the title page, *Serafim* has this: “The right to be translated, reproduced and deformed in all languages—S. Paulo—1933” [“Direito de ser traduzido, reproduzido e deformado em todas as línguas — S. Paulo — 1933” (*SPG* 36, my translation)].<sup>16</sup>

There are several ways to interpret this facetious copyright notice (cf. Farinaccio 20). Most significantly for this reading, the line preemptively invites the reader to continue the process of appropriation the text itself uncovers and performs. One might even argue that no text even exists except through its active appropriation by readers. What the text that follows this invitation illustrates in particular is the way *where* we are sitting when we read matters, as does where the text and all its pieces come from. As a text that shows itself to be stitched together in the way all texts constitute networks of textual appropriation, as well as through the *roteiros* of the ships and passengers that pass through the narrative, *Serafim Ponte Grande* uncovers and participates in a complex network of transatlantic appropriative connections centuries in the making.

While Equiano fights, in his narrative, to free himself from the magnetic pull of the Atlantic slave trade and the triangle pattern that perpetuates it, Serafim fights to free himself from the economic and moral structures he sees keeping him in line. His solution, of course (“o nudismo transatlântico”) is no solution at all, though, as for Equiano, Serafim’s freedom of movement suggests the possibility of other kinds of freedom. Farinaccio remarks:

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<sup>16</sup> This notice does not appear in Jackson and Bork’s translation.

The story of Serafim Ponte Grande the character is presented, however cynically, as the story of possible revolution, in the historical frame of the 1920s. The itineraries proclaimed in the “Manifesto Antropófago” are liberatory proposals offered to the individual victims of tedious states.

A história da personagem Serafim Ponte Grande se apresenta, algo cinicamente, como a história da revolução possível, no quadro histórico dos anos 1920. Ora, os roteiros anunciados no “Manifesto Antropófago” são propostas libertárias oferecidas aos indivíduos vítimas dos estados tediosos. (108)

The *roteiros* traced in the novel, by deviating from established patterns, disrupt the structure of the network by adding detours to it.

Ultimately, the eighteenth-century patterns of material and cultural trade that Equiano works in and against are those that lead to the economic and cultural web Oswald witnesses and participates in a century and more later. Slavery in Brazil, let us not forget, is only outlawed twenty months before Oswald is born in January 1890. Both Equiano’s and Oswald’s texts work to undermine the same transatlantic network of capital appropriations as it presents itself in their respective centuries. The former elaborates its critique through a rational, productive traveler—the rational subject that underpins the study of transport geography critiqued by Cresswell and Merriman. The latter pursues a similar critique using more leisurely means—a method that illustrates the irrationality of complex systems as well as the “liveliness” of “mobile time and space” (Cresswell and Merriman 4-5).

The next chapter brings us close to the present moment. In *Histoire de la femme cannibale*, as we will see, Maryse Condé makes painfully clear how the patterns of slavery that stitched the Atlantic together during the colonial period still affect all those who live around, on, and through the ocean. The network of geographic connections

Condé's text constructs expands on that of Serafim's and Equiano's in an explicit attempt to disrupt or even reverse patterns left over from a dehumanizing history.

CHAPTER 4: “LE TRIANGLE S’ÉTAIT INVERSÉ”: RECONFIGURING THE POSTCOLONIAL  
IN MARYSE CONDÉ’S *HISTOIRE DE LA FEMME CANNIBALE*

So I continue to swoop and circle around the irreducible figure  
of the girl, casting one net of meaning after another over her....  
— J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Maryse Condé’s 2003 novel *Histoire de la femme cannibale* performs a radical reversal and reconfiguration of Atlantic colonial history. The manipulation of history begins with the image of a tree early in the novel. Condé’s protagonist, Rosélie, sees a traveler’s tree in the front garden of a house in Cape Town that she is looking to purchase with her partner, Stephen. Her reaction is immediate and intense, and she decides on the spot that the house will be her home. The tree reminds Rosélie of her childhood in Guadeloupe, when she would hide from her cousins in a similar tree at her uncle’s house. The sight of the tree calls up not only her own past but also the accumulated history of Atlantic colonialism. In her reflections, she draws an analogy between her own voyage from the Antilles to Africa and the opposite experience of her ancestors taken in the other direction on slave ships:

The triangular trade had been reversed. Before arriving in Cape Town, the *Christ-Roi* had anchored at La Pointe, where it had replaced its ebony cargo with other species. The magic of the long-lost tree, of Nature, the smell of the mighty ocean parading as far as the eye could see, and the everlasting distress of her people like a canker in the midst of so much beauty cast a powerful, equivocal spell, a magical, perverse philter against which she was helpless. (38–39)

Le triangle s'était inversé. Avant Le Cap, le *Christ-Roi* avait abordé à La Pointe où il s'était chargé d'autres bois que des bois d'ébène. La magie de l'arbre retrouvé, de la Nature, l'odeur de la mer, souveraine, paradant à perte de vue, la détresse des siens persistant tel un chancre au sein de tant de beautés composaient un charme équivoque et puissant, un philtre magique et pervers contre lequel elle ne parvenait pas à se défendre. (52-53)

The presence of a tree Rosélie recognizes from Guadeloupe in the garden of that house in Cape Town marks for her the reversal of the colonial trajectory that Christopher Miller calls “the French Atlantic Triangle.”<sup>1</sup> The clockwise pattern (from Old World to New via Africa) suddenly, magically, perversely appears to have traveled counter-clockwise (“Le triangle s'était inversé”). A slave ship called the *Christ-Roi* has traded its human cargo (“bois d'ébène”) in Pointe-à-Pitre for another kind of wood and improbably returned with it to Africa.

The image of a tree conjures a sense of rootedness, but this particular tree does not represent Rosélie's roots so much as an unexpected transatlantic link between two particular places—among many—that have played a significant role in Rosélie's story. Throughout this dissertation, I explore how Atlantic colonialism can be seen not only as an economic program but also as a pattern of thought resulting from a self-organizing network of movements. The triangle is a self-reinforcing pattern in that network and is therefore more than just the symbol of the slave trade; the stability of the triangle represents the persistence of colonial thinking in the dichotomy of First and Third

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<sup>1</sup> “The Atlantic triangle was invented by a system of trades, following a certain pattern. The French version of the Atlantic, perhaps more than any other, was triangular in its configuration. The Atlantic triangle was traced onto the earth and into world culture by men and women and ships, moving goods to Africa, captive Africans to the New World, and colonial products back to the mother countries” (3).

Worlds and the hierarchal conception of races. In this fourth chapter, I analyze Condé's novel as an attempt to defuse the triangular pattern of colonial thinking.

*Histoire de la femme cannibale* interrupts entrenched colonial and postcolonial patterns by elaborating a network of relations between geographic sites outside the traditional colonial triad. This network consists of new, unexpected geographic connections that challenge the cultural and historical legacy of the Atlantic triangle. Those connections are established through processes of incorporation on multiple levels and illustrated by the metaphor of cannibalism. The text itself performs cannibalism (by incorporating other texts, people, and place names), while cannibalism also becomes a theme of the novel (with characters cannibalizing other characters figuratively and perhaps literally).

Incorporation establishes a link between the foreign and the self through appropriation; the self appropriates the foreign. As each of the cannibalized elements in the novel (texts and characters, as well as the traveler's tree) is geographically marked, cannibalism can be seen as a geographically significant process of appropriation or incorporation. Cannibalism highlights the distinction between here and there while at the same time blurring that distinction.<sup>2</sup> Cannibalism on the textual and thematic levels provides the mechanism by which *Histoire de la femme cannibale* proliferates ambiguous and powerful ["équivoque et puissant"] geographic connections. Ultimately, the novel aims not merely to reverse the Atlantic triangle but to replace it with other,

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<sup>2</sup> "The idea of incorporation...depends upon and enforces an absolute division between inside and outside; but in the act itself that opposition disappears, dissolving the structure it appears to produce" (Kilgour, *Communion* 4).

proliferating patterns of movement and connection. From the vantage point of Cape Town, both Condé the novelist and Rosélie her protagonist are able to form links—to places, people, and texts—that do not conform to the entrenched colonial triangle. For example, as readers we can uncover resonances between this novel and South African fiction, just as Rosélie finds a familiar tree in an unfamiliar city.

Rosélie's reaction to the traveler's tree appears to confirm Caroline Rody's observation that "Condé's fiction, like so much Caribbean literature, retraces the historic passages of the diaspora, recrossing the waters in the attempt to master and purge historical trauma" (183). Regardless of whether Condé's fiction is representative of Caribbean literature, *Histoire de la femme cannibale* argues along with Rody that fiction can not only remind us of history but in fact can reconfigure that history. The phrase "Le triangle s'était inversé" suggests that—as Rosélie remembers it—the sight of the tree purges the historical trauma of the slave trade by "recrossing the waters," exactly as Rody observes.

It is not self-evident, however, *how* "recrossing the waters" can help to purge the trauma of history. If appropriation (of bodies, of products, and of cultures) characterizes the mechanism of the Atlantic triangle trade, how can a reverse appropriation—of a tree from west to east—address hundreds of years of systematic violence and the resulting racism that persists to the present? By posing such a question, Condé's novel can help reorient the critical project that is postcolonial theory. *Histoire de la femme cannibale* refocuses the postcolonial critical enterprise on what should be its main objective: to



purge historical trauma by dismantling modes of colonial thinking (racism, patriarchy, north/south divisions) that persist after political decolonization.<sup>3</sup>

### **Recasting the Postcolonial**

As critics have noted for at least twenty years, the problems with postcolonial theory begin with both parts of the term *postcolonial*. Anne McClintock notes that “post” relegates all non-colonial cultures to a single “subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time” and that “colonial” collapses an important multiplicity of forms of domination (86, 88-89). By that logic, the reduction of historical and contemporary oppression into a binary opposition between the colonial “same” and a postcolonial “other” paradoxically ends up obscuring real differences between real cultures in an effort to celebrate Difference. Richard Serrano cites Arif Dirlik’s and Aijaz Ahmad’s claims that postcolonialism’s adherents may want to obscure diversity (especially of class) to hide the fact that they benefit from the system they purportedly criticize (Serrano 5). Serrano concludes that “most practitioners of the postcolonial remain modernists at heart, dismantling the modernist, colonialist project not in order to understand the specificities of particular peoples, cultures, writers, or texts, but in order to build their own monolithic ideological structures instead” (7).

Condé’s fiction as well as her critical writing challenge postcolonial theory precisely because of the latter’s seeming inability to consider multiplicities of otherness.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> Or, in the case of the French Antilles, *départementalisation*.

<sup>4</sup> This is essentially the thesis of Dawn Fulton’s 2008 monograph on Condé: *Signs of Dissent: Maryse Condé and Postcolonial Criticism*.

essays published in the few years leading up to the appearance of *Histoire de la femme cannibale* in 2003, Condé explicitly mobilizes an avowedly modernist project—the Brazilian *Antropofagia* movement discussed below and in more detail in the preceding chapter—for contemporary Francophone Antillean writing. Oswald de Andrade’s 1928 “Manifesto antropófago” locates a Brazilian nationalism in a colonial distinction between Europe and America. His postcolonial move is to reverse the roles of eater and eaten. By complicating the dualism of eater and eaten to a dizzying degree, Condé’s novel shows both the limits and the potential future use of the cannibalist paradigm for postcolonial criticism.

Condé is considered a Guadeloupean writer because she was born in Guadeloupe. Her writing is considered postcolonial because she writes politically reflective fiction in the era of decolonization, in spite of the fact that Guadeloupe remains a French *département*. Such categorization by place of origin and historical context does not sit well with a writer such as Condé, who continually and overtly works to undermine such classifications. *Histoire de la femme cannibale*, considering the geographic range it encompasses and the diversity of cultures it incorporates or references, is particularly difficult to categorize as a Caribbean novel.

The novel’s relationship to the discourse of decolonization and the postcolonial is deeply ambivalent. Especially as Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* figures as a crucial intertext, the reader comes to see Rosélie as a postcolonial anti-hero. From a Fanonian point of view, Rosélie does everything wrong. She not only repudiates her home country, she is indifferent to the metropole and finds nothing in sub-Saharan

Africa worth fighting for. She appears content to hide in an affluent white pocket of downtown Cape Town. She lives as the concubine of a white man who simultaneously coddles and belittles her and who, it turns out, cheats on her constantly behind her back with his male students. As opposed to her friend Simone, Rosélie feels no remorse about her status as black *bourgeoise* and does nothing to mitigate her privilege. She is complacent and complicit with the structures of power that cause her so much anguish. Yet this critique is not external to the novel but rather explicitly included in the narrative. Rosélie finds herself indicted by way of Fanon's condemnation of Mayotte Capécia: accused, that is, of "lactification," the desire of a black woman for a white man out of a kind of racial inferiority complex.<sup>5</sup> The suggestion is that by taking such a passive stance with regard to her subject position—and for all the damage that passive stance does to the struggle to eradicate racist and sexist thinking—Rosélie might as well go around saying she is a cannibal.

Mireille Rosello and Dawn Fulton have noted that the novel both invites and precludes a postcolonial reading first of all with the words *femme cannibale* in the title. As Fulton puts it, "[t]he novel's provocative title creates a desire, or at the very least an expectation, so that the reader, like the colonial explorer, is already looking for cannibalism before the journey has begun" ("Question" 91). Before even cracking the

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<sup>5</sup> After Stephen accuses their African-American friends of hypocritically criticizing Nigerian corruption while being unwilling to decry African-American gang violence, those friends pity and condemn Rosélie via Fanon: "A sister who stays with a Caucasian of the most dangerous sort can only be pitied. Was it masochism? Certainly not! She was a living example of Mayotte Capécia's complex of lactification, so magnificently denounced by Fanon" (*Cannibal Woman* 192) ["Il fallait plaindre une sœur qui restait avec ce Caucasien de l'espèce la plus dangereuse. Masochisme ? Non ! Elle était l'illustration du complexe de lactification à la Mayotte Capécia, si magnifiquement dénoncé par Fanon" (*Femme cannibale* 221)].

spine of the book, the reader-colonist expects the text to include a woman who eats human flesh. Is it Rosélie, who spends most of her time in her studio, painting primarily in red? Or is it Fiéla, the woman accused of eating her husband, whom Rosélie's housekeeper Dido loves to read about in the newspaper? Rosello points out that the phrase does not refer to any character in the novel at all, but rather to a painting. Though she generally has trouble naming her creations, Rosélie finds as the story ends that she has a name for a new painting in mind: "*Femme cannibale*" (352).<sup>6</sup> In Rosello's reading, the subversion of our expectations constitutes "a critique of the historical shortcut that makes us think that we understand what is meant by a 'femme cannibale'" (39). The deferral of the referent of the title tempts the reader to summon the metaphor of cannibal as anti-colonialist and then trumps that metaphor at the last moment.

The novel asks that we "swoop and circle" the image of the *femme cannibale*, "casting one net of meaning after another over her" as the magistrate of Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* does with the barbarian girl. Fulton goes further than Rosello to analyze Rosélie as both appropriator and appropriated, cannibal and cannibalized: a morally ambiguous figure that does not map onto the postcolonial reader's expectation of "a heroic self-liberating cannibal" set against "a unilateral condemnation of the West" (Fulton, *Signs* 141). The ambiguous use of the cannibal metaphor in *Histoire de la femme cannibale* suggests a critique of postcolonial theory.

Beyond the cannibal metaphor, the novel also calls for and challenges a postcolonial reading by developing a theme of unexpected, unlikely, or unsettling connections,

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<sup>6</sup> These are the words that end the novel.

exemplified in a focus on mixed marriages, in Rosélie's affinity with Fiéla, and perhaps most fundamentally by the novel's setting. By making Cape Town the setting of the present of the novel from which Rosélie looks back at her life in the United States, France, Guadeloupe, elsewhere in Africa, and otherwise around the world, Condé complicates a postcolonial reading based on place. The novel elaborates a geographical network of references with Cape Town as the most important hub and in so doing confounds readers' expectations of how a Francophone novel should fit into the France-colony relationship. Just as with the network of Olaudah Equiano's voyages analyzed in chapter two of this dissertation, the network of appropriations in Condé's novel defuses the power of the Atlantic triangle by proliferating other geographic linkages. The expected transatlantic and colony-metropole connections coexist with an unpredictable array of other geographic links. Furthermore, with Cape Town as the story's hub, apartheid becomes the more immediate historical referent, rather than Atlantic colonialism. In these and other subtle ways, the novel undermines the postcolonial reader's triangular assumptions about a Francophone novel written by a Guadeloupean woman.

Strictly speaking, the novel establishes a specifically anti-triangular, rather than a postcolonial, stance. The image of the traveler's tree reversing the clockwise pattern around the Atlantic stands in for the subversive geographic logic of appropriation at work throughout the novel. Condé builds on the *antropofagista* metaphor of cultural appropriator as cannibal liberator while dispensing with the colonizer/colonized dyad. The result is a cascade of appropriations—of other texts, of words from other languages,

of characters by other characters, of objects from around the world—that reconfigures literary cannibalism as a network operating on several levels simultaneously.

In the passage quoted at the outset, Rosélie first of all appropriates a tree she has seen for the first time into her personal experience. She claims a relationship between the tree in front of her and the one she remembers “chez Papa Doudou.” At the same time, she is overcome [“elle ne parvenait pas à se défendre”] by the associations that the experience draws up; the composite sensation of the tree, her personal memories, and a collective memory of slavery act as an equivocal elixir, a “philtre magique et pervers” by which she is appropriated. To answer the question “Where on earth is she?” (38) [“Mais où est-elle donc ?” (52)], Rosélie must triangulate her position in relation not only to her personal trajectory from Guadeloupe to Cape Town but also to the trajectory of her people (les “siens”) in history, from Africa into slavery. Even while incorporating the tree into the memory of her family, she allows herself to be swept away by the tree’s symbolization of a history of human appropriation (the slave trade).

In the logic of the passage, the tree itself is the result of a reciprocal, transatlantic set of appropriations. The mysterious slave ship the *Christ-Roi*, neither explained nor mentioned elsewhere in the text, is a vehicle that connects two points: “La Pointe” (Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe’s largest city), where violently appropriated Africans were off-loaded and the tree (“autres bois”) was taken into the hold, and Cape Town, where the appropriated tree came to stand in the garden. The tree visually marks the link between two seemingly unrelated places.

The traveler's tree is a contradictory symbol of Rosélie's connection with her natal island. The species *Ravenala madagascariensis*, or *l'arbre du voyageur*, though common in the Caribbean, originates from Madagascar.<sup>7</sup> While it is entirely plausible that Rosélie would see the same kind of tree in Cape Town that she had played in at her uncle's house, the tree does not work as a sign of her "Guadeloupeanness." A tree for travelers must either provide comfort to those far from home or welcome those just returned. Either way, the traveler's tree, though stationary because rooted, reminds the traveler of her mobility and constant displacement.

Any expectations the reader might have about Rosélie's rootedness, as elicited for example by this image of the traveler's tree early in the novel, are constantly undermined by the novel's series of flashbacks to a proliferating number of locations around the Atlantic and beyond. If, as Michael Lucey writes, Condé's 1989 novel *Traversée de la mangrove* embodies "the failure...of finally ever writing a novel which could be 'guadeloupéen'" (132), then *Histoire de la femme cannibale* ridicules the very idea of attempting to write such a novel. While *Traversée* takes place entirely in one Guadeloupean village, the later novel mentions Guadeloupe only as a distant memory.

On another level, the *Christ-Roi* itself is also the result of an appropriation. The *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*<sup>8</sup> does not indicate that any ship of that name participated in the Atlantic slave trade or that any ship at all recorded a journey from Pointe-à-Pitre to Cape Town (Eltis et al.). The ship name makes more sense as an

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<sup>7</sup> An image of the tree figures on bank notes in Madagascar and planes belonging to the national airline (Ansel and Le Divellec 14).

<sup>8</sup> This free, online, fully searchable database compiles records of slave ship voyages perpetrated by all the European colonial powers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

intertextual than as a historical reference. *Christ-Roi* translates the name of the ship on which Tituba's mother was raped in the passage that begins Condé's *Moi, Tituba sorcière...noire de Salem* (1986):

Abena, my mother, was raped by an English sailor on the deck of *Christ the King* one day in the year 16\*\* while the ship was sailing for Barbados. I was born from this act of aggression. From this act of hatred and contempt. (3)

Abena, ma mère, un marin anglais la viola sur le pont du *Christ the King*, un jour de 16\*\* alors que le navire faisait voile vers la Barbade. C'est de cette agression que je suis née. De cet acte de haine et de mépris. (13)

Besides being a wink at Condé's readers, the translation of the *Christ the King* to *Christ-Roi* also translates (in the sense of "brings over") all of the equivocal feelings that attend the opening of the earlier novel. Whereas seventeenth-century Tituba is literally a product of the middle passage, Rosélie's relation to the violence of slavery is no less anguish provoking for its centuries of remove. Abena, Tituba's mother, is appropriated both geographically and sexually: she has been taken from her homeland and then raped. Tituba, by the fact of her birth and by her enslavement, is the result of that double appropriation. In the garden of her new house in Cape Town, Rosélie imagines the result of the transatlantic appropriation—the cargo of the *Christ-Roi*—to be the traveler's tree, not herself. And yet her sense of self is contingent on her ability to locate herself in relation to those that came before as well as to those around her. The tree reminds her that she is a product of history.

That reminder gives her a foothold in the strange city, and the resulting mix of emotions energizes her artistic creativity in a way that had been lacking since before moving, with her partner Stephen, from New York. Once settled in the house in Cape



Town, “[a] frenzy of blood flooded through her heart, her head, her arms and legs, and she painted, painted for days on end, endeavoring to convey her conflicting feelings with her brushes” (*Cannibal Woman* 39) [“Un sang furieux inondait son cœur, sa tête, ses membres et elle peignait, peignait des journées entières, tentant de traduire avec ses pinceaux le partage de ses sentiments” (*Femme cannibale* 53)]. Just as the sight of the traveler’s tree evokes a complex set of appropriations both metonymic and intertextual that jumpstarts Rosélie’s art, the narrative energy of the novel as a whole derives from the network of geographically significant appropriations at work on multiple levels. The sensational intrigue of the title drives the reader to ask, from the first page onward, “who is the cannibal woman?” The answer is that no one actually eats anyone (the accusation that Fiéla has killed and stored her husband in the freezer stands on shaky ground), and yet the title tips us off to the fact that the novel refers to and performs cannibalism throughout.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I review the history of the origin of the word “cannibal” and its association with Columbus’s journal entry of 23 November 1492. The previous chapter explores how Oswald de Andrade makes cannibalism into a literary practice. Given this history, we can say that by including the word *cannibale* in the title of her novel, Maryse Condé not only obliquely references Columbus’s journal, but also the tradition of literary cannibalism. The words *cannibale* and *histoire* (in the double sense of “story” and “history”) are clearly linked, both to each other and to a wide discursive network spanning continents and centuries. Cannibalism is central to the history of colonial discourse in that it returns again and again in the story Europeans told

about non-Europeans. What about the other word in Condé's title: *femme*? We know that "woman" is a category historically defined as "not-man" and marked as secondary, inferior. *Cannibale* is an invariant adjective and noun in French with what appears to be a feminine ending, and yet the figure of the man-eating Other has historically been male. To indicate a *femme cannibale* is to mark a special case, an unexpected combination of femininity and savagery. One aim of feminist criticism, generally speaking, has been to establish "woman" as a subject of history. The conjunction of *femme* and *cannibale* in Condé's title establishes woman as a subject of cannibalism, in the recuperated, culturally liberating sense of *Antropofagia*. In Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, Condé's novel enacts a "becoming-woman" of the cannibal.

The fact that the cannibal of the title, and of Rosélie's painting, is a *femme cannibale* also brings to mind a particular Caribbean woman writer: Suzanne Césaire. In a 1998 article entitled "Unheard Voice: Suzanne Césaire and the Construct of a Caribbean Identity," Condé writes: "Suzanne Césaire is the first intellectual who invented what we now call literary cannibalism (i.e., a rewriting and magical appropriation of the literature of the *other*)" (62). Condé refers specifically to a statement that closes an article by Suzanne Césaire in the January 1942 issue of the literary and cultural journal *Tropiques*: "Martinican poetry will be cannibalistic or it will not be" ["La poésie martiniquaise sera cannibale ou ne sera pas" (Césaire 50; qtd. in Condé, "Unheard Voice" 64)]. This one phrase erupts suddenly from a dismissive review of John Antoine-Nau's sentimental poetry, which Césaire declares to be "[t]ourisme littéraire" (50). Césaire suggests that Martinican poets cannot allow their island to continue to be captured or colonized by

flowery verse-forms inherited from Europe. If it is to be unique and original, it must bite back.

But Condé does more to theorize literary cannibalism in the parenthetical explanation of Césaire quoted above than Césaire does in the polemical statement that inspires Condé's comment. Condé's essay is more concerned with Suzanne Césaire's obscurity relative to the other Négritude writers: "Why up to very recently has Suzanne Césaire been so often ignored? Is it the fate of the women writers in the Caribbean?" (64). Her focus is at least as much on Césaire as woman writer as it is on Césaire as literary cannibal. In her own criticism and fiction, Condé has done more than perhaps any other writer, since or including Suzanne Césaire, to challenge the way Caribbean women are perceived. By touting Césaire's call for a *poésie martiniquaise cannibale*, Condé positions Césaire as an importantly female voice among the otherwise male founders of the pan-Caribbean-Latin American tradition of literary cannibalism.<sup>9</sup>

Condé makes the connection between Césaire and the *antropofagistas* more explicitly in an essay published two years later, in 2000. She suggests that we reconnect [*rattacher*] Suzanne Césaire "to the tradition of literary cannibalism that has cropped up in various locations throughout the Americas and testifies, despite obvious disparities, to the cultural unity of the region" ["à ce grand courant du cannibalisme littéraire qui fit surface en divers lieux des Amériques et témoigne en dépit d'évidentes disparités d'une

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<sup>9</sup> Kathryn Lachman notes that the "Manifesto antropófago" traps women into "the traditional virgin/whore paradigm" and argues that *Histoire de la femme cannibale* "provides an alternative literary model of how women writers can use cannibalism to renegotiate gender relations, challenge their own exclusion from the canon, and demonstrate their mastery of diverse traditions" (75).

certaine unité culturelle de la région” (“Des héros” 29)]. Though she gives credit to Oswald de Andrade for the idea of literary cannibalism, she finds that the provocation and the irreverence of the metaphor has become and continues to be useful for unifying otherwise diverse American cultures.

Challenging Glissant’s claim in *Discours antillais* that “[t]he Caliban theme has affected Antillean intellectuals such as Fanon, Lamming, Césaire, and Retamar to a surprising degree” [“Le thème de Caliban a touché de manière surprenante les intellectuels antillais : Fanon, Lamming, Césaire, Retamar” (395, qtd. in Condé, “Des héros” 32)], Condé notes that Shakespeare’s anagrammatic characterization of the Caribbean cannibal has been more consistently and successfully appropriated in English-, Spanish-, and Portuguese-speaking America than in the Francophone Caribbean. She cites Eugenio Matibag’s article “‘Cannibalisme tenace’: Anthropophagic Fictions in Caribbean Writing,” which discusses (despite the phrase from the *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* embedded in the title) anthropophagic texts primarily in Spanish and English. Condé wants Francophone Caribbean authors to embrace the irreverent spirit of *Antropofagia*.

Condé claims that the supposedly cannibalistic characters in Suzanne Césaire’s husband’s works lack the outrageous sense of parody that gives Oswald de Andrade’s rewriting of Shakespeare its power (in the line “Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question”). For Condé, the Caliban of Aimé Césaire’s *Une tempête* loses the subversive humor of Oswald’s “Manifesto antropófago,” as well as that of Shakespeare’s own character: “Shakespeare’s bawdy, drunken monster, smelling of fish and sexually obsessed,

becomes a reasonable, garrulous character (even slightly boring) who holds forth on the comparative merits of violence and non-violence” [“Le monstre à odeur de poisson, paillard, soûlard, obsédé sexuel de Shakespeare devient un personnage raisonneur, bavard, un tantinet ennuyeux qui pérore sur les mérites comparés de la violence et de la non-violence” (“Des héros” 36)]. Oswald’s cannibal manages, Condé suggests, “to desecrate and revolutionize the Western order” [“désacraliser et révolutionner absolument l’ordre occidental”]. Césaire’s Caliban, along with the poet of the *Cahier* and the rebel of *Et les chiens se taisaient*, lacks “the taste for obscenity, the vulgarity, the sense of outrage, and the power of derision” [“Le goût pour l’obscénité, la grossièreté, le sens de l’outrage et le pouvoir de dérision” (35)]. In her own novelistic cannibalizations, Condé returns the “taste for obscenity” and the “sense of outrage” to the postcolonial rewrite.

In her literary criticism, Condé seems to endorse (with a feminine twist) the *Antropofagia* tradition as a successful, pan-American form of parodic resistance to the “ordre occidental.” Her fiction presents a much more ambivalent view of the emancipatory potential of cannibalism. *La migration des coeurs* (1995), published before the articles referenced above, and *Histoire de la femme cannibale*, published subsequently, explore the limits of the cannibal paradigm. *La migration* is an overt appropriation of *Wuthering Heights* in the tradition of the Caribbean rewrite of European classics. Condé herself places *La migration* in that tradition: “The list of Caribbean writers who rewrote the canonical texts of the European tradition is long. I shall cite only Jean Rhys from Dominica, who rewrote *Jane Eyre*; Derek Walcott, who rewrote

*The Odyssey*; Vincent Placolty from Martinique, who rewrote *A Planter's Diary*; and I, who rewrote *Wuthering Heights...*" ("Unheard Voice" 62). Indeed, as Nicole Simek notes, by 1995 when *La migration* appears, the subversive technique of the postcolonial, subaltern rewrite "had become a consecrated literary maneuver" (81). Condé's belated contribution to that tradition remains relevant to the extent that it parodies and interrogates Caribbean literary cannibalization itself. Simek contends that *La migration* subverts the postcolonial expectation that a rewrite be antagonistic. The dedication of Condé's novel to the author of the text to be cannibalized—"To Emily Brontë/Who I hope will approve of this interpretation of her masterpiece./Honour and respect!" (*Windward Heights*) ["À Emily Brontë qui, je l'espère, agréera cette lecture de son chef-d'œuvre. Honneur et respect !" (*La migration*; qtd. in Simek 94)]—establishes a relation of affinity between the two authors that confounds the postcolonial antagonistic template.

*La migration* multiplies characters, settings, narrators, and back-stories, thus transforming as well as transposing Brontë's novel. What distinguishes Condé's postcolonial rewrite from those that precede it is the refusal "to fill in Brontë's gaps with a triumphant reversal of the colonizer-colonized power dynamic" (Simek 85). Rather than a reversal, the novel enacts an expansion of Brontë's story. Several critics have noted that *La migration* replaces the closed system of *Wuthering Heights* with a genealogical and geographical openness.<sup>10</sup> Near the end of *Wuthering Heights*, Cathy Linton-Heathcliff, having been widowed by one first cousin (Linton Heathcliff), turns to marry her other cousin (Hareton Earnshaw). The world of the two families is closed and

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to Simek and Fulton, discussed here, see also Lionnet and O'Regan.

incestuous, and there is no indication of a third generation. In *La migration*, Cathy de Linsseuil not only marries the son of Heathcliff's counterpart, Razyé (who most likely is also her half-brother), but together they have a daughter. Simek notes that the daughter's name, Anthuria, breaks the cycle of repetition (Cathy, Cathy II, Razyé, Razyé II, etc.) of the previous generations (91).

While the horizon of Brontë's novel is also limited to the space of the two households Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, *La migration* involves much of the Antillean archipelago. Fulton notes that the novel "enacts an opening out of space, of geography, of social spheres, creating a world whose boundaries are difficult to define, much less preserve" (*Signs* 68). More specifically, the structure of the novel builds on a series of geographic markers that crosses from the Francophone to the Hispanophone and Anglophone Antilles. Each of the five sections of the text is organized under the sign of a Caribbean island or town: Cuba, Guadeloupe, Marie-Galante, Roseau, Guadeloupe.<sup>11</sup> The cannibalization, or "magical appropriation," of *Wuthering Heights* takes place most significantly in terms of geography.

As we have seen with Léry in chapter one and with Oswald in chapter three, cannibalism (by identifying and incorporating an other) simultaneously highlights and collapses a separation between "here" and "there." The writer from "here" eats another's

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<sup>11</sup> Confusingly, the action of the story does not reliably occur in the location indicated by the section titles. Only the first two of the fifteen chapters that appear under the heading "Cuba" actually take place on that island. One possible explanation for such a division of the text is that the section titles refer to the origin of the various *babalawos* or necromancers that Razyé studies under. Razyé leaves Cuba the same night that Melchior, his Cuban intercessor, dies. The section entitled "Cuba" continues right up to the moment at which Razyé finds a new *babalawo* or *gadèdzafè* in Guadeloupe. Such an explanation motivates the idea that each section unfolds under the *sign* of a Caribbean location.

writing or culture, which comes from “over there.” Cannibalism is thus an appropriation that can be mapped. Especially in a transatlantic context, any mapping of cannibalism must constantly pose the question “who is eating whom?”<sup>12</sup> For Oswald, the answer is clear: Brazilian national culture, embodied in the Tupi cannibal warrior, consumes (appropriates) European culture and thereby subverts its power. In subscribing to Oswald’s cannibalism project, Condé simultaneously expands the home of the literary cannibal (the eater) from Brazil to America and transforms the whole world, not just the former colonizer, into the potential cannibalized (the eaten). In *La migration*, the geographic aspect of all cannibalization (the appropriation of “over there” into “here”) becomes visible through the process of adapting *Wuthering Heights* to the Caribbean setting.

The geographical connections that accompany the cannibal act performed by *La migration* become infinitely more complicated in *Histoire de la femme cannibale*. Though the latter novel takes cannibalism as its organizing theme, it does not rewrite any classic text. It seems, in fact, that Zita Nunes’s multi-level analysis of the classic *antropofagista* novel, *Macunaíma* (1928), also applies to *La femme cannibale*. Nunes notes that *Macunaíma* “enacts cannibalism” on four different levels:

- 1) a textual level by incorporating other texts through plagiarism;
- 2) a linguistic level by incorporating other languages into Portuguese;
- 3) a thematic level through the cannibalistic activities of its characters; and
- 4) on a formal level [by] incorporating various genres into the novel.... (41)

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<sup>12</sup> This is a central question for Zita Nunes’s analysis of *Antropofagia* and race in Brazil and the United States. For Nunes, cannibalism is a useful metaphor for modeling democracy, especially racial democracy (10). The process of eating necessarily results in a byproduct, a “remainder.” In the *antropofagista* model of racial democracy, she finds that the remainder—that which is discarded—is blackness.



On the first level, textual incorporation abounds in *La femme cannibale*. Other critics have noted the range of unattributed quotations in Condé's novel, from her own previous work (as with the *Christ-Roi*) and that of fellow Antilleans Glissant and the Césaires to American and Cuban songs to Anglo-Irish poetry.<sup>13</sup> Such snippets are left untranslated from the Spanish and English (incorporation on the second, linguistic level), although the novel also incorporates words from Afrikaans and of course Creole. On the third level, cannibalism as a theme pervades the novel, with all of the female characters (not to mention Rosélie's partner, Stephen) as candidates for the title *femme cannibale*. And on the fourth, formal level, Condé's novel, like Mário de Andrade's, also incorporates various genres. Indeed, *La femme cannibale* is part detective story (as Rosélie's quest is to find out why Stephen was killed on the street in Cape Town), part fictional memoir. Kathryn Lachman also argues that the novel has aspects of a *bildungsroman* and a screenplay (80). Of the four levels Nunes identifies, textual and thematic cannibalism constitute the two processes of Condé's novel with the most relevance to the present discussion. In fact, the two levels are linked. Intertextual appropriation mirrors the suggestion of cannibalism (as in literal anthropagy as well as sexual appropriation) on the part of characters in the novel. Furthermore, the geography of cannibalism (the locations that the eater and the eaten represent) is of crucial importance on both the

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<sup>13</sup> Derek O'Regan calls the novel "a dense intertextual fresco, not least by virtue of the multiplicity of references to canonical English literature" (301). In Kathryn Lachman's view, "Condé incorporates so much foreign material into her narrative that the text simply cannot assimilate it all: we find quotes from novels, film, popular songs and opera; allusions to her previous novels, to her autobiographical trajectory and to academia; recipes and fragments from newspapers; as well as a wide array of contemporary and historical references to Africa, the Antilles, and the United States" (72).

textual and thematic levels.

The geographic diversity of the intertextual references undermines the two-dimensional *antropofagista* model of New World cannibal and cannibalized former colonial. It is Stephen, a white Englishman, who introduces travel to Rosélie, for whom the idea had previously meant voyages along the colonial pathways from Pointe-à-Pitre to either Basse-Terre or Paris (178–79). In a scene set in Venice, Rosélie and Stephen encounter an Italian man who, in his Italian-centered postcolonial imagination, assumes that “la signorina” comes from Ethiopia. “Ignoring her negative answer,” the narration continues, “he began talking about Ethiopia. Or rather about himself in Ethiopia, since people only talk about themselves” (157) [“Malgré la réponse négative, il se mit à parler de l’Éthiopie. Ou plutôt de lui-même en Éthiopie, puisque les gens ne parlent jamais que d’eux-mêmes” (182)]. Their conversation is cut short by Andreas Scholl, a real-life German countertenor, who begins to sing Vivaldi’s *Stabat Mater* (182). Condé short-circuits the trap of postcolonial antagonism set up in the scene by introducing a specific, geographically complicated European reference. The “passion entre Rosélie et le maître de Venise” that begins at that moment satisfies neither the Italian expectation of a postcolonial connection between Ethiopia and Italy nor Francophone fiction readers’ expectations of a postcolonial relation between the French Antilles and the metropole.

During another flashback, we learn that Stephen rented a studio for Rosélie and signed her up for art school during their time in N’Dossou. Her teachers there critique her work for lacking “that opacity generated by cultural authenticity” (33) [“l’opacité que génère l’authenticité culturelle” (46)]. As a non-European, they suggest, she cannot

be a true artist unless she represents her own authentic culture in a way that is “opaque” to outsiders.<sup>14</sup> She frets that she is “seulement une vulgaire bonne élève,” learning to imitate the artists she studies. She asks herself: “Am I nothing more than one of those *tlacuilos*, Indians from Ixmiquilpan who filled the Spanish with so much admiration?” (33) [“Ne suis-je rien qu’un de ces *tlacuilos* indiens d’Ixmiquilpan qui émerveillèrent tant les Espagnols ?” (47)]. An explanation of the obscure reference to *tlacuilos* comes from Serge Gruzinski’s *La pensée métisse*, which investigates frescoes dating from the mid-sixteenth century on the walls of a church in Ixmiquilpan, Mexico. The images mix precolumbian cultural elements with depictions of characters from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. *Tlacuilo* was a term for the sons of the Mexican aristocracy who, beginning in the 1530s, trained as Latinists and artists (Gruzinski 133).

Rosélie’s reference to *tlacuilos*, like the image of the traveler’s tree, invokes appropriation on several levels. On the thematic level, *tlacuilo* presents a contrasting model of New World cultural appropriator to that of Oswald’s Tupi warrior. Both constitute historical figures from the sixteenth-century beginnings of Iberian colonialism, although while the Tupi represents violent antagonism and absolute cultural difference, the *tlacuilo* suggests a subtle subversion of European imagery through apparent assimilation.<sup>15</sup> The presence of a word from early colonial Mexico further complicates the idea of a linear genealogy of cultural cannibalism. Alongside the word “cannibal,”

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<sup>14</sup> Opacity here reads as an unacknowledged reference to Glissant’s use of the word in *Le discours antillais*.

<sup>15</sup> Gruzinski reconstructs the historical context in which the *tlacuilos*, a newly Christianized group, would have felt threatened by the nomadic, non-Europeanized groups in the area. The frescoes may then use classical imagery as allegory for the political situation of Mexico at the time (122–23).

stemming etymologically from the Caribbean, and the idea of *Antropofagia*, originating in Brazil, here we have a third American origin for the tradition of subversive appropriation. On the intertextual level, the reference to *tlacuilos* may as well be read as an appropriation of Gruzinski himself. *La pensée métisse* appeared in 1999, just a few years before *La femme cannibale*, and Condé references the book in an interview in 2009 (Condé, Benali, et al. 13).

In addition to the anti-triangular geographic network established through intertextuality, the novel also brings far-flung places into contact through the appropriation of characters. Rosélie feels appropriated, both sexually and geographically, by her partners. Stephen, who is half-English, half-French, is preceded by Salama Salama, an African reggae artist, and succeeded by Faustin, a Rwandan diplomat educated in Eastern Europe. Aside from Rosélie, Stephen also sexually appropriates his male students, including Bishupal, who is Nepalese.<sup>16</sup> Rosélie and Stephen's friends in Cape Town almost exclusively consist of couples that are geographically as well as racially mixed: the pairings represented at a dinner party include Métropolitain-Martiniquaise, Swedish-South African, Australian-Nigerian, and American-Congolese (ch. 3). All of the couples around the table instantiate a historical

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<sup>16</sup> In a flashback, Stephen himself alludes to his homosexuality in terms of cannibalism when speaking to Rosélie: “I lived thanks to other men. Like a Tupinamba Indian I devoured their liver, their spleen, and their heart. But these bitter feasts left me even more despondent.... You gave me everything” (153–54) [“Je vivais au travers d’autres hommes. Comme un Indien Tupinamba, je dévorais leur foie, leur rate, leur cœur. Mais ces âpres festins me laissaient plus morose encore.... Tu m’as tout donné” (178)]. Fulton cites Caleb Crain, whose analysis of Melville shows how one “unspeakable” discourse—cannibalism—can stand in for another: homosexuality. Fulton argues that the same affiliation between the two discourses is at work in the two mysterious figures in Rosélie’s life: Stephen and Fiéla (*Signs* 136).

pattern of racialized, transnational, sexual appropriation.

At that dinner party, after we have heard the story of each pair, Stephen recites the history of the mixed-race couple as if to justify the actions of those present by situating them in a legitimate tradition.

The mixed couple is a very old and honorable institution....It dates back to 1510, when a group of Portuguese from Lisbon, including criminals fleeing the kingdom, settled at the mouth of the river Senegal and, adopting the African custom, took up with black women.... (59)

Ne vous en déplaie, le couple mixte est une institution fort ancienne et fort honorable....Il date de 1510 quand un groupe de Portugais de Lisbonne, parmi lesquels des criminels fuyant la Couronne, s'installèrent à l'embouchure du fleuve Sénégal et, adoptant les moeurs africaines, prirent des épouses noires.... (76)

What takes the form of a justification is in fact a condemnation. In Stephen's telling, the mixed-race couple originates (as does the word "cannibal") at the dawn of Iberian Atlantic colonialism. The couples around the table may be subverting racial barriers, but from a certain point of view they are also guilty of recapitulating a pattern of exploitation (white, Western male with non-white, non-Western female) that has been repeated over five centuries to the point of being legitimized. The "institution" of the *couple mixte* may be "ancienne," but in Stephen's history, it was founded by criminals.

Coming from Stephen, of course, such an ironic historical justification can only be seen as hypocritical. His character remains contradictory throughout. When Rosélie is beginning to uncover the truth about Stephen, she is met with hostility by her friends. They do not know what happened to Stephen, but they claim to know who he was: the over-confident academic who believed himself to be above political correctness and who hypocritically exposed other people's hypocrisy. Stephen stands in for the kind of

seemingly iconoclastic, academic, postcolonial reading that the novel simultaneously invites and condemns. Stephen musters his academic knowledge in the service of a mocking, ironic justification of his own actions and those of his dinner companions. What his commentary suggests is not that any of the mixed-race couples in the room (nor, by extension, Condé's marriage to the white, English Richard Philcox) are morally wrong. His association of the mixed-race couple with sixteenth-century *lançados em terra* simply points out how actions in the present follow patterns established over hundreds of years of Atlantic colonialism. That Stephen phrases his description of the Portuguese-Senegalese *couple mixte* in terms of geography (“un groupe de Portugais... s'installèrent à l'embouchure du fleuve Sénégal”) instead of race is consistent with the emphasis on geographic patterns throughout the novel.

In fact, geographic appropriation pervades almost every page of *La femme cannibale* through the nearly constant mention of place names. The narration appropriates seemingly from everywhere. Each character and every product and idea mentioned is geographically marked. Linda, Rosélie's *femme de ménage* and *guérisseuse* in New York, is Peruvian (94). Rosélie's one friend during her time in the fictional African city of N'Dossou, Dominique, comes from Guyane (88). The restaurant in N'Dossou where Rosélie meets Stephen (while working as a prostitute) is named the Saigon and is run by a Vietnamese man named Tran Anh, married to Ana, a Peule woman from Niger (24). When Stephen arrives at the Saigon, we see him sitting “at the bar with a Pilsner Urquell, that's a Czech beer” (13) [“assis au comptoir devant une Pilsner Urquell, c'est une bière tchèque” (25)]. When Rosélie sits down to eat in her house in Cape Town, she sees that

“[o]n her plate the green of the spinach, the saffron brown of the lamb, and the white perfumed rice from Thailand formed a still life” (48) [“Dans son assiette, le vert des épinards, le brun safrané de l’agneau, la blancheur du riz parfumé de Thaïlande composaient une nature morte” (63)]. Mostly unnecessary to the narrative as descriptive details, the constant references to other places make of the text a geographical mosaic.

An analysis of the text reveals that all continents except Antarctica are mentioned at some point. The United States (primarily New York) and Europe (primarily France) are mentioned roughly the same number of times, with Africa mentioned significantly more and Asia, South America, and Australia significantly less often.<sup>17</sup> The global scope of the narration mirrors Rosélie’s peripatetic life story. Though born in Guadeloupe, she spends most of her adult life abroad. Having moved to Paris for her education, she meets Salama Salama, who brings her to N’Dossou. She eventually leaves him, and it is there in N’Dossou that she meets Stephen. Together Stephen and Rosélie move to New York, travel to Japan, and end up in Cape Town.

Rosélie describes her life as a mosaic using a geographically specific comparison: “She compared her life to one of those quilts she had bought during a visit to Amish country in Pennsylvania: a mosaic of different textures” (75) [“Elle comparait sa vie à une des couvertures qu’elle avait achetées aux Amish, lors d’une visite en Pennsylvanie: mosaïque de tissus de textures différentes” (94)]. In citing this passage, Lachman notes that the quilt as mosaic represents what she calls the “indigestion” of Condé’s novel.

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<sup>17</sup> This tabulation results from a project to map the network of geographical references in the novel. The dynamic map of the geographical references in the novel is available at: <http://batchgeo.com/map/b9a06c40e22a714eea7f018c9a63b9d2>.

The cannibalistic mosaic distinguishes itself from texts that assimilate foreign elements through a process of weaving like that involved in tapestry (Lachman 81–82). The references to texts and locations are sewn together rather than woven into Rosélie’s story, and each element retains the mark of its origin in the resulting quilt. The images of the mosaic and the quilt, like the network of appropriations, illustrate processes of connection without assimilation.

It is not entirely accurate to say that the novel “takes place” in Cape Town, even though the scenes in that city are those that inhabit the “present” of the narration. The bulk of the text consists of flashbacks to episodes in Rosélie’s life with Stephen in N’Dossou and New York, as well as to trips they took separately and together to Paris, Pointe-à-Pitre, to other parts of the U.S. and elsewhere. The story really takes place *between* the present and Rosélie’s past, which is to say between Cape Town and all of the other locations mentioned. In this way, Rosélie’s reminiscences rehearse the process of “being-between” becoming “being-double” that Bellei claims is at the heart of Oswald’s *Antropofagia*. Cândido’s description of Oswald’s “viagem permanente e redentora” applies equally to Rosélie’s dreams of escape through travel.

Condé employs the combined metaphor of the mosaic-quilt to illustrate the combinatory effect of Rosélie’s memories from around the world. An advantage of the network model over the mosaic and the quilt is that the network suggests a more precise diagram. Specifically, the network of geographically marked appropriations in the novel traces a diagram that significantly deviates from the established pattern of the Atlantic



triangle.<sup>18</sup>

Condé comments in an interview from 2003, the same year that *Histoire de la femme cannibale* is published, that the novel “rejects...the trio formed by the author, narrator, and main character...I wanted to create a work in which you don’t really know where all these voices you hear are coming from.” She adds, “I also wanted to combine settings. The action takes place in South Africa, in Cape Town, but also in New York City, in Guadeloupe, in Japan” (Condé, Alexander, et al. 25-26). The rejection of the trio author-narrator-main character is first of all enacted by the geographic decentering of the story. It is no great surprise that the trajectory of the main character mirrors Condé’s own personal history. Both Rosélie and Maryse Condé are originally from Guadeloupe and educated in France. Both move to French-speaking Africa and then to New York. And both know firsthand the particular challenges of living as a mixed-race couple. But perhaps most significantly for this particular reading, neither character nor author is from South Africa. It is only the character Rosélie who develops a strong connection to that country, against all expectations, by the end of the novel.

Cape Town lies at the extremity of the Atlantic world that saturates Condé’s fiction. From seventeenth-century New England in *Moi, Tituba...* to the Bambara Empire in *Ségou* to the French Antilles of *Traversée de la mangrove* and *La Belle Créole*, Condé’s work continually traces links around the circumference of the Atlantic. And yet even from this perspective, the choice of Cape Town stands out. South Africa is, in Condé’s words, “another Africa” (Condé, Alexander, et al. 28). The setting of the story is

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<sup>18</sup> This diagram results from the analysis described in the previous note.

disconcerting because off-center.

Rosélie thinks of herself as a nomad without a homeland. Guadeloupe, the island where she was born, holds no more appeal to her than Paris, the city where she was educated. In her desire to travel, fostered in her relationship with Stephen, Rosélie distinguishes herself from her mother, Rose. We learn that Rose chose early in life not to travel, and during the last years of her life she remained confined to her bed. She grew physically larger and larger, until she could not move at all. She became as stationary as Rosélie is nomadic. Whereas Rose's beautiful singing voice was slowly choked off as she became more obese, Rosélie ultimately finds her artistic voice in faraway Cape Town. Both mother and daughter attempt to balance the force of tradition with a desire for originality. Rose stayed put and suffocated; Rosélie severs her roots and drifts without purpose. The description of Rose's perversely large coffin ("quatre mètres sur quatre") suggests that the figure of the mother—metonymically the mother-island of Guadeloupe—has grown in Rosélie's memory out of proportion with her/its importance to Rosélie's selfhood, present and future (17).<sup>19</sup> Rosélie arguably only saves herself when she stops trying to run away and recognizes the artistic potential in her rootless experiences.

As much as Rosélie disavows her connection to Guadeloupe, she cannot but represent her natal island to those around her in Cape Town. When she is asked

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<sup>19</sup> Compare the mother imagery here with that of the iconic Guadeloupean novel, Daniel Maximin's *L'isolé Soleil*, in which the association of Marie-Gabriel's mother with her mother-island is strong. A good portion of that novel is a letter from a daughter to her dead mother. In Condé's novel, however, the narrator's apostrophic refrain is not to her own dead mother but to Fiéla.

“[a]ren’t you going to return home?” she responds: “Home? If only I knew where home was” (30) [“Est-ce que vous n’allez pas retourner chez vous? Chez moi? Si seulement je savais où c’est” (43)]. She baffles them by deciding to stay in Cape Town. Rather than return “home” to Guadeloupe, she chooses to make the most of her new life while continuing to be foreign and speak her foreign language. She comes to this decision after realizing that, despite the horrible realization of Stephen’s betrayal, Cape Town is the place she is most connected to: “She realized that, unbeknownst to her, ties were binding her to this city, ties she had never formed with any other place. Even that of her birthplace” (291) [“Elle s’apercevait qu’à son insu des liens l’amarrèrent à cette ville, des liens qu’elle n’avait jamais noués avec aucun autre endroit. Même celui de sa naissance” (330)]. Cape Town has become the most important hub in her geographic network, not through any intrinsic connection between person and place, but because of an accumulation of links over time. Her process of self-realization consists of appropriating the place where she finds herself.

Rosélie’s appropriation of South Africa begins with her adoption of Fiéla, the woman accused of killing and eating her husband. Rosélie learns of Fiéla through Dido, who reads her the story from the *Tribune du Cap*.<sup>20</sup> The story of Fiéla’s supposed crime appears in the paper one morning like any other *fait divers*:

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<sup>20</sup> Dido’s own cannibal propensities as a consumer of news media become clear with her first appearance as a character; she not only reads the paper while sipping her coffee, “[i]n a rustle of paper she opened the *Cape Tribune* and went through it page by page, licking her lips, exclaiming greedily whenever a crime was much too juicy, while sipping her brew of ‘bull’s blood’...” (6) [“elle déplia et parcourut minutieusement, page par page la *Tribune du Cap*, se purléchant les lèvres, se récriant de façon gourmande quand le récit d’un crime était par trop succulent sans cesser de siroter le breuvage qu’elle coulait « sang de taureau »...” (17)].

A woman was accused of murdering her husband, who had been missing for several weeks. According to her son-in-law [sic],<sup>21</sup> who had become suspicious of the meat packed in plastic bags on the refrigerator shelves, she had cut him up into little pieces and frozen them. Why would be anybody's guess. (77)

Une femme était accusée d'avoir tué son mari, disparu depuis plusieurs semaines. Au dire de son beau-fils, soupçonnant la nature de la viande rangée dans des sacs en plastique sur les rayons du Frigidaire, elle l'aurait découpé en petits morceaux et congelé. Dans quel but ? Toutes suppositions étaient permises. (95)

Of course, not all "suppositions" should be permitted ["permises"], but the public and eventually the jury latch onto the most "succulent" supposition available. The meat found in the freezer must be her husband, and Fiéla herself must be guilty not only of killing and preserving her husband, but also of consuming him. Rosello finds in Fiéla's story a series of "slippages from fact to allegations to conclusions" that recapitulates the violent history of the cannibal moniker itself:

If Fiéla is a cannibal...it is not because she has eaten human flesh...but because she has been "cannibalized" in the sense of turned into a cannibal by a narrative. Condé thus fictionalizes the historical violence done to the Caribs whose name was appropriated and transformed into a synonym for anthropophagy. (Rosello 48–49)

Rosélie, just as much as the rest of Cape Town, is guilty of jumping from assumptions to conclusions about Fiéla. Rather than condemn Fiéla's supposed act, however, Rosélie aches to know what drove the woman she sees as her alter ego to do such a thing. The narration, in Rosélie's first-person voice, periodically addresses Fiéla and asks her to divulge her secrets: "Don't keep anything from me. You know full well when you say 'I' you mean 'us'" (86) ["Ne me cache rien. Tu le sais bien, quand tu dis

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<sup>21</sup> *Beau-fils* should be translated "stepson," not "son-in-law" in this instance.

« je », c'est « nous » que tu signifies" (105)].<sup>22</sup> Rosélie assumes an affinity between the two women, even though she knows very little about the other. Rosélie is fascinated by Fiéla's eyes in the newspaper photo of her, and it is ultimately those eyes that provide the inspiration for the painting that represents Rosélie's artistic and personal liberation at the end of the novel: "The entire face would be built around these eyes" (316) ["La figure en entier serait construite à partir des yeux" (351-52)]. She appropriates Fiéla's eyes into the painting she will call *Femme cannibale* not only as a reference to the mysterious accused woman, but also as a marker of the connection she feels between them, asking: "Fiela, is that you? Is this me? Our two faces have merged" (316) ["Fiéla, est-ce toi ? Est-ce moi ? Nos deux figures se confondent" (352)]. Fulton summarizes this linking process of affinity via appropriation as follows: "Rosélie, a true reflection of the cannibal woman, has consumed Fiéla's story as her own" ("Question" 103).

Though Fiéla remains obstinately silent through her trial, imprisonment, and eventual suicide, we do learn more about her life as the story progresses. The police inspector in charge of investigating Stephen's murder confides details of Fiéla's life to Rosélie, since he knows that Rosélie works as a kind of spiritual healer on the side:

[T]wo years after their wedding, Adriaan had a child with a neighbor's daughter. But apparently it didn't affect their relationship. She took the boy in and raised him. The whole business remains a mystery. (86)

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<sup>22</sup> The apostrophe continues into the following chapter: "Fiela, you've settled into my thoughts and dreams. No bother at all. As discreet as an alter ego. You hide behind everything I do, invisible, like the silk lining of a doublet" (87) ["Fiéla, tu t'es installée dans mes pensées, mes rêves....Discrète comme une autre moi-même. Tu te caches derrière mes actions, invisible, pareille à la doublure de soie d'un vêtement" (106)]. See Rosello 47 for an interesting reading of the significant double meaning of "doublure de soie" in this passage.

Deux ans après leur mariage, Adriaan a fait un enfant à la fille d'une voisine. Mais, apparemment, cela n'a pas modifié leurs relations. Elle a recueilli le garçon, l'a élevé. Toute l'affaire demeure un mystère. (106)

The *beau-fils* who accuses his stepmother on the basis of suspect meat in the freezer is the child who resulted from her husband's adultery and whom Fiéla adopted as her own years before. This narrative detail establishes an intertextual significance for the name Fiéla. *Fiela's Child* is the English title of a novel first published in Afrikaans in 1985 by Dalene Matthee. The story revolves around a "brown" woman named Fiela Komoetie who adopts a white child that she finds near her home in late-nineteenth-century inland Cape Colony. Benjamin Komoetie is eventually taken away from his adoptive mother and brought to the woodcutters' settlement where he was born Lukas Van Rooyen. Ultimately, Benjamin reclaims the name Komoetie and settles in the town on the coast, after he finds that he can no longer fit in in either family.

While the resonance between *La femme cannibale* and *Fiela's Child* has gone thus far unnoticed, critics have noted parallels between Condé's novels and the work of another South African author: J.M. Coetzee. The real-life Bishopal Limbu (not to be confused with the character of that name in Condé's novel) reminds us that Coetzee rewrote *Robinson Crusoe* in his 1986 *Foe* before Condé tried her hand at *Wuthering Heights* (Limbu 150).<sup>23</sup> Lachman identifies a "striking resemblance" between Stephen's story in *Histoire de la femme cannibale* and that of Coetzee's *Disgrace*, in which "a university professor... falls from academic grace when his sexual preferences [are] exposed" (Lachman 80). The parallel works more smoothly even than Lachman allows,

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<sup>23</sup> For discussion of Coetzee's intertextual move as a comment on postcolonialism, see Bongie 26.

not least because of the South African setting of the two novels. Stephen and David Lurie both work for a university in Cape Town and enter into sexual relationships with their students there. Furthermore, Karen Lindo draws an analogy between Fiéla's silence and the refusal of Lurie's daughter Lucy to accuse the black men who raped her. For Lindo, Fiéla embodies a South African national shame that may or may not be possible for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to reconcile: "Fiéla's body, much like Lucy's, is a repository of historical shame that no institution can adequately address, nor redress" (66). The fact that the *femme cannibale* of the title ultimately resists the "nets of meaning" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*) cast over it and remains an empty reference reminds the reader that no institution, including postcolonial criticism, can provide an easy answer to the violence of history.

What makes the connection of Condé's novel with *Fiela's Child* and with Coetzee's novels visible is the Cape Town setting. By having Rosélie look back on her life from Cape Town, Condé not only decenters the expected geography of a Francophone novel, but also makes other intertextual resonances possible. Perhaps more significantly, the association of Fiéla with Fiela Komoetie and of Stephen with David Lurie shifts the immediate historical focus away from Atlantic colonialism and towards apartheid. *Disgrace* paints an ominous picture of race relations in post-apartheid South Africa, while *Fiela's Child* fabricates a scene of pre-apartheid Cape Colony where hardworking "Coloured" people were free to raise ostriches where they pleased, even if they were not allowed to adopt someone else's white baby. Brian Macaskill views the "historical manipulation" of *Fiela's Child* dubiously: "Matthee generates sweeping

panoramas...that, for example, trace the tribulations of poor Afrikaans woodcutters in a time before apartheid—when archetypes, elephants, and ostriches regulated human behavior” (442n2). Condé does not shy away from historical manipulation in her historical novels (for example *Moi, Tituba...* and *La migration*); what distinguishes *La femme cannibale* is the effort to manipulate multiple histories—apartheid and Atlantic colonialism—at once and to draw links of affinity between them.

So as with all the other instances of cannibalism at work in this novel, the appropriation of South Africa takes places on more than one level. While the novel appropriates works of South African fiction, Rosélie appropriates Fiéla, and through Fiéla, Cape Town itself. Though the palpable racial tension in the city continually unsettles her, and though she has no reason to stay now that Stephen is dead, Rosélie decides at the end of the novel to make the city her own. Her decision is phrased in terms of incorporation, a cannibalistic taking-possession:

She had earned this city. She had made it hers by reversing the journey of her ancestors, dispossessed of Africa, who had seen the isles loom up like a mirage to the fore of Columbus’s caravels, the isles where the cane and tobacco of their rebirth would germinate. (309)

Cette ville, elle l’avait gagnée. Elle l’avait faite sienne en un mouvement inverse de ses ancêtres dépossédés d’Afrique, qui avaient vu surgir, tel un mirage à l’avant des caravelles de Colomb, les îlots où ils feraient germer la canne et le tabac de leur re-naissance. (350)

Cannibalism as appropriation and incorporation pervades the novel, as we have seen, on the textual and thematic levels. In this case, what Rosélie takes into herself is the place she has been living in. It is not just that she plans to continue living in the same place; she sees herself *taking over*, in a reverse direction to that of the slave ships that headed



west to the Caribbean. While Hulme claims that every use of the word “cannibal” is an implicit reference to Columbus’s journal, the reference to Columbus is explicit in Rosélie’s cannibalization of her adopted homeland. When she says that she has “made the city hers,” it is not just any taking possession, but one that mirrors the movement of Columbus’s ships. Rather than see herself as a pawn in someone else’s itinerary, Rosélie chooses to appropriate Cape Town. It is in this metaphorical, geographic sense that Rosélie becomes the *femme cannibale* of the title. And the link she makes, between her Guadeloupean origin and the Africa in which she finds herself, does not correspond to the expected pattern. As postcolonial readers we might expect, along with Rosélie’s peers in Cape Town, for her to go “home” to Guadeloupe, or else go to Paris. Instead, she recasts her accidental arrival in Cape Town as a taking-possession, not a return to the Africa of her ancestors so much as a reversal of the middle passage itself. In this bizarre refashioning of Caribbean history, sugar cane and tobacco are transformed from products of dehumanizing enslavement into symbols of rebirth. Rosélie, like a reverse Columbus, initiates a new link with Africa.

Rosélie’s taking possession of Cape Town [“Elle l’avait faite sienne”] provides a kind of ahistorical closure to the issue raised by the image of the traveler’s tree early in the novel. Not only has the triangle reversed itself, but Rosélie as anti-Columbus now arrives to claim her new world. We began by questioning to what extent we can call this a postcolonial novel when the main character, from a Fanonian point of view, does everything wrong. Taking the bookend moments of anti-triangular appropriation together (the traveler’s tree at the beginning and this “mirage” at the end), Rosélie

appears in a certain way much more postcolonial than a Fanonian reading could allow, in that her story transcends the patterns established in the colonial era and perpetuated insidiously in the chronologically post-colonial era. Her struggle is, primarily, a personal and selfish one: she hopes to find her artistic voice and ultimately to find happiness in love, through art, and in life in general. Her artistic self-actualization, when it occurs, has a liberatory effect with consequences beyond Rosélie's personal story; at the moment of her artistic liberation, she takes on the weight of the colonial past and enacts a kind of anti-Columbian reversal. While Condé's novel quietly mocks the enterprise of postcolonial criticism, I maintain that the novel can be seen as sympathetic to a specifically anti-triangular kind of postcolonial action. The novel's proliferating network of geographic connections makes it possible to envision an Atlantic world no longer subject to the accumulated, dehumanizing, essentializing patterns left over from colonialism: namely, the Atlantic triangle.

## EPILOGUE: THE INTERNET AS A CANNIBAL NETWORK

In the 1990s, when the Internet was just beginning to become the global, ubiquitous phenomenon we now know it as, optimistic theorists and techno-prophets saw in the worldwide web the possibility for a new, non-hierarchical world of interaction. The dream of utopia, first inspired in the mind of Thomas More by reports of a New World across the ocean, returned in publications such as *Wired* magazine, inspired by reports of a new digital “no-place.” Fred Turner recalls how, “in the pages of *Wired*, the Internet, and digital communication generally, stood as a prototype of a newly decentralized, nonhierarchical society linked by invisible bits in a single harmonious network” (208).

That utopian hope of freedom from hierarchical power structures through technological innovation recalls Oswald de Andrade’s later writings. After rejecting *Antropofagia* in the 1930s to become a Communist, he returns in the 1940s and ‘50s to the notion of liberation through devouring. In essays such as “A crise da Filosofia messiânica” (1950), Oswald rehabilitates *Antropofagia* as a productive way of conceptualizing what he calls a “matriarchal” society free of hierarchical power structures. In that essay, Oswald suggests that a new anthropophagous culture, made possible through technology, will bring about the third term in the dialectic between two kinds of society. With “natural man” [*o homem natural*] being the first (positive) term

and the worker slave of patriarchal civilization [*o homem civilizado*] the (negative) second, the synthesis will be a “technologized” cannibal, “*o homem natural tecnizado*” (79). After tracing the entire history of Western civilization from the consolidation of the Christian message under Paul to the consolidation of party dogma under Stalin in fifty pages, Oswald summarizes his conception of history in thirteen points:

1. That the world is divided in its long history into: Matriarchy and Patriarchy.
2. That corresponding to these antagonistic hemispheres are: a cannibalistic culture and a messianic culture.
3. That the latter is being dialectically replaced by the former, as the synthesis or third term, through technical achievements.
4. That a new Matriarchy is announcing itself with its forms of expression and social reality, such as: the son of mother-right, common ownership of the land and the classless state, or statelessness.
5. That the current phase of human progress foreshadows what Aristotle sought to express by saying that, when the spindles work by themselves, the slave will disappear.
6. That, under the appearance of secularism, philosophy committed to God never ceased to be messianic.
7. That the USSR expresses a bit of the great revolution of kinship that is realized with the advent of the new Matriarchy. Its revolution focuses on one area: the property sector.
8. That, alongside this, the USSR, led by the mystique of action, lost its dialectical momentum, seized by a labor dogmatism reminiscent of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.
9. That this expresses the last refuge of messianic philosophy, brought from heaven to earth.
10. That, given the historical and collectivist conception of Marx, Existentialism expresses the acme of subjectivity, one in which the individual is historicized as conscience and drama. In Patriarchy.
11. That only the technologized restoration of a cannibalistic culture can solve the current problems of man and Philosophy.
12. That *The Managerial Revolution*, by James Burnham, remembering the gerontocracy of the tribe, offers the best scheme for a controlled society that would gradually abolish the state, private property and the indissoluble family: that is, the essential forms of Patriarchy.
13. That man, as virus, as gene, as the minimum unit of life, realizes himself in an antagonistic doubleness—beneficial, evil—which brings his character into conflict with the world.

1. Que o mundo se divide na sua longa História em: Matriarcado e Patriarcado.
2. Que correspondendo a esses hemisférios antagônicos existem: uma cultura antropofágica e uma cultura messiânica.
3. Que esta, dialeticamente, está sendo substituída pela primeira, como síntese ou 3º termo, acrescentada das conquistas técnicas.
4. Que um novo Matriarcado se anuncia com suas formas de expressão e realidade social que são: o filho de direito materno, a propriedade comum do solo e o Estado sem classes, ou a ausência de Estado.
5. Que a fase atual do progresso humano prenuncia o que Aristóteles procurava exprimir dizendo que, quando os fusos trabalhassem sozinhos, desapareceria o escravo.
6. Que, sob o aspecto dissimulado ou não da secularidade, a filosofia comprometida com Deus nunca deixou de ser messiânica.
7. Que a URSS exprime um pequeno anseio da grande revolução do parentesco que se realiza com o advento do novo Matriarcado. A sua revolução se concentra numa ênfase – a do setor da propriedade.
8. Que, ao lado disso, a URSS, levada pela mística da ação, perdeu o impulso dialético de seu movimento, enquistando-se numa dogmática obreirista que lembra, em síntese, a Reforma e a Contra-Reforma.
9. Que isso exprime o último refúgio da Filosofia messiânica, trazida do Céu para a terra.
10. Que, face à concepção histórico-coletivista de Marx, o Existencialismo exprime um momento alto da Subjetividade, aquele em que o indivíduo se historializa como consciência e como drama. No Patriarcado.
11. Que só a restauração tecnizada duma cultura antropofágica, resolveria os problemas atuais do homem e da Filosofia.
12. Que *A Revolução dos Gerentes*, de James Burnham, lembrando a gerontocracia da tribo, oferece o melhor esquema para uma sociedade controlada que suprima pouco a pouco o Estado, a propriedade privada e a família indissolúvel, ou sejam, as formas essenciais do Patriarcado.
13. Que o homem, como o vírus, o gen, a parcela mínima da vida, se realiza numa duplicidade antagônica, – benéfica, maléfica – que traz em si o seu caráter conflitual com o mundo. (128-29, my translation)

The key point here, for our purposes, is number 11: “That only the technologized [tecnizada] restoration of a cannibalistic culture can solve the current problems of man and Philosophy.” The suggestion is not that we, as a society, return to a system whereby the strong and victorious eat the weak and defeated in battle (or is it?). Rather, Oswald wants us, as a global culture, to relinquish the hierarchies that have built up over time

and invested all of our systems—political, social, religious, and philosophical—and to return to a system closer to a “peer-to-peer” network, where everything is held in common. This networked society would operate through universal cannibalism—appropriation—of everything and everyone by everyone else.

Oswald leaves us with the question of how exactly a technological anthropophagy will solve the problems of man and philosophy. Point 13 offers the unsettling suggestion, building on an unlikely reference to James Burnham, that the ideal system will initiate continual tribal warfare. Oswald does not know exactly what kind of technology will allow for or bring about a technological anthropophagy. He also does not specify what the tribes will be, nor how tribal affiliations, in supplanting class affiliations, will return property to communal ownership and dissolve the state. He does suggest that Communism as it has actually been tried (the USSR being the prime example) gets us no closer to resolving the “problems of man and Philosophy” than capitalistic society; he rejects the political system he devoted twenty years of his life to. Writing in 1950, he cannot predict the eventual outcome of the Cold War, nor the advent of “globalization” of the economy and of information.

Champions of new media might suggest that the Internet, with its global scope, might be just the technology needed to challenge the state, private property, and class divisions in the way Oswald dreams of. The Internet, as a network made up of reposts, shares, retweets, and mashups, could be seen to make us all *antropófogos tecnizados*. Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei argues something similar in his attempt to bring *Antropofagia* into the twenty-first century. He shows how cannibalism can operate as the mechanism

of a network, using the Internet as the paradigmatic example of our era. Bellei's modern-day *antropofagista* is the Internet user (54).

The Internet is not just a new way of dispensing media content; it involves the user in a way that television, for example, does not. Bellei cites an essay by Roberto Schwarz from 1987 in which Schwarz downplays the liberatory potential of international culture at a time when Oswald's perpetual traveler and devourer of cultures has been replaced by a third-world consumer of first-world media (Bellei 54). Bellei acknowledges the exploitative aspect of global media but remarks that Schwarz's vision does not apply in the age of the Internet. Television requires a passive spectator ["mais devorado do que devorador"], while the Internet calls for an "interactive subject ["sujeito interativo"] who creates as well as receives content and who navigates his or her own path through an infinity of information (Bellei 55). The Internet does not emanate from a central source. What is more, in the case of a dispersed, decentralized, ever-growing network like the Internet, the link replaces the unit of text as the focus of the user or reader (56).<sup>1</sup>

A hyperlink, in this sense, is more than a connection between web pages; it becomes the tool by which the reader-writer devours other pages by appropriation. The link is ambivalent in the way that Kristeva claims that the minimal unit of poetic language is ambivalent: it is never one, always two. The link exists because it connects two sites or texts and thereby serves as a schematization of the "poetic logic" that Kristeva calls upon to "embody the 0-2 interval, a continuity where 0 denotes and 1 is implicitly

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<sup>1</sup> Bellei draws on a definition of the link put forth by Nicholas Burbules for this insight: that is, links "as associative relations that change, redefine, and enhance or restrict access to the information they comprise" (Burbules 103).

transgressed” (70). A logic based on “1” occludes dialogism and favors linearity, which in turn requires a passive receiver of tradition or of media content. In a linear system, only the origin matters. A network of appropriations, on the other hand, requires both appropriated and appropriating elements.

As a linking mechanism, cannibalism cannot be said to be purely good or bad. It is ambivalent in that it looks both ways, but it is also ambivalent in the sense that it destroys and validates its object at the same time. For Freud, the first phase of love is the “phase of incorporating or devouring—a type of love which is consistent with abolishing the object’s separate existence and which may therefore be described as ambivalent” (138). Though for Oswald and the *antropofagistas*, the desire to appropriate previous texts stems from an anticolonial resistance to Europe, this same devouring is also always an act of love toward and identification with the hegemonic. Caetano Veloso makes sense of this ambivalence when in his memoir he explains in what way the *Tropicália* movement drew on the earlier *Antropofagia*:

When trying to understand modernist ruptures, the revitalization of tradition inherent in supposedly destructive tactics is readily apparent. Stravinsky and Schoenberg seem to intend not that we stop listening to Bach in order to listen to them, but rather that we become better listeners of Bach for having listened to them. In fact, all modernisms upon deeper examination show themselves to be a struggle against the imminent obsolescence of a past so beautiful as to be on the verge of banality. (147)

Caetano contends that what he and the other *tropicalistas* did in the realm of music corresponds to what Oswald and the *antropofagistas* did with text: “We were ‘eating’ the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix” (156). What *Tropicália* and *Antropofagia* share with all “modernist ruptures” is a deep ambivalence with regard to tradition. Caetano sees



Stravinsky and Schoenberg as advocates for Bach even while their music takes apart the listener's expectations of what music should and can be. The important thing is to make something new out of a past both beautiful and banal.

At the same time, what separates the two Brazilian movements from Stravinsky and Schoenberg is the desire to transgress not just the boundary between one and other, present and past, but specifically the boundary between colony and metropole. Oswald inspires Caetano not just as one modernist among many but because of the anti-hegemonic impulse inherent to *Antropofagia*: “Oswald’s imagery stimulated the imagination to be skeptical of nationality, history, language” (155). Likewise, Caetano recognizes in the work of his friends Augusto and Haroldo de Campos a new reading—by way of *Antropofagia*—of an American culture “no longer conceived in terms of a genealogical imagery of branches, twigs, and buds that point to a gradual emergence of transatlantic ‘identities’” (Richard M. Morse, qtd. in Veloso 152). According to Caetano, the criticism and “concrete poetry” of the brothers de Campos tap into the anti-genealogical unconscious of American texts.

The focus on network formations in my readings in the preceding chapters allows us to see more precisely *how* works by certain writers, such as Oswald de Andrade and Maryse Condé (as well as Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, Caetano Veloso, Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, J.M. Coetzee, and many others) express ambivalence toward tradition, described here as patterns of interaction resulting from preferential attachment in the cultural and textual network. The anti-genealogical, anti-hegemonic action of the works I read here plays out through the establishment of novel, unexpected links. The existing

links remain, and as Caetano points out, we need not reject them (that is, we need not stop listening to Bach). “Modernist ruptures” such as the one Oswald calls for in “A crise da Filosofia messiânica” work only by rejecting the idea that the existing links (for example, links to European culture) are *primary* in the network and *inevitable*.

And yet the development of Internet culture over the past twenty years has shown us that the creation of a vast network with no center, as much as we might want it to, does not realize Oswald’s dream of a non-hierarchical society, with Internet users as the *Aufhebung* of the dialectic between “natural” and “civilized” man. Even as early as 1993, evangelists of the Internet such as Kevin Kelly and George Gilder acknowledged that the supposedly non-hierarchical “peer-to-peer” networks that make up Internet society actually require “nested hierarchies” in order to function. That the Internet would do away with hierarchy might only be a “myth, a utopian hope” (Kelly, qtd. in Turner 224).

The Internet is not, and cannot be, a non-hierarchical utopia, primarily because complex networks naturally tend toward hierarchical order. Hubs develop out of the workings of the network itself. And yet, one paradoxical insight from research into the workings of networks is that network dynamics both construct and deconstruct hierarchies. The theory of preferential attachment explains how certain hubs and patterns can come to dominate a system through probabilities: the more links a hub has, the more likely it will be to attract new links. But at the same time, a complex network always allows for deviation. The authors discussed in this dissertation exploit that possibility for deviation from the probabilistic patterns and hierarchies of their respective eras.

The network of cultural and economic interactions that has made the Atlantic a “viable unit” of historical analysis over the past five hundred years is no different from a social network or molecular network in that sense. The patterns of interaction that have led to colonial power and racist thinking—the Atlantic triangle prominent among them—can be illustrated by way of such network dynamics. Nonetheless, what draws together the four texts from four different eras that I read here is their work to establish counter-movements. By plotting those movements on a map, we can see how these texts act in history. Perhaps we can even use these examples of counter-movement through unexpected linking to navigate our own thoroughly networked contemporary world.

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