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Undying (and Undead) Modern National Myths: Cannibalism and Racial Mixture in Contemporary Brazilian Vampire Fiction

Jacob C. Brown
Vanderbilt University, jacob.c.brown@vanderbilt.edu

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Undying (and Undead) Modern National Myths: Cannibalism and Racial Mixture in Contemporary Brazilian Vampire Fiction

Cover Page Footnote

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“Minha terra tem vampiros”: Vampires in the Brazilian Imagination

Whereas Gonçalves Dias famously wrote “Minha terra tem palmeiras” in the first line of his poem “Canção do exílio,” Brazil has not only palm trees but also vampires (3). Alongside other more stereotypical Brazilian archetypes like the *malandro* and *mulata sensual*, vampires have long stalked the Brazilian cultural imagination through twentieth and twenty-first-century reimaginings of them in fiction, television, and political discourse. Dalton Trevisan’s short story *O vampiro de Curitiba* (1965), Rede Globo’s comedy television program *Chico Anysio Show* (1982), and journalistic political analysis provide a non-exhaustive yet illustrative sketch of the vampire’s multifaceted forms in contemporary Brazilian culture. In “The Vampiric and the Urban Space in Dalton Trevisan’s *O vampiro de Curitiba*” (1998), Andrew M. Gordus argues that Trevisan’s vampire exemplifies “the grotesque, horrific underside of daily experience within modern Brazilian society” (13). Going beyond Berta Waldman, Nelson Vieira, and Eva Paulino Bueno’s analyses of the vampire in Trevisan’s work, Gordus analyzes *O vampiro de Curitiba* within the context of rapid urbanization and expanding economic inequality in Brazil’s major cities during the mid-twentieth century. Insofar as Curitiba sapped its growing population of its optimism for a new industrial and democratic Brazil, Gordus argues that, “The vampire is in essence the city itself” (15). Furthermore, in “Uma leitura de *O vampiro de Curitiba*, de Dalton Trevisan, à luz do pós-moderno” (2007), Edner Morelli argues that Trevisan’s work exemplifies key themes of Brazilian post-modernism, namely, “a obsessão do protagonista pelo prazer de contemplar o objeto-mulher como marca de consumo e a fragmentação da linguagem” (77). In other words, *O vampiro de Curitiba* reflects not only Brazilian post-modernism’s fragmented stream-of-consciousness form but also its socially critical content. In Morelli’s reading, the vampire’s lust for blood lampoons the male gaze’s objectification of women as commodities of sexual desire and consumption in heteronormative patriarchal society.

Airing from 1982-1990, the Rede-Globo TV sitcom *Chico Anysio Show* reveals a lighter side of the Gothic horror monster through its recurring vampire character named Bento Carneiro,¹ vampiro brasileiro. Embracing the grotesque’s potential to make incisive social commentary (and score laughs), Bento and his ghoulish gang in the “Condomínio dos Vampiros” parody typical aspects of Brazilian culture. For example, Bento Carneiro sketches often caricature the hypocrisy of clean-cut, suit-and-tie-wearing politicians and professionals, ironically suggesting that they, rather than Bento and his off-beat pals, are the real vampires. Beyond *Chico Anysio Show*, the depiction of politicians as “vampiros,” who live off of the privileges afforded to them by the state at citizens’ expense, has remained popular in contemporary political discourse. For example, the *O Globo*’s September 9, 2012 news article “Máfia dos vampiros é outra preocupação de

Delúbio Soares” investigates corruption accusations against Delúbio Soares, the former Treasury secretary under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who allegedly exchanged public funds for bribes. Using the image of the vampire to defame Lula’s presidency and party, detractors of the Brazilian Worker’s Party, or PT, dubbed Delúbio’s accused political group a vampire mafia, or “máfia de vampiros,” hell-bent on exploiting political power for personal gain.² On the other side of Brazil’s political spectrum, the 2018 Carnival performance of Rio de Janeiro’s Tuiuti samba school featured a vampire festooned with a collar of dollar bills and bearing a presidential sash, as well as a striking resemblance to then President Michel Temer, who was briefly imprisoned for his own involvement in political scandals.

Still Amongst the Living: Myths of Vampires, *Antropofagia*, and *Mestiçagem* in Contemporary Literature

Beyond these representations of the vampire as a symbol of urban decay, comic excess, and government corruption in Brazilian culture, contemporary speculative fiction has acted as perhaps Brazilian’s strongest proponent of representing the vampire as a symbol of Brazil’s colonial past.³ In narrating the participation of vampires in the development of the nation’s history, three contemporary Brazilian novels in particular—*O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* (1999) by Ivan Jaf, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* (2014) by Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro and *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* (2015) by Nazarethe Fonseca—reflect Hayden White’s objection to the binary separation of history and literature in modern Western culture by calling attention to both as narrative constructs.⁴ In dialogue with one another, the novels illustrate a decolonial ideological project within contemporary historical Brazilian fiction by reversing the roles of historical protagonists and villains in Brazil’s dominant national narratives. As they are oftentimes the vampire’s victims, Brazil’s indigenous and African populations merit sympathy in the novels, whereas the Portuguese and Imperial elites of Brazil that colonized, enslaved, and exterminated them literally transform into bloodthirsty and predatory monsters. Brazil’s dominant socio-economic classes throughout its history since the Portuguese “discovery” are thereby demonized as grotesque, abject, and supernatural “Others,” whereas their subaltern victims exemplify the very humanity that their vampiric colonizers lack. Furthermore, by imagining vampires in Brazil long before Bram Stoker’s genre-defining *Dracula* (1897), the novels destabilize the vampire’s supposed origins in nineteenth-century European Gothic horror fiction.

In these ways, the three Brazilian novels I analyze in this article drive a wooden stake into the Eurocentric worldview at the heart of both the vampire’s supposed European origins and colonial “civilizing” projects in the New World. However, by recirculating imagery of vampires consuming human blood within a

Brazilian cultural context, they also demonstrate the undying—or, rather, undead—persistence of the modern national myths of *antropofagia*, or cannibalism, and *mestiçagem*, or racial mixing, in Brazil’s contemporary national imagination. Ushered into modern discourse by Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954) and Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), respectively, these terms revolutionized the intellectual history and landscape of Brazil during the twentieth century. With regards to *antropofagia*, tales of savage cannibal tribes devouring European visitors in the Americas—such as Dom Pedro Fernandes Sardinha, a Portuguese priest and the first bishop of Brazil, who was devoured along with his unfortunate fellow missionaries by the Caeté people—struck fear and morbid fascination in Portuguese colonists in Brazil and subjects back home during the sixteenth century and beyond. Stories of indigenous cannibalism like Sardinha’s became the stuff of legend across Europe, thanks in part to the graphic copper-plate engravings of Theodore de Bry. Moreover, some indigenous groups’ practice of cannibalism served as an important way that European Empires justified their subjugation under colonial rule.⁵

Centuries later, the Brazilian poet, essayist, and playwright Oswald de Andrade reclaimed and repurposed Brazilian cannibalism in his “Manifesto antropófago” (1928). Andrade’s manifesto is one of the main touchstones of the Brazilian Modernist movement, whose roots were planted during the Modern Art Week celebrated in São Paulo’s Municipal Theater in 1922, exactly one hundred years after Pedro I declared the Brazilian Empire’s independence from Portugal. In addition to Oswald de Andrade, Brazilian Modernists such as Mário de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira spurned the perceived bourgeois mediocrity of previous literary models, such as the French-inspired *parnasianismo*, which they viewed as a mere copy of European poetics void of any true aesthetic innovation.⁶ The iconoclastic and nationalistic Modernist mood had a lasting impact on Brazilian literature far beyond the Modern Art Week. Rather than continuing to reject *antropofagia* as a derogatory epithet for Brazilian cultural savagery under an imposing European epistemological lens, the “Manifesto antropófago” radically embraces cannibalism as an intellectual strategy of “devouring” both Brazil’s precolonial indigenous cultures and Europe’s avant-garde artistic and literary movements in order to create a hybridized and authentic Brazilian national culture. In this way, Oswald de Andrade’s manifesto declared Brazil’s cultural independence from Europe six years after the Modern Art Week and over one-hundred years after Brazil’s political independence from Portugal.

Insofar as they rewrite the European vampire tradition within Brazilian history, the contemporary novels I analyze both evoke and participate in the Modernist project of *antropofagia* through their depictions of man-eating monsters in Brazil. Ivan Jaf’s *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* revises the myth of indigenous cannibalism by assigning the role of the vampires to none other than the Portuguese colonizers themselves. The leading scholar in Brazilian science and

speculative fiction, Elizabeth Ginway, breaks ground in analyzing “cannibalizations” and resignifications of the vampire in contemporary Brazilian literature through her analysis of Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro’s *O vampiro de Nova Holanda* (1998).⁷ To build on Ginway’s work, I add that *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* contributes to the vampire as a symbol of Brazil’s cultural cannibalization of foreign European and Brazilian aboriginal cultures. Like Lodi-Ribeiro’s novella, Jaf’s novel also portrays the vampire as a historical actor in Brazil’s history from the turn of the sixteenth-century to the turn of the twentieth, bearing witness to the extermination of indigenous peoples, the importation of enslaved Africans under the Portuguese Crown, and the historical legacy of colonial oppression in the Brazilian Empire and the Brazilian Republic. The immortal vampire thus emerges as a metaphor for the specter of violence, exploitation, and political domination that has haunted Brazil from the time the Portuguese first accidentally set foot in the Americas. Finally, Jaf’s vampire also serves as literary device for observing a five-hundred-year panorama of Brazilian history from Portuguese conquest to Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s presidency.

By recasting the colonizers in the role of cannibals and natives in the role of the cannibalized instead of the other way around, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* simultaneously revises and recycles the theme of *antropofagia* in the Brazilian cultural imaginary, thereby reestablishing its place in contemporary, post-colonial, and post-Modernist Brazilian narrative. However, to further build on Ginway’s work on Brazilian interpretations of the vampire, I turn not only to *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* but also to *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* and *Dom Pedro I Vampiro*, novels that notably also feature the recurring image of a male vampire preying on the blood of Afrodescendant women. The novels I analyze embrace the figure of the vampire as a metaphor for the violent reality lurking behind the widely-accepted myth of the cordial, intimate relationship between masters and slaves, especially enslaved black women. This benevolently paternalistic version of slavery, the myth continues, contributed to making racial mixture into the defining characteristic of Brazilian national identity. This myth, defined as the myth of *mestiçagem*, finds its origins in Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa grande e senzala* (1933) and contributed to a prevailing belief in Brazil that their history of racial mixture gave birth to a spirit of racial harmony and set Brazil apart from nations with histories of de jure segregation systems, such as the United States and South Africa. In the field of Gothic literary studies, scholars have long interpreted the mythical vampire as a metaphor for the all-too-real exploitation of women by men, of the working class by the bourgeoisie, and other imbalanced relationships of power in Victorian English society. By setting their narratives partially in the nineteenth-century Brazilian Empire (1822-1889), *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* and especially *Dom Pedro*

I Vampiro illustrate the vampire as an apt metaphor for the exploitative institution of African slavery in Brazil.

Through the repeated, sexually-charged, and violent performative act of sucking black women's blood, the novels revise Freyre's romanticized, genteel, and even tender description of slavery in Brazil, instead presenting anti-black racism as the ghost—or rather the vampire—in the machine of Brazilian history. However, just as with Oswald de Andrade's conceptualization of *antropofagia*, the novels do not just revise Freyre's notion of *mestiçagem* but also perpetuate it through repeating representations of the black woman as a naturally sensual and irresistible figure, whose allure causes men in positions of social power to transgress sexual and racial boundaries. In *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares*, for example, black blood is represented as the most potent and enticing of all. The novel opens with the vampire Dentes Compridos falling into the temptation of killing the female confidant of a Bantu princess named Amalamale. Written only a year later, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* also represents black women as the favorite flavor of Brazil's vampiric ruling elite. For their exploitation of black women, Brazil's slaveholding class is portrayed both figuratively and literally as a pack of monsters in the novel. In this way, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* clearly uses the figure of the vampire to critique colonial and Imperial Brazil as regimes whose social, political, and economic power was built on the labor of chattel slaves, and the sexual exploitation of enslaved black women in particular. Nevertheless, despite undermining Freyre's mythic vision of genteel relations between the masters and the slaves, the novel also reproduces the Freyrian trope of black women as innately sensual beings. Finally, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* mocks the historical figure of Domingos Fernandes Calabar by depicting him as sucking the blood of a black woman. Known popularly as Brazil's most infamous traitor, Domingos betrayed the Portuguese crown by allying himself with the Dutch invaders of the Brazilian Northeast. By portraying him as drinking a black woman's blood, the novel exaggerates the cowardice of Brazil's colonists at the same time as it resonates with the nation's simultaneous cultural fixation, fascination, and anxiety surrounding European and African racial mixture.

Beyond *Dracula*: Reading the Vampire in World Literature and Brazil

Given its typical associations with European Gothic horror, the literary vampire might at first glance appear to be an idea “fora do lugar,” or out of place, in Roberto Schwarz's famous phrase.⁸ In her book *The Origins of the Literary Vampire* (2016), Heide Crawford points out how academic scholarship on the vampire as a literary figure tends to gravitate toward the same sources: nineteenth-century English and French literature and, most notably, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). However, these are not the origins of the vampire in history and literature.

The “crucial moment of transition from folkloric monster to literary figure” takes place, not in nineteenth-century England or France, but rather the vampire made its literary debut in the German poem “*Der Vampir*” by Heinrich August Ossenfelder in 1748. Nineteenth-century Gothic horror and vampire prose novels, in other words, are heavily indebted to eighteenth-century German poetry, yet this is not to say that poets like Ossenfelder do not also have their own debts to pay. They themselves adapted their vampire poems from central European folklore and superstition, which captured the German imagination after Austrian Emperor Charles VI had acquired territories in wars against the Turkish Empire.

To further complicate the origins of the vampire, central Europe was not the only world region to have vampire myths. As its title suggests, *The Universal Vampire Origins and Evolution of a Legend* (2013), edited by Barbara Brodman and James E. Doan, shows that the vampire has not one but many origins around the globe, making it a “universal” figure that does not necessarily belong to any place or time period, much less nineteenth-century England. Moreover, just as the vampire of German poetry differed from the vampire of central European oral tradition, so too do the world’s many versions of the vampire in folklore share both similarities and differences. Whereas Crawford traces the literary vampire’s origin to the less well-known poem “*Der Vampir*” by Ossenfelder, Brodman and Doan argue that the vampire became a mainstay of Western literature and culture beginning with the more well-known novel *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori. And while Brodman and Doan also point to Eastern European myth as a predecessor to the literary vampire, they ask: to what extent is this creature a product of European cultural forms or is the vampire indeed a universal, perhaps even archetypal figure?” (ix). In response to this question, *The Universal Vampire* lays out a collection of essays that traces the Western vampire tradition from the early Norse *draugr* to Bram Stoker’s Count Dracula. However, this trajectory only occupies Part I of the book; in part IV, “Old and New World Manifestations of the Vampire,” various authors explore “the existence of similar vampiric traditions in Japanese, Russian, and Latin American art, theatre, literature, film, and other cultural productions” (Brodman and Doan x). For example, Doan’s chapter “The Vampire in Native American and Mesoamerican Lore” traces vampire folklore as far back as 6,700 B.C.E., when manifestations of the vampiric corn and other earth goddesses began to appear among Paleolithic cultures prevalent throughout North America. In oral myth, in other words, the vampire may truly be as old as time itself. Given its possible folkloric origins in the Americas, moreover, vampire stories in Brazil might not be “out of place” but rather close to home.

While the exact origins of the vampire narrative are disputed, what is indisputable is its revenant-like return in popularity in contemporary popular culture. As Heide Crawford quips in *The Origins of the Literary Vampire*, “Indeed, this irresistible and alluring monster refuses to die” (xi). The recentness of

Crawford's study (2016) and others like it suggests that the vampire indeed still walks amongst the living, wherever the living still walk. Given the vampire's presence in contemporary Brazilian culture and literature, too, it may strike one as odd that very few studies have been dedicated to the vampire as an expression of cultural issues and identity in Brazil. A gleaming exception is Elizabeth Ginway's 2003 article, "Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women." Although only a third of the article is dedicated to vampires, it nevertheless establishes a model for how they might be analyzed as metaphors of colonialism and slavery in Brazil. In order to do so, she turns to an earlier version of *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* (2014) by Lodi-Ribeiro titled *O Vampiro de Nova Holanda* (1998). Just like the longer 2014 version of the novella, *O Vampiro de Nova Holanda* takes place in an alternate version of history in which the Dutch form an alliance with the runaway-slave colony called Quilombo dos Palmares and challenge Portuguese hegemony in Brazil. In addition to this historical twist, the novel's protagonist is a vampire named Dentes Compridos, or "Long Teeth," whose species called South America home for centuries before becoming nearly extinct—not unlike many indigenous tribes in the Americas after Europeans' arrival. In this way, Ginway argues that Dentes Compridos represents the marginality of subjugated indigenous and African "racial minorities" in Brazil who, although representing the majority of Brazil's population throughout its history, had limited access to power after Portuguese conquest (287). Captured by the African and Afrodescendant inhabitants of Palmares, the nonfictional seventeenth-century confederation of *quilombos*, or runaway slave societies, Dentes Compridos is brought before the legendary leader Zumbi dos Palmares and hired as a spy to disrupt Portuguese dominance in Brazil, thereby enacting a narrative of "reverse colonialism" in Ginway's argument.

Moreover, Ginway argues that Lodi-Ribeiro's "New World" vampire, in contrast with "Old World" vampires such as Stoker's Dracula, represents society's celebration of racial mixture rather than society's fear of it: "One of the main fears symbolized by Dracula is that of the mixing of blood, or miscegenation, evidenced in the bloodsucking of the vampire (...) England's fear of racial weakening and mixture is the opposite of Brazil's historical experience, and Lodi-Ribeiro's narrative does not condemn miscegenation but celebrates it" ("Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women" 289). Also, in contrast with Dracula, Dentes Compridos manages to coexist among Brazil's various ethnic groups, controlling his urges to kill for sustenance except if overwhelmed by the temptation of black blood, which the novel—gesturing to the myth of black hyperfertility—portrays as the most potent of all. In the way that Dentes Compridos does not turn his victims into vampires themselves and lives for the most part peaceably among aboriginal Americans and Afrodescendant Palmarinos, Ginway argues that Lodi-Ribeiro "Brazilianizes" the vampire through the rejection of Old-World narratives of racial (or blood) purity:

Dentes Compridos also asserts New World racial mixture over Old World notions of racial purity. Bloodsucking, besides being an obvious metaphor for colonization or capitalist exploitation, also has sexual overtones, and Dentes Compridos's actions suggest that the colonial enterprise in Brazil went hand in hand with miscegenation, and had a positive effect. However, the power-hungry elites, first the Portuguese, then their heirs, carried out a program of internal colonization which continued to exploit slave labor, and to reinforce hierarchies of race, class and gender. In a sense, the metaphor of the vampire is also an appropriate one for Brazil, because it points to the deep ambivalence of the colonized towards the colonizer, to which they are related by the blood ties of miscegenation. (Ginway, “Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women” 290)

Ginway's analysis in this passage represents the most innovative and clear attempt to analyze Brazilian society, history, and culture through Brazilian representations of the vampire. In her work, she introduces the sexual and miscegenational implications of bloodsucking in Brazilian vampire novels, including Lodi-Ribeiro's.

To build on Ginway's work, this article further examines the ways in which vampire novels in Brazil interact with *mestiçagem*, which Marshall C. Eakin calls Brazil's most important cultural narrative of the twentieth century. In Eakin's view, the history of Brazil during the twentieth century is the story of the rise and fall of the *mestiçagem*, a term that serves as shorthand for the myth that “Brazilians share a common history of racial and cultural mixing of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans” (2). In his fifth book, *Becoming Brazilians: Race and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (2017), Eakin explores how this “fable of the three races” became (and un-became) “the most powerful narrative of Brazilian identity in the twentieth century” (4). As Eakin points out, *mestiçagem* did not always enjoy a formidable or even favorable position in Brazil's national imagination. On the contrary, racial mixing was generally regarded as an anathema by Brazil's intelligentsia throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Whereas the Modernist movement's incorporation of indigenous and African elements into art and literature in the 1920s anticipated the winds of change, Eakin argues that the major turning point was the publication of *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa grande e senzala)* by Gilberto Freyre in 1933. Going against the grain of many of his intellectual predecessors and contemporaries, who viewed biological and cultural mixing as obstacles to modernity and progress, Freyre did not lament but instead heralded *mestiçagem* as a source of national identity, distinction, and even pride. In the five decades that followed, State-sanctioned mass culture provided Brazilians with the means through which they gradually came to see themselves as “*brasileiros* a la Freyre,” united by a perceived and shared belonging to a crucible

of Native, African, and European cultures (Eakin 5). It is only in the twilight of the twentieth century that forces such as the black consciousness movement and the rise of the Internet have begun to dismantle *mestiçagem* as the “master narrative” of Brazilian identity, leaving open the question of “whether this narrative, or any narrative, will exert such power in Brazil in the current century” (274). Tarnished by dictatorships and the racial harmony it failed to produce, the official Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem*—equally apt to highlight black and indigenous contributions to Brazilian culture as it is to downplay or “whiten” them—appears to be on the outs.

One especially unpopular aspect of Freyre’s work is his genteel representation of slavery. In her article “Racismo cordial sesconstruído: uma leitura pós-positivista do papel da mulher negra no Brasil colonial,” Adriana do Carmo Figueiredo problematizes Freyre for mistaking coercion for consent and downplaying rape under Brazil’s slave system:

Hoje, por parte da academia e de pesquisadores do tema, tem-se a convicção do equívoco quanto à maneira positiva (leniente) com que se interpretava a suposta afetividade entre senhor e escrava. Esta linha de pensamento caracterizada na obra de Gilberto Freire, não resiste à visão feminista, onde a relação “afetiva” não passava de violência, coação e estupro, sendo este um comportamento rotineiro aprovado pela sociedade da época. (Figueiredo 9)

Overlooking the inherent violence of slavery, Freyre romanticizes the institution and the black women it most oppressed. The sexualized representation of black women in Freyre’s work is endemic of Brazil’s myth of *mestiçagem* and is perpetuated in not only Brazilian film, television, and Carnival, as Eakin demonstrates, but even in Brazilian vampire novels.

The Vampire that “Discovered” Brazil (and Stayed): Reversing and Recycling Colonial Roles in *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* by Ivan Jaf

As Dalton Trevisan’s *O vampiro de Curitiba* shows, vampires lurked within the Brazilian literary imagination long before the *Twilight* craze struck young adult audiences around the world. As a further testament to the Brazilian vampire’s pre-*Twilight* preeminence, Ivan Jaf’s *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* was first published in 1999 and is on its sixth edition to date.⁹ Whereas Morelli argues that Trevisan’s work likens heteronormative masculinity’s sexual objectification of women with the vampire’s lust for blood, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* goes even further by illustrating Portugal’s hunger for commercial and military world dominance as literally vampiric in nature. Like the “discovery” of Brazil itself, *O*

vampiro que descobriu o Brasil narrates the beginning of the story as a fateful accident that occurs for no reason other than “o azar de estar no caminho” (Jaf 11). The fictional protagonist and everyman Antônio Brás, a local tavern keeper in Restelo, announces that he is closing for the night, provoking a violent reaction from a mysterious seaman, who shocks the hapless Antônio by biting him on the neck and drinking his blood. Baffled by his inability to eat food or drink wine and his sensitivity to sunlight, Antônio is soon afterward informed by a shadowy figure, who introduces himself as simply Domingos, that he has been turned into a vampire. Domingos informs Antônio his attacker was “O Velho,” the world’s oldest and most powerful vampire, who has the ability to descend upon and possess any human body he chooses, and whose hunger for power is the very thing that set Pedro Álvares Cabral’s expedition in motion:

- Pretendia pilotar uma das caravelas que está a ser preparada aqui em Restelo.
- E para quê?
- Queria tomar parte no que será uma grande conquista portuguesa: o monopólio do comércio com as Índias. É a mania do Velho. Participar dos grandes acontecimentos. (Jaf 11)

In order to avenge his human “death” and regain his mortality, he climbs Cabral’s ship on course to impose Portuguese commercial and military dominance in India and thus become the most powerful ultramarine empire in the world. In this way, the vampire O Velho stands for the avarice that motivated the Portuguese interest in Indian trade but resulted in the conquest of approximately half the South American continent, previously unknown to the Portuguese.

Brazilian literature, history, and culture play heavily as intertexts within Jaf’s vampire novel. As his surname “Brás” suggests, Antônio turns into an immortal and undead main character after the violent and bizarre attack, just like Machado de Assis’s “defunto autor,” Brás Cubas, from *Memórias Póstumas* (1881). *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*’s opening sentence—“Pensando no que lhe aconteceu nos últimos quinhentos anos, Antônio Brás concluiu que a vida eterna não valia uma lasca de bacalhau frito no azeite”—echoes the pessimism of *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*’s final sentence, “Não tive filhos, não transmiti a nenhuma criatura o legado de nossa miséria” (Jaf 7; Machado de Assis 244). His first name also possibly alludes to Padre Antônio Vieira, Brazil’s exalted Jesuit “protetor dos índios” during the Portuguese colonial era.¹⁰ Furthermore, Antônio’s mentor Domingos reveals himself as having been O Velho all along. Although Domingos Jorge Velho is not a historical character in the novel, the novel’s principal villain may allude to the *bandeirante* who commanded the destruction of the Quilombo dos Palmares. Throughout the novel, O Velho inhabits the bodies of

several major actors in Brazilian history, from the first Portuguese colonists to major twentieth-century leaders, suggesting that the spirit of Portuguese conquest and colonialism has lived on, as if immortal, from the slavery of the past to the social injustice and political corruption of the present.

Following Brazil's historical timeline and Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter to King Manuel I (1500), the novel narrates Cabral's expedition landing not in India as they had expected but rather in a fertile, green land, unknown to them and populated by "um povo de pele marrom, limpos e felizes, cobertos de penas coloridas, pintados, andando nus e conversando com as aves. Mulheres lindas, peladas, com ossos espetados na boca. Gente que cuspiam o vinho e temiam as galinhas" (Jaf 17-8). Here the novel caricatures the Portuguese explorers' first impressions of indigenous peoples as childlike simpletons. Just as the Frei Henrique de Coimbra prepares to attack one of them, Antônio, who had been spying in the distance, suddenly jumps out and stabs him in the heart. However, O Velho narrowly escapes the priest's body and continues possessing other members of the Portuguese crew—as well as other important figures throughout Brazilian history. *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* thus upends the stereotyped role of the indigenous cannibal savage and instead assigns it to the Portuguese invaders. Possessed by an ancient evil vampire spirit, Henrique de Coimbra, who is known as having presided over the first mass ever celebrated in Brazil, acts as a vampiric aggressor to his would-be indigenous victim. In this way, the novel revises the myth of Brazilian cannibalism as the same time as it reinscribes it back into the Brazilian cultural and literary imagination. The novel thus practices literary *antropofagia* by importing the vampire myth and adapting it to a Brazilian setting—in this case, the first encounter between Portuguese and indigenous Americans.

O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil plays with more than just one Brazilian cultural myth. Beyond *antropofagia*, the novel also revises the myth of *mestiçagem* in Antônio's second encounter with O Velho, who has this time possessed the Portuguese Empire's most ignominious traitor, Domingos Fernandes Calabar. Antônio furtively catches O Velho red-handed—or perhaps red-faced—as he feeds on the blood of an enslaved black woman: "Afinal, numa noite sem lua no começo de abril de 1632, pendurado no alto de uma palmeira, Antônio teve o Segundo encontro com o Velho! Estava bem embaixo dele, sugando o pescoço de uma negra. Agora usava o corpo de Calabar" (Jaf 31). In drinking the woman's blood, O Velho ousts himself as the parasite to Calabar's host. Waiting to catch him unawares at the campsite where the Portuguese held their resistance against the Dutch invasion, Antônio is first disappointed and confused when Calabar does not return that night. He later becomes exasperated upon finding out that the reason was that Calabar had been hanged and quartered for his betrayal of the Portuguese army, allowing O Velho to escape once again onto the next host.

The image of Calabar draining the blood of an enslaved black woman in the novel is charged with symbolic meaning in the context of Brazilian history. Despite historical disagreements over the “true” racial background of Calabar, the novel describes him as a “mulato alagoano” and a sugar plantation owner (Jaf 31). The novel also comments on the cruelty with which the “senhores de engenho” like Calabar treated enslaved black people. The image of Calabar, a mixed-race sugar plantation owner, literally sucking the life from an enslaved black woman therefore stands for not only the economic (and sexual) exploitation of black women in patriarchal Portuguese American society, but also the emerging class of mixed-race plantation owners, “whitened” by their relative economic privilege compared with enslaved blacks. In this way, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* counters the Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem* as an explanation for Brazil’s supposed racial harmony. Although Calabar is supposedly also an Afrodescendant in the novel’s depiction of him, the novel also illustrates his exploitation of enslaved blacks as a plantation owner in Brazil’s lucrative sugar industry by literally transforming him into a blood-sucking vampire.

Just as *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* simultaneously revises and reinscribes the myth of *antropofagia*, the novel also both undermines and perpetuates the myth of *mestiçagem*. Whereas the novel uses the vampire’s bite to allegorize a critique of the harsh reality enslaved blacks—and enslaved black women in particular—faced behind Freyre’s amicable portrait of harmonious relations between masters and slaves, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* also portrays Afrodescendant women as the sensualized objects of both men and vampires’ deepest desires. Since vampires in the novel cannot feel romantic passion towards women, Antônio’s vampire mentor, Domingos, cannot fulfill the script of heteronormative partnership by falling in love (or copulating) with a woman. Nevertheless, his condition does not prevent him from flirting with women or seeking out what the novel presents as the most tempting type for both man and vampire, the *mulher negra*: “Domingos adorava festas e mulheres. Embora não pudesse consumir o ato, flertava com todas. Mas era o pescoço das negras escravas que acabava chupando no final da noite. Como o Velho, gostava de conviver com os ricos, mas se alimentava dos pobres” (Jaf 60). The finishing quip of this passage indicates the ironic tone with which the novel satirizes and ultimately criticizes colonial gender and racial relations. As an allegory of Brazilian slave-holding society, Domingos literally feeds off of poor, black, and enslaved women subjects for his own sustenance and pleasure.

As Eakin’s *Becoming Brazilians* argues, Freyre’s *Casa grande e senzala* concretized the trope of the enslaved black woman’s sensuality as a touchstone of Brazilian culture. In Freyre’s social analysis, *mestiçagem* is indebted to the relative acceptance of sexual relations between Eurodescendant (male) masters with Afrodescendant (female) slaves in comparison with other nineteenth-century slave-

holding societies like the United States. Eakin argues that state-endorsed forms of popular culture such as television, film, and especially Carnival helped to expand the Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem* far beyond Freyre's writing. Not just a sex symbol but also a symbol of supposed racial harmony in Brazilian national identity, the stereotype of the "mulata sensual" became particularly ubiquitous in manifestations of popular culture such as films and TV shows starring Sonia Braga.¹¹ However, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* illustrates that not just visual arts but also contemporary literature participates in reinforcing the myth of *mestiçagem*. In the following passage, Domingos lies to Antônio that he saw O Velho inhabit the body of the Portuguese Emperor João VI in order to drink an enslaved woman's blood. Domingos and O Velho's shared preference for black women's blood is a clue the novel offers that O Velho is an alias for Antônio's false friend, Domingos:

- *Eu vi o Velho*
Antônio abriu muito os olhos:
— *Quem?*
— *Voltei antes de o sol nascer, percorri os aposentos do Paço...*
— *Quem? Quem?*
— *... e encontrei D. João VI chupando o pescoço de uma criada, uma bela negra, por quem, na verdade, eu havia voltado.*
— *D. João VI?!*
— *Pois é. Por isso tu não o encontraste. Nunca vi o Velho tão à vontade num corpo. O imperador também é grande, gordo e espalhafatoso . . . Assisti à cena, amigo. A festa foi uma despedida mesmo. Depois que ele bebeu todo o sangue da negra eu o segui até seu quarto, o vi deitar, e em seguida a sombra escura do Velho deixou seu corpo e saiu pela janela. (Jaf 67-8)*

Domingos/O Velho's hit-and-run murder of yet another black female victim uses vampire fiction to allegorize the violent reality behind Freyre's depictions of benevolent, fatherly masters and sensual, receptive slave women as the symbolic parents of Brazil's mixed-racial national identity. O Velho's escape from João VI's body after the attack both parodies and parallels how colonial society condoned the sexual exploitation of enslaved black women.

In these ways, *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* demonstrates the contemporary Brazilian vampire novel's preoccupation with reassigning historical protagonism from the powerful in Portuguese colonial society (Frei Henrique de Cardoso, Domingo Fernandes Calabar, João VI) to the powerless (indigenous peoples and enslaved blacks—especially women). In Jaf's novel, the vampire symbolizes, the violence, vice, and literal "bleeding" of non-European "Others" behind the attractive veil of Freyrian *mestiçagem*. In their reimagined role as

vampires, therefore, not the colonized but rather the colonizers represent the monstrous “Others” in *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*’s inverted colonial lens.

Indigenous Cannibal Vampires and Irresistible Black Blood: *Antropofagia* and *Mestiçagem* in *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* by Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro

Like Jaf’s vampire novel, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* also (re)writes the figure of the vampire within a Brazilian historical and cultural context. However, Lodi-Ribeiro’s vampire is different from the evil villain O Velho and takes a more sympathetic role as the novel’s main character, Dentes Compridos. Like Antônio Brás, Dentes Compridos is portrayed as a vampire antihero beset by difficult circumstances. With important exceptions, he reduces harm to his victims and drinks human blood only out of necessity. But whereas Antônio is a vampire because O Velho turned him into one, thus sending him (and the reader) on journey through Brazilian history, Dentes Compridos represents the last of a mythical humanoid race called *filhos-da-noite*, or children of the night. Autochthonous to South America, the *filhos-da-noite* were all but completely wiped out due to Incan retribution for their overfeeding on humans. In this way, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* revises the traditional European origins of the vampire present in both *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* and “canonical” vampire novels like Stoker’s *Dracula*. However, by locating the origins of Dentes Comprido’s vampire race in pre-European South America, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* reinscribes the colonial myth of indigenous cannibal tribes in contemporary Brazilian literature and culture.

As Ginway suggests through her reading of Lodi-Ribeiro’s *O vampiro de Nova Holanda*, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* “cannibalizes” the traditionally European figure of the vampire within a Brazilian context. By turning the vampire into an indigenous precolonial Brazilian race, Lodi-Ribeiro’s novel responds to Oswald de Andrade’s “Manifesto antropófago.” However, whereas Ginway argues that *O vampiro de Nova Holanda* celebrates racial mixture, I argue that *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* illustrates a complex relationship with the Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem* that involves both revision and perpetuation of *Casa grande e senzala*’s depiction of black women. In her article, Ginway argues that the novel enacts an allegory of colonial revenge through Dentes Compridos, who acts as Palmares’ secret weapon against Portugal. On one occasion, Palmarino leaders send Dentes Compridos to Recife to spy on and take out the Portuguese high command, but the mission fails because he kills Tumarea, the close friend and trusted confidant of Amalamale, a Bantu princess who is to be married to a Palmarino prince. Whereas Ginway mentions that Dentes Compridos murders Tumarea in the novel, I argue that exploring why he does it is crucial to understanding the novel’s relationship to the myth of *mestiçagem*.

Together with *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*, *Aventuras do Vampiro de Palmares* builds contemporary Brazilian vampire fiction as a genre that rigorously engages with national history and literature. As Ginway indicates in her book *Brazilian Science Fiction*, Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro stimulated the genre of science fiction in Brazil through his inauguration of the *Prêmio Argos*, or Argos Prize, an “annual prize for the best Brazilian science fiction” (139). Another way he demonstrates his serious dedication to the genre, of course, is through his own fiction. Despite Lodi-Ribeiro’s close association with science fiction, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* resists facile categorization. In the appendix, the author describes the novel as first and foremost an alternate history of Brazil. In Lodi-Ribeiro’s re“vamped” version of history, the nonfictional Northeastern territories of New Holland and Palmares work together to survive beyond their historical collapse in the seventeenth century. In effectively resisting Portuguese dominance in Brazil, Nova Holanda, and especially Palmares, “um autêntico Estado dentro do Estado: um outro Brasil, negro e livre, existente no interior do Brasil Colonial Luso habitado por brancos, índios e escravos,” Lodi-Ribeiro spells out the decolonial project of his novel (284). Finding solidarity in a common enemy, the native and black people who were colonized by the Portuguese Empire become history’s protagonists by joining forces with João Maurício de Nassau and liberating themselves from colonial oppression.

Revising not just Brazilian history but also the vampire myth, Lodi-Ribeiro argues that vampires do not represent fantastic or supernatural beings in his novel like they do in *Dracula*’s Victorian vampire, nor do they represent “alternative” elements of alternative history. Rather, the author proposes that they should be understood as having existed as easily within traditional schoolbook history as in his alternative history. In other words, Nassau’s return to Brazil—not vampires—represents the “alternative” component of alternative history in *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares*:

Assim, considero *Aventuras do Vampiro de Palmares*, antes de tudo, um romance de história oculta que tem no vampirismo científico e não na história alternativa, sua temática principal. Reparem que o termo ‘vampirismo científico’ é aqui empregado para definir o tipo de ficção fantástica que advoga a existência de vampiros naturais, entidades não-humanas que podem ser explicadas por meio do emprego de leis estritamente científicas. Entidades cuja existência prescinde da proposição de elementos sobrenaturais. (Lodi-Ribeiro 287)

In separating alternative history from his term “scientific vampirism,” Lodi-Ribeiro presents a complex revision of the traditionalist European concepts of history and science. In line with post-structural thought, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares*

“plays” with history as a subjective narrative instead of a natural, objective, and unquestionable sequence of events. Science, too, is a subjective narrative construct, which in the novel does not preclude the possibility of vampires as a scientific phenomenon. Although typically represented as unreal or supernatural within a dominant European epistemology, vampires in the novel are as natural and plausible as the moon and the sun. *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* thus embraces genre complexity by blending science fiction and fantasy as well as history and literature.

In revising the European construction of the vampire within the context of Brazilian science fiction, Lodi-Ribeiro’s novel participates in literary *antropofagia*, adapted from Oswald de Andrade’s manifesto for the world of science fiction by Ivan Carlos Regina’s “Manifesto antropofágico da ficção científica brasileira” in 1988. According to Ginway’s *Brazilian Science Fiction*, “The short manifesto echoes Oswald de Andrade’s original 1928 ‘Manifesto Antropófago’ [Cannibalist Manifesto], which proposed that Brazil ‘cannibalize’ foreign art and culture to create new national art forms in an act of dynamic and critical assimilation” (139). Like *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* participates in the Modernist tradition of “cannibalizing” European literary elements—in this case the vampire—in order to make a distinctly Brazilian national product. However, whereas Jaf’s novel imagines vampires amongst the dominant ranks of the Portuguese and Brazilian Empires, Lodi-Ribeiro’s *filhos-da-noite* are an ethnic minority reduced to a single member, the novel’s title vampire of Palmares, Dentes Compridos. Due to Dentes Compridos’s status as an endangered and persecuted minority, the black Palmarinos who capture him appeal to his solidarity and recruit him in their struggle, aided by Nova Holanda, against hegemonic Portuguese rule in Brazil.

Just as the novel upholds the Palmarinos’ just fight for independence and liberation from slavery, the novel portrays Dentes Compridos’s need to feed sympathetically, thereby awarding protagonism to both runaway slaves and vampires, two groups typically cast as villains in typical colonial and European scripts. *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* begins with a prologue depicting a “*noite-de-beber*,” the mandatory feeding period that occurs once in a blue moon for Dentes Compridos as it had for his all-but-extinct kind. The novel validates the vampire code of ethics, in which moderation does not preclude consuming the blood of humans, dubbed in the novel as “*vidas-curtas*,” or short-lives: “Chegada a noite-de-beber, não havia muita margem de opção para um filho-da-noite. Podia, quando muito, tentar agir com moderação e temperança, virtudes que não implicavam, em absoluto, compromisso de se privar por inteiro do sangue dos vidas-curtas” (8). The novel reiterates the necessity of moderate and occasional bloodletting to sustain Dentes Compridos’s prolonged life¹² and even allies his feeding practices with Palmares and Nova Holanda’s anticolonial resistance to

troubling representations of black women. As Ginway shows, Dentes Compridos had disciplined himself to drinking the blood of Portuguese while they slept, just enough to sustain himself and not leave a mark on the bodies of his victims. However, the opportunity to drink “*sangue negro*,” or “black blood,” proved too strong a temptation to resist holding back: “Ansiava por delibar outra vez do nectar mais puro jamais criado pelo Inominado. Precisava beber de um negro” (Lodi-Ribeiro 11-12). The fact that the black blood (and that of a black woman, Tumarea, in particular) is the most irresistible of all illustrates one side of the paradox of *mestiçagem*: although the Portuguese presumed Africans as naturally inferior in order to justify their enslavement, Freyre depicts black women as superior to white women, at least as far as sensuality is concerned. In Freyre’s version of Brazilian culture, black women thus occupy a position of elevated importance as the symbolic mother of the nation, to which Brazil’s predominantly mixed population owes its respect, gratitude, and existential debt.

However, the dark side of *mestiçagem*, hidden from sight in Freyre’s work (yet highly criticized in the wake of Brazil’s black movement) soon comes to light in the novel. The result of Dentes Compridos’s lust for Tumarea’s blood is that he kills her for it: “Os olhos escuros esbugalharam-se, congelados na cegueira baça da morte iminente. O aroma inebriante delicioso do sangue dos vidas-curtas escuras, impregnava o ar ao redor do filho-da-noite, conduzindo-o ao êxtase. O júbilo arrebatador de predador esfaimado” (Lodi-Ribeiro 14). The cost of Dentes Comprido’s pleasure is Tumarea’s pain, and the price of her blood is her life. From its very prologue, the novel thus allegorizes the violent relationship between masters and slaves beyond the Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem*. More than merely celebrating racial mixture, the novel in this opening scene gestures toward and violently disturbs the myth’s representation of black women.

The Long Shadow of Brazil’s Vampire Empire: *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* by Nazarethe Fonseca

Through the vehicle of fantasy and science fiction, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* reveals the harsh reality that black women have been historically exploited for their labor and their master’s pleasure in Brazil. A similar dynamic of Afrodescendant women’s special appeal in Brazilian culture and violence committed against black women plays out in *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* by Nazarethe Fonseca, a female author who has not yet enjoyed the same critical attention as the previous two male authors analyzed in this article. Like *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* and *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares*, Fonseca’s vampire novel reimagines history with vampires. Thus, in the same way as the two previously-analyzed novels, Fonseca’s “cannibalizes” the vampire within a Brazilian context and perpetuates the myth of *antropofagia* in Brazil, even if it reverses colonial

stereotypes by casting Brazil's Eurodescendant aristocracy, rather than its indigenous peoples, in the role of man-eating cannibals. In *Dom Pedro I Vampiro*, the vampires are not an almost-extinct indigenous race like in Lodi-Ribeiro's novel but rather, like in Jaf's, hold the highest positions of power in Brazil's colonial and Imperial governments. To develop how Pedro's attained his immortality as a vampire, the novel alternates chapters between Pedro's contemporary life in São Paulo and his checkered past as the first Emperor of Brazil. Also playing with Dom Pedro's historical reputation as a womanizer, the novel selects the seductive vampire as an apt fantasy alter ego for him.

Like the novels previously analyzed in this article, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* therefore blends historical and fictional elements in order to tell truth through fantasy. On the eve of independence from Portugal, Pedro I discovers that one of his most trusted confidants, Durval, harbors the grave secret that he is a vampire. Durval dramatically reveals his true identity by inflicting a fatal bite on one of his female slaves:

O conde avançou sobre uma das escravas e a mordeu. O corpo da mulher se contorceu de dor, ela tentava lutar, mas a força do vampiro era esmagadora. Ele sugou o sangue da ferida aberta enquanto fitava o príncipe. Quando a soltou, estava morta. De pé com a boca suja de sangue, o conde fitou Pedro e falou com segurança.

“— Sou um vampiro e me orgulho muito disso. (Fonseca 90)

On the one hand, this scene revises the Freyrian myth of cordial slavery, in which the inherently mixed “Brazilian race” was born out of the harmonious relationship between male masters and female slaves. Through the symbol of the vampire as a powerful master and cruel slave owner, the novel reveals the violence behind the myth of *mestiçagem*. Nevertheless, the novel is more complex than an outright censure of the myth. Like Freyre, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* depicts the black woman as a sensual figure in the following passage:

A mulher de pele escura trajava um vestido de linho a gosto da época. Os dois seios estavam comprimidos pelo espartilho, que a deixava extremamente sedutora. No pescoço havia um lenço encobrendo certamente uma marca de mordida. Os cabelos estavam perfumados e penteados no alto da cabeça por um laçarote. Estava descalça e sorriu quando o príncipe a sentou em seu colo. Sedutor como era, envolveu a jovem com galanteios, beijos na orelha, no pescoço e, por fim, no colo desnudo. A escrava sorriu e afastou o lenço oferecendo ao príncipe sua veia. (Fonseca 181)

Just as in *Casa grande e senzala*, the depictions of black women in *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* are limited to this sensualized stereotype. However, whereas Freyre overlooks the violence of masters and slaves, Fonseca allegorizes it using vampires and victims. Nevertheless, both depict sensuality as natural in black women, thus adapting the twentieth-century myth of *mestiçagem* to the twenty-first century. Therefore, like *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil* and *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* before it, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* recasts black women once again in a position of victimhood instead of agency. In all three vampire novels, black women characters tend to have no names and no voice but their screams. Contemporary vampire fiction thus recycles the Freyrian myth of the sexually receptive black female necessary for the symbolic birth of Brazil's mixed-racial national identity.

Beyond his historical role as the first Emperor of Brazil, Pedro's fictional role in *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* is as an average inhabitant among some twelve million others in São Paulo's vast metropolis. Due to Dom Pedro's immortality resulting from Durval's fateful bite, the novel spans his double life between his public identity in the nineteenth century and his secret identity as a vampire in the present day. When his past comes back to haunt him over a century after abdicating his post as the Emperor of Brazil, he depends on his neighbor Eva to fight alongside him. In the process, Eva discovers that she possesses hidden powers of her own. At the end of the novel, Eva assumes her inherited role as the queen of the succubae. Both immortals, she and Pedro marry in order to spend the rest of eternity together. In this way *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* illustrates Ginway's point that, "Whereas capture by a vampire was equated with eternal damnation by Victorian audiences, several contemporary American vampire tales portray such an event as leading to a type of happy ending and the beginning of a new existence" ("Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women" 286). Based in nineteenth-century colonial Rio de Janeiro and present-day São Paulo, *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* participates in Brazil's tradition of literary *antropofagia* by adapting and "Brazilianizing" the contemporary U.S. vampire narrative, love plot, happy ending, and all. However, the Brazilian vampire is not any more or less culturally authentic than any other regional vampire since, as studies on global vampire myths suggest, every vampire legend is the adaptation of another. In other words, the origins of the vampire are shrouded in darkness and mystery. Rather than representing any one sole place and time in history, the vampire is an expression of the particular cultural anxieties of the society that imagines it.

Beyond *antropofagia*, therefore, perhaps the vampire narrative represents its own cultural tradition of biting into and feeding off of previous narratives in order to eternally replenish itself in the universal literary imagination. Grandiose and universalizing conjectures aside, my analysis of contemporary Brazilian vampire novels builds on Ginway's view that, "For today's readers, with more liberal, multicultural views, the vampire is an attractive modern-day outsider hero"

(“Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women” 286). While Ginway applies this reading to *O vampiro de Nova Holanda*, Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro’s extension of the previous novella in his novel *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares* illustrates the complex tension between revising and perpetuating the modern Brazilian cultural myths of *antropofagia* and *mestiçagem*. As I have mentioned, Ginway aims to go beyond the vampire as what she calls an “obvious metaphor for colonization” by showing that “Dentes Compridos also asserts New World racial mixture over Old World notions of racial purity” (“Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women” 290). However, it is exactly in modernizing the Old-World vampire in a Brazilian cultural context that contemporary Brazilian vampire literature falls into the modern national myths of *antropofagia* and *mestiçagem*. Echoing Freyre and his impact on mass culture in Brazil, all three novels I have analyzed tend to highlight and mythicize Afrodescendant women’s sensuality. Like Freyre, the novels ultimately mean to present this as a positive attribute. However, unlike Freyre, the novels also depict the same hyper-sensuality as the reason they are targeted by vampires.

In this way, the vampire represents an allegory for the violence against black women hidden deep within the heart of the myths of *mestiçagem* and racial harmony in Brazil. Charged with both violent and sexual connotations, the vampiric act of sucking the blood from enslaved black women in *O vampiro que descobriu o Brasil*, *Aventuras do vampiro de Palmares*, and *Dom Pedro I Vampiro* simultaneously revises and perpetuates the Freyrian myth of *mestiçagem* for a new generation of readers in Brazil. These novels are therefore important in how they reveal the loosening but still steadfast grip of Freyre’s legacy on the popular cultural imagination in Brazil. In rewriting of history with the participation of vampires, in other words, contemporary Brazilian vampire literature does not put a silver bullet to *antropofagia* and *mestiçagem* but rather strengthens them as two of Brazil’s most persistently undying (and undead) modern national myths.

Notes

¹ “Carneiro,” literally sheep, may be used as an epithet for an innocent person or fool in Brazilian Portuguese slang.

² See “Máfia dos vampiros é outra preocupação de Delúbio Soares,” <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/mafia-dos-vampiros-outra-preocupacao-de-delubio-soares-6037503>.

³ For a well-developed definition of speculative fiction, see the Oxford Research Encyclopedia’s article on the topic: “speculative fiction in its most recent understanding is a fuzzy set super category that houses all non-mimetic genres—genres that in one way or

another depart from imitating consensus reality—from fantasy, science fiction, and horror to their derivatives, hybrids, and cognate genres, including the gothic, dystopia, zombie, vampire and post-apocalyptic fiction, ghost stories, weird fiction, superhero tales, alternate history, steampunk, slipstream, magic realism, retold or fractured fairy tales, and many more” (Oziewicz 2).

⁴ See Hayden White’s “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact” (1978), which more briefly discusses the main points made in his seminal *Metahistory* (1978).

⁵ For a discussion on the Valladolid debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda about the role of Spanish conquest in the Americas, see Anthony Pagden’s *The Fall of Natural Man: the American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (1982).

⁶ For a concise discussion of Brazilian Modernism, see Giovanni Ponteiro’s chapter “Brazilian Poetry from Modernism to the 1990s.” *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*.

⁷ In addition to Ginway’s article “Vampires, Werewolves and Strong Women: Alternate Histories or the Re-Writing of Race and Gender in Brazilian History” (2003), which I discuss later, see also her books *Brazilian Science Fiction: Cultural Myths and Nationhood in the Land of the Future* (2004) and her co-edited collection of essays *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice* (2012).

⁸ The phrase comes from Schwarz’s book *Ao vencedor as batatas: forma literária e processo social nos inícios do romance brasileiro* (1977) and refers in particular to European liberal capitalism as being an idea out of place in Brazil, whose economy and society were founded on agriculture and slavery.

⁹ This article uses Ática’s sixth edition, reprinted in 2015.

¹⁰ For a discussion of Padre Antônio Vieira’s role in sermonizing against the ill-treatment of indigenous peoples by Portuguese colonists in Brazil, see Thomas M. Cohen’s *The Fire of Tongues: Antônio Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (1998).

¹¹ See Eakin’s third chapter of *Becoming Brazilians*, “Visualizing *Mestiçagem*: Literature, Film, and the *Mulata*”: “Braga became the premier visual image of *mestiço* nationalism through her portrayal of iconic *mulatas* in the cinema (and television) of the 1970s and 1980s. In some of the most important films, she brought to the screen the most emblematic figures of print culture – most prominently the best known *mulata* in Brazilian literary culture, Gabriela in Jorge Amado’s classic novel, *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*” (111).

¹² For example, the chapter dedicated to “Os Filhos-da-Noite” explains, “O jovem Dentes Compridos foi ensinado que um filho-da-noite poderia substituir muito tempo sem beber dos vidas-curtas. Muitas e muitas luas, embora a abstinência o tornasse cada vez mais fraco. Era possível sobreviver ao suplício por quase uma geração humana. Mas não eternamente. E, decerto, não incólume” (Lodi-Ribeiro 26-7).

¹³ See page 10, “Durante quatro noites seguidas, o filho-da-noite ingressou sem ser notado no amplo sobrado oferecido ao militar paulista. Em cada uma das investidas, uma vez invadidos os aposentos particulares do proprietário, bebeu o suficiente para deixar o organismo da presa ainda vivo, mas assaz debilitado. Sorveu o sangue venoso devagar, com delicada parcimônia. Para não deixar cicatrizes extensas, mordida o luso no interior da coxa” (Lodi-Ribeiro).

¹⁴ See Chapter 2 of Part 2, “Escrúpulos de Vampiro.”

¹⁵ For more sources on the role of “Natural Law” in the Sepúlveda and Las Casas debates over Spanish conquest in the Americas, see Lewis Hanke’s *Aristotle and the American Indians; a Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (1959) and José Alejandro Cárdenas Bunsen’s *Escritura y derecho canónico en la obra de fray Bartolomé de las Casas* (2011).

¹⁶ See the preface to *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen xiii).

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