Hans Staden and the Cultural Politics of Cannibalism

Neil L. Whitehead

Hans Staden's *Warhaftige historia und beschreibung eyner landtschafft der wilden, nacketen, grimmigen menschfresser leuthen in der Newenwelt America gelege* is a fundamental text in the history of the discovery of Brazil.[1] In fact, it is the earliest account we have of the Tupi Indians from an eyewitness who was captive among them for over nine months, and a key reference in the resurgent debate on cannibalism and its discourses—a debate that partly has its origins in the speculations of Michel de Montaigne, who also conversed with Tupi people who were brought as living exhibits to France. Despite this intellectual genealogy, there has not been an English-language edition since 1929, and no translation into modern German since 1942. Neither has there been a critical introduction that brings ethnographic experience of ritual anthropophagy to the task of interpretation, using other anthropological research on anthropophagic discourse, or literary criticism of the cannibal trope. I am currently collaborating with Michael Harbsmeier (University of Roskilde, Denmark) to make good these deficiencies, through the production of a new critical edition of Staden's 1557 work that will feature a new translation from the sixteenth-century German, close annotation of the text itself and discussion of the circumstances of its production, its ethnological significance, and subsequent intellectual importance, with particular emphasis on current debate concerning cannibalism.

The purpose of this paper is to outline an approach to some of these critical questions, especially the issue of the cultural politics of cannibalism. As a cultural category, cannibalism has always incorporated ethnological judgments of others, albeit usually negative in character, and so regardless of how, when,

1. *True History and Description of a Land Belonging to the Wild, Naked, Savage, Man-munching People, Situated in the New World, America* (Marburg, 1557) (my translation).

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or by whom it was created, the ethnological record has an empirical as well as a logical connection with cannibalism. This was clearly argued by Arens,[2] and I do not wish to rehearse or become enmeshed in his controversies at this time. However, part of the current importance of a text like Staden's is precisely the way in which it fits into current debates on knowing or interpreting others distant in both cultural space and historical time. The text itself is not uniquely important among the class of colonial documents more generally, but the appearance of the cannibal sign in its earliest and most intense form through Staden's text, impart particular relevance to a renewed engagement with the *Warhaftige historia*. Recent anthropological publications, especially *Sick Societies* (1992), *War Before Civilization* (1996), *The Anthropology of Cannibalism* (1999), and *Man Corn* (1999) have all thrust into wider cultural debate renewed images of violent, primitive savagery as the all-too-inevitable condition of humans.[3] One might also reference here our related cultural obsessions with cannibal serial killers,[4] as well as ethnic violence in the tribal zones[5] of the modern world-system, particularly where they are expressed through unspeakable forms of mutilation and dismemberment. However, various recent ethnographic and historical studies clearly show that more is at play than a collapse into savagery in this resurgence of "traditional" forms of violence.[6] In short, the time is right to reexamine that initial cannibal encounter along the Brazilian shore.

2. See Wiliam Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), and his "Rethinking Anthropophagy," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998).

3. Robert B. Edgerton, *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Hegemony* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992); Lawrence H. Keeley, *War before Civilization* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996); Laurence R. Goldman, ed., *The Anthropology of Cannibalism* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1999); C.G. Turner, *Man Corn: Cannibalism and Violence in the Prehistoric American Southwest* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1997).

4. Denis Duclos, *The Werewolf Complex: America's Fascination with Violence* trans. Amonda Puigree (New York: Berg Press, 1998); and Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

5. Neil L. Whitehead, "Deceptive Images of Tribal War," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10 November 1993.

6. K. George, *Showing Signs of Violence: The Cultural Politics of a Twentieth-Century Headhunting Ritual* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996); J. Hendricks, *To Drink of Death: The Narrative of a Shuar Warrior* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1993); Janet Hoskins, ed., *Headhunting and the Social Imagination in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996); Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, "Feasting on My

The Text

The text of the *Warhaftige historia* originally comprised 165 folios and 56 woodcuts, and there is only one edition in which those woodcuts appear, that is, the first published in Marburg on Shrove Tuesday in 1557, by Andres Kolben at the sign of the Clover Leaf. A second edition also appeared in that year, in Frankfurt, but the original woodcuts—probably done under Staden's direct supervision since his figure regularly appears in the scenes—were replaced by utterly irrelevant pictures of Turkey and the Levant.[7] The Marburg woodcuts are a vastly underappreciated aspect of the text—possibly because they only appeared in the first edition and because they were evidently a source of inspiration for the reworking of the Staden material for presentation by Théodore de Bry in his collection of voyages.[8] Since this work was also issued in Frankfurt we might assume that it simply supplanted the original Staden material, both because of the better reproductive quality of the de Bry graphics, and because of their greater accessibility as part of a widely disseminated collection in numerous editions.

In the intervening years between the first edition of the *Warhaftige historia* in 1557 and the inclusion of a Latin translation of the text in de Bry's 1592 collection, two further editions appeared in 1558 and 1567, respectively. In addition to the de Bry edition, there were two more Latin translations in 1605 and 1630, in which year there was also the first Dutch edition. A fourth edition of the original German appeared in folio, again in Frankfurt, in 1593. There were an additional ten editions, in German, Dutch, and French by the end of the nineteenth century. The first English-language translation was made by Albert Tootal for the Hakluyt Society under the editorship of Richard Burton, who

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Enemy: Images of Violence and Change in the New Guinea Highlands," *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 4 (1999); Christopher Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (New York: Berg Press, 1999); Neil L. Whitehead, "Kanaimá: The Cultural Practice and Political Morphology of Ritual Death in the Pakaraima Mountains, Guyana" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, 1998); Neil L. Whitehead and R. B. Ferguson, ed., *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, 2d ed. (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1999); G. Yue, *The Mouth That Begs: Hunger, Cannibalism and the Politics of Eating in Modern China* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1999); and Yi Zheng, *Scarlet Memorial: Tales of Cannibalism in Modern China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

7. Montaigne also appears to have associated Turks with cannibals through his imitation of Postel's work on the Ottoman. See F. Lestringant, *Cannibals* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), 53.

8. Theodore de Bry, *Americae Tertia Pars* (Frankfurt, 1592).

was the British consul to Brazil in the early 1870s. There have been a number of facsimile editions since then, but only one other English translation made by Malcolm Letts.[9]

Although French- and Portuguese-language sources have dominated the representation of Tupi cannibalism, Staden's text is indispensable to anybody interested in the study of sixteenth-century Brazil. There are good reasons for this interpretative emphasis on French and Portuguese materials, including the breadth of commentary through time, the overtly ethnological ambitions of their authors who were relatively educated and literate, their accessibility, and the fact that they were the product of a set of political, military, and economic relationships more enduring than personal encounter. Nonetheless, Staden's highly personal account was born of a very distinct and intense experience that lasted just over nine months and in this sense was the more properly ethnographic, understood as a dialogic and sustained encounter, than the priestly ethnologies, understood as principally synthetic and second-hand. However, Staden's text is not without the imprimatur of ethnological, if not liturgical, approval for the account of his captivity itself is preceded by an introduction by Johannes Dryander.[10] The endorsement is given by Dryander since he had known Staden's father for "upwards of 50 years" and as the proverb says, "The apple tastes of the tree. It is to be expected, therefore, that the son of so worthy a man should resemble his father in virtue and piety."[11]

However, it is more than a simple endorsement for Dryander also says that he was asked by Staden "to revise[12] it and where necessary correct it." The

9. Malcolm Letts, *Hans Staden: The True History of His Captivity* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928). As a new translation is in preparation, all quotations in English are from the Letts edition unless otherwise stated.

10. Dryander was a professor of anatomy and medicine at Marburg until his death in 1560, and he took a close interest in ethnological description. See Michael Harbsmeier, "Spontaneous Ethnographies: Towards a Social History of Traveller's Tales," *Studies in Travel Writing* 1 (1997).

11. Dryander's introduction to *Warhaftige historia*.

12. This paper will not address issues arising from the translation of the original German since this is a part of the project that is still in hand. However, the differing interpretations of Richard Burton via Albert Tootal and Malcolm Letts are often germane. In the passage under discussion, the Burton edition suggests that corrections were only made "if necessary" and the implication of heavy revision by Dryander is absent. Letts also took it upon himself to spare his readers some of the details of the cannibalistic rites by suppressing the original German. See Letts, *Hans Staden*, 182 n. 86; and Richard F. Burton, *Veritable Historie and Description of a Country Belonging to the Wild, Naked, Savage, Man-munching People, Situated in the New World, America* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1874), 158–9.

introduction thus deals with a number of matters, principally the probity of Staden's testimony, the cultural and epistemological status of eyewitness accounts of the strange lands (largely by analogy to the way in which astronomical knowledge is established contra theology), Staden's motives for publishing his account as pious rather than vainglorious, the power of prayer and trust in God to produce deliverance and redemption, and the duty of those so redeemed to communicate this to their fellows. Dryander notes that Staden was verbally interrogated in his presence by Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, to whom Staden also dedicates the book. Staden himself chooses to quote Psalm 107,[13] further underlining the profoundly religious approach with which he mediated and represented that experience.

Dryander also presumably oversaw the production of part 2 of the actual text which is essentially an ethnological appendix to the "direct" testimony of Staden himself which comprises part 1. The intellectual context and purpose of that ethnological exercise will be a most pertinent aspect of our proposed commentary, but it is the testimony of Staden himself which I wish to concentrate on here.

The Testimony

Little else is known of Hans Staden aside from the story of his captivity in Brazil. In 1547 he was in Lisbon, where there was a German commercial colony, in hope of finding employment as a ship's gunner. He set sail in June of that year on a ship transporting convicts, which had orders to attack any French interlopers off the Brazilian coast. He reached Pernambuco in January 1548 (see chaps. 1–5 in Staden's account), and then returned to Portugal in October 1548, but sailed again in March 1549 on a Spanish vessel that was part of a new expedition to Rio de la Plata. Unfavorable weather broke up the fleet, which was partially reunited at the Portuguese colony of São Vicente (Santos). Here the Portuguese were allied with the Tupinikin, which meant that the Tupinambá to the north were hostile to their settlement, the Tupinambá in turn being allied with the French. Staden was persuaded to stay in Portuguese service for a further two years, acting as a gunner in a new Portuguese fort to the east of São Vincente on the island of São Amaro, opposite the existing fort of Brikioka. It was during this period that he was captured by the Tupinambá and the bulk of his text describes the events leading up to this episode and his subsequent captivity.

13. The psalm opens with the lines, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: These see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep."

While out hunting in the vicinity of the fort, Staden was surprised by a party of Tupinambá warriors. Stripped naked and beaten, Staden was immediately carried off by his captors (see figure 1) towards their settlement of Uwattibi (Ubatúba). Given his treatment and the words of his captors, it was apparent (though perhaps only with hindsight) that he was destined for sacrifice—*kawewi pepicke*—as a prisoner of war. However, his two years of service in the fort had given him opportunity to learn the Tupi language and this was to serve him well. As Staden candidly tells us, "At this time I knew less of their customs than I knew later, and I thought to myself: now they are preparing to kill me."[14]

Staden at least had the wit to understand that if the Tupi mistook him for a Portuguese they would certainly kill him, so he began an interminable struggle to play off the fact that he was a German and thus be exempted from the cycle of political revenge between Portuguese and Tupinambá. To that end, and not withstanding his positive identification by a Tupinambá captured in a Portuguese and Tupinikin raid and enslaved to the Portuguese at Brikioka,[15] he attempted to persuade a French trader who was living four miles from Uwattibi to vouch for the fact that he was not Portuguese.

> Then they took me to him, naked as I was, and I found him to be a youth known to the savages by the name Karwattuware. He commenced to speak to me in French, which I could not well understand, and the savages stood round about and listened. Then when I was unable to reply to him, he spoke to the savages in their own tongue and said: 'Kill him and eat him, the good-for-nothing, for he is indeed a Portuguese, your enemy and mine.' This I understood, and I begged him for the love of God to tell them not to eat me, but he replied only: 'They will certainly eat you.'[16]

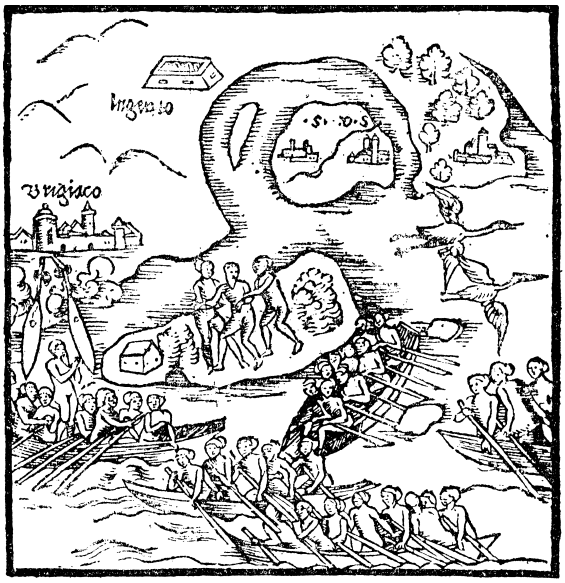
Staden was abandoned to his fate.[17] He was duly prepared to be ritually killed, but a timely attack of toothache, which his captors tried to remedy by a

14. Letts, *Hans Staden*, chap. 22.

15. Ibid., chap. 25. Staden elaborates, "the savages among whom the Portuguese dwell had waged war on the Tuppin Imbas and had captured a whole village, killing and eating the grown men. But the young ones had been carried off and bartered to the Portuguese for goods, and among them was this young man."

16. Ibid., chap. 26.

17. Ibid. Staden adds, "the savages said only, 'He is indeed a true Portuguese. Now he cries. Truly he is afraid to die.'"



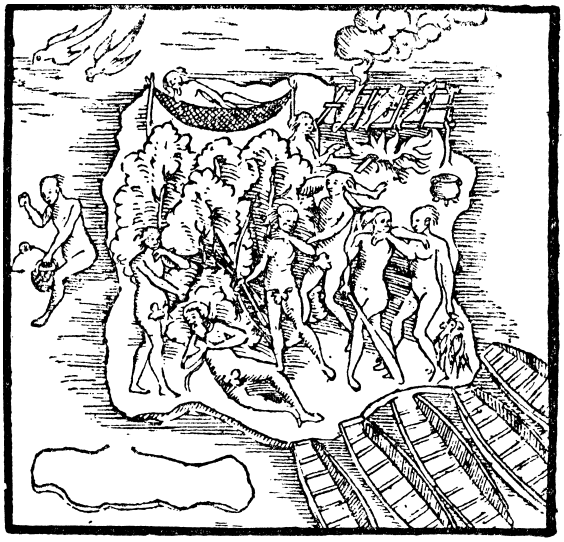


Figure 1. Hans is Captured and Carried Away. Source: Malcolm Letts, ed. and trans., *Hans Staden: The True Story of His Captivity, 1557* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928), 63, 67.

Figure 2. Hans and the Tupinikins. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 82.

forcible dental extraction, led him to refuse food and he grew correspondingly thin, although they "threatened that if I do not eat and grow fat again they would kill me before the appointed day."[18] Questioned as to the disposition of the Portuguese, Staden suggested that it was the Tupinikin who were planning to attack his captors. When this prediction came true, not only was Staden's status as a possible prophet-shaman established, but he also reluctantly joined them in defending Uwattibi against the Tupinikin attack (see figure 2). Following this prophetic event, Staden went on to suggest, when asked one night why he looked at the moon so intently, that the moon was angry with the Tupinambá (see figure 3). This proved, whether by luck or judgement, to be a most culturally effective observation since it produced both curiosity and alarm among his captors.[19] When his captors themselves subsequently fell sick,[20] this became a further opportunity for Staden to perform as a shamanic-healer and to suggest that he had interceded with his god to relieve them of the sickness that afflicted them (see figure 4). Staden tells us, "I went to and fro laying my hands on their

18. Ibid., chap. 27.

19. See Isabelle Combés, *La tragédie cannibale chez les anciens Tupi-Guarani* (Paris: P.U.F., 1992), 83–118 for a discussion of the significance of the moon and sun in Tupian cannibal cosmology.

20. It is clear that epidemic disease was ravaging Tupi populations at this time and this must be highly significant factor in the plausibility given to Staden's acting out of shamanic roles.

Figure 3. The Captors Fall III. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 83.

Figure 4. Hans as Healer. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 87.

Figure 5. Eating Another Slave. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 100.

heads as they desired me to do, but God did not suffer it and they began to die."[21] This, nonetheless, ultimately proved to be a politically-effective and culturally-affective action; in particular, the recovery of the chieftains Jeppipo Wasu, Vratinge Wasu, and Kenrimakui, despite the deaths of other members of their families, meant that "there was no more talk of eating me. But they guarded me closely and would not suffer me to go about unattended."[22] Staden thus had ample opportunity and the linguistic abilities to understand and record what occurred around him and it is this aspect of his text that speaks most strongly to his subsequent commentators. It is notable that both contemporary and subsequent sources may add to and amplify, but do not contradict or undermine, his account of the Tupinambá.

The peculiar new status of Staden also meant the Frenchman, Karwattuware, was now prepared to say that Staden was indeed a German and was different from the Portuguese. But despite the offer of trade goods the Tupinambá were not about to give up their strange but powerful, new prophet-healer. Staden recounts how he observed the cannibalism of other captives and the frustrating attempts he made to escape with various visiting ships (see figure 5).

21. Letts, *Hans Staden*, chap. 34.
22. Ibid., chap. 24.

Figure 6. Raids Against Enemy Villages. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 107.

Figure 7. Fate of the Prisoners. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 108.

He also joined them on raids against enemy villages (see figure 6) and observed and commented upon the practice of war and the cannibalism of captives, including Portuguese (see figure 7). Finally, however, Staden was able to parlay his way aboard a French ship, although he nearly died of a serious gunshot wound when they encountered a Portuguese vessel off the Brazilian coast. He finally arrived in Honfleur, France, on 20 February 1555.

The narrative tension at the heart of Staden's text is how his experience of the cannibal Tupi, which was far more extensive and "ethnographic" than that of either Léry and Thevet, threatens to continuously overwhelm the religious and ethnological testament that he, and his ghostly interlocutor Dryander, wish to make. Thus Staden's captivity among the Tupi is used to produce a homily of redemption and faith in which Tupi cannibalism is but one of the many tests and redemptive proofs of faith the text offers. The threat of bodily and spiritual dissolution through the visceral certainty of customary cannibalism is not the only test that Staden's god inflicts upon him, and other physical dangers—shipwreck, disease (both epidemic and dental), gunfire, and the perfidy of the French—also loom large as moments in which evidence of Staden's god become manifest.

However, his experience undermines this didactic purpose since the vivid nature of Staden's experiences while captive among the Tupi, that is Staden's engagement with actual cannibals, at all points threatens to escape the straitjacket of Christian testimonial and ethnological distancing into which he and Dryander try to encase it. In this light the text may also be understood as part of Staden's "ritual of return," which allows both him and us to give meaning, purpose and to derive cultural illumination from the otherwise "incomprehensible" experience of being captive among the Tupi.[23] But before considering the nature of that experience, as it bears on questions of Tupi ethnology, and how the resulting text has been used by subsequent commentators, it is necessary to situate the *Warhaftige historia* in relation to the other more copious and better known accounts of the sixteenth-century Tupi.

The French Texts and Their Testament

Frank Lestringant has recently analyzed the intellectual genealogy of the cannibal and in particular the texts that derive from the Brazilian shore in the six-

23. See Michael Harbsmeier, *Wilde völkerkunde: Andere welten im deutschen reisebeerichten der frühen neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1994), and his "Spontaneous Ethnographies."

teenth century.[24] He has rightly emphasized the way in which the cannibal was a colonial mirror of not just violence but also spirituality. Lestringant sees a progressive degradation of the image and iconicity of cannibals from the initial encounters with the Tupi, propagandized by Michel de Montaigne, to the nineteenth century show ground "Kaffirs" observed by Gustave Flaubert.[25] Although Lestringant has much of importance to say on the French sources, especially Jean de Léry (1578) and André Thevet (1558), his overall notion of a progressive degradation actually seems to be belied by the *Warhaftige historia*—which he does not consider at all—since for Staden, as we have seen, the cannibal sign is at best ambiguous. For Staden, the intellectual connection between Tupi cannibalism and Christian thought is not one of threatening homology, as for Léry, Montaigne, or Thevet, but of analogy with other tests of faith. In this sense the humanity of the Tupi world emerges in Staden's text through comparison with the treacherous French, and his identification with other intended sacrificees, or with the just revenge that is visited upon them[26]—that is despite, not because of, the practice of cannibalism.

For Lestringant, the subsequent degradation in European writings of the humanity of cannibals on the Brazilian shore is paralleled by an increasing inability to make sense of the anthropophagic act as it evolves from sacrificial ritual into merely a response to the poverty of material circumstances or exigencies of survival—a hunger cannibalism de-fleshed of its cultural meanings.[27] However Lestringant himself also plays directly into the cultural politics of cannibalism at the present time, calling William Arens a "sensation-*hungry* journalist" (with no acknowledgment of the irony here) rather than an "exact historian," for his "denial" of cannibalism.[28] At the risk of also being "consumed" by this controversy, one should at least note that Arens didn't deny the historical possibility of cannibalism but rather criticized the kind of evidence that has often been advanced to suggest its occurrence. His examination of that evidence itself is not always so reliable, and Lestringant[29] in turn is somewhat

24. Lestringant, *Cannibals*.

25. Ibid., 4.

26. Staden tells us that a captured Cario slave "urged the savages constantly to kill me" and that when this man fell ill, Staden told them, "on account of his lying stories about me my God was angry and smote him with sickness and put it in your minds to kill and eat him. So will my God do to all evil persons who seek or have sought to injure me." See Lett, *Hans Staden*, chap. 39.

27. Lestringant, *Cannibals*.

28. Ibid., 6.

29. Ibid., 7.

credulous in his acceptance of the archaeological evidence of Anasazi cannibalism —and of course the very indeterminacy as to what constitutes cannibalism, that is what is to count as anthropophagic, is often the real dispute here.[30] However, the easy elision of any evidence of mutilation and dismemberment with a demonstration of cannibalism does mean that Lestringant is ethnologically ill-equipped to recognize possibly significant aspects of the texts he discusses. For example, in his discussion of Thevet's tale of the Tabajare Indian, who after having traveled to France and being baptized was hacked to pieces by enemies on his return to Brazil, Lestringant notes that, "For once, they did not eat their victim," as if want of opportunity or inclination held them back even as the victim was "butchered" as if for consumption.[31] But as Darling recently has shown with regard to the peoples of the southwestern United States, including the Anasazi, this may well be misinterpretation of the purposes for which human bodies might be dismembered and de-fleshed, since "witches" and "sorcerers" might be so treated in order to ensure their metaphysical, as well as physical, death; in this case, cannibalism is not appropriate.[32]

Despite this lack of ethnological sensitivity, Lestringant has the powerful and important ambition to retrieve the "proud and cruel eloquence" of the cannibal from beneath the weight of commentary of the last two decades (and the intervening centuries).[33] This emphasis on the conjunction of orality and oratory in the cannibal act is certainly consonant with other recent anthropological interpretations,[34] and more generally this intellectual program also recovers the cannibal as an anticolonialist sign, much in the manner of the Brazilian *antropofagia* movement,[35] as a mark of liberty in the face of colonial

30. For example, one might say that logically the Tupi were not cannibals at all, not because they were not eaters of human flesh, but because such an act was not allelophagic within their own theology, as Cunhambebe's words, quoted in this article, could be taken to imply. See also E. Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View: Humanity and Divinity in an Amazonian Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 304.

31. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 62.

32. J. Andrew Darling, "Mass Inhumatin and the Execution of Witches in the American Southwest," *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (1998). For other examples of assault sorcery, see Whitehead, *Kanaimá*; and Stewart and Strathern, "Feasting on My Enemy."

33. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 7.

34. E. Basso, *The Last Cannibals: A South American Oral History* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1995); Combès, *La tragédie cannibale chez les anciens Tupi-Guarani*; Hendricks, *To Drink of Death*; and Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*.

35. Sergio L.P. Bellei, "Brazilian Anthropology Revisited," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); and Luís Madureira, "Lapses in Taste: 'Cannibal-tropicalist'

oppression. This was also the use of Karipuna (Caräibe) cannibalism in the Caribbean[36] during a later epoch of French colonialism in the seventeenth century.[37] In tandem with this emancipatory use of the cannibal sign a paradoxical discourse of cannibalism as "unbearable constraint" also emerged,[38] as a mark of an economic and political tyranny that eats up its victims. Cannibalism thus becomes allegorized, particularly by Montaigne and Léry, as slavery, feudalism, usury, and conquest. However, Isabel Combés,[39] has offered a forceful argument for resisting this generalization, lest we lose the particularity of Tupian cultural praxis, formulated contra René Girard,[40] who sees here only a exemplum of the universal notion of the scapegoat.

Lestringant[41] also discusses the centrality of the religious debate as to the meaning and form of the Christian Eucharist in the French sources, and it is this aspect that is the starting point for Montaigne's consideration."[42] For Montaigne, both Tupi and Christian rules of cannibalism are communal, related to the worship of the dead and done in the hope of benefit to the group. But the key question for the differentiation of Catholic and Protestant liturgy then becomes whether this is a literal homology present in the moment of transubstantiation or an analogy of spiritual nourishment that replenishes and feeds faith indefinitely. For Montaigne, as a Catholic, the assimilation of the Tupi practice to the Christian belief is an obstacle to the humanistic embrace of the Tupi. Notably it is a question that does not arise at all for Staden. However, Montaigne fails finally to condemn the Tupi precisely because of the parallels in symbolic practice that Léry explicitly elaborates.

Without the possible religious significance of the parallels between Tupian

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Cinema and the Brazilian Aesthetic of Underdevelopment," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World.*

36. A "tupinambization" of the Caraïbe can also be recognized in sixteenth-century French sources through the way in which the previous French encounters in Brazil lead to transliteration of certain native terms and a similar framework of explanation for the cannibal rite, although this does not preclude ethnological relatedness. See Neil L. Whitehead, *Wolves from the Sea: Readings in the Archaeology and Anthropology of the Island Carib* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995), 93 n. 4.

37. Peter Hulme and Neil L. Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); and Whitehead, *Wolves from the Sea*.

38. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 8.

39. Combés, *La tragédie cannibale*, 81.

40. René Girard, *La violence et le sacré* (Paris: Grasset, 1977), 383.

41. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 9.

42. Michel de Montaigne, *Essais* (Paris: n. p., 1580).

and Christian Eucharist, the subsequent fate of the cannibal is to be superfluous and so anachronistic, fit only for eradication, as with that "exterminating angel" Robinson Crusoe.[43] And so the cannibals come to be seen as responding to their bio-ecological conditions not their culture, or, in the act of erasure that Lestringant[44] rightly resists, the materiality of their acts are supplanted by the evanescence of a cultural discourse which "shifts the noise of teeth and lips towards the domain of language.[45] Nonetheless, Lestringant provides a perceptive and careful commentary on the major French sources relating to the Tupi of the Brazil shore in the sixteenth century. It is therefore all the more necessary that the *Warhaftige historia* of Hans Staden be situated within this commentary for the counterpoint it provides to the French sources, and since this is something Lestringant himself notably failed to do.

André Thevet, in his earliest[46] work on Brazil, *Les singularitez de la France Antarctique*,[47] delineated a geography of man-eating that located the uncultured "cannibals" to the north towards the Amazon river, and the ritualized "anthropophages" in the orbit of French experience. Thus the former are characterized as cruel eaters of human flesh as a matter of diet, the latter as exponents of certain rituals of revenge. Not surprisingly this cannibal cosmography also conforms to the patterns of French trading and military alliances in the region.[48] But it is the matter of direct experience which needs special note here since Thevet, although often lauded as the "first ethnographer" of the Tupi, in fact composed his account, or had others do so, from a multiplicity of second-hand sources.[49] Thevet notes the progress of the cannibal rite in great detail and seems unable to resist an analogy with the preparation of roasting pig in French peasant culinary traditions.[50]

43. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 11.

44. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 12.

45. The separation of cannibal consumption and oratory was a distinction already present in Tupian thought. See Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 293.

46. Curiously Lestringant persistently conflates the date of publication of the *Warhaftige historia* (1557) with that of Thevet's work published a year later, perhaps in an unconscious occlusion of a text he does not discuss. See Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 44, 58, and 200 n. 10.

47. Thevet, *Les singularitez*.

48. Neil L. Whitehead, "Native American Cultures Along the Atlantic Littoral of South America, 1499–1650," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 81 (1993).

49. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 46.

50. Ibid., 58, 65–66. Lestringant suggests that "these particularities give the ethnographic tableau a vivid impression of truth" and that this was "raw information probably gathered in the course of his voyage to Brazil." But, taking Lestringant's own example of this supposed ethnographic veracity, we find that the description and depiction of

Figure 8. Preparations for the Feast. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 159.

However elaborate this ritual becomes in Thevet's subsequent account in the *Cosmographie*[51] and a manuscript work *Histoire de . . . deux voyages*,[52] it is clear that vengeance is the hermeneutic key to understanding the meaning of the cannibal act, such that description of the careful distribution of the victims body parts and the embedding of the ritual in myth, becomes central to these later works. However, this ritual and spiritual inflation of the cannibal act to ongoing tragic theater, as beautifully elaborated by Combès,[53] may to some extent be predicated on the "narrative dyslexia" of unsorted evidence noted by Lestringant.[54]

Montaigne,[55] in turn, merges this geography but restricts the notion of the cannibal to the Tamoio, as constructed by Thevet 20 years earlier and as contemporaneously read by Léry. Montaigne's method is to conjoin the sensationalism of cannibalism with an unexpected eulogy, mimicking another work of the period on the savageries and civilities of the Ottoman Turks.[56] As Lestringant[57] wryly notes, this particularization of the cannibal, unlike with Thevet, allows Montaigne to actually conceal the extent of his analytical and descriptive borrowing from Thevet through Léry, and directly from Léry himself. Unfortunately, Lestringant is utterly silent on how Staden's account, and particularly its visual materials, may also have had a significant impact on French accounts, or at the very least a direct bearing on their interpretation.

Since Léry, unlike Thevet and Montaigne, may have a stronger claim to a form of ethnographic engagement with the Tupi, rather than a more distant philosophical or ethnological interest, his work offers the most relevant counterpoint to the account of Staden. Thus it is important to note that he was only 21 years old when he went to Brazil. He was there, though not in the huts of the Tupinambás, from 1556 to 1558. Léry's account of this youthful adventure, *Histoire d'un voyage*,[58] was written some 20 years later, after he had

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the decoration of the execution club iwera pemme was already in Staden (see figures 9 and 10), as Gaffarel acknowledged in his edition of Thevet's *Les singularitez* (1558). See Paul Gaffarel, ed., *Les singularitez de la France Antarctique* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1878), 200, n. 1.

51. André Thevet, *Teres & isles decouvertes de nostre temps* (Paris: Chez le Heritiers de Maurice de la Porte, 1575).

52. ca. 1587–88, Paris Biblioteque nationale. MS fr. 15454. See Susan Lussagnet, *Les Francais en Amerique* (Paris: PUF, 1953), 237–310.

53. Combès, La tragédie cannibale chez les anciens.

54. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 65, 206 n.55.

55. De Montaigne, *Essais*.

56. Guillame Postel's La République des Turcs (Poitiers: Enguilbert de Marnef, 1560).

57. Lestringant, Cannibals, 54–55.

58. Jeab de Léry, *Historie d'un voyage faict en al terre du Brésil* (Geneva: Antoine Chuppin, 1578).

become a pastor in the church in Geneva, and he was stimulated to do so not by the original encounter but by the events of later life. In this sense, Léry unlike Staden writes with hindsight and youthful memory. He claimed not to have read Staden's work until 1586 and mentions it only in the editions of 1600 and 1611.[59] Léry's borrowing from Thevet, despite their theological differences, is more easily demonstrable. In fact, Léry actually adds very little new ethnographic evidence but nonetheless vastly enriches the interpretation and symbolic exploitation of that material.[60] In his writing, the cannibal becomes a universal symbolic and tropic key; the central motivation of vengeance is made systematic through an examination of various aspects of Tupi culture and he clearly allegorizes the act of eating. In this new framework of semiophagy the carnal and spiritual are expressed through the opposition of the raw and cooked. The northerly (or merely distant) bad cannibals, given specificity through the ethnological example of the Ouetacas, practice a cannibalism that shows no exercise of culinary, and so spiritual, art. However, a devolved cannibalism is also threateningly present inside as well as outside Tupi social space through the presence and enthusiastic participation of women in cannibal ritual. As a pastor Léry was also a witch-hunter of some enthusiasm in Europe,[61] so that the imagery of life-sucking hecuba and witch cannibalism of the innocent, play easily into his representation of Tupian ritual, as they do strikingly in de Bry's illustrations of the same (see figures 9 and 10). This misogyny is given further inflection in Léry's own biography since he encountered survival cannibalism during the siege of Sancerre,[62] just before turning to write the *Histoire d'un voyage*. A family was caught preparing to eat their dead child, a scene to which Léry was eyewitness. In his account, originally composed virtually on the spot, the ethical scene is broken down into the criminal and diabolical with the old woman of the house bearing the full weight of Léry's witch-centered view of female corruption. Indeed the trauma of this event, for so Léry represents it, is plausibly directly connected to his literary return to the

59. Janet Whatley, ed., *Jean de Léry: History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), 231 n. 26.

60. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 68–69.

61. Ibid., 70.

62. In 1573 the provincial town of Sancerre was besieged by the pro-Catholic forces during the Wars of Religion in France. See Robert McCune Kingdon, *Myths About the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres, 1572–1576* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988).

Figure 9. The Feast. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 163.

Figure 10. Eating the Enemy. Source: Theodore de Bry, *Discovering the New World*, ed. Michael Alexander (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 111.

Brazil shore of his youth.[63] Here Tupi cannibalism, as a rite of men, controlled and shaped by their desires, becomes acceptable in a way that the female seduction of masculinity and youth was not in Sancerre.

For Léry, cannibalism can also symbolize cruelty, usury, and a lack of charity and, as the meaning of the cannibal sign universalizes, so debate over the Eucharist bloats Léry's account of the Tupi materials to the point that even Villegagnon, leader of the French colony of Rio de Janeiro during Léry's time there, is identified on account of his Catholic views as a *soi-disant* Ouetaca.[64] So if the Tupian cannibal rite recapitulates at all points the Christian Eucharist, to prevent his readers turning away in ethnocentric disgust, Léry goes on to detail the unspeakable cruelties of European tyrants—including Dracula, by way of Vlad the Impaler. In this way Jean de Léry de-territorializes the cannibal who thus freed from the Brazil shore still roams the European and American imaginary.

63. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 74–80.
64. Ibid., 71.

Staden and Tupi Ethnology

The presence of the cannibal in the anthropological imaginary has been addressed principally by William Arens[65] and I have referred above to some of the controversies that work has engendered. It is clear that, whatever the methodological and theoretical benefits of his arguments that enjoin us to a careful and sophisticated approach to source materials, he clearly erred in his own application of those principles to the reading of the literature of cannibalism in South America.[66] This does not mean that the use of the textual materials relating to the early period of colonial encounter is unproblematic,[67] but it does suggest that we cannot dismiss Arens's wider point that anthropology as a cultural expression is no less apt to mythologize its object than any other academic or professional discipline. Arens's examination of the cannibal is as an exemplary case of this process but anthropology's approaches to gender, race or warfare also have often been highly prejudicial to the human subjects of those musings. So much is evident from the case of the Yanomami of Brazil and Venezuela whose representation by anthropologists as "fierce" may have served also to legitimate and justify military and criminal actions against them.[68]

The argument made here is that Staden's text, although seemingly minor compared to the copious ethnological productions of Léry, Montaigne, Thevet, as well as the extensive discussion of the Tupi and their cannibalism in the missionary literatures[69] should, in fact, be considered as critical to our understanding of the cannibal rituals of the Tupi. What the *Warhaftige his-*

65. See Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth*, and his "Rethinking Anthropophagy."

66. See Donald W. Forsyth, "Three Cheers for Hans Staden: The Case for Brazilian Cannibalism," *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 1 (1985); and Neil L. Whitehead, "Carib Cannibalism: The Historical Evidence," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 70, no. 1 (1984).

67. Neil L. Whitehead, "The Historical Anthropology of Text: The Interpretation of Ralegh's 'Discoverie,'" *Current Anthropology* 36 (1995); and idem, ed., *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, vol. 1 of the Exploring Travel Series (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1997) and vol. 71 of the American Exploration and Travel series (Norman: Oklahoma Univ. Press, 1998).

68. Alcida Rita Ramos, *Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Pres, 1998); and Neil L. Whitehead, "Yanomamology, Missiology, and Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 2 (1998).

69. See, for example, J. de Anchieta, *Cartas, informações, fragmentos históricos e sermões* (São Paulo: Univ. de São Paulo, 1988); C. d'Abbeville, *Historie de la mission des Pères Capuchins en l'Isle de Maragnan et terres circinfines* (Paris: Francois Huby, 1614); F. Cardim, "A Treatise of Brazil," *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* 16 (1906); Y. d'Evreux, *Voyage dans le nord du Brésil, fait durant les années 1613 et 1614* (Paris: Payot, 1985); and M. da Nóbrega, *Cartas do Brasil, 1549–1560* (Rio de Janeiro: n.p., 1931).

toria may lack in terms of that ethnological sophistication and systematics that induce both Lévi-Strauss[70] and Lestringant[71] to consider Léry's text to be the avatar of all Tupian ethnology, it more than makes good with proto-ethnographic tale of Staden's direct, personal, and extended engagement with the Tupi. This is shown in part by the way in which Staden's close observation and reporting of his interactions with the Tupi prove highly relevant to contemporary ethnological understanding, but also by the way in which his account reveals the political and social calculation surrounding the ritual performance.[72]

In this paper it is clearly not be possible to properly examine the intellectual genealogy of Tupian ethnology in its entirety, so I will briefly refer to two of the most recent works, that of Eduardo Viverios de Castro[73] and Isabelle Combès.[74] These rich and complex works may be seen as complementing, extending, and reacting to the earlier presentations of Alfred Métraux[75] and Florestan Fernandes,[76] as well as making more widely known the collaborative work of Carneiro de Cunha and Viveiros de Castro,[77] as well as Viveiros de Castro's own doctoral study[78] of the Tupian Araweté's "cannibal cosmology." For Viveiros de Castro,[79] the text of Staden plays a key role in establishing aspects of Tupi cannibalism that are not present or are differently represented in other works. In particular, the connection between male provision of sacrificial flesh and female provision of strong beer,[80] the importance of the motive of name-taking, as much as a generalized revenge, in understanding the purposes of warfare and sacrifice,[81] the significance of magical rattles, *tam-*

70. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 102.

71. Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 9.

72. For example, the killing of a sick slave "before he is dead" and the eating of his diseased corpse, "except the head and intestines . . . on account of the man's sickness" by Staden's captors illustrates an unappreciated political context for understanding the pragmatics of cannibal ritual. See Letts, *Hans Staden*, chap. 39.

73. Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*.

74. Combès, *La tragédie cannibale chez les anciens*.

75. Alfred Métraux, "The Tupinamba," *Handbook of South American Indians* 3 (1948).

76. Florestan Fernandes, "La guerre et le sacrifice humain chez les Tupinamba," *Journal de la Société des Amercanistes* 41, no. 1 (1952).

77. Manuela Carneiro de Cunha and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Vingança e temporalidade: Os Tupinambás," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 71 (1985).

78. Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: Os deuses canibais* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Zahar, 1986).

79. See Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*.

80. Ibid., 132.

81. Ibid., 152, 279.

maraka,[82] particularly in the cultural logic of war and cannibalism,[83] as well as the personal construction of self by the Tupi cannibal warrior,[84] the classification of the intended victim as a household pet,[85] and the notion that "their treasures are the feathers of birds."[86]

Of course the works of Léry, Thevet, and others also enable the recuperation of Tupian cannibal practice, but, as Viveiros de Castro acknowledges,[87] it is Staden's testimony in particular that allows latter-day interpreters to escape the sterile vision of Tupi war and cannibalism as merely an intense aspect of a revenge complex. By making the crucial connection between killing and the accumulation of beautiful names, as described by Staden, Viveiros de Castro is able to elaborate the motivations for war and cannibalism beyond the 'revenge' model that the chroniclers promoted and that both Métraux[88] uncritically adopted. I would suggest therefore that there is a valuable ethnological legacy in the pages of Staden's text as a result of the way in which he vividly, if not systematically, illumines key details of Tupian cultural practice. Whatever value we may attach to Staden's (and Dryander's) attempt to elaborate an "ethnology," Staden himself was able to sustain a cultural performance of some felicity before his Tupi captors through his manipulation of indigenous concepts and categories in a way which saved his life. His cultural performance is thus a source of knowing that is both different and at times superior to that of the priestly ethnologies of Léry and Thevet. For example, in Staden's account of his close encounter with the war-chief Konyan Bebe (see figure 11) he tells us that

> This same Konyan Bebe had then a great vessel full of human flesh in front of him and was eating a leg that he held to my mouth, asking me to taste it. I replied that even beasts, which were without understanding did not eat their own species, and should a man devour his fellow creatures? But he took a bite saying, *Jau wara sehe* (I am a jaguar; it tastes well).[89]

82. Ibid., 222.
83. Ibid., 278.
84. Ibid., 271.
85. Ibid., 280.
86. Ibid., 374 n.10.
87. Ibid., 3567 n.12.
88. Métraux, "The Tupinamba"; and Florestan Fernandes, "La guerre et le sacrifice humain."
89. Letts, *Hans Staden*, chap. 43.

Figure 11. Hans with King Konyan Bebe. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 80.

This leads Viveiros de Castro to rightly suggest that "Cunhambebe's repartee . . . was certainly a burst of humor: black or Zen, it was unquestionably Tupinamba."[90] It is precisely this kind of vivid personal testimony and the relative absence of complex ethnological pretension that makes the record of Staden's encounter so unique and valuable in the annals of Tupinology.

In the work of Isabelle Combès, Staden is not used to elucidate the complexities of Tupian ritual practice per se, since this work is far more concerned with the secondary interpretations that have been made of sixteenth-century source materials. Where and how the *Warhaftige historia* is used, thus becomes all the more enlightening as to the character of Staden's text, no less than Combés's, the principal use of the *Warhaftige historia* being as a visual reference. This underlines the fact that Staden's text is exceptional for the wealth, and probable accuracy, of its visual materials, although this has never been the subject of critical commentary. Many editions of the *Warhaftige historia*, as was the case even with the second printing in Frankfurt in 1557, omit the 56 woodcuts, or supplant them with the versions promulgated by de Bry, and this is part of the reason that this aspect of the text is often overlooked. The original woodcuts must have been relatively fragile objects, not useful for long print runs; thus the transmutation of these depictions into the durable copper-plate

90. Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 271.

engravings made by de Bry "elevate the illustrations into a new technical and artistic dimension."[91] However, this process clearly changed the content, and so much that was precise and particular to Staden's renderings were lost in the versions by de Bry. Nonetheless it has been the de Bry illustrations that have perennially attracted editors and publishers, and so obscured the valuable content of the original woodcuts to subsequent commentators, who have relied on the presence of illustrations as expressions of the first hand experience of Staden, but carelessly conflated them with the de Bry's versions.[92] Within the analytical framework of ritual that Combès offers, it is particularly germane to note that while Staden's manipulation of ideas about the moon have received some attention because of his written reference to a particular incident (see figure 4), the emphatic visual depiction of the sun and stars, as well as the moon, in various scenes of execution and divine intervention stands in need of further interpretation (see figure 11). In short, without close consideration of the whole text, in both its written and visual aspects, its many subtleties have largely gone unnoticed.

Conclusion

At such an early stage in the production of a new edition of the *Warhaftige historia*, it would be clearly premature and insouciant to offer anything like a conclusion as to the nature of Hans Staden's text and its role in the cultural history of cannibalism. However, I hope to have at least indicated the kinds of issues that will be addressed in that projected edition. Broadly, it is intended, through the close critique of earlier commentaries and a careful reading of the ethnological literature, to improve the overall understanding of Staden's' text and to situate that text in both the context of these debates and the circumstances of its production. By these means it should be possible to open up new literary, historical, and ethnological vistas for the *Warhaftige historia*.

As we have seen the case of Hans Staden presents some key differences with the more established sixteenth-century texts of Montaigne, Thevet and Léry, and if the excellent work of Frank Lestringant seems to have borne more

91. Michael Alexander, *Discovering the New World* (London: London Editions, 1976), 90.

92. Such is the case with figure 5; Lestringant appears to treat de Bry as a source independent of Staden, and incorrectly suggests that Thevet's illustration adds details not present in Staden's text, such as the use of the *boucan* and the cooking of the entrails and the head. In fact these details do appear in other woodcuts in the Staden series. See fig. 9 and also n.16 in Lestringant, *Cannibals*, 56–57.

Figure 12. The Sun, Moon, and Stars in the Scenes of Death. Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 161.

than its fair share of close criticism it is in recognition of the central importance of his interpretations of those early French works of Tupinology. Among the more important of those differences with the French materials are the exceptionally ethnographic quality of Staden's text which means that many of the details he provides on the Tupi are either absent or only later included in other sources, his lack of obsession with the comparative meanings of cannibalism, and the absence of a tendency towards misogyny in the representation of cannibalism. In these ways, Staden's text appears as ethnographically complex but ethnologically naive, and as such would also bear comparison with the wider literature of captivity in the Americas.[93]

However, this only serves to underline the need to also consider the discursive properties of Staden's text, of which such naivete is but one aspect. Given the ghostly hand of Dryander in the production of the text, central to this exercise will be further research on his relationship with Staden, as well as the production of the quite exceptional visual materials. Given Staden's rela-

93. The wider cultural meaning of which is perhaps best summated through John Ford's cinematic classic, *The Searchers*. It is also notable that the only cinematic representation of Staden's account, *Como era gostoso o meu francês*, erases his identity as German and in this way continues a tradition of francocentrism inherent in much of the commentary on the ancient Tupi.

Figure 13. Cannibal Rites
Source: Letts, *Hans Staden*, 155.

tive lack of formal education the production of these visual materials could be seen as the more authentically personal expression of Staden's own viewpoint—unmediated by Dryander—especially since, although clearly vivid in content, they do not show the ideological reworking that is so evident in de Bry.[94] One key motif that buttresses this authenticating naivete in Staden's text is that of nakedness, which can then be read as both a physical and moral condition. Hans is stripped naked on capture (see figure 1):

> They tore the clothes from my body, one the jerkin, another the hat, a third the shirt, and so forth . . . while the rest smote me with their bows. At last two of them seized me and lifted me up, naked as I was . . . carried me . . . towards the sea where they had their canoes.[95]

On reaching the village where he was to be kept Uwattibi, Hans was further stripped (see figure 13):

> A woman approached carrying a piece of crystal fastened to a kind of ring and with it she scraped off my eyebrows and tried to scrape off my

94. De Bry's treatment of female participation in the cannibal ritual thus fully reproduces the misogynistic inflection given to it by Léry. See also n. 15.

95. Letts, *Hans Staden*, chap. 18.

> beard also, but I resisted, saying that I would die with my beard. Then they answered that they were not ready to kill me yet and left me my beard.

But, as if the perfidy of the French were as much the cause of Hans's plight as the divine hunger of his captors, it is French steel that signifies Staden's nakedness as both physical and metaphorical, he continues, "But a few days later they cut it off with some scissors which the Frenchmen had given them."[96] One almost feels that he might have added "Specifically for this purpose," since they also took him to see the perfidious French trader "naked as I was" and he contemptuously strips off even further:

> I had on my shoulders a linen cloth, which the savages had given me, although I know not where they can have obtained it. This I tore off and flung it at the Frenchman's feet, saying to myself (for the sun had burnt me severely) that it was useless to preserve my flesh for others if I was to die.[97]

Although, as with the scissors, it must have been quite evident from where and from whom they obtained it. Indeed, when a French trading ship does appear off the village of Uwattibi Staden's captors will not let him go aboard, even with the promise of "all they required" since they tell him that "These are not your true friends, or they would have given you a shirt when they saw that you were naked. It is clear they take no account of you" (which was indeed true).[98]

Staden appears naked in all the woodcuts illustrating his captivity, except that he retains his beard and long hair. This in turn suggests allusion to the Biblical trials of Job (though it is Jeremiah he quotes in chap. 26) with whom, Staden might have been expected to readily identify. Certainly then, the semeiosis of the hirsute nakedness of Staden and the feathered nakedness of the Tupi within the text will warrant more thought and commentary. In a similar vein, and as already mentioned, the strong cosmological allusions to heavenly bodies as aspects of divinity in both the representations of Staden and the theologies of the Tupi will require careful consideration, especially where there appear captions in the Tupi language.

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that the place of Staden, and his text,

96. Ibid., chap. 22.
97. Ibid., chap. 26.
98. Ibid., chap. 40.

within the politics of French, Portuguese, and Tupi contacts along the Brazil shore in the sixteenth century has hardly been broached in this essay,[99] or indeed the commentary of others. However, it is obvious that Staden was part of that demographic impact which was to devastate Tupi populations to the point that by 1563 many of the groups in close contact with the Europeans had lost up to 75 percent of their population. It is important also to stress that all the "first hand" accounts of the Tupi cultural complex derive from a period of only sixteen years (ca. 1548–64), between the first encounter of Staden and the last of Thevet. In which case it may be that Staden witnessed Tupi cannibalism at a particularly intense and desperate moment, as famed warriors like Cunhambebe, Iperu Wasu, or Vratinge Wasu, sought to augment their fame and legitimate their vision of Tupi cosmos, even as it was disintegrating under external colonialism and epidemic disease.[100] How the practice of the cannibal theater was attuned both to this demographic challenge and to the way in which the Europeans themselves read the practice is thus an important avenue of enquiry, not least since in other contexts the cannibal sign was quite overtly manipulated by indigenous populations, in face of colonial obsessions.[101]

In the same way, the cultural politics of cannibalism today are no less intense than they were in the sixteenth century, being an aspect of debates on knowing and representing others[102] but also still present integral to the cultural practice of native South Americans.[103] In this sense, the cannibal is resurgent as an anticolonialist, antimodernist sign, as with other "traditional" forms and poetics of violence seen in Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bosnia, Kosovo and so forth.

The historical and epistemological primacy of the Brazilian texts is thus still a matter of relevance. I hope the critical tools outlined in this paper will

99. Whitehead, "Native American Cultures Along the Atlantic."

100. An analogous argument has been made that Iroquois incorporation of other groups through warfare, torture and cannibalism of enemies intensified greatly as a response to declining population in the face of European disease in the seventeenth century. Thomas S. Abler, "Beavers and Muskets: Iroquois Military Fortunes in the Face of European Colonization," in *War in the Tribal Zone*, ed. R. B. Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1999), 153–54. See also n. 21.

101. Neil L. Whitehead, "Monstrosity & Marvel: Symbolic Convergence and Mimetic Elaboration in Tans-Cultural Representation," *Studies in Travel Writing* 1 (1997).

102. Peter Hulme, "Introduction," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*.

103. Basso, *The Last Cannibals*; B. Conklin, "Consuming Images: Representations of Cannibalism on the Amazonian Frontier," *Anthropological Quarterly* 100, no. 3 (1995); and Whitehead, "Kanaimá."

underline the importance of Hans Staden's *Warhaftige historia*, and that it will come to be better appreciated for the vivid, bitter, intense and idiosyncratic account that it is, as well as for the brilliant shaft of light with which it illuminates that now far distant moment of originary cannibal encounter on the Brazil shore.