Hispania

OPEN ACCESS

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Hispania 97.3 (2014): 463–76

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AATSP The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese

AfroReggae: *Antropofagia*, Sublimation, and Intimate Revolt in the *Favela*

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Abstract: The documentary *Favela Rising* (2005) and its companion narrative, *Culture is Our Weapon* (2010), depict the AfroReggae cultural movement as a break with the past, a means of creating citizenship for Brazilian *favelas*. A leitmotif of the film is struggling to end the communities' "paralysis" caused by the domination of drug lords and corrupt, brutal police. Many residents and viewers feel that the *favela* lies outside the Brazilian nation. However, this essay shows that AfroReggae is part of a Brazilian artistic tradition that begins with Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto antropófago" (1928). Andrade focuses on sublimation, translating emotions into art. But Andrade's ideas, while sometimes inspired by the *favelas*, did not reach most of their residents until later movements, such as Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, Boal's theater of the oppressed, and Quilombhoje's *Cadernos Negros*. This history explains why AfroReggae stands out among today's *literatura marginal*, most of which is a continuation of the determinist Naturalist tradition. Andrade's essay and AfroReggae's performances predate and confirm Kelly Oliver's argument that the oppressed need a sublimation space to combat oppression. AfroReggae and the Brazilian tradition they represent have much to teach about how art can transform communities around world.

Keywords: Afro-Brazilian culture/cultura afro-brasileira, AfroReggae, *antropofagia*, Brazilian Modernism/modernismo brasileiro, documentary film/documentário, favela, intimate revolt/revolta interna, literatura marginal, Non-Government Organizations/Organizações não governamentais, pedagogy of the oppressed/pedagogia do oprimido, sublimation/sublimação

Though in many ways it is a break with the past, the AfroReggae cultural movement, popularized in the film *Favela Rising* (2005), is actually a continuation of a key aspect of Brazilian cultural *antropofagia*: sublimation of "savagery" through poetry as a source of uniquely Brazilian creativity, a *modernista* tradition that contrasts with naturalistic representations of the *favela* that continue today. Though critic Silviano Santiago explains that, through the myth of racial democracy, or *mestiçagem espontânea*, the *modernistas* contributed to the marginalization of *favela* residents (182), this current study will analyze the "Manifesto antropófago" (1928) against the grain and argue that some of Oswald de Andrade's key ideas are embodied in a social movement rooted in the *favelas*, showing that the text holds the tools of silence and oppression (racial democracy) as well as resources for constructive rebellion (sublimation by the oppressed), which came into conflict as the text's ideas were translated into the lived experiences of Brazilians. *Modernismo* is about selective continuation and rupture between a movement and its precursors. This essay will focus on the AfroReggae movement as depicted not only in the film, but also in the nonfiction novel titled *Culture is Our Weapon* (2010) written by Patrick Neate, Damian Platt, and key members of the movement such as José Júnior. JB AfroReggae's origins are found not only in US hip-hop and Brazilian *funk*, but also in the Brazilian *modernista* literary tradition as described in Andrade´s manifesto.[1] Using his notion of sublimation, this study will trace a history of exemplary popular movements that exhibit similar "cannibalistic" tendencies in Brazilian literature and pedagogy that have focused on sublimation

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for the oppressed, which, hopefully, will lead to a more nuanced, more contextualized discussion of the importance of the film, the book, and the movement. These texts constantly reiterate the *favelados*' marginalization from the Brazilian nation by contrasting the *favelas* (illegal squatter settlements), which originally had no paved streets, with the *asfalto*, or official territory of Rio de Janeiro. However, they do have a place in a Brazilian literary tradition. These artists of the *favela*, and the tradition they continue, have much to teach those interested in post-colonial theory and psychoanalysis, as will be argued in this article's closing discussion of sublimation in philosopher Kelly Oliver's *The Colonization of Psychic Space* (2004).

The *Movimento Cultural AfroReggae* is part of the *tradición de la ruptura* in the way Octavio Paz defines the term, which is to say that it is part of a long history of cultural and political projects that attempt to abandon the ways of the past and start anew (13). This is represented in the film by the leitmotif of Anderson Sá's paralysis, which metonymically represents the cultural and economic stagnation in which his community, the *favela* of Vigário Geral, found itself before the advent of AfroReggae, the group of which he is the "face." By the film's end, he overcomes his quadriplegia and is later seen singing and dancing on stage with the movement. AfroReggae repeatedly refers to itself as a "Revolution," evoking the modernist yearning for change. Images of revolutionaries like Che Guevara are part of the film's iconography, as are Bob Marley, Malcolm X, and the Hindu god Shiva. The latter represents cultural rebirth through artistic destruction and creation, and a leitmotif of the film is the "Shiva effect" of simultaneous psychological death and rebirth, symbolized by this deity of both destruction and creation (Neate and Platt 27). These revolutionary metaphors are appropriate because the movement is making important cultural and political changes. It gets youth out of the gangs that serve as a *de facto* government in many of what were, at the turn of the new millennium, Rio de Janeiro's six hundred slums. Though the book claims only one percent of the *favela* residents are directly involved in drug trafficking, this industry created a rigid hierarchy in the *favelas*. Gang life is perceived by many youth as their only chance for social mobility due to their limited access to education and the rampant corruption in many sectors of Brazilian society (81). This market results in real, if fleeting, material gains for youth. However, the gang wars that the film and novel graphically depict usually result in young people either being fed into the prison pipeline or in torture and death. Collateral damage in these wars is high, and they are greatly influenced by police corruption, impunity, and indiscriminate massacres of *favela* residents. The modernist metaphors of death and rebirth that define AfroReggae's "Shiva effect" have very tangible referents in their context. The movement has turned gang members into students, musicians, and artists, affecting a cultural revolution that has served as a model in other urban centers in Brazil, London, and Haiti, as the DVD bonus features indicate.

The "newness" of AfroReggae has garnered it much attention. *Favela Rising* won the filmmakers Jeff Zimbalist and Matt Mochary thirty-six awards, including an Emmy nomination, "Best Feature" from the International Documentary Association, and "Best Emerging Filmmaker" at Tribecca, as well as important funding and recognition for the group ("Awards," n. pag.). One year later, director of *Bye Bye Brazil* (1980), Carlos Diegues, directed, along with Rafael Dragaud, a second documentary on AfroReggae called *Nenhum motivo explica a guerra* (2006), which combines interviews with *favela* residents with performances and commentary by international superstars of *música popular brasileira* Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso. This success probably was a factor in Penguin's publishing of Patrick Neate and Damian Platt's nonfiction novel about the movement, *Culture is our Weapon*, which includes a forward by Veloso. *Favela Rising* and *Culture is our Weapon* have led, in part, to performances by the movement at Queen Mary University of London in 2007 ("AfroReggae Arrives," n. pag.) and Columbia University in 2011, bridging the gap between North American and European scholars and the artists of Rio's *favelas* ("Event Highlights," n. pag.). George Yúdice focuses on the movement in his *The Expediency of Culture* (2003), researched and written before the film's release. In addition

to contextualizing the movement by chronicling the reception of hip-hop in Brazil from the late 1970s to the present, Yúdice argues that the movement represents a coalition of seemingly incongruous forces (bankers, city governments, lawyers, music labels, church groups, police forces, the Ford Foundation, and, of course, other residents of the *favelas*) that provides citizenship to youth whose chances for this kind of agency are otherwise exceedingly sparse (157). He compares the movement to conserving natural resources, only in this case the resource is humanity itself, and cultural production is central to its preservation (4). Yúdice's study of the movement echoes Frederic Jameson's quest for a radical interpretation of comparative cultural studies. In the latter's classic essay "On Literary and Cultural Import-Substitution in the Third World: The Case of Testimonio," he develops the metaphor to which the title alludes and applies it to narrative and film. Comparing "Third World" artists to entrepreneurs, like Yúdice, Jameson claims that they do not passively emulate dominant cultural forms, but alter and eventually replace those original models with their own autochthonous creations. This attention to, and analysis of, cultures at the margins has led to fruitful discussions on the role of the academy and the arts in effecting political change.

However, through its literature, Brazil has developed its own models to understand its cultural production, and Brazilianists, not unlike the youth of the *favelas*, sometimes happen upon an exciting phenomenon like AfroReggae not taking into account important elements of the tradition that led to it, perhaps unbeknownst to the movement itself. Terry Eagleton's most poignant criticism of cultural studies is the "Politics of Amnesia," which perpetuates the political status quo through systematic "forgetting" of history in so-called post-modern cultural production (the media, for example) and the approach that scholars take to it (1). Neil Larsen's *Reading North by South* argues that United States and European Latin American Studies can fall into the trap of repeating colonial epistemologies if authorities from Latin America are not consulted as speaking subjects instead of merely objects of study (1). The Brazilian literary tradition offers a solution to this postcolonial pitfall. For example, Brazilian *modernista* Oswald de Andrade develops the concept of culture as a good to be imported, exported, and replaced in his "Manifesto Pau-Brasil" (1924), sixty-eight years before Jameson.[2] Recent scholarship also focuses on the intersections between post-colonial studies and psychoanalysis, which Andrade develops in his "Manifesto antropófago" (1928). It can be read as a psychoanalytically-informed continuation of the 1924 manifesto. By placing AfroReggae in the Brazilian tradition of *antropofagia*, one can view it not only as an example of post-nationalism, as Yúdice does, but also a continuation of local revolutions of the past, something of which Brazil can be proud, even though AfroReggae challenges previous models of both nationalism and engaged literature. As Santiago argues, "o local assume o universal para melhor inscrever o projeto existencial e cultural dos cidadãos e das nações não ocidentais num mapa-múndi, de que foram excluídos pela globalização neoliberal, ocidentalizante. . . ." And thus Brazilian national identity is an "atalho" to a "world identity" today, as it was in the times of the *modernistas* (164). It is a way to "questionar, mas não necessariamente rejeitar ou repudiar, a abrangência sem limite imposta pela intolerância ocidental," a destabilization of margin and center that began in Brazil with *modernismo* (164).

The most debated work of *modernismo*, Andrade's "Manifesto antropófago," was published as the preamble to his literary and cultural journal *Revista de Antropofagia*, the same year as André Breton's "Surrealist Manifesto" (1928), and he dialogues with Breton.[3] Andrade, like the surrealists, was using art to seek something beyond the conscious mind in hopes of finding a solution to political stagnation and the oppression and repression of human drives. Both writers were heavily influenced by Sigmund Freud, who was beginning to apply psychoanalysis not only to individuals but to social groups as well. Andrade repeatedly alludes to *Totem and Taboo* (1913), in which Freud seeks a historical origin for the primal urges of the Oedipus Complex in Africa and Polynesia among those he called "primitives." Assuming the challenge of creating a Brazilian aesthetic, as he had during the Semana de Arte Moderna of 1922 and the "Manifesto

Pau-Brasil," Andrade sought modernity, a rupture with the past and a model for the future, in the most "primitive" elements of Brazil: the cannibals that did not obey the colonizers. Andrade claimed that the Brazilian artist does not reject the colonizer outright, but that he "ingests" him as in the rituals of some Pre-Colombian war cultures, not only mixing one cultural form with another, but drawing on a unique contact with unconscious drives that had been more repressed in "civilized" cultures of the *de jure* colonizers of the past and the *de facto* colonizers of 1928 (3). Freud theorized that the "civilized" seek to control the drives that lead to sex and violence by "sublimating" or transforming these urges into something acceptable to "civilized" society, resulting in the arts and other condoned forms of expression ("Creative" 713). In reaction to this, Andrade claims that his movement is "[c]ontra as sublimações antagônicas. Trazidas nas caravelas" (3). He does not oppose all sublimation; without it there could be no art. However, he is against the definition of sublimation established by the European oppressors, which are based on rigid binaries of "high" and "low" culture, "civilization" and "barbarism." Brazil's "underdevelopment" was at once its source of rebellion, a space where its creative drives could flourish more strongly than those of Europe:

> A luta entre o que se chamaria Incriado e a Criatura—ilustrada pela contradição permanente do homem e o seu Tabu. O amor cotidiano e o modusvivendi capitalista. Antropofagia. Absorção do inimigo sacro. Para transformá-lo em totem. A humana aventura. A terrena finalidade. Porém, só as puras elites conseguiram realizar a antropofagia carnal, que traz em si o mais alto sentido da vida e evita todos os males identificados por Freud, males catequistas. O que se dá não é uma sublimação do instinto sexual. É a escala termométrica do instinto antropofágico. De carnal, ele se torna eletivo e cria a amizade. Afetivo, o amor. Especulativo, a ciência. Desvia-se e transfere-se. Chegamos ao aviltamento. A baixa antropofagia aglomerada nos pecados de catecismo—a inveja, a usura, a calúnia, o assassinato. Peste dos chamados povos cultos e cristianizados, é contra ela que estamos agindo. Antropófagos. (3)

This quote contextualizes his second rejection of sublimation as it was previously defined by Europeans. The transfer from physical cannibalism to "friendship," "love," and "science," creates unity and resistance for Brazilians. Unlike the materialist *Communist Manifesto*, the "digestion" of the "Surrealist Manifesto" into a Brazilian theory of resistance and sublimation does not seek violence or overthrow of the enemy. It seeks to use the tools of oppression, beginning with language, against the oppressors, making the "primitive" of Brazil seem more "elite" and exposing the stains of the "civilized" of Europe, who came to Brazil with the express purpose of Christianizing it during the Conquest.

AfroReggae's context is very different from Andrade's. Oppression comes from a variety of sources in the *favelas*, as *Favela Rising* and *Culture is our Weapon* show. However, the language of "civilization" has changed little. Like Santiago's comparisons of Brazil to other nations struggling for a cultural "place" on the postcolonial *mapa mundi*, the *favela* of Vigário Geral is introduced in the film by comparing it to the Gaza Strip, the iconic site of struggle between Palestinians and Israel (Santiago 164). The same binaries of "civilized" and "savage" exist in Rio de Janeiro. As the film explains, the land of the *favelas* is not controlled by the State, nor does it provide social services in some cases. Often occupying the breath-taking hills of the city, these slums are settlements of diverse origin that have completely illegal economies that parallel and interact with the official economy of Brazil and other nations. The *favelas* are the result of overpopulation, underemployment, government and police corruption, to mention a few key influences. In many areas, the *traficantes* are the only law or are more powerful than the law of the State. The *favelas*, which many continue to call "primitive," though not so loudly as in Andrade's day, often appear to lie outside the law. Therefore, residents refer to the rest of the city as the *asfalto* (asphalt), a symbol of continued presumptions of "civilization" and "savagery." However, as will be shown at the end of this essay, this division is changing rapidly, given the effects of the *pacificações* of the *favela* by Rio's military police, an attempt to control the "wild" areas of Rio.[4]

Seeking access to the opportunities of "civilization," AfroReggae leader JB's family came to Rio, but they found only economic hardship. However, he was drawn as a child into the *de facto* government of his *favela*, drug trafficking. He rose to prominence in Comando Vermelho, one of Rio's most notorious gangs. He received money, respect, adventure, and the appearance of social mobility. He was also given a gun. The *soldados do tráfico*, the group to which he once belonged, were his chance for power and self-expression through military technology. However, in AfroReggae, Andrade and Breton's quest for something redemptive and at once radical in the "undeveloped" areas of humankind—the unconscious, the "native"—is continued today by the now highly visible leaders of AfroReggae. These intrepid individuals are JB of *Culture is our Weapon*, the founder of the movement, José Júnior, and the star of the film, Anderson Sá.

Compared to these redeemed former gang members who reach out to young people in places where most non-government organizations are not allowed, one could accuse the historical Andrade of not being sufficiently engaged with the oppressed. *Modernismo*'s break with the past was a conflict between two groups of financial and intellectual elites, as Santiago argues (169). He shows that, though monetarily privileged, they felt like intellectual second-class citizens of the world, exiles from its center in Paris, and thus they recycled materials from local traditions like indigenism and abolitionism to fill what would have otherwise been a hollow copy of the European avant-garde by and for Brazil's intelligentsia (174). Andrade's poetic and philosophical revolution was no doubt lost on most of the residents of the *favelas*. The very act of writing poetry made it inaccessible to those at the margins of society, a problem that AfroReggae is working to address. This is not to say that the *modernistas* were not influenced by the *favelas* or popular culture. In fact, Bernardo Borges Buarque de Hollanda's 2011 essay details iconic *modernistas*' fascination with the music of the poor communities of Rio de Janeiro. As they were for many intellectuals in Latin America, folk music and dance were a source of national identity and pride even before the 1930 coup that ushered in the nationalist Vargas Era. This administration would eventually institutionalize popular celebrations of Carnival and samba as national symbols. In his introduction to *Culture is Our Weapon*, proud *nordestino* migrant Caetano Veloso points out that Rio's most vibrant music community has been the *favelas* since the earliest days of samba in Rio (xiii). While Andrade's revolution was not "engaged" directly with the oppressed, a claim that is anachronistic in some respects, since Jean-Paul Sartre did not coin the term until 1947, and while Andrade seems to romanticize the marginalized more than advocating for material change, his idea that the margins have the potential to sublimate their collective energies that revitalize national identity has echoes throughout Brazilian literature.

Many cultural steps had to take place for *antropofagia* to effect change in the *favelas*. The *modernistas* did little to directly involve the historically oppressed in their theorization of the "primitives" among them, but other privileged thinkers, side-by-side with *favelados* and other marginalized sectors of Brazil, attempted to create innovative art and social change, and their contributions have echoes in AfroReggae. Revolutionary educator Paulo Freire (1921–97) understood the role of access to education in effecting social change. His *Educação como prática da liberdade* (1967), a liberal pedagogy focused on literacy, and *Pedagogia do oprimido* (1968), a more Marxist focus on challenging oppression through education, challenged hierarchies in the classroom and society alike (Holst 245). These publications proposed that the oppressed could express themselves and create and share knowledge with minimal or no mediation from intellectual elites, embodied by the teacher's authority in the classroom. Like AfroReggae, Freire's ideas led to the establishment of schools and cultural centers for the impoverished around the world, and his pedagogy is among the most studied. AfroReggae even uses his term, *núcleo*, for their cultural centers, institutions that continue his pedagogy of the oppressed.

In theater, Augusto Boal's *Teatro do oprimido e outras poéticas políticas* (1975) paralleled and developed Freire's challenging of social hierarchies, showing that everyone, including the oppressed, can be an actor, and that the separation between the street and the stage was not only oppressive but creatively stifling (120). AfroReggae's theater, dance, and circus troupe are a

continuation of this tradition, and its revolution is as simple, as local, and as effective as Boal's. Because AfroReggae is a model for change through art that is accessible to anyone, it has had success where other Non-Government Organizations have failed, not only in Brazil but in Haiti, London, and New York, as the DVD bonus footage for *Favela Rising* attests.

Expanding literacy also gives agency to the oppressed. Cultural and literary journals are as important to AfroReggae as they were for Andrade, and they are a space where literature is a means of re-writing *modernism* by the Afro-Brazilians it has been accused of objectifying and silencing through the myth of "racial democracy" (Hanchard 15). The politically engaged literary and cultural group Quilomboje began in 1980 as an outgrowth of the on-going cultural journal *Cadernos Negros* in 1978 (Oliveira 50). Emanuelle Oliveira's *Writing Identity* (2008) discusses how the group appropriated *modernista* discourse, including *antropofagia*, in its writing, parodying it and using it to articulate Afro-Brazilian identity (9). In São Paulo, Sérgio Vaz's *sarau* (poetry reading) Cooperifa is a space where the marginalized can sublimate their feelings every week at a local bar, as he shows in his anthology *Cooperifa: Antropofagia periférica* (2008). Its title is simultaneously an indictment of *modernismo* and homage to it, because it celebrates its poetry and populism, but it implies that the original movement was one of the elite, not the oppressed. Critic Neide Luzia de Rezende praises the *sarau* as the culmination of *antropofagia*, a movement by and for the margins. The same can be said of AfroReggae's performances and literacy programs. Although member JB laments its early demise in *Culture is Our Weapon*, *AfroReggae Notícias* (1993), the cultural journal that gave AfroReggae its name, is a continuation of the radical *antropofagia* begun in Andrade's eponymous journal and continued by Quilomboje (Neate and Platt 19). Since the film, AfroReggae has created a monthly magazine, a television show, and a website (Neate and Platt 190), using the written word to complement the group's mission, addressing Andrade's problem of writing about the illiterate oppressed and simultaneously excluding them from the discussion.[5]

AfroReggae's continuation of *antropofagia* stands in contrast to a trend that continues determinist, hopeless, naturalist depictions of the *favela*, as Rezende (n. pag.) and critic Tânia Pellegrini (19, 20, 24) note. For example, Kátia Santos argues that the world has been given a stereotyped impression of them through Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund's *Cidade de Deus* (2002). The film narrates a housing development's descent into chaos but provides no solutions to the problems it depicts, which leads Pellegrini to consider the novel on which it is based by Paulo Lins an example of violent, naturalist exoticism (21). Soon afterward came the television series *Cidade dos homens* (2002–05), which aired on Brazil's most popular television station, Rede Globo, during the same period of time that AfroReggae appeared on the variety show *Faustão* (Yúdice, n. pag.). Like the movie, *Cidade dos homens* is not supported by a grass-roots movement for community education and focuses on problems, not a "Shiva Effect."

However, some *favela* residents are also writing their marginality. An entire genre known as *literatura marginal* has emerged in the new millennium among the *favelados*.[6] The most popular of these writers is Ferréz, author of *Capão Pecado* (1999) and *Manual prático do ódio* (2003). His works unapologetically relish in the excitement and adventure of the slums that line the *periferia* of São Paulo, to the awe of a hungry reading public, within and outside the favelas (Martínez Rodríguez 61; Villaraga 43–45). Oswald de Andrade the cannibal would smile as the cannibals consume other cultures, change them, and then export them. Ferréz praises writing for allowing him a psychological escape from the *favelas* (see Tennina 271), and his stated goal is to inspire self-esteem in marginalized youth, to inspire them to write (see Martínez 63). He alludes to *modernista* Drummond de Andrade in his works, so he is familiar with *modernismo* (Martínez Rodríguez 61; Ferréz, *Capão Pecado* 73). However, Oswald Andrade the poet, like Breton, would frown on the largely unaltered, mimetic language used in Ferréz's novels that provide no political alternative to the *status quo*. Ferréz's manifesto, "Terrorismo literário," like the photographs of his novel, presents his project as "nossa foto" (9) and the marginalized "verdadeiro povo brasileiro" (11) as separated from the rest of the nation, static, with no hope of change (9). Moments in his

Capão Pecado (1999) make it hard to believe such images can inspire change in the slums of São Paulo. There are graphic depictions of murder (51, 57, 68, 73, 113, 116) and sex (124, 144–45, 148–49, 163) with no hope of a new, redemptive language. Like his sadomasochistic character, Paula, the reader is put in a position of relishing in pain more than seeking a salve. More often than not, the narrative is a horrifying photograph that gives visibility to the "inferno" of the lives of the capão (slum) without offering any alternative. In the novel, rapper Conceito Moral sees hope in faith and revolution through education, but he is in the minority (161). One character, Narigaz, believes that the residents should overcome their oppression through "criatividade" and study, but he sees no one engaging language this way (118–19). One could see this *literatura* and *cinema marginal* as a continuation of the primarily French Naturalist movement that was imported to Brazil. *Literatura marginal* seems to be more inclined toward a more deterministic, even hopeless, vision of the *favela* that is heir to Aluísio Azevedo's *O cortiço* (1890), for example, which does not provide a way out of the *favela*, physically, emotionally, or psychologically, for most *moradores*. It is an example of what Flora Süsskind's *Tal Brasil, qual romance* (1984) shows to be a general continuation of the naturalistic tendency in Brazilian fiction. In contrast to this tendency, AfroReggae's combination of writing, poetry, and performance complements social activism in the tradition of Freire and Boal, working to create material, educational, and artistic change for their neighborhoods. Andrade's *antropofagia*, like Breton's surrealism, was a resounding rejection of Naturalism, Realism, and linear, mimetic narrative (and art) in general, to the extent that language and other forms of expression could sustain. This is why Andrade's manifesto, like Breton's, is littered with incomplete sentences and non sequiturs and why he not only called for a new language but invented it: he was seeking a revolutionary language through *antropofagia* that made the "primitive" into a poetic "elite" that could change the status quo.

Like Ferréz, rapper/novelist/filmmaker MV Bill portrays the *traficante* lifestyle; but like AfroReggae, he is parlaying it into a safe space for sublimation in the *favela*. MV Bill, along with Celso Athayde, wrote *Falcão: Meninos do tráfico* made into a documentary by the same name in 2006. Like the members of AfroReggae, MV Bill is a hip-hop performer. He gained fame through a strand of *funk* that unapologetically depicts the life of the *traficante*, and he was accused of *apologia do crime* for his music video "Soldado do morro," which depicts him holding a rifle (Silvia D.). The initial overreaction by officials, which sparked debate over censorship in Brazil, can be traced to the violent strand of hip-hop, *funk de briga*, that was scapegoated by politicians for the 1992 *arrastão*, the gang conflict on Arpoador beach that led to the robbing of citizens of the *asfalto* (Neate and Platt 59). Politicians passed a bill that was, in part, the result of the media circus that played on stereotypes of the *moradores* and Afro-Brazilians. After the ban, an underground form of *funk* continued, illegally, to laud the exploits of the *traficantes* and their *soldados*, called *proibidão* or *funk proibido*. Often, the abject images *favelados* captured (and capture) the attention of a viewing public, but they do little to change the lives of the *favelados*, other than to earn money, power, and fame for some of those involved in the *tráfico*. However, since the video, MV Bill has started a non-government organization that, like AfroReggae, advocates for social justice. Called the Central Única das Favelas (Cufa), the purpose of this group is to keep youth out of gangs and prison (Bill 10). It is a place where sublimation can take place.

Despite its revolutionary "newness" or "modernity," as Paz understood it, AfroReggae is part of a long tradition of artistic and philosophical revolutions. By understanding this tradition, one is able to appreciate how AfroReggae, a continuation of *antropofagia* amidst a crowd of the naturalists' grandchildren (who probably do not consider themselves such), enriches and confirms the validity of US philosopher Kelly Oliver's theory of sublimation in *The Colonization of Psychic Space* (2004). AfroReggae's revolution is the chance for Oliver and Andrade to be "conversation partners," as Larsen might say, showing how the Brazilian literary tradition can inform US scholarship. It also shows that good ideas can come from the margins and the center, and that the margins often precede the center in those ideas. My essay's continued

focus on sublimation compliments Santiago's argument that a local, cosmopolitan voice for the marginalized is a pro-social alternative to gaining global visibility through violence (165). My emphasis on affect is not only an intellectual means of redefining national identity in times of crisis, as Santiago proposes (178), but is also a means of treatment for the daily depression faced by *favela* residents, which is all to often acted out through death and destruction.

Sublimation from the margins is at the heart of *antropofagia*, but today's understanding of the former has been altered by other important thinkers. Since the 1928 publication of the "Manifesto antropófago," psychoanalysis has undergone many revisions. Like Andrade, Oliver analyzes *Totem and Taboo* as it relates to political and cultural oppression and artistic creation, and like Andrade, she is critical of Freud's notion of sublimation, because it presumes that only European men can sublimate and therefore control language and everything constructive in the social sphere. Importantly, Martinican Frantz Fanon (1925–61) uses psychoanalysis as a means to understand racial and colonial oppression in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) has revised the role of women in Freud's thinking and has focused on art, language, and religion as a means of treatment for social conflicts by focusing on the individual. Her *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1992) focuses on melancholy as a universal condition and argues that psychoanalysis, particularly as it relates to sublimation, can play a role in solving social problems. However, Kristeva does not apply these concepts to racially marginalized groups like AfroReggae. In her 2004 work, Oliver dialogues with Fanon and Kristeva's texts, pointing out that melancholia and sublimation are socially and historically conditioned:

> At stake in the depression of oppression and the silencing of the affects of oppression is the ability to sublimate, that is, the ability to translate affects and bodily drives into words or other forms of signification. Oppression undermines the ability of those othered to sublimate, and sublimation is the origin and operator of all that we know as human. Sublimation is what makes us linguistic beings. The inability to sublimate leads to depression and silence. But again, to explain the relationship between sublimation, subjectivity, and oppression, we need a more social theory of sublimation than traditional psychoanalysis provides. (125)

Seventy-six years after Andrade wrote on the intersection of sublimation, language, and what would later be called "post-colonial theory," scholars around the world are asking very similar questions about how the oppressed can turn feelings and drives into something constructive, be it language, dance, the plastic arts, or other forms of creation and communication. Like *antropofagia*, Oliver's notion of sublimation allows the "animal" drives that lead to sex and violence to take form in ways that alleviate the linguistic "paralysis" in which the melancholic oppressed finds himself. One is reminded of Anderson Sá's paralysis in *Favela Rising* as Oliver considers the "colonization of psychic space" an inability to translate or "elevate" the body into words due to social oppression. The warring factions of *traficantes*, armed with the latest weaponry, seem eerily similar to Freud's myth of the primitive band of brothers whose father attemps to horde all the females in the group ("Totem" 500). This is, for Freud, the origin of the Oedipus complex, which postulates that man has a deep-rooted desire to be reunited with his mother, which is blocked by the primordial imagined figure of the Father. It is the bedrock of psychoanalysis and *antropofagia*. In Freud's text, the brothers unite to kill and eat the father, but they feel guilty for what they later consider a crime, creating a taboo on murder that would preserve their fledgling society. This, for Freud, is the first sublimation, which eventually leads to all language and civilization over the course of history. Oliver states: "until the totemic meal, man is an animal and the father is merely the strongest" (133). In *Favela Rising* and *Culture is Our Weapon*, the *soldados* of the *traficantes* are merely animals with guns, vying for control of territory, money, possessions. And since most *soldados* are men in a hyper-masculine war culture, they also

contend to control women. As Andrade noted, Brazil's colonial past is part of this struggle, as is indicated by the title *dono*, once used to describe slave masters and now used in reference to drug lords, the top of the *favela* hierarchy (Neate and Platt 14). Following Kristeva, Oliver interprets Freud's theory of "the Father," he who embodies the law of language and governor of social space, as the Loving Third that separates the subject from his or her identification with the Mother. Oliver considers sublimation to be rooted in infant language acquisition, so she continues the Kristevan model for the Mother, the body from which one does not know he or she is separate until acquiring language, passing from a timeless, subjectivity-less animality into human consciousness. In the context of political oppression, such as in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, Oliver considers the Loving Third to be "a primary form of social support necessary for psychic development, creativity, and love" (126). Oliver seconds Kristeva in claiming that artistic, literary, and religious rituals are an attempt to return to a timeless pre-linguistic state, to express the unconscious drives of the body, allowing us freedom from emotions of guilt, repression, and depression (133). This connection between the drives of the body and language allows for a "robust psyche" and a positive self-image, which have historically been repeatedly denied to the residents of the *favelas*. The oppressed internalize their oppression, creating abject identities for themselves:

> This abjection is compounded by the lack of social space [a Loving Third], or even social taboos, for talking about the truly painful affects and shame caused by racism, sexism, and homophobia. . . . The new use of the rhetoric of equality and color blindness denies the very existence of racism or sexism. . . . Those othered within mainstream culture are in the double bind of being made ashamed of their negative affects at the same time that they are denied the positive social support that enables sublimation of those negative affects. This double alienation from one's own affects is debilitating unless alternative communities and forms of social support can grow out of the silence that we share. (129)

The silencing of racism in Brazil, as Yúdice notes (110), has made it difficult to talk about race and class-based oppression, which explains the effectiveness of AfroReggae's Afrocentrism. *Modernismo* as Santiago suggests, contributed to this silence (175). However, *antropofagia*'s notion of sublimation, as I read it, can also be seen as part of its treatment. Unlike the *modernistas*, Afro-Reggae imports cultural production of African diaspora artists and thinkers, beyond European and US models, and they complement them with the local history, culture, and concerns of Afro-Brazilians.[7] AfroReggae provides a Loving Third, an encouraging, free social space that allows the oppressed to sublimate the anger, fear, and hopelessness that permeate their violent reality. During a performance in *Favela Rising*, Anderson Sá screams "Tô bolado," which is translated as "I am pissed" and "I am disoriented" in the film, but as "I am confused" in an interview with public radio host Tom Ashbrook regarding *Culture is Our Weapon*. In their poetry, the silence of oppression and repression ends, sublimated as a cry that pours out of Sá's body like tears and sweat. He breaks the silence on oppression from the *traficantes* and police alike in the following lyrics:

> Eu tô bolado . . .
> em Vigário Geral só morreu trabalhador 29 de agosto mataram a minha gente . . .
> 21 moradores assassinados pelo ódio e a violência de policiais vingadores . . .
> essa crueldade aconteceu porque no dia anterior traficantes mataram 4 policiais . . .
> o caminho certo é o caminho da sorte o caminho errado pode te levar à morte . . .
> (*Favela Rising*)

This is the tragedy that gave rise to AfroReggae as a political activist group. The song is an act of mourning and an act of foundation. The *eu* that emerges in the song has a space in which

to seek meaning through words and movement. This cry, echoing a primal cry, brings the pain of the body into the realm of language and memory, giving new meaning to Sá, the dancers, and the audience alike in a way that the violence of the *tráfico* could not. The song also references the police violence as an example of the *favela*'s marginalization from the *asfalto*, the rest of Rio de Janeiro. Echoing Andrade's claim that "só a antropofagia nos une" (Antropofagia 3) Oliver's theory of oppression claims that sublimation is the only means of intimate revolt. Returning to Kristeva, Oliver explains intimate revolt as:

> a challenge to authority and tradition analogous to political revolt that takes place within an individual and is essential to psychic development. It is a revolt in the psyche that allows us to live as individuals connected to others. Lack of the ability to revolt erodes any sense of belonging to the social. . . . Psychic revolt is essential to sublimation, through which one makes social codes and meaning one's own. (143)

A Loving Third, an accepting social space for the oppressed, allows for Intimate Revolt. Infants come to language first through cries, later babbles, and then two rebellious acts: negation and questioning (Oliver 146). Members join AfroReggae for many reasons. One of these is their family and the need to create and feel a sense of community provided by the *tráfico*, a communion that is soon denied through *tráfico*'s rigid hierarchies, unforgiving punishment, and violent modus operandi. It is a loveless community where revolt is achieved through violence. However, through intimate revolt, exemplified by AfroReggae, the oppressed can express their own oppression. For example, after Sá narrates the events of the Vigário Geral massacre in the film, he asks a series of questions, sublimating his mourning into intimate revolt, and, in his own parlance, achieving the "Shiva effect." Through Intimate Revolt, the oppressed can also negate historically and socially prescribed roles for them, such as stereotyped notions of *favelado* identity. This is exemplified in the film by the dialogue between Sá and a young, potential *traficante*, who later changes not only his name but his goals for the future. AfroReggae's flexible model, ranging from nuclei that focus on dance to drum lines, circus acts, and technology, has one goal: to turn *soldados* and *trabalhadores* of the *favelas* into something new, evolving, protean. This is the improvisation that Andrade praised in Brazilians, a manifestation of the *antropofagia* that strengthens Brazilians: not merely copying the symbols of the past, but recreating them by creating new meanings for them. This evolution is also a continuation of Freire and Boal's "bottom up" models of pedagogy and performance, all focused on empowering the oppressed and challenging rigid hierarchies. In other words, AfroReggae continues a tradition of creating Loving Thirds, an encouraging, supportive social sphere. "By giving form to semiotic drive force [affect, sensations], the accepting third or supportive social space allows entry into the symbolic to be playful and subliminal instead of just threatening," as Oliver states (139). It is a means of turning pain into words, fear into expression, language into an identity that the individual creates and re-creates.

Like Andrade's poetry, AfroReggae changes the meanings of words and symbols to revolutionary ends. These usually are associated with the *tráfico*, as indicated in the title of *Culture is our Weapon*, which depicts a fist with a microphone on the cover. Concerts are *arrastões* (alluding to Rio de Janeiro beach robberies) in the film. José Junior is a *dono* that gives power to his *soldados* instead of taking it away, expecting discipline and community, but never violence (Neate and Platt 26). Bullets and metal bars are part of the show, but they come to symbolize new-found peace and liberation as they are a part of dance and re-enactments of release from a prison cell. As portrayed in Estevão Ciavatta's documentary *Polícia Mineira* (2005), the police force of Belo Horizonte, which was once synonymous with corruption and violence, has collaborated with AfroReggae in improving community relations through arts and community refurbishing projects (*Neate and Platt* 127). Also, there is a "gang war" with records in the *Favela Rising* DVD bonus footage. This takes place on a soccer field, and the records are thrown like Frisbees.

In addition soccer's status as the Brazilian national sport, it is one of the few existing alternatives to the *tráfico* outside of AfroReggae, though it is not always an alternative. As depicted in *Culture is Our Weapon*, the warring gang factions sometimes solve territory disputes through *jogos de paz*, which can erupt into wars (Neate and Platt 94). In the AfroReggae video, "players" are "killed" by the records, and one is carried away in a cart. However, Anderson Sá is still seen and heard singing. His metaphorical death, like his very real sadness, has not silenced him. Sublimation replaces death and silence.

While a means of creating positive individual and group agency, AfroReggae is also a means of creating community among otherwise alienated *favela* residents and a link between the *favela* and the *asfalto*, as exemplified by the disparate members of its coalition. As Yúdice indicates (151), involves local, national, and international collaborators with the common goal of getting *favela* residents out of drug trafficking. This includes church groups that would certainly not approve of Andrade's assault on the Catholic colonizers and what seems to be a notion of Christian values in general. However, as evidenced in *Capão Pecado* and other *literatura marginal*, voyeuristic representations of sex and violence in the *favela* have become commonplace. Repeating this imagery in the new millenium is not revolutionary. AfroReggae's challenges are not Andrade's, since the latter still had a classical, repressive bourgeoisie to worry about at home and an unquestioned Eurocentrism in the global cultural and political spheres as his main concerns. Advocating for the margins from within the margins, AfroReggae provides a Loving Third for an intimate revolt which leads to robust psyches in *favela* youth.

The *favela*, while represented as paralyzed in *Favela Rising*, is currently going through notable changes. Afro-Reggae celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2013 (Javoski). The dominant gang and *dono* in Vigário Geral of *Favela Rising* is not that of *Culture is Our Weapon*, nor that of the book's postscript (181), nor are they the same today. Because of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, a construction boom has led to new efforts by Rio de Janeiro's various government and multinational commercial forces to ensure that the city's guests will leave with a positive impression. This has involved several *pacificações* of *favelas*, perhaps most important of them being the military police raid on 28 November 2010 of the Complexo do Alemão (Furtado n.pag.), the Comando Vermelho gang headquarters described in *Culture is Our Weapon* and mentioned in the film. One of Afro-Reggae's centers in the Complexo do Alemão was threatened (Teixeira), attacked, and forced to briefly close (Santos; G1, "Mulher"). Public support for AfroReggae became synonymous for some with support for the pacificações, or taking government control of the favelas from the *traficantes* (Teles). One of the latter murdered the military police officer assigned to José Junior in 2014 (G1, "Câmara"). Vigário Geral and surrounding areas have displayed a drop in homicides (Equipe do Rio n.pag.) and one in four businesses in the region showed economic growth during the same period (Rossi and *O Globo* n.pag.). Though violence in the area continues, it is occupied by police forces and there is talk of handing the area over to the national army. Housing prices in the region have skyrocketed three hundred percent (Nogueira n.pag.). It is still unclear what Vigário Geral will look like in 2015 and years to come, if it will remain an area outside the *asfalto* or if those terms will need to be changed. As history changes what Vigário Geral represents, *Favela Rising* and *Culture is Our Weapon*'s function as texts will no doubt change as well. They will become a record of a specific time and place. For example, they can be seen as precursors to Milton Alencar Júnior's documentary on the Vigário Geral Massacre, *Lembrar para não esquecer* (2011), a memorial to the victims of the crisis that AfroReggae was created to overcome (Tardáguila n.pag.). They will join the ranks of Andrade and their engaged precursors in future interpretations of the Brazilian cultural tradition. However, the model for change they represent, a continuation of *antropofagia* and the socially engaged artists, journalists, and teachers of the past, is and will be a powerful example of the Loving Third in the midst of paralyzing, collective depression, a problem with which Brazil, and the rest of the world, will be grappling for many years to come.

NOTES

[1] Though AfroReggae performs in many venues in many forms, primarily in Portuguese, this current study focuses on *Favela Rising* and *Culture is Our Weapon*, due to their popularity with English-speaking audiences.

[2] "Let's make the division—imported Poetry. And Pau-Brasil poetry, for exportation" (Andrade, "Pau-Brasil" 185).

[3] Oswald de Andrade was central to Brazil's Semana de Arte Moderna (São Paulo, 11–18 February 1922), arguably the most effervescent and foundational moment in the history of Brazilian arts. Andrade, like the other participants in this exhibition, are referred to in this essay, as in Portuguese, as *modernistas*, which can lead to misunderstandings for Spanish and English speakers, who are familiar with disperse artists referred to in Spanish as *modernistas* and in English as "Modernists." Antônio Cândido's "Literatura e Subdesenvolvimento" juxtaposes and explains the characteristics of these movements (146–48). Since this article focuses on Andrade in reference to AfroReggae, this study defines *modernismo* as Andrade's manifesto portrays it.

[4] For a map and descriptions of the *pacificações* of the *favelas*, see "Mapa das favelas e das UPPs em Rio de Janeiro" at <http://oglobo.globo.com/infograficos/upps-favelas-rio/>.

[5] Watch the television show "Conexões Urbanas TV" at <http://www.afroreggae.org/category/audiovisual> and follow the movement.

[6] For critic Lucía Tennina, these writers of *literatura marginal* or *periférica* include Ferréz (Reginaldo Ferreira da Silva), Sérgio Vaz, Alessandro Buzo, and MV Bill, all of whom come from the *periferia* of São Paulo or the *favelas* of Rio (263, 267). Beginning in 2001 (263), its graphic, action-packed prose describes selected moments of life in Brazil's slums. Themes of police brutality, racism, poverty, and imprisonment are central. Its most direct precursor is the diaries of São Paulo *favelada* Carolina Maria de Jesus (Silva 22; Villaraga 48). It dialogues with and often includes rap lyrics and popular speech (270). See Martínez Rodríguez.

[7] Pinho and Rocha argue that this is an alternative to the Brazilian national identity, the latter being based on racial democracy, but the pattern of importation and substitution is rooted in *modernismo*.

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