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# Racial and Linguistic prejudice in Brazil: comparisons, contrasts and anthropophagic solutions.

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## **Resum**

In this article I compare and contrast how prejudicial views about race have/have not intersected with prejudicial views about Language in the history of Brazil. I examine both within Latin American discussions related to civilisation and barbarism, onto which the distinction between Educated and Popular Brazilian Portuguese maps. I focus on the work of the modernist Anthropophagic Movement and how this movement combined with subsequent developments helped to break the dichotomy civilisation/barbarism and redefine Brazilian identity and place at its centre mixed-race characteristics. I suggest that a similar movement is necessary to overcome the prejudices against popular Brazilian Portuguese.

## **Palavras-chave:**

Linguistic prejudice, racial, civilisation, barbarism

## 1 Introduction

The sociolinguistic situation in modern Brazil has been characterised as a polarised one (LUCCHESI 2017; MATTOS E SIVA 2004) between the language of the upper classes who speak what is termed educated Brazilian Portuguese, which is also similar to the language used in education, and the language of the masses who speak what has been termed popular Brazilian Portuguese, an umbrella term which includes numerous varieties of spoken Brazilian but which is usually characterised by a lack of agreement features on nouns, adjectives and verbs and not a consistent use of the subjunctive. Popular Brazilian is often considered a barbarous aberration of the language and historically it is thought to have been the product of the imperfect learning of Portuguese by indigenous peoples and African slaves. In this article I show how this linguistic distinction maps on to the conceptual dichotomy of Civilisation and Barbarism and how views about race and ethnicity have interacted with views about language in the history of Brazil. On the racial dimension I focus on how, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when ‘Civilisation’ was associated with development, the racial mix of the population was considered to be the reason for Brazil’s economic and developmental failure. The scientific racism which was rife at this time, however, was challenged by a number of Brazilians but most interestingly by those involved in Brazil’s modernist movement. In particular the Anthropophagic Movement and subsequent developments helped to redefine Brazilian identity and place at its centre mixed-race characteristics. Interestingly enough this movement also broke the dichotomy Civilisation/Barbarism which had plagued and interested Latin American intellectuals for a century. I suggest that a similar movement is necessary to overcome the prejudices against popular Brazilian Portuguese since the linguistic prejudice and discrimination against these varieties is a reality in Brazil and it has even been identified as constituting a social and potential developmental problem for the country (O’NEILL; MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2019).

## 2 Civilisation and Barbarism

The antipodes Civilisation and Barbarism have their roots in the Greek and Roman concepts of ‘civilized’ peoples residing in ordered urban societies governed by the rule of law which provided security and potential progress and prosperity for all its citizens versus those barbarous, primitive, tribal people residing in the untamed hinterlands, who were a law unto themselves and lacked the intellectual and cultural sophistication of the Romans and Greeks. Language has always been a crucial and, at times, deterministic factor in these debates. The term *barbarian*, an antonym of the word *politēs*, citizen, was used to designate all non-Greek-speaking peoples and its

origins lie in the onomatopoeic, discordant and unintelligible *bar-bar* noises which foreign languages sounded to Greek ears.

The polar opposites of Civilisation and Barbarism have been much-used and highly-debated concepts in Latin American politics, thought and literature since 1845, when, whilst in exile in Chile, the Argentinian Domingo Faustino Sarmiento published an attack on the caudillo system which his native country was suffering from and an extended political and social meditation on the problems of a political culture which he considered deficient. This publication eventually took the form of a book with the title *Civilización y barbarie. Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga y aspecto físico, costumbres y hábitos de la República Argentina* [Civilisation and Barbarism: life of Juan Facundo Quiroga and the physical aspect, customs and habits of the Republic of Argentina.] and has been argued as constituting ‘the single most influential literary work of modern Spanish American culture’ (Williamson 1992: 290).

In what follows I will trace how historically in Brazil this debate around Civilisation and Barbarism could and could not be drawn along racial and linguistic lines and how the poet Oswald de Andrade managed to dispense with and dispatch this distinction and convert what initially was considered barbaric, the consummation of human flesh, into something positive. This had important implications for conceptions of race within Brazilian identity and I maintain that it has excellent potential for combating linguistic prejudice against popular varieties of Portuguese.

### **3 The earliest encounters.**

The initial views and testimonies of the New World and its peoples by the Europeans were largely positive. Amerigo Vespucci describes the land as an ‘earthly paradise’ (quoted from GALEANO (1973, p. 13) and, as attested in (1), Perô Vaz de Caminha, the chronicler of the initial and accidental encounter of the Portuguese with Brazil, is extremely complimentary about both the fertile, lush lands of what would become Brazil and its native inhabitants, which he describes as the land’s *melhor fruta*. (1)

*A feição deles é serem pardos, um tanto avermelhados, de bons rostos e bons narizes, bem feitos. Andam nus, sem cobertura alguma. Nem fazem mais caso de encobrir ou deixa de encobrir suas vergonhas do que de mostrar a cara. Acerca disso são de grande inocência.*

*andam bem curados, e muito limpos. E naquilo ainda mais me convenço que são como aves, ou alimárias montezinhas, as quais o ar faz melhores penas e melhor cabelo que às mansas, porque os seus corpos são tão limpos e tão gordos e tão formosos que não pode ser mais*

*E não comem senão deste inhame, de que aqui há muito, e dessas sementes e frutos que a terra e as árvores de si deitam. E com isto andam tais e tão rijos e tão nédios que o não somos nós tanto, com quanto trigo e legumes comemos*  
*[They are brown skinned, of a quite reddish complexion, with handsome faces and noses, nicely shaped. They go about naked, without any type of covering. They do not bother to cover their bodies, and show their private parts as readily as they show their faces. In this matter they are of great innocence.*

*they are well groomed and very clean. And in that aspect, I am convinced they are like birds, or mountain animals, to whom the air gives better feathers and hair than those of their domesticated counterparts, because their bodies are as clean and as plump and as beautiful as could be!*

*They only eat this yam [manioc] which is very plentiful here, and those seeds and fruits that the earth and the trees give of themselves. Nevertheless, they are sturdier, and sleeker than we are despite all the wheat and legumes we eat.]*

Such descriptions both fueled and chimed with the philosophy of Primitivism in an increasingly industrialized Europe in which the urban centres were often the locus of squalor, poverty and plague. Primitivism philosophy therefore interacts in interesting ways with the poles of Civilisation and Barbarism, since the city is no longer the seat of civilisation in opposition to the unruly countryside. Rather the bucolic countryside represents a civilized ideal – the untainted condition of man living at peace and at one with nature. For some in Europe the newly discovered American lands represented this ideal (the geographical location of the Garden of Eden was in the Americas (GALEANO, 1973, p. 14) and its native peoples were romanticized as noble savages and also exoticized (see GUILLE-ESCURT (2000, p. 195) for early representations of the Tupinamba of Brazil). During the European Enlightenment humanists used these images to criticize European society. Sir Thomas Moore’s famous publication of 1516 tells the tale of a Portuguese adventurer, Raphael, who was left behind on Brazilian shores on one of Vespucci’s voyages and came across the island of *Utopia*, whose perfect governance is contrasted with that of Europe, and particularly England, which is characterised as irrational and haughty. Likewise, LINDENBAUM (2004, p. 490) notes how Montaigne ‘considers the absence of laws among the [Brazilian] Tupinambas to be more desirable than their proliferation in France’ and ‘presents the exotic as a viable alternative to the “civilized” world.’. America and its inhabitants are therefore used as a tool to question the aims of civilisation and offer alternative ways to reconceptualize it, particularly as a more harmonious, more natural, more primitive state of being and of organization.

This view, however, was not to endure given that the European explorers’ ultimate aim was to claim the lands as their own and exploit its resources, including its peoples. One cannot admire, respect and rate highly those peoples that one wishes to exploit, in many cases, to the extent of enslavement, be it explicitly as chattel slaves or in the form

of forced labourers in the Spanish American *encomiendas* or the Brazilian *fazendas* and in the mines of Potosi and Ouro Preto (for a reassessment of the assumptions of the lack of indigenous slavery in Brazil see PINTO VENÂNCIO (1997)). Therefore the ideal image of the noble savage had to change. The cannibalistic practices of both the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean (Arawaks and Caribs) and the Brazilian Tupi(nambá) provided the perfect justification for viewing all indigenous peoples as savage=barbaric people. Their *anthropophagy* – the eating of human flesh by human beings – ‘foi usada pelos colonizadores europeus como justificativa para a aplicação de medidas preventivas, punitivas e técnicas de sujeição.’ (KNORR DE CARVALHO, 2008, p. summary) [‘was used by the European colonizers as a justification for applying preventive and punitive measures and technologies of subjection.’].

Cannibalism, a term which has its origins in the Spanish deformation of the term *Karib*, originally meaning ‘strong man’ but used to refer to the native peoples who inhabited the lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, has even been claimed to be a western and particularly colonial invention (KNORR DE CARVALHO, 2008; OBEYESEKERE, 2005; TEMPESTA, 2005) and different, therefore, from *anthropophagy*. This idea is given its greatest expression in Gananath Obeyesekere’s book<sup>1</sup>, *Cannibal Talk: the man-eating myth and human sacrifice in the South Seas*. The author argues for a definition of cannibalism as ‘the dread of the other’ which can only be understood as existing within the colonial discourse of the opposition of the civilized and the savage. In a review of this book the Brazilian social anthropologist, Giovana Acacia Tempesta, notes (2)

*‘O canibalismo seria, pois, uma forma de classificar a alteridade com efeitos políticos claros. Assim, imagens de barbárie, selvageria, irracionalidade, inumanidade estariam associadas à “cena canibal”, compondo uma fronteira simbólica, ética e política que permite ao “eu” dominador manter-se a distância e afirmar que canibais são os “outros” (TEMPESTA, 2005, p. 750)*

*[Cannibalism becomes, therefore, a way of marking otherness with clear political effects. Thus, the ‘cannibal scene’ comes to be associated with barbarous, savage and inhuman images, which establishes a symbolic, ethical and political border which allows the ‘I’ of the ruler to distance themselves from and from which they can affirm that the cannibals are the “others”]*

That the anthropophagic practices of (some) native Americans contributed to Europeans perceiving them as barbarians is clear, as attested from the account of the native peoples of Brazil by the Jesuit priest, Antônio Blazquez, to his brothers in

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this book is primarily about the British expansion in the South Pacific and their contact with Polynesian peoples.

Coimbra in 1555 in (3) and in the testimony in (4) of Fray Tomás Ortiz, Bishop of Santa Marta (now the Colombian coast) to the Spanish Council of the Indies in 1524.

(3)

*Ó meus irmão em Jesus Cristo caríssimo, quantas lágrimas derramariam seus olhos se vissem estas criaturas de Deus viver quase a maneira de animais sem rei, sem lei e sem razão, sedentos em comer carne humana e tão impregnados desta brutalidade, que preferirão perder o que possuem à dar-nos um negro cativo que pretendem comer. Entre eles não há amor nem lealdade (...). Não tem a quem obedecem além de suas vontades, e aqui fazem o que querem inclinando-se a vícios imundos e tão imorais que prefiro que se calem sob o silêncio do que escrevendo expor maldades tão grandes (BLAZQUEZ apud LEITE LEITE (1954, p. 252), translation taken from KNORR DE CARVALHO (2008, p. 50)*

*[to my brothers in our beloved Jesus Christ, what tears would fall from your eyes if you could see how these creatures of God live almost like animals without a king, without laws and without reason, hungry to eat human flesh and so steeped in this brutality, that they would prefer to lose what they have than to give to us a black that they have captured and intend to eat. Amongst them there is no love or loyalty (...). They do not have anyone to obey apart from their own desires, and in this they do what they want being inclined to obscene and such immoral vices which I prefer to muffle under silence than to expose such great evils in writing.]*

(4)

*“The people of the mainland of India eat human flesh and practice sodomy more than any other human group. They do not administer justice amongst themselves, walk naked and do not show signs of love or modesty. Like donkeys they are stupid, crazy and insane. They kill each other or other people without restraint. They only respect the truth when it is to their advantage...they are inconsistent . . . have the vices of beasts . . . are not capable of understanding doctrine . . . are traitors, cruel, vengeful, and never pardon . . . lazy, thieves . . . of low and mean judgment . . . are as cowardly as rabbits, dirty as pigs, they eat lice, spiders, and raw worms . . . have no art or human skills . . . are like brute animals. In all, I say, that never did God create people with so much vice and animal behaviour”. (RIVERA PAGAN (1991) apud (RODÉS))*

However, their consumption of human flesh is only one of a long list of the indigenous peoples’ immoral deficiencies which makes them barbarians and such deficiencies are attributed to them even when there is no mention of cannibalism. Thus, the Portuguese historian and chronicler, Pero de Magalhães Gândavo, who worked on the Fazenda do Governo da Bahia around 1558-1572 refers (Gandavo 2008) to the native populations as a ‘*multidão de bárbaros gentios*’ [multitude of barbarous peoples] who ‘*vivem como brutos animais sem ordem nem concerto de homens*’ [‘live like brute animals without order or the correct and cordial structures of men’] they are described as ‘*muito belicosos... desumanos e cruéis.... muitos desonestos e dados a sensualidade, e entregam-se aos vícios como se neles não houvera razão de humanos*’ [very warlike....cruel and inhuman.... most dishonest and predisposed to sensuality, and they give themselves over to vice as if they possessed no human reason.].The noble savage

is therefore no longer noble for some<sup>2</sup>, but merely a barbaric savage and, perhaps a devourer of human flesh, and its society, which offered through its exotic and primitive ways a different way of conceiving civilization, is now conceived as a one without laws, morals or human reason.

To my knowledge language does not seem to be a deterministic factor in the barbaric traits of the native inhabitants of America, more importance is given to the climate of the area and the different constellations of the Southern Hemisphere which at the time of the European conquest were considered to be able to influence the physical and mental state of those who resided beneath them: emasculating men and degenerating their behaviour ((EARLE, 2012; ESGUERRA, 1999; SCHROER, 2016). It is only Gândavo (2008) who notes how the language of the Tupi seemed to be a reflection of their lack of civilisation since, ‘*carece de três letras - não se acha nela F, nem L, nem R, coisa digna de espanto, porque assim não têm Fé, nem Lei, nem Rei*’. (GANDAVO, 2008) [[it lacks three letters, one cannot find in it F-, nor L, nor R, something which warrants fright, because thus they do not have Faith, nor Law, nor royal sovereigns]

The linguistic dimension related to the concepts of civilisation and barbarism would be expressed in explicit terms in Portuguese America some 200 years later in the *Directório dos Índias* in 1755, when the Portuguese crown, under the auspices of the Marques de Pombal, reacted against what they considered being the excessive power of the Jesuit order in their colony and their insistence of the use of the local languages in their catechizing mission and the social life of their *aldeias*. The result of this language policy and the influence of the Jesuits was that the most spoken language used in the colonized territories, especially outside the North East, was the *Língua Geral Paulista*, based on the indigenous Tupi language. Moreover this language was used not only by native peoples and their but also by black slaves, European colonists and the children of Portuguese men and indigenous women. The Jesuits were considered by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns to have become almost rulers of a state within their colonies and they were ordered to leave. When they defied this order, they were forcibly expelled by a joint Spanish and Portuguese army (1753-56) which had very unfortunate consequences on the Indian populations in the Jesuit-ran *aldeias* since “European artillery and cavalry slaughtered 1,400 Christian Indians who were pathetically holding aloft their banners, crucifixes and holy images” (HEMMING, 1987, p. 84).

The *Directório dos Índias* (1755) set down a number of directives, some of which are given in (5), on how the surviving indigenous people should be treated. On the topic of what language the natives should speak it is clear that the imposition of the European

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<sup>2</sup> This statement needs must be nuanced since from the earliest moments of conquest there have been Europeans who have defended the character and disposition of the native inhabitants and condemned their treatment by other Europeans, e.g. Antón de Montecinos and Bartolomé de las Casas



language is seen as an unquestionable and proven civilizing principle upon the native peoples whereby they will be purged of their barbarous ways, and which will also conveniently result in their loyal obedience and submission to the Portuguese Crown.

(5)

*Sempre foi maxima inalteravelmente praticada em todas a Nações, que conquistarão novos Domínios, introduzir logo nos Povos conquistados o seu próprio idioma, por ser indisputável, que este he hum dos meios mais eficazes para desterrar dos Povos rústicos a barbaridade de seus antigos costumes: e tem mostrado a experiencia, que ao mesmo passo, que se introduz neles o uso da Língua do Principe, que os conquistou, se lhes radica também o afeto, a veneração, e a obediencia ao mesmo Principe. Observando pois todas as nações polidas do mundo este prudente, e sólido sistema, nesta conquista se praticou o contrário, que só cuidaram os primeiros conquistadores estabelecer nela o uso da língua, que chamam geral; invenção verdadeiramente abominável e diabólica, para que privados os Índios de todos aqueles meios, que os podiam civilizar permanecessem na rústica e bárbara sujeição, em que até agora se conservavam. Para desterrar este perniciosíssimo abuso, será um dos primeiros cuidados dos Directores estabelecer nas suas respectivas povoações o uso da língua portuguesa, não consentindo, por modo algum, que os meninos e meninas, que pertencem às escolas, e todos aqueles índios, que forem capazes de instrução nesta matéria, usem da língua própria das duas nações ou da chamada geral, mas unicamente da Portuguesa, que Sua Majestade tem recomendado em repetidas ordens, que até agora se não observaram com total ruína Espiritual, e Temporal do Estado.*

*[It has always been a maxim unalterably practiced by all Nations, who conquered new dominions, to introduce without delay unto the conquered peoples their own language, since it was undeniable that this is one of the most efficient ways to banish from the rustic peoples the barbarity of their old customs: and experience has shown, that at the same rate that they are instilled with the language of the Prince, who conquered them, thus the affection, veneration and obedience to the same Prince takes root and grows within them. Although all the sophisticated nations of the world adhered to this prudent and solid system, in this conquest the opposite was practiced, the first conquerors only took care to establish in it the use of the language, that they call the 'general language': truly an abominable and diabolic invention, so that the Indians, deprived of all those means whereby they could become civilized, remained in their rustic and barbarous subjection, in which they continue until now. So as to expel this pernicious abuse, it will be one of the first provisions of care of the Directives to establish in the respective settlements the use of the Portuguese Language, not allowing, in any way, that the boys or girls, who belong to the schools, and all those Indians, who are able of instruction in this subject, to use the native language of those two [indigenous] nations or that which is called the general language, but only the Portuguese language, that His Majesty has recommended over and over again in official orders, that until now have not been observed with complete and utter ruinous effects on the spiritual and temporal conditions of the State.]*

Linguistic matters aside, the Directório dos Índias was in some respects an enlightened document for its times. It decreed all Indians to be free citizens, prohibited racial discrimination (the distinction between old and new Christians was abolished) and granted them the same rights as white people, including the rights to hold property and to trade. Importantly, it also avidly and actively encouraged more miscegenation. In this respect the Directório dos Índios is somewhat reminiscent of the speech, the

relevant part of which is reproduced here in (6), that the Spanish American liberator, Simon Bolívar (1783-1830), gave to the Congress of Angostinas in 1819. Bolívar was well aware of the ethnic and racial tensions in the newly formed states and foreseeing potential problems he suggested that the solution lay in unity and miscegenation.

(6)

*Es imposible asignar con propiedad a qué familia humana pertenecemos. La mayor parte del indígena se ha aniquilado, el europeo se ha mezclado con el Americano y con el africano, y este se ha mezclado con el indio y el europeo. Nacidos todos en el seno de una misma madre, nuestros padres, diferentes en origen y en sangre, son extranjeros, y todos difieren visiblemente en la epidermis, esta desemejanza trae un reato de la mayor transcendencia.... Para sacar de este caos nuestra naciente República, todas nuestras facultades morales no serán bastantes si no fundimos la masa del pueblo en un todo.... Unidad, unidad, unidad, debe ser nuestra divisa. La sangre de nuestros ciudadanos es diferente, mezclémosla para unirla'*

*[Let us remember that our people are not European, nor North American...It is impossible to say, properly speaking, to which human family we belong. The greater part of the indigenous population has been destroyed, Europeans have mixed with Americans, and Africans, and these with both Indians and Europeans. Born all of one mother, our fathers, different in origin and blood are strangers, with skins of visibly different colours. These dissimilarities link us in the most transcendent of ways....For our rising Republic to emerge from this chaos, all our moral power and capabilities will not be enough unless we merge the mass of people into one whole. To unite, unite, unite, that which is divided must be our aim. The blood of our citizens is different, let us mix it to unite it.' (Bolívar - Discurso de Angostura – some of the translation R.K. Britton)]*

This call to unity and racial mixing was a difficult task given that for hundreds of years race had been and still was strongly correlated with social-class and material wealth and these social and economic structures remained firmly in place both in Spanish America and Brazil even after independence. The landowning creoles and commercial elites, who were usually white(r), were protective of their dominant positions and suspicious and fearful of the ascension of the *mestizos*, not to mention the indigenous peoples and the black slaves. This fear and suspicion was fueled by mixed-race insurrections prior to full independence (the siege of Guanajuato in México, the great indigenous rebellion of Tupac Amaru II in Perú, the defiance of the *llaneros* in Venezuela, the slave revolts in Brazil within the context of the Haitian revolution and the Bahian Tailors' Rebellion (*A Revolta dos Alfaiates*)) which had often resulted in the loss of wealth for creoles or even their deaths and had ultimately threatened with dismantling the whole social system which the creoles dominated.

Thus, just as the Directório dos Índios ended up being revoked in 1798 since, as stated by Faraco (2017:19), 'trazia, no geral, uma perspectiva que se chocava frontalmente com o modo como os colonos, missionários, funcionários civis e militares viam as populações indígenas' [In general, its outlook on and aims for the indigenous

populations clashed head on with the way the colonists, missionaries, state functionaries and soldiers saw the indigenous peoples'] so did Bolivar's call for unity and miscegenation in Spanish America fail due to the white(r) elites protectionism of their own privileges and position. It is these white elites who would be responsible for the scientific racism in the second half of the 19th century which was dominated by the yearning for progress which was the defining characteristic of Civilisation

#### **4 The hegemonic idea of progress=civilisation and the emergence of scientific racism**

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin America witnessed an economic boom in exports but, despite this boom, the long awaited-for signs of social, political and economic development were lacking. This century was also marked by the continuation of the importance of French ideas on the Latin American elites, most notably the social and political theory of Auguste Comte (1796-1857), who is accredited with the doctrine of Positivism. This philosophical outlook held that the structure of society and the behaviour of human individuals can be understood through the application of the scientific method (objective, empirical observation). The assumption was that just as natural laws governed the Universe, so too did they govern human societies and therefore scientific knowledge and reason can and should be used to control society and social life.

The way this 'scientific' knowledge was applied to Latin American societies was in response to the question of its countries' slow economic development, especially when compared with the USA or Europe. In somewhat simplified and crude terms, their reasoning and response to this question was the following: Latin America, like Europe and the USA, now enjoys the political and economic freedoms to participate in world (free)trade, has access to the necessary technology and skills for production and moreover (and unlike Europe) it possess numerous natural resources and a climate propitious to the cultivation a wide range of crops. The only objective and scientific reason for the lack of development in Latin America, therefore, was its peoples and their different racial make-up when compared to Europe and the USA.

Such a conclusion was also encouraged by the writings of Ernest Renan (1823-1892) and his belief, as expressed in (7), that racial characteristics were innate and deterministic and therefore produced a hierarchy of races in which, unsurprisingly, the white European was on top.

(7)

*Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost no sense of honor... A race of tillers of the soil, the Negro; treat him with kindness*

*and humanity, and all will be as it should; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the ergastulum like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel... But the life at which our workers rebel would make a Chinese or a fellah happy, as they are not military creatures in the least. Let each one do what he is made for, and all will be well. (RENAN, 1872)*

These ideas encouraged other supposedly ‘scientific’ approaches to man and society. The popularity and prestige of the work of Charles Darwin was seized upon and taken advantage of and his ideas about Natural Selection and the Survival of the Fittest were distorted and applied to societies in the form of social Darwinism (for an overview see DOMONT DE SERPA (1997)). This combination of positivism and other pseudo-scientific social and racial theories resulted in scientific racism conceived principally in Europe to justify their racial superiority over Africans and also Latin Americans, as attested by the quotation in (8) of the Swiss biologist Louis Agassiz (1807-1873).

(8)

*basta ter-se estado no Brasil, para não se poder negar a decadência resultante dos cruzamentos efetuados neste país mais largamente que noutra. Estes cruzamentos apagam as melhores qualidades quer do branco, quer do negro, quer do índio, e produzem um tipo indescritível, cuja energia, tanto física como moral, se enfraqueceu (Agassiz Louis apud GOUVEIA (2016, p. 37)*

*[One only needs to have been in Brazil to not be able to deny the decadence which has resulted from the racial mixing which has taken place in that country more extensively than any other. These mixes erase the best qualities of either the white man or the black man or the Indian, and they produce a indescribable type, whose both physical and moral energy, has weakened.]*

These theories were readily adopted by certain members of the Latin American elite in the 19<sup>th</sup> century since they provided what seemed to be an answer to the developmental stagnation of Latin America and its frustrated aims of becoming a fully civilized society – the degenerate mixed racial characteristics of its peoples were to blame and the whole continent was considered to be ‘ill’ since miscegenation had led to a physically weaker race which was less intelligent and more morally corrupt. As illustrated by the quotation by Cesar Pino (1997) in (9), these views easily mapped on to the poles of Civilisation and Barbarism.

(9)

*‘The philosophy of positivism and its cult of progress seemed to offer a plausible explanation [to the lack of political and economic stability]. If the measure of civilisation was industry, and if technology was available to all nations, then Latin America's backwardness had to be due to cultural factors. Indians, Africans, and mixed- bloods lacked the requisite mentality to adapt to industrial civilization. National progress thus depended on forcibly assimilating these "barbarians" into the dominant culture or physically removing them from society.’*

The result in a number of Latin American countries, particularly in Brazil and Argentina where positivism had a number of influential followers, was the desire to whiten its population by attracting European immigration via the provision of subsidies; such whitening was considered the solution to achieving the future progress and stability characteristic of civilized societies. In the period of 1870-1910 Brazil accepted 2.6 million European immigrants and Argentina 3.5 million (ULYSES BALDERAS; GREENWOOD, 2010).

## 5 Racial and linguistic prejudices converge and diverge

It is also around this time that in Brazil there are signs of a distinction between two types of Brazilian Portuguese: Educated and Popular Brazilian, which, as has been noted clearly map on to the antipodes of Civilisation and Barbarism. Educated Brazilian Portuguese was traditionally spoken by the urban literate elites, who in the colonial and imperial period were described as the *boa sociedade, sociedade dos homens bons, a camada superior, a flor da sociedade* [‘good society, society of good men, the upper echelon, the flower or society’] (Faraco 2017: 138) whilst Popular Brazilian Portuguese was historically restricted to the speech of the non-urban illiterate masses, who were described as *homens sem qualidade, escória da população, parasitas da árvore social*, [men without quality, the dregs of society, parasites of the social tree] but at the same time acknowledged as being *a grande massa da população* [the great mass of the population] and even present in the cities as the *plebe urbana* [the urban rabble] (ibid. quoted from (Mattos Ilmar 1987).

It is at this point where racial and linguistic prejudices merge since there is also a clear racial dimension in the two different types of Brazilian Portuguese. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century popular Brazilian, which was considered as being full of *erros crassos* [gross mistakes] and characterised as *língua de gente selvagem, língua incivilizada, língua estropiada, uso de gente ignorante* (dos Santos Silva 2012: 108-09). [language of savage people, uncivilized language, defiled language] was often related to the language of black slaves and then freed slaves. Araripe Júnior (1848-1911), a founding member of the Brazilian Academy of letters refers to *o falar atravessado dos africanos* [the warped speech of the Africans]. This group of people were not only considered wretched due to their actual condition of slaves or the legacy of slavery but in accordance with scientific racism they were considered an inferior race, one that lacked initiative, drive, intellect and was naturally irrational, lazy and had a predisposition to crime and wantonness ((AZEVEDO, 1987, p. 253-254). Faraco (2018:44) cites the words of a Brazilian senator, reproduced here in (10), in one of the debates on the topic of ceding to the British

demand to abolish the traffic of slavery. The senator highlights how the slaves had made the Brazilians forfeit the purity of their language

(10)

*o maior bem que nos resulta da abolição da escravatura (...) é arredarmos de nós esta raça bárbara que estraga os nossos costumes, a educação dos nossos filhos, o progresso da indústria e tudo quanto pode haver de útil, e até tem perdido a nossa língua pura*

*[The best thing to come from the abolition of slavery is for us to rid ourselves of that barbarous race which ruins our customs, the education of our children, the progress of our industry and all that could be useful, and because of them we have even lost our pure language.]*

The idea that *popular Brazilian* was the result of the European language being learned and spoken by these less civilized peoples of African, and also Indian, origin was, during the 19th and early 20th century, a deeply entrenched social belief of the time and one which gained credence by appearing in social and linguistic histories of Brazil as attested by the quotations below in (11) and (12) respectively.

(11)

*“Sem identidade de língua, de usos e de religião entre si, só a cor e o infortúnio vinha a unir estes infelizes, comunicando-se na língua do colono, estrangeira a todos, e por isso sempre por eles cada vez mais estropiada, em detrimento até da educação da mocidade, que, havendo começado por aprender com eles a falar erradamente tinha depois mais trabalho para se desavezar de muitas locuções viciosas” (VARNHAGEN, 1854, p. 256)*

*[Without any identity amongst themselves regarding their language, their uses and their religion, only the colour of their skin and their misfortune came to unite these poor wretches, who communicated with each other in the language of the colonist, a foreign language to all, and for that reason it was increasingly defiled even in the education of the youth, who, having begun by learning how to speak incorrectly with them afterwards they had more work in order to dishabituate themselves of many deficient phrases.]*

(12)

*os indivíduos que tinham o tupi como língua materna abandonaram-no e adotaram o novo idioma. Naturalmente não puderam dominar todo o mecanismo e todas as sutilezas deste; antes, aprenderam-no mal, desfigurando-o com uma série de defeitos provenientes dos antigos hábitos linguísticos.....o negro africano, também ele entrou a falar mal o português, desgurando-o com a marca dos seus anteriores hábitos linguísticos..... Pois bem: o português, transplantado, sofreu um rude abalo.... foi altamente deturpado na boca de índios e mamelucos, e na boca dos pretos, ficou ilhado em muitos pontos do território nacional, que se imunizaram do bafejo civilizador.....Como se vê, há muitas semelhanças entre o português dos índios e o português dos negros. isto é, aliás, bem natural, pois tanto o índio quanto o negro, em atrasado estágio de civilização, aprenderam o português como língua de emergência, obrigados pela necessidade (Silva Neto, 1950, p. 36)*

*[The people who had Tupi as their mother tongue abandoned it and they adopted the new language. Naturally they could not master all of the workings and subtleties of this language; rather, they learned it badly, distorting it with a series of defects originating from their old linguistic habits ...The African negro also came to speak Portuguese badly, distorting it with*

*the hallmark of their old linguistic habits ... . So: the Portuguese taken to Brazil took a crude and rough battering ... it was extremely distorted and corrupted in the mouths of the Indians and half-breeds, and in the mouths of the negros; it became isolated in many points of the national territory, which kept it away from the waves of civilization ... . As you can see, there are many similarities between the Portuguese of the Indians and the Portuguese of the negros. at is, moreover, extremely natural, since both the Indian and the negro, in a primitive stage of civilization, learned Portuguese as a language when they were in di cult predicaments and they were obliged to learn it through necessity.]*

Sousa (2010) illustrates how, in the seminal works of the historical linguists Gladstone Chaves de Melo (1946) and Serafim da Silva Neto (1963) languages are conceived as following a natural course in which they are born, they develop and reach their zenith, and then fall into decline and decay. Each of these stages can be identified with the complexity of their morphological systems. Educated Brazilian is clearly at the zenith, while popular Brazilian is at the stage of decay as shown by its morphological system which is described as being *reduzido, simplificado, erodido, empobrecida, deformada* [‘reduced, simplified, eroded, impoverished and deformed’] (Paixão de Sousa 2010:89) due to the contact with the, inherently less civilized, African slaves and indigenous peoples whose languages were in the initial stage, that of being born and not as complex as the Portuguese standard. Popular Brazilian is therefore conceived as the result of being *desfigurado* and *deturpado* [‘disfigured’ and ‘garbled’] by these peoples in the rural backwaters of the country which were out of reach of the *bafejo civilizador* [‘the waves of civilization’] of the cities.

In terms of the morphological system, varieties of what is called Popular Brazilian can be considered as simplified with respect to the written standard since they typically are characterised by reductions in the verbal, nominal and adjectival inflectional morphology, e.g lack of agreement features or non-use of the subjunctive mood. For example saying *os livro ilustrado mais interessante* instead of *os livros ilustrados mais interessantes* ‘the most interesting illustrated books’ and *os menino pega o peixe* instead of *os meninos pegam o peixe* ‘the children catch the fish’ and *eu não quero que as menina sai* instead of *eu não quero que as meninas saiam* ‘I don’t want the girls to go out’. However, such a simplification is linguistically entirely predictable and natural. It is well established in the linguistic literature that morphological simplification takes place when (a) languages expand in their number of native speakers (LUPYAN; DALE, 2010; NETTLE, 2012), (b) they come in to contact with other languages (TRUDGILL, 2001; 2010; 2011), and (c) they are acquired by adult speakers as a second language (BENTZ; VERKERK; KIELA; HILL *et al.*, 2015; BENTZ; WINTER, 2013; MCWHORTER, 2007; NICHOLS; BENTZ, 2017; TRUDGILL, 2001). Brazilian Portuguese fulfils all of these requirements for accelerated linguistic change since the number of native Portuguese speakers increased exponentially in Brazil, it became spoken over a much wider and

less-connected territory and, in its history it was learned by many adults as a second language and was spoken natively alongside numerous other languages. Morphological simplification is the general tendency of all Indo-European languages especially, as explained above, in cases of colonial expansion, dialect mixing, language contact and acquisition of the language by adult speakers. Latin had in excess of one hundred inflectional forms which were significantly reduced when Rome became a large Empire. Portuguese is the Romance language with most inflections and French, regarded historically as the most prestigious Romance language, has the least. The Indo-European language which is most simplified regarding its inflections is undoubtedly English.

The Brazilian grammarian, Melo, was aware of these developments in French and English but he refused to accept that such a process could have occurred in Brazilian Portuguese, because such morphological simplification was not present, he thought, in his own variety of educated Brazilian but was characteristic of popular Brazilian and embodied by the *matuto brasileiro* – the Brazilian residing in the countryside who is simple, crude and ignorant.

(13)

*Não há negar a tendência indo-européia, mas estou que a simplificação observada no Brasil não se deve a ela filiar. Porque é bem de ver que tal simplificação representa um desvio e não uma evolução, por assim dizer, orgânica.....E tanto deve ser considerado um desvio, que, ao lado da língua popular simplificada, existe uma língua padrão amplamente flexionada, língua padrão esta que continua a representar o ideal linguístico da comunidade. Assim, é muito diversa a atitude e a situação de um matuto brasileiro da de um francês ou da de um inglês (Melo, 1946, p. 102).*

*[One cannot deny the [ndo] E[uropean] tendency, but I am of the opinion that the simplification in Brazil is not along those lines. Because it's evident that such a simplification constitutes a deviation and not a natural evolution ... and thus it should be considered a deviation, that, besides the simplified popular language, there exists a standard language with many inflections, this standard language still represents the linguistic ideal of the community. thus, the attitude and situation of a Brazilian country boy is very different from that of a French or English man]*

The author's prejudicial opinions of Brazilian country folk lead him to conclude that the reduction of inflections and simplifications in this speech is a deviation and somehow unnatural as opposed to the natural simplification and reduction which took place in the speech of the French and English; civilized French and English gentlemen are not to be compared with barbarous Brazilian country boys.

These ideas are reminiscent of Sarmiento and his views of the *gauchos* and other countryside-dwelling folk as “a symbol of barbarism, backwardness, and ignorance, the anachronism of the countryside confronting urban civilization, the poncho and chaps against the frock coat, the spear and knife against the troops of the line, illiteracy against the school” (GALEANO, 1973, p. 187). What is additionally striking is that in



both the terms *gaucho* and the *matuto* the primary semantic force of the word is that of rural, rustic and provincial over mixed-race heritage; race, therefore did not determine one's status of civilized or barbaric, as explained by HOOKER (2017, p. 81) below in (14) for the work of Sarmiento

(14)

*“the Argentine countryside was the site and source of barbarism in Facundo and it shaped its indigenous and European inhabitants equally. Barbarism, Sarmiento argued, was the result of environmental and cultural conditions not inherent racial characteristics. Despite the dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism, Sarmiento left open the possibility that under the right conditions the inhabitants of the pampas could become “civilized”.*

Likewise in Brazil, throughout the discussions of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries although popular Brazilian was/is considered to be a consequence of Portuguese being spoken by indigenous peoples and African slaves, this debased form of Portuguese came not to be exclusively aligned along racial lines but became a marker of non-urban illiterate speakers. Due to the rural exodus and exponential expansion of Brazilian cities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, this type of Portuguese is now a characteristic of urban varieties, where it is correlated with social status, level of education, and viewed as a polar opposite to educated, or even civilized, Brazilian Portuguese.

Evidence to this effect comes from the civil response to the introduction of educational measures to foster a non-discriminative approach to popular Brazilian Portuguese (for a full discussion see O'NEILL e MASSINI-CAGLIARI (2019, p. 40-44)). These measures took the form of a pedagogical textbook, *Por uma vida* (Ação educativa 2011), which highlighted the differences between the spoken and written language and made the point that features of popular Brazilian are not wrong or debased variants of the language but simply different, and different variants are appropriate in different contexts. The aforementioned textbook was a source of great polemic since some considered that the government was endorsing the use of 'bad' Portuguese; the textbook attracted substantial media attention, being featured on the evening news and in the headlines of a number of national newspapers. The public reacted by posting comments on the online version of the newspapers or writing to the newspapers. Leiser Baronas and Pagliarini Cox (2003) provide an excellent analysis of these comments and note that the ideology underlying many of them is that there is only one legitimate and civilised variety of Portuguese, the standard, and all other varieties are barbarous aberrations. Many of the adjectives used to describe the book are in the semantic field related to ignorance and lack of reasoning ('barbarity', 'aberration', 'stupidity', 'foolishness', 'madness') and many complaints focus on the book being against the intellectual, social and moral progress of students ('disservice to students', 'licentiousness', 'reversal of values', 'demagogy') (Leiser Baronas and Pagliarini Cox 2003:83). These authors also

note how the standard and its grammatical rules are viewed as analogous to laws and a type of Constitution of the language and, thus, not speaking or writing in accordance with the grammatical rules of the standard is tantamount to breaking the law – placing oneself outside civilised society, as attested by the comment in (15).

(15)

*Os autores do livro criminoso poderiam usar outro exemplo: “Posso matar um desafeto? Claro que pode. Mas fique atento porque, dependendo da situação, você corre o risco de ser vítima de preconceito jurídico” Tal como matar alguém viola uma norma, matar o idioma viola outra. Condenar uma e outra violação está longe de ser preconceito. É um critério civilizatório. (Leiser Baronas and Pagliarini Cox 2003:86)*

*[The authors of the criminal book could use another example: ‘Can I kill someone I don’t like? Of course you can. But be careful because, depending on the situation, you run the risk of being a victim of judicial prejudice.’ Just as killing someone violates a rule, killing the language violates another. To condemn both violations is not prejudice at all. It is a civilizing principle.]*

The book was even hailed by some as being propaganda from the Workers Party (*Partido Trabalhador*), which was accused of barbarizing the country with a primitive language and returning it to a *sistema tribal (onde) cada um fala como quer* (Leiser Baronas and Pagliarini Cox 2003:88–9), [tribal system where each person spoke how they wanted].

## **6 Linguistic prejudice in Brazil**

Sadly, the non-standard features discussed in the pedagogical book are well attested in the spoken language of many speakers, as evidenced by in-depth and sophisticated sociolinguistic studies. Scherre and Naro (2014:344) analysed the three variables discussed in the book in the speech of a community in Rio de Janeiro and concluded that the author of the book ‘showed great linguistic sensitivity and presented structures that are genuinely natural in Brazilian Portuguese.’ Thus popular Brazilian Portuguese is a ‘natural’ variety of the language and it is even claimed by some to be the real and authentic variety of the language. Hence the claim that, because standard written Portuguese is so different from the spoken language, Brazilian Portuguese is the language with the most native speakers that does not have a written system (Perini 2003). Although the concept of a language is essentially political and almost all Brazilians do identify themselves as speaking Portuguese, it is true that the differences between the spoken and written language in Brazil are substantial, that there is a view that (a) knowledge of speaking Portuguese correctly is the privilege of a few and (b) that Brazilians, in general, speak an inferior and illegitimate variety of Portuguese, compared

to the European variety (BAGNO, 2002a; b; MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2004) and despite Brazil being the home to 85% of native Portuguese speakers.

Historically an independent Brazil has had and continues to have great difficulties in recognising what the features of its official standard language are, which has caused problems for a consistent, inclusive and effective language policy in schools (Faraco 2017). The question is still unresolved since there is an ongoing conflict between a flexible, albeit nebulous, ‘educated norm’ and a dogmatic and clear ‘grammatical norm’ which was artificially defined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, as we have seen, has powerful and vociferous devotees and adherents in the media and the educational system (Faraco 2002, 2008, 2017:363). The problem, however, is that this written norm was defined at a time when the emphasis was on strengthening and consolidating the Brazilian nation as ‘o desdobramento, nos trópicos de uma civilização branca e europeia’ (cf. GUIMARÃES 1998:8 apud FARACO 2018:41). Accordingly the drive was for the ‘standard’ to be as similar as possible to the European norm. The tragic paradox was that the advocates and espousers of this drive, the Brazilian literate elite, came to classify their own natural way of speaking as wrong and ungrammatical (FARACO 2018:44).

In all countries the difference between the official standard and taught language and the linguistic habits of speakers can be the source of much linguistic prejudice and discrimination within the educational system and society in general. In societies like those of Brazil, however, these prejudices can be of a different magnitude since there are significant material and social inequalities between groups of people which is also correlated with linguistic differences. As pointed out by SOARES (2017) and validated by the research of PATTO (2010, 2015) within the educational system of Brazil the linguistic differences of poorer children are reconceptualized as linguistic deficiencies. Their non-standard forms are considered to be not only a reflection of cognitive deficiencies originating from insufficient and inadequate linguistic input but also a hinderance to their cognitive development since their non-standard use of language is erroneously assumed to be not adequate for logical and formal reasoning. The problem lies not within the linguistic structures themselves but the differential values attributed to the speech of the upper-classes vs. the speech of the working classes, the former highly valued in educational settings. The results can be the noted academic failure (SOARES 2017) and increased school drop-out rates (O’NEILL & MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2019) for poorer students, which is ultimately an obstacle to social and economic development of individuals and the country as a whole.

## 7 Language and race and Civilizaion and Barbarism

In the discussion of the racial and ethnic dimension to the debate about Civilisation and Barbarism I highlighted how the latter term could be associated with the 'dread of the other', the idea of the cannibal, which could justify punitive measures against them. This notion developed with the growing mixed-race society of Latin American into not so much a 'dread of the other' but a dread of becoming the other or being replaced by the other. Civilisation was both a quality and aim of the ruling elite, which at times was directly involved with race and with a dominant culture that was based on that of Europe. The barbaric sections of the population need must assimilate to this culture or be replaced (e.g the political culture of urban Buenos Aires for Sarmiento, the white capitalist culture for many positivists).

In Brazil this moment in the Civilisation and Barbarism debate coincided with the artificial fixing of their written norm which accordingly was modeled very closely on the European norm and which not only excluded certain natural ways of speaking of its elite but the popular language of the majority of the population. The result is that now in Brazil being civilized includes learning a language which is actually spoken natively by very few (if any) people but whose use, at least in writing, is a hallmark of this dominant civilized culture; it is the written standard used in education, administration and the media. Brazilian society and its institutions, therefore, are rigged to favour and value the linguistic habits of the upper and middle classes, which most closely resembles this standard.

It is a gross simplification, however, to correlate the dichotomies of Civilization and Barbarism in the 19th century and early 20th century with the opposition between white/non-white and Europe/Latin America since there were many dissident voices to such a reductionist view of the debate and the desire to whiten and Europeanize Latin American identities in order to achieve the capitalist ideal of progress, as triumphed by the USA. The most influential opposing voices came from those involved in the modernist and *indigenista* movements in Latin America who objected strongly to the types of pseudo-scientific determinism and, as explained by R.K Britton in (16), they made their voices heard in diverse ways.

(16)

*Their reaction was a complex mixture of ideas and attempts to revalue the historical and cultural experience of the Southern American continent which were essentially teleological, sometimes bordering on the metaphysical, but at their centre was a search for identity which was based upon the autochthonous realities of their countries*

The most successful of the Spanish American voices was that of the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó (1872-1917) who in his essay *Ariel*, as explained by LONSDALE (2017, p. 32) in (17), did manage to challenge the concept of Latin America being

barbaric but did not ultimately overcome the Civilization/Barbarism dichotomy (for a full discussion see BRITTON (1996, p. 130-134)).

(17)

*'Rodó challenged any supposed distinction between European and North American "civilisation" and Latin American "barbarism" by transposing its terms onto the Shakespearean figures of Ariel and Caliban, the former incarnating the spirit of idealism he believed Latin America should cultivate, in contrast to the essential barbarian but also Nietzschean supermen of the rampantly capitalist "Caliban" USA.'*

One must turn to Brazil and the *Manifesto Antropófago* of the Brazilian modernist poet Oswald de Andrade for the vanquishing of the Civilisation/Barbarism distinction. In what follows I analyse how this work and the movements which ensued not only achieved this but also redefined Brazilian identity, placing at its centre mixed-race characteristics. I conclude by highlighting the potential of this movement for Brazilians to radically reconceptualize their language and overcome the prejudices against popular Brazilian Portuguese.

## **8 The Anthropophagic Manifesto and its relevance for linguistic prejudice in Brazil.**

Andrade published his short manifesto written in poetic prose in 1928 in which he laid down his cultural vision for Brazil and which was taken up by contemporary artists (Tarsila do Amaral) and writers (Raul Bopp) and became the Anthropophagic movement. This movement has been identified as key in both understanding the expression of Modernism in Brazil and defining Modern Brazilian culture, in general.

It is relevant to the concepts of Civilisation and Barbarism in that Andrade reclaims and even praises the image of the barbarous indigenous Tupi and their cannibalistic practices; the date of the poem is given as *Ano 374 da Deglutição do Bispo Sardinha*. The cannibalistic practices of the native peoples of Latin America was an unquestionable hallmark of their 'barbarism' and often a cause of shame and taboo for expressions of Brazilian culture. Andrade foregrounds this practice and therefore not only subverts the image of the 'noble savage' of the European Primitivists but reclaims and hails this barbaric practice as an emblem (totem) of Brazilian national identity which he expresses as *A Transformação permanente do Tabu em totem*. Thus Andrade dispenses with the Civilization/Barbarism dichotomy; he is not concerned with defining the terms and placing Brazil on the side of civilization rather he impressively reclaims the old taboo of barbarism as a 'Brazilian badge of honour' and a source of inspiration for what defines Brazilian identity and its cultural production. As explained by SMITH (1997, p. 84-85) in (18) Andrade's manifesto had important consequences for Brazilian literature, however, its effects reached far beyond this realm. The manifesto can be seen

as a proud and confident affirmation of the Brazilian present through its cultural indigenous past and a desire of being able to express this socially and artistically as something original.

(18)

*The principle had important consequences for Brazilian literature since it entailed proclaiming that the country's barbarism-taboo because until then it was a cause of embarrassment (or at best a romantic idealization) when compared to the civilized metropolis, the mirror in which the colony was always contemplating itself- should therefore be seen as a source of inspiration, and not any more as a hinderance in the production of culture. And a most original source of inspiration since it represented the native element in all its rusticity, radically modifying the foreign model.*

In the movement which ensued, the idea was that cultural production could draw on European models but just as the indigenous Tupi would eat and consume their enemies and gain strength and inspiration in this process of incorporation, so too would the foreign influences be consumed, digested and absorbed and ultimately changed in the process to produce something original and unashamedly Brazilian. This basic idea runs throughout the Manifesto Antropófago and is enshrined in the lines *Antropofagia. Absorção do inimigo sacro. Para transformá-lo em totem*, and exemplified in the line *Tupi or not Tupi*, clearly the Brazilian anthropophagized lines of Shakespear's *To be or not to be*.

Spearheaded by Oswald de Andrade and other figures, the modernist intelligentsia, as noted by REID (2014, p. 89) 'revolutionized the Brazilian thinking of the racial question [...] urged Brazilians to lose their inferiority complex in relation to Europe and embrace their racial mixture as the core of their national identity.'. This idea is expressed explicitly in the quotation in (19) from Gilberto Freyre's 1933 book *The Masters and the Slaves*<sup>3</sup>,

(19)

*Todo brasileiro, mesmo o alvo, de cabelo louro, traz na alma, quando não na alma e no corpo ..a sombra, ou pelo menos a pinta, do indígena ou do negro....Na ternura, na mímica excessiva, no catolicismo em que se deliciam nossos sentidos, na música, no andar, na fala, no canto de ninar menino pequeno, em tudo que é expressão sincera de vida, trazemos quase todos a marca da influência negra.*

*"Every Brazilian, even the light skinned fair haired one carries about him on his soul, when not on soul and body alike, the shadow or at least the birthmark of the aborigine or the negro.... in our affections, our excessive mimicry, our Catholicism which so delights the senses, our music, our gait, our speech, our cradle songs, in everything that is a sincere expression of our lives, we almost all of us bear the mark of the black influence."*

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<sup>3</sup> Note that this book has been much criticized in Brazil and elsewhere for its rose-tinted view of slavery

This idea of celebrating Brazil's racial mixture and that this was the future for a Modern conception of Brazil is expressed by Buarque de Holanda in his 1936 essay *Raízes do Brasil*. He notes how Brazilian society is '*vivendo entre dois mundos, um definitivamente morto e outro que luta por vir à luz*', the dead one is that of slavery but the one to be born is still to be established. He criticizes positivists and their belief in the miraculous power of foreign ideas and poses the question "Não existiria, à base dessa confiança no poder milagroso das ideias, um secreto horror à nossa realidade nacional. As pointed out by Owensby (2014) with reference to the work of Buarque de Holanda "the future lay not in mimicking foreign ideas or bemoaning the fact that Brazil was not Holland or the U.S., but in finding ways to articulate Brazil's own history to the challenges of the modern world".

The influence of the anthropophagic movement endured throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its influences are clear in the Tropicália movement of 1960's, originally the name of an art installation by the Hélio Oiticia (CANEJO, 2004), but then used by and chiefly associated with the musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil and their Brazilian pop which was influenced by pop rock from Britain and USA but infused with the manipulation of rhythms from Africa and Brazil. This movement was at the same time associated with the exotic image of Carmen Miranda whilst also taking on a political dimension of protest and defiance – 'the Brazilian expression of the worldwide current of rebellious youth culture' (REID 2014). It was relevant to the race question in that its fundamental characteristic was celebrating hybridity and defining a new Brazilian cultural identity based on this multifaceted hybridity and opposing an elitist and prejudiced cultural environment (DA SILVA CABRAL, 2018)

It would be incorrect, however, to portray Brazil as a racial Utopia since the country still has serious and deeply ingrained problems with race and ethnicity, as exemplified recently by the comments of such influential and powerful people as the country's actual president, Jair Bolsonaro, in (20) and vice president, Hamilton Mourão in (21). The latter in a speech in which he was talking about the mixed heritage of the Brazilian people.

(20)

*'Índio está evoluindo....cada vez mais é um ser humano igual a nós'.<sup>4</sup>*

*[Indian is evolving... they are more and more human like us' ]*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2020/01/23/indio-ta-evoluindo-cada-vez-mais-e-ser-humano-igual-a-nos-diz-bolsonaro.htm>

(21)

*Essa herança do privilégio é uma herança ibérica. Temos uma certa herança da indolência, que vem da cultura indígena. Eu sou indígena. Meu pai é amazonense. E a malandragem. Nada contra, mas a malandragem é oriunda do africano. Então, esse é o nosso cadinho cultural.<sup>5</sup>*

*[that legacy of privilege is an iberian legacy. We have a certain legacy of laziness, that comes from the indigenous culture. I am indigenous. My father is from the Amazon. And trickery, nothing against [signaling to a person of African heritage] but that trickery is from Africans. So, that is our cultural melting pot.]*

Despite these problems, it can be stated with some confidence that racial mixture is at the core of Brazilian identity. Not all Brazilians are mixed race, however, but just as not all Brazilians like samba, feijoada, capoeira, *bossa nova*, *candomblé* or the films of Carmen Miranda most Brazilians accept them and even celebrate them as being part of the complex mosaic of what it means to be Brazilian.

On the topic of language, however, Brazilians do not celebrate their hybridity but it is either a mark of shame that Brazilians do not speak Portuguese correctly or at best a point of amusement: the fact that their natural ways of speaking do not correspond to the grammatical rules of the standard is likened to the Brazilian roguish disposition and their general disrespect for trivial laws. However, as expanded on above, linguistic prejudice and discrimination is a serious problem for the country and the fact that their standard written language is so far distanced from their natural way of speaking can have very real and serious effects for children from the poorest backgrounds, since their language is the most distanced from this norm. Indeed, it remains an open question of whether the school system is designed to teach the standard variety to non-native speakers or rather it paradoxically merely assess the extent to which it is acquired. If it is the latter then the attested academic failure of poor students is understandable since they are being assessed on something which they do not naturally possess and are not given sufficient training to acquire. This linguistic problem divided along the conceptual lines of Civilisation and Barbarism therefore constitutes a real problem for Brazil.

The solution I suggest would be to own the barbarism and celebrate it in the style of Oswald de Andrade – turn the taboo into totem and be proud that Brazilian Portuguese is different from European Portuguese and that that difference is because of the particular complex social history of Brazil. A history in which Portuguese was learned as a second language not only by native peoples and African slaves but by a wide variety of European immigrants. A history in which Portuguese was spoken natively and bilingually alongside other languages, and allowed to develop naturally into different varieties since, apart from the failed attempts of the Directório dos Índios

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<sup>5</sup> <https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/general-mourao-liga-indio-a-indolencia-e-negro-a-malandragem/>



(Faraco 2017: 98-100), there was no real preoccupation in the colonial period to police or regulate matters concerning the Portuguese language. A history in which there was a total disregard for education and literacy both in the colonial period (the requests to set up a University and have a printing press were repeatedly rejected) and during the first century of independence, if not much longer. A history in which the different geographic and social varieties of Portuguese all came in contact with each other during the mass urbanization of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which invariably accelerates language change and naturally results in dialect levelling and morphological simplification.

If language change is likened to the heating of water in a cauldron, in Brazil the fires were not only stoked but they were burning strongly and steadily for an extended period of time. The language of Brazilian institutions and the media, however, is that artificially created on the model of a form of the language spoken hundreds of years earlier and not ever really natively spoken by anyone in Brazil. Even though Oswald de Andrade, in his *Manifesto da poesia pau – brasil*, attacked the Parnassian literary tendency and defended a "*língua sem arcaísmo, sem erudição. Natural e neológica. A contribuição milionária de todos os erros. Como falamos. Como somos...* [a language without archaism, without erudition. Natural with neologisms. The millions of contributions of all the mistakes. As we speak. As we are...], the Anthropophagic movement did not have a clear linguistic dimension but was largely targeted at cultural production and at redefining Brazilian identity. I suggest that the basic underlying idea of this movement has enormous potential for providing a roadmap for a ambitious project whereby Brazilians can reclaim and be proud of the natural way that they speak.

On the point of naturalness and returning to the topic Civilisation and Barbarism in Latin America, I reproduce in (22) some words on government from *Nuestra America*, an essay by the Cuban revolutionary philosopher and political theorist José Martí (1853-1895), who was a key figure of the Cuban War of Independence. Martí rejects in explicit terms the dichotomy Civilisation/Barbarism, instead he sees a struggle in Latin America between what is natural and what is not – that which has been imported, imposed and essentially false, bogus and fraudulent.

(22)

*El gobierno ha de nacer del país. El espíritu del gobierno ha de ser el del país. La forma de gobierno ha de avenirse a la constitución propia del país. El gobierno no es más que el equilibrio de los elementos naturales del país [...] Los hombres naturales han vencido a los letrados artificiales. El mestizo autóctono ha vencido al criollo exótico. No hay batalla entre la civilización y la barbarie, sino entre la falsa erudición y la naturaleza. [José Martí*

*Government must be born of the country. The form of government must reflect the way the country is constituted. Government is no more nor less than the achievement of an equilibrium between the natural elements of the country. For this reason, in America, natural man has superseded the imported book. Natural men have replaced the artificially educated.*

*The native mestizo has overcome the exotic creole. The struggle is not between civilisation and barbarism, but between false knowledge and nature.... [Translation taken from BRITTON (1996, p. 39)*

Just as Martí insists that government must reflect the natural way the country is constituted, so I would say that the standard language of Brazil, its grammars and rules should reflect the way in which Brazilians speak naturally. Popular Brazilian is natural Brazilian and this variety needs to overcome the false and artificial standard. The question remains, however, whether Brazilian society can allow the natural forms of speech of a great proportion of the population to have visibility within the state and celebrated as legitimate Brazilian Portuguese forms. The Anthropophagic movement, I suggest provides a successful model within which this question can be shaped and made palatable. Popular Brazilian is not barbaric Brazilian it an authentic form of the language which, as with many languages, came about as a result of its complex social history and the expansion in its number of speakers. Let Brazilians be proud of it, let there be *a Transformação permanente do Tabu em totem* [‘The permanent transformation of the Taboo in totem’]!

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# O preconceito linguístico e o preconceito racial: comparações, contrastes e soluções antropofágicas

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## **Resumo**

Neste artigo, comparo e contrasto as visões prejudiciais sobre a raça e a língua e analiso os cruzamentos e as intersecções entre elas na história do Brasil. Relaciono as discussões latino-americanas sobre a civilização e a barbárie com a distinção entre o português brasileiro culto e o português brasileiro popular. Focalizo o trabalho do Movimento Antropofágico modernista e como esse movimento, combinado com desenvolvimentos subsequentes, ajudou a quebrar a dicotomia civilização / barbárie e redefinir a identidade brasileira e colocar em seu centro as características de raça mista. Sugiro que um movimento semelhante seja necessário para superar os preconceitos contra o português brasileiro popular.

## **Palavras-chave:**

preconceito linguístico, racismo, civilização, barbárie