

Galvão among the Cannibals: The Emotional Constitution of Colonial Power

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Colonial domination was not a simple act of violence. Rather, it was written into the bodies and the hearts of the people—"white," "black," or whatever other combination might be held to exist. Using the example of the Portuguese African colonies in mid-twentieth century, this paper aims at illuminating the emotional constitution of colonial power by exploring the uses of the trope *cannibalism*. In order to do that, recourse is taken to a reading of the non-fictional writings of Henrique Galvão—one of the most active Portuguese intellectuals and Africanist politicians of the period. Subaltern persons were attributed terrible and mysterious tendencies that escaped simple rationality (they were *zombified*). In this way, a phantasmagoria of subalternity was constituted that, through fear, transformed domination into a structure of emotions. Thus, the repressive attitudes of colonial power were made to appear natural and unavoidable.

Key Words: Colonialism, Portugal, Cannibalism, Subaltern

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING "COLONIALISM"

As one of the central concepts of this paper is that of colonialism, we must start by investigating the meaning of the term. Modern usage of the word "colony"¹ dates to the seventeenth century and carries with it, from its Roman origins,² three clear implications.

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First of all, the apparent agricultural reference of the term is actually a civilizational metaphor. In fact, the two metaphors merge into each other, as in the Johnson's Dictionary's definition of "to colonize": "to plant with inhabitants; to settle with new planters; to plant with colonies" (1799: s.v.). The Latin root *colere* means to cultivate but also to honor, and implies inhabiting a land.³ It stresses the control of wild nature as a moment of social foundation, thus casting previous occupation as pre-social (barbaric, savage). Secondly, the word is used to define a territory by relation to a group of people that take control over it. And thirdly, nowhere in the definitions of the word or of its immediate derivatives is there a reference to the people that were previously in control of that land. In fact, the very use of the word defines them out, so to speak. It is as if the concept of colony implied a symbolic annihilation of the populations that occupied that land.

A further metaphor implicit in the modern uses of the term correlates interestingly with this absence, and that is the animal world metaphor. We use the word "colony" for termites and for micro-organisms that are prone to an orderly and military-like occupation of terrain. Both in Roman and in modern usage, therefore, the word "colony" implies capacity for and proneness to self-protection in the face of external threat. It implies an authoritarian, highly corporate manner of functioning. When the Portuguese call a summer camp a *colônia de férias* or when the English call a self-ruled group of artists an "artists' colony," the same sort of implication is extended to imply that the group isolates itself from its social surroundings, disregarding the original rule of the land.

In short, whenever we adopt "colony" and its derivatives as analytical categories, we should be wary of the semantic trap laid out for us: namely, the metaphorical highlighting of the colonizer's role and the casting of a shadow over that of the colonized. The operation of this mindset (an "ideological spotlight," see Pina Cabral 1997) means that the autonomous participation in the public arena by the colonized depended on the miming of the colonizer (cf. Bhabha 1997). Any other public manifestation was necessarily cast as external to the colonial social order, and thus perceived as threatening.

When a European State and its respective "white" citizens took control over an African territory, they did not do so by physical violence alone. The need for negotiated forms of domination was constantly felt. These were constructed upon a whole foundation of definitions and associations: a "civilizing" discourse that defined

who and what was within or outside the bounds of “civilization”—both in the sense of that which is more fully human (no longer savage or bestial) and in the sense of that which has the right to participate in civic life. Thus, the civilizing discourse defines a subject at once morally and politically, as if the two were interdependent.

Colonial domination was enforced and endured by the very same people that it defined. Moreover, in practical terms, it was often far from clear as to where the barrier between the enforcers and those who endured colonial domination lay. The Anglo-American concept of “race” has the effect of making it appear (a) as if the barrier were univocal and not gradual⁴ and (b) as if one could always tell who was on which side of the colonial boundary of domination—it being written on the skin, so to speak. In fact, this was far from being so even during the heyday of the British Empire. In contexts such as those of the Portuguese African Empire, however, the boundaries of domination were even less easily determinable. Faced with Salazar’s statements denying the existence of racial discrimination in the Portuguese empire, C. R. Boxer wrote a deservedly famous demonstration that this was not the case (1963). The very need for the demonstration, however, shows how the formulation of ethnic discrimination in the Portuguese possessions, as well as its long-term history, differ significantly from those of the British possessions. This is one of the main reasons why, rather than take on all of the unavoidably ethnocentric implications that the Anglo-American concept of “race” bears, I prefer the far more analytical concept of “ethnicity” (cf. Pina-Cabral 1994 and 2001).

As Erving Goffman has argued, “The embarrassment of limits is a general feature of social organisation” (1963: 148). Colonial subjects were constantly faced with the embarrassment of dealing with the internal limits that the boundary of “civilization” represented. During the heyday of British colonialism, for example, Portuguese people were often confronted with the ambiguity that resulted from being perceived both as a colonial, European power and as an underdeveloped, “Mediterranean” nation with an incomprehensible propensity for recognizing the paternity of their “half-caste” children. This led to curiously ambiguous situations that had deeply troubling effects upon those who experienced them. The effects of this dynamic of exclusion did not simply vanish with the end of the British Empire. They remained as part and parcel of the ideological constructs of the territories that had been historically shaped by it. The way in which Portuguese people were treated in *apartheid* South

Africa, always with a shadow of doubt about their genuine “whiteness,” is a very good example of what I mean.⁵

The turn that Henrique Galvão, a Portuguese mid-twentieth century intellectual, gave to the opening pages of his well-known book on cannibalism is a graphic demonstration of this embarrassment. He depicts the polarized stereotypes, only to call our attention to the continuities. Between two drawings of a naked African and of a dressed (and pith-helmeted) European, he places the following cinematographic charade:

The characters presented in this work are real; these existed, but others also exist.

The cases reported here are true to fact.

... However, any similarity that a particularly observant reader might come to detect between these barbaric people and events and other people and events that we take to be very civilized—and who do exist in other latitudes—must be considered as pure coincidence beyond the responsibility of both the author... and the cannibals. (Galvão 1947)

While calling our attention to the fact that his discourse on cannibalism was ultimately a discourse about morality, Galvão is also unwittingly reminding us that “civilization” is not merely an intellectual matter and that it has to be expressed in the everyday appearance of colonial subjects—“white,” “black,” or whatever other combination might have been recognized in each local context. Like all forms of behavior that are potentially subject to moral prejudice, it is not enough for “civilization” to occur, it has to show itself openly—to be seen to exist.

We are reminded of Catherine Lutz’s complaint against “the dominant cognitive view of human beings as mechanical ‘information processors’” (Lutz and White 1986: 405) Indeed, for meanings to become compelling they have to be rooted in the agents that enact them—not only in their minds, but in their bodies and emotions. People are moved to action by ideas only to the extent that ideas move them emotionally. Only thus do ideas come to appear “inevitable” and “natural.” We forget all too often that morality is of necessity grounded in emotion.⁶

Colonial power, therefore, is both embodied and emotionally constructed. When studying its ideological bases, we have to search beyond ideas, and look for the way in which these ideas move people emotionally. We may, thus, understand how colonial domination constructed colonial subjects (both colonizers and colonized) that

were prone to act naturally in accordance with the colonial environment. To sum up, we must trace the emotional constitution behind colonial power.

The present paper aims at illuminating this process by exploring the uses of the trope *cannibalism*: that is, the absorption by some human bodies of the bodies of human others.⁷ In order to do that, I have taken recourse to a reading of the non-fictional writings of Henrique Galvão—one of the most active Portuguese intellectuals and Africanist politicians of the mid-twentieth century.

PORTUGUESE MODERN AFRICAN COLONIALISM AND GALVÃO

Not all “colonialisms” are equal: types of colonization have varied throughout history; colonizers have differed in their attitudes; colonized peoples have reacted differently to oppression; the general conditions prevailing around the globe at the time of each colonization were not the always the same. But, when people read what we write, they read into what we write the expectations that their general cultural and scientific background instilled in them.

Now, as it happens, in twentieth century social sciences, the word “colonial” has been primarily marked by a set of expectations and presuppositions that find their source in the form of colonialism that was globally dominant during the first half of the century: British colonialism. For those of us who happen to be writing about other types of colonialism this problem is very acute, for there are many hidden presuppositions in established forms of expression (cf. Fry 2000).⁸ It is, therefore, necessary to stress from the outset that the colonialism to which this paper refers is that of the Portuguese modern African empire, which lasted from the second half of the nineteenth century to 1974—that which Clarence-Smith has aptly called the “Third Portuguese Empire” (1985).⁹ I place my focus particularly on Mozambique and Angola in the 1930s and 1940s.

The choice of Henrique Galvão’s *œuvre* might seem strange to some, as he is best known internationally as the foremost Portuguese critic of the colonial policies of the dictatorial regime that ruled Portugal from the late 1920s to 1974, whose figurehead was a retiring Professor of Finance, António de Oliveira Salazar. Indeed, in the second half of his life, while exiled in Brazil, Galvão led a very active and media-conscious struggle against the prevailing policies in the Portuguese colonies. Some of his political gestures made world headlines—like the occupation of the liner Santa Maria in 1961.

He went so far as to deliver an invited speech of denunciation before a Special Committee of the United Nations in New York in December 1963 (cf. Farinha 2000).

This was all after 1947, when he turned against Portugal's dictatorial regime. Before that, however, he had devoted his energies to the authoritarian politics that Salazar represented. In fact, in the 1920s, he was part of the group of young people that espoused authoritarian solutions to the perceived political upheaval that characterized the Republican period (1910–1926). Already involved with Sidónio Pais' failed dictatorship, he threw his lot in with the 1926 military coup d'état that brought Salazar into power. He became increasingly involved in matters of propaganda and overseas policy and was, for a while, director of the National Broadcasting Agency. He represented the Ministry of Colonies at the Congress of the Colonial Press in Paris in 1931. He was director of the Commercial Fairs (*Feiras de Amostras Coloniais*) of Luanda and Lourenço Marques in 1932. He was involved in the organization of the Colonial Exhibition in 1934. He was Senior Colonial Inspector after 1936. He was Governor of Huíla in Angola. He was organizer of the Colonial Section of the *Exposição do Mundo Português* (1940)—the regime's grandest moment of nationalist affirmation. Finally, from January 1946 to January 1947, he was member of the National Assembly as a representative of Angola.

During all this period he wrote incessantly. His novels about African safaris and wild beasts and his travel books—always edited with the greatest care paid to graphic design—became the central ideological mark of a whole generation of colonialists. Galvão's *œuvre*, however, is used here merely as an exemplar of an ideological complex that went far beyond his own personal influence.

In many regards, Galvão was a product of his period. He was that, however, in a singularly energetic fashion and, puzzling though it may seem to us today, with a deep humanitarian concern. The Second World War changed tremendously the way in which the issues of colonialism and ethnic relations were dealt with in international relations, largely due to the change in attitudes that took place in Western Europe and North America. Portugal's aging dictatorial rulers, however, having been left out of the War, failed to see the need to remold their colonial policies. Eventually, Galvão came into conflict with Marcelo Caetano, the figure who was most influential in shaping the regime's colonial policies from the 1930s to the 1950s.



Figure 1 Henrique Galvão as curator of the Colonial Section of the “Exhibition of the Portuguese World” of 1940, by Fausto Sampaio (Exposição . . . 1940).

Galvão’s courageous denunciation of “forced labor” in 1947, when he was a member of the National Assembly representing Angola, eventually forced him into a position of confrontation with Salazar. In characteristically outspoken fashion, he concluded his parliamentary report on “Native Labor” by claiming that in Portuguese Africa, “Only the dead are free from forced labor” (in Ribeiro 1997: 58–124).

Unlike most other dominant members of the regime, Galvão saw that the times had changed and that the policies being implemented were retrograde and would eventually backfire. The same propagandistic zeal that had characterized his support of the regime was now put to use in opposing it. In his “Open Letter to Salazar” (1975 [1959]), for example, after having complained of the dictator’s “over-seas policy” as economically narrow-minded, he states:

The political peace [of which Salazar is so proud,] has been sustained by means of terror and obscurantism. Our provinces of Angola and Mozambique are the only territories south of the Sahara where one cannot find a

reasonably significant number of black intellectuals—which was not the case previous to [Salazar's] miraculous coming. [...] Our blackmen, with the exception of a few thousand whose schooling hardly goes beyond primary education, are nothing but simple natives forced to labour in order to pay the taxes . . . and to emigrate. (1975 [1959]: 86)

He was right of course. Two years later, in 1961—after the launching of the anti-colonial war in Angola—Salazar could no longer brag about the success of his policy of repression and planned ignorance in preventing the local population from demanding their legitimate rights to citizenship. Ironically, the armed rebellion against Portuguese colonialism started in Angola, precisely in Nambuangongo, a place about which we will hear further below.¹⁰

Galvão's criticism was well-informed and motivated by humanitarian concerns. Had he been yet another of the thousands of nearly illiterate men and women who found in Africa an easy route to prosperity, we would not be so challenged today by the portions of his *œuvre* that deal with African cannibalism. Yet, in the very same year he entered into conflict with the dictatorial regime, he published *Antropófagos* (1947), an essay on African cannibalism. Forty-four years have passed since then. We have distanced ourselves tremendously from what was expected of a reader at the time. Faced with the arguments and the system of proof he adopts, readers such as us, who no longer take for granted the dictua of modernity, can only be perplexed by the book. The work demands urgently that we find some contextualizing interpretation for what we read there.¹¹

Our sense of surprise will never vanish completely. Consider, for example, what was happening in the neighboring British-administered territories in Southern Africa. There, colonial authorities were subsidizing the development of a brilliant anthropological school: the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. In 1946, for example, a year before the publication of *Antropófagos*, Max Gluckman managed to obtain from the Colonial Social Science Research Council a grant for a young social psychologist coming from Natal to study "social conflict in relation to secular and ritual action" (Marwick 1965: v) just south of Lake Nyassa, near Mozambique's borders. Max Marwick undertook an exegesis of local belief systems, based on a careful study of 194 reported cases of misfortune leading to sorcery accusations. He managed to demonstrate that there was a correlation between the areas of stress that characterize local social structure and the accusations.



Figure 2 Cover of "Antropófagos," drawn by José Moura (Galvão 1947).

On the other side of the colonial border, however, Portuguese administrators—and even exceptionally intelligent people such as Galvão—continued to follow the old canonical formula that “the gods of the gentiles are demons;” that is, the symbolical workings of the exotic cultures are not simply interpreted as being false.¹² Rather, they are seen as potentially dangerous because they are anti-social. The witchcraft accusations that inevitably reached the ears of colonial administrators were interpreted literally, as accusations of premeditated murder!

And yet, in considering the anachronistic attitudes of the Portuguese elites of the period, what perhaps requires further explanation is not so much why they continued to stick to their earlier forms of thinking, but why northern European colonial nations had changed their approaches so radically and so suddenly in the post-war period.

TIME AND CANNIBALISM

For Galvão and his generation, cannibalism was not a simple crime; it was much more than that. It was not a matter of identifying sporadic acts of madness or unhealthy and ignorant traditional beliefs.

On the contrary, it was a major strain that ran through human society—a metaphor of great power to explain human life. In fact, as we have seen, the author starts by establishing precisely this point on the first page of his book. He states clearly that there may be great similarity between “these barbaric people and events” that he is about to describe and “certain people and events that we take as being very civilised” (Galvão 1947).

As we know, modern society was prone to read cultural difference in temporal terms. Thus, otherness became *pastness*.¹³ For Galvão, “anthropophagy” was a constant of human history—the only difference was that in the “backward” time of primitive Africans, it was real; while in the “advanced” time of modern-Europeans, it was moral. Notwithstanding, he insists: “man continues to be eaten by man, with increasingly insatiable appetite” (1947: 8).

It is, therefore, essential to establish from the start that, in southern Africa, the probable occurrence of sporadic events of homicide motivated by the ritual use of parts of the human body does not detract from the force or validity of the arguments that follow.¹⁴ The statistical significance of such events is clearly overblown; it will never compare in scale, for example, with deaths resulting from health problems caused by mining or urban criminality. In symbolic terms, furthermore, the publicizing of events of this nature¹⁵ has a powerful effect that has little to do with their actual occurrence. It is my belief that the dense network of interrelations that we are about to identify between cannibalism and colonialism must not be seen as a product of the occurrence of actual acts of cannibalism but rather as a product of colonial domination.¹⁶

Galvão’s Africanist works are filled with lively and localized narratives of cases of cannibalism, supposedly empirically verified and proven, full of intimate detail. These are accompanied by photographs of the culprits as well as by dramatic reconstitutions of cannibalistic fury, in the form of drawings and paintings that he commissioned from his artist friends, notably Fausto Sampayo and José de Moura. The characters in these stories are described by their personal names and treated with the easy familiarity of the Africanist, who is supposed to know them intimately. But they are immediately juxtaposed with other narratives coming from other places, other times, other contexts. We are pulled into a spiral of increasingly delocalized confirmation to the point where we no longer can tell to which case in particular he is referring. This is one of his most favored stratagems in *Antropófagos*.



Figure 3 A cannibal feast “reconstituted” by José de Moura (Galvão 1947: 233).

His narratives of anthropophagy—whether they come from Angola, Mozambique, Guiné, or yet other times and places—are all jammed one against the other within a generalizing interpretative framework. He presumes an integrated vision of “Africa,” always permeated by the modernist logic of temporality. “Cannibalism,” he says, “although on the wane, was still common at the end of the nineteenth century among practically all of the superior black races of Africa, specially among the Bantu branch” (1947: 41).

As a matter of fact, this *gulodice* (gluttony or greed), as he calls it, is supposed to be well documented by European reports about the times in which Africans were free to lead their lives as they wished. He quotes a certain Frenchman who traveled to Africa and “describes men with teeth that have been darkened and filed to a point—and women, many of them tattooed and almost naked. He tells of a certain village that he visited where he saw, running away

from his curiosity, a woman that carried in her hand a human thigh" (Galvão 1947: 41). He also cites the supposedly well attested case of the Zulus and Bassutos whose gluttony led them to "practice the hunting of humans with greater enthusiasm than the hunting of beasts, and who dwelled in caves to which they carried their fellow-creatures captured in hideous game-drives in order to be devoured"¹⁷ (Galvão 1947: 40–41).

"Only the white man's repression can control cannibalism, since natives cannot resist the temptations of this perverse greed. And even then, anthropophagy continues to be practised in the darker recesses of the vast colonial territories" (1947: 37).

CARNIVOROUS TEETH

And what better proof of this gluttony than the very fact that African bodies are manipulated in order to better satisfy these proclivities? One of the colonial commonplaces concerned the proof of this cannibalistic atavism by reference to the practice of tooth filing, which was commonly found in various areas of the continent. Compare Figures 2 and 4a—where a drawing by José Moura is used as graphic proof of the taste for human flesh—with Figure 4b, the original photographic inspiration, where an old man from Nambuanguongo is asked to sing a traditional song. This phantasmagorically dislocated image is what Galvão chooses for the frontispiece and cover of his book.

This custom of filing teeth, common to many Bantu peoples at the time, had a purely aesthetic purpose. However, by means of the use of the temporal dislocation created by the concept of primitivism, it ends up serving as a demonstration of cannibalistic ancestry. Even careful and informed ethnographers such as Dora Earthy, in her study of a population of southern Mozambique, fell prone to this kind of association:

The filing of the teeth is another tribal mark. Lege women do not practise this now. But the Txopi women often display a row of filed (upper) teeth, said to resemble crocodile's teeth. They say they do it for decorative purposes. It is quite possible that it is a relic of cannibalism. (1968: 105)

The mouth, which opens and closes, hiding and revealing interiorities that are both moral and physical, ends up constituting an almost theatrical device of revelation. Thus the young Angolan woman, Nambua Mainga, who is presented to us in Figure 5 as a simple

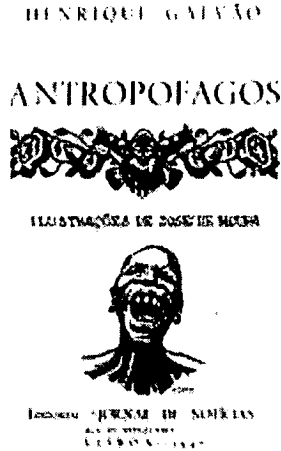


Figure 4a Example of phantasmagoric dislocation. The frontispiece of "Antropófagos" (Galvão 1947).



Figure 4b Example of phantasmagoric dislocation. The original legend read: "An expression of Meneca Paca, Kinzare of Nambuanguo, singing a Puhita" (Galvão 1947: 241).

African peasant, sitting on the dirt floor of her *kraal* (1947: 181), is shown in Figure 6 (1947: 177) to be a dangerous "N'ganga" (a frightening word the meaning of which is never clearly explained by Galvão, even though he uses it repeatedly). All he had to do was to



Figure 5 "Another attitude of Nambua Mainga" (Galvão 1947: 181).



Figure 6 "Nambua Mainga, N'Ganga of the people of Praia" (Galvão 1947: 177).

ask her to open her mouth and to approach her, so as to capture a more decontextualizing close-up.

As in so many of his works from his first period as apologist of Portuguese African colonialism, Galvão shows himself to be a masterful manipulator of images as a means to legitimate arguments and justify power. His activities as organizer of colonial exhibitions had amply prepared him for that (vide Ribeiro 1997).

HIDEOUS PANTAGRUELISM

Can there be a more terrifying crime, in the eyes of a Catholic,¹⁸ than that of a mother who, through sheer gluttony—literally, due to an excessive love for human flesh—eats her own children? Oh, what “hideous Pantagruelism”! But, in the eyes of the Portuguese colonialists of mid century, Africa was filled with such women.

Galvão describes one such event that he is supposed to have witnessed. The following is an extract from his volume *Ronda de África* (1948) where he describes his travels in Mozambique:

The Pantagruelism was also revealed in the confessions of other [cannibals]. Some declared that they hunted men as other people hunted beasts, because human flesh pleased them more than that of antelopes. Vancela and another, who used the name Fátima, specified that even the excrement of human victims is tastier than the meat of any wild animal, and saltier!

At the same time—but how can a white man’s brain understand them?—this barbaric tragedy was interspersed with sentiments that seemed at the time, as they seem today, totally absurd.

For example:

That Vancela woman, to whom I have referred above, witnessed the murder of Morrilha and licked the blood off his corpse. Her group mates claim that she killed and ate two of her own young children. At the time she was imprisoned, she carried on her back, another son of six months age. Since the child looked sickly—just a mere rag of human flesh, so weak was his condition—it was ordered that he should be handed over to the care of the Health Centre and, of course, separated from his mother. Well, one can hardly imagine her grief, her anguished pain, and the pleas that this vixen made not to be separated from her son. And one could in no way doubt that her pain was indeed profound and sincere. (1948, II: 492)

Judging from the place where Galvão puts this description, we presume that it might have taken place in some administrative post among the matrilineal peoples of northern Mozambique. But we cannot be sure. When I first came across it, I was moved to tears. In truth, how can a “white man’s brain” understand such a thing (the quaint expression Galvão uses implies “confused brain”—*bestunto de branco*)? If we take into account that, in Catholic Europe, a mother’s love, as symbolized in the images of the Passion, represents the holiest link among two human beings, how can we then expect him to understand that such a monster *contra natura*, such a monument to human bestiality as this Vancela, may feel a mother’s love?

It would indeed be absurd! If a person really killed her own two children out of greed for human flesh—if she even eats with greater gusto human excrement than the famed meat of the wild deer—then it makes no sense for her to show such desperate love for her remaining child—a baby who, due to the persecution she suffered, was reduced to a famished condition!

At this point, I can safely presume that the reader, just like myself, is not faced with the same type of shock that moved Galvão's pen. I am nearly certain that the reader is also shocked by the absurdity of the situation, but not by the same absurdity that moved Galvão's pen. What surprises us, half a century later, is that such a cultivated and intelligent human being as this army officer should have failed to ask himself about the nature of the evidence that led him to believe that that woman had actually committed those crimes and for those reasons. It is precisely that challenge which we will try to surmount in the remainder of this paper.

SHIFTS IN TRANSLATION AND REGISTERS OF TRUTH

Later on, in *Antropófagos*, but now apparently referring to northern Angola, Galvão gives us yet another description of a similar case.¹⁹ Might it be the same person? A certain woman, after being duly investigated, apparently confessed to

being a witch because she used to transform herself into a snake. But that having burnt her witch-matter, she can no longer transform herself into the said animal. [...] And that] she has already eaten two of her children, of four and two months of age, having killed them herself, by piercing their throats with a knife. [...] She attributes the crime that she perpetrated to the fact that the devil was in her. But she says the devil no longer is in her, since she handed over the witch-matter she had (and which consisted of some of her children's bones) to the native MAÇÓNICO.²⁰ The latter burnt it in her presence and since then she has been freed, having become incapable of transforming herself into a snake. (1947: 169)

In terms of Galvão's argument, whether this is the same story or not, whether it is Angola or Mozambique, is a matter of no concern. However, for us, this development raises an interesting question that sheds some light on what might have happened to poor Vancela. What is this "devil" that took over the woman, allowing her to turn herself into a snake? As it happens, since those days, anthropology has learnt much about witchcraft and sorcery in Africa. The idea of familiars (such as the snake) or of witches who attack their close kin

during the night, no longer surprises us. But what is the Judaeo-Christian concept of demonic possession doing here? Immediately we are led to suspect that a terrible abyss of miscommunication²¹ existed between, on the one side, Galvão, the white District Magistrate, and the author's hunter companion Teodósio Cabral, and, on the other side, Fátima, Vancela, the *sepoys* (native soldiers) that extracted their confessions, and the neighbors and kinsmen that made the accusation.

We can be sure at least of one thing: either someone translated badly what the woman said, or someone misunderstood the translation, because what happened to Vancela was not likely to have been demonic possession. If that is a case of missed translation, then can we be so sure that the rest was well translated? Can we be sure that the conception of truth within which she situates her confession is the same as Galvão's, when she reports killing her children or licking Morrilha's blood?

A CONFESSION

What is a confession? This is not the moment to explore in general terms such a major question. I will limit myself, therefore, to discussing three questions.

The first is: how did she come to be accused of such a crime?

We can be fairly sure that when she was brought to the District Magistrate for judgement, Vancela was preceded by some sort of accusation. Now, we can safely presume that this was not the result of the direct observations of some *sepoys* who, innocently going about his business, had come across her performing her disgusting gastronomic deed! That is not how such things happen. When she arrived in court, Vancela had already been accused and perhaps even tortured by her kinsmen and neighbors, who believed that she was the cause of some misfortune. The very fact that her little son was in such a dire condition suggests that she had been persecuted and ostracized.

The second question is: if she did not really do it, how could she have thought up such a hideous tale? Well, as it happens, in the society she comes from, people believe that such things do occur. Once again, we cannot be too sure to which socio-geographic context Galvão is referring when he tells her story. But Junod tells us the following, in his ethnography of the Tsonga of Mozambique: "The fact of a woman having lost many children is also a reason for suspecting her of being a witch, as the death of a baby is constantly considered

as having been caused by its own mother, who wished to 'eat' it!" (1962, II: 525). Note that he places eating in inverted commas.

If, however, Vancela belonged to one of the matrilineal societies of northern Mozambique it would not be surprising if we found that she thought in the same terms. Marwick, across the border in Malawi (then Nyassaland), states that 100% of the people he met believed that witches exist and that the majority of them are women (1965: 72, 96).²² And he explains:

After hearing a few accounts of the wonderful but wicked ways of sorcerers, and after being assured that people were constantly troubled by their actual deeds and the dread of their possible deeds, I had one of my assistants interview ten men and nine women individually and ask them to estimate how many of twenty hypothetical deaths in a village they would expect to be caused by sorcerers. Their estimates ranged from sixteen to twenty, i.e., from eighty to 100 per cent; the residual category (if any) they described as 'deaths of God' (*imfa zaMulungu*). (1965: 72-73)

Can we, however, be even certain that when she said she had killed two of her children, she was actually referring to her own biological children? Even that question remains uncertain, as we only know what Galvão says. Now, it is well known that the translation of kinship terms is one of the classical sites of intercultural missed communication in colonial Africa. Might she be referring to her sister's children or to the children of her co-wife? According to Marwick, any of those deaths might have launched an accusation.²³

The third question is: what could have led Vancela to confess to this story?

I will not discuss here the awful question of how people can confess to being the agents of crimes that, in all probability, they did not commit in any factual sense of the word. Once again that clearly goes beyond the scope of this paper.

We will start considering culturally endogenous reasons. Even though we cannot know where Vancela lived, we can place her story within cultural parameters that are broadly characteristic of Bantu southern Africa. We may safely presume that this woman's confession would be thought to have beneficial effects that she herself might well have desired. Once again, Junod provides us with a useful contextualization. In the following passage he is referring to measles and the way it reveals the crime of witchcraft.

Suppose that the patient so seriously ill [with measles] is a grown-up woman, the wife of one of the men of the village. Her parents will first be

called. The headman and all the inmates of the village will attend the meeting in the hut. 'Confess your guilt!' they will say to the woman. She may answer: 'No! I am not a witch.' [...] They insist: 'Do not hide anything.' And under the strain of their questions she may say: 'Yes! I am a walker in the night! I have eaten so-and-so! I have eaten my own child!' If the patient is a little child, his father will have to make the confession in his stead. He will take the infant in his arms and say: '*Mavuzane dhlula!* Questioner [referring to the measles], pass on your way! Yes! We are *baloyi* [witches]. I have taught my child to eat human bodies! But we will not persist in our bad doings! Go away and leave us in peace!' (Junod 1962, II: 465)

In fact, we have to make another important intellectual leap in order to understand what happened to Vancela, since we are misled by the literalist bent of modern thought. Even Junod feels obliged to correct himself when he explains that someone can be eaten and only his corpse remain alive, his real personality having been robbed and eaten. He comments in a disturbed tone: "Here we find again, in an even more mysterious form, the idea of the duality of the human personality. How it is possible for a man who has still some days or months to live to be regarded as already entirely eaten up, I do not pretend to explain. Such is however the Native idea" (1962, II: 515).

Mary Douglas' essay on the concept of person (Douglas 1995) comes inevitably to mind. There she quarrels with the Eurocentric presupposition of the unity of the person. She shows that in pre-modern non-European contexts, such a presupposition is not necessarily present. She presents various instances where the person is pluralized, which allows us to understand, without any recourse to irrationality, how situations such as those described by Junod or lived by Vancela may occur.

COLONIAL CONFRONTATIONS

Let us now consider the culturally exogenous questions raised by our story. That is, those that result from the fact that the situation within which Vancela and Galvão met was one of colonial trans-cultural confrontation. Galvão gives us various leads as to the nature of the confrontation, as for example, in the description he gives of the human qualities of his travelling companion—co-author of hunting books and great friend—concerning an occasion in which his home was attacked by a lion.

Teodósio Cabral, says Galvão, shows a permanent concern for the safety of his blacks which is a noteworthy example for African hunters. He was

inconsolable. He had been attacked in his stronghold as a great lord of the jungle by another as large as himself—and he lost the poor old woman [mauled by the lion her boss had wounded]. Not even all the lions he had already killed, or yet all those he was still to kill, would suffice to pay for his affront. (Galvão 1948: 500)

It is interesting to note how the symmetry of the situation is here expressed: the lion, as powerful lord of the jungle, confronts another powerful lord, the white hunter. The servants, who accidentally get killed, brutally mauled by the infuriated lion as a result of the hunter's provocation, are of lesser importance than the mutual pride of the opponents. Again, the spotlight of colonial ideology has cast the colonized into the area of shadow. It can come as no surprise, therefore, that Vancela should have been under terrible stress for, from her point of view, the dangers that faced her and her child were momentous. From the point of view of the colonial observer, however, such dangers remained invisible, and it was she who constituted a source of danger. Galvão describes a similar situation, this time in Angola:

I found myself one morning among a group of cannibals from Nambuanguo, among whom there was a girl of about sixteen years of age who had become anthropophagous against her own will and tendencies [...]. She suffered all the terrors of the Supernatural that subjugated her—and, before me, a big white man, she experienced the terror of considering what might happen to her for having practised anthropophagy. (1947: 141)

Galvão forgets to remind us, however, that the terrors the young girl experienced were totally real and objective. In the best possible scenario, both she and her companions would be deported to São Tomé, where they would spend the rest of their lives carrying out forced labor in the plantations. In São Tomé, there being many more men, deported women found themselves in particularly undesirable circumstances. Describing another such court case, our author explains:

Portuguese administration, being traditionally very understanding, did not carry out the persecution and punishment of the criminals in the way that many other societies feel to be necessary in order to repress these things. [...] The cannibals of the Congo were simply deported and given over to the influence of healthier societies where, it was hoped, they would be regenerated by labor. (1947: 237–238)

He goes so far as to show us a photograph of these people carrying out heavy manual labor after having been deported to São Tomé (1947: 264)!

The police methods used to obtain confessions were often brutal, but what is important to understand at the present moment in the argument is how people such as Galvão, who were essentially intelligent and humane persons, did not rise up in revolt against such inhumanity.

SUBALTERN ZOMBIES

What is at stake here is the notion that for the colonizer at the time, these subaltern persons were subject to different bodily standards of reference than their own. In order to exemplify what I mean, I will now report on an event that took place in my presence in Mozambique in the early 1970s—a time when I was not yet an anthropologist.

There used to be a social club (*Associação de Antigos Alunos da Universidade de Coimbra*) in the compound that today is the Residence of the President of the Republic of Mozambique. The parties that were organized there were much appreciated by my group of friends. On a certain occasion, because there had been some bar-side fights on a previous evening, the director decided to call in a policeman with a dog. In the middle of the night, escaping from the heat inside, I found myself sharing a few beers with the policeman. The man explained how they trained their dogs. The description—which I have not forgotten—is far too brutal to be related here. What deserves mention, however, is that he believed profoundly that blackmen have a special capacity to resist pain that is very superior to “ours,” and that they trained themselves to resist pain. According to him, he had learnt this fact through direct experience during the many years he had lived in the country. As an example, he told the following story.

He was working at a District Magistrate’s court in a rural area of Gaza. One day, a certain man was brought to the court, accused of having stolen a chicken. After having questioned the man, he still refused to admit to the fact. He was beaten, but he still refused to confess in spite of the fact that his neighbors stated firmly that he was guilty. Then the policeman asked the magistrate to leave them alone for a while. He tied the man’s arms and legs to a chair and tore out his nails with the ebony ferule they normally carried (a *palmatória*).²⁴ Only then did the man confess. For this policeman, I will never forget, the moral of the story was that blackmen were particularly dangerous as they had a surprising capacity to withstand pain.

Many descriptions such as this one might be elicited. They all point to what I call here the *zombification of the subaltern*. In short, it is

a process of attribution to subaltern persons of terrible and mysterious tendencies that escape simple rationality. Such persons become passive agents of forces that dominate them. As Galvão stated of the Nambuanguo girl: "She suffered the terrors of the Supernatural that subjugated her." They escape rationality, however, not only because of a demonic capacity to overcome pain, but also because they practice acts that normally they would recognize as being irrational. That is why they are dangerous and you cannot trust them: because, when possessed by these forces, which these persons believe were transmitted via their ancestors, they leave behind the rational forms of thinking that they normally cherish. Once again I take recourse to my own personal history in order to exemplify what I mean. When I was young I was told a story that I did not forget, but I can no longer remember why it was told to me.

The lady who told it to me claimed that when she was a young girl in Angola, she had a black schoolmate who had finished her schooling and had eventually married an educated black man. Much later this couple, which everyone thought was very "civilized," had been accused of committing cannibalistic rituals using little black children. The moral of the story was the *atavistic* recidivism that they demonstrated. As with the Nambuanguo girl that Galvão met, they had practiced these acts while subjected to an atavistic terror that overcame their rational minds and was contrary to their everyday feelings.

This phantasmagoric conception of the colonial subject is particularly noticeable in the way in which Galvão categorizes certain ethnic groups that, for one reason or another, he chooses as particularly grave examples of this pan-African atavistic recidivism. For example, speaking of the people of Nambuanguo: "besides being rebellious and resistant to all attempts at assimilation—they were also inferior to many other Bantu peoples: more addicted, more subjected to the black horror of magic, degenerated and brutish as a result of the practice of orgies, as a matter of fact reduced to the worst moral and intellectual conditions" (1947: 116).

About another such group, which he calls Mussorongo, he claims that they are "a people that have acquired the worst and most confirmed reputation for cannibalism and beastliness, stupidity and moral insensitivity, laziness and orgiastic habits" (1947: 126). This is a particularly interesting passage in that it establishes a polarity between shortcomings of a mental type (cannibalism, stupidity and laziness) and shortcomings of the human condition (beastliness,

amorality, and subjection to purely physical desires). But theirs is not only a reduced condition of humanity—it is also singularly dangerous.

In this regard, it is interesting to compare these accusations by whites against blacks with those I dealt with in “The return of Laurentina” (Pina-Cabral 1999b). There, blacks accused whites of eating them, stealing their vital force; here, whites accuse blacks of eating each other. I was surprised to discover that the accusations made by whites at this period did not seem to contemplate the hypothesis that blacks should want to eat them. It would appear that it is only in situations where the dominant power of whites is directly challenged by the turn of political events (as indeed did happen in Nambuagongo two decades later, at the beginning of the armed struggle against Portuguese rule, cf. Miranda 1998) that accusations of eating white people emerge.²⁵

To my mind, this interesting asymmetry must be interpreted as signifying an intrinsic difference between the two types of accusation. If the accusations of cannibalism are read as a discourse about domination, then both types depend on a symbolic construction of a phantasmagoria of the other—where excessive power is always attributed to the other. Nevertheless, each type places itself differently in relation to the object of the accusation. While the black people of Bilene saw their substance being robbed by the whites, in Galvão’s accusations against blacks, the substance of white people is left intact; it is the common humanity that is jeopardized.

In this way, by means of a symbolic structure where the phantasmagorized blacks threaten their own humanity, the necessity for white power is clearly established.²⁶ There is a civilizing power that permits the flowering of true humanity among a people who would otherwise exhibit a sub-human brutality. The emotional basis of colonial power is solidly placed upon the foundations created by this terror that all share—this impending collapse of humanity before nature. For the whites this was symbolized by the sound of the far away drums and the menacing shadow of the tropical forest (cf. Figure 3). For the blacks, by the witches and by the Ogre stories to which Junod alludes.²⁷

COLONIAL AGORAPHOBIA

Associated with this symbolic complex is another one that has to do with the spatial aspect of political power. The presence of populations

that possess alternative definitions of reality is not all that threatens the colonialist. He is especially threatened by his lack of control over a space that turns out to be oversized. The colonialist is pleased by the enormous size of his territory, which promises easy fortune. But, at the same time, he is frightened by the difficulty of controlling it.²⁸ This ambiguity may be called *colonial agoraphobia*. We often find it expressed in anthropophagistic formulations that reveal its association with the issue of domination. In particular, it reveals itself in the transformation of domination into a structure of emotions by means of the phantasmagorization of the subaltern.

We find here a direct link between a symbolic threat, a geographic threat, and political power. In Galvão's words, cannibalism only continues to exist because it "finds refuge in the mysteries of secret sects that manage to escape for a long time all types of persecution, hidden in the depths of the labyrinthine forests and the impenetrable hideouts" (1947: 37).

Once again, as in the case of Vancela, it is hard to escape the suspicion that we are dealing with an unfortunate misreading of traditional witchcraft beliefs by European administrators. Junod's perceptive ethnography may serve once more to highlight this point. Reporting again on Tsonga beliefs, he tells us: "These *baloyi* [witches] know each other. They form a kind of *secret society* within the tribe, and they assemble during the night—in their spiritual bodies—to eat human flesh in the desert" (1962, II: 506).

The territory escapes the control of the colonizer:

The difficulties of the territory, always too extensive and mysterious by relation to the practical possibilities of occupation, and the ferociously kept and superstitiously observed secret, not only among the sectarians but also among their victims—only these permit and have permitted many such sects to remain alive, and some are even created anew in places where others have been eradicated. (Galvão 1947: 74)

And, if the population is not enough to fill up all the land, then the reasons for this are clearly moral: "the scourge," the author tells us, "that principally contributed toward the demographic rarefaction was the complex of 'magic, demonism, and witchcraft' with which cannibalism is generally associated, directly or indirectly" (Galvão 1947: 38). Thus the reason why Africans have not completely occupied Africa, leaving it available for the colonialists, turns out to be that they eat each other!

The notion of "secret sect" is fascinating because it reveals the manner in which colonial ideology silenced and naturalized the presence of the terror that it created itself.²⁹ Thus the sects are secret only to the extent that they are hiding from the white man's justice. As a matter of fact, Galvão repeatedly states this. It is only because of the white man's action, and normally through Catholic missionizing, that you manage to repress the spontaneous recidivism of the subalterns: "The secret sects are the fatal and spontaneous fruit," Galvão claims, "of the myths and mysteries that transform the spiritual life of the African native [...] into a horrific tragedy" (Galvão 1947: 67). Thus the origins of the Secrecy of these sects is pushed back into the pre-colonial past, so that the explanation of their Secrecy is not that they are repressed but that they are perverse.

It should be noted that this association between political domination, colonial agoraphobia, and anthropophagic recidivism is clearly obvious in the hatred that Portuguese colonialists manifested toward Protestant missionaries, as is shown by the bitter comments of Governor Mouzinho de Albuquerque against the Wesleyans and their "theories of equality." Marcelo Caetano, when he was Minister of Colonies, published these passages taken from the Governor's Report for 1896-1898. There, Mouzinho states that "even in Lourenço Marques, the *chiquonguela* blacks are the worst. That is, those who have been converted by the Swiss and the Wesleyans. They are insubordinate and they hate labor, they are the least usable of all natives" (Galvão 1946: 76).

Now Galvão is quite explicit in associating this political concern with cannibalism. He says of Protestant missions: "they either ignored totally what took place, or knew about it and did not care to repress the deeds of the sects nor to communicate them to the authorities. By contrast, such cases never took place in the areas of influence of the Catholic Missions" (Galvão 1947: 155). Shortly after he states that in Protestant missions, "witchcraft matters are also received," leaving in the air a suspicious ambiguity concerning what could be meant by that (Galvão 1947: 157).

For one who assumed the position that "the gods of the gentiles are demons," there is a special threat in the attitude of greater acceptance of religious plurality that characterizes some Protestant denominations. This meant that they did not engage directly in the repression of local religious practices, nor did they collaborate with the Portuguese civil authorities in order to repress local religions by means of police force.



Figure 7 Reconstitution of a supposed nocturnal attack by one of these cannibalistic sects—José Moura (Galvão 1947: 136).

Following a symbolic logic already familiar to us from other anthropological studies, we see here that the phantasmagorization of subalterns ends up validating the repressive attitudes of colonial power.³⁰ The terrible danger that the enemy constitutes comes to justify the size of the means mobilized against him. This is particularly true in a situation where what made repressive domination so urgently necessary was the terror about what would happen if it were withdrawn. The question, then, is not to protect the whites

from the blacks, since a whole world of symbolic evidence had been constructed according to which blacks needed to be protected from themselves. Cannibalistic recidivism was seen as nearly inevitable, should the control of the state not be enforced and the power of the Catholic Church not protected.

EQUIVOCAL COMPATIBILITIES

Unfortunately our story does not end here. Once again, it is poor Vancela that captures our attention. The fact is that there is ample suggestion that the disruptive presence of colonial power over political and economic pre-colonial structures had the effect of producing conservative reactions on the part of southern African societies. These, in turn, functioned as instruments of validation of the phantasmagoria of subalternity.

Already in his famous essay on the inauguration of a bridge in modern Zululand, Max Gluckman identified this apparent irony. Although white authorities did not attack the rituals associated with ancestral cults, these were giving signs of decay. Contrarily, although colonial authorities systematically repressed witchcraft accusations, these were on the increase.³¹ Later on, in the preface to Marwick's book quoted above, Gluckman comments again about witchcraft saying that "strikingly these beliefs, rooted in persistent forms of domestic life, survive more than beliefs in the lineage spirits" (Marwick 1965: vii). In Marwick's opinion, the reason for this is that it is a conservative reaction particularly felt in moments of more intense social change (Marwick 1965: 221).

Everything suggests, therefore, that one of the reactions to the impact of capitalist economy and the colonial political system in the 1940s and 1950s was the reinforcement of intra-communitarian accusations of witchcraft. In Vancela's case, as well as in the other cases reported by Galvão, the colonial administrators ended up corroborating their own phantasmagoria of subalternity by recourse to the mutual accusations of witchcraft that the subalterns threw at each other.

When these intra-communitarian accusations are interpreted by the Portuguese administrators as "confessions" of cannibalism in the light of a modernist concept of the person, we are faced with a particularly tragic case of *equivocal compatibility* (cf. Pina-Cabral 1999a). The "confessions" of cannibalism thus obtained confirmed the phantasmagoric terrors of the colonial administrators. These were used as "evidence" in court cases, which had the practical effect of sending

hundreds of deported people to forced labor in São Tomé. It is sadly ironic that the very reaction on the part of subaltern populations to the political destruction and economic re-structuring effected by modern colonialism contributed to making possible the emotional constitution of colonial power.

CONCLUSION

The passage of time and the change in political conditions, as well as the concerted efforts of numberless anthropologists working hard at interpreting cultural difference throughout the greatest part of the twentieth century, have allowed us to distance ourselves somewhat from the quandary of miscommunication that led Vancela to such a tragic ending and that constituted such a barrier to understanding for people like Galvão. Nevertheless, our own contemporary world is permeated by ever more complex forms of domination that lead to ever more inscrutable quandaries.

Furthermore, the semantic traps laid out by the concept of *colonialism* have not simply vanished, which turns out to have potentially disturbing implications. For example, by choosing to define a present condition by reference to a past colonialism (as in "post-colonial") we run the risk of obscuring present-day neo-colonialism. This would contribute toward the naturalization of the already faceless (nationless) appearance of contemporary globalized capital.

As it happens, however, it is this capital that is supporting the national elites who, in the African post-independence period, have prevented the organic reconstruction of African society and the achievement of solutions for endowing the people in Africa with the capacity to construct their own political future. In war-ridden northern Mozambique, the fate of Vancela's child, if it is alive today, is in all likelihood as tragic as that of its mother.

NOTES

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1. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary: “col.o.ny n, pl -nies [ME *colonie*, fr. MF & L; MF, fr. L. *colonia*, fr. *colonus* farmer, colonist, fr. *colere* to cultivate—more at wheel]; 1(a): a body of people living in a new territory but retaining ties with the parent state (b): the territory inhabited by such a body; 2: a distinguishable localized population within a species (<~ of termites>; 3(a): a circumscribed mass of microorganisms usu. growing in or on a solid medium (b): the aggregation of zooids of a compound animal; 4(a): a group of individuals or things with common characteristics or interests situated in close association <an artist ~ > (b): the section occupied by such a group; 5: a group of persons institutionalized away from others <a leper ~ ><a penal ~ >; also: the land or buildings occupied by such a group.”
2. “A public settlement of Roman citizens in a hostile or newly conquered country, where they, retaining their Roman citizenship, received lands, and acted as a garrison, being mostly formed of veteran soldiers who had served their time.” (*Oxford English Dictionary*)
3. As in *incolere*, to inhabit—cf. Corominas and Pascual 1989: s. *culto*.
4. Or “segmentary,” to use an anthropological concept.
5. A number of instances were reported to me, when I lived in South Africa in the early 1970s, of Portuguese people with slightly darker skin being aggressively questioned as to their right to use the “boss’ lift” rather than the “servants’ lift.” Similarly, older Portuguese Eurasians that lived in Hong Kong before the 1950s reported situations to me that had humiliated them, where their non-Chineseness (and, therefore, their right to avoid open discrimination) had been questioned.
6. I take it that Tambiah is making a similar point when he complains that anthropology has used “a narrow rationalist definition of religion, born of the European Enlightenment, which [...] constructed it primarily as a doctrine of beliefs and a system of intellectualistic constructs” (1990: 3).
7. This paper follows on the ideas published in *Novos Estudos*, cf. “O retorno da Laurentina” (Pina-Cabral 1999b).

8. These are both active notions and passive gaps in knowledge. For example, I was surprised to discover that one of the reviewers of this paper did not know who Salazar was!
9. The "First Empire" would be the Portuguese naval expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, which was based on the formation of small, fortified, commercial citadels that permitted the control of trade routes, especially in the Far East. The Second Empire would be the gold- and slave-driven empire of Brazil in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
10. Cf. João Miranda (1998).
11. We are "non-modern," as Bruno Latour would have it (1994 [1991]).
12. This sentence is taken from the *imprimatur* of the first edition of the *Lusíadas*, the famous sixteenth century epic poem. There, the inquisitor insists on explaining to future readers that Camões makes reference to "gentile gods" (Greek gods) only as figures of speech. He stresses the truth of the old Eusebian thesis that the gods of the gentiles are not merely false gods, they are demons. Therefore, they are not simply passive constructs of the imagination but rather active anti-social forces (for a study of this question in relation to the supposed "pagan survivals" in Europe, cf. Pina-Cabral 1992).
13. Cf. Martins' concept of pastness as used by myself in comparing bourgeois society and peasant society in northern Portugal (Pina-Cabral 1989: 272).
14. Again, on this issue, Junod confirms that "Cannibalism, [...] has perhaps never existed as a general custom in South Africa, but has been practised sporadically in times of famine, and has left a feeling of disgust and horror in the minds of later generations; this feeling is also manifested in the numerous Ogre tales" (1962, II: 535).
15. In the Spring of 2000, for example, the press in Mozambique regularly aired such stories, which inevitably produced a frisson among the readers.
16. Cf. Pina-Cabral 1999b, where I studied accusations of black Mozambicans that Portuguese people were cannibal "fish."
17. The Zulu nation, formed around the political leadership of Shaka Zulu in the early-eighteen-hundreds, is suddenly cast into a primeval atemporality, simply due to the fact that the name would be easily recognizable by European readers.
18. Consider the importance of the cult of the Virgin Mary at the time Galvão is writing.
19. In the boroughs of Ambriz and Bembe, in 1945 (1947: 125).
20. In the context of the book, we are led to believe that "Maçónico" here has no other meaning than a personal name—even although it is hard to escape the natural association, since the word means "member of the Masonry" and Salazarists, at the time, tended to demonize Masons. In all likelihood this was a ritual specialist specially dedicated to the resolution of witchcraft accusations, such as those to which Marwick refers for the 1940s and 1950s in northern Mozambique (1965: 63–64).
21. About the notion of intercultural miscommunication, see Pina-Cabral (1999a).
22. For reasons that do not affect our present argument, he opts for calling them "sorcerers" instead of "witches," the more common expression proposed by Evans-Pritchard (Marwick 1965: 68–71).
23. Cewa maintain that matrilineal relatives "practise sorcery against each other" because they are unable to settle their quarrels by the ordinary judicial procedures available to unrelated persons who quarrel (1965: 95).
24. The ferule—*palmatória*—was an instrument that was also widely used at the time in schools as a means of correcting students. (My own hands still remember how

I learnt to spell Portuguese.) Its use as an instrument of policing by colonialists is yet another case of the metaphoric infantilization of Africans.

25. I am grateful to Maria da Conceição Neto for calling my attention to this connection.
26. Note that I use the categories "white" and "black" here as polar opposites, as if in everyday relations it were always easy to determine which was which. In fact, as stated earlier, the situation was far more complex. The simplification here, however, is not only due to the needs of my analysis, which polarizes the complexity of the relations in order to identify their internal structure. It is also due to the fact that, on an ideological level, "black" and "white" are presented as if they were clearly determinable attributes. The racist discourse that characterizes today's press in Maputo continues to refer to "blacks" and "whites." But when we attempt to situate these attributes by relation to the people so designated, we end up being puzzled to discover that it is not at all clear as to where to classify them. Furthermore, we discover that "black/white" is a form of constructing a discourse of otherness that has little actual phenotypic support.
27. Cf. Luise White (1997).
28. This is not a specifically Portuguese dilemma, as can be detected in many of the discourses concerning space and its uncontrollable vastness that characterizes much of the colonial literature of the period.
29. Cf. Serra Frazão (1946).
30. Cf. Bloch and Parry (1982); Bloch (1986); Pina-Cabral (1981); Pina-Cabral (1988).
31. Cf. Gluckman (1987) [1940]: 338.

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