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ANTHROPOPHAGIC PARODY AND/AS DECOLONIAL CRITIQUE: VERISSIMO, SHAKESPEARE, AND LITERARY DEVOURING

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Abstract

This article explores the decolonizing potential of anthropophagic parody in *A décima segunda noite* (2006), by Luis Fernando Verissimo, a novel that reimagines Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* through Oswald de Andrade's concept of cultural anthropophagy. By transposing the play into a Brazilian setting, the novel subverts the hierarchical centrality of Shakespeare in the Western canon. The parrot-narrator, Henri, embodies this process by mimicking and distorting Shakespeare's text in a carnivalesque dialogue that both honors and critiques its source. Engaging with post-colonial and literary theorists such as Walter Mignolo and Linda Hutcheon, the article argues that anthropophagic parody enacts epistemic disobedience, allowing a Brazilian writer to appropriate and reconfigure Shakespeare's legacy. Through linguistic, narrative, and thematic disruptions, *A décima segunda noite* illustrates how anthropophagic parody can dismantle colonial epistemologies, demonstrating the subversive potential of Brazilian literature to engage critically with global cultural traditions while asserting its own creative agency.

Keywords: Anthropophagy; Parody; Decoloniality; Shakespeare; Verissimo.

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Introduction

In the context of literature and literary studies, parody is a central creative strategy explored by writers and scrutinized by literary theorists and critics. By ironically imitating and modifying established codes, conventions, and prior works, parody challenges prevailing norms and allows for the creation of new texts. Notably, this process not only deconstructs literary patterns but also interrogates the power structures and authorities that facilitated the production of the parodied material. Within the realm of intertextual writing, parody distinguishes itself through its critical and ironic stance, being regarded in literary theory as a productive strategy for questioning, subverting, and deconstructing established modes of literary production. In this article, we will investigate how parody, particularly when intertwined with the Brazilian tradition of anthropophagy, as conceptualized by Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade, can offer a critical and transformative perspective within literature – a perspective that may ultimately serve as a conduit for decolonizing thought and dismantling national, cultural, and literary hierarchies.

Parody and anthropophagy intersect in their approach to assimilating and transforming foreign cultural elements to forge novel creations. These processes extend beyond mere imitation or consumption, embodying dynamic mechanisms of cultural and textual exchange. Both creative strategies represent an active engagement where the appropriated elements are not only integrated but also adapted to fit new cultural or artistic contexts. Importantly, this adaptation is not passive; it involves a selective and creative reworking of these elements to resonate with the new environment.

This paper analyzes Luis Fernando Verissimo's novel *A décima segunda noite* (2006), one of three works that comprise the Devorando Shakespeare [Devouring Shakespeare] collection, published in Brazil between 2006 and 2007, which reimagine and parody Shakespearean comedic plays through the lens of Brazilian cultural anthropophagy. This novel specifically devours William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (2004), transposing its plot, characters, and scenarios from the Renaissance stage to a contemporary Brazilian tableau. In this process, the Brazilian rendition appropriates and markedly intensifies the carnivalesque atmosphere of *Twelfth Night*, weaving a narrative tapestry rich with boundless possibilities. The phrase "Or what you will" – the subtitle of Shakespeare's play – is epitomized by Henri, a French parrot with Brazilian lineage who serves as the narrator in *A décima segunda noite*. Amidst the narrative's festive environment, the novel offers multiple meta-commentaries on Shakespeare and his body of work, engaging with and ironically subverting critical and theoretical discourses that traditionally place the English playwright at the epicenter of the Western literary canon. Our analysis contends that this engagement and subversion of the discourses on Shakespeare are hallmarks of an anthropophagic parody, which carries the potential to unsettle cultural hierarchies and power dynamics within the universe of literary writing.

This article begins with a succinct exposition of some features of parody in literature, particularly its interplay with irony, which endows parodic fiction with a character of ambiguity and ambivalence. Subsequently, we will outline the nuances of anthropophagic parody, as a practice with potentially disruptive consequences in post-colonial contexts of artistic creation. Finally, our analysis will focus on the novel *A décima segunda noite*, scrutinizing how parody and anthropophagy do more than recontextualize Shakespeare's play and its constituent elements (such as characters, setting, and plot), since they also establish a critical space for reflecting on the power dynamics involved in this process of intertextual and intercultural reinterpretation.

Parody, Ambivalence, and Subversion

Parody is a fundamental concept in literature that illustrates how texts interact and build upon one another. It relies on the interplay between different works to generate new meanings by directly engaging with previous texts, styles, genres, and discourses. This process is rooted in the idea of intertextuality – the notion that all language production is interconnected, as each text positions itself in relation to those that came before and is subsequently referenced or rejected by those that follow (Dendith 2000). By examining parody, we can better understand the inherent connectedness of literary works and appreciate the dialogic nature of textual production.

Among the intertextual creative strategies – quotation, paraphrase, pastiche, and others –, parody stands out for highlighting difference in textual relations. In this sense, Linda Hutcheon defines parody as "repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity" (Hutcheon 2000, 6). This emphasis on difference in parodic texts is facilitated by parody's intrinsic link to irony, often considered its primary discursive strategy. Irony, at its core, involves using language to express a meaning that typically signifies something else, usually the opposite, creating a dissonance between what is said and what is intended. In parodies, irony establishes a critical distance between the parodic and parodied texts, enabling the parodist not only to imitate the antecedent text but also to subvert and critically comment on it.

Due to its close connection with irony, parody is a highly ambiguous and ambivalent literary form. Nil Korkut (2005, 1) argues that parody is a creative strategy that "has manifested itself throughout history with widely varying features, intentions, and functions." In relation to its target –whether another text, genre, or discourse – Korkut contends that "parody's attitude […] is often ambivalent and may range from degradation and mockery to respectful admiration" (Korkut 1). This ambivalence is intricately connected to parody's use of irony, which allows it to convey both admiration and critique. The dual engagement inherent in parody lets the parodist positively acknowledge and subvert the previous text simultaneously, creating a balance between the seemingly opposite poles of homage and subversion. Irony in parody creates a space where the parodist

can mimic the form and style of the earlier work while highlighting its flaws or underlying assumptions. This interplay of meanings allows parody's target to be both celebrated and critiqued, reflecting a nuanced and complex relationship between parodic and parodied texts.

The ambivalent nature of parody can be further elucidated by examining the etymology of the Greek noun *parodia*. As Hutcheon (32) explains:

> The textual or discursive nature of parody […] is clear from the *odos* part of the word, meaning song. The prefix *para* has two meanings, only one of which is usually mentioned – that of "counter" or against. Thus parody becomes an opposition or contrast between texts. […] However, *para* in Greek can also mean "beside," and therefore there is a suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of a contrast.

The ambivalence of parody should not be considered a weakness that detracts from the inventive potential of this creative strategy. On the contrary, parodic texts demonstrate that part of the pleasure in engaging with parody lies not only in observing "what" has been appropriated and subverted by the parodic discourse, but also in understanding "how" this appropriation and subversion occur, whether respectfully and/or irreverently. In this sense, the reader of parodic texts becomes aware that "When we speak of parody, we do not just mean two texts that interrelate in a certain way. We also imply an intention to parody another work […] and both a recognition of that intent and an ability to find and interpret the backgrounded text in its relation to the parody" (Hutcheon 22).

Parody, by its very nature, introduces a level of textual complexity that is integral to its function and impact. This complexity stems from its double-coded nature, as a single text simultaneously engages with and pays homage to, subverts, or critiques another. The parodied text thus serves a dual purpose: it is both the target and a structural component of the parody. This ambivalence is essential to understanding how parody operates on multiple levels of meaning, creating a layered reading experience that requires a sophisticated interpretive approach. Ambiguity, therefore, is not merely a byproduct of parody but a deliberate strategy that enriches the text, inviting readers to navigate between the lines and uncover deeper layers of meaning.

Throughout history, parody has often been seen as a creative strategy aimed at ridiculing its targets in an aggressive and disrespectful manner. However, when we examine parodic texts, particularly contemporary ones, we realize that this view is limited and does not encompass the full complexity of this literary strategy. As Simon Dendith (7) argues, parody is a multivalent literary form whose functions and effects vary significantly and cannot be anticipated: "the social and cultural meanings of parody, like all utterances, can only be understood in the density of the interpersonal and intertextual relations in which it intervenes." Investigating specific cases of parody – as proposed in the analysis of Verissimo's novel – is necessary to reveal the cultural politics of parody, which can oscillate between conservative and subversive poles. It should be noted that these poles

are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as a single parodic text can simultaneously demonstrate impulses to preserve certain literary codes and conventions while challenging others:

> Parody can do all of the things that these opposed traditions describe; it can subvert the accents of authority *and* police the boundaries of the sayable; it can place all writing under erasure *and* draw a circle around initiated readers to exclude ignorant ones; it can discredit the authority of what has always been said *and* ridicule the new and the formally innovative (Dendith 27-28).

Parody is often regarded as a form of metafictional or self-reflexive writing due to its inherent critical awareness of both its own fictionality and the processes involved in its creation. By imitating and transforming existing texts, genres, and discourses, parody not only critiques their content and style but also reflects on the act of literary production itself. Consequently, some critics accuse parody of being too self-absorbed, focusing more on the manipulation of literary conventions and the critique of previous works rather than engaging with broader social and political issues. However, this criticism is unfounded, since parodic texts, through their intertextual connections, can also develop profound ethical and political reflections. Parody's critical distance often exposes the underlying ideologies and assumptions of what is being parodied, providing a platform for questioning and challenging dominant cultural narratives. Considering the reverberations of parody within the realm of self-reflexive literature, it is important to recognize that parody plays a pivotal role in reflecting on the politics of representation, which also underscores its ideological engagement with the world. By recontextualizing and transforming previous texts, parody can subvert traditional power structures and offer alternative perspectives, making it a potent tool for political commentary and resistance. Consequently, parody may function as a platform for generating alternative perspectives, allowing silenced voices and ways of thinking to be heard. As Hutcheon emphasizes, parody can be utilized by these groups to critique and subvert hegemonic discourses. Through this process, dominant cultural forms may be converted into instruments for articulating marginalized voices and experiences, thereby transforming acts of oppression into acts of resistance and identity assertion.

It is particularly revealing, therefore, that parodic literature produced in Latin America often exhibits a political dimension while typically distancing itself from a totalizing ideological imposition (Weldt-Basson 2018). In Latin American literary traditions, parody has served as a means of asserting cultural identity and resisting colonial and neocolonial influences. By reinterpreting and transforming dominant European literary forms and genres, authors from the continent can critique the cultural hegemony imposed by colonial powers and assert their own perspectives. Parody enables these writers to engage with traditions that have historically marginalized them, subverting and reappropriating these traditions to reflect their unique experiences.

A notable example of this politically engaged parodic practice is the Brazilian concept of cultural anthropophagy, which has had significant reverberations within Brazil's literary production. This concept will be examined in the following section.

Anthropophagic Parody, Decolonial Thought, and Shakespeare

Originally tied to the literal practice of cannibalism, the term anthropophagy underwent a profound conceptual shift as it entered literary and cultural discourse in early 20th-century Brazil. Rather than denoting an act of physical violence, it came to represent a symbolic process of creative engagement with external influences – one in which foreign cultural forms, especially those of European origin, would be devoured, digested, and reassembled into a new aesthetics more attuned to local realities (Campos 2010). In this sense, anthropophagy emerges as a metaphor for cultural renewal through the critical assimilation of foreign elements, ensuring that what results is not a passive reproduction but a transformative reconfiguration of the borrowed materials.

This redefinition was explicitly articulated in Oswald de Andrade's (1928) "Manifesto Antropófago" ["Anthropophagous Manifesto"], a foundational text of Brazilian Modernism. Composed during a period when Brazil was seeking to establish a distinct national identity after centuries of colonial oppression, Andrade's manifesto urged writers and artists to overcome cultural dependency by creatively appropriating and transforming European traditions. Reflecting this stance, Andrade famously declared, "I am only interested in what is not mine. Law of man. Law of the anthropophagus," emphasizing the deliberate assimilation and reinvention of external influences as a means of cultural resistance. Rather than venerating imported literary norms, the manifesto advocated their selective absorption and playful subversion – challenging hierarchical canons that had historically relegated the cultural "periphery" to a subordinate position relative to the "center." This process of transformation, Andrade asserted, opposed "all importers of canned consciousness" and celebrated "the palpable existence of life," highlighting the manifesto's call for a dynamic, living cultural practice rooted in local realities.

The anthropophagic approach is defined by principles that distinguish it from mere imitation: rather than simply replicating foreign styles, anthropophagy involves a process of rigorous cultural digestion, in which external elements are deconstructed, displaced from their original ideological frameworks, and recontextualized within the cultural and aesthetic landscape of Brazil. This transformative process produces hybrid, polyphonic works that articulate local perspectives and experiences, effectively challenging static notions of cultural influence and origin.

Andrade recognized the inescapable presence of European thought within Brazilian intellectual and artistic traditions, acknowledging that colonial miscegenation had permanently shaped the country's cultural identity. However, rather than rejecting this inheritance, he proposed devouring and digesting the

foreign elements to create a new, hybrid form – a hybrid aesthetics that carries unmistakable marks of a Brazilian identity. In this process, "what has to be done is to devour the foreigner and then digest its parts, making the old nonnative element become one with the really national, the regional, the autochthonous, giving birth to a half-breed that will ostensibly show his marks of Brazilianity" (Resende 2002, 16-17).

Much like Caliban, who appropriates the language of the colonizer to assert his individuality and resist European exploitation, Brazilian anthropophagy, as Aimara Resende observes, reclaims Shakespeare's canonical works as raw material for reinterpretation. Through subversive appropriations, parodic counterpoints, and ambivalent reimaginings, Shakespeare is reshaped into a figure that comes to embody the hybridity and resilience of Brazilian culture. As Andrade articulated, this process turns "taboo into totem," transforming colonial impositions into sources of cultural strength and creativity, thus paving the way for a new, decolonized Brazilian literature. This reinterpretation of Shakespeare exemplifies a critical response to colonial legacies, offering a foundation for broader discussions on how anthropophagy operates as a strategy for cultural resistance and renewal.

By reframing foreign literary inheritances through the lens of anthropophagy, writers bring to the forefront the colonial foundations that have historically sustained hierarchical relations between cultural traditions. In this view, what once passed for a naturalized flow of influence from a Eurocentric core to supposedly lesser peripheries is instead revealed as an imposed dynamic shaped by the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2011). Rather than endorsing a linear transfer of authority, this reorientation highlights a multidirectional exchange marked by appropriation, adaptation, and reinvention. Consequently, the notion of an original and uncontested literary source loses its solidity, as texts and traditions enter fluid networks where each cultural site not only contributes but radically reconfigures what it inherits.

Before turning to how anthropophagic parody challenges such canonical structures, it is important to consider how Shakespeare came to occupy a position of unparalleled prominence, particularly within Anglophone literary studies. Across this critical tradition, Shakespeare has frequently been treated not only as the most exemplary writer of the English language but as the symbolic apex of literary achievement itself, his works serving as benchmarks for aesthetic value, interpretive depth, and cultural legitimacy. Few figures have contributed more decisively to the playwright's status as the apex of Western literary tradition than Harold Bloom. In *The Western Canon* (1994) and *Shakespeare: the invention of the human* (1998), Bloom frames Shakespeare not merely as one among many literary greats, but as the source of modern subjectivity itself. According to Bloom, the psychological depth and linguistic innovation of Shakespeare's characters constitute a singular breakthrough in literary history – so singular, in fact, that they are said to have taught humanity how to reflect upon itself. This vision casts

Shakespeare not simply as a canonical writer, but as the defining consciousness of Western culture, and thus elevates him to a status of almost mythic preeminence.

In *Will in the world*, Stephen Greenblatt (2016) offers a complementary, though distinct, articulation of Shakespeare's centrality. The scholar traces the playwright's rise from provincial obscurity to global eminence, grounding his success in an extraordinary responsiveness to the cultural, religious, and theatrical energies of Elizabethan England. Greenblatt does not claim, as Bloom does, that Shakespeare created modern human consciousness; instead, he contends that no other writer has demonstrated such an uncanny ability to synthesize the conflicting voices of his time and transmute them into enduring art. Greenblatt's portrait reinforces the view that Shakespeare's works represent an apex of literary achievement, continuing to shape global standards of narrative craft and emotional insight. Through this narrative, the dramatist becomes not only a historical figure, but the symbolic fulcrum of literary excellence, a writer whose mastery justifies his central place in curricula, publishing markets, and global stages.

Shakespeare's centrality has been not only critically endorsed but also materially and institutionally engineered, as Julia Thomas (2012) argues. In *Shakespeare's Shrine*, the scholar traces how the playwright's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon was transformed during the Victorian era into a national site of pilgrimage, effectively consecrated as a shrine to literary greatness. Through preservation campaigns, architectural restorations, and meticulously curated visitor experiences, the humble house was elevated into a sacralized space that enshrined Shakespeare as a cultural monument. Thomas contends that this apparatus did more than memorialize a historical figure: it actively constructed and perpetuated his privileged status within the literary imagination. Shakespeare's iconicity, she shows, derives not solely from the perceived merits of his texts, but from a web of ritual practices, symbolic investments, and institutional mechanisms that have long worked to naturalize his universality. Far from arising through spontaneous acclaim, this centrality emerges as the product of a sustained cultural project, embedded in both the material and symbolic architectures of the Western canon.

Taken together, these perspectives – Bloom's metaphysical elevation, Greenblatt's historicist singularity, and Thomas's institutional archaeology – demonstrate how Shakespeare's hypercentrality in the Western canon has been repeatedly reinforced by literary criticism. It is precisely this composite construction of authority that anthropophagic parody sets out to ingest, disrupt, and reinvent.

In the context of post-colonial thought, anthropophagy stands out as a distinctly Brazilian contribution (Amorim 2018; Campos; Stam and Shohat 2014; Zamora and Kaup 2010). This approach reframes the relationship between the national and the foreign by situating them within a dialogical interplay, rather than a hierarchical binary. Haroldo de Campos (321) describes anthropophagy as a process that "does not involve a submission (an indoctrination), but a transculturation, or, better, a 'transvalorization': a critical view […] capable

of appropriation and of expropriation, de-hierarchization, deconstruction." By embracing the foreign as material to be reinterpreted and reimagined, anthropophagy transforms acts of colonial imposition into opportunities for creative reconfiguration. This unique framework destabilizes the binary oppositions of center and periphery and enriches post-colonial discourse with a dynamic and generative paradigm.

This process of creative appropriation and re-signification finds a compelling parallel in the ambivalence inherent to both parody and anthropophagy. These strategies not only challenge the dominance of imposed cultural frameworks but also engage with them critically, extracting and transforming their elements. Ambivalence is central to both practices, as they simultaneously critique and celebrate the cultural materials they engage with. In anthropophagy, as envisioned by Andrade, only that which holds cultural or aesthetic significance is "devoured," an act of selective assimilation that reflects both reverence for and subversion of the earlier material. Similarly, parody adopts a dialogical approach to what it parodies, imitating and preserving some of its elements while exposing its inherent contradictions and assumptions. This dual engagement allows both parody and anthropophagy to challenge cultural conventions and hierarchies without fully rejecting the systems they transform.

In this light, anthropophagic parody is a literary strategy that merges the subversive mechanisms of parody with the critical assimilation of cultural anthropophagy: rather than merely imitating or ridiculing a prior text, it operates through a process of selective devouring and reconfiguration, appropriating dominant literary forms while simultaneously dismantling their hierarchical authority. By engaging in an irreverent, often carnivalesque dialogue with canonical works, anthropophagic parody transforms them from symbols of cultural imposition into sites of creative resistance, producing hybrid texts that interrogate and destabilize colonial epistemologies. This dynamic practice does not reject inherited traditions outright but rather metabolizes them, integrating and recontextualizing their elements in ways that challenge the primacy of Eurocentric literary and cultural paradigms.

Rather than adhering to linear models of literary influence, anthropophagic parody embraces an eclectic and de-hierarchized engagement with the cultural past. As Susanne Klengel (2000) observes, this process often incorporates elements of carnivalization, further intensifying the destabilization of dominant narratives: more than a literary technique, Brazilian anthropophagy constitutes a radical avant-garde poetology, one that constructs a hedonistic and playful imaginary, blending the aesthetics of carnival with ludic literary experimentation. Moreover, the metaphor of cultural anthropophagy provides a framework for Brazilian writers to parodically address the cultural dilemmas posed by their colonial legacy.

The convergence of anthropophagy and parody thus embodies a potent strategy for resisting artistic and cultural domination, serving as a form of creative subversion. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam explain, anthropophagic

texts go beyond mere local adaptations; they function as tools to challenge and undermine the authority and image of the colonizer. By critically recycling foreign cultural elements, anthropophagy transforms them into innovative and subversive expressions, positioning itself as a strategy of post-colonial resistance. This process allows peripheral nations to destabilize the dominance of hegemonic artistic and cultural systems, asserting their creative agency. Shohat and Stam (308) describe this as a "critical recycling of foreign culture," enabling marginalized cultures to generate knowledge and artistic practices that directly confront colonial and cultural hierarchies. Through the fusion of anthropophagy and parody, such practices may transcend subjugation, reshaping imposed cultural materials into instruments of resistance and decolonial creation.

Anthropophagic parody, in this sense, may function as a mechanism for advancing a decolonial project. Such a project articulates a literary formulation that diverges from the "insipid, resigned perspective of the 'noble savage' (idealized within the model of European virtues in the 'nativist' line of Brazilian Romanticism, exemplified by Gonçalves Dias and José de Alencar)," and instead adopts "the point of view of the 'bad savage', devourer of whites – the cannibal" (Campos 321). The stance of this "bad savage" is inherently subversive, rejecting submission to colonial narratives and idealizations. Instead, it embodies defiance and agency, confronting colonial power structures not through passive assimilation but through active appropriation and transformation. By devouring and reconfiguring the colonizer's cultural materials, the "bad savage" asserts a posture of critical resistance, one that transforms imposed frameworks into tools of creative empowerment. This perspective challenges the binary opposition of "civilized" and "barbaric," revealing cultural hybridity – rather than purity – as a powerful source of strength and innovation within a decolonial project.

Such a stance resonates with Walter Mignolo's concept of "epistemic disobedience," which calls for a break from Eurocentric paradigms of knowledge and a reorientation toward the experiential realities and intellectual traditions of historically marginalized groups. By refusing to conform to established frames of knowledge production, the "bad savage" likewise enacts epistemic disobedience: the cannibalistic reworking of foreign symbols, forms, and narratives – including canonical figures such as Shakespeare – destabilizes conventional hierarchies of authority, reclaiming the right to define, interpret, and circulate cultural practices. Anthropophagic parody, in this regard, resists both artistic domination and the epistemological structures underpinning colonial authority, opening new pathways for decolonial thought through imaginative and critical acts of disobedience.

In light of Mignolo's (2018, 2634) assertion, "Decoloniality is the exercise of power within the colonial matrix to undermine the mechanism that keeps it in place requiring obeisance. Such a mechanism is epistemic and so decolonial liberation implies epistemic disobedience, the anthropophagic reimagining of Shakespeare offers a pathway toward a decolonial literary practice. Brazilian authors, such as Luis Fernando Verissimo, illustrate how selectively devouring

canonical symbols allows for local voices to reconfigure dominant aesthetics and knowledge systems. Rather than reinforcing Eurocentric narratives, these rewritings foster subjective and programmatic departures from the colonial matrix of power, affirming local cultural agency. By thinking and acting decolonially – both in critical analyses of inherited frameworks and in creative endeavors that remake imported traditions – anthropophagic parody ultimately opens new spaces of possibility, reshaping Shakespeare's legacy into a domain of epistemic disobedience and cultural reinvention.

In the next section, the focus shifts to an analysis of Luis Fernando Verissimo's *A décima segunda noite*, so as to examine how the novel embodies the principles of anthropophagic parody by reimagining *Twelfth Night* and subverting not only this canonical text but also the very figure of William Shakespeare, transforming both into spaces of decolonial creativity, resistance, and subversion.

"Qu'est-ce qu'il dit, le perroquet?"

By choosing to set his novel in the period between Christmas and Epiphany, leading into Carnival, Verissimo replicates the temporal framework established by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*, marked by a liminal interval of revelry and inversion. This alignment is made explicit through Henri, the novel's unlikely narrator, who happens to be a parrot with an erudite and self-reflexive voice. Right at the outset, Henri underscores the significance of this festive season by remarking: "Have I mentioned that all of this took place between last Christmas and Twelfth Night, with an epilogue during Carnival? Well, it did"[1] (Verissimo 31). Verissimo thus invokes the same carnivalesque atmosphere that Shakespeare harnessed, immersing readers in a world poised for social and textual upheaval. In this interval historically characterized by role reversals ("or what you will"), Henri's presence as a perceptive and ironic commentator magnifies the novel's subversive energy, setting the stage for the playful dismantling of cultural, aesthetic, and literary hierarchies.

The carnivalesque atmosphere in Verissimo's narrative strongly resonates with Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) concept of carnival, described as a time when social hierarchies are temporarily dissolved, creating space for parody, laughter, and creativity. Carnival, as Bakhtin argues, represents a world turned inside out, where rigid structures give way to fluidity and transformation. By situating his narrative in this festive and disruptive temporal framework, Verissimo channels the liberating energy of carnival, crafting a fertile ground for anthropophagic parody to challenge conventions and imaginatively dismantle and reconstruct dominant cultural paradigms.

A décima segunda noite, by Luis Fernando Verissimo, reimagines Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* by transposing its structure of mistaken identities, gender disguise, and misplaced desire to 1970s-80s Paris, where undocumented Brazilian immigrants and affective entanglements replace the aristocratic intrigues of Illyria. The narrative centers on the twins Violeta and Sebastião, who

are separated upon arriving in France, with Violeta assuming the male identity "César" to gain employment at a Brazilian-themed hair salon also called Illyria, owned by Orsino. Drawing inspiration from Shakespeare's comedy, Verissimo's novel preserves the romantic entanglements and the spirit of carnivalization but reconfigures them within a Brazilian framework. This includes the presence of political exiles fleeing the military dictatorship and a subplot centered on the illicit trade in sacred art. These narrative layers are interwoven with Henri's voice, a parrot narrator who offers ironic and irreverent meta-reflections on Shakespeare's work and its canonical status, effectively merging storytelling with literary and cultural critique.

The novel's irreverent dialogue with Shakespeare aligns with broader critical efforts to reassess the playwright's cultural dominance and global reach. As Jyotsna G. Singh (2019) highlights, the worldwide prestige attributed to Shakespeare is deeply entwined with imperial structures that facilitated and legitimized the circulation of his works across colonized regions. In *Shakespeare and Postcolonial Theory*, Singh demonstrates how his plays became central to colonial curricula, functioning both as tools of cultural assimilation and as symbols of British moral and aesthetic superiority. This process effectively recast Shakespeare as a metonym for universal literature – though, as Singh argues, this so-called universality was manufactured through imperial mechanisms of diffusion and institutional validation: "If traditionally Shakespeare has been considered as the universal Bard, as well as a cultural signifier for a reified 'Britishness', today such categorizations seem outdated" (Singh 11). In response, a growing body of postcolonial adaptations, performances, and critical re-readings has emerged, not to dismiss Shakespeare, but to interrogate and reshape his legacy within diverse local contexts, exposing the constructed nature of his centrality in world literature.

Indeed, recent decades have witnessed a surge in intertextual engagements that integrate Shakespeare's life and *oeuvre* across diverse national, regional, and local contexts, thus contributing to his afterlife through translations, adaptations, and performances that reshape him for new audiences. This growing archive of appropriations, however, is never ideologically neutral. In post-colonial contexts, Shakespeare is frequently reimagined as part of a cultural inheritance forged under colonial rule, a reminder that his worldwide reputation was in large measure carried by British imperial expansions, which transported his works across continents and diverse cultural landscapes. When Shakespearean studies draw on post-colonial theory, they engage with a series of fundamental questions:

> […] what sorts of cultural and ideological encounters do these works represent? Are these cultural encounters between Shakespeare and an "other" tradition contestatory, mutually illuminating or legitimizing, a form of cultural imperialism or native self-assertion, a postmodern jumbling of styles or evidence of Shakespeare's universality? (Lanier 239).

This critical revision of Shakespeare's global stature resonates with recent efforts to rethink anthropophagy as more than a Brazilian literary metaphor. The volume *Eating Shakespeare: cultural anthropophagy as global methodology* (Refskou et al. 2023) advances this gesture by reframing anthropophagy as a decolonial hermeneutic capable of unsettling hegemonic hierarchies within Global Shakespeare studies. The editors propose anthropophagy not merely as an act of cultural appropriation, but as an epistemological tool grounded in defamiliarization and coexistence. As the editors of the volume explain, "its Brazilian references unsettle and subvert European organizations of reality: at its core the 'Manifesto' insists on a defamiliarized ontology" (Refskou et al. 379). By refusing paradigms of exclusion or substitution, the anthropophagic method allows for the irreverent incorporation and transvaluation of dominant cultural forms. More than rhetorical, anthropophagic parody enacts an epistemic undoing of colonial paradigms, disarming them through parody, laughter, and critical estrangement. This theoretical reframing directly informs the logic of *A décima segunda noite*, where Shakespeare is not simply adapted but digested, mocked, and redistributed as part of a Brazilian cultural metabolism that refuses reverence without forgoing engagement.

One of the central targets of Verissimo's anthropophagic parody is the symbolic figure of Shakespeare – not the playwright himself, but the canonical image shaped by centuries of institutional consecration. Through Henri's playful irreverence, the novel questions this figure's status as a metonym for literary universality and aesthetic supremacy. It is important to note, however, that this reflection and subversion of Shakespeare's image does not stem from a deliberate plan to depose him; rather, it emerges from the novel's broader anthropophagic endeavor to devour, parody, and reinvent canonical references. Given Shakespeare's worldwide reach, he possesses an enormous "cultural capital," a concept introduced by Pierre Bourdieu and defined by Siobhan Keenan and Dominic Shellard (2016) as the social prestige enjoyed by those who possess the competence to interpret and appreciate works of art, including literature. In this light, *A décima segunda noite* simultaneously perpetuates Shakespeare's legacy – by reviving and citing his texts – and subjects it to parodic dismantling, questioning the uncritical glorification that often accompanies his name. Such appropriations inevitably reinforce Shakespeare's enduring relevance, yet they also open the door for playful disruptions of his status, as Verissimo's anthropophagic parody repurposes Shakespeare's authority, reframing it within a Brazilian cultural landscape that balances homage, critique, and the creative possibility of decolonial reinvention.

Within this landscape of hybrid contacts, *A décima segunda noite* introduces Henri, a French parrot with purported Brazilian roots who holds complete command over his own narrative. He not only invokes the prestige associated with Shakespeare's cultural capital but also undermines it through acts of anthropophagic parody. By retelling and updating the plot of *Twelfth Night*, Henri effectively presents himself as a kind of Shakespearean parrot, a creature

that repeats while injecting a parodic difference into the source material. Thus, the guiding question – "Qu'est-ce qu'il dit, le perroquet?" ["What is the parrot saying?"] signals that our central task is to examine what Henri actually says and how his words function as a destabilizing, irreverent engagement with Shakespeare's legacy.

What, then, is the parrot really saying? The repeated question – "Qu'est-ce qu'il dit, le perroquet?" –, appearing five times throughout *A décima segunda noite*, with only slight variations, and notably in the novel's very first lines, carries a layer of self-mockery that casts doubt on Henri's reliability as a narrator. Its frequent recurrence implies that his listeners either fail to understand him or more likely simply choose not to pay attention, thereby reducing his pronouncements to inconsequential rambling. As Henri himself laments:

> Try saying anything serious or profound in a parrot's voice. Even in French. Impossible. That's why nobody has paid attention, and the comedy I'm about to tell has nearly turned into a tragedy. I warned them, I screeched my lungs out, but did they listen? All I got was, 'Le perroquet, qu'est-ce qu'il dit?'. And they laughed. I was telling them it wasn't comedy, it was drama, it was tragedy. There was passion, betrayal, perfidy, sociology. And yet they laughed, and laughed. Blame the voice, it's my curse (Verissimo, 2006, p. 7).

By foregrounding his own predicament, a speaker whose "cursed" voice prompts only laughter, Henri exposes the precariousness of his authority, particularly in relation to the cast of characters who populate his fictional world, none of whom appears willing to take him seriously or give weight to his dramatic revelations. This ironic stance resonates with the broader anthropophagic parody at work in the novel, wherein both Shakespeare and his "Shakespearean parrot" occupy unstable positions of cultural and narrative power. If even the narrator's most urgent declarations can be dismissed with mocking laughter, it becomes difficult to determine what is truly at stake in his retelling. In so doing, Verissimo accentuates the ambivalent interplay between anthropophagic parody and its target, as well as the deeply comedic (yet also critical) potential of a parrot who dares to retell Shakespeare.

Parroting Shakespeare

Henri quickly transfers his parodic skepticism to Shakespeare himself, offering a rumor of uncertain veracity: "With a parrot's voice, nothing is important, nothing is tragic. They say Shakespeare used to read his comedies in a parrot's voice to his actors, who never understood what he wrote. That was the only way they could tell it wasn't a tragedy" (Verissimo 7-8) This secondhand, almost gossipy account not only carnivalizes Shakespeare's revered status but also delivers a pointed, twofold critique. On one hand, the anecdote suggests that Shakespeare's actors could not grasp his text without a parrot-like cue; on the other, it frames Shakespeare as

yet another "parrot," someone who, like Henri, borrows and repurposes prior discourses to craft his plays. Far from merely insinuating this, the passage ironically highlights a well-known facet of Shakespeare's work: he drew substantially on existing sources. In likening Shakespeare's creative process to parrot mimicry, *A décima segunda noite* playfully undermines the notion of a solitary, transcendent genius behind the Western canon, while exemplifying the anthropophagic drive to devour, revise, and subvert one of its most exalted literary icons.

Henri's physical characterization further illustrates the parodic self-mockery that runs throughout the novel and, by extension, echoes back on Shakespeare. Despite his professed Parisian origins – "I was born in Paris, and my gray coloring is the same as that city's winter sky" (Verissimo 11) – he confesses that his bright green-and-yellow plumage is merely painted on: "When Orsino bought the beauty salon and said he wanted a Brazilian ambience, Negra took charge of the décor, and voilà, green and yellow on a plastic perch" (Verissimo 11). This overtly artificial transformation wryly exposes his dual position: a gray, French-born bird acting as a Brazilian symbol. At the same time, every act of mockery Henri directs toward himself – such as admitting his colors are "just paint" – also resonates with the barbs he flings at Shakespeare, reinforcing their shared status as "parrots" who explore and intertextually engage with existing sources. By cloaking himself in Brazil's national hues, Henri aligns his persona directly with Oswald de Andrade's *ethos*, recasting cultural appropriation through the lenses of Brazilian anthropophagic parody, as a playful and irreverent strategy of literary reinvention.

This parodic playfulness extends beyond Henri's appearance and into his reflections on language and literary creation. While recounting his experiences with one of his former owners, the second Jean-Paul, Henri explores the intricacies of how language operates as a tool for constructing narratives. In doing so, he not only critiques the mechanisms behind literary production but also makes Shakespeare the direct and explicit target of his parody:

> The word detached from substance, language freed from meaning, perhaps that's what JP2 expected of me. A literary inspiration that bypassed experience, an artificial sentimental education. A parrot, moi, as a symbol of pure glottology, untouched by the interference of the world. An example of self-referential literature, audaciously implausible, like the improbable plots set in Shakespeare's fantastical lands. He would listen to me, utterly fascinated, before interrupting with yet another theory (Verissimo, 2006, p. 74).

The concept of pure glottology envisions language as entirely detached from substance, experience, or external interference, existing in an idealized, self-contained realm where words function independently of meaning or context. This notion, inherently impossible given that communicative acts always occur within an intertextual network of shared meanings and references, is ironically invoked in the narrative. Henri embodies its complete antithesis: as a parrot, his identity

is inherently tied to repetition, with his very speech echoing prior utterances. His literary creation is explicitly intertextual, characterized by the appropriation and transformation of preexisting stories and voices. Henri not only acknowledges this intertextual nature but fully embraces it, bringing Shakespeare into his narrative and, with ironic ambivalence, situating the dramatist in the unattainable position of pure glottology. This move underscores the unavoidable intertextuality of all literary production, including Shakespeare's well-documented reliance on sources. Henri's stance is firmly rooted in anthropophagic parody, aligned with the posture of the "bad savage," ultimately rejecting and undermining hierarchical notions of originality and authorship.

Throughout the novel, Henri offers further metafictional commentary on Shakespeare, with a particular focus on the dramatic genres explored by the English playwright. Although Shakespeare's *oeuvre* is often acknowledged to blur the boundaries between tragedy and comedy in various "mixed" plays, Henri pushes this observation to an absurd extreme. Early on, the parrot-narrator dismisses the celebrated comedic intricacies of Shakespearean plotting as mere happenstance, remarking, "It would only happen by an unlikely accident, by a Shakespearean coincidence" (Verissimo 48). Later in the narrative, Henri offers a further critique, stating,

> For Jean-Paul 2, everything in Shakespeare was tragic – especially the comedies, which took the characters' misunderstandings and swapped identities to such extremes of cruelty that even the so-called happy ending couldn't redeem them. Meanwhile, Festinha claims it's all comedy, right down to the bloody *Titus Andronicus*, which ends with everyone dead onstage and in the first three rows of the audience, and he swears *Hamlet* is the funniest of them all, a riotous comedy of errors in which nobody ever seems to know exactly who they're running through with a sword (Verissimo, 2006, p. 108-109).

By intensifying the inherent tragicomic elements in Shakespeare's works, Henri not only collapses the conventional boundaries that separate comedic and tragic modes, but he also introduces a distinctly metafictional layer to Verissimo's text: these provocative remarks double as a commentary on literary-critical debates over Shakespeare's genre mixing. They highlight, for instance, the darker undertones of mistaken identities and cruel misunderstandings in plays like *Twelfth Night*. Conversely, Festinha's exaggerated claim that everything in Shakespeare is comedy stretches this ambiguity to its limits, turning some of the most solemn works into sources of grotesque humor. These layered critiques illustrate the text's disobedient and carnivalesque approach, wherein hierarchical distinctions between high and low art, comedy and tragedy, are inverted and exposed as fluid constructs. Henri's reflections, while humorous, also function as a pointed critique of the sacralization of Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, emphasizing its inherent contradictions and inviting readers to view it through a lens of parody and subversion. In doing so, Verissimo's *A décima segunda noite* situates Shakespeare

not as an untouchable cultural figure but as a dynamic participant in an ongoing process of intertextual dialogue, one that Henri – as an anthropophagic narrator – devours, transforms, and irreverently reimagines.

Interrupting Shakespeare

Thus far, we have observed that Henri not only speaks but exercises meticulous control over discourse, carefully determining who is granted a voice within his narrative. Among the many subjects he addresses, Shakespeare occupies a central role, filtered through a distinctly carnivalized and parodic lens. This raises a further question: is there space for Shakespeare's own voice within the account of this Shakespearean parrot? Notably, Henri portrays the playwright as an authoritative voice on love, quoting him directly in English: "Regarding the melancholic Violeta, I could say, borrowing from the Bard, that she knew as much of hidden love as of love declared, that she 'let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheeks' […] with apologies for the pronunciation" (Verissimo 73). The phrase "with apologies for the pronunciation" immediately foregrounds the limitations and creative possibilities of Henri's own performance, underscoring a parodic rupture within the very act of citation. As a parrot, Henri cannot simply replicate Shakespeare's words with perfect fidelity; instead, he actively reframes them, oscillating between reverence for the English playwright and a simultaneous assertion of his own narrative authority, as Shakespeare's voice only reaches us through Henri's mediation – filtered, distorted, or permitted at his discretion –, further reinforcing the parrot's dominance over how the English dramatist is represented and engaged with in the novel.

Shakespeare's voice, then, is only ever heard through Henri's mediation – a mediation that is itself repeatedly disrupted by the novel's structural framework. The narrative unfolds as a series of taped interviews recorded on cassette, with each chapter corresponding to a new tape. This format leads to three significant interruptions of Henri's commentary on Shakespeare, as his speech is abruptly cut off at key moments. At the end of the sixth chapter, just as Henri invokes the playwright, the recording stops mid-sentence: "Henri, Henri, toi aussi ne serais plus. How has the bard put it? The" (Verissimo 94). A similar rupture occurs at the end of the tenth chapter, when Henri realizes he has been speaking to students of his former owner, JP2. Once again, Shakespeare's presence is curtailed – this time, his very name is severed in half: "It was for a school project, hence the cheap cassette recorder. Fine. At least you're here studying literature instead of cooking. I imagine all these things from the past, dictatorships, exiles, betrayals, misplaced loves, must seem to you as distant as Shakes" (Verissimo 142). These repeated silences highlight the precariousness of Shakespeare's ambivalent presence in the novel. Rather than granting Shakespeare an unchallenged space for veneration, *A décima segunda noite* adopts the irreverent stance of the bad savage: even when parroted, his voice is subject to fragmentation and erasure, not allowed to remain intact or uncontested.

Shakespeare's status as an emblem of Western literary authority roots him firmly within the colonial matrix of power, where his canonization has long functioned to uphold Eurocentric ideals. A crucial component of this matrix is the control of knowledge and epistemology: what is recognized as valuable, who is granted authority to speak, and whose narratives are legitimized (Mignolo). By truncating Shakespeare's words, Henri enacts a form of epistemic disobedience, refusing to perpetuate the presumed supremacy of the English playwright's voice. These deliberate interruptions exemplify the anthropophagic parody of *A décima segunda noite*, in which cultural devouring entails both absorbing and creatively distorting the dominant tradition to serve local realities. In this light, the parrot's cuts also invert Gayatri Spivak's (2010) notion of subaltern silence: here, rather than being silenced by the center, the subaltern figure silences the very icon of the Western canon. As a result, Shakespeare, historically positioned at the zenith of imperial cultural capital, becomes subject to the parrot's prerogative to reshape and fracture his discourse. In doing so, Verissimo's novel challenges the entrenched hierarchies that have sustained Shakespeare's legacy and reclaims interpretive agency for its own narrator, who speaks from a vantage point informed by decolonial disobedience, irreverence, and creative appropriation.

Building on this inversion of colonial hierarchies, anthropophagic parody in *A décima segunda noite* operates on multiple levels, engaging not only in a selective devouring of Shakespeare but also in a broader decolonial critique of epistemological and literary authority. As Luis Fellipe Garcia (2018, 15) observes,

> Anthropophagy in that sense is an attempt to capture the specificity of those ways of being through a process of totemization through which the taboos of Western culture are brought to the forefront, enabling thus the marginalized to devour those very apparatuses of power that have been excluding them along the years and to open the horizon to a new way of being. This is why anthropophagy is not to be understood merely as a metaphor for cultural appropriation, since it is also […] a diagnosis of the colonial trauma and a therapeutic against it.

While Garcia discusses anthropophagy in general, our analysis thus far suggests that Verissimo's anthropophagic parody operates in similar terms, amplifying this process through humor, irreverence, and narrative distortion. In this sense, anthropophagic parody in *A décima segunda noite* functions as a metaphor for cultural appropriation, yet one that foregrounds the instability of its sources rather than simply assimilating them. At the same time, it serves as a diagnosis of the colonial trauma embedded within cultural transmission, exposing how hegemonic traditions – such as Shakespeare's – have been historically used to structure epistemological and artistic hierarchies. Finally, it acts as a therapy, providing a means of reconfiguring and recontextualizing these hegemonic traditions in ways that undermine their presumed universality. By truncating Shakespeare's voice, rewriting his plots, and parodying his cultural authority, *A décima segunda noite* enacts an anthropophagic parody that both preserves

and destabilizes the earlier material, embodying a process of playful yet critical decolonial intervention.

In its final lines, *A décima segunda noite* pointedly recalls Shakespeare's celebrated passage from *Macbeth*, "[Life] is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (1997, 229), yet appropriates it in a markedly parodic and anthropophagic mode. Henri's closing words – "After all, this is just a story told by a parrot… mon Dieu, I think this really is my last breath! – full of inconsequential noise and frivolity, signifying" (Verissimo 147) – conjure the ghost of Shakespeare only to truncate him once more. Where *Macbeth* offers a grim assessment of life's meaninglessness, Henri's own trailing ellipsis hints at a more expansive take on "signifying," suggesting that, unlike Macbeth, he leaves the door open for continued interpretation and play. This stylistic shift, replacing "sound and fury" with "inconsequential noise and frivolity," captures Henri's carnivalesque spirit, one that refuses to commit to the despondency of Shakespeare's tragedy. In effect, his closing parodic twist constitutes an act of epistemic disobedience, interrupting the gravitas of Shakespeare's statement and, in true anthropophagic fashion, remaking it for a context rooted in irreverent humor and creative appropriation. By embedding this irreverence at the novel's very end, *A décima segunda noite* foregrounds the vitality of anthropophagic parody itself: rather than merely negating Shakespeare's words, it devours and transforms them, affirming a decolonial potential that insists on open-ended dialogue, continuous reinvention, and the subversive power of literary play.

Concluding Remarks

Can Shakespeare be devoured? Absolutely, as demonstrated by the preceding discussion. Does he taste good? Most likely – his stories continue to be translated, appropriated, and adapted worldwide. Does Shakespeare provide appropriate nutrients for a literary diet? It appears so; after all, only that which possesses merit and value is worthy of being devoured by the anthropophagist. Does Shakespeare look good in Brazilian hues? Very much so, especially considering his representative in the novel, Henri, painted in green and yellow and perched on a plastic stand; Shakespeare has never looked readier for Carnival. Can we think of Shakespeare as something of a parrot? Indeed, we can; literary studies have long acknowledged the playwright's significant engagement with preexisting sources. Is there a problem with Shakespeare having been a parrot? No; in fact, we might even consider ourselves lucky that he was one – after all, his mimicry and reworking of sources have given us great works of literature. Are there any Shakespearean parrots? In fact, there are many; just in Devorando Shakespeare [Devouring Shakespeare], the Brazilian collection, there are three authors that act as Shakespearean parrots in very different ways: Adriana Falcão, Luis Fernando Verissimo, and Jorge Furtado[2]. Was Verissimo a successful Shakespearean parrot in *A décima segunda noite*, in terms of advancing a decolonial, anthropophagic,

and parodic literary practice? Well, this question deserves a longer answer, as it has been the main focus of this article.

Building on the discussion throughout this article, we can now return to the question of whether *A décima segunda noite* advances a decolonial, anthropophagic, and parodic literary practice. Luis Fernando Verissimo's novel does more than homage Shakespeare: it reimagines him through the irreverent gaze of a parrot-narrator, Henri, whose very presence dismantles the notion of unassailable canonical prestige. By installing this Shakespearean parrot at the narrative's center, the text exposes how authority in literature can be eaten away, quite literally, when a once-dominant tradition is consumed and repurposed. Henri's playful approach is nonetheless critically charged, as it questions the colonial matrix of power that has long shaped perceptions of cultural value and hierarchies of knowledge.

In this context, the dual force of anthropophagy and parody becomes particularly salient. Parody stresses the dialogic tension between texts, their ironic appropriation of prior works, and the distance they establish from pre-existing sources. Anthropophagy, on the other hand, evokes a more radical process of devouring foreign elements and transforming them from within – a notion deeply tied to Latin American and specifically Brazilian post-colonial discourse. By fusing these two strategies, Verissimo performs what we might call anthropophagic parody, whereby Shakespeare's influence is not just acknowledged but reconfigured and woven into local concerns. The English dramatist's truncated voice, abruptly halted by cassette tape malfunctions or by Henri's own editorializing, underscores the subversive capacity of post-colonial writers to interrupt Eurocentric authority and assert their own epistemic stance.

Such interruptions also highlight the text's decolonial edge. In refusing to grant Shakespeare seamless reverence, *A décima segunda noite* enacts a form of epistemic disobedience, exposing how the Western canon's supposed universality can be playfully dismantled and interwoven with local realities. This is what Oswald de Andrade's concept of anthropophagy implies: a creative refusal to submit, a devouring of the "center" that reemerges as something radically new. Through Henri's carnivalized posturing, the narrative inverts Spivak's concern about the silencing of the subaltern, showing that it is now the very emblem of literary prestige – Shakespeare – who is repeatedly cut off, overshadowed by a talkative, green-and-yellow parrot on a plastic perch.

Verissimo's novel also unfolds a metaphor of a somewhat "curved literature," hinted at by Henri's jest about his curved beak: "Try saying that with a curved beak like mine" (Verissimo 97). This is more than a playful remark: it becomes a symbol of how language, narrative, and cultural production themselves may bend under the weight of local interpretations and subversive humor. The parrot's inconsequential noise and frivolity replace Shakespeare's proverbial sound and fury, presenting readers with a realm of ongoing, open-ended creation rather than one of despair or fatalism. Henri's trailing ellipses hint at possibilities still

unspoken, possibilities continuously generated by parody's irreverent spirit and anthropophagy's ceaseless reworking of dominant forms.

In this vein, *A décima segunda noite* reminds us that even figures as canonical as Shakespeare are subject to local reinterpretations that challenge and revitalize their legacies. Henri's parting invitation, effectively a farewell tinged with humor, replaces Shakespeare's tragic view with a carnivalesque one, emphasizing playful subversion instead of bleak resignation. Such an ending testifies to anthropophagic parody's power to merge critique with celebration, intertextual homage with radical rewriting, thereby asserting a distinctly Brazilian voice that dares to reshape the Western canon from within.

Ultimately, the novel does indeed fulfill the promise of being a decolonial, anthropophagic, and parodic endeavor. It devours Shakespeare, digests him in a Brazilian context, and produces a hybrid creation that neither denies the playwright's relevance nor passively upholds his authority. Instead, through well-timed interruptions, ironic references, and carnivalized inversions, it demonstrates how the subaltern might refuse merely to be spoken for and instead seize the power to interrupt, reassemble, and reinvent. Verissimo thus offers us a final, irreverent feast in which Shakespeare is both a treasured dish and a subject of playful critique – a meal that leaves us hungry for further devourings and, by extension, for the ongoing reinvention of Shakespeare everywhere.

Notes

1. All cited excerpts from the novel were translated from Portuguese into English by the author of this article.
2. For a discussion of parody as a strategy for engaging with Shakespeare in Brazilian literature, as well as an analysis of the three novels in the collection from a metafictional and intermedial perspective, see Nóbrega (2023). Nóbrega, Caio Antônio. *Articulações da Paródia na Coleção Devorando Shakespeare*. PhD diss., Universidade Federal da Paraíba, 2023.

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