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Only Anthropophagy unites us – Oswald de Andrade's decolonial project

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ABSTRACT

This paper advances the idea that Oswald de Andrade's Anthropophagy, formulated for the first time in 1928, can be read as a decolonial project *avant la lettre*. In order to establish this thesis, we will reconstruct the project of the Brazilian thinker through a detailed analysis of the first aphorism of his *Manifesto Antropófago* (Anthropophagist Manifesto). We will argue that, similarly to what will be later articulated by the decolonial approach, Andrade indicates: (i) that the cultural and economic dimensions of colonialism are entangled ramifications of a larger structure of domination; (ii) that capitalism is an aspect of this larger structure; and (iii) that it is necessary to articulate a third political path irreducible to both capitalism and communism. Anthropophagy would thus function not only as the evident metaphor of cultural appropriation, but also as a diagnosis of the colonial domination and as a therapeutic to face it within a decolonial project.

KEYWORDS Anthropophagy; decoloniality; exclusion; patriarchy; matriarchy; Messianism

Introduction

Postcolonial studies are articulated in a close dialogue with the critique of modernity formulated in postmodernity. Indeed, in the works of its pioneer theoreticians such as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, we can find a set of methodological strategies elaborated by postmodern thinkers – like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault – being applied to the problem of colonialism. Accordingly, from the perspective of postcolonialism, we could say that if, as postmodernism claims, it is necessary to call into question, and eventually overcome, the rationalist and universalist presuppositions of modernity towards a *post-modernity*, it is equally necessary to call into question the apparatus rendering possible the big colonial enterprise in the modern times so as to overcome colonialism towards a *post-colonialism* – there thus exists a fundamental articulation between modernity and colonialism

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allowing the use of postmodern conceptual tools for the sake of formulating not only a critique of modernity, but also a critique of colonialism.

If postcolonialism plays an important role in the exposition of the cultural, or so to say epistemological, implications of the pair modernity-colonialism – that is, its effects on the way we perceive the world resulting in the projection of an exotic image of alterity (Said 1978), which is considered more as an object of study than as a subject capable of producing knowledge (Spivak 1988), posing thus a challenge that we should face through a different approach to culture (Bhabha 1994) – the *decolonial perspective goes a step further*, since it advances the idea of *coloniality as a way of exerting power in which both the epistemological and the socio-economical dimensions are articulated* forming a complex structure of domination that remains operative even after the dissolution of the colonial administrations (Quijano 2000), since it redefines ‘subjectivities, gender and labour relations’ according to ethnic and racial hierarchies (Maldonado-Torres 2011, p. 2). Accordingly, the decolonial approach treats not only modernity and *colonialism* as two sides of the same coin as postcolonial studies do, but it considers also modernity as closely related to *coloniality*, understood as a complex structure of domination in which the cultural and the *political-economical* are entangled (Grosfoguel 2011, pp. 17–25) so that both ‘colonialism and the making of the capitalist world system’ (to which communism is but a reaction) are to be understood ‘as constitutive aspects of modernity’ (Escobar 2007, p. 184).

De-coloniality, understood as a program of resistance against coloniality, appears thus as a political project aiming at ‘overcoming modernity’ – understood as an apparatus of cultural and economic domination of the ‘others outside the European core’ – ‘by thinking about it from its underside, from the perspective of the excluded other’ (Escobar 2007, pp. 184–187) so as to enable the liberation of the ways of being that were marginalized (Dussel 2003 [1980], pp. 9–10) and to open the horizon for the constitution of a world in which ‘many worlds [could] fit’ (Maldonado-Torres 2011, p. 18). Understood in those terms, decoloniality constitutes a political project to face the forms of domination entangled in the cultural, social and economical levels, a ‘third path [irreducible both to American capitalism and to Soviet communism ...] characterized by a widespread disenchantment with Eurocentrism and a renewed affirmation of decolonization as a project’ (*Ibid.*, p. 2) – in short, a new political *option* (Mignolo 2010).

Such a comprehension of colonialism as a complex apparatus of domination operating on the social, economical and cultural levels, against which we should resist through a political project aiming at opening existential spaces for a new way of being (a vision paradigmatically articulated by Frantz Fanon in the 1950s and 1960s¹), was also articulated by the Brazilian thinker Oswald de Andrade in his *Manifesto Antropófago* (literally

Anthropophagist Manifesto) which formulates for the first time this notion that, until nowadays, is considered by many Brazilian thinkers such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro as the only philosophical concept originally articulated in Brazil:² *Anthropophagy*.

Anthropophagy is the ingestion of human flesh within ritual practices, typical of some Brazilian native tribes such as the Tupinambás, for the sake of incorporating the vision of the world of the enemy being ingested; within those rituals, the eater undergoes a process of transformation into the devoured other, so that we could say that what is ingested is actually the point of view of the other (Viveiros de Castro 2002). Andrade uses the concept expressing those practices not only as a (i) metaphor for a procedure of critical assimilation of European culture, but also, as we will see, as (ii) a tool to diagnose the socio-economical structure of colonialism and as (iii) a therapeutic operator to deal with it.

The influence of this concept upon Brazilian culture cannot be exaggerated; indeed, since its first formulation in the *Manifesto* (published in 1928), the concept has reverberated in many cultural fields such as literature, music, theatre and cinema (Schulze 2015), and it is fair to say that almost every Brazilian thinker that conceives a self-reflective sociocultural project, from Tropicalism (Veloso 1997, pp. 255–274) to Cinema Novo (Augusto 2012),³ makes use of this concept – this is why Anthropophagy, as a Brazilian writer states, is not only ‘the sole original philosophy made in Brazil, but also, in many aspects, the most radical of the artistic movements that we [Brazilians] have produced’ (Campos 1976).⁴ If Anthropophagy’s influence on the Brazilian culture is remarkable, the philosophical and decolonial dimensions of the works of ‘one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century’ (Viveiros de Castro 2016a, p. 16) remain considerably under-explored. Indeed, even if there is a tradition of literary reception of Andrade’s works (to be found in authors like Raul Bopp, Antônio Cândido, the Campos brothers, Décio Pignatari, Lúcia Helena, among others), and if some authors, following the example of Benedito Nunes in the 1970s (Nunes 1972), begin to explore his works from a more philosophical perspective (such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro,⁵ Alexandre Nodari and Beatriz Azevedo⁶), the reception of the philosophical legacy of this ‘decolonial [project] avant la lettre’ (Viveiros de Castro 2016a, p. 14) remains a work to be done.

In order to grasp the nature of such a project, we propose to examine in detail the first aphorism of the *Anthropophagist Manifesto*. Such an analysis, in which we will not hesitate to mobilize theses developed in other texts of the author, will enable us to retrace the general lines of the fertile semantic field of Andrade’s Anthropophagy as well as the reason why it could be considered as a *decolonial project avant la lettre*. To be precise, we will argue that Andrade’s project just as decoloniality: (i) *treats capitalism and colonialism as aspects of a larger structure, or matrix of power*, except that he does not

associate this structure to modernity as such but to what he names 'patriarchy'; (ii) *conceives the economic and the cultural dimensions of the colonial domination as entangled aspects of this larger structure*; and (iii) *sketches a political project of resistance against such a domination 'by thinking about it from its underside, from the perspective of the excluded other'* (Escobar 2007, p. 187). Based on those three traits, we will suggest that the contemporary decolonial debate can be enriched by an exploration of this notion of *Anthropophagy*.

A different kind of exclusion requires a different kind of union

Oswald de Andrade's *Anthropophagist Manifesto*, composed in a close dialogue with authors such as Freud, Marx, Montaigne, and, above all, in a dialogue with the socio-cultural practices of the native people that existed in Brazil long before the arrival of Europeans, was first published in 1928 in the first number of the *Revista de Antropofagia*, a Journal regularly published between 1928 and 1929, in which Oswald de Andrade, Osvaldo Costa, Raul Bopp, Alcântara Machado and other important names of the Brazilian modernist movement (Campos 1976, p. 3) sketched the idea of *Anthropophagy* as a vision of the world. Andrade was himself a modernist writer who was particularly interested in the specificity of a Brazilian aesthetics conceived as a non-European phenomenon, as he indicates in his *Pau-Brasil Manifesto* (1924). The *Anthropophagist Manifesto* represents a step further in these reflections since it exposes the pernicious effects, on the cultural and socio-political levels, of the colonial domination. The short Manifesto, that occupies two pages of the *Revista*, is composed of 51 aphorisms disposed around Tarsila do Amaral's famous modernist painting *Abaporu*, which gives a powerful visual expression of Andrade's words. The aphoristic style reveals a remarkable power of synthesis, paradigmatically manifested in the first aphorism, which condensates in a single line the intuition of *Anthropophagy* as a vision of the world articulating three existential dimensions: society, economy and philosophy. We propose to reconstruct Andrade's project from an analysis of this first aphorism, which is formulated in the following terms:

'Only Anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically.'
(Andrade 1978, p. 13)

As remarks Beatriz Azevedo (2016, p. 104), this assertion about what unites us echoes one of the most famous Manifestos composed in the Western world, namely, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, whose last sentence famously states: 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' Answering to this appeal to union made by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in Europe in 1848, Oswald de Andrade responds 80 years later in Latin America by stating that union is certainly what is required from us, since it is necessary that we unite to resist oppression,

however, that what unites us, at least in Brazil, where the *Manifesto* is published at the end of the 1920s, it is not the proletarian condition, but rather Anthropophagy.⁷

Now, according to Marx, proletariat is the class opposed to the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) by which it is exploited; it is the class of modern labourers, who, after a period of violent expropriation famously described by the German thinker in the first volume of *Das Kapital*, have lost their lands being thus forced to sell their labour force in order to survive; it is thus a class that is originated in the very process of the constitution of capitalism and whose historical vocation is, according to Marx, to take power and reverse the mode of production through which it was generated so as to attain the aim of a more just and egalitarian society.

However, in the 1920s in Brazil, a Portuguese ex-colony whose original population is organized around social practices completely alien to the notion of 'salary' – a country where in this period the number of industries was considerably limited – the common link between the excluded enabling them to form a class so as to accomplish their historical vocation of building a more just and egalitarian society was certainly not the condition of wage-earner worker. Would it thus be necessary to subject the country to a process of generalized proletarianization so as to render possible the attainment of the liberation of the excluded thanks to the constitution of a class destined to do it? Or would there be another way to face and fight the exclusionary mechanisms of domination?

If the proletarian condition, in the Marxian sense of the term, does not offer the necessary bond required to unite the excluded for the sake of their liberation, Anthropophagy would do it. In other words, according to the Brazilian thinker, Anthropophagy is, at least in the specific conditions of the socio-historical locus in which it is enounced, the common link enabling the excluded to unite in a group in order to fight for a more just and egalitarian society. Therefore, the claim to unity would rather be formulated in the following terms: *Anthropophagists of all countries, unite!*

But what does it mean to be an 'anthropophagist'? In what sense does it differ from a proletarian or even in what sense do they both resemble? The sequence of the aphorism gives us the keys to articulate an answer to this question: indeed, Anthropophagy is the only thing that unites us, and it unites us in three levels: *the social, the economical and the philosophical ones*. This sequence indicates that the exclusion suffered by those who shall unite is not only economical – and it is certainly not a fruit of their proletarianization, since the majority of them are not proletarians after all – but also social and philosophical; in other words, it is the fruit of an extensive marginalization operating on multiple levels. If the Marxian approach was focused on the economic marginalization constitutive of the development of the economic system, what Andrade highlights here is that *there is a social and cultural*

marginalization constitutive of the development of a more extensive form domination that, as the sequence of the Manifesto will make clear, can be associated to the colonial system.

This different kind of exclusion requires accordingly a different kind of union, offered by a broader category than the one of proletariat; it requires indeed a notion capable of encompassing the underside of a mechanism of repression that excludes them through a multi-layered domination exerted not only in the economic level, but also in the social and cultural ones. *It is this broader category of the excluded ones that Andrade's term tries to capture.*

It is thus fair to say that Anthropophagy functions here, as Benedito Nunes formulates it, not only as (i) the evident '*metaphor*' – inspired on the rites, practiced by indigenous tribes in Brazil, of ingestion of the flesh of enemies captured in combat⁸ – applied to the cultural mechanisms of domination that we must 'assimilate and overcome in order to conquest our intellectual autonomy', but also as (ii) a '*diagnosis*' of a society 'traumatized by the colonial repression' and as (iii) a '*therapeutic*' against the socio-political mechanisms and the intellectual habits that have transformed the colonial trauma into a 'collective Super-ego' (Nunes 1972, pp. xxv–xxvi). Andrade's Anthropophagy, this powerful metaphor, thus functions also as a *diagnosis* of a multi-layered exclusion resulting from the colonial repression and appears equally as a therapeutic antidote against the domination exerted in those three levels: social, economical and philosophical.

Only Anthropophagy unites us socially

As we have seen, Oswald de Andrade begins the *Manifesto* in which he announces his project with a statement about what unites us: 'Socially. Economically. Philosophically'. This order of words is not hazardous. Indeed, *the unity offered by Anthropophagy is first of all a social one*. The author indicates here his intention of replacing the Marxist pair bourgeoisie-proletariat, a fundamentally economic opposition, by a social one, the opposition, as it will become clear in the sequence of the *Manifesto*, between patriarchy and matriarchy – this is why *anthropophagy unites us firstly socially (in a matriarchy) and then economically (in an economy irreducible both to the bourgeois and to the proletarian one)*.⁹ Before even entering into the details of the new pair proposed by Andrade, it is important to highlight the originality of such an approach. As a matter of fact, the Brazilian thinker is saying that the economic opposition bourgeoisie-proletariat is inscribed within a set of social practices fundamentally incompatible with the ones existing in this part of the planet that the Portuguese named Brazil. He proposes therefore not to oppose an economic class or category (proletariat) to another one (capitalists or bourgeois), but rather to oppose a set of social practices to those practices rendering possible the very economical opposition bourgeoisie-proletariat.

This way of approaching the problem is very similar to the decolonial approach, which treats economy as an aspect of a broader structure that articulates an 'ensemble of processes and social formations' (Escobar 2007, p. 185), and it thus avoids the Eurocentric account of the genesis of capitalism that 'privileges economic over social relations' (Grosfoguel 2007, p. 215). It is also in a similar direction that argues the Hungarian economist Karl Polanyi, who in an analysis of the problem developed in 1944 from an European perspective, would call this set of social practices lying at the basis of the economic opposition bourgeoisie-proletariat *the market society* – that is, the one that, according to Polanyi, has transformed *land* (under the figure of private property), *men* (under the figure of labour force) and money itself into commodities, thereby inaugurating a set of social practices that did not exist either in medieval (pre-capitalist) Europe nor in indigenous (pre-colonial) societies (Polanyi 2001 [1944]).¹⁰ By affirming that our union is first of all social, and only thereafter economical, the Brazilian thinker formulates a similar point to Polanyi's, since he suggests that we should make explicit the exclusionary effects not only of the monopole of the means of production by the bourgeoisie (this sub-product of capitalism), but also those of *the market society as a whole, that is, of the set of social practices on which the very opposition bourgeois-proletarian is grounded, thereby calling into question its visions on the notions of nature, labour and commerce.*

From Andrade's perspective, this society on which the opposition bourgeois-proletarian is grounded is what he calls *patriarchy*, a social order opposed to the characteristic social trait of anthropophagy: matriarchy. According to Andrade, patriarchy is grounded on three pillars: the patriarchal family (an institution where the authority is detained by men), the private property of land (the division of land in small private unities), and the State of classes. The family, organized around the figure of men (in Andrade's words: this institution in which children belong lawfully to the father), is what grounds the notion of patrimony that signifies according to its etymological origin 'the inheritance of the father' (Andrade 1978, p. 81);¹¹ it assures therefore a transmission of property within the same private and masculine core, from generation to generation. Now, this property includes, as attests the second pillar of patriarchy, the private property of land – that is the division of land into smaller unities that we call territories. It is thanks to this spatial division of land in territories whose private character is transmissible from generation to generation across time (thanks to the family) that the very notion of State of classes is established. Indeed, *there are different social classes only because the land is sliced up in private properties, which are transmitted to the following generations through the social mechanism of patrimony within family.*

To this organization based on the inheritance of the father and on the private property of land, Andrade opposes what he calls matriarchy – the

social organization that, according to him, existed in those tropical lands before the arrival of the Portuguese. Matriarchy is grounded on the common property of land and on the belonging of children not to the father, but to the tribe; these double aspect of matriarchy means that all social difference is progressively diluted within the tribe, to the extent that each new child is the heir not of a private father but of a social whole to which he or she belongs. Moreover, within this social structure, the tribe is itself responsible for the administration of the entirety of the social relations, so that the State does not exist.¹² In a few words, instead of (i) family, (ii) private property of land and (iii) the State of classes (the three pillars of patriarchy), we have (i') the tribe (collectivity), (ii') the common property of land and (iii') the absence of State – *a social order that is typical of the native tribes that lived in this part of the planet that patriarchy converted into a fatherland*.

Matriarchy therefore, as Andrade highlights, is not a social order in which women, instead of men, are the arbitrary rulers. It is rather an organization within which 'the child is not only an individualized person, but rather the child of the tribe' (Andrade 1978, p. 204) – an organization within which the Law is not derived from the arbitrary decisions of men, but from the ancestral customs of the community. Therefore, the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy is characterized by Andrade as 'the transference of all emanation of Law' from the domain of the customs 'to the domain of the *arbitrium*' (*ibid.*, p. 80). In other words, *patriarchy and matriarchy are not opposed on the basis of the figure of the authority – a male or a female one –, but on the basis of the source of the authority: the customs of the community or the arbitrium of positive law instituted by men*.

Thus, similarly to the decolonial authors (such as Escobar 2007, p. 185; and Grosfoguel 2007, p. 215), the Brazilian thinker proposes that there is a set of social practices inaugurating a way of exerting power that presides the very constitution of the economic opposition bourgeois-proletarian. According to the conceptual frame advanced by Anthropophagy, specifically in the case of Brazilian colonization, this new way of exerting power results from *the transformation of a tribe-based society into a paternal family-based*, a transformation bringing about *a notion of Law* that is attached to the arbitrary authority of men, thereby instituting the very notion of patrimony, the inheritance of the father, and opening the horizon to the constitution of a fatherland – the one the Portuguese called Brazil, thus introducing a name and a social practice foreign to the natives, who referred to their matriarchal land as Pindorama, the land of palm-trees.¹³

In that sense, we could say that the natives are what the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro calls 'the "involunteers" of the fatherland', inasmuch as the very constitution of the country is based on the destruction of the social substance of their tribes. Throughout this process, the original

relation of those communities to the land and to one another is eroded by *the imposition of a new social order within which the natives are to become citizens* through the imposed action of a way of exerting power that did not exist before: the rule of law exerted by modern States. In Viveiros de Castros' words:

[To be a native] is to be part of a community tied to a specific place, that is, it is to integrate a 'people'. To be a citizen, by contrast, is to be part of a controlled 'population' (at the same time 'defended' and attacked) by a State. The native looks down, to the land to which s/he is immanent; s/he takes his strength from the ground. The citizen looks up, to the Spirit incarnated in the form of a transcendent State; s/he receives her/his rights from on high. (Viveiros de Castro 2016b)¹⁴

We could thus say that what unites us is not the fact of being wage-earner workers (a sub-product of the consolidation of a new social order), but rather the fact of 'being part of a community tied to a specific place', of integrating a people, who suffered the consequences of the instauration of an order that has eroded the former social tissue – the underside of this new order include the indigenous tribes, slaves forced to abandon their social life in Africa, peasants forced to work for new masters, women forced to work in the shadows of men, and so on. Particularly in those lands transformed into Brazil, there were tribes organized in an egalitarian fashion and with no classes, a group of self-sufficient communities in which the very notions of positive law, king or Christian faith played no role in its maintenance,¹⁵ or, as Andrade states, social groups within which 'communism already [... existed] long before the arrival of the Europeans' (Andrade 1978, p. 16). Therefore, from that perspective, those communities do not need the instauration of a patriarchal society, the mass destruction of the social substance of the natives, the proletarianization and impoverishment of the majority of the population in order to glimpse the possibility of attaining the promised land of communism, since communism, they have already had long before all that, and even before the European industrial revolution. To be sure, not a communism of labourers, since the very notion of labour must be reassessed, as we will now see.

Only Anthropophagy unites us economically

This social organization structured around the tribe within which what is transmissible from generation to generation is not the private property of land but a set of collective practices belonging to all is at the basis of an economy completely different from the one practiced within patriarchal societies – be it socialist or capitalist. As it is well known, the word 'economy' derives from the Greek word οἰκονομία which is composed by the terms οἶκος that means house or home and νέμω that means to allocate, to manage, to administer hence οἶκο-νομία, meaning *the administration of the*

house.¹⁶ It is only after the advent of the modern market society and its process of massive conversion of almost everything that exists into commodities that economy has become this discipline that we nowadays know, consisting in the study of the production, the circulation and the consumption of goods and services; therefore a discipline which studies the laws of the market – we can thus say that in its modern sense *oiko-vομία* is the science not of the administration of the house, but of the management of the market, or to state it differently, *the market has replaced the house, and it has become the home of modern men*. As a consequence, one of the central categories of modern economy is the notion of labour understood as an activity of production of commodities in order to supply the market (the new home).

If the house, the *οἶκος*, of modern society is the market, the *οἶκος* of native tribes is the forest, the natural environment (their true home), so that their *οἰκο-vομία* consists in the administration of their primordial habitat: *nature*. But if nature is what it is to be administered, it follows that *within such an economy the very notions of commodity, production and labour become secondary*; indeed, the activities enabling us to administer the forest and the stability of the relation to the environment do not consist in the production of commodities or in the industrial labour, but rather, on the contrary, in a better understanding and interplay with the forces of nature; this is the reason why it is necessary to affirm them and to make them flourish instead of negating them though their transformation into products of work.

This contrast can help us understand how Andrade presents the transition from the economy of a matriarchal society to the one of a patriarchal one. Indeed, as affirms the Brazilian philosopher, ‘the historic rupture with the matriarchal world happened when man stopped devouring his Other in order to enslave him’ – from the advent of this practice of enslavement, derived ‘the division of labour and the organization of society in classes’ (Andrade 1978, p. 81). In other words, the transition from a tribe-based society with no private property to a patriarchal family-based one with private property is operated *through the enslavement of the members of the tribe, so as to force them to work not for themselves, but for a master who will profit from the fruits of their labour*. This social transformation is responsible for the introduction of the notion of labour as the production of something other than a use value; indeed, the slave works not for the sake of consuming what he produces, but rather to enrich his master in exchange from protection, food and general maintenance. By forcing men to work for someone else’s profit, the patriarchal society destroys the social substance of the tribes, since now the beneficiary of the vital energy of work is no longer the community as a whole, but the master of the enslaved natives.

To put it in a few words, the transition from the natural *οἶκος* to the market *οἶκος* is mediated by the enslavement of the members of the tribe, which first

introduces *the notion of labour as the production of exchange value*, thereby opening the way to the development of the notions of 'salary' and 'market'. In matriarchal societies, on the other hand, labour, in the sense of the production of exchange value, cannot be central to the economy to the extent that the only ground for producing is the general equilibrium of the relation between the community and the environment; as a consequence, there is no reason to accumulate since the final aim is not the well-being of the market (which in the capitalist world means growth), but the one of nature – and this latter, as we have seen over the last decades, shows already signs of incompatibility with the idea of perpetual growth.

Such a conception of economy is, according to the Brazilian thinker, irreducible both to capitalism and socialism, since it brings to the heart of the economical practices not the idea of production as both sides of the economical antithesis do (as they operate around the idea of means of production), but rather the question of consumption. In Andrade's view of economy, we should be concerned with the ways in which we consume goods so as the better develop and liberate our most fundamental powers. This is why he does not hesitate to point out that one of the shortcomings of the application of Marx's theory to native communities is its over-emphasis on the importance of production instead of problematizing the ways in which we consume our vital energies; indeed, *the notion of a production detached from its ends, that is, the notion of producing only in order to be productive, is a key one only within the market society*, whereas the one of consumption is related to everyday life also in native communities, since humans need to consume some sources of vital energy in order to keep alive.¹⁷

Based on this idea of economy, Oswald de Andrade, writing at the end of the 1920s in a country that at the time had very few industries, thinks on the possibilities opened ahead of a newborn nation, whose independence, more than 100 years after its official declaration in 1822, 'has not yet been proclaimed' (Andrade 1978, p. 19). These reflections lead him to suggest what we could call *an anthropophagic consumption of modern inventions*, namely, to use the technics brought about through the development of new technologies for the sake of liberating men and women from the obligation of labour, so as to liberate those vital energies to other activities more closely related to the flourishing of the fundamental powers of humanity; indeed, free from those obligations, it is possible to develop 'the innate laziness of human beings, [...] the mother of fantasy, invention and love', so as to allow the blossoming of a central feature of humanity, its 'ludic instinct'. Only then could the *Homo Ludens* finally prevail 'over the Faber, the Viator and the Sapiens' (Andrade 1978, p. 73) to the extent that the work, the displacements and knowledge of human beings would all be directed to the nourishment of his fundamental instinct of playing. We can thus see that the main concept of this economy is not labour, but rather leisure (*otium*), since, indeed, its

final aim is not the well being of the market, but the one of the pair community-nature.

Economy thus, in the anthropophagic sense of the word, can help in the relocation from the market-home to another home more closely related to our natural environment. The final purpose of such an economy is not an eternal growth, as in capitalism, nor the proletarianization of a class through an industrial revolution so as to render possible the advent of those who are destined to socialize the means of production, but rather the use of technological techniques so as to create an ambiance in which we do not have to be concerned with production, since it would be 'an age in which, as Aristotle puts it, the time zones work from themselves' (*ibid.*), thereby liberating humans to fulfil their nature of *Homo Ludens*.

Only Anthropophagy unites us philosophically

This social order grounded on the matriarchal community and giving rise to an economy based on an organic relation to nature capable of liberating the powers of game in human beings so that they can fulfil their nature of *Homo Ludens* produces a different culture from the one that has triumphed within patriarchal societies. Indeed, according to the Brazilian thinker, those different social orders – patriarchy and matriarchy – giving rise to different conceptions of economy – the administration of the market through productive labour and the administration of nature through playful consumption – engender similarly two different cultures: Messianism and Anthropophagy.

As Andrade puts it, if the historical rupture producing the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was the enslavement of men that brought about the notion of labour as the production of exchange value, this rupture would never be possible without a cultural apparatus to prevent the continuous rebellion of slaves: 'the idea of a future life'. Without such an idea that life on earth is not everything and that we will eventually be repaid for our earthly sacrifices in the hereafter, slavery would become an unsustainable institution: 'hence the importance of Messianism in the history of patriarchy' (Andrade 1978, p. 81).

Furthermore, there is a second central trait of Messianism allowing it to bring stability to the social order of patriarchy, namely: its high-valorization of labour. Indeed, according to the Brazilian philosopher, the messianic culture converts the notion of labour, particularly the one of sacrificial work, into a core value of society. Accordingly:

Christ is the first labourer God. Far from the ascetic fakirism of Buddha, beyond the Olympic entertainments, Jesus Christ, the son of the carpenter of Nazareth, he himself an apprentice of carpenter, grounds the mechanical prodigy and creates the sanitary miracle. It is a labour union God.¹⁸

This divine grounding of labour associated to the idea of a future life rewarding our efforts in the hereafter articulates a cultural apparatus that instils the idea according to which the fruits of our everyday work are not necessarily to be gathered in this world, thereby offering an efficient epistemic mechanism to consolidate the practice of working for someone else's profit. In other words, Messianism has functioned as an epistemic engine giving stability to the practice of working for a master thereby offering a fertile ground for the transition from a community-based social order (Matriarchy) to a family-based one in which patrimonies are accumulated over the generations (Patriarchy).

To be sure, the Brazilian philosopher recognizes in Christianity as well as in the history of Western culture some powerful (and, as he puts it, matriarchal) tendencies whose unfolding could be truly revolutionary, but what he states here is that within the history of the consolidation of patriarchy, the aspects of Christianity that found resonance in the spirit of the new social order were those attached do Messianism, particularly the valorization of labour and the idea of an after-life reward for our earthly efforts. Accordingly, these aspects of Christianity will triumph within patriarchy whereas other aspects, especially those related to social emancipation that will be later explored by movements such as the Theology of Liberation, would be marginalized. In other words, there is a social process within which some ideas – the ones that bring stability to this very process – find resonance and flourish, thereby contributing both to the consolidation of the social order that brought them to the foreground and to the marginalization of other conceptual possibilities. This is why it is always possible to re-read history so as to reactivate the power of ideas that were drowned out by the history of patriarchy¹⁹ – to reactivate those histories that constitute the underside of patriarchy, or, as the decolonial authors would put it, the underside of the pair modernity-coloniality.

The culture opposed to *Messianism* is, as we have seen, the one that is consolidated within matriarchal societies, namely, *Anthropophagy*. It is important to highlight, as the Brazilian philosopher carefully does, that *Anthropophagy* is not to be understood as the practice of pure cannibalism, that is, the practice of eating human flesh out of gluttony or hunger, but rather as something associated to the ritual practices of native tribes for which the consumed flesh represents a vision of the world, a vision that, through the ritualized process of deglutition, is incorporated and transfigured into a new vision within a sort of epistemic metamorphosis.²⁰ As a consequence, *Anthropophagy* is to be understood as a *Weltanschauung* aiming at perceiving existence from the perspective of alterity, a vision according to which the world is a space containing numerous perceptual bodies that should be incorporated so that we can progressively engender more comprehensive visions of existence.

This *Weltanschauung* is linked to a fundamental 'metaphysical operation', namely 'the transformation of the taboo into totem' (Andrade 1978, p. 77) – that is, the transformation of what is forbidden as a result of social, cultural or religious conventions into a sacred object for the community. In other words, an operation of a true inversion of values through which the taboos of moralism, what appeared as morally unacceptable, are brought to the foreground and converted into figures to be celebrated. It is remarkable that the Brazilian author does not qualify this operation as an *epistemic* one, but rather as a *metaphysical* one. Indeed, what is at stake in the conversion of that about which we shall not speak (a taboo) into an object of adoration for a group of people (a totem) is the manifestation and valorization of *ways of being* that were systematically ignored to the point of being excluded from the range of possibilities of being. The procedure through which those taboos are manifested is therefore an action revealing the ontological character of ways of being that were repressed along the history of patriarchy – this is why it is not an epistemic operation, but rather a metaphysical one, since its *result is the manifestation of marginalized ways of being*.

As a matter of fact, this is precisely the operation executed by Oswald de Andrade himself in his *Anthropophagist Manifesto* since he brings to the foreground one of the greatest taboos of Western society, the practice of eating human flesh, and reveals the set of social habits and ways of existing embodied in those ritualistic practices, thereby rendering the world of Anthropophagy, the world of the natives, *manifest*. *The totemization of taboo is thus an operation through which communities previously obliterated are brought to the foreground, are rendered manifest*.

It is important to highlight, as Beatriz Azevedo points out, that there is a double sense in Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago* – which is not Anthropophagic (that in Portuguese would be *Antropofágico*) but rather *Anthropophagist* (*Antropófago*) –, indeed, the notion of *Manifesto* is used by the Brazilian philosopher not only in the sense of a public declaration of a set of intentions or of a chart of principles (as the word 'Manifesto', as a noun, suggests), but also in the sense of a process through which latent and repressed contents are brought to the foreground and rendered *manifest* (as an adjective).²¹ Oswald de Andrade is therefore *rendering manifest* latent ways of being that were repressed and converted into taboos within the history of patriarchy, and he does it through the metaphysical operation of converting them into totems so as to disclose their being. *The Manifesto consists therefore in a political and psychoanalytical procedure operating in a metaphysical level*.

This operation of aiming at the interdicts of a culture, at its unspoken limits, and converting them into the first to be seen is therefore what renders possible the manifestation of those ways of being historically excluded. It follows that in the face of alterity, it is not question of trying to convert them into a version of our own identity, but rather to open ourselves to the embodiment,

through ritual practices (be they the ingestion of human flesh or the manifestation of ways of being that were rendered invisible), of new visions of the world, so as to illuminate the blind-spots of our own views, thereby attaining more comprehensive visions of totality – this is why Andrade will affirm, through the voice of a character in one of his literary works, that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, this route along which the spirit attains progressively higher levels of consciousness and flourishing, is only feasible through the metaphysical operation of transforming taboos into totem (the one of transforming the invisible into the first to be seen), and thus through Anthropophagy (Andrade 1974, p. 203);²² the only operation capable of dialectically putting dialectics back on its feet by re-reading it, or devouring it, through the look of the very one that it seemed to exclude – or, so to say, from its underside.

Again, what unites us, in a philosophical sense, is not the proletarian condition, the condition of those workers excluded from the benefits of the industrial revolution and who will finally unite in a class that will reverse those who excluded them, thereby giving rise to the constitution of a more egalitarian society, free from industrial exploitation. As a matter of fact, within this history, the non-western societies were *not the visibly excluded ones* (the European proletarians), *but rather the excluded and invisible ones* – those communities organized around social practices that were altogether incompatible with this idea of progress and development (either towards perpetual growth or towards the socialization of the means of production), and that were therefore excluded from the range of possible ways of being. What unites us in that sense, according to the Brazilian thinker, is not the fact that we are the visible labour force of industries, but rather the fact that we embody a set of practices invisibly excluded within the history of the social order that brought to the foreground the ideas of patrimony, labour and production. What unites us is the quest of those invisible excluded who are to be converted in the first to be seen within the metaphysical operation of transforming taboos into totems.

Conclusion

This general outline of Oswald de Andrade's project of *Anthropophagy* has thus shown that the Brazilian philosopher *is looking for an option of political union irreducible to the pair capitalism-socialism*. According to him, in a colonized society such as Brazil, industrial labour is not the link uniting the excluded, but rather their anthropophagic vision of the world ready to devour and transfigure the taboos of other ways of seeing so as to render possible the manifestation of a new *Weltanschauung*. Such a vision of the world is entangled, on one hand, with an economy based not on work and labour, but on the affirmative relation to nature aiming at developing the

possibilities of *otium*, and, on the other hand, with a social order grounded not on identity (the patronymics, patrimonies and fatherlands of patriarchy), but on the permanent addition of new visions of the world thereby attaining a more comprehensive understanding of the whole. In such a society, what unites people is not the identity but an insatiable openness to new possibilities incarnated by the other. What unites people – socially by the community without fatherland, economically by the playful affirmation of the powers of nature, and philosophically by the permanent totemization of taboos – is *Anthropophagy*.

The Brazilian thinker formulates thus a project to assemble those who were rendered invisible because of a set of presuppositions implied in the dichotomy bourgeois x proletarian, namely: (i) its patriarchal social order; (ii) its economy centred on the notion production; (iii) its culture of a high-valorization of labour. If, in order to fight oppression, we are to compromise with those implications, then we could contribute, in spite of our good intentions, to the process of invisibilization of other possibilities of being. According to Andrade, if we are to unite in a group including not only the visibly excluded ones but also the invisible ones, it is necessary to articulate a new political project capable of taking into account those differences so as to achieve a more comprehensive and diverse level of union.

To be more concrete, in a society such as Brazil, the notion of proletarian does not capture the specificity of the exclusion suffered by Indians, Afro-Brazilians, descendent of former-slaves, peasants, women, and so on. The kind of exclusion implemented through coloniality is not of the same kind as the one implemented in Western Europe through its Industrial Revolution; accordingly, the kind of union required in ex-colonies is also a different one, as it requires that we take into account all those processes of marginalization of ways of relating to one another, of ways of administering home, of ways of knowing and, in general, of ways of being that have been historically excluded. *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, as Benedito Nunes puts it, a *diagnosis* of the colonial trauma and a *therapeutic* against it.

This reconstruction of Andrade's project allows us finally to say that, *similarly to the decolonial approach*, *Anthropophagy* diagnoses (i) *a broad structure of domination operating in multiple levels* and preceding the very economic oppositions of Western societies, it states likewise (ii) that within this structure *the cultural and the economical dimensions are entangled ramifications of a*

matrix of power. Thirdly, Anthropophagy is formulated as an antidote against the complex structure of domination of coloniality since it is (iii) *articulated as a political project of resistance irreducible to the dualism capitalism-communism*. If the aphoristic formulations of the project do not always explore the whole ramifications of the insights it contains – for instance it could have better scrutinized the diagnoses of the ethnic and racial hierarchies grounding the exert of the colonial power (an idea that is crucial to the whole decolonial project) – it certainly opens conceptual spaces to explore some important challenges of decoloniality, since it also mobilizes tools to formulate a third way political project (Mignolo) whose capacity to think from the underside, from the perspective of the excluded other (Escobar), can help us dealing with multiple levels of domination (Grosfoguel) related to the colonial way of exerting power (Quijano).

As a decolonial thinker *avant la lettre*, the Brazilian philosopher articulates thus a political project aiming at a long-run unity among the colonized subjects so that a new possibility of being can emerge. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to expose the colonial mechanisms of exclusion operating on a social, economical and philosophical level, so as to galvanise the political engagement of broader groups in a union for decolonization. The colonial power has not only dominated communities and forced them to work, it has also reverberated on their modes of relating to one another, of perceiving society, economy and the general culture – the Brazilian thinker saw it clearly at the end of the 1920s. We would like therefore to suggest that the conceptual tools he mobilizes to articulate his project of political resistance could take part in this international dialogue being built in order to develop the urgent project of decoloniality.

Notes

1. 'La décolonisation est très simplement le remplacement d'une espèce d'hommes par une autre espèce d'hommes [...] elle introduit dans l'être un rythme propre, apporté par les nouveaux hommes, un nouveau langage, une nouvelle humanité' (Fanon 2002 [1961], p. 40).
2. As Viveiros de Castro puts it, Oswald de Andrade, 'um dos maiores pensadores do século XX', is 'o inventor e burilador infatigável de um autêntico conceito, um dos poucos, senão o único, conceito genuinamente brasileiro' (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2016a, pp. 12–13).
3. Glauber Rocha, the great film-maker from Brazilian Cinema Novo, defended the idea of an anthropophagist aesthetics to be employed so as to face colonialism and to expose the degrading social condition of large parts of Brazilian population (Rocha 1981), and Nelson Pereira dos Santos enters in direct dialogue with Anthropophagy in his famous film *How Tasty was my Frenchman* (*Como era Gostoso meu Francês*, 1971). For a rich reconstruction of the relations between Cinema Novo and Anthropophagy, see Augusto's 'Cinema Novo: a Antropofagia como modo de produção artístico-cultural' (2012).

4. In the original words of the literary critic Augusto de Campos: '[Antropofagia é] a única filosofia original brasileira e, sob alguns aspectos o mais radical dos movimentos artísticos que produzimos' (Campos 1976).
5. The Brazilian Anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has recently published the essay *Cannibal Metaphysics*, a philosophical essay drawing on his extensive knowledge of native tribes in Brazil for the sake of articulating a metaphysics from the perspective of the natives' basic ontological concepts, particularly the very notion of anthropophagy, since he proposes that the starting point of such metaphysics would be the *Cannibal Cogito* (Viveiros de Castro 2014).
6. Beatriz Azevedo offers the most complete historical reconstruction and systematic comment of Andrade's *Manifesto* in a brilliant book in which she discusses each aphorism of the *Manifesto* and retraces all of its many explicit and implicit references (Azevedo 2016).
7. In the original words of Beatriz Azevedo: 'Para começar, parece-me que esse manifesto de Oswald de Andrade pretende devorar outros manifestos. O primeiro deles seria o Manifesto Comunista de 1848. Em uma possível 'resposta' ao manifesto de Marx e Engels (que acaba com a já conhecida frase 'Proletários de todo o mundo, uni-vos'), apropriando-se do mesmo verbo – unir – Oswald esculpe a primeira frase de seu manifesto. Num oroboros, o final de um manifesto pode ser lido como o início de outro, sugerindo uma questão cíclica e inconclusa' (Azevedo 2016, p. 104).
8. For a brilliant historical and cultural genealogy of the transformation of the anthropophagical practices of natives into a symbol of the colonial and post-colonial condition in Latin America, see the excellent study of Jauregui (2008).
9. A similar point is defended by Beatriz Azevedo: 'Se Marx, tematizando a luta de classes, opõe burguesia e proletariado, Oswald vai opor o patriarcado ao matriarcado, na mesma simetria de polarizações' (Azevedo 2016, p. 105).
10. Polanyi remarkably associates the effects of the advent of market society on pre-capitalist Europe and on the colonized lands, and asserts that 'the elemental force of culture contact, which is now revolutionizing the colonial world, is the same which, a century ago, created the dismal scenes of early capitalism' (Polanyi 2001 [1944], p. 166). For a comprehensive account of the advent of market society, see particularly the chapters 4 'Societies and Economic Systems', 5 'Evolution of the Market Pattern', and 6 'The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities: Land, Men and Money' (pp. 45–80).
11. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, patrimony is 'an estate inherited from one's father or ancestor', or yet, 'anything derived from one's father or ancestors' <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patrimony> (consulted on March 23rd, 2018).
12. In the original: 'No mundo do homem primitivo que foi o Matriarcado, a sociedade não se dividia ainda em classes. O Matriarcado assentava sobre uma tríplice base: o filho de direito materno, a propriedade comum ao solo, o Estado sem classes, ou seja, a ausência de Estado.' (Andrade 1978, p. 80).
13. Throughout the *Manifesto*, Andrade shows in an eloquent way how colonization has transformed not only the social practices but also the most basic conceptual frames of self-consciousness, such as language and temporal references – indeed, even the name of the country (Brazil), of the cities (Sao Paulo, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro), and the apprehension of its temporal existence (through the Christian calendar) were determined through the cultural references of the

colonizer. This is why Andrade in a significant way, signs his Manifesto in the following way: Piratininga (the former and native name of Sao Paulo), Ano 374 of the deglutition of the Bishop of Sardinha (stipulating a different starting for the temporal series, namely, an event symbocally representing a first act of critical appropriation of European culture).

14. It is a public lecture given by Viveiros de Castro during the Abril Indígena (Native April) Act, Cinelândia, Rio de Janeiro – 20-04-2016 and reproduced by Escola dos Saberes, 2016. For an English translation of the text, see: <http://autonomies.org/2017/05/eduardo-viveiros-de-castro-landed-natives-against-state-and-capital/>, consulted on March, 19th, 2018.
15. This idea of a society with no faith, law or king is extracted from a famous work of one of the first Portuguese that arrived in Brazil. The author, writing in 1576, declares 'A língua de que usam toda pela costa é uma [...]. Carece de três letras, convém a saber, não se acha nela F, nem L, nem R, cousa digna de espanto, porque assi não têm Fé, nem Lei, nem Rei: e desta maneira vivem desordenadamente sem terem além disto conta, nem peso, nem medido' (cf. Magalhães de Gândavo 1576), this very absence of faith, law and king is read, through the eyes of the Oswald de Andrade, in a positive register, since it allows him precisely to affirm that 'we have already had communism long before the arrival of the Europeans'.
16. Hoaf (2000, p. 141).
17. In an aphorismatic note entitled 'The Mistakes of Marx', Andrade announces the German author's first mistake in the following terms: 'O que interessa ao homem não é a produção e sim o consumo' (Andrade 1990, p. 52). The same point is articulated in an article at the *Revista de Antropofagia*, where Andrade, under the pseudonym Freuderico, states that Marx 'errou quando colocou o problema econômico no chavão dos meios de produção. Para nós, o que é interessante é o consumo – a finalidade da produção. Simplesmente.' (*Revista de Antropofagia*, 1 (5), 1929 p. 3).
18. In the original: 'Cristo é o primeiro deus trabalhador. Longe do faquirismo asceta de Buda, além dos divertissements olímpicos, Jesus Cristo, filho do carpinteiro de Nazaré, ele mesmo aprendiz carpinteiro, fundamenta o prodígio mecânico e cria o milagre sanitário. É um deus de sindicato.' (Andrade 1978, pp. 83–84).
19. This is precisely what Andrade does in his text *Crise da Filosofia Messiânica*, an essay in which he reconstructs the history of Western philosophy from the perspective of the opposition patriarchy and matriarchy, and brings to the foreground those authors in which he finds 'matriarchal tendencies', that is, tendencies that could effectively call into question the Western social order (patriarchy).
20. For a description of the ritual practices of Anthropophagy as rite of assuming the perspective of one being ingested, see Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's 'Xamanismo e sacrifício' (2002).
21. For a comprehensive discussion of this ambiguity of the notion of 'manifesto' in Andrade's text, see Azevedo (2016, pp. 55–63).
22. In the original lines of the romance *Chão*: 'A fenomenologia do espírito só pode se realizar na História pela Antropofagia. É o destino devorativo da espécie'. The passage is, as oft in Andrade's works, very synthetic and almost aphorismatic. But the general idea, once contextualized in the general picture of the project seems to become meaningful, since what he seems to affirm is that the Spirit

can only acquire a more comprehensive grasp of its own history through the manifestation of its limits, in Andrade's terms, through the manifestation of its taboos (its invisible exclusions).

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