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## **Perspectives for a Metaphorology of Anthropophagy: Blumenberg, Montaigne and Oswald de Andrade**

**Abstract:** When one examines modernist anthropophagy from the perspective of a new theoretical-methodological instrument – Hans Blumenberg’s metaphorology – one notices that the very object of literary and critical study is reconfigured. Understood as a theoretical metaphor, anthropophagy appears as a complex intertextual network interacting with the social and aesthetic debates of its time; it is also widened and historically transformed, crossing over different discussions. After all, this new metaphorical object exceeds the modernist moment, suggesting the need for a future, more exhaustive study, one that would include anthropophagy’s revisiting after modernism, arriving even at its contemporary usage, as in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. On the other hand, a critical reading of the anthropophagy metaphor enlightens significant aspects of this theoretical methodological tool, establishing bridges between metaphorology and anthropology.

**Keywords:** metaphorologie; antropophagie; Brasilien modernism; Blumenberg; Montaigne.

### **Introduction**

Considering Montaigne’s expression *visage du monde* as a metaphorical characterization of an aspect the metaphor itself, Blumenberg comprehends it as a human necessity: that of conferring significance to the spatial element, thus associating it to human values, as for example, in the attribution of laughter to a meadow.

Metaphor captures what is not present in the qualities of a meadow when viewed objectively but is also not the subjective and phantastic addition made by an observer [...]. It accomplishes this by assigning the meadow to the inventory of a human life-world in which not only words and signs but also things themselves have “meanings”, the anthropogenetic prototype of which may be the human face with its incomparable situational meaning. The metaphor for this meaning content of metaphor was provided by Montaigne: “the world’s face” (*le visage du monde*).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 89.

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This interesting allusion to Montaigne seems to rest, however, on an inaccuracy concerning the conceptual axis. After all, with this expression, Montaigne did not aim at the characterization of the metaphor. In the context of his *Essays*,<sup>2</sup> it designated the set of habits and customs making up the world of each culture. The sea voyages of the Renaissance and the contacts they provided with non-European cultural universes are, in this context, very important in his work. However, in what concerns the infinite human plasticity,<sup>3</sup> the plurality of the cultural configurations of the imaginations, the faces of Montaigne's world are intimately related to Blumenberg's. In this manner, the reference to Montaigne's metaphor does not correspond to an error in a conceptual reconstruction, but to a dislocation of the metaphorical sense in a new transposition, which is not deprived of relation to the first "transport". Indeed, Blumenberg's dislocated usage of this metaphorical construction is significant, for it concerns the profound articulation between his metaphorology project and his anthropological reflections.

How is the metaphor articulated to human plasticity, which is not only at the origin of the plurality of cultural worlds, but also capable of representing the "world's faces" from the past, as well as the new "faces" yet to come? This interrogation will lead us to examine the historicity of the metaphorical construction taken from the anthropological considerations contained in Montaigne's essay "Of Cannibals", upon which Oswald de Andrade's "Anthropophagy Manifesto" rests. As metaphor for a conception of cultural identity based on one's relation to otherness, de Andrade's anthropophagy takes us not only to Blumenberg's "world's face", but also to Montaigne's.

### **From the "World's Face" Metaphor to Montaigne's "Faces of the World"**

Against the Cartesian ideal of a perfectly conceptual theoretical language, thus an a-historical one, Blumenberg evokes the logic of the imagination and revisits Kant's problem of the symbolic presentation of ideas in order to propose the investigation of the role of metaphors in theoretical discourse. He attempts, therefore, to show that these poetical constructions not only constitute the anticipation of subsequent systematic formulations, but also that some of them, the so-called "absolute" metaphors, are definitive, for they are insurmountable in conceptual terms. But Blumenberg does not summon the metaphor against the concept; he tries to investigate the complex relations between conceptual and metaphorical elaborations. Taken as a complex and intertextual discursive construction and not just as a transference that would take effect at the level of the word, the metaphor constitutes, according to the author, an indispensable instrument for all philosophical elaboration, thus adding to the concept.

The postface to *Shipwreck with Spectator*,<sup>4</sup> which contains the reference to Montaigne, indicates a change in perspective in the initial project of metaphorology.

<sup>2</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Essais. Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard /Bibliothèque de la Pléiade/), 1967.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the notion of plasticity and its connection to the concept of imagination see: Christophe Bouriau, *Qu'est-ce que l'imagination?* Paris, Vrin (Chemins philosophiques, 2003), 110–11.

<sup>4</sup> Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer*.

The latter is no longer presented as a mere historical examination of theoretical metaphors, but also comes to include the investigation of non-conceptual correlations articulated to the demands of reason, going beyond the limits of the conceptual instrument. Indeed, according to the *Theory of Nonconceptuality*, a volume also from the 1970s, where Blumenberg offers a detailed reading of the §59 of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, the more radical the indeterminacy of conceptual context, the more radical metaphors may be. In this manner, the presentation of the most fundamental ideas of reason necessarily engenders absolute metaphors, which are articulated in the conceptual instrument, but remain irreducible to conceptuality.

From the perspective of this theory of nonconceptuality, metaphors are considered in their relation to life's world, i.e., the fabric of ways of feeling and thinking that make up the non-thematized horizon from which each affirmation is underscored. Thus, Blumenberg understands them as "fossils that indicate an archaic stratum of the trial of theoretical curiosity"<sup>5</sup>. Reclaiming an original state of non-differentiation between theory and poetry, metaphors would therefore be as related to our poetical predispositions as to the theoretical impulse not yet investigated by the specialized language of the philosophers. In this manner, according to Blumenberg, they refer to the crossing over of the philosophical and literary ways of thinking in the living world, i.e., to the common origin of poetic creation and theoretical questioning.

According to Blumenberg, Montaigne offers the corresponding metaphor to this understanding of metaphorical construction itself: "the world's face". For, according to him, the movement of the metaphorical operation, illustrated by the classical example of the "laughing meadow", is to be understood as the demand to attribute a face to the world. Such a gesture, which aims to combine radical alterity and diversity to the world we live in, thus conferring a symbolic value to the more external elements of experience appears as a fundamental strategy of reason in its aspiration to unity and totality.

In this context, the reference to Montaigne is significant, although it appears to be erroneous. For, in the *Essays*, the expression "world's face" does not designate a metaphor. It concerns the set of customs, habits, beliefs, norms, etc., that make up the "face", always singular, under which the world appears to individuals in a given culture. To put it differently, by means of "world's face", Montaigne designates the manner through which each cultural group "makes up the world". In this manner, he renders the infinite human plasticity, i.e., the potency of the imagination. From this perspective, the essayist suggests that the laws of consciousness appearing to be natural are sprung from the reality of the imaginative plasticity inscribed in the customs.

Montaigne affirms that the laws of consciousness are not universal, for they do not come from nature; they are, rather, the product of customs, from where the "world's face" presents itself to us from birth. A careful reader of Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, he also considers that the forces of imagination allow us to extract our own "world's face", rendering possible the projection of ourselves upon

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 87.

others, thus enabling identification with the customs of other people, from different periods.

In the Renaissance, Mirandola returns to Aristotle's theses about the imagination drafted in the *De Anima* treaty, and finds imaginative faculty to be located in the set of the human spirit's operations. He grants, however, a new inflection to the Aristotelian considerations, relating the problem of the imagination to the infinite human plasticity. This is the relation between the capacity of producing images and the absence of human fixation that will be developed by Montaigne.<sup>6</sup>

According to Montaigne, in what concerns the study of uses and actions, fabulous and fictional testimonies were as pertinent as the allegedly real ones, for both constitute the development of this capacity to produce images. For him, man's value is not located in his submission to a universal normative rationality – as in Descartes – but in the exploration of fantasy as an instrument of transformation, as a plasticity. In this manner, the exploration of fictional resources and poetic imagination, abundant in the style of the *Essays*, are inscribed in an intrinsic historicity to a polymorphous truth, constructed by infinite human plasticity.

Designating the plurality of the imagination's cultural configurations, Montaigne's faces of the world relate to those of Blumenberg. The latter's false error refers, effectively, to the profound articulation between the metaphorological project and an anthropological type of problematization. Indeed, the posthumously published fragment as a sort of postface to his *Theory of Nonconceptuality* allows us to understand this relation.<sup>7</sup> For, while he himself explores a sort of scientific fable, Blumenberg indicates therein the anthropological implications of the constitution of metaphorical and conceptual functions.

According to the narrative constructed by Blumenberg, the first pre-historical humans abandoned the immediate domain of perception as soon as they could stand up, which led to an extension of the visual field. Simultaneously to this sudden widening of the horizon and its meanings, they were distanced from immediate experience, and were enabled to defer reactions and take prevention. Abandoning immediate perception, the first humans were able, according to him, to represent absent objects – and not only those needed in the struggle for survival, and which they try to capture, but also the items they desired. In this perspective, the concept is understood as a sort of trap designed to capture absent objects, while the metaphor refers to the further horizon of other objects, located beyond the necessities of survival.

Thus, when the pre-historical individuals imagined by Blumenberg drew on cave walls, they distanced themselves from the search to satisfy their immediate needs, in order to confer a meaning to space. This is a move which may be metaphorically understood as granting a face to the world. For drawing absent objects does not merely imply on the capacity of representing such objects conceptually, but also

<sup>6</sup> In: Bourriau's (2003) proposed reading of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in *Qu'est-ce que l'imagination?*

<sup>7</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Teoria da não conceitualidade*, trans. by Luiz Costa Lima (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG /Torres de Babel/), 2015.

that of crystallizing the desires that refer to the realm whereupon Plato would place ideas, and Kant would reflexively attribute to reason. By means of this gesture, the first humans invent themselves as beings of culture. Their leaving nature behind would be, therefore, connected to this plastic capacity that is the correlate of the theoretical impulse – that which is proper to the human being is precisely not having a nature or a specific character, but moving away from the realm of necessity to freely invent oneself.

Indeed, although Blumenberg does not examine it, what he calls the “muscular exercise of freedom” in the movement of symbolization is carried through in multiple forms, a potentially infinite plurality of the world’s cultural “faces”. According to his theory of nonconceptuality, the analysis of metaphorical construction enables orientation in the disseminated symbolization of a human world, where not only words, but also things have a meaning which does not drain out in their objectivation, and can be metaphorically understood as the demand to grant them a face. As such, the characterization of the metaphor as the face of the world effectively approaches the anthropological notion of world’s face in Montaigne. This infinitely polymorphous plasticity not only renders the plurality of the cultural sets, but also constitutes that which allows us to represent past faces of the world, and also new ones, present elsewhere or yet to come. The approximation of Blumenberg and Montaigne surrounding the notion of “world’s face” leads us to take a further step, in order to interrogate the relation between metaphorical invention and the anthropological problem of cultural identity and of the plurality of cultures.

In order to do so, we shall examine the historicity of a metaphorical construction developed from the anthropological material present in Montaigne’s essay about the “cannibals”, among other texts. We shall deal with a literary invention of a theoretical metaphor, that of cultural anthropophagy, in the context of avant-garde Brazilian modernism. This historical investigation will enable us to invert the initially adopted theoretical perspective in order to observe how Montaigne’s take of the “world’s face”, may be converted to a metaphor that refers us to the cultural plurality and alterity residing in the interior of the idea of culture and cultural identity, thus becoming a “world’s face” in Blumenberg’s sense, i.e., a metaphorical construction.

This double “world’s face” comes from the metaphorical transposition, accomplished by the writer Oswald de Andrade in his “Anthropophagy Manifesto” of 1928, of the image of the cannibal warrior ritual practiced by the natives that inhabited the Brazilian coastline up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This transposition brings forth a reflection about cultural identity, emerging in the horizon of a peripheral project of literary modernity. Oswald de Andrade conceives, effectively, a metaphor to substitute that of the “root”, with the aim of rendering what modernist writers called *brasilidade* [“Brazilianess”], i.e., the budding and quite indeterminate cultural “essence” of Brazil and of the Brazilian people.

This *brasilidade* was, indeed and above all, an interrogation and a project which the literary and artistic avant-garde proposed to accomplish in different ways. The

problem confronted by the agenda of various groups was that of an “imported” modernity, fulfilled in updating artistic production by imitating the European models. Criticizing traditional artistic forms, based on classical mimesis, Brazilian modernist discourse was inspired by the contemporaneous European avant-garde; it sought, however, also to be emancipated from cultural imitation. In this manner, the road to artistic modernity was enmeshed with the search for a Brazilian “essence”, that which would establish Brazil’s specific contribution to international modernity. It is in the context of these debates regarding *brasildade* that a certain anthropological world’s face appears as an absolute theoretical metaphor, frequently taken up and updated throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and onto our days, as in the work of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.<sup>8</sup>

### **Anthropophagy: From Warrior Ritual to Theoretical Metaphor**

Between 1917 and 1924, the concerns of Brazilian artists who called themselves modernists was an aesthetic renovation of national artistic production, through the reception of the European avant-garde’s new formal propositions. What this meant, affirmed Oswald de Andrade in his “Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry” (1924), was waking up “the empire clock of national literature.”<sup>9</sup> However, this programmatic text published in 1924 situates itself in a second moment whereupon another problem is laid out: that of Brazil’s *brasildade*. Moving from one to the other, the questioning of imitation is dislocated from the avant-garde’s challenge of moving beyond classic representation standards – art as a “copy” of reality or nature – to the criticism of imitation of imported European fashions and models. As such, it becomes necessary to refuse an imported modernization, where artistic and literary production would be satisfied with belatedly following new European tendencies, in the project of offering a specific Brazilian contribution to “universal art”, i.e., an artistic and literary production “for export”.

This problem is summarized by Mario de Andrade in a singular syntax:

A present-day problem. The problem of being something. And this can only be, in being national. We have the present-day problem, the national, moralizing, human problem of brazilianizing Brazil. [...] And we shall only be universal the day when our Brazilian coefficient competes for universal richness.<sup>10</sup>

But what does it mean to be Brazilian? How to define, identify or quantify “our Brazilian coefficient”? From 1923–24 onwards, the *brasildade* issue appears at the

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<sup>8</sup> In: Viveiros de Castro, *Metafísicas canibais: elementos para uma antropologia pré-estrutural* (São Paulo: Ubu Editora, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *A Utopia antropofágica* (São Paulo: Globo /Obras completas de Oswald de Andrade/, 2011), 65.

<sup>10</sup> Mario de Andrade’s letter to the modernist French-Brazilian poet Sergio Millet. In: Eduardo Jardim de Moraes, *A Brasildade modernista. Sua dimensão filosófica* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1978), 52.

center of all literary or artistic debates. In this search for identity, one finds a certain inclination to a primitivism that, in spite of finding inspiration in the European avant-garde's interest in the art of the so-called "savage" peoples, seeks an authentic *brasilidade* in popular culture, where the indigenous or African contributions would undo the inauthenticity of colonial and post-colonial emulation. It is, however, in relation to the question of *brasilidade* that aesthetic and ideological questions begin to differ from each other, at the core of the modernist movement.

Acknowledged with German Romanticism, Mario de Andrade finds an answer to the question of identity in the study, collection and appreciation of various issues from popular culture. For this, he carries out several ethnographic field trips and proposes, from the 1930s onwards, concrete institutional actions.<sup>11</sup> A repertory of authentically Brazilian forms would thus be available to modern artists and could constitute the bases for a cultural identity substantially conceived, as a common heritage non distorted by the mimetic mechanisms of colonial and post-colonial alienation. From another perspective, the "green and yellow" group led by Plínio Salgado, of a politically conservative character bent, confers an ethnic sense in its references to indigenous people, considering the essence of nationality an underlying biological, psychological and spiritual heritage, i.e., a substantial reified concept.<sup>12</sup>

Already drafted in the "Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry", the notion of identity targeted by the anthropophagy metaphor is distinct from these two other conceptions of *brasilidade*. For, from the perspective of this theoretical metaphor, identity is not based upon a collection or set of positive and definable objects, but upon a complex recovery, assimilation and transformation function, i.e., as "digestion", a metaphor that appears in the 1924 Manifesto:

Reaction against all indigestions of knowledge. The best of our lyric tradition. The best of our modern demonstration.  
Merely Brazilians of our time. The necessary of chemistry, mechanics, economy and ballistics. All of it digested. With no cultural meeting. Practical. Experimental. Poets. Without bookish reminiscences. Without supporting comparisons. Without methodological research. Without ontology.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For references regarding German Romantics and Mario de Andrade's institutional actions, see: Eduardo Jardim de Moraes, *Eu sou trezentos. Mário de Andrade. Vida e obra* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições de Janeiro, 2015). About the notion of *brasilidade*, see: Mario de Andrade, *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*.

<sup>12</sup> Eduardo Jardim de Moraes shows that the "anthropophagy" and the "green and yellow" groups represent two divergent tendencies for the understanding of Brazilian identity which, in spite of having as common points of departure the reference to the indigenous element and a critical stance towards the ideas of the writer Graça Aranha, are completely opposite in their political, social and aesthetic postures. In: Jardim de Moraes, *A brasilidade modernista: sua dimensão filosófica*.

<sup>13</sup> In: "Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil" (Andrade, *A Utopia Antropofágica*). Adapted from Stella M. de Sá Rego's translation, 187. In: "Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry. Oswald de Andrade and Stella M. de Sá Rego," *Latin American Literary Review* 14, 27 (Jan. – Jun., 1986), 184–87.

Consistent with the agenda of “Pau-Brasil” poetry, the rejection of the imported model of modernity, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century mimes in the tropics the historical indigestion denounced by Nietzsche, does not exclude historicity.<sup>14</sup> According to Oswald de Andrade, this is not about drawing an erudite inventory of popular cultural material, as desired by Mario de Andrade, but of historically “digesting” the most diverse materials. From this perspective, the demand for a certain native primitivism is associated with a historical critical gaze towards the past – a gaze capable of receiving otherness at the core of an identity, always in construction, by means of a creative, plastic process. In this manner, one looks neither for heritage nor root in the past, which would grant a substantial foundation to identity; one attempts, rather, to critique history through poetic creation, using historical materials such as the narratives of colonial era travelers, but being ironic towards them, thus presenting identity as a function or process.<sup>15</sup>

This understanding of cultural identity as assimilation and transformation of the relation with otherness – a process always unfinished, implying on a long critique of history – is radicalized at the end of the 1920s with the “Anthropophagy Manifesto”. Whereas the “Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry” begins with a catalogue of images of the Brazilian landscape, this 1928 Manifesto opens with a universal scope, problematizing and also relativizing the reference made to the Tupi people:

Only Anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically.  
The only law of the world. The masked expression of all individualisms,  
all collectivisms. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties.  
Tupi or not Tupi that is the question.<sup>16</sup>

The first-person plural situated at the center of the text establishes an ironic distance in relation to the identification with the Tupi people, as Oswald de Andrade calls attention to the constructed character of his anthropophagy – thus, to its metaphorical character. Reconstructed from the narratives of European travelers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who met the anthropophagous natives in a Brazilian coastline, and above all from Montaigne’s essay “Of Cannibals”, the image of the anthropophagy ritual foregrounds the problem of culture in general, and of Brazilian cultural identity in

<sup>14</sup> Oswald de Andrade’s indigestion of knowledge probably recovers a metaphor used by Nietzsche in *Second Untimely Meditation, On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*. According to Nietzsche, modern man, nourished with historical culture, would have a stomach overloaded with undigested knowledges which shock against each other and whose “noises” denounce the characteristic opposition of modernity – and unknown to the ancients – between interiority and exteriority. In this metaphorical construction, the philosopher conceives the servile imitation or modern caricature of the past as a sort of historical indigestion. A culture’s creative potency or plasticity – its capacity to obtain nourishment from other times, customs, philosophies and foreign knowledges, transforming them – would thus be understood by means of the digestion metaphor, the only function capable of reconciling exterior form and interior content.

<sup>15</sup> In: Oswald de Andrade, “Poesia Pau-Brasil,” in: *Poesias reunidas, obras completas VII*, 73–97. In this 1925 book, there is a long series of poems entirely constructed from the narratives of travelers present in Brazil during the first centuries of colonization.

<sup>16</sup> de Andrade, *A Utopia Antropofágica*, 67.



particular. It is the complex articulation of this image and questioning that constitutes what we denominate here a theoretical metaphor. With this metaphor, Oswald de Andrade, who also refers to Freud,<sup>17</sup> attempts to transform the “taboo”, the forbidden act of cannibalism amongst the natives, into a “totem”, i.e., into a symbol of sociocultural identity.

This metaphorical construction, which tries to convert “taboo” into “totem”, is based upon Montaigne’s “world’s face”, coined in order to describe the customs and habits of the people in the land “où Villegagnon prit terre”.<sup>18</sup> In effect, he describes the customs of the natives who lived around Guanabara Bay, relying above all on the accounts of the French travelers of his time. However, while the “Of Cannibals” essay begins by considering that native people were closer to the laws of nature, thus being impregnated with an “original ingenuousness”, it judges them by the lens of Greco-Roman warrior virtue.

This prelude to the picture of cannibal habits that Montaigne then proceeds to paint, also refers to the poetic fictions of the Golden Age or the Utopian philosophies (he makes direct references to Plato’s *Republic*). In fact, the “world’s face made up by these strange habits operates as a fictional (or Utopian) image destined for the reflection, in contrast, about the desires and habits of European Renaissance society. In this sense, Montaigne describes a primitive human community defined in particular by the characteristics it does not have:

no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers [...]; no use of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties, no employments, but those of leisure, no respect of kindred, but common, no clothing [...].<sup>19</sup>

This succession of negatives is followed by the affirmation of natural abundance surrounding a community where the very idea of surplus has no meaning, and, therefore, where the wars, in spite of being numerous, have no other goal, and search no trophy, other than the honor of victory. It is in the context of this warrior virtue, painted according to an ancient fashion, that Montaigne inserts the description of the anthropophagy ritual:

After having a long time treated their prisoners very well, and given them all the regales they can think of, he to whom the prisoner belongs, invites a great assembly of his friends. They being come, he ties a rope to one of the arms of the prisoner, [...], he holds the one end himself,

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem und tabu. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker* (Londres: Imago, 1940).

<sup>18</sup> Montaigne, *Essais*, 200. This expression of Montaigne’s is quoted in French by Oswald de Andrade in the “Anthropophagy Manifesto”.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 204.

and gives to the friend he loves best the other arm to hold after the same manner; which being done, they two, in the presence of all the assembly, dispatch him with their swords. After that, they roast him, eat him amongst them, and send some chops to their absent friends. They do not do this, as some think, for nourishment, as the Scythians anciently did, but as a representation of an extreme revenge.<sup>20</sup>

According to Montaigne, the aim of this ritualistic anthropophagy is not of nourishment, but of “a representation”, that of “an extreme revenge”. However, if the warrior asks for mercy, if he admits the victory of the other, then he is granted freedom; only those who prefer death rather than cowardice are eaten: “There is not a man amongst them who had not rather be killed and eaten, than so much as to open his mouth to entreat he may not.”<sup>21</sup> From the perspective of the representation of this warrior virtue, it is significant that Montaigne refers to a song where the defeated warrior remembers, at the moment of his execution, that he himself had eaten the flesh of the ancestors of those who are about to devour him:

“These muscles,” says he, “this flesh and these veins, are your own: poor silly souls as you are, you little think that the substance of your ancestors’ limbs is here yet; notice what you eat, and you will find in it the taste of your own flesh:” in which song there is to be observed an invention that nothing relishes of the barbarian.<sup>22</sup>

As he recalls eating his own enemies in the past, the defeated warrior tries to relativize the victory of those who are preparing to devour him: they will find in his flesh the taste of their own, for he had consumed it in the past. The anthropophagy ritual implies, in this manner, the symbolic reconstruction of the community’s identity in a time process marked by exchanges with the other. The cohesion of the group is reinforced by this “extreme revenge”, which consists in eating an enemy who had, in former times, eaten their ancestors.

Oswald de Andrade recovers this symbolic scheme as he transforms the ritualistic anthropophagy practiced by the natives into a theoretical metaphor. Associating Montaigne to Freud, his metaphorical construction offers a twist to the devouring the symbolic father scheme, which, according to the scientific myth portrayed in *Totem and Taboo*, is at the origin of the symbolic banquet. *Totem and Taboo* constitutes an important reference for de Andrade’s anthropophagy, as well as for other groups of the Brazilian and European avant-garde who place value in the unconscious and the primitive. In Freud’s theory, the ritual meal where the totem animal, which normally should be neither killed nor consumed by members of the clan, is sacrificed and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 207.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 209.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 211.

served in a feast, symbolizes the murder and the devouring of the despotic father of the primitive horde, by the oppressed and excluded phratry. Such an event would have occurred in an archaic ritual of passage from animal grouping to human society, and involving a dominant male. Freud departs from the narrative of this original cannibalistic ritual, clearly a scientific myth, to interpret the totemic meal as a reinforcing of the group's identity, through the symbolic distribution of the body and positive aspects of the father, between individuals. The magical similarity between the members of the totemic tribe is thus renewed, for each person's connection to the archaic father figure is intensified, metonymically, by the ritual absorption of the animal that symbolizes it.

The theoretical metaphor elaborated by Oswald de Andrade operates a synthesis between Freud's totemic cannibalism and the native "world's face" described by Montaigne. In the complex configuration of the anthropophagous ritual, at the basis of the theoretical metaphor of cultural anthropophagy, the devoured symbolic ancestor is from another tribe. The foundation of the group's identity does not take place by exchanging a common origin or a founding "root" that would guarantee the similarity of the different "branches".

"Against the vegetable elites. In communication with the soil,"<sup>23</sup> writes Oswald de Andrade in the "Anthropophagy Manifesto", in an open opposition to the "root" metaphor or to its plural form "roots", explored by his contemporary, the writer Graça Aranha.<sup>24</sup> Transforming the "taboo" image of the anthropophagy ritual into a metaphoric modernist "totem", de Andrade rules out the comprehension of identity as foundation or common origin, and rests it upon a gesture that implies historicity in relation to the other.

Ingestion and digestion (metaphorically) of the other are the foundations, according to the "Anthropophagy Manifesto", not only of *brasilidade* but of any other cultural identity. In this manner, it is a metaphor of a gesture or practice: anthropophagy is an act that foregrounds historicity, placing it against alterity. In opposition to all substantial conceptions of cultural identity, it corresponds to a functional representation of the concept of culture. It incorporates the relation to the other in the elaboration of identity; as such, Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagy presents culture in terms of a functional dynamics: "I am only interested in what's not mine. Law of man. Law of the anthropophagi."<sup>25</sup> Emerging in the historical context of a peripheral modernity's avant-garde project, in which the relation to the other is dramatically staged, the metaphor of "cultural anthropophagy" presents a plurality implied in the very concept of culture.

Translated by Maria Clara Versiani Galery

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<sup>23</sup> de Andrade, *A Utopia Antropofágica*, 70.

<sup>24</sup> In: Graça Aranha, *A Esthetica da vida* (Rio de Janeiro : Livraria Garcia, 1921).

<sup>25</sup> de Andrade, *A Utopia Antropofágica*, 67.

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