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Anthropophagic Subjectivity

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Today's world: an infinite ocean churned up by swirling waves – different flows with no possibility of the totalization they would have in delineated territories, with no stable frontiers, in constant rearrangements. In the opinion of some, a second flood – except that this time the waters will never recede, never more will there be land in sight, there are many arks, and they will drift forever, captained by myriads of Noahs of all shapes and sizes. Never again will we walk the stable landscape of solid land: we must get used to the idea that “sailing is necessary,”¹ with no fixed direction, no general point of view on this tumultuous and moving surface. No longer is there just one form of reality with its own map of possibilities. Possibilities are now reinvented and redistributed all the time, at the mercy of waves of flows that undo the forms of reality and generate others, that also end up dispersing themselves in the ocean, carried along by the movement of new waves.

Today's subjectivities: grabbed from the soil, they have the gift of ubiquity – they fluctuate at the mercy of the mutable connections of desire with flows from all places and times that all pass simultaneously through electronic waves. A singular and fluid filter of this immense and also fluid ocean. With no name or

[SUPERSCPT]1.Fernando Pessoa, *Livro do Desassossego*, n. 495, vol.II (Atica: Lisboa, 1982), p. 24. (*The Book of Disquiet*).

permanent address, without identity: metamorphosing modulations in an endless process, tirelessly managed day after day.

Estrangement takes charge of the scene; it's impossible to tame it: destabilized, displaced, discomforted, disoriented, lost in time and space – it's as if we were all “homeless”. Not without a concrete home (level zero of survival basic conditions where a larger and larger contingent of human beings find themselves), but without the “at home” of a feeling of oneself, a subjective, palpable consistency – familiarity of certain relationships with the world, certain ways of life, certain shared meanings, a certain belief. The whole globalized humanity lacks this kind of house, invisible but no less real.

Voices in all languages, from all corners of the earth, the voices of all the experts and also those who are not experts, are shuffled together in an infinite conversation, somewhere between afflicted and excited, about the same question: have we in fact all become homeless? Did the subjective house dissolve, collapse, disappear? Where is identity? How can we construct an identity in this world where national, cultural, ethnic, religious, social, and sexual territories have lost their aura of truth, irreversibly denaturalized themselves, got mixed up in all possible ways, fluctuate or cease to exist? How can we rebuild a territory in this shifting world? How to get along with this disorientation? How to reorganize some meaning? How to conquer free zones of serenity? And this transnational chorus oscillates in variations on the theme, variations composed by affective positions that range from wonder to the apocalyptic. Hope or hopelessness, it's all the same: poles of a moralistic position that naturalizes a value system and uses it to interpret, judge, and predict what is going on – a happy ending or the end of everything.

However, another kind of voice is clearly dissonant from this teleological tone. Its timbre expresses neither judgment nor drama, but the vibration of the movements of the world where it is intoned, transmitting the sensation that this

world of today is neither better nor worse than others. Like any other, it is unique, with its own problems, its own ways of affirming life and also of ruining it, with territories in the process of disappearing and others in the process of beginning which require cartographies of meaning to make them intelligible, and to strengthen their gain of consistency. In tune with this, a voice from Brazil can be heard, a voice very old in the tradition of this country, a voice that at a given moment received the name “anthropophagous.”

The inspiration for the idea of anthropophagy came from a custom of the Tupi Indians: it consisted in eating their enemies – but not just any enemy, only brave warriors. A certain relationship with alterity thus ritualized itself: a choosing of their others in terms of the vital power that their proximity would intensify; allowing themselves to be affected by those desired others to the point of absorbing them into their own bodies, so that particles of their virtue would integrate into the chemistry of the anthropophagous' souls and promote their refinement.

During the '30s, anthropophagy acquired a meaning that extrapolates from the literalness of the act of devouring practiced by the Indians. The so-called *Anthropophagous Movement* extracted and reaffirmed the ethical formula of the relationship with the other that governs this ritual in order to make it migrate to the sphere of culture. This movement disclosed the active presence of this formula in a mode of cultural production that has been practiced in Brazil since its foundation.

Brazilian culture was born under the sign of a variable multiplicity of references and their mixture. However, also since Brazil's birth, there have been many strategies of desire vis-à-vis this mixture, different grades of exposure to alterity which this situation intensifies.

The founding elite, unlike those of other New World nations, the United States for example, has its interests oriented toward Europe and does not invest in the construction of an “at home” in Brazilian territory. The body is as if it were

separated from experience, anesthetized to the effects of the living together of heterogeneous groups and, therefore, is deaf to the demands of the creation of meaning for the singular problems delineated in this exposition. The tendency that has maintained its hegemony since that time is that to consume European culture, and, more recently, the American one, which beyond the fact of having constituted itself in its origin as the cartography of an experience of non-mixing, is removed from the context that led to its production, and is not, moreover, problematized in its consumption in the new context. Mere games of erudition and intelligence resulting in sterile repetitions and an “at home” lacking in elegance and devoid of meaning. It is just this “professor side, quotations side, well-known authors side”² with their “speculative boredom,”³ that Oswald de Andrade tells us about – a kind of academic superego acting against thought.

Popular culture is traditionally produced from the exposure to this varied other, out of the necessity to construct a territory of existence here, an “at home” made of the consistency of that every day life – a matter of psychic survival. The result is an exuberant, irreverent, and inventive esthetics. A familiar image is the cult of *Iemanjá* on Brazilian beaches during New Year's eve. Devoured by the local culture, the African goddess, as Darcy Ribeiro puts it:

“[...] Suffered a total transformation to arrive on January 1st, substituting the old and ridiculous bearded Santa Claus, who eats dried European fruits, dragged by a car pulled by deer, by the first saint who fucks and to whom one asks not for a cure but for a tender lover or a less violent husband.”¹

[SUPERSCPT]2. “Manifesto da Poesia Pau-brasil,” 1924, *A Utopia Antropofágica, Obras Completas de Oswald de Andrade*, Globo, São Paulo, 1990. [Oswald de Andrade, “Brasil-Wood Poetry Manifesto” (1924), in *The Anthropophagy Utopia*, in the *Complete Works of Oswald de Andrade*.

[SUPERSCPT]3. “Manifesto Antopófago,” [1928], in *A Utopia Antropofágica. Obras Completas de Oswald de Andrade*. Globo. São Paulo, 1990.

All this production is carried out on the margin of local, official culture, that disqualifies it or, in the best of hypotheses, folklorizes it, avoiding thus any danger of disruptive contamination. The only possible relationship occurs as the paternalistic patron, a role that masks the defensive closure while eliminating guilt.

A third tradition, however, insinuates itself between these two sides, one in which the discriminatory border that separates them is erased, promoting a general contamination not only between the erudite and the popular, the national and the international, but also between the archaic and the modern, the rural and the urban, the hand-crafted and the technological. An “at home” takes shape that incarnates all the dynamic heterogeneity of the consistency of sensibility from which is made the subjectivity of any Brazilian, a subjectivity that is created and re-created as the effect of an infinite miscegenation – nothing to do with an identity. The *Anthropophagous Movement* makes this position explicit, giving it retrospective visibility, but above all the dignity to affirm it in the present. One of the most important ideas of this movement, reinstated in its two Manifestos, asserts: "against living at the ivory tower-ism, the erudite practice of life;"² "against all the importers of canned consciousness, the palpable existence of life."³

The creators who take up this position take on the right to construct their own problems. Therefore they incorporate the banal in their own way and affirm the exuberance of this irreverent esthetics that impregnates the everyday life of Brazil within the official system of culture. They not only inject doses of this aesthetic in the artistic scene, but intensify its irreverence by mixing it with the most current and sophisticated erudite repertoires from the so-called “hegemonic centers” which up to then reigned supreme in Brazilian official culture, disconnected from any labor of thought. Hélio Oiticica refers to this attitude:

“WHAT REALLY MATTERS: the creation of a language. The destiny of Modernity in Brazil depends upon the creation of this language, the relationships, the swallowing, the entire phenomenology of this process (including also the other international languages), requires and demands (so as not to be consumed by a conservative academicism; don't do it) this language: the conceptual should submit itself to live phenomenon, the mocking of what is 'serious:' who will dare to confront Brazilian surrealism?

Who am I to determine which and how this language will be? Either it will be or nothing (conservation-dilution)? I don't know. The dilution is there--the coexist-condone (typical Brazilian illness) seems to consume most of the ideas--ideas? Fragile and perishable, aspirations or ideas? To take a critical position: aspirin or cure?

Or the rape of paternalism, inhibition, guilt.”⁴

The anthropophagous banquet is made of various universes, fully incorporated only in their tastiest morsels, mixed at will in a single caldron without any reverence to a prior hierarchy or mystifying allegiances. But it is not just anything that enters into the menu of this extravagant dinner: the ethical formula of anthropophagy is used to select its ingredients, allowing alien ideas, which, absorbed by the chemistry of the soul, can reinvigorate it, bringing language to it in order to compose the singular cartography of its restlessness. The anthropophagous strategy allows at least four operations worth of attention.

The first is the bastardization of the elites culture and, indirectly, of European culture as a standard. The *Manifesto antropófago* [*Anthropophagous manifesto*] declares itself "against all catechisms." The supposed power of generalization of this or any other model is ignored, since all models are incorporated as temporary coagulations of language selected in an experimental

and singular process of the creation of meaning, in the same way, in fact, as the indigenous or African world.

This freedom to employ only what is pertinent to a system of thought is probably the result of the mestizo context ingrained in the country since its foundation, thereby demanding this type of freedom so that territories of existence can take shape. But two other factors have probably contributed as much. The fact that European culture consumed in the tropics does not work as a cartography for a territory of its own, as might be the case for a European, allows to de-invest or partially invest it without any danger of such brutal deterritorialization, and therefore less threatening. Also, the Anthropophagous movement occurs at the precise moment in which the notion of a culture centered in European supremacy and bourgeois life-style has already suffered the shock of the First World War and the effects of the criticism of European intellectuals, who searched in the primitive for a solution to meaning. This prepares the ground for anthropophagous ideas and legitimizes the criticism to a scholastic imitation of French culture.

To some, the Anthropophagous movement maintained a subordinate position, as it did nothing more than adopt the idealized primitive, this utopian Other produced by European criticism of the time. The "non-European" would therefore continue to be discriminated as exotic, the only change being that it would now be praised rather than disqualified. This interpretation seems to ignore that anthropophagy's power lies exactly in the irreverent affirmation of a mixture that does not respect any form of a priori cultural hierarchy, since for this mode of cultural production all repertoires are potentially equivalent as resources to produce meaning, and only this is of any importance. As Darcy Ribeiro writes:

“Colonization in Brazil functioned as a persistent effort to implement a Europeanness adapted to these tropics and incarnated in these miscegenations. But it always collided with the stubbornness of nature and with history's fancies, so

that despite those intentions we became who we are, the opposite of whiteness and civility, so innerly de-European as de-Indian and de-Afro.”⁵

Thus the Indian or the Black are not perceived as good humanity, bearers of a truth, to be ingested, contrasted to the European, bad humanity, distant from truth, to be vomited. As Darcy Ribeiro writes, we are “as much de-Europeans, as we are de-Indians and de-Afro.”⁴ This is because the criteria for selection for the anthropophagous ritual in culture is not the content of a value system per se, but if it functions, with what it functions, how it allows intensities to pass and meaning to be produced. And this never works for a system as a whole but for some of its elements, which are articulated with elements of other systems, losing in that way any connotations of identity.

There appears here a second operation which the anthropophagous strategy makes viable: the exercise of creating culture has nothing to do with meaning, explaining, or interpreting to reveal truths. The truth, according to the *Anthropophagous Manifesto*, “is a lie many times repeated.” To make culture in the anthropophagous style is related to cartographing: to trace a map that participates in the construction of the territory it represents, in the taking shape of a new figure of one’s self, a new “at home,” a new world. “Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes.” the *Manifesto* insists seven times in a row. It is from the paradoxical closeness among heterogeneous elements, made of unsolved agreements and not referred to a totality, that meaning emanates: route, cartography of real social movements, critical effect. Any pragmatic experimentation, if it is more or less well carried out, is worth more than the sterile imitation of models. Again, Hélio Oiticica:

[SUPERSCPT]4. *O Povo Brasileiro. A formação e o sentido do Brasil*. Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 1995.

“‘Experimental art’ does not exist, only the experimental, which not only implies the idea of modernity and vanguard, but also the radical transformation in the field of existing concept-values: it is something that invites transformation in behavior-context, that swallows and dissolves the coexist-condone. In Brazil, therefore, a permanent universally critical position and the experimental are constructive elements. Everything else is dilution in diarrhea.”⁶

A third operation derives from the first two: the breaking down, already during the 20s, of the division of the world into “colonized” and “colonizers”. If at that time the breaking down of the division had barely begun to take shape, today, in the era of globalized neoliberalism, such figures have definitively no place any longer. The axis of power relationships has changed position and altered its figures. The pairs that defined political conflict in the modern period have entangled. It is not a matter of a sovereignty of a colonial type any longer: the hegemonic power no longer confronts its Other, there is no more exteriority, because its borders have been progressively extended to engulf the entire planet.

A fourth operation still is that the culture produced in Brazil becomes a line of flight of European culture and not simply a submissive and sterile replacement, nor a simple opposition that maintains that culture as a reference. The tree of western knowledge transplanted to tropical America ceases to be a tree, in the sense of having a structure and an evolution previously defined through a transcendental program. It is no longer invested in its totality, but as an element of an infinite process of creation. Connected to universes of alien references, it begins to incorporate an unexpected evolution, immanent to the process itself, in which the structure is perpetually redefined. This strategy of desire defined by the irreverent juxtaposition that creates a tension between worlds that do not touch each other on the official map of existence, that demystifies every and all value a priori, that decentralizes and renders everything equally

bastardized, sets into motion a mode of subjectivation that I will call “anthropophagous.”

In a first approximation, restricted to the visible, the anthropophagous subjectivity defines itself as never adhering completely to any system of reference, a plasticity to mix at will all kinds of repertoires and a freedom to improvise language based on such mixtures. However, for a sharper eye, one that catches the invisible, anthropophagy is actualized according to different strategies of desire, moved by different vectors of power, that range from a greater or lesser affirmation of life to, almost, its complete negation. They are basically distinguished by the way in which the subjectivity knows and explores the world, in what motivates its search for meaning and the criterion used to choose what will be absorbed in order to produce that meaning. Actualised in its most active vector, the anthropophagous mode of subjectivation in its invisible facet functions according to some essential characteristics.

Above all, this mode depends, to a significant degree, on the exposure to alterity: to discover and desire the singularity of the other, without feeling shame in discovering and desiring, without feeling shame about expressing that desire, without fear of contaminating oneself, because it is through that contamination that the vital powers expand, where the batteries of desire are charged, where a series of becomings of subjectivity incarnates – the Tupi formula. Was this not what Oswald called “cordiality,”⁷ which he defines as the tendency to “see the other in oneself?”⁸ This kind of relationship with alterity produces a joy in the body – “the litmus test,”⁵ as the *Anthropophagous Manifesto* asserts twice, the test of a pulsating vitality.

This capacity depends on a second characteristic of the anthropophagous mode of subjectivization actualized in its most active vector: a certain state of the body, in which its nerve fibers vibrate to the music of the universes connected by

[SUPERSCPT]5. See Note 3.

desire; a certain tuning with affective modulations provoked by this vibration; a tolerance to the pressure that such unfamiliar affects exercise on the subjectivity so it will incarnate them, re-inventing itself, becoming other. It is probably what Lygia Clark called the “state of art without art,”⁶ and which Oiticica refers to as the “state of invention.”⁷

This kind of relationship with alterity is different from two other rather common types in contemporary subjectivities, which correspond to different forms of narcissism. The first, more clearly narcissistic, consists in relating to the other for the simple pleasure of releasing desire without being exposed to otherness, which amounts to no more than having an eternal joy of oneself: a "hedonist narcissism." The second consists in plain civil respect for the other. Although this respect is the least that is expected in a democratic society, to merely accept it with a modesty to desire alterity, to express this longing and allow oneself to be affected by it, amounts to a reiterated re-affirmation of one's own self: a "citizen narcissism." To provide just one example: we should remember the politically correct sexuality invented by contemporary North American calvinism: liberation from a diversity of kinds of erotic relationships, with each one taken as an identity, catalogued as a new civil right, with the official stamp of the State that stuffs it, stops the becomings it would generate, impedes the invention of new worlds – in other words, de-eroticizes. Although civil respect for the other may be the least to be expected in a democratic society, to merely accept it with a modesty of desiring alterity, of expressing that desire and of allowing oneself to be affected, results in a reiterated reaffirmation of oneself: a “citizen's narcissism.” In this strategy of

[SUPERSCPT]6. “A propósito da magia do objeto,” [1965], in *Lygia Clark*, col. *Arte Brasileira Contemporânea*. Funarte, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

[SUPERSCPT]7. “Eden” [1969] in *Hélio Oiticica*. *Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume*. Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Editions du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1992.

relationships with the other, the body runs a great risk of being reproved in the litmus test of joy.

A third characteristic of the anthropophagous mode exercised in its most active vector is what joins different elements together to form an "at home," that is, what functions as an operator of the subjective consistency, which is the nomadism of desire that goes its way making its connections, guided predominantly by the point of view of the vibratility of the body and its will to power. An ethical criterion for making choices – again, the Tupi formula. Is that not what Oswald de Andrade called "orphyic feeling," or "religious feeling without transcendence or atheism with God?" In one of the Manifestos, Oswald writes that anthropophagy is governed by the law of a "caravan god metamorphosed as a caravel god," and that would be "the world's only law"⁹ or, as another participant of the movement puts it, "the least transcendental of laws."¹⁰

The anthropophagous law of the nomad caravan god is immanent to the desire movement. The law of the caravel god, on the other hand, is that of the catholic powers that colonized the country, and transcends the nomadism of desire in two ways: in its origin, and in its unquestioned transplantation to an entirely different context.

The difference between these two types of law resides in the strategy adopted to build the "subjective house:" when governed by an immanent law, the construction will be oriented by the intensities produced by the vibrating body, i.e. the configuration of the world as it is presented in the body--a knowledge through vibration and contamination. Yet, when the strategy is determined by a transcendent law, the latter imposes to desire, images that are extrinsic to its movements, as an a priori program to be followed--a knowledge through representation and imitation.

Beneath the official appearance of a subjectivity commanded by the law of a caravel god, who imitates the white European face out of context, here is

affirmed the warm and changeable face of a mestizo subjectivity, born from the exuberant variety of worlds that make up the local conditions.

When a transcendent law governs the shape of subjectivity, the mind is the agent of consistency, guided by the ego's point-of-view and its will for totality, stability, eternity. The hallucination of a transcendence that strips desire of its productive immanence and submits it to a state of dearth, which becomes the motor of its movement. A narcissistic criterion determines these choices.

A fourth characteristic is the kind of subjectivity that is constituted by the anthropophagous principle in its most active vector: an impersonal singularity, completely open, dispersed in the multiple connections of desire in the social field and which emerges among the negotiated worlds. While the subjectivity controlled by an identity-figurative principle consists in a personal "I," an immured individuality, imprisoned in its psychic living space and commanded by the fear of losing itself.

A fifth characteristic is the way how this kind of subjectivity emerges: its genesis is made through alliances and contagion, an infinite rhizome that changes nature and direction at the mercy of the racial mixtures that take place in the great factory of our cultural anthropophagy. Different from the genesis of an identity-figurative subjectivity that is constructed through filiation, promoting the fantasy of a linear evolution and the imprisoning compromise with a system of values adopted as the essence to be perpetuated and revered.

However, the same absolute non-adhesion to any system of references, the same plasticity in mixing them together at will, the same freedom to improvise language as a result of the mixtures, which define the anthropophagous mode of subjectivization in its visible dimension, might constitute a kind of subjectivity in which, in invisibility, none of the previously mentioned characteristics is present. When this takes place, we face an actualized anthropophagy in its most reactive vector. This differentiates itself fundamentally

through the absence of ethical criterion commanding the connections of desire and the creation of meaning, replaced here by a narcissistic criterion. It is the formula that falsifies itself, overflowing the carcass of certain procedures without the stuffing of the body as a compass needle, a body that knows through vibration and contamination and not only through representation and that has life as a criterion to make its selections. Is this not the vector that one of the *Manifestos* refers to as “low anthropophagy,” declaring that it is against this “plague of the so-called cultured and Christianized nations [...] that we, anthropophagi, are acting?”⁸ There are many examples of this kind of actualization of the anthropophagous mode, this “everything-goes” in function of the ego’s interests, so common on the national scene. A more recent example was the construction in Rio de Janeiro of buildings with sea sand: as might have been foreseen, the buildings collapsed with their inhabitants;⁹ ; the appropriation by a republic president of all personal savings accounts in the country, transferred to the State¹¹; the soap operas, etc. Lets examine this last example, so much integrated to the everyday life of the great majority of Brazilians.

The plot of the most prestigious soap opera, which takes place everyday, at eight o’clock in the evening, on channel Globo, is a fairly faithful cartography of Brazilian political, economic, social and behavioral movements that shake the everyday of collective life, but in which a promise of pacifying transcendence is reaffirmed. As if everybody spent the day despairing over upheavals and calming down at night, when the soap opera shows those unsettling experiences, yet numbing the discomfort, domesticating the estrangement, extinguishing its problematizing fire, making everything amount to the same. Low anthropophagy

[SUPERSCPT]8. See note 3.

[SUPERSCPT]9. Two buildings constructed by Deputy Sergio Naya, who deliberately used sea sand to lower construction costs. One of the buildings collapsed during the Carnival of 1998, causing the death of eight people. The second building was demolished after the accident through a court decision. Two months later, the deputy was removed from office.

devours in its language the most contemporary of television technologies, which have the freedom and the intelligence to improvise the composition of a scene with everything that agitates the daily agenda, but without passing through the vibrating body's sieve or the ethical criterion of what would be good for collective life in the development of the plot. This high-tech lab of prêt-à-porter ways of being, idealized after each new situation in the market, tends to mobilize an equal anesthesia in the vibrating bodies of the audience and to de-mobilize the power that their discomfort might prompt toward creating meaning for the lived impasses in that specific moment of social life. This is clear in the handling of dilemmas regarding contemporary love relationships, which are almost always the prevailing theme in soap operas. The cartography provided by soap operas covering the upheavals in this area is surprisingly up-to-date. However, this is always accompanied by a reaffirmation of large doses of romantic love that legitimates the stubborn insistence on this model and postpones the urgent collective process of elaborating and reinventing love relations. The characters of the eight o'clock soap constitute a sort of prosthetic family tuned into Brazilian homes, contaminating them daily with a reactive anthropophagy. The numbers of those addicted to this drug rise over half the country's population for the episodes that promise extra doses of pacification and a happy ending.

One might consider that low anthropophagy is part of the disembodied tradition of the Brazilian elite, which does not meet the urgency of the creation of meaning demanded by the body in its collective experience. Yet, besides this fact, it is necessary to remember that the fine tuning of the vibrating body is always at risk, there is permanent danger of losing the immanence of desire's nomadism as the agent of subjective consistency, and slip again into submission to a transcendence of the process. Moreover, this risk increases when the dominant mode of constituting an "at home" all over the planet legitimates and summons it, as happens nowadays.

Actually, between the most active pole of anthropophagy (in its ethical actualization) and its most reactive pole (in its narcissistic actualization), there are many shades in which these positions combine in different proportions. This is not a matter of an ontological or axiological – and much less psychological – dualism. What occurs is a diversity of modes in the affirmation of anthropophagy: from the most ethical to the least ethical, from the everything-goes in function of the life interests to the everything-goes in function of the ego interests. These modes are never definitive because they depend on the dominant force in each context of individual and collective existence.

The voice of Brazil that is heard in contemporary discussions that swirl around the identity crisis is that of anthropophagous subjectivity in its most active vector. As if we were forever this “mixed and bastard blood people that is now constituting itself all over the Earth,”¹⁰ as if we brought to this globalized conversation a know how with regard to navigating this infinite ocean churned up by swirling waves of a variable profusion of flows which is what makes up today's world. Basically, what the anthropophagous voice brings to this impasse that is unique is that it shows not only theoretically but, above all, pragmatically, that the problem being posited is not the reconstitution of an identity, hallucinated horizon that divides mankind into hopeful and hopeless. The issue is to detach the sensation of subjective consistency from the model of identity; displace oneself from the identity-figurative principle in the construction of an “at home.”

If living without a concrete house is difficult, there is no human life possible without a mode of being in which one can feel oneself “at home.” Therefore we are not all becoming homeless: it is not true that the subjective house has disappeared. It is only suffering a radical transformation in the principle of its construction – which is nonetheless disturbing. To build an “at home” nowadays depends on operations that are rather inactive in modern Western subjectivity, but

[SUPERSCPT]10. See note 4.

familiar to the anthropophagous mode in its most active actualization: to be in tune with the transfigurations within the body, resulting from the new connections of flows; to surf the events that such transfigurations trigger; to experience concrete arrangements of existence that incarnate these palpable mutations; to invent new life possibilities. Such operations depend, of course, on the exercise of powers of the body equally inactive in contemporary subjectivity: to expand beyond representation, to conquer an intimacy with the body as a vibratile surface that detects the waves even before they arise, to learn how to surf, establish zones of familiarity within the movement itself – that is “sailing is necessary,” because if we don't, our destiny will probably be shipwreck. An “at home” made of partial, unique, provisional, fluctuating totalities, in a constant becoming, that each one (individual or group) builds up from the flows that touch its body and its selective filtration operated by desire.

However, despite the subjective experience having changed in this regard, the predominant tendency is to follow the standard that reigned until recently: an “at home” related to identity. This is made clear by the entrenchment in which ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual groups find themselves, or even entire nations that insist in existing as identities, cut out from the ocean of variable flow that comprise today the subjective consistence of all inhabitants on Earth.

Why is there no end to the whining, longing for the lost rooted home, in spite of this evident and irreversible change? It is certainly a question of habit, ingrained in our desire; but also, and perhaps mainly, because of the hegemonic mode of subjectivation of the integrated world of neoliberalism, that requires the identity mode to function and engages this habit in our desire, as an essential device for its fulfillment.

If, on one hand, the market builds and destroys territories of existence as its condition to function, as it needs to continuously create new orbits of production and consumption, on the other hand, to enter any of these orbits it is

necessary that this deterritorialized subjectivity embody prêt-à-porter identities, produced in accordance with each one of these orbits. Such identities are defined not only by certain abilities, but also by a certain appearance, a body "style," clothes and behavior dictated by the most recent tendencies of the market. The identity principle is thus maintained, the only difference being that the images on which subjectivity is formatted cease to be fixed and local to become flexible and globalized. Therefore to enter the game it is imperative to have a certain subjective capital: to be a "flexibility athlete," the must of the entrepreneurial season that has taken over the planet. But attention! It is a flexibility serving "total quality" of production, which requires a subjectivity whose body and soul are invested on the market. Within this strategy of desire, to have a good performance in the surf of changes implies being able to consume the new, and not to create it based on the indications of the body's vibratility. It is a subjectivity cut off from the sensitive body, numbed to its estrangements, without any freedom to create meaning, totally devoid of uniqueness.

"High anthropophagy" puts us in the privileged position to break the hellish circle of slavery to this hegemonic mode of subjectivation, to resist the appeal to become a flexibility athlete in the service of exclusive interests of the market. It enables us to better withstand the lack of meaning that results when world mixtures in our body impose changes in language; to improvise more easily with uncommon languages to express such changes; and above all, to use in this creation what we have at hand, as long as it favors the expansion of individual and collective life. This makes us more apt to reach out for a subjective consistency distanced from the identity principle, which allows us to refuse more easily the image of the flexibility athlete, without fear of staying out of any orbit - a total outsider. Perhaps this unique know-how of resistance explains the interest that Brazilian culture has engendered in the planet, such as the important retrospectives of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, or of the recognition of relatively young artists

such as Tunga, to mention only examples from the visual arts. However, if high anthropophagy provides a know-how of subjective resistance to everything that has nefarious effects on contemporary individual and collective life, low anthropophagy, on the contrary, offers a know-how for us to be the best flexibility athletes in the world. This is because when an evaluation of what is good for our bodies, and therefore, our lives, is not active, it is easy to become detached from current models of behavior and allow oneself to be contaminated by everything that is presented, which makes us more vulnerable to swallow anything, without fear of being deterritorialized, and therefore without conflict. This is certainly what makes us so at ease in the contemporary neo-liberal scene, more than in any other country with a similar degree of economic development. This is also, perhaps, what makes the Globo soap-operas, this high-tech lab of prêt-a-porter identities, be exported to over one hundred countries and have such significant international success.

To fight low anthropophagy and to affirm the anthropophagous mode of subjectivization in its ethical vector is a responsibility we have not only on a national scale but also and above all on a global scale, because freeing ourselves from the indentity-figurative principle is an urgent need all over the planet. We are the bearers of a vaccine that allows people to resist this addiction: the “anthropophagous vaccine,” as one of the *Manifestos*¹¹ calls it, indicated for “the spirit that refuses to conceive of the spirit without the body.” Oswald de Andrade ultimately defended the thesis that Anthropophagy would constitute a “social therapy for the contemporary world.”¹²

[SUPERSCPT]11. See note 3.

[SUPERSCPT]12. Oswald de Andrade, “The March of the Utopias”[1953] in *A Utopia Antropofágica. Obras Completas de Oswald de Andrade*. Globo, São Paulo, 1990.

The fact is, the anthropophagous vaccine would seem to be becoming indispensable for an ecology of the soul (or of desire?) as the end of millennium.¹³

Translated from the Portuguese by Michael Reade, Erika Benincasa,
Alfred MacAdam e Nadine.

Sobras do maior que inclui no médio:

A familiar image is the cult of *Iemanjá* on Brazilian beaches during New Year's eve. Devoured by the local culture, the African goddess, as Darcy Ribeiro puts it:

“[...] Suffered a total transformation to arrive on January 1st, substituting the old and ridiculous bearded Santa Claus, who eats dried European fruits, dragged by a car pulled by deer, by the first saint who fucks and to whom one asks not for a cure but for a tender lover or a less violent husband.”¹²

The only possible relationship occurs as the paternalistic patron, a role that masks the defensive closure while eliminating guilt.

One of the most important ideas of this movement, reinstated in its two Manifestos, asserts: "against living at the ivory tower-ism, the erudite practice of life;"¹³ "against all the importers of canned consciousness, the palpable existence of life.”¹⁴

They not only inject doses of this aesthetic in the artistic scene, but intensify its irreverence by . [...] Hélio Oiticica refers to this attitude:

“WHAT REALLY MATTERS: the creation of a language. The destiny of Modernity in Brazil depends upon the creation of this language, the relationships, the swallowing, the entire phenomenology of this process (including also the other international languages), requires and demands (so as not to be consumed by a conservative academicism; don't do it) this language: the conceptual should

submit itself to live phenomenon, the mocking of what is 'serious:' who will dare to confront Brazilian surrealism?

Who am I to determine which and how this language will be? Either it will be or nothing (conservation-dilution)? I don't know. The dilution is there--the coexist-condone (typical Brazilian illness) seems to consume most of the ideas--ideas? Fragile and perishable, aspirations or ideas? To take a critical position: aspirin or cure?

Or the rape of paternalism, inhibition, guilt."¹⁵

The *Manifesto antropófago* [*Anthropophagiste manifesto*] declares itself "against all catechisms." The supposed power of generalization of this or any other model is ignored, since all models are incorporated as temporary coagulations of language selected in an experimental and singular process of the creation of meaning, in the same way, in fact, as the indigenous or African world.

This freedom to employ only what is pertinent to a system of thought is probably the result of the mestizo context ingrained in the country since its foundation, thereby demanding this type of freedom so that territories of existence can take shape. But two other factors have probably contributed as much. The fact that European culture consumed in the tropics does not work as a cartography for a territory of its own, as might be the case for a European, allows to de-invest or partially invest it without any danger of such brutal deterritorialization, and therefore less threatening. Also, the Anthropophagous movement occurs at the precise moment in which the notion of a culture centered in European supremacy and bourgeois life-style has already suffered the shock of the First World War and the effects of the criticism of European intellectuals, who searched in the primitive for a solution to meaning. This prepares the ground for anthropophagous ideas and legitimizes the criticism to a scholastic imitation of French culture.

To some, the Anthropophagous movement maintained a subordinate position, as it did nothing more than adopt the idealized primitive, this utopian Other produced by European criticism of the time. The "non-European" would therefore continue to be discriminated as exotic, the only change being that it would now be praised rather than disqualified. This interpretation seems to ignore that anthropophagy's power lies exactly in the irreverent affirmation of a mixture that does not respect any form of a priori cultural hierarchy, since for this mode of cultural production all repertoires are potentially equivalent as resources to produce meaning, and only this is of any importance. As Darcy Ribeiro writes:

“Colonization in Brazil functioned as a persistent effort to implement a Europeanness adapted to these tropics and incarnated in these miscegenations. But it always collided with the stubbornness of nature and with history's fancies, so that despite those intentions we became who we are, the opposite of whiteness and civility, so innerly de-European as de-Indian and de-Afro.”¹⁶

[Thus Indians or Africans are not perceived as a good humanity, the bearer of truth, to be swallowed, a counterpart to Europeans, viewed as bad humanity, distant from truth, to be vomited. We are "as much de-European as we are de-Indian and de-Afro," because the criteria of selection for the anthropophagous ritual in culture is not that of a value system chosen per se, but consists on how much it works, what it works with, and to what extent it allows intensities to pass and meaning to be produced. And this never works for a system as a whole, but for some of its elements that are articulated with elements of other systems, losing in this way any connotation with identity.

One perceives here a second operation made possible by the anthropophagous strategy: the practice of creating culture has nothing to do with signifying, explaining or interpreting in order to reveal truths. The truth, according

to the *Manifesto antropófago*, "is a lie repeated many times." To make culture anthropophagically has to do with mapping: to draw a chart that participates in the construction of the territory it represents, to gain consistence of a new figure of the self, a new "at home," a new world. "Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes."--is repeated seven consecutive times in the same Manifesto. Meaning emanates from the paradoxical neighborhood between the heterogeneous, consisting of non-resolved agreements and not referred to a totality: routes, a cartography of real social movements, a critical effect. A criticism, not based on content, in which any pragmatic experimentation, be it more or less successful, more or less precarious, is worth more than any sterile imitation of models.]

Again, Hélio Oiticica:

“‘Experimental art’ does not exist, only the experimental, which not only implies the idea of modernity and vanguard, but also the radical transformation in the field of existing concept-values: it is something that invites transformation in behavior-context, that swallows and dissolves the coexist-condone. In Brazil, therefore, a permanent universally critical position and the experimental are constructive elements. Everything else is dilution in diarrhea.”¹⁷

A fourth operation still is that the culture produced in Brazil becomes a line of flight of European culture and not simply a submissive and sterile replacement, nor a simple opposition that maintains that culture as a reference. The tree of western knowledge transplanted to tropical America ceases to be a tree, in the sense of having a structure and an evolution previously defined through a transcendental program. It is no longer invested in its totality, but as an element of an infinite process of creation. Connected to universes of alien references, it

begins to incorporate an unexpected evolution, immanent to the process itself, in which the structure is perpetually redefined.

Was this not what Oswald called "cordiality,"¹⁸ which he defines as the tendency to "see the other in oneself?"¹⁹

The first, more clearly narcissistic, consists in relating to the other for the simple pleasure of releasing desire without being exposed to otherness, which amounts to no more than having an eternal joy of oneself: a "hedonist narcissism." The second consists in plain civil respect for the other. Although this respect is the least that is expected in a democratic society, to merely accept it with a modesty to desire alterity, to express this longing and allow oneself to be affected by it, amounts to a reiterated re-affirmation of one's own self: a "citizen narcissism."

Is that not what Oswald de Andrade called "orphic feeling," or "religious feeling without transcendence or atheism with God?" In one of the Manifestos, Oswald writes that anthropophagy is governed by the law of a "caravan god metamorphosed as a caravel god," and that would be "the world's only law"²⁰ or, as another participant of the movement puts it, "the least transcendental of laws."²¹

The anthropophagic law of the nomad caravan god is immanent to the desire movement. The law of the caravel god, on the other hand, is that of the catholic powers that colonized the country, and transcends the nomadism of desire in two ways: in its origin, and in its unquestioned transplantation to an entirely different context.

The difference between these two types of law resides in the strategy adopted to build the "subjective house:" when governed by an immanent law, the construction will be oriented by the intensities produced by the vibrating body, i.e. the configuration of the world as it is presented in the body--a knowledge through

vibration and contamination. Yet, when the strategy is determined by a transcendent law, the latter imposes to desire, images that are extrinsic to its movements, as an a priori program to be followed--a knowledge through representation and imitation.

Beneath the official appearance of a subjectivity commanded by the law of a caravel god, who imitates the white European face out of context, here is affirmed the warm and changeable face of a mestizo subjectivity, born from the exuberant variety of worlds that make up the local conditions.

When a transcendent law governs the shape of subjectivity, the mind is the agent of consistency, guided by the ego's point-of-view and its will for totality, stability, eternity. The hallucination of a transcendence that strips desire of its productive immanence and submits it to a state of dearth, which becomes the motor of its movement. A narcissistic criterion determines these choices.

; the appropriation by a republic president of all personal savings accounts in the country, transferred to the State²²; the soap operas, etc. Lets examine this last example, so much integrated to the everyday life of the great majority of Brazilians.

The plot of the most prestigious soap opera, which takes place everyday, at eight o'clock in the evening, on channel Globo, is a fairly faithful cartography of Brazilian political, economic, social and behavioral movements that shake the everyday of collective life, but in which a promise of pacifying transcendence is reaffirmed. As if everybody spent the day despairing over upheavals and calming down at night, when the soap opera shows those unsettling experiences, yet numbing the discomfort, domesticating the estrangement, extinguishing its problematizing fire, making everything amount to the same. Low anthropophagy devours in its language the most contemporary of television technologies, which have the freedom and the intelligence to improvise the composition of a scene

with everything that agitates the daily agenda, but without passing through the vibrating body's sieve or the ethical criterion of what would be good for collective life in the development of the plot. This high-tech lab of prêt-à-porter ways of being, idealized after each new situation in the market, tends to mobilize an equal anesthesia in the vibrating bodies of the audience and to de-mobilize the power that their discomfort might prompt toward creating meaning for the lived impasses in that specific moment of social life. This is clear in the handling of dilemmas regarding contemporary love relationships, which are almost always the prevailing theme in soap operas. The cartography provided by soap operas covering the upheavals in this area is surprisingly up-to-date. However, this is always accompanied by a reaffirmation of large doses of romantic love that legitimates the stubborn insistence on this model and postpones the urgent collective process of elaborating and reinventing love relations. The characters of the eight o'clock soap constitute a sort of prosthetic family tuned into Brazilian homes, contaminating them daily with a reactive anthropophagy. The numbers of those addicted to this drug rise over half the country's population for the episodes that promise extra doses of pacification and a happy ending.

One might consider that low anthropophagy is part of the disembodied tradition of the Brazilian elite, which does not meet the urgency of the creation of meaning demanded by the body in its collective experience. Yet, besides this fact, it is necessary to remember that the fine tuning of the vibrating body is always at risk, there is permanent danger of losing the immanence of desire's nomadism as the agent of subjective consistency, and slip again into submission to a transcendence of the process. Moreover, this risk increases when the dominant mode of constituting an "at home" all over the planet legitimates and summons it, as happens nowadays.

However, despite the subjective experience having changed in this regard, the predominant tendency is to follow the standard that reigned until recently: an "at home" related to identity. This is made clear by the entrenchment in which ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual groups find themselves, or even entire nations that insist in existing as identities, cut out from the ocean of variable flow that comprise today the subjective consistence of all inhabitants on Earth.

Why is there no end to the whining, longing for the lost rooted home, in spite of this evident and irreversible change? It is certainly a question of habit, ingrained in our desire; but also, and perhaps mainly, because of the hegemonic mode of subjectivation of the integrated world of neoliberalism, that requires the identity mode to function and engages this habit in our desire, as an essential device for its fulfillment.

If, on one hand, the market builds and destroys territories of existence as its condition to function, as it needs to continuously create new orbits of production and consumption, on the other hand, to enter any of these orbits it is necessary that this deterritorialized subjectivity embody prêt-à-porter identities, produced in accordance with each one of these orbits. Such identities are defined not only by certain abilities, but also by a certain appearance, a body "style," clothes and behavior dictated by the most recent tendencies of the market. The identity principle is thus maintained, the only difference being that the images on which subjectivity is formatted cease to be fixed and local to become flexible and globalized. Therefore to enter the game it is imperative to have a certain subjective capital: to be a "flexibility athlete," the must of the entrepreneurial season that has taken over the planet. But attention! It is a flexibility serving "total quality" of production, which requires a subjectivity whose body and soul are invested on the market. Within this strategy of desire, to have a good performance in the surf of changes implies being able to consume the new, and not to create it based on the indications of the body's vibratility. It is a subjectivity cut off from the sensitive

body, numbed to its estrangements, without any freedom to create meaning, totally devoid of uniqueness.

"High anthropophagy" puts us in the privileged position to break the hellish circle of slavery to this hegemonic mode of subjectivation, to resist the appeal to become a flexibility athlete in the service of exclusive interests of the market. It enables us to better withstand the lack of meaning that results when world mixtures in our body impose changes in language; to improvise more easily with uncommon languages to express such changes; and above all, to use in this creation what we have at hand, as long as it favors the expansion of individual and collective life. This makes us more apt to reach out for a subjective consistency distanced from the identity principle, which allows us to refuse more easily the image of the flexibility athlete, without fear of staying out of any orbit - a total outsider. Perhaps this unique know-how of resistance explains the interest that Brazilian culture has engendered in the planet, such as the important retrospectives of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, or of the recognition of relatively young artists such as Tunga, to mention only examples from the visual arts. However, if high anthropophagy provides a know-how of subjective resistance to everything that has nefarious effects on contemporary individual and collective life, low anthropophagy, on the contrary, offers a know-how for us to be the best flexibility athletes in the world. This is because when an evaluation of what is good for our bodies, and therefore, our lives, is not active, it is easy to become detached from current models of behavior and allow oneself to be contaminated by everything that is presented, which makes us more vulnerable to swallow anything, without fear of being deterritorialized, and therefore without conflict. This is certainly what makes us so at ease in the contemporary neo-liberal scene, more than in any other country with a similar degree of economic development. This is also, perhaps, what makes the Globo soap-operas, this high-tech lab of prêt-à-porter

identities, be exported to over one hundred countries and have such significant international success.

Sobras do médio:

Neither submissive and sterile repositioning nor opposition that maintains that culture as a reference: there is a radical dislocation of the idea of “center.” The supposed power of generalization of this model or any other is overlooked, since all are understood to be provisional coagulations of language, selected in an experimental and unique process of the cultivation of meaning, in, by the way, the same form as that of the indigenous or African universe.

¹ Darcy Ribeiro, *O povo brasileiro. A formação e o sentido do Brasil*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995.

² *ibid.*, note 2.

³ *ibid.*, note 3.

⁴ "Brasil Diarréia" (1973), *Hélio Oiticica*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Editions du Jeu de Paume, 1992.

⁵ *ibid.*, note 4.

⁶ *ibid.*, note 7.

⁷ "Um aspecto antropofágico da cultura brasileira: o homem cordial," *A utopia antropofágica, obras completas de Oswald de Andrade*, São Paulo: Globo, 1990.

⁸ *ibid.*, note 10.

⁹ *ibid.*, note 3.

¹⁰ Acquilles Vivacqua, "A propósito do homen antropófago," *Revista de Antropofagia, Diário de São Paulo*, May 8, 1929.

¹¹ The act happened during the presidency of Fernando Collor de Melo who, in 1990, transferred over to the State the personal savings of all Brazilians, as a personal loan without the consent of the involved parties, with no warning; later his link to one of the most scandalous networks corruption in the history of the country was discovered, which led to his impeachment and the revoking of his right to run for public office.

¹² Darcy Ribeiro, *O povo brasileiro. A formação e o sentido do Brasil*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995.

¹³ *ibid.*, note 2.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, note 3.

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