

Debt and Utopia Through the Anthropophagic Philosophy of Oswald de Andrade*

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Abstract

Questo articolo esamina il significato del debito nella filosofia antropofagica di Oswald de Andrade, cercando una concezione compatibile con l'idea di giustizia sociale implicita nella sua utopia. Si sostiene che, da una prospettiva antropofagica, il debito debba preservare la tensione tra le forze positive e negative piuttosto che sopprimerla. Come strategia anticoloniale, questa filosofia rivaluta il debito nelle relazioni sociali attraverso una critica in linea con la *Genealogia della morale* di Nietzsche, concentrandosi sulla moralizzazione patriarcale dei rapporti creditore-debitore e sul loro ruolo nella creazione dei valori e nel risentimento. Il lavoro è diviso in due sezioni. La prima delinea le basi cosmologiche della filosofia antropofagica come una «filosofia della natura», da cui derivano le categorie socio-cosmiche di matriarcato e patriarcato. La seconda esamina il rapporto creditore-debitore attraverso la lettura oswaldiana di Nietzsche e aspetti della guerra tupinambá, evidenziando come la deviazione del sentimento orfico sostituisca un'etica del conflitto con una logica di separazione tra l'umano e la natura.

Parole chiave: antropofagia; debito; utopia; matriarcato; patriarcato.

This article examines the meaning of debt in Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic philosophy, seeking a conception compatible with the idea of social justice implied in his utopia. It argues that, from an anthropophagic perspective, debt should preserve the tension between positive and negative forces rather than suppress it. As an anti-colonial strategy, this philosophy re-evaluates debt in social relations through a critique aligned with Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality*, focusing on the patriarchal moralization of creditor-debtor relations and their role in value creation and resentment. The paper is divided into two sections. The first outlines the cosmological foundations of anthropophagic philosophy as a «philosophy of nature», from which derive the socio-cosmic categories of matriarchy and patriarchy. The second examines the creditor-debtor relationship through Oswald's reading of Nietzsche and aspects

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of the Tupinambá war, highlighting how the deviation of the Orphic feeling replaces an ethics of conflict with a logic of separation between human and nature.

Keywords: anthropophagy; debt; utopia; matriarchy; patriarchy.

Introduction

Developed in Brazil (1920s-1950s), Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic philosophy is a critical continuation of Modernism. *Modernist Movement*. Originating in debates on Brazil's post-independence colonial condition, the movement, inspired by Tarsila do Amaral's *O Abaporu*, sought not only an aesthetic but also a political and social revolution. After the movement's dissolution, Oswald returned to his early ideas, consolidating them into a philosophy of nature that generated philosophies of history, culture, and anticolonialism.

Throughout its development, the philosophy's revolutionary character remained constant, expressed in its utopian aspect. For Oswald, utopia meant social justice achieved through the clash between a matriarchal-anthropophagous worldview, expressed in *otium* (leisure), and a patriarchal-messianic one, expressed in *negotium*. It aims to balance space and time, replace property with possession, and reinstate Maternal Law, ultimately reflecting two opposing conceptions of justice that shape contrasting notions of «debt».

This paper explores a notion of debt compatible with Oswald's utopia and social justice. First, debt follows what he called «biologically favourable» justice, where the creditor–debtor relation sustains conflict between positive and negative forces. Second, a deviation in this relation drives the shift from a matriarchal to a patriarchal worldview.

Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954) was an intellectual from São Paulo, graduated in Law, recognized in Brazil for his literary production, for having been one of the organizers of the Modern Art Week of 1922, and for having conceived the Anthropophagic Movement. In addition, Oswald developed a philosophy of nature according to which matriarchy corresponds to a cosmic order characterized by permanent conflict between positive and negative forces, to formulate a philosophy of history whose origin lies in the rise of patriarchy and the predominance of negative forces. For Oswald, patriarchy is a worldview where humanity affirms itself through negativity. From this perspective, human is defined as negation of nature, leading to the separation of life's spheres into means and ends. This separation manifests in the division between idle classes, such as priestly and noble ones, and working classes, and progresses into a value inversion, subordinating consumption and leisure (*otium*) to production and work.

The use of the term «anthropophagy» by Oswald de Andrade can be understood as a metonymy whose initial reference lies in the anthropophagic rituals identified in different parts of the planet in a remote period of humanity. Inspired by

Bachofen, Oswald identified this period as a historical cycle called the Matriarchy, although the meaning of the term «matriarchy» in anthropophagic philosophy, as will be seen later, is not limited to this historical cycle. The word «anthropophagy» was adopted by the author in multiple senses, among them: (a) to name the «Anthropophagic Movement», which had an artistic, philosophical, social, and political nature; (b) to refer to a matriarchal worldview; (c) to refer to a universal cosmic mechanism consisting of the devorative and/or communal interaction between the positive and negative forces of the universe; (d) to refer to a revolutionary attitude, which in some contexts can be called anti-colonial, and which would be capable of restoring humanity to the utopian matriarchy; (e) and to name a philosophical system that he intended to develop even after the end of the Anthropophagic Movement.

The choice of the word «anthropophagy» to name a philosophical concept is related to Oswald de Andrade's understanding that anthropophagic rituals are philosophical rituals that express the shared perception of the devorative mechanism of the universe by the peoples who practice or practiced them, and that synthesize the greater meaning of life, which is communion with the contrary value. From this meaning would derive a specific ethical attitude toward conflicts of interest and the conflicts implied in cosmic relativism, that is, in the variation of axiological scales or in the absence of a universal and shareable scale of values. Anthropophagic communion, in this sense, is both the response to conflicts (although never their definitive resolution) and the meaning, the ever-renewable purpose of life, and from this derives a valuation or even an insubmissive sacralisation of enmity and contrariety. This conception refers to an insubmissive idea of love, which corresponds to the very «anthropophagic instinct» when elevated on a «thermometric scale».

Oswald transferred this idea to the problem of colonialism. From this perspective, it is not the rejection or expulsion of the colonizer and of foreign elements that would provide the social, political, and cultural emancipation of the country. The solution would lie in anthropophagic communion, that is, in the active devouring of everything that presents itself as an obstacle to the independence of the peoples inhabiting Brazilian territory. This solution would never have ceased to be employed. Oswald proposes, in fact, a change of point of view, as becomes clear in the *Manifesto Antropófago*: «We were never catechized [...] We made Christ be born in Bahia or in Belém do Pará». In this sense, anthropophagy articulates an idea of revenge and justice with Nietzschean concepts of transvaluation and the will to power, insofar as anthropophagy also signifies seizing opposing forces and imposing new meanings or purposes upon them.

This philosophy of history is guided by what Oswald calls «Orphic feeling», a religious feeling understood as a universal constant of humanity, resulting from the inherent negativity of all life. The history of patriarchy would thus be the history of the deviation of this Orphic feeling, which in matriarchy connects humanity to the earth, especially through the anthropophagic rite and coexistence with deities, and

which in patriarchy disconnects human from earth by transferring the meaning of life to a superterrestrial world or through its appropriation by messianic leaders.

It is important to mention an apparent contradiction in anthropophagous philosophy, which lies in its simultaneous alignment, on the one hand, with Nietzschean philosophy and with a philosophical approach to relativism in physics and biology, and, on the other hand, with the idea of «jusnaturalism», which presupposes the existence of a «natural justice», inherent in nature or in humanity, preceding human agreements or positive law, with a universal and immutable character. The jusnaturalist tradition is often idealistic and tied to a transcendental reality. Oswaldian jusnaturalism, however, can be thus defined because it «emanates from the earth» and is grounded in a philosophy of nature centred on time and space, in which the maintenance of conflict and movement must prevail over any fixed norm and over hierarchical fixations. In this way, it remains even more closely aligned with Nietzschean philosophy (with the idea of justice corresponding to that of good health) and with an axiological relativism that the author combines with the relativism of physics and biology.

One of the justifications arises from the rise of messianism in Brazil, merging religion and politics. In this context, messianism can strengthen authoritarianism and passive postures before urgent crises such as climate change. Oswald regarded messianism as exploitation of an available «Orphic feeling», transferable to art, politics, sport, land and priesthood. His thought opposes the disregard for the religious dimension of the human already identified in partisanship. Utopia thus plays an antimessianic role by restoring the «primitive terror», the anguish before life's devouring nature.

That anguish, tied to the Orphic feeling and also an instinct linking humanity to life, compels humans to find here and now a response. Oswald identifies that response in the feeling of alterity characterizing the cordial man and in the idea of *homo ludens*. For Oswald, cordiality associates with alterity:

one may call alterity the feeling of the other, that is, seeing the other in oneself, feeling in oneself the disaster, mortification or joy of the other. Thus, the term opposes Baudelaire's existential usage: as feeling oneself to be other, different, isolated and contrary¹.

Understanding life as devouring, the human in the matriarchal worldview develops this aspect. Facing imminent danger, living in the other becomes response to death. «He understands life as devouring and symbolizes it in the anthropophagic rite, which is communion» and «On the other hand devouring brings within itself the imminence of danger and produces social solidarity defined in alterity»². By contrast,

¹ O. Andrade, *Um aspecto antropofágico da cultura brasileira: o homem cordial* (1950), in B. Nunes (ed.), *A utopia antropofágica: A Antropofagia a alcance de todos*, O Globo, São Paulo 1990, p. 157. Note: All English quotations have been translated from Portuguese by the author.

² *Ibidem*.

the messianic patriarchal worldview, through salvation and election, promotes indifference.

The concept of *homo ludens* expresses an analogous thought: «man is the animal who lives between two great toys: Love where he wins, death where he loses. Therefore, he invented the plastic arts, poetry, dance, music, theatre, circus and finally cinema»³. Both *homo ludens* and the cordial man embody an antimessianic conception of life, affirming that love emerges as meaning and answer precisely through confronting life's devouring reality. Love and solidarity, from this viewpoint, are inseparable from an active and autonomous attitude that does not transfer salvation or value-creation to an external authority. By mobilizing the idea of *homo ludens* and the concept of «leisure», Oswald proposes an anticolonial strategy that does not separate means from ends. Not subordinated to external purposes, they are both path and utopian end., expressing a conception of utopia that contradicts its etymological origin – *ou* (not) + *topos* (place) = «no-place». The anthropophagic utopia, by contrast, points to a sphere of reality already existing, simultaneously spatial and social, to which the human should reintegrate.

The anthropophagic philosophy, also understood as an anti-colonial strategy, implies a re-evaluation of debt in social relations. There is a critique, aligned with Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality*, of the patriarchal moralization of creditor-debtor relations and of the role these relations play in the creation of values, in submission to external values, and in resentment. The creditor-debtor relationship, on the other hand, still holds a fundamental role in this philosophy, as it is inherent to the idea of social justice and revenge that drives anthropophagic utopian thought. The purpose of this article is to discuss how anthropophagic philosophy, which carries a strong relativist and immanentist emphasis, nevertheless adopts concepts that seem contradictory to this stance, such as the idea of natural law and even the concept of debt, since debt presupposes the establishment of equivalences. To this end, the paper is divided into two sections. The first consists of an introductory approach to anthropophagic philosophy, emphasizing cosmological aspects that can be identified as a «philosophy of nature» from which derive the socio-cosmic categories of matriarchy and patriarchy. In the second section, the creditor-debtor relationship will be examined through Oswald's reading of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* and aspects of the Tupinambá war. Based on the distinction between matriarchal-anthropophagic and patriarchal-messianic worldviews, this section analyses how the deviation of the Orphic feeling contributes to the replacement of an ethics of conflict by a logic of separation between human and nature.

1. Introduction to Oswald de Andrade's Anthropophagic Philosophy

³ O. Andrade, *A Crise da Filosofia Messiânica*, in B. Nunes (ed.), *A utopia antropofágica*, cit., p. 144.

As a philosophy of nature, Anthropophagic thought sees reality as constant conflict between positive and negative forces. It links cosmology from Indigenous theogonies and Bachofen's «Mother Right» to a physical-biological view of space-time.

A key cosmological principle appears in the *Manifesto Antropófago*: «If God is the consciousness of the Uncreated Universe, Guaracy is the mother of the living. Jacy is the mother of plants» and «The struggle between the Uncreated and the Creature is illustrated by the permanent contradiction between man and his taboo». For Oswald, this struggle reflects the opposition between time and space, yielding two filiations: temporal (God) and spatial (Jacy or Guaracy). The latter aligns with his concept of «Matriarchy» and Bachofen's claim that mother right once prevailed universally.

For Bachofen, the Sun belongs to a transcendent, masculine plane opposing the Earth and Moon as feminine powers. In Matriarchy, motherhood opposes violence with divine love, harmony, peace, and fosters care, devotion, moral growth, and reverence for the dead. From him, Anthropophagic philosophy takes the idea that Matriarchy rests on a natural law uniting society and individuals within the cosmic order, contrasting with patriarchal law, which governs only human society and separates it from nature. Oswald's notion of *metro* captures this opposition and the differing configurations of space and time in each legal order:

Natural peoples, unburdened by metaphysical speculation, perceive natural restrictions as well, of which, for contemporary atheistic thought, the meter may be taken as a model. The meter is, in fact, the model of restriction. Neither greater nor smaller. And, in a broad gesture alongside Sir Oliver Lodge, we will divide the universe into the metric and the non-metric. But in the current debate, Einstein intervenes at every moment. From him it follows that the meter is subjective⁴.

Lodge saw absolute space as non-metric, becoming metric with matter or energy; relativity treats the meter as variable. For Einstein, each observer has their own frame, making absolute distance meaningless. Anthropophagic philosophy links the meter to time as an «inner» dimension, while patriarchy denies this, externalizing the meter into immutable norms and borders. This variation appears in Oswald's adaptation of Proudhon: possession (Matriarchy) relates to use, grounded in gravity's law; property (Patriarchy) derives from time and may conflict with use. Property depends on a spatial metric projection, essentially temporal for Oswald. Property and inheritance create «fixed forms of existence» and, in the anthropophagic view, are not natural rights⁵.

In the *Manifesto Antropófago*, the conflict between «the God of the Uncreated» and the mothers of the living draws on Couto de Magalhães's *Os Selvagens*, which

⁴ O. Andrade, *A Antropofagia como visão do mundo* (1930), in M.C. Pinto (ed.), *Diário Confessional*. Companhia das Letras, São Paulo 2022 (Kindle version), pp. 629-630.

⁵ O. Andrade, *O Antropófago*, in M.E. Boaventura (ed.), *Estética e Política*, O Globo, São Paulo 1991, p. 242.

describes a Tupi-Guarani theogony where all created things have a mother. The term «father» was absent, used only in societies where marriage excluded women's community. The «God of the Uncreated» in the *Manifesto Antropófago* likely refers to Tupã, the Tupi-Guarani thunder spirit, supreme yet without a generative or protective role like the «mothers of the living». Oswald links Tupã to the catastrophic notion of God among Indigenous peoples, already altered by missionary influence.

Matriarchy, as an anthropophagic worldview, may persist even when social organization changes. Utopian Matriarchies like Pindorama and the Technicate share a nature- and history-based anti-colonial philosophy. Pindorama, the Tupi-Guarani name for pre-colonial Brazil, refers both to the original socio-spatial order and to its reintegration through the Carib Revolution of the *Manifesto*.

Amaral and Nodari⁶ see *caraiiba* not as «whites» or Caribs, but as shamans (*carais*) leading migrations to the «Land Without Evil». The *Manifesto's* rejection of the «whites» meaning, its use of «migrations» against «tedious states», and Oswald's recurring shamanic references support this. Tupi prophecy and anthropophagic utopia join future-oriented action, territoriality, mobility, resistance to fixed states, and divine-human permeability.

Though influenced by classic works on the «patriarchal revolution», Oswald's concept of Patriarchy stems mainly from his philosophy of nature. It marks the dominance of negative forces, tied to the «unnatural», technique, civilization, the clothed man, and the fall, a cyclical process exploiting the universal «Orphic feeling» and merging it with nostalgia for the primitive Matriarchy.

Thus, the man expelled from Eden, while for Catholics it means a case between God and the first father, and for Marxists the loss of the state of happiness ensured by primitive communism, is for certain recent anxious ones, among whom I include myself, the dispersion of natural man, originating in the tropics, through the geographic agonies of the latitudes that created technique. [...]. Man, in his troubled history, unable to return to the lost paradise, seeks to realize it in small stages, in small closed circles, in tribes or in the family, in convents or in his transfers in kindred groups, and even in nations and societies⁷.

The Orphic feeling exists in both matriarchal and patriarchal worldviews, but its direction matters: it may bind man to the earth or shift salvation to a transcendental realm. The former is Oswald's «spatial» and «individual biological» affirmation, clarified by his affinity with Stirner and Nietzsche

Now, we have already seen that God is the very negation of life. He is, therefore, simply the fourth dimension of spatial cosmos. He would be eternity or time. The Greek premonition made the gods derive from Chronos. The passive anguish of the

⁶ M.C.A. Amaral, A. Nodari, *A Questão Indígena do Manifesto Antropófago*, in «Rev. Direito e Práx.», 9, n. 4, 2018, pp. 2461-2502: 2485-2486.

⁷ O. Andrade, *O burguês Infeliz criador de pintura* (1938), in M.E. Boaventura (ed.), *Estética e Política*, cit., p. 155.

Hindus makes everything move toward negation. That it may be deduced from this that man carries within himself the sense of God, of eternity, and of time, and that one may affirm from this that man is a religious animal because he possesses the sense of the fourth dimension [does not concern us]. Time is the negation of all spatial and biological individual affirmations.⁸

This interpretation of reality as forces adapts Nietzschean philosophy, where Oswald's positive forces correspond to Nietzsche's active forces and the negative ones to reactive forces. Oswald associates patriarchy with the resentment of Nietzsche's slave morality and with bad conscience. From the anthropophagic perspective, in the morality of the «clothed man» (slave morality), negative devouring, or temporal affirmation, regulates and limits spatial devouring, linked to spatial and individual biological affirmation. In the «naked man» (noble type), spatial affirmation dominates the temporal. In a healthy relationship, the terms of the contradictions are unstable and unsubstantial; when the negative predominates, they stabilize and become substantial due to the absence of positive devouring, manifested in the consolidation of boundaries.

A possible influence on Oswald de Andrade's idea of negative devouring is Stirner's notion of «vampirization»⁹ of «specters». In the *Manifesto Antropófago*, «urban sclerosis» may allude to Stirner's critique of Western abstractions that drain the bodily singularity, sustain hierarchies like State and religion, and promote stagnation. Vampirization occurs when spiritual creations become sacred, placed above the individual, and imposed onto the body, limiting autonomy. This helps explain the messianic deviation of the Orphic feeling, which opposes biological and individual affirmations, and supports Oswald's critique of external hierarchy. For him, the Orphic feeling, openness to mystery and nothingness, symbolizes life's negation; valuing it negatively prevents its authority. In the matriarchal worldview, negativity is integrated; in the patriarchal, it is dissociated from the body. Anthropophagy converts negativity into positivity through communal devouring.

The next section will explore debt's role in this variation of the Orphic feeling, with Nietzsche as a key influence on Oswald.

2. Debt and Revenge in Anthropophagic Philosophy

This section examines debt, the rise of bad conscience in Nietzsche, and the value inversion Oswald associates with the shift from Matriarchy to Patriarchy.

Debt recurs in Oswald's work. Anthropophagy reinterprets the Fall and the idea of sin, opposing the guiltless «naked man» to the «clothed man», whose attire separates inner and outer worlds: «what trampled the truth was clothing, the raincoat between the inner world and the outer world»¹⁰.

⁸ O. Andrade, *A Antropofagia como visão do mundo*, cit., p. 629.

⁹ M. Stirner, *O Único e a Sua Propriedade*, Antígona, Lisboa 2004, pp. 56-57.

¹⁰ O. Andrade, *Manifesto Antropófago*, cit.

Freud's fictional hypothesis of cannibalistic parricide imagines primitive humanity under a paternal horde, whose tyrannical father, controlling women, is killed and devoured by rebellious sons, internalizing paternal authority as a collective superego that forbids incest.

In its second phase, Oswald's philosophy of history is guided by the Orphic feeling, whose deviation marks the «fall». In Matriarchy, anthropophagy dissolves external authority within the individual. In Patriarchy, the deviation dissolves differences, the Stirnerian «unique», and individual spatial and biological affirmations. The «inversion of the axiological scale» links debt, inhibition of the anthropophagic instinct, and guilt. Freud tied guilt to leaving the «natural state», but Nietzsche's creditor–debtor framework better explains its origin:

While, in its fundamental axiological scale, Western man elevated the categories of his knowledge up to God, the supreme good, the primitive established his value scale up to God, the supreme evil. There is a profound conceptual opposition here that produces an equally opposed conduct¹¹.

The next passage clarifies the conception of God as the supreme element of opposition

The sense of negation that life carries within itself is so deeply bound to man that it forms the common ground and psychic secret of all religions. God is the vast and immutable notion of the Contrary [...]. Simply devouring, as instinctive man has always seen him. [...] I find no more accurate notion of God than among the anthropophagic tribes of Brazil. Jurupari is the spirit of evil to whom all malevolent oppositions are attributed [...]. For in Catholicism, as in other so-called religions of salvation, God is always what cuts the logical thread of our constructions. What annihilates. A force above all forces, a logic above all logics. He is the symbol created by instinct in response to the negation that life itself contains, which the cunning of man seeks to appease with flatteries, repressions, promises, and exorcisms. This cowardice before the Contrary is unknown to natural man and codified by the civilized man, who turns it into his glory and triumph [...]. If God is the supremely hierarchical Contrary, since he is unreachable, then in human communities a consequence arises from the natural superiority of elder brothers, of fathers, and of chiefs. Nothing is more strictly logical than the divine lineage of this hierarchical series of contraries, which led man to the organization of family and State. Natural man, however, expanded this notion, already dissolved within the tribe itself. God, implacable as the very negation of life, did not demand moral tributes¹².

This relationship between debt and submission, which characterizes the stabilization of hierarchical positions and the inhibition of the «anthropophagic

¹¹ O. Andrade, *A Crise da Filosofia Messiânica*, cit., p. 101.

¹² O. Andrade, *A Antropofagia como visão do mundo*, cit., pp. 623-625.

instinct», likely draws on Nietzsche's philosophical reading of the role of the creditor-debtor relationship in the rise of bad conscience and the triumph of reactive forces.

Nietzsche's genealogy identifies two inversions: within the body, when active forces yield to reactive ones, producing the «slave» type; and socially, when this type creates values, shifting history from serving life to governing it. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, memory and forgetting are central: nobles can forget, while resentment in reactive types stems from an intensified memory rooted in the distorted creditor-debtor bond.

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche traces social organization to the creditor-debtor relation: humans set prices, measure values, and exchange. This prehistorical bond formed the promise-keeping sovereign individual and underpinned economic, social, and political ties. Nietzsche also exposes a shift in the meaning of debt. It ceases to be a means and begins to intensify, creating debts impossible to repay, particularly in the relationship between the individual and the community, culminating in the formation of the state and possibly the origin of gods. In Christianity, this reaches its peak with the Final Judgment, where the debt deepens and becomes unpayable. His distortion breeds guilt and turns justice into revenge.

This distortion results from the triumph of reactive forces, which occurred when the injured party's perspective prevailed and reactive types began to create values. This triumph relies on a fiction essential for the blame of oneself and life, participating in the formation of metaphysics and beliefs that devalue existence. This fiction is the belief in a subject separate from the manifestation of force, underpinning the idea of free will, original sin, and the Final Judgment.

Nietzsche defines bad conscience as «the profound illness that man had to contract under the pressure of the most radical change he has ever experienced, the change that occurred when he found himself definitively enclosed within the confines of society and peace»¹³. This change, as discussed in the Second Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, is directly linked to a deviation in the creditor-debtor relationship.

Peace is an expression of the introversion of instincts and results from a change in the debt relationship between individuals and the community that takes place with the formation of the State. Bad conscience is also associated with the feeling of guilt, which intensifies with the rise of Christianity and the deepening of the debt to the divinity.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, the creditor-debtor relationship is presented as the origin of the most primitive form of personal relationship, from which all social complexes derive. Economic relations are identified as expressions of man as the «appraising animal», «who assigns value and measures»:

Buying and selling, together with their psychological apparatus, are even older than the beginnings of any form of social organization or alliance: it was only from the most rudimentary form of personal law that the germinating feeling of exchange, contract, debt [*Schuld*], right, obligation, compensation was transferred to the

¹³ F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Essay II, § 16.

roughest and most incipient social complexes (in their relation with similar complexes), simultaneously with the habit of comparing, measuring, calculating one power against another¹⁴.

In the prehistoric period of humanity, the creditor–debtor relationship served as a means by which culture endowed the human being with memory and collectively provided a future, creating an animal capable of making promises. In this case, it is, according to Nietzsche, a memory of the will, engaged with the future, which is the fulfilment of the promise. At this prehistoric stage, memory would not yet inhibit the active faculty of forgetting that Nietzsche attributes to the noble in the First Essay and connects to action in the Second Untimely Meditation. However, Nietzsche points out the possible contradiction already inherent in the mnemonics implied in the creditor–debtor relationship, in instituting in man a force that acts in opposition to forgetting, which for Nietzsche

it is not a mere *vis inertiae* [inertial force], as the superficial believe, but an active inhibitory force, positive in the strictest sense, thanks to which what is experienced, lived, received by us, enters our consciousness no more in a state of digestion (which we might call «psychic assimilation») than the manifold processes of our bodily nutrition or «physical assimilation». To temporarily close the doors and windows of consciousness; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our subterranean world of servant organs cooperating and diverging; a little repose, a little *tabula rasa* of consciousness, so that there may once again be room for the new, above all, for the nobler functions and functionaries, for governing, foreseeing, predetermining (for our organism is hierarchically ordered), this is the use of forgetting, active, as I said, a kind of gatekeeper, custodian of psychic order, peace, and propriety: from which it is immediately clear that there could be no happiness, cheerfulness, hope, pride, or present without forgetting¹⁵.

In the reactive type, the active force of forgetting weakens, and it is in this weakening that resentment resides. The institution of justice then transforms into vengeance. According to Nietzsche, the creditor-debtor relationship, regulated by punishment, remained for a long time detached from the notion of guilt or the criminalization of the will. The deviation of this relationship and the emergence of the feeling of guilt originated in a fiction: the predominance of the perspective of the harmed party. This fiction underlies the notion of the subject and of free will, that is, the idea that an action can be separated from a subject who chooses whether to act. In reality, there is nothing beyond the forces, no subject behind them, and no freedom outside the force of being force.

To demand of force that it not express itself as force, that it not be a will to dominate, a will to triumph, a will to subjugate, a thirst for enemies, resistances, and victories,

¹⁴ Ivi, Essay II, § 8.

¹⁵ Ivi, Essay II, § 1.

is as absurd as demanding of weakness that it express itself as force. A quantum of force is equivalent to the same quantum of drive, will, and activity – better yet, it is nothing other than this very drive, this very willing and acting, and only under the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason crystallized within it), which understands or misunderstands that every action is determined by an actor, a «subject», can it appear otherwise. Just as people distinguish lightning from its flash, taking the flash as an action, the operation of a subject named Lightning, so the morality of the people discriminates between force and the expressions of force, as if behind the strong there were an indifferent substratum free to express or not express force. But no such substratum exists; there is no «being» behind doing, acting, or becoming; «the agent» is a fiction added to the action – the action is everything¹⁶.

This fiction, associated with the predominance of the perspective of the harmed party, allowed the triumph of reactive forces and constitutes the mode of value creation of the slave. The relation between forces came to be understood as a substantial opposition, good and evil, and no longer relational, defined by the pathos of the distance of noble valuation, good and bad. The perspective that there is responsibility but not guilt is said to have predominated throughout human prehistory, when punishment functioned to record memory and generate compensation that settled the debt, without deepening guilt in the debtor. Compensation was justified by the equivalence between harm and pain, in which the pleasure of seeing the harm-doer suffer equalled the harm caused. Punishment thus delayed the emergence of bad conscience but was not its origin. For Nietzsche, bad conscience arose when humans could no longer externalize their instincts and these turned against themselves, reaching its apex with Christian morality and the stabilized peace promoted by the State. The individual's debt to the State became unpayable, and the debt to the deity deepened.

Between Oswald de Andrade and Nietzsche there is an apparent divergence regarding vengeance. While Nietzsche denounces its reactive character, Oswald identifies the Nietzschean transvaluation with anthropophagic vengeance as an expression of social justice and an anticolonial strategy. Vengeance is an inseparable foundation of the anthropophagic utopia.

The Tupinambá anthropophagic ritual and the war system in which it was embedded may help resolve this apparent contradiction. It involves a creditor-debtor relationship between ancestors and enemies, which unfolds between past and present through vengeance and memory. The interpretation of Manuela Carneiro da Cunha and Viveiros de Castro attributes to the Tupinambá war system a sense of memory close to Nietzsche's notion of memory for the future. In the Tupinambá case, vengeance resembles a feature Nietzsche opposes resentment: reverence for enemies.

How much reverence for enemies a noble man possesses! And such reverence is already a bridge to love. He claims his enemy as a mark of distinction; he cannot

¹⁶ Ivi, Essay I, § 13.

endure an enemy in whom there is nothing to despise and much to venerate. In contrast, let us imagine «the enemy» as conceived by the man of resentment – and precisely herein lies his achievement, his creation: he conceived «the evil enemy», «the evil one», and this as a basic concept, from which he also elaborates, as an equivalent image, a «good»-himself¹⁷.

Reverence for enemies in Tupinambá society is evident in the centrality of enmity in social organization and in the meaning of society, determined by these enmities. Only the strong and courageous were eaten, possibly not to absorb their courage, but because it was necessary to avenge their death and perpetuate enmity between groups. The division of the dead enemy's flesh committed the entire group, transferring to the relatives the expectation of recovering the dead's substance in a future vengeance.

According to Florestan Fernandes, there was no intention to break the cycle of vengeance, reinforced by ritual incisions related to the adoption of new names for each dead enemy. These incisions exposed the sacrificers to further vengeance. The impregnation of children with the dead's blood had a similar effect, committing them to future vengeance and sustaining the warrior system. This commitment was not due to the enemy's substance, but as a blood pact with living relatives¹⁸.

According to Fernandes, this vengeance was subordinated to the society's religious system, with ancestors or spirits of the dead determining the war. Vengeance was subject to the obedience of the tribe's «collective we» to these spirits, but also to the group's internal needs. For Fernandes, war existed for and through religion, without autonomous meaning. The victim's position in relation to the sacred determined the ritual massacre, whose function was to promote collective and direct communion with the sacred. By contrast, Manuela Carneiro da Cunha and Viveiros de Castro understand that the meaning of vengeance is not external to itself. The memory of ancestors was not an end in itself, but subordinated to vengeance itself, which consisted in the relation with enemies. Hereditary memory would therefore be the memory of vengeance, not the remembrance of an identity recovered through the enemy. This interpretation approaches Nietzsche's, in the function of the future and of the will, which produces humans capable of promising and disposing of the future. Thus, it is the relation of enmity that would determine the entire social organization of the Tupinambás, including the prestige of warriors and the relation with ancestors.

The nexus of Tupinambá society is vengeance. But vengeance is nothing other than a link between what was and what will be, the dead of the past and the dead to come, or, equivalently, the past living and the future living. To say that its nexus is vengeance is, therefore, to say that Tupinambá society exists in temporality, that it conceives itself as constituted in time and by time. Dependent on what is external to it, Tupinambá society makes death in the ritual space and through consumption the

¹⁷ Ivi, Essay I, § 10.

¹⁸ F. Fernandes, *A Função Social da Guerra na Sociedade Tupinambá*, Globo, São Paulo 2006, p. 174.

ultimate honorable death: it is this that guarantees memory. Memory, as we have seen, is not the personal immortality that the Greek hero achieves through glorious death, immortality constituted by fame among men, but a memory whose sole content is vengeance, of which the victim is both the result and the pledge. As the result of previous acts of vengeance, it guarantees the existence of the group that devours it, while as the pledge of future vengeance, it guarantees the existence of the group to which it belongs. In both respects and for both groups, vengeance is the thread that unites past and future, and in this sense, vengeance, memory, and time are inseparable¹⁹.

This is also a creditor-debtor relation in which one death does not settle the previous one, but updates the relation and the future, in a circularization of memory through the substance of the dead warriors' bodies, driving the creation of the future through vengeance. While the memory of vengeance conditions access to paradise, the memory of customs does not function in the same way. Inconstancy and aversion to dogma express a society in which tradition and memory are not ends in themselves, but exist in relation to a future open to and conditioned by the existence of the other.

Final Considerations

The anthropophagic conception of justice, elaborated by Oswald de Andrade in dialogue with Nietzsche's idea of struggle, is not based on equality, but on affirming struggle as a sovereign value. In the anthropophagic worldview, the ethical principle of «eating only the strong» preserves the conflictual nature of life, ensuring the perpetual renewal of active forces. Struggle is not a means subordinated to another end, but the original norm, an anthropophagic jusnaturalism that regulates valuation, legitimization, and the ordering of other social norms. Justice, in this sense, ceases to be the realization of equivalence and becomes the device that guarantees the continuity of conflict.

Starting from this conception and considering other aspects of this philosophy, as well as the dialogues that the author himself suggests with relativistic physics, drawing on Eddington and Einstein, and with the phenomenological relativism of the biologist Jakob von Uexküll, it is possible to follow a path of philosophical inquiry only outlined by Oswald de Andrade regarding a relativistic and anthropophagic natural law. In this sense, Indigenous thought and anthropophagy as a permutation of perspective, as proposed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, can contribute to understanding anthropophagy as a response to the difficulty of conceiving ethical relations between worlds, that is, between distinct and equally valid frameworks of values, without resorting to the idea of universal or transcendental values. Furthermore, a dialogue between this philosophy and the «dualism in

¹⁹ M. Carneiro da Cunha, E.B. Viveiros de Castro, *Vingança e Temporalidade: os Tupinambá*, in «Journal de la Société des Américanistes», 71, 1985, pp. 191-208: 201.

perpetual disequilibrium», as identified by Lévi-Strauss, may reveal answers present in Indigenous thought to the impossibility of establishing absolute equivalences. Asymmetry, in this context, assumes a positive and essential value of life, allowing for the maintenance of its movement and the preservation of relationships through contradictions that are constantly renewed but never resolved. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the deepening of an anthropophagic natural law may also contribute to the contemporary debate on «cultural appropriation», by seeking answers outside the patriarchal paradigm of property.