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# Lack, excess, and time in the *Cannibalist Manifesto* by Oswald de Andrade

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### Abstract

Abstract: This study explores the relation between figurations of lack and excess and historical time, particularly within the context of the manifold modernist temporalities in Brazil. We undertake this endeavor by closely reading Oswald de Andrade's *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928), aiming to elucidate how the author employs notions of lack and excess to question modern historical time as a device to synchronize diverse temporalities. In conclusion, we underscore the significance of investigating artifacts of historical expression beyond conventional historiography to grasp temporal experiences akin to those of Brazilian modernism and to seek alternative modes of conveying the constituent multiplicity of the entire temporal experience.

### Keywords

Brazilian Literature. Modernisms. Time.



## Lack and Excess and Modernist Time

Lack and excess configure neither uncommon figures in literature nor foreign analytical categories to literary critics and analysis, frequently occurring in historiographical accounts. Nonetheless, our understanding of what they mean to our imagination of the past remains largely obscure. This obscurity becomes particularly curious considering that lack and excess can fairly reasonably be considered – more than simply analytical categories – features of the human psyche; see, for instance, Jacques Lacan’s characterization of desire as the relation between the Subject and a lack (*manque*), rather than between the Subject and an Object, desire as the desire for something else (Darriba, 2005; Lacan, 1995) or George Bataille’s economy of excessive energy and expenditure (*dépense*) – in Freudian words, *drive* – as cornerstones of subjectification and movement (Bataille, 1985; Fortes, 2010; Shaviro, 1990). As psychical and existential principles, lack and excess also appear in the relationship between human and non-human animals, as Animal Studies propose, and between the “standard person” – white, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, young, etc. – and people with disabilities, as widely discussed in critical disability studies (Hall, 2019; Mollow, 2012; Roets; Braidotti, 2012), those from different ethnic backgrounds, or colonized subjects, as recently explored by Gautam Basu Thakur in *Postcolonial Lack* (2020) – his recent investigation into the ways that ideas such as lack, identity, culture, and excess have featured in postcolonial thought.

Thus, although we will discuss the Brazilian literary modernism and modernist historical imagination, it would be inaccurate (to say the least) to claim that lack and excess only belong to the modern/modernist ways of framing alterity. Nevertheless, certain ideas of lack and excess have played a central role in many modern/modernist intellectual traditions, with many examples. Walter Mignolo, commenting on the inaugural events of Latin American modernity, writes that “lack and excess were two features persistently assigned to Indians, as well as non-Christians, in order to locate their correspondence with the standard model of humanity” (2012, p. 185). In the case of modern colonial India, Dipesh Chakrabarty writes that “within this narrative shared by imperialist and nationalist imaginations, the ‘Indian’ was always a figure of lack. There was always, in other words, room in this story for characters who embodied, on behalf of the native, the theme of inadequacy or failure” (2000, p. 31). Edouard Glissant, in *Caribbean Discourse*, stresses that a “recurring feature [of Caribbean Creole tales] is the criterion for assessing the ‘benefits’ that man here recognizes as his own. Where it is a matter of the pleasure of living, or the joy of possessing, the Creole tale recognizes only two conditions, absence or excess. A pathetic lucidity. The benefits are ridiculously small or excessive” (1999, p. 131). Countless Polish intellectuals characterize their nation or intellectual tradition as “lacking” something



in comparison to its great neighboring countries or even affirming that they lack something (for instance, Russians' lack of civility; see Mayblin; Piekut; Valentine, 2016, p. 65). The use of notions of lack and excess is, therefore, well documented in many traditions of thought, especially in those dedicated to thinking about national culture and identity.

Likewise, in Brazil lack and excess have configured and remain figures of fundamental importance in reflecting on Brazilian culture and identity. Based on Mario Vieira de Melo's *Desenvolvimento e Cultura* (1953), the notorious sociologist and literary critic Antonio Candido forwarded a typology to the phases of Brazilian thought centered on the idea of backwardness (*atraso* or temporal lack/excess, as we will detail), organizing the Brazilian intellectual history into a succession of an "unconsciousness of backwardness," a "mild consciousness of backwardness," and a "catastrophic consciousness of backwardness" (1989). In turn, Ettore Finazzi-Agrò (2010), in a more psychoanalytical vein derived from Giorgio Agamben's readings of Sigmund Freud, suggests that it is possible to speak of a melancholy (a feeling of loss of an unidentified and yet desired object in Freudian theory; thus a form of lack) characteristic of the historical-literary imagination of Brazilian modernism that derives from a phantasmatic double-absence: the impossibility of being modern in ideal terms and the impossibility of going back to a primitive and now lost Indigenous Brazil, in addition to the idea of double-absence, which Ettore Finazzi-Agrò mainly attributes to texts of the first Brazilian modernism and in which the Italian intellectual identifies, in some canonical Brazilian authors – namely, Euclides da Cunha, Mario de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, and Pedro Nava –, the effort to represent national identity through lack. In Finazzi-Agrò's words about Mario de Andrade:

Few writers have faced with greater clairvoyance and more acute awareness the question of representing the meaning and form of national identity without resorting to hypothetical historical reconstructions of the Origin, but, on the contrary, by writing precisely from the Lack [*falta*], that is, by settling on this paradoxically "non-historical" character of Brazilian history. (Finazzi-Agrò, 2001, p. 176-177)

Therefore, Finazzi-Agrò claims "*Lack* in the place of *Origin* – or even, if we rethink the concept of origin in a non-mythical key, [...] *Lack as Origin*" (Sterzi, 2022, p. 132). This view of Brazilian culture evinces the centrality of lack as a proper historical category in a profoundly acute way – perhaps precisely due to its non-historicity, in Finazzi-Agrò's understanding.

In turn, some researchers have noted excess in Brazilian thought, albeit in a more discreet way than lack. It mainly emerges in studies on Brazilian romanticism, such as in Teresa



Cristina Mauro's (2020) recent studies on the excesses of love, instincts, and death in *Noite na Taverna* by Álvares de Azevedo, a classic of Brazilian romanticism. Antonio Candido (1989) had indicated the importance of excess or abundance of nature in the myth of the "new country" at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century (Hansen, 2012), whereas Haroldo de Campos (1989) had evoked the centrality of excess in Baroque<sup>1</sup> aesthetics in his critical review of the literary chronology Candido proposed in his *Formation of Brazilian Literature* (1959). On a less academic note, the prevalent anecdotal interpretations of the Brazilian past see, in Brazilian history, an excess of political corruption (Schwarcz, 2019) or a very rich (which abounds in wealth) but sadly and poorly managed (or "exploited") country. These ideas of lack and excess often complement each other in forming historical cultures. Ettore Finazzi-Agrò insightfully notes the interweaving of these ideas in Brazilian thought when commenting on Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões (The Backlands)*. "*Os Sertões* is seen there as an 'exemplary and paradigmatic' case of a writing starting from Lack," comments Eduardo Sterzi (2022, p. 132) on Finazzi-Agrò's reading. He continues:

We cannot forget that it is another book that poses problems for those who want to circumscribe it to an exclusive genre or form; it is another text from that sequence of failed "novels," of novels in lack – at the same time that, and without contradiction, in excess – that constitute a good part of the best Brazilian prose of the 20th century, including *Macunaíma*, *Grande sertão: veredas* and *Água viva*, and going back at least as far as Haroldo de Campos' *Galáxias* and Paulo Leminski's *Catatau*.

On the one hand, Sterzi's and Finazzi-Agrò's works are good entries to understanding the role of figurations of lack in Brazilian culture. As in the previous quotation, they point toward this non-contradictory presence of lack and excess in many "failed novels" of Brazilian literature. On the other hand, these works give no clear direction as to how Brazilian writers *articulate* lack *and* excess. Knowing how this articulation operates is particularly important because, as we will discuss in the following pages, lack and excess presuppose a model in relation to which scarceness and overabundance are determined as such<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the articulation of lack and excess

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, the baroque imaginary of abundance has a privileged place in continental Latin-American poetics, from Severo Sarduy's notion of *neobarroco* (2013, p. 1385-1404) to the contemporary "*barroso/neobarroso*" tendency in the Argentinian fiction and critique that unites an abundant, excessive verbal style with the naturalistic imagery of extreme misery, insalubrity, and dirt of the slums – misery as a figure might be seen as a paradoxical one, that of an excessive lack (see Guerrero, 2012; Hernández, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> João Cezar de Castro Rocha (2017, p.33) identifies an essential component in these models of what he calls (on different occasions) "poetics of emulation," "Shakespearian cultures," and – based on René Girard's works –



against a certain model entails an imagination of time and history. The following analysis of how Oswald de Andrade portrayed lack and excess in his *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928) is the first effort of a more extensive study that seeks to offer an overview of the figurations of lack and excess in the Brazilian modernism of the late 1920s and the imagination of history they engendered. We believe that we can derive a theoretical substrate from a study of the Brazilian case that can analyze other modernisms from the point of view of how they articulated lack and excess.

Before we analyze the manifesto, let us further examine the connection between the figurations of lack and excess and modernism by turning to the work of philosopher of history and conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck. Koselleck's ideas are important because they enable us to explore a fundamental aspect of the relation between lack/excess and modernities/modernisms: what the author calls the "spatialization of time" – i.e., the modern tendency to perceive cultural differences as temporal differences and to elaborate them as different positions in a singular and collective time.

According to Koselleck, modernity<sup>3</sup> is characterized by semantics that are specific to historical time. The German historian argues that the arrival of the Europeans on the American continent, the invention of the printing press, and religious wars exposed European cultures (his research only addresses Germanic and French thinkers) to a series of experiences that neither corresponded to nor could be more satisfactorily explained by past experiences. The result of this asymmetry between new and old experiences was a growing distrust of the possibility of predicting the future based on what has been experienced – or, in the characteristic terminology of Koselleck's work, a distancing between the space of experience and the horizon

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"mimetic intuition" or "desire," a set of strategic procedures non-hegemonic cultures developed to creatively address the growing asymmetries imposed by the modern articulation of a world-system. They are essential for they constitute one core paradox of cultural experiences, which is the necessity of defining oneself in relation to the Other. In the words of Castro Rocha (2017, p. 344), "el sujeto que emerge de la teoría mimética es un sujeto cuyo 'mal ontológico' lo obliga a adoptar un modelo, sin el cual no llegará siquiera a determinar sus objetos de deseo. Reitero: lo que importa subrayar es la centralidad del otro en la determinación del yo." Non-hegemonic cultures make this necessity explicit – as Silviano Santiago (2001, p. 31) puts in his classic essay on the in-betweenness of Latin-American cultural experience: "To speak, to write, means to speak against, to write against" – which tends toward concealment in hegemonic cultures. Castro Rocha unsurprisingly identifies Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagy as a paradigmatic case of these poetics of emulation, as we will show in our analysis of the Manifesto.

<sup>3</sup> Koselleck defines modernity by the hegemony of this particular time configuration that we describe in the following part of this paragraph. Hence, modernity as temporalization consolidates itself in the period from 1750 to 1850, which Koselleck calls *Sattelzeit*. However, on several occasions, the historian claims that the process of distancing between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations that peaks during the *Sattelzeit* starts with a set of important events: the invention of the mobile press, the arrival of the Europeans in the Americas, and the religious wars. These could be considered the time marks of the beginning of what Koselleck calls modernity. The author never clearly defines an end for modernity, but many scholars who based their work on Reinhart Koselleck's theories suggest the Second World War as its final boundary. See Gumbrecht (1997) and Hellerma (2020).





of expectation. As a result, if the pre-modern semantics of historical time were characterized by a broad equivalence between what was experienced and what is expected to be experienced (a belief in the repeatability of the past in the future, a cyclical time), the modern semantics of historical time are marked by an asymmetry between what has been lived and what is yet to be lived (a disbelief in the repeatability of the past in the future, a linear time). Moreover, Koselleck's studies on conceptual history show the gradual transition from an idea of multiple histories to a singular History (with a capital H) from 1780 to 1830 (to which all cultures belong).

The linearity of historical time and the singularity of History as a phenomenon, which represent the marks of the semantics of modern time for Koselleck, configure the conditions that enabled modern intellectuals to locate the differences between cultures/peoples as different positions *in* the same singular and linear time. This idea of history and time enables us to state that a particular culture (e.g., Brazilian, Indian, Indigenous, or Polish) is backward and another (e.g., French, German, or English) is advanced. Lagging cultures are perceived as *not yet* advanced, in a more primitive position at the same time. Koselleck names this organization of differences in the space of time as the *spatialization of time*. We can derive from Koselleck's theory that *the function of figurations of lack and excess in the hegemonic modern historical imagination precisely produces differences in time*.

Before moving forward with this argument, it is important to note that the wide discussion of the Koselleckian notion of linearity as a defining feature of Western European modern time. Zoltán Simon and Marek Tamm (2023) have recently pointed to the inherent contraction between the supposed linearity of modern historical time – an idea much older than modernity that dates back to at least Aristotle – and another recurring feature (also present in Koselleck's works): acceleration. They note that "For where there is acceleration, there is no linearity anyway, and vice versa. Acceleration is a nonlinear, exponential trajectory [...]" (2023, p. 13). Their point, rather than claiming that modern time can neither linear nor accelerated, states that modern historical time is mainly defined by its ways of framing change as "taking place against the backdrop of a *processual continuity*" (p. 14).

It is also important to note that the modern and modernist imaginations of time are two interrelated but rather different things. Modern historiography turned the processual continuity of modern time into its epistemological backbone (Salomon, 2018, p. 13), whereas – according to Hayden White (2014, p. 17) – the first (European) modernist writers ("Conrad, Proust, Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Woolf, Kafka, Stein, Gide") "seemed to turn against 'history' as a cause rather than a solution to the problem of how to address a present oppressed by the remains of the past," taking the relation between past and present "as its principal object of interest" (idem). In other words, although modernism can and has been frequently understood as the aesthetic dimension



of modernity, these aesthetic representations (or allegories, or figurations [...]) have frequently been very reactive to modernization and its effects, more than often stressing its fractures and contradictions. As Salomon puts it:

In literature and the arts, *Chronos* embarked on new adventures. The novel's form, exemplified by figures such as Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, not only challenged chronological time but also aimed to contemplate it within a framework that liberated narrative from continuous and linear chronological sequences. The progression of the narrative no longer aligned with the order of events. Modern writers 'relinquished' aligning the representation of their 'characters' histories' with 'chronological progression.' The pursuit of a 'theme from beginning to end,' imbued with a 'chronologically ordered global treatment,' ceased to be the ideal of novelistic writing and composition. Thus, according to Erich Auerbach, its primary innovation lay in a novel 'treatment of time,' in the discovery of 'other times' (2018, p. 14)

Modernist writers are not usually and certainly not necessarily inventing "other times." Instead, they are just discovering them – or rather uncovering them. "We all live and have always lived in different times" write Simon and Tamm (2023, p. 17). They continue:

"The baseline for human existence on Earth is that we are out of sync with each other, as well as with our surroundings, simply because we live in a condition of multiple, heterogeneous, and diverging times," as Helge Jordheim (2022a: 47) has recently put it. The idea of a homogenous and universal time is a modern myth (Hamann 2016), or, more exactly, as we will see, a felicitous act of temporal synchronization. But we have to bear in mind that this myth or act of synchronization has never been exclusive. Ever since the emergence of modern historical time, there has been a strong alternative tradition of thinking in terms of the coexistence of multiple historical times.

What is at stake in modernist literature, then, is precisely the singular-collective modern time as an act or performance of synchronization.<sup>4</sup> Modernisms invented ways of recognizing

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<sup>4</sup> One equally productive way to frame these acts and performances of synchronization/desynchronization is addressing them as part of a broader set of anti-hegemonic politics of time – "a politics which takes the temporal



and addressing the multiplicity of times and offered alternative forms of synchronization and desynchronization of times. In traditions marked by a colonial past, these acts of synchronization and desynchronization are characterized by time conflicts related to the uneven concurrence of the time of the colonizer against the time of the colonized. As Simon and Tamm (2023, p. 46) point out:

The conflicts arising out of modern historical time are not mere abstractions. To a large extent, the non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous, having been translated into notions of leaders of development and backwardness, served as a tool of legitimation for the Western colonial enterprise, old and new forms of resource extractions (Riofrancos 2017; Lochery 2022), and histories of violence (Ghosh 2021).

To put it in a thesis-like form: *while the function of the figurations of lack and excess in modernity is mainly to produce differences in (or out of) time, modernisms also use them to perform different acts of temporal synchronization and desynchronization, and a systematic study of these figurations enables us to map the nuances of the complex modernist temporalities and historicities.*

In this paper, we will take a first step toward developing this thesis by showing how Oswald de Andrade uses lack and excess to subvert the modern hegemonic idea of historical time. The next part of this study will attempt to locate the *Cannibalist Manifesto* in the Brazilian literary and intellectual tradition to understand its importance as a literary document. This importance is closely related to one of the temporalities – those of urgency, inversion, and multiplicity – the Manifesto carries within itself.

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structures of social practices as the specific objects of its transformative (or preservative) intent” (Osborne, 1995, p. XII). Oswald de Andrade, as Gilberto Freyre points out at a conference in 1946, was one of the Brazilian modernist writers who “early on endeavored to save it [the modernism] from remaining merely literary or aesthetic; one of those who early on sought not only through words but also through action to add social meaning to it, and within social meaning, political meaning” (Freyre, 1965, p. 8; *apud* Valle, 2020, p. 34); meaning that he was particularly concerned with the social implication of his work and particularly aware of the transformative and preservative intents of history – as attested by his wide reference to historical sources and texts in *Pau-Brasil* (1925) and in the *Cannibalist Manifesto*. As we are going to see in the last part of this paper, Oswald de Andrade implodes the allochronism – the denial of coevalness (Fabian, 2014) or the assumption that the temporal difference between the colonizer and the colonized should be framed in normative and hierarchical terms (Bevernage, 2016) – of the colonial politics of time by performing at least three discernible acts of resynchronization/desynchronization through figurations of lack and excess in the Manifesto. For a rich overview of the debates surrounding the politics and allochronic uses of time, particularly in the discussion about the performative nature of the temporal boundary between present and absent times, see Ramalho (2023).



## The Cannibalist Manifesto, Crisis, and Kairological Temporality

The desire to produce an authentically Brazilian intellectual and artistic life is long-standing and dates back to before the country declared its independence from Portugal. The Declaration of Independence in 1822 was an important milestone for these yearnings to become practical efforts, gain substance, and eventually become a Brazilian state project. However, this was not enough to produce a truly national art according to the diagnosis of a group of intellectuals and artists who came, in their majority, from the municipality of São Paulo in the late 1910s. These intellectuals and artists, who would come to claim for themselves the title of “modernists,” saw in Romantic literature, Realism, and *fin-de-siècle* Decadentism important steps toward creating a national art, which remained limited by their imitation of European trends. They also considered that the academicism of some of their peers at the time – especially the Parnassians – was an obstacle to the insertion of Brazil in the world panorama in the arts and geopolitically. Aiming to “update the clock of national arts,” this group composed of, among many names, Oswald de Andrade, Mario de Andrade, Di Cavalcanti, Paulo Prado, Anita Malfatti, Menotti Del Picchia, and Tarsila do Amaral, organized the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Week of Modern Art) in 1922 at the Theatro Municipal in São Paulo – and quickly worked to consecrate it as not only the initial milestone of modern art in Brazil but as the inaugural milestone of a “new quarter of civilization.”

In 1928, when the *Cannibalist Manifesto* was written and published, the scenario already differed somewhat from that of the *Semana de Arte Moderna*. In that year, six of the most important works of Brazilian modernism were published: Tarsila do Amaral’s *Abaporu* and Mario de Andrade’s *Macunaíma* – arguably the two most important works of the cannibalist movement, alongside Oswald’s manifesto (1928) and Raul Bopp’s *Cobra Norato* (1933)<sup>5</sup>; Cassiano Ricardo’s *Martim Cererê* – an epic poem that synthesizes the aesthetic dimension of the ultraconservative modernism of the *Grupo da Anta* and *Integralismo*;<sup>6</sup> Paulo Prado’s *Retrato do Brasil* (*The Portrait*

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<sup>5</sup> Mario never acknowledged any affiliation with the Cannibalist movement, especially after he severed his personal relations with Oswald for reasons on which scholars differ. Alexandre Rabelo (2022) has recently defended the hypothesis that Mario would have gotten tired of the jokes Oswald made about his sexuality – a sensitive topic for the author of *Macunaíma*, who never spoke about it publicly. The review of *Macunaíma* entitled *Miss Macunaíma* (1929), published by Oswald under the pseudonym Otacílio Alecrim in *Revista de Antropofagia*, marked the end of the Andrades’ friendship.

<sup>6</sup> *Integralismo* was a Brazilian political movement that emerged in the 1930s, characterized by its advocacy for a form of nationalist and authoritarian governance. Inspired by European fascist ideologies, particularly those of Benito Mussolini’s Italy, the Integralist movement aimed to establish a centralized and corporatist state in Brazil. Led by Plínio Salgado, *integralistas* promoted themes of nationalism, anti-communism, and traditionalism while emphasizing the importance of social unity and the preservation of Brazilian cultural values. The movement, symbolized by its green-shirted uniformed members, gained significant attention during the 1930s, especially after Getúlio Vargas’ rise to power in 1930. However,



of Brazil) – a historical essay that sets the tone for the interpretative essayism of the 1930s and 1940s; and, finally, José Américo de Almeida's *A Bagaceira* (Trash) – widely considered the first Brazilian regionalist novel and, therefore, a source of inspiration for the second and third generations of modernism. It is, thus, the year that decisively marks the diversification of the modernist project that united most of these intellectuals in 1922.

Oswald de Andrade wrote the *Cannibalist Manifesto* – the object of our analysis – after receiving as a gift from his then-wife, Tarsila do Amaral, the painting *Abaporu* – a name that, in the Tupi language, means “the man who eats people.” The text was published for the first time that same year, 1928, in the first issue of *Revista de Antropofagia* (*Cannibalist Review*), a literary magazine Oswald and other modernist intellectuals founded, giving rise to the so-called anthropophagic or cannibalist strand of Brazilian modernism. Traditionally, anthropophagy (and the *Manifesto* as its inaugural document) was interpreted as a moment of radicalization of the first Brazilian avant-garde modernism, therefore, as a continuity of the project of the *Paulista* modernists realized six years earlier in the Week of Modern Art of 1922. Indeed, as Jorge Schwartz has demonstrated in *Um Brasil em Tom Menor: Pau-Brasil e Antropofagia* (1998), there are many continuities to be drawn between the project of 1922 and the numerous strains of avant-gardism that emerged in the following years. These continuities are noticeable in the work of Oswald de Andrade, for instance, in the similarities between *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (1924) and the *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928). Recently, Ulisses do Valle (2020) has defended the position, using Oswald's insightful expression, that the struggle against a “photographic prejudice” is the driving force that unites the avant-gardes not only of São Paulo but from different parts of the country, despite differences in ideological alignment and cultural contexts. Valle (2020, p. 36, 43) demonstrates how Oswald de Andrade remained loyal to this unifying principle by analyzing a devastating review of Paulo Prado's *Retrato do Brasil* (1928), published by Oswaldo Costa under the pseudonym of Tamandaré in the *Cannibalist Review* in April of 1929. Costa's review was published with Oswald de Andrade's approval, which might have led to the end of Prado and Andrade's decade-long friendship and intellectual collaboration. The critique was centered – among other things – on the realist intentions of Prado's historical-psychological essay, a capital sin against the unifying principle of the historical avant-gardes.

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by the late 1930s, internal divisions and Vargas' shift toward a more centralized authoritarian regime led to the decline of the Integralist movement's influence. The movement was officially banned in 1937 when Vargas established his *Estado Novo* regime, which suppressed various political activities. *Integralismo* is usually seen as a political development of the aesthetic ideals of *Grupo da Anta*, a Brazilian cultural movement in the 1920s, led by Menotti del Picchia, Guilherme de Almeida, and Cassiano Ricardo. Associated with conservatism, it aimed to establish a uniquely Brazilian cultural identity, emphasizing national traditions, folklore, and indigenous influences. The movement's ideas were promoted by *Revista da Anta*, a magazine founded by the group, which played a role in shaping modern Brazilian literature and art.



Nonetheless, some scholars' interpretations differ from those that emphasize the continuity of the 1922 project in the 1920s avant-gardes by shifting the focus of their analysis to the matter of nationalism rather than the questions of form and the status of art.<sup>7</sup> Recently, many specialists on Oswald de Andrade's works have begun to defend the idea that although his second manifesto (the *Cannibalist* one) is a work written *in* Brazil, it is not primarily written *on* Brazil. In other words, even if the sign of the nation and nationalism are still present in the meaning horizon of the *Manifesto*, its originality and relevance derive precisely from the fact that it goes beyond the project that unified the generation of 1922: that of updating Brazilian culture. Thus, as Rafael Cardoso (2022) and Eduardo Sterzi state in different texts, we also understand the *Cannibalist Manifesto* as a reaction to the modernist nationalism of 1922, embodied in a much more explicit manner by the aforementioned Grupo da Anta and Movimento Integralista. In the words of Eduardo Sterzi (2022, p. 5), anthropophagy is:

[...] the active and incessant questioning of the great figures of the One (identity, individuality, subjectivity, but also people, nation, language, literature, etc.); on the other hand, the difficulty or even impossibility for the reader to distinguish between culture and politics, artistic *poiésis* and social *praxis*, but no longer through the usual ways of subordinating the first to the second term, but, instead, through the conceptual and practical renewal of both poles (culture is no longer what it was; politics is no longer what it was, etc.) and the consequent dissolution of the dichotomies that they, in their supposedly "pure" forms, engendered.

In this sense, it differs from the 1922 project in that the latter sought to stabilize the One, to find its pure form.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the *Cannibalist Manifesto* retains an essential component from the spirit of 1922, which shows one of its temporalities: the sense of urgency and

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<sup>7</sup> A similar quarrel between two different strains of literary criticism is seen in Gilda de Mello e Souza's critique (1979) of Haroldo de Campos' *Morfologia de Macunaíma* (1973). According to Henrique Gaio (2016, p. 27), the disagreement of these authors over the modes of composition of Mario de Andrade's *Macunaíma* – Campos defends the position that the work was composed according to the modular form of Russian fabular tales derived from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Tale* (1928) and Souza defends the thesis that it was composed by an emulation of procedures used by composers of popular Brazilian music – result in a fundamental difference of analytical emphasis. While Campos' analytical framework points towards an interpretation of Andrade's rhapsody centered on its aesthetic and formal intentions, Souza roots Andrade's compositional procedures in the Brazilian cultural experience, opening the work to analogical interpretations and placing the problem of the Brazilian national entity in the center of the book.

<sup>8</sup> In the words of Mauro Franco and Henrique Gaio (2020, p. 188): "insistir em certa imagem de Brasil não significa que Oswald aponte para sua existência no passado ou no presente, mas sim que essa imagem conteria uma potência crítica de desestabilização e tensionamento de certas determinações existentes no presente e ocidentais no caso, o mundo da civilização industrial, do trabalho e por que não, dos fascismos."



the desire for immediate and critical intervention. This is why Oswald de Andrade's option for the manifesto genre is not merely a coincidence or just an imitation of the trends of that time – as many have suggested from an interpretation of the *Cannibalist Manifesto* based on other avant-garde manifestos that preceded it, such as the Futurist and Dadá manifestos.<sup>9</sup> "The manifesto," writes Walderez Ramalho (2012, p. 86), "is a text of action. The very act of writing manifestos intends to expose and interfere in a present crisis." In the words of Hayden White, quoted by Ramalho:

The manifesto is a radical genre. It presupposes a time of crisis and that, moreover, the crisis is manifest, plain for all to see. And it usually calls for action (or in the case of religious manifestos, a change of heart) to overcome or ameliorate the situation at hand. The time of the manifesto is the present (and the immediate future); the 'now' time (Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*) of decision. (White, 2007, p. 220)

These passages emphasize the relation between the time of crisis and the *Manifesto*, a well explored relation in the specialized bibliography on the subject, as Ramalho (2021, p. 86, note number 209) documents. The crisis to which the *Cannibalist Manifesto* responds is not the same crisis to which the Week of 1922 responded. In the words of Oswald de Andrade at the end of his previous manifesto, the *Manifesto da Poesia Pau Brasil* of 1924, "The work of the futurist generation [including the modernists of 1922] was enormous: to set the imperial clock of national literature. Once this step has been accomplished, another problem arises. To be regional and pure in its time" (Andrade, 1990, p. 44). In short, the problem of the backwardness of cultural and artistic life had already been overcome. The crisis that the *Cannibalist Manifesto* provokes and in which it intervenes in a double and ambiguous movement is the crisis of messianic philosophy, the "crisis of the Western priesthood" (Andrade, 1972, p. 82), the "crisis of the structure of the bourgeois regime" (p. 118), the "crisis of kinship" (p. 118), or, in a single term, the crisis of the patriarchal regime. We will go into more detail in the following part of this article. For now, it suffices to say that the idea of the patriarchal regime configures nothing more than an elaboration subsequent to the *Manifesto* Oswald de Andrade uses to gather all the characteristics he attributes to the colonizer – the Other – imposed on a people with a matriarchal and anthropophagic culture. In this sense, although the nation no longer occupies the center of Oswald's intellectual production after 1922, the broader problem of the Other and his relationship with the Self continues to be the core of

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<sup>9</sup> About the relation of the Latin American vanguards and Italian Futurism, for example, Jorge Schwartz (1995, p. 40) writes: "The Latin American vanguards criticized or refuted unanimously the Italian Futurism-especially after the First War when Marinetti's support for fascism became more ostensible. Even so, they owe an undeniable debt to the ideology of the Italian school: the refutation of the values of the past and a stake in radical renewal."



Oswald's reflection – now less through the prism of diversity and more through the prism of multiplicity, as we will see in the following part of this text. This is not a particularity of the *Cannibalist Manifesto*, but it seems to be the leading guiding thread of the use of the manifesto genre in peripheral cultural contexts. In João César de Castro Rocha's (2022, p. 207-208) reading:

[...] the manifesto genre made an effective contribution to turning upside down what seemed to be the insurmountable dilemma in the constitution of Latin American cultures: how to think of an original formulation if even the language for its expression is foreign, or at least it was initially imposed? The challenge of *mimesis* crossed centuries of the cultural history of the continent and reached an unprecedented level of tension in the avant-garde movements, especially in the 1920s [...] Final irony: agonistic genre *par excellence*, polemic by definition, conflictive by stylistic trait, in the Latin American vanguards, the manifesto found its convergence in the invention of a way of dealing with the centrality of the other.

The *Cannibalist Manifesto*, therefore, can be read by this prism: it is an invention of a way of dealing with the centrality of the Other. But more than that, as a manifesto, it offers both a diagnosis of the crisis of the centrality of the Other and a critical intervention that aims at subverting the prevailing order, including the order of time. "Manifestos," writes Laura Winkiel (2008, p. 2), "signal a crisis in narratives of progress and the temporal dimensions (past, present, and future) that narrative structures." This is because the manifesto "prioritizes, by the performative force of its language, historical agency in the critical moment of historical rupture and urgency" (Ramalho, 2021, p. 87). This is the temporality Oswald de Andrade's choice of the manifesto genre first reveals: that of urgent and opportune time, time for decision and change. This quality (rather than quantity) of time is called *kairós*. In Ramalho's (2021, p. 85) words:

*The manifesto inscribes and poetically organizes kairological historicities insofar as the genre typically reflects and responds to critical situations. The manifesto "makes one see" the kairological aspect present in the semantic constitution of the concept of crisis and the way it names and articulates historical time.*

The following section will discuss precisely what alternative Oswald de Andrade gives to the centrality of the time of the Other (the modern, colonial, and patriarchal time) in the *Manifesto* by the use of figures of lack and excess. This project, rather than representing another nationalist





attempt to circumscribe Brazilian identity and culture, offers “the postulation of America as a place of displacement, as a place of dispossession” (Sterzi, 2022, p. 17), on the one hand, and of the affirmation of multiplicity and of a synchronic time, on the other.

## **Lack and Excess on the Cannibalist Manifesto: A Two-Fold Subversion of the Modern Imagination of Time<sup>10</sup>**

In the *Cannibalist Manifesto*, Oswald de Andrade figures lack/excess in at least three discernible ways: lack/excess as negative features, as positive features, and the negation of lack/excess – the completeness and sufficiency of things, which, we will argue, produces a gap that allows for the affirmation of the multiplicity (rather than just the diversity) of existence. The various themes in which lack and excess are mobilized include logic/magic, language/form, the naked body, sexuality, *saudade*, laziness/paralysis, and, most importantly, as principles of otherness.

Let us start with the question of logic, which is one of the central themes of the text. In the *Manifesto*, logic is “the spirit without a body” (a. 16), the “canned consciousness” (a. 10), and the “objectified” and “cadaverized” ideas (a. 19). Logic is the principle of the colonizer’s thinking, “source of classical injustices” and “of romantic injustices” (a. 19). Logic is, therefore, negative in the sense that it negatively lacks dynamism (a. 19) and recognition of corporeality (a. 16). Paralysis (a. 47), oppression (a. 53), urban sclerosis (a. 37), and the “antagonistic sublimations” “brought on the caravels” (a. 32) result from it. In other words, logic constrains existence, forces the sublimation of desires and sustains oppression. If “we never permitted the birth of logic among us” (a. 14), as Oswald de Andrade writes, it can only have been imported – violently or not. To it, Oswald opposes magic (a. 18, 27), mystery (a. 27, 29), and divination (“We had no speculation. But we had divination,” a. 36), anthropophagic – “pre-logical” (a. 10), as Andrade writes in reference to Lévy-Bruhl – ways of knowing the world and existing in it.

When Andrade writes, in aphorism number 9, “it was because we never had grammars nor collections of old plants. And we never knew what urban, suburban, frontier, and continental were. Lazy the *mapamundi* of Brazil,” he is not talking about the lack of grammars, collections, or borders as something bad. On the contrary, this lack is good because it means that the “We”

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<sup>10</sup> Inspired by Beatriz Azevedo’s recent analysis of the *Manifesto*, we will refer to specific aphorisms instead of pages. In the brackets following each quotation of the *Cannibalist Manifesto*, the letter *a* stands for *aphorism*, and the number that follows corresponds to the position of the aphorism in the text. This allows us to be more precise and for readers to use different versions of the text in different languages to follow the analysis. The version used as a basis for this analysis is Leslie Bary’s translation of the *Manifesto* into English, published in the *Latin American Literary Review* in 1991. Despite the many problems this translation presents, it is the only published English translation of the text.



evaded the logical evil. The lack of grammar is translated into the experience of language and fluid form, which the poet emulates in the *Cannibalist Manifesto* by telegraphic language. The same goes for laziness. Unlike the paralysis (the lack of movement) that results from logical thought, laziness is “the stop of thought that is dynamic” (a. 19); it is the moment of contemplation that much more resembles Macunaíma’s “*ai que preguiça*”<sup>11</sup> – which is the exercise of the negative potency of the hero without any character, his potency of not doing things, to use terms dear to sociologist Byung-Chul Han (2015) – than the melancholic and apathetic sadness of Paulo Prado’s Brazilian or Monteiro Lobato’s Jeca Tatu<sup>12</sup> – which is the impotence of doing things, the lack of positive powers (power to do) or negative powers (power not to do).

Also positive is the lack of clothing, nudity, and negative is its excess. “What ran over the truth was clothing, the impermeable between the inner and outer worlds,” Oswald writes before calling for a “reaction against the dressed man” in aphorism 7. The same image of clothing as an obstacle between the inner and outer world is present in the work of one of the authors Oswald quotes by name (a. 12), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as thoroughly investigated by Jean Starobinski in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la transparence et l’obstacle* (1953). The dressed man is also the man who sublimates his desires. “Down with the dressed and oppressive social reality registered by Freud-reality without complexes, without madness, without prostitutions and without penitentiaries, in the matriarchy of Pindorama,” Oswald de Andrade once again calls out in the last aphorism of the *Manifesto*. Clothing is a harmful excess. It is the expression of the “paterfamilias” and the “Morality of the Stork,” which, in turn, result from the equation “real ignorance of things + lack of imagination + sense of authority in the face of curious offspring” (a. 41) – lacks, lacks, excesses.

The theme of repressed or exaggerated sexuality also appears in the eighth aphorism of the *Manifesto*, which reads, “Children of the sun, mother of the living. Discovered and loved ferociously, with all the hypocrisy of *saudade* by the immigrants, the slaves and by the *touristes*. In the land of the Great Snake.” Here we have an interesting juxtaposition of the topic of sexual excess in “discovered and loved ferociously” – which also appears in the colonizer’s lust, in Paulo

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<sup>11</sup> The protagonist of Macunaíma’s motto, *ai que preguiça*, is a wordplay. *Preguiça* in English is laziness. The word in the Tupi language for laziness sounds like “Aique.” Hence, *ai que preguiça* can be read as *laziness laziness*. Macunaíma generally says this sentence when he does not want to do something.

<sup>12</sup> *Retrato do Brasil* (1928) by Paulo Prado and *Jeca Tatu* (1914) by Monteiro Lobato, respectively a historical essay and a romance, share common ground in their portrayal of societal aspects. Prado identifies a sadness or melancholia in Brazilian people, a result of the luxury and greed-driven process of colonization, that renders the population apathetic and idle. Similarly, Lobato’s satirical portrayal of Jeca Tatu – the protagonist of his romance – in a state of idleness, with sickness, lack of activity, and overall laziness, serves as a commentary on social and economic challenges within the nation.



Prado's *Retrato do Brasil*, and in the hypersexuality of Mario de Andrade's *Macunaíma*, or in Graça Aranha's moralist philosophy of *A Estética da Vida*<sup>13</sup>, or as the foundation of *mestiçagem* in Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande & Senzala* – and the double or triple lack of the “hypocrisy of *saudade*” – *saudade* being itself a double lack (the longing for lacking), whereas hypocrisy configures the lack of discernment (*hipo-* comes from *hypo-*, the Greek prefix for lack, *-crisia* comes from the Greek *krisis*, which means section or discernment). Both lack and excess, attributed here to the colonizer, are negative in the valuative economy of the *Cannibalist Manifesto*.

One last figuration of lack, perhaps the most expressive and most quoted by Oswald's scholars and readers, appears in the fifth aphorism, which says, “I am only concerned with what is not mine. Law of man. Law of the cannibal.” This aphorism is commonly (and rightfully) interpreted as the principle of anthropophagy, as a way of existing (before being theory or any form of systematic thought), anthropophagy turns to the Other, to the devouring and listening to the Other (“We can only attend to the orecular<sup>14</sup> world,” a. 17), recognizing one's own identity in otherness. Notably, the other here is what is “not mine” and, therefore, what I lack. Again, this lack is not negative. On the contrary, it is the foundation of otherness and, therefore, of identity, which, in turn, is the very mechanics of anthropophagy: “Law of man. Law of the cannibal.”

We can conclude from the analysis so far that one of the inflections Oswald de Andrade operates in the *Manifesto* is to invert the value fields of lack/excess. The lacks/excesses of the colonized, the Indian, and the anthropophagist (which are not the same thing<sup>15</sup>) are positive – they contain a potency that can be used to exist anthropophagically. The colonizer's lacks/excesses, on the other hand, are harmful. Consequently, the anthropophagist's attitude toward them should be contrary – expressed most explicitly in the 19 occurrences of the word “against” or “down” in the *Manifesto*. This simple inversion of values is enables Oswald to retain the characteristic futurism of the *Manifesto* in which the field of futurity (of expectation, to return to Koselleck) is filled, rather than by colonial utopias, by the utopia of the technicized barbarian.

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<sup>13</sup> The book *Estética da Vida* (1921) consists of a series of essays, among which Graça Aranha elucidates his philosophical worldviews. The author describes the perspective that individual nations possess inherent characteristics that constitute the essence of their ethnic identity. Aranha contends that each nation contributes to the universal whole by its distinctive qualities. The essay is regarded as somewhat moralistic and conservative (Dutra, 2000, p. 234) for it also pictures the formation of Brazil as a sinful process that resulted in a morally weakened people – much like Paulo Prado would do a few years later.

<sup>14</sup> “Orecular” is a neologism coined by Oswald de Andrade by merging the words *orelha* (“ear,” in English) and *oracular* (“oracular,” in English).

<sup>15</sup> “O homem natural que nós queremos pode tranquilamente ser branco, andar de casual e de avião. Como também pode ser preto e até índio. Por isso o chamamos de antropófago e não ‘tupy.’” (Andrade, 1929, s/p), or in the words of Franco Neto and Gaio (2020, p. 193): “É preciso, antes, clarificar que o antropófago nunca é, mas que se comporta muito mais a partir de um vir a ser incessante, devir, potência”)



Here, Oswald's dialogues with Hermann Keyserling and, indirectly, with Oswald Spengler are fundamental.

Recent analyses directed specifically at Oswald de Andrade's philosophy of history – but not specifically at his *Manifesto* – account for the two temporalities mentioned so far: the kairological time and the inversion of linear, chronological time. For example, Mauro Franco Neto and Gaio (2020, p. 189) emphasize the “potentiation of the past by its seditious capacity to invent the present,” operated by Oswald throughout his work. The appropriation of the past is a significant part of an effort that transforms the status of the primitive by inverting the historical time: if the primitive had been the insufficient, the backward, that which should be overcome, in anthropophagic philosophy, it is the therapeutics that will rid the modern world (patriarchal society) of its ills. “As an aggressive instrument, the primitivism of anthropophagy did not promise synthesis or even identity to the Brazilian historical process,” Franco Neto and Gaio recall (2020, p. 192); “less than aiming at conciliation, the inverted anthropophagy was the social therapeutic of the modern world.” In other words, anthropophagy configures an intervention in the critical moment of the present (*kairós* time) by rehabilitating the primitive (inversion of the linear and progressive *chronos* time). Ulisses do Valle (2017, p. 327), in turn, emphasizes aspects of Oswaldian philosophy that can be characterized as principles of a substantive philosophy of history – the unifying principle of historical successions and the mechanics of historical change. The first Oswald de Andrade calls, in late texts, the orphic feeling (*sentimento órfico*), i.e., the feeling of abandonment of the being in the world that “corresponds directly to the human need to find meaning and significance for life, for death, for suffering, for injustice.” The second, the mechanics of change, is the principle of permanent devouring and, therefore, endless historical becoming that takes the form of a dialectical movement (matriarchy as affirmation, patriarchy as negation, and the synthesis of both worlds in a post-patriarchal era). In this sense, Oswald de Andrade's thought also forms a philosophy of history in which time is procedural and linear, such as in modern historical time and its rigid demarcation between past, present, and future, but also in which what was once seen as backward (and insufficient, according to modern logic) is now seen in a positive light – in the evaluative sense and also in the dialectical use of the term.

However, the Oswaldian *Manifesto* and the Cannibalist philosophy, in general, contain a more radical use (or non-use) of the notions of lack/excess. In the *Manifesto*, its use is expressed in the recurrent use of the adverb “já” (“already”) – eclipsed or not – followed by the verb *ter* (“to have”) in the first-person plural of the past imperfect tense of the indicative – *tínhamos* (“we had”). We already had many things: “justice, the codification of vengeance,” and “Science, the codification of Magic” (a. 18); “Communism,” “Surrealist language,” and “the Golden Age” (a. 25); “We had the description and allocation of tangible goods,



moral goods, and royal goods. And we knew how to transpose mystery and death with the help of a few grammatical forms" (a. 27); "divination," "Politics, which is the science of distribution. And a social system in harmony with the planet" (a. 36). Moreover, it is worth remembering that happiness, which is proof of/by nines<sup>16</sup> (a. 44, 49), is also something we already had: "Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness" (a. 42).

At first glance, the temporal quotient of the particle *já* may suggest that we are, again, in the field of temporal lack, i.e., of the previous or the primitive. However, we believe that this is not the only case. It is evident that when Oswald writes "already had," he is referring to the moment before colonization. However, it is equally apparent that Oswaldian primitivism is not a return to the past<sup>17</sup> and these potencies are still seizable. The use of the particle *já* shows the third temporality of the Cannibalist Manifesto: the multiple time. *Já* indicates an independent, concurrent existence; rather than only a prior presence. These different interpretations are both possible because of Oswald de Andrade's choice of words. The past imperfect tense is used in Portuguese not only to express actions in the past that are yet to be concluded but also to express the past within the past – generally alongside another verb in the past perfect tense. For example, the sentence "We were happy before the Portuguese arrived" in Portuguese is *Éramos felizes* (past imperfect tense) *quando os portugueses chegaram* (past perfect tense). Although no other verb is explicitly used alongside *já tínhamos* in the *Manifesto*, it is particularly reasonable to argue that "before" or "when the Portuguese arrived" is eclipsed in every single occurrence, based on the overall idea of the text. Our point, rather than to determine whether or not this or any other expression is eclipsed in Andrade's *Manifesto*; simply indicates that Oswald de Andrade's choice is most likely not arbitrary and that it keeps open a range of multiple possibilities of interpretation.

Franco Neto and Gaio (2020, p. 195-196) had detected this expression of multiple times in Oswald de Andrade's later and more systematic texts. According to these authors:

[...] anthropophagy, besides a specific philosophical understanding of life, carries implicitly not only a philosophy of history but a philosophy of alterity, of a repressed

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<sup>16</sup> The Brazilian expression *prova dos nove*, translated by Leslie Bary into English as "proof of nines" and "proof by nines," refers to a definitive test or critical examination used to verify the accuracy, authenticity, or reliability of something. The term often implies a rigorous assessment to confirm the validity or truthfulness of a situation or claim.

<sup>17</sup> See again note 7 for Oswald clearly states that the "natural man" or "anthropophagus" does not necessarily correspond to the "tupy." Haroldo de Campos' and Benedito Nunes' classical texts on the Cannibalist philosophy already stress that Oswald de Andrade's primitivist utopia is not centered on the idea of return but on the idea of a constant *becoming* and permanent devouring. This constant movement takes shape in the dialectical relation between the matriarchal and the patriarchal regimes that would result in a third (new) regime, that of the technicized matriarchy. See Campos (1992) and Nunes (2001, 2004).



*time-other* that, in turn, remains in spectral forms haunting the consensuses of modernity. Anthropophagy, unlike a reading that we might call “essentialist” or “identitarian,” does not seek to answer certain questions of temporal and historical order with the affirmation of an absolute singularity or with a nostalgic appropriation of history, thus pointing to the rescue of a given well-defined moment in the past.

According to Franco Neto and Gaio (*idem*), the inversion of the set of categories that characterize the man of the West (the man of the patriarchal regime) is itself how Oswald makes this repressed other time explicit and questions the absolute singularity in his late philosophical thesis, *A Crise da Filosofia Messiânica* (*The Crisis of Messianic Philosophy*, 1950). The inversion is also an inversion of the logic of historiography, as a science of the past, traditionally concerned with promoting knowledge of the main events and legacies of the Western civilization. Oswald de Andrade’s alternative to historiography is *Erratics* (*Errática*). This science gathers the fragments of what was lost in the trajectory of the consolidation of the West as a global standard. “This inversion,” write Franco Neto and Gaio (2020, p.196),

Would, in such a way, shift the attention of historiography to a particular set of phenomena that could be called latent, that is, in some degree present in this trajectory, but that were thus repressed and hidden in order to remove from history its rebellious content, its constitutive unfinishedness, to affirm a particular evolutionary path to be maintained and justified.

This is absent in the *Manifesto*; even the idea of utopia, which would become central to Oswald de Andrade’s thought in the decades after the publication of the *Cannibalist Manifesto*, appears in the 1928 manifesto very discretely. This, however, does not diminish the strength of Andrade’s operation on the *Manifesto*’s lexical/semantic level. Even without having systematically elaborated on the idea of a science of the fragment, he seems to use it in his poetic operations by mechanisms other than the inversion of the value of lack and excess and of chronological and linear modern time.

## Final Considerations

What we can conclude from this short analysis is, first, that the figurations of lack and excess are indeed instrumental in the *Manifesto Antropófago*. Their valuational inversion is fundamentally how Andrade inverts modern chronological historical time, resynchronizing times



in which the colonized becomes the center and the standard. It is also from the value inversion of the idea of logic that Oswald de Andrade affirms, in later works, the difference between the logic of the patriarchal regime and its syllogistic thought and that of the matriarchal regime and its metaphorical and analogical thought, systematizing the Erratics as a science of the fragment that can recover repressed pasts. Furthermore, it is essential to note that by affirming the plenitude, rather than the lack and excess, in his *Manifesto*, Andrade asserts the coexistence of multiple historical times that are not necessarily in lack or excess to each other. Thus, he neither resynchronizes nor desynchronizes times. He instead radically affirms the multiplicity of times while offering no promises of synchronization.

The results of this short analysis point to the importance of investigating the figurations of lack and excess in other texts of the Brazilian modernist tradition. First, they indicate that other literary and intellectual traditions can also be examined by how they figure these ideas. Second, the figurations of lack and excess can be the axis of a comparative analysis of modernist historical-literary imaginations, especially how they articulated otherness in time.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight the relevance of the *Cannibalist Manifesto* as an artifact of historical expression. Although not a strictly historiographical text nor a systematic philosophical reflection, the *Manifesto* posed a series of questions about the nature of historical knowledge and disputed – although it never became hegemonic in this dispute – the meaning of one of the basic foundations of historiography: the idea of time. The same can be said about many other literary texts.

“Thinking historical time in plural is a genuine conceptual challenge. When we give up the idea of a single uniform historical time, we are confronted with major conundrums, starting with the need to pluralize all forms of our temporal vocabulary” (Simon & Tamm, 2023, p. 24). For this particular reason, resourcing works that have attempted to coin linguistic ways of talking about the multiplicity of time – such as the *Cannibalist Manifesto* – might be a fruitful exercise for historians and theorists of history.

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