

Richard Morse and Oswald de Andrade: A Cat's Cradle

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A people which did not evaluate could not live; but if it is to preserve itself, then it dare not evaluate the way its neighbour evaluates.

Much that one people calls "good", another calls "shame" and "disgrace". So I found. I found much that was here named evil and there decked in purple honours...

A table of values hangs over each people.

(Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* I, 15)

The works of the two authors I will approach in this paper – the Brazilian Modernist Oswald de Andrade and the North American Brazilianist Richard Morse – are examples of how the conception of good and evil are relative, because deeply related with people's culture and history. Their interpretation of Brazil and Iberian America as singular results of the expansion of the Counter Reformation to the New World open new possibilities of examining and comprehending Brazilian and Iberian American history and culture in accordance with its supposed legacy of disruption. This paper argues that, actually, this coincidence is not a mere accident. Oswald's view seems to have influenced significantly Richard Morse.

The importance of the anthropophagic movement today is renewed by the bombardment of goods, signs and information in the era of computerised globalisation because it allows us to recover the lightness and the agility to process and create local and transnational references as well as to update the issue of utopia within new historical perspectives. Among them, I underline the contribution by Oswald de Andrade to the tropicalist movement and to interpretations of Brazil, such as those by Richard Morse in the 1980s, that, instead of showing regret for the fact that Brazil and Iberian America are not properly included in the high, or western modernity, would rethink the very idea of Modernity, giving to it a plural form. That is to say, according to both of them, Iberian America is modern in its own way, which is different from North America, but not inferior to it. We are modern in the Iberian way, very much influenced by the ancient Greeks, and

the medieval Arab culture, considered by them more flexible and adaptative than the Protestant culture that have modulated Anglo America, more precisely the USA¹.

Oswald's Anthropophagy has been showing enormous vitality and fertility since its appearance in the 1920's. It is worth remembering the enormous influence it had in many fields of Brazilian art in the 1960's and 1970's, paving the way for aesthetic experimentation and generating artistic movements as important as concretism and tropicalism. The latter, by the way, became the key movement around which the exponents of many art forms gathered. From poetry to music, from cinema to the plastic arts, tropicalism, a new take on the anthropophagic metaphor, left a mark in the Brazilian culture that is still alive, either as serious criticism or as an ordinary feature of the cultural industry, or as an element that builds the self-image of the country.

Anthropophagy represented a renovating thought for everything that is human. Its inspirations, multiple and fragmented, seemingly contradictory for inadvertent eyes, range from Nietzsche's criticism of Christian genealogy to the Marxist criticism of the capitalist society, the Freudian criticism of rationalism and Bachofen's matriarchy.²

These theories and thoughts that built the modern mental universe appear associated to a shamanistic conception of nature and to an equalitarian configuration of native Brazilian societies that separated itself from the Romantic ideal and eventually constituted a philosophical and political criticism of modern colonialism and the political and economical system that used it. A criticism endowed with "an affirmative dimension, interspersed with a spontaneous vitality, without guilt and wrapped up in a poetical seduction"³, and brings closer the Oswaldian utopia to both the intellectual framework of European origin and the amalgamation of primitive cultures, establishing conciliation between the native culture and the renovated intellectual culture. Crossbreeding was the essence to understand the New World, and Brazil in particular, which implied a lack of origin, but not a lack of originality.

¹ According to this line of thought, the possible "swallowing" of Oswald by our post-modernity (or post-modernities) may offer non-dichotomous clues to understand the intersection between spirituality and technique in our culture. It is an issue that we find fascinating, but that we leave open to discussion for now.

² Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815-1887) offers a radically new vision of the role of women in ancient societies. With extensive documentation, he aimed to demonstrate that maternity is the source of human society, religion and morals. And he ends his work connecting the archaic motherly right with the veneration of the Holy Mary. His book caused reactions in many generations of scholars, including Friedrich Engels.

³ SUBIRATS, Eduardo. "Viagem ao fim do paraíso". *Oito visões da América Latina*. SP, Senac, 2006. p.100.

According to the brazilwood poetics (poesia Pau-Brasil), exotic issues such as idleness, brotherly communion, generous society, sexual freedom and Edenic life, become prospective values that link the native originality of magic, instinctive and irrational components of the human existence to the modern literate thought. Stemming from this conception, in which the mixture is the basic assumption, the anthropophagic thought builds itself from the “digestion” of many modern scholars, from Montaigne to Freud, Nietzsche and Keyserling.

The “Carib revolution” and the idea of primitive life as an equalitarian social model based on solidarity, idleness, freedom and, above all, on the courage to take care of the most human instincts have their most important reference in Montaigne.

These nations then seem to me to be so far barbarous, as having received but very little form and fashion from art and human invention, and consequently to be not much remote from their original simplicity. The laws of nature, however, govern them still, not as yet much vitiated with any mixture of ours: but 'tis in such purity, that I am sometimes troubled we were not sooner acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times, when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are. ⁴.

Montaigne’s cannibal is the man beyond borders. For Oswald too, cannibalism implies leaving the tribe for what lies outside; it is the happiness of those who go out and see what is outside. Eating – cannibalism, anthropophagy – is like a rite of absorption of the other. It means exchanging a culture with another without really killing the other one or the other culture. Not being eaten or devoured isn’t interesting. Being eaten is an honour. Eating and being eaten means trying out something, leaving the boundaries, a way of life always based on future transformations, on leaving your own self, on the absorption of the other.

As a symbol of devouring, anthropophagy is at the same time a metaphor, a diagnosis and a therapy. It is the organic metaphor of the Tupi society, the diagnosis of the Brazilian society – “traumatized by colonial repression” derived from the “repression by Jesuits of ritual anthropophagy itself” – and the therapy to get rid of this trauma⁵. In other words, it alludes to the primitive societies of Pindorama, to the historical period that, with

⁴ MONTAIGNE, Michel de. “Os canibais” In *Ensaio*. Livro I, Ensaio XXXI, Sao Paulo, Abril Cultural, 1980, Coleção Os Pensadores, p.196.

⁵ NUNES, Benedito. “Antropofagia ao alcance de todos” In ANDRADE, Oswald. *A Utopia antropofágica*.

interdictions and taboos, repressed the anthropophagic rite, and to the present and the future, where the technique itself can offer idleness in the era of the *chauffeur*.

In the 1950's Oswald returned to anthropophagy, creating at the same time a less negative interpretation of Brazil in relation to the Iberian tradition and the Counter-Reformation and an adaptation of the revolutionary dialectics to the historical specificities of modern Brazil and to the schematisation of its own utopia: matriarchy-patriarchy-“technised” barbarian.

I could say that Oswald's “mature” or “matured” anthropophagy has a subversive character, although it may look as a moderate version, or even a “capitulation”, due to some of its considerations, such as the re-evaluation of the Counter-Reformist legacy. In my opinion, the revaluation of the Counter-Reform, instead of meaning some kind of domestication of the thought of the restless rebel of the 1920's, may express a more theoretical maturing of some more instinctive aspects of anthropophagy with the incorporation of elements of his Marxist phase.

I intend to show that this approach – including the sympathy towards Montaigne - was very influential on Richard Morse's understanding of Iberian America civilization as contrasted to the one developed in the Anglo Saxon America, that is to say, in the USA. It seems to me that the therapy that Morse suggests to Prospero shares this spirit: if Prospero were to get to know Caliban better, he would enjoy him, learn from him, cannibalise him!!! I can not guarantee that Morse would sign this statement as I made, but I sense that he would laugh and complete it in a very creative way.

2. Prospero looks at himself in the Mirror

Throughout, Morse's *Prospero's Mirror* contrasts Iberia and Anglo America, rather than Latin America and the United States. His concern is not with terminological purism, is to call attention to feature and ideological and institutional patrimonies that the New World has received from its parent countries. This requires differentiation of the French, the Italian, and the Iberian tradition within the mythicized Latin one. He did not wish to construct an analytical tool, or to collapse Iberian American history into those of France or Thailand, or to delineate a shaped and invariant institutional and ideological inheritance that has persisted since the sixteenth century, or to accumulate such massive documentation

that no “story” is discernible. According to him, the purpose of his book “was never to conduce an exercise in model building, pathology, cultural determinism, or pedantry but simply to see if Iberia American civilization, which surely possesses history and identity, has messages for the modern world”⁶.

Morse explains that the title of his book, *Prospero’s Mirror*, is inspired by *El mirrador de Próspero* (1909), by the Urugayan essayist José Enrique Rodó. Rodó’s *mirrador*, however, was not a mirror but a watchtower. In *Ariel* (1900), the book that brought fame to Rodó, Prospero was an “aged and venerated master” who addressed his disciples on the perils of utilitarian democracy. Recent readings of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* propose that Prospero was not a benign and sagacious intellectual but the paranoid colonial ruler of an enchanted isle whom the playwright identified at the dawn of European overseas expansion. In the spirit of this interpretation Prospero becomes, in Morse’s essay, the “prosperous” United States, who should look at himself in a mirror and learn from Caliban (Iberia America).

I attempt to treat the southern Americans not as victim, patient, or “problem” but as a mirror image in which Anglo America might recognize its own illness and “problems”(...) For two centuries a North American mirror has been held up aggressively to the South, with unsettling consequences. The time has perhaps come to turn the reflecting surface around. At a moment when Anglo America may be experiencing failure of nerves, it seems timely to set before it the historical experience of Ibero America, not now as a case study in frustrated development but as the living-out of a civilizational option⁷.

Like Oswald, Morse admits that the Anglo-Saxon model brought more economical development. But this is not the only criterion to interpret a society. Neither one of the authors is interested in explaining societies by social or economic variables, but in interpreting cultural meanings. According to Oswald in 1953:

We have to accept the undisputed superiority of Calvinism based on inequality as the encourager of technique and progress. But today, with the questioning of the values produced by mechanisation, it is time to review and search for new elements (...) Having reached the climax of technique,

⁶ MORSE, Richard. *Prospero’s Mirror. A Study in New World Dialectic*. 1980. pp. V and VI. I am quoting from the manuscript in English, not yet translated, that Morse himself gave to me. The book was translated and published in Portuguese and Spanish.

⁷ Idem, p. ii.

*Calvinism, which together with the Grace doctrine, was the instrument of progress, has to give way to a human and equalitarian conception of life – a conception that was given us by the Counter-Reformation.*⁸

And then Morse in 1980:

If the northern venture has contributed so famously to the Western systole, may not the southern venture have lessons for the diastole? In our search we must of course probe behind familiar paradigmatic characterizations of Ibero and Anglo America as Catholic and Protestant cultures, as organic and as “atomistic” polities, or as ascriptive and achievement societies. Such labelling, taken tout court is a historical and dichotomous, wherever its heuristic uses⁹.

As the subtitle of his book indicates – “A Study in New World Dialectic” -, Morse places Anglo and Iberian America in a relationship of dialectic. And so, I do think, had done Oswald in several passages as the one above.

Another point that approximates the authors is the emphasis on the Brazilian case. In Oswald’s book this is obvious as his intention is to understand Brazilian culture and history. Morse, on the other hand, admits that he exemplifies Iberian tradition with many more examples from Brazil, the Luso-Brazilian outcome, than from Hispanic America, except for the formative period, where he considers the role played by Spain more significant of the modernization of the medieval tradition than the one played by Portugal.

3. European influences in the New World Societies: a second Western Story

Morse calls attention to the fact that usual comparisons of Ibero and Anglo America neglect their European prehistory. Insofar as such comparison considers origins, it presents the parent civilizations on the eve of settlement as exhibiting two sets of mental outlook, religious commitment, and institutional configuration, with inert or decorative antecedents and pedigree (p.4)

This perspective inclines towards evolutionary rather than, in the sense of Huizinga, historical understanding, which is Morse’s intention to follow. He states clearly that the enduring concern is with history, not with evolution, insisting upon taking civilization as an

⁸ ANDRADE, Oswald. “A marcha das utopias” , p. 165.

⁹ Idem, p.11.

adventure, not an assignment. He does so outlining the fact that the respective traditions - Anglo-Saxon and Iberian- stem from a common moral, intellectual, and spiritual matrix. Within this matrix, “from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, the options were taken and rationales constructed that were to provide the distinctive patterning of what we think of as ‘Western Civilization’” (p.5). By the end of this formative period certain characteristic outlooks came to be loosely associated with the subcultures of new and prospective nation states. None of these outlooks was hermetic or without internal stress and contradiction. The European panorama was complex.

Like Oswald, Morse is engaged in proving that the societies of the New World did not start from scratch, or from a fresh baseline. This, according to Morse, clashes with a significant amount of bibliography on the New World and from the New World. In Morse’s words, the American settlements “were extricated from the very history - that is, from the tangle of moral dilemmas, ideological probing, inertial habits and institutions - that had finally given issue to the European Diaspora”¹⁰. The very common exorcising of the past, while it tries to attenuate the continuing dialectic with the past, therefore forecloses a European future for America, as Hegel had predicted.

This mentioned complexity of European scenario was also considered by Oswald, for instance, when he traces two lines inside “Western Civilization”: one more intolerant, inspired by the Jews, which culminated in the Nazi societies, and another more flexible led by the Arabs, which became the inspiration of the Jesuits and of Iberian America in general, and particularly Brazil. I will go back to this.

Iberia history is interpreted by Morse as being “the second Western story”: it lacks the Faustian, evolutionary quality of the first, the Anglo-Saxon. “It represents modern history as a footnote to, rather than the apotheosis of, spiritual choices made in the formative period” (p.14). He considers the early chapters of the Iberian story a multi-faceted attempts to construe a Christian cosmogony with coherence, credibility, and demonstrability” (p.15). Compared with this attempt, the religious and scientific revolutions were “fundamentalists” (b. Nelson). They were not “revolutions”, but rather final answers to riddles posed centuries earlier.

¹⁰ Idem, 5.

Different of the British, who became “modern” while abstaining from tradition, Iberians were more cautious. “They accompanied the key issues through the late middle Ages and then, on the threshold of modernity, held the fort” (p.16). In drawing back, however, Iberians were keenly aware that the times demanded a reworking of late-medieval orientations.

Neither was the adoption of Thomism a foregone conclusion, nor was it viable without appreciable modernization. Sixteenth- century Iberian neo-Scholastics were scarcely blind reactionaries if they can be credited with having laid the foundations for international jurisprudence, supplied an initial metaphysics for modern European philosophy, and devised a rationale and norms for overseas conquest more humans than those that were to follow¹¹.

Iberian culture up-to-dated Aquinas tradition, in which there was no need for a “double truth”, as it did the Ockhamist tradition. Aquinas treated the truths of faith and of natural certainty as complementary and always compatible. He thus meshed his reinterpreted Aristotelianism to neo-Platonism as well as to Christian theology (p.22).

After the close of the Middle Ages, in Iberia and England were made “choices” that were very faithful for their transatlantic realms. Both choices had to deal with the same concerns being discussed by European scientists, philosophers and religious reformers. But, swimming against the current, Morse agrees with Pierre Duhem and Benjamin Nelson in considering medieval scholastics as having more “modern” notions of science than Kepler and Galileo, as they were more sensitive to the role of hypothesis in constructing scientific understanding. They did not feel compelled to demonstrate ultimate certainty, as did Descartes and Galileo, respectively in philosophy and science. (p.28). The founders of modern science and philosophy were precisely against probabilistic strategy that forbade claiming greater certitude than a subject matter allows, and the fictionalistic strategy of hypothesis, or ‘saving the phenomena’. Actually, these two strategies are now considered closer to modern epistemology than the certitude and certainty claimed by Galileo and Descartes.

¹¹ MORSE, R. op. cit., pp. 16-17.

Like Galileo and Descartes, “religious reformers” (Luther, Calvin) attacked casuistry and probabilism in a determination to elevate conscience from a proximate source of right reason to a mode of direct access to universal norms of utmost generality. The Church criticized by them was not one opposed to experimental method or innovative opinion, but an institution against any assertion of demonstrable knowledge – of certainty or certitude – in the physical and moral realms.

“The significance of the Iberian case becomes more evident when we consider that the religious and scientific revolutions did not, in their paths of incidence, neatly dichotomise Europe” (p.31) While Protestantism prospered along the northerly east-west axis, “science” favoured a north-south axis tilted towards the Italian peninsula. In other words, Galileo is not a product of a Protestant environment, but of the most Catholic among Catholics: Italy. Then,

To say that Iberia in the long run ducked the large ‘revolutions’ is not to deny that it was closely responsible to trends elsewhere in Europe, still less that it was a case of arrested development¹²

Morse goes further affirming that Spanish option for Thomism in the sixteenth century – that is, to a thirteenth-century world view that had won only scattered adherence in the intervening three centuries – is explainable precisely by the modernity of Spain’s historical situation. Spain had to face the demand of reconciling a rationale for the modern state with the claims of an ecumenical world order. It also had to adapt the requirements of Christian life to the task of “incorporating” non-Christian people to European civilization. (p.41) According to J.A. Maravall, “the Renaissance Spaniard is busy constructing: a new State, a new world, a new man”. In short, mid-sixteenth-century Spain faced a more clearly stipulated national agenda than did other European peoples of the time. They had also an “international agenda” due to their encounter with new men and societies in the New World, to which they applied the Thomist tradition.

The Summa contra gentiles, written it is said to guide conversion of Moors in Spain, broadly expounded the case of “gentile” societies ordered by natural philosophy

¹² Idem, p. 33

(p.42). Actually, Thomism opened a large arena for speculation and controversy in political, moral, and natural philosophy, yet always oriented by conclusive moral principles and theological premises.

Human reason was a proper instrument for pursuing truth in the world available to it, just as conscience was a proper source of moral decision: but just as reason was limited, so conscience was fallible¹³.

4. The Iberian Commitment with Counter-Reformation: thanks God!!!!

All that has been said prepares for a positive evaluation of the so commonly blamed Counter-Reformation. Far from considering it a reactionary response, or reaction, to the Protestant Reformation, Morse follows authors such as Otis Green, who explains Spain's detachment from the implications of the religious and scientific revolutions due to its precocious modernity. According to him, Spain was "un édifice déjà construit", "a structure that rested on the firm foundation of divine and ecclesiastical authority, at length fully explained and clearly understood" (p.46). Where England could buy the entire packet of modernity, starting a new architecture, Spain had to adapt a building already in construction.

Actually "the divergent of the Protestant and Catholic traditions was not a divorce. For Spanish neo-Thomism of the post-Tridentine period provided a metaphysics, as elaborated notable by Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), that not merely was adopted in pure or revised form by centres of Protestant scholasticism at central European universities but also influenced such "modernizing" philosophers as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Gassendi, and Leibniz (p.47).

The frustration faced by Spanish neoscholastics was that they poured new wine into old barrels. As reminded by Ferrater Mora: "In times of crisis it seems much more conducive to historical triumph to be concerned with the barrels and pay less heed to the wine poured into them" (p.48). This was perceived by the most modern group in Spain: the Jesuits. They paid more attention to the barrels than to the wine. Evennet calls Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* an old wine of scriptural spirituality poured into a new bottle.

¹³ p. 43

According to him, the Society of Jesus became “the most powerful, active, modernizing, humanistic, and flexible force in the Counter-Reformation”. (p.48)

These two modes of cognition imply, in Morse’s view, two methods of arriving at operable conclusions: the formal-objective rationale of Thomism and the dialectical-personal rationale of Protestant theology. They are two divergent epistemologies and not simply the two gambits in logic represented by deduction and induction:

The formal-objective mode leads from a concrete datum to a class of things, then returns to interpret the datum. In the dialectical-personal mode – which has clear affinities with the Ockhamism that Spain had discarded – arguments are nourished by the “yes” and “no” arising from encounters between discrete persons. In the first case people are “interchangeable” because the single person is interesting and intelligible only as he exemplifies a genus or a general rule. In the second case persons are unique and self-given because instead of exemplifying a general order they represent the Not-I of the knower¹⁴.

These considerations, continues Morse, helps one to understand statements such as: a) Iberian Americans are partisans of doctrine and social order and Anglo Americans are partisans of pragmatism and regeneration or self-transcendence; b) the Iberian American mind is holistic while the Anglo American one is empirical; c) Iberian American political culture valorises “natural law” and, often in a pre-Rousseauian sense, “general will”, while the Anglo Americans are attached to universal suffrage and “free elections”.

But, in Morse’s eyes, what is at issue in his own time, and I would say until now, are the organizing principles of politics, not political outcomes: a covenanted as against an organic society, a levelling or individualist principle as against an architectonic one. In terms of outcomes, “democracy of a certain complexion is after all compatible with the Iberian neoscholastic tradition, while tyranny – as Tocqueville made prophetically clear – finds rationales, practioners, and congenial occasions within the Protestant one” (p.54)

Morse sees the scholastic achievement as one that weaves the strands of Greco-Roman moral and natural philosophy, Christian doctrine, science and technology of circum-Mediterranean and Asiatic origin, and a component of sheer observation that

¹⁴ Idem, p.51.

became steadily more systematic (p.13) According to him, Iberian formulated and kept alive alternatives from the formative period of Western civilization that are of increasing interest for the grand dilemmas of our day (p.17).

5. Oswald's evaluation of the Counter Reformation

Almost three decades before Morse, Oswald was, with his provocative sense of humor (also part of Morse's writings), showing some positive aspects of the Counter-Reformation. As already mentioned, he attributes it mostly to the Arab influence. Although a product of the desert, as the Jewish monotheism, the Muslim religion generated the Renaissance utopias, while the strict racism of the Jews would generate, in his own times, its most powerful enemy: Adolf Hitler. "The *Führer* comes straight from Mosaism and certainly constituted the most dramatic lesson given to the exclusivists who defended race, country and religion privileges".¹⁵

The Bedouin tribes, maybe reclaiming from a distance the matriarchal Sabbath, do not seem to have practised strict monogamy. "And how to get married in the desert? And the Koran announces the pleasure in the other life for its credulous beneficiaries". In opposition to someone like St. Jerome who "hit his chest with a stone at any symptom of virility", the caliph presents himself as someone "not in the least hostile to the mundane pleasures".¹⁶ For many centuries, the two monotheisms fought against each other, "until introducing themselves in the Counter-Reformation and in the understanding lassitude of the Jesuits".

Coming from petrified Arabia and leaving the desert, the Saracen people would mingle in the Peninsula to advance through the ocean its exogamous and conquering impulse, that bore in itself an erratic, imaginative, adventurous and fatalistic character. An impulse that would only stop in the green lands of the Discovery. In the Island of the True Cross, Island of the Holy Cross, Island of Utopia, Brazil. (p.170).

In short, without the Arabs, the discovery of the New World would have had different intellectual and/or practical consequences in the Iberian world, or even in the Anglo-Saxon one, where the utopias were also generated by the Discovery, to a great extent

¹⁵ Idem, p.167

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 169.

made possible by the metamorphosis of the god of the desert and the caravans of the “God of the Caravels”.

The sixteenth century Reformation and Counter-Reformation received a very creative interpretation in Oswald “A marcha das utopias”. He associates Reformation with business and Counter-Reformation with idleness.

Idleness, according to him, had been considered by all religions as a supreme gift, especially in the priesthood, “holder of the sacred idleness that distinguishes and dignifies God’s mediators¹⁷. The reward in the future life is idleness. The promised supreme happiness of the beatific contemplation of God is pure idleness. Priesthood is the sacred idleness. Business is the denial of idleness: it arrives with the merchants, with the new social classes who are interested in dethroning the idle medieval classes, the priests and the warriors. Throughout history, there is a democratisation of idleness as a result of the democratisation of culture, because, as Friedman already warned¹⁸, human work leads to idleness. Or to a return of the paradisiacal phase of the matriarchy.¹⁹

The middle Ages that shaped the West had created a hierarchy of idleness, determining and ascribing in a decreasing social scale, down to the slave, the hard tasks of social life. Renaissance initiates an inverse logic: work becomes the aspect that dignifies the human being.

The historical passage from idleness to business happens with the Reform, when the first bourgeois conscience is outlined “And this [bourgeois conscience] repels idleness, if not as a blemish, at least as a sign of inferiority. The reformed countries use it as the lever for their expansionism and progress”.²⁰ But this change does not happen all of a sudden. It is during the Middle Ages that the age of work laid its roots with the measuring of time.

In the dialectic Oswaldian utopia, the thesis would correspond to the matriarchy of totemic idleness that existed in Pindorama a long time before the Europeans discovered it. It corresponds to a cosmic culture of “laziness”, in which “we work to live instead of living

¹⁷ ANDRADE, Oswald. “A marcha das utopias” In *A Utopia antropofágica*, p. 171

¹⁸ The American economist Milton Friedman caused great impact in the 1950’s with orthodox opinions that brought him many enemies, in the level of ideas, and was much criticised. Maybe Oswald makes reference to him just to affirm that, even authors that were against Marxism admitted a similar relation between work and idleness.

¹⁹ ANDRADE, Oswald. “A marcha das utopias”, p. 219

²⁰ Idem, p. 171

to work”. The “life-devouring” attitude of the cannibal does not mean killing the other one. Everyone is connected to the big mother – Earth – that cannot be separated from the one that gives life and supports it. There was no idea of a supreme being (God). The totems corresponded to codes of transcendence of its own gods; but this was something that the members of the community could go through. It was made of mythical imaginations.²¹

Patriarchy is the antithesis, the institution of business, of taboo, of boundaries, of an untouchable God or a male head of the family. This is when the advent of technology happens. The synthesis would take on the form of the “technised barbarian”, the one who ate the technique of the civilised man to create something else and strengthen himself. It means eating science and technology to make them give us back the idleness: “the spindles working by themselves”, without the Protestant ethics, for idleness, understood as production outside the logic of profit, is the great enemy of Capitalism.

In this elaboration, it is possible to envisage a unique overlapping of technique, religiousness and relationship between man and nature. I would like to underline that the consideration of the psychological, religious and technical aspects of these three moments can help us better understand Oswald’s re-evaluation of the Counter-Reformation in the Brazilian historical formation. This seems to have conducted him to the conclusion that the Counter-Reformation was a lesser evil than the Reformation, as it allowed certain aspects of Panorama’s matriarchy to survive, not banning the culture of idleness as drastically as the Reformation, and, thus, creating the conditions for Brazil to be, for better or worse, the accomplished utopia, more favourable to the flourishing of the “technised” barbarian than the cultures shaped by the doctrines of Luther and Calvin.

Conclusions

If the association of idleness with less developed countries – those that did not buy the modern package – is source of lamentation for many Brazilian sociologists and economists, it was not for Oswald. This perspective is the center of the disputes that followed the publication of *Prospero’s Mirror* in Brazil. Several of his opponents in Brazil

²¹ According to Nietzsche, an evil god is better than a good god because I can only go through the evil one. The good god is the Judaic and Christian god; a good god hinders life while the evil one stimulates it.

certainly thought so when accused him of being a “gringo deslumbrado com os trópicos”. But it is not what I intend to “prove” or “disprove”.

Following Morse’s step I constrain myself to point out the familiarity between his formulations and those of Oswald, but never suggesting that the Brazilianist was a simply disciple of the Brazilian modernist. Actually, Oswald and Morse, like Montaigne and Nietzsche, are not easily classified in any ism. They are eclectic in their selection and digestion – cannibalism- of authors and perspectives, and the result quite singular.

In what concern to the evaluation of the Counter-Reformation, as I hope to have showed that, although through different references, their arguments share some perspectives. While Oswald focus more on the Arab inheritance and Morse goes back to ancient Greece, Oswald is nostalgic about the matriarch of Pindorama and Morse wants to humanize the Anglo-Saxon culture. Morse sees the Jesuits as a modern and hierarchic order, orchestrating “conscience” to public purpose (pp.48-50). Oswald does not investigate the internal functioning of the Jesuit order. He accentuates its flexibility and adaptability in the New World due, in grand part, the Arab influence.

Morse goes deep while trying to comprehend the difference between theoretical principles and practical implications of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation referring to a very specific bibliography on the topic. But, it seems to me, the clue already in Oswald, in the way he associated the Counter-Reformation with a more tolerant branch of Renaissance (Montaigne), particularly in what relates with the contact between Europeans and the others, from the New World (Indians) or even before that with Arabs and Jews during the middle Ages. Morse explains this in a more detailed way. Besides historical aspects inherent to Spain (coexistence among Arabs, Jews and Christians for seven centuries, National State in the sixteenth century, contact with other continents earlier than other European societies), he calls attention to the rich possibilities of modernization offered by the Aristotelian Thomist tradition under the label of neo-Thomism (p.51)

Of course Morse’s intention is a comparison between Anglo and Iberian American societies. In order to better clarify it he recurs to their pre-history, to a time (middle Ages) when both metropolis still shared the same tradition, until the turn of the sixteenth century, when the different choices made by England and Spain interfered so much in the present and future of their New World’s colonies.

But, in doing so, they end up building an interpretation of Iberian and Iberian American worlds that, to me, can be seen as part of the same framework. Both attempts at re-reading the Counter-Reformation point out that, with all its failures, it was more plural, flexible and tolerant than the Protestant Reformation. This is a very strong statement as it challenges the main current interpretations of the role of the Protestant culture in paving the way to Capitalism, progress, democracy, and so on. In doing so, it attenuates the common criticism and lamentation so frequent in the analyses of the American Iberian culture and history.

Maybe Morse was also motivated by Oswald's nostalgic and utopian feeling: develop better??????