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EDITORIAL

POSTCOLONIALISM

AND DECOLONIALITY. RESISTANCE

AND COUNTER-CONDUCTS IN

THE CURRENT NEOLIBERALISM

Sandro Luce

(Università degli Studi di Salerno)

Serena Marcenò

(Università di Palermo)

Post and de-colonial studies define a huge and heterogeneous field of research, crossing several disciplines and territories. Their interdisciplinary interaction produces a fruitful and open space with vague boundaries. Divergent positions, sometimes even contradictory, different ways of being postcolonial prevent us from considering them as a homogeneous entity. However, the heterogeneity of the positions inside and across postcolonial and decolonial studies cannot be separated from a common basis, a core of concepts that move the analysis from the same starting point: the event of colonization.

In the area of postcolonial studies there are attempts to critically rethink the present, starting from the effects and legacies deriving from colonialism, which only formally ceased with the processes of national independence, and continue to be working today, albeit in different forms and a profoundly changed context. The theoretical urgency of these studies arose from the need to highlight the theoretical partiality of Western discourse and its Universals, as well as the conditions in which it has been

reproduced. Thus, not a *sui generis* critique of the West, as to its effects in term of violence and subjugation produced by a specific conception of reason, universalism and humanism. In the colonial conditions, therefore, a rift was dug that separates European ethical thought —condensed in declarations of universal rights and in aporetic and ambiguous concepts such as that of humanity— from the practical, political, and symbolic conditions in which the colonized have been thrown (Mbembe, 2006).

The epistemological question has assumed a central role, imposing the need to provincialize the Eurocentric narrative on the transition to Modernity and Capitalism, that depicted Europe as the Master-Signifier of development and historical progress, as well as the universal subject of philosophy of history (Chakrabarty, 2000). Hence the need for counter-narratives, which —as in the case of Subaltern Studies— have highlighted the limits of Western historiography based on a teleological model, which celebrates its own pedagogical and civilizing role in a narcissistic way.

Postcolonial Studies made an important contribution to the emerging of different experiences of modernization (Parameshwar, 2001), allowing not only a global and differentiated understanding of Modernity, but above all showing how modernization processes have been the terrain of struggles and resistances that have continually challenged the Western domination, revealing its European face behind its monolithic and universal image.

Decentralization and deconstruction implemented by postcolonial scholars were decisive for the challenge to modern categories and concepts such as nation, race, citizenship, identity, and for the attention paid to the foreclosure processes that invested women, represented through the *puppet of Third World Woman* by removing the spectrum of different desires and subjectivities (Levis & Mills, 2003; Loomba & Lukose, 2012; Jad, 2018; Mestiri, 2019; Mohanty, Russo, Torres, 1991; Mohanty 2003; Oyèrónkẹ, 1997; Spivak, 2008; Vergès 2019).

Decolonization infers a critique to Modernity, the deconstruction of its paradigms consolidated through the reiteration of specific power relations, showing up the subjectivities of the colonized —even from a psychic point of view, as Fanon argued— caught by colonizers' hegemonic gaze.

Postcolonial Studies worked out through a sort of *anti-systematic syncretism*. While starting from heterogeneous positions, they share some elements acting in an antagonistic way with respect to the systematizing drift of Western thought, without however merging into a single voice. They have engaged in a struggle against the *reductio ad unum* matrix of Eurocentric Modernity, without producing positions that

can be assimilated to each other. This characteristic has given rise to syncretism in subverting the universalizing rationality, without taking on a systematizing vision.

Dubois' diasporic perspective can be an example, as well as that of Gilroy's, who made the Black Atlantic —as a transnational oceanic formation— not only the experiential place of the violence suffered by Africans during the slave deportation but the unity of his analyses. A transnational and de-territorialized space that outlines a specific diasporic dimension and cultural contamination which, on the one hand, is mirrored in the 'ethnic absolutisms' of the politics identity of national orders, becoming, on the other, the metaphor of what we can consider one of the characteristic elements of contemporary global society.

The critique of colonialism assumes disharmonious and anti-systematic positions, but how do they risk falling into representational, homogenizing, nominalist, and even identity rationality, which they claim to destroy?

The risk emerges, once again and in certain respects, with the Estudios Decoloniales and the introduction of concepts such as that of *colonialidad* through which, starting from Quijano's remarks (Quijano, 1990; 2000), not only the colonies always represent the lowest step in the construction of a hierarchical system of States, but they also do so in the perpetuation —in a continuous metamorphosis— of a hierarchical organization albeit the formal independence.

Although semantically alike to colonialism and deriving from it, coloniality shows how racial and sexual classifications, economic dynamics of exploitation, centralization of the West as a place of production, and enunciation of knowledge, are firmly established into the current power relations, and constitute one of the specific elements of the global capitalism.

According to these scholars, Modernity produces a space-time fracture where the discovery of America represents the main reference of this break. The crucial event in the self-representation of Europe as a sovereign subject on a global scale, capable of affirming its political and military superiority, and above all of producing a hierarchy of knowledge that affects the ways of thinking the world.

These assumptions derive the need to deploy a strategy of disobedience towards the consolidated Western knowledge, thanks to practices that push towards other "modes of life, existence, being, and thought" (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 19), which cannot be reproduced in the structure of Western domination.

Although they insist on *vincularidad*, understood as the need to expand and integrate the interdependent relationships between living beings, *decolonialidad* represents,

above all, an alternative and antagonistic way to the Western one, capable of rediscovering and reactivate an autochthonous identity, and ancestral knowledge, in order to achieve complete emancipation from the Western model of modernization and development. An alternative understanding of Modernity—in some aspects, quite similar to the Postcolonial Studies' proposals— based on a dualism that constantly reproduces an ineluctably excluding relationship with otherness.

The centrality recognized to living beings, the insistence on praxis as a conflict time, and, at the same time, as the construction of the very meaning of decoloniality, up to the strong and continuous defence of the environment and the territory, doubtlessly constitute remarkable aspects of this line of thought. The risk inherent in their proposal, however, stays on conveying a new identitarianism of subalterns through which the identity again falls to an appropriative logic by reactivating a way of representing otherness within the Western discursive strategies (Moreiras, 2001). The risk is the revival of the dichotomous and hierarchical logic of modern political concepts, of their aporias and traps, which had already been the object of the Dependency Theory and Philosophy of Liberation: colonized vs. colonizer, centre vs. periphery, development vs. underdevelopment, etc. In order not to get trapped in an identity thought with essentialist connotations, critics should reactivate processes in which otherness, instead of being hypostatized through archaic and immutable figures, should be understood as the becoming of multiple uniqueness, opening a radical crack in the wall of representative thinking able to destabilize and subvert it.

However, the aim of this work is not to face questions and themes within the post-decolonial debate, to which we dedicate some essays in “Notas y discusiones” section (Ascione, Biondi, Luce, *infra*, p. 295-326). Rather, our purpose is to verify how useful these critical studies are for understanding current political and social dynamics, and their capability to offer perspectives, categories, and methods which—as Sandro Mezzadra pointed out— constitute an important archive to be combined and hybridized with “other archives, perspectives, and conceptual languages”.

Such a process of contamination can be productive—from a theoretical point of view— since it allows above all thinking of today's postcolonial condition as a part of current capitalism. Gender and feminization issues, population movements, racism and de-racialization processes, pandemic, economic, financial, and environmental crises, activate processes of reciprocal signification within the sphere of current postcolonial capitalism (Aung, 2018; Mezzadra, 2011; Mitra, Samaddar, Samita, 2017; Samaddar, 2018); a space of production and reproduction that can be described—as Chakrabarty

proposes in the interview he gave us— as a new *planetary dimension*. He argues that “we have even moved on from the world-historical phase we used to describe by the word ‘globalization’”, and we are living “on the cusp of the global and the planetary” where “democratic forms of management invented over the last couple of centuries are failing to function, and authoritarian and impatient forms of struggle [...] are capturing people’s imagination” (*infra*, p. 51).

New shapes of accumulation outline streaks between spaces of inclusion and exclusion that lead us to reflect on the “planetary conjuncture” (Chakrabarty, 2009, p. 199). Such a conjuncture tells us of the gap between geological eras and human chronology, how civilization deployed along with increasingly high-energy consumption, exploitation of the planet’s resources and dispossession of human beings, and how today’s environmental crisis is unevenly spreading on the planet. It tells us of *surplus lives* that Capitalism can manage through “development policies” that serve to stem the dangerous effects of the unfair distribution of wealth beyond Western borders (Duffield, 2007).

As Sajeve highlights about the monetary metric used to value nature, we are dealing with processes of ‘capitalisation’ of nature, rhetorically envisaged as an ecological defence tool. A question that addresses one of the hot topics of environmental and development policies: to what extent some of the practices and keywords such as those of sustainability, but also of empowerment, resilience, etc. respond to logics and market mechanisms and top-down technocratic responses.

These are all issues that require theoretical and political reflections to open up new battlefields rethinking the possible ‘positioning’ of subjectivity, that link and recombine their differences through heterogeneous connections going beyond any re-emerging binarism. Following this direction, Gibran Bautista y Lugo outlines the limits of the critical historiographic perspectives of the center-periphery model, as well as the approaches centered on the agency of subordinate subjects, without understanding the dynamics that framed their histories. He addresses the limits of Latin American particularism, and proposes a set of reflections that serve as the basis for a story that moves away from the presumption of individual or collective identities, and instead focuses on action, practices and experiences as diachronic dynamics of the configuration of the social.

Baccelli’s analyses on the conquest of America show us how the reduction to a homogeneous unity doesn’t work even in the case of Bartolomé de Las Casas, who was defined by Robert Young as the founding father of anti-colonialism. Baccelli shows us all the ambiguities of Las Casas’ positions, his commitment, practical and theoretical,

to support of indigenous peoples which, although permeated with an evangelical paternalism, represents one of the first attempts to recognize the colonized peoples' forms of life, questioning colonizers' domination and violence.

Enriching the debate, Irrera proposes the category of 'extractive body', taking up some of Mbembe's considerations on the universalization of the black condition, and combining them with the Marxist schema on primitive accumulation and the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics. A fruitful propose to rethink the black condition, beyond the dimension of the neoliberal government's exploitation, not falling back into the victimization devices of humanitarian rhetoric and its identity hypostatization. A way to think of forms of subjectivation and narratives that reveal black alethurgies and their heterogeneity, opening the space to new possibilities of de-territorialization and resistance.

The "impossibility of representing", as Crippa argues, show us how the phenomenon of hybridization and cultural appropriation works as a tool for the construction of collective national identities in the postcolonial era, and the contribution of Cultural Studies in observing the storytelling on "reverse racism" starting from same specific case studies. The plurality of points of view that we present in this issue of *Soft Power*, closes the circle of reflection with Preite's analysis of the connections between evolutionism, colonialism, and social sciences. The naturalization of historical and social processes, and in particular the idea of adaptation that is at the basis of today's building-resilience policies, assumes evolutionism as a model for the processes of subjectivation, implying a constant adaptation to the environment as an improvement. Social sciences apply the natural model of evolution as a way to legitimize Western domination, using the economic mechanisms of exploitation as a kind of re-naturalization and justification for new forms of colonialism.

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CHALLENGING BORDERS. THE LEGACY OF POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE IN THE PRESENT CONJUNCTURE¹

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Abstract

This paper investigates the implications of the current global economic situation in the development and nature of capitalism through the contribution of postcolonial criticism. The assumption from which they move is that decolonisation is not over at all, although the sense that it takes on is profoundly different than in the past. It is a question of saving this project and 'transposing' it into a completely different global context. It is not a question of thinking without Modernity or of building epistemological scaffolding, as scholars of the Coloniality/Modernity/Decolonialid group try to do, rather, working on the edges of Western concepts and categories that become open fields of struggle to the intervention of former colonized subjects.

Keywords

Decolonisation, capitalism postcolonial, globalization, modernity.

Resumen

Este documento investiga las implicaciones de la actual situación económica mundial en el desarrollo y la naturaleza del capitalismo a través de la contribución de la

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crítica poscolonial. La suposición de la que parte es que la descolonización no ha terminado en absoluto, aunque la sensación que adquiere es profundamente diferente que en el pasado. Se trata de salvar este proyecto y “transponerlo” a un contexto global completamente diferente. No se trata de pensar sin Modernidad, o de construir andamios epistemológicos, como los estudiosos del grupo Colonialidad/Modernidad/Decolonialidad tratan de hacer, sino, más bien, trabajar en los bordes de los conceptos y categorías occidentales que se convierten en campos abiertos de lucha a la intervención de antiguos sujetos colonizados.

Palabras clave

Descolonización, capitalismo poscolonial, globalización, modernidad.

The circulation of Covid-19 has demonstrated once again the tricky nature of contemporary global processes. In one sense, that circulation has been fast and smooth, it has hit almost the whole globe prompting the sudden emergence of a “global crisis”. At the same time, however, the spread of the virus has been profoundly uneven, shedding light on a panoply of borders, both between countries and regions and within them. Colonial legacies have shaped the circulation of the virus in many parts of the world, for instance in the US, where African Americans and Latinxs have been disproportionately affected, or in Brazil, where the same has happened with Indigenous people (as well as with blacks and the poor in general). More generally, the pandemic is spurring complex processes of reorganization of global spaces that were already underway, pointing to a further displacement of the US from the center of the global order and disorder and to the conflict-ridden emergence of a multiplicity of regional spaces. In the framework of such processes the mix of homogeneity and heterogeneity that characterizes globalization (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) is even more pronounced and invites critical reflection.

Which are the implications of the current global conjuncture for the development and nature of capitalism and in particular for the condition and struggles of exploited subjects across the planet? This is of course a crucial and complex question, which would require a much more expanded investigation and discussion than it is possible to provide in this essay. My aim here is far more restricted. I want to preliminarily test the potential contribution of postcolonial criticism to the general question I just asked. I speak of the “legacy” of postcolonial critique because my sense is that over the last ten years the field of postcolonial studies has somehow exploded. A postcolonial approach has deeply shaped the development of critical theory and the discussion of key topics in the present (say, from biopolitics to migration and climate change). But while the field continues to reproduce itself through journals and academic chairs, it seems to me that the most valuable contribution of postcolonial scholars today lays precisely in the operationalization (which also means “hybridization”) of an approach and not in new systematic works of postcolonial theory and criticism. Moreover, many critiques of postcolonial studies, including the ones I will mention in this essay, have steadily led to a destabilization of its paradigms. Having modestly contributed to the postcolonial debate since the early 2000s —see for instance Mezzadra (2008) and Walker (2011)—, I basically tend to consider postcolonial criticism today as an important archive for the critical investigation of the present, which we can use combining it with other archives, perspectives, and conceptual languages. I will try to explain this in the following pages.

But let me start, consistently with the focus of this issue of *Soft Power*, with a short discussion of decolonization.

Struggles of Decolonization

Decolonization is far from over. This is a foundational statement for postcolonial criticism. In the last years we have been witnessing an amazing array of movements framing their struggles and claims in terms of decolonization; just to give a couple of examples, from the “Rhodes Must Fall” campaign in South African campuses to African American movements and struggles in the US, from Indigenous movements in many parts of the world to feminist struggles in Latin America and elsewhere. These are powerful although heterogeneous movements, which intertwine a claim for the decolonization of knowledge (“epistemic decolonization”) with a struggle against the material reproduction of colonial logics and devices in contemporary regimes of domination and in the operations of capital. Decolonization takes on multiple meanings in the light of those movements and struggles and builds a fundamental stake in the present. Needless to say, there are profound discontinuities between the way in which decolonization is understood today and the historical process of decolonization, which builds however the necessary antecedent for any discussion of the topic.

There is a need to repeat that, independently of its multiple “failures” and truncations, decolonization was an epoch-making process, a key moment in the history of our present. Critiques of the shortcomings of decolonization are well known and well grounded. The emphasis on the nation state, in particular, has been often considered as a severe limit to the political imagination of movements and struggles of decolonization (see for instance Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. 132-34). The inscription of postcolonial regimes within borders that more often than not had been drawn by colonial powers radically circumscribed the possibility of cooperation and experimentation in the search for new paths of political, economic, and social development after independence (see for instance Winichakul, 1994). Nevertheless, it is a useful exercise today to recall the high stakes and expectations surrounding decolonization in order to grasp the radical nature of the challenges it raised. Decolonization, Frantz Fanon famously wrote, “is quite simply the substitution of one ‘species’ of mankind by another. The substitution is unconditional, absolute, total, and seamless” (Fanon, 2005, p. 1). It would be wrong to read in these lines a kind of “naiveté” of Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth* is a political

manifesto and Fanon's statement is a wager, which nicely captures the turmoil, passion, and inventiveness that shaped the historical moment and struggles of decolonization. Political animals "in the most global sense of the term" (p. 40), the insurgent colonized have according to Fanon the unique opportunity to terminate the history of racism and to open up a new epoch in the history of the human.

We should take Fanon's (2005) words not that much as representative of the widely heterogeneous process of decolonization, but definitely as an effective reminder of the expectations and dreams, projects and efforts that spurred the movements and struggles of the colonized in that historical conjuncture (see also Samaddar, 2007, II, ch. 1). I am convinced that an attempt to rescue those dreams and projects—which also means to "translate" them onto a completely different conjuncture—is one of the main tasks of a postcolonial critique capable to contribute to the forging of a new language and politics of liberation in our present. Reading the classical texts of anticolonial thinkers of the 1950s and 1960s confronts us at the same time with an early and pronounced awareness of the pitfalls and risks haunting the process of decolonization. This is again the case with Fanon, who provides in the fourth chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*—"The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness"—a detailed and sharp critique of African bourgeoisies, who aim at a mere "transfer into indigenous hands of privileges inherited from the colonial period" (p. 100). Writing an article significantly entitled "Decolonization and Independence" for *El Moudjahid* (April 1958), Fanon had already warned that "it is the colonial peoples who must liberate themselves from colonialist domination". And he had added that "true liberation is not that pseudo-independence in which ministers having a limited responsibility hobnob with an economy dominated by the colonial pact" (Fanon, 1988, p. 105). Fanon was anticipating here the formalization of the concept of "neo-colonialism" provided in 1966 by Kwame Nkrumah, to designate a situation in which formal sovereignty of a formerly colonized country is combined with a direction "from outside" of the economic system that ends swallowing up "its political policy" (Nkrumah, 1966, p. ix).

The notion of neocolonialism, alongside with other related categories forged by the panoply of dependency theory and Marxist analysis of underdevelopment, continues to be employed in critical literature and activist interventions across the world. It definitely grasps important economic factors and processes, as well as power relations that shaped the outcome of decolonization foreshadowing the current predicament of many postcolonial countries. Nevertheless, there is a need to emphasize that the focus on continuity constitutive of the notion of neocolonialism risks to erase the presence and mutations of

the dreams and projects of the colonized, their agency in history and present. A “stress on continuing neocolonial dominance”, Robert J.C. Young (2001) aptly writes,

[...] has the disadvantage of suggesting a powerlessness and passivity which underestimates what has been achieved since independence, including the independence movements themselves, perpetuating stereotypes of helplessness even while it implies sympathy, and reinforcing assumptions of Western hegemony with the third world being portrayed as its homogeneous eternal victim. (p. 48)

This is precisely the wager of what I consider to be the best and most interesting postcolonial critique, which necessarily takes the historical break of decolonization as its point of departure and struggles to combine an analysis of the continuous reproduction of the legacy of colonialism with an emphasis on the agency of former colonized people, which also means with an effort to open up the archive of anticolonial struggles before and after the historical moment of decolonization.

Postcolonial Critique

Such an understanding of postcolonial critique is effectively instantiated by the work of Stuart Hall (2000). In several essays he insists that the postcolonial does not signal a linear chronological succession. It does *not* imply, above all, that the “problems of colonialism have been resolved” (p. 213). The term postcolonial rather “marks the passage from one historical power-configuration or conjuncture to another” (p. 213). Hall is keen to stress that the problems of dependency, underdevelopment, and marginalization (the problems usually emphasized by theories and usages of “neocolonialism”) *persist* in the postcolonial situation. However, he repeats, “these relations are *resumed* in a new configuration” (Hall, 2000, p. 213). It is, simply put, this combination of continuity and discontinuity that characterizes the postcolonial. Colonialism is not over; its logics continue to haunt the present and nevertheless they are compelled to come to terms with a new configuration in which colonialism cannot reinstate itself as a consistent and stable system of power. This is because the historical threshold of decolonization continues to produce its effects and subaltern politics reproduces and amplifies those effects in multifarious ways (not necessarily consistent with the dreams and projects of struggles of decolonization but nonetheless effective).

It is worth shortly dwelling on Stuart Hall. His 1996 essay, “When Was the ‘Post-Colonial.’ Thinking at the Limit”, provides an excellent overview of the main topics at stake in postcolonial critique and of key theoretical points. Written in the aftermath of the Iraq war in 1991, which built a kind of stress test for postcolonial theory, Hall’s essay takes a critical distance from a unilateral “culturalist” understanding of the postcolonial. He explicitly acknowledges the constitutive relevance of a wide array of material factors, including violence and war, to make sense of the tricky combination of continuity and discontinuity that makes up the postcolonial. The proliferation of heterogeneous histories and temporalities, the inscription of difference onto Eurocentric grand narratives, the multiplicity of latitudinal cultural connections, movements of migration and the displacement and decentering of Europe and the West are analyzed in the essay against that background. Hall is quick to add, for instance, that “it is only too tempting to fall into the trap of assuming that, because essentialism has been deconstructed *theoretically*, therefore it has been displaced *politically*” (Hall, 1996, p. 249). This is an important warning, considering existing trends within postcolonial studies to disentangle the analysis of cultural processes from the materiality of politics and from an analysis of the working of capitalism (see Mezzadra, 2011a).

But let me come to the point I find most important and challenging in Hall’s (1996) essay. Colonialism, he writes, is usually defined “in terms of the binary between the colonizers and the colonized” (p. 242). What Hall has in mind is a constitutive aspect of modern regimes of colonialism, which was part and parcel of their working and of their “legitimization”, independently of the fact that since the beginning it was challenged and transgressed on the ground. On the one hand, the colonial situation was characterized by such a binary, famously captured by Fanon in his description of the colonial world as a “Manichean world” (Fanon, 2005, p. 6). On the other hand, what we can term a qualitative “metaborder” run through the world circumscribing and separating the colonies from the metropolitan powers, which means from Europe and the West. Carl Schmitt’s book, *The Nomos of the Earth* (2003), can be read as a brilliant chronicle, although from a reactionary point of view, of the legal, geographical, and political forms taken by that “metaborder” across modern history. It is precisely this standard view of colonialism that is radically challenged by postcolonial critique. Even more precisely one can say that postcolonial critique epistemically translates onto its paradigm the challenge to the “metaborder” between the colony and the metropolis successfully posited by the historical movement of decolonization. In this sense postcolonial critique, at least in

the strands that I find most consistent and thought provoking, can be considered as a continuation of anticolonial struggles in the field of theory under the new conditions established by decolonization.

Allow me to quote at length a passage from Hall's essay. The term "postcolonial", he writes:

[...] refers to a general process of decolonization which, like colonization itself, has marked the colonizing societies as powerfully as it has the colonized (of course, in different ways). Hence the subverting of the old colonizing/colonized binary in the new conjuncture. Indeed, one of the principal values of the term 'post-colonial' has been to direct our attention to the many ways in which colonization was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always inscribed deeply within them – as it became indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonized. (Hall, 1996, p. 246)

The "subverting of the old colonizing/colonized binary" is a distinctive hallmark of postcolonial critique since its inception. This is the reason why it does not merely address the former colonial world, but it powerfully reconfigures also Europe and the West. It allows for instance to adopt the colonial lens to investigate mutations of citizenship and labor in the former metropolises, while it invites to discern anticipations of modernity and postmodernity in the colonial and postcolonial world. The contestation of the spatial "metaborder" implies in fact the contestation of its translation onto the domain of temporality, of the "first in Europe, then elsewhere" structure of global historical time" whose historicist imprint has been effectively criticized by Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, p. 7). It is easy to see that the "subverting of the old colonizing/colonized binary", which also means the contestation of the borders traced by European colonial expansion, opens up new continents both for historical research and for a critical analysis of the present. Movements of migration become particularly important from this point of view precisely for the challenge they posit to borders, giving way to new geographies and spurring what Hall calls "the subaltern proliferation of difference" (Hall, 2000, p. 215). The study of the decentering effects of such movements on the West and of the related reactions toward closure in the latter, which imply the reworking of old and the emergence of new forms of racism, defines one of the major fields of tension and struggle investigated by postcolonial critique.

Unsettling, and not merely registering, the relations of Europe with its multiple “others” (Barker, 1984), carefully mapping the “responses” of the former colonized subjects through writing (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1989) or antiracist struggles (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982), investigating the wide spectrum of subaltern agency in the colonial and postcolonial world, ranging from insurrection (Guha, 1983) to multiple forms of negotiation and “mimicry” beyond the rigidity of what Fanon called “Manicheism” (Bhabha, 1994), challenging the borders of Western feminism and opening up new spaces for feminist theory and practice (Mohanty, 2003): this is just a short and necessarily incomplete list of what I consider important foundational gestures of postcolonial critique (see for instance Quayson, 2000; Young, 2003; Mellino, 2005; Luce, 2018, part II). It should be clear that all of them, although in different ways, contribute to place under duress what I termed the “metaborder” between former colonies and former metropolises. This is not to say that postcolonial critique considers the world as a “smooth” space, where boundaries and differences (in the distribution of wealth and power) do not matter anymore. The opposite is the case. Boundaries and differences rather multiply in the postcolonial world, and there is a need to carefully analyze them both between different countries and regions and within them. The fact is that precisely this proliferation of boundaries and differences within countries and regions further displaces any “metaborder” and challenges its epistemic operations.

This is what makes Chakrabarty’s project of “provincializing” Europe plausible and necessary, since the position of Europe at the very center of knowledge production and circulation was part and parcel of the architecture of colonial domination predicated on what Hall terms the “old colonizing/colonized binary.” Displacing Europe from that position (the position of the “universal”), turning it onto a province among others, is a project that Chakrabarty (2008) places in a line of continuity with “twentieth-century anticolonial democratic demands for self-rule”, which refused any historicist argument harping on “a ‘now’ as the temporal horizon of action” (p. 8). It is important to note that such a project does not lead Chakrabarty to dismiss the question of the universals or modernity as such. Universal notions and modernity rather become fields of struggle, open to the intervention of former colonized subjects capable to stage dialogues among themselves and even with the former metropolis, transforming old concepts and inventing new ones that may differentially work in different parts of the world, including Europe and the West. One is reminded once again of Fanon here, not only of his struggle to hold on to the idea of the human and humanism notwithstanding his devastating

critique of European humanism but also of his anatomic-political analysis of the emergence of a new Algeria in *A Dying Colonialism* (1965). Particularly in the chapters on the veil, on the radio, and on medicine Fanon combines a critical analysis of colonial modernity with a description of the many ways in which, through the insurrection, the colonized selectively appropriate modernity, laying the basis for a postcolonial modernity after independence. This is another truncated dream and project of the struggles of decolonization that postcolonial critique has taken up in many ways.

Civilizational Borders: the “Colonial Matrix of Power”

“Thinking *without* modernity”, writes instead Walter D. Mignolo (2018), “delinking from its fictions, is one major decolonial challenge” (p. 109). Although it is possible to find similar rejections of modernity as such in postcolonial studies, scholars who employ the notions of “coloniality” and “decoloniality” take a much more radical stance on modernity in the framework of what has become an influent and widespread approach. Based upon the work of Anibal Quijano, who first introduced the notion of “coloniality of power” (see for instance Quijano, 2000), the “modernity/coloniality/decoloniality” project has steadily emerged since the late 1990s through the collaborations of scholars based in North and Latin America. What distinguishes the project is among other things the foundational reference to the conquest of America, which would be underestimated in postcolonial studies (hence a subtle polemic that often runs through the writings of scholars pertaining to the group). This is an important point, which definitely highlights a limit of postcolonial studies, and more generally there are many interesting aspects in Quijano’s and even in Mignolo’s work. However, my impression is that particularly in the last years the kind of orthodoxy crystallized around notions like “coloniality” and “decoloniality”, as well as the “colonial matrix of power” (usually referred to through the acronym CMP, to signal the stabilization of its meaning), is closing rather than opening spaces of debate and research. Moreover, the absolute primacy of epistemology advocated by Mignolo leads to a sidelining of any material factor in his analysis of power and to a merely culturalist understanding of the stakes of decolonization. I will base my critical discussion of his approach on the chapter he wrote in a recent book co-authored with Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality. Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018), which opens a new Duke University Press series on the topic.

What characterizes Mignolo's take on the question of decolonization is on the one hand a critical discussion of the historical process of decolonization, on the other hand a distinction between "dewesternization" and "decoloniality." Regarding the first point, the "shortcomings of decolonization" (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, p. 124) are identified in a focus on the state that replicates the blueprint of Western political theory. "The task of decoloniality after decolonization", Mignolo writes, "is redefined and focused on epistemology and knowledge rather than the state" (p. 121). The bias of decolonization continues to haunt contemporary processes of "dewesternization", which are reshaping the global space through the emergence of non-Western powers that aim at "delinking from westernization and confronting rewesternization by means of strong states" (p. 127). "Dewesternization" seems to be for Mignolo a welcome trend, since it lays new basis for decolonial options and practices. "In the current formation of a multipolar world order", Mignolo and Walsh write in their joint introduction to the book, "the rhetoric of modernity is no longer unidirectional and unipolar" (p. 6). Nevertheless, while there is a common ground, there is also a fundamental difference, and even an antagonism between "dewesternization" and "decoloniality." The former remains for Mignolo "an interstate-led project that disputes the control and management of the colonial matrix of power but doesn't question its very foundation" (p. 125). On the contrary, "decoloniality" radically challenges and disrupts the colonial matrix of power, as Mignolo often repeats, it "focuses on changing the terms of the conversation" (p. 130) and on opening up new territories for engaging in decolonial options and multifarious practices of "re-existence", which means in "the sustained effort to reorient our human communal praxis of living" (p. 106).

Mignolo's understanding of "decoloniality" is based upon a set of strictly integrated and nested concepts, starting with the strict link between modernity and "coloniality." "Decoloniality" is the perspective that allows making visible that link, shedding light on "coloniality as the darker side of modernity" (p. 109). We can begin to discern here some of the implications of Mignolo's use of the notion of the notion of "coloniality". I am sure that he would not agree with me, but coloniality seems to be a kind of metaphysical, or simply essentialist category that wipes out any difference within modernity and, even more importantly for the current discussion, erases the inscription within its conceptual fabric of a multiplicity of colonial and postcolonial encounters. The whole history of colonialism, in particular, is reduced to the uniform matrix of "coloniality" independently of the wide array of differences that characterized it since its "historical

foundation” in the early 16th century. “The changes are substantial if you focus on colonialism”, Mignolo writes. “If instead you look for coloniality and you are aware of the history of the CMP they are circumstantial” (p. 237). Such an undifferentiated and compact understanding of the nexus between modernity and “coloniality” from the angle of “decoloniality” is characteristic, although with different nuances, of the “decolonial” project as a whole. And I am convinced that it is a serious limit both from a historical point of view and for a critical theory of the present.

Mignolo (2018) further develops his critique of modernity/“coloniality” in the field of knowledge, in ways in which one can see the lasting influence of his training as a semiotician. His main theoretical point could be described in terms of a primacy of epistemology over ontology. Ontologies, he writes, “are epistemic inventions” (p. 177). “Entities” and “de-notation” dominate the realm of Western ontology. One could legitimately ask what kind of notion of ontology Mignolo has in mind (Heidegger’s work seems to be particularly relevant here) when he opposes “entities” to “relations”, writing that “a world-sense [as the decolonial] that privileges relations cannot be understood ontologically because relations are not entities (they are relations among entities)” (p. 135). Suffice it to recall Étienne Balibar’s (2007) engagement with the notion of an “ontology of relations” with respect to outstanding modern philosophers like Spinoza and Marx to show that the spectrum of alternatives within European philosophy is much wider than Mignolo seems to believe (pp. 32-33). The point is particularly important, since Mignolo uses the opposition between “entities” and “relations” to draw a kind of epistemic civilizational boundary between the West (where “we are taught to see entities, things”), and “most of cultures and civilizations on the planet”, which take relations as the main focus of their worldviews. Repeating that “it is epistemology that institutes ontology”, Mignolo (2018) maintains that “ontology” is an exclusively Western category, which should not be projected onto “non-Western thinking” (pp. 147-148), while for some mysterious reasons “epistemology” is not.

The drawing of such a firm epistemic (and civilizational) boundary “the West and the Rest”, which in a way replicates in inverted form the “metaborder” between the metropolis and the colony, is for me another serious limit of Mignolo’s work. Moreover, epistemology tends to become a totalizing principle, which disentangles the operations of knowledge from any material force, and from the “materiality of the world” as such, which for Mignolo (2018) is entirely “shaped by epistemology” (p. 196). The “colonial matrix of power” nicely encapsulates such a primacy of epistemology. The “domains, levels, and flows” that compose the matrix (p. 142) revolve around an act of *enunciación*,

which in particular institutes the “domains” (economics, politics, knowledge, subjectivity, etc.) to be managed and controlled (p. 169). The emphasis on such an act of enunciation is what allows Mignolo to widely employ the notion of “fictions” to characterize the narratives of modernity (p. 109) and to speak of the “rhetoric of modernity” (p. 121), eventually reducing the latter to a diabolic rhetorical machine that somehow managed to dominate the whole planet with its “colonial matrix of power.” What we can call the materiality of modernity, which is also at root of its tensions and contradictions, is completely subordinated to the epistemological dimension, which also guides Mignolo’s analysis of capitalism in terms of “economic coloniality” (p. 130).

Mignolo’s (2018) frantic search for cultures and “epistemologies” existing outside modernity and its Eurocentric “colonial matrix of power” leads him to continuously reinforce the border circumscribing the West. And that border is necessarily a “civilizational” border, separating Europe and the West —“one of the results of knowledge making itself” (p. 196)— from other regions and continents where different epistemologies, ways of doing and thinking, forms of living are possible due a different history of civilizations and different cultural archives. “Delinking” from modernity and opting for decoloniality are the conditions for breaking free from the “colonial matrix of power”, an option that Mignolo recommends also for racialized and sexualized minorities within the West (since racism and sexism are for him key outcomes of the working of the “colonial matrix of power”). “The decolonial”, Mignolo (2011) writes elsewhere, “confronts all of Western civilization, which includes liberal capitalism and Marxism” (p. xviii). This civilizational opposition requires the reinforcement of the border circumscribing the West and forecloses therefore the theoretical space opened up by postcolonial critique through the “subverting of the old colonizing/colonized binary” (Hall, 1996, p. 246). Independently of the fact that “civilizational though” has a long history in Europe and the West, and it would be interesting to dwell on its pitfalls and shortcomings, its decolonial variant is doomed to nurture a merely moralistic critique of Eurocentrism and identity politics.

Resonances Across Borders

I dwelled quite at length on Walter Mignolo’s work because it is definitely influential in many parts of the world, even beyond the Americas, often in dialogue with Indigenous studies (see for instance Byrd, 2011) and settler colonialism studies (see Wolfe, 1999, 2016; Veracini, 2010). In a way, one can say that the decolonial project

promises to provide an alternative to a postcolonial critique that for several years now seems incapable to provide a convincing “grand narrative.” I have explained the reasons why I do not consider that project a viable and interesting alternative (while a discussion of Indigenous and settler colonialism studies is beyond the scope of this essay). The essentialist nature of the main decolonial concepts, the primacy of epistemology over ontology, the sidelining of material factors and forces lead to a reinforcement of a “civilizational” border between the West and the rest that I find highly problematic. Challenging the border between former colonies and former metropolises in the wake of decolonization was the founding gesture of postcolonial critique. And independently of the way in which one evaluates the development of postcolonial studies in the last two decades, I continue to find that gesture a crucially important move in order to make sense of the world we live in. In the two remaining sections of the article, I will explore different ways to work according to that foundational gesture, whether or not they form part of postcolonial studies.

What I am interested in is precisely the production of resonances across borders, the forging of a theoretical framework that acknowledges differences between countries and regions while at the same time allows taking experiences and processes from one region to explain what is happening in another region. A good example in this respect is provided by Jean and John Comaroff’s (2012) celebrated essay “Theory from the South”. On the one hand they write that “in many respects, Africa, South Asia, and Latin America seem to be running ahead of the Euromodern world, harbingers of *its* history-in-the-making” (p. 121). It is easy to see that the boundary between the “Global North” and the “Global South” is blurred here, and it becomes possible, say for a European scholar, to study the development of Africa, South Asia not only from the angle of “area studies”, but also to let that development “resonate” in Europe. On the other hand, Comaroff and Comaroff focus on the politics of the poor in South Africa, a “living politics”, stressing its peculiarity in the South African context. And nevertheless, they add that “the wave of popular protests against austerity measures in Europe has brought something akin to a living politics to the streets of Athens and London” (p. 122). We are confronted here again with “resonances”, although of a quite different way. Expanding and elaborating on such resonances as the ones highlighted by Comaroff and Comaroff it becomes possible to forge an approach to the study of global processes that seems to me consistent with the foundational gesture of postcolonial critique, and that allows grasping crucial aspects of both global capitalism and of the struggles crisscrossing and contesting its development.

Resonances across borders are haunted by what Ann Laura Stoler calls in her *Duress. Imperial Durabilities in Our Time* (2016) “colonial presence”, a notion that is not necessarily coincident with a “colonial present”, since it marks “the interstices of what once was and what is, reworking both” (p. 33). Among recent scholarship, Stoler’s book provides us with particularly effective conceptual tools to grasp colonial continuities in the present. While she definitely stresses moments of straightforward continuity (she mentions for instance Palestine and Iraq), she invites us to carefully analyze “strange continuity” (p. 28), following the mathematical model of “recursion.” Recursion, she writes, “is precisely *not* to imagine that social and political processes ever play out in a repetitive and mimetic fashion” (p. 27). The recursive replication of fragments of colonial legacy shapes our present, and Stoler adds that the effects of such “fragments” are no less “tragic” than the ones of earlier systems of full-fledged colonial domination (p. 31). It seems to me that such an approach allows discerning different levels of colonial continuity, focusing on such different instances as, say, the operations of transnational corporations in Indigenous territories in Latin America, police violence and mass incarceration of African Americans in the US, Hindu fundamentalism in India, or European border regimes in the Mediterranean. These are just four instances among many others of key structures of power whose working displays colonial continuity and “presence”, although to different degrees and in diverse ways, and cannot therefore be critically grasped without employing the colonial/postcolonial lens.

The approach I outlined speaking of “resonances across borders” and the concern with mapping “colonial presence” in our current predicament compose a theoretical framework that I find particularly effective to grasp the transitions and mutations of capitalism at the global level. It is from this point of view that I have employed both in individual essays (see for instance Mezzadra, 2011b) and above all in my collaborative work with Brett Neilson (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, 2019) the notion of “post-colonial capitalism”. This is a notion that has been circulating in postcolonial debates particularly since the publication of an important book by Kalyan Sanyal, *Rethinking Capitalist Development* (2007). This is not the place to provide a full-fledged discussion of Sanyal’s work (see Chatterjee and Sanyal, 2016). Suffice it to say that in his opinion “postcolonial capitalism is a world of difference” (Sanyal, 2007, p. 218). Far from being able to accomplish its universalizing tendencies, capitalism in the postcolonial world is compelled to negotiate its relations with multiple “outsides”, which means in particular with the steady expansion of that informal “need economy” that according to theories of development and modernization was only a remnant of “traditional”, pre-capitalist

social formations. This is above all because postcolonial capitalism is characterized by the continuity of processes of so called “primitive accumulation” that do not end up in processes of full proletarianization of the dispossessed (in their transformation into industrial workers). A new meaning of poverty and a new politics of the poor, both in terms of capitalist governmentality and in terms of struggles, are according to Sanyal distinctive features of postcolonial capitalism.

There would be much to discuss in this pioneering book, focusing for instance on the ways in which Sanyal frames his notions of capital’s outsides and “non-capital” (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2019, ch. 2). My main critical point here is that Sanyal limits his use of postcolonial capitalism to the analysis of capitalist formations in the former Third World. The continuity of “primitive accumulation” however, has been stressed by many scholars over the last years as a hallmark of global capitalism writ large —see Mezzadra (2011c) and the literature discussed here—. Such a theoretical move challenges the “historicist” temporality of modern capitalism (since it points at the reemergence of the “origin” at the “highest point” of capitalist development) and should therefore invite to reshuffle its spatial coordinates. Recent analyses of “accumulation by dispossession” (since Harvey, 2003) and of “extraction” as a key aspect of contemporary capitalism (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017) are attempts to flesh out logics and operations of capital that make up a regime of *differential* accumulation whose effects expand across borders between countries and regions. This is for me a very important point, as I wrote at the beginning of this essay. To be aware of the “homogeneity” of such regime is so important as it is to carefully investigate the profound “heterogeneity” that builds the basis of its working and that such working further stimulates and multiplies. It is to conceptually grasp this complex interplay of homogeneity and heterogeneity that the concept of postcolonial capitalism is particularly helpful for me.

Thinking about Sanyal’s definition of postcolonial capitalism as a “world of difference”, one is again reminded of Fanon’s (2005) definition of colonial capitalism as a “protean, unbalanced reality, where slavery, bondage, barter, cottage industries and stock transactions exist side by side” (p. 64). Needless to say, there are huge differences between colonial and postcolonial capitalism, but I agree with Miguel Mellino (2016) when he writes that the protean and uneven space described by Fanon, the “combination of different and hierarchized forms of labor, extends even through the so-called advanced capitalist countries” and that therefore “contemporary global capitalism can be conceived of as postcolonial capitalism” (p. 73). There should be no need at this point to stress once again that this does not imply erasing differences and inequalities among

countries and world regions. The opposite is true. As I understand it, the notion of postcolonial capitalism allows grasping the proliferation of differences and inequalities while it helps forging a unitary framework for their analysis. It enables the production of “resonances” across borders in the sense I was speaking about with respect to “Theory from the South” by Comaroff and Comaroff, which means both regarding structural processes and regarding social movements and struggles. Moreover, an important aspect of the notion of postcolonial capitalism is that it opens up an effective angle on the transformations of what we can call with Marx “living labor” after the explosion of “free” wage labor as a standard employment relation both in the West and elsewhere in the world (see Mezzadra, 2011b). Also from this point of view “resonances across borders” can help us to better understand what is at stake in such explosion and to prompt dialogues among scholars and activists based in different parts of the world.

Postcolonial Spaces

Speaking of “resonances across borders” raises the question of the ways in which we make sense of the global space in its current constitution. Geographical and “meta-geographical” (Lewis and Wigen, 1997) notions are particularly important in front of the spatial disruption that we are currently witnessing in a conjuncture characterized by the steady displacement of the US from the center of the global order and disorder and by the conflict-ridden processes of regionalization that I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. An entire geographical nomenclature, including the “three worlds” model, the notion of an “international division of labor”, or stable configurations as the ones elaborated around binaries such as center/periphery or North/South, is tested in such a conjuncture. Civilizational thought, in a way anticipated by Samuel Huntington in his *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), circulates in contemporary debates even beyond the “decolonial” variant I critically discussed before, for instance when it comes to the analysis of the position of continental states like China and India in the planet. There is a need to repeat that the use of the notion of civilization to make sense of the global geography is a foundational aspect of European colonialism. As Naoki Sakai (2000) explains in an important essay on the historical role of the “West and Asia binary”, the “cartographic imaginary of the globe upon which modernization theory is invariably dependent” emerged out of a series of violent colonial encounters in which the “West” interpellated its “others”, establishing civilizational partitions and

at the same time reinforcing its undisputed centrality. This is the reason why Sakai writes:

[...] the insistence of the propriety and native authenticity of us Asians would only reinforce the discriminatory and distinctive uniqueness of the West and prevent us from dismantling the colonial relationship that underlies the identities of both the West and Asia. (p. 801)

A critique of civilizational thought should therefore figure prominently in a research agenda on postcolonial spaces, which does not mean that we should not take into consideration the role of religious and cultural factors in the making and remaking of the world we live in. The point is rather to maintain and nurture a critical attitude toward the crystallization of those factors in the shape of unitary civilizations. Deploying and updating a postcolonial critique of cultural “essentialism” there is a need to shed light on the material forces and relations of power that drive such crystallization as well as on the underlying conflicts and struggles. The same is true for the notion of “region”, whose processes of constitution and bordering require a critical scrutiny, for instance through the lens of the “critical regionalism” advocated by Gayatri Spivak (2008) within the framework of a reflection on the notions of “planet” and “planetary” that also inspire the work of postcolonial geographers (see Sidaway et al., 2014).

Alternative images of the global spaces are urgently needed in this regard. And luckily there is no shortage of such images in contemporary scholarship. Take for instance Lisa Lowe’s amazing book, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (2015). Starting from the analysis of a secret memorandum from the British colonial office to the “Court of Directors of the East India Company”, written in 1803 and dedicated to a discussion of the implications of the Haitian revolution across the British Empire, Lowe interweaves a narrative that displaces colonial and imperial geographies and focuses on the entanglement of “four continents”. Crucial to her work are the movements and struggles of Chinese indentured workers, whose import within the British Empire in the wake of the abolition of slavery was foreshadowed in the secret memorandum of 1803 (p. 23). Far from pursuing “a single, particularist cultural identity”, Lowe’s interest in Chinese emigration is “to explain the politics of our lack of knowledge” and to provide a key to the exploration of alternative geographies, to unearth that “spatial dynamics” that crisscrosses and enables her counterhistory of “liberal freedom” and its colonial imprint (p. 16).

Lowe's analysis of the "intimacies of four continents" from the angle of the interplay between colonial regimes of domination, mutations of labor, and migratory movements is definitely thought provoking and it outlines methodic principles that it would be worth testing in the present. Needless to say, postcolonial critique has tackled the question of space since its inception, and there is a need to carefully search the postcolonial archive in our attempt to forge a conceptual language capable to grasp the geographical turmoil and spatial disruptions we are currently confronted with. Just think, to give an example, of Paul Gilroy's (1993) careful intertwining of spatial and temporal dimensions in his analysis of the diasporic "counterculture" of the "Black Atlantic". His focus on the sea as a geographical space and a methodic perspective for the analysis of modernity, colonialism, and postcolonialism has nurtured a proliferation of Oceanic histories and studies, including for instance an "Indian Ocean critique" (Chari, 2015). To give a second example, a recent volume edited by Tariq Jazeel and Stephen Legg (2019) explores the legacy of "subaltern studies" from the angle of their implicit and explicit contribution to critical geography. Following the lead of Gayatri Spivak, Jazeel and Legg (2019) pursue "a critical engagement with the politics of representation" (p. 14) in the field of geography, further displacing Europe from the center of the map, provincializing the spatial autonomy of the nation form, and focusing on "interstitial" geographies across borders. The chapters of the book provide readers with multifarious and challenging instances of a postcolonial "geographic imagination" that have immediate resonances in our present, from fascinating tales of subaltern maritime networks across the Indian Ocean (Sharad Chari) to the analysis of the University of Dar es Salaam as a postcolonial site of learning and pan-African elaboration in Nyerere's Tanzania (Jo Sharp). Such "subaltern geographies" do not fit any national or civilizational norm, and they continue to spur social and even spatial practices in many parts of the world.

The struggles against colonialism have also been characterized by peculiar forms of geographical imagination, powerfully instantiating what David Featherstone (2012) calls "the generative world-making possibilities of subaltern political activity" (p. 9). Those struggles have produced their own geographies, which remain hidden but nonetheless present in the constitution of the current global space, as a peculiar anticolonial "presence" to hark back to the discussion of Stoler's notion. Transcontinental networks have nurtured anticolonial activism, while exchanges across languages and continents have led to the emergence of politically charged visions of regionalism (think of Pan-Africanism, to give one example) and solidarity. Writing of his link with Africa, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote for instance in 1940 his *Dusk of Dawn* (2002) that its real essence had

to do with the “social heritage of slavery”. And he immediately added that “this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas” (p. 117). Du Bois was foreshadowing here the emergence of a political notion of “Third World” in the framework of decolonization, which was at the same time registered and prompted by such an important event as the Afro-Asian conference of Bandung in 1955. In a recent book, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South* (2018), Anne Garland Mahler carefully investigates the contribution of black radicalism in the Americas and in the Caribbean to the formation of the spirit of anticolonial and antiimperialist solidarity that anticipated Afro-Asian encounters and laid the basis for “the extension into the Americas” of the Bandung movement with the formation of the Tricontinental in January 1966 (p. 3).

What makes Mahler’s reconstruction of Tricontinentalism so interesting and inspiring is that she continually works the boundary between the insurgent peripheries and the imperialist center. In fact, an important part of her book is dedicated to the history of Tricontinentalism in the US, particularly focusing on African American and Puerto Rican movements and cultural practices. In Mahler’s (2018) analysis Tricontinentalism anticipates “key concepts within recent theories of network power and resistance” since it conceptualized power “as transcendent of individual nation states”, theorized resistance “as occurring through global, lateral networks” beyond boundaries, and emphasized that there is “no outside” to power (p. 26). Interestingly, she distinguishes Tricontinentalism from Third Worldism, maintaining that the latter “clearly fails to capture [the former’s] highly fluid geography and privileging of struggles located precisely within the First World” (p. 208). It is from this point of view that Mahler finds the notion of Global South “to have striking resonances with Tricontinentalism in that it uses the South to refer to a global system of inequality that affect diverse peoples across a fluid geography, and it theorizes transnational resistance to a decentralized power structure through ideological rather than trait-base terms” (p. 219).

Fair enough. I welcome the return of Tricontinentalism in Mahler’s (2018) understanding of that historical experience, including what she calls its “metonymic color politics”, which means a use of color and race detached from skin color and inscribed onto shifting geographies of power and resistance (p. 65). Nevertheless, my sense is that the widespread use of the notion of Global South today (by activists and scholars, sure, but also by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) does not contribute to grasping what Mahler calls a “fluid geography”. It rather tends to reinforce the border between the Global South and the Global North. I repeat that I am happy

to register different usages of the notion, but I remain concerned with the rigidity of a binary distinction that does not allow grasping crucial aspects of the contemporary planetary turmoil (for instance, is China part of the Global South or of the Global North? Definitely of none of them) while it obscures the proliferating transits and entanglements among different areas at the global level. Mahler explains the erasure of the memory of Tricontinentalism with the direction taken by mainstream postcolonial studies, which “focus on the national contexts represented at Bandung” and elide “both Latin America as well as oppressed populations within wealthy countries like the United States” (p. 243). This may be true regarding the academic development of postcolonial studies in the US. Nevertheless, I am convinced that what I called the foundational gesture of postcolonial critique, the subverting of the “old colonizing/colonized binary” (Stuart Hall) and the challenge to the “metaborder” between colony and metropolis, continues to be an inspiring methodic principle for the critical investigation of the current global space, of its fault lines, of its connections and disconnections, of the movements and flows that traverse it, of the boundaries, channels, bottlenecks, and deadlocks that striate it. Whether or not one decides to adopt a postcolonial language in that investigation is at the end of the day not particularly important for me. But I continue to work in the spirit of the foundational gesture I just recalled, which seems to me to open up a conceptual space in which a wide array of struggles for liberation continue to nurture practices of research and political interventions, across borders and beyond the limits of postcolonial studies.

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THE LONG-LASTING 'PROVINCIALIZATION' OF EUROPE. AN INTERVIEW WITH DIPESH CHAKRABARTY¹

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Abstract

This article and the related interview aim at exploring the intellectual legacy of Dipesh Chakrabarty's book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000). The long-lasting process of "provincialization" of both Europe and the Western world is analysed in the light of today's most pressing global challenges. A particular attention is dedicated to the process of European integration, the 'colonial origins' of the European Economic Community and the reconfiguration of labour subjectivities within contemporary society in Europe and beyond. In this respect, our aim is to introduce a fruitful postcolonial perspective into such an intriguing topic, that is the transnational history and politics of European integration. This article is conceived

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as a long introduction to an interview with Chakrabarty himself, where we seek to understand how he conceptualizes the far-reaching transformations that both Europe and the entire “globe” experienced over the last twenty years in the realm of transnational social, economic, political, and cultural relations.

Keywords

Europe, European Integration, Globalism, Environment, Labour, Subjectivity.

Resumen

Este artículo y la entrevista relacionada tienen como objetivo explorar el legado intelectual del libro de Dipesh Chakrabarty *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000). El proceso de larga duración de la “provincialización” tanto de Europa como del mundo occidental se analiza a la luz de los desafíos mundiales más apremiantes de la actualidad. Se presta especial atención al proceso de integración europea, a los “orígenes coloniales” de la Comunidad Económica Europea y a la reconfiguración de las subjetividades laborales dentro de la sociedad contemporánea en Europa y más allá. En este sentido, nuestro objetivo es introducir una perspectiva poscolonial fructífera en un tema tan intrigante, es decir, la historia transnacional y la política de la integración europea. Este artículo se concibe como una larga introducción a una entrevista con el propio Chakrabarty, donde buscamos entender cómo conceptualiza las transformaciones de largo alcance que tanto Europa como todo el “globo” experimentaron en los últimos veinte años en el ámbito de las relaciones sociales, económicas, políticas y culturales transnacionales.

Palabras clave

Europa, Integración Europea, Globalismo, Medio ambiente, Trabajo, Subjetividad.

INTERVIEW

Frapporti – Ventresca:

We would like to conduct this conversation by building up a sort of intellectual path where many crucial topics and categories included in your pivotal work, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), will be intertwined. As said, the focus of our interview is on the process of European integration as it has been evolving since the early post-WWII period. In this respect, we aim at ‘provincializing’ our own historiographic gaze, that is to adopt —or at least to deal with— a postcolonial perspective on a process (namely, European integration) which is now celebrating its seventieth anniversary.

Thus, as far as the main topics of our discussion are concerned, we would like to start from a very basic —though central— question: What does Europe mean in your opinion now?

At the very beginning of your book (pp. 3-4) you highlight that “The Europe I seek to provincialize de-center is an imaginary figure that remains deeply embedded in clichéd and shorthand forms in some everyday habits thought”. In the following pages, you get back to this point, stressing that Europe (as well as India) is treated as a “hyperreal term” inasmuch it lies on “certain figures of imagination whose geographical referents remain somewhat indeterminate” (p. 27).

In light of what happened over the last twenty years in the European as well as the global political and economic arena (just to mention the 9/11 and its repercussions on transatlantic relations; the defeat of the European constitutional project in 2005; the outburst of the ‘Great Recession’ and the post-2008 crisis of the Eurozone; the issue of migrant flows), do you think that the ‘imagination’ of (and even the geographical reference to) the European Political Space has been radically redefined? Putting it differently: when you speak about Europe, what are you now thinking about?

Chakrabarty:

When I wrote *Provincializing Europe* (PE), “Europe” was a term that mediated many questions of “modernity” for me. It was a shorthand for certain ideas that arose among European intellectuals and in their institutions even as European nations expanded to create empires and dominated —and in the case of indigenous societies, destroyed— the lives of other peoples. Empire was a creative force in India. It created

new possibilities for life. Most importantly, the British created a middle class in India. This was true of all regions of India but especially of Bengal where intellectuals from this middle class in turn developed a fascination with the ideas and institutions of Europe even as they protested the injustices (including racism) of the Empire. Certain visions of emancipation —from patriarchy, caste and class-based oppression, inequalities of other kinds, and democratic political structures and so on— came out of this inter-cultural dialogue. PE in many ways was an attempt to understand the nature of this dialogue that took place across differences of history and cultural pasts. This is why questions of translation and displacement remained very important in PE. But the Europe in question was a Europe that had been formed out of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and one with universal messages (the two most important being liberalism and Marxism). People knew that alongside this Europe, there was also the Europe that produced modern forms of racism, empires, new forms of violence and oppression but they still felt inspired by those universal ideas and tried to make them their own through processes that I treated as translational. To provincialize was to see how the dialectic of the universal and the particular related to that which I, following Paul Veyne, called the singular.

When I look at Europe today, I see groups and intellectuals fighting for some of those ideals that now also feel somewhat irretrievably lost. This, incidentally, is true not only of Europe but of India as well. The Indian intellectual struggles I highlighted in PE now seem like minority and non-dominant traditions, certainly on the defensive. There is no question that the European political space —and, of course, the space of the EU— is undergoing upheavals marked by the resurgence of populism, authoritarianism, financial crises, and xenophobia. But these are global issues. The global world is post-imperial (if one uses the word “empire” in a formal sense) and is marked today by certain crises of planetary proportions. Certainly, many of the hopes and aspirations that had to do with 1989 have been blighted. But this is the big difference with the analytical frame that I deployed in PE. The whole question of modernity that Habermas once described as an incomplete project and that was at the core of PE now lives a much more precarious life than it did in the 1990s when I was working on PE. 1989 still seemed close. But the world that was created by various democratic upsurges between the 1960s and the 1980s have slowly morphed into a world marked by unbridled expansion of what Sandro Mezzadra and his colleagues call extractive capital, of technology that is threatening the future of labor and replacing labor by work (on this distinction, see below), demographic changes, and environmental crises of

planetary proportions. Today's problems in Europe and elsewhere are not unrelated to these factors. In my current work, I try to develop analytical distinctions between the global and the planetary and argue that we have even moved on from the world-historical phase we used to describe by the word "globalization"; we live on the cusp of the global and the planetary. Known democratic forms of management invented over the last couple of centuries are failing to function, and authoritarian and impatient forms of struggle —social media often reflect and aid this impatient and un-nuanced nature of contemporary information flows— are capturing people's imagination both on the right and the left, blurring the traditional left-right distinctions.

Frapporti – Ventresca:

Your reference to the planetary dimension of today's crises (economic, financial, environmental, and so on) give us the opportunity to reflect on one of the most blatant contradictions that characterize current debates on the seemingly re-emergence of the "State" as the pivotal actor of global —or, to stick with the same theme, international— politics. As you said, the "democratic forms of management" that emerged over the last two centuries fall short of dealing with the global challenges of today's capitalism, basically because the historical conditions within which these "forms" took shape are no longer present. However, the idea that the State, often depicted as a sort of a-historical subject, might defend people from looming "external" menaces —from migrants to cosmopolitan élites of greedy bankers and technocrats— is still acquiring a mobilizing effect "both on the right and the left", as you outlined.

In some (actually circumscribed) European leftist circles, even Karl Polanyi's theory of "double movement" (1944) is now largely seen as a theoretical justification for the need to bring back previous forms of "containment" of capitalist deregulation, such as national welfare state or the restoration of full national sovereignty over monetary issues. However, these positions largely underplay the intrinsic transnational dimension of current capitalist flows and fail in explaining how the State could concretely bridle them. On the contrary, the focus on the global trajectories of capital flows and the role of assets such as logistics, extractions and finance (i.e. the works of Sandro Mezzadra, Brett Neilson, Anna Tsing and Deborah Cowen) are certainly much more persuasive, although a clear thematization of the current role of the State —which of course has not completely disappeared— is still somehow necessary.

In this respect, how do you conceptualize the role of the State in today's global scenario? How can the system of national and supranational institutions —like the EU—

deal with the challenges embodied by the dialectic between the “global” and “planetary” dimensions of contemporary world?

Chakrabarty:

In approaching your question, I find it helpful to distinguish between “the state” and actual governments. The category of “the state” projects a normative entity, hardly what governments are except in some very exceptional moments in their lives. In “The Jewish Question”, Marx made a distinction, following Hegel, between “the state” and the “the actual life of people” that is never without prejudice and feelings of self/other differences. The modern state, even in some authoritarian forms, professes to stand above the actual lives of people and claims a capacity to create a “universality” of interests (in Marx’s nineteenth-century terms, man’s species-being) that hovers above the egoistic sphere of the civil society. In reality, actual governments try to perform this “universal” idea of the state but their success at this depends on the extent to which forces from “the actual life of people” —with all their armnory of power and inequalities— have already invaded and occupied the sphere of the state and converted “the state” into so many specific departments of governments molded by historical particularities. Take, for instance, the Trumpian government in the US or the Modi government in India. The constitution and its various provisions, in both cases, act as scripts for the state but the state machinery has been taken over —in either case— by certain sections of the populace and certain fragments of the capitalist classes in pursuit of wars that belong to the domain of the actual lives of people. These political elements convert the machinery of the government —its various executive, judicial, and legislative organs— into instruments for conducting wars that have historically erupted in society. In India, for instance, the machinery of the government, both at the central/federal and provincial levels, is actively involved in promoting sentiments of Hindu majoritarianism directed at religious minorities and at so-called “illegal Muslim immigrants” from the neighboring country of Bangladesh. Trump, too, uses the federal government machinery to pursue his anti-immigrant policies. One could also find similar instances in Europe and other places (the other country I know reasonably well, Australia, also displays versions of this phenomenon). Here all kinds of justifications are used including those of security (hence Islamophobia) but you know what is going on in reality. Both the leaders mentioned got elected as partisan generals in racist, ethnic, or religious battles that have erupted in society for understandable historical reasons. Once they get elected, however, the state, ideally, requires them to stand above these partisan issues and to translate their electoral promises into policies

compatible with the ideal practices of the state. But instead they see the machinery of the government —its various agencies and institutions— as something to capture in order to foment and further the divisive social battles (against immigrants, against the poor, against those perceived as deviant) they see themselves as part of. Many of these battles may be understood, without defending them, as social or popular responses to certain changes in global capitalism and the planetary environment that have increasingly been with us since the 1980s and have increasingly challenged social management. I know that even some middle-of-the road economists are raising voices for social regulation of technology and of certain kinds of market institutions that are seen as threatening society (the Amazon distribution system is a good example of this, seen as convenient to the consumer but utterly destructive of the local, neighborhood shop or the Uber model for taxis). My colleague, Raghuram Rajan, a celebrated economist in our Business School, has written a book called *The Third Pillar* (2019) that argues for some reigning in of capitalism in order to sustain society as an institution distinct from the government and the marketplace. Yet you only have to look at the unrelenting momentum of digitalization of life and the workplace and the consequent fragmentation and redundancy of labor to know that much of this talk in its current form (I will elaborate on this in a moment) is expressive of a nostalgia for some imagined time of the past. Global capital has created a global consuming class that, in spite of all its internal unevenness and its diaspora of dependents, enjoys a life that is made possible by the combination of the digital revolution and globalization. You only have to see how embedded our own lives are in these circuits to know that there are no clear answers here, while it is also clear that the technosphere that supports our planetary existence is creating planetary problems that only involve us more, and not less, in moving towards the illusion of being able to manage the planet (I am thinking of developments in geoengineering).

If my argument that the state has been reduced to mere governments in most places and that governments so conceived have become weapons to be used by the powerful in battles in the actual life of people, then social regulation can only be advanced by movements that participate in people's lives - in other words, by not wanting to start with normative ideas of the state. At the same time, as we have already discussed, we have to recognize that older forms of mobilization, general strikes, etc. may not be enough. And the most difficult question that I think about is the illusion of "rational" reorganization of society that the left has harbored for a long time. I cannot tell you how many times John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York's *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth* (2010), a Marxist-ecological analysis of the currently planetary envi-

ronmental crises, reverts to this theme as integral to solving humanity's problems: some kind of permanent and sustained rational regulation of society and economy. I fully understand where the desire for this comes from, but I do not see what historical evidence allows us to imagine a humanity capable of doing this beyond moments of universal crises and that too only in a fragmentary manner.

Frapporti – Ventresca:

Now we would like to shift our attention to the issue of (Western) European integration as a political, economic and social process. As far as we've noticed, you don't mention the topic of European integration in *Provincializing Europe*. The process of integration —actually, first cooperation and then integration— of Western Europe is often perceived as a mere technical or even technocratic way of linking European markets within a broader context of economic, administrative and juridical rules —which is in many respects blatantly true! Actually, it is somehow relevant to recall that Western Europe (of course, on the wake of the US push!) experienced after 1945 a process of progressive integration when its old Empires (i.e. Britain, France) were definitely losing their grip on global territories. For sure, European integration has very little to do with the rhetorical claims of the so called 'fathers of Europe' (Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi, and so on), while the goals of economic, monetary, and infrastructural integration stand out as the main reasons of this historical move. Starting from these general remarks, how would you place the history of European integration within your broader narrative of "provincializing Europe", here interpreted as both a book and a far-reaching intellectual challenge? Does European integration gain its own historiographic specificity according to your post-colonial perspectives on the history of the so called 'Old continent'? Looking at some relatively recent works on the emergence of the global neoliberal turn and its relationship with the making of European Integration (Garavini, 2012; Slobodian, 2018, pp. 182-217), how and to what extent do you think that the processes of post-WWII decolonization, European integration, and capitalist transformations are interrelated? Do you think that the features of European integration, as they evolved from the early post-WWII period to date, could tell us something specific on the global trends of today's capitalism?

Chakrabarty:

Let me pick up on this question of post-war Europe to which you refer by mentioning the very illuminating texts of Slobodian and Garavini. Here I speak as someone

who is an outsider to the post-war project of reconstruction of Europe and yet dwells within a long history of Europeanization of the world. Remember I began my book *Provincializing Europe* by saying that the geopolitical space that refers to itself as Europe was provincialized by history itself, that the Europe I was seeking to provincialize was a hyper-real Europe conjointly produced by European ideas about Europe in the hey days of European empires and anti-colonial visions of modernization and nationalism often working together. So when I look at the world as it was in the decades between c.1950-1980, I see processes, an emerging structure and a set of institutions that fundamentally owed themselves to and were shaped by the expansion of Europe and the subsequent decline of European empires: all the settler-colonial nations of the world including the US, the two great wars of the twentieth century, and as well as nineteenth and twentieth-century circuits of migration; but these also at the same time included the processes of decolonization, the Cold War, and eventually the rise of the Asian economies, mainly of China and India, and the decline and ruin of the Soviet bloc. It is an open question as to when the process of Europeanization of the world ended. Carl Schmitt dated it from the beginning of the Monroe doctrine of 1823, i.e. the rise of a separate sphere of influence for the US. But I think the process continued for well over another hundred years until the end of the process of decolonization, that is to say, into the 1960s. You only have to look at the early years of decolonization or even indigenous peoples' movements in the 1960s to see how much European ideas about freedom and emancipation influenced these movements via the writings of thinkers such as Frantz Fanon. So, basically, you get a multi-themed second half of the twentieth century, and some of the themes don't even necessarily intersect in observers' minds. Firstly, there is the Cold War - much of the science of climate change that we talk about today comes out of Cold-War related interests and competition in the atmosphere and space; there is decolonization and an upswell of democratic urges reflected in struggles for civil liberties and indigenous peoples' rights; then there is the Sino-Soviet split and the rise of Maoism, the Chinese cultural revolution without which student radicalism in India, or even the rise of *Subaltern Studies* cannot be understood; the enormous and global significance of the Vietnam War and the Israel-Palestine conflict; the third-world-ism around oil and the rise of resurgent and extreme Islam. True, there is American technology and Hollywood mesmerizing the world in this period but there are also currents of anti-colonial and anti-imperial thinking that are legatees of Enlightenment and nineteenth-century Europe (Marxism and liberalism of various hues being prominent examples here). We are on the verge of globalization by the end of the 1980s. The Chinese have begun their "four

modernization” programs, while India would begin to liberalize her economy from the early 1990s.

I said these themes did not always present themselves simultaneously to observers and actors in the second half of the twentieth century. My biggest examples are global warming and global/postcolonial thinking. It was in 1988 when the NASA scientist James Hansen spoke to the US government about the dangers of global warming. In the same year or next, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Isac Julien came together to curate the first important global and postcolonial conference on Fanon. But the two strands of thinking were unaware of each other. Those celebrating or criticizing globalization did not even know that it was connected to the parallel story of global warming. The connection was not made until the next century.

Where is post-war Europe in all this? Europe looks like an entity struggling to find its place in a post-imperial world. It could not deny its connection to the peoples it had colonized - and this touches on issues of immigration, claims of special economic ties (that are not quite realized except in the field of education), development of forms of racism in the European mainland that can be recognized as post-imperial (Le Pen, for instance), all this made complicated by the rise of the US and the presence of a large part of Eastern Europe in the Soviet bloc. Garavini shows how the rise of the welfare state and post-war prosperity in Europe made even the European working classes or their leaders somewhat inward-directed in their focus. Slobodian documents the persistence of racism among many Vienna liberals of the mid-20th century. At the same time, Europe is at the forefront of the radical student movements of the 1960s and it was a certain European uptake of both Latin American and Chinese radical ideas of the 1960s and 70s that greatly influenced us in India in that period.

I could perhaps use the Robert Redfield’s ideas of “great” and “little” traditions to express my thoughts here. There are the great traditions of European thought of which all modern humans are inheritors, and there are the little traditions of European thought that delineate concerns that are specifically European. Sometimes, within Europe, you find people using elements of the Great Tradition to contest and fight the “little” imaginations of Europe especially when it comes to issues of race and immigration. But, clearly, once the empires go, European intellectuals are no longer in a position to speak in the name of all humans while the lives and histories of all humans have been inevitably touched by the way European powers shaped and brought into being “the globe” that connects us all. This is why the conversation with the Great Traditions of Europe never ends.

Frapporti – Ventresca:

Our last question deals with the issues of labour, subalternity, and subjectivity in today's Europe. As you aptly noticed in *Provincializing Europe* —and as the history of the past three or four decades have largely demonstrated—, the modern relationship between (waged) labour and citizenship as one of the main pivots of 'modern' subjectivity (at least in Western capitalist countries, and namely in Western Europe) has faded away. The transformations occurred in the material shape of both *labour* and *citizenship* led to the displacement of these categories as the modern pillars through which people could conceive themselves as 'subjects' endowed with rights —bourgeois rights, at least. If this is not something new, nevertheless a question arises: according to a post-colonial perspective on today's Europe and the broader transformations of global capitalism, which are the new sources of political and social *subjectivity*? Which are the engines of the present-day construction of political subjectivity within our current capitalist system? And, if we take into account the category of 'subaltern', what still makes *subaltern* today's *subalterns*? Could you spell out which are, in your opinion, the main sources of both 'subjectivity' and 'subordination' that characterize our lives as Europeans (no matter how large Europe can be considered) within global capitalism?

Chakrabarty:

I make a distinction, conceptually, between the categories *labor* and *work*. Let me explain the difference with some a quick and superficial gesture at philology. The word "labor," in most European languages that I know anything about, references toil, actual physical, unpleasant toil by humans or animals (and exclusively to human toil when humans replace animals). The word "work," on the other hand, refers to the Greek word for energy (if I am not mistaken) and is thus quite compatible with seventeenth-century Physics's definition of work as "expenditure of energy." The source of energy does not have to be human or animal. Work can be done by anything —a waterfall can perform work, a river can do work, a machine can work, artificial intelligence can do work for us, and so on. At the beginning of the history of capitalism —or what we loosely call capitalism, it is always a loose word, not tightly defined— human labor or toil was critical to its organization and success. Marx's theories of surplus value could not be thought without positing the category of "living labor." But it seems to me that in the late twentieth century, capitalists discovered that labor in the sense of direct human toil to be a constraint on the expansion of capital. Labor is increasingly less critical to the production process than ensuring that the necessary work gets done, irrespective of

whose energy is being spent and in what form. Another way to say this would be to say that domain of nonhuman (AI, machines) work has vastly expanded while that of labor—in the production of profits—has shrunk. Thus you have this paradox of what Indian economist often call “jobless growth,” - an overall increase in GDP and “wealth” but not of employment. This is the kind of capitalism that the Pope denounced as un-Christian in his 2015 encyclical on climate change (but who listens?). Think of the history of coal mining. Once, miners were critical to the industry. Today, a lot of the extracting work is done by computerized machinery while prospecting itself would involve work by satellites and other high-tech instruments.

These developments have fundamentally changed the nature and significance of “work” for humans and have created the category of the precariat, underlining the insecure and fragmented place of human-labor in capitalism today. If this is right, then we are way beyond the days of old, labor-centered subjectivity. Many economists talk these days of “guaranteed universal basic income” for everybody to ensure a living for humans in an age when “work” comes to dominate and supplant “labor” in very large measures. But, surely, a society where a majority of human beings do not “labor” in the traditional, industrial or bureaucratic sense will call for a reordering of subjectivity. More on that in a minute.

In my thinking, the labor/work distinction is related to another distinction I have been engaged in developing: that between the globe and the planet. The globe is what human labor, capital, and the work of technology created over a few hundred years. But as the domain of “work” expands and supplants labor, that is to say, as we work the Earth harder in all our endeavor to extract more and more from the biosphere—requiring all natural processes to speed up: fish to reproduce faster, land to grow more food—we encounter the “planet,” a geobiological entity whose processes often take place on scales of time that are simply humongous in human terms. Climate Change, the Anthropocene, the rising seas, the increased frequency of cyclones and wild fires—these are the results of that encounter between the globe and the planet. An intensification of the global reveals the planetary to us. And frankly, whatever the champions of geoengineering might say and actually do, the planet is not engineerable, it seems to me. There is a real and planet-wide environmental crisis unfolding before our very eyes. What it will do for our economic, political, and social institutions is still too early to tell, but there is no doubt that global capitalism, its extractive relations to the biosphere, and the nation-state based global governance that the UN represents, are all faced with

unprecedented challenges. I also feel that it is highly likely that humans, going forward, will not be able to avoid what scientists call “dangerous” climate change.

We are thus looking at an Earth many parts of which may become increasingly inhospitable for both human and many nonhuman forms of life. Humans, animals, plants will therefore want to move, both within and across nations. The official number of refugees in the world today is somewhere around 65 million. Sea level rise could make that figure soar to a few hundred million. Which means that problems of so-called illegal immigration will only increase and become acute. The ideas of national citizenship and inviolable national borders will not serve us very well, unless we want to see the world slide into some kind of barbarism, with the privileged exercising extreme selfishness in fighting to defend their narrow interests (they possibly can, to a certain extent, against other humans—but against fires, sea-levels, bacteria and viruses? What will they do?). The alternative is to think of humans differently. I think we have to rethink citizenship and sovereignty as Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson once suggested, and develop what may be called a planetary consciousness that actually involves learning to think from the position of being a migrant or a minority (this is a variation on Mezzadra and Neilson’s “border-as-method”). We have to think of humans as constituting a diaspora of a biological species, the *Homo sapiens*. And we also have to remember our place in bio-diversity, that while we may be the most dominant species, we are a minority form of life. The coming politics of subjectivity will entail these tasks of learning to think from diasporic and minority positions (though *without*—as in the Jewish conceptions of the diaspora—having a particular place to which to return).

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This interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty has a specific purpose. Over the last few months, we have been editing a special issue for the journal *Zapruder. Rivista di storia della conflittualità sociale* (*Zapruder. A Journal for the History of Social Conflict*), which focused on both the history and politics of the European integration process². In addition to offering a historical exploration of the main economic, social and intellectual actors that contributed to the unfolding of the so-called “European project”, we also wanted to introduce a fruitful postcolonial perspective in our investigation of such an intriguing —though complex and somehow elusive— topic. Seventy years after the *Schuman Declaration* of 9 May 1950, which led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (1952), we have sought to “provincialize” both the mainstream scholarly narratives on European integration and the most popular clichés that currently characterize public debates about the European Union (EU), as well as the manifold crises that affect the “European project” as a whole. Thus, the desire to connect Chakrabarty’s work to our own research stems from this broader intellectual commitment; the variety of issues Chakrabarty deals with in this interview —such as European integration and Europe’s ongoing “displacement” in contemporary politics, new forms of labour subjectivities, and the impact of capitalism on the transforming relationship between humankind and the planet— tellingly demonstrates how crucial his reflection can be for a better understanding of the very features of our “global present”.

The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, and the very start of European integration, spurred heated debates among political theorists and historians of international relations. This progressively led to the birth of new and autonomous fields of study (i.e., European law, European politics and European integration history, to mention only some), which are entirely dedicated to the specific factors that characterize the setting up of the so-called “European construction” (Varsori & Kaiser, 2010).

Beyond European Integration scholarly reception over the last seven decades, the building up of an ever more integrated (Western) Europe put into question the very issue of sovereignty and its relationship with the State (Balibar 2020), thus contributing to the global process of reconfiguring the traditional “Leviathan” into its “2.0” version (Maier, 2014). Furthermore, European integration gained a pivotal position in the con-

2. Mattia Frapporti and Roberto Ventresca (2020). We published a shorter version of this interview: “L’Europa tra il “glo-
bale” e il “planetario”. A vent’anni da Provincializing Europe” (pp. 151-162) (translated in Italian by Margherita Di Cicco).

text of the Cold War (Gilbert, 2015; Westad, 2017), during the process of decolonization (Garavini, 2012), and at the start of the so-called 1970s–1980s globalization (Warlouzet, 2018; Slobodian, 2018). In this respect, European integration has long ceased to be studied exclusively by diplomatic historians or political scientists; new theoretical approaches —from political theory to gender studies (Schulz-Forberg & Strât, 2010; Abels, Mushaben 2012)— have contributed to reveal its multi-layered dimensions.

In so doing, we deemed it crucial to develop a postcolonial perspective on European integration, in order to gauge the long-lasting effects that the EEC's establishment in the late 1950s has had on the —at least formal— dismissal of old European empires and on the changing relationship between “colonies” and “colonizers” in the Cold War era (Garavini, 2012). The birth of the EEC envisaged the creation of a Common Market, whose “preferential access” was also provided to French, Dutch and Belgian colonies, in the guise of “associated states”. Thus, the EEC's institutional architecture implied that a very significant part of the “Common Market's territorial area was beyond the borders of Europe itself” (Hansen & Jonsson, 2011, p. 1038). Symptomatically, the establishment of the EEC evoked both praise and harsh criticism not only from European diplomats, governmental officials or policymakers, but also from some of the most representative circles of the neoliberal school of thought (Mirowski & Plehwe, 2009). On the one side, the representatives of the so-called Geneva neoliberal school (i.e. neoliberal “universalists”) blamed the *regional* stance that the EEC embodied, and the potential drawbacks against their efforts to set up a truly global market; rather, the latter could be achieved thanks to the role played by an international organization like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). On the other side, those who belonged to the German ordoliberal school (i.e. neoliberal “constitutionalists”) considered the EEC a strategic framework through which to enhance the driving forces of market economy, under the pressure of binding institutional agreements and rules (Slobodian, 2018, p. 182-217). In this respect, the reflection on the often neglected “colonial origins” of the European Economic Community has forced us to widen our perspective to include methodological approaches that could take into account the contradictions between European colonial history, the counter-reactions of colonial subjects, and the broader effects of these dynamics, as far as the remaking of the post-WWII global order was concerned.

A look at the so-called “global present” can reveal the multiple perspectives from which to study the long-lasting unfolding of European (and Western) historical “decentralization”. From a geo-economical point of view, the decentralization of Europe consists not only in the mere acknowledgment that “the network society” (Castells, 1996)

no longer has a clear core. Furthermore, a “space of flows” is now investing a “space of places” (Castelles 1999), setting out new political maps. “[N]ew state spaces’ are emerging, and the ‘planetary urbanization” (Brenner, 2004, 2014) is a new, pervading paradigm in the study of present-day politicization of global territories. The world’s “non-scalability” (Tsing, 2012; Farinelli, 2003, 2008, 2009) is forcing us to use different analytical tools to understand our global times. Logistics, together with extraction and finance (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013a, 2013b, 2015, 2019), is largely considered a new “form of power” (Neilson, 2012; Cowen, 2014; Grappi, 2016), which deeply influences political geography —with China at the forefront of such a global move, for example through the Belt and Road Initiative— thanks to the production of new “logistical territories” (IntotheBlackBox, 2019). Thirty years after the collapse of the Cold War system and the end of the bipolar confrontation, the steep decentralization (or rather, the very deconstruction) of the global primacy of the old, Western world —in economic, political and even cultural terms— is clearly underway. According to some scholars (Pieranni, 2020), even the management of the global Covid-19 pandemic may have important consequences for the assessment of the (seeming) efficacy of the Chinese socio-economic model as opposed to the models adopted in the US and in other Western countries.

Starting from these theoretical perspectives, it becomes clear to what extent the “provincialization of Europe” is all but a new phenomenon: it has been more than a century now that Europe is not the “world centre” (Arrighi, 1994). From the point of view of scholarly political theory, instead, twenty years ago one could still maintain that “the so-called European intellectual tradition is the only one alive in the social science departments of most, if not all, modern universities” (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 5). Chakrabarty’s *Provincializing Europe* therefore aimed at overcoming this trend by setting up a complex intellectual project, which is “difficult to overestimate” in terms of both “importance” and “influence on several diverse disciplines as well as on cross-disciplinary research and theoretical practices” (Mezzadra, 2011, p. 151; Seth, 2011, p. 129).

As we have mentioned, *Provincializing Europe* represented the starting point of our discussion about the issue of Europe and its location within present-day “globality”. While *Provincializing Europe* “is not a book about the region of the world we call “Europe” (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 3), the author considers both Europe and India as “hyperreal terms [...] in that they refer to certain figures of imagination whose geographical referents remain somewhat indeterminate” (p. 27). In fact, Chakrabarty argues that “the dominance of “Europe” as the subject of all histories is a part of a much more profound theoretical condition under which historical knowledge is produced

in the third world” (p. 29); it is precisely this irresistible, European theoretical “attractiveness” that he seeks to challenge and then subvert. Thus, the aim of *Provincializing Europe* cannot be compared to a “project of cultural relativism” (p. 43); rather, “the idea is to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it” (p. 43).

By designing a historical reconstruction that spans from the Eurocentric historicism as described by Marx —“what is indispensable remains inadequate” (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 88)— to the criticism of the bourgeois idea of the nation-state’s universalization, Chakrabarty’s main postulation seems to be that there is neither a linear, homogeneous and ongoing time in history, nor a common “code” to interpret it: “I begin with the assumption that, to the contrary, this time, the basic code of history, does not belong to nature, that is, it is not completely independent of human systems of representation” (p. 74). This assumption has led several academics to tackle the issue of modernity’s multiple dimensions. According to Mezzadra (2011), “*Provincializing Europe* can be read indeed as a powerful intervention in the debates on “modernity”” (p. 152). Further to this, Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar edited a book called *Alternative Modernities* (where he included a chapter by Chakrabarty titled “Adda, Calcutta: Dwelling in Modernity”, which is actually chapter 7 of *Provincializing Europe*). In his book, Gaonkar (2004) adopts a precise grammar: “One can provincialize Western modernity – he claims – only by thinking through and against its self-understandings, which are frequently cast in universalist idioms” (p. 15). Gaonkar concludes his chapter “On Alternative Modernities” with this assumption: “everywhere, at every national/cultural site, modernity is not one but many; modernity is not new but old and familiar; modernity is incomplete and necessarily so” (p. 23).

As we have mentioned, in *Provincializing Europe* the issue of modernity and its irreducible plurality is abundantly analysed, in close connection with the topic of capitalism. In the chapter “Two Histories of Capital”, Chakrabarty sketches an illuminating picture where he underscores the difference between the “past posited by capital itself as its precondition” (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 63) and “another kind of past” that “inhere[s] in capital and yet interrupt[s] and punctuate[s] the run of capital’s own logic” (p. 64). His analysis of the Indian social practice named “*adda*” (pp. 180 - 213), or his investigation of the “*chakri*” —or, better, the “aversion to *chakri* (salaried work) and the simultaneous glorification of housework” (p. 214)—, still constitutes an invaluable source of inspiration for those who wish to explore the high complexity of a subject —namely the history of capitalism as a global phenomenon— that is often conceptualized in a quite linear way: “No historical form of capital, however global its reach, can ever be a universal.

No global (or even local, for that matter) capital can ever represent the universal logic of capital” (p. 70).

Twenty years after the publication of this book, we thought that Dipesh Chakrabarty would be the best-suited scholar with whom to discuss (and perhaps rethink) a truly postcolonial perspective on Europe and on the European integration process as a whole. This is not only because of his past research, but also in light of his most recent works. Indeed, in his latest study, on the relationship between humankind, environment and the capitalist system (*The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, forthcoming), Chakrabarty attempts to further expand the analytical tools he employed in *Provincializing Europe*. More importantly, he seeks to reflect on the progressive overcoming of the age of globalization, while also describing the very features of contemporary politics as marked by the endless tension between the “globe” —the world as it has been shaped by the intervention of the humankind— and the “planet”, that is, “a geobiological entity whose processes often take place on scales of time that are simply humongous in human terms”, as Chakrabarty himself sustains in the following interview.

When we concluded this interview, the global pandemic was yet to begin. The insightful thoughts Chakrabarty ends the conversation with are somehow revelatory of both the intrinsic contradictions and the disruptive effects that the conflict between capitalism and the environment has historically brought about, inasmuch as the latter is considered an endless exploitable source for the sake of value extraction (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2015). We do not know when, how and at what price this crisis can be overcome. What we do know is that without a thorough rethinking of what Chakrabarty defines the mutual relationship between the “globe” and the “planet”, the very condition of our biological existence (as a species among other species) will be put under growing and perhaps irreversible pressure. The challenge to subvert the “present state of things” still remains the most pressing task to be pursued.

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ANTHROPOCENE: NEW ENCOUNTERS, OLD PATTERNS. A FEW COMMENTS ON PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES¹

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Abstract

This paper focuses on one of the answers that have been given to the question: *what type of change is to be pursued* to limit human impact on the Earth while considering the needs of poor and disadvantaged communities? In particular it looks at a proposal that combines *sustainable development* approaches with market mechanisms and top-down technocratic responses: Payments for Ecosystem Services frameworks. They have been criticized by many points of view and this paper questions, in particular, their very reliance on the market, questioning their appropriateness for the regulation of conservation activities and their interaction with local communities.

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Keywords

Anthropocene, market-based, environmental protection, local communities, payments for ecosystem services

Resumen

Este artículo se centra sobre una de las posibles soluciones al problema: ¿cómo podemos limitar el impacto humano en el planeta Tierra, teniendo en cuenta las necesidades de los grupos más pobres y marginados? La propuesta examinada —los Pagos por Servicios Ecosistémicos— pertenece al marco de los enfoques de desarrollo sostenible que se mueven en el marco de los mecanismos de mercado y de las acciones de arriba hacia abajo. Precisamente la confianza en los mecanismos de mercado será objeto de crítica, poniendo en cuestión su aptitud a la regulación de las acciones de conservación del medio ambiente y a la interacción que estas tienen con las comunidades locales.

Palabras clave

Antropocene, basado en el mercado, protección del medio ambiente, comunidades locales, pagos por servicios ecosistémicos

“Men come back to the world, [...] which was long ago our master
and of late our slave, always and in all cases our host, and our new symbiont.”

Serres (1990, p. 38)

What does it mean for a paper and a scholar to decolonise discourse, to move beyond colonial understandings, biases and patterns? It means to engage with the origins and consequences of the terms, themes, literature and approaches used, especially when dealing with the current environmental crisis and the governance of nature, as this paper attempts to do. The very decision to engage with the concept of Anthropocene implies a certain vision of the relationship between nature and culture, nature and humanity. A vision that accepts the “naming of an epoch after ourselves” (Crist, 2016, p. 14) and that reflects a certain understanding of “class, race, gender, sexuality, nation” (Moore, 2016a, p. 78). A vision that “retains—even as it seeks to transcend it—the binary of Humanity and Nature” (p. 80), and that “feeds a casual dismissal of conceptual and historical criticisms” (p. 81).

The Anthropocene concept is the result of a multifaced and eccentric improvisation² whose contours are not yet fully defined, even though 20 years have passed since its inception. Regardless of its uncertain status, in 2019, the *Anthropocene Working Group* of the *Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy*³ agreed that it is correct to regard the Anthropocene as a self-standing geological epoch, describing it as “the present geological time interval, in which many conditions and processes on Earth are profoundly altered by human impact” (Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy, 2019). The Subcommission also established that we entered this new epoch in the XX century as a result of the *great acceleration*⁴ of industrial production and human population growth, the commencement of globalization, and the first nuclear bomb tests (Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy, 2019). Following the *modus operandi* of the Working

2. It was proposed by the Noble Prize winner Paul Crutzen during a conference (Zalasiewicz, 2017, p. 118). The formal proposal to use the term to describe a new geological era was launched in Crutzen & Stoermer (2000).

3. The *Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy* is one of the subcommissions of the *International Commission on Stratigraphy*—one of the scientific organizations which are part of the *International Union of Geological Sciences*, whose objective is to set the global stratigraphic coordinates. The *Anthropocene Working Group* was established in 2009 with the goal of determining whether the Earth may be considered to have entered a new geologic era.

4. The report refers to the *Great Acceleration*, the name that was given to a group of graphics published in 2004 by the *Geosphere-Biosphere Programme*, that show that, starting from 1950, the human impact on the Earth has dramatically increased (Steffen et al., 2015). The term *Great Acceleration* echoes the *Great Transformation* by Karl Polanyi (Polanyi, 1944). See also McNeill & Engelke (2014).

Group report, the Anthropocene appears as a debated scientific concept, which may or may not be fully approved on the ground of scientific data (Subramanian, 2019).

Anthropocene is also a *buzzword*⁵ (Castree, 2019, p. 25), which provides the most paradigmatic example of the encounter between natural sciences (geology, earth system science, climate science and so on) and human sciences. It enters the space of the relationship between humans and nature (a distinction that finally emerges as obsolete as it is⁶), whose relevance spans across very different dominions, touching upon justice, ethics, law and politics on one side and scientific data on the other⁷.

The new epoch materialises at the conjunction between Earth history and human history, where the geological times of the former are expected to bend to the speed and brevity of the latter⁸. Geology and Earth system science examines stratigraphic traces, material bodies, changes in temperature, sea level, and rock composition, whose relevance are evident on scales far wider than humans are able to comprehend or influence. Instead, law, politics, and ethics, find themselves surrounded by controversial data, impenetrable modelling techniques, and disputes over Celsius degrees, all struggling to provide sound analysis of their human sides and implications.

The Anthropocene is also a *discourse* —as Crist (2016) calls it— which is at danger of imposing a certain understanding of human’s relationship with the environment that reflects (though, of course, partially) the patterns followed by certain western scientific opinions (p. 15 ff). The Anthropocene is, in fact, embedded with normative concepts⁹ and implications —such as *how should human action change*, or *who should be considered responsible for its emergence*— which are at risk of being left to the sole analysis of natural sciences whose legitimacy as unbiased and truth-seeking enterprises¹⁰ might shadow the need for a profound political and ethical reflexion (Baskin, 2019, p. 151) able to overcome old patterns and colonial biases. The “fact of human impact” shall not be turned into the “ought to be” without coming to terms with the real features of such

5. For the use of *buzzwords* (and *fuzzwords*) in the development discourse, see Cornwall & Eade (2010).

6. Malm & Hornborg (2014). On the rejection of traditional binaries, such as nature/culture, mind/body, subject/object, see Pellizzoni (2017, p. 66).

7. On the both material and political force of things, scientific facts, and the inanimate, non-organic world (such as rocks and stratigraphic evidences), see Bennet (2004).

8. As Chakrabarty (2018) notes, the Anthropocene brings about a “conceptual traffic” (p. 6) that switches historical timeframes from tens of millions of years, to a few hundreds of years, and leads to the collapse of the distinction between natural history and human history (Chakrabarty, 2009, thesis 1).

9. According to Biermann & Löwbrand (2019) it is a four-faces concept, with a *temporal* side (a new epoch), an *observational* one (the human impact on the Planet), an *explanational* one (how human impact has reached this stage), and a *prescriptive* one (how human action should change).

10. Castree (2019) further notes that “a thorough exploration of the normative implications of science for humans is also missing in scientific literature” (p. 40 f.).

“fact”. Who brought this fact to be? Following which patterns and applying which techniques? At the expenses of who?

Overall, both natural and human sciences find themselves partially out of place when trying to answer these difficult questions, tentatively navigating between “scientized politics” and “politicized science” (Castree, 2019, p. 27). However, the two sides need to learn to listen to and dialogue with each other, in order to avoid misinterpretations, excessive simplifications, and loss of in-depth analysis of the Anthropocene.

For example, the natural science discourse on the Anthropocene mostly refers to *humans* as those responsible for the current state of the Earth¹¹. This “narrative simplicity” pictures humanity as a collective actor and hands to all humans the responsibility for the current state of the Earth. This narrative —the one that Moore (2016a) tries to partially overcome proposing the term *Capitalocene*— dismisses the relevance of imperialist and capitalist structures that have excluded most humans from humanity itself, placing the excluded ones into the same box of nature and providing them with the same treatment (putting them “to work” or annihilating them) (Moore 2016a, pp. 82–87)¹². On the contrary, it cannot be denied that the huge extent of damage inflicted on the Earth are the responsibility of a specific part of humanity: Europe and its empires (Chakrabarty, 2018, p. 18)¹³. In fact, the 1992 Rio Declaration avowed the need to address environmental issues in line with the “common but differentiated responsibilities” principle because *the past matters* and the current state of the Earth is due to the actions of only a fraction of humanity¹⁴. Accordingly, developing countries have responded to climate talks (one of the most hotly contested issues of the Anthropocene) underlying that the use of the word *Anthropos* is “falsely and unfairly implicating the poor and their ‘survival emissions’ of green-house gases in the crime of those whose ‘luxury emissions’ are actually responsible for the current crisis of global warming” (Chakrabarty, 2015, p. 156)¹⁵.

11. For example, Pulcini (2010) argues that the risks of the Anthropocene, as the “expression of a planetary condition of vulnerability and interdependence, can become the unifying factor *par excellence*” (p. 459).

12. According to Moore (2016a), the very choice of the term *Anthropocene* dismisses part of the *story*. Because of its focus on geological traces it ends up denying (or at least shadowing) the responsibilities of capitalism and capitalist structures. The term *Capitalocene*, that he proposes, has instead the power to show how nature, capital and power are to be looked at “as an organic whole”, whose origins are not to be found in XVIII century England but are, instead, linked to colonialism and the commodification of (cheap) nature, which started in the XV century (p. 81 ff.).

13. See also Moore (2016a)’s reconstruction of the history of the Capitalocene.

14. On rights and responsibilities in climate justice theories, see Baxi (2016). However, as Chakrabarty (2015) notes, the *common* side of our responsibilities is equally important because, for instance, the “problem of global warming produces its own timeline for urgent and global action, irrespective of the question of responsibility” (p. 140).

15. Following a Third-worldism approach may lead to forgetting that the provenance of emissions is irrelevant for their effects (Cerutti, 2010a). China, for example, already surpasses EU’s emissions and Indian’s development policies are likely to lead to the same (Chakrabarty, 2015, p. 169).

Likewise, in natural science discourses the Anthropocene is most often characterized as a global phenomenon¹⁶, one that affects everybody, everywhere, in the same way. However, this description is at risk of hiding the fact that the poor, minorities, women, islanders, and all other already-vulnerable subjects, remain those for whom the most is at stake (D'Andrea 2013, p. 108). Transforming all humans into vulnerable subjects, levelling them into one vulnerable category creates the danger of forgetting that “there will be [some] lifeboats for the rich and privileged”¹⁷ but not for the others, and that different actions need to be taken.

Moreover, and most importantly, human sciences and natural sciences need to complement each other in the discourse on *what type of change is to be pursued*¹⁸ to face environmental challenges in ways that do not exacerbate current inequalities and injustices. A change that follows sustainable development theories, building on the fostering of de-linking techniques? Or one that trusts de-growth or post-development approaches (Baskin, 2019)¹⁹? De-linking, a theme firmly established in the Anthropocene *discourse* (Crist, 2016), embraces the opportunity to renew confidence in Western-centric development and capitalist market-based logic, relying on natural sciences and the improvement of technology and their ability to reduce environmental externalities. De-linking methodologies have trust in the ability of new technologies to create a smarter Planet leading to salvation through the creation of new, “greener”, European-like countries and people (p. 20).

A very different approach, much more in line with a decolonizing enterprise, would build on non-Western science and ethics, de-growth and other alternatives-to-development, so to propose more radical routes to facing the Anthropocene through the

16. A *global phenomenon* was defined as an event or a process that creates a homogeneous space and community, where all members equally share, and are equally concerned with, a common threat whose impact can only be reduced or halted if the whole community engages in the fight. A *globalized phenomenon*, instead, involves many people spread around the world, but not the entire global population, and its effects do not touch upon everybody in the same way (D'Andrea, 2013, p. 107).

17. Malm & Hornborg (2014, p. 67) criticize Chakrabarty's position according to whom the Anthropocene makes the whole of humanity equally vulnerable, such that “unlike in the crises of capitalism, there are no lifeboats here for the rich and the privileged (Chakrabarty, 2009, p. 221)”.

18. Baskin (2019) analyses what he describes as the foundational scientific articles on the Anthropocene. See also Crutzen & Stoermer (2000); Crutzen (2002); Deutsch et al. (2011); Steffen et al. (2011).

19. Post-development approaches are a response to both the announcement of the death of development —Wolfgang Sachs so declared in his *The Development Dictionary* (1992)— and the hope that the fight against poverty and suffering may not be faced solely with *Western* tools, but also with the re-discovery of local culture and knowledge through grass-root movements and bottom-up approaches (Escobar, 2006).

However, far from being buried, development approaches —whose origins are the Global North, colonialism, and the imposition of the *human* over the *natural*— are well represented by the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Cardesa-Salzmann & Cocciolo, 2019, p. 441).

abandonment of anthropocentric ethics, market-based solutions and technocratic approaches.

Vis à vis these difficult encounters and dialogues, the concept of Anthropocene cannot maintain a neutral façade, and “social and historical embeddedness of scientific understandings” (Pellizzoni, 2017, p. 69) needs to be renowned. Anesthetizing the political implications (Chakrabarty, 2018, p. 28) of the Anthropocene concept can become a dangerous choice. Its stark politicization, well founded on scientific data and frameworks, is a necessary enterprise, essential to avoid such a new concept being used to foster the same old patterns that led to its occurrence²⁰.

Difficult solutions

This paper briefly focuses on the latter of the issues raised: the different solutions proposed to the question *what type of change is to be pursued* to limit human impact on the Earth and protect the environment. In particular it looks at one specific proposal that perfectly fits a certain way of dealing with the Anthropocene *discourse* (Crist, 2016), and that falls within *sustainable development* approaches based on market mechanisms and top-down technocratic responses (rather than alternative-to-development approaches): Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) policy frameworks. PES were proposed to stimulate the conservation of the environment through the enlargement of markets, entering environmental and related values into their trading system and welcoming sustainable local communities into their functioning.

The word *development* became famous and politically powerful after the second world war, when the world was divided between *developed* and *underdeveloped* nations through the establishment of a linear path whose *rightful* direction was the increase of the gross domestic product (Sachs, 2019, p. xi). In the 1970s, through the pressure of the United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the purely economic aspect of development was complemented by social indicators of wealth (nutrition, health, education, environment), which were meant to be measured so to rank nations more deeply but still linearly (p. xiv). Around fifteen years later,

20. Moreover, political philosophy and ethics cannot leave these matters to hard sciences because, as Cerutti (2010b) notes, “the amount of possible harm [...] raises ultimate problems of life and death, well-being and extreme misery for the whole of humankind that can typically only be grasped by philosophy (ethics, metaphysics) or theology” (p. 427).

development was further complemented by the word *sustainable*²¹, creating paradigms that combine economic interests and wellbeing needs (of the poor and of future generations) with the recognition of the limits of the environment (Cardesa-Salzmänn & Cocciolo, 2019, p. 439)²².

About ten years later, sustainable development practices and discourses met with environmental conservation practices and techniques, bringing much-needed attention to local communities and their rights and relationship with nature. The vast use of land for the creation of national parks in America, Australia and Asia had, in fact, been made possible by the forced removal or decimation of local communities²³ through the application of what were called *fortress conservation approaches* (Maffi, 2014, p. 4), that caused, and still cause, human rights violations²⁴: displacing communities from their lands; reducing or halting access to natural resources important for essential services (livelihoods, housing, building materials, water sources) (Campese, 2009, p. 7); prohibiting access to culturally or spiritually significant areas and resources; denying self-determination; and refusing to ask or abide to the principle of free prior informed consent²⁵. In the '90s, policy makers, conservationists and NGOs began to pay more attention to peoples and communities, and started to develop so called community-based conservation projects²⁶ that learned from the aims and teachings of sustainable development approaches. Many projects turned into *so called* Integrated Conservation and Developments Projects (ICDPs)²⁷, whose aims were meeting social development and poverty alleviation goals, as well as environmental conservation goals (Hughes & Flintan, 2001)²⁸. ICDPs, a tentative response to the dichotomy between people and environment, were presented at the Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro 1992 (Wunder, 2005, p. 1)²⁹, as win-win solutions.

In the attempt to highlight the importance ecosystems have for people and the need to find ways to protect both, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment employed the term

21. According to the 1987 Brundtland Report "humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

22. See also Sands et al. (2012, p. 206).

23. Claus et al. (2010, p. 263). In a recent report the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, calculated that up to 50% of existing protected areas were created on lands and territories traditionally held by indigenous peoples (United Nations General Assembly, 2016, p. 7).

24. Brechin et al. (2002, p. 45); United Nations General Assembly (2016).

25. Jonas et al. (2016, p. 15 ff).

26. Agrawal & Gibson (1999); Alcorn (1993, p. 3); Gavin et al. (2015); Reed (2008, p. 2420).

27. Also known as People-centered conservation and development and eco-development projects.

28. For a critical stance on ICDPs see Christensen (2004).

29. On the structure and functioning of ICDPs see Wells & Brandon (1992).

ecosystem services (ES)³⁰ as *the benefits people obtain from ecosystems*³¹. ES frameworks emerged as a *simplified language* accessible for politicians, policies and the private investments world³². They build on the idea that many ecosystems bring benefits not only to the communities that take care of them, but also to people that do not contribute to their conservation. By bringing these people to pay for the services they obtain (positive externalities), the caring communities can be incentivized to continue or improve their positive actions (Lele, 2013, p. 125)³³. This framework, called Payments for Ecosystem Services, is a further elaboration of ICDPs and is designed as a set of economic transactions. PES apply socio-economic investment tools to conservation and poverty alleviation actions, taking communities into market mechanisms (Wunder, 2005, p. 7) in order to face together environmental and justice issues³⁴.

Old encounters

PES are extensively proposed internationally and include famous instruments such as the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol, Reducing Emissions from Forest Destruction and Degradation projects (REDD)³⁵, and bioprospecting agreements (Huberman, 2009, p. 14). They are all presented as win-win solutions able to fully respond to the need to protect the environment and to alleviate poverty (Wunder, 2005, p. 1). PES enter the sustainable development realm, without particular caution, in its

30. The idea of “nature’s services” was first proposed in a 1977 paper (published in *Science* by W. Westman and titled *How Much Are Nature’s Services Worth?*) (Costanza et al., 2017). Ecosystem services, instead, were first named in 1981 in a paper by Ehrlich & Ehrlich, but they mostly owe their international success to their use in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (Lele, 2013, p. 122). See also Hummel et al. (2019).

31. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005, p. v.). ES are classified in four categories: “provisioning services, which includes food, water, timber and genetic resources; regulating services, such as the regulation of climate, floods and waste treatment; cultural services, such as recreation and aesthetic enjoyment; and supporting services such as soil formation, pollination and nutrient cycling” (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010).

32. Martin-Ortega et al. (2019). The goal behind the proposal to use terms such as ecosystems services and —similarly— *natural capital* was certainly (at least for most scholars) laudable. Costanza et al. (2017), for example, explain that by providing a tentative estimate of the monetary value of the entire biosphere —in the range of US\$16–54 trillion per year (Costanza et al., 1997)— meant “to demonstrate that ecosystem services were much more important to human wellbeing than conventional economic thinking had given them credit for [...] and] that standing, intact, functioning ecosystems produce many valuable services, which are often more significant than what results from their extraction and exploitation” (Costanza et al., 2017, p. 3).

33. The “core idea of PES is that external ES beneficiaries make direct, contractual and conditional payments to local landholders and users in return for adopting practices that secure ecosystem conservation and restoration” (Wunder, 2005, p. 2).

34. Other sustainable development practices that employ “inclusionary capitalism” responses are: “microfinance loans that promote adherence to market principles; and World-Bank Poverty Reduction Programs to enroll developing-country states in such ‘compensatory’ strategies” (McAfee, 2012, p. 109).

35. McAfee (2012); Srinivasan (2015).

most capitalistic form: money, the tool designated to compensate potential trade-offs between poverty and conservation (Wunder, 2005, p. 2), thus turning poor communities into environmental defenders in order to protect the services used by more wealthy communities. Nature is *capitalized*, turned into a commodity to be traded in order to protect it³⁶.

Even though the literature on and practice of PES has evolved to include increasingly complex transactions and forms of compensation, they remain a market-based framework. They have been criticized by many points of view, and while some of the critics come from within-the-market —such as that well-functioning markets should address only the scarcity of a resource leaving other considerations such as poverty alleviation aside (Kinzig et al., 2011)— most authors and practitioners question their very reliance on the market, considering it inappropriate for the regulation of conservation activities and their interaction with local communities.

These critiques mostly concentrate on the use of money as a proxy to describe the value of ES. Money is, in fact, said to be an inadequate instrument to properly value nature. The monetary metric, they claim, cannot be the sole evaluation criteria of a cluster of ES and of the relationship between humans and nature, because it loses sight of the cultural, spiritual, aesthetic and biological values, and the relationship with future and ancestral generations (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010). More in general, the focus on economic analysis tends to disregard the complexity of the social and political systems involved. Since PES cannot be detached from the “culturally-engrained economic logics of ‘value for money’” that reigns over funding decisions for projects and related scientific research (Kolinjivadi et al., 2017), their whole functioning is polluted by assumptions that hardly fit with the heterogeneous cultural and social specificities of the communities involved.

Some authors have, in fact, spoken of *commodity fetishism*: “as the masking of the social relationships underlying the process of production” (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010, p. 1229). Ecosystems and their functioning become *commodified*, i.e. turned into discrete goods that enter the market system where providers and consumers undertake, only, monetary interactions (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010). Money “is not an essence but a cultural veil obscuring material asymmetries by representing unequal exchange as reciprocal” (Hornborg, 2019, p. 14). When the value of natural elements is commodified it acquires, at least in theory, a trade-off value: for as high as it may be, it may always be overcome

36. See Leonardi (2017) for an analysis of how neoliberalism attempts to turn nature from a limit (as source of raw material and as a waste repository) into driver of economic competition, i.e. into a commodity.

by another element with a higher value (Sikor, 2013, p. 4). Thereafter, incomparable assets—such as spiritual values and building materials—become comparable and exchangeable.

Moreover, the very use of the term *service*, to describe what is to be valued of ecosystems, denotes the grounding on a fully anthropocentric conceptualization of nature whose role is reduced to producer of facilities and goods for humans (Martin-Ortega et al., 2019), who are, henceforth, separate from nature³⁷.

As all markets, PES aim at economic efficiency, and tend to prioritize certain ES—such as water management and carbon sequestration, which are easier to *monetize*—over cultural and spiritual *services*, or health and educational benefits that hardly fit market evaluations and strategies (Pascual et al., 2014). They assume that humans are rational beings, holding the information necessary to take decisions on the base of cost-benefit analysis choosing the most efficient options. Beside the infinite critiques already raised against the idea that humans are fully rational and competent beings, the idea that money is a “good choice” belongs to a specific, market-based set of values not necessarily shared by the communities involved in PES projects (Kolinjivadi et al., 2017). This approach assumes that the decision to conserve certain ES can be influenced by economic incentives, rather than other policies/rights/benefits—ignoring the facts that different communities have different perceptions of economic incentives, and that other factors may be more pressing in their decision-making processes concerning whether or not to conserve a certain ES (such as what is understood to be life-supporting) (Kolinjivadi et al., 2017). At the same time, if the offer of monetary incentives to put in action a customary environmentally beneficial practice is accepted, it may undermine the intrinsic, personal, social, and cultural motivation of the actors and weaken the correlated institutions (Muradian et al., 2013); hence the practice may be carried out less efficiently, or it may be abandoned if monetary incentives terminate, moving below the standard achieved before the PES scheme was applied.

The weakening of institutions and values may be sided by the fact that “when parachuted into rural communities of the developing world without market power or political voice, PES [...] can enhance existing inequalities in income, access to resources, and decision-making if pro-poor management measures are not considered” (Corbera & Pascual, 2012, p. 655). In other words, the use of economic evaluations and the research of economic efficiency may shade other important factors, such as lack of equity,

37. Kolinjivadi et al. (2017, p. 2) assert “it is clear that PES (and the underlying ES framework), rests on precarious epistemological foundations”.

vulnerability of stakeholders, free prior informed consent procedures, and identity. Most PES (though not all projects that implement them) often lack the necessary focus on equity issues and inadequately framed to avoid exacerbating them (Pascual et al., 2014). This may lead not only to the actual failure of PES projects —especially in the long run— but also to the disruption of local equilibriums, loss of social norms, emergence of new marginalization processes or exasperation of existing ones, the loss of traditional leaderships, and even the abandonment of positive conservation practices.

The commodification of nature and entrance in the market may also be considered responsible for the privatization of lands, or of specific goods such as timber and water, that were previously held in commons or through other property systems (Martin-Ortega et al., 2019). The privatization of goods —entrenching legal acts such as property titles—, especially if undertaken as a side effect of a project, is likely to aggravate existing inequalities, the marginalization of certain actors, and the power asymmetries of a place.

Moreover, PES treat resource users and conservationists as separate entities, both of which attempt to communicate through the ES concept as providers of “a unifying language between resource users and resource conservationists” (Huberman, 2009, p. 9). This sharp separation badly reflects the realities of the lives and practices of many communities, which together act as natural resource users and conservationists.

The many critiques raised against PES show how even the best intentions, if polluted by naivety or rush to find emergency win-win solutions, are doomed to failure *vis à vis* the complexity of environmental and poverty issues. As Redford asserts, ICDPs and PES are a “deadly combination of wishful thinking, quickly contrived policy poulitices, and poor information [...] transformed into packaging buzzwords [that] took on a life of their own” (Redford & Sanderson, 1992, p. 38 and 36). Although this judgment may appear too negative —Redford himself suggests not discarding the whole approach (Brandon et al., 1998)—, it seems to be true that ICDPs and PES are based on the naïve assumption that if poverty may exacerbate biodiversity loss then that poverty alleviation through payments for ecosystem services leads to increased environmental conservation (Christensen, 2004).

New solutions

Over the past 20 years, PES have received increased pressure to incorporate human rights and equity issues, find alternative paths that take the rights and needs of local peo-

ples into consideration, and become more participatory-based (Petheram & Campbell, 2010). The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services³⁸ has proposed a new conceptual framework that underlines the multifactor relationship between nature and people, through the relevance of six elements: nature; nature's benefits to people; anthropogenic assets; institutions and governance systems and other indirect drivers of change; direct drivers of change; and good quality of life (Díaz et al., 2015). *Nature's Contribution to People* (Díaz et al., 2018)³⁹, as it was named, is an approach that aims at going beyond classic ES by recalling local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, to engage in comprehension and protection of ecosystems and reopen a dialogue with the social sciences.

The world of responses to the Anthropocene is complex and diverse. So called *Global Environmental Management* discourses advance technocratic solutions permeated by development optimism, asserting that top-down global interventions can lead to win-win solutions that break the vicious cycle binding poverty and environmental mis-management, by generating “opportunities for local benefits in poor countries through exchanges with private and public parties from industrialized countries” (Adger et al., 2001, p. 702). Locally focused discourses and critical approaches contrasting neoliberalism and capitalism tend instead to describe these top-down, technocratic solutions as incapable of capturing local needs and realities, ultimately perpetuating old-style colonialist and neoliberal approaches. These solutions are described as making local peoples the victims, once again, of interventions that overburden local communities, tasked with rationally and strategically choosing sustainable paths based on micro-economic evaluations (Marcenò, 2019, p. 107), as PES schemes do.

While neither of the two discourses fully portray the realities of human-environment relationships, the second, at least, tends to look at local realities without imposing the same economic and institutional practices that are, at least partially, the cause of the current environmental crisis.

Though the second may be better than the first, both reveal a general lack of imagination to conceive something new, different, not yet existing⁴⁰. They both follow the same

38. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), established in 2012, is an independent intergovernmental body whose objective is to provide up to date scientific support to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The experts-based functioning of IPBES grounds on the combination and reciprocal support of different knowledge systems (including indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge) and engages different stakeholders (including local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector).

39. *Nature's benefits to people* —their original name— comprise “all the benefits that humanity —individuals, communities, societies, nations or humanity as a whole— in rural and urban settings – obtains from nature” including provisioning, regulating and cultural services (Díaz et al., 2015, p. 6).

40. On the lack of imagination, I am indebted to Marcenò S. and her presentation during the seminar “Affrontare

old patterns of global vs local, top-down vs bottom-up, private vs common. Maybe, the incapacity to imagine other and better solutions lies in our inability to surpass these categories and their dichotomies and to focus, once more, on the need to choose one over the other, contraposing them as if one led to survival and the other to ruin. Dualism —starting from the separation of human and nature, women and men, Europe and new worlds, white and black— is actually part of the problem itself (Moore, 2016b, 2). It is at the root of many of the phenomena of exclusion and oppression that characterize the Anthropocene and its capitalistic origins (Crist, 2013).

Maybe, this lack of imagination lies in our structural inability to perceive that we live in a Pluriverse (Kothari et al., 2019) where different places and lives require different solutions⁴¹.

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41. See Fletcher et al. for the proposal of a Green New Deal beyond growth inspired by truly innovative conservation practices.

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GEORGE FLOYD Y AMÉRICA LATINA. ACCIÓN, PRÁCTICA Y EXPERIENCIA EN LAS ESCRITURAS DEL PASADO GLOBAL DE AMÉRICA¹

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GEORGE FLOYD AND LATIN AMERICA ACTION, PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE SCRIPTURES OF AMERICA'S GLOBAL PAST

Abstract

The article promotes a dialogue between history, philosophy and sociology with the aim of formulating a global history from America transcending decolonial particularisms. The first section addresses the scope and limits of the critical historio-

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graphic perspectives of the center-periphery model, the contributions to the study of the role of America in the first globalization, as well as the approaches centered on the agency of subordinate subjects (by race, gender, language or class) without understanding the dynamics that framed their histories. Thus, a starting point is formulated to dialogue with other disciplines and traditions of thought that affect the globality of Latin American history in line with the Mediterranean one. The second section addresses the scope and limits of Latin American particularism, with special emphasis on decolonial assumptions that affect the knowledge of history. Finally, a set of reflections are proposed that serve as the basis for a story that moves away from the presumption of individual or collective identities and, instead focuses in action, practices and experiences as diachronic dynamics of the configuration of the social. Subsequently, it is stated that any global history from Latin America should be oriented towards the understanding of the universal human experience, within the framework of the realities of the continent as a whole, taking as a turning point the assassination of George Floyd in May 2020.

Keywords

Global history of America, decoloniality, Latin American particularism, action, practice, experience.

Resumen

El artículo promueve un diálogo entre historia, filosofía y sociología con el objetivo de formular una historia global desde América que trascienda los particularismos decoloniales. En un primer apartado se abordan los alcances y límites de las perspectivas historiográficas críticas del modelo centro-periferia, los aportes al estudio del papel de América en la primera globalización, así como de los enfoques centrados en la agencia de los sujetos subalternos (por raza, género, lengua o clase) sin comprender las dinámicas que enmarcaban sus historias. Se formula, así, un punto de partida para dialogar con otras disciplinas y tradiciones de pensamiento que inciden en la globalidad de la historia latinoamericana en consonancia con la mediterránea. En el segundo apartado se abordan los alcances y límites del particularismo latinoamericanista, con especial énfasis en los presupuestos decoloniales que inciden en el conocimiento de la historia. Finalmente se proponen un conjunto de reflexiones que sirvan de base para una historia que se aleje de la presunción de identidades individuales o colectivas y, en

cambio, aborde la acción, las prácticas y las experiencias como dinámicas diacrónicas de la configuración de lo social. Ulteriormente, se expresa que cualquier historia global desde América Latina debería orientarse en la comprensión de la experiencia humana universal, en el marco de las realidades del continente en su conjunto, tomando como punto de inflexión el asesinato de George Floyd en mayo de 2020.

Palabras clave

Historia global de América, decolonialidad, particularismo latinoamericanista, acción, práctica, experiencia.

A Bernard Vincent, maestro de maestros

La noche del 24 de mayo de 2020 en Minneapolis, Christopher Harris había recomendado a su amigo Georges Floyd acudir a una agencia de empleo temporal tras su imprevisto despido como personal temporal de seguridad privada. A sus 46 años, Floyd, como millones de seres humanos en el mundo, había perdido su empleo de forma abrupta a causa del confinamiento obligado por la propagación del virus SARS-Cov2, comúnmente llamado Covid 19. El día posterior, el desempleado afroestadounidense oriundo de Houston, Texas, murió asfixiado bajo la rodilla de un policía blanco, Derek Chauvin, de 44 años, quien lo había esposado y postrado contra el suelo a un lado de la patrulla, mientras lo arrestaba por una acusación infundada de “utilizar moneda falsificada”².

En los días que siguieron a la irracional acción policiaca que segó la vida de Floyd, detonó una multitudinaria ola de protestas en cincuenta ciudades de los Estados Unidos de América. Muy pronto, las movilizaciones desbordaron el ámbito nacional y se multiplicaron en Canadá, Inglaterra, Alemania, Turquía y otros países. Abonada por la represión policial, el despliegue militar, los ataques de supremacistas blancos y el desprecio de la Casa Blanca, la indignación creció en Estados Unidos en torno al lema “*Black lives matters!*”. Desde entonces, las confrontaciones y los asesinatos de afroestadounidenses se han multiplicado, mientras que, en otras partes del mundo, como América Latina, la historia de Georges Floyd se enlazó con las denuncias de madres y familiares de jóvenes víctimas de la brutalidad policial.

Así, a principios de junio, en diversas ciudades de México miles se movilizaron contra el asesinato de Giovanni López, un joven albañil muerto en las dependencias policiacas de Guadalajara, Jalisco, tras su arbitraria detención por no llevar mascarilla sanitaria³. Así, las acciones individuales frente a las amenazas racistas y policiacas se tradujeron en movimientos masivos, prácticas que organizaban el dolor, la indignación y la rabia, hasta convertirse en una experiencia compartida en diversas ciudades del mundo, en el marco de la pandemia como común circunstancia global.

La noticia de los acontecimientos relatados y su recepción mundial dan cuenta de la naturalidad con que se conectan e identifican expresiones de rabia compartidas, prác-

2. Declaraciones de Christopher Harris al fiscal de Minneapolis recogidas por la prensa. *BBC News, Mundo*, 31 mayo de 2020.

3. “El grito de México contra la brutalidad policial”, *Euronews*, 8 de junio de 2020. Consultado el 5 de septiembre de 2020. <https://es.euronews.com/2020/06/08/el-grito-de-mexico-contra-la-brutalidad-policial>

ticas políticas frente al abuso de la autoridad, así como la capacidad de vincular las diversas reivindicaciones con experiencias del pasado. Resulta evidente que los agravios de la gente en movimiento y su capacidad de organización encuentran formas de reconocimiento en cualquier parte del mundo. Lo que no está tan claro es si las ciencias sociales y las humanidades están en sintonía con esta circunstancia global. Por ello, resulta pertinente preguntarse sobre las condiciones actuales para pensar una historia global sin adscripciones particularistas.

...

En una publicación reciente, Gabriela De Lima y Sven Schuster trazaron una agenda de trabajo para estudiar la historia de América Latina desde una perspectiva global (De Lima Grecco y Schuster, 2020, pp. 425–446). Su propuesta pondera la utilidad de las reflexiones derivadas de la noción “geopolíticas del conocimiento”, formulada por los representantes de las teorías decoloniales, para contrarrestar las tendencias eurocéntricas de las narrativas dominantes en historia global. Como se ha constatado en diversos aportes, los académicos más identificados con la historia global, escrita principalmente en inglés, han privilegiado unos periodos, unas regiones y unos objetos de estudio restrictivos de las dinámicas históricas de los mundos iberoamericanos⁴. Al establecer las serias deficiencias de una historiografía global que reproduce los marcos conceptuales del nacionalismo imperialista decimonónico, De Lima y Schuster también reconocen los límites de los presupuestos decoloniales, que han derivado en una reificación nativista anacrónica y han terminado por ignorar los efectos de los procesos colonizadores de los que partió su elaboración teórica. La agenda de trabajo propuesta resulta estimulante para continuar el diálogo, en línea con las contribuciones de Sebastian Conrad, Lin Hunt, Jeremy Adelman, Matthew Brown y Perla Patricia Valero Pacheco y, últimamente, Sergio Serulnikov, entre otras voces, quienes han reflexionado sobre el carácter de la historia global, sus objetos de estudio, la lengua en que se escribe y el papel de las diversas regiones del mundo en esta vertiente, con especial énfasis en América Latina.

Con el propósito de abonar al diálogo citado, y teniendo en cuenta las aristas historiográficas, metodológicas y teóricas enunciadas por las voces citadas, conviene advertir que la inclusión de América Latina en la historia global provoca, al menos, dos consecuencias sustantivas. La primera es que esta inclusión remonta necesariamente

4. Ver la crítica de Matthew Brown (2015).

al siglo XVI, a la historia de las monarquías ibéricas conformadas a partir de conquistas y a la historia del desarrollo mercantil, que tuvo en las ciudades iberoamericanas algunos de sus principales centros mundiales. Este aspecto ha sido reconocido desde la perspectiva latinoamericanista, pero sus filósofos, historiadores y sociólogos lo han generalizado bajo la etiqueta de pasado colonial, de espaldas a la comprensión y conocimiento de las condiciones geo-históricas de reproducción de aquellas sociedades.

La segunda consecuencia es de carácter hermenéutico. Al poner en relación los dos términos, América Latina e historia global, sus significantes se transforman de base, tanto para la historiografía como para la filosofía. Con esto último se quiere decir, por una parte, que no es posible insertar a América Latina, como a ninguna otra entidad histórico territorial, incluida Europa, en el relato de una historia global, sin alterar el sentido mismo del relato y orientarlo en diversas direcciones posibles. Por una parte, el espacio que supone uno de los términos deja de tener entidad en sí, para convertirse en territorio histórico producido por dinámicas e interacciones determinadas (Middell y Naumann, 2010, pp. 149-170). Por otra parte, la idea de historia global como relato de procesos planetarios, al pensarse desde una región específica, pierde sustancialidad para encontrarse determinada por procesos locales constitutivos de esa globalidad (Levi, 2018, pp. 21-35)⁵.

En este orden de ideas, pensar América Latina en la historia global no consiste en incluir una pieza en un rompecabezas cuya imagen ya se tiene preconcebida, una concepción desde un relato autorizado, sino de fomentar una perspectiva global a partir de reconocer las relaciones y conexiones diversas que se pueden descubrir en las fuentes, sin perder de vista sus desequilibrios y asimetrías. En tanto que, al pensar desde América Latina la historia de las conexiones, entrelazamientos, convenciones, subordinaciones y los procesos de integración económica, territorial y cultural con los alcances, límites, tensiones y violencia que involucraron, salta a la luz que no hubo una esencialidad histórica de la región, sino que su configuración misma resultó de interacciones entre personas, grupos y poblaciones enteras que resultaban de dinámicas entre movi­lidades a distintas escalas en relación y diversas formas de arraigo.

Para explicar estas consecuencias, conviene, en primer lugar, revisar los aportes de las vertientes historiográficas que los últimos veinte años han incidido sobre la historia de lo que fueron las Indias Occidentales. En segundo lugar, reconocer los límites del particularismo latinoamericanista, la inadecuación de los términos identitarios en que

5. Resultan muy sugerentes los aportes de Christian de Vito y Anne Gerritsen en su introducción a *Micro Spatial Histories of Global Labour* (2018).

se basan sus presupuestos sobre una especificidad cognitiva y el peligro de considerar inconmensurable su pasado respecto del resto del mundo, en especial en relación con las historias del norte de América.

Agencias y narrativas imperializantes

En las últimas tres décadas, el conocimiento sobre el pasado imperial de lo que hoy llamamos América Latina se ha producido en torno a tres ejes principales. Los descendientes de las poblaciones prehispánicas de América, es decir, los miembros de los pueblos indios, los esclavos y sus descendientes, así como las mujeres, han sido estudiados bajo la luz de su agencia. Por otra parte, la comprensión de los mundos ibéricos, como entidad histórica articuladora de diversas latitudes en el pasado, ha sido objeto de una renovadora historiografía sobre los siglos XVI al XVIII. Otro eje ha consistido en el reconocimiento del papel del continente americano, sus ciudades, población, circuitos comerciales y producción, particularmente de la América española y portuguesa, en la llamada globalización temprana o arcaica.

En el primer eje está la atención a la agencia de los subordinados por la dominación imperial. Estos enfoques resultaron de la confluencia de la etnohistoria americanista tradicional con el auge de los estudios subalternos en la academia estadounidense. A decir verdad, se trata de una vertiente en la que han confluído propuestas historiográficas con objetivos distintos y enfoques, en ocasiones, contrapuestos, pero que tienen en el centro de sus interpretaciones la restitución de sujetos históricos negados, olvidados o desatendidos por la historiografía política y económica tradicional.

Algunos estudios que resaltan la agencia de los indios, esclavos o mujeres han hecho grandes aportes al conocimiento de las sociedades coloniales y de la complejidad cotidiana de sus vínculos e interacciones, así como de los grados de intervención de diversos actores “débiles” en la configuración jurídica, cultural, económica de los pueblos, villas, regiones y ciudades que conformaron las Américas.

Así, hoy se tiene conocimiento del decisivo papel de los indios conquistadores en las diversas empresas de conquista de América; sabemos mucho más sobre la lógica de los foros judiciales, los cabildos y las corporaciones a partir de la acción de los demandantes de justicia que aprovechaban a su favor el conflicto de jurisdicciones y la naturaleza pluri jurisdiccional de las monarquías ibéricas. Mientras que, están disponibles importantes estudios sobre las relaciones entre amos y esclavos, la conformación de comunidades

negras y mulatas; las complejas relaciones entre pueblos indios, encomenderos y caciques en diversas regiones de América; esclavos, libertos y cimarrones; familias y corporaciones religiosas, matrimonios y circulación de bienes dotales. Así como del papel de las comunidades conventuales femeninas en la economía, la salud y la cultura urbana, de las cacicas y otras mujeres indígenas en la conservación de tierras y privilegios, etc⁶.

Instalados en la agenda historiográfica continental, entre las comunidades académicas latinoamericanas, estos enfoques resultaron de la confluencia entre la irradiación de la academia estadounidense y las fuertes tradiciones historiográficas de los distintos países de América Latina. Especialmente las de México, Perú y Ecuador, en relación con el pasado indígena y sus fuentes en distintos idiomas antiguos. Las de Cuba, Brasil y Colombia, cuyos aportes pioneros al estudio de la esclavitud y la diáspora africana sentaron las bases de un conocimiento del que abrevaron los estudios poscoloniales de otras comunidades académicas. Así como las de Chile y Argentina, donde el estudio del derecho indiano constituyó un antecedente sustantivo de los cambios que, en los años ochenta del siglo XX, transformarían la historia del derecho y la justicia en el ámbito iberoamericano.

En lo que respecta a los exponentes de la agencia de los subalternos en la academia estadounidense, sobre todo de quienes fijaron sus objetos de estudio en América Latina colonial, su preocupación trasluce los principales temas de la agenda historiográfica y política de aquel país: la raza, el género y la orientación sexual. Herederos de la recepción de Michel Foucault en las comunidades universitarias de California, Durham, Boston y, más tarde, Carolina del Norte, e inspirados en la influencia global de los historiadores de la India agrupados en la revista *Subaltern Studies* bajo la dirección de Ranajit Guha, historiadoras e historiadores estadounidenses y latinos de muy diversas temáticas encontraron en los estudios de área el nicho para formular sus propios grupos de debate y sus perspectivas poscoloniales, como el Grupo de Estudios Subalternos para Latinoamérica (GESLA)⁷.

El segundo eje ha sido el desarrollo de estudios sobre fronteras, circulación, representación, saberes y agentes de gobierno y justicia en los mundos ibéricos e iberoamericanos. Los muy diversos aportes de esta vertiente han buscado superar los relatos nacionalistas del pasado ibérico e iberoamericano, así como restituir la historia de las Indias Occidentales al ámbito general de las monarquías ibéricas entendidas como

6. Véanse las referencias a los diversos estudios en la bibliografía final (Menegus, 1994; Kellogg, 1995; von Mentz, 2008).

7. Latin American Subaltern Studies Group (1995). Ver las contribuciones del volumen entero, especialmente la de Néstor García Canclini.

conglomerados compuestos, policéntricos o negociados según sus diversas vertientes y de cara a su proyección exterior.

Esta transformación de la tradicional historia moderna de España y Portugal o colonial en los países de América Latina partió de la necesidad por comprender las realidades similares, diásporas y conexiones que sustentaron aquellas entidades extendidas, las monarquías ibéricas cuyas fuentes, desperdigadas por distintos países, ponían en jaque las visiones estructuralistas que la historiografía institucional había formulado sobre su naturaleza. La generación de Antonio Manuel Hespanha, desde Portugal, puso la piedra angular para una transformación radical de la historia moderna europea, que abrevó de la antropología, la sociología y los estudios sobre el lenguaje y las representaciones para pensar la llamada época moderna y la importancia de los reinos de la península ibérica en aquel periodo. Así, los aportes se multiplicaron por todas las comunidades académicas europeas; desde Italia hasta Bélgica comenzó a reflexionarse sobre los mundos ibéricos. Bajo la inspiración de Braudel, pero superando los límites de su visión estática, los circuitos, intercambios, conflictos y sociabilidades del ámbito mediterráneo han sido profundamente estudiadas. En este punto es central reconocer los aportes de Bartolomé Bennassar y Bernard Vincent (este último fundador del Grupo de Estudios Ibéricos de la Escuela de Altos Estudios en Ciencias Sociales de París).

En el ámbito iberoamericano, la transformación de las temáticas pasó de los estudios regionales de impronta colonial a los estudios sobre la movilidad geográfica y social que pasaba por la circulación de agentes, pobladores y vecindades dislocadas. Así, de la España o el Portugal “modernos” o “imperiales” y la “Italia meridional española”, o el México y el Perú colonial, se ha pasado al estudio de corporaciones, procuradores de ciudades, regiones, reinos, monarquías y, en general, mundos ibéricos, más allá del marco de comprensión de las visiones nacionales.

En este marco, al filo del cambio de siglo se llevaron a cabo esfuerzos colectivos, desconectados y ocurridos en distintas latitudes, que marcaron la pauta de lo que en adelante constituiría una avalancha transformadora y se agruparía en diversas redes académicas internacionales. Así, nuevos temas marcaron una agenda renovadora inagotable: la preocupación por lo local y lo general en la monarquía, el conflicto y el consenso (Guillamón, F. J. y Ruiz, J. J., 2001)⁸, la deslocalización de las fuerzas constitutivas de la autoridad real, principalmente de carácter fiscal; así como la comprensión de sus diversas formas de representación, impulsaron los intercambios entre historiadores

8. “La Monarquía Española. Grupos políticos locales ante la Corte de Madrid”, *Relaciones. Estudios de Historia y Sociedad*, vol. XIX, núm. 73, 1998.

de diversas latitudes del planeta, preocupados por comprender el pasado por fuera de unas fronteras nacionales artificiales y anacrónicas. Esta explosión ha conducido a la aparición de nuevos enfoques, modelos explicativos y métodos de estudio. Todo ello da cuenta de la complejidad que implica estudiar cualquier proceso o acontecimiento, por local que sea, durante este periodo.

En el tercer eje se pueden agrupar, por una parte, los estudios relacionales sobre las administraciones locales hispanoamericanas, y por otra, los aportes sobre el papel de Iberoamérica en la conformación de la primera globalización.

El estudio de grupos con adscripción corporativa ha desembocado en la investigación sobre sus acciones, circulación, lazos de interés y trayectorias.⁹ Así, el estudio de configuraciones relacionales ha permitido observar la constitución de polos de poder conectados por lazos horizontales y verticales, sistemas relacionales mucho más maleables y difíciles de captar en las fuentes, pero que resultan centrales en la configuración del entramado socio político y explican la naturaleza cambiante de las sociedades de antiguo régimen y de sus jerarquías de poder y autoridad, más allá de su presunto carácter colonial o metropolitano (Bertrand, 2007, p. 855-884; Moutoukias, 2002, pp. 69-102). El análisis de sistemas relacionales ha sido profundizado en historia por los estudios sobre la relación entre el poder local y la administración central, del que deriva la noción de “consenso colonial”, y que ha producido estudios referenciales para Guatemala y Nueva España, el Río de la Plata y la Audiencia de Quito.

Por otra parte, de los estudios sobre la administración imperial española ha emergido la idea de “convención monárquica”, aportada por Jean Pierre Dedieu (2010), herramienta conceptual que debe tenerse en cuenta a la hora de proyectar nuevas aproximaciones al carácter y naturaleza política de las monarquías ibéricas y sus territorios, del carácter fiscal, comercial y jurídico de sus lazos sociales (Moutoukias, 2017, pp. 95-122).

Con esos presupuestos en mente, resulta pertinente pensar los aportes acerca del papel de las sociedades de América ibérica, su producción, especialmente minera, la creación de sus circuitos mercantiles y sus experiencias culturales cosmopolitas ancladas a aquellas actividades. Desde los aportes sobre el flujo de plata mexicana y peruana al continente asiático por medio de Manila (Flynn y Giráldez, 1995, pp. 201-221) y su intercambio por mercancías baratas de gran difusión en los puertos y ciudades de las

9. La referencia fundamental es *Réseaux, familles et pouvoirs dans le monde ibérique à la fin de l'Ancien Régime* (1998). Una reflexión sobre la trayectoria del grupo en Jean-Pierre Dedieu (2017). Para el siglo XVIII peninsular, el referente principal es *El sonido del dinero: monarquía, ejército y venalidad en la España del siglo XVIII*, de Francisco Andújar (2004). La obra paradigmática para Nueva España es *Grandeur et Misère de l'office. Les officiers de finances de Nouvelle-Espagne (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, de Michel Bertrand (1999)

Indias, hasta los estudios sobre la proyección de la experiencia evangelizadora del llamado Nuevo Mundo sobre la China de los Ming, sus conexiones con la ruta portuguesa y las diásporas de criptojudíos (Romano, 2016; Subrahmanyam, 2007, pp. 1359-1385), el abanico de posibilidades interpretativas extiende el horizonte tanto de la subalternidad colonial, como de la ominipresencia de los agentes de la monarquía, y hace emerger a las potentes sociedades locales de los mundos indios. Todo ello permite comprender que el capitalismo mercantil montado sobre el crédito de las monarquías modernas se fraguó tanto en Amsterdam como en Ciudad de México, el conglomerado minero de Zacatecas, el puerto del Callao o el de Guayaquil.

Los tres ejes han partido de la desarticulación de los modelos de explicación nacidos para justificar al Estado nacional como actor histórico central. En cada uno de estos ejes se han formulado diversos instrumentos de método e interpretación para aproximarse al pasado, advirtiendo su complejidad y poniendo el foco en nuevos actores. Frente al protagonismo de reyes, virreyes, frailes y grandes caciques de la nobleza indígena, se ha puesto el acento en repúblicas de indios, indios rebeldes, comunidades femeninas conventuales, cacicas, encomenderas y virreinas, negros esclavos, libertos y rebeldes, oficiales reales, oficiales de república, misioneros y traductores culturales, navegantes extraviados, soldados, corsarios, grandes mercaderes, agentes comerciales, procuradores de corporaciones, inmigrantes y emigrantes, vecinos y extranjeros en las fronteras imperiales.

Ahora bien, salvo los aportes sobre fiscalidad y flujos comerciales, la mayoría de los estudios que han definido el rumbo de los mencionados tres ejes de la transformación historiográfica sobre el pasado indiano, colonial o ibérico de América, han tendido a constituir nuevos sujetos o entidades históricas. Desde la agencia de los subalternos, hasta las monarquías policéntricas, la pregunta se ha centrado más en quiénes son los actores de la historia y menos en cuáles eran las dinámicas que los constituyeron. Para desarticular todo centrismo europeo, chino o “nuestroamericano” y arribar a una comprensión más global de la historia, en su doble acepción mundial y total, resulta necesario dejar atrás los esquemas epistémicos que organizan las fuentes del pasado a partir de entidades, sujetos inmanentes o trascendentes, y empezar a pensar en acciones, prácticas y experiencias estructurantes de aquellas sociedades y de las nuestras.

Por supuesto, las explicaciones acerca de la agencia de los subordinados, el policentrismo de las monarquías ibéricas y el protagonismo panamericano de la globalización temprana son necesarias para salir de los esquemas nacionalistas del pasado. Pero, para comprender la lógica de la violencia en la configuración de sociedades desiguales no es

suficiente constatar la agencia de los subalternos en la historia. Como tampoco resulta satisfactorio conformarse con explicar las hegemonías imperiales a partir de la colaboración de los hegemonizados o de la omnipresencia del príncipe por medio de sus agentes. La exploración sobre el papel central de los grupos de poder mercantil de las Indias Occidentales en la primera integración global resulta fundamental para dislocar las bases del modelo centro periferia, pero al abordar las características de la circulación de mercancías la tarea apenas comienza: resulta indispensable comprender los ámbitos locales en que se produjeron y el modo en que eso se proyectaba sobre los espacios no americanos.

Concebir la historia de Iberoamérica entre los siglos XVI y XVIII como una asignatura sustantiva de las recientes perspectivas mundiales, conectadas y globalistas de la historiografía, comporta un desafío doble. Por una parte, el problema impone la necesidad de trascender las narrativas regionales y nacionalistas de las Indias Occidentales, como etapas antecedentes de los actuales estados nacionales que componen el espacio iberoamericano. Por otra parte, y esto quizás sea el reto mayor, los objetos de estudio que permiten conocer las Indias Occidentales descomponen la trayectoria historiográfica de la historia global, fundamentalmente centrada en procesos civilizatorios dominantes (eurocéntricos o sinocéntricos) y escrita en inglés. Ahora bien, escribir historia global implica tomar conciencia del lugar desde el que se escribe. En ese sentido, como lo señalaron Gabriela De Lima y Sven Schuster, la contribución de las propuestas decoloniales en relación con las geopolíticas del conocimiento resulta un punto de partida pertinente, para un diálogo interdisciplinario.

Alcances y límites del particularismo epistémico latinoamericanista

Las falacias y peligros del particularismo latinoamericanista poscolonial, que confunde la voluntad universalista europea con la universalidad de la experiencia humana, han sido ya expuestos en sus dimensiones éticas y políticas. Tanto Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffé como, posteriormente, Santiago Castro-Gómez han desvelado el carácter colonial, complementario del universalismo eurocéntrico y desmovilizador de aquellas posiciones. No es necesario insistir al respecto.

En este apartado me interesa referir tres aspectos de orden historiográfico no suficientemente discernidos, en los que se apoya el particularismo decolonial y sus conse-

cuencias para una agenda de conocimiento histórico global desde América Latina. Mi propósito es presentarlos ligados a la reflexión general de esta contribución, sin pretender una exposición exhaustiva por ahora. Me refiero, en primer lugar, a la materialización de diversos particularismos universalistas, coetáneos al europeo, como fenómeno global en un momento específico de la expansión de las prácticas mercantiles. En segundo lugar, a la base historiográfica nacionalista colonializante sobre la que se asientan los presupuestos decoloniales; y, en tercer lugar, al problema que representa la idea de una epistemología particularista para reflexionar sobre la construcción de conocimiento, y en especial de conocimiento sobre el pasado humano.

El particularismo universalista europeo no ha sido el único en la historia de la humanidad. Una revisión general de las diversas formaciones imperiales en la historia es suficiente para relativizar el peso del eurocentrismo. Nada indica tampoco que, antes de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII, tuviera una vocación preponderante frente a otros, sustentada en un particular desarrollo económico.

Conviene, así, tener en cuenta que la común matriz cultural mediterránea en la que apareció el cristianismo como culto religioso, pensamiento y práctica legal mediadora en la dicotomía universalidad/particularidad formulada por la filosofía clásica griega, también sentó las bases para la aparición de otros particularismos universalistas, no sólo el europeo. Junto a las pretensiones de los monarcas, emperadores y papas de la cristiandad occidental, y en profunda interacción con ellas, crecieron las vocaciones universalistas almohades, otomanas y safávidas, que operaron como justificación de sus propias expansiones¹⁰. En latitudes distintas a las del mundo mediterráneo es posible encontrar también expresiones de particularismo universalista, en los fundamentos ideológicos de las dinastías centralizadoras del Imperio mogol, en la China de los Ming y los Qing, en el Japón de los Tokugawa, así como en la expansión mexicana-tenochca sobre los territorios nombrados como Mesoamérica por Paul Kirchoff, en la hegemonía inca sobre los diversos pueblos de los Andes e, inclusive, entre algunos gobernantes del África bantú que difundieron su poder, lengua y principios en un amplio territorio de ese continente (Obenga, 1989). Los estudios especializados en cada formación imperial y la creación de sus discursos legitimadores permiten situar en procesos históricos concretos la diferencia entre universalismos y universalidad, generados mediante prácticas específicas con sus particularidades, que Castro-Gómez ha enunciado, a propósito de la necesidad de una política emancipatoria (Castro-Gómez, 2017).

10. Diversos estudios sobre la formación del imperio otomano sobre las dinámicas locales del imperio mameluco en *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, de Stephan Conermann y Gül Sen (Eds.) (2017).

El estudio de los diversos universalismos, en particular los producidos entre los siglos XIV y XVIII, así como la crítica del particularismo latinoamericanista, permiten observar las dinámicas locales en que se produjeron estos discursos de legitimación; su estudio constituye la base para comprender las diversas condiciones de universalidad concreta. Tanto el eurocentrismo como la reificación de los particularismos indigenistas, africanistas o feministas se fundan en la sublimación de unas prácticas concretas y determinadas históricamente para convertirlas en identidades inmanentes, ahistóricas. Las críticas a estas elaboraciones teóricas e ideológicas, como las formuladas por Laclau, Mouffé y Castro-Gómez, no sólo habilitan para considerar la importancia y necesidad de la universalidad como condición de una política emancipatoria; llevada a su última consecuencia, la distinción entre universalismo y universalidad, emanada desde las características comunes de las experiencias particulares desvela la necesidad de desnaturalizar identidades y sujetos para considerar el plano de la acción que los produjo. Abordaré este aspecto en la siguiente sección a propósito de las subalternidades raciales y étnicas.

Esbozo ahora la relación entre lo que he llamado historiografía nacionalista colonializante y la base narrativa de las elaboraciones decoloniales. Con este propósito conviene distinguir las reflexiones filosóficas que aspiran a una coordinación de valores orientadas a la liberación, de la historiografía decolonial, pocas veces enunciada desde ámbitos herederos de lo que Aníbal Quijano (1990) llamaba “colonialidad del poder”. En este sentido, y de cara a la relación que interesa dilucidar, no es lo mismo abordar las elaboraciones filosóficas de Enrique Dussel (1998) o las interpretaciones sociológicas de Ramón Grosfoguel y el propio Quijano, que las declaraciones de los historiadores estadounidenses especializados en lo que consideran la subalternidad latinoamericana y amerindia.

La crítica filosófica latinoamericana poscolonial ha resultado de un diálogo intenso con la filosofía crítica contemporánea europea posmoderna, especialmente con los herederos de la escuela de Frankfurt y los posestructuralistas. Esta especialización resulta muy original. No obstante, los presupuestos históricos de sus principales reflexiones se han sentado en una historiografía que tradicionalmente respondió a la necesidad de explicar el Estado nacional y, por tanto, formuló sus explicaciones del pasado a partir de esquemas nacionalistas y estatistas en cada país de América Latina.

Este desfase ha conducido, inevitablemente, a una interpretación general del pasado latinoamericano que reifica su carácter colonial y pierde de vista las efectivas relaciones

de subordinación y dominio. Éstas no se dieron de un continente sobre otro, sino a partir de direccionalidades políticas y polaridades de fuerzas sociales fincadas en la desigualdad fundamental a escala local, como la ha ubicado Castro-Gómez (2005) desde su interpretación filosófica crítica de la historia.

Durante los siglos XVI al XVIII, el llamado periodo colonial, la desigualdad se pensaba como una cualidad natural de las personas, que se traducían en diferentes calidades sociales según una convención en que convivían y se yuxtaponían privilegios o derechos particulares, foros judiciales y representaciones formales e informales constitutivas de los diversos órdenes políticos que articulaban las monarquías modernas. La raza, el género, la propiedad de la tierra, la capacidad crediticia, el trabajo manual frente al trabajo intelectual, condicionaban políticamente la naturaleza de las calidades en aquellas sociedades (Schaub, 2019).

Con base en la diversidad de calidades surgidas de las dinámicas sociales, jurídicas y políticas, pero sin advertirlas, la historiografía decolonial ha operado una generalización, al identificar aquellas calidades generales con sujetos inmanentes expresión de la “colonialidad del poder”, sin interesarse en comprender las dinámicas específicas de su construcción social.

Entre la diversidad de acciones que determinan una específica desigualdad sobre la que se configuran sociedades asimétricas, se cuenta la cognición. La acción de conocer. Sobre este asunto Boaventura de Sousa Santos ha hecho contribuciones sobresalientes. Desde *Epistemologías del Sur* hasta *El fin del imperio cognitivo*, Santos deconstruye las bases de las operaciones gnoseológicas del saber particularista eurocéntrico y propone una reflexión sobre los modos de conocer desde otros mundos. Sin duda se trata de un aporte de gran originalidad que merece un acercamiento detenido.

No es este el espacio para profundizar y sólo me limito a considerar el riesgo de la inconmensurabilidad a que podría conducir una lectura fácil de estas propuestas. Señalar el desequilibrio y la asimetría con que se producen las narrativas sobre el pasado no basta para enarbolar una epistemología particularista. Primero, resulta pertinente tomar conocimiento de cómo, cuándo y con base en qué formas de sociabilidad se configuraron aquellas asimetrías. Para ello, lejos de invocar estrategias genealógicas o arqueológicas posestructuralistas, conviene explorar casos concretos, acciones y experiencias del pasado a partir del estudio y la crítica de los testimonios que han dejado. En este sentido, el diálogo con la investigación histórica que se hace desde los archivos puede rendir insospechados frutos para las perspectivas filosóficas y teóricas.

Para una historia política de las prácticas sociales

La conmoción generada por el asesinato de Georges Floyd y la espiral de confrontaciones que ha detonado, la activación de un renovado movimiento masivo contra la discriminación racial en Estados Unidos, así como su conexión con las protestas contra la brutalidad policial en diversas partes del mundo, han dado la razón a quienes, algunos años atrás y desde la academia, han señalado el carácter político de las identificaciones raciales y la necesidad de estudiar su conformación histórica (Navarrete, 2016).

En su penetrante ensayo sobre el carácter político de las definiciones raciales en la historia, Jean-Frédéric Schaub (2019) ha señalado la distinción entre lo que una persona es, definida generalmente por otros, y lo que una persona hace, así como la dificultad que la comprensión de esta distinción ha supuesto para las ciencias humanas y sociales, hasta que, en lo que respecta a la idea de raza, la perspectiva constructivista de las ciencias de la conducta y el avance en la genética confluyeron para desterrar del lenguaje científico un término carente de sustancialidad (p. 9).

En otra de sus asertivas proposiciones, Jean-Frédéric Schaub caracteriza magistralmente la historia de las definiciones raciales en Europa a partir de dos condicionantes: la aparición y despliegue del nazismo y la dinámica pendular entre colonialismo y descolonización, asociada al tema fundamental de la migración entre los países colonizados y los europeos. Esta última caracterización resulta sustantiva para pensar la raza y el racismo en relación con la historia de América Latina, por más que sus referentes históricos conduzcan a suposiciones distintas.

Una historia global de América Latina podría comenzar con las movilidades individuales y colectivas de los siglos XVI y XVII. No sólo las emprendidas por los europeos al pretendido “Nuevo Mundo”, también, sobre todo, las que tuvieron lugar en diversas direcciones, señaladamente de América hacia Europa. Algunos historiadores y antropólogos se han ocupado de este tema, por lo demás y hasta hace muy poco, marginal en la agenda historiográfica de modernistas, colonialistas y americanistas. Consideremos para esta reflexión los estudios sobre los descendientes de los indígenas americanos que viajaron a Europa.

Junto a hijos de conquistadores, frailes y clérigos seculares, los indios viajeros también han llamado la atención de los historiadores. Esteban Mira Caballos (2003) ha profundizado en la migración de naturales de las Indias a Europa desde las empresas colombinas (pp. 1-15). Los avatares de las distintas ramas de la familia Moctezuma, en especial de aquella que se asentó en Cáceres, han sido estudiados décadas atrás (Cline,

1969, pp. 70-90; Saavedra, 1998, pp. 369-397). De modo similar se han hecho aproximaciones a los negocios y descendientes de doña Francisca Pizarro Yupanqui (Talaván, 2004, pp. 9-34).

Estudios recientes insisten en la excepcionalidad de los casos de caciques y nobles, frente a los aportes que muestran la cotidianidad de itinerarios o residencias de indios y mestizos menos prominentes en diversas villas extremeñas o de Andalucía (Caballos, 2001). En un estudio excepcional, José Carlos de la Puente Luna (2018) ha profundizado en la identificación colectiva de los solicitantes andinos que viajaron a Castilla; si bien cabe aclarar los límites de su acción frente a los foros de justicia, resulta muy pertinente el enfoque adoptado. Con algunas excepciones, las dinámicas locales o regionales que vincularon a unos indios con otros carecen de estudios.

No obstante, conviene distinguir las diversas experiencias de movilidad y hacer algunas advertencias. El encuadre en la categoría “indígenas en Europa”, de indios nobles o de los llamados “mestizos”, junto a los esclavos forzados de las primeras décadas del siglo XVI o los exhibidos como muestra exótica, desdibuja los contextos en que se produjeron fenómenos de circulación tan disímiles¹¹. Un conjunto así concebido expresa los límites de la etnología histórica de nuestra época e impide una aproximación a las dinámicas concretas (Taladoire, 2017, p. 21)¹².

Este ha sido el enfoque dominante al considerar trayectorias como las de don Juan Cano Moctezuma, Melchor Carlos Inga o don Pedro de Henao, cuyos casos resultan más cercanos a los de cualquier indiano nacido o avecindado en América como lo fueron regidores, comerciantes y vecinos de las llamadas villas y ciudades españolas. No sólo por su adscripción a una presunta “elite indígena” —categoría menos difícil de admitir que el citado conjunto de los “amerindios en Europa”, pero tan nebulosa y anacrónica como la de “elite criolla”—, sobre todo, porque formaban parte de las mismas redes de circulación, competencia y solidaridad, de cara a la obtención de mercedes de diverso tipo, desde juros y rentas, compra o cesión de oficios reales, hasta los hábitos militares y títulos de Castilla.

Semejante generalización se funda en una lectura ontológica del ser indígena, y deja

11. Aportaciones recientes sobre los litigios de esclavos indios en Andalucía demuestran la especificidad de estas dinámicas que, por otra parte, llevan a ponderar la repercusión de las circulaciones del temprano siglo XVI, tanto de conquistadores como de esclavos. Véase el indispensable libro de Nancy E. Van Deusen, *Global Indians. The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in the Sixteenth-Century Spain* (2015).

12. Los excesos de esta categorización han llegado a considerar casos de inuit, beothuk y micmac quienes, probablemente, conocieron el viejo continente como resultado de intercambios o raptos entre vikingos y tribus de América del norte en los siglos previos a los viajes colombinos. Véase Éric Taladoire, *De América a Europa. Cuando los indígenas descubrieron el Viejo Mundo (1493-1892)* (2017).

de lado las prácticas constituyentes que distinguían una experiencia de otra. Así, resulta necesario ponderar las trayectorias de los indios y “mestizos” en la Europa de los siglos XVI y XVII en función de sus acciones, vínculos y saberes concretos. Pero considerar la acción, implica también discriminar los diversos contextos y los niveles de conceptualización. Es decir, diferenciar las dinámicas y relaciones que intervienen cuando se estudian acciones, sin una intencionalidad consciente; prácticas, que resultan de la reiteración e institucionalizan grupos de acciones; y experiencias, que resultan de la toma de conciencia de acciones reiteradas y apuntan a la construcción de conocimiento.

No se trata sólo de constatar una experiencia de la modernidad en el sentido de experimentar un ambiente, como se ha pensado en relación con la modernización en América Latina y las tecnologías de gobierno que la implementaron (Castro-Gómez, 2009). Considerar la experiencia como acumulación de prácticas en interacción con otras formas de acción, implica tener en cuenta su carácter diacrónico, en la vida de una persona o de un conjunto de personas a partir de una determinada configuración social.

Formular conocimiento nuevo sobre la historia de las experiencias humanas en las diversas regiones del mundo contribuye a combatir la desigualdad global. Se trata, pues, de una necesidad cada vez más urgente y no de una opción ideológica preferencial o un derrotero intelectual megalómano. Poner en práctica esta perspectiva histórica supone el reto de no privilegiar una región y su narrativa en detrimento de otra, pero también implica explicar por qué no es posible hacer una historia a partes iguales (Bertrand, 2011).

Los testimonios del pasado, inclusive el modo en que han llegado hasta nosotros, son expresiones de acciones fundamentalmente asimétricas. No hay documento neutro. Por tanto, no basta con intentar restituir la parte de los pobres, los que no escribían o no contaban, sino de conocer y explicar, desde la misma asimetría documental, las acciones que configuraron a las sociedades en sus profundas desigualdades; así como las prácticas que, pasadas por la intención y su sedimentación, reiteraban todos los días la asimetría, hasta que, como resultado de la toma de conciencia de esas dinámicas, se producía el lugar de la experiencia y su enunciación.

...

“I can’t breathe” es el nudo en que se trenzan acción, praxis y experiencia. Como una declaración, la terrible frase pronunciada por Eric Garner en 2014 antes de morir, como un sino inexorable, colmó el aliento de George Floyd en Minneapolis el 25 de mayo de

2020. Sus ecos son universales, resuenan en Abu Ghraib como en Auschwitz, en la Escuela de Mecánica del Buenos Aires de 1976, como en los cuarteles militares de Iguala en México, en 2014, y en cualquier cárcel clandestina o legal del mundo.

Aquella frase también resume, como último aliento, en las pateras del Mediterráneo que llegan por decenas, todos los días, a los puertos del sur de Europa; en el tren mexicano llamado “la bestia”, sobre el que viajan miles de migrantes, haciendo de la tierra de Floyd el destino que los libere de su propia pesadilla. Aparece en las palabras desperdigadas de miles de mujeres asesinadas, y las de sus madres y padres, en Ciudad Juárez, Estocolmo o Zaragoza. Aquel último instante de vida sopla en 2020, en cualquier hospital del mundo, de Wuhan a Milán y a Nueva York, del Hospital 12 de Octubre en Madrid, al Hospital regional Gustavo Baz en Ecatepec, Estado de México. Por eso George Floyd es parte de la historia global de América Latina.

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LA CRÍTICA DEL COLONIALISMO EN LOS ORÍGENES DEL COLONIALISMO. BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS¹

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THE CRITIQUE OF COLONIASM IN THE ORIGINS OF COLONIASM. BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

Resumen

Bartolomé de Las Casas ha sido definido por Robert Young como el padre fundador del anticolonialismo, mientras que otros intérpretes han captado los límites y la ambivalencia en su batalla a favor de los nativos americanos, hasta el punto de considerarlo solidario con el “imperialismo eclesiástico” y corresponsable de la “violencia fundadora” de la modernidad. La posición de Las Casas ha cambiado con el tiempo, desde las propuestas de reforma de la colonización y racionalización de la explotación, hasta la denuncia de las “guerras diabólicas” y la esclavitud, pasando por tesis muy radicales

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sobre la ilegitimidad de la conquista y dominación española en las Indias. En el curso de este itinerario elaboró tesis teóricas de gran importancia para el inicio del discurso anticolonial: el cuestionamiento de la teoría de la guerra justa, la deconstrucción de los argumentos a favor del trabajo esclavo en la época de su renacimiento, la afirmación de la civilización madura, de los derechos y el autogobierno legítimo de los indios, el reconocimiento del valor de sus formas de vida en un primer intento de confrontación intercultural.

Palabras clave

Conquista, Colonialismo, Imperialismo, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Trabajo servil, Guerra justa, Violencia simbólica.

Abstract

Bartolomé de Las Casas has been defined by Robert Young as the founding father of anti-Colonialism, while other interpreters have grasped limits and ambivalence in his battle in favour of Native Americans, to the point of considering him in solidarity with “ecclesiastical imperialism” and co-responsible for the “founding violence” of modernity. Las Casas’ position has changed over time, from the proposals for reform of colonisation and rationalisation of exploitation, to the denunciation of “diabolical wars” and slavery, to very radical theses on the illegitimacy of Spanish conquest and domination in the Indies. In the course of this itinerary he elaborated theoretical theses of great importance for the beginning of the anti-colonial discourse: the questioning of the theory of just war, the deconstruction of the arguments in favour of slave labour at the time of its revival, the affirmation of the mature civilisation, rights and legitimate self-government of the Indians, the recognition of the value of their forms of life in a first attempt at intercultural comparison.

Keywords

Conquest, Colonialism, Imperialism, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Servile Labour, Just War, Symbolic Violence.

[...] se les torturaba con los más viles tormentos corporales: los desollaban, los empalaban, los quemaban con fuego, los ataban a estacas desnudos y ponían fuego debajo de sus pies, y despues a las piernas, y así avanzando poco a poco, hasta los miembros superiores, quemando uno tras otro. También los echaban a perros mordaces que tenían, y con gran industria y diligencia, se esforzaban en adiestrar para que se hicieran feroces, para este solo fin; cortaban con espadas los cuerpos por la mitad, y a porfía, quien era más rápido que el otro, o más aprisa dividía por la mitad, o más lejos arrojaba una cabeza separada del tronco de un solo tajo, o también despedazase en otras munchas partes las fracciones de todos los miembros. Y así, unos eran estrangulados con cuerdas, otros eran degollados, otros despedazados, otros despellejados, otros crudelmente aniquilados. ¿Que más? Todo estaba empapado con sangre humana. (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, p. 243)

La brutal apropiación de la tierra, la subyugación de las poblaciones y la explotación extrema inauguran el colonialismo moderno. La violencia a menudo parece carecer de sentido, pero en realidad tiene su propia racionalidad perversa, literalmente “terrorista”, también porque los conquistadores están en extrema inferioridad numérica (Las Casas, 1989-, 4, pp. 1322-29). La crítica de la conquista comenzó en 1511, con la denuncia de los dominicos de La Española en la homilía de Antonio de Montesinos, y poco después se convirtió en protagonista Bartolomé de Las Casas, que maduró su elección de campamento al lado de los nativos mientras se encontraba entre Haití y Cuba como clérigo-colonista y capellán de las expediciones de “pacificación”.

En su historia de estudios poscoloniales, Robert Young (2001) lo define como el padre fundador del anticolonialismo europeo: “cuestionó todo el fundamento jurídico del dominio europeo y al hacerlo refrendó la base legítima de la resistencia a éste” (p. 75). Según Enrique Dussel (1994), Europa se ha auto-reconocido como el centro del mundo en la conquista del “otro” y “no es Maquiavelo ni Hobbes los que inician la filosofía política moderna, sino aquellos pensadores que se hicieron cargo de la expansión de Europa hacia un mundo colonial” (Dussel, 2005, p. 37). En ese contexto, Las Casas elaboró “el primer discurso crítico de *toda* la Modernidad” (p. 38). Gustavo Gutiérrez (1992) ha captado en la fe el manantial de su compromiso pastoral y político, que se integra con el análisis socioeconómico de las causas de la explotación de los nativos. Otros han visto en la posición sobre la evangelización la raíz de las limitaciones y la ambivalencia del compromiso de Las Casas con los indios. Mientras que Tvezan Todorov (1982) sostenía que adoptaba una posición antiesclavista, pero se mantenía dentro de

una perspectiva colonial, Daniel Castro (2007) afirmaba que era un crítico radical del colonialismo, pero terminaba aportando valiosos argumentos a los soberanos españoles en la dialéctica que se oponía a las reivindicaciones de los colonos. Castro habla de un “imperialismo eclesiástico” de Las Casas, denunciando su incapacidad “para comprender cómo la imposición de una fe ajena estaba contribuyendo al genocidio cultural de los mismos pueblos que decía estar tratando de proteger de la extinción física” (p. 93). Los nativos permanecieron en una condición de subalternidad cultural que abrió el camino a formas más o menos mitigadas de violencia simbólica. Eduardo Subirats (1994) ya había comprendido el vínculo entre la crítica reformista a la destrucción de los indios y la “conquista espiritual”: la construcción de una nueva identidad de los nativos a través de la conversión “de hecho inconcebible sin una violencia fundacional” (p. 123).

Para evaluar la tesis de Young a la luz de estas críticas es necesario considerar, por un lado, la evolución de las posiciones que Las Casas ha asumido en más de cincuenta años de militancia; y por otro lado, la aportación teórica de su pensamiento. Esto es lo que trataré de hacer en los próximos dos párrafos.

Desde la disciplina hasta la restitución

Al menos desde Frantz Fanon ha quedado claro que la construcción de una imagen negativa de los nativos jugó un papel decisivo en la estrategia colonial. Las crónicas de los intelectuales orgánicos de la conquista enfatizaban la presunta humanidad inferior de los “indios”, su indolencia, inmoralidad, incapacidad para gobernarse a sí mismos, falta de virtud militar. Al proporcionar una valiosa documentación histórica, Las Casas volcó la perspectiva. Presentó una escalofriante fenomenología del horror en su impresionante *Historia de las Indias* (Las Casas 1989-, 3-5), pero también en un gran número de informes, cartas, apelaciones y documentos (Las Casas 1989-,13), mientras que la *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (Las Casas 1989-,10, pp. 25-94), publicada en poco tiempo en los principales idiomas europeos, permitió que el contradiscurso iniciado por los dominicanos llegara a un amplio público.

Pero la posición de Las Casas sobre la legitimidad de la presencia española en las Indias ha cambiado con el tiempo. En la primera fase de su militancia su objetivo era salvar a los indios de la destrucción, pero sus planes de reforma preveían que siguieran sometidos a un modelo de colonización diferente. Las Casas abogó por la regulación del trabajo, la reducción de las horas de trabajo y la exclusión de actividades

particularmente onerosas, pero no se cuestionó el fundamento sobre la base de la cual se institucionalizó la *encomienda*: la idea de que la condición de los indios como “vasallos libres” de la corona es compatible con el trabajo esclavo, siempre que se haga “con moderación”. A todo esto, se añadieron una serie de disposiciones que hoy en día quizás llamaríamos biopolítica en materia de vestimenta, costumbres, conducta sexual, enseñanza de idiomas, registro de nacimientos y defunciones. A los labradores cristianos de buena voluntad se les “darían” cómo “compañeros” cinco indios con sus familias, y los cristianos serían “como sus ayos”. Las Casas imagina una mezcla entre los dos pueblos a través de matrimonios mixtos (Las Casas 1989-, 13, p. 25), asumiendo que con el paso del tiempo “los indios fueren hábiles para vivir por sí y regirse” (pp. 25-26) para servir a los reyes de Castilla como vasallos. Además, la entrada en la economía monetaria habría refinado sus habilidades intelectuales. Pero los habitantes de las zonas más primitivas no destinadas a la colonización seguirían siendo deportados —bajo el control de religiosos— sometidos a un año de catecismo y educación en una Casa del Rey especial y luego insertados en el sistema colonial reformado. Se perfila un modelo paternalista y disciplinario que habría sentado las bases de una acumulación original racional tal que previniera la destrucción de la fuerza laboral y permitiera una evangelización eficaz y no (demasiado) forzada y violenta. Si este hubiera seguido siendo el enfoque de Las Casas, no hay duda de que las críticas de Todorov y Castro (Castro, 2007, pp. 71-73; ver Mora-Rodríguez, 2012) serían más que legítimas.

En los años siguientes a las propuestas de reforma de la colonización, Las Casas apoyó proyectos de evangelización pacífica y en 1521 tuvo la oportunidad de ponerse a prueba; pero la empresa, con la que había acordado asociar a los colonos de La Española en un desafortunado pacto con el diablo, fracasó trágicamente. En los siguientes largos años de retiro y meditación, Las Casas, quien ingresó a la orden dominica, tuvo la oportunidad de profundizar sus conocimientos teóricos en el camino de una progresiva radicalización de sus posiciones. En su primer tratado teórico afirmó que la única forma legítima de evangelización, establecida por la divina Providencia, es esa “persuasiva del entendimiento con razones y soavemente atractiva y exhortativa de la voluntad” (Las Casas 1989-, 2, p. 17). Cualquiera en las Indias que pretendiera llevar el Evangelio con las armas está en pecado mortal y para sperar la absolución está obligado a la *restitución*: de bienes materiales pero también de propiedad de derechos y jurisdicciones usurpados. Esto se aplica a los que lucharon en el campo pero también a los que consintieron y legitimaron, con acciones y omisiones, impresas como tales: razón que bien podría desarrollarse para incluir al propio soberano, si no al Papa que con la *Inter caetera* del 1493

le autoriza a someter a los indios para anunciar a ellos el Evangelio. Sin embargo, en los capítulos de la *Historia de las Indias* escritos en los mismos años, Las Casas subraya el carácter providencial del descubrimiento de las Indias Occidentales como la apertura de un mundo nuevo a la difusión del Evangelio y la expansión de la Iglesia, una oportunidad de salvación para millones de infieles condenados de otro modo a la perdición (Las Casas 1989-, 3, pp. 327-428).

Volviendo a la acción, en 1531 Las Casas exigía la liberación efectiva de los indios de La Española (Las Casas 1989-, 13, p. 79), pero el énfasis recaía en la misión evangelizadora y el objetivo seguía siendo la “ponderosa carga” [*the burden* (Kipling, 1899; Ignatieff, 2003)] de una forma de gobierno que promovió la gloria de Dios en las Indias y la salvación de los indígenas que padecían “tan antigua barbaria y ceguedad” (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, p. 67).

En los numerosos escritos de los años cuarenta, expresión de intenso activismo en la corte, se definía ahora el diagnóstico de la destrucción de las Indias: las causas se remontan a “injustas, crueles, sangrientas y tiránicas guerras” de conquista y a “más dura, horrible y áspera servidumbre, en que jamás hombres ni bestias pudieron ser puestas” (Las Casas 1989-, 10 p. 35). Se trata de bloquear a los conquistadores y liberar a los indios, pero Las Casas, aún confiado en las instituciones imperiales, reafirmó que la población de los españoles es necesaria “para la conversión y policía de los Indios” (Las Casas 1989-, 13 p. 115). Se volvió a plantear la idea de que la aceptación del cristianismo y la jurisdicción española supondrá un progreso en la civilización, en particular en lo que respecta a la adquisición de la plena capacidad política.

Las tesis de Las Casas sufrieron entonces una doblez teocrática. Convertido en obispo de Chiapas afirmó que, en ese “myserables y muy myserables” (p. 204) los indios quedan bajo la protección de la Iglesia. Debemos defenderlos, “como niños recién nacidos” (p. 203); la posición es, literalmente, paternalista, pero se trataba de sacar a los indígenas de la jurisdicción de la justicia civil y someterlos a la jurisdicción de los obispos, quienes deben “agarrar, golpear y matar [...] a los tiranos temporales [...] y cuando sea necesario, exterminarlos de en medio con la muerte” (p. 228). El sacramento de la confesión se convirtió en un arma estratégica para llevar a cabo este proyecto.

En el documento *Aquí se contienen unos avisos y reglas para los confesores* (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, pp. 359-88), Las Casas afirma que la absolución sólo puede conferirse después de que los indios hayan recuperado total e incondicionalmente su libertad y los bienes que les fueron robados, a lo que los españoles están obligados conjunta y solidariamente hasta el último maravedí. En 1548 el tribunal ordenó el retiro de la obra y Las Casas

fue acusado de negar el “título y señorío” de los reyes de Castilla en el Nuevo Mundo (p. 203). Para defenderse de esta acusación volvió a jugar la carta teocrática, exaltando el poder universal del Papa, que puede delegar para una región a un cierto príncipe cristiano la predicación del Evangelio a los infieles. Las guerras de conquista no tienen justificación alguna, pero el Vicario de Cristo puede destituir a los soberanos infieles o limitar sus poderes si es necesario “para obviar y evitar los impedimentos ciertos o probables de la dilatación de la fe e de la conversión y salvación dellos” (p. 423) y los que se resisten “por guerra mandar compeler, cometiendo la ejecución della a cualquiera cristiano príncipe” (p. 431). Es necesario “ponderar primero cuál será mayor daño” (p. 432): las diferencias con los apologistas de la conquista parecen depender todas de consideraciones de oportunidad y conveniencia.

En la disputa de Valladolid de 1550-51, Las Casas afirmó que las tesis sostenidas por Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda deslegitimaban y ponían en peligro el imperio de los reyes de España en las Indias (Las Casas, 1989-, 9, pp. 66-69); por el contrario, negar que la conquista es una guerra justa significa aclarar el *verum ius* a la posesión de esas tierras. De hecho, el objetivo de Las Casas era convencer al emperador para que bloqueara definitivamente las conquistas y aplicara en su totalidad las Leyes Nuevas, promulgadas en 1542 y en gran parte revocadas. Plantear dudas sobre el mandato imperial habría sido contraproducente.

En la última década de su vida la posición de Las Casas expresó un salto significativo en la continuidad (Castro, 2007, pp. 136-37). Felipe II, el sucesor al trono, se inclinaba más que su padre Carlos V a satisfacer las demandas de los colonos. Hasta entonces la benevolencia de los soberanos había constituido el principal recurso para la batalla política y cultural de Las Casas y sus más cercanos colaboradores sus más preciados aliados. El arma a utilizar parecía más bien la apelación a la conciencia del rey y la evocación del riesgo de condenación. Las Casas nunca llegó a teorizar el abandono total de las Indias por parte de los españoles, pero su doctrina de la restitución se ha radicalizado y la autonomía de los gobiernos nativos está cada vez más firmemente establecida (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, pp. 279-303).

En la interpretación que hace Las Casas del mandato de evangelización, de hecho, el Rey de Castilla puede ser investido de un poder supremo “cuasi imperial” sobre los legítimos “señores naturales” sólo después de la firma de un tratado que garantice la libertad, la jurisdicción autónoma y el autogobierno de los nativos. Esta es la condición necesaria para que el poder de los reyes de España se convierta en un *ius in re* efectivo (Las Casas 1989-, 11.1, pp. 314-17) y en todo caso los indios “no de las justicias del Rey,

sino de sus reyes y caziques an de ser regidos” (Las Casas 1989-, 13, p. 298). De hecho —afirmó ahora Las Casas— es *falso* que los españoles sean necesarios para los indios “para su policía [...], especialmente para la religión”. Al contrario, para que los indios puedan “restaurarse en su humana y temporales polizías, no avia de quedar hombre español en las Yndias” (p. 299). Y, a diferencia de lo que había argumentado anteriormente, Las Casas especifica que incluso una vez que han abrazado la fe, los pueblos indios *no* están obligados a someterse (Las Casas, 1989-, 11.1, pp. 242-55). Por el contrario, tendrían la autoridad jurídica y una causa racional justa para negar tal consentimiento a los españoles (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, pp. 258, 282), pertenecientes a una “nación extranjera, bárbara y feroz a primera vista” (Las Casas, 1989- 11.2, p. 68): la alteridad y la aparente barbarie *de los españoles* justifican la desconfianza de los indios.

El derecho derivado del consentimiento popular es más poderoso que el mandato papal, porque sin él la jurisdicción del rey de España permanece *in habitu* (Las Casas, 1989-, 11.1, pp. 324-31) y este consentimiento debe ser unánime, expresado tanto por los gobernantes como por todo el pueblo (pp. 210-13). En *Doce dudas*, Las Casas llega a sostener que el rey de Castilla, si quiere salvar su alma, debe apoyar la revuelta de Titu Cusi, a quien considera legítimo heredero del imperio peruano, y si los colonos se resisten, “a hazelles guerra y morir si fuere menester en ella por extirpallos a todas quella gentes inocentes que tienen oppressas [sic]” (Las Casas, 1989-, 11.2, p. 197). Las Casas excluye que una vez en el trono el Inca pudiera rebelarse, dado que en el Perú hay más de diez mil españoles, con armamento abrumador, y tres o cuatro mil caballos, cuando “ciento y cinquenta o poco más, fueron bastantes a prender el Rey Athabaliba, que allí junto tenía sobre quarenta mill hombres de guerra” (p. 214). La asimetría de las fuerzas en el campo emerge como lo reprimido de todo el argumento anterior. Ciertamente, es muy probable que en tal situación los indios se conviertan al cristianismo y den su consentimiento al supremo principado del Rey de Castilla. Pero uno se pregunta si la conversión en estas condiciones configuraría esa adhesión espontánea y racional que Las Casas siempre ha teorizado. Ha habido una conquista violenta e ilegítima, y se han establecido las condiciones en las que la posible — casi segura para Las Casas— conversión y la atribución del consentimiento que legitima y hace *ius in re* el poder cuasi-imperial. Visto desde esta perspectiva, las *Doce dudas* parecen conceder una paradójica venganza a la tesis de Sepúlveda según la cual la conquista militar estableció las condiciones adecuadas para la evangelización.

Sin embargo, Las Casas propone nada menos que la restauración del Imperio inca. Y en las últimas páginas de su último trabajo publicado, dirigido al Consejo

de Indias, se afirma que los conquistadores, los encomenderos y todos los religiosos que les dan la absolución están en una condición de pecado mortal; que todas las conquistas han sido guerras injustas, acciones de tiranos; los impuestos, las encomiendas y los repartimientos son injustos, el Gobierno es digno de los turcos y sin restitución no hay posibilidad de salvación porque “todos los reinos de las Indias tenemos usurpados” (p. 217).

Particularmente indicativa de la evolución de la posición de Las Casas y también de sus paradojas es la parábola del juicio sobre Cristóbal Colón. En el primer borrador de la *Historia de las Indias* se exalta al almirante como una especie de profeta elegido por la divina providencia (Las Casas, 1989-, 3, pp. 357-68). Cristóbal significa *Christum ferens*, y Colón habría sido originalmente Colonus, lo que significaría “poblador primero” (p. 358). En partes posteriores de la obra se reconocen y destacan gradualmente las responsabilidades de Colón en el inicio de las conquistas violentas y la esclavitud de los nativos (pp. 669-70; 4, pp. 886-90, 934-36, 960-63, 967-68, 991-99, 1109, 1244). Las Casas no descuida sus responsabilidades (p. 1444) pero, a diferencia de otros protagonistas de la conquista, lo confía a la misericordia divina, esperando que se salve. A pesar de todo, queda el mérito de haber abierto las puertas del Océano a la Iglesia y la posibilidad de salvación a la gente de un nuevo mundo destinadas a la condenación eterna. La trágica figura de Colón es un ejemplo de las contradicciones de la conquista, pero también de las tensiones no resueltas en la obra de Las Casas.

Prolegómenos de una teoría anticolonial

Contra las guerras diabólicas

En el curso de este itinerario Las Casas ha ido elaborando poco a poco tesis teóricas de gran importancia para el inicio del discurso anticolonial, comenzando por el cuestionamiento de la teoría de la guerra justa. Originalmente elaborada entre los siglos IV y V por Ambrosio y Agustín para legitimar la participación de los cristianos en la actividad bélica, se propuso de nuevo para justificar la conquista y la sumisión de los nativos. Si bien Sepúlveda había injertado esta teoría con la teoría aristotélica de la servidumbre natural y con la ideología de la guerra santa, Francisco de Vitoria lo reformuló sobre la base de la idea de los derechos naturales universales: los indios son “*veri domini, sicut christiani*” pero al violar los derechos de viajar, comerciar, residir, participar en el bien

común, proclamar el Evangelio, cometen *iniuria* contra los españoles y dañan una causa justa para la guerra de conquista (Bacelli, 2018).

Incluso para Las Casas la causa justa de la guerra es sólo la violación de un derecho. Pero la perspectiva se invierte:

[...] sé por cierta e infalible sciencia que los indios tuvieron siempre justísima guerra contra los cristianos, e los cristianos una ni ninguna nunca tuvieron justa contra los indios; antes fueron todas diabólicas e injustísimas, e mucho más que de ningún tirano se puede decir del mundo. (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, p. 19)

Esta inversión es aplicada por Las Casas con inexorable intransigencia. Las jurisdicciones de los indios eran legítimas por ley natural, al igual que sus “señores naturales”; no habían cometido ninguna injusticia contra los cristianos y, por lo tanto, no sólo tenían el derecho y el deber de defenderse, sino también el derecho a contraatacar, expulsar a los invasores, defender su libertad, recuperar sus bienes, vengar las injusticias sufridas “apoderándose de nuestros bienes [...] apresando y degollando las personas” (Las Casas, 1989-, 11.1, p. 381), hasta el derecho —establecido por el *ius gentium* para los que luchan una guerra justa— de esclavizar a los españoles. Todas las acciones de los indios en la resistencia a la conquista están justificadas, incluida la matanza de civiles inocentes, incluidos los religiosos (Las Casas, 1989-, 5, pp. 1445-46, 1898-1901, 2442-63; 8, pp. 1502-06; 9, p. 351; 10, pp. 67-68). Y si Vitoria presentó al príncipe justo como un juez que se sienta entre las dos comunidades que lucharon, Las Casas le toma la palabra: son los indios “nuestros legítimos jueces” (Las Casas, 1989-, 11.2, p. 387, cf. p. 82), mientras que la guerra no es justa ni contra los que se resisten a la predicación (Las Casas, 1989-, 9, pp. 332-348), ni contra los que practican los sacrificios humanos, como veremos más adelante.

En algunos trabajos la teoría de la guerra justa está a punto de ser superada. La guerra se define como “multorum homicidium commune et latrocinium” (Las Casas, 1989-, 2, p. 380) y “omnium malorum oceanus” (p. 468): se destacan claramente algunas de las falacias de la analogía entre la guerra y la sanción penal (pp. 411-16), que se ha propuesto varias veces para legitimar las acciones imperiales hasta el presente. Pero en los últimos años Las Casas ha vuelto a utilizar la teoría en función de la defensa de los indios, desarrollándola, como hemos visto, hasta las extremas consecuencias. Sus tesis, sin embargo, representan una ruptura radical con la tradición: la teoría de la guerra justa nació y se ha utilizado hasta hoy no para limitar la violencia de la guerra sino

para afirmar que *nuestras* guerras —de nosotros los cristianos, civilizados, europeos, occidentales, demócratas liberales— son justas y *sus* injustas. Las Casas no abandona el paradigma, pero ciertamente compromete su uso en las funciones imperialistas.

Trabajos forzados

El advenimiento de la modernidad fue acompañado por un renacimiento general del trabajo esclavo y servil, iniciado con la deportación de los esclavos de las costas occidentales de África, y durante siglos ha representado uno de los pilares del sistema colonial y una de las condiciones previas de la revolución industrial y la economía capitalista. Los pasos de los portugueses ya fueron seguidos por Colón, que inició la subyugación de los nativos americanos, que se practicó en las diferentes formas de esclavitud, por así decirlo, *optimo iure*, y otras formas de trabajo esclavo, entre las cuales la encomienda representó la forma más típica de institucionalización. Y ya en los diez años del siglo XVI los africanos eran deportados hacia las Américas.

Desde *El corazón de las tinieblas* de África hasta los espacios infinitos de las Américas, Asia y Oceanía, la reducción de las personas a los cuerpos disponibles tuvo lugar en un complejo y ambivalente entrelazamiento con la subyugación de las almas y con el proyecto de moralizar, convertir, cambiar las costumbres en el que la misión evangelizadora y la “carga” de la civilización desempeñaron un poderoso papel de legitimación, mientras que la violencia física y la violencia simbólica se enviaban la una a la otra. El trabajo esclavizado, más que el remanente de un pasado lejano, constituye una parte constante e integral de la “acumulación por despojo”, que reaparece en fases de grandes transformaciones económicas hasta la globalización contemporánea. Las Casas fue uno de los primeros en oponerse a la esclavitud colonial de los modernos y probablemente el primero en elaborar una crítica teórica de la misma. Dado que los españoles *nunca* fueron poseedores de la causa justa y que *todas* las acciones de resistencia de los indios eran formas de guerra justa, *ningún* indio fue reducido a la esclavitud legítimamente sobre la base del *ius gentium* (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, p. 221). Pero en el debate sobre la conquista se propuso de nuevo la teoría aristotélica, según la cual los que no pueden gobernarse a sí mismos son siervos por naturaleza y es bueno para ellos también estar sujetos a los que son capaces de deliberar y prever. La teoría, también gracias a su ambivalencia flexible y a la polisemia del término *servus*, hizo posible la cuadratura del círculo. Los nativos eran, en efecto, “súbditos y vasallos libres” de los soberanos de Castilla —como ya había declarado la reina Isabel—, pero esto era compatible con su sometimiento a los

trabajos forzados, lo que también legitimaba la jurisdicción española en las Indias y la sumisión política de los nativos y sus gobernantes.

Las Casas deconstruye la teoría aristotélica que identifica a los sirvientes por naturaleza con los bárbaros, a través de la distinción de cuatro casos en los que se utiliza el término “bárbaro”. Los bárbaros en el sentido propio son hombres incapaces de desarrollar formas de sociabilidad, unos pocos casos “monstruosos” en los que no se incluyen los habitantes de las Indias que desarrollaron instituciones y sistemas jurídicos complejos (Las Casas, 1989-, 9, pp. 77-125). Otros textos afirman tesis incompatibles con la idea de la esclavitud natural: los seres humanos “nacen libres como consecuencia de su naturaleza racional” (Las Casas, 1989-, 12, p. 35), porque, como sostiene Tomás, la naturaleza racional no está subordinada a ninguna otra cosa.

Las Casas documenta las condiciones insostenibles de los trabajadores esclavizados, desde los agricultores hasta los mineros, pasando por los transportistas de carga, los pescadores de perlas que acaban transformándose en una especie de monstruo marino (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, pp. 70-71), mientras que la violencia brutal, para incitar al terror o simplemente por capricho, es continua y va de la mano de las violaciones y la explotación sexual de las mujeres. La desintegración de las comunidades resultante de la deportación de los indios trastorna el sistema productivo y el mismo ciclo de reproducción (Las Casas, 1989-, 4, p. 1347). Los efectos son devastadores tanto a nivel físico —los indios mueren por la violencia, por el trabajo agotador, pues se ven obligados a abandonar sus cosechas— como a nivel psicológico. Todo esto es funcional a una estrategia política consciente dirigida a impedir que los indios conciban su libertad. El mal más pernicioso de la encomienda aparece precisamente el efecto de la *despolitización*: literalmente “impide que jamás allí haya república” (Las Casas, 1989-, 5, p. 2350), hasta el punto de comprometer el ejercicio de la razón (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, p. 288). En Aristóteles, como en Hannah Arendt, la auténtica praxis política presupone la liberación del trabajo, una actividad impolítica que acerca al ser humano a otros animales (*Política*, 1278 a, 1328 b - 1329 a; cf. Baccelli, 2020); por el contrario, para Las Casas, es la obligación de trabajar como esclavo lo que rompe la policía, el espacio público de las relaciones sociales y el autogobierno. No es la racionalidad insuficiente lo que hace a la naturaleza servil; es la servidumbre —una usurpación antinatural de la libertad natural— lo que inhibe la racionalidad.

Las Casas, desde el ilustrado Corneille de Pauw hasta Jorge Luis Borges (1977), pasando por los libros de texto escolares contemporáneos, fue acusado de haber propuesto la deportación de esclavos africanos a América para sustituir a los nativos en trabajos

forzados. En efecto, en la fase “reformista” aceptó y sugirió esta práctica (Las Casas, 1989-, 5, pp. 2189-91, 2335-36; 13, pp. 28, 36, 52-53, 60, 79-80, 95, 116, 129). Pero también sobre este tema se puede hablar de una conversión de Las Casas, que se puede situar a finales de los años 40. Cabe destacar que incluyó en la *Historia de las Indias* el relato de las conquistas portuguesas en África, que prefiguró la violencia y la explotación que se desarrollaban entonces en América (Pérez Fernández, 1995) y en el seguimiento de la obra la estigmatización de la esclavitud africana es cada vez más radical (Las Casas 1989-, 5, pp. 2321-25). La autocrítica de Las Casas es despiadada, hasta el punto de dudar de que reciba el perdón divino (pp. 2464-66) y, por lo tanto, ha puesto en tela de juicio toda forma de esclavitud y trabajo esclavo, precisamente en un momento en que se estaban relanzando a gran escala, apoyados en el plano teórico por teólogos devotos y humanistas refinados, eminentes juristas y filósofos liberales (Tully, 1993).

Los humanos y los derechos

Los protagonistas del “descubrimiento” y los documentos que legitiman la conquista no cuestionaron la pertenencia de los nativos a la especie humana. Pero en el comportamiento real de los españoles se produjo una reducción progresiva de los indios a animales brutos, lo que no impidió que se les considerara como niños necesitados de protección (Las Casas, 1989-, 4, p. 1286; Vitoria, 1960, pp. 723-24). La conquista de América inauguró ese proceso de reducción del otro a una forma inferior de humanidad, en las diferentes modalidades de ferinización, racismo, violencia simbólica, en un discurso ambivalente en el que la sumisión es la condición necesaria así que los nativos “a christianis humanitatem discant” (Sepúlveda, 1997, p. 56; Baccelli, 2018). Las Casas desafía la idea de la minoría de nativos americanos e insiste en su plena inclusión en la *humanitas*. No son bárbaros, ni infieles que necesiten del Gobierno español y de la evangelización para convertirse en *humaniores* y aplicar plenamente las formas de vida social y política, ni tampoco son individuos miserables que necesiten protección paternalista, sino pueblos organizados en comunidades políticas legítimas.

De ahí la visión lascasiana de los derechos, que vincula la atribución de la propiedad de estos derechos a todos los seres humanos con una extraordinaria sensibilidad a las diferencias y contextos culturales. Si el universalismo abstracto de Vitoria resulta ser falsamente neutral y de hecho asimétrico, para la lógica de Las Casas los derechos universales deben ser tomados en serio y se lleva a cabo como hemos visto hasta el extremo, mientras que el catálogo de derechos es redefinido y leído por los indios (Las

Casas, 1989-, 11.1, p. 149). Por otra parte, los titulares legítimos de dominio y jurisdicción tienen derecho a regular la presencia de extranjeros en sus tierras y a defender sus fronteras: las “*communitates hominum in suo esse formali politico* se expresan en la jurisdicción autónoma, que *desiderat* un territorio (p. 426). Las Casas impugnó desde las primeras formulaciones esa tesis sobre la imposición de los derechos y la civilización *armis e bombardis* que tanto éxito tuvo en la historia del colonialismo y el poscolonialismo.

Libertad y soberanía

La teoría política de Las Casas combina la libertad universal de los seres humanos —individuos y pueblos— con la propiedad universal del *dominium* (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, p. 552): la propiedad de los infieles es tan legítima como la de los cristianos, al igual que sus poderes y jurisdicciones. Las diferentes partes de la sociedad se caracterizan de hecho por diferentes “causas” y “*aliquid quod moveat ad bonum commune multorum*”, por lo que ejercer la *vis regitiva*, es necesario. Por lo tanto, la naturaleza ha creado individuos aptos para gobernar, que “*naturaliter sunt domini et rectores aliorum*” mientras que los *deficientes ingenio* “*naturaliter sunt servi*”, es decir, aptos para obedecer y ser gobernados (p. 556; cf. p. 454; 6, p. 390). La teoría política aristotélica, ampliamente utilizada para legitimar la subyugación de los indios, es volcada para afirmar la universalidad del poder político y la legitimidad de sus “señores naturales”. Pero en el *ius gentium primevum* todas las cosas y todos los seres humanos eran libres, sólo el *ius gentium secundarium* introdujo la servidumbre y la subordinación por ambos (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, p. 327). Pero el pueblo como entidad colectiva preexiste al soberano, es libre y “*non recognoscentes superiorem*” (Las Casas, 1989-, 13, p. 127); establecen el poder político (Las Casas, 1989-, 12, p. 34 a 60), pero el consentimiento no se da de una vez por todas. Si “*imperium immediate processit a populo [...] per liberam electionem*”, entonces “al elegir al príncipe o rey el pueblo no renunció a su libertad” (pp. 62-63), como era caso en la *fictio juridica* que legitimó a los emperadores romanos y como Hobbes apoyará. La dialéctica entre príncipe y pueblo debe permanecer en acción y cualquier transferencia, concesión, donación de jurisdicción no tiene fuerza legal sin el consentimiento del gobernado (pp. 146-48). Sobre esta base, Las Casas llega a calificar el dominio español en América como una tiranía, recordando que, contra el tirano, “*peste de la república*” (Las Casas, 1989-, 9, p. 412), la rebelión hasta su muerte es un derecho y un deber (Las Casas, 1989-, 8, p. 1452; 10, p. 560; 11.2, pp. 130-32).

En general, “Dondequiera que falte justicia, se la puede hacer a sí mismo el opreso y agraviado” (Las Casas, 1989-, 5, p. 2307).

Aquí la distancia de las visiones paternalistas es evidente, y en la obra de Las Casas hay consideraciones sobre la plena naturaleza política de los indios, el valor de sus formas de gobierno y sus sistemas jurídicos. Al menos desde 1519 les atribuye la “prudencia gubernamental” argumentando que en las Indias hay formas más racionales de policía humana que las de Castilla (pp. 2418-19): según la interpretación actual de Aristóteles seríamos *natura servi* (p. 2422) y ellos podrían “mandarnos a nosotros por su razón natural, como dice también el Filósofo hablando de los griegos y de los bárbaros (1 Polit.)” (Las Casas, 1989-, 2, p. 351).

El valor de los otros

La refutación de la infamante tesis de que los pueblos de las Indias no poseían una racionalidad tal que les permitiera autogobernarse y dar nacimiento a la “humana policía y ordenadas repúblicas” (Las Casas, 1989-, 6, p. 285) es la “causa final” de la *Apológética historia sumaria*. Según los criterios de la filosofía aristotélica, la sociedad, la economía, las formas de gobierno, la organización militar, la moral, la ley y la religión de los diversos pueblos se comparan con las de los judíos, griegos, romanos y pueblos “bárbaros” de la antigüedad. De esto se destacan las virtudes de los indios, que demostraron ser capaces de vivir en paz y ejercer la justicia.

Los indios son de “temperantísima complixión”, por lo tanto, intelectualmente vivos, sin que les falte “animosidad y esfuerzo de corazón” (p. 433). Son sobrios y temperamentales en el comer y beber y morigerados en la actividad sexual (cf. p. 445), y el llamado “oficio nefando” no está en absoluto universalmente extendido (cf. Las Casas, 1989-, 8, pp. 1205-06, 1490). Pero, sobre todo, los indios reúnen las condiciones necesarias para lograr el bien común: están dotados de prudencia política, económica y monástica (relativa al autogobierno) (Las Casas, 1989-, 6, p. 465; cf. 2, p. 350) y en las diversas áreas existen las funciones, órdenes y clases sociales necesarias, según Aristóteles, para que las comunidades políticas sean autosuficientes y perfectas.

Las Casas contrasta las aberrantes supersticiones y las prácticas inmorales e inmundas difundidas en la antigüedad (Las Casas, 1989-, 7, pp. 651-68, 791-792, 803-04, 954-55, 1008-16, 1038-47; 8, pp. 1258-59) a las religiones de los pueblos de las Indias, que “tuvieron más razón y discreción y honestidad que las más de todas naciones idólatras antiguamente hobo, bárbaras, griegos y romanos [...] y, por consiguiente, mostraron

ser más que todas racionales” (Las Casas, 1989-, 7, p. 896; cf. p. 793). Las Casas insiste en su devoción y celo, hasta el punto de afirmar que ningún pueblo ha sido nunca tan religioso.

La existencia de numerosas y complejas comunidades que viven en paz muestra que en las Indias había formas de gobierno justo. Si existen costumbres bárbaras, hay que considerar que algunas comunidades se encuentran en esa condición primitiva que pasó por todos los pueblos en sus comienzos, y que, constituidas por seres racionales, pueden ser “traídos a la vita culta y política” (Las Casas, 1989-, 8, p. 1328). El gobierno de México demostró ser muy ordenado (p. 1367) y el reino incaico del Perú se presenta como un modelo de sabiduría natural y de prudencia de los gobernantes (pp. 1511-70), más justo y recto que el Imperio Romano.

En conclusión, los pueblos indios son todos políticos, bien gobernados y suficientemente ricos. Si practican algunas costumbres corruptas, son enmendables con industria humana y sobre todo gracias a la predicación del Evangelio, “porque por la doctrina de Christo son sanables todos los hombres del mundo” (p. 1572). El vínculo entre la civilización y la cristianización reaparece y no hay duda de que aquí Las Casas se refiere a un modelo de *humanitas*, a un camino unilateral de civilización progresiva cuyo objetivo es la república cristiana.

La evaluación de los sacrificios humanos representa una especie de *experimentum crucis* de la apertura de Las Casas a la alteridad. Es un mal, tanto que fueron introducidos por el diablo (Las Casas, 1989-, 7, pp. 686-89), pero hay que reconocer que están muy difundidos desde tiempos inmemoriales, y en las Indias son prescritos por los gobernantes y aprobados por los que se consideran más sabios (como en la teoría aristotélica de los *endoxa*): los indios están afectados por una probable ignorancia (pp. 969, 1251; Las Casas, 1989-, 8, pp. 1215-16; 9, pp. 422-83; 10, p. 176). No sólo es inútil e ilícito hacer la guerra para impedir los sacrificios humanos: Las Casas llega a sostener que los indios cometerían un pecado mortal si no defendieran sus cultos, incluso a costa de sus vidas (Las Casas, 1989-, 10, p. 176); esto les atribuye “los derechos que son corolario de una justa guerra” (Las Casas, 1989-, 9, p. 461).

Para Danilo Zolo (2007) Las Casas inauguró “un enfoque multicultural y ‘relativista’ de la diversidad de los infieles que no tiene precedentes en la cultura occidental” (p. XI). Es evidente que en su visión el mensaje del Evangelio y los dogmas de la fe tienen una validez absoluta, mientras que el paradigma aristotélico-tomista —que remite a un modelo antropológico, a una visión sociopolítica, a un universo de valores éticos y,

obviamente, a una verdad absoluta— se toma como una cuadrícula interpretativa de las diferentes experiencias culturales. Pero esta matriz disciplinaria se utiliza para valorar la racionalidad de los indios, sus normas e instituciones. Por el contrario, en la elaboración de sus oponentes teóricos, la asunción de un modelo universal se traduce en un prejuicio sobre su *humanitas* inferior, según el esquema que se repropondrá en los siglos siguientes, modificando los términos (de las oposiciones infiel-cristiano y bárbaro-*humanus* a las salvaje-civilizado, subdesarrolladas-desarrolladas y así).

Gutiérrez (1992) subraya que la asunción del punto de vista de los indios está en consonancia con la evangelización y está abierta al respeto de la libertad religiosa y al reconocimiento del valor de sus creencias y cultos (p. 217). Pero es precisamente aquí donde surge una ambivalencia que se resuelve en una paradoja: el cristianismo de Las Casas, lejos de ser el opio de los pueblos, es la base de su compromiso práctico y teórico, la fuente de su coraje y obstinación, el presupuesto de su radicalidad; pero el anuncio del Evangelio constituye también el residuo de la legitimidad de la presencia de los cristianos en América, por lo tanto, del cuestionamiento de los universos simbólicos y culturales de los nativos, aunque esto excluya cualquier coacción y requiera una convicción racional y un consentimiento consciente y voluntario, y presuponga su libertad individual y colectiva. Para evaluar la contribución de Las Casas a la crítica del colonialismo, es necesario, por tanto, preguntarse hasta qué punto la adhesión al cristianismo significa la conformación a la norma de la civilización europea. Es decir, si se mantiene el síndrome de la subalternidad cultural de los pueblos indígenas, que abre el camino a formas más o menos mitigadas de violencia simbólica. La tesis de Castro (2007) de que Las Casas, al defender a los nativos objetivamente, “les roba la voluntad y los arroja como víctimas indefensas sin capacidad de autodefensa, y mucho menos de autodeterminación” (p. 154; véase pp. 36-37) parece falsificada por la afirmación sistemática de la capacidad política de los indios, la reivindicación efectiva de sus derechos y el énfasis en su autodeterminación.

Más apropiada es la cuestión de la mirada que el *protector* ha puesto en los indios. Asumiendo que los subalternos pueden hablar —parafraseando a Gayatri Spivak— rara vez lo hacen en las obras de Las Casas. Sin embargo, no se puede dejar de reconocer que ha emprendido un camino de cuestionamiento del enfoque objetivista y que ha ido mucho más allá de muchos protagonistas del discurso filosófico, político y antropológico de la modernidad, hasta algunos de nuestros contemporáneos. Por otra parte, al evaluar la apertura a la confrontación intercultural y el reconocimiento de los contextos, es necesario contextualizar también su posición. Es completamente irrealista pedir a un

misionero dominicano, formado en España, que acaba de terminar la expulsión de los musulmanes y los judíos y que lucha contra el Imperio Otomano y, más en general, a un europeo cristiano del siglo XVI, que considere los mismos dogmas de fe, el mismo paradigma ético y antropológico dentro del cual piensa como potenciales dispositivos de violencia simbólica e instrumentos del imperialismo cultural. Como dijo Las Casas de los indios sobre el sacrificio humano, cae en un error probable y se ve afectado por una ignorancia invencible. Por otra parte, hablar el mismo lenguaje y compartir el mismo paradigma teórico que sus adversarios hace que sus argumentos sean más efectivos (Pagden, 1991, p. 152).

En este contexto Las Casas “asumió el punto de vista de los ‘otros’ y trató de aceptar su diversidad con serenidad, aunque le resultara moralmente inaceptable” (Zolo, 2007, p. X), mientras que los conocimientos protoantropológicos de las culturas e instituciones indias se transformaron en armas para su batalla. No se puede pretender que Las Casas fuera un refinado exponente de los estudios culturales o un desconstruccionista desencantado, sino que es decisivo evaluar el significado político de su operación interpretativa. Si los estudios poscoloniales nos han enseñado que la modernidad occidental se construyó a través de la dominación y la violencia, física y simbólica, sobre los colonizados, Las Casas los cuestionó radicalmente desde el principio. Al hacerlo, elaboró importantes argumentos contra el armamento teórico del colonialismo, desde la teoría de la guerra justa hasta la legitimación de la explotación y la subordinación política, pasando por la reducción de los subordinados a una forma menor de humanidad.

La razón cristiano-europea y luego la occidental se presenta como portadora de valores universales, por lo tanto, orientada hacia el imperialismo cultural y la imposición de un modelo de racionalidad, proclive a desencadenar la violencia —simbólica y no sólo— y por otra parte vector de principios como la dignidad de todo ser humano, la emancipación, el autogobierno. Las Casas critica implícitamente esta dialéctica, pero no puede dejar de estar marcado por ella. Su pensamiento se vuelve cada vez más radical y la conquista pierde todo fundamento. Pero la oscilación entre la evaluación del descubrimiento del otro como la oportunidad providencial para la salvación de una parte de la humanidad y el rechazo de la conquista con la destrucción de esa misma humanidad nunca (y tal vez no pudo) encontrar un equilibrio estable. Es a la inescrutable voluntad de la Providencia, por otra parte, que Las Casas se apoya en varias ocasiones.

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EL DEVENIR-NEGRO DEL NEOLIBERALISMO. EL CUERPO DE EXTRACCIÓN Y LA ALETURGÍA NEGRA EN LA ERA DE LA PLANETARIZACIÓN BIOPOLÍTICA NEOLIBERAL¹

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THE BECOMING-BLACK OF NEOLIBERALISM. THE EXTRACTION CORPS AND THE BLACK ALETHURGY IN THE AGE OF NEOLIBERAL BIOPOLITICAL PLANETARIZATION

Resumen

Uno de los aspectos más remarcables del proyecto anunciado por una obra como *Crítica de la razón negra*, de Achille Mbembe, es el intento de esbozar un marco conceptual e histórico, amplio y coherente, que conduzca a la ineludible articulación de una

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genealogía global del vínculo entre la sujeción racial (la fabricación de un sujeto de raza que Mbembe llama “el Negro”) y el diagnóstico de la creciente planetarización del neoliberalismo que orientan la superposición de espacios y de tiempos de nuestro presente global. De ahí la idea de que el devenir-mundo del neoliberalismo de hoy no pueda estar disociado de lo que Mbembe llama la “universalización tendencial de la condición negra” e invoca, por consiguiente, una genealogía entorno a lo que podríamos llamar el *devenir-negro del neoliberalismo*. Esta contribución retomará las reflexiones de Mbembe, situándose de manera crítica respecto a ciertos problemas que parecen quedar abiertos o susceptibles de ser elaborados en mayor profundidad.

Palabras clave

Achille Mbembe, Aleturgia, Biopolítica, Cuerpo de extracción, Neoliberalismo, Racismo (sujeto de raza), Razón negra.

Abstract

One of the most remarkable aspects of the project announced by a work such as Achille Mbembe’s *Critique of Black Reason* is the attempt to outline a broad and coherent conceptual and historical framework that leads to the inescapable articulation of a global genealogy of the link between the racial subjection (the fabrication of a racial subject that Mbembe calls “the Negro”) and the diagnosis of the growing globalization of neoliberalism that guide the superposition of spaces and times of our global present. Hence the idea that the becoming-world of neoliberalism today cannot be dissociated from what Mbembe calls the “tendency universalization of the black condition” and therefore invokes a genealogy around what we could call the becoming-black of neoliberalism. This contribution will take up Mbembe’s reflections, placing himself in a critical way regarding certain problems that seem to remain open or capable of being elaborated in greater depth.

Keyword

Achille Mbembe, Alethurgy, Biopolitics, Extraction Corps, Neoliberalism, Racism (subject of race), Black reason.

Esta contribución atenderá la manera en que Achille Mbembe (2013) intenta situar una cierta lectura de inspiración foucaultiana del neoliberalismo en una escala global, proponiendo una articulación histórica y geopolítica entre vida y poder centrada en la idea de “razón negra”². Se trata en otros términos de lo que también podríamos designar, como ya lo veremos, un *devenir negro del neoliberalismo*. No obstante, esta lectura no puede realizarse adecuadamente sin incorporar a la genealogía del sujeto de raza (que la noción de razón negra presupone) otra noción importante: la de “cuerpo de extracción”, noción que Mbembe formula en su obra de 2013, *Crítica de la razón negra*, pero sin lograr captar completamente su alcance crítico. Nos parece que es profundizando la reflexión en torno a la idea de un cuerpo de extracción, que la empresa crítica de Mbembe podría permitirnos retrazar la matriz histórica y biopolítica del devenir-negro del neoliberalismo, así como elaborar, de manera consecuente, un diagnóstico de nuestro presente global. Sin apoyarse en la idea de un cuerpo de extracción, se torna efectivamente difícil combinar bajo la noción de razón negra dos perspectivas que en las reflexiones de Mbembe parecen fundamentales y que, aunque de manera subterránea, refieren constantemente la una a la otra, a saber: el esquema marxista de la acumulación primitiva y la biopolítica foucaultiana. Articulación que nos permite hablar, entonces, del devenir-negro del neoliberalismo. A continuación, veremos cómo haciendo mayor hincapié que el propio Mbembe en la noción de cuerpo de extracción lograremos reorientar su crítica de la razón negra por medio de lo que designaremos “aleturgia negra”.

1. De hecho, gracias a la noción de “razón negra” Mbembe realiza, entre otras cosas, un desplazamiento de la racionalidad biopolítica neoliberal al interior de un dominio conceptual histórica, y, sobre todo, geográficamente, más vasto que el que ha sido abordado por Foucault. Todo esto en la medida en que este desplazamiento pasa por la crítica genealógica de una modernidad que sería demasiado limitado calificar como europea u occidental, y que convendría designar como global, tal como lo ha sido la empresa colonial e imperial de las potencias europeas, que han marcado profundamente el espacio a una escala transcontinental. El mismo espacio donde hoy el neoliberalismo continúa, aún si de manera diferenciada, no sólo deviniendo-mundo, sino también deviniendo-negro.

Desde este punto de vista, la empresa crítica de Mbembe se presenta como la problematización genealógica de la fabricación de sujetos de raza, y se define en toda su

2. Agradezco a Camila Ginés por la traducción de este texto y a Joaquín Ginés por su relectura.

especificidad histórica y geopolítica, proponiéndose vincular tres momentos mayores de esta modernidad global: la esclavitud, alimentada por la trata atlántica que encuentra en el espacio de la plantación su foco de experiencia privilegiado; la colonia, donde la sujeción racial se remodela en función del establecimiento de instituciones y de técnicas de gobierno ligadas a la constitución de grandes imperios coloniales; y, finalmente, el Apartheid, donde las formas de segregación racial conducen a una intensificación ulterior de la experiencia de sí como sujeto de raza.

Sin embargo, como el punto de partida de toda genealogía se halla siempre fijado *en y por* el presente, el método genealógico de Mbembe parece sugerir algo más, puesto que también se organiza a partir del diagnóstico del presente global marcado de manera cada vez más consistente por un neoliberalismo que se presenta como la salida es el de la expansión planetaria de los mercados, la privatización del mundo bajo “[...] y la imbricación creciente entre la economía financiera, el complejo militar postimperial y las tecnologías electrónicas y digitales” (Mbembe, 2013, p. 12). En esta idea de devenir-negro del mundo y del neoliberalismo, la condición negra puesta aquí en cuestión es principalmente una grilla genealógica de inteligibilidad que apunta a esclarecer cómo es que aquello que Mbembe califica de “Negro” desborda su marco de origen, aún si este continúa siendo la matriz histórica y geopolítica que nos permite comprender el alcance de sus desarrollos actuales en la era del neoliberalismo en vías de globalización:

En primer lugar, los riesgos sistémicos a los cuales sólo los esclavos negros fueron expuestos durante el primer capitalismo constituyen de ahora en adelante, si no la norma, cuanto menos el destino que amenaza a todas las humanidades subalternas. En segundo lugar, esta *universalización tendencial de la condición negra* es simultánea a la aparición de prácticas imperiales inéditas, que adoptan elementos tanto de las lógicas esclavistas de captura y de depredación, como de las lógicas coloniales de ocupación y de extracción, e inclusive lógicas de guerras civiles y de raciales de épocas anteriores [...]. Por primera vez en la historia de la humanidad, la palabra negro no remite solamente a la condición que se les impuso a las personas de origen africano durante el primer capitalismo [...]. Es esta nueva característica fungible, esta solubilidad, su institucionalización como nueva norma de existencia y su propagación al resto del planeta, lo que llamamos el devenir-negro del mundo [en la época de la planetarización del neoliberalismo]. (Mbembe, 2013, pp. 14-16)

Es así como este devenir-negro del mundo y del neoliberalismo no hace más que poner el acento sobre una generalización progresiva de las formas de racionalidad política, cuya genealogía no puede de ninguna manera eludir el análisis de la experiencia colonial y poscolonial. En este sentido, podemos decir que, según Mbembe, el devenir-negro del neoliberalismo marca un espacio de aceleración, de intensificación y de difusión —que ocurre bajo formas variadas y adaptadas a cada contexto singular— de modos coloniales y poscoloniales de racionalidad política, incluyendo aquellas que conciernen las matrices de asignación identitaria poscolonial, lo que en el registro de Mbembe corresponde a la producción del “Negro”.

2. Es dentro de este marco general que podemos comprender la complejidad de la noción de “razón negra” y de su tarea genealógica dirigida a articular, sobre un plano histórico y geopolítico más vasto que el de la modernidad europea, tanto los elementos discursivos como los no discursivos, o aún más específicamente, un conjunto complejo compuesto de discursos, de instituciones, de prácticas y de formas de subjetivación. Tal como lo afirma Mbembe (2013):

A primera vista, la razón negra consiste entonces en una suma devoces, de enunciados y discursos, saberes, comentarios y tonterías cuyo objeto es “la cosa” o la “gente de origen africano”, así como aquello que, se diría, constituye su nombre y su verdad. (p. 50)

Pero la razón negra refiere también a “una gama de intermediarios e instituciones que, por aquel entonces, participan en la consolidación de esta razón y en su transformación en sentido común o en *habitus*” (Mbembe, 2013, pp. 50-51). Esto conduce a la fabricación poscolonial y racializante de una asignación identitaria que la gubernamentalidad neoliberal aún hoy continúa operando a lo largo de lo que Boaventura de Sousa (2014) llama “la línea abisal” del pensamiento occidental moderno³, y más generalmente, de la “fractura poscolonial” (Lamaire, Bancel y Blanchard, 2006)⁴. Desde esta

3. “El pensamiento occidental moderno es un pensamiento abismal. Éste consiste en un sistema visible e invisible de distinciones, las invisibles constituyen el fundamento de las visibles. Las distinciones invisibles son establecidas a través de líneas radicales que dividen la realidad social en dos universos, el universo de “este lado de la línea” y el universo del “otro lado de la línea”. La división es tal que “el otro lado de la línea” desaparece como realidad, se vuelve no existente, y de hecho es producido como no-existente [...] La modernidad occidental es un paradigma sociopolítico fundado sobre una tensión entre regulación social y emancipación social [...] Sin embargo esta distinción visible está fundada sobre una no visible, aquella entre sociedades metropolitanas y sociedades colonizadas” (p. 173) (La traducción está hecha por nosotros).

4. En general, la perspectiva de esta obra muestra como esta fractura no designa tanto la reproducción de estructuras económicas, sociales y culturales del colonialismo, sino la dispersión de los efectos de este en las sociedades contemporáneas.

perspectiva, la fabricación de toda identidad postcolonial debe hacer remontar su genealogía a lo Mbembe (2013) denomina “la *conciencia occidental del Negro*” (pp. 50-51), es decir, una matriz de subjetivación que constituye

[...] el reservorio que otorga justificación a la aritmética de la dominación de raza [...], su función principal es codificar las condiciones en las que aparece y se manifiesta un sujeto de raza al que se denominará negro o, más tarde y bajo condiciones coloniales, el indígena: ¿quién es?, ¿cómo lo reconocemos?, ¿qué lo diferencia de nosotros?, ¿puede transformarse en nuestro semejante?, ¿cómo gobernarlo y para qué? (p. 51)

La originalidad de esta perspectiva radica, precisamente, en la tentativa de poner en marcha una genealogía del sujeto de raza que combine —como ya ha sido anticipado— dos abordajes teóricos e historiográficos diferentes, cuyo ensamblaje no carece de dificultades y cuya elaboración permanece en la obra de Mbembe mayoritariamente de forma subterránea. Por una parte, encontramos el esquema marxista de la acumulación primitiva que pone el acento en las relaciones históricamente cambiantes entre capital, trabajo, guerra y racismo (Alliez y Lazzarato, 2016). Es por este flanco que Mbembe (2013) nos invita a considerar que:

la transformación del estado liberal en una potencia de guerra, en un momento en el que —y esto es patente hoy en día— el capital no sólo jamás abandonó su fase de acumulación primitiva, sino que, parahacerlo, hizo un uso constante de los subsidios raciales. (p. 44)

Por otra parte, Mbembe aborda la cuestión desde una perspectiva marcada por la biopolítica foucaultiana, deteniéndose menos que Foucault sobre la función principal-

Aún si esta fractura emerge con la aceleración planetaria de la colonización desde el siglo XIX, lo que *queda* de esta es esparcido en forma de herencia en una coexistencia a nivel planetario de espacios y de tiempos heterogéneos y plurales que de hecho perturban tanto la oposición entre sociedades metropolitanas (occidentales) y sociedades coloniales así como las distinciones entre “centro” y “periferia” o entre “primer” y “tercer” mundo. Por el contrario, el “post” del colonialismo (las particiones derivadas de esta fractura del colonialismo a pesar del final formal de este) concierne, penetra y estructura cada espacio del capitalismo global neoliberal actual). Pese a las diferencias que continúan existiendo, los espacios instituidos por la violencia colonial ya no son geográficamente asignables de forma tan clara como lo eran en la época imperial, ya que sus fronteras se han vuelto progresivamente porosas y móviles. Es a partir, tanto de este entrelazamiento estructural y multilineal entre sociedades occidentales y sociedades coloniales, como de las nuevas formas de movilidad selectiva de individuos y de poblaciones (que los actuales dispositivos biopolíticos, estatales y supraestatales se esfuerzan en gobernar), que hay que pensar la producción de la fuerza de trabajo como mercancía a la cual, precisamente, Mbembe se refiere centrándose en el devenir negro del neoliberalismo.

mente negativa del racismo en tanto que “la condición de aceptabilidad de dar muerte en una sociedad de normalización” (Foucault, 1997, pp. 227-228) —y aún menos de lo que Mbembe (2006) mismo había anteriormente enfatizado insistiendo en la noción de “necropolítica”—. Por este motivo, ya no se trata verdaderamente de reducir la articulación entre racismo y colonialismo a una “función asesina” que sería la prerrogativa de un Estado que opera “al modo del biopoder” y cuyo “genocidio colonizador” constituiría una suerte de modelo, de paradigma, o de antecedente genealógico, lo que, en el ejercicio de una modalidad colonial de poder, no dejaría entrever, a pesar de su retranscripción en términos biológicos, más que formas *residuales* del poder de dar la muerte, que según Foucault caracteriza principalmente el poder de soberanía (Mbembe, 2006).

El desafío es entonces repensar las relaciones entre racismo, biopolítica y colonialismo en términos más positivos y productivos como los que más tarde fueron ensamblados e integrados en el funcionamiento del neoliberalismo a escala global: se trata mayormente de “hacer-vivir” más que de hacer-morir, y esto al precio de una ampliación del campo de operatividad práctica y política de los discursos entorno a las razas y del racismo a los cuales Foucault se refiere. Es por esta razón que, para comprender este aspecto productivo, la articulación entre racismo y colonialismo debe necesariamente desbordar el marco restringido del Estado, que se ocupa de sus peligros biopolíticos internos, y abrirse tanto a una genealogía de la cuestión (post)colonial como al devenir-negro del mundo y del neoliberalismo.

En este contexto más vasto, que toma en cuenta la genealogía de lo que históricamente pasó en el régimen de la plantación en el seno de las sociedades coloniales y bajo el Apartheid, la raza “funciona [ría] como un dispositivo de seguridad fundado sobre la base de lo que se podría denominar el principio de arraigo biológico por medio de la especie”. De igual forma, los procesos de racialización a los cuales da lugar este dispositivo

[...] tienen el propósito de identificar [y a jerarquizar] estos grupos poblacionales y de fijar, con la mayor precisión posible, los límites dentro de los cuales pueden circular [...] de determinar, lo más exactamente posible, los emplazamientos que pueden ocupar estas poblaciones. En definitiva: apuntan a garantizar la seguridad general. (Mbembe, 2013, p. 62)

Para ensamblar la cuestión marxista de la acumulación primitiva, que siempre se desplegó a escala planetaria a través del intermediario de “subsidios raciales”, y esta biopolítica foucaultiana donde la raza figura como un dispositivo de seguridad

global, según Mbembe, es preciso reencuadrar estas dos perspectivas en el marco de una *bio-economía*. En su seno, la fabricación de sujetos de raza indexada sobre la razón negra constituye el horizonte epistemológico-político al interior del cual

[...] venía a reconciliar masas, clases y poblaciones, es decir, las tres herencias de la historia natural, de la biología y de la economía política. El trabajo y la producción de riquezas eran inseparables de los problemas específicos de la vida y de la población, de la regulación de movimientos y de desplazamientos, en definitiva, de los procesos de circulación y captura. Y los procesos de circulación y captura constituían una dimensión central. Además, eran tecnologías de seguridad y mecanismos de inscripción de la gente en sistemas jurídico-legales diferenciados. (Mbembe, 2013, pp. 62-63)

3. Antes de volver a estos pasajes y a los mecanismos de fijación en el espacio propios de la razón negra, debemos remarcar previamente que entre la panoplia de conceptos utilizados por Mbembe hay uno que permite en particular articular teórica y genealógicamente estos dos abordajes de los que se nutre la crítica de la razón negra. Se trata de una noción de escasa aparición en la obra de Mbembe y de la cual este no explora toda la riqueza de implicaciones teóricas que podrían permitirle terminar el trabajo de sutura teórica subyacente a su diagnóstico del presente global, marcado por el devenir-negro del neoliberalismo. Esta noción constituye a la vez el correlato materialista de la razón negra y su sitio material e inmanente de inscripción, allí donde la razón negra *de hecho se hace cuerpo*: es justamente a lo que Mbembe llama un “cuerpo de extracción”.

De hecho, no hay fabricación de sujeto de raza, asignación normativa de identidad, de “Negro”, sin que un lazo social de sujeción pase por un cuerpo de extracción, a saberse: “un cuerpo completamente expuesto a la voluntad de un amo que se empeña en obtener de él la máxima rentabilidad” (Mbembe, 2013, p. 36). Cuerpo que debe ser entendido, a la vez, como cuerpo individual, objetivo de toda una serie de tecnologías disciplinarias y como cuerpo colectivo, es decir, como población sometida a regulaciones biopolíticas y racializantes. Ahora bien, ¿por qué esta noción de cuerpo de extracción, a pesar del uso bastante limitado que hace de ella Mbembe, nos resulta tan importante?

Primeramente, porque la idea de un cuerpo de extracción brinda una grilla genealógica de inteligibilidad capaz de hacer aparecer la perpetuación de la acumulación primitiva en nuestro presente global, puesto que se despliega aún hoy a escala planetaria y continúa las experiencias históricas del colonialismo, lo que marca en profundidad

tanto el capitalismo contemporáneo como toda forma de identidad poscolonial a través del planeta. Como ha sido demostrado en varias ocasiones, cuando Marx habla de acumulación “originaria” o “primitiva”, es necesario considerar estos adjetivos en su literalidad solamente en relación con la *Darstellung*, a la exposición, al método, pero no en relación con el plano histórico concreto donde la acumulación primitiva del capital continúa reproduciéndose en una superposición global de tiempos y de espacios heterogéneos (Mezzadra, 2008). De hecho, en la era del neoliberalismo globalizado de hoy la intensificación y la expansión de las prácticas extractivas deben ser comprendidas no solamente en sus formas históricamente conocidas, como las de las minas o las plantaciones, donde los cuerpos “negros” estaban sometidos a regímenes históricamente específicos de prácticas extractivas.

Esta expansión que caracteriza al capital contemporáneo debería incluso ser considerada a partir de otras formas de operaciones extractivas que sometan los cuerpos a otros regímenes de extracción, como la de los datos biométricos o los *big data* en general, que contribuyen a poner en marcha y a hacer operacionales las lógicas *jerarquizantes* y *discriminatorias* (y en este sentido a menudo racializantes) de clasificación y de redistribución de estos cuerpos. Hoy, estas son prácticas extractivas cruciales para gestionar las relaciones entre capital y trabajo a través de los dispositivos neoliberales actuales de vigilancia, de control y de confinamiento, que son especialmente el objeto de los fenómenos masivos de migración a lo largo del planeta (Gago y Mezzadra, 2017; Neilson y Mezzadra, 2017 y 2019). Por este sesgo, llegamos a comprender cómo las operaciones del bio-capitalismo neoliberal a las cuales hace alusión la idea de razón negra de Mbembe están de hecho ligadas, por una parte, a la reestructuración en sentido extractivo de las dinámicas propias de la acumulación primitiva y, por el otro, a la intensificación de los procedimientos racializantes de *segmentación del continuum* biológico de la población planetaria, lo que se articula en la redefinición de las prácticas extractivas que no son ni operacionales, ni inteligibles, sin algo que oficie como un cuerpo de extracción.

En segundo lugar, el cuerpo de extracción que según Mbembe (2013, pp 67-68) remite a la “doble dimensión metamórfica y económica” del “proceso por el cual la gente de origen africano es transformada en *mineral* viviente para extraer *metal*”, que luego se convierte de manera fiduciaria en moneda, muestra que la extracción de la que estos cuerpos dan cuenta es también el “arrancamiento o separación” de individuos que hay que convertir a su vez en objeto y en mercancía (pp. 67-68). Se trata de un dispositivo de extracción en virtud del cual de un cuerpo racializado se extrae no solamente fuerza de trabajo, valor, datos biométricos, sino también verdad sobre sí mismo en términos de

identidad, necesidades, deseos. Y se trata, también, de un procedimiento de extracción en virtud del cual, a partir del cuerpo racializado, es necesario extraer formas específicas de manifestación de sí: lo que, siguiendo un léxico foucaultiano revisitado según las sugerencias de Mbembe, estaríamos tentados a llamar una “aleturgia” *negra* (Foucault, 2009 y 2012; Irrera, 2013 y 2018).

Desde este punto de vista, el cuerpo de extracción no solamente permite ensamblar en el mismo dispositivo racial la acumulación originaria y la biopolítica, sino también lo que Mbembe llama “los dos discursos” de la razón negra en sí misma. Del primero ya hemos hablado, y corresponde a la conciencia occidental del Negro que apunta a

[...] lograr el advenimiento del negro como sujeto deraza y exterioridad salvaje; trabajo cotidiano cuyo fin era hacer del negro un sujeto susceptible de descalificación moral y de instrumentalización práctica [...]. Al buscar una respuesta para la pregunta ¿quién es?, Occidente se esfuerza en nombrar una realidad que es exterior y a la que pretende situar en relación a un yo considerado como el centro de toda significación. (p. 51)

4. Esta matriz de asignación identitaria opera, sin embargo, no solamente del lado del genitivo objetivo, en donde “el negro” en cuestión es objeto de conocimiento de los que no se califican de esta manera y por lo tanto se subjetivizan a través de esta partición. Pero también hay que tener en cuenta la productividad de esta matriz identitaria del lado del genitivo subjetivo, problematizando el decir veraz sobre sí mismo en tanto que “Negro” al interior de este régimen racial y poscolonial de verdad que es el de la razón negra.

Se trata de un punto que Mbembe no desarrolla demasiado, al menos no explícitamente, pero sobre el que merece hacerse hincapié, ya que suscita problemas que hacen eco a las cuestiones formuladas, directamente, por el propio Mbembe. De hecho, si miramos con mayor detalle la manera en la cual una cierta forma de manifestación de la verdad sobre sí mismo contribuye a la fijación de estos cuerpos de extracción tanto sobre los aparatos de producción del biocapitalismo neoliberal como sobre los dispositivos biopolíticos poscoloniales y post-imperiales de regulación y vigilancia, nos encontramos delante de un fenómeno que va a influenciar de manera particular a la razón negra, especificándola más como lo que hemos denominado “aleturgia negra”. Esto se debe a que en la dicha “conciencia occidental del Negro”, tanto del lado genitivo objetivo como del lado genitivo subjetivo, las relaciones entre la “descalificación moral”

y la “instrumentalización práctica” mencionadas por Mbembe se redefinen siempre que no es más (o no es más solamente) la descalificación moral que va a acompañar la instrumentalización práctica del Negro (ya sea como su efecto o, por el contrario, como su condición de posibilidad), pero también lo que en los últimos treinta años figura como su “recalificación moral”, y más precisamente, en los términos de un “gobierno humanitario”, por utilizar la eficaz fórmula de Didier Fassin (2010).

Es por este medio que la consciencia occidental del Negro suscita cada vez más sentimientos morales de compasión, piedad, simpatía, etc., lo que Fassin (2010) designa, a partir de Adam Smith en su *Teoría de los sentimientos morales*, “las emociones que nos llevan a las desgracias de los demás y nos hacen desear corregirlas” (p. 7). Aún si los sentimientos morales están inscritos hace ya mucho tiempo en la forma de racionalidades políticas en Occidente (basta con pensar en la “moralización” de los obreros y de las clases populares desde el siglo XVIII de las cuales hablan, desde perspectivas diferentes, tanto Michel Foucault como Edward Palmer Thompson), aún si la aparición de la figura de la víctima y de todo tipo de traumatismo (Fassin y Rechtman, 2007) que la caracteriza concierne hasta a los sujetos no racializados y no necesariamente procedentes de una condición poscolonial (por ejemplo las víctimas de acontecimientos catastróficos o de guerras que no tienen relación directa con las contradicciones del colonialismo), resulta imposible pensar la *extensión global* del gobierno humanitario sin articularlo a las múltiples dinámicas extractivas y poscoloniales del biocapitalismo contemporáneo a las cuales remite el devenir del neoliberalismo de Mbembe.

En este sentido, para que la condición negra pueda, donde es posible, suscitar intervenciones orientadas a atenuar la violencia a las cuales estos cuerpos de extracción son estructuralmente sometidos, activando mecanismos estatales, supra-estatales o privados de protección y de asistencia, la identidad poscolonial del negro tiene que manifestarse a través de obligaciones de verdad sobre sí mismo que deben inscribirse cada vez más en el registro del sufrimiento social y del traumatismo psíquico. Es decir, mientras que todo dispositivo de ayuda, intervención o indemnización se codifica en términos de atención al sufrimiento social y/o psíquico que problematizan la *buena* “consciencia occidental del Negro”, este último, el Negro, no puede “suceder” sin pasar por la obligación de asumir, de manifestar y de certificar una identidad victimaria activada por un traumatismo que, *por una u otra razón*, lo afectó, lo que se supone que debe suscitar a la vez compasión, piedad, simpatía y, simultáneamente, apelar a un sentimiento “humanitario” de lo que es intolerable y que, de este modo, merece entonces asistencia y solidaridad.

Este régimen victimario de veridicción que se fija sobre los cuerpos a través de los dispositivos biopolíticos de atención al sufrimiento provocado —al menos en este caso en específico— por las contradicciones del capitalismo neoliberal que desplaza toda la multiplicidad de sus operaciones extractivas a escala planetaria, permite así que de estos cuerpos se extraiga también formas de subjetividades preconstruidas en vista de su gobierno “humanitario”. Estar limitado a hacer coincidir su propia identidad con el estatus de la víctima significa reconocer que esta identidad no puede escapar a una especie de “traumatismo constituyente” que se transforma en la condición aletúrgica de posibilidad de una ayuda y de asistencia en situaciones de emergencia y de miseria frecuentemente sin salida. Estar forzado a asumir y manifestar una fragilidad psicológica constituyendo una forma de identidad al interior de este dispositivo aletúrgico de victimización produce, por su parte, mecanismos que clasifican y discriminan entre quién debe/quiere/puede ser salvado o ayudado y quién no (mecanismos que a menudo se articulan y se superponen a otros tipos de discriminaciones sobre una base racializante).

Por su parte, estas obligaciones aletúrgicas de la razón humanitaria vuelven evidentemente más difícil que estos cuerpos de extracción puedan reivindicar otras formas de identidad, sobre todo de identidad *política*, siendo estos dispositivos aletúrgicos con frecuencia atomizantes y operando bajo el modo de la fragmentación: o reducen la identidad que ellos producen a la singularidad de la experiencia individual del traumatismo, o crean pequeñas comunidades cuyo principio de pertenencia que autoriza la toma de palabra sigue siendo la experiencia directa y personalmente vivida o sufrida de tal o cual traumatismo; lo que, en la mayor parte de los casos, impide o limita la posibilidad de alianzas con otras subjetividades procedentes de las mismas contradicciones del capitalismo neoliberal cuya lógica de expansión pasa por este régimen a la vez aletúrgico y extractivo de la razón humanitaria.

Asimismo, como lo remarca Fassin (2010), “la compasión puede paradójicamente demostrar ser un sentimiento que nos permite hacer economía de acciones más exigentes” (p. 230). A esto podemos agregarle que el dispositivo aletúrgico de lo humanitario impide la constitución de sujetos que puedan identificarse a partir de esta reivindicación más exigente; ocultando así, detrás de la manifestación de una identidad victimaria fragilizada por la *extracción* de su traumatismo, las múltiples causas que produjeron este sufrimiento y de las cuales la única visible será la de la simple y abstracta urgencia humanitaria, frente a la que la única respuesta posible sería finalmente la compasión.

5. Si hemos decidido, no obstante, utilizar el concepto foucaltiano de aleturgia para visitar lo que según Mbembe corresponde a dos discursos de la razón negra, es en la

medida en la que la noción de aleturgia articula la manifestación de la verdad en forma de la subjetividad, no solamente en relación con la subjetivación entendida como sujeción, sino también como actitud crítica. Razón por la cual hablar de *aleturgia negra* no remite la problematización de la identidad poscolonial solamente a la “consciencia occidental del Negro”, sino también a la constatación que la experiencia de asignación racial que pasa y es asumida por el intermediario de un cuerpo de extracción permite oponer a este primer texto un contra discurso que rechaza toda postura victimaria y escapa por la misma actitud crítica a todo repliegue identitario.

Considerada desde este punto de vista, la razón negra, tal y como la concibe Mbembe, así como la aleturgia negra (según la inflexión conceptual que proponemos aquí), problematizan el difícil equilibrio entre afirmación y negación en una especie de elemento de resiliencia “positiva”: afirmativa, pero a partir de la negación de *toda* identidad fijada de antemano, lo que, por su lado, no haría otra cosa que reproducir bajo diferentes formas y registros los mismos efectos de sujeción de los dispositivos aletúrgicos de lo humanitario, pues esta identidad prefijada encerraría esta forma de subjetivación en la comunidad *restringida y cerrada* de un traumatismo identitario. La perspectiva crítica a la cual remite el segundo discurso de la razón negra, y a lo que nosotros hemos llamado la aleturgia negra, se esfuerzan, en primer lugar, en apartarse de una matriz identitaria que se basa en dos limitaciones aletúrgicas mayores. Por un lado, el hecho de que sean *solamente* las personas que hayan experimentado “directamente” la experiencia de la condición negra (o que hayan sufrido las consecuencias) quienes puedan *hablar* de esta. Y por el otro lado, correlativamente a esta primera limitación, pero también (y quizá sobretodo) como su condición de posibilidad, existe la constatación según la cual son solamente estas personas que han experimentado directamente la experiencia de la condición negra (o que han sufrido las consecuencias) que pueden *comprenderla*, y que pueden finalmente *compartirla* y ponerla en común.

Dicho de otra manera, el presupuesto de esta matriz identitaria es que la experiencia poscolonial de la condición negra es *completamente intraducible* para aquellos que no la han padecido, lo que encierra a toda comunidad imaginable en los límites restringidos de esta experiencia “directa”, o peor aún, “auténtica”, porque esta produce más un discurso identitario, cuyos beneficios políticos son bastante inciertos, que una realidad efectiva o verificable. Lejos de todo mito de transparencia de esta experiencia y bajo todas las formas en las que puede presentarse, el problema político de la aleturgia negra no se sitúa a nivel de la plena accesibilidad cognitiva o afectiva

de esta experiencia para cualquier otro sujeto político. El desafío remite más bien a la posibilidad de crear efectos de recomposición política y emancipadora *a partir de esta experiencia*, aunque solamente sea traducible de manera parcial. En otros términos, la cuestión es saber cómo poner en común esta experiencia, no para captar la “verdad” de esta y sus formas de manifestación subjetiva, sino para hacerla entrar en un agenciamiento colectivo, o para utilizar otro término deleuziano, en una máquina de guerra transnacional dirigida a oponerse al devenir-negro del mundo a través de la intervención de formas más abiertas y cambiantes de identidades poscoloniales sin que ninguna identidad predeterminada, ya sean las de raza, de clase o género, jueguen un rol dominante (ya sea como elemento indispensable para cualquier traducción, partición, hibridación, o como elemento catalizador necesario para todo proceso posible de contra-subjetivación o crítica).

Estas formas identitarias correspondientes a contradiscursos de la razón negra deben quedar estructuralmente abiertos porque aquellas se modifican a medida que en estas luchas y en función de estas luchas, fabricamos otros saberes, otras estrategias, otros derechos y otras maneras de conducirnos, en donde la difícil y delicada dimensión a alcanzar de un común posible, a la vez sobredetermina y reduce la tensión entre lo individual y lo colectivo. Es en este sentido que indudablemente hay que interpretar lo que Mbembe (2014) designa como la diferencia entre el “negro de superficie” (“la persona de origen africano, el que está marcado para el sol de su color”) y el “negro de fondo” que designa

[...] una categoría subalterna de la humanidad, un tipo de humanidad subalterna, esa parte superflua y casi excesiva de la humanidad, que el capital apenas necesita, y que parece condenada a la zonificación y al desalojo. Este “negro de fondo”, este tipo de humanidad, está haciendo su aparición en la escena mundial en un momento en que [...] el hombre de carne y hueso del pasado está dando paso a un nuevo hombre-flujo, digital, infiltrado de cada parte por cada tipo de órgano sintético y prótesis artificial. El “negro de fondo” es el Otro de esta humanidad de software, una nueva figura de la especie y por lo tanto típica de la nueva era del capitalismo, aquella en la que la auto-reificación es la mejor posibilidad de capitalizarse a sí mismo. (p. 130)

6. No obstante, lo que origina problemas en este pasaje no es tanto el hecho de que en la “la tendencia a la universalización de la condición que antes estaba reservada a los

Negros [...], la producción de “sujetos de raza”⁵ continúa, ciertamente, pero de nuevas maneras” (Mbembe, 2014, p. 130), es decir bajo la modalidad de un “racismo sin raza” (Balibar y Wallerstein, 1988), sino la convicción subyacente según la cual el cuerpo de extracción no sería sino un elemento residual en relación a las nuevas lógicas del biocapitalismo neoliberal:

[En] el mundo de los cerebros humanos y de los cálculos automatizados, de trabajar con instrumentos cada vez más pequeños, cada vez más miniaturizados. En estas condiciones, producir *negros* no consiste exactamente en la fabricación de un vínculo social de sujeción o de un *cuerpo de extracción*, es decir un cuerpo enteramente expuesto a la voluntad de un maestro, y del que se tratará de obtener la máxima rentabilidad [...], la reducción de la persona humana a una cosa, un objeto, una mercancía que se pueda vender, comprar o poseer. (Mbembe, 2014, p. 130)

Como hemos dicho anteriormente, la intuición de Mbembe acerca del cuerpo de extracción se funda sobre una concepción bastante limitada de la extracción, ya que no parece considerar al menos dos aspectos de su racionalidad operacional que están estrictamente anudados el uno con el otro. Primeramente, el advenimiento del “hombre flujo, numérico” no es posible sin una extracción previa de datos biométricos, imágenes, etc., que *solamente* pueden ser almacenados, reelaborados, recodificados y finalmente redistribuidos bajo la forma de flujo de informaciones valorizadas por el biocapitalismo neoliberal actual. En otras palabras, el hombre-flujo puede aparecer solamente si su cuerpo *ya* ha sido capturado para extraer datos o imágenes. Esto nos lleva al segundo aspecto que constituye una especie de condición de posibilidad de la extracción en sí-misma, una acción sin la cual esta no puede tener lugar. De hecho, no hay operación extractiva posible si su sitio inmanente y material de extracción, a saber, el cuerpo, no es previamente *fijado* por dispositivos que en última instancia son *a la vez* de captura y de extracción. Como lo remarcaba anteriormente Foucault, se trata de una fijación que puede *ocurrir* tanto en y por espacios o lugares precisos (pensamos en las isotopías disciplinarias de los cuerpos individuales), como en y por espacios de circulación cuyos límites deben necesaria y cuidadosamente estar fijados⁶. Por consiguiente, sin tomar en cuenta estas estrategias de fijación, así como los

5. Esto no excluye la posibilidad de que haya desaparecido todo el racismo basado en una determinada idea de raza, sino sólo que se ha convertido en un fenómeno minoritario.

6. Hasta la extracción de minerales en las minas no puede tener lugar sin apropiarse de una porción de territorio y fijando sobre este instrumentos de extracción.

dispositivos que las vuelven operacionales, será difícil lograr lo que Mbembe (2014) propone, es decir, pensar adecuadamente un cuerpo “infiltrado por todas partes por todo tipo de órganos sintéticos y prótesis artificiales” (p. 130).

Si consideramos de manera más sofisticada toda la multiplicidad de operaciones que se refieren a la extracción, advertiremos que su matriz poscolonial y normativa de subjetivación (el lado por así decirlo de la sujeción propia a la aleturgia negra) opera no tanto como una “religión animista”, como sugiere Mbembe (2014) refiriéndose al advenimiento del “hombre-flujo, numérico”, sino a través de modalidades que siguen siendo efectivamente de fijación y de extracción. Aún allí donde los hombres parecen estar reunidos como “una parte superflua y casi en exceso, que el capital apenas necesita y que parece condenada a la zonificación y al desalojo” (p. 121), es solamente en virtud de un trabajo de fijación de barreras, de muros, y de otros instrumentos y estrategias de vigilancia, de control y de confinamiento. Porque esto permite así *extraer de estos cuerpos*, a la apariencia inútiles, el valor de su potencial peligro, lo que sigue siendo esencial para el dispositivo de seguridad de la razón negra ya evocados por Mbembe.

Desde una misma perspectiva, apuntar sobre el cuerpo de extracción, tanto como punto de anclaje materialista, así como intercambiador privilegiado capaz de poner en red toda una serie de discursos (conocimientos y saberes), de dispositivos disciplinarios y normativos vinculados a las regulaciones a nivel estatal y supra-estatal (plan institucional y jurídico), y de matrices de asignación normativa de identidad (dispositivos aletúrgicos de lo humanitario) todo eso significa también reconsiderar el lado por así decirlo “crítico” y oposicional de lo que hemos llamado la aleturgia negra. ¿En que consistiría en efecto una tal crítica oposicional? ¿De que se alimentan los actos políticos de emancipación y las formas de contradiscurso y contrasubjetivación que critican tanto a la razón negra y a su devenir-mundo como los dispositivos aletúrgicos que la acompañan?

7. Es dentro de este marco, donde la idea de un cuerpo de extracción nos parece a pesar de todo primordial, que podemos releer la matriz identitaria del contradiscurso de la razón negra de Mbembe como una aleturgia negra. Un pasaje de la *Crítica de la razón negra* (2013), que muestra cómo todo discurso que concierne “la conciencia occidental del negro” es siempre doblado por otro texto o contra discurso, es, al respecto, muy significativo:

[un contradiscurso] que se pretende a la vez gesto de autodeterminación, modalidad de presencia de sí, mirada interior y utopía crítica [...] A través de él, el negro dice de sí mismo que es aquél sobre quien no se tiene poder de influencia; aquél que no se encuentra allí donde se dice que está, y mucho menos allí donde se lo busca; aquél que, por el contrario, se encuentra allí donde no se piensa que está. (pp. 51-52)

Ya hemos observado cómo en la negación de toda identidad fijada *de antemano* se jugaba la posibilidad de alcanzar un equilibrio difícil y siempre provisorio entre afirmación y negación. Pero una lectura más profunda de este pasaje permite constatar que la serie aletúrgica positiva —“la vez gesto de autodeterminación, modalidad de presencia de sí, mirada interior y utopía crítica” (Mbembe, 2013, p. 51)— termina justamente con esta curiosa noción de “utopía crítica”. ¿Por qué una utopía, que en su propia forma conceptual parece de entrada remitir a la crítica, es calificada justamente de “crítica”? Porque, evidentemente, hay utopías que no son otra cosa que lo otro-del-mismo. Dicho de otra manera, detrás de las formas aparentemente *otras*, se repite en el fondo la misma lógica, o para decirlo en nuestros términos, la misma aleturgia, de la cual deseamos deshacernos.

Ahora bien, el carácter crítico y oposicional de la aleturgia negra consiste exactamente en el hecho de que su positividad queda indeterminada y a inventar en cuanto a sus contenidos concretos, pero su forma se determina a través de una negatividad irreductible, sin la cual apenas sería posible de considerar una “auto-determinación”, ni una “presencia de sí-mismo”, o una “mirada interior”. Sin embargo, y aquí reside el punto más delicado, esta negatividad, en apariencia vaga e indeterminada, da por el contrario forma a un régimen aletúrgico donde la manifestación de la verdad sobre sí misma (“A través de este texto, el Negro dice de él mismo...”) se vuelve un instrumento para criticar toda la *multiplicidad de operaciones de fijación y extracción* a las cuales son obligatoriamente sometidos los cuerpos. De lo contrario, a que remitiría toda aleturgia dirigida a manifestarse a sí mismo como “aquel que no se encuentra allí donde se dice que está, y mucho menos allí donde se lo busca; aquel que, por el contrario, se encuentra allí donde no se piensa que está” (Mbembe, 2013, p. 52).

Pero este problema tiene implicaciones aletúrgicas aún más grandes si en la era del devenir-negro del mundo nos preguntamos ¿quién es exactamente este “Negro” que dice de sí mismo...? No exactamente lo que Mbembe llama “el negro de superficie”, sino toda una multiplicidad de sujetos que se vuelven “negros”, cada uno a su manera, cada uno a partir de la manera en la cual su cuerpo es sometido a operaciones de fijación y

de extracción en una escena global, pero fuertemente diferenciada. La aleturgia negra marca entonces un espacio experimental de fabricación de identidades postcoloniales donde, a partir de una multiplicidad de experiencias de la condición negra, no se trata tanto de centrarse en la singularidad (o la “verdad”) de cada una de ellas, sino en las diferentes formas en las que estas experiencias pueden ser políticamente traducidas y compartidas por todas las subjetividades políticas que se oponen a la razón negra y al devenir-negro del mundo.

8. A modo de conclusión podemos afirmar, entonces, que la aleturgia negra, en lugar de insertarse y de funcionar dentro de dispositivos que fijan y capturan los cuerpos para extraer valor (como lo vimos también en el caso de la aleturgia negra de lo humanitario), se vuelve al contrario un foco crítico de traducción, de solidaridad y de politización acelerada capaz de componer fuerzas diversas y subjetividades heteróclitas y de dar así lugar a alianzas políticas transnacionales y mucho más amplias que aquellas indexadas sobre el “Negro de superficie”. Desde esta perspectiva, en lugar de limitarse a la aleturgia negra que manifiesta bajo la forma de la identidad (o de la demanda de reterritorialización identitaria) el régimen de verdad de la razón negra y de sus dispositivos, se trata de hacer de esta aleturgia el espacio postcolonial y post-racial de experimentación de otras formas de subjetivación. Es a partir de la materialidad de las prácticas que someten a los cuerpos, bajo formas y modalidades variadas a escala planetaria, en regímenes múltiples de extracción, que sería políticamente más fecundo experimentar la extracción de una voluntad común de no ser más el objeto de esta sujeción, es decir, de extraer una matriz contraidentitaria (aleturgia negra en sentido crítico) indexada a una “voluntad de no ser gobernado” así, o de esta manera (razón negra) (Foucault, 2015).

Por otra parte, lo que forma parte del mismo gesto crítico de esta aleturgia negra, si como vimos toda operación de extracción presupone dispositivos de fijación de cuerpos en el espacio, ya sea abierto o cerrado (fijando límites a su movimiento y a su circulación), entonces el espacio crítico de la aleturgia negra deberá asociar toda operación de contra-extracción a una voluntad común de deshacer las particiones espaciales y los límites de la circulación impuestos por los dispositivos de la razón negra (cuya genealogía es la de la Trata atlántica, la de la plantación, la del Apartheid). Esto significa vincular la aleturgia negra en sentido crítico a una resemantización del espacio global y de sus fronteras y a las contra-disposiciones (*contre-aménagements*) cuyo testimonio más importante es actualmente proporcionado por el activismo de toda una pluralidad de sujetos políticos (militantes, asociaciones, ONG). Estos están comprometidos

no tanto (o no solamente) en el rescate de vidas “humanas”, o en su inscripción en los dispositivos de emergencia o de crisis humanitaria, sino en la crítica de toda estrategia discursiva o gubernamental dirigida a justificar la necesidad de fijar fronteras y barreras para contener inmigrantes “económicos” (los cuales se postula que no tienen los mismos derechos de solicitantes de asilo, ejemplo emblemático de las discriminaciones reintroducidas por los dispositivos aletúrgicos de lo humanitario). O peor, abandonar a estos inmigrantes a la muerte y limitar su esperanza de supervivencia a través de horribles y mortíferos itinerarios por el desierto o el mar, o lo que es incluso peor, rechazarlos hacia los vergonzosos dispositivos necropolíticos de los campos y de las torturas que pretendemos no ver ni asumir porque operan por fuera de las fronteras que Occidente y la razón negra contribuyen a crear y a proteger.

Por consiguiente, nos parece que la crítica del devenir-negro del neoliberalismo, con sus matrices poscoloniales y normativas de asignación identitaria, no puede prescindir de esta articulación fundamental entre la aleturgia negra (en los dos sentidos en los que hablamos) y de los cuerpos de extracción. La fuerza crítica y el espacio de experimentación política de la primera no puede desplegarse sino a partir del anclaje materialista en todos los cuerpos de extracción dispersados todavía en la actualidad sobre el planeta.

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MATTERS OF ARCHIVES AND MEMORIES: POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES IN MASS CULTURAL PRODUCTS¹

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Abstract

Starting from a proposal of Cultural Studies, this paper analyzes some products of cultural industry, more specifically: the novel *Gould's Book of Fish*, by Richard Flanagan (2003) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, by Joan Lindsay, first published in 1967, both in its version as a novel and in the two subsequent adaptations, first as a movie (Weir, 1975) and lately as a TV series of the same name (2018), available on streaming on the Amazon platform. We also focus on the BBC recent short series named *Noughts + Crosses* (2020), in which we observe the impossibility of representing “reverse racism”. These cultural products are observed through the prism of postcolonial theories. The paper identifies some issues related to the historical narrative produced through colonial archives and the silencing of other voices. It observes how the phenomenon of hybridization and cultural appropriation develops as a tool suitable for the construction of collective national identities in a postcolonial era of globalization.

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Keywords

Colonial Archives, Collective Identities, Mass-Culture products, Cultural Studies, Postcoloniality: Racism.

Resumen

A partir de una propuesta de Estudios Culturales, este artículo analiza algunos productos de la industria cultural, más específicamente: la novela *El libro del pescado de Gould*, de Richard Flannagan (2003) y *Picnic en Hanging Rock*, de Joan Lindsay, publicado por la primera vez en 1967, ambos en su versión como novela y en las dos adaptaciones posteriores, primero como una película (Weir, 1975) y últimamente como una serie de televisión del mismo nombre (2018), disponible en *streaming* en la plataforma Amazon. También nos centramos en la reciente serie corta de la BBC denominada *Noughts + Crosses* (2020), en la que observamos la imposibilidad de representar el “racismo inverso”. Estos productos culturales se observan a través del prisma de las teorías poscoloniales. El artículo identifica algunos temas relacionados con la narrativa histórica producida a través de los archivos coloniales y el silenciamiento de otras voces. Observa cómo el fenómeno de hibridación y apropiación cultural se desarrolla como una herramienta adecuada para la construcción de identidades nacionales colectivas en una era poscolonial de globalización.

Palabras clave

Archivos Coloniales, Identidades colectivas, Productos de cultura de masas, Estudios Culturales, Postcolonialidad: Racismo.

Introduction

The problem of narrating memories and of identity in a multicultural panorama, the recognition of their legitimacy or the lack of it are themes of postcolonial and decolonial discourse. The theoretical path we propose here, in order to analyze the chosen cultural products (literary and audiovisual) and their links with identity representations, is built on the basis of the reflections developed by thinkers such as Stuart Hall (2006, 2011), Homi K. Bahba (2007), Grada Kilomba (2019) and Nestor Canclini (1997), among others.

Analyzing cultural products such as TV series or books is particularly interesting when we observe the forms of impact of cultural and political reflections developed by the academic world when they come into contact with globalized audiences, contesting some principles of universality of Eurocentric origin. Novels and TV series can be observed by identifying, as the main nucleus, the production of discourses that become institutional and which originated in the formation of alternative identities to those, binary based, of the dialectic of center-periphery, in a scheme discussed, already in the 70s, by Fernando Novais (1986).

The issue we identify in these products is that of the possibility of legitimate narratives as alternatives to those produced by the tradition of European origin, in which any alterity to the order imposed by the formation of institutional archives created by colonization would not respond to the idea of truth, but would be relegated to the space of the invention. We want to discuss the principle of legitimate and illegitimate knowledge based on the status of discursive productions which, as fiction, are considered as “secondary” social memories, because principles still exist stating that historical constructions only recognize the validity of the speeches produced from the creation of documentaries sources, as they have long been articulated starting from the European and colonial archives, specially from the nineteenth century.

First, we will analyze two cultural products related to Australian space, *William Gould's book of fish* (Flannagan, 2003) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Lindsay, 2017), from which, after the publication in 1967, both a movie, directed by Peter Weir (1975) and a TV series (2018) were taken. These are productions of Australian origin that clearly question the records of postcolonial identities, and we will approach them from the debates on the idea of “total archives” (Cook, 1998; Stoler, 2009). Later, we will focus on a short BBC series, *Noughts + Crosses* (2020), where we found some issues that forced us to discuss how images forges identities.

These products are related to the sphere of mass culture production and, at the same time in which they are not well seen by the academic world, they enter, in a very efficient way, in the symbolic market of late Capitalism, as analyzed by Beatriz Sarlo (2007).

The history proposed by these mass products imposes the irruption of the present, transforming them in operations that can be decoded only to the extent that they are structured as fiction narratives. Thus, they are able to move far beyond the disciplinary field of history, reaching the public sphere of political communication.

Our proposal wants to discuss these mass productions, suggesting a revision of the methodological rules of a still Eurocentric history, which claims to supervise the ways of reconstitution of the past, through an epistemological ideal that places itself as a “guarantor” of a historical production of quality, thus corresponding to the construction of authority. On the other hand, the story narrated by the products of wide circulation, sensitive to the strategies in which the present “captures” the past, reveals itself to be open to a “common sense” capable of orienting audiences in different ways, legitimating some postcolonial perspectives, still minor in the academic world.

New archives facing multiculturalism and decolonisation

In a similar way to museums and other traditional institutions of the European nation states, the archives have in the last decades undergone significant changes towards higher accessibility and transparency, facilitated mainly through the advances of the digital technologies. These changes have resulted in new challenges which offer unforeseen possibilities for democratization, both in terms of access and knowledge production by new, often marginalized, voices. The decolonisation of archives has a broader meaning beyond interrogating the colonial legacy and existing, or even emerging, neo-colonial power relations (Stoler, 2009). Therefore, what we should discuss is how to undo, or at least to avoid, the perpetuation of neo-colonial epistemologies, fighting for the recognition of certain materials as relevant, despite continuous dismissals by the authorities (Ernst, 2016). One of the levels we must consider when we address decolonised memory dwells in acknowledging that the seemingly neutral Western criteria and classifications are in fact tools for maintaining the role of an archive as an imperial project of domination and affirmation, while the wide spread of digitalized documents may offer the illusion of a new “democratization” of knowledge. However, the apparent abundance of available material online often results in

an overload that, instead of mining the established Western narratives, merely supplement and thus confirm their primacy.

The issue, previously appointed, of legitimate memories and of their recognition (or their lack of legitimacy) is the main theme of *Gould's Fish Book* (2003), written by the Australian author Richard Flanagan. Within a journey through the paths of fiction and its connections with the representations of information and its universe of documents, the analysis of this novel is of particular interest, placing it on a literary axis strongly marked by discussions of Cultural Studies as contestants of the universality of Eurocentric origin. The novel does this by identifying, as its main nucleus, the production of institutional memory originated by archives as the only legitimate source of history. The theme that arises throughout the narrative is the impossibility of an alternative history to that allowed by the institutions or, better: a different history is possible, but it can only be considered as a fictional narrative. Any alterity to the order imposed by an institutional archive created by the colonizers has no value. What is discussed in this book is the core of legitimate and illegitimate knowledge based on the status of literature, which, as fiction, tends to be considered as a less socially useful memory, more like a *divertissement*.

What this means is already presented in the first pages of the novel. The first "self" in the narrative belongs to Sid Hammett, a forger who lives on expedients, deceiving tourists with fake objects that satisfy their expectations in relation to their ideas about Tasmania, seen by them as a distant and exotic place: "In the end, what tourists were buying was history, the only kind of story they were interested in buying - an American story, happy and exciting, whose theme was 'we found them alive and brought them back home'" (Flanagan, 2003, p. 14). "They wanted stories in which they were already imprisoned [...]. They wanted us to say 'whalers', so that they could reply 'Moby Dick' and evoke images of the well-known miniseries" (p. 16). A memory forger, therefore.

One day, during an expedition in search of old objects to be transformed into "ancient ones", Sid sees some loose threads "from a somewhat worn bookbinding, with the spine partly detached" (Flanagan, 2003, p. 19). It is the encounter with an unusual book, which, says Sid himself, should not have fallen into the hands of the little rascal he was. The book presents itself to the eyes as "a terrible mess, with some reports written in ink, brought up over other texts in pencil, and sometimes the other way around" (p. 21). It is an account written by a prisoner from the penal colony of Sarah Island, named William Buelow Gould, in charge, since 1828, of making the drawings of all the fish that were caught for scientific purposes. But "if the charge of painting fish was an obligation,

writing the text [...] was not. Prisoners were forbidden to write diaries, and therefore this activity was dangerous.” (p. 22). The problem with this account is that, despite being recognized as “old” by the historians, bibliophiles and editors Sid shows it to, “it harmonized with the known facts to a certain extent, as soon afterwards it came into conflict with them” (p. 24).

In short, the book cannot be recognized as a historical document:

When I managed to convince the museum experts to subject the parchment and the inks to certain tests, to apply carbon dating and even tomography to the entire book, page by page, they recognized that all materials and techniques looked authentic and compatible with the period. However, the text of the report was so far-fetched that, instead of providing me with a document attesting that the book was an authentic work of great historical interest, the museum experts praised the quality of my forgery and wished me much success in my activities focused on tourism. (Flanagan, 2003, p. 24)

Sid decides, then, to turn to an eminent specialist in the colonial period, trusting academic authority, but the professor “initiated a passionate reasoning accuse” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 25), during which he “demonstrates” how history is made based on archival records. At first glance, he says, the penal colony described in the book seemed to be the same that historically existed on the island of Sarah, where the worst criminals were taken. However,

If on one hand it is a historical fact that between 1820 and 1832 Sarah Island was the most feared colony in the entire British Empire, on the other hand there is practically nothing in the Book of Fishes that is corroborated by what is known about that insular hell. There are few names contained in this curiosity that appear in the official documents of the time, and those few appear in documents with identities and life histories that have nothing to do with what is reported in this... this despicable *pastiche*. And, if we take the time to examine the historical [...] documentation, we learn that Sarah Island never suffered under the heel of a tyrannical ruler, nor did it, for some time, become such an important and independent commercial port that it became an autonomous nation, nor was it destroyed by an apocalyptic fire such as reported by this catastrophic chronicle which is the Book of Fishes. (Flanagan, 2003, pp. 27-28)

The final suggestion Sid receives is to publish it as a novel, since literary fraud is, for the eminent university professor, “the only area of letters... in which Australia can be proud of a certain global eminence” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 28). Despite all the chemical, physical and biological (in a word: scientific) evidence pointing to the originality of the book, its inconsistency with the archival memory that becomes historical puts it at a lower level twice: the first, because it can only be considered a literary piece and the second because it originates from a part of the world that, being a colony, can only be able to imitate an original, something that comes from the “center”, from Europe, from the British colonizer, the only producer of the legitimate memories of that time.

Obviously dissatisfied, Sid searches for information in the public archive of Tasmania and finds a historic William Gould who was effectively arrested, as a swindler, in the penal colony and in charge of drawing the fish. He also finds a copy of the book at the Allport library but, in this book, there are no words: there are only the drawings of fishes. This is a legitimate copy, the one found in the library, and it is the mirror of the book Sid possess: “they seemed to mirror each other so precisely, they were simultaneously the same book and two very different books [...]. One of the books spoke with the authority of words; the other, with the authority of silence [...].” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 30-31).

Unfortunately, Sid says that (as we already know, he is also a con man) he ended up losing the book. The fascination, however, had been so great and its reading so attentive that he decided to rewrite it and deliver it for publication as a novel. This long initial part, more than a traditional prologue within literature, that of a found manuscript, already places several stimuli for reflection on the documentary validity of history and literature, especially in a post-colonial context such as Australia. From that moment on, we are thrown into a surreal world, that of the penal colony, made up of all the elements summarized by the remarkable historian, in an atmosphere of cruelty, ambition and unbridled desire of the colonizers. The self of the narrative changes, now the first person to speak is William Gould, the crook, transposed into a fictional narrative by Sid Hammett, also a crook.

Let us now discover another “key” character in the story, Mr. Jorgen Jorgensen, a clerk at the penal colony, who is described by William Gould / Sid Hammett as follows:

Even by the horrendous patterns of that horrendous island Jorgen Jorgensen —despite all his affectation— was a veritable ugly pelican, a long man, full of sharp angles, a body that looked like a hanger trying to remember the coat he had slipped many years before. (Flanagan, 2003, p. 150)

Jorgensen takes care of writing reports and rendering accounts of the administration of the penal colony. In short, he is nothing more than the archivist of the island, obedient to the commander to the point of creating the fantastic documentation on the administrative and prison conditions that the latter asks him to report. But this evidence, William Gould will reveal to us almost at the end of the book. For insubordination, our con “author” is confined in a cell where, during high tide, he can only stand and head upwards so as not to drown. It is in that cell that he writes his *Book of Fishes* while he arms his escape, digging a path through the low ceiling. Through this exit, he reaches a place where there are only books:

There were books everywhere, and everywhere I looked, my eyes were met with more books, and they were all neatly stacked and arranged on rough, heavy shelves of dark hardwood, on large shelves that rose from the floor to ceiling, all radiating, like the spokes of a wheel, from the center, where there was a large, circular table, from which I had emerged [...]. (Flanagan, 2003, p. 275)

An interesting form, which refers to the *Panoptikon* model, applied to prison spaces, rather than to an archive, which is exactly the place where the protagonist entered. Yes, because that is the kingdom of Jorgensen, as we will soon discover. And if an archive is, unfortunately, frequently still defined as the mirror of the institution that produces it, an archive of this nature reproduces the model of control and surveillance that allows, from a center, to observe all rays, in effect, the model studied by Foucault (2005). Here, the archivist is watching, and his documents are under his eye without being able to hide from him. It is not a cozy archive, but “a labyrinth of gray and blue mobile shadows, ugly and sinister” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 276). On the table there is a document, which William takes out to read. Even the letters “extended in monstrous connections [...], as if all the words were chained together, subdued” (p. 276), a description that reinforces our idea that this is a place that, through its documents, “mirrors” the penal institution. But what William reads baffles him: “it was supposed to be a list of the activities of the forced in the past six months, but almost every detail was wrong” (p. 276).

Gould understands that he is in the archive, where all the records of the island can be found, that this is the table where Jorgensen sits “to indulge in the work of the only account of our strange world that would last more than the memory of each one of us” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 276). These are, then, those documents on the basis of which history is built, that history that made the *Book of Fish*, at the beginning of the novel,

a fraud, a literary piece, something that contrasts with the institutional account. We thus have a new swindler, who can never be considered such, as a legitimate producer of memory, but who, in the eyes of the swindler Gould and in the words of swindler Sid, only writes “things so unexplainable, of shocking boldness, and, yet at the same time so convincing in the lucidity of their madness” (p. 277). Everything Gould reported in his *Book of Fish* has no trace in the archive, despite his searches that go on for seven nights:

What I discovered between the covers was not a chronicle of the penal colony I knew, the new nation that the commander called New Venice. I flipped through the memos, the copiers, the forced labor contracts, looking for the records, the drawings, the floor plans of the wonderful Great Hall of Majong. Anything. For seven nights, I combed through the Intendency records, trying to find bills, invoices, receipts that would prove that the commander had bought the South American locomotives; documents attesting the sale of Transylvanian forests, or the even bolder operation by which the commander had sold the Australian continent and acquired the Moluccas Jewels, medicines from China, sea cucumbers, Javanese furniture and shipments of Siamese girls. Anything. For seven nights, I examined diaries and personal letters, looking for the smallest details that would indicate, albeit in a more indirect way, the commander’s nightmares about a past that never passed, of naked Arab merchants and Japanese immortal pirates and French rationalists. (p. 278)

In Gould’s eyes, everything in the archive reveals the need to lie to the central government, painting the penal colony as it was expected to be and not as it really was, and clearly the archivist had been chosen to alter all documents to reflect not the institution as it was, but expectations about it. And isn’t this, one of the evils of the archive, that positive view of the document that tells the truth, so criticized throughout the 20th century? Is not history as offered by the colonizers, who have long denied genocide and the destruction of original cultures, in the name of civilization, progress and order? The protagonist says:

I tried to imagine the old Dane at first feeling compelled to reinvent all the barbarism and horror of our colony as order and progress, material, moral and spiritual, recording everything, in the uncertain light of the whale oil lamp, with its elegant

italics in the colony's official documents. [...] If, under the commander's yoke, vigil, dream and nightmare formed a single whole, in the records of the old Dane they were completely separate and opposite things. Nightmares were forbidden, and no collusion between life and dream was allowed. It was a tremendous cheat [...]. (Flanagan, 2003, p. 281)

It is clear, then, that the penal colony is a metaphor for telling the world subjected by the colonizers and the archive, as a precious source of "facts" and "data", is the place of the lies of memory, which becomes a false history not yet rejected. After all, "If freedom [...] exists only in the space of memory, then [...] everyone was condemned to an eternity of incarceration" (Flanagan, 2003, p. 285). And then, William Gould's conclusion is that the world no longer existed to become a book. Now a book existed whose obscene ambition is to become the world. The outcome is inevitable: the destruction of the archive. Surprised by the archivist who, as the document room is "monochromatic and cold", the two begin to fight and Jorgensen dies, buried by the shelves and the records that fall on him. But, as we already know from the beginning of the book, it is the official data, it is the archive that, in the dimension of memory, silence the other voices, those of the dominated, who, like prisoners of the penal colony, forbidden to write diaries, had his own silenced memories, reduced to literature as an improbable tale.

Revisiting fiction in Cultural Industry: Picnic at Hanging Rock

Collective identity refers to the sense of oneself as a member of a social group or collectivity. It is a sense of belonging, a sense of being part, that makes sense of the world and one's place within it. What is the relevance of communication media to the construction of this identity? The media provide some of the important symbolic materials for the construction of identity, both at the individual and the collective level: beliefs, assumptions, and patterns of behavior. The construction of identity can never start anew; it always builds on a pre-existing set of symbolic materials which form the foundation of identity.

Evidence for the influential role that the medias play in societies is overwhelming. Perhaps most significant of all is the fact that people attach central importance to the media as critical contributors to the way in which they think and live their lives. In this way, it is very important to remember that collective identity is collective consensus, a

symbolic project, and shared interests, and that the media in general and the Internet in particular are powerful tools to actively build it.

The path we'd like to follow concerns the way of using a fictional product, originally a novel, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, by Joan Lindsay, first published in 1967. In 1975 the Australian director Peter Weir adapted the novel for the homonymous movie and, in 2018, the streaming platform by Amazon produces a series also named after the novel.

Picnic at Hanging Rock has become one of the most known Australian fictional products since the global success of the book, and the recent series allows to observe how it designs postcolonial reflections.

The original story is known. On Valentine's day in 1900, the young students of the Appleyard college, directed by the widow Appleyard, go, accompanied by two teachers, to Mount Diogenes, also known as Hanging Rock, for a festive picnic. During the afternoon, four of the young women, Miranda, Irma, Marion and Edith, leave the group to explore the surroundings. In the meantime, the rest of the group, exhausted by the heat and food, falls asleep.

At noon, all the clocks stopped. After some time, the group is awakened by the cries of Edith who returns in desperation. Not only did the other three girls disappeared, but also one of the teachers, Miss McCraw, joined them. Only after more than a week Irma will be found, while there will be no more news of the other two missing girls and the teacher. Originally, the book was published with a suspended ending, but a few years later the author published a closure in which the widow Appleyard reaches Hanging Rock and commits suicide by jumping off a cliff. Peter Weir's film substantially follows the plot of the book. In the original story there are no elements that allow to characterize the ethnicity or race of the characters, which we tend to suppose white, with the exception of a single reference to an "abo tracker" during searches for missing girls. We suppose them white because they are part of a college established for the "traditional" education of young people according to an English model. Peter Weir's film reinforces this image: the widow Appleyard is a middle-aged lady, the young women of the college are all white, from good families, with the exception of Sarah Waybourne, an orphan who studies at the college thanks to a rich tutor. The college servants are also represented as belonging to the world of English colonization. The only, quick exception is the fleeting appearance of the "abo tracker", during the searches, to which both Lindsay and Weir don't give much importance, but whose presence shows the fidelity of the movie script to the book.

Peter Weir's movie begins with the adaptation of Poe's poem *A dream in a dream*, published in 1849: "What we see and what we seem are but a dream. A dream within a dream"², a young voice recites. This quote reminds us that the author of the book, the Australian artist and writer Joan Lindsay, claimed to have written the book directly inspired by dreams she dreamt.

But, as we shall see, this idea of the dream will acquire a lot more of importance, when the story is re-adapted for the tv series, in 2018.

As the movie unravels, we can see that the adaptation is strongly based on the original characters: Ms. Appleyard is a middle-aged English widow; all the students are white young ladies; the servants are white, and the story is quite faithful to the novel. Apparently, there are no big changes in the expectation created by the novel but, of course, the visual effect must be considered as an element that help to build sense.

Nevertheless, the movie is interesting to consider because it allows to observe the changes that occurred in the audiovisual representation of history in its production as a TV series, which took place in 2018. Of course, the story clearly follows the original novel, so we are now going to observe what happens between the movie production in the seventies and the much more recent tv series.

First of all, let's take a look to the characters that play a central role in our analysis:

1. Ms. Appleyard. In Weir's movie, she is an English widow, owning a school in which "good manners" are taught. In the series, Ms. Appleyard is a swindler. Not even the name belongs to her, she took it from a soap box. She fled away from her evildoer fellows from England to Australia and she doesn't really know "good manners". She appears, during the first scenes, pretending to be a wealthy widow, and one of her first assertion is that "People always believe their own eyes. Dress like a tart you're a tart. Dress like a widow...". She also thinks that it is a new beginning, there in what she sees as "the end of the world". So, in her mind, it's a "goodbye, Hester, hello, Ms. Appleyard". During the six episodes, flashbacks will reveal her past at the orphanage, how she met her fellows and how she escaped. We will also know that she is far from refined (one of the girls comment that she doesn't even know the right place to put the cutlery on the table). At the end, she will kill herself, as the original novel character does.

2. "All that we see or seem/Is but a dream within a dream", recites the original poem by Poe.

2. Miranda Reid. Both in the book and the movie, she appears to be the leading girl of the lost group, but we actually don't know who she is or where she comes from. In the TV series, she's the eldest daughter (and the only female of five) of a family who owns a factory in North Queensland. She is portrayed as quite a rebel, used to ride horses and climb trees. Her family wants her to get manners in order to find her a husband. She faces up Ms. Appleyard several times.
3. Irma Leopold. As for the other characters, Lindsay and Weir don't tell us about her background, we only know she's from a very rich family. In the series, we learn her mother is from the Rotschild family and left her father. After ten days lost, she is found in a cave at Hanging Rock. After recovering, she will leave the boarding school, and the other girls violently attack her. In the series, it looks like she established strong boundaries with Miranda, but we will discover that she actually hated her.
4. Marion Quade. She's one of the lost girls. In Weir's movie she is portrayed, as the others, as a white girl, but the series innovates, presenting her as the result of her father's affair with an aboriginal woman. So, she is race-mixed, and she has been sent to the college because she is not only an illegitimate child, but also socially unacceptable because of her dark skin. She falls in love with Ms. McCraw, the math teacher who also disappears.
5. Greta McCraw. She's the math teacher, portrayed in the novel and the movie as a middle-aged woman interested only in her books, stiff in her posture and mind. In the TV series, she's very friendly with the girls and she will accept an intimate relation with Marion. She went to Australia from Scotland, to run away from the rigid rules of a society where lesbians can't be accepted.
6. Mademoiselle Diane de Poitiers, the French teacher. In the book and in the movie, she plays an important role, while Ms. Appleyard is somehow less relevant during the whole action. In the TV series, though still occupying a relevant place, she presents less strength, letting Ms. Appleyard to stand out more.
7. Michael Fitzhubert. The young nephew of a retired colonel, he plays an important role. In the book and the movie, he is the last one who sees the girl while they are climbing Hanging Rock. He is the one who decides to go back, after ten days from their disappearance, eventually finding Irma Leopold. In the TV series we discover he was sent to Australia after some kind of scandal

involving him and another boy at Oxford. He establishes a strong homo-affective relation with Albert, Fitzhubert groom, who is an Australian orphan: no past, for him, who consider himself completely “Australian”.

Some of the original lines are played by different characters in the TV series, but, basically, they are maintained. There are also some small repeated details from the book that surface in the movie and the series such as: when the girls leave the school for the picnic, Ms. Appleyard states that they will keep their gloves on until they pass through the small city on the way to Mount Diogenes. Then, they are allowed to take them off; after the picnic, when everybody is dozing, all the watches stop at midday. But many other can be found.

Let's now focus on what, essentially, changes, not in the script, but in the way it becomes an image of the collective identity for insiders and for outsiders, and in doing so, it contributes to the construction of some sort of Australian depiction of identity.

Benedict Anderson (1983) writes about the nation as a formalized, relatively stable, homogenizing social space that citizens encounter every moment of their everyday lives, but also as an imagined community, a cultural space that they share in common. Cultural identity gives people a shared sense of difference that is reinforced through the routines and rituals of everyday life,

Collective identity is much more than a collection of individuals who share history and space and speak the same language. Collective identities are complex and distinctive cultural narratives, mythical stories that people tell themselves. So, now, we will try to observe how the series builds some aspects of the “new” postcolonial Australian collective identity.

As we previously said, Lindsay stated she wrote her novel based on a series of dreams, while the movie begins with Poe's poems on dreams.

We have to remind, here, that in Aboriginal culture the *Dreaming* plays a basic role as metaphysical expression of primordial truths that trace the birth of the world and man's place in it. What to the early European settlers in Australia was little more than a landscape, was for the Aborigines a complex spiritual edifice. They were not living in a lonely and desolate place, but in an environment conducive to well-being. We have to look at how the landscape transcends its “pristine” state to become an example of what may be termed as cultural or sacred topography. The aboriginal belief is that, before the *Dreaming*, the landscape was represented by an unending, featureless plain, conforming to an idea of formless void. It was only with the *Dreaming*, that the landscape takes on

a truly significance and, when the *Dreaming* ended, the so-called Sky Heroes left their personalized signature in the way of topographic landmarks, contour variations, trees, animals... as a matter of facts, all manifestations of life on earth. The *Dreaming* was a primordial event that shaped what we can recognize as a cultural landscape. Aborigines regarded their land as a symbolic landscape that became an important correspondent in the dialogue between man and earth.

In order to find their own Dream, aborigines undertake the so called “Dream Journey”, a practice that gave birth to the world *walkabout*. In Australian English, for the Cambridge Dictionary, the definition of *walkabout* is “a long journey by an Australian Aboriginal, especially on foot, for cultural reasons”³, in order to live in the traditional manner. These preliminary observations are essential to understand the cultural shift from the western dream, related to the book and the movie, to a “national” one, operated by the TV series.

We want to alert that we are not saying the series allows subaltern voices to speak out (Spivak, 2010), nor that there is a true recognition of the aboriginal genocide, or that their culture is now considered as “mainstream”. It is more a matter of cultural appropriation, through the hybridization of the western dream, stated by Lindsay and by Poe, and the search for a national discourse that is distinctive from the colonial one.

After the young girls cross the small town, they take off their gloves. They are dressed up in Victorian outfits, certainly not very comfortable in the Australian heath. They clearly show this discomfort, fanning themselves. After the picnic, the heath forces them to doze, and their watches stop. Time stops.

In the Aboriginal culture, the *Dreaming* is timeless, because the primordial events took place both in the far distant past and are continuing to occur even when someone is making his/her Dream Journey in the present. The encounter with the country, with the metaphysical landscape, which in this case is Mount Diogenes, the Hanging Rock, as the dream travelers roam across it, is an encounter with spiritual genesis, both personal and collective.

In the second episode of the series, during the searches for the girls, Albert, the groom, says that Hanging Rock was “used [...] for initiation of boys to men, that sort of thing”. And when sunset approaches, the policeman leading the searches says that “black men won’t stay after dark”, because they believe the Rock has a powerful spiritual presence: it’s hunted. These clues, along with the ancient origin of the mountain, lead to

3. Taken from Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/walkabout9>

the idea that the Rock is a spiritual “hot place”, therefore a place where a Dream Journey can take place. It is, as the watches stops, a timeless spot.

After lunch, almost everyone falls asleep. The four girls start their journey. After a while, climbing through the rocks and cliffs, they rest and sleep. Then, they go on, while they free themselves from their shoes, stocks and, finally, dresses. One of them, Edith, wakes up when the others three have already left, and goes back to join the group, screaming. She will give her version, a version that we will see as it changes, every time the scene of the journey up the Rock is repeated: it's like it's almost the same and never the same. When Irma is rescued, after ten days, she will have almost no memories of what happened, like when we wake up and the dream we were dreaming fades away. Many scenes are taken as if they were somehow unreal, with strong theatrical effects. For instance, when Edith tells the other girls what happened, the light completely changes, reaching a real dramatic effect and, as in a dream, we see the nails of the girls scratching a blackboard. Or when young Michael Fitzhubert sees the four girls walking: first he sees them approaching, but in the next scene, they simply disappear. Many other scenes put the viewers as if they were witnessing a timeless dream, where everything starts to happens at the same time. One good example of this is, in the final episode, when Ms. Appleyard starts climbing the Hanging Rock. We can simultaneously see Miranda, Irma and Marion walking and undressing, and we get the impression that Ms. Appleyard will reach them, because she is following the right path. The girls can actually hear her footsteps. But, when she arrives at the right place, nobody's there. They have vanished in another time, but they are still there. The past and the present of the *Dreaming* are staged. But while the fate of the girls may be of a real new beginning, the fate of Ms. Appleyard is a real end. As we said, in the first episode she says: “A new beginning”. But this new life is impossible, to the extent that she “imitates”, she “fakes” the old English life, teaching the girls how to behave as if they were English. So, she can't really start again, because she wants to reproduce something that doesn't belong to Australia.

Does representing a black racist society teach us something or is racism an asymmetrical representation? The *Noughts + Crosses* example

Until now, we discussed two post-colonialist cultural production markedly designed by white people.

However, the reflections of diasporic intellectuals become the privileged tool to understand how mass cultural products, which circulate globally (such as novels and television series proposed in this paper), made in societies with a wide colonial history, become bearers of new visions to deconstruct or, at least, to allow even countries like Italy to shed light on their structural racism.

According to Kilomba (2019), the way racism manifests itself in daily life is always through the particular. And the compilation of several episodes reveals not only the complexity of how racism is experienced, but also its uninterrupted presence in the lives of black people. We understand that if it is possible to analyze manifestations of racism through episodes, it is also possible to analyze actions of resistance. This form of analysis, according to Kilomba, also allows writing in a format similar to that of short stories, in line with his interest in transgressing the traditional academic format. Without using the term *episode*, African-American writer Jane Sharpe, when dealing with the lost stories about black slavery and the need to tell them, says that it can only be done through fragments. In this action, she teams up with Toni Morrison, who describes her historical novels as a type of literary archeology, to compose a world that exists only as a set of fragments (Sharpe, 2003, p. XI).

The term *fragment*, proposed by Kilomba, is also used by Ecléa Bosi, who states that memory is not a repository of “memories” from which to draw, but it is the constant work of organizing its fragments: “Full perception of the past is impossible. But memory allows the relation of the present body to the past in fragments, at the same time that it interferes with what is present” (Bosi, 1994, p. 46). Considering that collective memory, as studied by Holbwac (2013), concerns shared individual memories, as well as the mosaic composed of the fragments that are the memories of each individual, it seems to us methodologically adequate to operate the analysis of literary and audiovisual texts as fragments / episodes. We propose to interpret these fragments in the light of the theories of memory and diasporic Cultural Studies, to the extent that these texts become tools for the production and circulation of information and knowledge, research techniques and individual and collective technology to resist racism.

We do not believe that our analysis of an English product like *Noughts + Crosses* (BBC, 2020) can be “objective”, and the subjectivity that crosses it does not try to deny itself to the exposure of its theoretical frontiers and, as for all frontiers, of its limits and lacks. In a research that aims to discuss postcolonial themes starting from the multicultural textuality of the chosen fragments, we chose to use the voices of women and men who define “places of speech” that do not belong to us, and this forces us to discuss what

is the place of our speeches, inevitably rooted in the gender / race / class to which we belong (Ribeiro, 2017).

We cannot culturally appropriate the voices of men and women who belong to an “otherness” in which, as we will see, color and/or origin are what establishes, *a priori*, the otherness itself, the one who is other than me and which, as Mbembe (2001) clearly explains, is transformed into subordination:

We should first remind ourselves that, as a general rule, the experience of the Other, or the *problem of the “I” of others and of human beings we perceive as foreign to us*, has almost always posed virtually insurmountable difficulties to the Western philosophical and political tradition. Whether dealing with Africa or with other non-European worlds, this tradition long denied the existence of any “self” but its own. (p. 2)

With these premises, we would like to try to think on a contemporary issue involving the complaint of structural racism, and on the concept of *reverse racism* as linked to the idea that there is, on the part of the black world, a phenomenon of racism against white people. Basically, a counterattack of structural racism is “formed” in the same way that a counterattack is elaborated in an attempt to dismantle the patriarchal model: in this case, the defenses of a family ideal —the heterosexual one— are put on stage, so that special days are set up for “family” and the requests for rights of other family configurations are hindered. All in the name of defending something based on the false premise that someone wants to “destroy” the heterosexual family, taken as “traditional”. It is in the same direction that we discuss “reverse racism”, that is, the claim that racial struggles for rights are a form of segregation towards whites.

To try to understand how the British series *Noughts + Crosses* stages racism, let’s consider, schematically, the concept of race.

The concept of *race*, with its proposal to classify human beings permanently, is an eminently modern construction. The term has a semantic range that unfolds to this day. One of the characteristics of race is being a relational and historical concept. To understand what is meant by relational, Frantz Fanon, in *Black skin, White masks* (1967), criticizes the process of subjugation of black people, showing how strong the impact of the regime of images of racial representation is. According to him, the set of images makes existence understandable to human beings from childhood, through the construction of universal notions of humanity, with its identity dimensions. Fanon identifies the clash

that Black people suffer with the interpretative limits of the pedagogy of images, which are used as tools for the maintenance of racial representation practices. The images give us gender and race structure through literature, movies, games, cartoons, school books, disciplining black people in the place of anti-humanity. In this perspective, Fanon recalls when, at school in Martinique, in ultramarine France, he learned that the Gauls were the ancestors of the Martinicans, who are mostly descendants of enslaved people. Fanon identifies the process of acquiring images with the construction of a racialized identity, which prevents access to the right to a genealogy of one's own, on which to base identity(s), since identity is configured in the reproduction of the original colonial myth imposed, in his case, by the French.

Foucault (1997) explains how racism is directly linked to the formation of states. In the nineteenth century, the discourses of biology have a direct impact on the concept of race denoting, among the functions of the state, that of protector of racial purity, which represents, for Foucault, the conservative face assumed by political discourse after the revolutions of the eighteenth century. According to him, therefore, from the nineteenth century states have operated under a “racist state regime”. For Foucault, this is not an ideological discourse, but a true “technology of power” on life and death, which he defines as “biopower”. The biopower, through biopolitics, acts in the areas of structures that concern health, transport, safety and hygiene, and how and where these structures are present or absent, the action of biopower on life and death can be identified. In all of this, racism performs two functions:

- 1) Fragmentation and biological division of the human species, through the hierarchization and classification of races. Thus, divisions are established between good and bad, between superiors and inferiors, between those who can live and those who can die.

- 2) Allowing the establishment of a “positive” relationship with the death of the “other”, a relationship in which the discourse of biology makes the death of the “other” acceptable because this is not an peer, as an adversary, but belongs to a “bad”, “inferior” race. Death is seen both as a guarantee of safety and as a “positive” development for the dominant group.

Mbembe (2018) states that it is in the colonial world, before the Nazi-Fascist state, that Western rationality started practicing “the selection of races, the prohibition of mixed marriages, the forced sterilization and the extermination of the defeated peoples” (p. 19). Colonialism and slave states shape racial hierarchies based on the fear that arises from the invention of an absolute otherness. It is in such spaces as colonies are, where

there are no juridical norms, for which the law is unable to dominate the right to kill, that the “necropower” is found. According to Mbembe, the specificity of colonial fear is that it exists without the existence of a serious/tangible threat. Fear is provoked by the possibility of an enemy’s existence, by his (supposed) will to dominate, not from his real presence. In this climate, which is generated in colonial modernity, slave disciplinary regimes develop first and, after the abolition of slavery, preventive measures are refined up to now (ranging from curfews to control measures as preventive arrest, denunciations of resistance...).

What the racist structure builds is an unreal place which is wild, irrational, therefore unable to organize itself in the form of a modern state made by/for citizens. For Mbembe (2018), “[...] the colonies are the place *par excellence* where the controls and guarantees of the legal order can be suspended - the area where the violence of the state of exception is supposed to operate in the service of ‘civilization’” (p. 35).

Colonial occupation must not be understood as a fact restricted to the nineteenth century, but as a new form of political domination in which disciplinary, biopolitical and necropolitical powers come together. Colony discipline, as a form of domination, can now be established within the borders of states as part of political appeals on public security.

Despite the anthropology and biology of the twentieth century playing their part in demonstrating the non-existence of “qualitative” differences that justify discriminatory treatment between human beings, it remains a fact that the notion of race plays a prominent political role in naturalize inequalities and legitimize segregation and genocide of sociologically considered minority groups. It is important to distinguish racism from other categories associated with the concept of race, namely “prejudice” and “discrimination”. While racism is a systematic form of discrimination based on the idea of race, manifested through practices that culminate in privileges or disadvantages for members of different racial groups, racial bias is a stereotypical judgment that can result in discriminatory practices. Racism is, therefore, defined as having a systemic character, in the sense that it is not simply marked by one or more discriminatory acts, but as a process in which subordinate or privileged conditions, distributed among racial groups, are reproduced in the areas of politics, economics and everyday social relations. Racism is articulated in racial segregation as a division of spaces in urban topography, defining places of living, consumption and access to services. Basically, racism is a development of the social structure itself, that is, of the naturalized way in which political, economic and social relations are constituted: racism is structural. As a consequence, individual

and institutional behaviors derive from the fact that racism is the rule and not the exception. The systemic reproduction of racist practices constitutes the organization of society, concretely manifesting itself in inequalities.

That said, putting racism as part of the framework does not exempt the individual from responsibility for racist conduct, to the extent that actual changes are also brought about by individual anti-racist stances and practices, as well as collective complaints and moral repudiation. In short: race is a concept that can only be elaborated from a relational perspective, and it manifests itself in concrete acts that take place within social structures marked by conflicts and antagonisms.

If we look at racism as a political process, it will be clearer that it is a systemic process of discrimination that shapes social organization and that depends on political power itself. If this were not the case, systematic discrimination of entire social groups would not be possible. This way, the idea of “reverse racism” makes no sense, as something directed by minorities to majorities. The misunderstanding is obvious: minority racial groups can show prejudice and practice discrimination, but they cannot impose social disadvantages. In current conditions, in Western countries, whites do not lose their jobs, they are not suspected *a priori* of being dangerous, their intelligence or professional ability is not questioned for race reasons. By the way, the term *reverse* implies something out of place, in relation to a somehow “correct”, “natural” racism, namely that against Blacks, Latinos, Arabs, Gypsy, Jewish minorities...

What is evident is that the idea of reverse racism serves to de-legitimize demands for racial equality.

With these observations in mind, let's now focus the six episodes series, produced by BBC in 2020, *Noughts+Crosses*.

The story develops in a “parallel” reality, in which a political “entity” called Aprica conquered, dominated and “colonized” Albion seven hundreds years ago. Albion is now ruled by a black racist elite, while white people are segregated and suffer heavy discriminations. The main plot is the love story between Persephone “Sephy” Hadley, daughter of a minister, and Callum McGregor, a young white boy whose mother performs domestic tasks at Sephy's family house. Of course, the love story is strictly forbidden by racial laws, and Sephy is not completely aware of her own racism. Meanwhile, a resistance army for white people liberation (the Liberation Militia) acts with terroristic attacks, inflaming a very unstable and violent social distress. Letting apart the love story between the two young characters (molded by a strong shakespearean influence) that allows us to understand the audience addressed by the show —young adults—, we tried to

understand what kind of racism BBC sketches and what issues this representation creates.

Let's see some of the issues that appeared in our analysis. Apparently, the world represented in the series follows all the systemic "rules" that build our modern society on racism. Thus, we have black people ruling Albion, while white people do not enjoy the same rights: they don't vote, they can't enter good schools or university, the military career has just opened on quotas bases to white people, they live in poor districts, they can only work in low fares jobs. The elements of structural racism are all depicted, with white people represented as a constant danger, as (potential) enemies forcing the government to establish preventive measures in the name of "security". They are classified as inferiors, as bad, as savages. They are stereotyped as violent and drunk people. All the main points that belong to our systemic racism against black people are enacted in the series with a "simple" change of color. But: is it enough to allow both black and white audiences to identify with the characters and the action? Is it enough to characterize an effective representation of racism? From a very white point of view, we believe it is not.

The first issue is the target of the product, a young audience, without distinction of race. Black and white young adults, indeed, do not have the same expectations or the same basis in their appropriation of the series. While the white public belongs to the group that, out of fiction, benefits from structural racism and has a clearly defined identity, which comes from the pedagogy of images we referred to earlier, the black public is confronted with a quite lame representation of themselves. Black people are just white people with a different color. But it's not just a matter of skin: the real issue is that they are stripped of any cultural trace other than that of the well-known established white tradition. Shortly: Aprica replies the imperialist European world, it's by no means different, black people history is wiped out and substituted by the only role model of a structural racism, that is the white one. Apart from very few elements in costumes, this black racist society is structured exactly the same way as we know the white one. Aprica is just a name, the history of this black world appears to be a simple repetition of the legacy of domination left by European. So, we wonder what kind of impact this representation has on the black audience: does it find itself trapped, once more, in a white narrative of the past, one in which it may be difficult to mirror? To better clear what we mean with different interpretations due to racial cultural structures, we can observe how literature presents a perspective on perception of time and space when it comes to white and black identities and references. A good example refers to the relationship established with the act of "crossing the sea". Authors such as Gonçalves (2017), Collins (2019), Scego (2020)

have in common a very different historicized experience on what it means to cross the Ocean: while for white people the transoceanic travel during Modern Age is generally associated to adventure and discovery, black authors clearly identify the same route with death and suffering. This example can throw a light on differences in appropriating cultural production such as the BBC series.

With these divergent backgrounds backing interpretation, the bases needed for the suspension of disbelief may appear a bit more complicated when facing racialized audiences: does this representation, to someone whose past must identify with that of the real, present holders of biopolitical and necropolitical mechanism, cover the hiatus that sustain this kind of *mimesis*? Mind this, we are not saying that it is “wrong” to build this upside-down world, allowing white young people to decode some of the racist elements they carry by identity formation. The issue is that this product, in the end, seems to be much more directed to a white audience than a black one. Identification with the characters and the situations seems quite easier for white people, not only because, in the show, they are oppressed and discriminated, but because they recognize the rules of domination as their own. But to what extent do black people find representativeness, when they are “the villains” they could never have been?

We think we can't answer, due to our “place of speech”. In terms of mechanism of identification and self-recognition in this fictional representation, we can only highlight issues we recognize as clearly belonging as a background of our race and gender. Although we may attempt to define racism, we have never been part of the history as racially dominated, so we can't put our white voice to point out how this product collides with the (still) unofficial history of black people.

Our last issue concerns the fact that, in this young adult novel, this unfair regime is doomed to change, and if this happens, it is mainly due to white people demands. If the regime doesn't change, black people will last as villains. Once more, we stand with a question on the expectations of a black audience in terms of self-representativeness. While white people have an asymmetrical dominant power in history, must black people “adjust” to the needs of someone who is frankly used to dominate? Once more, being white, we can't answer.

Noughts + Crosses try to offer an impossible symmetry, just changing the “skin” of power. What we question is what kind of representation of empowerment the series offers, considering that the audience background is not equal when the representation meets white or black people expectations. Expectations are built in a racist system, where race is still politically hierarchical, and where producing empowering images for

Black people doesn't seem so linear and simple as the series suggests. What we can assume, here, is that we understand that black people, once more, might find white people, despite the appearance, dominating the speech.

Summing up but not really concluding

The symbolic character of cultural identity, increasingly built, represented, and promoted by the media, stimulates levels of emotional involvement that contribute to the viability of any individual country. Indeed, the mass media have long played an important role in the process of identity building, creating, ritualizing, and broadcasting who we are, and who the other is.

New theories, especially those coming from South America, offer a broad conception of communication and identity, proposing that mediation should be a central category for analysis. Martín-Barbero (1993) suggests that, for South America, the syncretic nature of popular practices contributes both to the preservation of cultural identities and to their adaptation to new demands. One implication of this analysis for the processes of construction of cultural identity is that “the culture industry, by producing new hybrids resulting from the erasing of boundaries between high and popular culture, traditional and modern, and domestic and foreign is reorganizing collective identities and forms of symbolic differentiation” (Canclini, 1997, p. 208).

If we consider cultural identity a symbolic construction rather than a thing already there to be described, we shall understand that identity formation in a global communication environment is highly influenced by the media, which construct our everyday perceptions of the other and ourselves. People live in a symbolic environment, a world of meaning, and it is clear that the mass media play a critical role in people's perceptions and attitudes. The experience of Picnic at Hanging Rock shows us that the media can be used not only to challenge traditional values and beliefs, but also to extend and consolidate a sense of belonging and to incorporate new patterns of behavior, called by Thompson (1998) “cultural migrations” due partly to the globalization of media products.

To sum up, cultural and collective identities are constructed in new ways and, particularly for the global middle class, construction of cultural identity increasingly reflects exposure to abundant symbolic resources and discourses broadcasted through mass product of Cultural Industry.

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COLONIALISMO Y COLONIALIDAD: UN ANÁLISIS TEÓRICO DEL EVOLUCIONISMO BIOLÓGICO AL EVOLUCIONISMO SOCIAL¹

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COLONIALISM AND COLONIALITY: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTIONISM TO SOCIAL EVOLUTIONISM

Resumen

El artículo trata de la conexión entre el evolucionismo, el colonialismo y las ciencias sociales. La idea principal es que el evolucionismo, concebido como una nueva perspectiva para entender la realidad, hace de la naturaleza un proceso de ajuste constante

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al medio ambiente, produciendo así una mejora continua. Las ciencias sociales del siglo XIX utilizan el modelo natural de la evolución como una referencia cultural para legitimar la dominación occidental sobre otras culturas, partiendo de la idea de que los países occidentales han alcanzado una etapa más alta en el proceso de evolución. Se propone que, mientras que la dominación necesitaba referirse a la naturaleza como instrumento legitimador, la globalización ha hecho que la referencia externa a la evolución biológica sea cada vez menos pertinente, ya que los mecanismos económicos de explotación se conciben ahora como una segunda naturaleza, lo que justifica *per se* nuevas formas de colonización.

Palabras clave

Colonialismo, colonialidad, evolucionismo.

Abstract

The article deals with the connection among evolutionism, colonialism and the emergence of the social sciences. The main idea is that evolutionism, intended as a perspective on reality, makes nature a process of constant adjustment to the environment, thus producing a continuing improvement. Nineteenth century social sciences uses the natural model of evolution as a way to legitimize Western domination over other cultures, starting from the idea that Western countries had reached a higher stage in the evolution process. The paper proposes that, whereas domination needed to refer to nature as a legitimizing instrument, globalization has made the external reference to biological evolution ever less relevant, as economic mechanism of exploitation are now intended as a sort of second nature, justifying *per se* new forms of colonialism.

Keywords

Colonialism, colonialidad, evolutionism.

Introducción

La contaminación entre las ciencias naturales y las ciencias sociales siempre ha generado modelos teóricos y áreas de aplicación para la observación, medición y clasificación de especies vivas: *in primis* la humana.

Este acercamiento puede ser reconducido a las perspectivas de investigación desarrolladas por la Escuela inglesa del siglo XVII, bajo el impulso teórico de Bacon. A partir de este período, se consolidan los métodos de representaciones empíricas en la relación entre análisis cuantitativos de los diversos aspectos de la vida biológica y descripciones cualitativas de la dinámica social. Entre los ejemplos más significativos, encontramos el enfoque analítico de Petty (1690) y sus observaciones sobre la política económica a través de la combinación de *bíos* y *mètron* como base para la afirmación de un nuevo ámbito del conocimiento: la *Aritmética política*.

Así es como el análisis de los fenómenos sociales adviene en la política económica y en la cultura científica inglesa: como arte de utilizar números y datos para decidir sobre cuestiones relativas al gobierno de las vidas, del territorio y de las poblaciones (Preite, 2016, p. 40). Petty no se limita a describir la realidad social en términos cuantitativos, sino que razona sobre datos empíricos obtenidos a través de complejas cadenas deductivas de tipo aritmético-cuantitativo, y rechaza tanto el razonamiento deductivo del racionalismo aristotélico como el empirismo puramente estadístico (Roncaglia, 2016, pp. 63-64).

En el plano filosófico, Derham proporciona una explicación teológica inicial de las regularidades cuantitativas de los fenómenos demográficos. A partir de observaciones sobre los fenómenos de la población, presume un modelo heurístico que, por un lado, tiende a considerar los hechos humanos como evidencia de sabiduría divina y, por otro, ve a la población como un medio de expansión económica, política y cultural de las naciones. Una visión que pronto plantea el problema de la relación entre los habitantes y la subsistencia y que crea los presupuestos para la afirmación de la teoría sobre la población de Malthus.

El problema biológico de los hechos sociales refleja el intento de establecer una nueva síntesis científica que permita comprender las nuevas bases biológicas del comportamiento social y los mecanismos evolutivos que determinan su desarrollo (Mainardi, 1992). En este modo, algunas características distópicas de la cultura occidental como la competencia, la conquista, la agresión, e incluso la guerra, encuentran una explicación en la naturaleza evolutiva biológica.

Esta premisa es fundamental para entender los desarrollos posteriores de la “Ciencia del Hombre” que, a partir de esta tradición, investiga y explica las comunidades sociales como resultado del progreso civil en términos evolucionistas. De hecho, las corrientes evolucionistas se desarrollan e incorporan sincréticamente a las fórmulas ideológica-políticas del capitalismo, el liberalismo y el colonialismo británico del siglo XIX, y legitima la competencia social, el racismo y la superioridad de los colonizadores sobre los colonizados. El imperio no puede ni debe reconocer ninguna autoridad moral fuera de sí mismo.

Sobre la base de estas suposiciones, este trabajo intenta revisitar las corrientes de pensamiento y las teorías científicas —aquellas evolucionistas en particular— como forma de contagio ideológico que justifican la supremacía y el ejercicio del poder imperial hasta la modernidad avanzada (Longo, 2005). Significativo es el dato de que las teorías científicas más importantes de matriz evolutiva están condicionadas por la obra de Malthus, convirtiéndose, de hecho, en transposición naturalista. Si, por lo tanto, la naturaleza misma trabaja con las leyes del capitalismo y el colonialismo, esas leyes son inevitables para el contexto social en su conjunto.

El colonialismo avanzado: malthusianismo y evolucionismo

El siglo XVIII termina con un fuerte interés en las dinámicas desarrolladas con el colonialismo inglés en relación con la disponibilidad de recursos y su acaparamiento. Este es el periodo en que se empieza indagando en la realidad natural y el crecimiento exponencial de la población choca con la escasez de recursos, lo que ocasiona una lucha inevitable por la supervivencia (según el pensamiento occidental). La selección natural es el mecanismo que resuelve el conflicto y asegura el equilibrio entre las especies vivas y los recursos disponibles, y permite la supervivencia de las especies más adecuadas al medio ambiente. La acumulación de las variaciones beneficiosas por cada especie, y la consecuente herencia de caracteres, produce transformaciones significativas en términos de ventaja. Los seres humanos son, entonces, el resultado de la evolución biológica y no son criaturas privilegiadas y ontológicamente diferentes a otras especies. La moralidad —presente en los seres humanos— también representa un artificio elaborado en términos evolutivos por la sociabilidad que los individuos desarrollan y refinan con el tiempo como útil para la misma lucha por la supervivencia.

Esta idea toma fuerza de las teorizaciones de Malthus (1798), que, con la publicación de *An Essay of the Principle of the Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society*, explica cómo la población, si no es controlada, tiende a aumentar en progresión geométrica, mientras que los medios de subsistencia tienden a aumentar en progresión aritmética con el resultado de que en el futuro habrá menos recursos disponibles y suficientes para alimentar a todos.

Las intenciones de Malthus no son distópicas: observa con cinismo benévolo la pobreza de las masas urbanizadas inglesas de la primera revolución industrial, frágiles, enfermas y explotadas, una situación que, sin embargo, se enfrenta a “frenos represivos” —generalmente inesperados o impredecibles— como las guerras, las epidemias, la carestía, las hambrunas; o la elección de “frenos preventivos”, que pueden ser planificados y coordinados por la política y las autoridades decisionales, como las restricciones morales y sociales de diversos tipos.

Sobre este último aspecto, Malthus (1798) propone algunas soluciones encaminadas a reducir el crecimiento de la población a partir de la restricción voluntaria de los nacimientos, mediante la abstención del matrimonio —una exhortación dirigida principalmente a los pobres y los indigentes—. Así, en sintonía con la concepción doctrinal de la Escuela inglesa y, por lo tanto, con los preceptos de la aritmética política de finales del siglo XVII, fomenta la adopción de todas las “medidas” necesarias para disuadir la tasa de natalidad, recomienda —por inconsistentes— la abolición de las “leyes sobre los pobres” y de todas las formas institucionalizadas de solidaridad y caridad, como fuentes de incentivos adicionales para aumentar la población y, por lo tanto, perjudicial para el crecimiento, el desarrollo y el bienestar social como un todo. Por otro lado, la naturaleza habría resuelto el problema por sí misma.

Estas ideas se consolidan mayormente con relación a las cuestiones políticas y económicas del liberalismo, que Malthus apoya con vigor y determinación: cada individuo es y debe ser libre, privado de asistencia social u otras formas de ayuda y solidaridad, de modo que los más fuertes prevalezcan y sucumban los más débiles. En realidad, como explica más tarde Marx (1953), las calamidades y los eventos adversos catastróficos de la modernidad no pueden estar relacionados con el exceso de población, más bien están vinculadas a la cíclica y convulsa alternancia de la expansión y contracción del sistema capitalista. Sobre el plano político —y diría también en el plano gubernamental—, la aristocracia inglesa de principios del siglo XIX apoya firmemente la teoría malthusiana como una solución a los problemas que surgieron después de la revolución francesa, consistentes en el miedo a perder sus privilegios en beneficio de las clases trabajadoras.

Tal posición les proporciona una sólida justificación y legítima en consecuencia todas aquellas conductas opresivas y explotadoras practicadas contra las clases sociales más bajas y perpetradas contra las poblaciones débiles y vulnerables.

La teoría demográfica de Malthus inspira a muchos intelectuales y científicos de la época (Mancarella, 2010, pp. 119-122) y de la corriente del malthusianismo poco a poco toman forma los conceptos de progreso, evolución de la especie por selección natural y lucha por la supervivencia. Sobre la base de estas consideraciones, se puede afirmar que la “Ciencia del Hombre” del siglo XIX investiga y explica los sistemas sociales —organizados políticamente mediante instituciones— como resultado del progreso civil de la humanidad en términos evolucionistas, concepto este último que extrae sus orígenes de la filosofía naturalista de la antigua Grecia y que se extiende a la modernidad con la contribución de fuertes y heterogéneas corrientes evolutivas: evolucionismo superorgánico (Spencer, 1857), evolucionismo orgánico (Lamarck, 1809; Darwin, 1859) y evolucionismo sociocultural (Morgan, 1877).

La evolución superorgánica de Spencer representa la sistematización filosófica más completa del evolucionismo en términos de progreso, y explica el desarrollo social del hombre basándose en la analogía entre evolución de los organismos y evolución social. Esta analogía es puesta de manifiesto por la ley del progreso que, en tanto continua e imparable, determina el cambio de la sociedad humana en el pasaje de un estadio primitivo, caracterizado por una estructura simple y homogénea, a estadios cada vez más avanzados, caracterizados por una estructura siempre más heterogénea y compleja.

El evolucionismo biológico de Lamarck y Darwin, basa el sistema teórico en la noción de “transformismo” de las especies animales y vegetales y sobre la idea de que todos los organismos vivos están conectados entre sí a través del mecanismo de la “lucha por la existencia” o de la “selección natural”. El proceso evolutivo, por lo tanto, se explica en términos de adaptación al medio ambiente, incluso si depende de la especialización.

Finalmente, el evolucionismo sociocultural, o la *teoría unilineal* de Morgan, se caracteriza por ser un “evolucionismo determinista” según el cual todas las culturas evolucionan de acuerdo a procesos que dependen de los lazos de descendencia y parentesco, un modelo que influye claramente en la construcción ideológica del marxismo promovida por Engels (después de la muerte de Marx).

Evolución biológica, progreso y evolucionismo determinista se afirman, a lo largo del siglo XIX, como tres macro cuerpos teóricos que polarizan las múltiples declinaciones asumidas por la investigación sobre los sistemas sociales, e influencia, con diferentes gradaciones, la mentalidad del colonialismo avanzado.

La política colonial del siglo XIX: lucha por la existencia y darwinismo social

Darwin se interroga sobre el desarrollo de la vida orgánica y en modo particular sobre la presencia de determinadas características en la clasificación de especies animales y vegetales: diversidad, variabilidad y adaptabilidad, y formula una teoría que considera que las especies evolucionan en la lucha por la existencia debido al entrelazado de dos mecanismos: *selección natural* y *variaciones individuales* (Darwin, 1859).

La teoría de Darwin contrasta con la teoría creacionista, basada en la idea del hombre creado como ser perfecto *ab initio*. En la evolución no existe alguna forma de progreso finalista y perfeccionista; la especie humana se somete simplemente a la aleatoriedad de los mecanismos de la evolución en sí (Preite, 2016, p. 47). Esta afirmación provoca la dura reacción de las corrientes ético-filosóficas aun sí, con la publicación de *On the Origin of Species* de 1859, Darwin encuentra el consentimiento de un círculo estrecho pero autorizado de intelectuales, incluyendo Marx, Engels y Nietzsche, interesados en explicar el proceso de desmitificación a través del cual el hombre y su subjetividad no representan el “centro de la tierra”.

El evolucionismo darwiniano también ejerce cierta influencia en las teorizaciones de Marx y Engels. Sin embargo, Marx, mucho antes de la publicación de *On the Origin of Species*, aborda la cuestión de la “ciencia humana natural” en los *Manuscritos Económico-Filosóficos* (1844) en los que la atención al plano antropológico, respecto del cual es observable la relación hombre-naturaleza, es claramente predarwinista.

Aun asumiendo que la historia natural es la base de la historia humana, los esfuerzos posteriores, realizados con Engels, se centran en la introducción de algunos elementos no relacionados con la evolución biológica: el trabajo, el capital y los modos de producción. Esta perspectiva explica el hombre y la historia basada en hechos sociales más que en leyes naturales, aunque hay puntos de contacto interesantes entre la teoría de la evolución de Darwin y la concepción materialista de la historia de Marx (sobre todo en su carácter determinista); por el contrario, es precisamente con respecto al principio de evolución que la afinidad del pensamiento se hace más evidente, tanto en relación con los cambios en la naturaleza (lucha por la existencia) como en relación con la sociedad (lucha de clases), donde conecta, como ha sido muchas veces anotado, con el pensamiento de Hegel.

El concepto de lucha es un elemento común en Darwin y Marx, pero con diferencias estructurales. En la teoría de Darwin, la lucha es la razón de la evolución natural

en toda su naturaleza biológica y social, mientras que en el pensamiento de Marx la lucha representa el impulso de la historia social humana y se separa del mundo natural, diferencia que se basa en la distinción filosófica clásica entre el hombre y el animal; el materialismo histórico comporta, de hecho, la adhesión a la idea de una naturaleza social mutable.

Son precisamente estas diferencias las que determinan la salida de Marx del enfoque darwiniano. Poco antes de la publicación de *El Capital* (1865), comienza a sospechar que la lógica del capitalismo —de la competencia y la competencia selectiva— pueda anidarse en la teoría de la evolución. Una intuición confirmada más tarde por el darwinismo social. Sin embargo, Marx no puede prever que otra teoría evolutiva está a punto de acechar dentro de su sistema teórico: *la evolución sociocultural* de Morgan (evolucionismo determinista), que se convierte, después de su muerte y con el favor de Engels, en un punto crucial para la construcción ideológica del marxismo (Mancarella, 2010, p. 27).

A distancia de pocos años, Darwin publica *El descenso del hombre* (1871), y hace emerger aún más claramente el asunto de que el hombre no goza de posiciones privilegiadas en la naturaleza, es sólo una “estructura” conectada con el resto de la vida orgánica animal, un producto del proceso natural desprovisto de propósito y dirección. La selección natural, por lo tanto, se aplica tanto a los cambios orgánicos en términos de ventaja biológica adaptativa como a los cambios superorgánicos en términos de ventaja adaptativa social: en ambas situaciones el término “civilización” adquiere relevancia conceptual. Para Darwin, la civilización, a la que asocia el concepto de ventaja, está vinculada a la variación hereditaria de los instintos naturales y los instintos aprendidos (sociales). Los instintos sociales tienen la prerrogativa de ser ventajosos, se fortalecen en el proceso de civilización (sujeto a la ley de selección natural) a través de comportamientos repetidos a lo largo del tiempo, tradiciones y hábitos hereditarios que, a su vez, mejoran el desarrollo del sentido moral y consolidan el nivel de civilización (pp. 57-58).

Spencer, firmemente convencido de la validez del concepto de evolución biológica, acoge favorablemente la teoría de Darwin, inicia un complicado proceso de injerto de principios evolutivos en todos los campos científicos y afirma la plena capacidad de respuesta entre la evolución biológica y la evolución social. Con *The Study of Sociology* (1873) afirma que el principio de “supervivencia del más apto” se identifica con el “progreso social”; un artificio útil para legitimar el *laissez faire* extremo y la libre competencia, o hasta la lucha competitiva, entre individuos, incluso, a través de la eliminación de

los más débiles y, por lo tanto, los menos adecuados como consecuencia de la vida social de los organismos que de alguna manera sobreviven en un mundo de recursos limitados (De Feo, 1990, p. 19). Esto purifica la raza y mejora la calidad de la población.

La influencia del pensamiento de Spencer es evidente en los desarrollos teóricos posteriores que ponen de relieve las características distópicas de la cultura occidental, como la agresividad, la competencia, la guerra y la conquista, y que encuentran una explicación en la naturaleza evolutiva biológica, donde los más fuertes se imponen a los más débiles (Giorgi, 2008, p. 19). En esta dirección también se mueven las corrientes tanatopolíticas subsiguientes interesadas en legitimar la selección de los más fuertes a través de un determinismo biológico que causa los efectos devastadores del colonialismo de finales del siglo XIX y los nefastos resultados del totalitarismo en la primera mitad del XX.

Con Spencer, independientemente de la voluntad y de las intenciones reales de Darwin, el concepto de “lucha por la existencia” se convierte en el principal impulso del darwinismo social. Esta corriente mistifica la teoría darwiniana al establecerse como una contaminación ideológica del capitalismo liberal. Una contaminación basada en la lógica spenceriana de la “supervivencia del más apto”, en la teoría malthusiana de la “lucha por la vida” e incluso en la guerra hobbesiana de “todos contra todos”. Así, el principio de selección natural aplicado a las relaciones nación-Estado se convirtió en el *leit motiv* de la geopolítica internacional en Europa, después de la segunda ola del colonialismo moderno. Naciones como Inglaterra, Alemania, Francia, y posteriormente Italia, están involucradas en un deseo incontenible de expansión territorial. Los grandes imperios ya existentes se refuerzan y compiten entre sí, ocupan territorios ilimitados sobre los cuales ejercen un amplio control político y administrativo, y explotan sus recursos naturales.

Esto no significa que en décadas anteriores no hubiera interés, por parte de las naciones europeas más fuertes, en subyugar a las colonias. Los intereses económicos y la explotación comercial ya son evidentes en el colonialismo pre-darwiniano: materias primas a bajo costo, explotación laboral, expansión del mercado, nuevos canales de comercio de bienes nacionales. Pero, mientras en los siglos anteriores la legitimación había sido ética o religiosa (Longo, 2001), con el advenimiento del darwinismo social y cultural este proceso de colonización se fortifica, porque está legitimado por una justificación científica. La interpretación de la obra de Darwin resulta irrefutable para dar una forma éticamente sostenible a lo que en realidad representa, simplemente, el ejercicio de una “política de poder” y facilita una posición ideológica que transfiere la

idea biológico-fenomenica de la evolución a otro ámbito, el de la política económica y la política colonial. Es una visión particular de la naturaleza del hombre y del mundo que extiende la teoría de la adaptación y la selección natural del campo empírico de las ciencias naturales a los procesos políticos y socioculturales (Preite, 2016, pp. 49-50).

Del evolucionismo biológico al evolucionismo sociocultural

En este período se desarrollan estudios paralelos que dan lugar a los métodos de la naciente “ciencia de la cultura”, fundada sobre la suposición de que la realidad humana se caracteriza por dos aspectos bien distintos: el cuerpo y sus funciones biológicas, por un lado, y el espíritu y sus productos, por el otro. Según esta línea de pensamiento, la evolución cultural es el resultado de un proceso que está en el camino de la evolución orgánica ya concluida: *Ancient Law* (1861), de Maine, *Primitive Culture* (1871), de Tylor, y *Ancient Society* (1877), de Morgan, alimentan el debate evolucionista para la afirmación del conocimiento antropológico en el ámbito sociocultural.

En particular, Maine se ocupa de la antropología como ciencia orientada al estudio de los sistemas sociales en su totalidad, de la que deriva su tesis fundamental que identifica la organización política con la social (según la tradición aristotélica) y que pone de relieve la existencia de una analogía entre la distinción filosófica relacionada con el “estado de la naturaleza” y el “estado de derecho” y aquella antropológica entre “sociedades de parentesco” y “sociedades territoriales”.

Tylor (1974) elabora la primera y más importante definición sistemática del concepto de cultura: “Culture, or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 1); y origina dos líneas de pensamiento diferentes, pero complementarias: una representada por la antropología cultural, que se desarrolla en los Estados Unidos con Boas, la otra, en cambio, representada por la antropología social, cuya difusión adviene en Francia con Mauss y en Inglaterra con Malinowski y Evans-Pritchard. En cualquier caso, tanto la perspectiva de la antropología cultural como la de la antropología social se ocupan de investigar y describir el hombre total, considerado, en un caso, en base a sus producciones, y en el otro, según sus representaciones (Lévi-Strauss, 1975, p. 393). Sea cual sea el punto de observación, no es modificada la perspectiva de estudio, que es siempre la antropocéntrica, es decir, la vuelta hacia el conocimiento del así llamado “hombre total”,

la misma que en Levi-Strauss será asumida como dimensión central de su “antropología estructural”.

La investigación de Morgan está dirigida, en cambio, a la evolución social de la humanidad a partir de los “primitivos”. Señala que las relaciones de parentesco no se basan en la “consanguinidad”, sino también (y principalmente) en la “clase” como estructura organizativa política de las comunidades sociales. Se trata de un “evolucionismo unilineal” y mecanicista que explica la historia de la humanidad como un proceso evolutivo constante, cuyo elemento básico consiste, precisamente, en la familia biológicamente determinada y socialmente organizada (Morgan, 1974, pp. 11-13). Además, la tesis de Morgan sostiene que la idea de propiedad surge con la necesidad de adquirir los medios de sustento y se desarrolla gradualmente a medida que avanzan las invenciones y los descubrimientos. Mejoras que marcan los diferentes períodos étnicos del progreso humano (p. 381):

No se puede observar sino maravillados el hecho de que, hace unos cinco mil años, una parte de la humanidad haya llegado a la civilización. Estrictamente hablando, sólo dos familias de la raza humana, la semítica y la aria, lograron este resultado sin ninguna ayuda externa bajo un proceso de desarrollo autónomo. La familia aria, en particular, representa la corriente central del progreso humano, porque produjo el tipo más alto de humanidad, y porque demostró su superioridad intrínseca, tomando gradualmente el control de la Tierra. (p. 404)

Esta ingenua declaración sitúa su pensamiento en una dimensión ideológica arriesgada que, primero con el colonialismo de finales del siglo XIX, y más tarde con los totalitarismos del siglo XX, habría producido resultados nefastos en Europa y en el mundo.

Para identificar y calificar otras culturas (etnias) se utilizan juicios de valor que encuentran su síntesis en los términos “salvaje” y “primitivo”, esto es, una dimensión cultural opuesta y por lo tanto inferior a la cultura civilizada dominante, la de una Europa que comunica la ideología de superioridad y dominación y que se identifica con el progreso.

Desde esta óptica, es fácil observar la relación que se entrecruza entre el etnocentrismo, que postula la centralidad de las categorías interpretativas de su historia cultural, o de la cultura del grupo étnico de pertenencia, con el eurocentrismo, que hace alarde de la superioridad cultural y racial del *homo europaeus* (Kilani, 1992a). En este contexto, el eurocentrismo se establece como una forma de observar, estudiar y tratar a otros

pueblos, teniendo como criterio Europa y su cultura (Connel, 2007).

Del *World-System Analysis* a la afirmación del capitalismo neo-liberal

Se ha visto que el evolucionismo social considera la evolución histórica como un camino lineal y progresivo, igual para todos los Estados nacionales, aunque no temporalmente alineada. De acuerdo con esta línea interpretativa, las comunidades sociales atraviesan, alcanzan y luego superan varias etapas, cada una de las cuales corresponde a un estadio de progreso civil y social mejor que el precedente.

A partir de aquí, Occidente, “encontrándose” en un estadio posterior respecto de las otras realidades sociales, consolida la idea de la “misión civilizadora”, portadora del progreso, en el confronto con pueblos considerados atrasados y primitivos, obligándolos a abandonar sus creencias y costumbres para adoptar las occidentales, basadas en el conjunto ideológico de cristianismo, civilización y mercado. Este proceso imperialista se transforma después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial con la liberación de los países sumisos y el consiguiente nacimiento de nuevos Estados nación (Vignola, 2018).

A finales de la década de 1970, en continuidad con las teorías de la dependencia para el desarrollo y con el concepto de economía-mundo elaborado por Braudel (1982), Wallerstein desarrollará su *world system analysis* como una reflexión histórica sobre la economía capitalista global. Se trata de una propuesta centrada en el rechazo de la idea del “Tercer Mundo” y la creencia de la existencia de un mundo único gobernado por una compleja serie de relaciones económicas (economía mundial) en las que la dicotomía “trabajo-capital” y la acumulación de un capital cada vez mayor explican los conflictos existentes. Aunque partiendo de la ausencia de homogeneidad del sistema capitalista mundial, en términos de cultura, política, economía y derechos, esta propuesta ofrece una representación del proceso gradual de expansión del propio sistema como una única red o sistema de intercambio económico global, existente todavía hoy.

Un elemento importante del *world system analysis* es la composición del mundo en centro, semi-periferia y periferia. Lo que caracteriza esta descripción del mundo es una división fundamental e institucionalmente establecida entre el trabajo del centro y el de la periferia. El centro está representado por un núcleo que reúne sólidas estructuras gubernamentales en términos de capital, bienestar y desarrollo (especialmente tecnológico). La semiperiferia, por otro lado, se caracteriza por un modesto nivel de

desarrollo y crecimiento, pero todavía sujeta al poder ejercido por el centro, y es por lo tanto un elemento estructural necesario en una economía-mundo: desempeña una función amortiguadora entre el centro estrecho y las inmensas periferias y mitiga, en la medida de lo posible, las presiones políticas que parten de la periferia y se dirigen al centro. Por lo tanto, la periferia representa un área vasta “mantenida” en condiciones de dependencia y atraso (Wallerstein, 1974, I) funcional al centro para el suministro de productos agrícolas, materias primas y mano de obra barata. Con esta operación, de matriz teórica e ideológica, se cambia el eje de la lucha de clases teorizada por Marx del nivel nacional al nivel del sistema de la economía mundial (Lafay, 1996).

Las teorías de Wallerstein y de los estudiosos de la dependencia latinoamericanos, por varias razones, no se arraigan, a pesar de la influencia en la clase intelectual de la época. Una de las principales causas se encuentra en el crecimiento exponencial del archipiélago asiático, hasta entonces tradicionalmente considerado semi-periferia. Así, en los años ochenta del siglo pasado, este enfoque se invierte definitivamente tras la afirmación y posterior consolidación de la actual corriente neoliberal, aclamada fuente de producción del saber basada sobre una nueva idea de desarrollo vinculada exclusivamente a las formas del sistema capitalista. En neto contraste, por lo tanto, con las teorías de la dependencia, con el marxismo y con el eurocomunismo (Vignola, 2018, pp. 57-58). Todo esto descarta definitivamente las teorías de la intervención estatal y la tentativa de las estrategias keynesianas para tener bajo control el ciclo de actividad económica y recesión. En contraposición al *mainstream* dominante hasta aquel período, se difunden ideas radicales como las de Hayek, capaces de ofrecer la interpretación de implicaciones metodológicas destinadas a revelar los errores del estatismo invasivo, sobre todo el implementado a través de maniobras correctivas de mercado en nombre de una política de justicia e igualdad social que interviene sobre la posición económica y social de los individuos.

Se afirma, entonces, la doctrina del “libre mercado” que sostiene la capacidad del sistema para autorregularse a través de ajustes espontáneos de las variables económicas, volviendo a equilibrar al sistema cada vez que se genera un alejamiento del estado ideal; en otras palabras, un mundo perfecto de empleo, creatividad y crecimiento perpetuo (Hayek, 1944; Friedman, 1962). Este proyecto sigue un doble proceso: por un lado, la liberalización de los mercados a escala mundial para la libre circulación de bienes y capitales, y por otro, el ajuste progresivo de este sistema al interior de los Estados nacionales para alcanzar una libertad portadora del pleno desarrollo del mercado. El concepto de lucha por la existencia se convierte aquí en lucha por la libertad. Emerge, una vez más,

el germen del evolucionismo social y, por lo tanto, la firme praxis de la superioridad ejercitada durante todo el siglo precedente.

La eliminación de todos los obstáculos que limitan el libre mercado está entonces en la base de la formación de hegemonías financieras privadas de reglas, cuyos efectos nefastos sobre la economía real son históricamente conocidos. La paradoja es que el sistema crece, pero consolida la disparidad de ingresos y riqueza que resulta en desigualdades sociales a nivel global.

Colonialidad: la ley de la naturaleza (económico-financiera)... de los más fuertes

Con la demolición del colonialismo como orden político, la evolución sociocultural determina una nueva forma de la distinción, aquella entre colonialismo y colonialidad. En el plano interpretativo se trata de una novedad que se puede analizar a través de la estructura conceptual de la Teoría de los Sistemas Sociales de Luhmann y, particularmente, a través de operaciones que explican el funcionamiento específico del centro y las periferias en la modernidad avanzada y, por tanto, en un entorno social altamente globalizado y de elevada complejidad social (Longo, 2005, pp. 103, 105).

El esquema teórico luhmaniano, con sus conceptos de complejidad, forma de la distinción y especificación funcional, se empeña en una tarea interpretativa no inmediata, aunque su coherencia interna permite superar esta dificultad. Asumir, de hecho, que la sociedad pueda ser observada y descrita a través de sus formas de distinción (sistema/ambiente, centro/periferia, inclusión/exclusión, dominio/dependencia, guerra/paz, oferta/demanda, etc.) nos permite establecer lo que significa la generalización de una forma para todas las demás (Luhmann, 1984). Si se acepta este punto de partida, el sistema puede ser estudiado como “autopoiético”, es decir, capaz de producir y reproducir los elementos que lo constituyen, pero también como autorreferencial, es decir, en grado de auto producir sus características constitutivas y su organización.

En la forma de la distinción dominio/dependencia, vemos, con el fin del colonialismo, la consolidación de una “práctica” global que modifica las representaciones clásicas de dominación expresadas en la modernidad, pero no la estructura de las relaciones centro/periferia presentes a escala global. En otras palabras, la dominación colonial pasa de la dominación administrativa-territorial a la dimensión de la colonialidad, un

estadio post-colonización que representa “el dominio del imaginario y la represión cultural” (Quijano, 1992, pp. 439-440). El concepto indica una nueva configuración de la relación dominio/ dependencia, menos violenta pero igualmente invasiva, que continúa perpetuándose aun después del fin histórico del colonialismo.

En resumen, el control de las instituciones sociopolíticas y económico-financieras, de los recursos de producción y del trabajo está, en realidad, en manos de un centro de poder (población dominante) en detrimento de las periferias (poblaciones subyugadas) (Quijano, 2000, p. 381) sin implicar necesariamente relaciones racistas o de *hard power*. Es por eso por lo que la noción de colonialidad, aunque todavía indeterminada, es hoy la única fórmula que puede explicar el nuevo enfoque estratégico del imperialismo capitalista en relación con los países dominados (Triki, 2011, p. 217).

Este es el modelo constitutivo del nuevo orden mundial, que presupone el control —a través de dispositivos gubernamentales potenciados por el capitalismo de matriz neoliberal— del sistema económico-financiero global, lo que representa con más fuerza nuevos condicionamientos, nuevas diferencias sociales y sobre todo nuevos procesos de inclusión/exclusión entre centro y periferia. Las relaciones sociales, las clasificaciones raciales y sexuales (especie, género, raza), las dinámicas económicas de producción y explotación, la centralización de Occidente como *locus* privilegiado de la producción y difusión del conocimiento, por lo tanto, no están extintas, sino que siguen reproduciéndose cada vez con más intensidad (Lander, 2000; Castro, 2007).

En este escenario, las restricciones sobre los flujos a nivel global de mercaderías y capitales son removidos bajo la presión del capital financiero que circula mundialmente, y esta hegemonía garantiza que todos los países del mundo persigan un conjunto común de políticas neoliberales. Es interesante, aunque distópico, observar que el evolucionismo social juega un papel fundamental en este proceso de cambio (colonialidad), y cómo “repropone”, aunque en diferentes planos, las mismas condiciones del pasado. Para este orden de ideas, el vínculo entre las concepciones de colonialismo y colonialidad sigue siendo fuerte.

Quijano identifica otros rasgos clave con respecto a las formas, a las funciones y a los modos del actuar social con respecto al fenómeno de la colonialidad.

Un primer rasgo distintivo, de la colonialidad, se refiere a la clasificación social (universal) en el mundo capitalista (Quijano, 2000, p. 374). Un camino iniciado mucho tiempo antes en Estados Unidos y que ha consolidado con el tiempo la división racial entre europeos (raza superior, dominante) y no europeos (razas heterogéneas, inferiores, dominadas), legitimada por los preceptos del evolucionismo social a través

de la prueba intangible de la marca fenotípica y el color de la piel como evidencia científica de una “diferencia” biológica.

Otro rasgo característico se refiere a la “colonialidad de las relaciones culturales e intersubjetivas” (Quijano, 2000, p. 379), una prerrogativa que ha llevado el modelo de dominación eurocéntrica a la desintegración de las formas culturales e intelectuales de conocimiento de las poblaciones dominadas, o al menos a la imposición de la “perspectiva eurocéntrica en las relaciones intersubjetivas de los dominados” (p. 379) como único, universal y permisible modo de producción y transmisión del conocimiento.

Por último, la “colonialidad de la articulación política y geopolítica” (Quijano, 2000, p. 375) completa una vez más el cuadro global de la clasificación territorial y de las poblaciones, basadas en diferencias étnicas y raciales, según el modelo eurocéntrico del capitalismo neoliberal en el que también hay una élite colonizada (Memmi, 1979) que se convierte, adoctrina y utiliza en los procesos de intermediación de la llamada expropiación y explotación de los recursos de países que aún no han salido de la periferia colonial y para participar en el desarrollo en beneficio exclusivo de los países que componen el centro (Quijano, 2000, p. 376).

Es evidente que en el concepto de colonialismo existe un mecanismo que es la base de los procesos de inclusión/exclusión con respecto a las relaciones de poder que hoy son predominantemente de matriz económico-financiera. En esta forma de la distinción, las periferias conservan una valencia negativa más o menos grave en base al contexto observado, pero que en cualquier caso revelan desigualdades que aseguran el funcionamiento del conjunto y que producen esa división internacional del trabajo no prevista por Marx, “un modelo [espacial] de desarrollo y subdesarrollo que puede dividir a la humanidad en dos campos —el *have* y el *have not*— separados por una fosa aún más profunda que la que opone burguesía y proletariado en los países capitalistas avanzados” (Sweezy, 1972, p. 149).

Si se toma esta perspectiva se puede ver cómo en la sociedad moderna se produce, al mismo tiempo, una mayor igualdad y una mayor desigualdad; más legalidad y más ilegalidad; más riqueza y más pobreza; más conocimiento y más ignorancia; más democracia y menos participación; más seguridad y más riesgos (Castañeda Cuéllar, 1998) y si frente a esto la política no proporciona estabilidad de las expectativas, sino que contribuye, más que nada, a desviarlas en otras direcciones, está el problema concreto de cómo se puede absorber la incertidumbre que se deriva y de cuáles son las verdaderas razones de la crisis sociopolítica que afecta a gran parte de la población mundial. La suposición es que si funciona la selección de las decisiones públicas fun-

cionar, sin duda, la selección “natural” del dinero y de las finanzas.

Las teorías evolucionistas en general y el darwinismo social en particular han ofrecido una justificación ideológica-superestructural al orden social del capitalismo y del imperialismo desde finales del siglo XIX, en una sociedad liberal en la que todos los ciudadanos “teóricamente” son iguales, y han permitido justificar las grandes diferencias de clase con motivos científicos: la inferioridad natural de las clases o de los pueblos “subalternos”. Pero, prescindiendo de las motivaciones evolucionistas y de las mismas intenciones de Darwin, esta práctica ha guiado y continúa guiando las políticas de los últimos dos siglos, e impone a las comunidades sociales un alto precio a pagar: para que los más aptos sigan evolucionando, los menos aptos son necesarios y, cuando faltan, hay que crearlos. Y su creación ya no está legitimada por referencias a la biología o la evolución. La economía se convierte en una segunda naturaleza y, por lo tanto, no necesita justificación.

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ARTÍCULOS

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COMMON IDENTITY BUILDING FOR STABLE CONFLICT REDUCTION¹

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Abstract

A new way of analyzing international politics, using a qualitative approach, in order to avoid alternation between war and peace, and foster the establishment of stable conditions of peace through the building of common identities in wider regional contexts.

Keywords

International relations, social constructivism, conflicts analysis, Catastrophe Theory.

Resumen

Una nueva forma de analizar la política internacional, utilizando un enfoque cualitativo, para evitar la alternancia entre la guerra y la paz, y fomentar el establecimiento de condiciones estables de paz mediante la construcción de identidades comunes en contextos regionales más amplios.

Palabras clave

Relaciones internacionales, constructivismo social, análisis de conflictos, Teoría de Catástrofes.

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Preliminary considerations

The International system sometimes reveals that it behaves on the basis of a kind of “genetic code”, which —once known— should allow us a better understanding of the discontinuous alternation of war and peace. We shall try to verify this hypothesis, and under what conditions, in the long run a similar “program” would tend to produce important effects, which would limit the use of organized violence. With the aim of underlining how this happens in the international system, we choose to employ a mathematical, topological model that is greatly efficient in showing how such an “internal scheme” really exists and works.

Reference to a systemic, pre-coded program will not be favorably looked upon for the fact it gives a pre-deterministic vision of reality. However, with our approach the non-deterministic factor is not ruled out altogether, since *how* and *when* the event will take place cannot be pre-determined. In other words, it can be said that this approach hypothesizes the existence of a *predisposition*, but not of a systemic *predetermination*. In this way it tries to overcome the limits of quantitative approaches —be they deterministic and rationalistic, systemic or reductionist— by introducing a highly evolved *qualitative* theoretical method, which is able to deal with the challenge posed by the presence of both chaos and complexity, thus building a new constructivist perspective.

The first objective of this study will be to show how —albeit mainly theoretically— by departing from a revision of International Relations theories it is possible to construct a model, which is able to represent the changes in the state of the international system over a fairly long period of time. Thus, it should be able to have a strong explanatory power, not only towards modern and contemporary systems, but also with regard to those previous to the Treaty of Westphalia, as well as for those likely to be foreseen in the near globalized future.

We will start with a brief description of a particularly efficient and innovative interpretative scheme regarding the functioning of the international system. This scheme organizes the analysis of the international system in four components, or levels: the *structural* level (derived from Kenneth Waltz), the *interactional* level (Barry Buzan), the level of *relations* (Glenn Snyder) and the level of the *units* (Hans Morgenthau).

First of all, we will explain the relations of interdependence which exist between the levels of this hierarchy, describing all the effects that ensue) from the top of the systemic structure downwards, that is to say, towards the level of the units, i.e., States, and/or all possible international non-State actors (*Top-Down Process*). In the second step, we will

outline the *Bottom-Up processes*, specifically, those mechanisms by way of which the level of the *units* influences the higher levels of the systemic structure, causing what can be defined as the “crystallization” —the term means a process by which “certain permanent characteristics” gradually form— of the decisional processes into *consolidated relationships*, or structured interactions, which are able to produce feedback effects on the morphological aspect of the systemic structure.

Normally, in the long term, the systemic structure prevails on the level of the units, obliging the units to evolve and/or put into act modes of behavior, which are able to contribute to the reproduction of structural principles and processes governing international relations. But under certain conditions it appears to be theoretically possible for the units to escape from the “behavioral trap” that the system in which they live imposes on them. In fact, the systemic structure moves on the basis of strong principles which, not only make its survival certain, but also guarantee that the systemic functioning always evolves along an established set of rigid rules. However, in a mature system the units become more and more aware of their potential and hence, are able to evolve in a way that allows them to render obsolete the rules that uphold the systemic structure, bringing about its downfall or, at least, its deep structural change. At the end of this study, we will see in detail how, why and under which conditions this can happen.

1. A theoretical scheme to represent the international system

The model described in the following chapters can be defined as an interpretive scheme of the international system in which the informative principles of Realism are preferred to those of the Liberalists, but the conclusions reached at the end of this study are closer to the constructivist approach. Even if we do not unconditionally accept the assumptions concerning human nature that are typical of classical realism, nevertheless we cannot deny that after Waltz (1959) realism finally consents a systemic and structural vision, which enlarges our ability to understand reality, giving us an *Image* of a superior level. But at the end it should become clear how our basic assumptions are above all constructivists, given the importance attributed to the role of reiterated decisions developed by the actors on the ground of their subjective perceptions, their ideas and values.

As we will be able to show, some of the basic assumptions of realism are best suited to our heuristic prospective, which is better defined by the construction of an explanatory model based on the use of topological surfaces taken from the *Catastrophe Theory*

by René Thom (1972). According to this theory, the evolution of every single system is the result of a sequence of preordained transitions, that can be foreseen, but only in their trend. Such a model—at least until the fundamental characteristics of the system in question remain unchanged—will not require the use of new explanatory factors in order to include new events, since every possible event is already included in the system, as “information” which will take on a specific “form” when the necessary conjectured condition occurs.

This scheme, when integrated with the topological approach, is able to revisit the various contributions made by realism to the study of international systems, by forcing them to enter into a reliable interpretative network, which is rigid enough to indicate which elements should be used and where they should be collocated, and yet sufficiently flexible to allow the great variety of events to be represented.

Besides, one of the emerging problems with which the theory of International Relations must deal is connected with the difficulty of providing a correct interpretation of internal-external relationships; for this reason, an interpretative scheme or model, which contains all the characteristics mentioned so far, cannot exempt itself from trying to overcome this “great divide”. In effect, as the process of globalization progressively consolidates, it becomes more and more evident that the study of international systems cannot ignore the role of the internal variables of the units which make it up, nor the weight of the structural variables in the system itself, or—as a consequence—the reciprocal conditioning and the feedback that come into play between the external and internal. Thus, the *idiosyncratic elements* and the *subjective decisions* of the human actors (Image I of Waltz), the results of the *internal political process* of the units (Image II) and the *structural limitations* (Image III) are, in any case, to be collocated at the same level of importance when it comes to the general understanding of international relations. Instead, only the particular considerations and the peculiarities of any single case study allow us to emphasize the role of any one of the mentioned Images in comparison with the others.

In this sense, the process of European integration is emblematic: the internal decisions of single member States are tightly linked with the constraints and objectives of the Union (a supranational union) and, yet again, with the conditioning of international structures, to the point that the borders between the internal and the external disappear, and it is no longer possible to distinguish between the two. This, at least, only when it is necessary to make the analysis of the system easier: in this case then, we are justified in making such a distinction.

In building the theoretical scheme that we are going to use, we decided not to abandon any of the best theoretical approaches developed until now: in so doing, we are likely to show that it is possible to integrate many different perspectives; furthermore, to a certain extent, this permits us to resolve also the abovementioned internal-external dilemma.

As previously said, our scheme is made up of four levels. Starting from the lowest, the first one reflects the position of Morgenthau regarding the role carried out by the units' attributes in the international context. These are integrated with the considerations made by other authors (Buzan, 1993; Snyder, 1997), who have gone to lengths to breakdown and analyze those processes, which bring the units to produce observable actions and behaviors that are relevant for the international system. In other words, in order to be able to evaluate the impact of the "level of the units", it is necessary to define the *comprehensive situation* within which these units are represented.

If therefore we conceive the latter in a context of actions and reactions —and this can be done best through a hierarchical network (Saaty, 1996)— it becomes evident how they combine their capabilities, their objectives, their preferences and perceptions as well as their strategies, to the point that these produce decisions, and therefore actions, which are then revealed on the concrete level of international relations. To express this synthetically in "waltzian" words, the "level of the units" can be said to be composed of the sum and of the interaction of the elements which belong to Image I and II.

Let us ignore the intermediate levels for a moment and go immediately to the fourth, the "structural" level, which can be compared to image III of Waltz and is made up of two components: the *deep structure* and the *distributive structure*. Both of these terms were used by Buzan (1993, pp. 19-80), who has made a radical re-adaptation of the systemic prospective of Waltz, making it easier to adjust it to the description of complexity of the international system, but without renouncing to the principle of anarchy, which is fundamental to Waltz's position. In particular, regarding the first component, Buzan (1993, p. 78) introduces the hypothesis according to which the principle of anarchic order can exist alongside a progressive increase of *functional differentiation* of units, which until then had been seen as an element rigidly reflecting the principle of sovereignty. Instead, according to neorealism, the principle of anarchy required the unconditional protection of the sovereignty of actors, yet from Buzan's perspective (i.e., of "structural realism") this is no longer necessary. The principle of anarchy can therefore present itself with different intensity, while even the sovereignty of the units and of the

States is not absolute but can be modulated. It is evident how such new perspectives allow the realistic approach to face up to the changes affecting the international system today in a much more efficient way. In fact, the international system, without losing its characteristic anarchy, is composed by units which are evidently —albeit differently— dependent upon one another, since they have to carry out specific roles in a context of reciprocal interaction, thus making them significantly distinct from a functional point of view.

After having defined the “deep” aspects of the structure, that is, those which characterize its peculiarity, it is also necessary to discover what “moves” and causes the changes in the system itself, therefore defining the role and the functions of the second structural component, specifically, the distributive one. For this reason, it is necessary to introduce a correct notion of power. To do this Buzan (1993, p. 67) defines a first component of power, relating to the units, the “subjective” power. Subsequently, he defines a second one, which instead regards the “distributive structure”, deriving from the way the reciprocal positioning and polarization of the units influences the access and the use of this very power in the context of the international system. This second aspect therefore completes the structural framework and clarifies the binding function between it and the other three levels.

Of the two remaining intermediate levels yet to be considered, we will first look at the third, the “interactional” level, which can also be traced back to the previously cited work by Buzan. The author attributes structural values to two particular aspects that guide the interaction activity among the system’s units: one related to technology and one related to the complexity of “*shared values and norms*” of the units themselves. Regarding the first, it is quite evident how the development and diffusion of technology (taken in the widest possible sense, therefore military technology, information, communication, transport, financial services,...) and its qualitative changes, make up a complexity of constraints and possibilities with an objective weight, in the sense that they have a unequivocal effect on the interaction capacity between units, thus influencing the relative cost, as well as the length and quality of the interaction itself. In the same way, the complexity of “*shared values and norms*” influences the level of cohesion/contrast (competition) which exists internally and externally with regard to systemic units, and also influences their interaction strategies, hence making them either more conflictual or more cooperative.

In other words, just as there are structurally very stable aspects of the system (the above mentioned “*deep structure*” and the “*distribution of power*”, both belonging to the

first level), there are others as well which influence actors in a particularly lasting, yet not so rigid and unchangeable way. As we will see, the development of these two factors is the product of a purported “condensation” between the activities of the system’s units, a sort of “social environmental residue”, which in the long run takes on a systemic valence and also conditions its existence.

Lastly, let us come to the description of the functions of the second level, i.e., the relational one, inspired by Snyder’s work. We have left this level as the last one to be considered, because the role which it carries out in the scheme is very particular: specifically, it connects the upper levels to the first level, the one pertaining to the units. In effect, a problem that could be seen as arising immediately in the conceptual development of our scheme was tied to the difficulty of finding a way to connect the variegated results of the units’ behavior to the very stable structural level of the system.

As far as the opposite effect is concerned, that is the direct conditioning of the “structural” and “interactional” levels on the level of the units, there is nothing to add to what has already been said starting with neorealism. Perhaps, it may be noteworthy to note that such conditioning comes about rather rapidly, almost instantaneously, in the sense that the system’s constraints are always present and tend to limit and direct the life and actions of the units. *Vice versa*, still in the context of a systemic perspective, it is not clear if—at least in the long term—“the structural stability” can be conditioned or not by the unsettled evolution of units on the first level. Thus, our aim would be to find out if the international system’s evolution is entirely preordained—and therefore, if it is the result of a rigid and immutable evolutionistic program, present in the very structure of the system, that unconditionally affects all the elements of the subsystems— or if instead it is rather the consequence of the constant *interaction* between the first and fourth level.

As we will see through the use of the topological model (chapter 3), following the introduction of the relational level, the most reasonable hypothesis seems to be the second. Precisely, the relational context of behaviors allows us to explain a type of feedback that, starting from the level of the units, very slowly makes its way towards the structural level, influencing the structure or, to be precise, the morphology of the system itself. It is easy to explain how this happens: strategies, objectives, contrasting or common interests, alliances or reciprocal interdependence between the actors, which are all generated in the context of the first level, are destined to interact and, although they are chosen by the intervention of systemic factors, they have the tendency to progressively take on a permanent characteristic, namely to “crystallize”,

hence creating the second level, the relational one. In this way, the reiterated behaviors and choices which have developed from the units' level can start to perform a certain feedback effect with regard to the upper levels, particularly with reference to the systemic ones. It is clear of course that the process is slow and progressive, being made up of two distinct processes—given that, once “crystallized”, the elements of the relational level must be able to contrast the structural inertia of the system— but this slowness should not be deceiving.

Even when faced with a clear case of “ultra-stability” of the international system, the use of the relational level allows the creation of a forward and backward mechanism which deprives the same system of its unconditioned predominance in generating the changes, thus giving the possibility of singling out a pre-existing cause for a possible collapse of the international structure when choosing the units.

Taking into account the constraints given by the three superior levels, all the different units interact among themselves and create a real scenario, that is, an “observable behavior”. This definition allows us to introduce the last element of our interpretive model, the one which summarizes and reinforces the underlying logic of the scheme itself, and more specifically, the topological surfaces taken from the “Catastrophe Theory”, an ideal tool when analyzing observable behaviors (and it is not by chance that these geometrical surfaces are also known as “*surfaces of behavior*”). By using these particular geometric structures, it is possible to study the *forms* and *changes* in behaviors—that is, their *morphology* and *morphogenesis*— taking into account the systemic constraints which have enough power to generate a strong structural stability in the system in relation to which it is difficult, for the units within it, not to comply with. In this sense, the “observable behavior” must be understood in the widest possible meaning, as it refers not only to the result of the actions of the single units, but also to the functioning consequence of the systemic structure.

Up to this point we have tried to define an interpretive scheme capable of representing the international system, but the “key” which will make the whole scheme work—that is, the model which will allow our representation to change—is still missing, at least until we introduce the abovementioned Catastrophe Theory. This theory was developed by French mathematician René Thom (1972) in his main work dedicated to topological structures and their capacity to describe the functioning of real systems in a parsimonious way. In the following chapter, before demonstrating how such model can be used to combine the various theoretical hypotheses referred to up this point, we will first underline its heuristic potentials.

2. The descriptive and explanatory powers of topological surfaces

The idea of using the Catastrophe Theory model in the field of International Relations was introduced not only after reflecting on some statements made by Kenneth Waltz on the particular stability of behaviors and the observable interactions in the context of international relations, but also on the grounds of Modelski reflections regarding the endogenous factors which determine change, and which appear as stable in long term curves.

It can be said that similar considerations are also the basis of the theory developed—in very different contexts—by Thom in order to obtain a valid tool for the description of those phenomena which apparently have strongly chaotic characteristics, such as discontinuity and apparent instability, but that in the course of time invariably take on an extremely stable behavior, a characteristic which in the long term seems to be common to all complex systems. In fact, Thom's theory follows the new tendencies concerning the study of phenomena characterized by the contemporary presence of Chaos and Complexity—theory of “Deterministic chaos” (Prigogine, 1993)—, while at the same time it is valuable in studying the behavior of units in contexts which are not only highly structured, but also very stable.

The “Catastrophe Theory” is a simple and sophisticated tool for evaluating and describing reality: it is indeed the ideal type of instrument to help observation, as it is able to free the perception of observers from the fuzziness and inaccuracy they are naturally subjected to, hence allowing them to recognize the principles which really decide the system's functioning. The end of positivistic certainties and the dawning of the awareness, according to which we are forced to live in a reality dominated by uncertainty, obliges us to look for new heuristic approaches, which Thom thinks may be found by rediscovering the ancient ways of thinking, which are not by any means obsolete, and specifically those very ways that allowed ancient philosophers to understand and intuitively recognize the basic principles of reality without the use of modern instruments.

By using mathematical and statistical methods, which are thought to contain unlimited descriptive possibilities, we are able to break down reality into numbers and proportions which have been assigned an absolute value, thus ignoring the weight of indetermination and imprecision through which we are condemned to perceive reality. The rationalistic mentality has conditioned our vision of the world to the point that it has limited our ability to take into account “rebellious” phenomena, such as discontinuity and chaos.

By making a direct reference to Heraclitus above all, Thom reviews the heuristic strategy of the ancient thinkers, which he considers based on an intelligent use of the evocative qualities of images, the ideal instrument to realize and capture the values of qualitative aspects—which are often crucial in defining the evolution of a system. Enriching such strategies with the possibilities offered by the most recent ideas in topological mathematics—which are able to stand up to the challenge given by discontinuous phenomena. Thom (1993) developed a theory that is able to represent the enormous variety of observable behavior by using very uncommon geometric images, thus reaching a “rigorously qualitative thought” (p. 29).

According to Thom, the multiplicity of manifestations produced departing from the existence of any system can be traced back to a limited number of morphological models which show how such multiplicity is finally “forced” to take on certain “forms”. He has demonstrated (Thom, 1980) that there are seven “*elementary catastrophes*” (i.e., seven *topological surfaces*) which are needed in order to represent the behavior of systems in the context of our whole reality. From the first and simplest (a “*fold catastrophe*”), to the most complex (the “*parabolic umbilicus catastrophe*”) the choice falls on the one which, given the size of the problem—that is, of its complexity or more precisely, of the complexity of the system being analyzed and of the various behaviors it can take on—can describe its “morphological behavior” best.

Thom has been able to demonstrate these intuitions starting from the idea that these geometric surfaces must be numerically limited, as systems evidently possess a *structural stability* which obliges the “infinite variety” to stay within certain behavioral schemes. In this sense, the infinite variety is only an “illusion of perspective”, the result of our incapacity to grasp regularity in relation to the dimensions of time and space of events, which are either too big or too small in relation to the proportions with which we perceive reality. The work of Thom—the validity of which is widely acknowledged today, regardless of the fact that it has been criticized for its somewhat metaphysical character—therefore sets out to demonstrate how the structural stability of systems is a basic reality and as such can be represented by qualitative mathematical models based on the use of geometrical images.

3. Morphology and Morphogenesis of the international systems

At this point we need to specify the logical sequence that will lead us to define the topological model that should be able to represent the interactions between units in the

context of an international systemic structure. First of all, this means that by using the right topological surface we will prove the existence of a relationship of dependence between the components on the interactional level (defined by “*technological quality*” and “*shared values and norms*”), on one hand, and the use of *organized violence* (war, but even violent conflicts), on the other. By observing Fig. 1, it is possible to see how such a relationship can be generically described by a “*cuspl behavioral surface*” (a topological surface, where we can see how the *structure of the system* conditions the *behavior of the units*, that are subjected to the influence of no more than two primary factors) which, among other things, is able to underline the different states (or intensities) that can be taken on by the antithetical binomial war/peace.

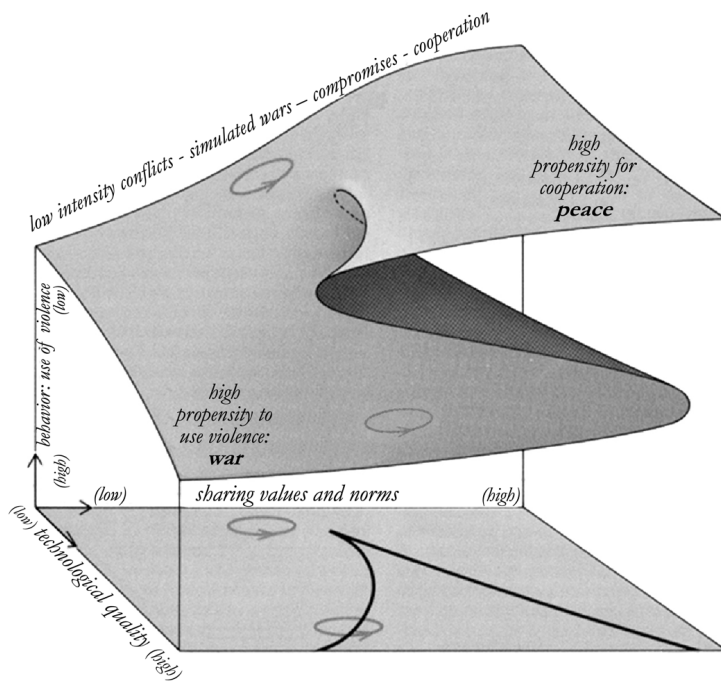


Figure 1. Relationship between war and peace described by a cusp catastrophe

An easy way to understand the mechanisms by which topological surfaces function is to compare the “behavior” adopted by the units to the one of spheres rolling over the topological surface. These spheres are “propelled” or “pushed” by the so called “*factors of behavior*”, that will decide where the behavioral sphere will actually come to rest on the topological (or behavioral) surface; in this way, the model will

reveal the type (or “quality”) of the events, resulting from the shift of the sphere from one position to another.²

In our case, the first “*behavioral factor*” that affects the “movement” of the sphere representing the behaviors that can be adopted in the international system is the “*technological quality factor*”; this one corresponds to the X-axis in the lower plane of Fig. 1: this factor can have a low or high value depending on whether, in the regional context analyzed, the States that are part of it have, on average, a low or, on the contrary, high level of technological development.

The second “*behavioral factor*” that contributes to the “movement” of our sphere (but gives the opposite direction) is the “*shared values and norms factor*” (linked to the sharing of cultural and identity elements); this one corresponds to the Y-axis in the lower plane of Fig. 1: this factor may have a low or high value depending on whether, in the regional context analyzed, the States that are part of it have on average a low or, at the contrary, a high level of shared common identities.

Generally speaking, it can be noted that when the factor named “*technological quality*” is very low, the behaviors of our systemic units are placed in positions which are strongly dependent on the development of the “*shared values and norms*” factor. This concerns systems which are not very evolved from a technological point of view: if there is an increase in the sense of common belonging (therefore, the establishing, defining or reinforcement of borders) the units are led to behave in such a way, that from a state of relatively low intensity conflict (because of the lack of offensive capacity) they will tend towards an attitude of compromise and cooperation. On the other hand, an increase in technological quality puts the non-conflictual tendency at risk, which, as we have seen, is connected to the creation of common borders subsequent to the increase of the sense of “*shared values and norms*”.

Among other things, this relationship seems to suggest the following rule: there is an ideal relationship between these two factors, in view of which actors decide to prefer peace. Consequently, in order to prevent a situation of conflict, the relative value of “*technological quality*” should always be a little “inferior” to that of “*shared values and norms*”. In fact, if the “*technological quality*” becomes “superior” to the corresponding

2. For some overviews of the theoretical principles of the “Catastrophe Theory”, and its explanatory, interpretative, descriptive and predictive possibilities (also in contexts related to international relations), see Adelman and Hihn (1982); Dockery and Chiatti (1986); Flay (1978); Holt and Brian (1978); Isnard and Zeeman (1976); Maldonado (2006); Mathews, White and Long (1999); Oliva, Peters and Murthy (1981); Schubert (1989); Varian (1979); Zeeman (1976); Zeeman (1978).

level of “*shared values and norms*”, it becomes inevitable for units to fall onto the lower plain of the surface, which is characterized by a high tendency towards conflict (see Fig. 1).³

In other words, every sociopolitical system should always aim at “converting” the growth of technological quality which it is able to achieve, either by strengthening sociopolitical and cultural growth, or by achieving cohesion between the elements that make it up, and therefore by strengthening “shared values and norms”. If this does not happen, there is a risk that technological progress will become a source of contrast which will be difficult to heal.

Continuing the description of the underlying logic of our model, it is necessary to take into consideration the effect caused by the introduction of elements from the first level of the international systemic structure, the one defined as “structural”. This effect would act on: *a*) the *positions of the plains*, that is to say on the *dimensions* of the topological surface (this is so in the case of the topological factor defined as “divergence”, which corresponds to the concept of “power distribution”, or “polarity” in the international systems: see Fig. 2), and *b*) on the *shape* of these same surfaces (this is the case of the so called “*butterfly factor*” connected to the principle of order and to the principle of functional differentiation of the units (see Fig. 3 and below in the text).

It can already be said that by merely introducing the *principle of polarity* a first, important morphological variation of the behavioral surfaces will be caused. By keeping the other parameters constant, the splintering of power —with the following proliferation of rival poles— causes an increase in the frequency with which reiterated shifts occur (in topological jargon, “*hysteresis*”) between belligerent behavior (inferior plain of the surfaces) and non-belligerent behavior (superior plain).

3. It is useful to remember that it is not possible to measure the intensity of the two factors of behavior in a quantitative fashion, given we are dealing with elements that are defined also on the basis of components possessing strong qualitative characteristics, which have different intensities and so will make the units behave in different ways (that is even antithetical). At this point, however, it will be the shape of the topological surface that will make the difference. For this reason, we have written the words “inferior” and “superior” in brackets.

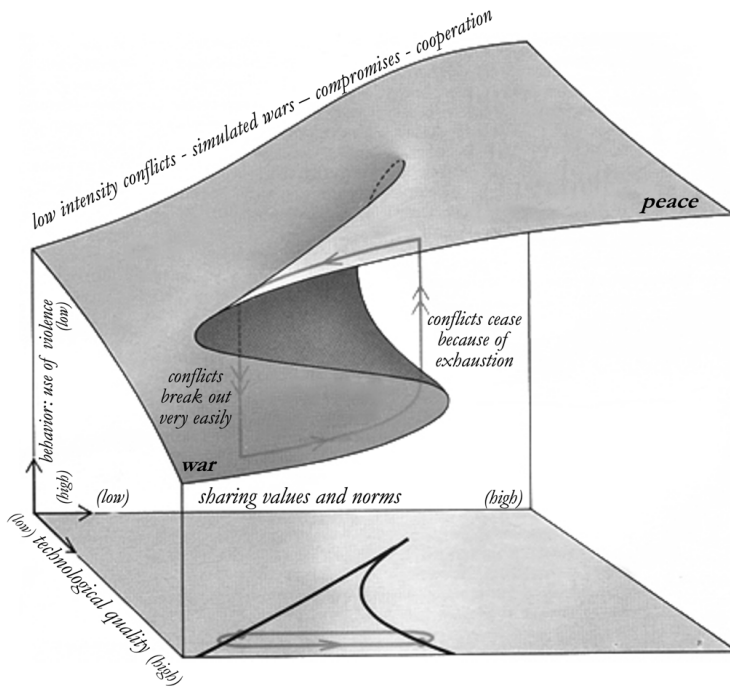


Figure 2. Changes on the cusp surface, due to the introduction of the principle of polarity

As a consequence of this, the “hysteresis” fold —that is, the corresponding complexity of bifurcation (the two lines drawn on the lower bi-dimensional plane, which describe the two alternative states derived from the interaction of the control factors “*technological quality*” and “*shared values and norms*”)— becomes longer and diverges towards the left, therefore towards the area where conflict is more probable (compare the aspect of Fig. 2 with that of Fig. 3). Besides this, the “hysteresis” fold becomes wider and causes a net increase in the probability that situations of conflict will occur.

In a context like this, a belligerent conflict will easily break out (since we are trapped in a *conflictual hysteresis*) and will only cease when both parties are exhausted. It can be said that when the technological level is *relatively high*, the units have a tendency to reject or abandon the ideal of sharing values and norms. In other words, the borders of regional systems —which potentially reduce the conflict between the units of which they are composed— are seen as fragile and insubstantial, while the units prefer to close themselves up in themselves, strengthening their own sovereignty and taking on autocratic attitudes and policies. This mechanism can be explained in view of the fact that

the growth in technological capacity not only increases the opportunity of inter-relationships, but it can also make the unit more aggressive.

Inevitably such a process is carried out within the framework of the model, given that until this moment we have not yet considered the so called “*deep structure*”, which is made up of the “*principle of order*” and of “*functional un-differentiation*”. In reality, this means that for the moment this factor has been tacitly considered as being stable at its maximum level (in other words, the units are all totally undifferentiated from a functional point of view and, therefore, the principle of sovereignty is completely respected, and anarchy is “complete”). In effect this induces the unit to act purely on the basis of the two abovementioned “interactional” control factors (the level of “*shared values and norms*” and the level of “*technological quality*”). In addition, as we have also previously noted, in contrast with the case observed in Fig. 1, the introduction of the “*principle of polarity*” has changed the context: as a consequence, once a certain level of technological quality has been exceeded, the systemic structure (i.e., the behavioral surface) takes on a morphological shape that makes the unit particularly inclined to enter into conflict. Therefore, paradoxically, upon introduction of the first modification, the factor of “*technological quality*” maintains and increases its double-fronted characteristic and has a tendency to make the negative effects prevail on the positive. In Fig. 2 the extent to which the situation has worsened becomes obvious. The conflictual component deriving from the increase of social interaction between groups of individuals and/or units has already been well emphasized (Richardson, 1960). It is therefore evident how the *principle of polarity*—tied to the unequal distribution of resources—in the presence of highly undifferentiated units (therefore, autocratic and not inclined or willing to come to an agreement) easily counterbalance—in a strongly negative way—the unit’s tendency to *share* borders established on the basis of “*shared values and norms*”, therefore favoring instead the tendency of *aggressive expansions*.

However, the international system has mechanisms which “compensate” the effects of “conflictual hysteresis”. These mechanisms can be traced back to the previously mentioned factor of *functional differentiation*. Contrary to what happens after the introduction of the *principle of polarity*, a greater functional differentiation of the units indeed causes an increase in the cost of the conflict, which helps to stabilize the system. In the case of the topological structure derived from the introduction of this new factor (see the “*butterfly catastrophe*” of Fig. 3, a morphological evolution of the “*cuspid catastrophe*”, with two more topological “dimensions”), the form of the surface changes and a new “*behavioral pocket*” emerges, characterized by a “controlled or regulated conflictuality”,

a sort of “governed turbulence” (Rosenau, 1990). Inside this “pocket” roles are given and expectations are more secure, even when referring to the use of force.

In other words, the units whose behaviors can be placed in this area of the topological surface “know” better how the others behave (even if only in an approximate way) and so they also know which ones could become aggressive towards them, or which ones would not be inclined to adopt belligerent behavior, or yet again they know on whom they can depend if an emergency should arise, be it military, economic, political, or diplomatic.

The name of the new surface is derived from the particular “pocket” in the center of the surface itself, in which new modes of interaction can take place: it can be classified in the category of compromise of “governed turbulence”. This new surface reveals the fact that even if the present systemic structural context survives, actors start *learning* to deal with violence in a brand new and different way.

This in fact happens when there is a growing functional differentiation of the units, which however does not lessen the principle of anarchy. We could say that the functional differentiation causes a “reassuring” effect on the units, which are now forced to accept regulated intermediary behaviors. In this way, the topological structure which was initially used to provide a generic description of the relationship between the intensity of the use of organized violence in the context of competitive interaction, on one hand, and the factors which make up the interactive level of our theoretical scheme (“*cusps catastrophe*” of Fig. 1 and 2), on the other, is finally put into a *mature context*, where even the fundamental principle of anarchy is “mature” (Buzan, 1993).

It could be said that the two new control factors literally add a new “dimension” to the political behavior between actors. Therefore, through a “*butterfly catastrophe*”, we obtain a valid topological model for the entire complex of international systemic structure on which the various behaviors of the systemic units can “move”. The usefulness of the model seems to be indirectly revealed by the fact that it is even able to solve the discussion which arises —especially within the realist theories— between supporters of the anti-conflictual tendency of unipolarity and those who instead are convinced that it is bipolarity, oligopolarity or even multipolarity that reduces international tensions. In our model there is room for each of these configurations, as it allows many possible results, may they be conflictual or pacific, in light of the “area” in which the unit is collocated: outside the *pocket of “governed turbulence”*, the proliferation of poles generates conflictual tendencies, while an increase of polarization reduces the risk of “*conflictual hysteresis*”. On the other hand, when the units are in the

“pocket”, the proliferation of the poles can also cause an effect opposite to the one just mentioned: specifically, it favors the functional differentiation of the units and therefore allows for the “pocket” to be enlarged with a stabilizing effect. As a consequence, in this area of the surface polarization is deleterious, because it leads to the shrinkage of the “pocket”.

Analyzing the morphology of the behavioral surfaces, it is possible to observe how a further increase in the factor of “*technological quality*” can make the unit leave the “*behavioral pocket*” —which could be defined as a “safe place”— and once again they risk falling into a behavioral hysteresis. This indeed corresponds to what actually happens, and it can be avoided only if one of the two following cases occur: *a*) enlargement of the “pocket” of “*governed turbulence*”, which can only happen if the effects of the positive feedback coming from the cooperative learning processes have “crystallized” in the system; moreover, this occurs if the increase in technological quality exerts sequential positive effects, both on the level of the units and on the relational one (the link between the level of the units and the structural one), as well as on the increase of functional differentiation, which will again regulate the dimensions of the “*behavioral pocket*”; *b*) increase in the “*shared values and norms*” factor —often indirectly caused by the increase of technological quality— sufficient to compensate the negative effect produced by an increase of the latter.

However, in both cases it is necessary that a certain amount of time elapses. If this does not happen —that is, when events which should “hold” the units in the “*behavioral pocket*” have not been able to take form— then the units effectively leave the area of compromise. Consequently, time is the crucial variable that intervenes on the retroactive mechanisms linking the various levels and that qualifies them.

To summarize briefly, we have observed how the various states that the international system can take on depend on the interaction between its highly stable structural components (albeit not “absolutely immutable”) and the units within them. The crystallization of the units’ behavior (defined by Buzan by the term “Process Formation”) decides the formation of the “relational context of behavior” (Snyder, 1997), which, by influencing the factors on the higher levels (those of the systemic structure), brings about variations both in the previously mentioned “*behavioral factors*” (which influence the “position” of the different behaviors of the units on the behavioral surface and define its state), and in the structure of the system (the morphology of the planes —that is, their position— and, in general, the shape and inclination of the topological surface).

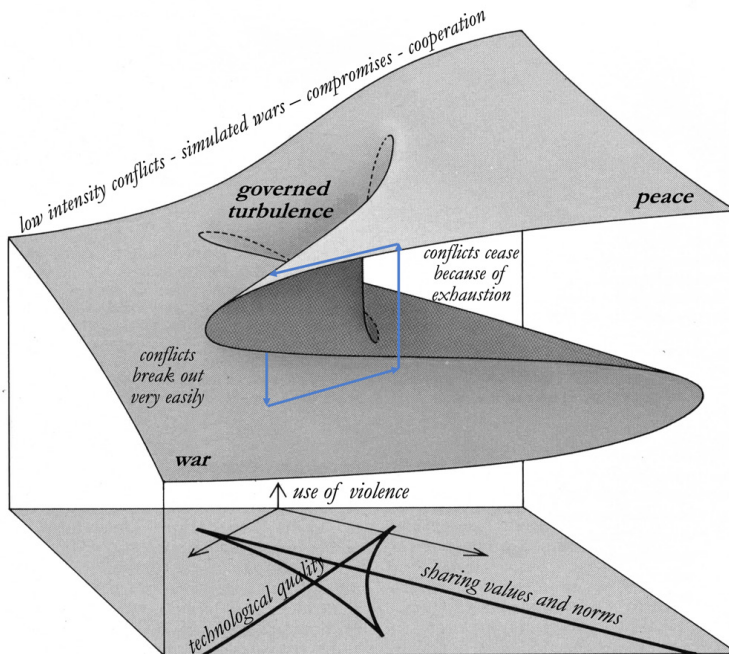


Figure 3. A butterfly surface: the result of the introduction of constraints and rules to the “deep structure”

However, this process does not upset the basic principle on which the system rests. It may change its appearance, but not the type of topological surface which will continue to exert its effects on the units in a stable way. This is in fact the main prerogative of the topological surfaces which has led us to employ the “Catastrophe Theory” for the purposes we set out to achieve: dimensions may change, but geometric properties remain unaltered.

Closing remarks

By applying the “Catastrophe theory” to the international system, we saw that when the growth of the “*technological quality*” factor exceeds, in intensity, the “*sharing of values and norms*” factor, it happens that the tendency towards conflicts significantly increases, unless the actors who could potentially be involved in such conflicts are included in a

supranational system, which facilitates a sort of constant and natural increase in the sharing of values and norms among all the members of the system itself.

An example of such a regional supranational system can be given by the European Union, which, however, presents itself as an entity still not well defined from many points of view (among the actors that are part of it there are in fact significant imbalances and inhomogeneity in the economic, fiscal, military, political, and socio-cultural domains), which is why in this particular case the full operativity of the effect generated by the “*butterfly pocket*” is not assured in a durable way. In fact, this particular situation, theoretically capable of regulating in a virtuous manner the behavior of the State actors that are included in it, is weakened and incapable of expressing all its positive effects when the differences (in terms of characteristics and strategic objectives) between the constituent members of a supranational entity are too marked.

Beyond what has been observed so far, it would certainly be interesting to verify if and how much an excessively rapid type of technological evolution, therefore potentially capable of generating conflicts, also affects the type of conflicts between the actors involved. In other words, if a rapid technological evolution (not counterbalanced by the sharing of values and norms) in the field of conventional military technologies generates conventional conflicts; or, when this evolution concerns the field of bacteriological-chemical technologies, if this generates chemical-bacteriological conflicts, or if evolution in nuclear generates nuclear conflicts, and if the evolution in the field of economic-financial technologies, generates economic-financial conflicts and “wars”. These hypotheses seem, at first reflection, very plausible and would deserve to be studied in depth.

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LAW, POPULISM AND COMMON SENSE: THE DEMOCRATIC THEORY TOWARDS THE AGE OF POPULISMS¹

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Abstract

What is exactly populism? Can we speak about a “juridical populism”? This essay aims to develop in the legal field the theories of Laclau and Mouffe, interpreting populism as a model of conflictual articulation of the political discourse in a liquid society. Thus, it may be considered as a political strategy which aims to rupture instead of continuity, but neutral with respect to the contents with which it can effectively be filled. The political struggle can be conceived as a struggle for hegemony. In a populist strategy, several social demands are deconstructed and reorganized around a major social demand, potentially able to evoke a new common sense and therefore a new hegemonic social order.

Keywords

Legal Populism, Constitutionalism, Common Sense, Class Struggle, Democracy.

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Resumen

¿Qué es exactamente el populismo? ¿Podemos hablar de un “populismo jurídico”? Este ensayo pretende desarrollar en el campo jurídico las teorías de Laclau y Mouffe, interpretando el populismo como un modelo de articulación conflictiva del discurso político en una sociedad líquida. Por lo tanto, puede considerarse como una estrategia política que pretende romper en lugar de continuidad, pero neutral con respecto a los contenidos con los que puede ser efectivamente llenado. La lucha política puede concebirse como una lucha por la hegemonía. En una estrategia populista, varias demandas sociales se deconstruyen y reorganizan en torno a una gran demanda social, potencialmente capaz de evocar un nuevo sentido común y, por lo tanto, un nuevo orden social hegemónico.

Palabras clave

Populismo Legal, Constitucionalismo, Sentido Común, Lucha de Clases, Democracia.

*Evermore – vengeance upon you: PRIVATION! ...
Globe's Stigma – penury:
How it hurts him! ... Fulfillment? ...
He – who prefers to begin
Forever to throw out before him – down payed!
– “Ear of Corn”? ... like a gold comet ripened,
Wind's breath barely stirs it,
A rain of wheat sprinkles down grains
Perfection alone sweeps away ...*

Cyprian Kamil Norwid, *Chopin's Piano* (VII)

*The fickle multitude!
Which turns with every wind. Unhappy he
Who leans upon this reed!*

Johann Cristoph Friedrich von Schiller, *Mary Stuart* (act IV, scene XI)

Populism: What is it? History, historians, commentators, today's politics²

We hear more and more about “populism”, and this word is often violently invoked in political debate as a synonym of “demagogy”, of “subversivism” or even of “neofascism”, depending on the context and on the target chosen by the accuser. This floating signifier was filled over time with several different signifieds, which complicate any attempt to fix it in a precise notion. We can nevertheless try to put some order into this confusion, before analyzing the implications of this phenomenon in the juridical field.

There was already talk about populism in the 19th century, mainly in Russia with the *narodničestvo* and in the USA with the People's Party. The *narodničestvo*, quite familiar to the readers of the entire world by the novels of Dostoevsky and Turgenev, was

2. This paper was presented at the Younger Scholars Forum of the 20th General Congress of the International Academy of Comparative Law, held in Fukuoka (Japan, July 2018). The author wishes to thank Professor Francesco Clementi for his valuable advice and suggestions. See also the working paper Zolea (2019).

actually a set of tendencies and ideologies quite variegated, from some of which the first nucleus of the Russian socialist movement developed. Widespread among Russian intellectuals of the second half of that century, the populism conceived the traditional rural community and the peasants' lifestyle —with whom the populists sought to establish a direct relationship— as paradigms of a development model in solidarity, alternative to the perspective of capitalistic modernization (Venturi, 1972). The People's Party is probably closer to the contemporary use of the word "populism". This political movement mainly represented a form of resistance against the emerging capitalism of the large corporations. It was mostly formed by small farmers ruined by changes in the global trade and in the internal mode of production, but also trying to direct their message to all productive classes, including the workers of the first large factories. Its ideology was founded on the American myth of a society of small farmers, a community of people freely working their own lands. Using a radical rhetoric, the populists criticized the centralization of the means of production and of the wealth in the hands of a small group of big factories and banks, while they proposed a democratization of the institutions and an active role of the State, which should have funded the farmers granting more favorable terms than the banks and which should have regulated the new communication networks (trains, telegraphs, etc.) and the market in the general interest (Foner, 2017, pp. 649-659; Pollack, 1962, *passim*). So, in their opinion, the State should actively defend economic opportunities of every citizen, contrasting the formation of economic and political elites, incompatible with a real, and not only formal, liberty of the people.

Populism became a hot topic of the American historiography, mainly after the mid 20th century: it is exactly from this debate that the current semantic shift arises, making this word ambiguous and polysemous. The school of thought of "consensus history", widespread in the 50s and in the 60s, tended in its analysis to minimize the importance of the conflicts, notably class struggle, in American national history, and to exalt the role of values shared among the whole society, such as competitiveness, economic individualism and property, beyond the differences between the factions. As populism had been the more important manifestation in the recent history of the USA of another ideological tradition, more aiming at rupture and social antagonism than at conciliation, both in the form and in the substance, these historians³ strongly attacked this movement, up to denigration⁴. Being a symbol of an American political radicalism, populism was

3. The most important work is Hofstadter (1955).

4. See Jäger (2016): "With the imaginative wit of the new urbanite, Hofstadter contrasted the Populist 'Agrarian Myth' with the 'Commercial Realities' of the late-nineteenth-century, accusing the Populist farmers of posing as an endangered yeomanry for the sake of winning over American public opinion, while being in reality mere crypto-capitalists, utterly

then strenuously criticized, not only as a certain political movement, historically circumscribed, but even as the ideological archetype of every “deviation” from the line of capitalistic liberalism. Such deviations were considered by these historians, under the influence of the events of their generation, as essentially ultra-reactionary, associating them to tendencies like nationalism, isolationism and anti-intellectualism, and identifying in them the roots of a wide range of more recent nefarious political experiences⁵, like pro-fascist American movements (Ferkiss, 1957, pp. 350 ff.) and McCarthyism (Shils, 1956; Hofstadter, 1965, pp. 3 ff.). It is in this way that in the USA the word *populism* has gradually diverted from the real historical phenomenon of the People’s Party and its own ideology to generically define several different ideologies accused of plebiscitarianism and demagoguery, sharing nothing else than a direct appeal to popular masses and a radical refusal of the political order of liberal pluralism, of its forms and mediations, of its delicate system of check and balance: mostly when they challenge the system from the “right”, but also when they challenge it from the “left”⁶. In this sense, the word has

enmeshed in the ‘business society’ which they themselves claimed to criticise so vocally. Their hatred of processes of financialisation and corporate capitalism could, in Hofstadter’s purview, better be explained out of a fear of losing status, rather than a steep decline in living standards. With the irony so characteristic of the post-war New York Intellectual, Hofstadter delivered a psychological portrait of the nineteenth-century ‘farmer-entrepreneur’ as divided between economic modernism and cultural traditionalism, perpetually schizophrenic in his defence of the market economy coupled with a plea for pastoral virtues, oscillating between two political poles which could only achieve institutional reconciliation in the ‘experimental pragmatism’ of the American New Deal” (p. 5).

5. See Hofstadter (1955) and Pollack (1960): “In presenting this critique it was necessary to confine the remarks to Hofstadter’s own evidence and in that way raise questions concerning the validity of his scholarship. It is suggested, however, that a re-searching of Populist manuscripts and newspapers shows even more effectively the weaknesses of his interpretation, for the evidence on each of his themes points to an entirely different conclusion. For example, the Populists were far from adopting a retrogressively utopian view towards society; many of them accepted the fact of industrialism and sought to democratize its impact through highly specific measures. They did not hold to outdated producers’ values but reasoned that farmers and workers were being placed in precisely the same economic position vis-à-vis the total society; hence, actual attempts at coalition between the two groups were made. Tens of thousands of Populist statements show that anti-Semitism was so infrequently mentioned that it might be contended that there was less, not more, anti-Semitism in the movement than in the rest of society” (pp. 499-500).

6. See Jäger (2016): “While previously only reserved for specific debates within American social and political history, and therefore pertaining to some rather strict temporal demarcations, the newly conjured tool of ‘populism’ proved to be a concept of high analytic elasticity, with a multitude of semantic dimensions now to be taken in account. Overseeing these multidimensional understandings of the word, five new distinct meanings can be highlighted:

- populism as a political style, comprising a rhetorical, rather than substantive conception of ‘paranoid politics’. In its invocation of the ‘people’ as the sole source of political legitimacy, it is akin to ‘anti-elitism’, although more ideologically articulated than merely contrarian politics. Equivocally synonymous with ‘demagoguery’ (Hofstadter, Ferkiss, Bell).
- populism as plebiscitarianism, signifying a demand for direct democracy and anti-constitutionalist rule, hostile to representative liberal democracy and pluralist interest-group politics. A variant of Rousseauian ‘monism’ in the Berlinian sense, meaning ‘democracy without the rule of law’ (Shils, Lipset).
- populism as status politics or cultural politics, representing a political ideology in which status-concerns and non-class based, subjective motivations for social action were seen as prevailing over rational decision-making (Shils, Lipset, Parsons).
- populism as a mass political movement, exemplifying a pathology of unconsummated processes of political modernization, pointing to an ‘asynchronism’ between economic, social, political and cultural trends in developing societies (Kornhauser, Shils, Lipset).
- populism as a political tradition, characterised by rural romanticism and anti-intellectualism, exemplified by the ‘yeo-

been transferred in the language of the political science and, above all, of the American political debate as a kind of epithet used by the defenders of the *status quo* to criticize every form of political radicalism.

With this same meaning, the word was also received in Europe, firstly in France (Lévy, 1994) (but also in Italy⁷), in conjunction with the rise of the *Front National* (Taguieff, 1984, pp. 113 ff., as well as more recent works of the same author), where its use soon spread from political analysts, to political commentators, to journalists and politicians, with the result that even the *Front National* got to use it to define itself, in order to divert the focus of public debate from more specific accusations of racism and fascism and to renew the image of the party, benefiting from a phase of social insecurity and political crisis⁸. Claims of populism did not even spare, in French political debate, some experiences of leftist political radicalism⁹. From the 90s, all over Europe the concept of populism has been used, frequently regardless to its origins, to define mostly, but not only (Hermet, 2001; Pappas, 2014; Tarchi, 2015), the new strategies of far right and neo-fascist movements and ideologies (*ex ceteris*, Betz, 1994; Ignazi, 2003)¹⁰: it is a concept that these movements, in turn, have been able to skillfully utilize in order to provide a camouflage acceptable, in current political debate, for less extremist voters, while they developed their theoretical discourse about a third way possible between right and left and between capitalism and socialism¹¹.

So, the idea of populism has got in the juridical debate only after this long path. In this way, it happened that populism was even qualified as the more insidious and lethal enemy of constitutional democracy, a kind of pathology and of corruption of the democratic process, wielding seditious techniques of manipulation of consent. From this perspective, some authors even do reject the notion of popular sovereignty, identifying

man myth' and other nostalgic forms of politics. Hostile to cosmopolitanism and wary of financial and intellectual elites (Hofstadter, Bell)" (pp. 9-10).

About the change in the general perception of populism, see also Kazin (1995).

7. Inspired to the movement of radical contestation of the system that developed (also) in Italy in 1968, see Matteucci (1972), Matteucci, (1976a) and Matteucci (1976b).

8. Jäger (2016): "In 1994, the word 'populism' established itself as the solid synonym for political irrealism, demagoguery, antielitism and chauvinism, constituting a political passepartout unlike any other term in the French political vocabulary. The features which the American pluralists had first ascribed to the term – plebiscitarianism, irrationalism, romanticism – were now recycled into the jargon of postmodern media analyses. Simultaneously, a militant 'anti-populism' was on the rise on behalf of politicians purportedly still adhering to a 'reasonable' form of politics not based on denunciation and rhetorical absolutism" (pp. 14 ff.; see also p. 17).

9. For a transversal generalization of the notion of populism, with respect to several radical political movements, see the number about "Les populismes" (1997) of *Vingtième siècle: revue d'histoire*, (56).

10. Cf. Martinelli, 2013, p. 76, who asserts the existence of a deep link between nationalism and contemporary populism, considered as an ideology.

11. For the debate about populism among the circles of the 'new right', see De Benoist, 2017.

in it the seed of a new populism, deadly threatening constitutionalism (Spadaro, 2009, pp. 2007 ff.¹²).

The populist theory of Laclau

This premise has been necessary as a first glance to the evolution of the concept of populism over time. May we stop here our research about this notion, considering it as a sufficient basis and so confining ourselves to analyze its implications in the juridical world? There are well-founded doubts on it. Most of the mentioned reflections about populism tend more to denigrate and ridicule this concept —or, more generally, even the idea of an active role of the masses in public life and of popular sovereignty (Riker, 1982)— than to try to deeply understand such a phenomenon and its mechanisms. It is sufficient to observe the difficulty of many works of political theory to define populism, to call in question the mainstream thinking about it. Several authors determine it into details but they have to admit that, in fact, concrete historical experiences radically split off from the constructed model (MacRae, 1969, pp. 153-165; Wiles, 1969, pp. 166-179); some others identify it only in negative terms with its rhetorical attitude hiding an ideological vacuum¹³, or limit themselves to detect the uncertainty of its contents and decide to focus their analysis on its different manifestations (Canovan, 1981). Furthermore, some legal academics who wrote about this matter (Spadaro, 2009, pp. 2007 ff.; Pinelli, 2019, pp. 29 ff.) seem to tend to make populism a kind of black hole beyond the event horizon whose they try to enclose the set of threatens to constitutional democracy that they discern. It may be wondered if there is really a shared matrix of this threatens and if their lowest common denominator, if any, cannot meaningfully be found elsewhere. Far from being satisfied, our research is just at the beginning.

Some elements of alternative analysis of populism can be found in some authors, for example in the hunch that populism is mostly an approach, a style or a dimension of the political culture in general than a specific kind of ideology or political organization

12. *Contra*, Somma (2018), Galli (2019); about the tense relationship between constitutionalism and populism, see also Mény & Surel (2000) and Pombeni (2004).

13. Cf. Minogue (1969, pp. 197-211); interpreting populism as a thin or weak ideology, see, with different nuances, Mudde, 2004: “I define populism as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. Populism, so defined, has two opposites: elitism and pluralism. [...] Though populism is a distinct ideology, it does not possess ‘the same level of intellectual refinement and consistency’ as, for example, socialism or liberalism. Populism is only a ‘thin-centred ideology’, exhibiting ‘a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts” (pp. 543-544); Taggart (2000), Mény & Surel, (2000, pp. 177 ff.), Zanatta (2002, pp. 263 ff).

(Worsley, 1969, p. 245; Knight, 1998, pp. 223 ff.; Capozzi, 2010, p. 115; see also Müller, 2016), or in the reflection that recognizes in populism something always accompanying democracy (Mény & Surel, 2000, pp. 32-35), whose component of pragmatic system cannot do without a component of redemptive system, in a perennial tension between these two poles¹⁴, or in the interpretation of the concept of *people* as a phenomenon having a relational, dynamic nature (Saward, 2006, 297 ss.). The time is right to introduce in this exposition Laclau's populist theory, which has shown to be able to provide a substantive and coherent vision. This scholar's study departed from a feeling of dissatisfaction for the state of the art in this matter. Laclau, directly influenced by populist experiences in South America, in particular from Peronism in Argentina (*ex ceteris*, see Sigal & Verón, 1986), where the author had been an activist in the Peronist left, was a revolutionary and militant intellectual: post-Marxist, he combined his effort of analysis of the reality with the effort to provide political activists of his time with the conceptual tools necessary to transform the reality. This should be considered in order to better understand the meaning and the mission of all his work, which base his original point of view about populism. In fact, today, political movements as *Podemos* in Spain and *France insoumise* are explicitly inspired to his theories in the choice of their political strategies (Iglesias, 2014; Mélenchon, 2014).

Laclau's most known works are *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, written with Chantal Mouffe, and *On Populist Reason*. In the first one, breaking away from a traditional Marxist interpretation, Laclau and Mouffe question the structure/superstructure relationship and the economist conception of social class, developing the Gramscian idea of cultural hegemony in the direction of a movable, and not stationary (especially in a phase of organic crisis), notion of social identity (especially of the revolutionary subject), which takes shape in an open system of relationships. So, such an identity would not have an objective prius in the relations of production and would find its meaning only in a blurred network of fluid relationships. It is a point of view which exalts the discursive dimension of the political sphere —which always exists in a delicate balance between the two antagonist dimensions of the positivist pragmatism of the probable

14. See Canovan (1999): "[...] some democratic theorists explicitly seek to strip democracy of all redemptive features and to emphasize its non-messianic side. This is democracy without foundations, democracy as open-ended political practice, democracy of which we should not expect too much. But the implication of the analysis presented above is that any attempt to banish the redemptive aspect of democracy is likely to be self-defeating. As a way of interpreting democracy it is rather like trying to keep a church going without faith. In politics as in religion, loss of faith tends to lead to corruption and surrenders the ground to revivalism [...]. [A]ttempts to escape into a purely pragmatic interpretation of democracy are illusory, for the power and legitimacy of democracy as a pragmatic system continues to depend at least partly on its redemptive elements. That always leaves room for the populism that accompanies democracy like a shadow" (pp. 15-16).

and of the redemptive hope of the possible— within which (and not somewhere else) a new historical bloc takes shape in a continuous process of formation and dissolution of the social agents (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001¹⁵).

In the second cited work (Laclau, 2005), developing several reflections of the first one, the populist theory is exhaustively exposed. Laclau's reasoning moves from the observations of the denigration of populism and of the general tendency to define it only negatively and to circumscribe it in the sectors of marginality, of uncertainty, of rhetoric, of manipulation, of irrationality, opposing it to the sphere of the "normal", legitimate politics. In all these behaviors, the author tried to uncover manifestations of a deeper attitude of denigration of the masses, or, rather, of every popular mobilization, if not canalized in the existing social structures and institutions¹⁶. Laclau perceives the uncertainty of the political sphere as the mirror of the uncertainty of the floating social reality, and the rhetoric (as a substitution of a literal word with a figured word, subsuming the signified of the first one under its own) as a basic foundation of the conceptual structure characterizing politics, and not only an ulterior and external element with respect to a given *quid*. The elements of the discourse (and, in particular, the identities) acquire a meaning only in their mutual relationships of differences and equivalences. Also the (sense of belonging to a) people, in this perspective, is not pre-constituted, neither is only the product of an ideology, but it is a concrete relationship between social agents, one of the possible articulations of a multiplicity of social demands, whose the systematic interconnection may result in a sense of identity. The dissatisfaction arising from the incapacity of the existing system to absorb in a differential way (each in isolation from the others) these demands and their accumulation over time —while the institutional system becomes increasingly remote from its popular basis— allow the creation of an equivalential relation between them¹⁷. Laclau calls such a kind of relation

15. In this work, conclusively identifying their vision of a radical democracy "in a form of politics which is founded not upon dogmatic postulation of any "essence of the social", but, on the contrary, on affirmation of the contingency and ambiguity of every "essence", and on the constitutive character of social division and antagonism. Affirmation of a "ground" which lives only by negating his fundamental character; of an "order" which exists only as a partial limiting of disorder; of a "meaning" which is constructed only as excess and paradox in the face of meaningless —in other words, the field of the political as the space for a game which is never "zero-sum", because the rules and the players are never fully explicit. This game, which eludes the concept, does at least have a name: hegemony" (p. 193).

16. Laclau (2005), utilizes several authors, such as Taine, Le Bon, Tarde, McDougall, to reopen the debate about crowd psychology, underlying the influence of the positivistic vision of the mobilization of anonym crowds as a pathological aberration of social life (pp. 3-64). Special attention is dedicated to the more nuanced approach of Freud, which Laclau uses as a starting point of his analysis. Cf. Eklundh (2020, pp. 107 ff).

17. See Laclau (2005): "Think of a large mass of agrarian migrants who settle in the shantytowns on the outskirts of a developing industrial city. Problems of housing arise, and the group of people affected by them request some kind of solution from the local authorities. Here we have a demand which initially is perhaps only a request. If the demand is satisfied, that is the end of the matter; but if it is not, people can start to perceive that their neighbours have other, equally unsatisfied

an “equivalential chain”, and, on the base of its creation, a social subjectivity, a “people”, a potential actor of history, is also formed, in an adversarial relationship with the current regime. So, a populist configuration emerges from the equivalential articulation of the demands, from the development on this basis of an antagonistic, virtual frontier which separates the ‘people’ from the power. Achieved a certain level of mobilization, several demands come together into a stable system of signification. Populism, not an ideology, but a political logic, may be filled up with widely varied social and political contents. It is therefore, in the political sphere, the opposite of institutionalism: while this latter is characterized by the predominance of the differential logic within the community, in the populist perspective an equivalential logic is preponderant, dividing society in two antagonistic camps, an “us” and a “them”¹⁸, the latter being conceived as the oligarchy detaining the power, which must be overturned (Laclau, 2005, pp. 67-124; cf. Villacañas, 2015, pp. 71 ff.).

In such a system of relations, the question arises to know how heterogeneous demands may join in a single global demand, capable of establishing its own antagonistic frontier between a “people” and an “oligarchy” and aiming to remove this latter from the power in order to “give it back” to the people. This is made possible by one demand which is able to represent and unify in the logic of the populist system the totality of the elements of the chain, determining their frontier and differentiating it from anything else, so that every identity may have a position in the system, below or beyond the dichotomic division. Such a demand, which plays the hegemonic function of being the element of unification of a camp, acquires in the discourse a universal signification overlapping with its own particular signified. So, this social demand becomes increasingly an empty signifier, detached from its particular initial signified, as incrementally diversified demands enter into the equivalential chain; it gets to embody not the realization, but the aspiration to plenitude and to totality¹⁹.

demands - problems with water, health, schooling, and so on. If the situation remains unchanged for some time, there is an accumulation of unfulfilled demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system to absorb them in a differential way (each in isolation from the others), and an equivalential relation is established between them” (p. 73); “The meaning of such demands is determined largely by their differential positions within the symbolic framework of society, and it is only their frustration that presents them in a new light. But if there is a very extensive series of social demands which are not met, it is that very symbolic framework which starts to disintegrate. In that case, however, the popular demands are less and less sustained by a pre-existing differential framework: they have, to a large extent, to construct a new one. And for the same reason, the identity of the enemy also depends increasingly on a process of political construction” (p. 86).

18. “S’aimer, c’est haïr le même ennemi”: (Sartre, 1951, p. 245).

19. See Laclau (2005): “there is the possibility that one difference, without ceasing to be a particular difference, assumes the representation of an incommensurable totality. In that way, its body is split between the particularity which it still is and the more universal signification of which it is the bearer. This operation of taking up, by a particularity, of an incommensurable universal signification is what I have called hegemony. And, given that this embodied totality or universality is, as we have seen, an impossible object, the hegemonic identity becomes something of the order of an empty signifier, its own particu-

Advantages of Laclau's approach

Another important element of Laclau's theory is the mobility of the frontiers dividing the political articulation, because hegemonic signifiers are in his view always floating. Alternative and rival chains of equivalences —each of them shaping a total, universal discursive dimension— connect, according to different logics, several popular demands. These chains overlap and clash, every one trying to smash the other, absorbing some of the demands composing its competitor in the different network of connections of its own hegemonic project, which is built around a different fundamental demand that tries to represent all the other demands proposing its own identity of “people” and its own dichotomic frontier between the “us” and the “them”. The success of a project or of another only depends on the issue of the fight for hegemony between these worldviews, on the capacity of each one to gain under its flag the support of social majorities. No demand is *a priori* included in a chain or in another, before the homogenization realized by an “empty signifier”, open to be filled with different signified (Laclau, 2005, pp. 129 ff.; see also Laclau, 2000). During periods of organic crisis, when the whole existing system of symbols and signifieds creaks, this fight for hegemony becomes increasingly intense and dramatic, while, during periods of greater stability, it becomes more discreet and latent, without generally calling into question the whole political and social framework. In this last case, the power seems to be able to satisfy enough demands by the use of a differential logic, preventing their concatenation in an alternative discourse able to undermine the foundations of the system. Also relying upon Mouffe's works²⁰, Laclau identifies a deep connection, and not a necessary contradiction, between populist theory and democratic theory. He points out that democracy is based on the existence of a popular, democratic subject —a “people”— which can

larity embodying an unachievable fullness. With this it should be clear that the category of totality cannot be eradicated but that, as a failed totality, it is a horizon and not a ground” (pp. 70-71); “For populism, as we have seen, is the terrain of a primary undecidability between the hegemonic function of the empty signifier and the equivalence of particularistic demands. There is a tension between the two, but this tension is none other than the space of constitution of a “people”” (p. 163); see also Laclau (1996, pp. 36-46).

20. See Mouffe 2000: “On one side we have the liberal tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights and the respect of individual liberty; on the other the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty. There is no necessary relation between those two distinct traditions but only a contingent historical articulation” (pp. 2-3); “By privileging rationality, both the deliberative and aggregative perspectives leave aside a central element which is the crucial role played by passions and affects in securing allegiance to democratic values. [...] The failure of current democratic theory to tackle the question of citizenship is the consequence of their operating with a conception of the subject which sees individuals as prior to society, bearers of natural rights, and either utility-maximizing agents or rational subjects. In all cases they are abstracted from social and power relations, language, culture and the whole set of practices that make agency possible. What is precluded in these rationalistic approaches is the very question of what are the conditions of existence of a democratic subject” (pp. 95-96).

only arise from certain hegemonic articulation of the demands in equivalential chains. Their empty signifier might be able to collect, for example, claims for democracy, coordinating them with claims for liberty, if these latter are not yet part of the framework of shared rules in the political system, as it happens in Latin America²¹. Thus, for example, in Turkey in 2013 the particular, ecologist, claim for avoiding the destruction of Gezi park in Istanbul became the empty signifier, and so the totalizing and unifying element, of a multitude of claims for democracy and freedom shared by large segments of Turkish society²², becoming the catalyst of a popular revolt.

After this quick overview of Laclau's theory, it is time to assess its epistemological usefulness, both in general and in particular with respect to our necessity of a juridical approach to the phenomenon of populism. In terms of analysis of the mechanisms ruling on a deeper level the contemporary societies, the question arises²³ if his substantial abandonment of the distinction between base and superstructure and of the centrality of the conflict between labour and capital corresponds to the effective current economic dynamics. But this is probably a question which goes beyond Laclau's horizon, whose analysis is focused on the field of political theory. Precisely in this perspective, several precious tools can be drawn from his works. Laclau's theory seems in fact well adapt to the framework and to the functioning of politics in Western liquid societies²⁴ of the XXIth century, where the feeling of class belonging —previously facilitated by the big productive concentrations of the age of the mass worker, but today hampered by the dimension of flexible, precarious, discontinuous, decentralized work— and the intermediates bodies have significantly weakened with respect to the rise of the individualistic dimension of the consumer. Collective identities have in general become fluid,

21. See Laclau (2005): "if there is to be an articulation/combination between democracy and liberalism, demands of two different types have to be combined. Combination, however, can take place in two different ways: either one type of demands —liberalism, for instance, with its defence of human rights, civil liberties, and so on— belongs to the symbolic framework of a regime, in the sense that they are part of a system of rules accepted by all participants in the political game, or they are contested values, in which case they are part of the equivalential chain, and so part of the "people". In Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, the defence of human rights was part of the popular demands and so part of the popular identity. It is a mistake to think that the democratic tradition, with its defence of the sovereignty of the 'people', excludes liberal claims as a matter of principle. That could only mean that the "people's" identity is fixed once and for all. If, on the contrary, the identity of the 'people' is established only through changing equivalential chains, there is no reason to think that a populism which includes human rights as one of its components is a priori excluded. At some points in time —as happens today quite frequently in the international scene— defence of human rights and civil liberties can become the most pressing popular demands" (p. 171).

22. Large segments, but not, on the whole, social majorities: this is why in the end, in the face of the repressive strength of the Government, the movement lost its battle, while the opposite equivalential chain of the Islamic party in power showed to be more large, stable and solid, able to mobilize social majorities both to contain the revolt of 2013 and, more recently, to stop and defeat the coup attempt in 2016.

23. See in particular the criticisms of Azzarà (2017).

24. For the notion of *liquid society*, see Bauman (2000).

uncertain and evanescent too. However, such a logic of individual isolation does not at all lead to a decline of the crowds and, in particular, to a prevalence of differential relations in the political sphere, but it imparts to this sphere its vocation for immersing the individual in an unknown, frightful and threatening reality. Consequently, the attitude of a rational control of the external reality is overcome by the antique, arcane collective need of the pre-rational and symbolic suggestion of mass archetypes²⁵. Consequently, the role of the crowds and of their latent structures —contrary to forecasts of XIXth century positivists, driven by their fear of crowds— tends to increase instead of vanishing. In fact, social networks and other mass medias place in every moment the individual in the center of an omnipresent virtual crowd, often overcoming national borders, and he undergoes an unprecedented multitude of haunting suggestions.

In political struggle, collective actors are not anymore generally conceived as pre-constituted bodies in the sphere of economic relations just fighting for power, but as improvised and itinerant fronts, gathered around symbolic and variable claims, which in the first instance compete for the determination of an horizon of answers toward which social demands are enchainned. This conception also and especially represents the perspective of subordinate classes, nowadays excluded not only from the ownership of the means of production, but also, beyond appearance, from the conscious command of the means of mass communication, in a double subjugation and alienation. The course of action of denouncing and unmasking unequal relationships, which still exist in the economic sphere and which structure on the ground of their paradigm the whole society, has not probably completely lost any role. But it does not anymore directly prelude to the formation of an historical subject aiming to social revolution, while the idea of a sort of “war of position” —fought, as Gramsci had theorized, on the field of civil society in order to exert a cultural hegemony and to obtain the consensus of the majorities— becomes the necessary premise of every realistic attempt to use the sophisticate machine of the contemporary State for purposes of social change.

It should be noted that these mechanisms seem to be well known by ruling oligarchies, which in turn gladly utilize them to realize their goals by populist discursive strategies. Unlike the ruling political group against which French Revolution of 1789 was directed, the one of nowadays (or, at least, its more dynamic and clairvoyant component) is not characterized by an only defensive strategy of a differential logic of

25. For an analysis of crowds archetypes in human history, the key reference remains Canetti (1960); see in particular, in this work, the notion of *double crowds*, which anticipates somewhat Laclau's conception of a dichotomic division, which characterizes populism.

separate absorption of demands. In a sort of “permanent revolution”, always calling into question the public faces, the hierarchies, the balances, values and institutional forms of the power, such a contemporary ruling political group continuously renews itself in order to guarantee the strategic survival of the economic structure and of the relations of social domination. Thus, some sectors of the establishment use populist strategies, form their own equivalential chains, create their own fracture people/elite, call on their own people (for example, we can think about the slogan *Make America Great Again*) and, making use of all the opportunities of mobilization that instantaneous mass media allow, may surpass other sectors of the establishment in the struggle for power. But also movements trying to represent the interest of the working class have learnt this lesson and, accepting the floating framework of the communication and of the politics in the liquid (post-)modernity, they have in turn built their own equivalential chains and the suggestion of their own identity of “people” (for example, we can think about the slogan of “La France Insoumise” at the last French presidential elections: “la force du peuple”), to aggregate social majorities and aspire to the political power.

There are some other advantages of Laclau’s populist theory, specifically concerning a lawyer’s perspective about populism. The approaches interpreting populism as an ideology often run the risk of expressing, in turn, an ideological, institutionalist approach, which politically contrasts what should be the object of the analysis, instead of providing an interpretation key. In addition, considering populism as an ideology leads the analysis on “juridical populism” to the research of the juridical view of such an ideology... except for the fact, as observed about populism in general, that identifying a juridical view shared by extremely variegated political movements would be a chimera. Rather, if populism is considered as a political logic, as a kind of political strategy, able to adapt itself to several ideological contents, but with some specific characteristics²⁶ which differentiate it from any other varieties of political logic, legal issues can be introduced as variables of this system. In this perspective, law, as a social phenomenon occupying an important and delicate place in complex societies, is a constituent element of equivalential chains, as juridical demands contribute to the formation of hegemonic discourses in the same way as, for example, economic or ethic demands. In fact, law contributes to govern collective life, with other non-legal (moral, religious, of diplomacy, of *bon ton*...) systems of rules, and contemporary societies tend to govern by detailed legal regulations large sectors of social relations.

26. Cf. in this regard the reflections of Müller (2016).

So, it is no wonder that juridical demands or demands with important juridical implications can have a central role in equivalence chains, even the role of the empty, hegemonic signifier, that is the universal element enchainin in an equivalential relationship all the other elements which form together one of the fronts of a populist dichotomy.

Hegemony and common sense

Before proceeding with some examples of what might be called “juridical populism”, another concept should be introduced, in order to better understand the idea of hegemony inspiring this paper: this is the concept of “common sense”. Several philosophers, since antiquity, have discussed about this notion, which even characterized the name of the Scottish School of Common Sense, founded by Thomas Reid (1710-1796). This author grounds his system on the existence of intuitive and pre-rational principles basing the relationship of people with reality²⁷. A partially different conception of common sense is developed by the Italian intellectual Giambattista Vico (1688-1744), who in his *Scienza nuova* confers upon it an ethical worth as a system of shared beliefs within a community and defines it as “judgment without reflection, shared by an entire class, an entire people, an entire nation, or the entire human race” (Vico, 1984, p. 63). The author affirms that “the natural law of gentes is coeval with the customs of the nations, conforming one with another in virtue of a common human sense, without ant reflection and without one nation following the example of another” (p. 91).

Gramsci (1975, II) also has quite a similar conception of common sense, which should be considered in order to better understand his theory of hegemony, essential to interpret the relationship between law and populism. According to this Italian intellectual, “civil society” is the complex of organisms having a “private” nature of the ruling social group: educative institutions or other apparatuses differently performing a function of ideological propagation, that is of social hegemony, through the diffusion of general approval for a certain social order. Instead, “political society”, as a legal power, that

27. See Reid (1785): “there are [...] propositions which are no sooner understood than they are believed. The judgment follows the apprehension of them necessarily, and both are equally the work of nature, and the result of our original powers. There is no searching for evidence, no weighing of arguments; the proposition is not deduced or inferred from another; it has the light of truth in itself, and has no occasion to borrow it from another” (p. 555); “The universality of these opinions, and of many such that might be named, is sufficiently evident, from the whole tenor of human conduct, as far as our acquaintance reaches, and from the history of all ages and nations of which we have any records” (p. 573).

is the State *stricto sensu*, has mostly a function of direct domination, through coercion and force²⁸. This author also uses a *lato sensu* notion of State, absorbing elements which otherwise he associates to the notion of civil society, into an integrated system of “hegemony armored with coercion” (pp. 763-764): the two levels of coercion-domination and of consensus-hegemony may in fact intertwine in a single complex mechanism, as it happens in the sophisticated system of power of contemporary societies. According to Gramsci (1975, III), the common sense is the conception of the life of a certain social stratum, not immovable and rigid as folklore, but always transforming and developing with scientific notions and philosophical notions come into common use (p. 2271). In such a dynamic perspective, this author identifies a close link with his idea of cultural hegemony: the struggle for hegemony is exactly a struggle for the definition and for the redefinition of the common sense, until its transformation in a new common sense, that is a new conception of the world and a new system of values, which substitute the precedent ones and justify a new order and a new power, creating the social consensus towards it (II, p. 1047). A common sense, grounding a system of power relationships, takes shapes and finally collapses only by virtue of conflicts; thus, such a kind of disruption and creation is the strategic object of the struggle for hegemony. A new equivocal chain, if we wish to revert to Laclau’s vocabulary, is then the potential embryo of a new common sense: its establishment only depends on the sort of the struggle for hegemony.

In the social reality of nowadays, reducing the role of the law at the level of “political society” does not take into account the complex nature of the mechanisms of power in liberal societies of the XXIth century, which, according to Gramsci’s hunch, hybrid the levels of the “civil society” and of the “political society”, of the domination and of the approval, of the popular involvement and of the revival of the mechanisms behind the scenes which base the supremacy of the ruling oligarchy. Legal issues are discussed in the press, on the television, on the internet, at the pub, at the barber shop: debates to which every citizen actively or passively participates, with new chances to be permanently up-to-date about the declarations and about the actions of political representa-

28. See Gramsci, (1975, III): “Si possono, per ora, fissare due grandi “piani superstrutturali” quello che si può chiamare della “società civile”, cioè dell’insieme di organismi volgarmente detti “privati”, e quello della “società politica o Stato”, e che corrispondono alla funzione di “egemonia” che il gruppo dominante esercita in tutta la società e a quello di “dominio diretto” o di comando che si esprime nello Stato o nel governo “giuridico”. Queste funzioni sono precisamente organizzative e connettive” (pp. 1518-1519); “in una determinata società nessuno è disorganizzato e senza partito, purché si intendano organizzazione e partito in senso largo e non formale. In questa molteplicità di società particolari, di carattere duplice, naturale e contrattuale o volontario, una o più prevalgono relativamente o assolutamente, costituendo l’apparato egemonico di un gruppo sociale sul resto della popolazione (o società civile), base dello Stato inteso strettamente come apparato governativo-coercitivo” (II, p. 800); see also Althusser (1976, pp. 67 ff.).

tives... maybe, with some wayfinding difficulties in this flood of information. Moreover, law regulates several fields of everyday life, unimaginably some time ago, so that many juridical elements are increasingly linked to the life of civil society and of its apparatuses. So, the task of the creation, transmission and reproduction of the consensus often involves the legal order. The struggle for hegemony is not limited to the sphere of direct political domination, but, incrementally with the growth of social complexity, it can have as protagonists equivalential chains linking in several ways different claims, for example of equality, of democracy, of liberty, of security, of transparency, of honesty, of solidarity, or of closure of national borders, of moral or religious reform, of geopolitical supremacy, of economic individualism, etc. All together, on the whole, several social demands shape an order that arises in the economic, in the ethical, in the legal field, or rather transversally between all these fields. A common sense, as a conception of the life and of the world, is therefore an articulated combination of ethic, esthetic, philosophic, scientific, economic, juridical elements and so on, reciprocally linked in the vision developed by a social group, and in particular by the group which hegemonically rallies the whole society in an “historical bloc”. The analysis of this paper will focus on the role that juridical claims may acquire in a hegemonic chain of equivalences, and, through it, in the hegemonic struggle for the colonization of the common sense.

The law in populist chains of equivalences: some examples

Topical subjects offer several examples about all these reflections. In that respect, a few well known cases, diffusely propagated by media and international commentators, are chosen in this paper.

a) 2016 United Kingdom European Union Membership Referendum

The case of Brexit shows very well that legal issues can be at the center of a populist discourse. In fact, the choice of British people, by the referendum of 2016, between remaining or leaving the European Union, had many different reasons and implications... but, above all, it is useful to remember that the main demand of the front of the Brexiters was exactly to withdraw from the European Treaties, which are acts governed by international law, by the activation of the procedure regulated by the withdrawal clause of article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. So, a juridical claim became the empty signifier enchainning many other social demands —several of them linked to the legal sphere too— in an equivalential relationship, even demands which in themselves were

reciprocally distant and hostile in the previous political spectrum. For example, restricting immigrants' access from other countries of the EU, as they could compete with local workers; autonomously deciding politics about immigrants and refugees coming from extra-EU countries and, more generally, about security and law and order; recovering full sovereignty in economic and social policies (even if the Kingdom had already kept its own currency), after the Greek crisis had attired public awareness about tragic social effects of European austerity politics; preferring political and economic relationships with the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations and with the USA, which share with the Kingdom the language and important cultural and legal elements, instead of the European continent. Moreover, other demands soldered in the chain of equivalences of the Leave front concerned law more specifically: in fact, the idea of the supremacy of European law, difficult to reconcile with the conception of parliamentary sovereignty of the Kingdom, and the style and the content of the European rules, with frequent difficulties of adaptation to national legal systems, were often used in brexiters' discourses to support and to exemplify their political stance²⁹. Contrariwise, the Remain faction adopted a more defensive differential strategy, trying to diffuse the fear of economic and political catastrophic consequences of a leap into the unknown and to absorb in isolation from each other the different claims of popular dissatisfaction, in the perspective of a possible future realization, at least in part, of reforms in the EU system, bargaining better conditions for the UK. Everybody knows which faction won that battle, the day of the referendum: the populist, heterogeneous front of the Leave, built linking such different demands in order to lead the Kingdom out from the EU, hegemonically persuaded the majority of the electors and colonized and transformed in anti-European the common sense of the Kingdom.

b) Donald Trump and Obamacare

Another example of juridical populism can be taken from topical subjects, in the USA, with respect to one of the personalities more often associated with contemporary populism: Donald Trump. His political strategy, through which he won the presidential election in 2016, was explicitly populist. His slogan, *Make America Great Again*, created a dichotomic fracture within the society, especially mobilizing the white middle-class

29. See the stance of Nigel Farage, leader of the brexiter UK Independence Party, favorable to "a proud, patriotic country that has control of its borders, represents itself on the world stage and makes its own laws in our own sovereign Parliament. I believe in a new British deal once we leave the EU, one that suits the needs of our own country" (Farage, 2015); according to Boris Johnson, at that time another important member of the Leave front: "you cannot express the sovereignty of Parliament and accept the 1972 European Communities Act" (Elliott, 2016).

impoverished by the consequences (delocalization, expansion of the tertiary sector, computerization, commercial international competition of developing nations producing goods at a lower cost) of the globalization, isolationist in foreign policy, conceiving immigration as a threat for employment and for security, opposing integration of ethnic minorities. Maybe paradoxically, in light of the previous personal carrier of Donald Trump, but less paradoxically, reflecting on the fluidity of the populist mechanisms of mobilization, he was able to build his own “people” around these grudges and to identify the enemy in the establishments of the institutional politics, of the press, of the bureaucracy and of the deep state, accused to facilitate at once the financial oligarchy of Wall Street, the intellectuals (especially of New York) and the social and the ethnic minorities, against the common interest of the “real” American people. The differential and defensive strategy of his adversary in the election, Hillary Clinton³⁰, was powerless against the suggestion of change and of revenge personified by Trump, who was then elected President of the USA.

What is more important to highlight here is the importance of the juridical sphere in Donald Trump’s populism, making for example a mostly legal demand, the repeal of Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, usually called Obamacare, one of the claims of his campaign. This reform of the health care system, strongly wanted by the previous Barack Obama’s administration, keeping the essential structure of a system grounded on private insurances, had extended to millions of Americans the access to medical treatments, also by the use of public subsidies. Many people were compelled to subscribe an insurance and insurances were compelled to cover also people already in status of illness. The augmentation of the costs of a system that remained a private market affected, at least partly, people already insured, as well as public finances, making the reform quite unpopular. Trump decided in his presidential campaign —probably, in order to get a stronger support from his Republican Party, but also to make use of the diffused discontent against this act— to frontally attack it, pledging to repeal and replace Obamacare. Other Trump’s claims, like the construction of a wall at the Mexican border or a more protectionist economic policy are more known and discussed by commentators than the repeal of Obamacare, but this latter demand is more suitable for

30. Already in the primary elections of the Democratic Party, Hillary Clinton, despite the support of the whole establishment of the party, had only with many difficulties overcome her rival Bernie Sanders, who had also adopted a populist strategy, even if different from the one of Donald Trump. In fact, Sander’s strategy was progressive, coming from the wave of the movement Occupy Wall Street: trying to enchain the demands of the impoverished middle class with those of the very poor and of the minorities, against the financial oligarchy, the military-industrial complex and the richest ones, and promoting another New Deal, a public health system and a free university system.

being analyzed in this paper, because it shows very well the conception of the legal order that characterizes Donald Trump's populism.

How could such a demand successfully join a populist hegemonic equivalential chain, in the political context of the USA? This was made possible as a result of an historical evolution of the American political actors adopting a populist strategy. Although the prototype of American populism had been the People's Party —whose we have observed how the label of conservative and reactionary had been only and controversially attributed *ex post*— and although such a strategy of enchainment of claims in an equivalential relation had also characterized the progressivism of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, after World War II, with McCartyism, then with George Wallace's presidential campaign, with Richard Nixon's and Ronald Reagan's administrations, populist strategies have been especially adopted by the most conservative American sectors, successfully getting to dismantle over time the system of welfare State of the New Deal (Laclau, 2005, pp. 133-137; see also Kazin, 1995). As the economic situation and the international framework had changed, the equivalential chain of the New Deal ideological system had become weak, while many social demands to which this system, already institutionalized from a long time, was not anymore able to adequately respond jumped into the adversary field. The myth of American liberty as freedom firstly from every interference of the State —aiming for example to regulate and to limit the internal market and to increase public expenses in order to improve the wellness of the needy members of the community— which had been overcome by Roosevelt's populist strategy, could in this manner finally overcome the New Deal ideology using another populist strategy. This new view identified state bureaucracy with a new parasite caste and it criticized heavy taxation and attention for ethnic minorities instead of the “real” Americans (mainly, the white middle class). Thus, Trump's populism should be contextualized in this historical development. The importance of the juridical claims in his populist discourse can now be more easily understood: claims including the repeal (or radical modification) of the Obamacare and a fiscal reform, aiming to a general reduction (but in practice mostly for the richest ones) of the income tax rates for persons and corporations³¹. Therefore, with regard to the economic and social role of the public sector, the

31. It is no accident that, after Trump's victory in the presidential election and his difficulties to obtain from the Congress the repeal of Obamacare (as the Republican majority in the Senate was very weak and they had internal divisions), the new US President could substantially empty of its content the health reform of the previous administration (eliminating the obligation of insurance) only through the same law that approved the fiscal reform, showing the connection between these two claims in Trump's populist political discourse.

conception of law of the conservative American populism³² results in an originalist, not evolutionary interpretation of the Constitution, exalting first-generation human rights and, especially, the economic freedom of the individuals. According to this view, in the internal market, the welfare state should reduce its role³³ and should impose as little as possible obligations of contribution and limitations caused by reasons of social solidarity, apart from the needs of defense and of security. Paradoxically, on the other side, Trump's rhetoric often calls on the idea of a unity and a homogeneity of the community (of the "real" Americans) against the internal and external threats.

c) 2016 Italian constitutional referendum

As a further example, the debate that preceded the Italian constitutional referendum of December 2016 should now be considered: in fact, it might better clarify the peculiarities of the populism of the XXI century, in particular with regard to its relationship with the legal field. Populism is often associated by many commentators to extreme political ideologies. It is true that moderate political views, especially if they are already integrated in the system of the ruling power, usually adopt institutionalist strategies, of differential and separated absorption of social claims, trying to defend the key aspects of the existing system. Nevertheless, historical phases of organic crisis, concerning not only the economic sphere, but also the whole spheres of public life and of social values, dissolve the institutional framework, strengthen and generalize the fluid dimension of politics: even "centrist" populisms become therefore conceivable. This is the case of the discursive strategy adopted by the Italian *Partito Democratico*³⁴, when Matteo Renzi gained its leadership. Without questioning the centrist position of the party on the political spectrum, he deeply changed its public rhetoric, so becoming one of the protagonists in Italy of the advent of the age of populisms. Thus, Renzi firstly built his discourse around the idea of "junking" the old politics, concentrating his attack on the proposals on the one hand of getting rid of a leadership (of his party, and, in general, of the Nation) unable and accustomed to an outdated world, on the other hand of a renewed and modernized country, through some reforms: a country more integrated in the European

32. These general observations can only indicate an overall tendency of Trump's political discourse (and of his predecessors on the path of an American conservative populism), but the drastic fluidity of his rhetoric should be contemplated in that respect. In fact, also after Trump's election, his discourse has remained very fluctuating and contradictory: for example, about Obamacare, he even declared, sometimes, that he wanted to guarantee, at any rate, a health-care coverage for everyone, but without provoking a rise in public expenses and in insurance premiums.

33. For an analysis of the process of privatization even of the production of the legal framework in the US, see Mattei (2014, pp. 276-278).

34. Some similar remarks might be made about the discursive strategy of Emmanuel Macron in France before his election.

Union, finally able to look forward to the future with enthusiasm. In his postmodern rhetoric, which fits a liquid society having lost strong feelings of belonging, his “people” was mostly composed of the “deserving” persons, the young ambitious ones, the new businessmen, creative and willing to invest in new technologies. So, a people of new consumers and of self-made men, who confront themselves with an oligarchy of privileged persons who benefit from welfare benefits that the State could not anymore grant in a globalized and computerized world: political bureaucracy, administrative bureaucracy, trade unions, workers having already entered into the labor market, having rights not sustainable anymore. With this in mind, the State should consequently reduce as far as possible its role of guarantor of the economic and social second-generation rights, and its role of interventionism aiming to “remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature which constrain the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country” (art. 3 of Italian Constitution, come into effect in 1948): such a role should be reduced in order to better adapt to the liberalism inspiring the European construction, while the State should, in this view, focus its activity on supporting young, deserving people, seeking an individual success.

However, only over time, after several Renzi’s political successes and his rise to the presidency of the Council of Ministers, the claim of the necessity of a constitutional reform —juridical demand *par excellence*, even more in a country with a rigid Constitution— became even the main link, the empty hegemonical signifier of the populist chain of the head of the Government: it was a move which could, if successful, consolidate his power for a long time. So, Renzi “junking” the old politics became Renzi “reformer”, who, after compressing the social and labor legislation, proposed to undermine the most resistant legal obstacle coming from the “old” world, a Constitution formed after the end of World War II by a compromise between the christian-democratic, the social-communist and the liberal faction, which he considered as exceeded by the end of Cold War. Such a reform seemed in this view necessary to switch to the *pars construens* and to completely realize his postmodern project of legal system and of social order. The constitutional reform, approved by the Italian Parliament before undergoing popular referendum, did not directly concern the economic and social parts of the Constitution, but it confined itself to modifications of the institutional balances between public authorities, in particular strengthening the influence of the executive branch over the legislative procedure, eliminating perfect bicameralism and direct popular election of the Senate (making it elected by local authorities, and not anymore by the people, and

only in a few cases associated to the legislative procedure), abolishing the provinces³⁵ and strengthening the competences of the State in relation to the regional competences (which in turn had been expanded by a constitutional reform in 2001). All of this was linked to the elections Act which had been recently approved³⁶, strongly majoritarian, which ensured to the most voted party a large majority in the House of representatives (*Camera dei Deputati*). The combination of the constitutional reform and of the elections Act would guarantee to the ruling party and to its leader a political supremacy unusual in Italian recent political history, as the institutional structure in Italy, realized after the fall of the Fascist regime, envisaged a delicate balance of power, shared among several different institutions. It would be impossible here to delve into the complicated contents of the constitutional reform, but what seems more important is to highlight its role of empty hegemonic signifier within an equivalential chain, presenting the reform as the only possible way to ‘unblock’ the country and asking to trust in the charismatic figure of Renzi as able to realize all of this. The wished consequences of saving public money and of quickening the legislative procedure, arising from the simplification of the institutional architecture, were exalted by the supporters of the reform, who pledged substantial effects of moralization of public life, at a time of corruption scandals and of debates about excessive costs of politics. They also promised results of a political stabilization of the country, leading to a solid parliamentary majority for a long time and in tune with the government, and of an economic and social stabilization, through the approval of the strategic reforms wished by the winning party, with the effect of a greater prestige of the country on the European and international scene.

The adversaries of the constitutional reform did not share between them a general political perspective, as they were scattered in the whole political spectrum, often with incompatible general views. Despite this, as an answer to the populist strategy of “reforming the Constitution to unblock the country”, another populist block arose, opposed to the first one, that is what makes very interesting this example: so, not an equivalential logic opposing a differential logic, but two different equivalential logics fighting for the hegemony over social claims. The defense of the Constitution became the empty hegemonic signifier of this other chain of equivalences, organizing itself around the goal of stopping the reform. Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of such a front, the framework of a shared populist discourse took shape, filled up by each oppo-

35. A level of local administration between the Municipality and the Region.

36. Act n. 52 of the 6 May 2015, later repealed before the next general elections, after the popular refusal of the constitutional reform by referendum and after having been declared in part unconstitutional by the *Corte Costituzionale*.

sition force of its particular contents, mobilizing its militants, supporters and electors. The technical aspects of the reform were quite set aside in the public debate, though academics animatedly debated them, respectively highlighting an easier governability or the risk of authoritarian tendencies and of an excessive concentration of powers. In contrast, the shared discourse of the adversaries of the reform focused on the one side on the attack to the concrete experience of Renzi's Government, accepting the defy of the personalization of the confrontation —every political organization with its own criticisms: having hosted too many immigrants and refugees, having compromised workers' rights and supported young people's job uncertainty, having supported banks involved in financial scandals, having too often used the repression of law enforcement against protesters, etc.— and on the other side on the criticism about the influence of international financial powers and of foreign countries on the project of constitutional reform. Actually, the role of the State in the economy and its interventionism for purposes of social solidarity had already been largely dismantled during the previous years, but European institutions and international economic interest groups had often wished for more radical reforms in this direction and the spirit —social, supportive and favorable to the demands of the working class— of the constitutions written after World War II was conceived, in this view, as a dangerous obstacle to the supremacy of market logic. So, several documents had linked the demand of political centralization to the demand of weakening social rights, and to the perspective of constitutional reforms³⁷. Already in 2012, after the stipulation of Fiscal Compact Treaty³⁸, Constitutional

37. See *The Euro area adjustment: about halfway there*, by J.P.Morgan (2013), available on-line: "The constitutions and political settlements in the southern periphery, put in place in the aftermath of the fall of fascism, have a number of features which appear to be unsuited to further integration in the region" (p. 2); "At the start of the crisis, it was generally assumed that the national legacy problems were economic in nature. But, as the crisis has evolved, it has become apparent that there are deep seated political problems in the periphery, which, in our view, need to change if EMU is going to function properly in the long run. The political systems in the periphery were established in the aftermath of dictatorship, and were defined by that experience. Constitutions tend to show a strong socialist influence, reflecting the political strength that left wing parties gained after the defeat of fascism. Political systems around the periphery typically display several of the following features: weak executives; weak central states relative to regions; constitutional protection of labor rights; consensus building systems which foster political clientelism; and the right to protest if unwelcome changes are made to the political status quo. The shortcomings of this political legacy have been revealed by the crisis" (p. 12); see also the letter of Jean-Claude Trichet (in that moment President of the European Central Bank) and of Mario Draghi (later President of the ECB) to the Italian Government of August 5, 2011, after the meeting of the Governing Council of the ECB of August 4: "A comprehensive, far-reaching and credible reform strategy, including the full liberalisation of local public services and of professional services is needed. This should apply particularly to the provision of local services through large scale privatizations. [...] A thorough review of the rules regulating the hiring and dismissal of employees should be adopted in conjunction with the establishment of an unemployment insurance system and a set of active labour market policies capable of easing the reallocation of resources towards the more competitive firms and sectors. [...] In view of the severity of the current financial market situation, we regard as crucial that all actions listed in section 1 and 2 above be taken as soon as possible with decree-laws, followed by Parliamentary ratification by end September 2011. A constitutional reform tightening fiscal rules would also be appropriate".

38. An international treaty, which had been agreed between 25 EU States.

Act 1/2012 had introduced in the Italian Constitution the principle of balanced budget and bolstered the subordination of public subjects to financial European rules. So, the claim of full political, economic and social sovereignty was an element of unification of the anti-reform front, every political movement of this front highlighting one of the aspects (a stronger control of the borders, the opportunity to do expansionary fiscal politics, etc.) of such a wish of recovery of sovereignty. During the last days of campaign for the referendum, the choice of representatives of some allied countries in the EU and in the NATO of openly making a stand only strengthened this rhetoric based on the danger of a radical limitation of national democratic sovereignty coming from the approval of a reform that the common sense already perceived as imposed by foreign powers. Thus, the large majority of people rejected the proposition of constitutional reform, provoking the political crisis of Renzi's Government. So, one populist block vanquished the other one, chaining together a greater number of unsatisfied social demands in a firmer connection. The suggestion of unblocking the country was overcome by the suggestion of safeguarding national sovereignty and getting rid of a diffusely contested Government.

Conclusions: toward a juridical populism

The time has therefore come to draw out some remarks. In this paper, interpretations of populism as an ideology were contested, as they often just result in an ideological criticism towards populism, which does not help at all to understand it. Instead, using the works of Laclau and of Mouffe, populism was interpreted as a particular logic of politics, which prefers a strategy of tying down in an equivalential relationship the social demands (gathered by a certain claim that plays the role of an empty hegemonic signifier) than an institutionalist strategy of differential absorption of the demands (each in isolation from the others). To better understand the mechanisms of such a hegemonic strategy, this essay also focused on the reflections of Vico and of Gramsci and explored the notion of *common sense*, conceived not as something of fixed and unmovable, but as the battlefield of the hegemonic struggle. The adoption of a populist strategy instead of an institutionalist strategy implies greater opportunities of success in a phase of organic crisis, when the social system is not anymore able of providing appropriate responses to a multiplicity of social claims, willing to being enchained in a new frameworks of meanings, striving to substitute the old one, which swings and falls apart. The current historic stage may be defined as a moment of organic crisis. This is the more evident reason

of multiplication of populist phenomena, not necessarily spreading radical ideologies: even moderate views can behave in a populist way, as the stigmata of this age are crisis, fluidity and social uncertainty.

This paper has also shown how juridical claims can be suited to be enchained in associations of equivalences with other claims, and may even play the role of empty hegemonic signifiers. Law, as economy, morals, aesthetics, the *bon ton* and all which concurs to the formation of the common sense is not foreign to the advent of an age of populisms. Even more in democratic societies, where law is conceived as a product of people's sovereignty, legal questions are currently debated and can create dichotomic divisions in public opinion. We can now go back to the views of some authors, conceiving populism as a pathology of the democratic process radically opposed to constitutionalism (Spadaro, 2009, pp. 2007 ff.; Voßkuhle, 2018, pp. 119 ff.; Ciarlo, 2018, pp. 1 ff.; Scoditti, 2019, pp. 10 ff.; Ferrajoli, 2019, pp. 1 ff.³⁹): this interpretation seems to consider constitutional law as something of static, while, in a period of organic crisis, the constitution is one the battlefields, where several institutionalist logics and several populist logics struggle with variable geometries. The Italian case shows how two populisms could fight for reforming or not reforming a constitution: one populist strategy aimed to modify it, another one managed to avoid this modification. How to interpret such a situation according to the model "constitutionalism versus populism"? Besides, experiences of populism in South America show that constitutions, even very progressive and open to people's participation and involvement, can originate from phenomena of populist hegemony. Such a spirit might also be found in several of the more commended European constitutions⁴⁰.

Populist logic, through its evocation of forces coming from outside the existing institutional system, may result in an element of dynamism and of versatility of constitutional democracies, helping to balance the risks of every excess of institutionalism, which threatens to lock the political system in a self-referential formalism, aside from popular masses and from their claims and only managed by professionals of politics. It is from such situations of discrepancy and of accumulation of an enraged and suspicious distance between governors and governed, that the more serious and baleful reactions originate. Thus, a dose of populism, bringing back at the center of the debate the subject matter of people's sovereignty, may reveal itself to be a life-sustaining medicine. Furthermore, trying to attribute to constitutionalism and to its mechanisms a kind of

39. Criticizing such a conceptual opposition, cf. Müller (2016) and Kaltwasser (2013).

40. See for ex. the Portuguese Constitution of 1976.

mystical value, able to autonomously solve social problems, might be an attempt to hide behind constitutional forms the real nature of the power, adversarial and in itself (whatever is its garment, even constitutional) violent, oppressive and threatening⁴¹. Making forget this nature, as it is the consequence of an institutionalist political logic, is really dangerous: this is why it may be beneficial that a dose of populism could balance it. The role of populism becomes even more fundamental during periods of organic crisis, whose the best way out passes through a democratic mobilization of the people, the last custodian of sovereignty, aiming to collectively elaborate, decide and start a new course of the social, political and institutional framework. In spite of the large margins of elasticity and of adaptation to social change that can be found in the systems of the constitutions, even if formally rigid⁴², searching inside the constitutional order the solution to the crisis of the constitutional order cannot always and necessarily be the most rational, efficient and equitable solution way out. For example, post-war European constitutions guaranteed more or less strongly economic and social second-generation rights: work, appropriate housing, effectiveness of access to instruction, universal and good quality health care, suitable salaries and retirement benefits, etc. Nowadays, about 60 years later, not only these rights are not completely realized, but the tendency is even to weaken them, towards a sort of restoration of the previous liberal political framework, from whose contradictions many horrors of the XX century originated. It was often sufficient not to apply constitutional rules, up to try to make penetrate in the people's common sense the idea that these regulations, outdated, could even be repealed. Also the frequent subordination of the economic policies of the governments to the inflexible willpower of the institutions of the international market and the growth of norms and of fundamental political decisions developed at the European level —absorbed by the market ideology and organized without a genuinely democratic system— increasingly elude and neutralize the principles of democracy and of popular participation which inspire national constitutions, as well as their social contents (cf. Somma, 2019, pp. 17 ff.). Recent history shows how a strategy of differential absorption of these social demands, in the perspective of gradually ensuring their satisfaction, may easily fail, when a direct activism of the masses, aiming to support it from outside the institutional system, is

41. According to Canetti (1960), the execution of every command leaves in whom carries it out a painful sting, whose he feels the need of getting rid, sooner or later: individually, passing it down by the action of making, in turn, a subordinate execute orders; collectively, by the formation of a "reversal crowd", aiming to the joint liberation from a large number of stings of a large number of people, who cannot individually get rid of such commands.

42. See in that respect the reflections of Italian scholars, such as Lanchester (2011), Amato (2016), cf. already Mortati (1998).

lacking. In the dynamic relationship between constitutional form and substance, it is exactly the presence of such an activism, as well as the capacity of foresight and the spirit of openness of the policymakers, that could induce the reception of a widespread need of social transformation in the framework of the existing constitutional texts, giving value through an evolutionary approach —as this might be the case of Italy (cf. Dossetti, 1995, pp. 97 ff.; Barbera, 2015, pp. 265 ff.)— to their democratic, popular and social spirit.

Is there any risk in populisms? Yes, of course, there is: but no more than in institutionalism, in fact. In either case, the wellness or illness of a society and of its social classes reside, in the end, not in the adoption by political actors of one or the other strategy, but in the adoption of one or the other constitutional order and of one or the other form of society. So, depending on what is appropriate in the concrete situation, political actors can choose to use different strategies. The political world of nowadays is a fertile soil for populism; but the more reasonable answer to this tendency could not be, rather than trying to deny the legitimacy of such a strategy, its reception⁴³? In politics, a strategy has firstly to work. Populist logic has no more, no less dignity than a different political logic: simply, in some cases, it works. Nowadays, it often works. Concretely, politics is choosing one side. Once more time, populism just unveils this simple reality. Law, even constitutional law, is one of the several battlefields for the creation of the new common sense, increasingly enchained as an element of populist political logics. Fellow lawyers, welcome to the age of juridical populism!

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43. See Preterossi (2019): “Para volver a enlazar la relación con la política, superando la ruptura entre Estados que ya se han entregado a los algoritmos tecnocráticos y los pueblos (que aparecen cada vez más como una amplia área de exclusión abandonada en los territorios), yo creo que el terreno populista, si se declina en clave emancipadora y abierta y no como hostilidad al diferente, es un punto de partida conyuntural necesario. De este se sacan los recursos para una política contrahegemónica de patente matriz social y popular, fundada en la indivisibilidad de los derechos sociales y civiles y en la primacía de la soberanía democrática”; see also Formenti (2016).

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DE LA SOLIDARIDAD SOCIAL DE ÉMILE DURKHEIM A LA SOCIALIDAD DEL DON DE MARCELL MAUSS¹

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FROM THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY OF EMILE DURKHEIM TO THE SOCIALITY OF MARCELL MAUSS'S GIFT

Resumen

Este artículo se basa en la tesis de que no existe altruismo o egoísmo desde el punto de vista comportamental, tal y como lo afirman sociobiólogos o comportamentistas, sino que hay “relaciones altruistas” y “relaciones egoístas”. Para demostrarlo, partiremos del pensamiento de dos autores clásicos, Émile Durkheim y Marcel Mauss, de quienes se pueden deducir indirectamente enlaces con aquellas conductas cuyos beneficios

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remiten a otros individuos respecto de quien actúa, pasando de alguna manera de la solidaridad social de Durkheim a la socialidad del don de Mauss, lo que reconfigura la relación *Álter / Ego*.

Palabras clave

Solidaridad social, Durkheim, Don, Mauss, Socialidad, Relación.

Abstract

This article bases its existence on the hypothesis that altruism or egoism does not exist as behavior, so as claimed by sociobiologists or behaviorists, but there are “altruistic relationships” and “egoistic relationships”. To prove it, we will start from the thought of two authors, Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, since from these we can indirectly deduce references to those behaviors whose benefits are directed to other individuals with respect to those who act, all in a sort of passage from social solidarity of Durkheim to the sociality of Mauss’s gift with the possibility of reconfiguring the *Alter / Ego* relationship.

Keywords

Social Solidarity, Durkheim, Gift, Mauss, Sociality, Relationship.

La sociología y las conductas heterodirectas

El nacimiento de la sociología tiene aún cuestiones abiertas, como el debate sobre el altruismo o la polémica acerca de la moral solidaria o solidaridad social.

Las ciencias sociales en general no descubrieron el altruismo cuando Comte (1851-1854; 1852) creó este término que luego se difundiría a partir de 1852, cuando empezó a existir también en inglés con las traducciones de las obras del mismo Comte (Dixon, 2012). Desde la antigüedad, los estudiosos —antes que todo los filósofos— trataron de explicar y comprender los motivos por los que, en determinadas situaciones, algunos individuos se aproximaban positivamente a lo social (relaciones heterodirectas) y aquellos por los que, en situaciones similares, esos mismos hombres no lo hacían. Lógicamente, no todas las disciplinas emplearon efectivamente el término altruismo, pero esto no impidió a diferentes disciplinas humanas y sociales que se ocuparan de comportamientos que, directa o indirectamente, pudieran remitir al altruismo: una de estas fue la sociología. De hecho, a medida que las ciencias sociales —sobre todo la sociología— iban desarrollándose y constituyéndose como un conjunto autónomo de conocimientos, categorías cada vez más amplias de fenómenos se “sustraían” a la investigación filosófica y al “discurso” moral o político, para convertirse en el objeto de nuevas disciplinas. A partir del siglo XVIII, la demografía, la estadística, la economía y la sociología representaron una manera particular de recoger datos y de observar la realidad emergente, una sociedad nueva y compleja con importantes transformaciones que se habían apropiado de Occidente. Es decir, se tendía a superar la tradición, dejando que la experiencia analizara los fenómenos: el hombre empieza a estudiarse como *homo sociologicus*.

Antes de empezar nuestro análisis, se necesita aclarar el contexto histórico en el que —en el ámbito de la sociología— se ha desarrollado el debate sobre el altruismo o solidaridad social. Es inevitable que los criterios de estudio hayan seguido el desarrollo de la sociología y la afirmación de esta como disciplina autónoma, de ahí que históricamente se hayan desarrollado paralelamente a la caracterización de la sociología sobre la base del paradigma de referencia predominante.

Ya se ha dicho que el término altruismo nació con Auguste Comte (1851-1854) y es una de las pocas palabras surgidas en el ámbito científico que se mantendrá en el lenguaje común con más o menos el mismo significado que se le atribuyó como término contrapuesto a egoísmo. La centralidad del altruismo en las reflexiones de las ciencias sociales se nota en muchos de los clásicos (Wuthnow, 1993; Bykov, 2017);

por ejemplo, precisamente a través de la contraposición entre altruismo y egoísmo, Durkheim (1987) explica los fundamentos de la solidaridad social en la sociedad moderna y define sus implicaciones en el libro *Suicide* (2012) para luego distinguir la más famosa tipología de suicidio, contraponiendo precisamente el suicidio altruista a aquel egoísta. Los funcionalistas siguientes (Parsons y Merton) renovarían la subordinación de las acciones de los individuos de manera funcionalmente positiva a la sociedad, esto es, con una marcada orientación a lo colectivo. De la misma manera, tanto Weber como Marx, aunque no empleen el término altruismo, lo refieren de forma indirecta: el primero describe la ética del amor de la autoridad carismática en contraposición con la autoridad legal y racional, mientras el segundo alimenta sus polémicas contra la caridad cristiana.

Sin embargo, este interés por el altruismo como objeto de estudio de las ciencias sociales va disminuyendo progresivamente a lo largo de las décadas —sobre todo en Europa— y a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo pasado los estudios teóricos y empíricos muestran el desinterés de los científicos sociales hacia ese objeto, a excepción del sociólogo ruso-estadounidense Sorokin quien en 1949, y financiado por Eli Lilly y Lilly Endowment, logró fundar el *Harvard Research Center in Creative Altruism* (Sorokin, 1955, 1963, 1995). Sin embargo, en los últimos años parece recobrar fuerza el estudio del altruismo, sobre todo en Estados Unidos, donde en 2012 surgió la sección “Altruism, Morality & Social Solidarity” en la Asociación Estadounidense de Sociología (Nichols, 2012). El promotor de la iniciativa fue Vincent Jeffries quien, en el artículo “Altruism and Social Solidarity: Envisioning a Field of Specialization” (Jeffries *et al.*, 2006), explicó junto a otros compañeros, la importancia de este ámbito doctrinal. Tras la publicación de este artículo, y ya a partir de 2009, se creó un *boletín digital* de la futura sección “Altruism & Social Solidarity”, que definitivamente se llamará “Altruism, Morality & Social Solidarity”. De esta manera, los estudiosos que fundaron esta sección juntaron esos tres aspectos en un único ámbito de especialización disciplinario por ser significativamente interdependientes en la realidad sociocultural (Jeffries, 2014), y a raíz de la herencia intelectual que sobre todo algunos estudiosos (Jeffries, 2002; Johnston, 2001; Krotov, 2012, 2014; Nichols, 2009; Weinstein, 2000) habían tomado de Sorokin.

Esto es lo que está ocurriendo en Estados Unidos. En Europa se retoman las investigaciones sobre el altruismo, sobre todo en la sociología francesa, en particular a partir de las numerosas contribuciones reativas a la lectura y relectura del don de Marcel Mauss (1925, trad. esp., 2009) —sobrino y discípulo de Durkheim— y del movimiento antiutilitarista de Alain Caillé (1988); cronológicamente el último libro fue aquel de

Steiner (2016), que esboza una historia del altruismo a partir de la teoría crítica de la economía, además de la psicología social de Moscovici (2000).

En lo que se refiere a las herencias intelectuales, se remite a la literatura producida por cada autor citado. En este trabajo se tratará de esbozar brevemente cómo el redescubrimiento del altruismo puede producir una nueva configuración de los estudios sociológicos hasta dejar aquel *modus operandi* que tiende a hacer emerger sólo fenómenos negativos o patológicos sin poner nunca de manifiesto fenómenos positivos y sanos (Sorokin, 1966). Este artículo se basa en la tesis de que no existe altruismo o egoísmo desde el punto de vista comportamental, tal y como lo afirman sociobiólogos o comportamentistas, sino que existen “relaciones altruistas” y “relaciones egoístas”. Se tratará de demostrarlo a partir del pensamiento de dos autores clásicos, Émile Durkheim y Marcel Mauss, porque de estos se pueden deducir indirectamente enlaces con aquellas conductas cuyos beneficios remiten a otros individuos respecto de quien actúa, pasando de alguna manera de la solidaridad social de Durkheim a la socialidad del don de Mauss, lo que reconfigura la relación Álder / Ego.

Las dicotomías sociológicas de Émile Durkheim y la solidaridad social

Con la obra de Émile Durkheim la historia de la sociología vive un momento fundamental: él quería construir una ciencia social que pudiera cimentar sólidamente la acción pública, aun sabiendo que la investigación sociológica no progresaría tanto como para permitir a esa nueva disciplina ser la base de una legislación específica.

Sin embargo, la aproximación del estudioso francés presenta un fuerte elemento innovador respecto del ámbito disciplinario de la estadística moral (Guerry, 1864; Quetelet, 1869) que en aquel período histórico representaba la máxima expresión del positivismo. De hecho, según la propuesta de Durkheim, el orden social (estructura o sistema) representa la premisa esencial de la acción individual y colectiva: el todo explica las partes. Sólo y exclusivamente si son insertados (integrados) en un sistema o pertenecen a una estructura, los seres humanos se convierten también en seres sociales. Los individuos reglamentan su comportamiento en los grupos y en la sociedad dependiendo de un complejo sistema de normas que, consciente o inconscientemente, son interiorizadas, o sea se hacen parte integrante de todo individuo. En otros términos, se ponen de manifiesto las funciones de reproducción y persistencia desempeñadas por

la inculturación, la educación, la conformidad con las normas, la combinación de las expectativas de papel, en una sociedad en la que el elemento constitutivo se supone ser el consenso a los valores. Por consiguiente, la estructura (o el sistema) adelanta siempre a los individuos, los precede y adquiere hacia ellos un legítimo valor explicativo.

Esta diferencia entre individual y social se esboza en contraposiciones dualistas: solidaridad orgánica vs. solidaridad mecánica, altruismo vs. egoísmo, hecho social vs. hecho síquico, representación colectiva vs. representación individual, sagrado vs. profano, orden social vs. anomia. Estas contraposiciones adquieren una relevancia fundamental a la hora de explicar muchos fenómenos socioculturales y de la sociedad en general. Precisamente el tema de la solidaridad social impregna toda la obra de Durkheim, por considerarse el elemento que vincula e integra a los individuos a la/en la sociedad: en efecto, su ausencia determina las que Durkheim definirá patologías sociales (piénsese en el suicidio).

Suicidio altruista vs suicidio anómico

De ahí que Durkheim se ocupe antes que todo de la diferencia entre individual y social; este dualismo se halla en toda la obra del sociólogo francés en contraposiciones como aquella entre altruismo y egoísmo, que se explicita en el enfrentamiento entre suicidio altruista vs. suicidio egoísta. Desde principios del siglo pasado, todos los estudios sobre el suicidio se fundamentaban en el libro de Durkheim (1897, trad. esp., 2012) que, a partir de su primera publicación en 1897, se considera el texto “clásico” para una aproximación empírica al estudio de ese fenómeno social (para Durkheim, el suicidio debe considerarse un fenómeno social y no individual). En esa obra Durkheim no analiza el suicidio como un mero acto individual sino que más bien, al compás de las otras obras, quiere poner de manifiesto con datos empíricos la predominancia de lo social sobre la acción individual: así las cosas, no se centra en el acto del suicidio en sí o en los individuos que lo hacen, sino en las condiciones sociales que lo determinan.

En la perspectiva de la teoría durkheimiana, la sociología debe individualizar y eliminar las posibles disgregaciones en la sociedad antes de que produzcan molestia entre sus componentes, y debe guiar al sujeto, induciéndolo a planificar sus comportamientos en el interior de una sociedad cada vez más funcionalmente diferenciada.

Para evitar confusiones en el pensamiento y en las ideas por un empleo superficial del término *suicidio* en la acepción popular, él mismo prefiere profundizar en la explicación de lo que quiere estudiar por medio de hechos que pueden ser comparados:

[...] se llama suicidio a todo caso de muerte que resulte, directa o indirectamente, de un acto, positivo o negativo, realizado por la víctima misma, a sabiendas del resultado. La tentativa sería el mismo acto cuando no llega a término y no arroja como resultado la muerte. (Durkheim, 2012, p. 13)

Así las cosas, al sociólogo francés no le interesa cómo un individuo decide “en plena conciencia” acabar con su propia vida. Un individuo puede que decida quitarse la vida de forma no violenta (por ejemplo, no alimentándose), y esto también entra en la categoría del suicidio. Todas las acciones remitibles a factores de semejanza, bien definidos y que tienden a la misma finalidad, representan elementos de la misma categoría. Durkheim polemiza con los estadísticos morales que lo adelantaron en esos estudios y considera implícita la idea de que el factor de causalidad es exclusivamente social y no extra-social, como afirmaban estos. En la primera parte de su trabajo, confuta precisamente las afirmaciones de estos estudiosos con relación a los motivos considerados determinantes y no-determinantes para el suicidio. No explica las tasas elevadas de suicidio por medio de fenómenos naturales, ni los considera la secuela de una enfermedad mental: de ahí que en la acción de un individuo influya el ambiente en el que vive, y esto es valedero también en lo que respecta a un acto tan dramático como el suicidio.

Durkheim llega incluso a sostener que las causas del suicidio se hallan en el equilibrio de dos parejas de fuerzas morales contrapuestas entre ellas (egoísmo-altruismo y anomia-fatalismo), que deriva de la combinación de dos variables: *integración* y *regulación*. Se opone a toda forma de individualismo a través del concepto de *orden social*, entendido como equilibrio moral de la sociedad debido, precisamente, a la unión de estas dos últimas variables. Al afirmar que la sociedad posee un valor superior al individuo, Durkheim pretende demostrar que la sociedad puede explicarse sólo a través de los *hechos sociales*; al analizar las características que estos adquieren en la sociedad, crea su tipología de suicidio explicado sobre la base del diferente grado de dependencia del individuo de la sociedad (egoísta, altruista, anómico, a los que cabe añadir fatalista). Los cuatro tipos de suicidio hacen que este acto remita al vínculo del individuo con la sociedad, que representa su sustrato común, a pesar de ser muy diferentes entre ellos.

El suicidio egoísta brota de una escasa integración del individuo en los grupos sociales de los que forma parte. Es el caso en que la individualidad del sujeto es preeminente respecto de la colectividad. Durkheim destaca estas características analizando las tasas de suicidio con relación a tres grupos sociales (religioso, familiar, político) que considera muy importantes para el orden moral y social de la sociedad. Estos son los

grupos con los que el individuo interactúa casi diariamente y por toda su vida. Tras el debilitamiento de las creencias tradicionales y la transformación de la solidaridad social ya no *mecánica* pero sí *orgánica*, el hombre siente cada vez más fuerte el deseo de poder actuar y pensar libremente.

Este tipo de suicidio es inversamente proporcional a la integración del individuo en el grupo religioso de pertenencia. La proporcionalidad inversa de las tasas de suicidio con el nivel de integración del individuo en un determinado grupo será la constante del suicidio egoísta.

Otro grupo social que Durkheim examina es la familia definida como *sociedad doméstica*. En su estudio, el autor analiza pormenorizadamente todas las posibles formas en que puede presentarse un grupo familiar y, también en este caso, sobre la base de algunas regularidades, saca unas conclusiones: los componentes de las parejas sin hijos se suicidan más que aquellas con hijos, los viudos sin hijos más que aquellos con hijos, los hombres más que las mujeres, y este último aspecto puede depender probablemente de un involucramiento emotivo con los grupos primarios más fuerte.

Cuando habla de sociedad política, Durkheim se refiere a la organización político-social considerándola capaz de influir de forma positiva o negativa en las tasas de suicidio. Las grandes turbaciones sociales, las guerras civiles y las revoluciones pueden reforzar los sentimientos colectivos (Sorokin, 2010) encañalando las energías de los individuos hacia un objetivo único, y aumentando por un tiempo determinado el nivel de cohesión social. De ahí que produzcan una disminución de las muertes voluntarias.

Lo que acabamos de describir explica que los diferentes grupos sociales ejercen un *influjo regulador* en el suicidio. La integración preserva el individuo de comportamientos suicidarios, haciéndolo responsable hacia sí mismo y los demás: el apoyo de la colectividad unida constituye una barrera para evitar dinámicas autodestructivas, aunque esto es verdadero hasta una determinada altura porque, al superarla, la integración actúa de manera contraria.

De hecho, a diferencia del suicidio egoísta, lo que caracteriza al altruista es la excesiva integración en el grupo social, con la total anulación de la individualidad del sujeto. Este queda totalmente devorado por las tareas que le impone la vida colectiva. Casos de este tipo de suicidio se pueden encontrar también en las poblaciones antiguas, bajo formas muy diferentes. Piénsese en el caso del suicidio de individuos en el umbral de la vejez, práctica que la población visigoda había institucionalizado. Piénsese también en el caso de la muerte voluntaria de criados y esclavos tras la muerte de sus dueños, o bien en los suicidios de las mujeres tras la muerte de sus esposos. Estas formas particulares

de suicidio adquieren la función de cumplimiento de un deber hacia la sociedad, y es por esto que el mismo Durkheim lo define como *suicidio altruista obligatorio*.

Descubrir elementos comunes en estos dos tipos de suicidio (egoísta y altruista) es posible sólo en términos de una visión aplastada de la vida: para los suicidas del primer tipo no existe el mundo fuera de sí mismos, mientras para los del segundo la privación de una realidad individual es fuerte. Esta consideración es aún más verdadera si se hace a raíz de la síntesis propuesta por Durkheim acerca de las palabras *egoísmo* y *altruismo*:

Puesto que hemos llamado egoísmo al estado del yo cuando vive su vida personal y sólo obedece a sí mismo, la palabra altruismo expresa bastante bien el estado contrario, aquel en el que el yo no se pertenece a sí mismo, se confunde con otra cosa que no es él, y el grupo del que forma parte, algo externo, determina lo que rige su conducta. (Durkheim, 2012, p. 175)

Esta definición no sólo pone de manifiesto la contraposición durkheimiana de dos formas de conducta individual, sino que también destaca la distinción entre individuo y sociedad. En efecto, el uso de la dicotomía altruismo/egoísmo demuestra la principal idea ontológica de lo social de Durkheim: la primacía de la sociedad sobre el individuo. Para Durkheim, altruismo y solidaridad social no se pueden distinguir (Bykov, 2017) y espera que —y es su idea moral de la sociedad— en la sociedad moderna —donde deberían convivir integrándose la dimensión individual y aquella colectiva— estos tipos de suicidio (altruista y egoísta) desaparezcan. Mientras tanto, analiza un grupo particular de suicidio altruista: el ejército.

En la última parte del análisis del suicidio altruista, Durkheim remacha aquella necesidad, satisfecha en la introducción, de definir de manera detallada e imparcial el objeto de estudio del suicidio, porque es fácil tomar posiciones ambiguas; de hecho, aclara que

[...] como el suicidio altruista, aun presentando los rasgos más notables del suicidio, guarda cierta semejanza con determinadas categorías de actos que estamos habituados a honrar y aun a admirar, se ha rehusado considerarlo un homicidio de sí mismo. [...] Pero entonces, si los suicidios cuya causa visible e inmediata es el espíritu de renuncia y abnegación no merecen esta calificación, sólo podemos aplicar el concepto a los suicidios que proceden de la misma disposición moral, aunque de forma menos aparente; la diferencia es de matiz. (Durkheim, 2012, p. 189)

Durkheim se detiene mucho en el *suicidio anómico* porque opina que es típico del mundo contemporáneo. La diferencia sustancial entre este tipo y los dos anteriores es que estos últimos se fundamentan en el *quantum* de la relación del individuo con la sociedad, es decir, en el nivel de integración en la sociedad a la que pertenecen, mientras el anómico se enlaza con la falta de importantes reglas sociales: de ahí el término *anomia*².

El término anomia puede considerarse como aquella condición en la que faltan o escasean formas de reglamentación de las relaciones entre los órganos (individuos) de una sociedad (organismo). De ahí que sea emblemática la descripción de Durkheim acerca del suicidio anómico, cuya causa se halla en la falta parcial o total de reglamentación en los grupos sociales, que hace que los individuos se desbanden y desorienten. Este tipo de suicidio ocurre sobre todo en los períodos de turbación económica que debilitan el equilibrio de la sociedad y del individuo mismo, que ya no sabe reconocer lo que es posible y lo que no lo es. Los momentos de crisis (tanto si tienen un final positivo, como si no lo tienen) aumentan las tasas de suicidio. Esta variación estadística se justifica con el cambio de las condiciones de vida social, que procura unos cambios a la escala de valores sociales que reglamenta las necesidades individuales. Esa condición crea un desequilibrio entro lo que es posible y lo que no lo es. El materialismo induce el individuo a pensar que no existen límites para sus deseos que no pueda superar. Para reducir ese fenómeno y/o los efectos de las crisis, Durkheim no cree en la represión de los deseos de los individuos o en acciones coercitivas, sino que considera necesario repensar en las formas de organización de los grupos sociales, sobre todo del grupo profesional (al estar este tipo de suicidio relacionado con las crisis económicas). Sin embargo, la anomia en el sector económico no es la única que procura este tipo de suicidio porque su verdadero efecto desencadenante es la falta parcial o total de reglamentación en el interior de grupos sociales, que facilita dispersión y desorientación en los individuos.

En resumen, puede afirmarse que la teoría durkheimiana del suicidio se centra en un equilibrio de dos parejas de fuerzas morales sociales contrapuestas entre ellas: egoísmo-altruismo y anomia-fatalismo³. A su vez, estas se explican respectivamente sobre la base de otras dos variables: la integración y la reglamentación, que repre-

2. Además de Durkheim, el concepto de *anomia* fue analizado también por otros estudiosos. En particular, fue descrito en el siglo pasado por Merton (1949), uno de los mayores exponentes del estructural-funcionalismo. El sociólogo estadounidense afirma que el estado de *anomia* indica una situación en la que se registra la pérdida de credibilidad de las normas y la ausencia total de normas. De ser así, los “actores sociales” se hallan en particulares condiciones de incomodidad porque, al no tener ya eficacia los valores normativos, pierden sus referencias. De ahí que se produzca un sufrimiento tanto en el caso de que las normas ya no tienen eficacia, como en el caso de que estas existen formalmente, pero exentas de significado.

3. El *suicidio fatalista* se considera menos importante, de hecho, se analiza en una nota al final del capítulo relativo al suicidio anómico. La escasa relevancia que el estudioso francés le regala se debe muy probablemente a la semejanza entre los conceptos teóricos del suicidio altruista y fatalista.

sentan los pilares del tema central de toda la sociología durkheimiana. El objetivo de esta es alcanzar el orden social que está supeditado a la integración y que, a su vez, se fundamenta en la condisión y el consenso alrededor de factores (creencias, reglas, valores, etc.) que, por esto mismo, se consolidan y transmiten para convertirse en comunes (conciencia colectiva). Esto permite a Durkheim oponerse a cada forma de individualismo en favor de una solidaridad social que ya no es solidaridad mecánica de las comunidades, sino solidaridad orgánica de la moderna sociedad.

Solidaridad orgánica vs solidaridad mecánica

Por lo dicho, la innovación metodológica de Durkheim es sustancial: separa netamente lo individual de lo social. Esta aproximación se convertirá en el paradigma de referencia de la sociología con el funcionalismo parsonsiano (Parsons, 1949). Lo social prima sobre lo individual, la solidaridad orgánica sobre la mecánica, las representaciones colectivas sobre las individuales, adquiriendo significado a través de las instituciones que representan la constante respecto de la variabilidad del peso de los individuos. La sociedad no se puede explicar a través de acciones y motivaciones individuales, sino por medio de hechos sociales externos y coercitivos que se cuelan en la conciencia individual (sustrato de la representación individual) creando la conciencia colectiva (sustrato de las representaciones colectivas). Para Durkheim, tal y como ya se ha dicho, fenómenos considerados típicamente individuales como el suicidio también tienen una causa social.

Dentro de los numerosos comentadores de la mastodóntica obra de Durkheim sobre el suicidio está Talcott Parsons (1949), quien trata de reconstruir la tipología durkheimiana con relación a otro texto de Durkheim, *La división del trabajo social* (1893, trad. esp., 1987). Parsons empieza a analizar la tipología durkheimiana considerando el suicidio altruista como consecuencia directa de una *solidaridad mecánica* no debida a la similitud de los individuos, sino a la subordinación de estos al grupo; en cambio, el suicidio egoísta se caracteriza por la *solidaridad orgánica* que tiende a valorizar las personalidades individuales. Para Parsons, el egoísmo es la representación reflejada del culto del individuo, lejos de ser el fruto de la *conciencia colectiva o común*— definida como el conjunto de las creencias y de los sentimientos comunes de los ciudadanos medios de la misma sociedad que forma un determinado sistema con vida propia. De esta simple definición se destaca que la conciencia colectiva —y la representación en un segundo momento— constituye un sistema autónomo del resto de la vida social, pero

en esta se establece y reproduce. Por lo tanto, Parsons critica la posición de Durkheim disintiendo del hecho de que el egoísmo puede ser el resultado de la transformación de la conciencia colectiva. Parson afirma que el egoísmo es el fruto del reflejo de la conciencia de los individuos que casi se contraponen a la colectiva y subraya que los diferentes tipos de suicidios no surgieron al mismo tiempo, y que el concepto de anomia —que ha sufrido una evolución a lo largo de las demás obras de Durkheim— ha sido elaborado después del concepto de egoísmo y altruismo. Resumiendo, el principio de la teoría durkheimiana del suicidio, tal y como lo reconstruye Parsons, distingue el suicidio anómico de los otros dos tipos por la falta de normas, mientras que el egoísta y el altruista se diferencian entre sí por el contenido de las normas y por la preeminencia del grupo sobre el individuo.

Se hace hincapié en el origen del poder regulador que, en el contexto del suicidio altruista y egoísta, se considera interno al individuo. En efecto, este poder regular brota del proceso de socialización de los individuos, sobre todo en la fase de la interiorización de las normas por parte de cada individuo, diferenciándose luego en el contenido colectivo (*conciencia colectiva*), en el primer caso (suicidio altruista), y en aquel individual (*conciencia individual*), en el segundo (suicidio egoísta), mientras en el suicidio fatalista se considera externo al individuo. En cambio, el suicidio anómico está caracterizado por la falta total de normas y de poder regulador. ¿Cómo se define este poder regulador?

Para Durkheim, el sustrato de la *conciencia colectiva* no es un órgano único. Por definición, esta impregna toda la sociedad, pero esto no significa que le falten los caracteres específicos que la hacen una realidad distinta. Es independiente de las condiciones particulares en las que se hallan los individuos. La conciencia colectiva no cambia a toda generación sino, por el contrario, vincula a las generaciones siguientes las unas con las otras. Es diferente de las conciencias individuales, aunque se realiza en los individuos. De ahí que la conciencia colectiva sea totalmente autónoma de los individuos y se presente casi como una forma de coerción externa para los sujetos, hasta definir negativa la acción que se contraponen a la integridad de la conciencia que caracteriza a un determinado colectivo. La conciencia colectiva representa la fuerza vital de una comunidad, así que todo lo que tiende a debilitar o disminuir ese factor causa turbación en los individuos.

En la obra *La división del trabajo social* (1893, trad. esp., 1987) el sociólogo francés emplea el término *representación*, que no se sustituirá a la idea de *conciencia colectiva*, a pesar de tener una definición análoga. Sin embargo, al ser fenómeno, la primera influye

en la conciencia. Durkheim no enfatiza demasiado esta gran analogía. Por un lado, seguirá considerando la conciencia colectiva como la forma principal aglutinante de los individuos en la sociedad, además del prioritario elemento de explicación de la cohesión social (elemento que produce integración), total que caracteriza a la *solidaridad mecánica* típica de las sociedades tradicionales, en las que los individuos se asemejan entre sí y comparten reglas y valores comunes. Por otro lado, las representaciones se consideran —por lo menos en este primer estudio— un elemento negativo porque casi siempre contrastan con la conciencia y, de todas formas, se subestiman respecto del problema del sentido en la vida social. Al respecto, Durkheim (1987) señala que la solidaridad mecánica

[...] no se puede fortalecer más que en la medida en que las ideas y las tendencias comunes a todos los miembros de la sociedad sobrepasan en número y en intensidad a las que pertenecen personalmente a cada uno de ellos. [...] Es tanto más energética cuanto más considerable es este excedente. Ahora bien, lo que constituye nuestra personalidad es aquello que cada uno de nosotros tiene de propio y de característico, lo que le distingue de los demás. Esta solidaridad no puede, pues, aumentarse sino en razón inversa a la personalidad [...]. La solidaridad que deriva de las semejanzas alcanza su maximum cuando la conciencia colectiva recubre exactamente nuestra conciencia total y coincide en todos sus puntos con ella; pero, en ese momento, nuestra individualidad es nula. (p. 152).

Con el principio de la división del trabajo, en cambio, se desarrolla un nuevo tipo de solidaridad (*solidaridad orgánica*) basada en el reconocimiento de las diferencias y en un énfasis menor en las normas y los valores. La solidaridad orgánica

[...] no es posible como cada uno no tenga una esfera de acción que le sea propia, por consiguiente, una personalidad [...]. En efecto, de una parte, depende cada uno tanto más estrechamente de la sociedad cuanto más dividido está el trabajo, y, por otra parte, la actividad de cada uno es tanto más personal cuanto está más especializada [...]. Aquí, pues, la individualidad del todo aumenta al mismo tiempo que la de las partes; la sociedad hácese más capaz para moverse con unidad, a la vez que cada uno de sus elementos tiene más movimientos propios. (Durkheim, 1987, pp. 153-154)

Al progresar la división del trabajo, la conciencia colectiva se hace más débil, y precisamente por esta progresión la división del trabajo se hace fuente de la solidaridad. Aunque esta es la posición de un joven Durkheim, él afirma que la división del trabajo incluso puede no ser un fenómeno normal de la sociedad cuando las relaciones de los órganos no son reglamentadas al estar en un estado de anomia. Por lo demás, el período histórico en el que Durkheim teorizaba estuvo caracterizado por importantes cambios sociales: la crisis del Antiguo Régimen y la consiguiente pérdida de las instituciones tradicionales habían producido en la vida colectiva dos situaciones extremas: por un lado, el individuo con sus necesidades insatisfechas que producían sufrimiento; por otro lado, un Estado centralizado incapaz de frenar los impulsos egoístas de los ciudadanos. Sólo si están limitadas por las reglas de la colectividad las necesidades humanas, derivantes de fuertes pasiones, logran ser satisfechas, de lo contrario, tienden a crear incomodidad. En efecto, el individuo no posee intrínsecamente el sentido del límite que, por ende, será impuesto por una fuerza externa que no puede sino ser la sociedad, la cual ejerce una potencia moral que induce los individuos a respetarla.

Estos son los motivos por los que Durkheim modificó sucesivamente su posición y puso de manifiesto que también los sistemas que habían desarrollado un elevado nivel de solidaridad orgánica necesitaban de una fe común, de una *conciencia colectiva*, si se quería evitar su disgregación en un aglomerado de individuos recíprocamente antagonistas, que sólo tienden a la autoafirmación (Coser, 1977). En la sociología durkheimiana se da por lo tanto la primacía de lo social: se opone a toda forma de individualismo por medio del concepto de orden social entendido como equilibrio moral de la sociedad, derivante de la combinación de dos variables: la integración y la reglamentación. Al afirmar que la sociedad posee un valor superior al individuo, Durkheim quiere hacer comprender que la sociedad puede explicarse sólo a través de los hechos sociales, y que el hombre se hace parte integrante de lo social —órgano de un organismo— sólo después de haber derrotado a su naturaleza egocéntrica. Para destacar esta diferencia entre individual y social, Durkheim emplea en todas sus obras dicotomías contrapuestas (solidaridad orgánica vs. solidaridad mecánica, altruismo vs. egoísmo, hecho social vs. hecho síquico, representación colectiva vs. representación individual, sagrado vs. profano, orden social vs. anomia), cada una de las cuales aspira a adquirir una relevancia fundamental para explicar muchos fenómenos socio-culturales y de la sociedad en general, pero sobre todo a hacer emerger la distinción neta entre individual y social. Los hombres reglamentan su comportamiento en los grupos y en la sociedad en función de un complejo sistema de normas y reglas que se

consolidan y transmiten para convertirse en patrimonio común (conciencia colectiva). Esto permite a Durkheim oponerse a todas las formas de individualismo en una sociedad en la que el elemento constitutivo, se supone, es el consenso alrededor de valores que lleven a una solidaridad social.

Marcell Mauss y el don: de la socialidad secundaria a la socialidad primaria

Steiner (2016) ha explicado muy bien que la contribución de Mauss ensancha el pensamiento de Durkheim favoreciendo el pasaje de la oposición somera del altruismo/egoísmo a aquella de las donaciones y de las contradonaciones. Esto ocurre porque, en la realidad de los hechos, los estudios sobre el altruismo deben conjugar el sistema con los individuos por medio de formas de relaciones. De ahí que el análisis de estas conductas heterodirectas tenga que considerar la multidimensionalidad y multifactorialidad que las caracteriza. De esta manera se privilegian los espacios de las relaciones sociales en los procesos que se desarrollan en la sociedad: todos los fenómenos sociales y las actitudes y acciones se construyen en un ámbito que posee sus lugares, tiempos y símbolos, que son fundamentales en los procesos cognitivos de autosignificación puestos en marcha por los individuos para la construcción de las realidades sociales en su experiencia de vida cotidiana.

Bajo esta óptica, se propone una reflexión sobre un aspecto de la sociedad y, en particular, de las relaciones entre individuos que remite al altruismo, pero que tiene su definición específica: el don. La obra empleada es el clásico de Marcel Mauss (1925, trad. esp., 2009), *Essai sur le don*. En este trabajo, remitiendo sobre todo a los estudios de Boas (1897) sobre el ritual del *potlatch*⁴ y de Malinowski (1922) sobre aquel del *kula*⁵, Mauss describe la socialidad del don en las sociedades arcaicas.

El lector se estará preguntando por qué, al hablar de relaciones positivas a favor de lo social (heterodirectas), se remite al don; esta perplejidad se aclarará en las páginas

4. El *potlatch* (o *potlach*) es una ceremonia típica de algunas tribus de indios americanos de la costa noroccidental del Pacífico de Estados Unidos y Canadá. Es una función ritual caracterizada tradicionalmente por un convite de carne de foca o de salmón, en la que los hospederos muestran su riqueza e importancia a través de la distribución de sus posesiones, induciendo de esa manera a los participantes a hacer lo mismo durante su *potlatch*.

5. El *kula* es un intercambio simbólico de dones entre las poblaciones de estas islas. Los que participaban en estos viajes incluso por centenares de kilómetros en canoa para intercambiarse dones como collares de conchas rojas (*soulava*), mirando hacia el norte (el viaje es un círculo y sigue el movimiento horario de las agujas del reloj) y pulseras de concha blanca (*mwali*) mirando hacia el sur (el intercambio ocurre entre objetos diferentes: collares vs pulseras y viceversa). La característica era que los objetos debían pasar de mano en mano continuamente y el intercambio estaba rígidamente ritualizado.

siguientes, aunque ya a partir de las dos definiciones de don (una sociológica y otra más general) —proporcionadas por Caillé— debería empezar a explicarse:

1) *definición sociológica*: todo abastecimiento de bienes o servicios realizado sin garantía de devolución, para crear, mantener o regenerar el vínculo social. En la relación del don el vínculo vale más que el bien. 2) *definición general*: toda acción o servicio desempeñado sin espera, garantía o certeza de devolución, con solo una dimensión de “gratuidad”. (Caillé, 1998, p. 75)

El don no se encuentra sólo en las sociedades arcaicas: se halla también en la sociedad moderna con formas y maneras enlazadas, la mayoría de las veces, con organizaciones, lo cual complejiza esos intercambios, no muy lejanos de aquellos que ocurren en el mercado. El don produce intercambios no gobernados por la presencia de un contrato, hay más iniciativa que fomenta la creatividad y consolida los vínculos sociales. Respecto de la presencia de un contrato hay por lo menos tres diferencias: i) el don es libre, se elige hacerlo. No hay ningún vínculo que induce a los individuos a donar o a corresponder (la fallida obligación al intercambio no prevé sanciones, solo es de carácter moral); ii) no hay garantía de devolución, de ahí que el intercambio se fundamente en la confianza y en lo que se opina del otro individuo destinatario del don:

El eje es que ‘quien da’ y ‘quien recibe’ constituye una relación muy compleja, que entra en una red de relaciones caracterizada por cambios crecientes en cada uno de sus elementos; además, demasiado a menudo se piensa que la asimetría en este tipo de relación se debe al comportamiento comunicativo de ‘quien da’ que ampliaría la prevalencia. En realidad, las diferencias se deben más a factores culturales y de construcción de la identidad que a factores intrínsecos a la relación: la distancia entre ‘quien da’ y ‘quien recibe’ de un modelo de organización racional, que codifica y finaliza la relación y que podría definirse de escuela taylorista-utilitarista. (Mangone, 2019, p. 37)

Sin embargo, si, en términos generales, la confianza y la desconfianza pueden considerarse una expectativa de experiencias del individuo de alcance positivo la primera y negativo la segunda, en lo que se refiere a la primera estamos ante una carga cognitiva y/o emotiva tan fuerte como para permitir superar el umbral de la mera esperanza (Mutti, 2007) y, por ende, considerar positivamente una relación; iii) el don exige recipro-

cidad, la deuda no se elimina (tal y como en los contratos de compra/venta). Es todo lo contrario, el don produce deuda hacia el otro, y cuanto más largo sea el período de la devolución, más se mantiene el vínculo entre las dos partes. De esa manera se registra el pasaje de un enfoque que tiende a reducir las acciones de los individuos solo a los aspectos de intercambio (*do ut des*) a un enfoque que hace hincapié en las interacciones globales entre los aspectos de intercambio y todas aquellas variables sociales y culturales importantes. Mauss así resume estos aspectos:

El don es, por lo tanto, al mismo tiempo lo que hay que hacer, lo que hay que recibir y aquello que, sin embargo, es peligroso aceptar. Esto se debe a que la cosa que se da crea una relación bilateral e irrevocable, sobre todo en aquellos casos en que los dones son alimentos. (Mauss, 1971, p. 240)

Por lo tanto, el paradigma del don subraya la importancia positiva y normativa, sociológica, económica, ética, política y filosófica de este tipo de acción. En la sociedad moderna, hablar de don es una especie de oxímoron, pues la idea de una sociedad solidaria y aquella de una sociedad en la que todo individuo persigue solo sus intereses chocan. Esta imagen dicotómica de la sociedad ha determinado una especie de bipartición de tipo también geográfico: la sociedad occidental utilitarista y racional que por cierto no emplea el don para construir cohesión o vínculos sociales, a diferencia de las demás sociedades llamadas “exóticas” que siguen fundamentando la sociedad en este tipo de acciones. Esto ha impedido la recontextualización de la fenomenología del don y su actualización a la sociedad moderna (Caillé, 1988).

¿A cuáles conclusiones llega Mauss con su ensayo? Destaca algunos aspectos fundamentales de la naturaleza del don que pueden valer también para las sociedades occidentales en sentido muy general.

El primero es que la “socialidad obligatoria” del don —representada por el ciclo “dar/recibir/devolver” (Reyes García, 2016)— se halla muy presente en las sociedades estudiadas: hay que “dar” para demostrar su propia potencia y riqueza. La obligación al don procede de vínculos comunitarios y de honor; en efecto, quien no puede hallar y poseer objetos para meterlos en el círculo del don está excluido de la comunidad; hay que “recibir” para garantizar una relación pacífica (rechazar el don es una ofensa al donador); finalmente, hay que “devolver” restituyendo a la par o aumentando el don recibido, de lo contrario también en este caso es una ofensa al donador. ¿Qué es lo que determina la última forma de obligación (devolver)?

Para Mauss, los objetos donados y recibidos poseen significados simbólicos, míticos y religiosos que vinculan e influyen en el individuo que los dona o los recibe. En particular, se refería al *hau* de la población Maori que indica —tal y como el *spiritus* latino— tanto el viento como el alma más precisamente, por lo menos en algunos casos, el alma y el poder en las cosas inanimadas y vegetales, mientras la palabra “mana” es para los hombres y los espíritus. Cuando el objeto recibido posee un alma e incorpora el *hau*, este tiende a hallar su origen, y el donador debe deshacerse de este, correspondiendo al don; si esto no ocurre el espíritu contenido en el objeto se hace maléfico.

Al referirse a las comunidades primitivas y antiguas, Mauss subraya que en estas la “cosa” (*res*) tenía un valor más alto respecto de la sociedad moderna. Y para aclararlo remite a la sociedad romana: “Las cosas no son cosas inertes, tal como las consideran el derecho de Justiniano y nuestros derechos. En primer lugar, forman parte de la familia; la *familia* romana comprende la *res* además de las personas” (Mauss, 1971, p. 226). Este ejemplo hace meditar sobre la sociedad moderna puesto que, a pesar de otorgar una gran importancia a las cosas en detrimento del interés por las personas, el don se ejerce poco, salvo cuando está justificado por una festividad. La diferencia con el pasado reside en que, para las sociedades primitivas, el ciclo “dar/recibir/devolver” era útil pero no en el sentido utilitarista-economicista, sino en aquel por el que el donar y el recibir servían tanto para el donador como para el donatario. El individuo que no dona se emargina en la sociedad; de la misma manera el donatario que no acepta, o que no corresponde al don, ofende y merma las relaciones con la comunidad del donador. El don descrito por Mauss en las sociedades primitivas no es gratuito ni desinteresado, establece un ciclo de bienes por lo que a todos les interesa esforzarse para cerrarlo. Además, el don determina una forma de “crédito”, una expectativa de intercambio del don, así como “un poder” del donador hacia el donatario.

Otro aspecto es que el don refuerza y protege los vínculos sociales y comunitarios entre individuos, entre individuos y la comunidad, y entre comunidades. La obligatoriedad de cerrar el ciclo “dar/recibir/devolver” promueve y fortalece una densa red de relaciones sociales y comunitarias en el interior de las tribus primitivas. Mauss (1925) afirma que

[...] este símbolo de la vida social, la permanencia de la influencia de las cosas objeto de cambio, no hace sino traducir bastante directamente, la forma en que los subgrupos de estas sociedades segmentadas de tipo primitivo quedan continuamente implicadas las unas con las otras, sintiendo que se deben todo. (p. 195)

El don es una ritualidad social que refuerza la cohesión porque fortalece las relaciones de todas las partes de la sociedad. Finalmente, Mauss (1971) define los dones como “hechos sociales *totales*”, ya que

[...] en algunos casos, ponen en juego a la totalidad de la sociedad y de sus instituciones (potlatch, clanes enfrentados, tribus que se visitan, etc.), en otros casos, sólo a un vasto número de instituciones, sobre todo cuando los cambios y los contratos conciernen a individuos. Estos problemas son al mismo tiempo jurídicos, económicos, religiosos, e incluso estéticos y morfológicos, etc. (p. 179)

El “hecho social total” es el objeto teórico definido por Marcel Mauss que ha más influido en la antropología del siglo pasado: “No se trata aquí de una búsqueda del hecho social de Durkheim, de la partícula mínima de societalidad, sino de la posibilidad que contiene esta peculiar manifestación colectiva” (Carvajal, 2013, p. 26). Para Mauss, el “hecho social total” era un poderoso instrumento a disposición del estudioso, esto es, una estructura fundamental a través de la cual era posible dirimir e interpretar dinámicas en apariencia lejanas y con naturaleza diversa y compleja como la del don.

Así que el don forma parte de lo que Mauss define como el “sistema de prestaciones totales”, es decir, el sistema que, al comprometer todas las clases sociales y todas las formas de la vida comunitaria, es tanto sistema social como económico. Esto demuestra que en las sociedades arcaicas no se da la separación típica de lo moderno, entre esfera económica y esfera social-afectiva. Conformemente con su demostración de que todas las socialidades basadas en el don se fundamentan en la búsqueda del interés y de la utilidad, en las conclusiones de su ensayo Mauss hace un análisis muy interesante del *Homo oeconomicus*. De hecho, el carácter distintivo del *Homo oeconomicus* moderno respecto de los caracteres distintivos del hombre arcaico no estaría, para él, en la búsqueda de la utilidad y del interés (ya presente en las sociedades primitivas), sino en la racionalización y tecnicización de esta búsqueda.

En realidad, de la obra de Mauss destaca la tentativa de superar los dos paradigmas que se han difundido en las ciencias sociales: el utilitarismo (individualismo metodológico) con el *Homo oeconomicus* y el holismo con el colectivismo de raíz durkheimiana. Esta tentativa volverá a aparecer con la actualización de la obra de Mauss en clave moderna por parte de los estudiosos que crearon el MAUSS⁶ (Mouvement Anti-utilitariste

6. Dentro de los principales promotores del MAUSS, se pueden recordar Gérard Berthoud, Alin Caillé, Jacques T. Godbout, Jean-Louis Laille, Serge Latouche y Guy Nicholas.

dans les Sciences Sociales), acrónimo nada casual para subrayar su estimación al estu-
dioso francés.

El tercer paradigma lo propone Alain Caillé (2007), el cual se pregunta: ¿y si el don fuera el instrumento con el cual los hombres crean la sociedad? El don se hace promotor de relaciones y vínculos sociales porque el hombre no se contenta con vivir en la sociedad reproduciéndola, sino que debe producir la sociedad para vivir. De esta manera se da un avance en la lectura del “valor” de los bienes y de los servicios: ya no solo “valor de uso” y “valor de cambio”, sino también “valor de vínculo” porque el vínculo se hace más importante que el mismo bien: “todo abastecimiento de bienes y servicios realizado, sin garantía de restitución, para crear, alimentar o recrear el vínculo social entre las personas” (Godbout y Caillé, 1992, p. 32). Esto define también la diferencia entre la socialidad primaria y la secundaria (Caillé, 1995); la primera se refiere a relaciones personalizadas construidas con el tiempo, mientras la segunda a las relaciones que se desarrollan entre las funciones y no entre los individuos. Está claro que en una socialidad primaria es fácil encontrar y comprender el don, en una secundaria se hace más difícil, salvo si no se definen las tres dimensiones de análisis de la sociología: la *micro* de la alianza entre individuos, la *meso* de la alianza de los individuos con grupos y de los grupos entre ellos y, finalmente, la *macro* que es la de la relación de los individuos y de los grupos, y grupos de grupos, con la totalidad simbólica que forman. El nivel del primer grado es el don con la relación “cara a cara”, aquel del segundo es el de las asociaciones, y el tercero es el de lo político.

De la socialidad primaria a una nueva configuración de la relación Álder/Ego

En la sociedad moderna solo pocas realidades se parecen a aquellas descritas por Mauss y son las que se fundamentan en intercambios locales que dan lugar a un “nosotros” en el que los individuos ya no serán ajenos entre ellos y las dinámicas del don han sufrido una metamorfosis (Beriain Razquin, 2017). En estas realidades, la sustitución del contrato con el don trata de llevar la economía en el interior de la sociedad desde un punto de vista sociológico (Carvajal, 2013), puesto que los seres humanos son en sustancia unos seres relacionales.

De esta afirmación se comprende que los estudios vuelven a ocuparse de un individuo que logra tener interacciones significativas que se insertan en un contexto cultural.

Es cierto que en estas relaciones, por un lado, influye la cultura y, por el otro, el vínculo indisoluble con la vida cotidiana y el contexto. Estos aspectos no han sido analizados por el funcionalista Durkheim, pero sí por Mauss (1971) y luego por Moscovici (2000); no es un caso que ambos deriven de la escuela francesa. El primero se refiere a la necesidad de cerrar el ciclo “dar/recibir/devolver” del don, y el segundo a las formas elementales del altruismo. Ambos ponen de manifiesto que estas acciones se basan en la relacionalidad de los individuos, esto es, en formas de socialidad primaria (Caillé, 1995) que se construyen fortaleciéndose con el tiempo. De esta manera se privilegian los espacios de las relaciones Ego/Álter en los procesos que se desarrollan en la sociedad, porque todos los fenómenos sociales y las actitudes, además de las acciones, se construyen en un ámbito con lugares, tiempos y símbolos propios, fundamentales en los procesos cognitivos de autoseñalización puestos en marcha por los individuos para construir unas realidades sociales en su experiencia relacional cotidiana. De ahí que la relación sea el proceso que debe analizarse, no el altruismo y/o el egoísmo.

Toda forma de socialidad balancea entre el intercambio de informaciones y la acción simbólica sobre el otro, con evidentes rasgos ambiguos: las interacciones realizadas por los individuos son un actuar problemático que, la mayoría de las veces, no permite la reciprocidad y el reconocimiento de los sujetos, fundamental para afianzar modalidades de acciones enlazadas con la socialidad primaria.

El mismo reconocimiento puede empujar la socialidad hacia una dirección con una acepción altruista o egoísta; en efecto, cuanto más se reduce la anonimidad del individuo con el que hay relación, más el individuo tiende a una relación altruista. Así las cosas, la relación Ego/Álter ya no se fundamenta en aspectos de desigualdad —¿en qué cosa?—, sino en aspectos de diferenciación —¿para quién?—. Hay que hacer hincapié en las posturas de Ego que se percibe igual/diverso de Álter en una determinada esfera simbólica, además de las respuestas de Álter en un marco relacional construido sobre expectativas que pueden jugar un papel importante a la hora de determinar cercanía/lejanía y apertura/cierre. La referencia a la anonimidad lleva a reflexionar sobre la interacción social remota y directa (Berger y Luckmann, 1966): cuanto más anónimo es el enlace con el Otro (interacción remota) más es difícil encontrar elementos comunes que permitan también la convivencia civil —piénsese en las acciones discriminatorias hacia minorías o partes de la población más débiles—. Por lo tanto, las acciones hacia el otro dependen de la idea que cada individuo se construye a partir del otro, de las interpretaciones de sus acciones pasadas y presentes, y de las previsiones de lo que hará en el futuro. Por eso, puede afirmarse que las actitudes (positivas o negativas) hacia alguien

dependen de la percepción que se tiene de este. El individuo construye sus esquemas de acción sobre la base de los significados que atribuye a su existencia cotidiana. Estas representaciones sociales (Farr y Moscovici, 1984) —entendidas como sistemas de interpretación del ambiente social que constituyen la realidad (la idea de mundo, *Weltanschauung*)— determinan el sentido y el significado de las acciones y de los sucesos, y definen la experiencia de la realidad individualizando los límites, los significados y los tipos de interacciones, lo que reduce la ambigüedad de las informaciones y aclara los significados de las acciones inequívocas (haciendo familiar lo que no lo es).

Si este proceso se analiza más profundamente, destaca que el reconocimiento de la alteridad se refiere a un proceso de categorización más amplio y complejo que produce la visibilidad del nexo Ego/Álter (base de la identificación social) y que, al mismo tiempo, marca la dimensión cercano/lejano. Por lo general, el Ego se refuerza y se difunde positivamente definiendo negativamente el Álter, proceso particularmente significativo cuando el individuo de por sí “defiende su propio mundo”. Lo contrario se registra, en cambio, en una relación primaria que se basa en la confianza, en particular en lo que Moscovici (2000) define “altruismo participativo”. En esta forma de altruismo emerge un “Nosotros” que vincula a los miembros del grupo, de la comunidad o de la sociedad, y es por ese “Nosotros” que los individuos están dispuestos a sacrificarse —los individuos siguen defendiendo su “propio mundo”, pero ese mundo ya no es individualizado, sino referido a lo colectivo como humanidad—. En este caso la relación altruista está dirigida a sostener aquel vínculo particular que no puede romperse por la supervivencia del grupo del que se forma parte (la humanidad), y prescinde de la forma que este puede adquirir. De alguna manera, el *Ego* se junta con el *Álter* en el “Nosotros”, y llegan a ser casi intercambiables, total que ya no se logra distinguir cuando se hace algo para el otro o para el bien del “Nosotros”.

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NOTAS Y DISCUSIONES

Sobre

**Mignolo W. D. & C. Walsh, (2018),
On Decoloniality. Concepts Analytics Praxis,
Durham and London: Duke University Press**

HERETIC-EROTIC ALLIANCES ON DECOLONIALITY

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To intellectual *vincula*, with love

When I first met the word *decolonial*, I was a confused PhD student. It was 2005. For the first time I was paid a salary to study instead of paying taxes for studying; the magic of online libraries was disclosed in front of my eyes; and the journal *Nepantla, views from the South* mediated my encounter with Catherine Walsh and Walter Dignolo. *Nepantla* happened to be a major discovery about the Decolonial option within the borders of an Italian national debate where, at the time, only the name of Enrique Dussel circulated amongst small circles of theoretical and political philosophers. *Nepantla* existed from 2000 to 2004, therefore I met her with a sense of sudden loss, which made me even more confused than I already was. I was confused because of the pressures that the colonial capitalist mode of production imposes on intellectual workers, artists, writers, translators or creatives in general: a monster whose name is Originality. *Search for something original!, Write something original!, Bring in something original!, Let us discuss something original!*. A pure nightmare: the first step into the publish-or-perish machine that neo-liberal academia endorses nowadays. Yet, I was confused also because *Nepantla*, which sounded fresh and new to me, was at the same time anachronistic: finished just before I could perceive myself contemporary to it. For both feelings, discovery and anachronism, Decoloniality, the conceptual matrix who gives name to the volume discussed herewith, has been crucial. It dramatically changed my views from the South, not only the Global South. Not only the South where I was thinking from: the Christian, Northern side of the Mediterranean. Also the south without a capital S: the south that stands for a transient condition of disempowerment that anyone can experience according

to the shifting concrete historical hierarchies of power wherein each of us is constrained, in a way or another: no one is fully master nor fully slave, as far as a relation of any kind is concerned. Not even death, as necropolitical boundary suffices to annihilate the transformative potential of relations, since even the ghostly presence of materially extinguished connections are able to over-determine the present as well as the future.

Decoloniality looks genuinely devoted to in-discipline human and social sciences by merging economists and sociologists, anthropologists and literary critics, historians and political scientists, without any attempt at reproduce the academic identity games of reciprocal recognition that underlie the pitfalls of multiculturalism (Ascione, 2014). Moreover, Decoloniality offers a theoretical guide into the political laboratory of Latin America where, since the turn of XX century, political forces have attempted at placing the indigenous question at the center of state politics. An attempt that suffers a violent backlash in the last years. Walsh and Mignolo pioneered the praxis of sustaining this indigenous and for-indigenous epistemological struggle by giving full theoretical legitimacy to other knowledges, both from Los Andes and from Selva Lacandona. Finally, the Decolonial option, as it was called earlier, was an alternative to postcolonial thought, which I was familiar with thanks to prof. Iain Chambers in Naples, yet not fully satisfied with, for one single reason: the problem of the unit of analysis. Differently from postcolonial thinkers, Decolonial thinkers had no issues in formalizing the world as a manifold spacetime singularity constituted by knowledges and processes occurring in the long distance and in the long run, with a planetary significance. Postcolonial critics, instead, kept on being more attached to “deconstruction”, in the broad sense of being allergic to whatever formalization that could somehow aspiring at shaping a methodological approach, even before this hypothetical methodology being explored, understood and eventually dismissed (Ascione, 2008). Moreover, being born at the crossroad between Indian Subaltern Studies historiography and Anglophone comparative literature studies, postcolonial studies repulsed historical sociology as an imperial discipline while, and this was a limit in my view, they only spoke the language of the empire: English. For me, who was approaching global modernity from a world-systems analysis background, this decolonial methodological flexibility and the ability to transgress the linguistic barrier between Neo-Latin languages and English at the global academic level provided me with a plausible pathway, whose entry point was the essay “Americanity as a concept”, by Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein (1992)¹.

1. A previous version of the concept of “Americanity” was exposed in the previous Quijano (1991).

From then, onwards, I have followed the path of theoretical decolonization of concepts and methodologies. In so doing, I have constantly confronted with a heuristic device that in the book *On Decoloniality*, Walsh and Mignolo reconfigure in an outstanding, deeper and thoughtful way: the concept of “relation” through the prism of *vincularidad*. For it is the way relations are concerned that informs the possibility of decolonizing knowledge about and within the planet. And the very notion of relation finally shows its inability to come to terms with the project of unthinking modernity in its constitutive colonial epistemological matrix.

Decolonizing *relation*: the coloniality of method

The legitimacy of the Eurocentric construction —therefore destruction— of the planet is safeguarded in surreptitious ways. It is buried under the methodological assumptions whose constitutive logic is what I have named the *coloniality of method*. The coloniality of method consists in the ability to mortify the transformative potential of the colonial difference both historically and epistemologically. The coloniality of method legitimates and incorporates the asymmetries of power formed through, and by, colonialism into categories of analysis. This colonial construction becomes invisible because epistemic violence dissolves into apparent conceptual neutrality and terminological transparency. The term *coloniality of method* conceptualizes and systematizes a wide range of criticisms that in recent decades have denounced the complicity of modernization and globalization theories with the Eurocentric construction of the social sciences. The coloniality of method operates through three devices: *negation*, that is, the assertion of the irrelevance of colonial relations in causal explanations and historical narratives; *neutralization*, that is, the acknowledgment of colonialism as a worldly relation of asymmetric power distribution, together with the simultaneous presumption of the irrelevance of non-dominant agencies within the colonial relation; *sterilization*, that is, the exoticization of non-dominant epistemologies and their displacement from the realm of theoretical production to that of particularistic cultures, standpoints, and spacetimes unable to express transformative universalisms.

Methodological issues thereby become strictly connected to historiographical and epistemological issues. In historiographical terms, an alternative genealogy of the notion of relation, from modernization theories to Decoloniality becomes legitimate. Modernization theories, in the context of emerging U.S. world hegemony, silenced

colonial relations of dominance that shaped the worldly distribution of wealth: development and underdevelopment were simply phenomena dependent on endogenous factors. Contrarily to what the disciplinary histories of western social theory claims since the 1970s, modernization theories were the ideological reaction to the early formulations of the center-periphery concept, and not vice versa. A closer philological and historical investigation into the politics of theory of the debates about the terms-of-trade controversy within the embryonal institutions of the United Nations since 1941 demonstrates it. This has major implications for the way relations are concerned: modernization theories attempted at silencing the relations between development and underdevelopment that scholars such as Folke Hilgerd, Hans Singer and Raúl Prebisch had already discovered. This means that diffusionism, that is the idea that core economic and cultural processes originated in the West to later spread across the entire world, is not simply wrong, yet it is a strategy to be read against the grain, which ends up demonstrating the quintessential constitutive role of relations in global history. Modernization theories were effective in crystallizing into method the North American critical onslaught against the first elaboration of the decolonization of theory, applying a radical state-centrism that negated the colonial question. It was against this neglect that Dependency theories during the 1960s reacted politically. This uprising took momentum since it came to be institutionally supported by the vivid ferment of Thirdworldism and Non-Alignment Movement that formed a major threat to the established U.S. world hegemony, across the 1960s and the 1970s. Yet, once again, Western/Northern/Colonial social theory reacted with a new methodological as well as ideological turn: thinking the world in terms of a “system” (Moore, 1966). The epistemological backbone for the logic of “system” was provided by von Bertalanffy’s *General System Theory* (1950). The notion of system was, in fact, first of all ontological: it affirmed the real existence of an integrated global super-system of relations called “the world”. It also implied holism, that is, the epistemological priority of the whole over the parts that form it, and the irrelevance of the latter outside the integrating understanding of the former. On the other hand, systems theory buttressed methodological relationalism, that is, the prevalence of forming relations over formed entities. It followed that social wholes were thought of as integrated systems whose dimensions and activities were defined in space and time by the extension and duration of their constitutive relations. World-systems analysis during the 1970s and 1980s inherited the western hegemonic rigidity of systemic holism, even though it endorsed relations as indispensable heuristic device. Even world-systems analysis

by Hopkins and Wallerstein embraced a diffusionist view. For them, the history of modern capitalism was the history of successive waves of incorporation of colonial worlds into the capitalist world-economy. However violent or not, the notion of incorporation conceals the colonial gaze and neutralizes the colonial difference by obscuring non-Western, non-capitalist agency. Incorporation overrides colonialism by reducing it to its function within capitalism. It simultaneously gives prominence to exploitation, domination and hierarchy formation, but it also neglects and mortifies the historical possibility of non-Western, postcolonial agency and the way these agencies co-produce social change in heterogeneous meta-geographies other than the core-periphery structure. Nominally, agency subordinates to the relations that produced it. This assertion conceals the fact that the same relation, as an object of analysis, is presumed analytically neutral and operationalized as such, whereas it is not neutral at all. The historical agency described as the dynamics of the colonial relation is implicitly coincidental with the dominant subjects, classes and groups that are located at the higher levels of power in the hierarchies that relationships inevitably design.

Since the 1990s, postcolonial and decolonial critiques to diffusionism, holism as well as systemic approaches coalesced. From a methodological point of view, the overall effects of these critiques have been the rupture of its core presumption; the breaking of the covalent holism-and-relationalism bond; and the disentanglement of relations from the whole. Relations do produce entities, which thus do not possess any essentialist innate trait as such; thus relations, rather than inner properties, determined the emergence of capitalism and modernity as significant long-term/large-scale worldwide processes of historical and social change; nonetheless, the global as a holistic construct does not provide a strong over-determining unit of analysis to which reference has to be constantly made as the prevailing horizon of sense.

Heretic alliances

This disentanglement has disclosed divergent ways of conceptualizing relations. From different standpoints, colonial, postcolonial or decolonial agencies have been reaffirmed on the global cartography of world history. In many accounts, relations include non-Western agency, yet the heuristic problem of explaining societal divergence in terms of fluctuating power differentials between advanced zones of the world, limits the relevance of this agency to those dominant social groups that are located outside Europe.

Only those non-Western agencies that could compete with the West on the terrain of modernization would be relevant. Only to the extent these alternatively hegemonic agencies concurred to form modernity through the conscious or unintended outcomes of their responses to the interaction between global connections, and local needs and pressures. So, the relevance of non-dominant agencies is relegated to the effects they produce in terms of pressures that exist locally, and is considered only in terms of their vertical dialectics with modernizing power, rather than their historical existence in a multiplicity of other ignored relations of social coextensiveness. Moreover, while these explanatory/narrative approaches share a tendency to neutralize all other forms of non-dominant agency, at the same time they also sterilize the transforming potential of existing epistemologies of otherness by never questioning the heuristic apparatus derived from the threefold conundrum of the breakthrough to modernity, the rise of the West and the transition to capitalism. Here, the notion of relations appears unable to radically question the coloniality of method.

Walsh and Mignolo (2018) overcome the limits of the heuristics of relationality through the notion of “vincularidad”. For them,

Vincularidad is the awareness of the integral relation and interdependence amongst all living organisms (in which humans are only a part) with territory or land and the cosmos. It is a relation and interdependence in search of balance and harmony of life in the planet. As such, and as we propose in this book and series, vincularidad/relationality unsettles the singular authoritativeness and universal character typically assumed and portrayed in academic thought. Relationality/vincularidad seeks connections and correlations. (p. 1)

In so doing, they call into question the entire construction of modernity either methodologically, or epistemologically, or ontologically. They basically affirm a relationality rather different than the one the hegemonic modern knowledge made us familiar with. It is relationality *in se* and *per se*, which connects the entire cosmos of living spaces-and-times entities. This alternative conception on relationality invokes the translation strategies across languages/logics enabling us to pragmatically elude the hegemony of modern/colonial/western/Christian epistemologies and ontologies. In fact, Walsh and Mignolo (2018) travels from Persian language to Kechua to propose an all-encompassing understanding of relationality through the noun *Runa*.

Runa was and still is conceived in relation to and in *convivencia* (a literal translation would be “living-with-other-living-organisms,” but the term is generally translated as “coexistence” or “conviviality”) with *huacas* (deities, entities of the sacred sphere), *sallqa* (all living organisms), and the *Apu* (the tutelary spirit that inhabits the snowed peaks of the mountains). These organisms are all weaved together, for the metaphor of *tejido* (weaving) is commonly invoked to express *convivencia* and *vincularidad* (translated as “relationality”). (p. 166)

The lexicographic movement described herewith could appear a circular one: from relationality to *vincularidad* to relationality. Yet, “relationality” we come up with results ontologically different; it is augmented in a sense, by the exploration into the semantic field inhabited by the tensions translation enhances. It is not a circular movement, rather a spiral. And the transformation from the circle to the spiral happens if and only if the epistemological consequences are assumed of thinking relations as inextricable from a single immaterial yet concrete force who translates relations into *vincula*: love. What love, though? In order to qualify *love* and subtract its inference from the common use modernity relegates it, Walsh and Mignolo (2018) use the adjective *decolonial* in a consistent way:

Decolonial love implies it is enacted with dignified anger confronting the dismantling of the social fabric of civilizational tendencies that promote competition and war. Decolonial love moves in two simultaneous directions: one confronting and delinking from the meanings that the word love has in liberal and Christian discourses, both of them embedded in *cmp* [colonial matrix of power] and the other, accepting that re-existence and building communalities of all kinds demands respects, listening, cooperation, and care. This is the direction that decolonial love is taking in rebuilding what the principles and goals in the name of modernity destroyed and continue to destroy. (pp. 223-224)

Decolonial love lives on an inherent *vinculum* with love as Giordano Bruno, before being burnt as heretic in Rome on February 17th, 1600, conceptualized in his fundamental incomplete work *De vinculis in genere* (2009 [1591]). Here, Bruno defines *Eros* (love), as *vinculum vinculorum*: what connects all the connections; what relates all the relations. Therefore, the spiral that semantically transforms relationality into *vincularidad*, at the

same time connects the underside of Renaissance with Decoliniality. It makes possible an unprecedented alliance between heretic and decolonial knowledges across modernity. Here, heresy should not be conceived as the dominant knowledge thought us for centuries, that is, a doctrine that merely opposes the dominant one. Rather, a political and theoretical strategy that consists in taking seriously the words spoken by power and dismantle, reconfigure, transfigure and subvert their meaning by fighting for the full recognition of such excluded, marginalized, silenced, yet existing, uncanny, living, embodied presences, in order to claim the ontological presence of the multiversal historical connections conceptualized trough Decoloniality.

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KNOWLEDGE, POLITICS AND DECOLONIALITY

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On Decoloniality is the updated introduction to decolonial thought, written together by two of its key exponents, Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh. When we speak of decolonial thought, we are referring to the work of a group of scholars—including among the most renowned also Santiago Castro-Gómez, Ramón Grosfoguel, Enrique Dussel, Edgardo Lander and Boaventura de Sousa Santos—that starting from the mid 1990s finds a common ground of research around the work of the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (e.g. 2007, 2010) from one side, and, from the other, in the contributions of Latin-American and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals like Paulo Freire, Frantz Fanon, and Aimée Cesaire (Restrepo & Roja 2010).

Decolonial thought deals essentially with the analysis of colonization and its disastrous implications that the group sees as still standing today, beneath the enthusiast rhetoric of homogenizing globalism and interconnectedness. While the word decoloniality may sound “new”, it focuses on the efforts to develop alternatives to the colonial endeavor that are at least five hundred years old and are, and have always been, both theoretical and practical. Mignolo and Walsh (2018) make clear in their introduction to the book (p. 5-6) that such a reflection is even more urgent today, since the unbalanced and disharmonious Western-centered world order created by colonization is no more secure in the hand of their creators, namely, the Europeans of the two sides of the Atlantic. While the principles on which it had been instituted are still alive and well, manifesting themselves in the hierarchization of humanity along the scale of development, the control over them is now open to contestation both from new protagonists in the geopolitical field, like Russia, China and Iran, and at the local level by re-emerging right-wing nationalist projects.

As the two authors see it, decoloniality is the effort to contrast the persistence of the colonial endeavor in contemporary times by placing themselves on the side of those who had been, still are, and cannot be anything else than, devalued by colonization. In this framework, what appears to be the most interesting contribution of decolonial thought is the understanding of colonization and Eurocentrism as an epistemic issue, i.e. the worldwide imposition of a local form of knowledge on all the others based on the assumption of its universal validity, that is, on its supposed ability to grant the same benefits to all the people of the world. Hence decoloniality, in Mignolo's words, needs to be declined as an act of "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo & Walsh 2018, p. 161; see also Mignolo, 2011), that is, refusing and contrasting the illusory universal character of the main tenets of Western knowledge. For this reason, both authors insist on the violation of the distinction between theory and praxis—which they see as re-producing the belief in a disembodied subject/knower and the belief in reaching a neutral and objective point of view—, and in conceiving them, in contrast, as a flux: "theory-and-as-praxis and praxis-and-as-theory, and [as] the interdependence and continuous flow of movement of both" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 7). For the same reason, they do not conceive decoloniality "to be a modern theoretical proposal pretending to be universal and to dictate to everyone what decoloniality is or should be" (p. 107). They conceive it as "an option" instead of a "mission", aimed at reshaping Western universality into pluriversality. Given the centrality of knowledge in decolonial thinking, the following pages will focus on the characterization that *On Decoloniality* offers of the concept and on the relevance it assumes for decolonial politics from a theoretical point of view. Drawing from the second part of the book authored by Mignolo that explicitly address the theory-and-as-praxis flux starting from the side of theory, the following pages will also try to highlight themes and issues worth of further discussion.

Mignolo's contribution to the book is centered on addressing the link connecting the Western idea of knowledge—as something different from, and superior to, mere opinion and belief—to the idea of modernity. The main question posed by the author can be expressed as: "when and how is that Western knowledge acquires its essential feature, that is, to be universally valid?". Mignolo's thesis can be probably summarized by saying that it happened with modernity, both in a historical and genealogical sense, and to the point that in the Western perspective there is no difference between modernity and knowledge. Hence the need to develop a critique of the concept of modernity, and of the ways in which it has been understood along a line that goes from Kant and Hegel to

Habermas and post-modern or post-structuralist accounts, that takes into account the perspective of those who experienced it in ways different from Europeans, namely, as a condemnation to subjugation rather than as a promise of progress and liberation. As commentators note (see e.g., Ascione, 2014, p. 32), while modernity broadly understood is usually conceived as the process of overcoming a stage of immaturity through the use of reason and the achievements of science and technics proceeding from the supposed natural potentialities of human beings and leading to their self-realization in the field of history, following the decolonial perspective the concept is neither neutral nor merely descriptive of historical dynamics. Rather, modernity is an ethnocentric concept, and namely a Eurocentric one, disguising itself as universal, and hence universally applicable, assuming Western modernity as the naturally desirable state for all human beings. It is in its supposed universal applicability, presenting itself as something objective, that modernity reveals to be an epistemic category, that is, a way to objectively explain and understand the world rather than simply describing it.

According to the decolonial account, in short, modernity acquires its universal status through a fundamental omission. It implicitly presupposes and obscures the land-appropriation, the domination over its inhabitants and the exploitation of resources conceived as completely legitimate acts and perpetrated by Europeans starting from the so-called discovery of the American continent. In this sense, the building block of what we call Western modernity, what characterizes it essentially with all its specific implications (capitalism, constitutionalism, natural rights, democracy, just to mention relevant concepts from the point of view of political philosophy), are not found in the Reformation, in the Enlightenment, in the French Revolution, or even in the invention of prisons or other totalizing institutions like mental asylums and hospitals, but rather in the peculiarities of the encounter between Europeans and native peoples of America:

It is generally taken for granted that the sixteenth century in Europe was a time of unprecedented changes. [However,] only half of the unprecedented changes are located in the history of Europe itself. The other half, the missing chapter, is less visible when sixteenth-century Europe is celebrated. It involves the invention of America, the massive slave trade, the massive appropriation of land, the pulling to pieces of the great civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andes, the two foundational genocides of Western civilization (of Indigenous people and enslaved Africans), and the historical foundation in the Atlantic (the Americas, South and North, the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe) of a new type of economy: economic coloniality, also known as capitalism.

An enormous “change” in economic knowledge both in the regional history of Europe and in the changes that European expansion imposed in non-European economies. (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 178)

For decolonial authors the origin of modernity, as well as that of Western knowledge, lies not in the natural potentialities of human beings, but in the political act of classifying the Indigenous people and the enslaved Africans according to a colonial logic, that is, not only as different from, but also and simultaneously as inferior to Europeans. This kind of classification finds its fundamental premise in the Spanish Renaissance with the forced expulsion of Moors and Jews from Castile enacted by Christians, and was initially organized around two basic and interrelated evaluation criteria: the first was *limpieza de sangre*, mutated from horse breeding and pertaining to the body, and the second was theological (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 181, see also Mignolo, 2012), that is, referred to religious belonging and based on Christian knowledge. In other words, between the fourteenth and fifteenth century a link was established for the first time between the tangible domain of physical appearance (for example, skin color) and the intangible one of values, behavior and culture, in such a way that the one necessarily implicated the other, so becoming available to work as a regulator of power relations among groups of people and individuals, and as the legitimation for the exercise of power from one party over the other.

It is important to signal here that by highlighting the double nature of the criteria of classification developed in Spain with the expulsion of Moors and Jews from Castile, Mignolo, and decolonial thinkers more in general, refuse to understand modernity according to the traditional dialectic between the religious/irrational and the secular/rational sphere, thus dismissing altogether with what has been called the theological-political problem —see Lutz (2018) for an introduction—. Not only the colonized, as has been shown by Fanon (see Luce, 2018), was included in none of the terms standing for, respectively, Christianity and rationalism. Rather, the very philosophical concept of dialectic shows itself unable to grasp what happened in the colonial world where religion and rationalism were allied to foster the unproblematic appropriation and exploitation of the American continent, thus revealing a validity confined to the European boundaries. In this sense, one may say, the very notions of secularization and dialectic may appear merely as emerging from internal processes limited to Europe that have been triggered by the encounter with an unknown continent called America.

The classificatory scheme first elaborated in Spain, however, revealed its full potential only with its secularized transposition in the American continent, since it was there that it specified the cases under which the definition of both collective and individual identi-

ties should be uncompromisingly excluded from negotiation. It was there that religious conversion was no longer a viable alternative for Indigenous and enslaved Africans to escape subjugation and exploitation like it was for Moors and Jews. It was in the American continent, and more precisely in its southern part, that the classificatory scheme was useful to the justification of slave trade and to the imposition of an economic model based on the forced labor of Indigenous people, thus unfolding the very concept of *race*, which decolonial authors see as primarily modern (Quijano, 2007).

We may say that what decolonial thinkers see as primarily modern about this concept, along with those constituting the other two pillars of Western modernity, that is *sex* and *nature* as separated from culture, is the fact that all three establish the same necessary connection between the tangible and the intangible realms, and the fact that the dichotomies they frame out (white/non-white, male/female, nature/culture) have not the same oppositional and mutually excluding meaning —if they have any meaning at all, as it is the case with nature/culture, which finds no correspondence in Aztec, Maya, Mapuche or even Chinese cultures— beyond Western civilization (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 160). Taken together, race, sex and nature constitute the core of a model legitimating along the course of history the exercise of power from one pole of the couples they engender over the other. Following Quijano, decolonial authors name such model, which they see spreading worldwide since the sixteenth century, “colonial matrix of power”, or “coloniality”.

It is easy to see how the decolonial critique of modernity, while distancing from Marxism because of the shift of focus from class to classification which Mignolo attributes to Quijano (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 181), at the same time draws upon the tools developed by contemporary Western philosophies —in his works, for example, Mignolo often confronts himself with, and draws upon, Carl Schmitt’s thought (see also Mignolo, 2012)— and may seem to come close to critical theory, post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-humanism and most notably post-colonialism, despite the efforts that decolonial authors make to distance from them. This is why decolonial thought is surrounded by debates centered on how much and in what sense its contributions should be reputed new or alternative, or compatible with that critical tradition (e.g., Bhabra 2014, Galceran Huguet, 2014, Andrade Guevara 2020, among others). Mignolo himself has clarified his position many times (see for example Mignolo 2012, p. xxiii, see also Dussel 1995), highlighting that while decolonial thought should not be seen in competition with the above-mentioned movements, it maintains with them important differences.

In the case of Western thinkers, such differences revolve around the persistence of the illusion “that the knower is a disembodied subject beyond location [...] de-racialized, de-sexualized, gender-neutral, and unaware that such subject dwells in Europe” (Mignolo, 2012, p. xxiv), which leads them to exclude the colonial world from their analysis, thus reproducing the belief that what has happened in Europe is relevant for all the rest of the globe. With respect to post-colonial accounts, instead, the difference lies rather in the locus of enunciation of the critique itself. Suffice here to say that decolonial critique and understanding of modernity emerges from the experiences of those who “had to grapple with the colonial violence that modernity implied, often as a matter of the cultural life-and-death of their societies” (Kho, 2018, p. 142) suffering from the Spanish and Portuguese colonization beginning from the late fifteenth century, rather than from the later British one. Moreover, decolonial critique stems from, and incorporates, the intellectual work of thinkers like Guaman Poma de Ayala, Ottobah Cugoano, Lloyd Best, Césaire, Fanon, which predates both post-World War II decolonization processes and the rise of post-modernism and post-structuralism (Mignolo, 2012, p. xxvi).

In contrast to more usual accounts of modernity, the decolonial one stresses that the draining of resources from the “New” world to the “Old”, was the necessary condition for the flourishing of European cultures and societies, thus laying the ground on which Europeans could arrive to perceive themselves as “modern” in opposition to a “pre-modern” dimension of being, conceived as something deemed to be overcome and/or to be nostalgically contemplated. For this reason, decolonial thinkers replace the concept of “modernity” with that of “modernity/coloniality”. The coupling of the two terms reveals the omissions and the partialities embedded in traditional understandings of modernity, pointing to the fact that colonialism with all its horrors and robberies was not simply one of its epiphenomena, but rather *constitutive* of it: one could not have the first without the second (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 4).

However, the concept of coloniality aims to grasp something quite different from colonization. While the latter indicates the appropriation of land and the economic and political domination over its inhabitants by a conquering society coming *de jure* to an end during the post-World War II era, the former denotes the persistence after decolonization of the status of inferiority (political, economic and cultural) of the peoples of the ex-colonies in comparison to Europeans, and particularly of the direct descendants of the natives and African slaves more than of the *mestizos*. In short, from the decolonial perspective armed invasion and imposition of economic models of production are

not enough to explain this persistency. What is needed is to grasp the parallel totalizing intrusion in the domain of knowledge:

“The radical shift introduced in the Atlantic commercial circuit through the massive appropriation of land and the massive exploitation of labor runs parallel to the radical epistemic shift introduced by Renaissance men in Europe. The epistemic revolution that was taking place in the European Renaissance was extended to the New World during colonization. Four universities following the European model were founded in the sixteenth century (in Santo Domingo, Mexico, Peru, and Córdoba), and one in the first half of the seventeenth century (Harvard). Colleges and convents abounded. The consequences were similar to that of the coloniality of economy: just as economic coloniality made destitute existing economic formations, so too did the coloniality of knowledge make destitute existing epistemic formations” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 183-184)

In this sense, according to the decolonial perspective, coloniality enforced itself in two different but entangled domains, the physical one of the organizations of labor, the appropriation of land and the extermination of peoples, and the domain of knowledge, via the imposition of the Western totalizing worldview over different ones labeled as pre-modern, and for this reason as ultimately irrelevant. Needless to say, in both domains the effectiveness of the colonial endeavor has been secured through the exercise of power along the above mentioned three pillars of race, sex and nature. But most notably, the domain of knowledge has a privileged position between the two, being like the puppeteer moving the puppets in the world stage (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 144). Indeed, one should not understand the imposition of knowledge as something happening merely in the disembodied field of ideas or cultures. As a matter of fact, it required the production of subjects who learned to hate and fear what came to be labeled pre-modern on the side of the colonizers, and, conversely, of subjects who learned to fear and hate themselves and their traditions, history and knowledges on the side of the colonized, according to a logic presenting such results as objective, valid everywhere and for everyone.

Coloniality of knowledge, therefore, is something concrete, which directly affects both the colonizer and the colonized. As Mignolo points out in the above quotation, it required and resulted in the establishment of a network of institutions like universities, schools, churches and the like, as well as the work of actors like professors, teachers,

priests who were precisely devoted to the production and reproduction of Western knowledge, and to the mission of civilizing the uncivilized. The connections between colonization and knowledge established by decolonial thinkers is without doubt one of their most interesting and challenging contribution. In their perspective, the colonial experience, the political act of conquering the American continent, was a necessary step for Western knowledge to acquire its fully modern status, namely the belief in its superiority over all other knowledges, based on the presumption to be universally valid and globally applicable.

Both conceptions, we may say, could be formulated only through the relative ease by which Europeans succeeded in the imposition of their dominion over the Americas, and both conceptions were simply unconceivable in the same terms before the so-called discovery of the “New” world, that is, before the very existence of a “globe” could be “demonstrated”. The universality of modern progress and civilization (its desirability for all humanity, like it was a sort of manifest destiny) could be affirmed only developing a knowledge which omits coloniality (that is the exploitation and the genocide of the racialized peoples and of their lands, and the elimination of their knowledges), and consequently should be considered illusory. It’s important here to stress that by triggering this train of thoughts decolonial thinkers do not want to suggest that the fact that we see the world as a “globe” is only an illusion produced by the hegemony of Western knowledge. Rather, they invite us to consider that conceiving the world to be “objectively” a “globe”, meaning this objective fact to be its essential character, posits it in the realm of inanimate objects, thus devaluing and dismissing, for example, an understanding of it as a living organism and thus limiting or circumscribing in advance the validity of the elaborations that could be drawn from such and similar alternative ideas (see for examples Schultz, 2017). As Victor Andrade Guevara (2020) points out to summarize this trait of decolonial thought:

La pretensión universalista del conocimiento occidental y del norte tiene como fundamento una relación asimétrica de poder, en la que el saber dominante se asume como válido a partir, no de su contrastación con la realidad compleja que caracteriza a todas las sociedades, sino de condiciones materiales y políticas que influyen en el asentamiento del predominio del saber occidental así como en el uso de conceptos y categorías de análisis que, referidas a la experiencia específica de las sociedades occidentales, pretenden aplicarse a todo tipo de sociedades. Ello tiene que ver también con la disposición de mayores recursos, medios de comunicación y espacios institucionales para producir y difundir su conocimiento, mientras las formas de

saber de los pueblos antaño colonizados se ven desplazadas o suprimidas. A esta relación asimétrica que tiene su efecto en la producción de los saberes, es aquella que los autores llaman una geopolítica del conocimiento. (p. 138)

So, moving from the rhetoric of christianization, progress and civilization of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries to the rhetoric of modernization and development which followed the decolonization era, decolonial thinkers see at work the same logic introduced by coloniality. The world is partitioned and classified according to a scheme that Mignolo defines geo-historical, in which the divide between developed and underdeveloped societies largely overlaps that between colonizers and colonized, thus justifying and regulating once again the use of power along the colonial power-relation, today mostly through the interventions of supra-national institutions—for example, the WTO or the WHO— rather than military intervention, but nevertheless still operating exclusively on the base of the supposed universal validity of modern knowledge.

Under this respect, one of the interesting aspects decolonial thought has for political philosophy, and which is surely worth of further analysis, is that, through the introduction of the concept of modernity/coloniality, it offers a tool to conceptualize and criticize power—for Mignolo’s own understanding of the concept see Mignolo & Walsh (2018, p. 114)— not only focusing on its repressive/productive qualities—to use a Foucauldian jargon—, but also focusing on the cases in which it is exercised to reach beneficial aims, in the sense evoked by expressions like “peace enforcement” or “development aid” still embedding concepts largely defined unilaterally from the Western perspective. It is probably even more challenging to see how much this kind of reflection is needed, not only in the field of inter-state relations, but also at the local level, where the state and political power is today mobilized by legitimizing itself on the basis of a superior knowledge via the recruitment of experts and professionals, for example to foster the empowerment and the inclusion in Western societies of formerly colonized and racialized peoples, now labeled as “migrants”.

As Mignolo reminds us, the entire vocabulary of scientific disciplines, as distinct from other forms of knowledge labeled as superstition or wisdom, is exclusively derived from Greek, Latin or other European languages and had been translated and redefined around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe:

The fact that none of the existing civilizational languages at the time (Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Russian, etc.) are relevant in any of the disciplinary

formations confirms that Eurocentered knowledge asserts itself at the same time that it disqualifies the vocabulary (and logic) of other knowing praxis and knowledge and belief systems (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 113).

In conclusion, *On Decoloniality* offers a contribution to the affirmation of the partiality of all kind of knowledges by affirming the need to reduce to size the pretense of universality of western modern knowledge. From the other side, it also understands knowledge as the medium through which a world order systematically reproducing the logic of colonization reach its totalizing pervasiveness. But this is only part of the story. The ultimate challenge of decolonial thought is to show that there are viable alternatives to Western modernity, even that its own critical recipe could be easily misunderstood—see for examples Ortega (2017) and García & Baca (2019)—. Hence *On decoloniality* should be read also as a call to *act out and practice* epistemic disobedience, a call which, making knowledge and knowledge production the field of political struggle, should resonate particularly with Western scholars. While it presents a dark depiction of the political and bio-political order in which we are all immersed, by placing the field of political struggle and political action into knowledge, it politicizes at the same time academia and academics, and more in general all “knowledge-producers”. An invitation that, as Walsh shows in the first part of the book, could be practiced following the path of a conscious and self-aware intercultural attitude, aimed at opening up disciplinary boundaries and, finally, one’s own thinking horizons.

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DESCOLONIZAR EL PRESENTE. PERSPECTIVAS Y PROBLEMAS EN EL PARADIGMA DESCOLONIAL LATINOAMERICANO

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DECOLONIZE THE PRESENT. PERSPECTIVES AND PROBLEMS IN THE LATIN AMERICAN DECOLONIAL PARADIGM

Prólogo

Un punto de partida ineludible para cualquier investigación sobre la actual condición poscolonial (Mezzadra, 2008) es asumir la tarea de analizar críticamente la persistencia de las relaciones de poder establecidas durante la dominación colonial: estas, *mutandi mutandis*, no desaparecieron con la independencia política de las antiguas colonias,

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sino que siguen operando y reproduciéndose en diferentes ámbitos. Baste pensar en lo que las crónicas actuales informan continuamente sobre episodios de violencia racista y sexista, sobre muros levantados, sobre leyes aprobadas para limitar o hasta bloquear los movimientos y las corrientes migratorias, sobre el continuo saqueo y expropiación de tierras, aguas y otras riquezas en las zonas poscoloniales. Los antiguos espacios de la plantación o del gueto de la ciudad colonial (Mbembe, 2010) vuelven a aparecer en la forma actual del “campo” —baste pensar en las dramáticas condiciones de Palestina, en los campos de refugiados de muchos países africanos, o en los llamados *hot-spots* (“puntos calientes” y centros de identificación) creados a las puertas de Europa—. Estas son realidades que no sólo forman parte de las periferias del imperio occidental, sino que lo atraviesan cada vez más, están en su centro, en las metrópolis.

Más allá de la paranoia securitaria que, una vez más, en nombre de la defensa de la vida acaba por negarla a los “menos-que-humanos”, lo que emerge es la reiteración de ese mecanismo maniqueo magistralmente descrito por Fanon (1970) cuando define la realidad colonial como un “un mundo en compartimientos [...] un mundo cortado en dos” (p. 21). Se trata de una concepción dicotómica y binaria basada en una visión mecánica de la relación entre las prácticas de poder y los campos de enunciación destinada a justificar, una vez más, la dominación, la explotación y la supremacía de Occidente. Estereotipo y *bios* son los dos elementos decisivos para poner en marcha los mecanismos de construcción de la identidad, esto es, para permitir la formación de la pareja tradicional nosotros/ellos con todos los anexos dispositivos de jerarquía excluyente. Son dispositivos que no desaparecen en la actual gubernamentalidad neoliberal, pero —hay que tenerlo en cuenta— a menudo tienden a identificaciones estratégicas o nuevos tipos funcionales a los objetivos incrementales y productivos del poder de gobierno neoliberal. Por lo tanto, los mecanismos de selectividad responden no sólo a criterios biológicos, epidérmicos y raciales, sino que también se rigen por una lógica estratégica y de gestión destinada a gobernar la potencialidad de los sujetos. De este modo, se amplían las mallas y el agarre de los mecanismos jerárquicos para no sólo excluir, sino también solicitar adecuadamente las capacidades y la adecuación de los sujetos a las condiciones emergentes y contingentes. Se trata de cambios que afectan al mundo en su conjunto y destacan la complejidad resultante de la difusión y la coexistencia de lógicas diferentes en zonas y espacios completamente heterogéneos (Bazzicalupo, 2017). Frente a este contexto gubernamental específico, es necesario reflexionar sobre el carácter incompleto de los procesos de descolonización y sobre los caminos, teóricos y prácticos, que hay que tomar para continuar las luchas y perseguir las aspiraciones

de emancipación que intelectuales como Césarie, Fanon, Du Bois y muchos otros han emprendido en el pasado colonial.

Sin duda, una de las principales aportaciones de la crítica post y descolonial ha sido la consideración de los puntos de vista subalternos y sus diferentes saberes marginados, ofreciendo contra-narraciones que desestabilizan a los dominantes. Sin embargo, la destitución del orden epistémico eurocéntrico va acompañada de la necesidad de afrontar críticamente también los cambios que el actual gobierno neoliberal ha producido, dibujando un escenario en el que el espacio, el tiempo y la subjetividad son cada vez más heterogéneos, marcados por prácticas e empujes que —por ejemplo, en el ámbito de la movilidad— se reproducen incesantemente, atrapados entre la necesidad capitalista de poner en valor la vida y la necesidad de ser gobernados y disciplinados. Esta tarea, teórica y a la vez política, es asumida tanto por la mayoría de los estudios poscoloniales como por los decoloniales, aunque con trayectorias y argumentos parcialmente diferentes. Nuestra intención no es tanto señalar estas diferencias, sino repasar los cruces históricos y teóricos que han llevado a la elaboración en América Latina de categorías específicas y tratar de examinar su validez teórica.

Fuera de la dependencia

En América Latina, la cuestión de la constitución de un “pensamiento americano” original y auténtico ha sido planteada, desde los años sesenta y setenta, por los llamados filósofos de la liberación, según los cuales, para alcanzar este objetivo, debía emprenderse un doble proceso de liberación. Por un lado, habría sido necesario liberarse de la dependencia económica estructural de las antiguas colonias, la llamada periferia, todavía explotada y saqueada por las regiones centrales. Como han señalado los teóricos de la dependencia, fue la creciente concentración de la riqueza en las zonas del centro la que aseguró la perpetuación y el fortalecimiento del comercio desigual, esto es, el desarrollo y el subdesarrollo no pueden considerarse como situaciones que se determinan independientemente la una de la otra, sino que entrelazan profundamente sus funciones respectivas y complementarias dentro de la misma estructura global de producción. El debate que animó al continente sudamericano durante esos años (Bielschowsky, 2000), al poner de relieve las nuevas formas de colonialismo, abrió un desafío que implicaba a todas las ciencias sociales que debían dar cuenta de cómo todo el mundo de la vida latinoamericana —y más en general del Tercer Mundo— podía todavía sufrir

los efectos de la dominación y la persistencia alienante del *ego conquiro* europeo. Por otro lado, la liberación de la dependencia también implicaba un proceso de descolonización intelectual, es decir, una ruptura con las tradiciones del pensamiento académico considerado cómplice de la dominación histórica de Occidente. Evidentemente, la autenticidad del pensamiento se mediría por su capacidad de derivar principalmente del contexto sudamericano y por su inclusión en la realidad social, cultural, política e histórica específica de los países de América Latina (Hurtado, 2009). La conquista no sólo fue el momento en que el mundo europeo y el americano se encontraron y se enfrentaron para dar forma al núcleo étnico-mítico latinoamericano, sino también la ocasión fundadora de una dominación histórica. El tema de la dependencia dio lugar a la necesidad de encontrar una salida alternativa a la situación de América Latina, induciendo a Dussel y a otros intelectuales a elaborar un nuevo proyecto filosófico (Castro Gómez, 1996) que atribuyera a los oprimidos una centralidad ontológica decisiva en la lucha por la emancipación: son ellos los que constituyen una posible, si no necesaria, figura de exterioridad —también podríamos llamarla alteridad— con respecto a la totalización represiva y expropiatoria del sistema mundo. Según Mignolo (2001), es precisamente esta perspectiva la que pone de relieve ese proceso de colonización del ser —que luego será desarrollado especialmente por Maldonado-Torres (2007)— que pasa por su totalización en la figura del europeo blanco posrenacentista, respecto del cual la exterioridad (subalterna) se convierte en la referencia de una ontología “marginalizada” y silenciada por la historia europea. La filosofía de la liberación y las teorías de la dependencia han ofrecido, por lo tanto, aunque desde diferentes puntos de vista, una reflexión sobre la condición económica y el saber de América Latina en clave emancipatoria y antiimperial, y han constituido un importante punto de referencia para los estudiosos del grupo Colonialidad/Modernidad/Decolonialidad (CMD) (Escobar, 2003; Castro-Gómez, 1996), permitiéndoles inscribir el proyecto descolonial en de una episteme ‘otra’ con respecto a la tradición occidental.

Creemos necesaria esta premisa, aunque sintética e incompleta, ya que uno de los aspectos consolidados de este grupo de estudio radica precisamente en la búsqueda de su propia especificidad y originalidad teórica que se mueve a partir del “restablecimiento de una identidad continental” (Mignolo y Walsh, 2018, p. 22) destruida por la conquista colonial. Este objetivo implica una operación teórica destinada a dar vigor a la fuerza epistémica de las historias locales y a aquellas tradiciones culturales y ancestrales que han sido presentadas por la narración europea como míticas, anticientíficas y como pertenecientes a una fase anterior e inferior del conocimiento

humano. Al mismo tiempo, cabe señalar cómo esta filiación teórica debería integrarse más en el análisis del contexto histórico-social latinoamericano caracterizado, desde los años ochenta, por la devastación de las políticas neoliberales, ahora plenamente activas ante el fracaso del desarrollismo, cuyo gran error fue pensar en la posibilidad de un desarrollo capitalista autónomo a escala nacional sin considerar que el capitalismo nació como un sistema constitucionalmente global, caracterizado desde su primera expansión por un profundo vínculo con el colonialismo (Devés Valdés, 2003). El fracaso de las políticas centradas en el desarrollo, aplicadas desde los años treinta y funcionales no sólo al proyecto de construcción nacional, sino también a la legitimidad de la clase política, dio paso a la nueva gobernanza neoliberal cuya eficacia estaba garantizada por su radical discontinuidad respecto del modelo de desarrollo nacionalista. Baste pensar en como los procesos de gobernanza actuales están ya plenamente insertados en los circuitos financieros mundiales, que se enfrentan a la continua transnacionalización del aparato productivo de cada país, o en la importancia del aparato logístico que, a través de una reorganización de los espacios de producción, circulación y gobierno, vio surgir nuevos y complejos ensamblajes emblemáticos de la creciente interdependencia mundial. Pero estos son también los años en los que asistimos a una formidable revitalización de las fuerzas antagónicas desde abajo, que han encontrado en los movimientos continentales indígenas una importante voz para desafiar las viejas y nuevas lógicas de explotación y colonialismo. Gracias a su activismo, se crearon las condiciones para la aprobación de cartas constitucionales, como las de Bolivia y Ecuador, con un alcance explícitamente plurinacional y multicultural y una comprensión específica de la naturaleza (Pacha Mama) que rechaza la lógica antropocéntrica occidental, para reconocerla como parte integral de la vida y la sociedad (Mignolo y Wlsh, 2018, pp. 60-69). A estos movimientos se refieren a menudo los estudiosos descoloniales, reivindicando el carácter “práctico” de su teoría estrechamente vinculada a los contextos vividos de la lucha contra las estructuras coloniales. Como señalan repetidamente Mignolo y Walsh, la teoría descolonial se expresa a través de una forma de conocimiento “encarnado y situado” (p. 28) y, como tal, sólo puede ser formado y moldeado por actores, historias, territorios y lugares.

El programa Modernidad/Colonialidad/Descolonialidad —que involucra a académicos que trabajan en campos disciplinarios muy diferentes— busca desde el principio cuestionar la narración tradicional de la modernidad y sus categorías universalistas relacionadas, para desvelar la violencia física, epistémica y ontológica, que no es sólo la consecuencia, sino también la condición de posibilidad. Es una perspectiva que no

parecería distante de la adoptada —incluso en su heterogeneidad— por los estudios poscoloniales. Sin embargo, la elección de utilizar el término descolonial para referirse a la propia investigación asume sin duda una función estratégica de posicionamiento dentro de la teoría poscolonial: de la misma manera constituye, sobre todo, la expresión de una originalidad a la vez teórica y temática. La opción descolonial se caracteriza, antes que todo, por la especificidad geohistórica de su objeto, es decir, la colonización de América Latina, inasimilable a otros casos de colonialismo ya que es inseparable de su *locus* de enunciación (Mignolo, 2007). Utilizamos estas expresiones especialmente familiares para Mignolo, quien, como buen semiótico, siempre ha hecho hincapié en los procesos de significación a través del uso del lenguaje. Al fin y al cabo, el trabajo de ruptura epistemológica que lleva a cabo está siempre atento a la ruptura radical que se establece entre el sujeto y el objeto de conocimiento, y a la manera en que lo “conocido” adquiere un significado específico por la atribución que le da el “el que conoce”. La unilateralidad de la narración eurocéntrica omite su rasgo original de “globalidad” —en la que la “americanidad” se presenta como un fenómeno coextensivo de la “modernidad” (Quijano y Wallerstein, 1992)— gracias a una narración que siempre oculta el “quién” detrás del origen del discurso. Esta operación de continuo desajuste entre el que habla y su concreta raza, género, etc., produce un conocimiento que se presenta como universal gracias al trabajo de una específica subjetividad moderna y occidental. Como señaló Dussel (1972) en clave filosófica, es la posición cartesiana del *cogito* la que constituye la principal expresión de un modelo de racionalidad, que sienta las bases de una representación “desencarnada” y “totalizadora” del mundo a través de la cual interpretar la realidad, que más tarde culminará en el idealismo hegeliano. Esta metafísica de la subjetividad inaugura un humanismo cuya manifestación última es la expresión de un deseo de poder que se traduce concretamente en el dominio del centro sobre la periferia. Esta relación, como se ha mencionado anteriormente, es completamente inasimilable al pasado y debe investigarse necesariamente a la luz de la evolución de las formas de *gobernanza* actuales.

En la afirmación de este fundamentalismo eurocéntrico se reconoce una función decisiva —a raíz de la obra de Quijano— al racismo, así como al sexismo, que ha funcionado como principio organizador de la división internacional del trabajo y de la acumulación capitalista a escala mundial. También en este caso, al analizar las dos semillas racistas de la modernidad —aquella basada en la sangre y la religión y aquella epidérmica, con relación al color de la piel— Mignolo (2007) insiste en una idea de la raza como “categoría mental de la modernidad” (pág. 182), renunciando a considerar

las implicaciones relacionadas con los mecanismos de reconocimiento, así como posibles consideraciones sobre la institucionalización de diferentes estatutos ontológicos. Una vez más, es la fuerza de las palabras —que depende inevitablemente de la posición a partir de la cual se pronuncian— lo que crea efectos concretos, trabajando sobre las sensibilidades —Mignolo (2010b) también se refiere a un poder de *aisthesis*— y, en particular, sobre la imaginación de los subalternos. La importancia reservada a la dimensión simbólica probablemente también sea funcional para destacar el proceso de interiorización de la norma (europea) en la construcción de subjetividades latinoamericanas (sujetadas) cuyos comportamientos acaban siendo —para usar una expresión althusseriana— superdeterminados por un orden simbólico, que desdibuja el momento conflictivo y naturaliza la realidad de las desigualdades. En este sentido, la misma cartografía del mundo se convierte en un momento crucial para la representación del poder, así como en una de las claves interpretativas necesarias para comprender cómo se ponen en juego las abstracciones normativas que constituyen la base del sistema de saber/poder del período de la modernidad. Si bien hasta el siglo XVI el *locus* geométrico, aunque distinto del *locus* étnico, no lo sustituyó, sino que lo integró y lo completó, la situación cambió radicalmente después del descubrimiento de América. Las nuevas exigencias, ligadas también al deseo de acumular información y de controlar las zonas colonizadas de manera más minuciosa y eficaz, imponen una nueva racionalización del espacio que hace que el anterior *axis mundi* sea inadecuado. Esta revolución cartográfica, debida a la formación de un nuevo estatuto epistemológico, se realiza a través de la disociación entre el centro étnico —considerado subjetivo, político e ideológico— y el geométrico, que se presenta en cambio como objetivo, neutral y científico (Mignolo, 1995, pp. 219-313).

De esta manera se crea la ilusión de una mirada desencarnada y objetiva, en la medida en que aparece desligada de todo particularismo étnico o religioso y, por consiguiente, de toda determinación histórica. Es una mirada transparente y absoluta que produce efectos de objetividad y universalidad hacia Europa y su cultura, a la vez que invalida otros regímenes de representación considerados arcaicos, particularistas o etnocéntricos. Por lo tanto, en el amplio proceso de colonización, al racismo y al sexismo —decisivos en la construcción del nuevo orden mundial capitalista— deben añadirse otras piezas que conciernen a las nuevas formas de cartografiar el espacio, la literatura y, más en general, el lenguaje, hasta la relevancia de la memoria con todo lo que concierne a la manera en que los historiadores crean la historia (Trouillot, 1995). Todas estas áreas dependen de la nueva lógica del racionalismo occidental capaz de dar lugar a una

revolución epistemológica, que tiene el efecto de universalizar el particularismo europeo. Sólo partiendo de este supuesto será posible plantear propuestas alternativas, no sólo para la interpretación de la Modernidad, sino también repensar la actualidad fuera de estas representaciones dominantes.

Desobediencia

Hasta ahora hemos intentado trazar algunos de los temas que se repiten en la perspectiva descolonial —sobre todo en el camino teórico de Mignolo— de los que se pueden extraer indicaciones útiles con respecto a lo que hemos definido como la necesidad de descolonizar el presente. Es una operación que, sin duda, requiere un trabajo previo de desconstrucción de la colonialidad a la que se le atribuye un excedente de sentido respecto a la categoría clásica del colonialismo, tanto por ser un paradigma que se repite también en el presente, como por objetivar desde una perspectiva eurocéntrica diversas esferas y dimensiones materiales y subjetivas de la vida. La colonialidad del poder, en la que habitan especialmente Mignolo y Quijano, está flanqueada por otros modos de colonialidad como aquel del ser (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) y del saber (Lander, 2010), que sirven para esbozar un cuadro general del proceso de inferiorización de los que se han presentado como “pueblos sin historia” (Wolf, 1990).

La tarea teórica de deconstruir el mito epistémico de la modernidad hasta sus cimientos se basa, antes que todo, en la desconexión de la red de conocimientos y saberes de matriz occidental. Mignolo acuñó la expresión *delinking epistémico*, subrayando que no puede reducirse a una acción de des-occidentalización (Mignolo, 2010; Mignolo y Walsh, 2018, pp. 120-127), que considera una especie de precondition histórica desarrollada a partir de las luchas anticoloniales por la independencia y que ha operado principalmente en el ámbito de las instituciones reglamentadas por el Estado. Según Mignolo, para activar una operación de descolonización eficaz y completa que permita salir de la matriz occidental del poder no es suficiente seguir el camino de la des-occidentalización, ni referirse exclusivamente a la esfera de la sociedad civil inherente al nivel estatal, sino que es necesario actuar “dentro de la esfera de una sociedad política mundial emergente” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 130). La posibilidad de influir en el MCD necesita un proyecto que cuestione sus fundamentos, por lo que “aprender a desaprender” —para usar una expresión de Paulo Freire retomada por Walsh y Mignolo— no es sólo una forma de repensar la pedagogía —que siempre ha sido un dispositivo

de conocimiento y poder—, sino sobre todo un instrumento para implementar una práctica descolonial, a través de la cual desprenderse del sistema educativo occidental y reconstruir su propia identidad cultural. Al mismo tiempo, Walsh y Mignolo siempre subrayan que la desobediencia a todo lo aprendido a través de los diferentes niveles de producción del sistema de conocimientos requiere necesariamente una mirada global y atenta a las actuales formas de gobierno neoliberal. En resumen, no se puede pensar en lo local de forma aislada de lo global. Esta es una de las posibles formas de dar visibilidad y hacer oír la voz de las subjetividades que surgen de las prácticas y de las luchas locales, a menudo muy diferentes entre ellas, llevadas a cabo fuera de las estructuras políticas tradicionales de gobierno a través de organizaciones y movimientos que reimaginan y reinventan su propia existencia. No es casual que Mignolo insista, junto con Walsh, en el concepto de re-existencia (Mignolo y Walsh, 2018) que, tomado de Albán Achinte (2008), indica el conjunto de estrategias puestas en práctica para denunciar los mecanismos de racialización, exclusión y marginación. Sin embargo, no se trata sólo de acciones “reactivas” y “defensivas”, es decir, dirigidas a rechazar el sistema de mediación de conocimientos puestos en marcha por Occidente: estas invierten la existencia en la medida en que son capaces de redefinir y resignificar la vida en condiciones de dignidad y autodeterminación.

Evidentemente, la estrategia de la desobediencia epistémica es necesaria para sacar a la luz nuevas narraciones, a partir de la reactivación de experiencias y momentos que nunca fueron incorporados en la representación europea. No sería imaginable ninguna humanidad post-racial, ni sería posible ningún camino alternativo al fallido proyecto de la modernidad, si no se tuviera en cuenta la perspectiva de los que están relegados a una condición de subalternidad perenne en esos límites. Esta es una posición que —desde nuestro punto de vista— corre el riesgo de elaborar una especie de reencarnación del sujeto histórico en las comunidades indo-latinas. Es un peligro que no deriva tanto de una visión primitivista, sino más bien de la opción epistemológica que lleva a Mignolo —y más en general a los estudiosos del grupo CMD— a reconocer en la raza el elemento central y articulador del sistema dominó propio de la colonialidad (Bourguignon y Colin, 2010). Son los sujetos racializados, los sometidos a los efectos más violentos de la colonialidad, los que se proyectan en la escena política, ya que su posición estructural dentro del campo social no les dejaría otra opción que desarrollar prácticas alternativas, aprovechando la larga memoria de la comunidad. Se trata de subjetividades vaciadas ontológicamente —ya que la ontología misma es una construcción epistémica que ha contribuido a la dominación occidental como condición de posibilidad de toda

la filosofía y de representación del ser— que surgen de la correspondencia inevitable entre la ubicación geo-social y la posición epistémica. Surgen dudas sobre hasta qué punto es posible que de las existencias concretas continuamente sometidas a diferentes vectores de poder puedan surgir puntos de intersección y alianzas entre subjetividades que ocupan diferentes posiciones epistémicas o esferas sociales y geográficas distantes. En otras palabras, ¿no se llega allí por negar las coaliciones contingentes, móviles y transfronterizas capaces de antagonizar con una biopolítica neoliberal que controla, domina y mercantiliza los seres vivos, los objetos y la naturaleza? ¿Qué conexiones podrían establecerse entre subjetividades específicas e históricamente diferentes, pero simultáneamente sometidas a los mismos ejes de poder? En resumen, es una posición que se expone a una especie de nueva identidad de los subalternos, que produce el efecto de atraparla en un mecanismo de apropiación a través del cual la alteridad entra y alimenta la economía discursiva de la representación misma de la alteridad. En otras palabras, hay un pensamiento latinoamericano crítico, pues hay una alteridad que debe ser expropiada de su actitud formativa del mundo, de su narrativa *mainstream*, así como de los conceptos que se derivan de ella. Pero este movimiento corre el riesgo de no ser más que una inversión que acaba reproduciendo el mismo gesto de apropiación del objeto de estudio que caracterizó al agarre epistemológico occidental (Moreiras, 2001; Restrepo y Rojas, 2010, pp. 185-191).

Con respecto a estas sospechas de esencialismo que se ciernen sobre una parte de su obra, y a la posibilidad adjunta de crear una especie de “contracanon” latinoamericano para oponerse al occidental, también a la luz de todas las ambivalencias posibles en cuanto al papel de la pedagogía constantemente expuesta a la producción de nuevas jerarquías de conocimiento, Mignolo ha relanzado fuertemente la idea de un “pensamiento de frontera” que se cuida de desconectarse de los lugares de enunciación para no volver a proponer las dicotomías clásicas (interno/externo, ciudadano/migrante, etc.) con todo lo que sigue en cuanto a la hipostatización de las diferencias. Precisamente la posición de frontera siempre inestable y abierta a la Alteridad —como aquella caracterizada por Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) a la que se refieren explícitamente Walsh y Mignolo— parece permitir escapar a la correspondencia esencial entre el *locus* epistémico y la ubicación político-social, abriéndose a la posibilidad de hibridación y contaminación. Creemos que es un paso decisivo para escapar de una política de identidad, en sentido fuerte, y redefinir la identidad en términos de procedimiento, fuera de las vallas geopolíticas y epistémicas, dispuesto a reconocer el carácter inevitablemente situado y contingente del conocimiento y de la política. Mientras que la civilización occidental se ha

constituido desde sus orígenes en entidades —en el sentido de haber creado dominios ontológicos— y en denotación —en el sentido de la fuerza política y simbólica del acto de nombramiento (Mignolo y Walsh, 2018, p. 135)—, la propuesta reexistente y mestiza pretende mejorar las relaciones fluidas (vincularidad) entre los seres vivos. Estos son temas centrales en el proyecto intercultural de Walsh que, aunque insiste en el carácter situado de los sujetos, no lo pretende como una correspondencia necesaria entre el lugar sociopolítico y el marco epistémico. Más bien “sugiere un proceso permanente y activo de negociación e interrelación en el que la diferencia no desaparece” (p. 59). Se trata de diferencias en el progreso que tienen que ver con el inicio de los movimientos, que surgen de las experiencias en curso, de la concreción de lo vivo y de su corporeidad, y que, incluso cuando recuperan elementos de identidad de manera estratégica, lo hacen sin darles ningún fundamento. En todo caso, esto es lo que esperamos.

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SOBRE LA REVISTA

Soft Power es una revista que nace del trabajo conjunto de estudiosos del sur de Europa y de América Latina, con el objetivo de solicitar la investigación sobre el nuevo paradigma de poder gubernamental, que hoy organiza el mundo, con especial atención a la zona geopolítica.

En respuesta a la urgente necesidad de repensar las categorías jurídicas y políticas tradicionales de la modernidad, tiene como objetivo el análisis crítico y reflexivo, centrado en resaltar el carácter problemático de actualidad.

Soft Power es publicada semestralmente. Asume un lenguaje interdisciplinario para garantizar la pluralidad de puntos de vista sobre el enfoque temático elegido, dando espacio a las contribuciones de filósofos políticos y del derecho, politólogos e historiadores del pensamiento político, pero también economistas y sociólogos.

La revista también tiene una sección, un *forum* de discusión, que le abre paso a la lectura de un libro de gran resonancia y analiza su tema desde diferentes perspectivas.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Soft Power is a review born from the joint work of scholars of the South Europe-Latin America, with the aim of hastening the research on the new paradigm of governmental power, which organizes the world with particular attention to that geopolitical area. Responding to the urgency of a rethinking of the traditional legal and political categories of modernity, it intends its analysis as critical as reflective, focused as it is onto highlighting problems of the present time.

Soft Power is published semi-annually. It adopts an interdisciplinary language to ensure the plurality of perspectives on the theme proposed from time to time, giving room to the contributions of political and law philosophers, political scientists and historians of political thought, as well as economists and sociologists.

The review also has a section, a discussion forum, that moving from the reading of a book of great resonance and importance, and it analyzes its topic from different perspectives.

NORMAS PARA LOS AUTORES DE LA REVISTA

Indicaciones para los artículos

Los artículos deben ser enviados como archivo al correo electrónico softpower.journal@gmail.com. Con cada contribución enviada a *Soft Power Journal* se debe adjuntar una carta donde el autor declara que el artículo no se ha presentado a otra revista y que no lo será mientras que la dirección no haya rechazado su publicación (Declaración de originalidad y de exclusividad). Después de la recepción, el Comité Editorial evaluará si el artículo cumple con las condiciones básicas requeridas por la revista. Posteriormente a este primer proceso interno de evaluación, el artículo se someterá a la evaluación de árbitros anónimos externos con un procedimiento de *blind peer reviewed*. El resultado de la evaluación será comunicado al autor en un período inferior a seis meses de la recepción del artículo. Si se requiere, el autor deberá tomar en cuenta las observaciones del evaluador, aportar los ajustes solicitados y reenviar la contribución correcta en un plazo no superior a los quince días. Al momento de recibir el artículo modificado, el Comité Editorial le informará al autor de su aprobación. Se asume que los artículos tienen el consentimiento de los autores para la publicación a título gratuito. El Comité Editorial se reservará el derecho de decidir en qué número aparecerán los manuscritos aceptados.

Los artículos enviados deberán respetar los siguientes requisitos:

- El texto no podrá tener una extensión superior a 40/50.000 caracteres (tamaño DIN A4), incluyendo resúmenes, cuadros, gráficos, notas de pie de página y referencias al final de cada artículo.
- El texto irá en letra Times New Roman tamaño 12, a espacio 1,5 líneas; las notas de pie de página irán en letra Times New Roman tamaño 10 a espacio sencillo.
- En la primera página debe figurar el título centrado y en mayúsculas. Más abajo se escribirán, también centrados, el nombre y apellido del autor o autores, así

como el centro o la institución a la que está(n) adscrito(s). En seguida debe figurar un resumen (*abstract*) con una extensión de entre 100 y 150 palabras y una lista de palabras clave (*keywords*) de 3 a 5 términos. Tanto el título como el resumen y la lista de palabras clave deben tener una versión en español y otra en inglés, para facilitar su inclusión en las bases de datos internacionales y en los repertorios bibliográficos.

- El artículo debe venir acompañado de los datos que permitan contactar al autor (dirección de correo electrónico), así como de un breve currículum indicativo (datos académicos, líneas de investigación y principales publicaciones). Se debe especificar el número de líneas o renglones o número de palabras o caracteres.
- Para las citas, estas se entrecomillarán “al comienzo y al final del texto”. Las citas largas (más de tres líneas) deberán ir sangradas dejando una línea en blanco antes y otra después de la cita. No deberá ser así cuando el texto largo venga citado como nota o dentro de ella.

Las citas bibliográficas se basan en pautas establecidas por la American Psychological Association (APA). Los autores deben adecuarse estrictamente al esquema presentado a continuación:

- **Para citar libros (un autor):**

En el texto: (Hart, 1961, p. 15)

Referencia al final de cada artículo:

Hart, H. L. A. (1961). *The Concept of Law*. London: Oxford University Press.

Si el libro tiene más de una edición o volúmenes o se cita algún tomo (t.) o volumen (vol./vols.) en particular, la referencia es la siguiente:

En el texto: (Basadre, 1983, VI, p. 57) que equivale al tomo sexto, página 57, de la obra de Basadre del año 1983.

Referencia al final de cada artículo:

Basadre, J. (1983). *Historia de la República*. 7.^a ed., t. 11. Lima: Editorial Universitaria.

- **Para citar libros (dos o más autores):**

En el texto: (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 185)

Referencia al final de cada artículo:

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1980). *Mille Plateaux Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*. Paris: Les Editions du Minuit.

- **Para citar capítulos de libro, artículos de monografías colectivas, prólogos, epílogos:**
En el texto: (Rosenau, 2004, p. 19).
Referencia al final de cada artículo:
Rosenau, J. N. (1992). Governance, Order, and Chang in World Politics. En J. N. Rosenau & E. O. Czempiel (Eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (pp. 1-29). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- **Para citar artículos de revistas científicas y de diarios:**
En el texto: (Bazzicalupo, 2016, p. 59)
Referencia al final de cada artículo:
Bazzicalupo, L. (2016). Populismo y liberalismo: la pretensión de la inmanencia. *Soft Power. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, 4(2), 57-70.
- **Para citar documentos de internet:**
En el texto: (Rosanvallon, 2004)
Referencia al final de cada artículo:
Rosanvallon, P. (2004). La democracia en América Latina. En PNUD. *Contribuciones para un debate. Comentarios*. Recuperado de www.ndipartidos.org/es/node/1336.

Eventual indicación del traductor irá al final del texto.

Los artículos que no se adecuen a estas características serán devueltos.

Indicaciones para reseñas y ensayos bibliográficos

Las reseñas y los ensayos deben enviarse como archivo al correo electrónico softpower.journal@gmail.com. El texto, acompañado de los datos que permitan contactar al autor, deberá presentarse a espacio sencillo y en letra Times New Roman tamaño 12; las notas de pie de página, en letra Times New Roman tamaño 10. Las reseñas deben constar de máximo 4 páginas; los ensayos bibliográficos, de un máximo de 10 páginas.

El Comité Editorial evaluará la publicación de los textos y decidirá en qué número se publicarán.

EDITORIAL RULES FOR AUTHORS

Recommendations for articles

The articles shall be sent as an archive file to the e-mail softpower.journal@gmail.com. The authors have to add a paper stating that the article has not been sent to another journal and it will not until the direction will take a decision about the publication (Declaration of originality and exclusivity). After receiving, the Editorial Board evaluates if the article is in line with the basic conditions requested by the journal. After this internal evaluation, the article will be submitted to an external anonymous referee with a process of *blind peer reviewed*. The result will be communicated to the author not later than six months after receiving the article. If requested, referee's remarks shall be taken into account by the author, which shall make corrections and send again the text within fifteen days. When receiving the amended text, the Editorial Board will inform the author about the approval. It is assumed that the publication of the articles is free of charge. The Editorial Board reserves the right to decide the issue in which the article will be published.

The articles shall fulfill the following requirements:

- The text shall not exceed 7.000 words (A4 sheet), including abstracts, tables, graphics, footnotes and bibliography page at the end of each article.
- The text shall be written in Times New Roman, 12 points, 1,5 line spacing; footnotes shall be written in Times New Roman, 10 points, single spacing.
- The title shall appear on the first page, centered and in capitals. Then the name and surname of the author or authors and their affiliation, also centered, shall appear and then an abstract (among 100-150 words) and a list of keywords (among 3 and 5). The title, abstract and the keyword list shall have both a Spanish and an English version, in order to facilitate the inclusion in international databases and bibliographic indexes.
- The articles shall be accompanied by information for contacting the author (e-mail address) and by a short *curriculum* (academic information, research topics and main publications).

- Quotes shall be written in double quotation marks “at beginning and at the end”. Long quotes (more than three lines) shall be preceded and followed by a blank line (not if the text is quoted as a footnote or inside it).

Bibliographic references are based on guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (APA). Authors must strictly adapt to the scheme presented below:

- **Book (one author):**

In the text: (Hart, 1961, p. 15)

Reference to the end of each article:

Hart, H. L. A. (1961). *The Concept of Law*. London: Oxford University Press.

If the book has more than one edition or volume, or a book (bk) or volume is cited (vol./vols.) in particular, the reference will read as follows:

In the text: (Basadre, 1983, VI, p. 57) which means volume six, page 57 of the 1983 work of Basadre.

- **Reference to the end of each article:**

Basadre, J. (1983). *Historia de la República*, 7.^a ed., t.11. Lima: Editorial Universitaria.

Book (two or more authors):

In the text: (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 185)

- **Reference to the end of each article:**

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1980). *Mille Plateaux Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*. Paris: Les Editions du Minuit.

- **Book chapter, articles of collective monographs, prefaces and epilogues:**

In the text: (Rosenau, 2004, p. 19).

Reference to the end of each article:

Rosenau, J. N. (1992). Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics. En J. N. Rosenau & E. O. Czempiel (Eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (pp. 1-29). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- **Articles of scientific journal and newspaper articles:**

In the text: (Bazzicalupo, 2016, p. 59)

Reference to the end of each article:

Bazzicalupo, L. (2016). Populismo y liberalismo: la pretensión de la inmanencia. *Soft Power. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, 4(2), 57-70.

- **Internet documents:**

In the text: (Rosanvallon, 2004)

Reference to the end of each article:

Rosanvallon, P. (2004). La democracia en América Latina. En PNUD. *Contribuciones para un debate. Comentarios*. Recuperado de www.ndipartidos.org/es/node/1336.

Any indication of the translator will go to the end of the text.

Articles not fulfilling these requirements will be rejected.

Recommendations for reviews and bibliographical essays:

Reviews and bibliographical essays shall be sent as an archive file to the e-mail softpower.journal@gmail.com. The text shall be accompanied by information for contacting the author and shall be written with single spacing in Times New Roman, 10 points. Reviews shall not exceed 4 pages; bibliographical essays shall not exceed 10 pages.

The Editorial Board will evaluate the publication of the text and will decide the issue in which it will be included.

CÓDIGO DE ÉTICA

Prevenir publicaciones negligentes es una de las importantes responsabilidades del Consejo y del Comité Editorial. Este código describe la política de *Soft Power* para asegurar el tratamiento ético de todos los participantes en la revisión entre pares y en el proceso de publicación. Editores, revisores y autores están invitados a estudiar estas directrices y dirigir cualquier pregunta o duda a los correos: vgiordano@unisa.it o softpower.journal@gmail.com.

Esta guía se aplica a los manuscritos presentados a *Soft Power* a partir del 1.º de enero del 2014 y podrán ser revisados en cualquier momento por el Editor y el Consejo Editorial.

Deberes del Editor

El Editor es responsable del contenido de la revista y de garantizar la integridad de todo el trabajo que se publica en ella.

- **Las decisiones sobre la publicación:** El Editor tiene el derecho de tomar la decisión final sobre si aceptar o rechazar un manuscrito en referencia a la importancia, originalidad y claridad del manuscrito, y su relevancia para la revista.
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- **Justa revisión:** El Editor y el Comité Editorial deben asegurarse de que cada manuscrito recibido por *Soft Power* sea revisado por su contenido intelectual sin distinción de sexo, género, raza, religión, nacionalidad, etc., de los autores.
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durante la fase de revisión; la protección de las identidades de los autores y evaluadores; además, se comprometen a adoptar todas las medidas razonables para preservar la confidencialidad de las identidades de los autores y revisores.

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- **Conflictos de interés:** El Editor debería excluir de considerar manuscritos que tienen un real o potencial conflicto de interés que resulte de las relaciones o conexiones competitivas, de colaboración, financieras o de otro tipo con cualquiera de los autores, empresas o instituciones relacionadas con el manuscrito.
- **Autoridad:** Al Editor pertenece la decisión última y la responsabilidad de la revista. El Editor debe respetar los componentes de la revista (lectores, autores, revisores, equipo editorial) y trabajar para garantizar la honestidad e integridad de los contenidos de la revista y asegurar una mejora continua en la calidad de la revista.

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- **Justa revisión:** Los revisores deben evaluar los manuscritos de manera objetiva, justa y profesional. Los revisores deben evitar prejuicios personales en sus comentarios y evaluaciones, y deben expresar sus opiniones claramente con argumentos de apoyo. Los revisores deben proporcionar revisiones fundamentadas y justas. Estos deben evitar ataques personales y no deben incluir ninguna opinión que sea difamatoria, inexacta, engañosa, obscena, escandalosa, ilegal o de cualquier otra forma objetable, o que infrinja los derechos de autor de cualquier otra persona, derecho de privacidad u otros derechos.
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- **Quejas:** Cualquier queja relativa a la revista debe, en primera instancia, ser dirigida al Editor de *Soft Power*.

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- **Originalidad:** Los autores deben garantizar que ninguna parte de su trabajo es una copia de cualquier otro trabajo, ya sea escrito por ellos mismos u otros, y que el trabajo es original y no ha sido previamente publicado en su totalidad o en parte sustancial.
- **La autoría del artículo:** La autoría se limita a aquellos que han dado una contribución significativa a la concepción, diseño, ejecución o interpretación del estudio presentado. Otros que han hecho una contribución significativa deben estar inscritos como coautores. El autor debe asegurarse de que todos los coautores hayan avalado la versión definitiva del documento y acordado su publicación final.
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El Código de Ética de la revista *Soft Power* se basa principalmente en las siguientes fuentes en línea:

- COPE - Committee on Publication Ethics, 2011. Code of conduct and best practice guidelines for journal editors. Accessed February 2014.
- Ethical-Guidelines, 2011. Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011. Accessed February 2014.

CODE OF ETHICS

The prevention of publication malpractice is one of the most important responsibilities of the Editorial Board. This Code describes *Soft Power*'s policies for ensuring the ethical treatment of all participants in the peer review and publication process. Editors, Reviewers and Authors are encouraged to study these guidelines and address any questions or concerns to the vgiordano@unisa.it or softpower.journal@gmail.com.

These guidelines apply to manuscripts submitted to *Soft Power* starting January, 1, 2014, and may be revised at any time by the Editorial Board.

Duties of Editor

The Editor is responsible for the content of the journal and for ensuring the integrity of all work that is published in it.

- **Publication decisions:** The Editor has the right to make the final decision on whether to accept or reject a manuscript with reference to the significance, originality, and clarity of the manuscript and its relevance to the journal.
- **Review of manuscripts:** *Soft Power* follows a double-blind review process, whereby Authors do not know Reviewers and vice versa. The Editor is responsible for securing timely, independent and anonymous peer review from suitably qualified reviewers who have no disqualifying competing interests, of all manuscripts submitted to the journal. The Editor is responsible for ensuring that the journal has access to an adequate number of competent reviewers.
- **Fair Review:** The Editor and their editorial staff must ensure that each manuscript received by *Soft Power* is reviewed for its intellectual content without regard to sex, gender, race, religion, citizenship, etc. of the authors.
- **Confidentiality of submitted material:** The Editor and the editorial staff will ensure that systems are in place to ensure the confidentiality and protection from misuse of material submitted to the journal while under review and the protection of authors' and reviewers' identities and will themselves take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of authors' and reviewers' identities.

- **Disclosure:** The Editor should ensure that submitted manuscripts are processed in a confidential manner, and that no content of the manuscripts will be disclosed to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, as appropriate.
- **Conflicts of interest:** The Editor should excuse themselves from considering a manuscript in which they have a real or potential conflict of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, financial or other relationships or connections with any of the Authors, companies or institutions connected to the manuscript.
- **Authority:** The Editor must have ultimate authority and responsibility for the Journal. The Editor should respect the Journal's constituents (Readers, Authors, Reviewers, Editorial Staff), and work to ensure the honesty and integrity of the Journal's contents and continuous improvement in journal quality.

Duties of reviewers

- **Fair reviews:** Reviewers should evaluate manuscripts objectively, fairly and professionally. Reviewers should avoid personal biases in their comments and judgments and they should express their views clearly with supporting arguments. Reviewers must provide substantiated and fair reviews. These must avoid personal attack, and not include any material that is defamatory, inaccurate, libelous, misleading, obscene, scandalous, unlawful, or otherwise objectionable, or that infringes any other person's copyright, right of privacy, or other rights.
- **Confidentiality:** Information regarding manuscripts submitted by authors should be kept confidential and be treated as privileged information. Reviewers should not discuss the manuscript with anyone other than the Editor, nor should they discuss any information from the manuscript without permission.
- **Acknowledgement of Sources:** Manuscript reviewers must ensure that authors have acknowledged all sources of data used in the research. Any kind of similarity or overlap between the manuscripts under consideration or with any other published paper of which reviewer has personal knowledge must be immediately brought to the Editor's notice.
- **Timeliness:** In the event that a reviewer feels it is not possible for him/her to complete review of manuscript within stipulated time then this information must be communicated to the Editor/Guest Editor, so that the manuscript could be sent to another reviewer.

- **Right of refusal:** Reviewers should refuse to review manuscripts: a) where they have provided written comments on the manuscript or an earlier version to the Author, b) in which they have any conflicts of interest resulting from collaborative, financial, institutional, personal, or other relationships or connections with any of the companies, institutions, or people connected to the papers.
- **Complain:** Any complaint relating to the journal should, in the first instance be directed towards the Editor of *Soft Power*.

Duties of Authors

- **Originality:** Authors must ensure that no part of their work is copied from any other work, either authored by themselves or others and that the work is original and has not previously been published in whole or substantial part.
- **Authorship of the paper:** Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to conception, design, execution or interpretation of the reported study. Others who have made significant contribution must be listed as co-authors. The author should ensure that all co-authors have affirmed the final version of the paper and have agreed on its final publication.
- **Plagiarism and self-plagiarism:** All work in the manuscript should be free of any plagiarism, falsification, fabrications, or omission of significant material. Plagiarism and self-plagiarism constitute unethical publishing behavior and are unacceptable. *Soft Power* reserves the right to evaluate issues of plagiarism and redundancy on a case-by-case basis.
- **Acknowledgement of Sources and Conflict(s) of interests:** The author should indicate explicitly all sources that have supported the research and also declare any conflict(s) of interest.
- **Timeliness:** Authors should be prompt with their manuscript revisions. If an Author cannot meet the deadline given, the Author should contact to vgiordano@unisa.it or softpower.journal@gmail.com as soon as possible to determine whether a longer time period or withdrawal from the review process should be chosen.

The Code of Ethics of *Soft Power* draws heavily from the following on-line sources:

- COPE – Committee on Publication Ethics, 2011. Code of conduct and best practice guidelines for journal editors. Accessed February, 2014.
- Ethical-Guidelines, 2011. Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011. Accessed February, 2014.

