CRÍTICA y EMANCIPACIÓN

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Two moments in Latin American social thought

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CLACSO's first theoretical journal was born in a very different Latin American and global context than that of today. Indeed, *Crítica & Utopía Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* came out in Buenos Aires in September 1979. Fifteen years later, the director of the journal, Francisco Delich, then executive secretary of CLACSO, wrote about the difficult conditions faced by Latin American social scientists at that time:

> In the middle of the previous decade, the democracies in Chile and Argentina had collapsed. The heresy of Uruguayan history had been consolidated—Bordaberry's civil *coup* against the country's own institutions. The brief and rich experience of the Peruvian Revolution, which in 1968 still held out some hope, had ended with the death of General Velazco. Bolivia continued on its erratic path between revolution and counterrevolution, paying more attention to the miners than to the modernisation of Santa Cruz. An unperturbed Stroessner, with strong support from Brazil, consolidated republican despotism in Paraguay. In Brazil, ten years after the military *coup* against Goulart, the Bra-

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

> zilian "miracle" began to take shape. Ecuador seemed to wake up from a long colonial nap, thanks to oil expansion and a military dictatorship.
>
> We knew—and many of us wrote about it—that South American society was shedding its skin (this was visible) but its skeleton was changing too. Capitalist expansion in the countryside was dismantling very old social structures and it was spreading to urban pockets.
>
> However, some of these changes in the natural evolution—if it can be called that—of social history seemed to smack us in the face. As prophets we were quite near-sighted (*Crítica & Utopía*, 17, p.1).

Under adverse conditions, Delich called together a number of Latin American social scientists—Juan Carlos Portantiero, Aldo Ferrer, Waldo Ansaldi, Angel Flisfisch, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Norbert Lechner, Juan Carlos Torre, Armand Mattelart, Hector Schmucler, Mario R. dos Santos, Oscar Landi, Oscar Oszlak, Anibal Ford, Torcuato Di Tella, Felix Schuster, Alberto Bialakowsky, Eduardo Rabossi, etc., and from other parts of the world, like Alain Rouquie, Adam Przeworski and Immanuel Wallerstein—to think through and rethink topics such as the nature of Latin American dictatorships, the bureaucratic-authoritarian state, political and social participation, the emergence of telematics, liberal and neoliberal ideologies, post-dictatorial transitions to democracy, etc. These quite different topics revolved around a central issue: the refounding of a democratic order in Latin America. According to Delich's own testimony:

> In 1977, and barely a year after the Argentine *coup d'état*, we started to work on the theoretical recovery of democracy and its redefinition as a historical reason. It was clear from the very beginning of the debate that we were not talking about an ideological restoration, nor about a liberal myth capable of successfully opposing the "revolution," but rather we were talking about a utopia. It was, as has been pointed out, a response to a context of widespread dictatorships, but it was not only a recognition of a necessity: it was an intellectual and political choice that defines a different conceptual field and a different political practice. Democracy is a valid political model for the transformation of society and the state, as well as for the construction of a social order. It was a precondition for critique and for utopia. The debate began in 1979 and the first issues of *Crítica & Utopía* are a strong testimony to the richness of the debate (*Crítica & Utopía*, 17, p.5).

It is, then, of enormous credit to Delich and the contributors to *Crítica & Utopía* to have sustained an intellectual debate of such a high standard under conditions so adverse to thought. It is for this reason that *Crítica y Emancipación* salutes their effort. However, we also want to point out what we see as the limits of that intellectual and political horizon that ended up becoming hegemonic in the 1980s.

Perry Anderson, in a lecture he delivered in Buenos Aires in 1987—published in *Democracia y socialismo* (Tierra del Fuego, 1988)—questioned the following thesis:

> The democracy that has come after this decade of dictatorships represents the victory of a new set of political values in the continent: they are the values of consensus and pluralism and respect for the law, thus creating a new climate of moderation and civility. A great political economist from the United States, Albert Hirschman, has theorised this, saying more or less that democracy in Latin America today should not be understood in terms of socioeconomic conditions but rather in terms of political attitudes *with respect to* democracy (what he terms "giving up on certainty") both in terms of ideological conviction as well as political viability. A similar position can be observed in the Latin American left itself, synthesised perhaps in Norbert Lechner's famous slogan ("from revolution to democracy") or maybe in the work of Mexican Enrique Krause: "Democracy without adjectives".

Anderson had come to spoil the consensus of an important number of Latin American social scientists with respect to the "democratic paradigm", reminding us that the military dictatorships had retreated from the continent without any strategic defeats, "because their primary objective—it would seem—had been met. Regardless of the specific local conditions for their final retreat from the presidential palace (which the Brazilians accomplished much more intelligently than the Uruguayans, who did so more intelligently, in turn, than the Argentinians), their basic goal had been met. Today, the word socialism has virtually become taboo in Latin American politics. Notably, even the newest and boldest left force in the region—the Brazilian PT—does not seriously invoke socialism in its public discourse. Capitalist relations of production have become mentally and materially untouchable for the moment, under the threat of a return of military terror in the event that these relations come to be at risk". The message from the military dictatorships to the popular classes has been this: You can have democracy if you respect capitalism. If, however, you do not ac-

cept it, you will be left without democracy and you will have to accept capitalism anyway. This message has been heard.

In Latin America, especially in the countries of the Southern Cone, which had well organised and combative working classes, the most brutal repression was necessary to dismantle the social and institutional fabric that had been built upon the social conquests of popular movements. The unprecedented repressive violence was necessary to radically change the balance of forces between classes, and between the camps of the left and of the right. This was the new political setting in which the "message" could be heard and accepted, ideologically consolidating the political changes, isolating anticapitalist tendencies, and trying to channel all ideas within the frameworks of neoliberal capitalism, by means of the Washington Consensus. The new theoretical field was therefore buttressed by repression, preparing the context for neoliberal hegemony in the continent.

The Latin American setting in which *Crítica y Emancipación* is born is very different. Almost three decades have passed since then. The 1970s may have been a time for processes of democratic transition, but their meaning was not unequivocal. At the same time that the dictatorships came to an end, we became involved in a more general process that later extended practically across the globe: the replacement of a regulatory hegemonic model—a Keynesian or welfare system, however you wish to call it—with the emerging neoliberal model. Through this process, these same democracies quickly developed crises that affected their legitimacy and their representativeness. The very idea—that had become widespread—of democracy as a universal value came to be interpreted in terms of what type of democracy is universal or what features do we refer to when we speak about this universality. Undoubtedly, in the 1980s too much hope had been placed on the democratisation processes as such, while a model of accumulation and a form of state that had prevailed, with variations, for various decades were coming to their end. We had replaced other utopias with one that seemed more simple and feasible—democracy—and even more so after having devalued it prior to the arrival of the dictatorships in several countries in the continent. But its fetishisation has rid the transition processes of their social content, and ultimately these democracies have ended up becoming an institutional framework that adapted itself to neoliberalism—which then appropriated the democracies by emptying them of their public content. Neoliberalism, then, built itself on the ideology of the "new democracies".

The transformations suffered by Latin American societies over the last two decades— from which social thought has not emerged

unscathed—have inevitably become the general framework in which the continent and every one of our countries must be theorised, as must the new dominant theoretical field, due to the sheer magnitude of these changes. Along with neoliberal hegemony, certain dogmas were established and came to occupy a privileged place as determinants in the newly established theoretical field.

Even so, the defeat was not total. Neoliberalism, with its shock therapy, produced its own critics. In the previous decade, the principal space of resistance to neoliberalism was Latin America. In 1994, the Zapatistas let their cry be heard against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Since then, the continent has witnessed a series of victories of the left and the centre-left—Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Lula da Silva in Brazil, Néstor Kirchner in Argentina, Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and, recently, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay. There has also been a resurgence of social movements, several led by peasants and indigenous peoples, from Chiapas to El Alto, from the *piqueteros* to the landless workers. Over the last fifteen years, eleven Latin American presidents have fallen before the end of their mandates, not due to the traditional process of military *coups* supported by the United States, but rather as a result of the action of popular movements in opposition to the neoliberal policies of their governments. During this period, the only attempt at a *coup*—against Hugo Chávez in 2002—was defeated. Governments such as those of Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa propose a refounding of the state in their countries, with advanced constitutions that go beyond the existing liberal democratic models. These countries took the first steps towards what the World Social Forum calls "fair trade", with exchanges made in accordance with the needs and possibilities of each country, regardless of market prices. Several accomplishments of ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean), such as the eradication of illiteracy in Venezuela, followed by Bolivia this year and soon in Nicaragua, amongst many other initiatives, suggest that democratising means decommodifying, shifting from the sphere of the market to the sphere of rights and the public sphere. This is what ALBA accomplishes, based on solidarity between governments and people in the continent. It is also, although in a different way, what is proposed by MERCOSUR, the Bank of the South, the continental gas pipeline, Telesur and Petrocaribe.

The main reason that Latin America has been transformed into a kind of weakest link in the neoliberal chain is precisely because it was the testing laboratory for this model; the region in the world where it has become most widespread and where it has taken on its most ex-

treme characteristics. The model that General Augusto Pinochet applied in Chile and the superminister of the dictatorship Martínez de Hoz applied in Argentina, with support from the Chicago School, was similar to the model that the Bolivian nationalist leader Paz Estenssoro implemented in Bolivia, years before it was taken up as a global rallying cry by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Introduced by the right, the neoliberal model ended up being adopted by forces of nationalist origin, such as Peronism under President Carlos Menem and the PRI in Mexico, as well as by social democrats and socialists, such as Chile's Socialist Party, Venezuela's *Acción Democrática* and Brazil's *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (PSDB, Brazilian Social Democracy Party) eventually consolidating its hegemony throughout the continent.

The continent had thus become the prototype for the application of Washington Consensus policies: development would be directed by foreign capital, attracted by the privatisation of public companies and the abundance of natural resources, by the liberalisation of imports, the high interest rates, the fiscal austerity, and in several cases, by a mechanical link through exchange rate regimes. Predictably, after a brief initial period of euphoria at the end of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, serious economic and social crises followed. Imports grew rapidly as duties were reduced; overvalued currency stifled exports; current account deficits and debt payments increased; and high interest rates hindered domestic investment and consumer demand, resulting in a recession. In the mid-1990s, the hike in interest rates in the United States made the foreign debt unbearable, leading to the collapse of the currencies of the continent's three largest economies: Mexico in 1994, Brazil in 1999 and Argentina in 2001.

However, unlike Southeast Asia and Africa, in Latin America the crisis caused by the neoliberal model met with the old tradition of combative mass movements and political uprisings. In the last half a century, the continent had gone through three important cycles of mass mobilisations and ambitious strategic projects of the left. The first was nationalist, between 1930 and 1950. The second expressed itself as a guerrilla movement, beginning with the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and lasting until the end of the 1970s. Beginning at the end of the last century, and more notably in the first years of this century, the continent has been experiencing a third cycle of increasing struggles, this time of an anti-neoliberal nature.

Critical thought had retreated to a defensive position, especially throughout the 1990s, when the prevailing broad ideological consensus took the lead in the intellectual sphere as well, redefining the terms of the debates. The very slogan of the World Social Forum

beginning in 2001—"Another world is possible"—suggests to what extent the alternative movement had retreated to a defensive position, to the point of struggling just to declare that history had not ended, that there were still alternatives and the future remained open.

The combined force of the neoliberal campaigns—orchestrated with the dissemination capacity of the large publishing, television, radio and newspaper networks—and the cries from liberalism—with its campaigns against "Soviet totalitarianism" and then the celebration of its defeat—radically altered the theoretical field that existed prior to the 1990s.

If Francis Fukuyama's declaration about the "end of history" had a clear propagandistic component, the assumptions it drew upon laid down strong roots in the theoretical debate, favouring the propagation of "the one-idea-system". These assumptions did not refer to the vulgar idea that history had stopped, that historic events would no longer occur, but rather to a much more profound and more deeply rooted idea: no historic events would go beyond the horizons of liberal democracy and the capitalist market economy. These assumptions, explicitly or implicitly, enjoyed a much broader acceptance than one would expect, limiting different forms of thought to historically narrow and constrictive levels.

The success of this consensus came, in part, from abandoning the so-called "grand narratives," from postmodern approaches that, as Perry Anderson has summarised well, took as their guiding principles "a structure without history, a history without a subject, knowledge without truth". The result was an anti-theoreticism and an anti-historicism that restricted the ability of intellectual thought to follow the guiding principles of reality.

As social reality was put on an equal footing with the real itself, a constitutive dimension of the human that is impossible to know and to transform seemed even farther away to social subjects. At the same time, the rejection of grand historical explanations—meganarratives discredited because they were impossible, reductive and even responsible for "totalitarian" views—denied social subjects access to long-term narratives that would lend meaning to their current struggles, and thus offered a resigned acceptance of reality. Prisoners, then, of capitalism and liberal democracy, we seemed to have few options: the resigned acceptance of the end of history, the celebration of its definitive triumph, or a resistance that seemed to be doomed from the start.

Social thought, on our continent and throughout the world, lost its critical dimension with its abandonment of history—or its reduction to an innocuous historiography—of history understood

as a synthesis of the social sciences, an understanding of the conditions for the constitution of social reality, and, hence, its deconstruction and reconstruction. This view involved a retreat to the crudest forms of positivism, to a contemplative understanding of reality, abandoning any attempt to link theory and practice, history and politics, subjectivity and objectivity, nature and history, thus condemning intellectuals and theory itself to insignificance.

Like any great turn in the theoretical field, concepts, issues and approaches were abandoned, while others were almost magically replaced with different ones. Contemporary critical thought has already broadly condemned how the figure of the consumer came to occupy the place of the citizen, and how the citizen was rid of his/her social content as a worker and reduced to the passive function of a voter every few years. International relations came to be analysed in a sterile fashion, trying to block out the greatest contemporary political, economic, military and ideological phenomenon: the existence of a single imperial superpower, with all of the consequences that this entails.

At the same time, social struggle had come to be dealt with in an almost functionalist fashion, in terms of inclusion/exclusion, without conflicts or contradictions, ceasing to occupy the very centre of the mechanisms of reproduction of our societies. In addition, a type of criminalisation of the state had won a strong consensus, with its forms of regulation, its social services, its defence of national sovereignty and public wealth, while more favourable attention was redirected towards a mythical "civil society" as a supposed space of emancipation—all cats are grey at night, as civil society now included everything, at the cost of blurring the social nature of each one of its components.

The results were, in some cases, the loss of the critical power of thought as it fell into the formal traps of liberalism. In other cases, a fragmentation of knowledge, an exile of thought to the confines of academia, or the exercise of critical critique, a critique that took delight in its own theoretical action, but was not able to contribute to the creation of alternatives. This is not, of course, to disregard the extraordinary creativity that Latin American social thought was able to maintain—and that we hope to convey, as much as possible, in the pages of *Crítica y Emancipación*, starting with this first issue—but we want to establish a parallel between the political relevance that this thought was able to attain in the not-so-distant past and the possibilities proffered in the current context.

Today, when we begin to publish *Crítica y Emancipación*, the continent looks very different. In his first mandate, the then president of the United States, Bill Clinton, did not need to visit Latin

America, as it was a continent that behaved according to Washington's plans. Today, the current president is almost unable to visit, with few and isolated allies in the region. The processes of regional integration include a good number of our countries, among them some of the largest economies, such as Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela, which have shunned the free trade agreements proposed by the United States. The countries that have opted for the processes of regional integration—Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Cuba, in addition to those cited above—have diversified their international connections and intensified their exchanges within the region and with other countries in the South around the world.

New political forces are arising, like the MAS in Bolivia, while new parties are being built in Venezuela and Ecuador, in keeping with the new social and political subjects. In other countries, parties are in power today that were in opposition a decade ago, such as the PT in Brazil, the *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front) in Uruguay and the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua. The central issues under debate are no longer fiscal adjustment policies but new patterns of development that combine redistributive social policies and ambitious regional integration projects.

The political and ideological climate is distinct. The one country in the region that is the setting *par excellence* for the "unending wars" of the empire—Colombia—is totally isolated in Latin America, even though its government enjoys great internal support. It is true that Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru have engaged in bilateral free trade agreements with the United States, but not without paying the price in domestic challenges, and without the sense of enthusiasm that reigned in the previous decade. Neoliberalism has lost its economic and ideological momentum. Latin America is the setting of a struggle between the old—which insists on surviving—and the new—which is encountering difficulties in being born. Hence its instability, in the midst of an immense hegemonic crisis, in the search for a post-neoliberal model, the constitution of a new bloc of forces and the strategies for their implementation.

The commitment to a new Latin American school of thought that can become as politically influential as the previous one was cannot be limited to discussions within the democratic paradigm that prevailed in the 1980s and 1990s, nor can it simply return to the intellectual horizon of the 1960s and 1970s. Faced with the complexity and the diversity of the continent's reality, and in an international scenario that has been profoundly reshaped over the last decade, with the emergence of new subjects, identities and demands, the arduous task of theoretical re-elaboration becomes necessary.

Without self-indulgence, we must identify both the strong and weak points in critical Latin American thought, without fear of speaking openly about its crisis. As the Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa has emphasised—in a speech included in this issue—the theoretical framework of the 21st century in Latin America could not be more disturbing. Faced with new political processes and new realities—radically transformed, mostly in a regressive direction, over the last two decades—hegemonic perspectives are developed as strategic plans of domination and disseminated with media tools, like a type of ideological war against any critical and alternative position. It is a manufactured consent—in the words of Noam Chomsky—constructed in an antidemocratic fashion by media controlled by just a few global corporations, and reinforced *ad nauseum* in written, audio and visual media daily for several million people all over the world. That is, theoretical changes were at work not only in the prevailing ideas, but also in the formulation of the issues—the topics that "appear" and those that "disappear"—and in the methods of analysis as well as in the media that elaborate and disseminate them.

The figure of the mediatized intellectual—or the supposed intellectual—has come to occupy an essential place in this new strategy to trivialise theory, and, at the same time, to discredit critical theoretical work, along with its key spaces, primarily public universities. In the background, there has been a notable decline in reading habits and in the ability to buy books, along with the crises faced by some of the best publishing houses in the continent and a crisis not only in the performance of the public universities but also in their mission.

As a whole, the crisis in Latin American social thought reflects new types of theoretical production, a new mode of hegemony, that not only redefines concepts and values but also the role of theory, creating a particular kind of common sense, closely linked to a way of life based on the commodification of social relations and a focus on the individual in the sphere of consumption.

The new century finds Latin America convulsed once again, amidst one of its most profound hegemonic crises, in which the recent past has ended abruptly and the future is yet to be invented. Though we understand the old—although not necessarily in all of its dimensions and in the depth and extent of its influence—it is the new that calls upon us to reflect, to dedicate our efforts and our capacity for theoretical elaboration.

We reassert our deepest democratic and pluralist convictions. We are aware, however, that what the continent needs is not only the restoration of formal democratic structures, that in large part have

already been restored, but without touching the deeper power structures (land, money, social communication, among others). These structures have not been democratised; on the contrary, they have become even more concentrated in the hands of just a few companies, many of which are international or internationalised. The re-foundational project for Latin American states aims for much broader and deeper forms of democracy, that will be compatible with and capable of promoting emancipation instead of placing limits on it and rendering it impossible. A democracy that does not strive for social, political, economic, cultural, ethnic, gender and ecological emancipation will tend to become hollow and produce apathy instead of greater popular participation, to become an instrument for the old elites instead of expanding the spaces for citizenship and the struggles for democratic systems with social content, like the old dream of the barricades of 1848.

The new political processes in the continent aim at this: to rearticulate social forces with new ways of making, constituting and organising the political sphere. They strive to overcome the reform/revolution dichotomy, including popular uprisings that culminate in political outcomes, but they do not resign themselves to transforming society with the elites' old instruments of power—rather, they seek to refound the state.

These are new theoretical challenges for all of us: rethinking the recent trajectory of our countries in terms of the superseding of the accumulation crisis, of the exhaustion of the existing form of the state, of the affirmation of multiple cultural, ethnic and gender identities, in terms of strengthening and renewing the actually existing democracies. The Latin American crisis is not a theoretical crisis, but it is also a theoretical crisis, a search for new theoretical possibilities for thinking through new practices and working towards potential futures of critical analysis that can lay out the different forms of emancipation in the continent.

Crítica y Emancipación is a part of CLACSO's effort to stimulate, encourage and enrich the debate, the capacity for reflection and the development of critical Latin American thought in this new century. It accompanies a number of other initiatives, like the *Colección Libros Clásicos del Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano*, and the *Cuadernos del Pensamiento Crítico*.

Any new journal aims to be not just another journal, even more so in times in which, unfortunately, journals tend to stop being published or are only published online. *Crítica y Emancipación* hopes to find its uniqueness within the uniqueness of CLACSO itself: a network of centres and researchers of critical Latin American thought.

Crítica y Emancipación seeks to nourish itself with the wealth of these three combined elements: links of networks and solidarity, the tradition and renewal of the best in critical thought, and the new landscape that Latin America and the Caribbean present.

Emir Sader

BOLIVIAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY: A SPACE FOR HEGEMONIC STRUGGLE

Catastrophic equilibrium and point of bifurcation

Álvaro García Linera

Abstract

This paper analyses how, following the institutional crisis in Bolivia that ended in Sánchez de Lozada's resignation to the presidency and the election of Evo Morales as the head of state, a process of building a new social and political project has been consolidated—an indigenous and popular project capable of challenging the power of the neoliberalism of the dominant forces. None of these sectors, however, is in a position to hegemonise decision-making spaces or to produce a consensus. This breeds a crisis that can only be resolved with some form of institutionalisation of the new state. This crisis may culminate in insurrection, in a display of force, or, as suggested in this paper,

Resumen

En el presente trabajo se analiza cómo, a partir de la crisis institucional en Bolivia, que devino en la renuncia de Sánchez de Lozada a la presidencia y la elección de Evo Morales como primer mandatario, se consolidó un proceso de construcción de un nuevo proyecto social y político, indígena y popular, capaz de disputarle el poder al neoliberalismo de los bloques dominantes. Ninguno de estos sectores, sin embargo, se encuentra en condiciones de hegemonizar los ámbitos y el consenso para la toma de decisiones. Esto provoca una crisis que deberá definirse en algún tipo de instancia en la que se pueda resolver la institucionalización del nuevo Estado. Esta crisis puede concluirse de manera insurreccional, por exhibición de fuer-

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democratically, through dialogue and pluralist construction, with the new Constitution at its core.

zas o, como se propone en esta conferencia, por vía democrática, a través del diálogo y la construcción plural, teniendo como eje la nueva Constitución.

Álvaro García Linera
Vice-president of Bolivia. | *Vicepresidente de Bolivia.*

Keywords
1| Bolivia **2|** Crisis **3|** State **4|** Democracy **5|** Hegemony

Palabras clave
1| *Bolivia* **2|** *Crisis* **3|** *Estado* **4|** *Democracia* **5|** *Hegemonía*

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Catastrophic equilibrium and point of bifurcation[1]

ÁLVARO GARCÍA LINERA

I will provide a short explanatory outline of some events of recent years in this country that, I believe, will help to link and give some sort of intellectual coherence to these events, which are infinitely more complicated than what can be processed by our thinking. It is possible to define at least three major stages (perhaps a fourth, ultimately) in a process of state crisis that is transforming the organisation of the state in its content, its social nature, and its institutionalisation.

The state crisis and our ability to visualise it

A number of *Comuna* comrades have been working for some time on the idea of the crisis of the state. In various writings in 2000 or 2001 we characterised what was going on in Bolivia as a crisis of the neoliberal state. There were distinct interpretations of how to understand the crisis, but fundamentally we argued that this crisis occurs when there are problems in the correlations of forces within the state, that is, in the structure of forces with a capacity for decision-making, in the set of dominant organising ideas in the political life of the society that allow a moral correspondence between the dominated and the dominators, and in the range of institutions (procedures, norms, offices) that objectify the correlation of forces and ideas.

We were beginning to experience this crisis of the state in 2000. The correlation of forces with decision-making capacity was beginning to come apart. The dominant ideas of the business bloc that is linked to foreign investment interests, the agro-export industry, banking, and the political elite formed around them were losing the capacity to define the public policies of our country in a stable and straightforward way.

1 Speech given at the Escuela de Pensamiento Comuna, 17 December 2007. Translated from Spanish by Richard Fidler. Reprinted with permission from *Monthly Review*.

That was also the year in which we entered a crisis, and the dominant ideas that present foreign investment as the engine of the economy, globalisation and exports as an unassailable horizon for our modernity, and the coalitions of political parties as a condition *sine qua non* in defining governability, understood as the common sense of politics, were no longer attractive to the whole of the society. The same thing was occurring in the institutions. The Parliament was no longer a place for political debate, which had been expropriated by the executive power. The executive, in turn, was being expropriated by the foreign business lobbies and hard-line political elements. And in turn this intransigent core was finding itself expropriated by foreign investment and a pair of embassies that were defining the situation in the country. An initial stage in the state crisis, in 2000, was its visibility.

A state crisis does not necessarily lead to a new state; there may be internal adjustments in forces, alliances, and policies, and there may be a reconstitution of the old state. For example, the national revolutionary state of 1952 had stages of internal mutation and reconfiguration that enabled it to survive a bit longer, amidst the military authoritarianism of the nationalist state. It was the same nationalist state, with only a few adjustments, internal linkages, and partial changes in content.

Catastrophic equilibrium and construction of hegemony

Any state crisis, then, may be reversible, or it may continue. If the crisis continues, a subsequent stage is the catastrophic equilibrium. Lenin spoke of a revolutionary situation, Gramsci of catastrophic equilibrium, both referring to the same phenomenon albeit in distinct languages. The catastrophic equilibrium is a phase in the state crisis, if you wish, a second structural moment that is characterised by three things: a confrontation of two national political projects for the country, two perspectives for the country, each with a capacity for mobilisation, attraction, and seduction of social forces; a confrontation in the institutional sphere—it might be the parliamentary arena or the social sphere—of two social blocs shaped by a will and ambition for power, the dominant bloc and the ascendant social bloc; and, thirdly, a paralysis of the upper echelons of the state and a failure to overcome this paralysis. This equilibrium might last weeks, months, years; but a moment will come when a breakthrough, a way out, is achieved.

The way out of the catastrophic equilibrium or deadlock would be the third step in the state crisis, which we will call ascendant hegemonic construction. This is characterised by unrest and, gener-

ally speaking, upsurge. Marx's writings on the political crisis of 1848 and 1849 are highly illustrative of this idea of waves of unrest that come and go: stability, unrest, stability, unrest.

This ascendant hegemonic construction, in turn, will have three stages and four other substages. The first is the preponderance or partial victory of a national political project with a capacity for attraction and social mobilisation. In the case of Bolivia, this preponderance presents various moments or sub-moments; the consolidation of the October agenda[2] is one, because it marks a social horizon that can attract the support of plebeian, indigenous, peasant, community, worker, and middle-class elements. And the institutionalisation of the October agenda, so to speak, is the election victory of 2005.

This crisis, of necessity, must end at some moment; no society can live permanently in mobilisation (as the anarchists hold) or permanently in stability (as Christians believe). There may be instability, struggles, but at some point an orderly structure must be consolidated, which will continue to experience internal conflicts, of course, but later it will be possible to say: "From this moment on, we have a reconstituted neoliberalism or we have a national, indigenous, popular, revolutionary state." We have termed this historical, precise, datable moment the point of bifurcation. The point of bifurcation means that either there is a successful counterrevolution and a return to the old state in new conditions, or a new state is consolidated, with conflicts still but in the context of its stabilisation. The counterrevolution, to obtain international support or a collapse of the command structure and leadership of the revolutionary bloc, will require a hegemonic rearticulation of regional resistances with a capacity for regional or national expansion.

I would illustrate this idea of the point of bifurcation with the crisis of the latifundist mining state, which actually began in 1944 or 1945; the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR, National Revolutionary Movement) won the elections in 1951, but its point of bifurcation is not in that year but in 1952. The April insurrection is the moment of bifurcation in that the state, with the characteristics and qualities of the worker, productivism, homogenisation, was consolidated and was to enjoy a relative stabilisation until a time of internal renewal, internal metamorphosis, with the presence of the military. But the nationalist state lasted until 1985.

2 Translator's note: October agenda: The main demands of the social movements arising from the October 2003 rebellion that removed Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada from the presidency: nationalisation of gas, constituent assembly, and trial for those responsible for the massacre of over 60 civilians during the uprising.

A second moment of point of bifurcation may have been in 1986. The national-popular state went into a crisis in 1977. *Coup d'état*, elections, *coup d'état*, elections, elections, *coup d'état*, democratic government, problems, early elections. The right won the elections in 1985, but the point of bifurcation occurred in 1986, with the March for Life,[3] when the nucleus of the old state, the social nucleus and the social thinking of the old state, collapsed, surrendered, in the face of the force, the vitality, the discourse and the coercive and cohesive capacity of the new neoliberal state.

The points of bifurcation may be insurrectional, they may be a display of force, or (as a working hypothesis) they may be resolved democratically. In any case, the idea of the point of bifurcation is the following: first, it is a moment of resolution of the stabilisation of the structure of the new state; secondly, a point of bifurcation is inevitably a moment of force; and thirdly, it is a moment in which politics actually becomes the continuation of the war by other means. It is a moment in which Nietzsche and Foucault are right.

A point of bifurcation is, basically, an act of force in the practical mediation of things. It is an act of leadership, of hegemony in the Gramscian meaning of the word, of moral leadership over the rest of society. Thus, if the Indigenous want to consolidate themselves as a nucleus of the state, they have to demonstrate that they are capable of handling and advancing the interests of the middle class, of the Bolivian business world, and isolating a very few, the implacable ones, but depriving them of their social base. To do this, it is important to talk with the adversaries; the Indigenous were required to talk with them.

In the case of Bolivia, it seems that we are coming closer to the point of bifurcation. It may be a question of months or days—this is merely a reflexive intuition—but it cannot drag on much longer. The interesting thing is that today, in 2007, when we see ourselves confronted by the new Political Constitution of the State and the autonomy statutes, when the Constituent Assembly is being challenged by the autonomy referendum, it may seem that we are repeating the history of 2005; it may seem that history is repeating itself, but in reality this is not the case. In 2005 the Constituent Assembly confronted the state as

3 Translator's note: In 1986 the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB, Bolivian Workers Central) sponsored a mass "March for Life" to frustrate government plans to restructure Comibol, the nationalised mining company, and to halt mass firings and raise salaries. A deal under which the government conceded many of the COB's demands subsequently collapsed, the mining sector was restructured, and the radical labour leaders were ousted at a COB convention.

a demand by the society and the response of the decadent bloc of the state to the society was the autonomy referendum. Today the reverse is the case. Society's proposal to the society mediated by the state is the new Political Constitution, and the response of the bloc of the displaced, now coming not from the State but from a part of the society, is the autonomy statute. It may appear to be the same thing, but the location of the social subjects has altered by 180 degrees.

Theoretically, then, we must be approaching the point of bifurcation. In the last 100 years, the primary experience with a point of bifurcation has been armed insurrection. The second experience of a

A state crisis does not necessarily lead to a new state; there may be internal adjustments in forces, alliances, and policies, and there may be a reconstitution of the old state.

point of bifurcation, the March for Life, was not an armed experience, but an exhibition and a measurement of political, military, and moral forces between the contending blocs and, without firing a single shot, the point of bifurcation was consolidated, a new state was stabilised.

Today, the government is betting on another, a third form of point of bifurcation, which would be a sort of democratic resolution through a form of iteration, that is, of successive approximation. The idea is that through various democratic actions the tensions between contending forces will be resolved. This is one of the possibilities that has opened up and the one that the government will be trying to promote. The idea is that the point of bifurcation will be resolved neither through insurrection (the hypothesis of civil war, which is always latent) nor through a show of force and the political and moral defeat of the adversary, but through the repeated manifestation of the sovereign power based on the relocation of powers, of local and regional forces, and the use of surpluses.

A referendum will determine how many prefects remain, or a referendum will determine whether the President and the Vice-President continue to govern. A referendum will determine the viability of the new Political Constitution, which is reorganising the state. Another referendum will determine the type of autonomy that will

be implemented in the country. In other words, the three moments of force—how to resolve the state architecture between the national and subnational levels, how resources are to be redistributed, and how the institutional level of the state is organised—will have to be determined through electoral action, if it comes to that.

Now basically I would say that this is a time of truce that may be broken when the time comes to implement the *Renta Dignidad*,[4] which redistributes the 60% of the *Impuesto directo a los Hidrocarburos* (IDH, direct tax on hydrocarbons) from the *prefecturas*.[5] Or, depending on the particular strategy of the right wing, it may not be until the referendum on autonomy, on their autonomy statute, is held. That referendum must go to the Parliament, and if Parliament amends or rejects it, they are going to try to hold a referendum for a decision by their regional autonomous assembly; and if this happens, they are going to want to apply their statute, and in trying to apply it without the corresponding legality, they are going to come into confrontation with the structure of the state. That may be another moment.

What else can happen in the days to come? A territorial counter-offensive in two dimensions, which is already happening in fact. The central government with the departments, and the confrontation between the departmental level and the subdepartmental, regional, and municipal levels which, under the new Political Constitution, have the right to a type of autonomy in which resources and powers will be subordinate to the Departmental Council.

The indigenous peoples will therefore look for their powers to the central government and will have to draw on it for their resources, while the regional and provincial autonomies will have to derive their resources and powers within the departmental limits. Hence there is going to be rising tension from regional forces and local elites that will extend to the *prefecturas* and, in turn, to the central government. So there will be rising tension among the territorial levels of the state.

In some of these moments, the deterrent capacity of the new social power bloc will probably be put to the test, and this will illustrate its ability to make decisions based on its capacity for social mobilisation at the national, departmental, and fundamentally regional levels, which in turn will reveal its capacity to maintain command, control, and compliance with the structures of legitimate coercion in the hands of the state, that is, the national police and armed forces.

4 Translator's note: Dignity income.

5 Translator's note: departmental governments.

That is more or less the panorama for the months to come. I am sure this initial reading will be modified week by week, because this is a time in which politics has again assumed a condensed form, and the correlation of forces is changing to a large degree within a very short timeline. Again, there is a condensation of politics in space and time, and this will oblige us to modify our modes of interpretation.

New political constitution of the state

The reading Raúl Prada[6] has made of the Constituent Assembly as a social project and a collective myth should really be fully incorporated here. But I am picking up what he said and simply situating it at a merely instrumental level of objectification of the new programming of forces. In its own way, this new Constitution provides for an indigenous popular nucleus, but it adds other sectors as well. The concerns of the middle class: Will I or will I not be able to send my son to private school? I can. Will I be entitled to hold my religious beliefs? I have that right. Can I inherit? I can. Can I invest in the country without the risk of being nationalised? If I pay taxes and comply with the rules, I have that right and no one should expropriate me.

What else can happen in the days to come? A territorial counter-offensive in two dimensions, which is already happening in fact.

The business person, too, can feel he or she is recognised in the new Constitution. This sector may have preferred the old Constitution and the old bloc, when, in order to negotiate a line of credit, there was no need to wait six months to have a meeting with Evo Morales. In the past, deals were settled over a weekend coffee or in a tennis game; now this is no longer the case, because Evo Morales never goes to tennis games or the embassies and he does not do deals in that way. But this Constitution incorporates them, as well.

6 See his article in this issue.

I think this is a demonstration of the possibility of exercising moral and intellectual leadership over the rest of society. As Raúl Prada says, it is a Constitution of transition that has had to be adaptable, that has had to incorporate other things without which it would be a Constitution solely for the poorest of the indigenous and without appeal to the average indigenous person. To be a Constitution for the *mestizos*, the middle classes, the business people, as well, and not for only one group, it had to be adjusted accordingly.

What group is not incorporated here, in the decisive referendum? The referendum question says: Do you agree that the extent of the lands be five thousand or ten thousand hectares? Who owns more than five thousand hectares? Eight thousand families. But only 400 families have upwards of ten thousand hectares. It is a powerful blow against the large landowners; clearly there is not much to negotiate with these gentlemen, so let's proceed with the referendum. I am sure the option of not extending it to more than five thousand hectares will be adopted, defining the irreducible core that will not be renegotiated.

It is possible that by the time the referendum is called, the Congress will negotiate five thousand or ten thousand, but it is clear that there is a core of major landholdings that have been defined in isolation from the rest of society. However, attempts were made to dialogue with them, because politically one should exhaust all channels for dialogue before making a tough decision. As any military strategist will say, take all possible steps, and once they are exhausted, the next step is justified. And here we have had to try again and again, not out of weakness but because we are obliged to dialogue and to listen, and in the worst of cases, after having exhausted all options, it is possible to define things by another route. That is why we have to dialogue.

On the subject of natural resources, we have given constitutional protection to the nationalisation of hydrocarbons. This means that no one can legally reprivatise above- or below-ground gas and petroleum, the refineries, or the ability to make decisions about, to market, and to set the price of hydrocarbons; this is now under lock and key. Sánchez de Lozada, with the old Constitution, which declared that the deposits (but nothing else) belonged to the state, privatised everything. With that experience, we say here: the gas and oil in the deposits and in any of the states where they are found belong to Bolivians through the national state.

The state determines the volumes, the marketing, the prices and terms of export. No one can adopt a reprivatisation law without changing the Constitution, which would take 15 years. So if Sánchez de Lozada were to return in 2010, God forbid, but if he were to return,

it would take 15 years to go back to privatising the resources. It cannot be done instantaneously, as he did. And the same applies to the forests, water, and minerals. Concerning the protection of national resources, the Constitution is very strong.

Applying the new Political Constitution of the State to the fight against corruption, we establish for the first time that the law is retroactive, that not only is there no limitation period on prosecutions for stealing from the state but such prosecutions can go back in time. No one is immune, all the presidents, vice-presidents, and ministers preceding the new Constitution are subject to investigation and, if subsequently convicted, are subject to imprisonment for their corruption.

So no one is immune now from prosecution and incarceration for stealing a fountain pen, or a million dollars, from the state. I think this is the only legislation in Latin America that allows for this kind of retroactivity, because the present Constitution is retroactive in regard to workers' rights and prisoners, as long as it favours them, but never in regard to the fight against corruption.

Missing from this analysis are the nature and characteristics of the consolidation and articulation of the new right-wing forces in the country that have now displaced *Podemos* as a project and that have new leaderships such as Branco Marinkovic, Mario Cossio, Rubén Costas[7], as well as the civic committees, a nucleus of mass mobilisation, and a youth strike force that we have to get to understand. This is not explained in this outline. It would require an analysis of the new right in its capacity for social mobilisation, but I think that in general terms the chessboard is moving in that way.

In any case, looking at this from the government's point of view, the following steps have to be taken in its ability to articulate social mobilisation around very concrete objectives such as, for example, the new Constitution, and the ability to maintain control over the structures of legitimate coercion in the hands of the state: Justice, Police, Armed Forces. And it also depends on what moves the right wing makes. Whatever the case, either this point of bifurcation is resolved through public support and its pressure in the voting and the referendums that settle the consolidation of the new state, or there will be some type of confrontation and a test of forces for which, I hope, we are prepared.

7 Translator's note: Respectively, President of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee, Prefect of the department of Tarija, and Prefect of the department of Santa Cruz.

Analysis of the New Political Constitution of the State

Raúl Prada Alcoreza

Abstract

In this article, the author analyses the characteristics of the new political constitution of the state, passed after Evo Morales took office as the president of Bolivia. This new constitution redefines the concept of the state as well as that of citizenship from a plurinational, multicultural and communitarian perspective. The development of liberal rights, obligations and guarantees is combined with grassroots indigenous claims, which are thereby included in the new legal and institutional framework. Hence, the notion of an interventionist, welfare state that protects natural resources takes shape, which incorporates the ways and practices of first peoples and nations into its

Resumen

En este artículo, el autor analiza las características de la nueva Constitución Política del Estado, sancionada tras la asunción de Evo Morales a la presidencia de Bolivia. Esta nueva Constitución redefine la concepción del Estado, así como el concepto de ciudadanía, desde una lógica plurinacional, multicultural y comunitaria. Se combina el desarrollo de los derechos, deberes y garantías liberales con demandas indígenas de corte popular que quedan, de esta manera, enmarcadas en una nueva conformación jurídico-institucional. De este modo, se da forma a la noción de un Estado interventor, protector de los recursos naturales, de bienestar, inclusivo en cuanto incorpora formas y prácticas de los pueblos y naciones originarios ins-

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institutional life. The state thus becomes a tool for equitable, sovereign and sustainable development.

titucionalmente, constituyéndose como herramienta para el desarrollo equitativo, soberano y sustentable.

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Keywords

1| Indigenous Peoples **2|** Bolivia **3|** Constitution **4|** Plurinationalism **5|** Multiculturalism **6|** Democracy **7|** State

Palabras clave

1| *Pueblos Indígenas* 2| *Bolivia* 3| *Constitución* 4| *Plurinacionalidad* **5|** *Multiculturalidad* **6|** *Democracia* **7|** *Estado*

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Characterisation of the state

The characterisation of the Bolivian state as a social unitary state of plurinational and communitarian law is new; this broad and complex description is not found in the old constitution. The characterisation of the state is a thorny subject. It articulates the legal sphere with political urgencies, and the social unitary rule of law with its plurinational, community and intercultural nature, ratifying its condition as free, independent, sovereign and democratic. It is founded on plurality and pluralism that operate in distinct spheres: political, economic, legal, cultural and linguistic. It is based on the recognition of the pre-existence of the originary indigenous peoples and nations, which implies the recognition of their right to self-determination. The characterisation of the state offers a description of the Bolivian people in its diversity and multiplicity, identifying its multicoloured composition with respect to nations, classes and social strata, scattered around the cities and the countryside. The characterisation of the state describes a democratic and participatory government, and opens up multiple types of direct, universal and communitarian representation. It also combines the cultural values of originary peoples and nations with liberal principles. This composite understanding of the characterisation of the state includes liberal constitutional developments and is enriched by the indigenous contributions of new constitutional and political forms.

A constitution for the transition

One might say that the new political constitution of the state is a constitution in transition. It is the passage from a social and unitary state to a plurinational one; from a state that gave up on federal-

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

ism after the war at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th (called the Federal War) and chose unitarianism. A state that, after the Chaco War, built a populist state, consolidating it as a Latin American-style welfare state during the twelve years of the National Revolution (1952-1964). The unitary and social nature of the state, then, is a legacy of the past. This is how Bolivia approached modernity. What is new in the new constitution is its plurinational and communitarian nature, its administrative decentralisation and its system of autonomies. Its plurinational nature is related to a decolonising dimension that points to the deconstruction of the republican, colonial and liberal state. It is related to the recognition of the existence of originary, indigenous nations prior to colonisation; that is, the recognition of the demographic matrix of the Bolivian people. Bolivian people are noteworthy for their ethnographic and sociological diversity. State pluralism, which is also a pluralism of nations, is a substantial improvement in democratic pluralism, constructed on the basis of collective identities and political communitarianism. The communitarian nature of the new constitution is based on the recognition of the cultural institutions that give form to the behaviours not only of rural communities, but also urban ones. We speak about the *ayllus*, the *tentas*, the *capitanias*, the organising structures that give meaning to migration, migrant settlements, holidays, festivals, *challas*, rituals and ceremonies, where collective symbolism lies. An initial conclusion could be the following: the new constitution represents a transition from the unitary and social nature of the state to a plural-national and communitarian one.

It is also a constitutional transition, as developments in liberal rights, obligations and guarantees are combined with constitutionalised indigenous demands, and with legal and political forms that give a constitutional framework to the process of nationalisation and recovery of natural resources. In other words, it does not cease to be a liberal constitution, albeit it in a pluralist version, incorporating four generations of rights: individual rights, social rights, collective rights and environmental rights. It is also an indigenous and popular constitution in that it incorporates the indigenous nations' and peoples' own institutionality, their own structures and practices. In the same way, it is a constitution that recognises the fundamental role of the public realm as an interventionist, welfare and industrialising state. This combination of pluralist liberalism, originary indigeneity and plurinational statism constitutes the juridico-political transition. A second conclusion is the following: the new institutional map is a combination of liberal, indigenous and popular forms, in the context of a welfare state.

Constitutional structure

The text of the constitution has five parts: characterisation of the state, rights, obligations and guarantees; functional structure and organisation of the state; territorial structure and organisation of the state; economic structure and organisation of the state; and hierarchy of norms and constitutional reform, containing the transitional provisions. The first part constitutes the dogmatic part of the constitution and the other parts, except for the last one, constitute the organic part of the constitution. The characterisation of the state declares that Bolivia is a social unitary state of plurinational communitarian law, free, independent, sovereign,

One might say that the new political constitution of the state is a constitution in transition. It is the passage from a social and unitary state to a plurinational one.

democratic, intercultural and decentralised, with autonomies. With respect to the principles, values and goals of the state, sovereignty is said to reside with the Bolivian people and is exercised directly. Article 8 combines Andean, Amazonian and Chaquenean principles and values with democratic principles and values; immanent cultural symbols with transcendental political meanings. Gender is an axis that cuts across the entire document, as do the plurinational and communitarian axes. This renders new subjects and subjectivities constitutive of the new political form. The subjects of gender—above all, female subjects—the diverse subjects and subjectivities of plurality, and collective subjects emerge as new imaginaries and actors in the new settings of a new political horizon. This lends a molecular dynamic to the institutional machinery and political mechanisms. It is not that other subjects, the classical subjects of modernity, have disappeared, but they now appear in new settings illuminated with the colours of a plurality of forms. The plot is different, and therefore, so are the expected outcomes.

Representation is opened up in various ways; it is direct and participatory, through universal suffrage, and communitarian, in accordance with different norms and procedures. The representative world is in harmony with the pluralism of the types of representation and the diversity of subjects, individualised and collective, those that

are female and those from the communities. It also speaks about the different forms of democracy: representative, direct and communitarian. Democracy goes back to the evolution of political action and to the primordial form of deliberation: the assembly. The monopoly of the political class is thus broken, politicising the working of all spheres of social action. Democracy is no longer for the few, but for the many. The many exercise their majority dialectically with the minorities, in a dialectic in which different interests and perspectives are made visible, in a place where political synthesis can take place.

In the new constitution, rights are divided into those that are exceptionally fundamental, like an acquisition in the evolution of rights, in addition to fundamental rights and constitutional guarantees. Among the exceptionally fundamental rights are the rights to life, water, nourishment, education, health, habitat and housing, and access to the basic services of potable water, sewerage, electricity, household gas, postal services and telecommunications. These rights can not be suspended for any reason, not even a state of siege.

The evolution of rights

In the new constitution, fundamental rights are civil and political rights, those of originary indigenous nations and peoples, those of peasants, social and economic rights, the right to a healthy, protected and balanced environment, the rights to health and social security, to work and employment, to property. Fundamental rights include the rights of childhood, adolescence and youth, as well as those of older adults, people with disabilities, people deprived of their liberty, and users and consumers. Education is conceived of as intercultural, and cultural rights are also considered. Section IV is dedicated to science, technology and research. There is also a chapter on social communication.

Rights do not remain a mere declaration; they are reinforced with constitutional resources, so that they will be unfailingly fulfilled. Guarantees include jurisdictional guarantees, defensive actions, such as the actions of freedom, the protection against the infringement of fundamental rights and freedoms, of constitutional protection, of privacy, of unconstitutionality, of fulfilment and popular action. States of exception are discussed, and citizenship is defined. It is noteworthy that the declaratory aspect of the constitution forms a part of the most advanced constitutionalism, of the greatest liberal traditions, including the development of communitarian liberalism, and of the greatest social traditions, including all of the conquests of the social classes, sectors and strata. In addition, the difference between

the exceptionally fundamental rights and the fundamental rights is emphasised and made visible, demonstrating that social and collective rights and those related to life and to the environment are not of a lower rank than individual rights, but rather that they are equivalent. What is emphasised here is the value of these rights of second, third and fourth generation.

The constitution states that education is a supreme function and primary responsibility of the state; state and society must protect and defend the education system. Education is unitarian, public, universal, democratic, participatory, communitarian, decolonising and of high quality; education is intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual. This is all part of the transversality of the plurinational state. In other words, social integration is built upon a recognition of diversity; different sectors must act and interconnect, the groups that make up new subjectivities must become articulated and differentiated, forming a multi-coloured social formation. It is said that the tongue was created in order to speak with others, with those who are different, of other tongues. The incorporation of plurilingualism substantially enriches the circulation of knowledge and the open formation of world views. These new experiences in alternative formative spheres open up possibilities that are constitutive of new subjectivities and understandings based on ductile and original paradigms. Education within a single paradigm—constructivism, which has been dominant—can no longer be sustained. Possibilities of speech open up through new instruments of expression, possibilities of visibility open up through new corporal agencies. It is therefore crucial to ensure that any new paradigms revolve around flexible and open educational experiences.

Plurinational structure and the functional organisation of the state

The second part of the state's new political constitution addresses the functional structure and organisation of the state; that is, the structure of the organs of the state. This structure involves four organs: legislative, executive, judicial and electoral. However, if we consider the structure of other organs of the state, we find social control, which forms a type of "fifth power", in addition to the four preceding "powers". It is said that when we speak about organs, we are referring to a metaphor of the state body from a holistic perspective, while when we speak about "powers", we develop an understanding of the balance between them. This begins with the theory of limits and mutual control of the powers, avoiding concentration in any one of them. Both the holistic perspective of organs and the "power" balance perspective are parts of the lib-

eral paradigm, even though one is built on an organicist model and the other on a model of equilibria. Exaggerating somewhat, it could be said that the view of the "powers" of the state is more liberal than the organicist view; however, both discourses talk about the same thing: the organisation and structure of the state. The difference from the prior state project, as outlined in the previous political constitution of the state, is that, in addition to increasing the number of state "powers"—instead of three there are now four or five—the plurinational and communitarian nature runs throughout the structure of the new constitution. Another transcendental step is the move from representative democracy to participatory democracy, constituting a social "power" with the constitutionalisation of participation and social control.

The new constitution describes a plurinational, bicameral assembly, with indigenous representation via universal suffrage. This organ or "power" elects uninominal and plurinominal representatives. The Chamber of Deputies will be made up of 121 members, elected on the basis of territorial and demographic criteria, in uninominal districts. Seats will be assigned through a system of relative majority. The Chamber of Departmental Representatives will be made up of four representatives per department, elected by plurinominal, departmental constituencies, assigned through a system of proportional representation. The new constitution describes an executive organ, also plurinational, as the political mechanism that brings together the political will and action of the plurinational and communitarian nature of the country. The judicial organ is constituted on the basis of the complementarity of two types of law: formal, "occidental" and ordinary law, and communitarian law, which, despite its practical nature, has a different formality and ceremoniality and a different set of values. The complementarity of the two systems proposes a dual articulation; it enriches and expands the ways of administering justice, establishing a point of connection in between the two in the courts, which will share a plurinational and intercultural nature. The constitutional court is plurinational and intercultural, thus guaranteeing the proper interpretation of both systems, and their combination. The electoral organ is also plurinational in its composition, and is responsible for organising, administering and executing the electoral processes.

Territorial structure and organisation of the state

The territorial structure and organisation of the state shapes the system of autonomies, and is responsible for the process of administrative and political decentralisation. It therefore defines the change in

the country's political geography. There are four types of autonomy: departmental, regional, municipal and indigenous. The departmental, regional and indigenous forms of autonomy are new, while municipal autonomy persists since the Law of Participation of municipal autonomy, it is the legacy of the system of autonomies. With such administrative and political decentralisation, autonomous territorial entities are not dependent upon each other and they each have equal constitutional rank. Those departments where the "No" vote won in the referenda on autonomy are not autonomous. They are decentralised, and they may become autonomous via a departmental referendum.

There is a clear choice for sustainable development, environmental equilibrium and the participation of the population in environmental management.

Much has been said lately about departmental autonomy. There are those who would like the only type of autonomy to be departmental, which would be very limited when confronted with the demands of an open and multiple decentralisation process. The autonomous system must be complex and integrated, which means that it must recognise different possible types of autonomies. Included in these possibilities is regional autonomy, which implies a process of greater decentralisation, incorporating local forms of management, which make it more functional and democratic. The struggle against centralism does not only imply a decentralisation from the central state. It also means decentralising from other centres, including the capital cities of the departments, where economic powers, dominant classes and monopolies of financial circuits are based, and from where large rural estates are administered. Regional autonomy is conceived of as part of a move to a new territorial structuring. This autonomous dimension is made up of provincial and municipal communities.

The various types of autonomy have their differences; in addition to occupying different spaces, they do not all have the same history, nor are they part of the same organising structures. These differences become clear in the distinction between their types of government and in their distinct competencies. The government of each region will consist

of a Regional Assembly with deliberative, normative-administrative and investigative power in the sphere of its competencies, and an executive organ. The government of each autonomous department will be made up of a Departmental Council, with deliberative, investigative and legislative-normative departmental power in the sphere of its exclusive competencies, as determined by the constitution and an executive organ. Autonomous municipal governments will be made up of a Municipal Council with deliberative, investigative and legislative-normative municipal power in the sphere of its exclusive competencies and an executive organ. Originary indigenous peasant autonomy is the expression of the right to self-government, understood as the exercise of the self-determination of originary indigenous nations and peoples and peasant communities whose population shares territory, culture, history, language and its own legal, political, social and economic organisation or institutions.

Economic structure and organisation of the state

The new political constitution of the state proposes a plural economy. It refers to an economy with different economic spaces, entwined and integrated, articulated and complementary, that are distinguished by their actions, their practices and their different structures, but that are connected in multiple commercial, financial, distributive, consumer and productive intersections. Their systems intersect, while maintaining their different spaces. This entire range of economic strategies—economic, communitarian, state, private and cooperative—will be combined in the National Development Plan and monitored by the state, the macro-institution that will intervene throughout the economic chain, strengthening the communitarian economy, aiding the cooperative economy, promoting the state economy and guaranteeing the private economy. The spaces of the plural economy are joined by an ethical and cultural density that cuts across these spaces and incorporates meanings that go beyond the economy:

> The plural economy articulates different types of economic organisation on the principles of complementarity, reciprocity, solidarity, redistribution, equality, sustainability, balance, justice and transparency. The social and communitarian economy will complement individual interest with collective welfare (Art. 307).

Of the four axes of the plural economy, the communitarian one receives special attention due to its long history and the role it plays in the conditioning and direction of the behaviour of the majority of the population. The community continues to be the strongest reference point in bartering circles, fairs, collective work, *ayni*, *minka*, the un-

derlying complementarity between different ecological floors and the reciprocity between communities.

> The state will recognise, respect, protect and promote community economic organisation. This type of community economic organisation includes the systems of production and reproduction of social life, founded on the principles and vision of indigenous nations and peoples and peasants (Art. 308).

Another axis of special attention is the state. The strengthening of the state is sought at every level of the economic chain, but the state is no more than the administrator of the properties of all Bolivians. Thus, the state has the task of "administering the ownership rights of natural resources and exercising strategic control in the productive chains and industrialisation processes of said resources in the name of the Bolivian people" (Art. 310). The communitarian economy and the state economy are fundamental axes of the plural economy; they are promoted without damaging other axes, such as the private and cooperative economies. The private economy is part of an inescapable economic reality; it drives and manages a significant part of economic spaces. In this sense, "the state recognises, respects and protects private initiative, so that it may contribute to economic and social development and strengthen the economic independence of the country" (Art. 309). With respect to the cooperative axis, "the state recognises and protects cooperatives as non-profit forms of work in solidarity and cooperation" (Art. 311).

Sustainability and indigenous peoples

In the fourth part of the new political constitution of the state, which addresses the Economic Structure and Organisation of the State, the Environment, as it appears in the subheading Environment, Natural Resources, Land and Territory, is understood to be the following:

> It is a duty of the state and the population to conserve, protect and sustainably exploit natural resources and biodiversity, and to maintain environmental equilibrium (Art. 342).
>
> It is also stated that the population has the right to participate in environmental management, to be consulted and to be informed prior to decisions that may affect the quality of the environment (Art. 343).

And it concludes:

> Natural heritage is of public interest and of strategic importance for the sustainable development of the country. Its conservation

> and use for the benefit of the population will be the exclusive responsibility and ascription of the state, and sovereignty over natural resources will not be compromised. The law will establish the principles and mechanisms for its management (Art. 346).

There is a clear choice for sustainable development, environmental equilibrium and the participation of the population in environmental management. This means that we work within the paradigm of sustainability, which has implications for ecological democracy, meaning that the people participate in environmental management. This brings us to a broad conception of natural resources:

> I. Natural resources include minerals in all states, hydrocarbons, water, air, the soil and subsoil, forests, biodiversity, the electromagnetic spectrum and all elements and physical forces that may be exploited.
>
> II. Natural resources are of strategic importance and public interest for the development of the country (Art. 348).

There is no doubt that natural resources are intimately linked to the environment. The type of exploitation of natural resources shapes the mode of development. Sustainability demands that the exploitation of natural resources be carried out with a proper balance between development and environment, between the development of production needs and biodiversity.

> The exploitation of natural resources in a given territory will be subject to a process of free, prior and informed consultation with the affected population, convened by the state. Citizen participation in the process of environmental management is guaranteed and the conservation of ecosystems will be promoted, in accordance with the constitution and the law. In the case of originary peasant indigenous nations and peoples, the consultation will take place respecting their own norms and procedures (Art. 352).

From this we can conclude that proper balance must also be accorded to culture. Sustainable development, environment and culture comprise a triangle. Let us call this triangle one of sustainability with identity—sustainability with the participation of indigenous peoples.

Hydrocarbons

With respect to hydrocarbons, "the state will define hydrocarbon policy, will promote its comprehensive, sustainable and equitable development, and guarantee energy sovereignty" (Art. 360).

Water

With respect to water resources, the fifth chapter of the part addressing Economic Structure and Organisation of the State states:

> I. Water constitutes an exceptionally fundamental right to life in the framework of the people's sovereignty. The state will promote the use of and access to water based on principles of solidarity, complementarity, reciprocity, equity, diversity and sustainability.
>
> II. Surface and subterranean water resources in all states constitute finite, vulnerable and strategic resources, and fulfill a social, cultural and environmental function. These resources can not be subject to private appropriation and neither they nor their services can be privatised (Art. 373).

Water is a strategic resource, especially with respect to sustainability. Sustainable and holistic development is not possible without the understanding of water as a common good and as a fundamental part of ecological balance and climatic cycles. It is a good that must satisfy current generations and must be preserved for future generations. Therefore:

> I. The state will protect and guarantee the use of water for life as a priority. It is a duty of the state, with social participation, to manage, regulate, protect and plan for the proper and sustainable use of water resources, guaranteeing access to water for all inhabitants. The law establishes the conditions and limitations for all its uses.
>
> II. The state will recognise, respect and protect the ways and customs of communities, their local authority and indigenous peasant organisations with respect to the right, administration and sustainable management of water.
>
> III. Fossil water, glacial water, wetlands, underground water, mineral water, medicinal water and others are priorities for the state, and their conservation, protection, preservation, restoration, sustainable use and holistic management must be guaranteed; they are inalienable, non-seizable and imprescriptible (Art. 374).

Also:

> I. It is the duty of the state to develop plans for the use, conservation, management and sustainable exploitation of hydrographic watersheds.

> II. The state will regulate the administration and sustainable management of watershed and water resources for irrigation, food security and basic services, respecting the ways and customs of the communities.
>
> III. It is the duty of the state to carry out research to identify and then protect, manage and sustainably use fossil water (Art. 375).

Originary indigenous peoples

We are also referring to populations with historical and cultural frameworks that entail alternative civilising possibilities to those of capitalist modernity. We refer to cultural norms in balance with the environment and biodiversity. These cultural norms are a part of ecology, of the dynamic ecology and the circles and circuits of ecosystems. But ecology is also a part of the cultural spheres of knowledge circulation and holistic world views that do not separate knowing from *oikos*, from the home, from the dwellings of the inhabitants, of all organic beings. We refer to indigenous peoples, then, not just as population and *ethnos*, but also as knowledges and practices. It is these techniques, these practices, these knowledges that must be recovered in worlds based on the proliferation of sustainability. Because there is not just one model of sustainability, but many, which are in line with the components of biodiversity. The difference with unsustainable development is the destructive and unbalancing capacity of development, of the process of modern evolution, in which natural conditions are separated from historical ones, ecological conditions from economic ones, abstracting natural riches as indefinitely exploitable resources, independently of ecological cycles and environmental balances. In contrast, sustainability is conceivable from the standpoint of a profound connection between natural and historical conditions, and between ecological and economic conditions. Sustainability may be conceived on the basis of a profound imbrication between social structures and ecological niches.

The new political constitution of the state considers:

> An originary indigenous peasant nation and people to be the entire human community that shares cultural identity, language, historical tradition, institutions, territoriality and world-vision, whose existence dates back to prior to the Spanish colonial invasion … in the context of the unity of the state and in accordance with this constitution the originary indigenous peasant nations and peoples enjoy the following rights:

1. To the freedom to exist.

2. To their cultural identity, religious beliefs, spiritualities, practices and customs, and to their own worldview.

3. To have the cultural identity of each of its members, if so desired, noted along with Bolivian citizenship in identity cards, passports and other official identification documents.

4. To free determination and territoriality.

5. To have their institutions form a part of the general structure of the state.

6. To the collective ownership of lands and territories.

7. To the protection of their sacred places.

8. To create and administer their own communication systems, media and networks.

9. To have their traditional knowledges, their traditional medicine, their languages, rituals, symbols and clothing valued, respected and promoted.

10. To live in a healthy environment, with appropriate ecosystem management and use.

11. To the collective intellectual property of their knowledges and sciences, as well as their appreciation, use, promotion and development.

12. To intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual education throughout the educational system.

13. To free and universal health care that respects their world view and their traditional practices.

14. To the exercise of their political, legal and economic systems in accordance with their world view.

15. To be consulted through appropriate means, especially through their institutions, whenever legislative or administrative measures may affect them. In this context, the right to binding prior consultation with respect to the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources in the territory they inhabit, carried out by the state in good faith and agreed upon by consensus, will be respected and guaranteed.

16. To enjoy the benefits of the exploitation of natural resources in their territories.

17. To autonomous indigenous territorial management, and to the use and exclusive exploitation of the renewable natural resources in their territory.

18. To participate in the organs and institutions of the state (Art. 30).

The new political constitution of the state, then, comprises originary indigenous nations and peoples not only as fully recognised populations, cultures and knowledges, but also from the perspective of rights. Not only is there a declaration of collective rights, but there is a specific chapter dedicated to the rights of the Originary Peasant Indigenous Nations and Peoples. Indigenous nations and peoples are part of the structure of constitutional rights—they are a structuring element in the structure of the new constitution.

CULTURE AND POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA

Culture and democracy

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Abstract

This text reconstructs the meanings of the term culture, whose different senses vary according to the intellectual and political context of a certain period, when during the age of enlightenment, the capitalist cultural model of Western Europe is placed as the maximum reference. Simultaneously, it becomes a tool of assessment and hierarchysation of political regimes and social classes, legitimating the domination and exploitation processes. Within this general framework it criticizes mass culture and communication, as a way of veiling such processes, thus creating a whole range of standard cultural products and services through the massive means of communication

Resumo

O presente texto reconstitui os significados da palavra cultura, cujas diferentes acepções variarão conforme o contexto intelectual e político da época, quando no iluminismo, coloca-se como referência máxima o modelo cultural capitalista da Europa Ocidental. Simultaneamente passa a ser instrumento de avaliação e hierarquização dos regimes políticos e classes sociais, legitimando os processos de dominação e exploração. Neste marco geral, critica a cultura e comunicação de massas, como forma de ocultar estes processos, criando toda uma gama de produtos e serviços culturais médios através dos meios de comunicação de massa e outras ferramentas, que encobrem a luta de classes; e descreve porque a massificação da cultura

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and other tools that cover up class struggle; this is developed because the massification of culture is, in fact, its denial. Then it deals with the issue of culture as a right, the affirmation of which is in opposition to the neoliberal culture, which transforms culture into merchandise, products and services to be sold in the market, thus becoming a class privilege and a tool to preserve the ongoing scheme. In accordance with such viewpoint, it analyses the cultural and democratic issues in the light of the Brazilian experience. Finally, it delineates what a concrete democracy would be, that is to say, a democracy within the socialist framework.

é, de fato, a sua negação. Posteriormente tratará da questão da cultural como um direito, cuja afirmação é a oposição à política neoliberal, que transforma a cultura em produtos e serviços a serem vendidos no mercado, constituindo-se, portanto, em privilégio de classe e instrumento de manutenção da ordem vigente. Segundo esta concepção, analisa as questões cultural e democrática à luz da experiência brasileira. Por fim, traça algumas linhas do que seria uma democracia concreta, ou seja, a democracia no marco socialista.

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Keywords

1| Culture **2|** Democracy **3|** Socialism **4|** Neoliberalism **5|** Rights **6|** Mass Communication

Palavras-chave

1| *Cultura* **2|** *Democracia* **3|** *Socialismo* **4|** *Neoliberalismo* **5|** *Direitos* **6|** *Comunicação de Massa*

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I

From the Latin verb *colere*, in its origin, culture means crop or care. At the beginning, it referred to the crop or taking care of the land as in agriculture, in the same way as puericulture refers to infants as well as the Gods and the sacred refer to cult. As crop, culture was conceived as an action directed to the sheer fulfillment of the potentialities of someone or something; it referred to sprout, fruit, blossom and cover with benefits.

Through western history this meaning was lost until the 18th century with the philosophy of illustration when the word culture emerges as a synonym to a different concept: civilization. Civilization derives from the idea of civil life, therefore, of political life and political regime. During the period of *enlightenment*, culture refers to the pattern or criterion that measures the level of civilization in a society. In this way, culture turns into a number of practices (arts, sciences, techniques, philosophy and crafts) for *the assessment and hierarchysation of political regimes*, according to an evolutionary criterion.

The idea of time is introduced in the concept of culture, however, it refers to a very precise kind of time, it is continuous, linear and evolutionary then little by little turning into a synonym of progress. In a civilization, progress is assessed through its culture and culture is valuated through the progress it brings to such civilization.

Deeply political and ideological, the illuminist concept of culture reappears in the 19th century when it becomes part of human sciences and anthropology. At the beginning of the constitution of anthropology, the anthropologists kept the illuminist concept of evolution or progress. Since anthropologists took the notion of progress as

1 Lecture given in Salvador, Bahia on November 11th. Chauí discusses issues included in her book: *Democracy and Culture. Competent discourse and other words* (Cortes 2007).

a measure to culture, they established a pattern to measure evolution or level of progress in a culture and this pattern was evidently the one of capitalist Europe.

Societies started to be valuated according to the presence or absence of some elements that belong to western capitalism and the absence of such elements was considered a sign of lack of culture or a poorly developed culture. Which are those elements? State, market and writing. Every society developing exchange, communication, power and writing forms different from the European ones were defined as "primitive". In other words, a concept of value was introduced to differentiate cultural forms.

The notion of primitive can only be elaborated if determined by the concept of not primitive, therefore, by the figure of that producing an "evolution". This fact implies not just passing judgment, even more; it implies that those criteria defined the essence of culture in a way that societies yet *without* market, *without* writing and *without* State would necessarily get to such stage in time. The capitalist European culture appears not only as *télos*[2], as necessary end to the development of any culture or civilization. Thus, adopting an ethnocentric position but specially legitimizing and justifying firstly colonization and later imperialism when presenting itself as the necessary model of historical development.

In the 19th century, mainly with the German philosophy, the idea of culture suffers a decisive mutation because it is elaborated as the difference between nature and history. Culture is the breakup of the immediate adhesion to nature, which belongs to the animal world, and opening to a world that is merely human. The natural order or physics is governed by laws related to a necessary causality for the balance of the whole. The vital order or biology is governed by rules related to the adaptation of the organism to the environment. The human order is the symbolic one, that is, the human capacity to relate to the absent and the possible through language and labor. The human dimension of culture is a transcendence movement that places existence as the power to transcend a certain situation through an action directed to what is *absent*. For this reason, it is only through this dimension that speaking about *history* per se is possible. A human body immediately stops adhering to the environment, as an animal does, through language and work. It transcends the immediate data from signs and objects and recreates them into a new dimension. Language and labor

2 [N de T: target/objective]

reveal that a human action cannot be reduced to a vital action, an ingenious device to reach a fixed target, however, there is an *immanent sense* relating means and ends that determines the development of such action as the transformation of data into ends and from these means into new ends therefore defining man as the historical *agent* per se and opening the order of time and discovery of what is possible.

Finally, this enlarged concept of culture is incorporated by European anthropologists in the second half of the 20th century. They will try to undo the ethnocentric and imperialistic ideology of culture whether because they had Marxist instruction or a deep sense of guilt, hence inaugurating a social anthropology and a political anthropology in which each culture conceives a symbolic human order historically and materially determined with its own individuality or own structure. Since then, the word culture is more comprehensive than before. Now, it is understood as the creation and production of language, religion, sexuality, work tools and forms of work, clothing, housing, cooking, leisure expressions, music, dance and social relation systems particularly the systems of kinship and family structure, power relations, war and peace, the notion of life and death. Culture starts to be understood as a field where human subjects elaborate symbols and signs, establish practices and values, define for themselves the possible and the impossible, the time line sense (past, present, future), the differences in space (the sense of proximity and distance, big and small, visible and invisible), values such as true or false, beautiful and ugly, fair and unfair, establish the idea of law and therefore of what is permitted and forbidden, determine the sense of life and death and the relations between sacred and profane.

However, in modern societies this enlargement of the notion of culture collides with a problem: the fact of their being societies and not *communities*. .

The main characteristic of *community* is the internal non-division and the idea of common wealth; its members are always in a one to one relationship (without institutional mediation). Communities have a sense of a unity of destinies or a destiny in common and assert the incarnation of the communal spirit in some of its members and under certain circumstances. But the modern world does not acknowledge communities: the capitalist production model originates a *society*, whose first feature is the existence of individuals separated from others by their interests and desires. Society means isolation, fragmentation or atomization of its members thus forcing the modern thought to investigate how isolated individuals can relate to one another or become *partners*. In other words, a community is perceived as natural by its

members (its origin is the biological family) or otherwise ordered by a divinity (like in the Bible), but a society also imposes the requirement of an explanation to its social origin. Such requirement leads to the invention of the idea of a social contract or social covenant signed by the individuals constituting a society. The second feature, what really makes it a society, is the internal division. If the community is perceived as ruled by the principle of non-division, a society cannot avoid internal division being its principle. Such division is not accidental; it is not produced by some people's evil and might be corrected, but is an *original division*. *Machiavelli* understood this for the first time, when in *The prince* he states that "every city is divided between the bourgeoisie's desire to oppress and command and the people's desire not to be oppressed and commanded", and was later restated by Marx when opening the *Communist Manifesto* saying that "until now, history has been the history of struggle between classes". The main feature of a society is the existence of social division, that is, the division of classes.

How is it then that within a class divided society so broad and generous a concept of culture as the expression of an indivisible community can be maintained, as proposed by the philosophy and anthropology? In fact, it is possible, since society of classes states a *cultural division*. This receives different names: we can speak about dominated or dominating culture, oppressed or oppressing culture, elite culture and popular culture. Whatever the term used, a clear cut within culture between what was agreed to be called *formal culture* or lettered culture and *popular culture* is evidenced, it spontaneously runs in the veins of a society.

On the other hand, the concept of *popular culture* is not an easy one. Let's just remember the three main approaches. The first one during the Romantic period in the 19th century states that popular culture is the culture of a good, truthful, fair people or the one that embodies the spirit of the nation and the people. The second approach, from the French Illustration considers popular culture as a tradition residue, a mixture of superstition and ignorance to be corrected by educating people; and the third one from the populisms of the 20th century blending the romantic and the illuminist vision by maintaining the idea that culture made by the people is per se good and truthful. From the illuminist vision it also keeps the idea that culture tends to be traditional and behind in time since made by the people, thus in need for updating in terms of a pedagogical action carried out by the State or a political avant-garde. Each conception of popular culture purports quite determined political options: the romantic view searches for universalizing the popular culture by means of nationalism, that

is, transforming it into a national culture; the illustrated or illuminist conception proposes the disappearance of the popular culture through formal education by the State; and the populist one pretends to bring the "right consciousness" to the people so that popular culture may turn into revolutionary (in the perspective of left-wing vanguards) or support the State (in the perspective of right-wing populisms).

Let's change the focus of our analyses. Thanks to analyses and reviews in ideology, we know that the place a dominant culture occupies is quite clear: it is the place where the exercise of economic exploitation, political domination and social exclusion is legitimized.

All the cultures that developed exchange, communication, power, writing and State forms different from those of the European market were considered primitive.

However, this place makes popular culture clearer too, as something produced by popular classes, particularly the working class, according to what is done in terms of domination; that is, as repetition or response depending on historical conditions and the forms of popular organizations.

For this reason, how cultural division tends to be hidden must be taken into consideration and for this, reinforced with the rise of mass culture or cultural industry. How does cultural industry function?

In the first place, it separates cultural commodities according to their supposed market value: there are "expensive" and "rare" pieces destined for the privileged that can pay for them, creating an elite; while on the other hand there are "cheap" or "ordinary" pieces addressed to the mass. In this way, instead of guaranteeing the same right to everyone to the totality of the cultural production, the cultural industry over-determines the social division thus increasing the division between the "cultivated" elite and the "not cultivated mass".

In the second place and contrary to the first aspect, it creates the illusion that everyone has access to the same cultural commodities, each one freely choosing what he wishes, as a consumer does at the supermarket. However, we just need to pay attention to the timetables of radio or TV programs or what is sold at the newsagent to real-

ize that culture promoting companies have already chosen what each class or social group can and must listen to, read or watch.

For example, in terms of newspapers and magazines, the paper quality, graphics, typos and images, kind of headline and topic published define the kind of consumer and determine the content of what it will have access to or the kind of information that it may receive. If we compared five or six newspapers in the same morning we would notice that the very same world where -we all live in- turns into five or six different and even opposing worlds since one same event receives quite a different treatment according to the kind of target reader the news agency is interested in (economic and political) .

In the third place, it invents a figure called the "average viewer", "average listener" and "average reader" who is attributed "average" mental capacities, "average" knowledge and certain "average" tastes and therefore, "average" cultural products are offered.

What does all this mean? The cultural industry sells culture. In order to do so, it has to seduce and please the consumer. In order to seduce and please the industry cannot shock, provoke or make the consumer think by bringing him any new information that might upset him. Accordingly he must receive what he already knows, has done or seen with a new appearance. The "average" is the common sense crystallized; what the cultural industry gives back with a new face.

In the fourth place, it defines culture as entertainment and leisure. Hannah Arendt stated the transmutation of culture under mass communicative imperatives, that is, the transformation of cultural work, mental work, art pieces, religious and civic acts and entertainment festivals. Evidently, she says, human beings do need entertainment and leisure. Be it as Marx showed, so that work force increases productivity because of rest, or as Marxist scholars show, so that social control and domination are perpetuated through alienation or even as Arendt states: because entertainment and leisure are vital to the human metabolism.

No one shall be contrary to entertainment, even when critical to entertainment modes that amuses social and political domination. Whatever the concept of entertainment, it is true that its main characteristic is not just repose but also a pastime. It is spending time as free time without any obligation, our time (even when this "our" is illusive). Entertainment or leisure time is related to the biological time and to the vital cycle of recovering physical and mental forces. Entertainment is a dimension of culture taken in its broad and anthropological sense, since it is the way a society invents its moments of distraction, amusement, leisure and repose. However, and just because

of this, entertainment differs from culture when it is understood as a creative work and expression of thought and art.

If for a moment we set aside the broad concept of culture as a symbolic order and we take it under the prism of creation and expression of thought, mental work and art pieces we will say that culture has three main features that separate it from entertainment: the first one is work, that is to say, the movement towards creation of sense when a piece of art or thought capture the experience of the world given to interpret it, criticize it, transcend it and transform it, it is the experience of what is new. In second place, it is the action to give what is hidden behind lived experiences or everyday experiences to be thought about, to be seen, to be reflected on or imagined and felt, thus turning them into a piece of work that transforms them since they become known (in works of thought) dense, new and profound (in art pieces). Third, in a society of classes, exploitation, domination and social exclusion culture is a citizen's right, the right to have access to cultural works and commodities, the right to do culture and participate on decisions about cultural policies. Then, the culture industry denies such features of culture. As part of the culture of masses, works of thought and art tend to: turn from expressive to reproductive and repetitive; from creational works to consumption events, from experimentation of what is new to the consecration of what is consecrated by fashion and consumption; from lasting events to be part of the fashion market, something ephemeral and transient without past or future, from forms of knowledge that unveil reality and establish relationships with what is true they become a disguise, a falsifying illusion, propaganda or publicity. Even more than this. The so called culture of masses appropriates cultural works to consume them, devour them, destroy them and make them null in simulations. Just because the spectacle becomes a simulation or the simulation is exhibited as entertainment; the mass media turn everything into entertainment (wars, genocides, strikes, parties, religious ceremonies, tragedies, policies, natural catastrophes, works of art, and mental labor). This is the cultural market.

In order to assess the contemporary meaning of cultural the industry and mass media producing so it is worth to briefly remember what was conveyed to be called the post-modern condition, that is, the social and cultural existence under a neoliberal economy.

The social and economic dimension of the new kind of capital is inseparable from a dramatic transformation in terms of time and space, as stated by David Harvey "the space-time comprehension". The fragmentation and globalization of the economic production produce two contrary and simultaneous phenomena: on the one

hand, space-time fragmentation and spreading out; on the other, under the effects of electronic and information technologies, a different understanding of space -- everything happens here, without distances, frontiers or differences --and the comprehension of time-- everything happens now, without past or future. In other words, the fragmentation and scattering of time and space condition their reunion under a no-differentiated space (a flat space with fugacious images) and an ephemeral time without depth. Paul Virilio (1993) speaks about acrony[3] and atopy[4] or the disappearance of sensitive units of time and space lived under the effects of the electronic and computer science revolution. Time depth and its differentiating power disappear in front of the power of the instantaneous. Accordingly, field depth that defines the space of perception disappears under the power of a location without a place and overflying technologies. We live under the sign of the telepresence and teleobservation that precludes the differentiation between the impression and the sense, the virtual and the real, since everything is immediately given to us within the form of temporal and spatial transparency of the appearances introduced as evidence.

Volatile and ephemeral, today our experience is unaware of any sense of continuity and is exhausted in a present meaning of a fugacious instant. When we lose the temporal differentiation we not only pursue what Virilio calls "immediate memory" or the absence of past depth, but also lose the depth of the future as a possibility inscribed in human actions in relation to the power to determine the indeterminate and to overcome given situations by understanding and transforming their sense. That is to say, we lose the sense of culture as historical action.

II

Massification is the opposite of democratization of culture. Or better, it is the denial of the democratization of culture.

What could culture be when treated from the point of view of democracy? What would the culture of democracy and a democratic culture be? Which are the problems of a democratic treatment of cul-

3 In Greek, *kronos* means time like in chronology, chronometer etc. *Anachronism* means without time, absence of time.

4 In Greek, *topos* means place, the space that is differentiated by places and qualities like distant, close, tall, short, small, big etc. like in: topology, topography. *Atopy* means without place, absence of a differentiated space. Utopia derives from *topos* that according to some people means no-place and according to others: a perfect inexistent place.

ture, therefore, of a culture of democracy and the realization of culture as a democratic vision, thus a democratic culture? These questions mark some of the problems to be faced. In the first place, the problem refers to the relation between culture and the State; secondly, the relation between culture and the market; and thirdly, the relation between culture and the creators.

If we examined the way in which the State traditionally functions in Brazil, we may say that in the treatment of culture its tendency was antidemocratic. Not because the State was occupied by this or that ruling group, but because of the way the State addressed

Volatile and ephemeral, today our experience is unaware of any sense of continuity and is exhausted in a present felt as a fugacious instant.

the question of culture. Traditionally, it always tried to capture every social creation of culture under the pretense of broadening the public cultural field, turning a social creation into the *official culture* to make it operate as a doctrine and to be spread to the whole society. In this way, the State is presented as *culture producer* bestowing it with national generality by taking from antagonist classes the place where culture is effectively realized. Still, there is another form of State action that comes from 1990s where the Sate proposes a "modern treatment of culture" and considers it archaic to present itself as the official producer of culture. Government understands modernity as the cultural industry criteria and logic whose patterns are repeated by the State by means of culture governmental institutions. Thus, the State starts to operate within culture with market patterns. If in the first case it appeared as a producer and distributor of the official culture, in the second, it appears as a counter where demands are attended by adopting consumption and mass media patterns, particularly the pattern of consecrating the consecrated.

However, we know that a different relation of State organisms and culture is possible. In order to understand why the State cannot be a culture producer we need to return to the broad philosophical and anthropological concept – culture as the social activity that establishes

a field of signs and symbols, values, behaviors and practices – though increasing that there are cultural differentiated fields within society resulting from social class divisions and plurality of groups and social movements. In this multiple vision of culture, yet within the field of the philosophical-anthropological definition, the impossibility in fact and rights of the Sate to produce culture becomes evident. Then, the State starts to be seen as one of the elements of culture, that is, one of the ways in which a society creates for itself power symbols, signs and images under certain historical conditions and the imperatives of social division of classes. The State is a product of culture and not the producer of culture. It is a product that establishes social division and multiplicity.

In relation to the State perspective of adopting the logic of the cultural industry and cultural market we may reject it by, now, considering culture in a less broad sense, that is, like a specific area of *creation*: creation of imagination, sensitivity and intelligence that is expressed in art pieces and mental work when looking for critically surpassing what is established. This specific cultural field cannot be defined by the market prism, not just because it operates as consumption, fashion and the consecration of the consecrated; but also because it reduces this form of culture to the condition of entertainment and leisure, the reverse of the critical and creative sense of cultural works. It does not mean that culture does not have a ludic and laze side that is essential and a constituent part of it, but one thing is perceiving the ludic and laze inside culture and another, orchestrating it so as to reduce it to just that: something superfluous, like a dessert, a luxury in a country where basic rights are not attended. Do not to forget that under the market logic, the merchandise "culture" becomes something absolutely measurable. The measure is given by the number of spectators or sales, that is to say, the cultural value derives from the ability to please. This measurement has even another sense: it indicates that culture is taken at its final step, at the moment the works are exhibited as a spectacle, leaving aside the essential, that is: the creative process.

What is a new relation with culture where the creative process is considered? It is the understanding of such as *labor*. It is treating culture as the work of intelligence, sensitivity, imagination, reflection, experience and debate as well as work within time; thinking about it as a *social institution*, therefore, determined by the material and historical conditions of its realization. It is known that work is an action that produces something inexistent up to that moment, the result of transforming the existent into something new. *Free* labor surpasses and modifies what already exists. As work, culture brings changes to our immediate experiences, opens time with the new, and produces

what has not been done, thought or said yet. Accepting culture as work ultimately means the understanding that the cultural result (the work/piece) is offered to the other social subjects, it is *exhibited* to them as something to be received by them so as to become part of their intelligence, sensitivity and imagination and to be re-worked by the recipients because they interpret the work or because the piece generates the creation of other pieces. The exhibition of cultural works is essential to them; they exist to be given to others' sensitivity, perception, intelligence, reflection and imagination. This is so because of cultural market explores this dimension in art pieces, in other words, the fact that they are a spectacle subordinate them to *show business.*

If the State is neither the producer of culture nor the instrument for its consumption, what is the relation that State may have with culture? It may conceive culture as a *citizen's right* and accordingly, ensure the right to access cultural works produced, particularly the right to enjoy them, the right to create pieces, that is, to produce them, and the right to take part in the cultural policies.

What does the right to produce cultural works mean? If we consider culture as the group of fine arts then we may suppose that this right would for example mean that the right to be a painter is available to everybody. After all, each of us, one day or the other feels like painting a picture with watercolors, gouache, drawing and so, cultural policies might be created to spread ateliers, classes and painting groups all around the cities. Such policy will not guarantee the right to produce paintings but will probably create a *hobby*, a leisure time activity and in the best of the cases a ludotherapy. What is a painting? The expression of the enigma of vision and what is visible: enigma of a body that sees and is seen, that makes a corporal reflection because it sees itself seeing; the enigma of the visible things that are simultaneously out in the world and inside our eyes; the enigma of depth that is not a third dimension beside height and width, but what we do not see and accordingly, allows us to see; the enigma of color, since color is just a difference among colors; the enigma of a line because when marking the limits of a thing it does not close in itself but is located in relation to all the others. The painter questions such enigmas and his work is to present the visible we do not see when we look at the world to be seen. So, if not everyone is a painter but mostly everyone loves paintings, wouldn't it be better if people could have the right to *see* the artists' works, enjoy them, being drawn to them? Wouldn't the State be in charge of guaranteeing the citizens the right to have access to paintings – the painters guaranteed the right to create them, and to those who are not painters the right to enjoy them?

Those who are not painters or sculptors or dancers are nevertheless culture producers in the anthropological sense of the word: they are, for example, subjects, agents, authors of their own memory. Why not offer them conditions so that they can create ways to record and preserve the memory they are subjects to? Why not offer them technical and theoretical conditions so once they know the variety of memory support tools (documents, writings, photographs, films, objects etc) and they may preserve their own creation as *social memory*? This is not about the exclusion of people from the production of culture but the enlargement of the concept of culture further than the fine arts, thus guaranteeing people that they have the right to produce the best possible work, when they are *subjects of their own work*.

Finally, the right to take part in the decisions related to cultural policies is a citizens' right, the right to participate in the definition of cultural guidelines and public budgets in order to ensure citizens both, access to culture and its production.

Then, we refer to a cultural policy defined by the idea of *cultural citizenship* where culture is not just reduced to the superfluous, to entertainment, market patterns, official doctrinarism (that is, ideology) but that is accomplished as the right to every citizen; right as from social class division or class struggle can be manifested and worked through the exercise of the right to culture. Within this frame, citizens as social political subjects, differentiate from each other, enter into conflicts, communicate and exchange experiences, reject forms of culture, create others and move the cultural process.

III

Asserting culture as a *right* is rejecting the neoliberal policy that abandons the guarantee of rights turning them into *services* sold and bought in the market and therefore, into class privileges.

This conception of democratization of culture supposes a new conception of democracy. In fact, we are used to accepting a liberal definition of democracy as *the regime of law and order to guarantee individual freedom*. Considering that the liberal thought and practice identify freedom and competition, such definition of democracy means in the first place, that freedom is reduced to economic competition, the so called "free initiative" and political competition among parties disputing elections. Secondly, there is a reduction of Law towards the judiciary in order to limit political power defending society against the tyranny, since law guarantees the government chosen by will of the majority. Thirdly, there is identification between the order and the potency of the executive and judiciary power to contain social conflicts

and restrain their becoming explicit and their development by means of repression. Lastly, despite the fact that democracy appears to be justified as "value" or as a "commodity" it is in fact approached through the *efficiency* criterion and measured in the legislative area through the representatives' actions; understanding they are professional politicians. In the executive, it is measured through the activities developed by the elite of competent technicians that are responsible for the State administration.

In this way, democracy is reduced to an *efficient political regime* based on the idea of citizenship organized in political parties and that is expressed at the election processes where representatives are chosen, at the rotation of governments and technical solutions to economic and social problems.

However, in the democratic practice and ideas, there is a bigger and superior depth and truth to what liberalism perceives and enables to perceive. We may, in general and brief traces, characterize a democracy as surpassing the simple idea of a political regime identified with a form of government by taking it as a society's general form and so, considering it a:

- socio-political form defined by the principle of isonomy (citizens' equality in law) and isegory (everyone's right to public exposure of opinions, their discussion, acceptance or rejection) taking into consideration the statement the everyone is equal in rights because they are free, that is to say that there is no-one under the power of other because everyone obeys the same laws of which they are all authors (direct authors, in a participative democracy, indirectly in a representative democracy) Where the major problem of democracy in a society of classes lies in the observance of its principles -equality and freedom – under the effects of the real inequality.

- A political form where, contrarily to others, the conflict is considered legitimate and necessary, looking for institutional mediations so it can express itself. A democracy is not a regime of consensus, but of work on and about conflicts: What is the origin of other democratic difficulties in societies of classes: like operating with conflicts when they have the form of a contradiction and not of mere opposition? A socio-political form that tries to face – the difficulties above mentioned by reconciling the principle of equity and freedom and the real existence of inequalities, just like

the legitimacy principle of the conflict and the existence of material contradictions and for that purpose introducing the idea of (economic, social, political and cultural) *rights*. Thanks to the rights, those who are not equal conquer equity by entering the political space to vindicate their participation in already existing rights and above all, in order to *create new rights.* These are just new not only because they did not previously exist, but because they are different from those already existing once they emerge as citizens; new political subjects that established them and made them known to the whole society.

– Because of the creation of rights, a democracy emerges as the unique political regime that is really open to temporal changes, once the new emerges as part of its existence and as a consequence, temporality becomes a constituent of its being.

– The only socio-political form where the popular character of power and struggles tends to become evident in societies of classes, as rights only enlarge its scope or just arise as new by the action of popular classes against the judicial-political crystallization in favor of the dominant class. In other words, a feature of a modern democracy, permitting its passage from liberal democracy to social democracy, results from the fact that only the popular classes and the excluded (the minorities) feel the exigency of vindicating rights and creating new ones.

– A political form where the distinction between power and government is ensured not only by the presence of laws and the division of several authority areas but also by the existence of elections since (contrarily to what the political sciences state) they do not merely mean "rotation in office" but also show that power is always empty, that the holder is a society and the government is just occupying the place because a temporary mandate was received. In other words, the political subjects are not simple voters, but electors. Choosing means not just the exercise of power but manifesting the origin of such power, recovering the principle stated by the Romans when they invented politics: it is "giving someone what is possessed, since nobody can give what he does not have", that is, electing is assert-

ing the sovereignty to choose the temporary occupants of the government.

Then, we say that a society –not a simple government regime- is democratic when apart from elections, political parties, division into three powers in the republic, respect to the will of the majority and the minorities, it establishes something more profound that is also condition of the political regime, that is when it establishes *rights* and such institution is a social creation in a way that the social democratic activity is carried out like a social counter-power that determines, directs, controls and modifies the State actions and the power of governors.

A democratic society establishes rights by opening the social field to the *creation of real rights, to the enlargement of existing rights and the creation of new rights.* That is why we can assert that democracy is a *really historical society* thus, opened to time and what is possible, to transformations, changes and to what is new. In fact, by the creation of new rights and the existence of social counter-powers, a democratic society is not fixed to a form for ever determined, in other words, it never ceases working in its divisions and internal differences, neither stops focusing on the objective possibility (freedom) nor being altered by its own *praxis.*

For this very same reason, democracy is the form of social life that creates for itself a problem that cannot cease to solve because each solution found reopens, rediscovers that problem, whatever the question of participation is.

As popular power (demos = people; krathós = power) democracy demands law to be done by those that will enforce it and to express their rights. In societies of class, we know the people in its quality of governor is not the total of classes or the population, but the dominant class presenting itself through voting as representing the whole society to pass laws, enforce them and guarantee rights. Thus, paradoxically, the political representation tends to legitimize forms of political exclusion without being perceived by the population as illegitimate, on the contrary, this is perceived as unsatisfactory. Consequently, social movements and actions are developed on the sidelines of representation under forms of pressure and vindication.

This way tends to receive the name of popular participation without its effectively being one, since popular participation will only be political and democratic if it could produce its own laws, rules and regulations to govern the socio-political life. So being, in each step, democracy demands the enlargement of representation and participation as well as the discovery of other procedures to guarantee partici-

pation as an effective political act that increases with the creation of every new right. If democracy is that, we can assess how far from it we are, since we live in a society that is oligarchic, hierarchic, violent and authoritarian.

IV

What is the Brazilian society as an authoritarian society?

It is a society got to know citizenship through the unusual figure of the master (of slaves) – citizens that conceive citizenship as a class privilege, making it a concession from the dominant class to the other social classes; something that may be taken from them when decided by those dominating.

It is a society where social and personal differences and asymmetries are immediately transformed into inequalities in terms of hierarchy, command and obedience. The individuals are immediately distributed between superior and inferior, although someone who is superior in a relation may result inferior in others depending on the hierarchy codes ruling the social and personal relations. All the relations take the form of dependence, tutelage, concession or favor. This means that people are not seen as autonomous and equal subjects on the one hand, or as citizens thus holders of rights on the other. This is exactly what *makes violence the rule in social and cultural life*. Even greater violence because it is invisible under paternalism and patronage considered as natural and sometimes glorified as positive qualities of the "national character".

It is a society where Law has always been a weapon to preserve privileges and also the best instrument for repression and oppression, without ever defining concrete rights and duties understandable to everybody. In the case of popular classes, rights are always presented as a concession granted by the State depending on the governor's personal wish or will. This situation is clearly recognized by workers when stating that "justice only exists for the rich ones". Such situation results in a diffuse social consciousness that is represented in the well-known saying "for the friends everything and for the enemies the law". For those who are big, the law is a privilege; for the popular stratums it is repression. The law does not appear as the public pole of power and the regulation of conflicts; it never defines citizens' rights and obligations because in our country the task of the law is to preserve the privileges and the exercise of repression. For this reason, the laws appear as innocuous and useless or incomprehensible. They are created to be broken and not to be transformed –violent situation that is mythically transformed into a positive feature when the transgression

is praised as the "Brazilian way" [o jeitinho brasileiro]. The Judiciary is clearly perceived as distant, secret, representing the privileges of the oligarchies and never the rights of the society in general.

In this society the authentic political representation does not exist, neither the idea nor the practice. The political parties tend to be private clubs belonging to the local or regional oligarchy; they always take the form of patronage which results in relationships of tutelage and favoritism. It is a society where the public sphere never becomes public since it is always and immediately defined by the demands of the private space, thus, the governor's wishes and will become the features

It is a society where social and personal asymmetry and differences are immediately turned into inequalities related to hierarchy, command and obedience.

of the government and the "public" institutions. The indistinctness of public and private (politics is born on the distinction between both, as mentioned above) is not an accidental failure that might be corrected, since it is a *structure of the social and political field determined by the indistinctiveness of public and private. Society and politics are realized in the same* indistinctness: it is not just politicians and congressmen who practice corruption on public funds but there is no social perception of a public sphere of opinion, of collective sociability, of the street as a common place in the same way there is no perception of rights of privacy and intimacy.

For this reason it is a society that blocks the public sphere of opinion as the expression of the interests and rights of differentiated and/or antagonistic groups and social classes. This blockage is not like an absence or emptiness but a group of determined actions that are translated into a determined way of dealing with the opinion field: the *mass media* that monopolize information and consensus is confused with unanimity therefore disagreement appears as ignorance or behind in time. Disputes on the possession of cultivable land are solved with weapons and clandestine murders. Economic inequalities acquire the dimension of genocide. Black people are considered childish, ignorant, a dangerous and inferior race; this is so, that until recently an engraving

at the entrance of the Escola de Polícia de São Paulo (Police School in São Paulo) read "A black person standing is suspicious, when running is guilty". Indigenous people, in the final phase of extermination, are considered irresponsible (that is, incapable of citizenship), lazy (that is to say, misfit to the capitalist job market), dangerous, so they should be exterminated or then "civilized" (that is, delivered to the rage of the market selling and buying manpower but without any labor guarantee since they are "irresponsible"). And, at the same time and since romanticism, the indigenous image is presented as heroic and epic by the lettered culture, as founders of the "Brazilian race". Rural and urban workers are considered ignorant, behind in time and dangerous and the Police are authorized to stop any worker on the street and ask for his work identification and arrest him to "verify antecedents". If he is not carrying a professional identification with him, and if he is black, apart from the identification, the Police are authorized to examine his hands to check whether they show any "sign of work" and arrest him in case such "signs" are not found). There are cases where women report being raped or beaten and they are again beaten or raped by the "public force" at police stations. Just not to mention torture of homosexuals, prostitutes and infant criminals in prisons. In other words, popular classes carry the stigma of suspicion, guilt and permanent incrimination. This situation is even more terrifying when remembering that the instruments created during the dictatorship (1964-1975) for repression and torture of political prisoners were transferred to the treatment of the working population on daily basis and that the prevailing ideology according to which misery is the cause of violence. The so-called "underprivileged" classes are considered potentially violent and criminal. This prejudice profoundly affects the inhabitants of the favelas (slums), they are stigmatized not only by dominant and middle classes but also by their equals: the city looks at the favela as a pathological reality, an illness, a plague, a cyst, a public calamity.

This is a society where the population in big cities is divided in the "centre" and the " suburbs", this last term is used not only in a space-geographical sense but a social one [periphery] since it names distant neighborhoods where no basic services are available (electricity, gas, sewers, pavement, transport, schools, medical attention centers). As a matter of fact, this situation is also found in the "center" of the city in pockets of poverty, slums and favelas. Population in these places has a 14-15 working hour day, including commuting, and in the case of women also includes house chores and taking care of the children.

This is a society where the land structure and the settlement of agro-industries created not only the phenomenon of immigra-

tion but also new figures in the landscape of the fields: the landless [sem-terra], migrant farm workers [bóiasfrias] and cleaning women without work contract and without minimum work guaranties. Those workers' labor day start around three a.m. when they get to the roads to wait for the trucks that will take them to work and ends around 6 p.m. when they are deposited again by the road that will be followed by a long walking way home. More often than not, the trucks are in very bad conditions and fatal accidents are constant, dozens of workers die and their families do not receive any indemnity. On the contrary, to substitute a dead worker, another member of the family –children or women- becomes a migrant worker. They are called *Bóias-frias* because their only meal –between 3 a.m. and 7 p.m. - some rice, egg and banana- is eaten when already cold because it is prepared at very early hours of the day. Workers do not always carry with them a bóia- fria [cold pot], and those who carry them try to hide from others at lunch time, feeling embarrassed and humiliated.

At last, it is a society that cannot tolerate an explicit manifestation of contradictions, just because social divisions and inequalities are pushed to the limit and cannot be accepted back, not even by the routinization of the "conflicts of interest" (in the way of liberal democracies). On the contrary, in this society the dominant class exorcizes the horror to contradictions producing the ideology of the non-division and national unity at whatever the price. For this, it refuses to perceive and work on the social, economic and political conflicts and contradictions as so, since conflicts and contradictions deny the mythical image of a good indivisible, pacific and organized society. Contradictions and conflicts are not ignored and do receive a precise meaning: they are ignored as a sign of danger, crisis, turmoil and they receive just one response: political and military repression on the popular layers, a constant condescending disdain for the opposers in general. It is a society that encloses the fascination for signs of prestige and power, as can be observed in the use of titles of honor without any relation to a possible appropriateness of their attributions; "Doctor" is the most commonly used term when in a social relation the other is seen or felt as superior ("doctor" is the imaginary substitute for the old nobility titles), or when the importance given to the maintenance of the household maids is observed; the bigger number of servants the greater prestige and status etc.

Wages inequality between men and women, black and white, infant work exploitation and elder people are considered normal. The existence of landless, homeless and unemployed people is attributed to ignorance, laziness and the incompetence of the "miser-

able". The existence of marginalized children [crianças de rua] is seen as the "natural tendency of poor people to criminality". Work hazards and accidents are attributed to the ignorance and incompetence of the workers. Working women (if they are not teachers or social workers) are considered potential prostitutes and prostitutes are vicious, perverted and criminals, however essential to preserve the sanctity of the family.

In other words, the Brazilian society is polarized between popular layers that lack of everything and the absolute privilege of the dominant or managing classes, thus blocking the institution and consolidation of democracy. In fact, since it is founded in the notion of rights, the democracy is apt to differentiate "*privilege from lack*". By definition, a privilege is something particular that when generalized or universalized stops being a privilege. A lack is also a particular or specific deficit that results in a particular or specific demand; it cannot be obtained without becoming general and universal. Contrary to a privilege or a lack, a right is not particular or specific but it is general and universal, whether because it is the same and valid to every individual, social class or group or because even when it is differentiated it is also recognized by everyone (like minority rights). In this way, the economic and social polarization between lack and privilege stands as an obstacle to the institution of rights that defines a democracy.

Apart from what was mentioned above, two major neoliberal offerings are added: on the side of economy, there is an accumulation of capital that does not need to incorporate more people to the labor and consumption market operating as structural unemployment; on the side of politics: the privatization of the public that is, the State not only abandons social policies but there is also a re-intensification of the historical structure of the Brazilian society centered in the private space reinforcing the impossibility of the public sphere to be constituted. Before the distinction between public and private is established, a new form of capital establishes de non-difference between public and private.

Politically and socially, the neoliberal economy is the project of shrinking the public space and the enlargement of the private sector – with an essentially anti-democratic characteristic – perfectly suiting the Brazilian society.

In the Brazilian case, neoliberalism means: taking the polarization lack-privilege to the extreme, socio-political exclusion of popular layers, disorganization of society as a mass of unemployed people, increasing the private space barely occupied by big economic and financial corporations but also by organized crime that in front of the Sate shrinkage can spread to the whole society as a substitute

for the State (protection, security, privatization of war, privatization of the use of force). It means solidifying and finding new justifications for the oligarchic form of politics, social authoritarianism and the blockage to democracy.

Facing this picture, we may say that social policies establishing economic and social rights against privileges and cultural policies determining the right to culture and against social exclusion constitute a real democratic revolution in Brazil.

V

It is possible to say that democracy enables the culture of citizenship because of its own rooting. Its realization is only possible through cultivating the citizens. If we can think about a cultural citizenship we can be sure that it is only possible through the culture of the citizens, only possible in democracy. These facts open up a complicated topic: a concrete democracy and therefore the topic of socialism.

What is socialism?

In terms of economy, the socialism is defined by the social property of *social* means of production. This means on the one hand, that the private individual property is preserved and guaranteed as the rights to commodities which are not only necessary to the reproduction of life but above all, essential to its development and betterment. On the other, work stops being waged, thus producing more value, exploited and alienated force, to become the social self-management practice of economy, a commitment of the individuals to the society as part of the whole. Work is free, that is, the subjective human expression into objects or exteriorized in products. As long as the property of production means is *social*, production is self administered and the labor is free. What centrally defines capitalism ceases to exist, that is, the private appropriation of social wealth by the exploitation of work as merchandise that produces goods that are sold and bought by means of the universal merchandise: money.

Socially, it is defined by the ideas of justice _ " each second with its necessities and capacities", as Marx said – abundance – there is no private appropriation of social wealth – equality – there is no class holding wealth and privileges – freedom – there is no class holding social and political power – rational autonomy – knowledge is not at the service of private interests of a dominant class –ethical autonomy – the individuals are conscientious agents that establish behavior rules and values –cultural autonomy – art and though works and pieces are not determined by the logic of the market or the interest of a ruling class. These ideas and values that define socialism also establish *rights*.

Politically, socialism is defined by the abolition of the State apparatus as an instrument of domination and coercion, it is substituted by participation and self-administration practices through socio-political associations, committees and movements; that is, power is not concentrated in a State apparatus, neither realized by the logic of force or the identification with the figure of the leaders but truly, with the public space of debate, discussion and collective decision making.

If we understood democracy as an institution of a democratic society and socialism as an institution of a democratic policy we would understand that only in a socialist policy, rights that essentially define a democratic society, may come true and only in a democratic society a socialist policy practice becomes concrete. Thus, a new cultural policy needs to start as a new *cultural policy* whose main column is the idea and exercise of participation

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The colonised poetics of Latin America

Eduardo Subirats

Abstract

This article analyses how, based on a logic of multiculturality and hybridism, cultural studies aim at a semiotic reduction of any sort of emotional expression, real commitment and will of being and of being transformed found in literatures, sciences, fine arts, film, politics and social expression. From a supposed interdisciplinary intersection that is both democratic and politically correct, as evident in the interdepartmental tendencies of universities in the United States, the ontological value of artistic work and its existential implications are neglected. This occurs when the complexity and richness of different artistic, social and cultural traditions are approached from homogenised

Resumen

En el presente texto se analiza cómo, a partir de una lógica de multiculturalidad e hibridismo, los estudios culturales apuntan a una reducción semiótica de toda expresividad emocional, compromiso real y voluntad de ser y transformarse propias de las literaturas, las ciencias, las artes plásticas, el cine, la política y las manifestaciones sociales. Desde un supuesto cruce interdisciplinario de corte democrático y políticamente correcto, reflejado en las tendencias interdepartamentales de las universidades estadounidenses, se anula el valor ontológico de la obra artística y su implicancia existencial, al abordar la complejidad y riqueza de las distintas tradiciones artísticas, sociales y culturales desde matrices teóricas ho-

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theoretical matrices, reduced to the proliferation of multiple "small discourses" that aim to disarticulate the great critical traditions of the 20th century. This tendency is particularly notorious in the study of the diverse Latin American aesthetics.

mogenizadas, reducidas a la proliferación de múltiples "pequeños discursos" que tienen como fin desarticular las grandes tradiciones críticas del siglo XX. Esta tendencia es particularmente notoria en el abordaje de las diversas estéticas latinoamericanas.

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The absence of an intellectual project that can address the dilemmas of the 21st century has placed a limit on humanities in the academic education system in the United States and worldwide. First the precarious spaces for reflection were bombarded with the ambiguous slogan of the "end of grand discourses". The attack on logocentrism and Eurocentrism that followed left the constituents and corollaries of instrumental reason unscathed but dismantled the critical traditions of the 20th century, calling it collateral damage. In its place, a semiotic formalism has been imposed in which any civilising reflection, any reference to the ecological and political global reality, any intellectual project is systematically diluted in its intertextual networks. The fragmentation, departmentalisation and compartmentalisation of knowledge thus limit its intellectual horizon. All this has been celebrated with academically administered enthusiasm about a virtual liberation of transindividual subjects, hypertextual banalities and transcultural spectacles. The colourful mantras of the end of the book, the death of the intellectual and the psychedelic anticipation of a final historical time are the ultimate war trophies of this global battle. The institutional volatilisation of critical theories has brought along with it the academic evaporation of aesthetic theory and literary criticism, whose departmental vacuums have been comfortably occupied by the guarded epistemologies of *cultural studies*.[2]

This landscape takes on shocking dimensions in the sphere of Latin American studies. First, it is not a secret for anyone that the prosperity of these studies in the United States has occurred in the context of its growing hemispheric predominance in the economic terrain as well as in the military terrain and in the media. The overthrow

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

2 Translators' note: Original in English.

of the Spanish empire and the strategic occupation of the Caribbean in 1898 marked its beginning, preceded by the military annexation of half of the former national Mexican territory. Throughout this process of expansion, the Portuguese and Spanish languages—until recently locked up by the 19th-century clauses of the *Romanistik*[3], as an intellectually insignificant extension of French and Italian—have displaced these languages, and even German, in terms of numbers on university campuses; these languages that were the traditional bastions of a humanist and enlightened culture that never existed in the Iberian cultural sphere. In addition, the Cold War made clear the importance of extending the academic spaces for Latin Americanism to new fields that went from food studies to the historical languages of the Americas; and of separating these knowledges and locking them up in compartments, cutting them off from one another.

This expansion of Latin American and Hispanic studies first resulted in a preponderance of the Spanish from Spain under a Eurocentric notion propounded by the generation of Spanish intellectuals exiled in 1939. At Princeton it came to the extreme that, until recently, knowledge of the Spanish language was an institutional prerequisite for studying Portuguese. And it was the most distinguished Hispanist at this university, Américo Castro—the person who questioned the basic principles of Spanish National Catholicism from a hermeneutic and humanistic perspective—who, paradoxically, developed the concept of a moral and linguistic hegemony of Spain over Ibero-America using imperial criteria essentially no different from the Catholic unity of the Spanish world expounded years earlier by Ramiro de Maeztu, the intellectual founder of the Spanish fascist and National Catholic movement (Castro, 1941; Maeztu, 1998). But to be fair, the Iberian cultural decadency exacerbated by this National Catholicism and the rise of a powerful generation of Latin American intellectuals and artists put an end to this unequal configuration.

The literary creation of writers like João Guimarães Rosa, Juan Rulfo, Augusto Roa Bastos and José María Arguedas, who developed a socialist and democratic project within and outside of their respective literary works in a linguistic, civilising and aesthetic context of the greatest complexity and scope; the refreshing essays of critics like Ángel Rama and Antonio Cándido, and of writers such as José Carlos Mariátegui, Darcy Ribeiro, Eduardo Galeano and Octavio Paz;

3 Translators' note: Original in German. In English, Romance languages and literature.

in addition to the most original composers, artists, filmmakers and architects, opened up new spaces in international culture and, consequently, in *Spanish & Portuguese*[4] departments. And in these spaces, a plethora of studies and reference works were generated that shared a common hermeneutic concern; the retrieval of lost memories and a critical inclination that allowed them to establish a relation of affinity and solidarity with their colleagues from the South. In this respect, the works by John Murra and Rolena Adorno in the United States, and those of William Rowe and Martin Lienhard in Europe, to mention only the specific area of Andean studies, can be considered as works of

The institutional volatilisation of critical theories has brought along with it the academic evaporation of aesthetic theory and literary criticism, whose departmental vacuums have been comfortably occupied by the guarded epistemologies.

literary criticism, anthropological research and political analysis closely linked to Latin American intellectual debates about colonialism and neocolonialism, liberation theology and the strategies of democratic and anti-imperialist resistance.

I want to draw attention to a central aspect of these intellectuals. To do so, I will mention a work that could hardly go unnoticed, although it is currently overlooked by everyone: that of Oscar Niemeyer. The issue I want to emphasise here is the formation of an intellectual and artistic project of cultural and political sovereignty in the milieu of architecture and urbanism, grounded in Latin American historical foundations and cultural traditions. American and European architectural criticism will never come to terms with the fact that Brasilia was built by three important geniuses—Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx—instead of being subordinated to the corporate demands of the large transnational agencies, which nonetheless subjugated it militarily the day after its inauguration. Nor will it forgive the construction two decades later of São Paulo's Latin American Memorial, right at the peak of the financial and media colo-

4 Translators' note: Original in English.

nisation of Latin America, when the *postmodern* and the *global*[5] became all the rage through corporate communication networks and the global academic machinery. I also want to emphasise that this artistic formulation of an open social project that draws upon a Latin American cultural tradition was not and is not only, nor primarily, political. It was something much more profound: an artistic vision in the strong sense of the word, inherited from the pioneers of 20th century European art and from the European Renaissance tradition.

Niemeyer, like Oswald de Andrade before him and the architect Lina Bo afterwards, posed a radical question that American and European criticism cannot but avoid: the crisis, failure and bankruptcy of the most socially and formally innovative projects of the arts and architecture since the European fascisms took control, unleashing World War II. For these intellectuals, as for other Latin American artists such as Juan O'Gorman and Diego Rivera, the exhibition of the *International Style*[6] organised by the MOMA in 1937 and the book of the same name by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson meant nothing less than academic stagnation, dogmatic rigidity and the normative imposition of what had been an attempt at innovation and an experimentation both social and formal, in the works of architects like Loos and Gropius, and in the poetics of Tzara, Schoenberg and Klee during the first decades of the 20th century. What is more, in the historical context of the Second World War, Niemeyer and Oswald de Andrade coined the term "postmodernism" to denounce this academicist regression of a form established as the norm and discourse of "modernity", to the detriment of the experimental, reflexive and innovative moments of the European vanguards of the first third of the century (Subirats, 2005b: 141ff).

But the most important aspect of these architects' projects, and the most remarkable thing about writers like José María Arguedas, Darcy Ribeiro and Augusto Roa Bastos, was not only their critique of this academicist freezing of the modern movement in a "style" and of the values of Puritanism and imperialism entailed by its globalising project, right when the United States' global nuclear and economic hegemony was beginning. The artistic and intellectual project that they were all developing was based on a linguistic, symbolic and also social integration of the popular cultures of Latin America (that are its historical cultures). And it was similarly based on the configuration of a state that was not only democratic, but also sovereign with respect to the economic

5 Translators' note: Original in English.

6 Translators' note: Original in English.

and technological powers of the First World. The artistic project of these intellectuals had—and not just as an afterthought—the social objective of a fair distribution of wealth in the region, for which the famous "superblocks"[7] in Brasilia were not merely a metaphor, but a politically effective praxis. Accordingly, these pioneers aimed at building an independent intellectual elite as a culturally revitalising force for a socialist society articulated around Latin America's artistic expressions. It is worth mentioning Mario de Andrade's and José María Arguedas' studies about popular music, the articles about Mayan social and cultural problems by Miguel Ángel Asturias, the critique of the political foundations of hunger in Latin America by Josué de Castro, the reform of the understanding of the Mexican Indian by Guillermo Bonfill Batalla and the popular culture and popular education projects developed by Paulo Freire and Darcy Ribeiro, to cite just a few examples of this vast intellectual and artistic project of a Latin American civilisation.

This social and intellectual heyday was brought to its end by something we think we understand or perhaps we still do not understand: the globally supported military *coups* that brought about the dismantling of democratic and popular social organisations, the persecution, the mass torture and assassinations of intellectuals and social leaders and an irreversible regional regression in all aspects of human life. What was imposed upon this Latin American cultural flowering, symbolically crystallised in the Cuban Revolution on one extreme and in the construction of Brasilia on the other, were the Latin American fascisms of the second half of the 20th century. It is significant that the political analysis of these globally engineered fascisms is systematically marginalised and obstructed in the current global academic system, to the benefit of a strictly legal and local study of intangible human rights. And this happens despite the fact that these same rights have been a mere legal regulator of successive genocides since the classical colonial age.

But not only have *coups d'état*, economic plundering and the imposition of widespread social poverty become depoliticised in the name of ethereal legal rights. And not only have their global corporate constituents become transubstantiated into subtle representations of gender. At the same time, the pillars that have supported these Latin American fascisms with their different methods are ignored. The persistent Iberian colonial heritage in the religious, political and military traditions in Latin America—their distinct hybridisation of authoritarianism, violence and machismo on the one hand, and intellectual

7 Translators' note: in Spanish *supercuadras*.

awkwardness and provincialism on the other—have been ignored. The absence of the large ruptures that gave shape to modern cultures—such as the Christian Reform, secular humanism, the Enlightenment, bourgeois liberalism and the socialist revolutions that shaped the fate of Europe and the United States—has been ignored. And the technological and technocentric unknowns of the new industrial and post-industrial colonialism continue to be ignored.

The proliferation of democratic constitutions in the Iberian Peninsula and Ibero-America over the final decades of the last century, under the auspices of the same regional and global powers that had supported the authoritarian regimes that preceded them, was, without a doubt, a happy ending after many years of state terrorism. But it is easily forgotten that time has not passed in vain, and while the democratic changes in the region were under analysis, democracy itself had also changed. Its electronic instruments were new, as were its linguistic and institutional systems of representation. The urbanistic and electronic components of the mediatised mass were new. The complete social vacuum of this democracy, neoliberally defined as a free market, was also new. These newly defined democracies, it turns out, were no longer the political project that the intellectuals and social demonstrations of the 1970s had defended. They were now more about a global system, a democratic globalisation or a global, postmodern democracy; the *postmodern tout court*[8] as a new globally standardised legal, financial and cultural system. It is also worth keeping in mind that the model of transition from fascist dictatorships to these new democracies was canonised by the imperial cradle of Ibero-America—the Spanish monarchy. And the exemplary significance of this Spanish transition can be summarised as a change that did not, to put it bluntly, legally, politically or intellectually question anybody who had been part of what needed changing; that is, National Catholic and fascist authoritarianism. The Spanish democratic change was a global model of historic and intellectual blindness. It was also a global model for another important reason. It meant the triumphant dissolution of the critical imagination of the 1960s and 1970s into the hybrid semiologies of the postmodern spectacle.[9]

This double conversion of postmodern democracies had a series of consequences. On the symbolic level, it meant the volatilisation of culture as a space of reflection and social transformation for

8 Translators' note: Original in English.

9 I analysed the crudeness and lapses of this Spanish "change" in my work "*De la transición al espectáculo*" (Subirats, 2003: 345ff).

the benefit of an administrative concept of culture as a commercially subordinate semiotic system. This means that the same intellectual or artist that was liquidated by fascist violence in the 1960s and 1970s vanished into the air of communicative action and its corporate monopolies during the postmodern decades that followed.

"Misplaced ideas" and the intellectual as a "man of letters" were two of the most relevant protests, from Roberto Schwarz and Ángel Rama, respectively, against the inclusion of opposition Latin American intellectuals in the bureaucracies of a fully administered culture (Rama, 2008; Schwarz, 1992). Schwarz ridiculed the charla-

It is not necessary to point out that suppressing and moving beyond the subject has become an academic rite of passage in the post-humanist age.

tan that quoted Sartre in the political social gatherings held by *coup* authorities in Brazil, and Rama brought into relief the continuity between the colonial intellectual as a lawyer and the modern semiological administrator of the colonised modernities of Latin America. But it would be unfair to reduce these *fin-de-siècle* democratic transitions to a recasting of the reformist intellectual in the mould of a corporate and epistemologically guarded communicative action. What was really transformed with these "changes" was not the position of the colonial, authoritarian and bureaucratic subaltern intellectuals, but rather the new institutional frameworks and designs and the new academic jargon that protected them. Rede Globo and Televisa, the international publishing consortia and the global academic corporations immediately prevailed as the managers of a manipulated public opinion, agents of the epistemes enshrined by the centres of global industrial culture and guardians of an electronically synthesised civil society. It was no longer necessary to raise the ominous flag of country, family and property to legitimise antidemocratic corporate powers, when the rhetoric of an academically sterilised feminism and multiculturalism generated greater consensus of statistical legitimation. In any case, "misplaced ideas" are a thing of the past in this democracy as spectacle, as there is no longer any space for ideas. On the fringe of this whole process of so-

cial regression, or protected by it, the epistemic immigration officers of *cultural studies* have been able to celebrate with authentic psychedelic enthusiasm the end of the "man of letters" and the "learned city" under the triumphant banners of hybrid cultures entirely domesticated according to the norms of the *cultural malls*.[10]

These changes have been marked out, and in many ways shaped by structural transformations in theoretical perspectives and in research and teaching programs. I am not referring only to the accepted practice of micro-analytically reducing the humanities to some fragmentary aspects of works and authors, nor to the witch hunt against any process of independent reflection in the academic machinery. Above all, I am referring to the epistemological postulate that supports this reductionism of intelligence: the allegorisation of social praxis, the digitalisation of human communication, the semiotisation of art and literature and the volatilisation of the social. Where democracy was recast as an artefact, culture was also redefined and recycled as *performance*[11], and art and literature were also converted to *social text*[12], to ultimately remap its linguistically standardised products in the corporate internationalism of a "Western Hemisphere".

Some details of this semiotic and geopolitical transformation of culture are worth keeping in mind. Or it is at least worth keeping in mind the first and absolute precondition for this vast hemispheric project of cultural homologation and epistemic surveillance: the commercial liquidation of the national literary and artistic traditions, and the linguistic evaporation of the intellectual and the artist as a reflexive consciousnesses and as autonomous mediations of a democratic public opinion on a regional and global scale. This cleansing process has been, to be sure, a paradoxical and complex procedure, if we consider its implementation in university departments that display the banner of humanities. The comparison with the anti-hermeneutic practice of deconstructing the gods of the Americas in order to subsequently hybridise them as Catholic saints, carried out systematically by global religious bodies in the age of theocratic colonialism, can be enlightening in this respect.

In my essay *Viaje al fin del paraíso* (2005b) I shed light on the relation of continuity and complicity between the political process of wiping out the Latin American *intelligentsia* through genocide and exile, and its subsequent transformation into magic-realist *entertain-*

10 Translators' note: Original in English.

11 Translators' note: Original in English.

12 Translators' note: Original in English.

ment[13] monitored by the cultural industry. In other respects, these degradations of the Latin American intellectual universe or universes have been strengthened by a series of arrogant classifications. Thus, what is actually its classical modern canon has been happily subsumed under the labels of boom, pre-boom and post-boom, which I have never understood if they are in allusion to a bombing raid or to a clearance sale. But it is the effective, academically formatted commercial reconfiguration of the Latin American literary canon into the commercial *package*[14] of magic realism that must be celebrated as a truly prodigious result of this mutation of Latin American literary culture into the *fiction & entertainment*[15] of the global publishing industry. And something else should be noted, even if only in parentheses: this real-marvellous brand owes its unassailable advertising success to the mysterious fact that the concept has never been rigorously debated, either with respect to the German artistic critique of the 1920s that invented the abstruse formula, or even less so with respect to the Latin Americanism of the other half of the century that imitated and plagiarised it *ad nauseum*.

All in all, it is worth emphasising that these commercial categories of mainstream criticism are the most noticeable in literary festivals, not the most excellent. Once again, *cultural studies* offer up the respectable version of the real-marvellous travesty of a literature that nonetheless stands out—as in the cases of Juan Rulfo, Augusto Roa Bastos and José María Arguedas—for its profound mythology, metaphysics and ethics, as well as the political project that runs through it. Calling them cultural or literary sociology would not pay the necessary respect to the *Erkenntnissoziologie*[16] conceived of by Emile Durkheim and Karl Mannheim. Somehow, they might be based on a systematic concept of society and on an articulated critique of techno-scientific epistemes. This is not the case here. What really defines these studies and grants them their institutional power is not only their methodologically random nature, but also their departmentally guarded territoriality with an inside and an outside, the rules of the game and the epistemic overseers, and their resultant systems of linguistic exclusion and corporate censorship.

But this is not the most important thing either. What must be emphasised in a most basic history of ideas as the most serious aspect of this culturalist garage sale is that, under its attractive interde-

13 Translators' note: Original in English.

14 Translators' note: Original in English.

15 Translators' note: Original in English.

16 Translators' note: Original in German. In English, sociology of knowledge.

partmental umbrella, it functions as the junkyard and cemetery for the deactivation and the breaking up of the critical theories of the 20th century. Its celebrated semiologies of gender, the much-ballyhooed multiculturalism, including its sweet hybridist dreams, have had an eloquent function. They are the ceremoniousness of the academic taming and the intellectual moderation of the war of the sexes, the cultural clashes and the semiotic colonisation that have run through the global expansion of industrial and postmodern culture. The ultimate goal of this rhetorical travesty of the cultural and social dismantling processes in real times and spaces is no less pious: the kidnapping of intellectual intentionality, the domestication and neutralisation of the historical and political commitment of theory, and the volatilisation of the praxical will for real transformation solidly linked to all literary, philosophical and artistic works. I do not have to underscore it further: the meaning of these cultural studies is regressive. However, I must add yet another commentary.

In the name of the worthy objectives of figuratively surmounting anthropocentrism and logocentrism, these cultural studies have confused the critique of the rational subject of domination, in its logical-transcendental form or in its political-imperial form (the Cartesian *Je* or Hobbes' *Leviathan*), as well as its patriarchal mythological precursors (the mystic Ignatian soul and Paulo's political theology), with what has been the great philosophical and intellectual tradition that, from Friedrich Nietzsche to Oswald de Andrade and from Johann Jakob Bachofen to Eduardo Galeano, has opened up a variety of paths for its anthropological, aesthetic, metaphysical and political critique. Protected by the gibberish created by such ambiguity, the culturalists have complementarily taken over the artistic and creative value of the form, as well as the exemplary significance that any literary work entails as a formative process, in the double sense of giving shape to a reality and being shaped by experiencing it, opened up by all creative processes of philosophical, literary and artistic reflection. The final consequence of this epistemological piracy is the elimination of the aesthetic experience and the ritual sacrifice of the autonomy of literary and artistic works, which, ultimately, results in the pillage of these works as textual material for semiotic processing, regardless of the pseudosociological method employed. The results of this processing are troubling: today, US literature departments do not do literary critique. Even less so, critical theory (Subirats, 2005b).

An anecdote can be more eloquent than a thousand words. José María Blanco White has been an accursed Spanish writer. He defied the Inquisition, laid bare the moral and institutional corruption

of the Spanish Catholic Church of the 17th century and wrote a series of theological essays of a reformist orientation that have never been published in Spanish. But he also emphasised the limitations and the precariousness of the Spanish liberals, and he did it with the same ease with which he attacked Catholic anti-Semitism. As if that were nothing in the Spanish intellectual wilderness, Blanco took sides in favour of Spanish-American independence. And he even dared to question the colonial inheritances that many of its leaders, Servando Teresa de Mier among them, accepted in the small print of their political programs. All these characteristics made Blanco one of the most relevant intellectual figures in the historical milieu of the failed Spanish liberal revolution and the constrained Latin American independence. And all this also explains why Spanish obscurantism has deplored his work for two centuries, to the point of burying it in oblivion. Menéndez Pelayo pronounced his judgment *post mortem* and his name practically disappeared without a trace from the literary canons of mainstream Hispanism, whose most distinguished feature is its meagre imagination.[17] Perhaps it should therefore be considered a miracle that, in the 1960s, two other exiled Spaniards, Vicente Lloréns and Juan Goytisolo, took it upon themselves to rehabilitate his memory and his unfinished project of the intellectual reform of Hispanic cultures at Princeton University.

Today, things have changed, but they have not changed. In the most select intellectual circles, Blanco's work can certainly no longer be ignored. To accuse him of being heterodox and radical would only serve to expose old obstinacies. Other rhetorics have had to be created, therefore, to renew his censorship. This is where the anecdote comes in. In the same Princeton University that had been the pioneer of his rebirth in the last century, a Hispanist of the first decade of this century condemned Blanco White with a feminist argument around the entangled secrets he had shared with the nuns whose confessions he had heard, and with the even more refined tale of certain illicit relationships with a stranger. Vulgar academic sanctimoniousness transformed its puritan gossip into a verdict, with the modest ultimate purpose of discouraging the doctoral research of Professor Lunden Mann on José María Blanco White's project of religious, political and philosophical reform (Mann, 2006).

In addition to exposing crude intelligences, this case reveals another Gordian knot: the question of modernity. Ambiguous

17 Hispanism and Latin Americanism are precariously defined concepts that I use here as "equivalent and unequal" (Subirats, 2005a).

in global terms in an age in which its constituent values have dissolved into thin air without a trace, the Iberian and Ibero-American cultures pose the additional problem of a decapitated Reform, an absent Enlightenment and an inexistent liberal revolution. If the historical concept of modernity is defined as a triumph of reason, a rejection of Catholic absolutism and a republican reform of society, in the sense in which it is portrayed in Diderot's *Encyclopédie,* the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the Declaration of Independence of the United States, then we can not speak rigorously about an Iberian or Latin American modernity. There are scarcely revolutionary glimmers, like the enlightened dictatorship of Pombal, and the agrarian and educational reform that the Peruvian Olavide brought to Andalusia before being taken out by the Inquisition in one of its penultimate edicts. Simon Rodríguez's treaties and articles can also be remembered as hidden pearls of this obliterated Enlightenment. But the Catholic Church's anti-liberal persecution on one hand, and the intrinsic weakness of these same projects on the other, abruptly shut down the prospects of a historical and social opening up. And Blanco White finds himself in the middle of this wreckage of the old absolutist order, out of which a true spirit of intellectual and social reform failed to emerge. Intelligently understanding his work would only be possible if the trivialities of late, peripheral and hybrid modernities in which these famous *cultural studies* try desperately to hide the elemental evidence of the colonised modernity of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America are tossed aside.[18]

It is not necessary to point out that suppressing and moving beyond the subject has become an academic rite of passage in the post-humanist age, nor is it necessary to point out that its banner is as essential for the institutional reproduction of its intellectual blindness as the dismissal of grand discourses and of the *tout court* thinking that legitimises this operation. But as if that were not bad enough, the disciplinary dismissal of intellectual subjects has been legitimised with great fanfare as a redeeming mission of the panoptic systems of punishment and surveillance inherent to the logical-transcendental constitution of technocentric reason. This means, among other things, a sublime vagueness between instrumental reason and the reflexive intellectual experience inherent in the philosophies of the European Enlighten-

18 This same argumentative strategy, and even more awkward such strategies, can be read in Kirkpatrick's contributions in the book of essays that I edited several years ago (Subirats, 2005a).

ment in a strict sense: one which includes Lessing, Marx, Voltaire and Herder. But this confusion is also fruitful, as it leaves the new corporate consciousness with its hands free to indulge in the metonymic polivalencies of the parrot-like repetitions of deconstructivist jargon. The institutional advantage of such confusion consists in forgetting and making others in the guarded systems of higher education forget that the constitution of the aesthetic subject in a literary work such as that of Augusto Roa Bastos or Juan Rulfo has nothing to do with the fractures and dilemmas of the Cartesian or Kantian subject, nor with its logical-positivist and phenomenological derivatives, nor least of all with its totalitarian panopticons. Rather, its importance lies precisely in its profound mythological, metaphysical and ethical dimensions, constructed from the voices of oral and popular memory, their social resistance and their effort to find a way out of the labyrinths of global powers and its deconstructive reasons.

This aesthetic subject is a social and cultural subject, and at the same time it is the subject of an intellectual and political project that necessarily entails a critique of the multifaceted discourses of colonisations both in their theological and secular forms, empirico-critical or structuralist. But its assault and muzzling are not the only consequences of the semiotic piracy carried out under the auspices of the culturalists. Its ultimate and decisive political consequence is the anti-aesthetic transformation of culture. As an aside, I will offer a couple of observations in this regard.

In the modern philosophical tradition, two fundamental understandings of culture have coexisted. One is expressed in the philosophical and historical analyses of Vico and Herder and the big and small names in anthropology and religious sciences, from J.J. Bachofen to Karl Kerény. It is the tradition that has studied the origin and development of cultures based on its myths, gods and cosmogonies, understood as systems of integration of all human expression, be they productive or material, aesthetic or ethical, in an ontological and religious order whose ultimate purpose is the preservation of being. But the rationalist tradition that has predominated in modern philosophy has conceived of culture, in contrast, as the constituent action of a transcendental memoryless subject (Kant); the productive work of a mythical *homo oeconomicus* (Mill); the formative action of the no less imaginary *homo faber* (Bergson) and even the performative fictions of a random post-panoptic subject (Lyotard). And if the first definition of culture revolved around the preservation of being through cosmic cycles that make up the history of the human spirit, the second definition hid behind processes of epistemological abstraction of nature, the separation and exclusion of

memories and historical forms of life, and the subsequent replacement of nature and historical norms of life following a self-styled colonising principle of economic and technological rationality.

Of course these two understandings have always maintained secret relations with each other. Kant's moral philosophy or Hegel's philosophy of history built bridges between techno-scientific rationality and the system of a moral and artistic culture that included many of the qualities of aesthetic culture defined by Vico or Schiller. The socialism of the 19th century and its related revolutionary artistic movements, from Courbet to Gropius, also tried to harmonise the industrial *techné* with an ethical and aesthetic concept of the social. But the systems of global power that developed after Hiroshima and Nagasaki have reversed these attempts at reconciliation. Techno-scientific reason, productive reason and reason as a system of universal military, economic and semiotic domination have ended up wiping out consciousness itself and the very biological and cultural preconditions for survival, like a final and undesirable bastion of resistance. Many are the planes of our global reality, from biodiversity to audiovisual communication, that today reveal an irreversible worldwide regression.[19] Two central works of 20th century philosophy, that of Adorno and of Horkheimer, as well as that of Foucault, must be remembered in this sense as the philosophical expression of this inner dissolution of the civilising order and of the human as a premise and consequence of its own epistemological and logical principle of domination. But faced with the antinomies posed by these and other critical theories of the 20th century (Anders, Bloch, Jungk, Mumford and other names of canonical authors deleted from the *reading lists*[20] of corporate academia and its associated publishing industry), the culturalists have created an opportunistic option.

Cultural studies, I repeat, is not a theory, nor is it a scientific methodology *per se*. From the perspective of the history of ideas, it is best understood as the remains of the civilising shipwreck of modern reason. It speaks of feminism as *performance*, but it is not able to establish the mythological and ontological foundations that defined the cosmic power and the ethical order of the goddesses of life and death in all pre-Christian cultures, right in an age in which genetic engineering is apparently displacing the reproductive powers of women for the benefit of the genetics industry. It brandishes multiculturalist semiotics and omits at the same time the biological and economic foundation

19 I draw on the analysis developed in my book, *La existencia sitiada* (Subirats, 2007).

20 Translators' note: Original in English.

from which an artist, a community or a people are able to create and defend their own cultural individuality. Or it raises the flag of a humanitarian liberalism identified with the so-called ethnic minorities and marginal groups without questioning the civilising constituents that in European and U.S. societies confine native people, Africans and homosexuals in *apartheids* of difference, in order to discreetly redesign them with identity strategies as socially atomised subjects, and without deciphering such concepts as desire, nature and community that objectively condition their structural marginalisation in the capitalist order and the colonial logos. What Anke P. Böttcher once stated against

***Cultural studies, I repeat, is not a theory, nor is it a scientific methodology* per se.**

the rhetorics of politically correct feminism, "they want to dress the cats up as dogs and they forget that a dog that mews always commands less respect than a growling cat", can be generalised to what the agents of these *studies*[21] delight in calling, with a discreet military gesture, strategies of identity (Böttcher, 2000).

In this respect, Antonio Risério presents an interesting commentary in his book *A utopia brasileira e os movimentos negros* (2007). His point of departure is a distinction between the segregationist colonialism of apartheid and the Mestizo colonialism of *padé*. This is not a new classification in the history of Brazilian thought. In his classic work *As Américas e a civilização*[22], Darcy Ribeiro traced this same difference to the divergent foundations—Catholic and Calvinist—that gave shape to the colonial processes of Brazil and the United States, respectively. But Risério specifies the consequences of these differences. First: black people in Brazil still have their gods, whereas this is not the case in the United States. Second: the mixing of races has

21 Translators' note: Original in English.

22 Translators' note: in English, Ribeiro, Darcy 1971 *The Americas and Civlization*, translated from Portuguese by Linton Lomas Barret and Marie McDavid Barret (New York: Dutton).

allowed for complex forms of ethnic, religious, social and artistic exchange and dialogue throughout history. And this historian wonders in conclusion: Why then is American academia obsessed with imposing *urbi et orbi* a multiculturalism whose fundamental premise is the constitution of ethnically and culturally closed and compartmentalised units, to the extreme of an authentic "anthropological autism"? Why does it insist on the cultural strategies of a narcissistic identity of "black" that ignores and impedes an understanding of the historical and cultural characteristics of black cultures in Brazil created through a long interaction between the black, white and native peoples?

In an analogous sense, Marta Lamas notes the paradox of the "Americanisation of feminism": its universalist category of *gender*[23] conceptually eliminates the physical differences attached to sexuality, it evaporates the conflicts between different sexes and different understandings of sexual life, as well as its mythological, religious and cultural expressions throughout historical time; it prophylactically isolates the masculine and the feminine and ultimately reduces the constituents of patriarchy and its cultural derivations to a "women's issue" (Lamas, 2008). This anthropologist also suggests that the linguistic reduction of the different aspects that surround both the union of and the conflicts between the sexes in contemporary cultures only leads to its abstraction, homologation and sterilisation. And it allows a glimpse of identity strategies as a means of epistemic evaporation of the biological, mythological, ethical and intellectual reality of masculine and feminine sexuality.

Both critiques reveal a cliché. Risério points out the segregating and disarticulating function of a social body shot through with conflicts and with much more complex interactions than the multicultural dichotomies of black and white, heterosexual and homosexual, masculine and feminine, self and other. Lamas points to the processes of abstraction from the body and from desire, from ways of life and from the relation between the sexes called upon to derail feminist discourses towards a narcissistic discourse. The political horizon of both analyses also meets at the same point: globalisation, colonisation, Americanisation, cultural strategies of imperialism.

But far from being a hermeneutic inconvenience, this formalist travesty of complex cultural realities, and the consequent omission of material conditions, ecological *environments*[24], sex conflicts and

23 Translators' note: Original in English.

24 Translators' note: Original in English.

the real political links in the globally imposed categorisations of gender, communication, culture and literature constitute the great institutional advantage of these cultural studies. Their success lies precisely in reworking everything, from the conflict between the pre-colonial religious world-views and the Christian West to the geopolitics of hunger, with the categories of a flat linguistics, a formal semiology and the *mise-en-scène* of discretional performances. They define hybridism as an iconic *collage*. Multiculturalism is an identity strategy, politics is communicative action and democracy is a spectacle. The intellectual and aesthetic subject is mutilated with respect to its emotional, existential, ethical and political dimensions by circumstances beyond our control, to then rise to the higher category of cultural manager and global academic *performer*[25], at the same time that the same subject is demoted to the role of a consumer of signs. The abstraction from the material conditions that create social conflicts and their symbolic expressions ultimately unlocks the institutional doors to staging any democratic or anti-colonial, feminist or anti-totalitarian production, without having to bother abandoning the self-styled semiotic paradise of referentless signs. This leads us to the ultimate missionary function of cultural studies and its global delegates: replacing intellectual reflection in a world in crisis with the production and supervision of its politically correct *performances*.

Redefining literature as *cultural text* means wiping out the ontological value of artistic work and the existential significance of its experience. But this also ends up benefiting the culturalists. In the name of their semiotic homologation of cultural expressions, these *studies* put a multiracial advertisement for United Colors of Benetton and Tarsila do Amaral's "*La Negra*" on an equal footing, to then proclaim far and wide that the former represents the progressive triumph of the commercialised populism of pop, spearheaded by the corporately sponsored stupidity of Andy Warhol. And just as quickly, they condemn the aesthetic elitism of São Paulo's coffee aristocracy, which surely cheered the much more subtle provocations of the *Movimento Antropofágico*.[26] In favour of this devout conversion of art into communicative action, it is argued that everything, after all, is representation; the war against evil is the same as Madonna's video clips, and they are all repertoires of one and the same global code. And hence the latest paradox that runs through cultural studies as a corporate

25 Translators' note: Original in English.

26 Translators' note: Original in Portuguese. In English, Cannibalist Movement.

sublimation of the society of the spectacle: the undifferentiated aestheticisation of reality goes hand in hand with the anti-aesthetic mutilation of the mythological, metaphysical and ethical value of the artistic form. When all is said and done, do Amaral's "*La Negra*" stands apart from the populist trash of *Pop Art* because of its links of texture and colour to a land resacralised with the matriarchal power of fecundation, which the *Movimento Antropofágico* transformed into aesthetic and political rebellion against the patriarchal logos of Christian and industrial colonialism, under a well-endowed bosom that semiotic puritanism in any case banned mentioning.

Redesigning and redefining literature and the work of art as cultural *performance* is indistinguishable from their repackaging as commodity, *entertainment* and a fiction of fictions, in a realm of simulations sacredly administered by the global academic. This ultimately explains the trivialisation of humanities in an intellectually hollow academia where literatures can be gracefully classified according to the same wild categories of tyrants, exiles, realist styles of magic and travel as found in tour package brochures. And where everything is allowed, from Pop to *Porn*[27], as long as it does not pose ultimate or penultimate questions about the spiritual meaning of the work of art or its political importance as an expression of a collective will for change towards a possible and better different world: the metaphysical and ultimate dimension of any authentic artistic experience of the real. To put an end to this story about the "lack of university spirit today", I want to clarify something else (Heinrich, 1998: 69). It can be defined as an ultimate consequence and, also, as the institutional premise for the discourses of subalternity and difference, the semiologies of hybridism, a multiculturalism reduced to politically correct *performance* and a defence of human rights that is nonetheless silent about the practices of extermination that we see every day on our screens and in real time. This main premise, and at the same time a consequence of the semiotic homologation of cultural expressions under the rubrics of intertextualities and performances, is the new global order. Two words suffice to clarify this misunderstanding. Under the conditions of the Cold War, the organising principle of the humanities read: fragmentation of specialised knowledge. One could study Glauber Rocha in the film department. Popular Brazilian music associated with the Tropicalismo movement of which it was a part was shut up in the music departments. The poems that these same composers of the Tropicalismo

27 Translators' note: Original in English.

vanguard wrote and sang were shut away in the literature departments. Historians took account of their political vision. Their relation to architecture was confined to the corresponding departments. And the political persecution of its members and associates was left to the human rights subdivision in the law schools. Through these institutional labyrinths, the specialists and experts have been brought to a state of professionalised schizophrenia. "Professionalisation as the decline of the domain of the intellect", Thomas Bender has called it, in his analysis of the crisis of intellectual values in American universities (1993: 131). *Fachidiot*—subject idiot—was the honorary title that students in Berlin gave in 1968 to such academic dilettantism.

Today things have notably improved. Academia no longer fears the dismembered intellectual projects forged in the interaction between classical music and popular artistic traditions and their organisations of political resistance, and between architecture, critique and poetry. It considers them defeated or dead. I have been witness to an "anti-establishment intellectual" being invited to the classroom as a circus monkey. This is why the dispersion of territorial knowledge has become an obsolete issue. The time has come when the indiscriminate transformation of literatures, fine arts, film, politics and social crises to semiotically homologated systems permits their administrative manipulation more efficiently than did their compulsive departmentalisation. To be more precise, global codes and semiotics are superimposed on departmentally fractured knowledge as a desperate measure. Thus, the doctoral student working on the representation of a given topic in a defined genre and a specific space and time feels the local aspirations of his or her micropolitical research to be in tune with global perspectives, to the extent that they are both subject to the same supreme and single discursive order. Sheltered by this semiotic reduction of any emotional expression, real commitment and will of being and of being transformed that may be present in literary and artistic works, cultural expressions and social manifestations, the neoliberal academia triumphantly celebrates the end of the intellectual and of art, and the dissolution of the "learned city". At the very least, this permits the reterritorialisation of radically different world-views, unequal historical memories, conflictive social experiences and heterogeneous languages and literatures in the geopolitical networks of a new system of global domination: "Latin America and the Caribbean", "Western Hemisphere", "Iberian and Iberian-American Area", and the boundaries of a possible South Atlantic treaty that would include the countries on the African Atlantic coast, the Iberian Peninsula and Latin American and the Caribbean, under the tutelage of whatever world

superpower. Its academic missionaries enthrone the transculturations, multiculturalisms and hybridism implied by these *packages* with a *global & local*[28] dialectic that necessarily ignores its theological and legal roots in the *totum orbis* of the classical colonial age.

Such remappings of Latin America suppose and impose several things: the suspension of cultural memories, both old (pre-colonial popular memories have been homologated to the same type of global and malleable subalternity as that of the Aristotelian souls of the colonial missionaries) and modern (the constituents of Latin American independencies have been volatilised and replaced by predefined aesthetic modernities under the paradigms of the *international styles*) and, not lastly, the liquefaction of its literary canons and intellectual traditions in the *no-man's-land*[29] of texts and hypertexts and their subsequent intertextualities and pretexts.

The price of this methodological evaporation of historical cultural constellations and the elimination of their intellectual and artistic voices is the distressing sensation of being suspended in a void. "There is a real obsession in *cultural studies* with the search for a *space*"[30], writes Danielle Carlo in her doctoral thesis about "Americanisation." They always talk about the "'need for a democratic space for exchange' or they wonder 'where is the space for cultural studies to speak'". They always call for a place from which to speak, because they actually do not speak from any place. Their institutional condition transforms social time and space into the formal conditions for an empty discourse (Carlo, 2008).

The absence of a social framework on American campuses, and, increasingly, in European universities, in which humanities could construct an intellectual project in the sense in which it was carried out in the tradition of humanism and the enlightenment from Erasmo to Emerson, tends to rid its categories of any relevance. And to strangle the intellectual dialogue between the four walls of departmental microcultures cloistered inside the structures of the corporate organisation of science. The systems of grants, prizes, publications and academic honours ultimately seal off a system of discipline and censorship of administrated knowledge. For those instrumentally defined territories, such as linguistics, psychology and epistemology, this state of siege is not a problem. For literary studies, which must necessar-

28 Translators' note: Original in English.

29 Translators' note: Original in English.

30 Translators' note: Original in English.

ily grapple with the social and political reality inherent to any artistic work and any thought, this vacuum leads to a type of delirium. And the usual digressions at conferences and lectures, which can be passionately dedicated to an analysis of human rights in the 16th century and at the same time be unable to articulate a socially responsible reflection on the genocides occurring in real time and around the corner, are, in fact, schizophrenic.

In this respect, we must recall one of the favourite hobbies of Anglo-Saxon cultural studies since the cannons of the Cold War began to cool down: *border studies*[31], the resulting rhetorics of semiotic transits

The price of this methodological evaporation of historical cultural constellations and the elimination of their intellectual and artistic voices is the distressing sensation of being suspended in a void.

and rogues, iconic hybridisations and piracy, and the appropriate transcultural passports of a new corporate internationalism. This obsession with borders is perhaps a symptom of the absence of a social place that corporate academia produces with its own institutional inertia. But this anxious feeling of being suspended in air loaded with syntagmas that bear no relevance to the real world is what confers upon *homo academicus* his fervour to conquer new virtual territories. In this way, they are similar to colonial missionaries, with the only difference being that the old conversion of savages is redefined as new strategies of constructing post-colonial, post-historical post-subjects, and the promise of the kingdom of heaven is dressed with the icons of socialist cosmopolitanism and the anti-colonial internationalism of the previous century.

The historical comparison with the monastic orders is as politically incorrect as it is intellectually inescapable. It is well-known that their missionaries, upon arriving in an indigenous settlement, gave away crosses with true generosity. For the men and women of the ill-named polytheistic cultures—which should actually be called religious in a worldly sense because they sacredly invest all expressions of being

31 Translators' note: Original in English.

("every part of the heart is sacred for my people", Chief Seattle wrote in his time to the president of the United States)—no sacred object, one's own nor belonging to another, is in vain. Accordingly, they believed in the gift of the cross. Later, however, these same missionaries ominously warned their natives, converted without their knowledge into their acolytes, that the cross was not just any sign, but the great signifier that, lacking a referent, encompasses them all. To it and only to it must the sacrifice of gold, sweat and tears be offered. Simultaneously, these ministries identified all other religious objects and nature itself with evil.

Global missionaries today do not harass the gods, nor destroy their cults, nor uproot the ways of life that they preserved. All this was reduced to ashes long ago. What these missionaries pursue, however, with the same fervour as their theological predecessors, is a reconversion of the conversions, and the ensuing string of redefinitions, remappings and resignifications of their cultural memories and their literary and artistic expressions. In this way, the Aztec goddesses of *Pedro Páramo*[32] become signs of gender, in an identity strategy deconstructionistically robbed of its mythological entity, ontological substance and political potency. The cosmic rebellion of the earth goddesses in Abancay in *Los ríos profundos*[33] is also reconfigured in this way, as the representation of a subaltern subject without memory and without speech, and without roots in the dynamic order of the uncreated and infinite being in Incan world views. Or, under the same name of transculturation that in Rama, Arguedas and Roa Bastos entailed a civilising project of dialogue between gods, myths, words and ways of life, it is surreptitiously substituted with the neocolonial dialectic of the local and the global. And the sacrilegious mysteries of the *Cannibalist Movement* are redefined as the holy sacraments of modernity-consumption-of-signs. And if in its classical age, colonialism converted the Mayan and Aztec gods and goddesses into hybrid saints, the global redefinition and reconversion of these literary and artistic projects and traditions is useful today, with the same trivial efficacy, for the programmatic homologation of social and political identities in the semiotic networks of a worldwide disorder without memories, without gods and without being.

32 Translators' note: in English, Rulfo, Juan 1994 *Pedro Páramo*, translated from Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Grove Press).

33 Translators' note: in English, Arguedas, José María 1978 *Deep rivers*, translated from Spanish by Frances Horning Barraclough (Austin: University of Texas Press).

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The Andes: The metamorphosis and the particularisms of a region

Heraclio Bonilla

Abstract

This paper points out the analytical limitations of many social studies on the homogeneity of the Andean region carried out over the past thirty years. By taking "the Andes" as a totalising concept, one runs the risk of minimising the different identity anchorages that actually exist in the region. A historical analysis is needed that considers, in addition to the region's social, economic and political processes, the articulation between nation, class and ethnicity, as well as their mutual representation in each of the different national states. According to the author, analysing the processes of internal constitution of the different realities in the region, in constant metamorphosis, at the

Resumen

En esta ponencia, se señalan las limitaciones en los análisis efectuados en diversos estudios sociales acerca de la homogeneidad de la región andina en los últimos treinta años. Al tomar a "los Andes" como concepto totalizador, se corre el riesgo de minimizar los distintos anclajes identitarios que existen realmente en la región. Se torna necesario un análisis histórico que tenga en cuenta, además de los procesos sociales, económicos y políticos de la región, la articulación entre nación, clase y etnia, así como su representación recíproca en cada uno de los distintos estados nacionales. Indagar en los procesos de constitución interna de las distintas realidades de la región, en continua metamorfosis, en los albores del siglo

dawn of the twenty-first century and in the context of a globalised world, is an epistemological challenge to be undertaken.

XXI y en el contexto de un mundo globalizado, es un desafío epistemológico a concretar que señala el autor.

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Keywords

1| Communities **2|** Aboriginal Studies **3|** Andes **4|** State **5|** Nation **6|** Ethnic Groups **7|** Region

Palabras clave

1| *Comunidades* 2| *Indianismo* 3| *Andes* 4| *Estado* 5| *Nación* 6| *Etnias* 7| *Regiones*

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The Andes: The metamorphosis and the particularisms of a region[1]

The scenario

Over the past three decades, social studies focusing on the Andean region have strongly emphasised the unity and homogeneity of the region. The reasons are obvious: the particular historical density of the region, the burden of one of the most difficult geographies on the planet, and the characteristics of the indigenous population, which is still one of the most important groups in the nation as a whole. The focus on the regional dimension as a unit of analysis that results from the emphasis on homogeneity constitutes an important advantage over previous studies, as it allows for comparative studies that are indispensable for our understanding of a problem.

The risk, however, lies in the *reification* of the Andean dimension; that is, in thinking of the region as a kind of master key with the capacity to either explain or identify what is occurring within it. Under these terms, the Andes—as reality or as meta-concept—is an omnipresent dimension, immune to time and to history, whose homogeneity prevails over its profound regionalisms and localisms. These *Andeanisms* not only do not stand up to the evidence, but they are also based on tautological reasoning. What needs explaining becomes the explanation.

The limitations of this form of perceiving reality are not only of an analytical nature. They are even more serious when they avoid or minimise the profound *national* divisions in the region under the pretext of its homogeneity. Understanding, for example, why two Andean countries like Peru and Ecuador, which share everything, from their culture to their poverty, were nonetheless will-

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ing to engage in bloody confrontations until the recent past, is so important that it demands that we question this supposed Andean regional unity.

National peculiarity and singularity in the Andean region, like in all of Latin America, is not a recent phenomenon. It goes back at least to their beginnings as independent countries, as a result of the impact of the Bourbon reforms of the second half of the 18th century and the specific characteristics of the political process of emancipation. The *doctores* of Chuquisaca decided to convert colonial Charcas into today's Bolivia, fed up with their territory swinging back and forth like a pendulum between the Buenos Aires countryside and that of Abascal's Lima. If those from Quito and from Guayaquil had to temporarily lower their proud regional flags to grant their precarious national unity the name of the imaginary line of the equator[2], it was because their coexistence within Great Colombia was no longer either possible or desirable. These odd nationalisms, because of how they arise and because of their content, are not, of course, exclusive to the Andes. The same thing happened both in Artigas's *Banda Oriental*[3] to give way to contemporary Uruguay, and in the private lands of Dr. De Francia before they became the Paraguay that we know today.

These Andean *nationalisms*, reproduced and fuelled by the suspicion and fear of their neighbours, not only give shape to different and contrasting national units. These differences are also evident within national territories, either in a consolidated form or in process. Although it seems paradoxical, this is the case of the indigenous peasantry and their respective *communities*; that is, the very groups and institutions that were and continue to be understood as the paradigms of regional unity.

As is well-known, *indigenous communities* were the result of the first process of mass urbanisation, implemented by Viceroy Toledo in the mid-16th century to facilitate colonisation and the efficient allocation of the native labour force to the Spanish companies. From New Granada to Charcas, the process of settlement followed the same model and pattern. However, if you travel across the Andean countryside, from Papayán, Colombia to Cochabamba, Bolivia, you will easily note their profound differences. In Colombia, such communities almost do not exist, because a large part of their in-

2 Translators' note: ecuador in Spanish.

3 Translators' note: "Eastern Strip".

digenous *resguardos*[4] are recent creations, after the peasants noted that organised in this way they increased their chances of receiving support from the central government. In Ecuador, indigenous territory disappeared as a result of the permanent migration of Indians during the colonial period. It is true that Saraguros, Otavalos and Salasacas are identifiable ethnic enclaves, but the immense majority of *indigenous communities* there are also recent creations, comprised of former settlers of the *haciendas*, the famous *huasipungueros*, who joined together in these villages when their secular link to the *haciendas* in the Ecuadorian highlands was dissolved in 1964. This was not

National *peculiarity and singularity in the Andean region, like in all of Latin America, is not a recent phenomenon.*

the situation in either Peru or Bolivia, despite the fact that it is also impossible to ignore the profound regional diversity of the peasant community in these countries.

Affirming that this is so would perhaps not be of great interest if it was limited to an academic exercise of no consequence. However, its implications go beyond the recognition of the profound national divisions in the context of the Andean region to suggest important dimensions for understanding and explaining the rationality of the recent political process. Due to space limitations, I would like to illustrate the importance of recognising this heterogeneity, both national and regional, by circumscribing my analysis to the political behaviour of Andean peasants.

In Bolivia in 1952, and in Peru in 1969, the peasants managed to impose deep agrarian reforms on their respective landowning classes, bringing about an end to the traditional *latifundios*. This did not happen in Ecuador or Colombia. The apparent homogeneity of the Andean region, in effect, obscures a very different articulation of its agrarian classes, the final results of which include precisely either the

4 Translators' note: reserves.

change or the persistence of the system of land tenure. In the cases of Colombia and Ecuador, there is essentially a powerful landowning class and a weak and fragmented peasantry, while in Peru and Bolivia the relationship is exactly the opposite, with a weak landowning class and a strong peasantry.

But the strength of the peasantry in the cases of Bolivia and Peru compared with the weakness and dispersion of the peasants in Ecuador and Colombia is also a consequence of the different trajectories of their respective communities. Upon disappearing or being fragmented, as in the case of the two latter national experiences, the peasantry was not in conditions to lay siege to the lands of the *latifundios*, which is what happened in Peru and Bolivia and, to include another significant experience, in Emiliano Zapata's Morelos, in the context of the Mexican upheaval of 1910. For this same reason, the timid agrarian reform of 1964 in Ecuador, resulting in the dissolution of the *concertaje* and the *huasipungo* as archaic expressions of the exploitation of the indigenous labour force, could not have happened without the resistance of the *hacienda* settlers, contradicting those analyses that consider the behaviour of these peasants to be passive because they were wrapped up in the paternalist mantle of the landowner.

In summary, the recognition of the Andes as one of the great cultural areas of the hemisphere—its undeniable economic and political articulation in the pre-Columbian period and a large part of the colonial period—should give way to examining the process of internal fragmentation and the implications of this fragmentation for the understanding of contemporary economics and politics. But an analysis of this type cannot and must not ignore that it is a process of fragmentation in a very specific cultural context that prevents a more complete and profound dislocation.

The state of the art

Recognising the territorial and regional fragmentation of the Andean world is one thing; constructing the concept of "region" is quite another. In effect, a region can be defined in multiple ways, depending on the perspective and the desired objectives. In economic terms, for example, it is the flow of goods and people that defines a region. In cultural terms, it is the expanse of the same patterns that marks its borders, or the adherence to a set of specific norms and values. In political terms, the region is defined by the sphere of power and authority exercised by the dominant group. In contrast, the central element in the definition of a region when using a historical coordinate is the historic conviction of being a part of a region shared by the social groups that inhabit it, as

Pierre Vilar (1962) has demonstrated for modern Catalonia. A historical consciousness of this type is the synthesis of a set of forces, from material forces to symbolic ones, which motivate the people's actions and allow them to identify their interests with a territory.

A definition of the region based on these terms has not been applied to the historical research of the Andean region. The most important dimensions that have been used to characterise the region are of an economic, political and ethnic nature. I will briefly mention the most significant factors in the context of the diverse moments in the history of the Andes.

For a long time, the pre-Columbian world was associated and identified with the Inkas and the Tawantinsuyo Empire. This is clearly mistaken, as it confuses the two centuries of the Inkan Empire with the millennia prior to its existence; that is, from the moment in which the first human groups appeared until the beginning of the expansion from the Tawantinsuyo under Pacachutec Inca. That the Tawantinsuyo consolidated itself in so little time can only be explained by the fact that the Inkas, like the Spanish after them, took advantage of economic and political institutions and mechanisms of proven efficiency utilised by the groups that preceded them. It is the analysis of these foundations of Andean civilisation, then, that should be prioritised.

The study of the Tawantinsuyo, based on information from the chronicles that continue to be one of the principal sources of our knowledge about them, focused almost exclusively on the Inkan State and on Cuzco, the imperial capital. For the same reason, almost everything about the mechanisms of incorporation of different regional kingdoms into the heart of the empire was unknown, as were the workings within this system. It was the discovery and application of the *Visitas del Reyno* of the Chupaycho, in Huanuco, and of the Lupaka, in the Andean altiplano—that is, of true sociological surveys, commissioned by the early colonial administration—that has allowed recent research to shift its focus away from the centre and to study those ethnic groups that were dominated by Cuzco. This is an example of regional ethnohistory that has modified and deepened our knowledge of the Tawantinsuyo. The region, in this case, is defined in strictly ethnic terms, in the sense of territories controlled by a specific leadership with established domestic units that comprised the kingdom. This "ethnic territoriality" was not necessarily continuous and contiguous. Given the colonising mechanisms established by the Inka State through the *mitimaes*, or the control of thermal floors by peasant groups segregated by their ethnic origins, its territoriality exhibited very large spatial discontinuities.

Throughout the colonial period, on the other hand, mining was the dominant sector in the economy due to its ability to generate extensive and profound linkages with different regions, and also with other productive sectors. Thus, the mining sector influenced the functioning of other economies and spaces, operating as a real centre of growth and imposing an authentic regional division of labour throughout the Andes. The pioneering works of Carlos Sempat Assadourian (1979; 1982) on early Andean mining and those of Enrique Tandeter (1992) on the late colonial period have clearly demonstrated the extent of regional articulation generated by the mining sector. Assadourian, for example, has indicated very precisely how textile production in Quito, sugar and cotton plantations on the Peruvian coast, mule-breeding in ranches in Córdoba, the production of *yerba mate* in the Guaraní plantations and wine and fabric production in the Argentinian north all found their sense and their meaning in the fact that they could efficiently supply the mining market in Potosí, one of the main markets in the Andean economic space. The constitution of these diverse regional markets was, therefore, the result of the circulation of silver as money and of its equivalence with other commodities within the Andean space prior to its exportation to Europe. Because of their narrow focus on the effects of the circulation of Latin American silver in European economies, previous studies of the metal overlooked this reality and did not permit the study of important problems such as the appearance of regional markets and a monetary economy. The pioneering works mentioned above were continued by other scholars of the Andean world, like Juan Carlos Garavaglia (1984), Luis Miguel Glave (1989), Tristán Platt (1982) and Antonio Mitre (1981), whose works have become one of the most important currents of research and knowledge of the history of the Andes.

The economic axis has been the line of study pursued in these works about the colonial period and the role of the mining sector in the regional polarisation of its space. Hence, regions were understood as spaces constituted by the flow of goods, both consumer and capital goods, from different regional centres towards the dominant market of Potosí.

The study of 19th century Andean regional history has focused on two different moments. The first is the first half of the 19th century, one of the most obscure periods in terms of knowledge, which corresponds to a phase of economic contraction caused by the lack of significant primary goods that could be exported to the international market. This first half of the century was usually thought of as the scenario of a parochialisation of national spaces, where the traditional

latifundio—the only significant productive unit—had barely produced the surpluses necessary to support the groups that lived in the *hacienda* and to be used as offerings to ensure the loyalties that linked the landowner to his followers. The recent works of Paul Gootenberg (1989) significantly changed this idea. Using economic and political parameters, Gootenberg has demonstrated the existence of the Peruvian north and south as regional blocks, expressed in different structures and inspiring different economic policies, set against each other by a quite fragile "national" state. As far as I am aware, this type of study does not yet exist for other Andean countries.

Recognising the territorial and regional fragmentation of the Andean world is one thing; constructing the concept of "region" is quite another.

The other moment corresponds to the second half of the 19th century, when cacao in Ecuador, silver in Bolivia, and guano in Peru made exports and the external sector the dominant areas in their respective economies once again. The works of Andrés Guerrero (1980) on cacao have demonstrated, for example, the mechanisms by which the production of cacao—though very traditional—nonetheless led to the emergence of the modern commercial, financial and even industrial sectors in Guayaquil and its surroundings. In the case of Bolivian silver, both Tristán Platt (1982) and Antonio Mitre (1981) have documented the regional transformations brought about as a result of the supply of labour and consumer goods for the dominant markets. In the case of Peru's guano, both Shane Hunt (1985) and Heraclio Bonilla (1974) have pointed out the changes caused by the reallocation of guano revenues by the Peruvian state, which managed these fiscal revenues. In this same context, the book by Nelson Manrique (1987) about the central Peruvian highlands in the second half of the 19th century draws the regional circuits and demonstrates the minor importance of revenues from the Peruvian fertiliser in this process, emphasising instead the fundamental role of the region's mining and ranching sectors for capital accumulation.

The first half of the 20th century is the period of consolidation of the external sector of the economies of the Andean countries.

In the case of Peru, exports consisted of a more diversified repertoire, while the banana replaced cacao in Ecuador, and tin replaced silver in Bolivia as a result of the falling price of silver in the international market since 1895. Latin American social thought of the 1960s termed the productive units consolidated as a result of this process "enclaves". This term refers to the vertical articulation of companies that produced these goods with their parent companies abroad, of which they were no more than subsidiaries. This form of articulation prevented the development of horizontal linkages within the region and, thus, within the country in which these "enclaved" companies operated. Hence, the very definition of "enclave" contradicts that of region. The most recent research has questioned the concept and has demonstrated the profound transformations brought about by the consolidation of the external sector. Foreign control of its working capital does not mean that all the factors of production or consumer goods came from abroad. Sugar cane workers and those working in copper extraction came from different regions within each national space, as did consumer goods for the reproduction of the labour force in tin mines and in banana plantations on the Guayaquil coast. The state, as weak as it may have been, also benefited from the income generated through taxes, and public spending was another mechanism by which these products and the companies that produced them helped to give shape to new regional economies, or to consolidate the existing ones.

The second half of the 20th century is marked by two very distinct phases. The first includes the three decades from mid-century to the beginning of the 1980s; a period characterised by a significant process of growth of the cities, the expansion of the industrial sector and social and political upheavals in the rural areas. In political terms, it was the recurrence of "populisms", under a clear military leadership, as illustrated by the cases of Velasco Alvarado in Peru, Rodríguez Lara in Ecuador and Torres in Bolivia, whose governments tried, with differing results, to eradicate the colonial foundations of their respective economies and societies and to allow the inclusion of important sectors of the popular classes onto the political stage. The failure of and the disenchantment with these policies constitute the context in which new changes were introduced in the 1980s, whose application, though still in process, have already shown signs of new situations of conflict.

To be brief, it turns out that populist policies of class conciliation are only feasible to the extent that they permit the economies to grow, but they ultimately lead to dead-ends and result in economic and political chaos because of the irreconcilable nature of conflicting class interests. These were the underpinnings for the application of severe stabi-

lisation policies, encouraged by the international financial organisations (the so-called "Washington Consensus"), including the privatisation of public assets, the opening of markets, the control of public spending, and the complete dismantling of policies of solidarity and assistance. That these market policies are also thought to be the indispensable anchors of democracy is not just a minor paradox of the current era.

The deepening of a form of capitalism that has no brakes or limitations could not but provoke a response. But the responses came from completely unexpected spaces and actors. In the face of the demolition of the labour, peasant and union movements and political parties that resulted from labour flexibility policies and the ineffectiveness of bureaucratic castes who arbitrarily took over the representation of workers and of those excluded from society, it was paradoxically the indigenous people and their organisations that led this resistance, with a completely unprecedented effectiveness in the political history of the region. They blocked roads, cut off supply to markets, brought pretentious leaders to their knees, evicted presidents from government palaces, and ultimately supported those who today occupy these posts and upon whose support their presence depends.

The last decade of the 20th century has seen the beginning of impressive social mobilisations, whose protagonists and actions produced, among other consequences, the removal of Presidents Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in Bolivia, and also the election of Alejandro Toledo in Peru. These mobilisations are, without a doubt, unprecedented, both for their magnitude and their scope. And it is not that they did not exist prior to these events, in a region where a large part of its rural and urban population is indigenous. Rather, it is the nature and the agenda of these mobilisations that has changed radically. Indeed, what were local and regional protest mobilisations against exclusion and exploitation are now social mobilisations, above all in Bolivia, that also seek the political control of the state. The recent victory of Evo Morales meets these characteristics.

These experiences take place in the context of the collapse of neopopulist policies and of the demise of the hegemonic neoliberal paradigm that required the dismantling of public policies and institutions, the full insertion of the economies of the region in the global market, and the untrammelled expansion of capitalism. In this context, the opposition would be expected to come from those social forces that in the not-so-distant past built their identity in response to capitalist expansion and to its new forms of domination. But the labour and peasant movements, to mention only the most well-known, disappeared as if by magic from the current social scene. As paradoxi-

cal as it may be, the vanguard of this opposition is actually made up of important segments of the indigenous population.

The classic contradiction between capital and labour has been displaced by a new contradiction, in which culture, or civilisation, as Samuel J. Huntington would have it in his well-known book, constitutes the arena of this struggle. It is undeniable that this dimension exists in the current conflict, as the struggle for representation and autonomy of the *kataristas* in Bolivia and those from the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) in Ecuador show, but if we do not want to convert this struggle into a clash of signs and symbols, it is necessary to be sensible, to consider the material dimension of the conflict as well. This is not a simple task because theory is either silent or ambiguous with respect to the nature of the articulation between *class* and *ethnicity*.

Outstanding tasks

A brief summary of the studies of the regional history of the Andean world suffices to note that the greatest advances in historical research of the region have occurred in this field. Moreover, the analysis of the regional peculiarities of each country has allowed a deeper understanding of them. In this precise sense, "national" history can be better understood as the contradictory history of the regions that comprise it, each of them with their own structure, rhythms, and specific weight in the country as a whole. In summary, this type of research is much more relevant than the superficial national histories, which by mistakenly assuming the uniformity of the country, impede our knowledge of its internal configuration and the peculiarity of the process.

However, these regional histories have privileged the economic dimension in the descriptions of their respective spaces, by claiming that the flows between the centres of production and their respective markets constitute the foundation of the regions. It is still necessary, therefore, to examine the mechanisms of articulation of variables such as population, culture, politics, ethnicity and social classes with those economic variables in the process of the constitution and consolidation of the regions. It is also necessary to study the interregional articulation in order to understand the complexity of the process followed by the country as a whole. The classic book by Emilio Sereni, *Capitalismo e mercato nazionale*, provides a very precise example of the scope that can be achieved by works that pay attention to the interregional tensions within the historical trajectory of a nation.

On the other hand, the analyses of the linkages generated by export economies, with all their importance, have undermined the

study of another type of region, possibly more significant from the point of view of the volume of the population they contain. I am referring to those regions that were not conditioned by export economies but were self-centred. This is the case of those rural spaces with significant indigenous populations that had peasant plots, indigenous communities and traditional *haciendas* as their most important economic and social units. In these cases the regional bond was cultural, even though the economic and the political dimensions also played a role in their internal articulation.

State, nation and ethnicity in the Andean region

January and February 1995 were the scene of a belligerent confrontation between detachments of the armed forces of Ecuador and Peru all along the Condor mountain range. These incidents were certainly not new, because in January 1981 a military conflict had broken out in the Paquisha zone. Also, the relationship between Peru and Colombia was affected by this type of tension regarding border limits in the 1920s and 1930s. In both cases, peace accords were necessary to put an end to these disputes. These conflicts were, and are, national; a definition that in principle alludes to actors that have a national scope and whose extreme expression is the decision to go to war in defence of the territory. However, the "nationalism" of the Andean countries conceals the very diverse cleavages that internally fragment the countries of the region, from spatial cleavages to social ones, including racial and ethnic divisions. Inquiry into the articulation between "nation", "class" and "ethnicity", as well as their reciprocal representation in their respective "national" states, constitutes one of the central issues of a new research agenda, whose results may allow us to deepen our understanding of the internal configuration of these realities in their relation with the national situation. Looking at the period between the wars of independence to 1995, and studying the most significant moments during this period, this research should look into the meaning of the different metamorphoses of nationalism in the Andes, as well as the process of internal fragmentation of the region, without this rupture having completely disarticulated the central characteristics of Andean civilisation. It is worth emphasising that the understanding of this bi-secular situation is only possible to the extent that we recognise that the present encapsulates, in a contradictory and unresolved way, the historic processes that were briefly summarised in the previous pages.

In recent years, studies of the national configuration of the Andean countries, and particularly, of the role of the popular classes within each national experience, have increasingly attracted attention

(Bonilla, 1980). But these studies present two important flaws that prevent a thorough understanding of the issue. The first is their unilateral character: they consider only one dimension, that of the popular classes, while setting aside their articulation with the ownership classes. As important as the role of the popular classes may have been, especially the peasantry, it is obvious that the configuration—or the truncation—of the national process is the result of the interrelation of all social groups grounded in a reality. The second is the excessive parochialism of these studies. Very circumscribed studies, even within each regional space (Manrique, 1981), have been very important for deepening our understanding of the role of peasant groups in this process, as well as that of the shared meaning of the concept of "nation". However, the very nature of these studies makes a greater generalisation of their findings difficult, and impedes an understanding of the potential role of these same actors and the characteristics of the processes when coordinates or variables that differ from a specific experience are present. The exception to this localism in studies of the Andean region is the book by Florencia Mallon (1995), even though it compares the peasants from the Mantaro valley and Cajamarca in Peru with those from Mexico during the French occupation.

The role of ethnicity in the research on national constitution is of even greater consequence. Indeed, the large majority of studies about nation and nationalism focus above all on the role of social classes in this process (Bloom, 1975). From this standpoint, as a result of its multiethnic composition, the entire Andean region constitutes an extraordinary laboratory, because including the ethnic dimension allows a deeper analysis of the national situation. It is one thing for the dominant class in a society to be able to confound its interests with those of the entire society, from a position of state power. It is entirely another thing for the dominant class to want or be able to confound itself with demographic groups whose language, colour and history it does not share.

The study of state building in the Andean region and in the context of post-colonial societies also presents important difficulties, both because the theories employed in the analysis do not pay attention to this post-colonial dimension and because the studies carried out have not convincingly demonstrated the articulation between their respective bureaucracies and the dominant classes of each country (Stepan, 1978). This difficulty is that much greater because Latin America is a clear example of the unsuccessful efforts to build nations from states, among other reasons, because the emergence of the latter preceded that of the respective national societies.

The main current in studies of the articulation between state and nation in the region holds that nation, nationalism, bourgeoisie and national market are concomitant, and that the peculiarity of their national process is due to the inexistence or the fragility of their internal markets and their bourgeoisie. The studies that share this premise present some difficulties. The first is their Eurocentrism, to the extent that they take the experience of national constitution in the countries of Western Europe as a universal paradigm. The second lies in treating nationalism and nation as an absolute reality, and not as what they effectively are: processes under construction. In addition,

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given the ethnic multiplicity of the countries of the Andean region, more precise inquiry is needed into the content of nationalism and the concrete meaning of words like "nation" and "native land" granted by different groups in society, instead of taking for granted the meanings ascribed to them in other national contexts.

The specific conjunctures that serve as a test for the analysis of this region are the wars of independence between 1810 and 1830 and the modern and contemporary national and social wars that convulsed the Andean countries: the War of the Pacific (1879–1884), the Putumayo war and the incidents in Leticia (1920–1930), the Chaco War (1932–1936) and the conflict between Peru and Ecuador (1914–1995). These are moments of national crisis, and therefore they are those that best reveal the consistency and meaning of the national situation, in which the articulation between *representation* and *praxis* can be found; that is, what ethnic groups and social classes did and did not do, and the meaning of their actions and their silences. It is a large-scale research project, and should therefore be separated into various stages and include the participation of a number of researchers working on a coherent research agenda.

The study of the wars of independence, between 1810 and 1830, puts special emphasis on the meaning of the participation of the

indigenous peasantry in the uprisings that broke out in the central Andes and southern Colombia. From Popayán and Pasto in Colombia to Cochabamba in Bolivia, the mobilisations that included an indigenous presence should be analysed using coordinates of space, indigenous leadership, internal cohesion of the group, the nature of the political and social articulation of the elite and the colonial bureaucracy, the linkages with the army and the different strata of the religious authorities and ultimately, the conjunctural changes in the war.

When analysing the participation of the indigenous peasantry in the wars of independence, recent historical studies have established a very precise chronology of significant conjunctures. The great revolutionary cycle begun by Tupac Amaru and the Katari brothers in the central and southern Andes would be the most important in terms of the commitment and the agenda pursued by the rebels. The rebellions of 1780, in fact, involved vast sectors of the indigenous population, at the same time that, beyond the rhetoric of the leaders, their praxis produced profound gaps in the articulation of these colonies with the metropolis. But the defeat of these uprisings, and above all their brutal physical and symbolic repression, ended this first cycle and opened a new one with completely different characteristics.

The second cycle corresponds to the same setting of the wars of independence, between 1810 and 1824, in which the leadership of the rebellions was exercised by the *criollos*. Now, the indigenous population was recruited by deceit or by force, both by patriots and by realists, to be used as cannon fodder. Examining these mobilisations of the indigenous peasantry under the sole parameter of their adherence to or their dissidence with the political control of Spain leads to the conclusion that there was no independent participation of the Indians in the independence process after the great rebellions of 1780. This would be nothing less than announcing their complete irrelevance in the national constitution of the countries throughout the 19th century (Lynch, 1973).

The clear limitations of this historiography justify the need to revisit the problem of the participation of the popular classes, especially the indigenous peasantry, in the wars of independence, from a completely new perspective, in which the very rationality of these mobilisations is studied, instead of looking at them only in terms of their meaning for the political separation of these regions from Spain, as was previously the case.

In this comparative analysis, the experience of the participation of the Colombian peasantry, both Indian and non-Indian, is of particular importance as it allows a better evaluation of the meaning of indigenous participation in the struggles for separation. Indeed, in the

case of the central Andes, the peasantry was mainly indigenous, which introduces the ethnic dimension into the analysis—an important component in the internal cohesion of communities and in the historical memory as a trigger for the mobilisations. Conversely, in New Granada, with the exception of the southern provinces, the indigenous component of the peasantry decreased significantly as a consequence of the early internal dismantling of the *resguardos* (González, 1970). It would be important to know to what extent the absence of this ethnic dimension affected the participation of the peasantry in the national wars.

But Colombia's experience is also exceptional in terms of the intervention of its peasantry—this time indigenous—in this conflict. I refer to the extensive, prolonged and relatively successful actions of the Indian peasants from Pasto and their leader Agustín Agualongo in opposition to the patriotic army and its fierce defence of Fernando VII (Ortiz, 1974). Similar experiences, such as that of the Iquicha peasants in Peru after the battle of Ayacucho in 1824 (Bonilla, 1996) and that of the Araucanos in Chile (Bengoa, 1990), do not compare to that of Pasto in terms of their tenacity and their achievements.

Given the spatial and economic heterogeneity in which these mobilisations occurred, it is unreasonable to hope to find a single pattern that explains their appearance and their outcome. Nonetheless, the existing literature (Lynch, 1994) allows us to suggest as a hypothesis that the mobilisations from 1810 to 1830 largely occurred outside the central scenarios of the great revolutionary cycle of 1780, in Indian spaces with weak ethnic cohesion and a mainly *mestizo* leadership, in which their articulation with the *criollo* elite, the army and the local church was more profound. The intensity of indigenous participation, in this understanding, was a result of the agenda proposed by their leaders and of the advances and retreats of the conjuncture of the war.

In this context, the experience of Great Colombia between 1820 and 1830 is also of great importance, as it allows an examination of the nature of the local and regional forces that disrupted an important attempt to avoid the complete internal fragmentation of this northern region after the dissolution of the colonial pact. As is well known, and despite the rebellion of the neighbourhoods in Quito, the final meaning of nationalism in Ecuador has much more to do with Santa Fe de Bogotá than with Madrid. Moreover, the national compromise did not completely terminate the internal dissent between Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. Davis's unpublished thesis (1983) is, as far as I know, the only attempt to describe these events, which demand a new analysis in order to fully understand the meaning of this rupture in relation to the national situation.

The analysis of the national wars of the countries of the Andean region during the 19th and 20th centuries constitutes a different approach to the study of this situation. These national wars broke out several decades after the formal establishment of independent states and countries, when their respective ruling classes took for granted the existence of national societies, in which all classes and ethnic groups that made up these societies were naturally expected to have an active involvement in the defence of the nation (Arze, 1987). Thus, the significant war-time conjunctures selected for study would be the War of the Pacific, which occupied the militaries of Bolivia, Chile and Peru between 1879 and 1884; the conflicts in Putumayo and Leticia, which involved Colombia and Peru in the 1920s and 1930s; the Chaco War that saw Bolivia and Paraguay in military conflict between 1932 and 1936; and the several wars between Ecuador and Peru between 1914 and 1995. Some studies, including excellent ones, have examined the behaviour of one or another group of the national society in some of these conflicts, and their results constitute the starting point for further studies. But these studies, as mentioned previously, are either very specific or they do not consider the articulation between those that participated and the other groups that were also part of those national societies.

As important as these studies are, the analysis of national conflicts should also be undertaken from a different perspective. In the context of the crisis initiated by the war, an analysis of the role played by the different classes and ethnic groups would shed light on the nature of their adherence to or their disengagement from the idea of nation and state as proposed by the landowning classes, as well as on the content of the alternatives deployed by these groups. Similarly, to the extent that these national conflicts occurred in societies where the ethnic dimension was still important, the proposed research would expose the mechanisms of the exclusion of the indigenous peasantry in their respective national contexts, the consequences of this for national non-integration, and the alternative and changing understandings of the concept of nation imagined by these groups and processed during the conflict. In addition, attempts by the national states to discipline and obtain the obedience of these different groups in the context of a national war, and the different groups' response to these attempts, constitute additional dimensions for the analysis of the strength of the political articulation between the state and its societies, the character of the state itself and the limits of its control.

The study of the outcome of these conflicts is another important element for the analysis of the national question. The military defeats of the countries embroiled in these wars triggered the challenges

to the landowning classes and the search for different political alternatives. Bolivia's national revolution in 1952 would not have been possible without the defeat of the army and the poorly armed militia during the Chaco War, just as the "Glorious May Revolution"—the insurrection in 1944 that returned power to José María Velasco Ibarra—can be largely explained by Ecuador's military defeat in 1941, while Manuel González Prada's profound questioning of the viability of Peru as a nation was based on the debacle of Peru in the 1879 war against Chile.

As Anderson (1988) has suggested, the presence of a solid landowning class and a strong labour movement, like in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, resulted in dictatorships, while Venezuela, with a weak landowning class and a weak labour movement, was the model of democracy. The intermediate situations were Colombia, with a limited democracy, and Bolivia, which has been a permanent roller coaster; the former with a solid landowning class and an inexistent labour movement, and the latter with the opposite: a strong labour movement and a landowning class destroyed by the national revolution of 1952.

On the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, the national and regional metamorphoses of the Andes continue, though in a much more pronounced fashion and in a context marked by a new type of globalisation.

For the entire Andean region, the situations discussed above might be analysed utilising the coordinates suggested by Anderson for the Southern Cone.

Nevertheless, in the Andean case, the articulation of these coordinates, as well as their representatives, are entirely different. Due to space limitations, I will illustrate this suggestion by considering only one aspect: the articulation of the two agrarian classes, landowners and peasants.

A look at the situation of the agrarian classes from Bolivia to Colombia clearly reveals two opposite configurations. On the one hand, Colombia and Ecuador have a powerful and hegemonic landowning class and a dispersed and weak peasantry. The weakness of the peasantry is evident in the destruction of traditional Indian villages, with one of the results being, for example, that they were unable to

impose a profound agrarian reform on their landowning classes. The uprising of the CONAIE in Ecuador with its celebrated leader, Dr. Luis Macas, is very recent and is not only a consequence of the balance of agrarian classes.

In contrast, until recently, Bolivia and Peru constituted two examples of strong peasants and movements and a weak landowning class. In both cases, the expression of this correlation was the destruction of the *haciendas* through profound agrarian reforms. The disarticulation of the *haciendas* would not have been possible if the peasants' "external siege" had not occurred, which depended upon the presence and the dynamism of the *indigenous communities* as an indispensable space for the reproduction of their peasant and ethnic identity.

A digression is necessary here. In Emiliano Zapata's state of Morelos, like in the Andean valleys of Peru and Bolivia, the transformations of the system of land tenure would not have been possible without the active mobilisation of their independent peasantry, grouped into traditional Indian villages, whose spokespersons protested, with or without reason, against the permanent dispossession of their lands by the big landowners in the area. In this context, the behaviour of the settlers, *arrendires* in the Andean highlands and *yanaconas* on the Peruvian coast, was very different, because they basically acted in defence of the interests of the landowning class, often forcefully resisting "invasions" from outside.

In contrast, in Ecuador the timid "agrarian reform" of 1964, evident in the termination of the *concertaje* and the *huasipungueros*, was partly motivated by the internal resistance of the *hacienda* settlers (Guerrero and Martínez, 1991), which challenges the hasty judgements about the servants' passivity as a result of the paternalism of their landlords.

Despite its importance, this peculiar balance of agrarian classes alone, along with its dynamic, are not at all sufficient to fully explain the national peculiarity of the Andean region. We must also consider that spatial and ethnic disintegration continues to challenge the national configurations of the region—even in Colombia, the most ethnically homogeneous country in the region, yet with considerable regional cleavages (Bushnell, 1996).

The separation of Panama in 1903 both confirms and adds new coordinates to our understanding of this process and the meaning of nationalism in Latin America. To begin with, Colombia, despite its supposed ethnic homogeneity, had and continues to have very significant regional fractures, to the extreme that a regional identity is much more noticeable than a national identity. These fissures were clearly ex-

pressed, for example, in the context of the dissolution of Great Colombia, with the appearance and rupture of different sovereign states in the more recent past, and with the current isolation of zones like Urabá and the Darien. The "national" state was unable to establish its national authority, nor could it build a nation from above, as was the dream shared by many in the 19th century. The reasons for this failure are certainly multiple: they go from material precariousness to the physical breakup of the territory, from the inexistence of a truly national class to the absence of values and symbols that won the support of the population.

Throughout the 19th century, the geographical location of Panama made it the territory furthest away from the political control of Bogotá. Hence, its incorporation into the Colombian territory implied more expenditures from Colombia's precarious finances than the benefits ultimately conferred by its inclusion. This situation of marginality, with the precarious links of administrative articulation with Bogotá breaking down, was evident as early as 1821, 1831 and 1840, when Panama's elite, invoking the colonial premises of a sovereignty that can be delegated and can therefore be recovered, negotiated formulas and mechanisms for a new integration that would still preserve their privileges. This position was strengthened by centrifugal forces clearly directed against centralism and complete subordination. The old dilemmas between the interior and the coast, with the concomitant conflicting attitudes and interests of their inhabitants, and the internationalisation of the population brought by migratory movements associated with the construction of the railway and gold fever in California, helped to strengthen an early cosmopolitanism in the population that was inconsistent with the deep-rooted traditionalism of the Andean interior. It was, therefore, fertile ground for the liberal dogma and for all its representatives to repeat this belief in all political arenas, although it is still improbable that the liberalism of the elites coincided with that of Victoriano Lorenzo. That the outcome in Panama occurred with the strengthening of centralism enacted by the conservatives in power, after the bloody experience of the Thousand Days War, was certainly not a simple coincidence and was anything but fortuitous.

But Panama was not only a crossroads for its internal forces; it was also the terrain for the action and the playing out of international forces. In the hemisphere, these international forces form a straight line that goes from the defining moment of the Monroe Doctrine against the threat of the Holy Alliance to 1898, with the definitive defeat of the already anachronistic Spanish rule and the separation of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, which could not be stopped despite Bolívar's premonitory warnings and Martí's actions. For Roosevelt

and the interests he represented, the secession of Panama was essential for the consolidation of the hegemony of the United States, as the entire history of the 20th century has demonstrated beyond a doubt. But those who subscribe to a conspiracy theory should nonetheless remember that national forces and interests, as powerful as they may be, always have domestic complexities and act in favourable settings.

The separation of Panama in 1903 constitutes, then, a decisive moment that brought to an end Latin America's secular experience, which had been initiated with the rupture of the colonial pact with Spain in the 1820s. At the same time, it was the starting point of a new era, with multiple consequences for at least the three actors involved. For the empire, it led to the consolidation of its hegemony, facilitated by the numbing of the consciousness of its workers who enjoyed access to the spoils of the empire. For Colombia, it resulted in the complete redesign of its economic space and its articulation with the outside world, while its collective consciousness shifted from outrage to oblivion. It also laid the foundations for understanding the rationality of the decisions of its ruling class, as demonstrated by Leticia in the conflict with Peru and by the policies of energy resources. For the Panamanians it meant that they finally understood that regional identity and national identity are not one and the same, and that in the attempt to attain a new type of cohesion, the Pyrrhic victory of 1903 opened up new channels: the struggle against the imposed protectorate and the recovery of the canal.

On the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, the national and regional metamorphoses of the Andes continue, though in a much more pronounced fashion and in a context marked by a new type of globalisation. How this situation will be resolved is uncertain, and, as Hobsbawm said (2007), as historians fortunately are not prophets, they are not required to supply an answer.

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LATIN AMERICAN DIALOGUES

Tomás Moulian: Itinerary of a Chilean intellectual

Interviewed by Emir Sader, Juan Carlos Gómez Leyton and Horacio Tarcus

Abstract

In this interview, Tomás Moulian, a key figure of Chilean critical thought, offers an overview of his personal history and the intellectual political journey that he followed during the changes in his country. His first readings, the writers that affected him in his youth, his first steps as an activist and the whole process of his schooling, his accession to power and the overthrow of the *Unidad Popular* government. Then, the long period of the Pinochet dictatorship, when he developed a fundamental part of his theoretical work. In the middle of the transition to democracy, he pointed to the high price of the concessions granted in order to carry out the transition process. Reflexively, lac-

Resumen

En esta entrevista, Tomás Moulian, referencia ineludible del pensamiento crítico chileno, brinda un panorama de su historia personal y el recorrido político intelectual que transitó a la par de la realidad de su país. Las primeras lecturas, los autores que lo marcaron en su juventud, sus primeros pasos en la militancia y todo el proceso de formación, acceso al poder y derrocamiento del gobierno de la Unidad Popular. Luego, el período de la larga dictadura pinochetista, donde desarrolla una parte fundamental de su obra teórica. En pleno período de transición a la democracia, señala el alto precio de las concesiones otorgadas para llevar a cabo este proceso. De modo reflexivo, sin dogmatismos, Moulian utiliza el

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king dogmatism, Moulian uses the study of Chile's political history as a means to intervene in and influence the present, following the tradition of critical intellectuals committed to their times.

estudio de la historia política de Chile como medio para interpelar e influir en el presente, siguiendo la tradición de los intelectuales críticos comprometidos con su tiempo.

Keywords

1| Chile **2|** Unidad Popular **3|** Lefts **4|** Neoliberalism **5|** Democracy **6|** Dictatorship

Palabras clave

1| *Chile* **2|** *Unidad Popular* **3|** *Izquierdas* **4|** *Neoliberalismo* **5|** *Democracia* **6|** *Dictadura*

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Tomás Moulian: Itinerary of a Chilean intellectual[1]

Tomás Moulian Emparanza, sociologist, social analyst and political historian, is one of the most relevant and influential thinkers and intellectuals in contemporary Chilean social sciences. He shares this place with the social and popular historian Gabriel Salazar and the sociologist Manuel Antonio Garretón Merino, both winners of national prizes in History and Humanities, and Social Sciences, respectively. Without a doubt, the next national award, whether it be for history or for humanities, should be given to Moulian in recognition of the forty years of his intellectual and academic trajectory and, especially, of his important work, including his book *Chile actual: anatomía de un mito*, acclaimed as "the most influential book of the 20th century" by the distinguished *Revista de Libros* of the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio*.

Moulian has been a privileged witness, protagonist and analyst of recent Chilean history, especially of the period from the mid-1960s to the present day. He has lived in the last four recognisable "Chiles" of this period: the Chile of the "rebels with a cause (1960–1970), popular Chile (1970–1973), dictatorial Chile (1973–1990) and current Chile (1990–2007).

The Chile of the "rebels with a cause" was an educational period for this intellectual, who committed himself early on to critical thought and the idea of social and political change, which he no doubt picked up from studying sociology in the Catholic University of Chile. The main intellectual "rebels" of the 1960s were trained at this school, including Manuel Antonio Garretón, José Joaquín Brunner, Rodrigo Ambrosio and Moulian himself, among others. With them, Moulian shares friendship, intellectual background and political activism.

Following a stay of three years in Europe, where he was influenced by Althusserian thought, he became a professor at the School of Sociology at the Catholic University and he taught the first

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

systematic courses and seminars on Marxism between 1967 and 1968. The University Reform—the great political achievement of the young Chilean "rebels with a cause" of the 1960s—had opened the doors to critical thought in this educational institution. Marxist thought was starting to be taught and to be studied, with Moulian being one of its main advocates, analysts and communicators.

During popular Chile, Moulian had an intellectual obsession, as he himself points out: studying the thought of Vladimir Ilich Lenin. His goal was not to redeem Lenin as a theorist of the socialist revolution, but rather, essentially, as a political analyst, with the ability to identify key political conjunctures within both the political process and the class struggle, with the aim of transforming them into real political possibilities for "making the revolution".

Moulian was a member of the *Movimiento de Acción Popular* (MAPU, Popular Action Movement), a political party founded in 1969 by the young rebels of Christian Democracy, led by Rodrigo Ambrosio. This party was not only meant to be revolutionary, but also, essentially Leninist; that is, a true vanguard of the proletariat, whose main task was to bring about the socialist revolution.

In those years, the political parties, whether they were from the left, right or centre, had a leading role in the political life of any society and political system. In other words, the parties ruled, commanded and were obeyed. As Gramsci would say, they were the "princes", and like all "princes", they needed advisers. Thus, intellectuals became the main advisers to the heads and the most important leaders of the parties. Moulian was one of the most distinguished intellectuals of the MAPU. He translated and thought what the party ordered and requested.

Moulian lived joyously, cheerfully, and, like many others, with "scares" in the period of popular Chile. The joy was due to the triumph of the popular forces of the *Unidad Popular*. And due to Salvador Allende, who won and entered the government after eighteen long years of maintaining that the institutional political way—that is, the electoral way—was a possible path to a popular, socialist and revolutionary government that would open the "doors to history", to begin building socialism peacefully and democratically.

The "scare" that many activists of the popular parties and followers of *Unidad Popular*, as well as the Allendistas, faced the day after their victory was the political responsibility to implement a political process which too many *Unidad Popular* leaders were not, it seemed, ready or able to carry out. In dictatorial Chile, between 1973 and 1990, the scares and the joy were transformed into terror, dreadful fear, permeating everything. Moulian faced the terror imposed upon

Chilean society by the dictatorship with political reflection and prolific intellectual activity. His central concern was "to write for the future", reflecting on the present and analysing the past. Under the influence of Benedetto Croce, the sociologist became a political historian. The analysis of recent Chilean history, specifically of the *Unidad Popular* period from 1970 to 1973, brought him to suggest that the only way to understand both its origin and its defeat was to analyse it over the long term. To this effect, Moulian considered it necessary to understand and, fundamentally, to know the Chilean history of the 20th century, especially that of the period between 1932 and 1973.

Moulian was converted into the "spoilsport" of the transition, into the very portrayal of the critique and thought of the non-concertacionista left.

La Unidad Popular y el conflicto político en Chile and *Democracia y socialismo* are today classic books and necessary reading for anyone who tries or seeks to analyse the topics addressed in these books, which are powerful books.

Moulian is an intellectual that thinks of socialism as a possible future, recovering the importance of democracy for Chilean socialism. His political reflections are essential for understanding the process of socialist renewal, of which he is one of the main agents and advocates.

The conjuncture of the plebiscite in 1988 and the subsequent transition to democracy, beginning in 1990, are political processes sharply criticised by Moulian. His criticism is especially directed at the refusal of the democratic political forces opposed to the military dictatorship to transform the plebiscite conjuncture into a "revolutionary" moment that would deepen the democratisation of Chilean society. According to his particular reading, the winning of the plebiscite was a tactical victory but a strategic defeat.

In 1993, in the context of the *Corporación de Estudios para Latinoamérica* (CIEPLAN, Latin American Studies Corporation), Moulian attended the seminar "Where is Chilean society headed?" where he presented his provocative thesis. His reflections were cruel

and blunt with respect to the praised and celebrated Chilean "success of the democratic transition and reinstatement".

El Chile actual: anatomía de un mito, to date the most important book by Moulian, is built on metaphors that describe the new Chilean society. It is the product of a fertile *ménage a trois*; that is, the "materialisation of an intercourse between military personnel, neoliberal intellectuals and national and transnational business leaders". The result, in sum, of a long-lasting revolutionary coitus (seventeen years) meant to produce today's Chile. We could say that the analysis of recent history and politics of Chilean society is divided into a before and after the publication of Moulian's book. Critical thought, especially, has been well-nourished by the different hypotheses presented in the book. But it is also the point of departure for constructing a critique of the criticism of Moulian's text.

Moulian was converted into the "spoilsport" of the transition, into the very portrayal of the critique and thought of the non-*concertacionista* left. From the academic trench, Moulian moved into contingent politics and became the "*generalísimo*"[2] to the Chilean Communist Party's presidential candidate, Gladys Marín, and later, Moulian himself became a presidential precandidate for the same party. Moulian's presidential venture was short-lived, lasting only eight months. In May 2005 he abandoned the presidential ship and went back to focus on his arduous, difficult and contradictory duties as the Dean of the *Universidad de Artes y Ciencias Sociales* (ARCIS, University of Arts and Social Sciences).

During this time, Moulian's pen, or more precisely his computer, did not rest. A small book came out at the end of 2004 in which he reviews the crises of politics, political parties, Lavinism and class consciousness in Chile today. Assuming that all crises have a negative aspect as well as a positive one, and based on the distinction between politics (praxis) and the political (institutional structure), Moulian reflects on the "danger that politics is being replaced with pseudopolitics". Moulian works with a modern conception of politics: as an activity that is articulated and thought of to build the future. Politics goes into crisis—it "agonises", Moulian says—when it loses this quality. And in Chile today, politics has become pseudopolitics, politics unable to conceive of the future. For Moulian, modern politics is, as well, learned. It has three key aspects: a theory, a diagnosis and a promise. While neoliberal or postmodern politics is illiterate, based only and exclusively on charisma (image).

2 This was the term for the intellectuals who worked on political campaigns.

Moulian does not abandon his early ideas from forty years ago. The centrality of political parties and the concern for the future we also find in two earlier texts: *El socialismo del siglo XXI. La quinta vía* (2002) and "El deseo de otro Chile" in a book edited by him, *Construir el futuro. Vol.1. Aproximaciones a proyectos de país*.

In *Construir el futuro*, Moulian brings together three Chilean intellectuals and academics that have been his colleagues and friends, as well as his main academic and intellectual adversaries, and therefore political adversaries, with whom he has had historic debates that have made "sparks fly" and must be considered landmark moments in the Chilean intellectual history of recent decades. The three represent different visions of the future of Chilean society: José Joaquín Brunner, Manuel Antonio Garretón and Gabriel Salazar.

Just as in Chile today there is a "battle over memory" with respect to recent history, there has also been a "battle over history" with respect to the course of the 20th century in Chile. Moulian has been the chief political historian of this period; thus the sociologists, political scientists and, mainly, historians—be they from the right, the centre or the left—that study this period must in one way or another discuss, accept or reject the hypotheses and/or the interpretations suggested and maintained by Moulian in his different writings.

The battle for society's future is a political, theoretical and ideological battle. But above all, it is a battle for the routes that the left should pursue in today's world. It is to this battle that Moulian dedicates his main reflections.

Juan Carlos Gómez Leyton

The making of an intellectual activist of the 1960s left: the Althusserian influence

Emir Sader: Tomás, this interview is for the first issue of CLACSO's journal *Crítica y Emancipación*. Tell us first something about your schooling. You went to a public primary school, what was that like?

Tomás Moulian: I have had very diversified schooling. First, I went to an English school, a preparatory school; it was called Rainbow School and it was a neighbourhood English school, in Ñuñoa. Then I went to a religious school, which was called *Instituto de Humanidades Luis Campino* (Luis Campino Institute for Humanities), and there I failed a course, as a demonstration of the poor student that I was, and I went to a high school, Thomas Jefferson High School, which behind that name was a totally Chilean high school that took in students who had had some bad fortune in their secondary education. So there I was, with those who had had some failure. I think that that high school saved me. It fostered in me a love of learning, which I hadn't acquired in the other schools I had been to. So going to the high school for kids who had failed was extremely useful for me.

E. Sader: And your university education? What is your intellectual background, how did it take shape over time?

T. Moulian: I studied philosophy for a brief period. I started studying philosophy in the *Instituto Pedagógico* (Teaching Institute) at the University of Chile. I lasted a year and I had to stop studying because my father had a drop in his income, even though universities were free then. I lived on my own and he supported me, so I started working as a librarian at the Roberto Bellarmino centre run by the priest Roger Vekemans. He was a well-known activist of the Social Doctrine of the Chilean Church, a Belgian priest who lived in Chile. Then I started studying at the School of Sociology at the Catholic University, which had been founded by Vekermans, and which was the second school of sociology that existed at that time in Chile. There, I was a classmate of important Chilean politicians: Rodrigo Ambrosio, founder of the MAPU; Claudio Orego, deputy for Christian Democracy, who died young. Well, Ambrosio also died young. And Eugenio Ortego, married to Carmen Frei, who is now the ambassador to Canada. So that is where I studied. It was a school that allowed discussion. The sociology that was taught there was very *sui generis*, a mix between social doctrines and American sociology. I was there until 1963. That year I got a scholarship with Vekemans's support to

go study in Belgium, at the same time that Rodrigo Ambrosio and Marta Harnecker were going to study in Paris. We travelled together, I went to Leuven, they went to Paris. I was in Leuven from 1963 until the beginning of 1966. I went back to Chile, and I was hired as a professor at the School of Sociology at the Catholic University where I had studied, and from there I went to the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Nacional* (CEREN, Centre for the Study of National Reality), which Jacques Chonchol created in the *Unidad Popular* days. Pascal Allende and Manuel Antonio Garretón were there, and others like Franz Hinkelammert, very important, Norbert Lechner, very important, Patricio Biedma, an Argentinian who died in Buenos Aires, assassinated by the dictatorship.

E. Sader: What important readings were you doing in this period as a student that you are talking about?

T. Moulian: At school I read a lot, but it was more literary reading. I read Camus, not *The Stranger* but *The Myth of Sisyphus*, which of course was very difficult for me. When I think about it I feel like trying to read it was the myth of Sisyphus, because it was extremely difficult: when you think you are reaching your goal, you fall down. That was my main reading. Later, in university, well, the critical social scientists of the period: Erich Fromm, first, also Martin Buber with that marvellous book *Paths in Utopia*, which was a vindication of utopian socialism and was the object of lively conversations with my classmates, with Ambrosio, with Orrego, because we were also constituting our world view. But along with the books, Cuba was starting. Marta Harnecker and Ambrosio, political leaders of the Christian Democratic Party, of the Christian Democratic Youth, had the opportunity to go to Cuba. So Cuba was the other educational focal point we had, the other book, we could say, even though I did not go to Cuba until much later. So, I learned from the vertigo that the Cuban Revolution made us feel, it made us see that a revolution was possible in Latin America. And not just a peaceful one like we could have in Chile, but a violent one. These were, I would say, my main books from that period. I started to read Marx at CEREN. When I was at CEREN, between 1970 and 1973, I read a lot of Marx. But above all, Lenin, I read Lenin obsessively.

From Althusser to Lenin and from Lenin to Marx

Juan Carlos Gómez Leyton: But, before you started Marx, your travel to Europe introduced you to Althusserian thought. And through it, you came to Marx's thought.

T. Moulian: That's right, yes. I would say that with Althusser there was an interesting phenomenon. Althusser was a very curious guy, but we aren't going to speak about him as a person. He had a seminar on Thursdays that Ambrosio and Marta Harnecker attended, so in Leuven I also heard, we could say, what was said in the seminar. I participated in that seminar from a distance, through reports, through conversations. When I went to Paris they would tell me everything that happened, so I almost felt like I was in the third row, we could say, behind them. Yes, Althusser was very important, because he showed us a Marxism that to us seemed very reflexive, and it was before Marta wrote her popular books, before that, we would get together with Ambrosio, with José Joaquín Brunner, with other intellectuals from around here, to talk about Althusser. And after Althusser, we started to read Marx, you are right.

E. Sader: Did you do any collective reading of *Capital*?

T. Moulian: Yes, yes, in Paris they did collective readings of *Capital* and others were organised here, but they were smaller, organised around Rodrigo Ambrosio. Because Rodrigo was a political leader, a Christian Democrat, but he came from France with the idea of making, or breaking away from the Christian Democratic Youth and creating a possibility for the left that would come out of the Christian sphere. And so, both Brunner and I read a little for Ambrosio, we read Althusser for Ambrosio and we talked about it with him, we were educating the leader, he would say. "You help to teach the leader." Okay, and we started with Althusser, and when we read Althusser we learned about Marx, although very little directly. We obviously became aware of the *Communist Manifesto*, but the *Manifesto*, for example, was not studied as thoroughly as "contradiction and overdetermination", "epistemological break" and other concepts of Althusser were studied. This entry to Marx through Althusser is interesting.

Horacio Tarcus: In any case there was an education prior to your Althusserian time with other readings, we can call them humanist. Was there a bit of social Catholicism as well? You have cited, for example, the journal *Esprit*.

T. Moulian: Yes, a bit of social Catholicism… Desroche and the journal *Esprit*... Henri Desroche is a sociologist of cooperation, and based on the sociology of cooperation he had a whole idea about how to transform a company. The Economy and Humanism group of father Lebret, those readings, yes, those readings were prior to Marx.

H. Tarcus: That previous humanist background, did it make your access to Althusserian Marxism easier or more complicated?

T. Moulian: I have never done a critique of Althusserianism, to be sincere. Later I would read the critiques of Althusser, but in our relationship with his writings, we were always more loyal than dissenting. Later, I focused on studying Lenin; I had an obsession, which was to treat Lenin as an analyst and not a theorist, and what I have written about Lenin is aimed at this: Lenin the political analyst, and as a political analyst he could constitute theory, but I was not interested in the

Today I could say that I feel powerful enough to present my political ideas, but at that time I was a party member, I was going to do what the party decided.

Lenin of *The State and Revolution*, I was interested in the "lenins" that studied political conjunctures and that spoke guiding political practice. That seemed to me to be the key aspect of the Lenin that led to revolution, let's put it that way.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: That is the outline of the research project you proposed in the article in *Revista CEREN* in 1972. You suggested various aspects, with respect to the interpretations of Lenin's thought, mistaken interpretations; you identified errors in those interpretations. What happened to that research project?

T. Moulian: Exactly… Now, those words put me on guard, but yes. That research project ended, we could say, right there, because we were in the years of the *Unidad Popular*. So, you have to realise that in the years of the *Unidad Popular*, the political intellectuals, let's call them, were all linked to parties, and the party determined your intellectual agenda and you thought at the pace of the party. At least in my case that is how it was, and there are other intellectuals that the same thing always happened to them and there are some who still think that way. Because in Chile, the Marxist parties are, for reasons that need to be studied in Chilean history, the parties of the working class. Well, I am talking about until 1973…

Antonio Gramsci, the great absence during the *Unidad Popular*

E. Sader: Did this adherence to Althusser delay your access to Gramsci?

T. Moulian: It absolutely delayed it for me, I would say. I say it in my books: I did not come across Gramsci until after the *coup*, until my reinterpretation of *Unidad Popular*, which I started to do after the *coup*. Even though I cite him in an article, but I think they are those "fake" citations, to put it that way, that are citations that you know what Gramsci says but that you haven't read thoroughly. He was not a guide for me nor was he for the Chilean left in the process of *Unidad Popular*, when an understanding of Gramsci could have been fundamental.

E. Sader: What Chilean thinkers influenced you, basically about Chile, the history of Chile, culture, literature?

T. Moulian: The thinkers, the social scientists that influenced me, were the diagnostic essayists: Aníbal Pinto, Julio César Jobet, Jorge Ahumada, who developed a critique of Chilean capitalist development in 1958. Aníbal Pinto wrote the book *Chile: un caso de desarrollo frustrado*. They were important, even though they are hybrid, very hybrid, from a theoretical point of view, and they are far from being repeaters of Marx or repeaters of any theory, they are pretty atheoretical in this sense. Well, they influenced me a lot. And then, as I said, it was Althusser, then it was the immersion in Althusser. At that time I was in my university period, going to Europe. Marta Harnecker, who had a plan to create a type of group that would link Marxism and Christianity, started to organise meetings. With Althusser, on one hand, who had renounced Christianity some time before, and the Dominican Fathers on the other hand. I never went with the Dominican Fathers, nor was I able to go with Althusser. But I did read Althusser, I participated in discussions with those who went, and for me it was very important. If you ask me today why it is hard for me to realise the importance, I would say yes, it is hard for me. There was this concept of trying to overcome economicism, that was very important, it seemed very important; and there is, I think, something about him that seduces me, an ability to write. I think that Althusser writes very, very well. And that is one of his abilities that allow him to seduce, because ultimately, when you count his contributions, he is a Leninist that tries to salvage Leninism by creating a different model and a different language. Okay, he is a philosopher from the French Communist Party. And he is not a philosopher that has seemed very interested in what later, for us, would be Eurocommunism.

A party intellectual or when the parties commanded the intellectuals

H. Tarcus: Nonetheless, you were reading him during the *Unidad Popular*, you continued reading the texts of Nicos Poulantzas, you were thinking in terms of "bloc in power"…
T. Moulian: Were we following the texts of Poulantzas? No, no, no… In *Unidad Popular* we thought what the parties thought. I thought what my party thought. I wrote reports for Jaime Gazmuri along the party lines, we had a similar conception to those of the Communist Party, very close to those of the Communist Party, which was realist, which thought that there was not enough strength to "move forward without giving in" and that it was necessary to try to broaden the political front.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: In this sense, were you a man of the party? Did you participate in the MAPU? You were a party intellectual, didn't you hold a senior position during…?

T. Moulian: Yes. I was a party intellectual, I was a member of the Central Committee.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Tomás, this force that the party had as you reflected in your comments just now, was it felt in the same way at that time as well? That is, did you feel that the the party was the structure in which one had to politically develop…?

T. Moulian: Until *Unidad Popular*…

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Until *Unidad Popular*, why?

T. Moulian: Yes, until *Unidad Popular*, yes. The party secretary would call me, he would call me and he would say "I need you to write such and such about the October strike [of 1972], take care of writing some newsboards for the October strike." I wrote all the newsboards about the October strike that we released, and well, that meant going to the party, knowing what the politics of the leadership were, and transforming them into street language.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Wasn't there a critical independence from the party?

T. Moulian: No, no, I would be lying to you if I told you that there was.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: And with respect to the other parties there was?

T. Moulian: Yes there was, for the other parties, yes. We were part of the conglomerate of the Communist Party-MAPU that was in a coalition with Allende to allow the creation of a bloc for changes, to go forward with the grand transformations that were wanted. Without that bloc for changes, we didn't think it was possible, we thought we were headed off a cliff.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: And in that sense, this idea of the party was the Leninist idea of the party, of the vanguard, of the leader of the process?

T. Moulian: Yes, yes. The MAPU managed to to be able to feel like a vanguard party. It is a party that comes out of Christian Democracy. I wasn't a member of Christian Democracy, I got involved [in the MAPU] because I was a friend of Ambrosio and I thought that with that group, with those people, I could be active in politics and they would hear me. Well, I was a member of that party, but following the direction of the leadership until the *coup* [1973].

Unidad Popular (1970-1973): the "*fiestoca*"[3] of the parties or the tragedy of a popular hope

E. Sader: How did you experience *Unidad Popular*'s victory? Do you remember the victory? Were you expecting victory?

T. Moulian: Yes, I remember the day of the victory. No, I wasn't expecting victory, as nobody was expecting victory. We got together to listen to the news with Carmen Castillo and other people, we had the mission of getting information and transmitting it, and after that we went to the Alameda.

E. Sader: You already had the results, did they scare you?

T. Moulian: We already had the results that night at the Alameda, for me it was seeing Franz Hinkelammert coming towards us running like a giant and hugging us. It was one of the deepest emotions I have ever felt, but the next day I was sitting down with them and saying: how is this going to happen? Scared, scared. Joyful and scared.

3 Translators' note: wild party.

E. Sader: What were you thinking? Does this change our lives, does it change Chile, does it change Latin America, does the future depend on this?

T. Moulian: We thought so, that the future depended on *Unidad Popular*, but we didn't feel able, we didn't feel like we had power, today I could say that I feel powerful enough to present my political ideas, but at that time I was a party member, I was going to do what the party decided, even being a member of the Central Committee. There were other intellectuals, let's see: José Antonio Viera Gallo, José Miguel Insulza (less

Chilean society was having demonstrations every day. And you can't live demonstrating every day.

intellectual than Viera Gallo). Ariel Dorfman and I were treated as intellectuals, they would say to us: "what do you, the intellectuals, think?" somewhat sarcastically. But we were not able to go much further than where the party went. But we were situated in the strongest realism, we were realists and that was the right position to have in the *Unidad Popular* period… The problem is that it couldn't be enforced.

The "wild party" of *Unidad Popular*…

J.C. Gómez Leyton: You wrote a text about the party, you referred to the *Unidad Popular* period as a party time.

T. Moulian: Yes, of course. But, a party… a party that you could say became, as we say in Chile, a "*fiestoca*"; that is, a party that ended up being fanfare, it ended up being a wild party, because in the end, it was a wild party. The parties discussing ridiculously if they would allow Allende to have a plebiscite… when the *coup* was coming. Everyone was talking about the *coup*, so there is a strange relationship with the defeat. It was a defeat that was foreseen but not avoided. What is characteristic is Altamirano [general secretary of the Socialist Party], on 9 September, speaking to the Navy, challenging the senior ranks of the Navy and defending

some crew members that had spoken, etc. that had become *Unidad Popular* agents. A real challenge, which increased the possibility that the *coup* would be soon, we didn't know when… and it was two days later.

End of party, the *coup*, exile: living, thinking and writing with fear

E. Sader: What did you feel on the day of the *coup*?

T. Moulian: The day of the *coup*… I spent the day of the *coup* with Manuel Antonio Garretón, Rafael Echeverría, who is now dedicated to the ontology of language, and with other *compañeros* in a house we had been assigned. A house where we could hear the planes in La Moneda, because it was very close, and we were overwhelmed, absolutely overwhelmed. Above all we received news of deaths, very exaggerated. We connected with each other, we were supposed to connect with the Cardinal, our task was to call the Cardinal to find out what he knew. That is where I spent the *coup*. With them, we were seeing that the world was changing for us. That the *coup* was changing our world. And without knowing what we were going to do tomorrow. I was working at the Catholic University, and obviously they were going to fire me. And a few days after the university trustee arrived, who was a naval officer, he fired me.

E. Sader: You never left Chile? You never went to live abroad?

T. Moulian: No, no, never, for personal reasons: my father was a refugee from the Spanish Civil War. So I lived my whole childhood and youth, while I lived in my parents' house, seeing my father get close to a map, the map, the already faded photo of his hometown, Zarauz, next to San Sebastian, and look at it, sigh, and read the newspaper *España Republicana* that he managed to get brought to him from Buenos Aires… He, who was a Basque nationalist, he wasn't even a republican. So, I lived through the Spanish Civil War and exile with my father, that was enough for me. So I said: not me. I knew that Chile had the same meaning that Spain had for my father and I had already felt it when I was in Leuven, feeling like coming back to Chile was returning to paradise. So, I knew that I couldn't stop being here and I preferred not to go. I preferred not to go and that was possible because of the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Ricardo Lagos and, above all, Brunner created the possibility of FLACSO, because Brunner led it for a long time and with a very firm hand. And when the military told him that they couldn't publish, he said that we were an interna-

tional organisation and they made us publish. And we started publishing, here in Chile, during the dictatorship, small working documents. Something is better than nothing. The book *Democracia y socialismo en Chile* is from around then, from those times. So, I was able to stay, while others couldn't stay, they couldn't have stayed.

E. Sader: Looking back, having lived through *Unidad Popular* and the military dictatorship, what comes to mind now about it, what is the experience like in your memory?

T. Moulian: I experienced the dictatorship like a time that… when I close my eyes I say "how did I live through that? How did I bear it?" Because I was only arrested once… No, arrested twice. But how did I tolerate the fear? I don't know, because there was fear. Sure, I made my calculations, that it wasn't so likely that they would detain me because I was at FLACSO, because I was part of the MAPU, what would they care, they cared a lot more about the socialists and the communists. But I was involved in active politics: the party charged me with the relations with Christian Democracy, which were very important because Christian Democracy was interested in getting to the Socialist Party through the MAPU. We formed the triangle in the relationship. So, that meant having a public life and a clandestine life. And fear. While the time of *Unidad Popular* was joy.

E. Sader: Did you experience the end of the dictatorship, the day of the defeat of the referendum or Patricio Aylwin's swearing into office?

T. Moulian: The day of the defeat of the dictatorship I said: this is the end of what it was like. Already by the end of 1986 we had lost our fear. The fear was very strong in the 1970s, very strong between 1976 and 1977. In 1983 there were protests, that great collective activity of the protests from where you would leave full of energy and you would see that this dictatorship could be beaten… We weren't able to get rid of it, because there was the hope that protests could get rid of it, but we weren't capable of getting rid of it… The snipers were not able to get rid of it either.[4] We had to accommodate… That was the difficult part, accommodating to the plebiscite, the way out proposed by Pinochet.

4 Translators' note: Moulian refers to the failed attempt to kill Pinochet carried out by members of the *Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez* (FPMR, Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front).

Beating Pinochet on his grounds, on the grounds that he had invented to solve the problems, because he thought he would win the plebiscite. Well, I lived through all that time and for me the triumph of the plebiscite was very important, very, very important. Of course, we would say, tomorrow we will mobilise, tomorrow we will have mass demonstrations to force Pinochet to leave sooner… Nothing was done…

Historical and political analysis of a double defeat: the failure of the Chilean way to socialism and the triumph of the 1988 plebiscite

E. Sader: The *Unidad Popular* period was not a time of great theoretical debates…

T. Moulian: There was an interesting theoretical debate created by an academic activity, between the CEREN, at the Catholic University, organised by Norbert Lechner, and the *Centro de Estudios Sociales* (CESO, Centre for Social Studies) at the University of Chile. Franz Hinkelammert and Norbert debated theoretically. I wrote an article about the transition in CEREN's journal [*Cuadernos de la Realidad Nacional*], that also presented a theoretical debate, it tried to say that what existed in Chile wasn't socialism, and it wasn't socialism, it was a path to socialism, but it wasn't moving forward, it was staying there. While with Lechner and Hinkelammert it was much more systematic. But the parties didn't ask us anything, they gave us orders. And, since we had the idea of the activist with obligations to the party, we obeyed.

E. Sader: What changed with the move to the dictatorship in the intellectual climate, the debates, the controversies, the theoretical influences?

T. Moulian: Well, the transition to the dictatorship was very hard, first we had to start getting used to living under those conditions. A little while later, I ended up in FLACSO. I lived the dictatorship inside FLACSO, and at FLACSO there was a lot of intellectual activity. That is where I started to become familiar with Gramsci, and we started—Norbert Lechner and J.J. Brunner on one hand and me on the other—to *write for the future*. My way of writing for the future was to start writing a critique of *Unidad Popular*, and I made this coalition with Manuel Antonio [Garretón]. Manuel Antonio had been able to get, through Francisco Delich, at CLACSO actually, some funding to put together a chronology of *Unidad Popular*. Manuel Antonio put together a gigantic chronology of *Uni-*

dad Popular, day by day, newspaper by newspaper, with a summary of what had happened, which is still very useful. So we wrote a book that is a settling of scores with *Unidad Popular*: we said that *Unidad Popular* didn't have any chances, that it was bound to collapse if it couldn't reach an agreement with Christian Democracy; and when the agreement was possible and when it wasn't possible… Well, we showed that none of the political forces that could have implemented this helped Allende to implement it, because even the communists were not adamant about telling him: "Look, Allende, here is another way out." Well, getting along with the Christian Democrats was pretty difficult, on the other hand.

Fear was present in what we did, in the demonstrations, fear was present in all these aspects, but in a way that was articulated with hope.

So, we started to feel like *Unidad Popular* had something… had a bit of tragedy. Garretón was the first to talk about it, about a process whose end was foreshadowed right from the beginning. I disputed that thesis, I said that there was no tragedy, that it was possible to do things, but that many actors acted as if it were a tragedy, because they didn't try small movements, they didn't have tactical attitudes aimed at lifting a bit of the enormous tension in Chilean society. Chilean society was having demonstrations every day. And you can't live demonstrating every day.

E. Sader: You understood the dramatic structural context of winning with a socialist program but with 34% of the votes. So, they had to build the strength…

T. Moulian: Yes, they had to build, exactly, they had to build the real program…

E. Sader: … that wasn't just the expansion of *Unidad Popular*'s influence…

T. Moulian: That wasn't that, that was trying to form a bloc for changes, and therefore, to reduce the project for change to what an ally in

good faith that also wanted a greater democratisation of society could accept; it had to shift from socialism to democratisation. It was possible on the left by showing that democratisation was a path to a possible socialism, but we didn't think that during the *Unidad Popular* period, it occurred to us afterwards.

E. Sader: What *Unidad Popular* won was Christian Left, but Rodomiro Tomic's vision was not less radical in any way. So why wasn't there an alliance with that sector, or did that sector never join?

T. Moulian: Yes, because political forces prevented it, Allende wanted it. Allende even tried to make a much more important deal than that pact, that minimal pact, which allowed Christian Democracy to vote for Allende, but the political forces were obsessed with the peaceful path to socialism, and besides, they balanced each other out, because the Socialist Party had gone to the left and that took away manoeuvring room from the Communist Party because the latter had a strategic dogma: socialist-communist unity, and they weren't going to do anything to break such unity. They had always accepted all the sacrifices and they continued to accept all the sacrifices, including the most spectacular defeat. But we didn't see it either, in MAPU, where I was, we didn't do what was necessary either.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: When you say that they made all the possible sacrifices it is as if the Communist Party ended up accepting all the Socialist Party's positions.

T. Moulian: It didn't accept.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Okay, it didn't accept, but it allowed them to develop and that made the political situation within *Unidad Popular* even tenser.

T. Moulian: Yes, it was a stalemate.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: It was a "catastrophic equilibrium" inside *Unidad Popular…*

T. Moulian: Catastrophic, because the socialists didn't let the communists do their politics, and the communists didn't let the socialists do their politics. So, they ended up with a politics that was a rehash of the two, which was ineffective and did not allow the front to broaden. Meanwhile the crises got worse, the October crisis [of 1972] didn't

get resolved, for example, when General Carlos Prats was named the Minister of Internal Affairs and the military gained entrance to the government, an admiral and a general. That is when a type of tactical Peruvianisation appeared, we can say, but it needed *Unidad Popular* to be willing to negotiate a restructuring of the program with the military, so that they could support a government with a national popular agenda, and that wouldn't be called socialist any more, it would be called national popular, with the military that still held a non-neoliberal idea of the tasks that needed doing. These were military personnel that came from the statist tradition of the Chilean military, they were believers in state intervention. And that option was not offered either.

The path *Unidad Popular* chose to build socialism was unviable

J.C. Gómez Leyton: This analysis brought you to believe that, at least for me, in general, every time I've read it, I find it provocative and I resist it… That idea that…

T. Moulian: You don't like it?

J.C. Gómez Leyton: No, I don't like the idea that the path chosen by *Unidad Popular* to build socialism was unviable.

T. Moulian: Yes, to build socialism I think that *Unidad Popular* was unviable, at that time and with that balance of political forces. I would not say that the peaceful path to socialism was unviable, I think that it is going to be open in the future. Because we have to think about the prospects for socialism too. The Soviet Union has fallen, but socialism is not over, the Soviet Union is over. In the case of Chile the conditions were not present; Chile was not the mature country that we thought it was…

J.C. Gómez Leyton: What are the conditions of maturity that a country or a society must have in order to travel—down one path or another—towards socialism?

T. Moulian: The ability of the left to attract the middle layers and their political representatives.

E. Sader: That is exactly the model with which Enrico Berlinguer later articulated Eurocommunism, that 51% is not enough, a large majority is needed.

T. Moulian: Of course, a small minority is not enough, a large majority is needed. And we were unable to get it.

Writing for the future, debating the present and analysing the past

E. Sader: In the dictatorship, a part of the debates revolved around *Unidad Popular*, what transition was possible, etc. And later, the debate was about the nature of the dictatorship, if it was fascism or not fascism.

T. Moulian: Yes, the Communist Party spoke about fascism, all the political forces incorporated the term fascism except the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR, Movement of the Revolutionary Left). There is an article by Atilio Borón where he challenges the idea of fascism, it came out in an issue of *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* and it was part of the debate here. But it was not fascism.

E. Sader: What other topics were discussed? Were there important theorists during the dictatorship?

T. Moulian: Look, that is when Gramsci appeared. He was not taken up by a group of intellectuals, in FLACSO we didn't take up Gramsci to say: look, from here we can build a strategy and tactics to defeat the dictatorship. But the idea of the extended state started to appear, these simple ideas started to appear, that at that time were very important: that the state was more than repression, that it was persuasion, that it was consensus, an idea of hegemony. All these ideas started to circulate, but they were not able to totally change left politics. And beginning around 1977 the parties started leading the struggles. I say '77 because of the famous "*Plan Argel*" that was developed I have no idea where. '77 was the last year of the disappearances, the big disappearances ended as a system because the *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* (DINA, National Intelligence Directorate) disappeared, and Contreras was knocked down. That is Jaime Guzmán's contribution. Then, at the same time, in the 1980s, the first large demonstrations started. Then we were more focused on a discussion about a strategy to defeat the dictatorship. So, we used our Gramscian ideas to understand the protests, to try to give them this or that orientation… And by '79 it became possible for many to participate and to have influence on the process. Individuals linked to FLACSO, linked to other groups, everyone had a group, but starting in '77 the parties took on

the leadership again. Obviously, *Unidad Popular* was already making decisions, as it continued to exist as a coalition.

H. Tarcus: You spoke at that time with the Italian Eurocommunists, with the Spanish socialists, the *Zona Abierta* group led by Ludolfo Paramio.

T. Moulian: With Paramio, yes, because he came to Chile, because we knew him and he was politically active for Chile. We knew the Italians less, none of them came to Chile and there is a reason for that: the Chilean Communist Party has an enormous distance from Eurocommunism. So, who would have been the most important person that could have come, I don't know, Giorgio Napolitano, who now is president and at that time held extremely important positions, didn't come. So the Italian influence was lost. We read about the modern Italians, we brought them to party discussions, but they were not taken up.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: But there were some seminars in Italy, in France and in other European countries.

T. Moulian: In Italy there were two seminars. You have to think about the journal *Chile América*, edited by Viera Gallo. Raúl Ampuero was there in Italy. Then, the Chantilly seminar organised by Jorge Arrate. Jorge Arrate's seminars in Amsterdam, in the *Instituto para el Nuevo Chile* (Institute for a New Chile), put us in contact with the *compañeros* that were in exile and allowed the introduction of new topics, new actors.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: There we were at the gates of a process of socialist renewal. Within the theoretical and political debates that were being developed, beginning around 1977–1978, something happened that characterises this period, which is the dissociation of Christian Democracy from the military dictatorship, there was a breaking off, a document by Christian Democracy circulated…

T. Moulian: It ended up breaking off…

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Exactly, it ended up breaking off. The document "Para un nuevo Chile" appeared, etc. It was an important time, because Christian Democracy, mostly, joined the opposition. And, at the same time, a political discussion started about what Emir was saying a minute ago, about the nature of the dictatorship, if it was fascist or not. But the concept brought by Guillermo O'Donnell also arrived, about

the authoritarian bureaucratic state, and the issue of authoritarianism was debated. There was an interesting debate around this issue, a seminar was organised; later a book came out about the new authoritarianism, edited by David Collier and others. But there is also the fact that, from the point of view of theoretical and political analysis, the issue of the state was abandoned, which until then had dominated the analysis. Norbert Lechner himself had written a pioneering book about the crisis of the state to explain the rise of the dictatorships. Later, the issue of the crisis of democracy started to have influence, based on the book by J.J. Linz, where he introduces the issue not of just a crisis of the state but of a crisis of the political regime, which changed the type of analysis that started to prevail, and that affected FLACSO as well. Did you participate in that debate?

T. Moulian: Yes, that debate was very important at FLACSO. I participated in that debate, yes, but I would say that I focused more on what we could call trying to understand the political history of Chile over the long term, and I started to realise that the UP could not be understood as a conjuncture in the short term of three years, and that the future had to be understood as an attempt to properly understand what happened in the past. So there I changed direction and I focused more on the political history of Chile. On the political history of Chile, not of Latin America, that is always the big void in my analyses and that is why I have not been published in Latin America.

Books with power: *Estudio de Chile*

J.C. Gómez Leyton: It is worth pointing out that the first book by Tomás Moulian seen in Chile is *Estudio de Chile*. It is a book that is rarely cited, it is poorly known, it is in a few libraries, in a few centres, some people have it, we have the pleasure of having the first edition of this book and it is an eminently conjunctural book, because it analyses the triumph of Christian Democracy, essentially, from an electoral political sociology perspective, in which you carry out an analysis in this respect. What was the objective, and if you remember, what was the epistemological, theoretical framework you propose in that book?

T. Moulian: Well, I am laughing because it is a book of ill-fated circumstances, we could say. A sociologist once came to Chile, who is still out there working, called Víctor Alba, who wrote *Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina*, who lived in Mexico and is Spanish,

he came because of the Spanish Civil War. He was here looking for someone to write a book about Chile, it had to have a certain number of pages, he had a publishing contract and needed a writer, not a "ghost writer" that would write it for him, but a writer that would publish it in his own name. So, this fell on my lap, because Rodrigo Ambrosio convinced Víctor Alba that I was the person that had to write it, I hadn't written anything then. So I wrote that book. Yes, it is a conjunctural book, I haven't thought about that book since then, I don't know what is in it. It was published in Chile in 1983 when I was studying in Europe and when I came back, there was the book, published by a publishing house, Orbe. I opened it and I started to look at the tables and I came across an extremely interesting graphic. Its interest lay in the fact that it had nothing in it, so the book had graphics with data, graphics with information and one or two graphics with absolutely nothing, which for readers must have been a total mystery. They must have thought that that was the centre of the book, but it was a simple editing error. So, for me it is my first book, and above all, the first book they paid me to write, perhaps one of the few I earned money for writing. I was twenty-two or twenty-three years old. I got started that way, a writer for hire for someone like Víctor Alba.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: But without a doubt, despite your opinion of the book, there are elements that later on, in other studies, you develop about the political system and the party system in Chile. You can find an origin of these analyses; that is, if you look for the roots of some of your interpretations, at least what I have found in that book are elements that allow an understanding of some of your theorising in the study of the party system, the evolution of the party system, etc. That is, it is not as simple as you make it seem in your modest reflection.

T. Moulian: This demonstrates perhaps how writers' writing works, we could say. I am not an intellectual who studies myself, who reads my previous books and goes from there, but obviously those elements stay in my memory and luckily they are elements that have not been disproved and can be integrated into future books. But I think that there is a certain randomness working in my favour there, unintentional. I didn't study that book to then write the second book, no.

E. Sader: How do you describe Eduardo Frei's Christian Democracy government in that book?

T. Moulian: In the first book? The first book is a book that was written during the government of Christian Democracy and I guess that I see it as a type of advanced reformism that cannot be fulfilled. The book was written at a time when the Frei government was still working. It is a book that assumes, suggests, that the Frei government will not be able to fulfil its reform agenda, and that may be in the book, I cannot say so with certainty. Perhaps there is an idea that I pursued later in other books: the structural factors that existed in the party system and that determined if a politics would work or not. Being a multi-party system with these two centres like I was saying, but at the same time with a left that since 1933 is divided into two parties and the two parties define themselves as Marxist. A different Marxism in each case, because the Marxism of the Socialist Party was anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet, and the Communist Party had a strong allegiance to the Marxist conception of the CPSU. But both parties said that the society of the future was socialism, and that socialism was the dictatorship of the proletariat and the nationalisation of the means of production. So, I have tried to pursue these characteristics of the party system in my books, I have tried to understand why this left in Chile became Marxist, to the extent that it is possible to explain that.

E. Sader: Does this go back to the fact that it is a primary export economy, but it is a mining economy, and therefore, there is a working class in the 19th century? Does this structural factor lead to the early existence of Marxist parties?

T. Moulian: Yes, a primary export economy, first tied to saltpetre, which is a particular form of mining production, and then tied to copper. But the Communist Party wasn't founded until 1922, when the saltpetre economy was already slipping into crisis. And the Socialist Party, in 1933, when the saltpetre economy already barely existed; so, these are parties that are related to Chile's contemporary economy, ultimately to the copper economy, to import substitution industrialisation. But it is interesting that the Socialist Party decided to become Marxist with the Communist Party already strong. You could say that Marxism is a method of interpretation, as Eugenio González, a great socialist essayist, says. But its points of reference are the socialist countries that exist. The socialists looked more and more to Yugoslavia as a point of reference, and then to Cuba, they fled from the USSR a bit. But they were revolutionary Marxists and socialists, when throughout Europe the socialist parties were becoming social democrats.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: But it is also said that the Socialist Party had some social democrat, some social populist, during the period from 1932 until the radicalisation of the party in the 1960s.

T. Moulian: Yes, but even there, under Ampuero's leadership, the party quickly abandoned its closeness to the *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) which was a kind of leaning amongst some socialist groups, and abandoning the closeness to APRA they had no other choice than to take the socialist world as their point of reference, at least the socialist world of Al-

Sociologists deserted to the governmental sphere, to the sphere of the state, they became officials of the governments of the Concertación, and others deserted to another type of sphere, we became social analysts.

geria and Yugoslavia, in order to set themselves apart from the Chilean Communist Party.

Unidad Popular and political conflict in Chile

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Following this kind chronology of your work, there is the book about the conflict of *Unidad Popular* that lays out—and I would say that it is a classic now—the explanation of the *coup*. I would say that there are three books that are classics in this sense: the book by Arturo Valenzuela about the bankruptcy of democracy in Chile, the interpretations of Gonzalo Vial about the crisis of the political system in 1973, and your book, by Moulian and Garretón, *La Unidad Popular y el conflicto político en Chile*. They constitute, I would say, the explanatory matrix of the *coup* even today, based mainly…

T. Moulian: But let me tell you what we did. You know this, but what we did there is say: let's look at political conflicts. So, we created a notion of conjuncture, and the notion of conjuncture here is of a certain political space in which there is a particular set of problems. So we see various conjunctures. Ultimately, this notion of conjuncture has some problems, because it can be confused with the notion of period,

but it doesn't matter, we recognised various periods in the political struggle and we were seeing how it went from a society that worked or a political regime that worked, that was able to solve the problem of Allende's win and appointed him and there wasn't a *coup d'état* then, and there could have been a *coup*, right? That political regime worked and we saw how from that working the crisis started. And why did the crisis start? Our idea with respect to the crisis is that a program of the breadth of *Unidad Popular*'s program, with its nationalisations, its policies around the organisation of workers and the participation of workers in managing companies, wasn't possible without a much broader bloc for changes.

E. Sader: Later on, in 2006, the interpretation you present in your book *Fracturas* is that the period 1932–1973 is of domination without hegemony. Is that right?

T. Moulian: Without a hegemony of the ruling classes, yes.

E. Sader: But the Communist and Socialist parties belonged to the system, they helped give it legitimacy and hegemony. How otherwise could Allende's victory be accommodated? Does that not signify a tremendous hegemonic capacity?

T. Moulian: Yes, but it also means that the parties of the ruling class were never able to occupy the presidency from 1938 until 1958, and then they occupied it via a mediator: Eduardo Frei Montalva. And Frei gave way to Allende. So, we can say that there was a problematic hegemony. We would have to say a problematic hegemony of the ruling class. There was also a permanent functioning of the political-democratic regime in all situations, even when the Communist Party was illegal, so the democratic regime manages not to have any important political actors deny it, not even the communists. The communists were declared illegal from 1948 until 1958 and they decided to continue to fight from within the political system to become legalised. So, that is what I mean about it being a—let's not use the word "hegemonic"—political system with an enormous capacity for survival. Survival has to do with the whole group of actors, with the group, and the group obtains some facilities, some capacities, that these actors consider to be appropriate and they say: okay, in spite of it all, let's keep going. Because the right, for a time, wasn't willing to participate in elections, for a time during the period of the popular fronts, but they had to participate. And then, when they were reduced to 11% of the votes in the 1965 elections they couldn't pull

out, they had to change the parties they had, create others and go back. There, the structure of the parties of the left, parties of the centre and parties of the right is key, because with the existence of Marxist parties there are these fluctuating centres, or they can fluctuate, and when they stop fluctuating, of course, there are enormous problems.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: There is a triangulation of the party system that before had been a cooperative system, in the sense that the *Partido Radical* (Radical Party) swung both to the left and to the right, which allowed the system to continue despite the coalitions that were formed. When this didn't happen it was because Christian Democracy left the centre and created its own path. But at the end of 1958, the left had also presented its own path, because it was just a few points away from winning the presidential elections that year.

T. Moulian: That is what the left is supposed to do, not what the centre is supposed to do. With this party system, you need a flexible centre. With this system of pressures, you need a structure with a flexible centre. When Christian Democracy became inflexible and became an eccentric centre, that is when the system took on an enormous rigidity, and it is rigidity that led to Allende's win, since the system let minorities win. That is also where the non-modern aspect of these systems comes in. Today there are more modern systems, with regulations. Today there would have been a runoff election.

E. Sader: So, you had a first axis of analysis which was Christian Democracy, and then a whole bundle about *Unidad Popular*. Was this the second large step in the construction of your work?

T. Moulian: The second big step was already dedicated to political history, it was the study of *Unidad Popular* in relation to Christian Democracy and the impossibility of the left entering into dialogue with Christian Democracy, but ultimately as well the impossibility of Christian Democracy saving the country from the *coup*, because it, in the end, was not in the position to take up Allende's calls for negotiation. Because its bases had become radicalised, its leadership had become radicalised, all of them, even those that you thought of as centre, like Renán Fuentealba for example. A group of only twelve people put out a declaration after the *coup*, saying that they had fought to avoid it. Among others, there was Belisario Velasco.

E. Sader: Did you change your analysis of *Unidad Popular* with time?

T. Moulian: No, I would say that it is still the same. For me, the possibility of moving forward without giving in—of radical policies that would put us in another sphere of power—was never possible, given the structure of the party system, the structure of social forces that were in motion. Well, we were very naïve when it comes to the military, I must say, we thought that the military was constitutionalist.

Democracy and socialism: building a new Political relation

H. Tarcus: After you collected the articles that you wrote at FLACSO in your book *Democracia y socialismo* in 1983, is that when you started studying Chilean political history?

T. Moulian: That started earlier. Because first Garretón and I wrote the book about *Unidad Popular*. It is a book about *Unidad Popular* but it forced us to study politics prior to that time and we can say that, from that book, we discovered that *Unidad Popular* could not be understood in that moment, but rather that we needed to see what had happened with the left from the 1930s on. So, for me, the issue of the historical left became very important, as did the evolution of the party system: to understand the role of the political centres in Chilean political history. Because in Chile there is a multi-party system, with powerful political centres. One is the *Partido Radical*, which was a centre that we could call typical. And then, Christian Democracy, which is a kind of centre… that is eccentric.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: In this sense, your book *Democracia y socialismo* marks a turning point for Chilean intellectuals, because in it you refer to various elements of the recovery of the history of the left, the interpretation of *Unidad Popular*, a reflection about democracy that was very important at that time: the link between democracy and socialism. That is, one of the things that the left did not have before and that started to become very strong, and also an analysis of the crisis of the left, from a perspective that was quite strong and critical of Leninism. But after that came a stage that we could call "reflection about socialism and the socialist renewal", in which you actively participated with a critical posture with respect to the transition. You distanced yourself from "transitology", you were not among the intellectuals of Chilean "transitology". That allowed you to have a certain intellectual autonomy as opposed to others that did commit themselves to those situations: some are much more "socialistly" renewed, others are much more "transitologists" and you have critical

autonomy. There is an interesting element there, related to what you were saying at the beginning of the conversation about how the party ordered and you complied. Were you in the party at that time, when you got that critical autonomy with respect to the whole process that was going on in the 1980s?

T. Moulian: I withdrew from the party, from the MAPU, in 1983, and in the early 1990s I started to get closer to the communists, but in a way that didn't affect my thinking like it had before. I moved towards the Communist Party in an instrumental way, I needed someone to vote for, because I wasn't going to vote for those masters of the transition, but it was nothing more than that. So, I went through the crisis of *Unión Popular* (Popular Union), and from that crisis, at FLACSO I identified the necessity of socialist renewal as a very important outcome (or we identified it, in dialogue with people like Norbert Lechner). So, I started to write, I wrote an article with Enzo Faletto (published by Edgardo Boeninger). It was a text that read today, seems incomprehensible, but at the time it was about socialist renewal, and a movement started to form. Many participated, the journal *Chile-América*, Viera Gallo, who was an important element in this context. But soon afterwards, I realised that the socialist renewal of some went as far as Felipe González or Mitterand, and that my socialist renewal didn't want to end there, because that is the repetition of a path—we could say—it's the repetition of the typical path of the revolutionary parties as they become social democratic parties, usually at times of defeat. So then I started to think about a critique of the transition and about showing that the transition was a transition in the mildest sense of the term. It was indeed a move from an authoritarian regime to a regime of representative democracy, but it was not a move from one type of society to another type of society, from an authoritarian society to a democratised society. These regimes did not confer democratisation. I am not saying that they did not confer socialism, I am saying that they did not confer democratisation; that is, they did not make democracy progress any further. A process of democratisation is a process of constantly seeking greater freedom and greater participation, if you want to adopt a perspective that does not convert you into a simple representative democrat and you want to go further, towards a participatory democracy. So, my books, beginning at that time, try to build the foundations of this political dream, this political desire that is a collective desire, but which encounters resistance in political parties.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: At the time you were making this socialist reflection, you were debating with "transitology". In Chile, other political alternatives also arose, other types of struggle were considered to defeat the dictatorship: the *Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez* appeared, which joined the MIR which had always been an armed political organisation and one of armed resistance against the dictatorship. Later the MAPU-Lautaro appeared, and there were other smaller political organisations, which also promoted the armed political option. What did you think then? I want to bring this up with you because later, in *Chile Actual*, not only is there a critique of "transitology" and the type of socialist renewal, there is also a critique of armed struggle, but I want to place you first at that moment when these options arose and know how you saw that situation.

T. Moulian: When they appeared there was an initial discussion about the issue. Some said that these groups weren't even necessary, that they were not needed, that they should disappear because their mere presence made the transition more difficult. I didn't agree with that, I was in favour of their efforts, because they represented certain groups. Although I also thought that their attempts were in vain and would fail. But I also thought that if the Chilean Communist Party, pacifist since the 1930s, entered into that war logic, it could develop characteristics that could make it less dogmatic, more theoretically open, more critical of its own thoughts. Because the challenge was to get into a politics that it had rejected all along, historically it had been rejected, and therefore, they had to be able to put their previous thinking in check. So, it would result in a more reflexive Communist Party. Well, the war was not waged, it failed. There were military defeats. The discovery of munitions by the military in Carrizal Bajo and the failure and disaster of the attack were military defeats, but it was also a political defeat, there were divisions, almost everyone left the CP, very few remained in the party and so the armed path stopped for a time. But the same previous ideas quickly reappeared and these groups ultimately died when their main leaders died—*Comandante* Tamara and Raúl Pellegrín, who died in a river where the police tossed them, already destroyed. So, it was a short-lived politics, but when they appeared, I thought: "it's good". And I also thought that, since there was a great deal of uncertainty, that approach couldn't be denied *a priori*. Well, it didn't work, but we—the others—weren't able to defeat the dictatorship like we had said either. So, we had a tactical victory but a strategic defeat, as I wrote in one of my books.

"Winning by losing": twenty years after the "No" triumph and the origins of *Chile actual*

J.C. Gómez Leyton: This is a key point in what was at that time your most recent political reflection. In a CIEPLAN seminar in 1992 or 1993, you proposed the thesis that you just mentioned, which caused a political commotion in Chile. You held that the democratic opposition achieved a tactical victory but a strategic defeat. That also prepared the way for *Chile actual*, I imagine.

I think the idea of revolution has to be discussed again, but as a profound democratisation of society.

T. Moulian: Perhaps, yes. Look, I can barely explain how I produced *Chile actual*.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Okay. During that period, until 1997, what other elements contributed to building the interpretation that you present in *Chile actual*, one of the most successful books of your career?

T. Moulian: Yes, it is the most successful book that I have written, with about thirty thousand copies sold, which is a lot for Chile.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: You have won many awards and acknowledgments for that book.

T. Moulian: Yes, yes. Well, I wrote that book at a time when I was going through a lonely period in my personal life, and I dedicated myself to writing it. It is a book that is based on metaphors such as "citizen's wasteland" and "consumer paradise". It attempts a critique of the society that neoliberalism is building and also a critique of the transition that I describe as "transformism". I am not very happy with that term today, because it isn't Gramsci's exact term either. I think I make a false use of this term, but the book turned out to be

very successful, yes. It was written in loneliness, I would say: without a party, without family life.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Okay, you were without a party, without family life, as you say, but you were also without certain reference points with which for a long time you had articulated your theoretical and political dialogues. But you were constructing new dialogues, because you were writing that book when you were starting at the university (ARCIS) and you had other dialogues and theoretical influences there.

T. Moulian: Yes, exactly, I changed my reference points. I had new people to dialogue with, I debated with you, I debated with the people here, with Gautier, among others.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: You were also theoretically influenced by Michel Foucault then.

T. Moulian: I was also influenced by Foucault, yes, my reading of him appears in that text.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: But not only Foucault, whether you agree with me or not, there was also a debate with another reference point in Chilean social sciences, Gabriel Salazar.

T. Moulian: Yes, he wasn't my target, but obviously the text refers to him a lot, as much as I wasn't always thinking about him and even though he would have been a good target for criticism. Because obviously I clashed with Gabriel Salazar, who offers a re-reading of contemporary Chilean history, and he has an odd position with respect to Chilean reality because ultimately, he wants to deny the existence of *Unidad Popular*, he thinks it was lost time, that if it could be erased, it should be erased. While I am of the opinion that *Unidad Popular* was a decisive experience of the Chilean labour movement and popular struggles. Salazar doesn't believe in the way in which the left has organised at all, he doesn't believe in its parties, he actually doesn't believe in the party form.

H. Tarcus: In relation to the Chilean intellectual field of the 1980s and 1990s, you distance yourself somehow from the redirection pursued by almost all of your intellectual generation. You speak here about a metamorphosis of the intellectuals and you engage in an intellectual political debate with them. Yet, you say that this repositioning should not be analysed either ethically or personally, but rather "positionally".

T. Moulian: Yes, yes, I use categories from Bourdieu to debate and settle things with Eugenio Tirón, with Manuel Antonio Garretón himself, who are in the centre, let's say. Because Gabriel Salazar is on the left. They are the theorists of the transition. M.A. Garretón, the least heard, is the most important from the point of view of analysis, because he does not just stop at the transition. Garretón has the merit that he bases his analysis on a type of democratisation, above all in his book *El Chile que viviremos*.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: *Chile actual* establishes several things. It is a reflection on the Chilean political, social and cultural time of the 1990s, especially when you refer to this issue of memory, of the whole process of forgetting that is cultivated in Chile. However, when you investigate the political situation between 1990 and 1997 a little bit, you find that there were a lot of things that were being written, being said, being pointed out: how do you recover the historical memory of the years of the dictatorship? I have conflicting ideas about this politics of forgetting and this recovery of memory. How are they made compatible or how are they balanced out in your book? Because you lend a great deal of importance to non-memory, while there is a memory that is unfolding.

T. Moulian: It is a book that in some ways clearly fits the conjuncture, which is the time from 1990 to 1995, because that is when I started to write the book, and it was a moment when the idea of forgetting was appropriate. It was the first government of Aylwin and there was a strategy in which doing politics consisted of tiptoeing around, being careful not to step on all the stones that were on the road. There were a lot of stones, but the political actors magically managed to move above them, with a type of consensus about forgetting, about silence, about denying a lot of things, about not insisting on critiquing the dictatorship, nor taking legal action against the dictatorship; a consensus about accepting Pinochet, who continued playing a political role, about treating Pinochet's attempts to polarise society during Aylwin's government gently, and later, during the government of Frei Ruiz Tagle, his attempts to create situations around personal issues, converting them into political phenomena that mobilised the armed forces. He showed his power. So, there was a *de facto* power that was at work there, and I think that that created a politics of strategic forgetting, let's say. This strategic forgetting was functional to the success of the transition. My book, written a few years later, could not have said the same thing, also because other interpretations appeared. You wrote, as did Carlos Huneeus later, a political scientist who wrote a very interesting book

about the military regime. So I think it was possible to talk about a forgetting, because it was also a society where the politicians realised that they had to avoid constantly evoking the traumatic situation, because it was discouraging, it created fears. I don't think that the way fear worked in Chile during the dictatorship has been studied thoroughly, because it wasn't an obvious fear. It worked in a very underhanded way, fear was present in what we did, in the demonstrations, fear was present in all these aspects, but in a way that was articulated with hope. And that is also related to the evolution of the repressive policies of the dictatorship. There were changes, we have to acknowledge that. The policy of forced disappearances that lasted more or less until '77 and '78 was not the same as the selective disappearances of certain people, of the five communist professionals and of Jecar Neghme, leader of the MIR. A politics of repression became normalised, but the risk of death decreased significantly. So, I wrote at a time when forgetting was present and so was whitewashing. I think whitewashing was very important, for me the book is above all a metaphor that I analyse, the metaphor of the iceberg that Chile brought to the Seville Expo, which I think was a masterly thing. I see in this the desire to show that Chile is clean, pure, look everyone: Chile is pure! This is the real whitewashing, pure Chile, you look at it and you see the ice, there is no blood, there is nothing. White and clear. These guys ultimately were copying Ortega, who at the beginning of *The Revolt of the Masses* speaks about an ice floe that crosses the Spanish plains towards Andalusia, and it is an iceberg. I think this inspired them. Bringing an iceberg demonstrated Chile's effectiveness, and at the same time, its transparent nature, its purity, its absolute purity. So, I wrote against that, against the idea that there could be a whitewashing. We mustn't allow a whitewashing. After my book there were others, but it was the first that spoke like that, it was one of the first critiques of the type of transition. That also explains its success. You know it is not so much whether books are good or bad; some of them, in the context of a certain conjuncture, take on an importance that otherwise they would not have.

The presidential campaign of Gladys Marín

J.C. Gómez Leyton: This book has been interpreted in several ways, you know that. There are people on the right, the left and the centre, who have different interpretations. But from my perspective, you could think that the success of your book made it possible, for instance, for the Communist Party to think that the success of the book could be extended to the electoral arena. That is when the Communist Party got

excited and in '98, if I'm not mistaken, presented the first candidacy of Gladys Marín, in which you were…

T. Moulian: I was her *generalísimo*…

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Exactly. Tell us a little about that experience and what it meant for your political and intellectual development.

T. Moulian: Look, this is what happened to me. The book was more successful than I expected and it made me someone that appeared in *El Mercurio*, with the top-selling book for fifty-six weeks. So, I said: okay, I have gained prestige, what am I going to do with it? I had built some symbolic capital, and I decided to invest it in helping Gladys Marín, who was going to run for the presidency. Until then I hadn't been close to the communists at all, I went to them, I became the *generalísimo* of her campaign, which I was to a nominal extent, because being *generalísimo* in a campaign is hard, it's terrible. So I preferred to travel around the country with others, speaking about her candidacy, and I let others direct the campaign, I didn't care much about directing. But the electoral result was bad, dreadful. Gladys got a bit more than 3% of the votes, less than the priest Pizarro had won in the previous election. Think about it, Gladys's charisma and what I thought I was contributing didn't achieve any numerical results and it was a failure. This showed once again that Chilean popular sectors distribute their votes between the *Concertación* and the *Alianza*. We should have gone back to a more thorough and current study of the previous elections to know how the popular vote had been distributed; studying the polls, all that is possible. We should have carried out a study: for example, where was the strong vote for the *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI, Independent Democrat Union) coming from, and what was happening between the popular sectors and the Communist Party? It's probably the middle classes that vote for them.

The crisis of sociology or sociologists in retreat

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Tomás, 1997 not only marks the success of your book, but also the fortieth anniversary of FLACSO-Chile, and there was an important event in which the general subsecretary, José Joaquín Brunner, participated. And at that time, Brunner, in the former National Congress or in the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I don't remember which of the two places, declared the "death of sociology" and suggested that literature offered the best interpre-

tation of Latin American societies and Latin American realities. This brought many people—I would say including you as well at one time—to get excited about this thesis and to become an essayist and a writer, instead of continuing to be a sociologist. In fact, I remember that at that time you defined yourself as a writer and not as a sociologist. I think that, from that moment, sociology entered into crisis in Chile and it has not allowed studies that permit us to properly understand Chilean society, such as for example the doubt that still exists today about the type of electoral behaviour in Chilean society.

T. Moulian: Yes, I think that what happened with respect to sociology was a desertion. Sociologists deserted to the governmental sphere, to the sphere of the state, they became officials of the governments of the *Concertación*, and others deserted to another type of sphere, we became social analysts. More than a sociologist, I consider myself a social analyst, and if you put me under a lot of pressure, a political historian. Why a political historian? Because I believe in the study of the past and the present with historical methods. We can find keys with which we can think about the future. So sociology was left to the schools of sociology, which unfortunately have not carried out enough studies. But the social scientists and those of us who think about this type of dissolution of disciplines, of disciplinary boundaries, have not been able to build research centres that address this diversity and that study, for example, what I was just telling you: what is happening with the popular sectors, from the perspective of their views of the world, their views of the future, their political allegiances, their party allegiances, their voting behaviour, their life strategies? Life strategies that do not let the official left parties attract them, and so these parties attract them: the *Partido por la Democracia* (PPD, Party for Democracy), the Socialist Party, which for all intents and purposes is more or less the same at this point: in the end, this apparatus that we call *Concertación*, and nobody foresees that this could change. The only thing that comes onto the scene is the Arrate move. Arrate is a very important socialist leader, a significant intellectual, a political leader with a long history, who is now trying to run as presidential candidate as a result of an articulation between a sector of the Socialist Party and the CP. This may be an interesting path and allow some changes in the future. But it has thousands of obstacles, it is more or less like walking in Antarctica with running shoes, it is a very difficult task. When Max Weber says that politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards, this manoeuvre of building a possibility of a socialist left and a communist left seems to me to be a task for the future in Chile, but a very difficult one.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Tomás, the possibility of building this alliance that you suggest, what bases does it build on, if you still don't know how the popular sectors think or what the citizenry thinks?

T. Moulian: Well, that's right, but it has a hypothetical aspect precisely because we do not know the mechanisms of domination of the popular sectors, how they are led to support this society, because everything shows that in the electoral sphere they support it.

For me, being on the left is trying to answer the question: how can the interests of the popular sectors be met?

The left in the 21st century in Chile and in Latin America

E. Sader: Is the theory of authoritarianism the hegemonic theory of the Chilean transition?

T. Moulian: I would say so. Well, all these authors have a lot of influence, like Guillermo O'Donnell. I try to settle things with them as I think that this transition has taken only one step, let's say. It has taken a step, it's not that it hasn't moved at all, it's moved from an authoritarian political regime to a regime of representative democracy, but within a framework of a protected democracy, within the framework of the 1980 Constitution, until after a real saga, through a very, very complicated process, the elements of protected democracy that remained and still remained until two or three years ago were eliminated. Only now, Michelle Bachelet works without the presence of the designated senators and without the National Security Council as was previously the case.

"Reform or revolution" or "reform and revolution": is this the question of the left today?

E. Sader: With respect to the classic issue of "reform or revolution", some say that the Chilean situation confirms either one strategy or the other. I would like you to tell me if this dilemma is still relevant, or if it is necessary to reframe the issues.

T. Moulian: I would say that this dilemma should be abandoned in order to properly think about the Chilean political process. I think that in Chile the revolution is a profound reform, that was *Unidad Popular*, and if *Unidad Popular* had been thought of as a profound reform instead of as already existing socialism, already created, it would have had much more possibility of operating politically to be able to achieve its goals. We were victims of that dilemma, "reform or revolution". However, today I think that the dilemma is useful for a critique of reformism, talking about revolution as a process of intensified democratisation, as a move from a representative democracy to a more participatory democracy, as a change so that there can be institutional ways for the citizen not to be a citizen between elections but an active subject, a participant. So, I think the idea of revolution has to be discussed again, but as a profound democratisation of society. Now, as I said, is an interesting political conjuncture, with Jorge Arrate's attempt to be the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party. There could be a political situation worth thinking about there.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: To think about this idea of reform, or revolution.

T. Moulian: Yes, a presidential candidacy that presents a program that goes beyond what has been done until now. What has been done until now is to complete neoliberalisation, legitimise it and maintain a policy of public peace, of respect for human rights, with the exception of issues like the Mapuches. That is an issue that the political elite isn't even very worried about, it will make Patricia Troncoso's hunger strike disappear and "Chileanism" will come back. There is a very big vacuum there, it is very powerful on the left as well.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Tomás, along the same lines that Emir was suggesting, in your debate with J.J. Brunner, which took place in the online newspaper *El Mostrador*, you conclude the following in a 2001 article: "Rethinking socialism as a politics not of revolution but of transformation should be a demand of the left today." What difference is there,

in theory, in your proposal, between transformation and revolution? Because one could think that revolution is a transformation.

T. Moulian: Yes, I wouldn't take the phrase as a concept. But I think that to put the word "revolution" in quotation marks here says that we should think about the notion of transformation as a possible change from the Chilean capitalism-democracy duo in a peaceful way, with a left that has to be able to gather together allies. I put the word "revolution" in quotation marks because, even from the point of view of slogans, it's a stigmatised slogan. I think we have to think about politics of transformation from the point of view of a peaceful process and they have to be politics of transformation that are based on the current state of class relations, social forces, on the situation in which these politics of transformation are experienced. Today that would mean democratisation or more participatory democracy. In times of Pinochet it would have been demanding representative democracy: democracy meant that the tyrant would leave immediately, that we would bring him to justice. Today there has to be a profound transformation of this neoliberal capitalism and this transformation has to take the shape of societies of participation, participation of workers in the management of companies and a much more participatory system of political democracy than the current one, with not just elections, etc. So I tried to think about some things that could be a politics of transformation.

Social transformation is with political parties and social movements

J.C. Gómez Leyton: But a politics of the type that you are proposing doesn't only need a party system with an inclusive left, it also needs the development of social movements. How do you see the state of social movements in Chile?

T. Moulian: Yes, that's right. Well, in Chile, the state of social movements is sporadic, to put it mildly. Perhaps the nature of social movements is sporadic, because in Argentina there was a development of social movements that we really envied here, and it also ended up being concentrated in a specific conjuncture. Which makes one think that maybe social movements are effective in specific conjunctures, perhaps one cannot expect them to be permanent. We should create structures of participation, which are not the same as social movements. So in Chile, the social movements are not too important,

because the political parties have a large presence and they tend to dominate. But recently the high school students formed a very autonomous social movement.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: You are referring to the high school students' "penguin revolution".

T. Moulian: The so-called "penguin revolution", of course, based on demands related to their situation and not to any global ideological discourse, but rather to their situation. They were very, very mobilised. Then they disappeared, they became fragmented. I think the central structure of political struggle of the masses in Chile is the parties, but they have to constantly be in relation with the social movements, they shouldn't prevent them from emerging, they shouldn't manipulate them when they arise and they should stimulate them when they don't arise. Because parties alone can lead to very problematic democratisation processes.

E. Sader: How was the end of the centrality of the world of work—if you accept this concept—experienced in Chile, where even in the parties it has a very strong presence in social and political life? What consequences did it have? In what specific way was this displacement managed?

T. Moulian: It is hard for me to answer you, because I would say the issue hasn't been very prominent, at least not in my thoughts, but not in Chilean political life either.

E. Sader: Because from abroad one sees the recent Mapuche protests, the *pirquineros*,[5] the high school students, so I don't see…

T. Moulian: Ah, yes, of course! Yes, it's true, workers have not been at the centre of social mobilisation for some time now. They are there only when it is about copper workers or the port workers: they are the two large unions capable of making other sectors mobilise, and making them mobilise around them. But even they don't attract public interest, they come across as somehow clueless, which prevents them from getting what the students get or what the Mapuches get. The struggle of the Mapuches is on television every day. Misrepresented and

5 Translators' note: the term refers to independent mining workers, informally organized, who work in very precarious and risky conditions.

all, but it's there, it is present. But this struggle of the Mapuches, the Chilean political parties don't take it up, we, the professionals, don't take it up either.

E. Sader: In the process of social reproduction there is room for the mining and port workers, but not for the Mapuches.

T. Moulian: There should be room for the Mapuches, there should be a progressive regime that would carry out a politics of transformation that would include the resolution of the Mapuche or national problem amongst its first priorities.

E. Sader: Does your analysis bring you to speak of a passive consensus?

T. Moulian: It's absolute passivity. It is also the passivity of the business sectors that accept that these *Concertación* governments are their best representatives. They don't organise desperate manoeuvres for the right to return to power either, so we have a *Concertación* that secures multiple backings, unspoken backings, the business people do not say that they support it. The popular sectors largely vote for them, for those parties.

E. Sader: Depoliticising politics.

T. Moulian: A depoliticisation of politics.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: It is pseudopolitics.

T. Moulian: Sure, we could call it pseudopolitics, but with a left that is not able to inspire political reflection. So, what is happening?

E. Sader: In Latin America, as a whole, what is it about the political processes that are developing, the opinion trends, the theoretical reflections, that most interests you, that stands out for you? What matters most to you?

T. Moulian: Evo Morales, Lula and Chávez. Chávez, well, I don't like him much, but what *chavismo* has managed to do in Venezuela is important. What surprises me about Evo Morales is his ability to articulate what until now has been practically inarticulable in Bolivia, and to achieve the stability, duration and survival of a project.

The left today

E. Sader: Is a critique of statism from the left developing?

T. Moulian: Yes.

E. Sader: Yes, from before. But how do you see this critique today?

T. Moulian: Well, today I don't think there really is a left in Chile. There is a different proposal from the left in the Communist Party and in a few forces that are around, new groups, groups that are trying to rethink politics, etc. The *Concertación*, it seems to me, is a modern social democracy, contemporary, which has managed to outline a suitable program for Chile, and this suitable program for Chile is to finish, or to complete, the process of neoliberalisation of Chilean society, and that was Patricio Aylwin's task. He had very few options: we can't blame Aylwin much because the way we got to the transition was via the plebiscite. After that it wasn't possible—or the parties thought that it wasn't possible—to have a politics of mobilisation that would force Pinochet to leave immediately and to thereby be able to create a new political system and get rid of the 1980 Constitution. So a transition in the context of the 1980 Constitution is what Aylwin did, he couldn't have done much more, he did what he could. He managed to appease the military and that task of appeasement actually lasted until Pinochet left in 2006. So now we have a transition with Bachelet, in which the military does not interfere, but this is no more than neoliberalism with small reforms.

E. Sader: But do you think that this critique of statism is a valid view today?

T. Moulian: Today my critique would be of the neoliberalisation of the Chilean left and of a left that is statised in the sense that it seeks power and does not conceive of itself outside of power. I haven't seen any debate about under what conditions we would be willing to continue and under what conditions we would not be willing to continue. The socialist left does not discuss this. It sees itself in the *Concertación* in perpetuity, and, well, I try to demonstrate this in my books: that this left is a left that has neoliberalised Chilean society and by neoliberalising it in democracy it has increased the legitimacy of neoliberalism. Because the neoliberalism of the dictatorship was questioned, but having neoliberalism be the system that has governed us in democracy until now relegitimises it. Of course it is still expected that it will do what neoliberalism finds

very difficult, which is to generate a better distribution of income. So, within the left today, there is the left that participates in power and the communist left. The latter is a left that has not undergone a process of re-orientation after the end of the USSR, which has an interesting program because the program it has is a program of democratisation of society, but which has not been able to become a necessary left or a left that can resonate with the youth sectors or the more organised workers, which are the two sectors where the left has to gain social predominance to be able to develop a politics that allows it to broaden its support.

J.C. Gómez Leyton: Tomás, perhaps, to finish, a question that always remains. We are speaking with a person who identified himself with the left during the 1960s. From 1967–1968 until now, forty years of evolution in the Americas have passed, evolution of our societies, our countries, our peoples and our lefts. What is it to be on the left in 2007, for a man who was on the left, has been and is on the left?

T. Moulian: For me, being on the left is trying to answer the question: how can the interests of the popular sectors be met? There are intellectuals that to do not belong to these sectors, I include myself, and I think the work of democratisation has to be carried out by popular sectors organised in political parties, in the Chilean case. Parties that have not yet arisen, that have to arise. So it is being, like we say in Chile, *a la "huaite"*[6] for this experience, studying this experience, trying to put ourselves at the service of this experience and collaborating with it with our own theories. We are not followers, we are partners in dialogue. The intellectual who wants to be on the left is a partner in dialogue with the people on the left in the way that these people organise themselves in their parties, their movements—penguins like we call these high school kids—their leaders, like Patricia Troncoso, who now came out representing a group of Chilean society that we—when I say "we", I mean the intellectuals—did not take much into consideration. The left political parties… what can I say? The limited presence of the Communist Party, for example, is an indication. The absolute inability of the Socialist Party to achieve a better policy with respect to the Mapuche people is another sign. So, being on the left is trying to be with these causes, to continue to learn and to teach, because that is how we learn from them, we teach them.

Santiago, Chile, January 2008

6 Translators' note: waiting for.

PERSPECTIVES

Lukewarm thought
A critical look at French culture

Perry Anderson

Abstract

In this work, Anderson deals with the changes that French thinking experimented from the middle of the twentieth century to the beginnings of the twenty-first century. He analyses the transformation of the French culture, which was emblematic due to its influence, and characterized by the richness, abundance and complexity of its artistic and intellectual production, into an increasing decay marked by the acceptance of the market ideology and the loss of a critical vocation. He gives an account of the privileged moment of post-war cultural production within the framework of the Fifth Republic, the outburst of May 68, and the subsequent conversion to liberalism of many intellectuals,

Resumen

En este trabajo, Anderson aborda los cambios acaecidos en el pensamiento francés desde mediados del siglo XX hasta inicios del XXI. Analiza el paso de una cultura emblemática por su influencia, como la francesa, caracterizada por la riqueza, abundancia y complejidad de sus producciones artísticas e intelectuales, a un progresivo deterioro marcado por la aceptación de la ideología de mercado y la pérdida de la vocación crítica. Narra el privilegiado momento de producción intelectual de la posguerra en el ámbito de la Quinta República, la explosión del Mayo del '68 y la posterior conversión al liberalismo de muchos intelectuales que fueron formando el pensamiento dominante de la época, que continúa

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who gradually constituted the dominant thinking of the period, which still prevails nowadays. However, the author finds elements which allow tracing down the pitfalls of this new hegemonic culture. Such elements may be thought to lead to a future recovery of the richness of the traditional critical thinking of this nation.

imponiéndose hasta el día de hoy. Sin embargo, el autor encuentra elementos que permiten rastrear las fisuras de esta nueva cultura hegemónica y que pueden comenzar a plantearse como base para una futura recuperación de la riqueza del tradicional espíritu crítico de esta nación.

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1| France **2|** Critical Thinking **3|** Republic **4|** Democracy **5|** Neoliberalism **6|** Socialism **7|** Comunism **8|** Intellectuals **9|** Culture **10|** Politics

Palabras clave

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Lukewarm thought
A critical look at French culture[1]

PERRY ANDERSON

I. Dégringolade

France is, of all European countries, the most difficult for any foreigner to write about. Its intractability is a function, in the first instance, of the immense output on their society produced by the French themselves, on a scale undreamt of elsewhere. Seventy titles just on the electoral campaign of spring 2002. Two hundred books on Mitterrand. Three thousand on De Gaulle. Such numbers, of course, include a huge amount of dross. But they are not mere logomachy. High standards of statistical rigour, analytic intelligence, literary elegance continue to distinguish the best of French writing about France, in quantities no neighbouring land can rival.

Confronted with this mass of self-description, what can the alien gaze hope to add? The advantages of estrangement, would be the anthropological reply - Lévi-Strauss's *regard lointain*. But in England we lack the discipline of real distance. France is all too misleadingly familiar: the repetitively stylised Other of insular history and popular imagination; the culture whose words are still most commonly taught, movies screened, classics translated; the shortest trip for the tourist, the most fashionable spot for a second residence. London is now closer to Paris than Edinburgh by train; there are some 15 million visits by Britons to France every year, more than from any other country. The vicinity is lulling. Its effect is a countrywide equivalent of the snare against which every schoolchild struggling with French is warned. France itself becomes a kind of *faux ami*.

Local connoisseurs are seldom of much help in correcting the error. It is striking that the two best-known recent English histo-

1 Editor's Note. The two parts that make up this article appeared in the Londdon Review of Books under the following headings:"Dégringolade" (September 2nd, 2004) and "Union Sucrée" (September 23, 2004). The title that we adopted for the whole was suggested by the French issue: Perry Anderson, *La pensée tiède. Un regard critique sur la culture française. Suivi de la pensée réchauflée*, Paris, Seuil, 2005. Such issue includes a reply by Pierre Nora.

rians of France, Richard Cobb and Theodore Zeldin, have taken the national penchant for the whimsical and eccentric to extremes, as if so defeated by their subject they had to fall back, in compensation, on a parodic exhibition of French images of Anglicity, as so many historiographic Major Thompsons. Less strenuous contributions - political science, cultural studies, the higher journalism - offer little antidote. Reportage itself often seems mortified: few dispatches are so regularly flat as those filed from Paris, as if it were somehow the deathbed of the correspondent's imagination. A bright obscurity covers the country, screening its pitfalls for cross-Channel commentary. What follows is unlikely to escape a share of them.

The current scene is as good a place to start as any, since it offers a pregnant example of the illusions of familiarity. Newspapers, journals and bookshops brim with debate over French decline. Gradually trickling to the surface in the past few years, *le déclinisme* burst into full flow with the publication last winter of *La France qui tombe*, a spirited denunciation of national default - 'the sinister continuity between the 14 years of François Mitterrand and the 12 of Jacques Chirac, united by their talent for winning elections and ruining France' - by Nicolas Baverez, an economist and historian of the centre-right (Baverez, 2003: 131)[2]. Rebuttals, vindications, rejoinders, alternatives have proliferated. Baverez looks at first glance like a French version of a Thatcherite, a neo-liberal of more or less strict persuasion, and the whole controversy like a rerun of the long-standing debates on decline in this country. But the appearances are deceptive. The problem is not the same.

Britain's diminution since the war has been a long-drawn-out process. But its starting point is clear: the illusions bred by victory in 1945, under a leader of 1914 vintage, followed virtually without intermission by the realities of financial dependency on Washington, austerity at home and imperial retreat abroad. By the time consumer prosperity arrived, a decade later, the country was already lagging behind the growth of Continental economies, and within a few more years found itself locked out of a European Community whose construction it had rejected. In due course the welfare state itself - a landmark when first created - was overtaken elsewhere. There was no dramatic reckoning with the past, just a gradual slide within a framework of complete political stability.

Abroad, decolonisation was conducted steadily, at little cost to the home country, but owed much to luck. India was too big to put up

2 For an elaborated reply from the "just means", see Duhamel (2003: 163).

a fight for. War in Malaya, unlike Indochina, could be won because the Communist movement was based on an ethnic minority. Rhodesia, unlike Algeria, was logistically out of range. The costs to the colonised were another matter, in the bloody skein of partitions left behind: Ireland, Palestine, Pakistan, Cyprus. But British society appeared unscathed. Yet, like the welfare state with which it was often coupled as a principal achievement of the postwar order, withdrawal from empire, too, eventually lost its lustre, when the abscess of Ulster reopened. The decisive development of the period lay elsewhere, in the abandonment after the Suez expedition of any pretension by the British state to autonomy from

The arrival of the Fifth Republic coincided with the full flowering of the intellectual energies that set France apart for two generations after the war.

the US. Henceforward the adhesion of the nation to the global hegemon - internalised as a political imperative by both parties, more deeply by Labour even than Conservatives - cushioned loss of standing in the popular imagination, while exhibiting it to the world at large. Intellectual life was not so dissimilar, vitality after the war coming largely from external sources, emigrés from Central and Eastern Europe, with few local eminences. Here, too, there was subsidence without much tension.

A sense of decline became acute within the British elites only when fierce distributional struggles broke out in the 1970s, with the onset of stagflation. The outcome was a sharp shift of gravity in the political system, and Thatcher's mandate to redress the fall in the country's fortunes. Neo-liberal medicine, continued under New Labour, revived the spirits of capital and redrew the social landscape - Britain pioneering programmes of privatisation and deregulation internationally as it had once done welfare and nationalisation. A modest economic recovery was staged, amid still decaying infrastructures and increasing social polarisation. With the recent slowdown in Europe, claims of a national renaissance have become more common, without acquiring widespread conviction.

Overseas, Thatcher's most famous success was regaining the puny Antarctic colony of the Falklands; Blair's, brigading the

country into the American invasion of Iraq. Pride or shame in such ventures scarcely impinge on the rest of the world. Internationally, the country's cultural icon is now a football celebrity. Little alteration of political arrangements; moderate growth but still low productivity; pinched universities and crumbling railways; the unmoved authority of Treasury, Bank and City; an underling diplomacy. The record lacks high relief. The British way of coming down in the world might itself be termed a mediocre affair.

France has been another story. Defeat and occupation left it, after Liberation, at a starting point far below that of Britain. The Resistance had saved its honour, and Potsdam its face, but it was a survivor rather than a victor power. Economically, France was still a predominantly rural society, with a per capita income a little over half of the British standard. Sociologically, the peasantry remained by far its largest class: 45 per cent of the population. Politically, the Fourth Republic floundered into quicksands of government instability and colonial disaster. Little more than a decade after Liberation, the army was in revolt in Algeria, and the country on the brink of civil war. The whole postwar experience appeared a spectacular failure.

In fact, the Fourth Republic had in some ways been a period of extraordinary vitality. It was in these years that the administrative structure of the French state was overhauled, and the technocratic elite that today dominates the business and politics of the country took shape. While cabinets revolved, civil servants assured a continuity of *dirigiste* policies that modernised the French economy at nearly twice the clip of growth rates in Britain. French architects - Monnet and Schumann - laid the foundations of European integration, and it was French politicians who clinched the Treaty of Rome: the birth of the European Community, just before the Fourth Republic expired, owed more to France than any other country. French literature, in the days of Sartre, Camus and De Beauvoir, enjoyed an international readership probably without equal in the postwar world, well beyond its standing between the wars.

So when De Gaulle came to power, on the back of military revolt in Algiers, the dilapidated estate he inherited in fact offered solid bases for national recovery. He, of course, promised much more than that. France, he had announced, was inconceivable without grandeur. In his vocabulary the word had connotations that escape the vulgar claims of 'greatness' attached to Britain; it was a more archaic and abstract ideal, that appeared even to many of his compatriots out of keeping with the age. Yet it is difficult to deny it to the man, and the reconstruction over which he presided. It is conventional to pair him with Chur-

chill, as statues in the national pantheon. But, beyond romantic legend, there is a discrepancy between them. De Gaulle's historical achievement was much larger. Colourful as it was, Churchill's role in 20th-century Britain proved by comparison quite limited: an inspirational leadership of his country, crucial for a year, in a war won by Soviet troops and American wealth, and a brief epilogue of nondescript office in time of peace. The image he left was huge, the mark modest. Little in postwar Britain, save lingering imperial illusions, is traceable to him.

In exile, De Gaulle's wartime leadership was more purely symbolic, and his adjustment to peace, at which he threw in a hand stronger than Churchill's, little more successful. But he was a generation younger, with an altogether more reflective and original cast of mind. When he returned to power a decade later, he had mastered the arts of politics, and proved a strange singleton of modern statecraft. In the West no other postwar leader comes near his record. The largest colonial conflict of the century - at its height, the French army in Algeria numbered 400,000; perhaps a million Algerians were killed - was brought to a dextrous end, and resistance to the settlement by those who had put him in power crushed. A new republic was founded, with institutions - above all, a strong presidential executive - designed to give the country political stability. High-tech modernisation of the economy proceeded apace, with major infrastructural programmes and rapidly rising living standards in the towns, as growth accelerated. Large-scale farming was shielded by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a French construction, while the countryside started to empty, and the capital regained its pristine splendour.

Most striking was the transformation of the French state's position in the world. As the Cold War continued, De Gaulle made France the only truly independent power in Europe. Without breaking with the United States, he built a nuclear deterrent that owed nothing to America, and cocked it *à tous azimuts*. Withdrawing French forces from Nato command, boycotting US operations under UN guise in the Congo, stockpiling gold to weaken the dollar, he condemned the American war in Vietnam and Israeli arrogance in the Middle East, and vetoed British entry into the Common Market: actions unthinkable in today's cowering world, as they were for Britain's rulers at the time. No country of the period was so plainly removed from any notion of decline. Equipped with a vigorous economy, an exceptionally strong state, an intrepid foreign policy, France displayed a greater elan than at any time since the Belle Epoque.

The radiance of the country was also cultural. The arrival of the Fifth Republic coincided with the full flowering of the intellec-

tual energies that set France apart for two generations after the war. Looking back, the range of works and ideas that achieved international influence is astonishing. It could be argued that nothing quite like it had been seen for a century. Traditionally, literature had always occupied the summit on the slopes of prestige within French culture. Just below it lay philosophy, surrounded with its own nimbus, the two adjacent from the days of Rousseau and Voltaire to those of Proust and Bergson. On lower levels were scattered the *sciences humaines*, history the most prominent, geography or ethnology not far away, economics further down. Under the Fifth Republic, this time-honoured hierarchy underwent significant changes. Sartre refused a Nobel Prize in 1964, but after him no French writer ever gained the same public authority, at home or abroad. The Nouveau Roman remained a more restricted phenomenon, of limited appeal within France itself, and less overseas. Letters in the classical sense lost their commanding position within the culture at large. What took their place was an exotic marriage of social and philosophical thought, at the altar of literature. It was the products of this union that gave intellectual life in the decade of De Gaulle's reign its peculiar brilliance and intensity. It was in these years that Lévi-Strauss became the world's most celebrated anthropologist; Braudel established himself as its most influential historian; Barthes became its most distinctive literary critic; Lacan started to acquire his reputation as the mage of psychoanalysis; Foucault to invent his archaeology of knowledge; Derrida to become the antinomian philosopher of the age; Bourdieu to develop the concepts that would make him its best-known sociologist. The concentrated explosion of ideas is astonishing. In just two years (1966-67) there appeared side by side: *Du miel aux cendres*, *Les Mots et les choses*, *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme*, *Système de la mode*, *Ecrits*, *Lire le Capital* and *De la grammatologie*, not to speak - from another latitude - of *La Société du spectacle*. Whatever the different bearings of these and other writings, it does not seem altogether surprising that a revolutionary fever gripped society itself the following year.

The reception of this effervescence abroad varied from country to country, but no major culture in the West, not to speak of Japan, was altogether exempt from it. This owed something to the traditional cachet of anything Parisian, with its overtones of mode as much as of mind. But it was also an effect of the novel elision of genres in so much of this thinking. For if literature lost its position at the apex of French culture, the effect was not so much a banishment as a displacement. Viewed comparatively, the striking feature of the human sciences and philosophy that counted in this period was the extent to which they came to be written increasingly as virtuoso exer-

cises of style, drawing on the resources and licences of artistic rather than academic forms. Lacan's *Ecrits*, closer to Mallarmé than Freud in their syntax, or Derrida's *Glas*, with its double-columned interlacing of Genet and Hegel, represent extreme forms of this strategy. But Foucault's oracular gestures, mingling echoes of Artaud and Bossuet, Lévi-Strauss's Wagnerian constructions, Barthes's eclectic coquetries, belong to the same register.

To understand this development, one has to remember the formative role of rhetoric, seeping through the dissertation, in the upper levels of the French educational system in which all these

No other country, even Italy, came near the blaze of the French cinema in these years.

thinkers - *khâgneux* and *normaliens* virtually to a man - were trained, as a potential hyphen between literature and philosophy. Even Bourdieu, whose work took as one of its leading targets just this rhetorical tradition, could not escape his own version of its cadences; far less such as Althusser, against whose obscurities the sociologist railed. The potential cost of a literary conception of intellectual disciplines is obvious enough: arguments freed from logic, propositions from evidence. Historians were least prone to such an import substitution of literature, but even Braudel was not immune to the loosening of controls in a too flamboyant eloquence. It is this trait of the French culture of the time that has so often polarised foreign reactions to it, in a seesaw between adulation and suspicion. Rhetoric is designed to cast a spell, and a cult easily arises among those who fall under it. But it can also repel, drawing charges of legerdemain and imposture. Balanced judgment here will never be easy. What is clear is that the hyperbolic fusion of imaginative and discursive forms of writing, with all its attendant vices, was also inseparable from everything that made this body of work most original and radical.

The vitality of France's culture under De Gaulle was not merely a matter of these eminences. Another sign of it was possession of what was then the world's finest newspaper, *Le Monde*. Under the

austere regime of Hubert Beuve-Méry, Paris enjoyed a daily whose international coverage, political independence and intellectual standards put it in a class by itself in the Western press of the period. The *New York Times*, the *Times* or *Frankfurter Allgemeine* were provincial rags by comparison. In the academic world, this was also the time when the *Annales*, still a relatively modest affair during the Fourth Republic, became the dominant force in French historiography, winning for it both a more central role within the public culture - something it had once enjoyed, but long lost - and a great arc of overseas influence. Braudel's command of the Sixième Section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes allowed him to rejuvenate the social sciences, and lay the foundations of what would become the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, regrouping disciplines and talents in a manner worthy of the Consulate. Last but not least, of course, was the cinema. Here, as in much else, the origins of a spectacular burst of creativity lay in the subcultures of the Fourth Republic. One of its features, still undiminished through the 1960s, had been the number and variety of its journals of ideas, which played a much more important part in intellectual life than anywhere else in the West. Sartre's *Temps modernes*, Bataille's *Critique*, Mounier's *Esprit* were only the best known of these. It was in this milieu that Bazin's *Cahiers du cinéma* had its place, as the crucible in which the passions and convictions of the future directors of the Nouvelle Vague were formed.

Their debut on the screen coincided with the arrival of De Gaulle in power. *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and *Les Cousins* opened in 1959, *A bout de souffle* in 1960. After the war Paris had notoriously ceased to be the capital of modern painting, a position it had held for a century. But within the visual arts as a whole, it might be said that France recouped with brio in moving pictures. Or if, with equal plausibility, we regard film as the art that has taken the place of the novel as the dominant narrative form of the age, Godard might be seen as the contemporary equivalent of the great French writers of the past, producing one tour de force after another - *Le Mépris*, *Bande à part*, *Une femme mariée*, *Pierrot le fou*, *Deux ou trois choses*, *La Chinoise*, *Weekend* punctuating the decade as once the latest volumes by Balzac or Proust. No other country, even Italy, came near the blaze of the French cinema in these years.

Today, all this has passed. The feeling is widespread that the Fifth Republic, as it approaches its half-century, presents a fallen landscape. The economy, after crawling forward at 1.3 per cent a year through the 1990s, is today sunk in yet another trough, with a widening deficit, rising public debt and very high levels of unemployment. Well over 9 per cent of the labour force, itself reduced by high rates of early

retirement, is out of work. One quarter of French youth is jobless; two-fifths among immigrant families. Secondary education, once the best in Europe, has been steadily deteriorating; large numbers now emerge from it scarcely literate. Although France still spends more on a pupil in its lycées (for the first time outclassed, except at the very highest level, by private schools) than it does on a student at its universities, it has one of the lowlier rates of reading in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Scientific research, measured by funding or by discovery, has plummeted: emigration, virtually unknown in the past, now drains the country's laboratories.

The political system, riddled with corruption, is held in increasing public contempt. Nearly a third of the electorate - a far larger number than voted for any single candidate - refused to cast a ballot in the first round of the presidential elections of 2002; the incumbent got less than a fifth of the vote; 40 per cent abstained in the legislative elections. The National Assembly is the weakest parliament in the Western world, with more than one resemblance to the echo chambers of the First Empire. The current ruler of the country would be in the dock for malversation had a constitutional court not hastened to grant him immunity from prosecution: a trampling of equality before the law that not even his Italian counterpart, in what is usually imagined to be a still more cynical political culture, has been able to secure. Foreign policy is a mottled parody of Gaullism: vocal opposition to the pretext for war in the Middle East, followed by practical provision of airspace and prompt wishes for victory once the attack was under way, then eager amends for disloyalty with a joint coup to oust another unsatisfactory ruler in the Caribbean, and *agrément* for the puppet regime in Baghdad. At home the prestige of public works, as late as the 1990s still a touchstone of national pride, lies in the mortuary dust and rubble of Roissy.

Economic stress and political corrosion could still, it might be argued, leave intact what are the essential values of France, both in its own eyes and those of the world. No other nation, after all, has so conspicuously based its identity on culture, understood in the broadest sense. But here too, as much as - in some ways, perhaps even more than - in matters of industry or state, the scene at large is dismal: in the eyes of many, a veritable dégringolade. The days of Malraux are long gone. No better symbol of current conditions could be found than the fate of his hapless descendant as court philosopher, the *salonnier* Luc Ferry, minister of education under Chirac - derisively pelted with his own latest opuscule by teachers when he tried to tour schools to persuade them of the latest round of downsizing reforms, and then summarily terminated as an embarrassment to his patron.

More generally, a sense of cheapening and dumbing down, the intertwining of intellectual with financial or political corruption, has become pervasive. Press and television, long given to the incestuous practices of *le renvoi d'ascenseur* - is there an equivalent so expressive in any other language? - have lost earlier restraints, not only in their dealing with ideas, but with business and power. The decline of *Le Monde* is emblematic. Today, the paper is a travesty of the daily created by Beuve-Méry: shrill, conformist and parochial, increasingly made in the image of its website, which assails the viewer with more fatuous pop-ups and inane advertisements than an American tabloid. The disgust that many of its own readers, trapped by the absence of an alternative, feel for what it has become was revealed when a highly uneven polemic against the trio of managers who have debauched it - Alain Minc, Edwy Plenel and Jean-Marie Colombani - sold 200,000 copies, in the face of legal threats against the authors, later withdrawn to avoid further discomfiture of them in court.

La Face cachée du 'Monde', a doorstop of 600 pages mixing much damaging documentation with not a few inconsistencies and irrelevancies, unfolds a tale of predatory economic manoeuvres, political sycophancies and vendettas, egregious cultural back-scratching, and - last but not least - avid self-enrichment, unappetising by any standards. 'Since *Le Monde* was founded,' Beuve-Méry remarked after he retired, "money has been waiting below, at the foot of the stairs, to gain entry to the office of the editor. It is there, patient as always, persuaded that in the end it will have the final word" (Péan y Come, 2003: 604). The media conglomerate erected by Colombani and his associates gives notice that it has taken up occupation. But, powerful a motive though greed at the top may be, the journalism they represent is too pervasive to be explained simply by this. A deeper focus can be found in Serge Halimi's exposure of the interlocking complicities - across the spectrum - of establishment commentary on public affairs, in *Les Nouveaux Chiens de garde* (1997)[3]. What this sardonic study of mutual fawning and posturing among the talking heads and editorial sages of Parisian society shows is a system of connivance based at least as much on ideological as material investment in the market.

The world of ideas is in little better shape. Death has picked off virtually all the great names: Barthes (1980); Lacan (1981);

3This wonderful Little dissection has been published seventeen times and has sold 300 thousand copies. There is no English equivalent, even though newspapers such as The Guardian and the like claim so.

Aron (1983); Foucault (1984); Braudel (1985); Debord (1994); Deleuze (1995); Lyotard (1998); Bourdieu (2002). Only Lévi-Strauss, at 95, and Derrida, at 74, survive[4]. No French intellectual has gained a comparable international reputation since. Lack of that is not a necessary measure of worth. But while individual work of distinctive value continues to be produced, the general condition of intellectual life is suggested by the bizarre prominence of Bernard-Henri Lévy, far the best-known 'thinker' under 60 in the country. It would be difficult to imagine a more extraordinary reversal of national standards of taste and intelligence than the attention accorded this crass booby in France's public sphere, despite innumerable demonstrations of his inability to get a fact or an idea straight. Could such a grotesque flourish in any other major Western culture today?

If this is what lays claim to philosophy, literature is not far behind. Today's leading novelist, Michel Houellebecq - the 'Baudelaire of the supermarket' in the eyes of admirers - occupies a position not unlike that of Martin Amis in English letters, as the writer by whom readers most like to be shocked, though beyond the commonplaces of sex and violence, their forms of *épater* are asymmetrical: flamboyance of style and *bienséance* of sentiments in Amis, provocation of ideas and banality of prose in Houellebecq. The French version, coming out of science fiction, is less conventional in intellectual outlook - capable of the occasional unsettling, if never very deep, apothegm - but, as might be expected of its origins, poorer in literary imagination. In principle, the steady drone of flat, slack sentences reproduces the demoralised world they depict, not the limits of the writer's talent. But a glance at the doggerel of Houellebecq's poetry suggests that the match between them is only too natural. That writing of this quality could command official acclaim says something about another, now more long-standing, weakness of French culture. Criticism has remarkably little place in it. The standard idea of a book review - see *La Quinzaine littéraire*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Monde des livres*, *Libération* - is what would elsewhere be regarded as not much above a puff. The rule has its exceptions but these tend to simple inversion, the obloquy as another ritual. No equivalent exists of the *TLS* or the *LRB*, of *L'Indice* or of the books pages of the *New Republic*, even of the dull ones of *Die Zeit*: truly sustained, discriminating engagement with a work of fiction, of ideas or history has become rare.

4 Editor's Note: Jacques Derrida died on October 9, 2004, few weeks after this article was published.

It was not always like this. The culture of the Fourth Republic and the early years of the Fifth, when political divisions were stronger and conflict within and between journals was livelier, involved much more genuine argument and criticism than can be found today. *Cahiers du cinéma* is a striking case in point. What is it now? Another commercial magazine in Colombani's stable, that could be mistaken on the news-stands for *Elle*. If French cinema itself has not fallen as far, this is mainly due to the continuing flow of works from its original transformers: Godard, Rohmer and Chabrol are still as active as when they began. As for its contemporary output, the one film France has successfully exported in recent years, *Amélie*, is kitsch sickly enough to make even Hollywood squirm.

The current French scene cannot, of course, be reduced to its least appealing expressions. No mere inventory of failings could capture the uneven realities of a society in motion; other features and forces have yet to be considered. It is also true that all inter-temporal comparisons are subject to distortion and selective illustration. In the case of France, still haunted by the assured regency of the General, perhaps more so than elsewhere. But the present unease is not a chimera, and requires explanation. What lies behind the apparent subsidence of institutions, ideas, forms, standards? An obvious first hypothesis would be that the life of what was once the 'French exception', that is, all those ways in which this society and its culture escaped from the mediocre routines of the Atlantic ecumene surrounding it, has gradually been squeezed out of the country by two unstoppable forces: the worldwide advance of neo-liberalism, and the rise of English as a universal language. Both have certainly struck at the foundations of traditional conceptions of France. Historically, neither right nor left, however passionately divided in other ways, ever trusted the market as an organising principle of social order: laissez-faire is a French expression that was always foreign to French reality. Even today, so deep is suspicion of it that here, uniquely, the contemporary term 'neo-liberal', with all its negative connotations, has little currency, as if it were redundant: 'liberal' alone remains enough, for a still considerable range of opinion, to indicate the odium. The *Gleichschaltung* of Western economic arrangements that began in the era of Thatcher and Reagan was thus bound to bear especially painfully on a national inheritance of economic intervention and social protection, common to the Fourth and Fifth Republics alike.

Coinciding with the economic pressure of deregulated financial markets, and often experienced as simply its cultural dimension, came the victory of English as the irresistible global medium of business, science and intellectual exchange. For the smaller countries

of Northern Europe - Benelux and Scandinavia - this merely confirmed a widespread bilingualism. The political and intellectual elites of the Federal Republic had always been so deeply in thrall to the United States, as the country's saviour from a discreditable past, that the post-war pretensions of German were small. Italians have never imagined their language as of much moment to anyone but themselves. France was in a completely different situation. French had once been the common tongue of the Enlightenment, spoken by upper classes across the continent, sometimes even - Prussia, Russia - preferred to their own. It remained the standard idiom of diplomacy in the 19th century. It was

Historically, neither right nor left, however passionately divided in other ways, ever trusted the market as an organising principle of social order.

still the principal medium of the European bureaucracy of the Community, down to the 1990s. Long identified with the idea of French civilisation - somewhat more than just a culture - it was a language with a sense of its own universality.

The intellectual fireworks of the *trente glorieuses*[5], spraying aloft and exploding far beyond the borders of France, sustained this notion. But the conditions that produced them depended on the training of an immensely self-assured, spiritually - often also practically - monoglot elite, in the Ecole Normale and the key Parisian lycées that formed generation after generation of talents within an intense, hothouse world.

The rise of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, founded only in 1945, to become the nursery of high-fliers in politics and business (Pompidou was the last *normalien* to rule the country) had already tended to shift privileged education in a more technocratic direction. Then, after 1968, university and school reforms followed the pattern

5 Editor's Note: The expression "the glorious thirties" belongs to Jean Fourastié and refers to the thirty years between 145 and 1973 in which the western world went through a remarkable economic expansion.

elsewhere: broadening access to education, without the resources necessary to maintain the standards of the narrower system.

Democratisation on the cheap inevitably undermined the morale and cohesion of a national institution that had been the pride of the Third Republic. The prestige of the *instituteur* plummeted; curricula were restlessly rejigged and degraded, the average *lycéen* now getting only a wretched smattering of French classics; private schools spread to take up the slack. This is a familiar story, which could be told of virtually every Western society. Overdetermining it in France were the brutal blows to cultural self-esteem from the invasion of English, through the circuits of business, entertainment and journalism. In the past two decades, the proportion of French films screened every year has dropped from a half to a third: at present 60 per cent are American. *Le Monde* now distributes a suitable selection from the *New York Times* at weekends. One of the most important props of national identity is under acute stress. In these conditions, some degree of disintegration in intellectual performance was to be expected.

But while economic and cultural pressures from the Anglosphere have imposed increasing constraints on a wide range of French traditions and institutions, political changes within French society have also been critical in bringing the country to its present low waters. Here an obvious coincidence strikes the eye. De Gaulle presided over the apogee of France's postwar revival. His rule culminated in the explosion of May-June 1968. A year later he was gone. But by then the social energies released in that crisis, racing to the verge of upheaval, had been defeated. No comparable elan has ever reappeared. Ever since, on this reading, France has been sunk in the long post- partum depression of a stillborn revolution - what should have been the turning point of its modern history that, as in 1848, failed to turn.

Seductive though such a conjecture may seem, the actual sequence of events was more complicated. Although the immediate revolutionary thrust of 1968 was broken, the energies behind it were not extinguished overnight. Politically speaking, for a time most of them flowed into more conventional channels of the left. The early 1970s saw a rapid growth in the membership of the Communist Party, the reunification of the Socialist Party, and in 1972 their agreement - seeming to bury Cold War divisions - on a Common Programme. Although Giscard narrowly won the presidency in 1974, polls indicated that the legislative elections scheduled for the autumn of 1978 would give a clear-cut victory to the left, creating the first Socialist-Communist government since the war, on a platform repudiating capitalism and calling for sweeping nationalisations of banks and industries.

It was this prospect, unleashing something close to panic on the right, that precipitated the real break in the intellectual and political history of postwar France. Mobilisation to stop the spectre of Marxism making its entry into the Hôtel Matignon was rapid, radical and comprehensive. The noisiest shots in the campaign were fired by former *gauchiste* intellectuals, launched by the media as the Nouveaux Philosophes between 1975 and 1977, warning of the horrors of Soviet totalitarianism and its theoretical ancestry. If a straight line could be drawn from Engels to Yezhov, would the French be mad enough to let Marchais and Mitterrand extend it into their own homes? Packaged under lurid titles - *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes*, *La Barbarie à visage humain* - and patronised by the Elysée, the message received timely reinforcement from the French translation of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in 1976. Lacking much scholarly tradition of Sovietology, France had long lagged behind the US, UK or Germany in public awareness of the detail of Stalin's regime: what was common knowledge elsewhere during the Cold War could come as a revelation to *le tout-Paris* during détente.

For a brief period Solzhenitsyn could thus exercise, as a local admirer was to put it, the "moral magistracy" (Grémion, 1999: 75) traditionally accorded by the French to one of their own great writers: a role that expired when his disobliging opinions of the West and other inconveniences came to light. But while it lasted, the effect was considerable, helping to put BHL[6] and his fellow thinkers into orbit. Then, in the midst of the mounting Communist scare, the French Communist Party (PCF) itself allowed its opponents a sigh of relief by suddenly ditching its alliance with the Socialist Party (PS), for fear of becoming a junior partner in it, and so destroying any chance of the left winning a majority in the National Assembly. By 1981, when Mitterrand finally won the presidency, the Common Programme was a thing of the past, and the Party a spent force. The left gained the *epaulettes* of office after it had lost the battle of ideas.

For the uncertainties of the late 1970s had galvanised into being an 'anti-totalitarian' front that would dominate intellectual life for the next two decades. The Russian sage and the Nouveaux Philosophes were only the advance criers of much stronger, more durable forces set in train in those years. In 1977, Raymond Aron - who had just joined *L'Express*, to be able to intervene more actively in politics - was preparing a new journal, *Commentaire*, to defend the Fifth Republic

6Editor's Note: frequent abbreviation for Bernard-Henri Lévy.

against what appeared to be the deadly threat of a Socialist-Communist regime coming to power on a well-nigh revolutionary programme. By the time the first number of the journal appeared, on the eve of the elections of March 1978, there had occurred the 'divine surprise' of the rupture between the PCF and PS. Nevertheless, as he explained in a formidable opening essay, 'Incertitudes françaises', there was good reason for continuing apprehension and vigilance. The factors that had made France so unstable and prone to violent upheavals in the 19th century - the lack of any generally accepted principle of legitimacy; peasant acceptance of any regime that left the gains of 1789 on the land intact; the powder-keg role of Paris - all these might indeed have passed away in the prosperous, industrialised democracy of Pompidou and Giscard. But the depth and predictable length of the economic crisis that began in the early 1970s, when world recession had set in, was underestimated by the French, while - even with the recent fortunate division of the left - French socialism had not yet cast off all maximalist temptations. If the PS were still to pursue PCF voters and bring Communists into government, "France will live through years of perhaps revolutionary, perhaps despotic, turmoil" (Aron, 1978:15).

Commentaire went on to become the anchor journal of the liberal right, distinguished not only by its intellectual avoirdupois, but also by its international horizons - a function in part of its close connections, under the direction of Raymond Barre's *chef de cabinet*, with functionaries, politicians and businessmen, as well as the academy. Two years later it was joined, and soon outpaced, by a partner in the liberal centre. *Le Débat*, launched in a sleeker format by Pierre Nora under the auspices of Gallimard, had a more ambitious agenda. Nora opened the journal with a programme for intellectual reform. In the past, French culture, steeped in humanist traditions, had been dominated by an ideal of rhetoric that had led from the role of the *instituteur* to the cult of the great writer, and had permitted every kind of ideological extravagance. Now, however, the legitimacy of the intellectual lay in positive knowledge certified by the competent institutions - essentially, the university. This change could not do away with the agonistic tensions inherent in intellectual life, but it confronted intellectuals with a new set of tasks: not only to promote democracy in society at large, but to practise it within the sphere of thought itself, as a 'republic *in* letters'. The aim of the new journal would thus be to organise what was still a rarity in France, genuine debate. The ground for that had been cleared by the demise of the three major schemas for understanding history operative since the 18th century. The ideologies of Restoration, of Progress and of Revolution were now all equally dead, leaving the

road open at last for the modern social sciences. *Le Débat* would stand for "information, quality, pluralism, openness and truth", and against every kind of irresponsibility and extremism (Nora, 1980: 33-19).

Addressing the perennial French query, 'Que peuvent les intellectuels?', this manifesto did not touch directly on politics, beyond indicating that a 'complete democracy' was to be found in the United States, not in France. When Mitterrand took the presidency a year later, Nora struck a cautious note, stressing the personal character of his victory. Although not suspect of any tenderness towards totalitarianism, would this former ally of the Communists draw the necessary conse-

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quences of the 'great change of mentality in the past four years that has turned the image of the Soviet regime upside down', and adopt the requisite foreign policy to confront the principal enemy? (Nora, 1982: 3-10). These were concerns shared by *Esprit*, a journal that had once been the voice of an anti-colonial and neutralist Catholic left, but on the retirement in 1976 of its postwar editor, Jean-Marie Domenach, had repositioned itself as a front-line fighter in the anti-totalitarian struggle. In these years, as Nora would later note, *Commentaire*, *Le Débat* and *Esprit* formed a common axis of what would have elsewhere been called Cold War liberalism, each with its own inflexion and constituency.

Of the three, *Le Débat* was the central creation. Not simply as the house journal of Gallimard, with resources beyond those of any rival, but because it represented a real modernisation of styles and themes in French intellectual life. Extremely well edited - in time Nora turned over its day-to-day running to Marcel Gauchet, a transfuge from the Socialisme ou Barbarie wing of the far left - the journal devoted its issues to a generally temperate exploration of three main areas of concern, history, politics and society, with frequent special numbers or features on a wide range of contemporary topics: the biological sciences, the visual arts, social security, the institutions of heritage, postmodernism and more. If it was less international in horizon than

it originally set out to be, it was rarely parochial. It was never an impartial forum for objective debates, as its prospectus had suggested, but it would have been a duller affair had it been. It was, on the contrary, an urbane *machine de guerre*.

Behind its political project stood one commanding figure. Nora's brother-in-law was the historian François Furet, whose *Penser la révolution française* - published at the political crossroads of 1978 - had in no time made him the country's most influential interpreter of the French Revolution. Like Nora from a wealthy banking family, Furet had been formed in the postwar Communist Party at the height of the Cold War, when it included a group of future historians - among them, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Maurice Agulhon, Jacques Ozouf - to rival its British counterpart. In France, too, it was the XXth Party Congress in Moscow and the Hungarian Revolt that broke up this nursery of talents. Furet left the Party in 1956, and while pursuing - initially fairly conventional - historical research, became a regular contributor to *France-Observateur*, the independent left weekly that was the principal organ of opposition to the Algerian War, and to De Gaulle's rule in the Fifth Republic. In 1965 he coauthored, with another brother-in-law, an illustrated history of the French Revolution designed for a general readership, which argued that it had been 'blown off course' (*dérapée*) in 1792 by a series of tragic accidents, destroying the liberal order at which it had originally aimed, and ushering in Jacobin dictatorship and the Terror instead (Furet y Richet, 1965-1966).

Thirteen years later, *Penser la révolution française* was a more potent proposition: an all-out assault, invoking Solzhenitsyn and the current political conjuncture, on the catechism of Marxist interpretations of the Revolution. Furet offered instead the insights of two liberal-conservative Catholic thinkers, Tocqueville in the mid-19-th century and Augustin Cochin in the early 20th, as the keys to a real understanding of the "conceptual core" of the Revolution: not the interplay of social classes, but the dynamics of a political discourse that essentially exchanged the abstractions of popular will for those of absolutist power, and in doing so generated the terrifying force of the new kind of sociability at work in the revolutionary clubs of the period. Delivered with great polemical verve, this verdict led, logically enough, to a pointed taking of distance from the *Annales* school - its facile notion of *mentalités* "often a mere Gallic substitute for Marxism and psychoanalysis" - as no more capable of grappling with the upheaval of 1789 and what followed. Needed instead was an "intellectualist history that constructs its data explicitly from conceptually posed questions" (Furet, 1982: 24-25,29).

Furet's major application of this credo, which appeared in 1988, was a large political history of France from Turgot to Gambetta, conceived as the playing out over a century of the explosive dialectic of principles released by the attack on the Ancien Régime (Furet. 1988a). Whereas in his earlier writing he had maintained that "the Revolution was over" with Napoleon's coup d'état in 1798, he now extended its lifespan to the final fading away of monarchism as an active force under the Third Republic, in 1879. Only then were republic and nation finally reconciled, and the original goals of 1789 realised in a stable parliamentary order. The tormented path from starting point to terminus, threading its way through the commotions of 1815, 1830, 1848, 1851 and 1871, was to be traced as a working out of the tensions and contradictions of the first historical experiment in creating a democracy.

The motor of Furet's history is essentially a genealogy of ideas. But he was not an intellectual historian in the sense that Pocock or Skinner has given the term. Although he was capable of acute insights into thinkers who interested him, there is scarcely any detailed textual scrutiny of a given body of writing in his work, and no attention to languages of discourse in the Cambridge tradition. Ideas are treated rather as stylised forces, each of them embodied in particular individuals, around whom a narrative of high political conflicts is woven. Furet was also fascinated by ceremonials as the public symbolisation of ideas, and *La France révolutionnaire 1770-1880* is studded with set-piece descriptions of them, from the coronation of Napoleon to the funeral of Thiers. At the other pole of his imagination were personalities, and here he had an outstanding gift for mordant characterisation. Out of this trio of elements - ideas: rituals: persons - Furet produced an unfailingly elegant, incisive story of the making of modern France, largely cleansed of its social and economic dimensions, and all but completely insulated from its imperial record abroad, that issued into an utterly focused contemporary political conclusion. He was not a great historian of the calibre of Bloch or Braudel. But he was an exceptional force in French public life in ways they were not.

For his historical work was part of a larger enterprise. No modern historian has been so intensely political. There was a virtually seamless unity between his work on the past and his interventions in the present, where he was an institutional and ideological organiser without equal. He owed that role to his person, a mixture of the dashing and the reserved. There was, a foreign colleague once observed, a hint of Jean Gabin in his taciturn charm. As early as 1964, he was orchestrating the merger of a declining *France-Observateur* with a more right-wing stable of journalists from *L'Express*, and picking the neces-

sary editor to ensure that the periodical to be created out of the fusion would have the correct politics. As Jean Daniel, who still presides over the *Nouvel Observateur* - for four decades the unfailing voice of centre-left proprieties - recollected 25 years later:

> I will not forget the pact we made; the choice in favour of his controversial theses on the Revolution and on Marxism which he proposed to me; and the surprise on his face at finding me an accomplice already so primed and determined to be at his side. I want to record the debt I owe him, and his family of thought, for the real intellectual security they gave me (Daniel, 1999: 917-921).

This disarming confession, from one of the country's most powerful journalists - Daniel even adds, in all innocence: 'One day we all found ourselves, without knowing it, running behind Augustin Cochin because Furet was pushing us in the back' - could have been echoed by many another kingpin of the Parisian establishment in the years to come. The network of Furet's placements was eventually referred to in the press simply as 'the galaxy'.

If the *Nouvel Observateur* gave Furet a central base in the media, his control of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), which he helped to create out of Braudel's old Sixième Section, and of which he became director in 1977, put him in command of the most strategic institution of the academy, bringing a research elite together across disciplines in the Rockefeller-funded building on the Boulevard Raspail, freed from the teaching burdens and administrative tares of the French university - 'like going to the cinema without paying for a ticket', as he cheerfully put it. The launch of *Commentaire* and *Le Débat*, in both of which he was active from the start, supplied him with flanking positions in the world of journals. Then, after Mitterrand's accession to power, he helped create in 1982 the Fondation Saint-Simon, an alliance of insider intellectuals and industrialists formed to resist any socialist temptations in the new regime, and guide it towards a more up-to-date understanding of market and state. Bankrolled by big business - the boss of the Saint-Gobain conglomerate was a moving spirit along with Furet, who acquired a seat on the board of one of his companies - the foundation operated as a political think-tank, weaving ties between academics, functionaries, politicians; organising seminars; publishing policy papers; and, last but not least, hosting dinners every month for Schmidt, Barre, Giscard, Chirac, Rocard, Fabius and other like-minded statesmen, at which common ideas were thrashed out over appropriate fare.

Two years later, Furet set up - or was granted - the Institut Raymond Aron, as a committed outpost of anti-totalitarian reflection, of which he became president, and which in due course would be integrated into the fold of the EHESS itself. Then in 1985 he extended his range with a transatlantic connection, taking up a seasonal position with the Committee of Social Thought at the University of Chicago, where he secured financial backing from the Olin Foundation to pursue research on the American and French Revolutions. The bicentennial of 1789 was looming, and Furet voiced fears that this would become an occasion for the Mitterrand regime, in which Communist ministers still sat, to organise an official consecration of the mythologies of Jacobinism and the Year II of the Republic. With his colleague Mona Ozouf, he set to work to make sure this did not happen.

On the eve of the potentially risky year, a huge - 1200-page - *Dictionnaire critique de la révolution française* appeared, covering 'events', 'actors', 'institutions' and 'ideas'. Its hundred entries, written by some twenty carefully selected contributors, supplied a comprehensive rebuttal of left-wing legends and traditional misconceptions of the founding episode of modern democracy[7]. The overwhelming impact of this admirably designed and executed compendium of moderate scholarship removed any danger of neo-Jacobin festivities in 1989. The fall of Communism in the East offered further, conclusive vindication of the original impulse of the Revolution, against its ensuing perversions. When the bicentennial arrived, Furet was the unquestioned intellectual master of ceremonies, as France paid homage to the inspiring principles - duly clarified - of 1789, and turned its back at last on the atrocities of 1794[8].

To dispatch the wrong past, and recover the right one, was part and parcel of the country's overdue arrival in the safe harbour of a modern democracy. In tandem with the *Dictionnaire critique*, Furet coauthored in the same year *La République du centre* for the Fondation Saint-Simon, subtitled: "The End of the French Exception". After the absurd nationalisations of its first phase, Mitterrand's regime had put paid to socialism by embracing the market and its financial disciplines in 1983, and then buried anti-clericalism by bowing to the demonstrations in favour of Catholic schools in 1984. In doing so, it had finally made the country a normal democratic society, purged of radical doctrines and theatrical conflicts. France had now found its equilibrium

7The best critical analysis of this Dictionary can be found at Woloch (1990: 1.452).

8For a lively description of the role played by Fuerte in 1989, see Englund (1993).

in a sober centre (Furet et al. 1988: 13-16). So entire did liberal triumph seem that on the tenth anniversary of his journal in 1990, Nora - rejoicing that the "leaden cape of Gaullo-Communism was now lifted from the nation" - could announce with Hegelian satisfaction: "The spirit of *Le Débat* has become the spirit of the epoch"(Nora, 1990: 3-11).

II. Union Sucrée

In Britain, the early 1990s saw the breakdown of Thatcher's rule and the passage to a less strident neo-liberal agenda, under the atonic stewardship of Major. In France, the trend was in the opposite direction. There, the dominance of a market-minded consensus reached its height in the early years of the second Mitterrand presidency. The gains of the arc of opinion represented by François Furet and his friends were there for all to see. France was finally delivered of its totalitarian temptations. The shades of the Revolution had been laid to rest. The Republic had found its feet in the safe ground of the centre. Only one heritage of the past had yet to be thoroughly purged of its ambiguities: the Nation. This task fell to Pierre Nora. In his editorial on the tenth anniversary of *Le Débat* in 1990, Nora had hailed the 'new cultural landscape' of the country, and within another couple of years, he completed his own monumental contribution to it. Originating in a seminar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in 1978-80 - the same conjuncture as *Le Débat* itself - the first volume of *Les Lieux de mémoire* came out under his direction in 1984. By the time the last set appeared in 1992, the enterprise had swollen to seven volumes and some 5600 pages, mustering six times as many contributors as the *Dictionnaire critique de la révolution française*, from a more ecumenical range of scholars. His aim, Nora declared in his initial presentation of the project, was an inventory of all those realms of remembrance where French identity could be said to have symbolically crystallised.

Under this capacious heading, 127 essays - most of high quality - surveyed a bewildering potpourri of subjects, ranging from such obvious items as the Tricolour, the Marseillaise and the Panthéon, through the forest, the generation and the firm, to conversation, the industrial age and medieval lineages, not to speak, obviously, of gastronomy, the vine and Descartes. What united them, Nora explained, was that "unlike all the objects of history, realms of memory have no referent in reality" - they are "pure signs, that refer only to themselves" (Nora, 1984: 41). The postmodern flourish is not to be taken too seriously. For what these signs actually referred to were, variously, the Republic, the Nation or just Frenchness at large. But since these too were symbolic, the exploration of them that *Les Lieux de mémoire* offe-

red would be a history of France "to the second degree" - one concerned not with causes, actions or events, but rather effects and traces.

That did not mean it was less ambitious than its predecessors. The *Annales* had sought a total history, in reaction to the narrowness of traditional political narratives. But since symbols united material and cultural facts, and the ultimate truth of politics could well lie in its symbolic dimension, the study of realms of memory converted politics into the register of a history paradoxically more totalising than the Annalism it might now be replacing (Nora, 1986: 19-21). What had made this possible was the abandonment of visions of the future as a controlling horizon for interpretation of the past, in favour of a consensual support for institutions of the present. At a time when the French were no longer willing to die for their country, they were 'unanimous in discovering their interest and affection for it', in all the diversity of its manifold expressions. It was as if 'France was ceasing to be a history that divides us to become a culture that unites us, a property the shared title to which is treated as a family inheritance" (Nora, 1992: 28-29). Escape from traditional forms of nationalism, such as that regrettable pair, Gaullism and Jacobinism, far from weakening sentiments of national belonging, had strengthened them as the French entered into the healing domains of common remembrance[9].

Les Lieux de mémoire was an enormous critical and public success, and in due course became the model for several imitations abroad. But it was always plain that it must count as one of the most patently ideological programmes in postwar historiography, anywhere in the world. It was Renan, after all, who had famously pointed out that a nation was defined as much by what it had to forget - the slaughter of 16th-century Protestants and 13th-century Albigensians were his examples - as to remember: a caution one might have thought all the more difficult to ignore a century later. Yet Nora could cheerfully introduce his enterprise with the words:

> Even though tolerably well thought out - in keeping with the required typology, the state of scientific knowledge of the issues, and the competences available to deal with them - the choice of subjects contains an element of the arbitrary. Let us accept it. Such complaisance in our favourite imaginaries undeniably involves a

9 Nora's reserve towards Gaullism was consistent: in the last sentence of the first part of this essay (2 September), a typographical error rendered his characteristic phrase 'Gaullo-Communism' as 'Gallo-Communism'. One of his most interesting contributions to *Les Lieux de mémoire* conjoins Gaullism and Communism as, each in its own way, vehicles of a powerful illusion.

> risk of intellectual regression and a return to that Gallocentrism which contemporary historiography fortunately endeavours to transcend. We should be aware of this, and on our guard against it. But for the moment, let us forget it [*sic*]. And let us wish, for this handful of fresh and joyous essays - soon to be followed by armfuls more - a first innocent reading (Nora, 1986:13).

The effect of these convenient protocols, as a number of Anglophone historians[10] pointed out, was to repress memories, not just of social divisions, but even, largely, of such inescapable symbols of the political past - their monuments literally astride the nation's capital - as Napoleon and his nephew: figures presumably no longer relevant in the "decentralised, modern" France, at rest within a "pacific, plural" Europe, celebrated by Nora. More widely, the entire imperial history of the country, from the Napoleonic conquests, through the plunder of Algeria under the July Monarchy, to the seizure of Indochina in the Second Empire and the vast African booty of the Third Republic, becomes a *non-lieu* at the bar of these bland recollections. Both Nora and Furet had been courageous critics of the Algerian War in their youth. But by the time they came to embalm the nation thirty years later, each eliminated virtually any reference to its external record from their retrospections. One would scarcely know France had a colonial empire at all in Furet's history of the 19th century, let alone that his particular hero Jules Ferry was the Rhodes of the Third Republic. Nora's volumes reduce all these fateful exertions to an exhibition of tropical knickknacks in Vincennes. What are the *lieux de mémoire* that fail to include Dien Bien Phu?

Wrapping up the project eight years later, Nora noted criticisms made of it, and sought to turn them by complaining that although conceived as a "counter-commemoration", his seven volumes had been integrated into a self-indulgent heritage culture, of whose vices he had always been well aware, but which would remain pervasive as long as France had not found a firm new footing in the world (Nora, 1992: 997-1.012). This ingenious sophistry could not conceal that the whole enterprise of *Les Lieux de mémoire* was elegiac: the antithesis of everything that Roland Barthes, no less fascinated by icons, but more concerned with a critical theory of them, had offered in *Mythologies* (1957), deconstructing the emblems of *francité* - a coinage Nora at one point even borrows, divested of its spirit - with a biting irony remote

10 See Englund (1993) and Beld (1997), among others.

from this erudition of patriotic appeasement, published with expressions of gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and Communications (see Barthes, 1957: 322 ss)[11]. All too plainly, the underlying aim of the project, from which it never departed, was the creation of an *union sucrée* in which the divisions and discords of French society would melt away in the fond rituals of postmodern remembrance.

The intellectual limitations of an undertaking are one thing. Its political efficacy is another. The orchestral programme of which Nora and Furet were the lead conductors in these years is best described as the enthronement of liberalism as an all-encompassing

No modern historian has been so intensely political. There was a virtually seamless unity between his work on the past and his interventions in the present.

paradigm of French public life. In this contemporary design they could draw on the legacy of the great French liberal thinkers of the early 19th century: above all, Constant, Guizot and Tocqueville, whose works were waiting to be rediscovered and put to active modern use[12]. This was not the least important labour of the antitotalitarian front, and good scholarly work resulted, in the service of constructing a perfectly legitimate pedigree. Still, there was an ironic contrast between forebears and descendants. Under the Restoration and the July Monarchy, France produced a body of liberal political thought substantially richer than England, let alone America in the same period. But as a political force, liberalism was incomparably weaker. The mishaps of its leading minds - the repeated contrast between noble ideas and shabby actions - were the symptom of that discrepancy: Constant the turncoat of the Hundred Days, Tocqueville the hangman of the Roman Republic, two

11It is significant how in order to analise the nature of the myth Barthens uses as an example an icon of imperial frenchness taken from Paris Match, exactly what *Les lieux de mémoire* seeks to forget.

12 A clear example is Pierre Manent's work Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, the last of the series. In most of French discussion, usually John Stuart Mil lis not mentioned.

champions of liberty who connived at successive Napoleonic tyrannies; Guizot the frigid mechanic of exclusion and repression, chased from the country amid universal reprobation. The discredit of such careers was one reason for the neglect that befell their writings after their death. But even in their own time, they never caught the imagination of their contemporaries. Classical French liberalism was a fragile bloom, in ungrateful soil. A hundred and fifty years later, matters were very different. The comprehensive rehabilitation of liberal themes and attitudes that set in from the mid-1970s onwards produced no political thinkers to compare even with Aron. But what it lacked in original ideas, it more than made up for in organisational reach. The phrase *la pensée unique*, coined twenty years later - though like all such terms, involving an element of exaggeration - was not inaccurate as a gauge of its general dominance.

The international conjuncture formed a highly favourable environment for this turn: the global ascendancy of Anglo-American neo-liberalism offered a formidable backdrop to the French scene. But no other Western country saw quite so decisive an intellectual victory. The achievement was a national one, the fruit of a co-ordinated campaign waged with skill and determination by Furet, Nora and their allies across two decades. It combined institutional penetration and ideological construction in a single enterprise, to define the acceptable meanings of the country's past and the permissible bounds of its present. Here, as nowhere else, history and politics interlocked in an integrated vision of the nation, projected across the expanse of public space. In this respect the Communist Party Historians Group in Britain, though its members were to be no less politically active, and produced much more innovative history, were tyros beside their French contemporaries. There has rarely been such a vivid illustration of just what Gramsci meant by hegemony. He would have been fascinated by every nook and cranny of *Les Lieux de mémoire*, down to its entries on street-names, a favourite subject of his, or the local notary; and he would have admired the energy and imagination with which the legacy of the Jacobins, his heroes, was liquidated: feats of a "passive revolution" more effective than the original Restorations of the 19th century themselves, around which so much of his theory in the *Prison Notebooks* was built. As if on cue, indeed, Furet ended his career with an obituary of Communism as the rule of capital was restored in Russia, closing the century's "socialist parenthesis".

By comparison with the rest of Furet's work, *Le Passé d'une illusion* - flirting with the ideas of Ernst Nolte in its linkage of Bolshevism to Nazism, topics with which he had little prior acquaintance

- was a pot-boiler (Furet, 1995b). Appearing in 1995, it rehearsed so many Cold War themes long after the event that one wit remarked it read like the intellectual equivalent of a demand for reimbursement of the Russian loan (Berger y Maler, 1996: 187). But this in no way affected its success in France. Acclaimed as a masterpiece by the media, it was an immediate bestseller, marking the height of Furet's fame. With this sensational copingstone in place, the arch of anti-totalitarian triumph seemed complete.

Nine months later, France was convulsed by the largest wave of strikes and demonstrations since 1968. The Juppé government, attempting to push through a standard neo-liberal restructuring of social security arrangements, had provoked such popular anger that much of the country was brought to a halt. The resulting political crisis lasted six weeks and split the intellectual class down the middle. Virtually the entire anti-totalitarian coalition, Furet in the van, endorsed Juppé's plans as a much needed initiative to modernise what had become an archaic system of welfare privilege. Ranged against it, for the first time a consistent alternative spectrum of opinion materialised. Led by Bourdieu and others, it defended the strikers against the government.

Politically speaking, the confrontation between the palace and the street ended with the complete defeat of the regime. Juppé was forced to withdraw his reforms. Chirac jettisoned Juppé. The electors punished Chirac by giving a majority to Jospin. Intellectually, the climate was never quite the same again. A few weeks later, Furet, playing tennis at his country-house with Luc Ferry, fell dead on the court. He had just been elected to the Académie française, but had not yet had time to don the green and gold, grip his sword and be received among the Immortals.

But well before the end he had begun to express misgivings. Certainly, Gaullism and Communism were for all practical purposes extinct. The Socialist Party had abandoned its absurd nationalisations, and the intelligentsia had renounced its Marxist delusions. The Republic of the centre he wished for had come into being. But the political architect of this transformation, whose rule had coincided with the ideological victories of moderate liberalism, and in part depended on them, was François Mitterrand. Furet's judgment of him was severe. A genius of means, barren of ends, Mitterrand had destroyed the PCF and forced the PS to accept the logic of the firm and the market. But he had also abused the spirit of the constitution by installing the simulacrum of a royal court in the Elysée; he presided over a regime whose 'intellectual electro-encephalogram is absolutely flat'; and he had signally failed to rise to the world-historical occasion when Soviet Com-

munism collapsed (Furet, 1995a: 84-97). It was impossible to feel any warmth for a presidency so cynical and void of ideas. Barre or Rocard, admired by the Fondation Saint-Simon, would have been preferable.

Behind this disaffection, however, lay a deeper doubt about the direction that French public life was taking. Already by the late 1980s, Furet had started to express reservations about the discourse of human rights that was becoming ever more prominent in France, as elsewhere. Impeccably liberal though it might seem - it had, after all, been the pièce de résistance at the ideological banquet of the Bicentenary - the ideology of human rights did not amount to a politics. A contemporary surrogate for what had once been the ideals of socialism, it undermined the coherence of the nation as a form of collective being, and gave rise to inherently contradictory demands: the right to equality and the right to difference, proclaimed in the same breath. Its enthusiasts would do well to reread what Marx had said on the subject (Furet et al., 1988: 58-62). Increasingly, the cult of human rights was narrowing the difference between French and American political life.

Closer acquaintance with the US sharpened rather than lessened these anxieties. Furet remained a staunch champion of the great power that had always been the bastion of the Free World. But from his observation post in Chicago, much of the scenery of Clinton's America was off-putting, if not disturbing. Racial integration had paradoxically undone older black communities, and left ghettoes of a sinister misery with few equivalents in Europe. Sexual equality was advancing in America (as it was in Europe, if mercifully without the same absurdities), and it would change democratic societies. But it would neither transform their nature nor produce any new man, or woman. Political correctness was a kind of academic aping of class struggle. Crossed with the excesses of a careerist feminism, it had left many university departments in conditions to which only an Aristophanes or Molière could do justice. Multiculturalism, as often as not combined with what should be its opposite, American juridification of every issue, led inevitably to a slack relativism. In the desert of political ideas under another astute but mindless president, the peculiar liberal variant of utopia it represented was spreading (*Le Débat*, 1992: 80-91; 1997: 3-10).

Furet's final reflections were darker still. His last text, completed just before he died, surveyed France in the aftermath of the elections called by Chirac that had unexpectedly given the PS a legislative majority: in his view, an almost incredible blunder by a politician he once thought had governed well. But Jospin offered little that was different from Juppé. Right and left were united in evading the real issues before the country: the construction of Europe; the tensions around

immigration; the persistence of unemployment, which could be reduced only by cutting social spending. Under Mitterrand, French public life had become a 'depressing spectacle', amid a general decomposition of parties and ideas. Lies and impostures were the political norm, as voters demanded ever new doses of demagogy, without believing in them, in a country that stubbornly "ignored the laws of the end of the century" (Furet, 1997a: 43-49).

What were these laws? Historically, the left had tried to separate capitalism and democracy, but they formed a single history. Democracy had triumphed since 1989, and with it capital. But its victory was now tinged with malaise, for it was accompanied by an ever greater disengagement of its citizens from public life. It was impossible to view that withdrawal without a certain melancholy. Once Communism had fallen, the absence of an alternative ideal of society was draining politics of passion, without leading to any greater belief in the justice of the status quo. Capitalism was now the sole horizon of humanity, but the more it prevailed, the more detested it became. 'This condition is too austere and contrary to the spirit of modern societies to last,' Furet concluded. He ended in the spirit of Tocqueville, lucidly resigned to the probability of what he had resisted. 'It might one day be necessary,' he conceded, 'to go beyond the horizon of capitalism, to go beyond the universe of the rich and poor.' For however difficult it was even to conceive of a society other than ours today, "democracy, by virtue of its existence, creates the need for a world beyond the bourgeoisie and beyond capital". (Furet, 1995b: 572).

Inadvertently, then, the passing of an illusion had itself been the source of a disappointment. Victor of the Cold War it might be, but actually existing capitalism was an uninspiring affair. It was understandable that utopian dreams of a life without it had not vanished. In his last historical essay, Furet even forgot himself so far as to write once again of the 'revolutionary bourgeoisie' that had carried France out of the Ancien Régime, almost as if he now saw merit in the catechism he had so long denounced (Furet, 1997b: 28-29). Two centuries later, the dénouement he wished for had come, but it lay like so much clinker in his hands. A liberal Midas was left staring at what he had wanted.

Of the two sources of his final disarray, capitalism and the condition of his own country, it was the second that posthumously scattered his following. There had always been a tension within the new French liberalism between its political loyalty to America and its emotional attachments to France. Its project envisaged an ideal union of the principles of the sister republics of the Enlightenment. But *e pluribus unum* and 'one and indivisible' are mottoes at war with each

other. For liberals, what counted more? An atomistic individualism with no logical stopping-place, breaking the nation into so many rival micro-cultures, whose unification must become ever more formal and fragile? Or a collective identity anchored in common obligations and stern institutions, holding the nation resolutely - but perhaps also oppressively - together?

It was over this dilemma that the anti-totalitarian front fell apart. The first skirmish occurred in the early 1980s, when Bernard-Henri Lévy announced that there was a generic French ideology, stretching from left to right across the 20th century, saturating the nation with anti-semitism and cryptofascism. This was too much for *Le Débat*, which demolished Lévy's blunders and enormities in two blistering pieces, one by Le Roy Ladurie and the other by Nora ('un idéologue bien de chez nous'), rebuffing attempts to discredit the Republic in the name of the Jewish question (Le Roy Laudrie, 1981; Nora, 1981: 97-103)[13]. The next occasion for dispute was, predictably enough, posed by the Muslim question, with the first affair of the *foulards*, in the late 1980s. Could head-scarves be worn in schools without undermining the principles of a common secular education founded by the Third Republic? This time the split was more serious, pitting advocates of a tolerant multiculturalism, American-style, against upholders of the classical republican norms of a citizen nation.

Eventually, simmering ill-feeling over these issues burst into the open. In 2002, Daniel Lindenberg, a historian close to *Esprit*, unloosed a violent broadside against the authoritarian integrism, hostility to human rights and contempt for multiculturalism of so many former fellow fighters for French liberalism - notable among them, leading lights of *Le Débat* and *Commentaire*. Such tendencies represented a new *rappel à l'ordre*, the eternal slogan of reaction. Lindenberg's pamphlet, although a crude piece of work, recklessly amalgamating its various targets, not only received a warm welcome in *Le Monde* and *Libération*. It pointedly appeared in a series edited by Furet's colleague Pierre Rosanvallon, fellow architect of the Fondation Saint-Simon, co-author of *La République du centre*, and recently promoted - many eyebrows had been raised - to the Collège de France. This was the signal for virtual civil war in the liberal camp, with a standard Parisian flurry of rival open letters and manifestos, as Marcel Gauchet - Nora's colle-

13 One year before, Nora had written that BHL, "recused by his peers, but to whom one hundred thousand buyers cast an authentic wish for knowledge, he counts on a legitimacy which relies on a sort of choice that may be questioned, but could not be rejected" (Nora, 1981: 9).

ague at *Le Débat* - and his friends hit back in *L'Express* and columns of the press closer to them. The disintegration of the comity of the late 1970s was complete (Lindenberg, 2002)[14].

By then, however, a much larger change in its position had occurred. Furet's misgivings at the upshot of modernisation were a murmur against the background of more menacing sounds from the depths of the country. Among the masses, neo-liberalism *à la française* had not caught on. From 1983 onwards, when Mitterrand made the decisive turn towards the logic of financial markets, the French electorate has unfailingly rejected every government that administered this medicine to it. The pattern never varied. Under a presidency of the left, Fabius - the first Socialist premier to hail the new 'culture of the firm' - was turned out in 1986; Chirac, who launched the first wave of privatisations for the right, was rejected in 1988; Bérégovoy, Socialist pillar of the *franc fort*, was ousted in 1993; Balladur, personifying an Orleanist moderation in the pursuit of economic liberty, fell at the polls in 1995. Under a presidency of the right, Juppé - the boldest of these technocrats, who attacked social provisions more directly - was first crippled by strikes and then driven from office in 1997; Jospin - who privatised more than all his predecessors put together - thought after five self-satisfied years of government he had broken the rule, only to be routed in the elections of 2002. Today Raffarin, after two years of dogged attempts to take up where Juppé left off, has already lost control of every regional administration in the country save Alsace, and sunk lower in the opinion polls than any prime minister in the history of the Fifth Republic. In twenty years, seven governments, an average of less than three years a piece. All devoted, with minor variations, to similar policies. Not one of them re-elected.

No other country in the West has seen such a level of disaffection with its political establishment. In part, this has been a function of the constitutional structure of the Fifth Republic, whose quasi-regal presidency, with its (till yesterday) seven-year terms of office, has both encouraged and neutralised continual expressions of electoral ill-humour within an otherwise all too stable framework of power. The Fourth Republic combined instability of cabinets with rigidity of voting blocs: the Fifth has inverted the pattern, uniting appa-

14 For an approach to the opposite viewpoint, see Alain Finkielkraut, Marcel Gauchet, Pierre Manent, Phillipe Muray, Pierre-André Tanguieff, Samuel Trigano, Paul Yonnet in *Manifeste pour une pensée libre* (Finkielkraut et al., 2002). For an ironic commentary of this dispute, see Halimi (2003: 3).

rently immovable policies with congenitally restless electors[15]. Such restlessness has not just been a by-product of institutional overprotection. More and more plainly as the years went by, it reflected disbelief in the nostrums of neo-liberal reform that every government, left or right, unvaryingly proposed to its citizens.

These did not remain mere paper. Over twenty years, liberalisation has changed the face of France. What it liberated was, first and foremost, financial markets. The capital value of the stock market tripled as a proportion of GNP. The number of shareholders in the population increased four times over. Two-thirds of the largest French companies are now wholly or partially privatised concerns. Foreign ownership of equity in French enterprises has risen from 10 per cent in the mid-1980s to nearly 44 per cent today - a higher figure than in the UK itself[16]. The rolling impact of these transformations will be felt for years to come. If they have not yet been accompanied by a significant rundown of the French systems of social provision, that has been due to caution more than conviction on the part of the country's rulers, aware of the dangers of provoking electoral anger, and willing to trade sops like the 35-hour week for priorities like privatisation. By Anglo-American standards, France remains an over-regulated and cosseted country, as the *Economist* and *Financial Times* never fail to remind their readers. But by French standards, it has made impressive strides towards more acceptable international norms.

Such progress, however, has done nothing to allay popular suspicion and dislike of Anglo-Saxon ideas about them. The 1990s saw the runaway success of literature attacking the advent of a new unbridled capitalism, with one bestseller after another: Pierre Bourdieu's massive indictment of its social consequences in *La Misère du monde* (1993); the novelist Viviane Forrester's impassioned tract *L'Horreur économique* (1996); the weathercock Emmanuel Todd's *L'Illusion économique* (1998), an onslaught against laissez-faire from an intellectual once an ardent warrior for the Free World. By the mid-1990s, the rising tide of disgust with neo-liberal doctrines was so evident among voters that Chirac himself, seeking election in 1995, made denunciation of *la pensée unique* and the fractured society it had created the centrepiece of his campaign. When - like all his predecessors - he then readopted it in office, the result was, almost overnight, the industrial tremors that shook Juppé down.

15 It was René Remond, a sort of critic of the consequences of liberalism, who proved this (2002: 198-201).

16 Nicolas Véron suggests an indulgent and satisfactory assessment of such changes in *Les heureuses mutations de la France financère* (2004).

Looking around amid the debris, a chronicler at *Le Débat* concluded gloomily: "The liberal graft has not taken" (Grémion, 1999).

But in the divorce between official policies and popular feelings there was another element as well, more social than political. Since De Gaulle, the rulers of the Fifth Republic have become the most hermetic governing caste in the West. The degree of social power concentrated in a single, tiny institution producing an integrated political, administrative and business elite is probably without equal anywhere in the world. The ENA accepts only 100-120 students a year - in all about five thousand persons since its foundation, out of a population

In Furet's history of the 19th century, let alone that his particular hero Jules Ferry was the Rhodes of the Third Republic.

of more than fifty million. But these not only dominate the top rungs of the bureaucracy and the management of the largest companies: they furnish the core of the political class itself. Giscard, Fabius, Chirac, Rocard, Balladur, Juppé and Jospin are all énarques; as were 11 out of 17 ministers in the last Socialist government; both main rivals - Strauss-Kahn and Hollande - for Jospin's succession on the left; not to speak of Chirac's dauphin on the right, Dominique de Villepin, recently foreign and now interior minister.

The inbreeding of this oligarchy has inevitably spawned pervasive corruption. On the one hand, the practice of *pantouflage* - high functionaries gliding noiselessly from administration to business and politics, or back again - gives many an opportunity for the diversion of public, or private, funds to partisan purposes. On the other, since the main political parties lack any significant mass memberships, they have long depended on milking budgets and trafficking favours to finance their operations. The result is the morass of jobbery that has, no doubt only partially, come to light in recent years, of which Chirac's tenure as mayor of Paris has been the most flagrant example to appear before the *juges d'instruction*.

But no matter how crushing the evidence, the judiciary has so far been unable to put any significant politician behind bars. Chi-

rac secured immunity from prosecution from a tame Constitutional Court, and is currently shielding Juppé; Roland Dumas, Mitterrand's foreign minister - himself a former member of the court - has been acquitted after a trial, and Strauss-Kahn cleared even without one. Few French citizens can have much doubt that all these figures, and many more, have broken the law for political advantage, or - in the spirit of Giscard's diamonds - personal gain. But since left and right are equally implicated, and close ranks against any retribution, the venality of the political class is proof against consequences within the system. There is little moralising strain in French culture, and less vocal indignation at corruption than in Italy. But this has not signified mere indifference. What it has fed is a deepening alienation from the elite running the country, and contempt for its revolving cast of office-holders.

Electoral abstention, rising to levels well above the EU average, has been one symptom of this disenchantment, even if Britain under New Labour has recently beaten all comers. Another has been more distinctively, indeed famously - or infamously - French. From the mid-1980s onwards, the Front National attracted at least a tenth of the electorate, climbing to nearly 15 per cent for Le Pen in the presidential contest at the end of the decade. At the time, the size of this vote for an openly xenophobic party, organised by veterans of the far right, set France apart from any other European country. Widely thought to be fascist, the FN appeared a peculiar national stain, and a potential threat to French democracy. What could explain such an extraordinary recidivism? In fact, the initial conditions for the FN's success were perfectly intelligible and local. No other European society had received such a large settler community from its colonial empire: a million pieds-noirs expelled from the Maghreb, with all the bitterness of exiles. No other European society had received such a large influx of immigrants from the very zone once colonised: two and half million *maghrébins*. That combination was always likely to release a political toxin.

The Front could also count, beyond its original base in the pied-noir communities, on pockets of nostalgia for Vichy - TixierVignancour's voters in the 1950s, a diminishing asset - or loyalty to the liturgy of Cardinal Lefebvre. But the conditions of its real take-off lay elsewhere. Le Pen's electoral breakthrough came in 1984, a year after Mitterrand had abruptly jettisoned the social vision of the Common Programme and embraced orthodox monetarism. The neoliberal turn of 1983 did not lead the Communist Party, which had four unimportant seats in the cabinet, to break with the government. Rather, as it would again under Jospin, it clung to the crumbs of office,

regardless of the political cost of doing so, let alone considerations of principle. Its reward for adding to the follies of the Third Period those of the Popular Front - first, blind sectarianism in 1977-78, then feeble opportunism - was self-destruction, as more and more of its working-class electorate abandoned the Party. It was the gap created by the resulting compression of the political spectrum that gave the FN its chance, as it picked up increasing numbers of disgruntled voters in decaying proletarian suburbs and small towns. For many, the system of *la pensée unique* had left only this acrid alternative.

The arrogance and self-enclosure of the political class did the rest. Excluding the Front from any presence in the National Assembly by eliminating proportional representation, and shielding itself against any settlement of accounts with corruption, the establishment merely confirmed Le Pen's denunciations of it as a conspiracy of privilege, delivered with an oratorical flair none of its suits could match. The more left and right united to treat the Front as a pariah, the more its appeal as an outsider to the system grew. Overt racism against Arab immigrants and a somewhat more muffled anti-semitism took their place in its repertoire alongside a generalised, raucous populism. The two stresses that eventually cracked liberal hegemony apart, the tension pitting multiculturalism and republicanism against each other, and the resistance of opinion to the virtues of the market, were exactly the terrain on which it could flourish, at the most sensitive intersection between them.

The limits of the Front as a political phenomenon were at the same time always plain. Shunned by the right, after initial furtive overtures by Chirac, overdependent on the personality of Le Pen, it lacked any professional cadre and never acquired administrative experience, vegetating between polls in a resentful subculture. Its brawling style at the hustings alarmed as much as it attracted. Above all, its main calling card - the immigrant issue - was inherently restrictive. The appeal of Fascism between the wars had rested on massive social dislocation and the spectre of a revolutionary labour movement, a far cry from the tidy landscape of the Fifth Republic. Immigration is a minority phenomenon, virtually by definition, as war between the classes was not. In consequence, xenophobic responses to it, however ugly, have little power of political multiplication. Aron, who had witnessed the rise of Nazism in Germany and knew what he was talking about, understood this from the start, criticising panicky overestimations of the Front. In effect, from the mid-1980s onwards its electoral scores oscillated within a fixed range, never dropping much below a national average of 10 per cent and never rising above 15 per cent.

In 2000, the political system underwent its most significant change since the time of De Gaulle. Chirac and Jospin, each manoeuvring for advantage in the presidential elections of 2002, colluded to alter the term of the presidency from seven to five years, Giscard brokering the deal between them. Ostensibly, the aim of the change was to reduce the likelihood of 'cohabitation' - possession of the Elysée and Matignon by rival parties, which had become increasingly frequent since 1986 - and so give greater unity and efficiency to government, too often compromised by strains between president and prime minister. In fact, what the revision amounted to was a massive increase in the power of the presidency, promising a thorough-going personalisation of the political system along American lines, since it was clear that if elections for the executive and the legislature were held in the same year, in France's highly centralised society, a victorious president would almost automatically always be able to create a tame majority for himself in the National Assembly, in the immediate wake of his own election, as had happened on every occasion since 1958. The result could only be to weaken a legislature already *fainéant* enough, and further to accentuate that excess of executive power Furet had termed a national pathology. A referendum was held to ratify this reduction of checks and balances in the constitution. Just 25 per cent of the electorate turned out for it, of whom four-fifths voted for a change trumpeted by the establishment as a great step forward in French democracy, bringing it into line with advanced countries elsewhere.

But there was still a potential glitch. The existing electoral calendar required elections to the Assembly to be held by the end of March 2002, and the presidential election in April-May, so reversing the intended scheme of things, and introducing the possibility that the vote for the legislature would determine the vote for the executive, rather than the other way round. Jospin, confident that he enjoyed the esteem of the electorate, rammed through a three-month extension of the life of the Assembly, to clear the way for conquest of the Elysée. Few self-interested constitutional manipulations have backfired so spectacularly.

In the spring of 2002, the campaign for the presidency starred Chirac and Jospin as leading candidates, running on platforms whose rhetoric was almost indistinguishable. When the results of the first round came in, dispersion of the vote of the *gauche plurielle* - Socialists, Communists, Greens and Left Radicals - between its constituent candidatures, all symbolic save the premier himself, knocked Jospin out of the contest with a humiliating 16.18 per cent of ballots cast, leaving Le Pen, with 195,000 votes more, to go through to the second round against Chirac, who himself got a miserable 19.88 per

cent, a nadir for any incumbent president. Had the legislative elections been held first, Jospin's coalition would almost certainly have won - the combined left vote he could have counted on, if the scores in April were an indication, was up to 10 per cent higher than that of the right - and in its wake he would have taken the Elysée.

The most startling feature of the presidential poll, however, lay neither in the gross miscalculation of the PS, nor in the fact that Le Pen overtook Jospin. There was actually no net increase in the combined vote of the far right at all, compared with 1995. The salient reality was the depth of popular antipathy to the political establishment as a whole. Far larger than the vote for any of the contestants was the number of abstentions and blank or invalid ballots - nearly 31 per cent. Another 10.4 per cent of the electorate voted for rival Trotskyist candidates of the far left; 4.2 per cent for the cause of hunting, shooting and fishing. In all, nearly two out of three French voters rejected the stale menu of the consensus presented to them.

Establishment reaction was unanimous. What mattered was one, apocalyptic fact. In the words of a typical pronouncement: "At eight o'clock on 21 April, a mortified France and a stupefied world registered the cataclysm: Jean-Marie Le Pen had overtaken Lionel Jospin" (Chevallier et al., 2002: 448)[17]. Everywhere hands were wrung in shame. The media were flooded with editorials, articles, broadcasts, appeals explaining to the French that they faced the brown peril and must now rally as one to Chirac, if the Republic was to be saved. Youth demonstrated in the streets, the official left rushed to the side of the president, even much of the far left decided it was the moment of *no pasarán*, and they too must weigh in behind the candidate of the right. Chirac - afraid he would be worsted in any argument with Le Pen, who would be sure to embarrass him by recounting past secret tractations between them - declined any television debate, and knowing the result was a foregone conclusion, scarcely bothered to campaign.

The second round duly gave him a majority of 82 per cent, worthy of a Mexican president in the heyday of the PRI. On the Left Bank, his vote reached virtually Albanian heights. The media switched in the space of 15 days from the hysterical to the ecstatic. The honour of France had been magnificently restored. After an incomparable demonstration of civic responsibility, the president could now set to work with a new sense of moral purpose, and the country hold its head high

17 *The Fifth Republic. 1958-2002.Histoire des institutions et des régimes politiques en France*, is a « reference work », according to its own publishers.

in the world again. Authoritative commentators observed that this was France's finest hour since 1914, when the nation had closed ranks in a sacred union against another deadly enemy.

Actually, if an analogy were needed, the unanimity of 2002 was closer in spirit to that of Bordeaux in 1940, when the National Assembly of the Third Republic voted overwhelmingly to hand power to Pétain, convinced that this was a patriotic necessity to avert catastrophe. On this occasion tragedy repeated itself as farce, since there was not even a trace of an emergency to warrant the consecration of Chirac. In the first round of the elections, the combined poll of the right was already 75 per cent higher than that of the FN and its split-off - a difference of more than four million votes. At the same time the lack of any major contrast in the ideas and policies of Chirac and Jospin made it clear that many who had voted for the latter would anyway switch to the former in the second round. There was never the faintest chance of Le Pen winning the presidency. The frantic calls from the left to rally behind Chirac were entirely supernumerary, merely serving to ensure that it was crushed in the legislative elections in June, when as a reward for its self-abasement the right took the National Assembly with the largest majority in the history of the Fifth Republic, and Chirac acquired a plenitude of power he had never enjoyed before. It was a *journée des dupes* to remember.

The wild swings of the vote in this ideological whirligig - Chirac transmogrified from a symbol of futility and corruption, trusted by less than a seventh of the electorate, into an icon of national authority and responsibility in the blink of an eye - can be taken, however, as symptoms of an underlying pattern in the country's political culture. Under the Fifth Republic, the French have increasingly resisted collective organisation. Today fewer than 2 per cent of the electorate are members of any political party, far the lowest figure in the EU. More striking still is the extraordinarily low rate of unionisation. Only 7 per cent of the workforce are members of trade unions, well below even the United States, where the comparable figure (still falling) is 11 per cent; let alone Austria or Sweden, where trade unions still account for between two-thirds and fourth-fifths of the employed population. The tiny size of industrial and political organisations speaks, undoubtedly, of deep-rooted individualist traits in French culture and society, widely remarked on by natives and foreigners alike: sturdier in many ways than their more celebrated American counterparts, because less subject to the pressures of moral conformity.

The French aversion to conventional forms of civic association does not necessarily mean privatisation, however. On the contrary,

the paradox of this political culture is that the very low indices of permanent organisation coexist with exceptional propensities for spontaneous combustion. Again and again, formidable popular mobilisations can quite suddenly materialise out of nowhere. The great revolt of May-June 1968, still far the largest and most impressive demonstration of collective agency in postwar European history, is the emblematic modern example, that no subsequent ruler of France has forgotten.

The streets have repeatedly defied and checked governments since. In 1984, Mauroy fell from office after his attempt to curb private education unleashed a massive confessional mobilisation in de-

The orchestral programme of which Nora and Furet were the lead conductors in these years is best described as the enthronement of liberalism as an all-encompassing paradigm of French public life.

fence of religious schools - half a million rallying in Versailles, a million pouring onto the boulevards of Paris. In 1986, protests by hundreds of thousands of students, from universities and lycées alike, fighting riot police in clashes that left one young demonstrator dead, forced Chirac to withdraw plans to 'modernise' higher education. His government never recovered. In 1995, Juppé's schemes to cut and reorganise social security were met with six weeks of strikes, engulfing every kind of public service, and nationwide turbulence, ending in complete victory for the movement. Within little more than a year, he too was out of power. In 1998, it was the turn of truckers, pensioners and the jobless to threaten Jospin's regime. Aware that such social tornadoes can twist towards them out of a clear sky, governments have learned to be cautious.

Signs of this characteristic duality, the coexistence of civil atomisation and popular inflammability, can be found in the deep structures of much French thought. They form one of the backgrounds to Sartre's theorisation of the contrast between the dispersion of the 'series' and the welding of the 'pledged group', and the quicksilver exchanges between them, in his *Critique de la raison dialectique*. But the most distinctive effect of the problem they pose has been to produce a line of thinkers for whom the social bond is basically always created by faith rather than reason or volition. The origins of this conception

go back to Rousseau's insistence - revealingly at variance with his own voluntarist construction of the general will - that a civil religion alone could found the stability of a republic. The derision into which the Cult of the Supreme Being fell after the overthrow of the Jacobins did not discredit the theme, which underwent a series of conservative metamorphoses in the 19th century. Tocqueville became convinced that dogmatic beliefs were the indispensable foundation of any social order, but especially in democracies like America, where religion was omnipresent in a way that it wasn't in Europe. Comte conceived the mission of positivism as the establishment of a Religion of Humanity that would anneal the social divisions tearing the world of the Industrial Revolution apart. Cournot argued that no rational construction of sovereignty was ever possible, political systems always resting in the last resort on faith or force. In some ways most radically of all, Durkheim reversed the terms of the equation with his famous notion that religion is society projected to the stars.

What all these thinkers rejected was the idea that society could ever be the outcome of a rational aggregation of the interests of individual actors. The branch of the Enlightenment that produced the utilitarian tradition in England became a dead bough in post-Revolutionary France. No comparable way of looking at political life ever developed. Constant, whose assumptions came closest to it, remained a forgotten half-foreigner. In the 20th century, the same underlying vision of the social resurfaced between the wars with a semi-surrealist tint, in the theories of the sacred proposed by Roger Caillois and Georges Bataille at the Collège de Sociologie. In the late 20th century, this intellectual line has seen yet further avatars in the work of two of the most original thinkers of the left, at odds with every surrounding orthodoxy. In the early 1980s, Régis Debray was already advancing a theory of politics as founded on the constitutive need, yet inability, of every human collectivity to endow itself with internal continuity and identity, and in consequence its dependence on an apex of authority - by definition religious, understood in a broad sense - external to it, as a vertical condition of its integration.

In this version, set out in *Critique de la raison politique* (1981), the theory sought to explain why nationalism, with its characteristic cults of the eternity of the nation and the immortality of its martyrs, was a more powerful historical force than the socialism for which Debray had once fought in Latin America. By the time of *Dieu, un itinéraire* (2001),[2] it had become a comparative account of changes in the ecologies, infrastructures and orthodoxies of Western monotheism, from 4000 BC to the present, that takes religion as an

anthropological constant for all times: however protean its historical forms, the permanent horizon of any durable social cohesion. Far from such speculations leading to any reconciliation with the status quo, they long continued to be accompanied by political interventions held scandalous by the Parisian consensus - not least scathing comment on Nato's war on Yugoslavia, still a touchstone of bien-pensant sensibility in Paris as in London. Perhaps in self-absolution, Debray has since compromised himself by preparing the ground for the Franco-American coup in Haiti. But the establishment can scarcely count on him.

A comparable case is France's most incisive jurist, Alain Supiot. Drawing on the work of the maverick legal philosopher Pierre Legendre, Supiot has renewed the idea that all significant belief-systems require a dogmatic foundation by focusing its beam sharply, to the discomfort of their devotees, on the two most cherished creeds of our time: the cults of the free market and of human rights. Here too, the logic of the argument, in each case brilliantly executed, is ambiguous: demystifying, yet also in a sense underwriting each as the latest illustration of a universal rule, a necessity beyond reason, of human coexistence itself[18]. A French habit of mind is at work here. The fact that the genealogy of such claims is so distinctively national does not in itself disqualify them: any general truth will have a local point of origin. But the predicament they point to is an archetypally French one. If singular agents will not associate freely to shape or alter their condition, what is the pneuma that can unexpectedly transform them, from one day to the next, into a collective force capable of shaking society to its roots?

For the guardians of the status quo, these are thoughts of the small hours, quickly dispelled in the sunlight of an exceptional morning in French history. "Never has the country been economically so powerful nor so wealthy", Jean-Marie Colombani rhapsodised in *Les Infortunes de la République* (2000). "Never has the dynamism of the country equipped it so well to become the economic locomotive of Europe". Better still: "never has there been in France such a palpable 'happiness in living' as at this threshold of the 21st century" (Colombani, 2000: 165). Bombast of this kind often has a nervous undercurrent. Much of the book, which ends with this peroration, is devoted to warning of the damage done to a healthy French selfunderstanding by critics like Debray or Bourdieu. In fact, the editor of *Le Monde* could have looked closer to home. The ebbing of the liberal tide in France has left a variety of unsettling objects on the beach.

18 For further consideration, see his work *Homo Juridicus* (Supiot, 2005).

Among them is the remarkable success of the daily's antithesis in the monthly that bears its name, *Le Monde diplomatique* having about as much in common with Colombani's paper as, in the opposite direction, today's *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has with the original. Under the editorship of Ignacio Ramonet and Bernard Cassen, it has been a spirited hammer of every maxim in the neo-liberal and neo-imperial repertoire, offering a critical coverage of world politics in sharp contrast with *Le Monde*'s own shrinking perimeter of attention. Enjoying a readership of some quarter of a million in France, *Le Monde diplo* has become an international institution, with over twenty print editions in local languages abroad, from Italy to Latin America, the Arab world to Korea, and a further twenty on the internet, including Russian, Japanese and Chinese: in all, an audience of one and half million. No other contemporary French voice has this global reach.

The journal, moreover, has not only been a counter-poison to the reigning wisdom, but an organiser as well. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, it set up ATTAC, an 'association for popular education', which today has branches throughout the EU, to stimulate debates and proposals unwelcome to the IMF and the European Commission. For any periodical, an organisational function exacts a price - typically, a reluctance to shock its readers, a failing of which the journal has not been free. Yet its animating role has been remarkable. Four years later, *Le Monde diplomatique* and ATTAC were instrumental in creating the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, launching the 'alter-globalisation' movement that has since become the principal rallying point of protesters against the existing order across the latitudes. Here, on an unfamiliar transnational stage, France resumed something of its historic place as vanguard land of the left, acting as the ignition for radical ideas and forces beyond its borders.

A similar interlocking of national and global effects can be found elsewhere in the *gauche de la gauche* that has emerged in the past decade. The moustachioed figure of José Bové symbolises another side of it. Who could be more archetypally French than this Roquefort-maker from the Larzac, foe of GM and McDonald's? Yet if alter-globalisation has international heroes, the charismatic farmer who founded a Peasant Confederation at home and helped create Via Campesina at large, active from the Massif Central to Palestine and Rio Grande do Sul, is among them. Characteristically, the French media put up with him as long as they could treat him as a piece of harmless folklore. Once he had the temerity to criticise Israel, it was another matter. Overnight, he became a bête noire, a disreputable demagogue giving the country a bad name abroad.

The role of Pierre Bourdieu in these years belongs to the same constellation. Son of a postman in a remote village of Béarn, in the borderlands with Spain, his trajectory bears many similarities to that of Raymond Williams, son of a railwayman in the marches of Wales, who was aware of the kinship between them. They shared steep ascents from such backgrounds to elite positions in the academy, and then feelings of acute alienation within the oblivious worlds of the *cumulard* and the high table they had reached, that made each steadily more radical after they had won established reputations. Even the typical complaints made of their prose - in the eyes of critics, sharpened by political hostility, a laboured, reiterative heaviness - were of a likeness. For both, the central experience that set the agenda of a life's work was inequality. In Bourdieu's case, the finest pages of the *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* he wrote just before he died are his recollections of the bruised bleakness of his schooldays in the lycée at Pau (Bourdieu, 2004: 117-127).

After induction into sociology in Algeria - it is striking how many leading French intellectuals were, in one way or another, marked by time in the colony: Braudel, Camus, Althusser, Derrida, Nora - Bourdieu developed work along two major lines, study of the mechanisms of inequity in education, and of stratification in culture. These were the inquiries - *Homo Academicus*, *La Distinction*, *Les Règles de l'art* - that made him famous. But in the last decade of his life, dismayed by what successive governments had done to the poor and the vulnerable, he turned to the fate of the losers in France, and the political and ideological systems that kept them there. *La Misère du monde*, which appeared two years before the social explosion of late 1995, can be read as an advance documentary for it. When it came, Bourdieu took the lead in mobilising intellectual support for the strikers, against the government and its watchdogs in the media and the academy. Soon he was to be found in the forefront of battles over illegal immigration, in defence of the *sans-papiers*, becoming the most authoritative voice of unsubdued opinion in France. Raisons d'Agir, the intellectual guerrilla he created to harry the consensus, specialised in flanking attacks on press and television: Halimi's *Les Nouveaux Chiens de Garde* and Bourdieu's own *Sur la télévision* were among its grenades. He was planning an estates-general of social movements in Europe when he died. His friend Jacques Bouveresse, France's leading semi-analytic philosopher, an attractive but very different kind of thinker, has paid him perhaps the best tribute, not only in writing well about him but contributing in *Schmock* (2001), pointed reflections on Karl Kraus and modern journalism, to a common enterprise.

Bourdieu's intransigence was a refusal to bend within the social sciences. But a similar sensibility can be seen in the better French cinema of recent years: films such as Laurent Cantet's *L'Emploi du temps*, or *La Vie rêvée des anges* of Eric Zoncka, himself also a sociologist, that show the cruelties and waste of Colombani's *vivre heureux*. France also saw perhaps the most ambitious attempt so far to trace the overall shape of the mutations in late 20th-century capitalism, in a work whose title deliberately recalls Weber's classic on its origins. *Le Nouvel Esprit du capitalisme* (1999), by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, links industrial sociology, political economy and philosophical inquiry in a sweeping panorama of the ways in which relations between capital and labour have been reconfigured to absorb the cultural revolution of the 1960s, and engender new dynamics of profit, exploitation, and emancipation from all residues of the ethic that preoccupied Weber. This critical synthesis so far lacks any Anglophone equivalent. But, not unlike Bourdieu's work, it also suggests a strange asymmetry within French culture of the past decades. For although its theoretical object is general, all its empirical data and virtually all its intellectual references are national. Such introversion has not been confined to sociology. The involution of the *Annales* tradition after Bloch and Braudel offers another striking illustration. Whereas British historians of the past thirty to forty years have distinguished themselves by the geographical range of their work, to a point where there is scarcely any European country that does not count among them a major contribution to the sense of its own past, not to speak of many outside Europe[19], modern historians of repute in France have concentrated overwhelmingly on their own country. Le Roy Ladurie, Goubert, Roche, Furet, Chartier, Agulhon, Ariès: the list could be extended indefinitely. The days of Halévy are over.

More generally, if one looks at the social sciences, political thought or even in some respects philosophy in France, the impression left is that for long periods there has been a notable degree of closure, and ignorance of intellectual developments outside the country. Examples of the resulting lag could be multiplied: a very belated and incomplete encounter with Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy or neocontractualism; with the Frankfurt School or the legacy of Gramsci; with German stylistics or American New Criticism; British historical sociology or Italian political science. A country that has translated

19 As just one example among the several posible ones in each case – Elliot for Spain; Mack Smith for Italy; Boxer for Portugal; Cartsten for Germany; Israel for the Netherlands; Roberts for Sweden; Davies for Poland; Macartney for Hungary; Needham for China; Lynch for Latin America.

scarcely anything of Fredric Jameson or Peter Wollen, and could not even find a publisher for Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes*, might well be termed a rearguard in the international exchange of ideas[20].

Yet if we turn to arts and letters, the picture is reversed. French literature itself may have declined in standing. But French reception of world literature is in a league of its own. In this area French culture has shown itself exceptionally open to the outside world, with a record of interest in foreign output no other metropolitan society can match. A glance at any of the better small bookshops in Paris is enough to register the difference. Translations of fiction or poetry from Asian, Middle Eastern, African, Latin American and East European cultures abound, to a degree unimaginable in London or New York, Rome or Berlin. The difference has structural consequences. The great majority of writers in a language outside the Atlantic core who have gained an international reputation have done so by introductory passage through the medium of French, not English: from Borges, Mishima and Gombrowicz, to Carpentier, Mahfouz, Krleza or Cortazar, up to Gao Xinjiang, the recent Chinese Nobel Prize-winner.

The system of relations that has produced this pattern of Parisian consecration is the object of Pascale Casanova's path-breaking *La République mondiale des lettres*, the other outstanding example of an imaginative synthesis with strong critical intent in recent years.[3] Here the national bounds of Bourdieu's work have been decisively broken, in a project that uses his concepts of symbolic capital and the cultural field to construct a model of the global inequalities of power between different national literatures, and the gamut of strategies that writers in languages at the periphery of the system of legitimation have used to try to win a place at the centre. Nothing like this has been attempted before. The geographical range of Casanova's materials, from Madagascar to Romania, Brazil to Switzerland, Croatia to Algeria; the clarity and trenchancy of the map of unequal relations she offers; and, not least, the generosity with which the dilemmas and ruses of the disadvantaged are explored, make her book kindred to the French elan behind the World Social Forum. It might be called a literary Porto Alegre. That implies a beginning, with much fierce argument and discussion to come. But whatever the outcome of ensuing criticisms or objections, *The World Republic of Letters* - empire more than republic,

20 Editor's Note: The work was eventually translated to French, but by a Belgian Publisher (Édition Complexe from Brussels) with the support of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, in 1999. The Brasilian edition, simultaneous to the English one, was issued in 1994, and the Spanish version, some months later.

as Casanova shows - is likely to have the same sort of liberating impact at large as Said's *Orientalism*, with which it stands comparison.

The wider puzzle remains: what explains the strange contrast between a unique literary cosmopolitanism and so much intellectual parochialism in France? It is tempting to wonder whether the answer lies simply in the relative selfconfidence of each sector: the continuing native vitality of French history and theory inducing indifference to foreign output, and the declining prestige of French letters prompting compensation in the role of a universal dragoman. There may be something in this, but it cannot be the whole story. For the function of Paris as world capital of modern literature - the summit of an international order of symbolic consecration - long precedes the fall in the reputation of French authors themselves, dating back at least to the time of Strindberg and Joyce, as Casanova demonstrates.

Moreover, there is a parallel art that contradicts such an explanation completely. French hospitality to the furthest corners of the earth has been incomparable in the cinema, too. On any day, about five times as many foreign films, past or present, are screened in Paris as in any other city on earth. Much of what is now termed 'world cinema' - Iranian, Taiwanese, Senegalese - owes its visibility to French consecration and funding. Had directors like Kiarostami, Hou Xiao Xien or Sembene depended on reception in the Anglo-American world, few outside their native lands would ever have glimpsed them. Yet this openness to the alien camera has been there all along. The brio of the New Wave was born from enthusiasms for Hollywood musicals and gangster movies, Italian Neo-Realism and German Expressionism, that gave it much of the vocabulary to reinvent French cinema. A national energy and an international sensibility were inseparable from the start.

Such contrasts are a reminder that no society of any size ever moves simply in step with itself, in a uniform direction. There are always cross-currents and enclaves, deviances or doublings back from what appears to be the main path. In culture as in politics, contradiction and irrelation are the rule. They do not disable general judgments, but they complicate them. It is not meaningless to speak of a French decline since the mid-1970s. But the current sense of the term, that of Nicolas Baverez and others, which has given rise to *le déclinisme*, is to be avoided. It is too narrowly focused on economic and social performance, understood as a test of competition. Postwar history has shown how easily relative positions in these can shift. Verdicts based on them are usually superficial.

Decline in the sense that matters has been something else. For some twenty years after the end of the *trente glorieuses*, the mood of

the French elites was not unlike a democratic version of the outlook of 1940 and after: a widespread feeling that the country had been infected with subversive doctrines it needed to purge, that healthier strands in the nation's past needed to be reclaimed, and - above all - that the forms of a necessary modernity were to be found in the Great Power of the hour, and it was urgent either to adapt or adopt them for domestic reconstruction. The American model, more benign than the German, lasted longer. But eventually even some of those addicted to it began to have doubts. At the end of this road, might there not wait a sheer banalisation of France? From the mid-1990s onwards, a reaction started to set in.

A country that has translated scarcely anything of Fredric Jameson or Peter Wollen […]might well be termed a rearguard in the international exchange of ideas.

It is still far from clear how deep that goes, or what its outcome will be. The drive to clamp a standard neo-liberal straitjacket onto economy and society has slowed, but not slackened - Maastricht alone ensuring that. What could not be achieved frontally may arrive more gradually, by erosion of social protections rather than assault on them; perhaps the more typical route in any case. A creeping normalisation, of the kind the current low-profile government led by Raffarin is pursuing, risks less than a galloping one of the sort admirers look to from Nicolas Sarkozy, the latest d'Artagnan of the right, and in French conditions may prove more effective. It will not be the Socialist Party, in office for 16 out of the last 24 years, that halts it. Its cultural monuments, the shoddy eyesores of Mitterrand's *grands travaux* and vulgarity of Jack Lang's star-shows, rightly detested by conservative opinion, were the epitome of everything signified by the progress of banalisation.

Outside the country, attitudes of passionate francophilia that were still quite common between the wars have virtually disappeared. Like most of its neighbours, or perhaps more so, France arouses mixed feelings today. Admiration and irritation are often expressed in equal measure. But were the country to become just another denizen of the cage of Atlantic conformities, a great hole would be left in the world. The vanishing of all that it has represented culturally and

politically, in its pyrotechnic difference, would be a loss of a magnitude still difficult to grasp. How close such a prospect is, remains hard to fathom. Smith's dry rejoinder to Pitt comes to mind: there is a lot of ruin in a nation. The hidden stratifications and intricacies of the country, the periodic turbulence beneath the pacified surface of a consumer society, sporadic impulses - gathering or residual? - to careen fearlessly to the left of the left, past impatience with democratic boredom, are so many reasons to think the game is not quite over yet. After explaining, lucidly and at length, why France was no longer subject to the revolutionary fault-lines of the 19th or early 20th century, and had at last achieved a political order that enjoyed stability and legitimacy, Aron nevertheless ended his great editorial of 1978 with a warning. "Ce peuple, apparemment tranquille, est encore dangereux". Let us hope so.

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JOURNALS FROM THE AMERICAS

Forty years of *Pensamiento Crítico*

Fernando Martínez Heredia

Abstract

The Cuban journal *Pensamiento Crítico* released its first issue in February 1967. The main objective of this instrument of the "K Street group" at the School of Philosophy and Literature (Havana, Cuba) was to integrate theory and practice in the concrete analysis of the problems faced by the Cuban revolution. In this paper, Fernando Martínez Heredia selects an editorial from the first issue of *Pensamiento Crítico* and a fragment of the speech he delivered when he received the National Award for Social Sciences. With this combination, Martínez Heredia seeks to appreciate the journal for what he considers to be its key contribution to the Cuban revolution in the battle of ideas. "Its

Resumen

La revista cubana Pensamiento Crítico *lanzó su primer número en febrero de 1967. Órgano del "grupo de la calle K" del Departamento de Filosofía y Letras (La Habana, Cuba) tuvo por principal objetivo aunar teoría y práctica en el análisis concreto de los problemas que enfrentaba la revolución cubana. En este escrito, Fernando Martínez Heredia selecciona un editorial del primer número de* Pensamiento Crítico *y un fragmento del discurso que ofreciera al recibir el Premio Nacional de Ciencias Sociales. Con esta síntesis, Martínez Heredia procura valorar la revista en aquello que juzga fue su principal aporte en el combate de las ideas para la revolución cubana. "Otro es su mundo y es ella misma", sostiene Martínez*

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world is different, yet it is one and the same", states Martínez Heredia. In its current phase, the Cuban revolution has launched its great anticapitalist challenge once again in the midst of a tremendous cultural war.

Heredia. En su proceso contemporáneo, la revolución cubana relanzó su gran desafío anticapitalista una vez más en medio de una tremenda guerra cultural.

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Keywords

1| Critical Thinking **2|** Revolution **3|** Socialism **4|** Communism **5|** Capitalism

Palabras claves

1| *Pensamiento Crítico* 2| *Revolución* 3| *Socialismo* 4| *Comunismo* 5| *Capitalismo*

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Forty years of *Pensamiento Crítico*[1]

On 22 December 2007, the 40th anniversary of the Cuban journal *Pensamiento Crítico* was celebrated at the *Instituto Cubano de Investigación Cultural Juan Marinello* (Juan Marinello Cuban Institute for Cultural Research). For almost four hours, six participants of that adventure of revolutionary thought of the 1960s spoke with more than a hundred people, mainly young people wanting to appropriate the legacy of the Cuban process in order to better prepare themselves to face the challenges of the present and of the task that lies ahead. In response to the generous initiative of *Crítica y Emancipación*, I reproduce here my opening speech at this event. Understandably, it was not a general analysis, nor was it an evaluation of the journal and its current circumstances, but rather it offered information in order to open up an exchange in a conjuncture charged with interest and the excitement of a long-awaited event.

To offer the reader more information, I include two other texts. A document from that period, a brief editorial from the first issue of *Pensamiento Crítico*, published in February 1967, which clearly lays out our position; and a fragment from a speech I delivered when I received the National Award for Social Sciences,[2] where I refer to the publication of the journal. In this extract I speak about the journal, and I refer to what, in my opinion was its significance as a part of revolutionary Cuban society and its place in the battle for ideas.

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

2 The National Award for Social Sciences was awarded to Fernando Martínez Heredia at the Havana Book Fair (La Cabaña, 10 February 2007).

Marxism and revolution[3]

This is not easy for me, as I do not speak much about this. In early 1966, I was one of the founders of the monthly cultural magazine *El Caimán Barbudo*, a friendly alliance between the group I belonged to and some poets, to have our own instrument of expression. In 1996 I was invited to a reunion with the founders, but was not invited to speak—other *compañeros* had a lot to say. Until Guillermo Rodríguez said, "Why don't you let Fernando speak? He's been quiet until now." So I said, "I know how to be quiet. I have been quiet for twenty years." This is not a poetic expression, it is reality. That is why I say that this is not an easy task for me.

I will not pretend to be naïve by saying that we did not know what we were doing. We did know what we were doing. But we did not think that it would be as important as it was. When you are involved in a struggle, what you do is struggle. Last January, on the occasion of the National Award for Social Sciences, I was asked about the journal *Pensamiento Crítico*, and I said that we did not think about what it would become, we just did it.

The journal was the instrument of one of the revolutionary groups from the 1960s: "the K Street group".[4] Saverio Tuttino, newspaper correspondent for *L'Unitá* in Havana, published an article in what was then the main communist cultural magazine in the world, *Rinascita*, called "*El Caimán Barbudo* speaks about philosophy". It began like this: "Very close to the old walls of the University of Havana, but at a convenient distance from them, is the Department of Philosophy…" This was not just an image. We were formally part of the university, but our position was actually independent, because it was indispensable. The Cuban revolution did not fit, in either its realities or its necessities, within the frameworks that existed for revolutions. This meant that in practice, it was heresy. But it was necessary for it to be heretical in its thought as well. Once it is already working, capitalism keeps working; it self-corrects, it even feeds off of what at one point were rebellions against it, in order to renew its hegemony. Socialism works differently, it is specific; it is not the continuation of an evolution of capitalism.

3 Presentation at the Round Table *"Marxismo y revolución a 40 años de la fundación de la revista Pensamiento Crítico"*. Event organised by the *Instituto Juan Marinello*, the *"Antonio Gramsci"* Chair, the *Casa de las Américas* (House of the Americas), the journal Temas and the seminar *"Revolución Bolchevique, historia de la URSS y Cuba. Análisis crítico socialista desde el siglo XXI"*.

4 The "K Street group" from the Department of Philosophy was at 507 K Street, in El Vedado.

We had to learn that time and again; we have forgotten it now, but it is still true. Socialism seems monstruous: it is the pretension that people should no longer be ruled by money, by selfishness, by individualism; it purports to create new people and social relationships.

The Cuban revolution implemented some extraordinary practices, but it did not have an organised, structured thought that could satisfy that need. The socialist transition—which is what I call that period, because communism can only be worldwide—it cannot live if it is not able to think about what it wants to do; to plan a part of what it wants to do, even if the plan later does not work out. And above all it must invent, create, be original—not imitate. That was very hard and difficult. Che had launched a very radical campaign in the Ministry of Industries and in all of his work, a conspiracy within the revolution itself. His Budgetary Finance System was just the tip of the iceberg. How to make Cuba's thinking appropriate for pushing the revolution forward, for forcing it to review itself, criticise itself, renew itself, change, be superior? And at the same time, how to multiply its forces, which were so small compared to the forces of imperialism and those of global capitalism and the pressures they exert on each person?

How to make Cuba's thinking appropriate for pushing the revolution forward, for forcing it to review itself, criticise itself, renew itself, change, be superior? […] From these needs and challenges,* Pensamiento Crítico *was born.

From these needs and challenges, *Pensamiento Crítico* was born. It was no more than a speck within that period. Luckily, we realised what we had to do. That is why I said at the beginning that we were not naïve. Many good *compañeros* do not realise what they have to do. They do what they are told, what needs to be done or what they think is correct. It is not wrong, but fundamental problems are never solved this way. At least we understood what was necessary, and, accordingly, we tried to do it. To some very modest extent, we achieved it. One of the achievements we sought was to increase our influence and ability to communicate, because it could not be just for one group. It makes me unhappy to see how there is now an elite in Cuba made up of profound people who know a lot and have good ideas and intuitions, at the same

time that there is an enormous mass of the population that consumes truly deplorable cultural products. This gives rise to a deep division.

The first step we took did not come from us, it made us grow quickly and it changed us. In the beginning of 1965, Fidel Castro invited our group to join him in a climb up Pico Turquino with university students. The night of 7 December he visited K Street and he spoke to us about an urgent, indispensable task for the country: to produce quality books in Cuba, taken from wherever, that would be of use for the gigantic leap we had to make in education and knowledge. Fidel gave us the task of making that leap, and we took it on very willingly and with great consciousness, which was about all we had. The entire department worked day and night, without stopping any of the work that we were already doing; we put the "offices" and the first storehouse in the house at 507 K, where we were already working. *Edición Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Publications) was born, which in early September 1966 would become the *Instituto del Libro de Cuba* (Cuban Book Institute). In those years we "trashed" the copyrights of a large number of foreign books that we published. That is, we didn't pay them at all. Now copyrights are considered to be one of the fundamental issues of contemporary capitalism, and many specialists study this topic. We just trashed them, and nothing happened. Among other reasons, because nobody had any power over us. We got some advantage out of being a small, free country. We looked for the most recent in the sciences and we published it in Cuba. Cuban students and professors took a tremendous leap in their opportunities and their knowledge.

We used the rotary press of a newspaper to put out *El Caimán Barbudo* once a month, with large print runs. But *Pensamiento Crítico* was a decisive step. What we were thinking then was: "We are going to produce a 'serious' journal, very large, that will have a different kind of influence". At the end of 1966 we organised and began the work. The first title we thought of was very dull: *Revista de Revistas*[5]—luckily it wasn't called that. The idea of the journal was to publish the most interesting things that we could find, an idea that was quickly surpassed. We argued a lot. *Pensamiento Crítico* was a much better name, because it referred to the fundamental issues: thought and critique. It is not that we were brilliant. We were relieved to finally have a title because later the people got used to seeing the logo… However, what gave strength to that title was what was done.

The first issue had four thousand copies. With the second

5 Translators' note: Journal of Journals.

issue we went to six thousand, and with the fifth issue it went up to ten thousand. We quickly increased to a monthly run of fifteen thousand, which is not small, and we stayed at that number until the end. We would send a large number to the "Lalo Carrasco" bookstore at the Habana Libre Hotel, and they would run out in 24 hours. Our print run would run short. Today nobody publishes that much; *Temas* and *Casa de las Américas* had a run of three thousand, *Casa* was the same. We took on most of the distribution ourselves so that it would be efficient, although the system of distribution then, with very few workers, was more effective than the system that came afterwards. When we created Edición Revolucionaria only four people did the work. I won't overwhelm you with the distribution system of the journal, in various places, in bookstores, by subscription. We also had legal and illegal distribution in Latin America. For example, in Colombia it was legal, despite the guerrillas and the repression. In Uruguay it was illegal; even though it was a democracy, the journal was burned right in the Central Post Office. In Cuba it was sold to the public in Havana and in several select parts of the country, like the Oriente and Las Villas universities and some cities; in the rest of Cuba we did not sell it, to avoid losing copies through the mechanisms of distribution. But we accepted all subscription requests that were not from Havana, which allowed Cubans to subscribe "from the interior".

With *Pensamiento Crítico* our group made its objective of communicating very broadly a reality. What did we communicate? Our idea was to present the principal problems of thought in relation to those of practice. The topic of revolutionary movements was a main focus for the journal. The first three numbers were dedicated to the revolutionary movements of Latin America, Africa and Asia. This was always a focus. Also, the graphic design of the journal—on the covers and the inside pages—was cutting edge and performed extremely important functions; it would be worth discussing this aspect. Here we are showing at least a few cover designs, to give you an idea; the last one we saw showed, in the language of popular culture, a Palestinian guerilla fighter's identity and decision to fight.

The first number began with a sociology text by Camilo Torres Restrepo[6]: "La violencia y los cambios sociales". The second article, "La revolución verdadera, la violencia y el fatalismo geopolítico",

6 Camilo Torres Restrepo (1929–1966) was a Colombian Catholic priest, predecessor of Liberation Theology and member of the guerrilla group *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN, National Liberation Army).

was by the Venezuelan Fabricio Ojeda,[7] the guerrilla commander of the *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional* (FALN, Armed Forces of National Liberation) assassinated in July 1966. The third author signed with a pseudonym, Américo Pumaruna. He was actually the Peruvian Ricardo Letts Colmenares, from the leadership of *Vanguardia Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Vanguard), a *compañero* that is still alive today, who analysed the recent rebellious movements in his country. A very tough Editor's Note prefaced the article, against its general position, arguments and criteria with respect to armed struggle, ideas we were opposed to. But we published it, and it took up a third of the issue. Because if there is nothing more than our own beliefs, we are lost. Amongst other reasons, because it is a lie that one is always totally right. The fourth was an excellent analysis, from the Guatemalan communist Julio del Valle—it was not his real name, he would later be killed—about the conservative tendency of his party against the armed and socialist path of the Guatemalan revolution.

I have gone into some of the details of this first issue in particular because it was our first issue. We immedately started with another genre that was also fundamental: theory. Especially social thought, although not exclusively. In the second issue, two authors debated about whether art was or was not a form of knowledge. And a third article explained who Antonio Gramsci was. Without being a thoeretical journal—a description that has been applied to it—*Pensamiento Crítico* published a large number of theoretical texts; they occupied and were the theme of the main section several times, but at least one was included in the majority of the issues. They were always chosen in the spirit of covering the fields of thought and social sciences from a critical perspective, helping to develop Marxism and satisfying the deeply felt need for theoretical education of that time.

Another aspect that we thought was vital was research about the structures and system of domination, about social classes and about other important themes in Latin America. The continent was theorising itself, and the journal participated fully in this intellectual adventure. If you review the collection, you will find a multitude of texts of the most diverse issues and specialisations, from different perspectives. A number of the main theses that were circulating in that period reached a broad public through *Pensamiento Crítico*. Along with

7 Fabricio Ojeda (1929–1966) was a Venezuelan politician and journalist. Reporter for the newspaper El Nacional in the Marcos Pérez Jiménez regime (1952–1958). He was head of the underground "*Junta Patriótica*" (Patriotic Junta), the organisation that overthrew the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship on 23 January 1958.

the contingents of activists that we met—we developed close relationships with several of them—we had very active and warm relationships with the scholars from Latin America that were producing a leap in the knowledge of the continent and in social science instruments, and who maintained a real commitment to the revolutionary cause.

We dedicated a lot of space to the history of Cuban thought, from a necessarily heretic position. In "the K Street group" we thought that it was essential to tackle and understand Cuban history from a perspective of class struggle. This was not because we had an overdose of "Marxism-Leninism". Nothing is further from this supposed

. If you never give up, if you do not become embittered and do not become a museum piece, you keep your humanity intact and you can be of more use.

Marxism-Leninism than class struggle. For the almost five years of the journal, we published a large number of texts by revolutionary Cuban thinkers, documents, fragments of interviews, presentations and editorials by the journal, and research papers. One of these could have given impetus to a historical research agenda: "La revolución pospuesta" by Ramón de Armas. One of his theses waited almost thirty years for a second book that would continue and deepen it.[8] Ramón's thesis was that while the Cubans were winning that war, they were losing their revolution. The *Centro de Estudios Martinianos* (Centre for Martí Studies) honoured this work several years ago with a new edition of the original text that had appeared in *Pensamiento Crítico*. The journal's longest issue—number 39, with 432 pages—fully dedicated to the 1930 Revolution, was the fruit of an enormous effort that made a significant contribution with respect to the least known Cuban revolution; its controversial nature brought about important consequences.

I will not continue describing the details because it would make this presentation very long. The point is that we took on a tre-

8 In reference to the text by Ibrahim Hidalgo de Paz, *Cuba 1895-1898. Contradicciones y disoluciones.*

mendous task. Some time ago I found one of those papers where someone summarises what is being done; it was about the journal, and it struck me. *Pensamiento Crítico* quickly became a network of activities. The core was to put out a montly journal of 224 pages, ensuring a good selection of high quality work. The difficulties in producing it were agonising. Everything was direct printing then, which means with leads, galleys, sheets, wood plates. Offset is old-fashioned for you. I even had to learn that an operator can compose a size-20 galley with leads in twelve minutes—like this that you can see here—which is equivalent to two and a half pages in the journal. This was to prevent the *compañeros* at the printer's from deceiving me when they calculated how many days they would need to produce it, something they tried in order to cover themselves in case they came up against any problems due to a lack of paper or ink, blackouts, or machine breakdowns, since they were very old. I remember that there were linotypes from 1916. Lack of material and inexperience were almost our distinctive feature.

Creating and maintaining the infrastructure was another problem. We received donations of gear and materials. Some revolutionary *compañeros* even took equipment from their workplaces so that we could have them at the journal. That is, they did something that was not nice, but for a good cause. We made translation agreements with the best translators we could find, trying to pay them as little as possible. Almost everything was done with voluntary work. There were only two or three paid workers: a secretary, the designer, and at times, an assistant. All the other tasks and responsibilities were voluntary, unpaid. From the small editorial board of the journal, José Bell Lara, Aurelio Alonso and I are the survivors of those that were there from the beginning until the end. We will never forget Mireya Crespo, from "the K Street group", a tireless worker dedicated to the work of the journal, who was a part of the board for the last ten issues. Jacinto Valdés Dapena worked on the journal for three years. Also a member of "the K Street group", Jacinto was very hard-working and responsible and he continues to have a very active life as a very distinguised researcher. Amongst other tasks, Jacinto was in charge of the exchange with 92 foreign publications, I think at the end there were 103. This broadened our influence, gave us access to a large mass of information and helped to raise the quality of the publication in several ways.

The search for and reading, discussion and selection of articles involved an immense number of texts, of which only a fraction would be published. The tiring review of the galleys and sheets, and all other tasks—and there were many different kinds—were all done with voluntary labour. *Compañeros* and *compañeras* from the Department

of Philosophy did the majority of the work, like Delia Luisa López and Marta Núñez. But it is best not to mention names, so as not to forget so many who worked so hard. Of course it was to everyone's benefit to read and evaluate that mass of intellectual work, to converse with visitors and listen to them speak, to have experiences beyond books, but it was all in extra time with respect to the pile of tasks and demands from the department, daily difficulties and the life pressures faced by this group of young people. As far as copyrights were concerned, in five years we only paid one author, a Latino friend short on funds.

Making *Pensamiento Crítico* a workplace that participated in the international activity of the revolution was a very large task. We hosted hundreds of foreigners, one by one and in an organised fashion, either on only one occasion or maintaining continuity in the relationship, and by doing so we combined our intellectual interests with the objectives of Cuban state and party organs. Sometimes in coordination with the Department of Philosophy, but most of the time as an activity of the journal. The majority of these foreigners were intellectuals, others were dedicated to other tasks. We maintained relationships with people and institutions whose work was prominent and influential, like *New Left Review*, from the United Kingdom, *Monthly Review*, from the United States, the Italian communists—who had several high quality publications—*Les Temps Modernes*, from France, an enormous number of Latin American publications, from *Punto Final* from Chile to many that were small and very little known. We put together an extensive catalogue of foreign publications, and another, much weaker, of leading figures.

To the extent that it was possible, we collaborated with national activities from our position. As *Pensamiento Crítico* became so well known, we had easier access to diverse intellectual events, and this broadened our sphere of ideological and cultural influence in Cuba. This was also notably the case in Latin America, and to a lesser extent in other places.

Pensamiento Crítico had an editorial policy. It was far from being perfect, but we always knew what we wanted. We thoroughly debated in an organised fashion every main theme of an issue and the majority of the articles, and we would debate and come to an agreement about the problems that, in our judgment, deserved it. The same thing happened with the design and the execution of all of the publication's very diverse tasks. We had norms and rules for our procedures, we made plans and we tried to follow through with them.

In those five years, *Pensamiento Crítico* was a principal commitment in my life, although not the only one by any means. I got

used to sleeping little and to being systematic. Although I almost never said so, I lived that time with so much devotion and passion that it is not difficult for me to remember it.

Pensamiento Crítico[9]

Today all the social forces in our country are in creative tension; the deepening and the magnitude of the goals of the revolution demand it. The purpose of this publication is to contribute to the full incorporation of scientific research on social problems into this revolution.

Our point of departure: on one hand, that theories arise or are developed by analysing concrete situations; on the other hand, that theoretical education is indispensable for researchers. Accordingly, we will try to communicate the actual issues and the opinions that exist about them, with unpublished articles by Cubans and foreigners, and by reproducing selected articles from the most diverse publications in the world.

In this first issue we present, in its Latin American dimension, the crucial problem of our times: the tricontinental anti-imperialist struggle that, in Vietnam, Guinea and Venezuela, works to conquer human dignity for the people, without which the intellectual profession itself would not be possible and would not have meaning. The names of some authors—Camilo Torres, Fabricio Ojeda—remind us that it is not criticism that is the great transformer, but rather it is revolution.

We are of the opinion that the revolutionary intellectuals are, above all, revolutionaries, plain and simple, because of their position with respect to life; and then, they are people who create or communicate according to their passion and understanding of the specificity and the transformative power of the intellectual role. If the first precondition is present, it will be easy for them to coincide with social necessity. We will work in accordance with this position.

The young people from K Street[10]

The group of young people that I belonged to, "the K Street group", took the intellectual task it had embarked upon very seriously. The president of the country, Osvaldo Dorticós, called upon us in 1964 to set the ocean on fire, even if, he said, we did not know how to do it. Soon, we learned that we had to play with fire to do so. I will reminisce

9 Editorial from the first issue of the journal, February 1967.

10 Excerpt from the speech delivered by Fernando Martínez Heredia upon receiving the National Award for Social Sciences, Havana, 2007.

only about the journal *Pensamiento Crítico*, because we will soon be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the publication of the first issue.

We did it, we did not ask ourselves what it was. I have fond memories of everyone who worked with the journal, who collaborated with it, so many wonderful people from Latin America for whom *Pensamiento Crítico* was a weapon during that time of weapons, *compañeros* from the United States and other parts of the world. But since that publication lived on and has not been forgotten, I will read something from what I told Julio César Guanche when he asked me, on behalf of my cherished *La Jiribilla*, about *Pensamiento Crítico*:

> One of the advantages of the journal was that it owed its existence to the revolution, but without becoming a particular office of a specific agency. This allowed it the possibility of revolutionary expression, but without any obligations other than our commitment to the revolution, embraced freely and openly. Even today I believe that without this, revolutionary thought cannot contribute and therefore cannot satisfy the persistent need for thought of revolutionary politics. The journal was controversial, and more than once it was extremely controversial. Had it not been this way, it would not have been worth it.
>
> It was an intellectual act led by the youth of the new revolution, focused on the main problems of the time, from a position of revolutionary activism in intellectual work. With ideas, with the choice of its themes and with the presentation of facts, it fought against the problems and questions that the structures of domination tend to hide or distort, without fearing the critique of ideas and of the very movement we were dedicating our lives to, seeking to create a future of liberation and joy. It thought because it was an activist group, not despite being an activist group, and it was one of the schools in this crucially important exercise. It contributed to the education of many revolutionaries, and its practice meant a small step forward in the difficult construction of a new culture. I think that it made real contributions to Cuban thought and social sciences, in several ways and respects, but I think it would be better for others to evaluate them. In those times, between all of us who were involved, we managed to push back mental colonisation.

Participating in this adventure of thought was a great reward. It is true that we did not win, that we came to a bad end, but we were not defeated. For two reasons. If you never give up, if you do not become em-

bittered and do not become a museum piece, you keep your humanity intact and you can be of more use. I have tried to do that all these years, both in Cuba and throughout Latin America, in intellectual tasks and in other endeavours. However, the second reason is the critical one. The Cuban revolution did not dry up, like other processes that came to their limits and became tragically tangled up in them. I have written hundreds of pages and spoken many hours about these decades of Cuba's current revolutionary process, I will not try to repeat myself here. Alive in its contradictions, the revolution launched another great challenge from 1985 to 1992, and demonstrated its just nature and its strength in the worst possible economic and international crisis. Its world is different, yet it is one and the same, in these last years when Cuba reasserts its anticapitalist nature after important changes and in the midst of a tremendous cultural war.

CRITICAL READINGS

The promises of the decolonial project or the chains of hope

Marcel Velázquez Castro

Abstract

Velázquez Castro offers a critical review of *The Idea of Latin America* by Walter Mignolo—renowned researcher of the modernity/coloniality paradigm. Velázquez Castro considers the conceptual and historical journey presented in this book. He holds that Mignolo brilliantly shows how "America" and later "Latin America" are ideas invented from the imperial/colonial logic, that he outlines their semantic changes associated with the new geo-politics, and that he succeeds in transmitting the strength and vitality of the decolonial project. As the most innovative thesis of the book, he highlights the notion of a Latin America that is a product of the reconfiguration of the modern/colonial world

Resumen

Velázquez Castro ofrece una reseña crítica de La idea de América Latina: la herida colonial y la opción decolonial *de Walter Mignolo –destacado investigador del paradigma de modernidad/colonialidad. Velázquez Castro transita el recorrido conceptual e histórico propuesto en dicha obra. Sostiene que Mignolo prueba brillantemente cómo "América" y después "América Latina" son ideas inventadas desde la lógica imperial/colonial, traza el devenir de sus cambios semánticos asociados a las nuevas geopolíticas, y logra transmitir la fuerza y vitalidad del proyecto decolonial. Destaca cómo la tesis más novedosa de todo el libro es la concepción de una América Latina producto de la reconfiguración del mundo moderno/colonial*

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brought about by the double process of decolonisation of the American continent and emancipation from Europe. He concludes with a number of questions: Are the new ways of thinking really outside capitalism? Does the decolonial project need to break away from Marxism in order to successfully oppose hegemonic forms of domination? How can the decolonial project speak with emancipation movements in the centre of the world-system? The questions proliferate as the adventure of thinking from an-*other paradigm* becomes more radical.

provocada por el doble proceso de decolonización del continente americano y emancipación del europeo. Concluye con una multiplicidad de interrogantes: ¿las nuevas formas de pensar están realmente fuera del capitalismo? ¿El proyecto decolonial necesita romper con el marxismo para enfrentar exitosamente las formas de dominación hegemónicas? ¿De qué modo el proyecto decolonial puede dialogar con los movimientos de emancipación del centro del sistema-mundo? Los interrogantes se despliegan conforme se radicaliza la aventura de pensar desde un paradigma otro.

Marcel Velázquez Castro

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Keywords

1| Modernity/Coloniality **2|** Decoloniality **3|** Border Thinking **4|** Power **5|** World-System Theory **6|** Colonial Wound **7|** Colonial Matrix **8|** Ethnocentrism **9|** Empire **10|** Social Movements **11|** Episteme **12|** Multiculturalism

Palabras clave

1| *Modernidad/Colonialidad* 2| *Decolonialidad* 3| *Pensamiento Fronterizo* 4| *Poder* 5| *Teoría del Sistema Mundo* 6| *Herida Colonial* 7| *Matriz Colonial* 8| *Etnocentrismo* 9| *Imperio* 10| *Movimientos Sociales* 11| *Episteme* 12| *Multiculturalidad*

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The promises of the decolonial project or the chains of hope

About *The Idea of Latin America* by Walter D. Mignolo[1]

MARCEL VELÁZQUEZ CASTRO

The research project of modernity/coloniality occupies the centre of contemporary Latin American debate. Despite their different approaches and disciplinary fields, Aníbal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Santiago Castro-Gómez, Gloria Anzaldúa and others share the exploration of problems derived from this conceptual matrix. Walter Mignolo is one of the most distinguished and visible representatives of this movement, one of whose merits is having thoroughly developed the concept of decoloniality introduced by Catherine Walsh and others.

In his book *Local Histories/Global Designs* (2000), Mignolo suggests that *border thinking* is a dichotomic place of enunciation, historically situated on the (internal and external) edges of the modern/colonial world-system. Border thinking emerges from the colonial power differential, and it rises up against it. He also explains how the homogeneous notion of "Latin America" is a product of the modern/colonial world-system imaginary, and he put forward the necessity of thinking about Latin America in *an-other way*, focusing on its heterogeneity more than its homogeneity, recovering its local histories and its knowledge structures that emerged in and from coloniality. Finally, especially in the prologue to the Spanish edition, he announces and celebrates the rise of *an-other paradigm* correlated to the exhaustion of the ideals of the second modernity, both in zones of colonial subalternity and in zones of imperial subalternity.

Published in English in the prestigious Blackwell Manifest series in 2005, *The Idea of Latin America* is a book that summarises previous arguments, traces new paths of reflection and moves into the

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder. Translators' note: Published in Spanish as Mignolo, Walter, *La idea de América Latina: la herida colonial y la opción decolonial* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2007). In English, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2005).

shaky terrain of articulating the symbolic and the political in contemporary sociocultural processes in the continent. The text formalises the possibilities and crossroads of the decolonial project. This is not the fruit of simply particular, narrow, academic research, but rather it is a book that claims to speak to everyone, written with clear language and a refined argumentative logic, with abundant examples and allusions to contemporary history that convert *The Idea of Latin America* into a philosophical and political manifesto that summarises the long and profound reflection of the author in the framework of modernity/coloniality.

The nature of the discursive framework (manifesto) imposes a strategy for reading right from the start. We have a public declaration of polemically articulated and presented ideas, where the generalisations, simplifications and verbal excesses are not accidents, they are essential to this discursive form. The book announces the end of an epistemological era (Western modernity/coloniality trapped in its abstract universals and in its vocation for domination) and celebrates the coming of new forms of thinking about the decolonial project, which implies an epistemic rupture that challenges the social and mental cartography of our times from *other* archives, languages and subjects.

The book proposes a conceptual and historical journey around the construction of the idea of Latin America from two antagonistic spaces: the matrix of modernity/coloniality and the horizon of decoloniality. Each of the three parts of the book corresponds to major transformations in the meaning, geo-political location and epistemic value of the "idea" of America. The platonic effort to define the conceptual norm, the ideal that defines these processes for more than five centuries, is remarkable. The foundation is similarly laid for a decolonial theory. Conceiving of history as nodes of historical-structural heterogeneity (Quijano), emphasis is placed on coexistence, the simultaneity of experiences, subjectivities and epistemologies: diversality replacing universality. In synthesis, a critical decolonial theory that transcends the history of Europe and reflects on and from the colonial history of America.

Was America invented under the cross of racism?

Chapter I examines the entrance of America into European consciousness, following the category of "invention" proposed by O'Gorman. The paradigm of invention makes decolonising knowledge possible, understanding modernity from the perspective of coloniality and from the voices, knowledge and concepts of the scorned (indigenous peoples and Afro-Americans).

Taking up Quijano's arguments, Mignolo suggests that the colonial matrix of power was simultaneously constructed with the irruption of America and the forging of the modern/colonial project. In this context, the American continent was characterised by the exploitation of the labour force on a large scale, the insignificance of human life and the consolidation of structures specific to internal colonialism.

The colonial wound (the mark left by the experience of coloniality in the wake of the conquest and colonisation) defines the "wretched of the earth" (Frantz Fanon). Coloniality is a consequence

The text formalises the possibilities and crossroads of the decolonial project.

of racism; that is, of the "the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign to themselves the right to classify" (p.8).

The geo-politics of knowledge, the local historical base of knowledge, was born in the 16th century as a decolonial position when the Aztecs, Incas and other indigenous peoples had to adapt their world view, knowledge and memory to a strange system imposed from the outside. They had to think in a two-pronged framework that revealed a differential in the power relations; that is, the contrast between colonial European thinking and colonised native thinking. This two-pronged framework generates the differential in power in the modern/colonial context, the *colonial difference*, the consequence of which is *border thinking*.

Border thinking allowed the decentralisation of the theo-politics of knowledge (in Tawantinsuyo and Anáhuac, in the 16th century) and of the geo-politics of knowledge (in British India and in French and British Africa in the 19th century) (p.9). Border thinking in the Andean region took on the form of interculturalism. Thus, the idea of America was born from the intersection of Christian cosmology, the capitalist economy and the decolonial reactions of the indigenous

peoples of the Anáhuac and the Tawantinsuyo and the populations of African descent. This first chapter, which presents the central categories of Mignolo's argument, poses a series of questions for the reader. In what follows I offer two critical observations.

a| The celebration of a dynamic border thinking that was antagonistic to Western European epistemology among the originary peoples of the Americas and the Afro-American populations overlooks the very dynamic relationships of assimilation, confluence and mutual enrichment between these two epistemologies. Does so-called *border thinking* not also end up invading and transforming areas of hegemonic thought (the preachers who learn Quechua and seek a symbiosis between the Andean world view and the Christian religion)? Does hegemonic thought not penetrate border thinking and offer it an archive of possibilities to strengthen it (Andean Baroque)? *Mestizaje*,[2] which is a concept deliberately excluded in Mignolo's line of argument, was not only physical, but also conceptual.

It is not possible to accept coloniality as a structure of domination that remained identical for more than five centuries, nor a *border thinking* that only resists assimilation and constantly opposes the forms of hegemonic domination. The phenomena of mutual translation end up reconfiguring—to put it in the author's terms—both local histories and global designs, border thinking and hegemonic thinking.

b| According to Mignolo, there is a concept of racism that is implicit in the tripartite division of the world from the theological framework of Christianity. Thus, the Christian empires that conquered and ruled America incorporated them into the West with the name of "West Indies" and simultaneously racially classified the indigenous people and the black slaves from the perspective of the Western, Christian, white male as an abstract and universal model.

What Mignolo defines as "racism" can be considered a traditional ethnocentric process based on a socioeconomic hierarchy that converts difference into inequality. During colonial times, mechanisms of dehumanisation coexisted

2 Translators' note: the mixing of races.

in the discourse of the Spanish and the Portuguese, but there were also mechanisms that rendered the social figures of Indians and blacks as subjects.

The Empire was a political community that included indigenous people and the castes; there was no institutionalised racism against them. The indigenous person who paid tribute to the King and had his/her own legal charters to enforce his/her rights and the free urban black person that did manual labour and formed a part of the socioeconomic structures were not permanent victims of racist doctrines, which is not to deny the evidence of some forms of institutionalised discrimination.

That there was a subalternisation of the indigenous subject and that this led to an "ethnification of the work force" (Wallerstein) is undeniable. "Racism", in a strict sense, as an essential difference specific to the very nature of human communities, spread at the end of the 17th century and reached its peak with the so-called "scientific racism" of the 19th century. Instead of "race", the more appropriate categories for analysing the hierarchical social construction of the colonial world in America are caste, cleanliness and state.

"Latin America": The illusion of European membership

Unlike the first chapter, quite laden with Mignolo's own previous texts and concepts, the second chapter contains the most innovative part of the book. Latin America is one of the consequences of the reconfiguration of the modern/colonial world (imperial histories in conflict in the western hemisphere) brought about by the double process of decolonisation in the Americas and emancipation in Europe (p.59).

According to Mignolo's argument, in the colonies, Baroque was an expression of protest and rebellion that demonstrated the critical consciousness of the Creoles of Spanish origin excluded from the social and economic order of the colonies. The Baroque of the colonies arose from the colonial difference between a Hispanic elite in power and a wounded Creole population.

Latin America was a French invention to articulate the southern European countries against the growing Anglo-Saxon influence. Its adoption in the Americas signifies the Creole elites' sad celebration of "their dreams of becoming modern while they slide deeper and

deeper into the" (p.58). The key thesis is that "the 'idea' of Latin America came into sight in the process of the transformation of the colonial Creole Baroque ethos into the postcolonial Creole 'Latin' ethos" (p.65) and this meant the denial of the Creoles' own critical legacy. Thus, becoming Latin American allowed them to reassert their inclusion within the project of European civilisation and to symbolically eliminate the presence of the indigenous and Afro-American cultures.

"Latinity" became the fifth side of the global ethnic-racial pentagon. This transnational identity referred to a conflictive reality different from the so-called yellow, red, black and white "races". This new racial space was considered "white" compared to the rest of the population in the Americas (made up of Indians, blacks, mulattos and half-breeds), but was not perceived as such by the northern Europeans or by the Americans. Ultimately, these Creole elites took on the metaphor of *mestizaje* to define themselves, while granting the European element the predominant position.

Over the last years, Indians, those of African descent in South America and in the Caribbean and the Latinos that live in the United States are the social actors who are taking on the task that the Creoles of European origin did not carry out; that is, defining their own conditions of identity and giving originary and original meanings to the subcontinent.

A reading of this section suggests the following critical observations.

a| Mignolo's seductive arguments work well in the terrain of philosophical abstraction, but they lose part of their explanatory capacity when they are contrasted with sociocultural processes. Hispano-American Baroque was a key moment of self-perception for the Creole elites of the Americas, a cultural link that legitimised difference within the imperial model. Thus, the most enduring legacy of Creole Baroque is the configurations and expressions of a sophisticated society, the celebration of power, and an oral and visual culture that still lives on amongst us. The poet from Lima Caviedes, one of the most representative dissident voices of Creole Baroque, questions some institutions of power from a carnivalised perspective, but legitimises the subordination of Indians and blacks and defends a colonial hierarchical social order. The ethos of Creole Baroque is very similar to the postcolonial Creole ethos, the potential criticism of Baroque comes from phenomena like Andean Baroque style, which

goes back to the conjunction of epistemologies and subjectivities that reformulate the western Andean world and create categories such as *mestizo* indigenous people.

b| Mignolo notes that following political independence, the processes of construction of 19th-century national images reproduce the dynamic of colonialism, rendering the social majority (indigenous and Afro-American population) symbolically inexistent. We believe this interpretation is valid, but the enormous differences between the diverse areas must also be recognised: the Andean region, the Caribbean, the *Río de la Plata* (River Plate). Thus, the need to identify oneself as "Latin American" has different dynamics according to the specific desires and imaginaries held by the 19th-century Creole elite. On the other hand, there is a perverse dialectic, since the Creole elites that deny or exterminate their indigenous and Afro-American populations end up, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, seizing some of the cultural marks of these groups to legitimise their own Creole codes (the imaginary of the *gaucho* in Argentina, the forms of Afro-Peruvian popular culture with the Lima elite, and indigeneity in Ecuador).

c| The association between the configuration of Latin America and its condition of fifth "race" poses the problem of defining the racial and cultural content of this "new" race. There is no satisfactory answer, we must recognise that the "problem" of racial heterogeneity in the Americas begins to fade away as "*mestizo*" becomes the distinctive feature of the Latin American. The social figure of the *mestizo* (product of the union between a white person and an Indian), loses its originary roots; thus, the condition of *mestizo* gradually comes an empty signifier for any racial and cultural combination.

d| There is unlimited confidence in the indigenous and Afro-American peoples' current social movements, especially in those sectors "not impregnated with the republican, liberal and socialist traditions" (p.67) because, by means of their epistemic potential, they are constructing the decolonial project. It is difficult to accept that the Pachakuti indigenous social movements in Ecuador, the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS, Movement toward Socialism) in Bolivia or

any Afro-American social movement could represent the political action of a chemically pure population, exempt from the grand discourses of modernity. On the contrary, they seem to be a hybrid response that combines a discourse of affirming the identity of originary peoples (encouraged by the multiculturalism of globalisation), conceptual instruments of the indigenist left and a practice that places them in the terrain of republican social democracy.

After Latin America: The new myth of emancipation?

The third chapter has a clear political tone more than a historical or philosophical one. The author presents us with a series of examples of the adoption of a geo-politics and a body politics of decolonial knowledge: the Afro-Caribbean philosophy exemplified by the ideas of Sylvia Wynter; the *Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas Amawtay Wasi* (Intercultural University of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples Amawtay Wasi); and the proposal of Gloria Anzaldúa in her triple status of border woman/Chicana/lesbian.

This construction of *an-other paradigm,* which changes not only the content but the frames of the debate, moves away from universal liberating projects and responds to the local necessities of those who bear the colonial wound (indigenous people, Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Andeans, and "Latinos" in the United States). This allows them to reconfigure identities, knowledge and subjectivities; thus, the traditional relationship with "Latin America" dissolves and new ways of naming the territory emerge: *Abya Yala*, *la Gran Comarca* and *La Frontera*, respectively. In sum, an erosion of the ethnic borders (Latino/Anglo) and the geographic ones (North/South).

One of the most controversial points of this argument is the distinctive series of characters the author uses to prove the existence of a decolonial project throughout five centuries: Guaman Poma, Bilbao and Mariátegui, or Fanon, Azaldúa and Luis Macas. They all think with originality from the perspective of the colonial experience, but they are also nourished to a large extent by the emancipatory discourses of Christianity, liberalism, Marxism and post-structuralism. Every revolution has the right to create its own precursors, but critical discourse must retrieve the ambivalences of these watershed moments.

The *episteme* of decoloniality establishes the paradigm of coexistence, that many worlds are possible; therefore, "thinking in Spanish from the colonial history of South America is also a necessary

practice in shifting the geography of knowledge" (p.107). There is no direct or necessary correlation between identity in politics and social subjects, there is an ethical choice that does not depend on the colour of skin, the social location or the lived colonial experience. Nevertheless, this position partially collides with the necessary bodily experience of knowledge and subjectivity that legitimise the decolonial project.

Despite the apparent signs of the vitality of decolonial thinking in the latest political conjuncture, it is difficult to accept the epistemological break celebrated by Mignolo. Are these new ways of thinking really outside global capitalism? Are we not converting certain subalterns and their perspective into the new privileged agents of the future and into the only way to read reality? In order to successfully confront the forms of capitalist domination, is it necessary to dissociate Marxism from the decolonial project? What would the possible dialogue be like between the emancipation movements that arise in the core of the world-system and the decolonial project? As with all of Mignolo's books, the questions multiply because his venture into radical thought always challenges and disturbs his readers.

The Idea of Latin America *is a manifesto, a vibrant narrative that purports to put an end to the epistemological paradigm of modernity/coloniality.*

The Idea of Latin America is a manifesto, a vibrant narrative that purports to put an end to the epistemological paradigm of modernity/coloniality and to celebrate the coming of a *pachakuti*: the decolonisation of the knowledge and the being of the *damnés*[3] themselves. The book brilliantly shows how "America" and later "Latin America" are ideas invented from the imperial/colonial logic, it outlines their semantic changes associated with the new geo-politics, and it succeeds in transmitting the strength and vitality of the decolonial project; however, in the big picture, the music of hope silences the sounds of the complexity of global capitalism.

3 Translators' note: original in French.

DOCUMENTS

Current challenges for Latin American social sciences

Reflections on President Correa's speech

Jorge Rovira Mas

Abstract

Based on Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa's speech in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of FLACSO, the author points out the multiple challenges faced by Latin American social sciences. The critical recovery of what was previously produced in the social sciences of the region (a tradition that was interrupted during the dictatorships), the analysis of academic dependence with respect to the theory developed in central countries, and the reaffirmation of theoretical production based on values such as quality, critical spirit, and relevance are some of these challenges. Thus, social sciences may be used as a theoretical tool to have an influence on the modification of the concrete reality of the region.

Resumen

El autor señala, a partir del discurso del presidente de Ecuador Rafael Correa en el 50º aniversario de FLACSO, los múltiples desafíos que enfrentan las ciencias sociales latinoamericanas. La recuperación crítica de lo producido en el pasado en las ciencias sociales de la región (tradición que se interrumpe durante los períodos de dictadura), el análisis de la dependencia académica respecto a la teoría elaborada en los países centrales y la reafirmación de la producción teórica a partir de valores de calidad, espíritu crítico y pertinencia son algunos de estos desafíos. Así, las ciencias sociales podrán ser utilizadas como herramienta teórica para influir en la modificación de la realidad concreta de la región.

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1| Social Sciences **2|** Latin America **3|** Critical Thought **4|** Dependence **5|** Knowledge Production

Palabras clave

1| *Ciencias Sociales* **2|** *América Latina* **3|** *Pensamiento Crítico* **4|** *Dependencia* **5|** *Producción de Conocimiento*

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Current challenges for Latin American social sciences

Reflections on President Correa's speech[1]

JORGE ROVIRA MAS

The successful *Congreso Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Ciencias Sociales* (Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences) in Quito (Ecuador) from 29 to 31 October 2007, organised to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences), featured the Ecuadorian president, Dr. Rafael Correa Delgado in the opening ceremony. The Editorial Board of *Crítica y Emancipación* has felt it important to include his speech, much more than a mere formality, in this first issue of the journal.

It is worth emphasising the fact that in addition to the formality, the president also collaborated with the Ecuador branch of FLACSO as part of the group that developed its doctoral program in economics. Correa, born in 1963, has a degree in this discipline from the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil, a Masters degree from the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) and a doctorate degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign (United States). He is part of a new generation of academics and politicians who combine a solid and diverse university education with a keen critical spirit with respect to the evolution of the neoliberally-inspired socioeconomic path pursued in Latin America over the last quarter of a century.

Correa's text poses that *fundamental question* that returns to the forefront in the scientific community from time to time, despite intervening periods in which some of the answers are considered self-evident and obvious: "What really justifies the existence and development of the social sciences?" Or, put even more precisely and appropriately: "What justifies social science in Latin America, especially today?" Recognising that there can be various answers to the question, the most obvious—that is, the recognition of its potential to collec-

1 Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.

tively produce a precise and rigorous understanding of social reality and thereby to facilitate actions that can transform it—in addition to what Correa suggests, does not thoroughly address the second part of the question. And it does not do so because it cannot, because the direction that transformative action may take cannot merely be deduced from even the most accurate analysis of reality that may ultimately be carried out. It demands more than this, it demands conceptions of the world and a repertoire of values prioritised and constituted on the basis of these conceptions, from which to choose and give direction to the alternatives for social change. However, reconsidering Correa's question as an introduction to exploring the possibilities for a relevant and effective social science in our region—one which would make feasible the consideration of alternative forms of development superior to those currently prevalent—brings us back in a timely manner to a basic and primary questioning to which it is essential to return time and again.

A second reminder, full of the sense of opportunity that is present in this text, comes from the weakening of the critical process of theoretical accumulation that had been developing in Latin American social sciences, from Latin American social sciences, and in the theoretical production of the region.

If we want to suggest, even in a preliminary and general way, what have been the key generations of social scientists in the region to date, we could put forward the following. The first, which instituted the disciplines under modern criteria and parameters, was comprised of figures such as Germani, Medina Echavarría, Florestan Fernandes and Prebisch, among several very influential others. In this generation the theory of modernisation became relevant, but there were some amongst these figures who produced the first critiques and alternative proposals to this approach to development, with Prebisch standing out for the scope and complexity of the structuralist centre-periphery paradigm he developed.

The next generation, whose members were born during the 1930s—that of Cardoso, Marini, dos Santos, Bambirra, González Casanova (1922), Torres Rivas, Cueva, Gérard Pierre-Charles, amongst others we could also name here—had to their credit the elaboration and dissemination of what has been the critical theoretical contribution of greatest scope developed in the region: *dependency theory*. Some of them developed their contribution precisely because they were able to propose a critique of the critique (and not only from a certain Marxist perspective).

Dialogue and critique, both intergenerational and intragenerational, were abundant, especially if we consider that the academy then was just beginning with newly emerging scientific institu-

tions and practices, with a few slightly more institutionalised pockets in some parts of the region (Santiago, Chile will always be linked to those early times, and Mexico later). But there are three main *values* in the evolution of our disciplines that were associated with these first stages, though not without multiple tensions with others: I refer to the values of *quality*, *relevance* and *cumulative theoretical criticism* in the process of developing and strengthening Latin American social sciences.

The third generation is that born between the end of the Second World War and the final years of the following decade. It constituted itself as an academy still in its first stage of development, fed

What form of knowledge production seems to work in the Latin American academy?

by the political debates that ran through the dynamics of regional development (characterised by Theotonio dos Santos as the alternative between socialism and fascism). However, shortly afterwards, in the context of the authoritarian onslaught of the conservative forces that started to dominate *manu militari* in the 1970s (after the Brazilian dictatorship starting in 1964), this generation experienced first-hand the regressive change in the university, intellectual and cultural climate. These forces even tried to destroy the existing university developments in several societies. One feature of this was not, as might be assumed at first glance, the absence of *quality* in their work (many emigrated and received good training in foreign universities). What was most weakened was the *critical and cumulative process of theoretical production based on certain values* (particularly in terms of the pursuit of development and of the construction of a more equal, fair and balanced society) that had been developing up to that point as these disciplines progressed in Latin America.

The fourth generation of Latin American social scientists is that of the Ecuadorian president, Correa, including those born from the 1960s on. They were educated in an intellectual, scientific and cultural environment in the heart of which the neoliberal onslaught gained strength and tended to become institutionalised, in its differ-

ent theoretical varieties, in academia. Its conspicuous shortcoming as a generation is its lack of knowledge about the above-mentioned prior process of theoretical development and its uncritical dissociation from this process, and of course all the theoretical and political implications that this closure has provoked for disciplinary advancement as well as for historical and social advancement.

Thus the Ecuadorian president's call to attention, once we accept the preceding contextualisation and as a member of this fourth generation, is very timely and significant: "it is not about an uncritical return to the past, but rather about a more accurate recovery of a legacy that has not been sufficiently appreciated", says Correa. It is fundamental for the social sciences currently taught in Latin America to recover and process the links and the contradictions between the past cumulative theoretical development in these fields and the current teaching of social theories.

Finally, a third aspect I wish to refer to and that seems to emerge from Correa's speech, intimately connected to the previous one, lies in a question that, although it does not come out literally in his text, one can easily infer, and which we should grant all the importance it deserves: the absence of a sociology of knowledge in Latin America. Far from being exclusively a scientific task, it is a scientific task with significant political implications. A sociology of knowledge that provides an account of the complex historical process of *academic dependence* that has taken root and been reproduced in the region over the past twenty-five years and based on which two theoretical tendencies have been developing. On one hand, the dissociation of current theoretical instruction from the initial theoretical production, and the lack of knowledge about it, to which I have already referred; and on the other hand, the predominance or the disproportionate influence of the different forms of neoliberal thought and academic styles. The consequences of both processes, it is worth repeating, are enormous in a variety of spheres (scientific, intellectual, cultural and political), but Latin American social scientists, confused as we have been by the neoliberal onslaught, have not yet been able to develop a greater understanding of academic dependence and its implications. This is what Correa refers to in his speech when he insists that we understand "the political economy of the dominant theories in the social sciences", about which he asks the following question: "What form of knowledge production seems to work in the Latin American academy?" And, we should add: How does it operate, how has it been reproduced?

I would like to conclude these brief commentaries about President Correa's speech at the FLACSO conference in Quito by em-

phasising what seem to be some of the fundamental challenges faced today by Latin American social sciences. The first of these, untangling the mechanisms of reproduction of *academic dependence* and analysing its consequences; the second, the revitalisation and revaluation of the process of theoretical production and accumulation in the region, that can critically retrieve what was developed in the past and connect it with current theoretical production; and the third, the reaffirmation of the growth and the maturity of our disciplines based on values such as *quality*, *critical spirit* and *relevance*, that naturally entail a corresponding appreciation of theoretical production from the region and about the region.

Speech by Rafael Correa in commemoration of FLACSO's 50th anniversary

Abstract

In this speech, Rafael Correa Delgado looks back upon and evaluates social sciences in Latin America. First, he maps out the intellectual heritage of Latin America, in which there has been a marked concern with regional issues (for example: ECLAC's economic thought, Liberation Theology, among others). Then, he explores the meaning of scientific-social work and concludes that, especially in the social sciences, a theory that does not have political implications that allow for the improvement of reality is essentially a useless theory. In this sense, the Latin American thought that has been colonized by hegemonic neoliberal theories (positivism, rational choice theory, among others) is

Resumen

En este discurso, Rafael Correa Delgado propone una retrospectiva y un balance de las ciencias sociales en América Latina. En primer lugar, bosqueja un mapa de la herencia intelectual latinoamericana en la que existía una decidida preocupación por las problemáticas de la región (por ejemplo: el pensamiento económico de la CEPAL, los teólogos de la liberación, entre otros). Seguidamente, se interroga por el sentido de la labor científico-social concluyendo que, particularmente en el campo social, una teoría que no suponga corolarios de política que posibiliten mejorar la realidad es sencillamente una teoría inútil. En este sentido, el pensamiento latinoamericano colonizado por las teorías hegemónicas neoli-

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submerged in a deep crisis. This crisis of thought accompanies the discrediting of politics and is expressed in a technicist discourse that confuses objectivity with neutrality. The great remaining challenge is to make the decision to invest time, money and human resources in the construction of a Latin American academic community committed to the emancipation of Latin America.

berales (positivismo, teoría de la acción racional, entre otras) quedó sumido en una profunda crisis. Tal crisis del pensamiento se combina con el descrédito de la política y encuentra expresión en un discurso tecnicista que confunde objetividad con neutralidad. El gran desafío pendiente es tomar la decisión de invertir tiempo, dinero y recursos humanos para la construcción de una comunidad académica latinoamericana comprometida con la emancipación de América Latina.

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Speech by Rafael Correa in commemoration of FLACSO's 50th anniversary[1]

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of an institution like the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences) calls for a retrospective evaluation of social sciences and their impact on our times and on the historical processes of Ecuador and of Latin America.

It is worth remembering that the men and women who founded FLACSO were deeply committed to the integration of our Latin America and were notably dedicated to research and teaching aimed at developing our societies.

FLACSO was born from an idea developed at the UNESCO General Conference in 1957 and was quickly taken up by a number of countries that understood what was meant by this action. The first to join were Brazil and Chile, and then Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Suriname.

The idea was to build a social science institution that would generate a space for reflection and analysis that did not yet exist, and that would drive the development of Latin American thought tied to the specific needs and problems of our region.

FLACSO's objective was considered to be key at that time: to increase the capacity for countries to collaborate in the field of social sciences through regional institutions of high academic standard, which would cooperate with national governments and universities by preparing human resources for social change.

We also have to remember that FLACSO was formed in the global context of the Cold War and in the regional context of social and

1 Opening speech at the *Congreso Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Ciencias Sociales* (Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences) in commemoration of FLACSO's 50th anniversary, 29 to 31 October 2007, Quito, Ecuador. Translated from Spanish by Shana Yael Shubs and Ruth Felder.
Available in Spanish at <http://www.presidencia.gov.ec/secciones.asp?seid=238>.

political unrest as a consequence of the influence of the Cuban Revolution, the appearance of guerrilla movements and the spread of Liberation Theology. It was a time in which capitalism and socialism seemed to define the battlefield of the options for social change. This was supplemented in our region with a marked interest in the development perspectives put forward, in large part, by the economic thought of ECLAC.

Thus, FLACSO, or, more accurately, the sites that were starting to work at that time, engaged in academic inquiry tied to a number of lines of research. For example, development. Theses about national strategies of regional development, economic concentration and development took shape, as did modes of alternative development, etc. Research that, it is worth remembering, in many cases linked the economic, the social, the cultural and the political, not dissociating them as if they were separate spheres without any type of relation.

In the field of development, education was not left out either. Economic development was thought about in a comprehensive way. The theory of human capital, which was later and for good reasons widely criticised, suggested important connections between the training of human resources and economic growth.

Interest in thinking about the different paths to revolution in the region was also significant, as was interest in the impediments to consolidating the democratic regime.

Issues related to agrarian sociology and agrarian reform also became important. Issues related to the country, to rural space, and to the peasant and indigenous actors became inescapable, but, once again it is worth saying, in the context of processes of social change.

Similarly, historical analyses were important. Phenomena, their significance and their productivity were explored in the context of their concrete historical development. In those times, history took on a key relevance in Latin American studies: it was about discovering the Latin American specificity as well as the underlying processes and relationships that were constituting it.

In sum, there was a marked interest in constructing research objects that addressed Latin American issues and, in particular, those that were relevant for each country and even sub-region. For example, in the case of FLACSO-Ecuador, interest in Andean and indigenous issues was concentrated in this institution.

So now, after fifty years, if we had to do an assessment, we could say that FLACSO, to a large degree, still reflects these original expectations.

Currently, this institution has become a key reference point in the academic and political world of our region. Nobody can deny that its

research, seminars, books, journals and even the informed opinion of its professors and researchers are widely respected, not only in the world of social sciences, but also in public space and in decision-making spheres.

FLACSO also continues to participate in the creation of highly-trained human resources that make up much of the teaching staff in public and private universities in the region, as well as occupying senior posts in different institutions in the governmental and non-governmental administration of our countries.

Through its diverse academic activities, FLACSO continues to collaborate in the consolidation of social disciplines, although—

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as we will see shortly—in many cases it does so under the ideological dominance of certain theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Similarly, FLACSO contributes, through its systems of scholarships, to the ability of many students from the region to carry out their studies, especially in countries other than their own. By having sites in different countries, student exchanges and the exchange of learning experiences, FLACSO has made its contribution to the pursuit of Latin American integration.

Finally, the Latin American nature of FLACSO is currently strengthened, not only by the origins of its students but also by its academic staff.

Though we could organize a seminar to examine the role FLACSO has had in the social sciences, I would like to reflect on the challenges that I can see, in the spirit of constructive criticism.

I will mainly try to focus on a critical reflection on what I think is one of Latin American academia's main problems and from which FLACSO is not immune: the crisis of Latin American thought.

A key question that all social scientists have at one point asked themselves revolves around the meaning of scientific-social inquiry: What really justifies the existence and development of the social sciences? What is the mission of a social scientist in the face of the

dynamic, contradictory and in many respects painful reality of the contemporary world?

Though multiple answers are possible, in general terms we could say that as academics we seek to contribute to increasing our understanding of the phenomena of the social world in order to increase as well our ability to build a better society from which all can benefit. Especially in the social sciences, a theory that does not have clear political implications that can improve reality is essentially a useless theory.

Nonetheless, several questions emerge that this general answer conceals. When we say "our understanding of phenomena", to whom are we referring with *our* understanding? And when we speak about a better society, how are we understanding the word *better*?

With respect to the first question, we have to note that there are differences between understanding in academia and understanding that occurs in other spaces of knowledge. The type of explanations that academic discourse constructs, in contrast with others such as those of common sense, of a sophist or even of a politician, is based on a specific process that produces arguments and verifies them. This is not to underestimate or to not seek forms of dialogue between different types of knowledge and experience, nor to imply that there are hierarchies between them. The scientific-social argument is not justified through intuition, belief or desire, but rather through a reflexive process that recognises errors, the mechanisms that produce them, and the ways to overcome them while leaving the capacity for discovery intact. As Pierre Bourdieu would say, it is not just about an abstract methodology that works like a manual—like a set of rules that can be applied to all cases—and as an unequivocal guarantee of scientificity. Precisely because the unconditional obedience to an *organon* of logical rules tends to prematurely shut down the conditions for discovery.

It is, instead, about an attitude of epistemological vigilance in which not only is there an effort to understand the logic of the error but there is also an effort to construct a logic of discovery of the truth.

In this sense, we can say that the academic-researcher seeks the greatest degree of "objectivity" possible. The ideal would be that, through methodological transparency (of the procedures carried out and the justifications offered for each decision) and through the democratisation of information, anyone could reproduce the results and the conclusions. In this way, through dialectic exchange, the quality of our understanding of reality can be continuously improved.

With respect to the second point, that is, what do we understand to be a better world, we encounter one of the most serious dangers that lurk in academic discourse: trying to equate objectivity with

neutrality, and therefore, free oneself of the inevitably political nature inherent to any teaching or research task, especially in the social sciences. Following Boaventura de Sousa Santos, I think that it is essential to distinguish between objectivity and neutrality. We must strive to be objective social scientists but not neutral ones, and this means using the best methodologies that the social sciences offer us and doing so with the greatest possible rigour, impartiality and autonomy.

But, at the same time, we have to be clear about what side we are on; that is, how we construct our research problems, our research objects, how we formulate our working hypotheses, how we choose our methodological strategy and even our research techniques. Such non-neutrality (inevitable in our profession) unquestionably leads us to the political, social, cultural and other positions that we necessarily embody and about which we must remain constantly vigilant. But careful, to be vigilant is not the same as to deny.

Example: my home Country.

Once we are clear about these differences, we can ask ourselves, for example: Where do the research topics in current social sciences come from? From what perspective are the research questions formulated? What is the political economy of the dominant theories in social sciences? Which brings us to ask: What is the form of knowledge production that seems to work in Latin American academia?

These questions locate us in a space for reflection about what has occurred over the last decades in Latin American academia and about what FLACSO, I believe, has not been able to escape from. As mentioned previously: the crisis in Latin American thought.

An example of the greatest expression of this crisis: the Washington Consensus.

Without fear of being mistaken, I believe that academic spaces are spaces for ideological struggle with the objective of building the hegemony of some interests over others, of some world views over others. It is about imposing meanings on what we call "reality" and thereby constructing it, and what ultimately each of us understands by a better world.

In this sense, Latin American academic space was practically colonized by a set of methodological theories and prescriptions that arose in the central countries.

For example, this can be seen in the predominance of the positivist economy which was uncritically and uncontrollably applied in the field of social sciences. This gave way to a kind of very profound homogenisation of research and teaching work, and certain pockets were only marginally able to resist and dispute what has become a type of common sense in academia.

The argument brandished was that such theories and processes were the only ones that could guarantee "relevant" issues for study, "objective" analytical perspectives (confusing this concept with neutrality) and "scientific" methodologies. The rest was just left over. It was residual.

Continuing with our example we can think about *rational choice*[2] applied to political science, and in some cases, even political sociology.

This has implied a return to the dominance of an extremely positivist methodology that only values what can be "observed" (meaning preferences) and therefore "measured", and that dismisses anything that in this context is considered "subjective".

Useless theory.

(Between parentheses we could say that this has reinforced the idea of academia as the only valid site of knowledge and a contempt for dialogue with other types of knowledge. Thus, along with other issues that were left out, those theoretical and methodological perspectives that emphasised the participation of the subjects being studied, because they were considered to be the principal beneficiaries of such studies, were rejected.)

This also involved the generation of unidimensional explanations that tended to account for social phenomena with a single, similar argument: the selfish, atomised, maximizing human being, etcetera.

In this context, the definition of the "better world" that social sciences must seek was reduced to the individual maximizing optimization of utilities, principally understood to be the preferences expressed in any *market* (political, cultural, economic, family, community) through consumption (also of any product: votes, goods, money, love, cultural consumption, etcetera).

In addition to being a largely useless theory, terribly reductionist, it presented the social sciences as being independent of value judgments. Example: market theory, rational actors, voluntary exchanges and "a girl lost in the desert".

A review of the curriculums of political science, sociology and economics programs in many FLACSO sites reveals to what extent this dominance has also permeated an institution that aimed to generate independent and specifically Latin American thought. Not to mention the programs that go under the name of Government and Public Affairs or Administration and Public Policies.

2 Translators' note: original in English.

We have to realise that these theories and their associated analytical categories, that have coopted ideological space, prevent us from seeing other ways of constructing the research problems and objects that are relevant for the plans for change that we believe in. They also make the intellectual inheritance of Latin American academia invisible, that academia that until a few decades ago was proud of its accomplishments and of its commitment to Latin American emancipation.

It is not about an uncritical return to the past, but rather about a more accurate recovery of a legacy that has not been sufficiently appreciated. With this dominance, disciplines and entire research lines have disappeared, such as for example history, agrarian sociology, studies of social structure, of economic concentration, of social inequality, and others.

It is true that other extremely important issues have been taken up that are related to types of social exclusion. For example, the treatment of groups determined by characteristics related to age, such as youth; to gender, such as women; to ethnic origin, such as the indigenous; to mobility, such as immigrants, etc. Academia has been particularly sensitive to these issues and to the human groups that have historically been denied their voices. This can be seen in the number of projects that have been developed, for example, in the different sites of FLACSO and above all in the research theses that these sites stimulate.

As Todd Gitlin asserts, though the profusion of social actors has occurred throughout society, think about the visibility achieved by minorities and social movements in recent years; nowhere has there been such a vigorous result as in the academic world. There, in many programs of study, each movement experienced the joy of an identity based on the group. The problem lies in that the expansion of what has been called "identity politics" was inseparable from the political fragmentation of what had initially been shared.

The university and academic world has taken up these new issues from a largely uncritical position, as in many cases such research lines imply abandoning the concern for what it is that human beings and groups share. The study of "identity" becomes the study of a type of inescapable destiny, in a world made up of intrinsic and essentialist identities that prevent connecting with the other. The voice of the voiceless can thus end up constituting a new silence, functional to the dominant paradigm, and academia has not been immune to this.

So, based to a large extent on what Boaventura de Sousa Santos suggests, perhaps a debt and an outstanding challenge for FLACSO over the next fifty years would be to decide to invest time, money and human resources in offering contributions toward a notable epistemo-

logical and theoretical overhaul of current social sciences. An overhaul from a Latin American perspective; that is, from the South.

Similarly, the understanding of the world enabled by the social sciences in many cases denies social experience and denies the social changes that are taking place. Example, the end of history. A set of experiences are thus neglected, unrecognised, robbed of their credibility by hegemonic perspectives. What is thus presented as the thesis is at most the dominant theory. Our challenge must be to take on this neglect of social experience. This can be achieved to the extent that we engage in a discussion not only about the objective conditions for the transformation of society, but about those conditions that speak about a will for change. Perhaps we have to think about how to create a rebellious subjectivity, not a paralysing objectivity.

In this sense, what I am trying to say is that we can not escape this quagmire with the social sciences, because they are part of the problem. First, we have to epistemologically work through the social sciences. Our forms of rationality come from the periphery and we have to keep this in mind in order to bring about a change in our frameworks of thought, as Edgar Morin would say.

To a great extent, this will happen, as Santos holds, if we think about "absences" from a different place. Let me explain. Much of what does not exist in society is produced as non-existent, which ends up reducing "reality" (always constructed) to what exists. A look from the absences is a rebellious method for showing what does not exist, but with a different, clear objective: trying to attain it. It also entails seeing what does not yet exist but is emerging, showing signs of life. For example, contributing to the symbolic extension of a social or citizens' movement. Free of romanticisms, we must make this development credible.

Also, questioning those concepts that speak to us of a time that is not ours and from a pre-defined point of arrival. Thus, in Andean and indigenous time, the ancestral is not part of the past, as we are told, but of the daily present; and the very ideas of "developed" countries, "progress", "modernisation" and even "globalisation" tell us of a time and a destination that are foreign to us, although we have internalised them as necessary goals. A first step towards this is to rethink the idea of development. Not from a modernising perspective or one based only on growth. I think that this is already included in our National Plan, which articulates, beyond economicist views, the human relationship with nature, the relationship between people and the way to perpetuate Latin American cultures indefinitely.

Moreover, we have to rethink the mode of knowledge production. Let us not forget once again that what is at stake is the

construction of hegemony. We do not need alternatives, but rather "alternative thinking about alternatives". This does not mean that we have to deny the knowledge from the North, but rather that we have to understand it in order to discover its ways of constructing knowledge, those that make it hegemonic.

We also have to reflect on the conditions in which Latin American academia carries out its work.

First, it is necessary to think about and relate funding and research. Frequently, research projects and education programs are conditioned by the source of funding, since it not only defines how much can be spent but also on what and in what ways. In many cases, academic programs first arise out of a need for funds rather than as a result of an academic need.

Perhaps we have to think about how to create a rebellious subjectivity, not a paralysing objectivity.

This type of funding has promoted short-term research, linked to specific conjunctural projects, while research into structural and far-reaching problems is precluded. This all ends up reproducing the predominance of a logic of consulting work and technical assistance more tied to NGOs than to academia. In the best of cases, long-term research agendas are personal projects and not institutional ones. This has led to the disappearance of the idea of research programs or lines. The only things that seem to be of relevance are individualities that become islands or archipelagos of status.

For these same reasons, what prevails is not research of an empirical nature. In most cases, it consists of compilations of secondary sources, states of art, bibliographic research or interpretations not supported by field work.

This has also been accompanied by an important change with respect to the profile of the social scientist. The double role or utility of the social sciences as both technical tools and a space for intellectual productivity has lost its balance with the growing participation of these human resources in the processes of transformation of the

state furthered by neoliberal policies. The importance that sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists and others acquire in studying the design, evaluation and theoretical and methodological justification of public policies in recent years has not been sufficiently appreciated in terms of its effects on the autonomy of the field and the political role of these resources.

To address this problem, it is first necessary to recover the autonomy of research production and agendas with respect to funding, and the sovereignty of the availability of academic programs as a function of academic criteria and social needs.

One of the messages I would like to make clear is that part of the crisis of thought is due to the discrediting of politics that has occurred over the last decades. Academia has destroyed itself by trying to gain visibility as something separate from politics, in the name of an objectivity confused with neutrality. Under the predominance of the technical discourse of the 1990s, the political became entirely tainted as negative. I think we must rethink what we understand to be the political in academia. It is not about justifying political interests with research or teaching, but about recognising the political nature of the understandings of reality that we construct in academia. This is a responsibility that cannot be evaded.

I invite you, then, to build an academia that is committed to the needs of Latin America and mindful of the processes of change that we are living through today. And these are significant; perhaps we do not clearly perceive it right now, we do not see a revolution taking place, but that does not mean that we are not in its midst. There are already signs that we are living not only in a period of change, but also a change of period. Let's help it be born from the place in which we find ourselves in this historic time.