
 COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS AND ADMINISTRATION DIFFERENCES¹

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ABSTRACT

Rise analysis of cultural communitarianism, as he puts supranationally on the international political recovenant original financial crack of 2008. From the enunciation locus, put up two main links, the literary and cultural point of view: for the countries of Portuguese and Ibero-America. Such formulations do not restrict cooperation and solidarity policies, since, according to the author, the world sets up increasingly as multiple boundaries and multiple identities. The text from these settings, focuses on the cultural communitarianism of Portuguese-speaking countries, coming from the cultural hybridity of the various shores of the Mediterranean Cultural Basin. Still raises political issues in order to discuss the current asymmetry of cultural flows and the difference of management strategies for the preservation of established hegemonies.

KEYWORDS: Cultural communitarianism, Administration of the differences, Cultural flows, Multiple borders, Identities plurals.

INTRODUCTION

In an intervention during an event celebrating one hundred years of the Portuguese Republic, hosted at the University of Lisbon, we noted that the great media, before the 2008 financial crash, naturalized a utopian image of the financial world: deregulation and flexibility as a model for the economy, a design naturally extensive to social and cultural practices. According to the reiterated agenda that ruled the media, deregulation would get in tune with liberty, and the latter, in the socioeconomic spheres, with competition, thus put as a criterion

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of efficiency and higher aspiration for companies, the individual, and democracy. Individualism was thus associated with the democratic way of life and, more so, as one of the fundamental inclinations of humanism. Because of the crash, that value system is being forced to recycle itself before the new situation, as it already did in the 1929 crash.

The current political moment requires a reconfiguration of strategies, new pacts, something that is already happening in the international relations in Brazil. In the plane of cultural life, however, those new pacts remain very shy. Intellectuality in Brazil and in the so-called Western countries, in general, is being dragged by events, making way for discourses that legitimize the established hegemonies. And in these reflections about questions of identity before the process of Americanization of the world, it is understandable that the critical voices of that process, many times melancholic and contemplating ruins, must assume more active and prospective attitudes, to create or redesign, with stronger hues, tendencies of cooperation and solidarity.

On the edges, we have been trying to highlight the need to think the real possibility of an effective counterpoint to the paroxysm of competition, which follows the logic of asymmetry of economic and cultural flows. This inclination toward the regulation of social life constitutes a reaction to the wicked effects of the articulatory models of financial capital, which have made national borders flexible to impose its order. However, since all hegemonies are porous, it was through the breaches of that globalizing process that the need for wide articulations was made firm, involving the growing supranational communitarianism.

From that social-political situation arises the imposition of ignoring that identities (individual, social, and national) must be seen in the plural. It is not about identities, borders, or elastic, plastic, shapeless discursive fields (BAUMAN, 2000), but from identities seen from the place from where we access the world – to use the language of the Internet –, and that involves contiguous and non-contiguous borders. We are varied and contradictory in a single identity and our borders are multiple. We have defended, in that sense, the idea of ignoring cultural blocks, just like we do in economy. For those who live in Brazil, there are strict relationships between our linguistic-cultural block and the Iberian-African-American countries. Not only these relationships,

of course, because in a world of multiple border other supranational articulations are fundamental.

It is important that the intellectuality imbued with a critical sense should verify sociocultural implications of these processes that are articulated in a network, without ruling out subjective potentialities. The colonizing process – whose *formas mentis* continue through the asymmetries of economic and cultural flows – leads to habits, such as the well-known importation of external models, without criticism, into the most varied fields of culture, including material culture. In linguistic and literary studies the uncritical import of these formulas is common, as it also occurs in the scientific and technological terrain, perpetuating asymmetries that continue to “colonize” us. It is evident that in cultural spheres, as has historically occurred, among actors attuned to colonial (and later neo-colonial and imperial) policies, access to the latest novelty may mean preserving symbolic power.

The sense of coloniality determined the division of world labor. From Eurocentric concentration, this coloniality passed to American hegemony, as we know, thus widening the hegemony of the North Atlantic.

Thus, from the explicitly colonial times, ethnocentrism sought to establish the intelligibility and, especially, the legitimacy necessary to the practices of domination, precisely because they diminished, in scientific as well as lay discourses, the spaces, towns and cultures of the colonies and pointed out their necessity of evolution in wide senses, from the interaction with explorers, justifying its domination. Today, in a social-democratic environment, these habits persist in the looks, practices and representations that allow the continuation of domination, even if in a subtle, naturalized way.

This same inclination also occurs within the European nations and the USA, where there are numerous marginalized communities such as the Irish, Gypsies, Blacks, Latin Americans, Muslims; soon, the inhabitants of the peripheries. Eventually, the “different”.

Evidently, it is convenient to emphasize the experience of the “other”. Be this “other” in a hegemonic pole or not. We also learn from people who have unwritten languages, who possess an experience we did not have. After all, we’re all mixed up. Identities are always plural, we have already stated. We need, on the other hand, not to submit to concepts of a certain hybridization that is confused with an undefined

plasticization of borders, which, in fact, are not liquid (Bauman's concept), but, we understand, configured and multiple.

Alienated habits have come from our formation, and cultural forms, as political, social and economic forms, resist. There is in them, on the one hand, an accumulated experience; And on the other, ideological implications that tend to justify hegemonies. The major problem, from the political point of view, is that such impregnations are part of daily life and constitute, as a dominant form, the expectations of each one, be it a leader or directed.

From individual to collective identities, we can observe – in addition to Benedict Anderson's definition (ANDERSON, 1989) that the nation-state is an imagined community – that this community comes only from the socioeconomic articulation of that community, with its power system. It is, thus, the modern nation-state. And it was formed in Europe parallel to colonial domination. And set it itself politically in cause – yesterday, as today – the administration of differences. Internal differences, such as those between European national states; external differences, through the subordination of power to the cultural creoles of subalternized territories, as occurred in Latin America. In the USA, by the extermination of the indigenous peoples and the apartheid of the ex-slaves, a country of the “whites” who refused to mix was established. Blacks and Indians were initially denied the status of citizen. In Brazil, the inclination for apartheid was replaced by the ideology of “racial democracy”, which was a way of masking the discrimination of the black population.

Habits based on asymmetries continue to regard mixtures as inferior, to subalternize them in a world of hegemony of a single thought. It is necessary to establish – in the opposite direction – an always renewed project of “decolonization”, which puts such mentis forms in check. This observation applies to liberal multiculturalism and to criticism of the process of hegemonic Americanization of the world that affects all subalterns. A “colonization” encompassing even – by extension – the spheres of academic disciplines. As always intellectuality is imposed on critical thinking and an effective manifestation of its subjective potentiality.

Supranational community relations are, today, the links of a society that tends to organize in networks. In relation to the Portuguese-

speaking countries, these linguistic-cultural ties were formed through a common historical experience, associated with the colonial system. The first settlers of Latin America came from the region, which the Arabs called Al-Ândalus. Algarve comes from Al-Gharb al-Ândalus (Western Andalusia), which covered the present Algarve and the lower Alentejo. The majority of the popular population of Lisbon, at the time of the Discoveries, was left with these findings, was of Moorish origin. They were culturally hybrid regions, where many cultures of the Mediterranean cultural basin converged. To extend the observations, we could say that the Mediterranean basin, in the perspective of a field that is organized in a network, is a multiplicity node, by the historical-cultural crossings between Europe, Africa and Asia. In the process of colonization of the Americas, its hybrid and polysemic repertoire was further mixed by interactions with Amerindian and African peoples. We understand that these Ibero-American and even Ibero-African American countries currently meet the conditions for the constitution of a community bloc, which, along with others, more restricted or comprehensive, may be able to set limits to the imperial asymmetries of cultural flows.

We have argued that the world is becoming more and more like multiple boundaries and identities must be seen in the plural (ABDALA JUNIOR, 2002). In terms of linguistic-cultural approaches, plurilingual horizons and reciprocities are imposed in terms of symbolic power. In our case, apart from the notorious loops for Spanish-speaking countries, there is the variety and breadth of community networks. In a world where English has become a lingua franca, it is necessary that we also speak in Portuguese and other languages, including in the technological field. In linguistic terms, not only as a language of culture, but of science.

Many supranational community networks have been established on a global scale, such as gender movements, the defense and promotion of human rights, ecology, etc. It establishes, therefore, fields of dialogue, beyond the borders of state, constituting possibilities of counterpoints to the monology of hegemonic flows. These multiple fields of supranational community life are capable of contributing to democratic interference in social life, in a line where national particularity tends to be articulated in a supranational network. It may be possible to continue to dream, as in the past, and in view of the not-so-distant future, with the possibility that a US worker may worry about the salary of another

worker, Latin America or Asia. It is true that this can only occur from the consciousness of this worker – the crisis is systemic, with globalizing effects – that the other worker’s salary will imply in the definition of his own salary. We would thus have the possibility of a desirable link between the community and the social.

Going back to the beginning of these critical notes, when we speak of a more social democrat tendency of managing difference, we point to another, always present: explicit, violent authoritarianism, but coexistent with that of Social-Democracy. We would say that national tendencies similar to those developed by Barack Obama point to the need to establish a space of contact with the other. A visual and corporeal contact for interactions, in which dominant groups continue with their privileges, but must make concessions to maintain their hegemony. Therefore, more subtle desires of displacements and spatial connections inclined to mixing and transculturation, but tending to explicit purposes of domination and hierarchy. However, since things are mixed, the shift from globalization to homogenization makes it possible for differences to rise.

It is not a matter of discussing the quality and relevance of knowledge of European or North American origin, but simply the claim that they tend to be always universal and superior in relation to the knowledge created by human groups spread throughout the planet. The relative absence of the concept of imperialism in many postcolonial studies produced outside Latin America is curious, in terms of the administration of difference, when it is known that its presence was fundamental to the analyzes produced in the subaltern countries.

It should be noted that the West has not abandoned its territorial ties, and the asymmetry of flows contributes to the territories of others. Such asymmetries are characteristic of a new empire that acts in a global sphere, without losing its bases of fire.

In this sense, the critic cannot stick to the narcissistic performance, which would be characteristic of who is (just) in passing, and also in the apology of an apparent disengagement, attuned to hyper-individualism. In fact, he always speaks of a certain enunciative locus, being in his country of origin or in the diaspora. If it adopts similar postures of a kind of nomadic relativism, it ends up limiting itself to slipping into obstacles, without maintaining situational ties beyond the ephemeral fashion discourse. Effectively critical praxis will not remain restricted to

these frameworks, unrelated to broader ties, involving tense relationships in dialogue, discernible from the geopolitical point of view, but also – on the other hand – in the conjunction of discursive threads of various areas of knowledge, if we think The area of literary studies.

We must take due account of the fact that postcolonial theorization has conveniently discussed issues of so-called globalization, the displacements of peoples, and the process of Americanization of the world, under the impact of the media and market consumption. True globalization presupposes reciprocity and what happens is the globalization of the capitalist economy with its asymmetries. Regarding politico-social issues, however, postcolonial theorizing may tend to tend to be generic. Also post-colonial are any societies marked by colonialism, with no regard for their historicity, leveling countries that emancipated themselves in the post-World War II period, those who emancipated themselves two centuries ago. To speak of post-colonialism, without awareness of these specificities, implies leveling a culture like that of Canada, or South Africa, for example, to the complex cultural situation of India – all former British colonies. Only a sociocultural network analysis, situated in a determined enunciative locus, can reveal what post-colonialism is all about.

At this moment, which appears in a post-neoliberal process - allow us this optimism –, the affirmation of a more tolerant tendency, which seeks to use the strategy of managing difference, for example, of liberal multiculturalism, can A more intelligent and long-term way of preserving and even promoting established hegemony. A strategy for managed capitalism, a return, on our foundations, of the guiding principles, for example, of the Roosevelt government in the USA. It would be a kind of new New Deal, from which – since things are mixed – it was possible nevertheless to arise the work of a Caldwell, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Gold, Steinbeck, Faulkner, etc. And also the United Nations organization and the letter that established the principle of self-determination of peoples.

The discourse of respect for difference, which is now affirmed, is that of the liberal perspective of multiculturalism, which may tend to ghettoize the excluded, or to the simple tolerance of those included in the administration. The hegemonic thinking of the North Atlantic has been averse to the appreciation of mixtures – it is to be repeated. In

the great narrative of US national formation, for example, inculcated worldwide by the media, the so-called civilizing mission was initially directed against those who considered indigenous barbarians. It matters little the skirmishes of the native peoples against the European invader, of real history, for almost always they have merely moved away from the invaders when they were expelled from their most fertile lands. For this ideological media, indigenous peoples were impostors in their own lands and these were considered as empty – the “Promised Land” or “New Canaan” of the symbology that comes from the Crusades. And the structure of this fundamentalist narrative, associated with imperial power, has come to this day, commuting Indians by blacks, Latin Americans, Asians, or Arabs. These are the “others” (in the naturalized designation, the “ethnic”), always shown as aggressive, undisciplined, uncivilized, etc. They are, in this ideological perspective, as mestizos, impure.

Such ethnocentrism, especially of the American elites, may now be attenuated, in the new configuration outlined, as one of the possible tendencies of imperial policy, although it is contradicted by the conservative sectors of that country. On the other hand, and from the point of view of the administration of difference, there is an insistence on the need for “tolerance”: liberal tolerance, a new modality of the presuppositions of charity, a single-handed way, without reciprocity. The approach of the excluded, which was one of the strong bases of Barack Obama’s election (OBAMA, 2007) and which made the difference, is not evidently overlooked. Beyond this modulation of tolerance, it is essential for critical thinking to also discover the power relations involved. Without the discussion of these relations, the multicultural discourse that, it seems, can be affirmed even more, will not cease to be a conceptual vehicle for managing difference. It lacks this multiculturalism of liberal paints to consider simultaneous voices in tension, a sort of harsh polyphonic concert constructed by differences.

We reiterate, therefore, in the counterpoint to what has naturalized until the moment of the economic crack, that the access to the supranational network is made in a certain enunciative locus and it is fundamental for the critic. If in university life, for example, a professor is in an American university, he cannot disregard the fact that his discourse may be associated with hegemonic strategies of that country. It is part of the hegemonic consensus, at present, not only to

accept, but to promote the capitalization of difference. A difference that is based on products, from the democratic image of the hegemonic country to the most explicitly tradable goods. In addition to the directly marketable product, hegemony implies an international “recognition” of the institution where this critic works, which will certainly attract students and teachers, including non-hegemonic countries. From this situation, conditions will be created for inter-institutional agreements with these countries, aimed at preserving hegemony. Only an effective reciprocity between the actors of the university community involved can attenuate these asymmetries. That is, the awareness of the political dimension that involves scientific research.

It is probable that the hegemonic cultural flow, configured, in literary studies, in critical theories and currents, eventually establishes in the subaltern country an associated warehouse. If this receptive port is actually critical, it is presumed that it will convey flows of a different nature from those of the standardization that guides mass culture, but it cannot fail to present equivalent vectorization. Without reconfigurations of intervening discursive networks to counter-hegemonic dynamics, the new locus may be a port that runs the risk of being at most one particularity of a more comprehensive design of the administration of difference. The determinant nucleus of enunciation, which prints the direction of the flow, in the case of subaltern sublocation, is still in the hegemonic center. It is proper to legitimize strategies of hegemony to tolerate difference, as long as it is a difference managed. Such remarks are valid for both clothing and critical fashions. Through the convergence strategies of this type of administration, the organic incorporation of the difference may even constitute a factor of dynamization of the hegemonic network. To change, thus, to continue to colonize the imaginary, determining patterns and conditioning expectations that entangle the world of the margins.

In this sense, it is worth repeating that the critic cannot stick to the narcissistic performance, which would be characteristic of who is (just) passing, and also in the apology of an apparent disengagement, attuned to the hyper-individualism of the situation that resulted in the financial crack. One situation, it is true, does not fail to present analogies with the so-called “crazy years” of the 1920s, which resulted in the crack of 1929, of which we speak.

Limiting oneself to these habits can mean an alienating delimitation to the channeling of established cultural flows. An effectively critical praxis will not remain restricted to these frameworks, unrelated to broader ties, which involve tense relations, either in relation to sociopolitical life or even in the analogous situation also between the different areas of knowledge. Design is correlated, from geopolitics to the cultural world. It is important that we turn to articulations that can lead to problematic multidiscursive nodes, inclined to discuss possible connections – always placed in the plural – between the world that is drawn in cultural life and its relations with the ground of political-social relations.

REFLEXÕES COMUNITÁRIAS E ADMINISTRAÇÃO DAS DIFERENÇAS

RESUMO

Análise da ascensão do comunitarismo cultural, tal como ele se coloca supranacionalmente diante da repactualização política internacional originária do *crack* financeiro de 2008. A partir do *locus* enunciativo, colocam-se dois enlaces principais, do ponto de vista literário e cultural: para os países de língua portuguesa e iberoamericanos. Tais formulações não restringem políticas de cooperação e de solidariedade, pois que, de acordo com o autor, o mundo configura-se cada vez mais como de fronteiras múltiplas e identidades plurais. O texto, a partir dessas configurações, centra-se no comunitarismo cultural dos países de língua portuguesa, oriundo do hibridismo cultural das várias margens da Bacia Cultural Mediterrânica. Levanta ainda questões de ordem política no sentido de problematizar a atual assimetria dos fluxos culturais e as estratégias de administração da diferença para a preservação de hegemonias estabelecidas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comunitarismo cultural, Administração das diferenças, Fluxos culturais, Fronteiras múltiplas, Identidades plurais.

REFLEXIONES COMUNITARIAS Y LA ADMINISTRACIÓN DE LAS DIFERENCIAS

RESUMEN

Análisis del comunitarismo cultural, supranacional, en la grieta repactualizaciones delante de la política internacional, que viene del *crack* del capitalismo financiero de 2008. Desde el *locus* de enunciación en Brasil, se pone dos enlaces principales, del punto de vista literario y cultural: para los

países de lengua portuguesa e Iberoamérica. Tales formulaciones no restringen las políticas de cooperación y solidaridad, ya que, según el autor, el mundo se instala cada vez más como múltiples fronteras y las identidades múltiples. El texto se centra en el comunitarismo cultural de los países de habla portuguesa, que viene de la hibridación cultural de las distintas orillas de la Cuenca Mediterránea Cultural. Sigue planteando problemas políticos con el fin de discutir la actual asimetría de los flujos culturales y la diferencia de estrategias de gestión para la conservación de las hegemonías establecidas en el mundo.

PALAVRAS CLAVES: Comunitarismo cultural, Administración de las diferencias, Flujos culturales, Múltiples fronteras, Identidades plurales

NOTAS

- 1 This work was presented at the round table “Frontiere multiple, identità plurali”, during the *I Congresso Culture e Letterature in Dialogo: identità in movimento*, which took place on May, 12 and 14, 2016, at Perugia University, Italy.

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Translation by Paulo Manes
(Translator at Universidade Federal de Goiás).

Submetido em 15 de junho de 2016.

Aceito em 23 de setembro de 2016.

Publicado em 12 junho de 2017.
