

The "Philosophy of Liberation," the Postmodern Debate and Latin American Studies

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The operative theoretical framework that was constructed in the late 90s, as much within Latin America as by Latin American scholars in the United States (philosophers, literary critics and anthropologists, as well as historians, sociologists, etc.), has diversified and acquired such complexity that it has become necessary to map a topography of these positions in order to deepen the debate. In other words, the perspectives, the categories, the planes of "localization" of subjects within theoretical and interpretative discourse have changed so much that it has become difficult to continue the Latin American debate without a preliminary understanding of its theoretical and conceptual basis. The old Latin Americanism ("Latin Americanism 1") seems to have become a museum-object rather than an obligatory point of reference in any discussion. Let us, then, briefly look at said topography on the debate, knowing that it is only "one" possible interpretation of the field. This is just a point of departure to illustrate the terms of the debate.

1. "Latin American Thought": From the End of the Second European-North American War

In the mid 1940s, towards the end of the second European-North American War, a group of young philosophers (such as Leopoldo Zea in Mexico, Arturo Ardao in Uruguay, Francisco Romero in Argentina ... etc.) went back the problematic debate of "our (Latin) America" ("Nuestra América"), which had begun in the nineteenth century with Alberdi, Bello or Martí or in the early part of the twentieth century with Mariátegui, Vasconcelos, and Samuel Ramos among many others. In response to North American "Panamericanism" there emerged an interpretation of Latin America that was distinct and not to be confused with the "Ibero-Americanism" of Franco's Spain.

The members of the "institutionalized" academic philosophy -in the pre-war era- according to periodization proposed by Francisco Romero, had begun to forge contacts throughout the Latin American continent. They sought to understand the "history" of Latin American thought, forgotten thanks to all of the focus placed upon Europe and the United States. Leopoldo Zea's *America en la Historia* (1957) is an example of the ideas of this era. The theoretical framework of this generation was influenced by philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset, Sartre, or historians such as Toynbee. They revisited the heroes of the emancipation from the beginning of the nineteenth century (so as not to recover the colonial era), in order to rethink its ideal of freedom with respect to the United States, which had established its hegemony in the West since 1945, at the beginning of the Cold War. Contemporaneously in Africa, P. Tempels published *La philosophie bantoue* in 1949. In Asia and India, M. Ghandi was rediscovering "Hindu thought" as an emancipatory catalyst of the British ex-colony. The era culminates around 1968, a time of great political uprising for students and intellectuals (marked by the 1966 Cultural Revolution in China, which is echoed in the "May Movement" of 1968, in the Vietnam War demonstrations in the United States, in Mexico's Tlatelolco and in the 1969 "Cordobazo" in Argentina).

2. Modernity/Postmodernity in Europe and the United States

In the 70s the "atmosphere" of European philosophy begins to change. The student uprisings have exhausted a portion of the left (which has in part abandoned the Marxist tradition), while others have become bureaucratized (constituting "standard" Marxism, including Althusserian "classism"). The gradual emergence of a critique of universalism and dogmatism from non-

traditional positions begins. Michel Foucault, who was a protagonist of movements that took place in Nanterre in 1968, posits a critique of the metaphysical and ahistorical positions of standard Marxism (the proletariat as a "Messianic subject", the idea of history as a necessary progression, the concept of macrostructural power as the only existent power, etc.).¹ In France, Gilles Deleuze², Jacques Derrida³ or Jean Francois Lyotard, Gianni Vattimo⁴ in Italy, (all of them with very different viewpoints), rose up against "modern reason", a concept that Emmanuel Levinas approaches through the category of "Totality" (in *Totalidad e Infinito*, published in the phenomenological collection by Nijhoff, Nimega). The work of J. F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), reads like a manifesto. In the third line of the "Introducción" he states that "The word is in current use on the American continent among sociologists and critics", and indicates that:

It designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts. The present study will place these transformations in the context of the crisis of narratives (Lyotard 1984, xxiii)⁵.

From Heidegger, with his critique of the subjectivity of the subject, and even more from Nietzsche, with his critique of the subject, of current values, truth, and metaphysics, the "postmodern" movement is not only opposed to standard Marxism, but also demonstrates that universalism has the same connotations of epistemological violence that we find, on a larger scale, in modern rationality (Dussel 1974). In contrast to the unicity of the dominant being, the concepts of "Différance", multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation, as well as the process of deconstruction of all macro-narratives, start to develop.

In the United States, Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) outlines a new stage in this process. As for Richard Rorty, he is, in my opinion, a more anti-foundationalist and skeptic intellectual, who only collaterally could be considered part of the "postmodern" tradition.

In Latin America, the reception of the postmodern movement emerges in the late 1980s. The edition of H. Herlinghaus and Walter, *Postmodernidad en la periferia: enfoques latinoamericanos de la nueva teoría*(1997)⁶, and the articles compiled by John Beverley and José Oviedo, *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*(1993)⁷ include a wide range of contributions to this topic, the earliest dating from the mid 1980s.

In general they give evidence of a generation that is experiencing a certain "disenchantment" at the close of an era in Latin America (not only with populism, but also with all of the promise stirred by the Cuban Revolution since 1959, confronted by the fall of Socialism in 1989). This generation makes the attempt to confront the cultural hybridity of a peripheral modernity that no longer believes in utopian change. They seek to evade the simplification of the dualities of center-periphery, progress-underdevelopment, tradition-modernity, domination-liberation, and they operate, instead, within the heterogeneous plurality and the fragmentary and differential conditions that characterize urban, trans-national cultures. Now it is the social anthropologists (particularly Garcia Canclini's *Culturas híbridas* 1989) and the literary critics that are producing a new interpretation of Latin America (see Follari 1991, Arriarán 1997, and Maliandi's critique 1993).

I believe that the work of Santiago Castro-Gómez is of great interest since it represents a good example of a postmodern philosophy produced from Latin America.⁸ His criticism is geared against progressive Latin American thought, in contrast to Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, Franz Hinkelammert, Pablo Guadarrama, Arturo Roig, Leopoldo Zea, Augusto Salazar-Bondy, etc.⁹ In all of these cases, including my own, the argument is always as follows: according to Castro-Gómez, these philosophers, under the pretense of criticizing modernity, in not being conscious of the "localization" of their own discourse, and for not having had the Foucaultian tools to undertake an epistemic archaeology, which would have permitted a reconstruction of the modern theoretical framework, have in one way or another fallen back into modernity (if they had strayed from it). To speak of the subject, of history, of domination, of external dependence,

of the oppression of social classes, using categories such as totality, exteriority, liberation, hope, is to fall back into a moment that does not take seriously the "political disenchantment" that has impacted current culture so deeply. To speak in terms of macro-institutions such as the state, the nation, the city, or about epic heroic narratives, results in the loss of meaning of micro, heterogeneous, plural, hybrid and complex realities. According to Castro-Gómez:

The other of totality is the poor, the oppressed, the one who, by being located outside the system, becomes the only source of spiritual renewal. There, in the exterior of the system, in the ethos of oppressed societies, people have values that are very different from those that prevail in the center. .. With this, Dussel creates a second reduction: that of converting the poor in some kind of transcendent subject, through which Latin American history will find its meaning. This is the opposite side of postmodernity, because Dussel attempts not to decentralize the Enlightened subject, but to replace it by another absolute subject" (1996, 39-40).¹⁰

What Castro-Gómez does not state is that Foucault criticizes certain forms of the subject but re-legitimizes others; he criticizes certain forms of making history departing from a priori and necessary laws, but re-emphasizes a genetic-epistemological history. Often Castro-Gómez is seduced by the fetishism of formulaic thought, and he does not take into consideration that a certain criticism of the subject is necessary in order to reconstruct a deeper vision of it: one must recognize that it is necessary to criticize the external causes of Latin American underdevelopment in order to integrate it into a more comprehensive interpretation, that it is necessary to not dismiss micro-institutions (forgotten by the descriptions of the macro) in order to connect them to these macro-institutions, that Power is mutually and relationally constituted between social subjects, but that, in any case, the Power of the State or the Power of a hegemonic Nation (such as the United States) continues to exist. When one criticizes one unilaterality with another, one falls into that which is being criticized. From a panoptical postmodern criticism some critics return to the claim of universalism that was characteristic of modernity. According to Eduardo Mendieta, "Postmodernity perpetuates the hegemonic intention of modernity and Christianity, by denying other peoples the possibility to name their own history and to articulate their own self-reflexive discourse" (in Castro-Gómez and Mendieta 1998, 159).

In Europe, on the other hand, a certain universalist rationalism such as that of Karl-Otto Apel or Jürgen Habermas, which distrusts fascist irrationalism (of the German Nazi era), posits that the objective is to "complete the task of modernity" as a critical/discursive and democratic form of rationality. The intent is to defend the significance of reason against the opinion of skeptic intellectuals, such as Richard Rorty. To sum up, in the North the debate was established between the pretense of universal rationality, and, on the other hand, the affirmation of difference, that is, the negation of the subject, the deconstruction of history, progress, values, metaphysics, etc.

3. The Emergence of Critical Thought in the Post-Colonial Periphery: The Philosophy of Liberation

In 1970 Ranajit Guha¹¹ initiated a theoretical transformation that would later serve as the foundation of "Subaltern Studies". Through a "situated" reading of Foucault, and coming from a previous position of standard Marxism, Guha begins to deviate from the trodden paths of the past toward the study of mass popular culture and the culture of groups or subaltern classes in India. This movement is, later on, enriched with the participation of intellectuals such as Gayatri Spivak (1987, 1988a, 1993), Homi Bhabha (1994)¹², Gyan Prakash, Dipesh Chakrabarty and many others. All of them are informed by the epistemologies of Foucault and Lacan, without abandoning Marxism. Now equipped with new instruments of critical analysis, they could engage in issues of gender, culture, politics and critiques of racismo

In Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient (1978) Edward Said posits a critical analysis of European studies on Asia. With respect to Africa, Tempels' position is criticized three decades after his work is published, in P. Hountondji's Sur la philosophie africaine: critique de l'ethnophilosophie (1977). I would like to suggest that throughout the periphery (Africa, Asia

and Latin America) there began to emerge critical movements that utilized their own regional reality as a point of departure, and in some cases a revitalized Marxism as a point of theoretical reference.

I estimate that the Philosophy of Liberation in Latin America¹³, which also emerged around 1970 (at roughly the same time that the first works of Guha emerged in India), and which was likewise influenced by a French philosopher, in this case Emmanuel Levinas, is framed by the same sorts of discoveries. Nevertheless, these discoveries may be misinterpreted if the originary situation is not taken into account and, consequently, the theoretical perspective is distorted. The Philosophy of Liberation was never simply a mode of "Latin American thought", nor a historiography of such. It was a critical philosophy self-critically localized in the periphery, within subaltern groups. In addition, for more than twenty years (since 1976 in some cases) it has been said that the Philosophy of Liberation has been exhausted. Yet it seems that the opposite is true, since it was not until the late 1990s that it was actually discovered and further delved into in order to provide a South-South -and in the future a North-South- dialogue.

The originary intuition for the Philosophy of Liberation --a philosophical tradition that (in contrast to other movements in the fields of anthropology, history, and literary criticism) was influenced by the events of 1968-- emerged from a critique of modern reason --the Cartesian subject on Heidegger's ontological criticism-- which in part permitted it to sustain a radical critical position. It was also inspired by the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno, and especially H. Marcuse's *Unidimensional Man*), which illuminated the political meaning of said ontology, allowing it to be more thoroughly understood (including the Heideggerean position in its relation to Nazism). In *Para una de-STRUCCIÓN de la historia de la ética* [1969] (1974), I quoted the following text from Heidegger: 'What do we mean by world when we talk about the darkening of the world? The worldly darkening implies the weakening of spirit itself, its dissolution, consumption, and false interpretation. The dominant dimension is that of extension and numbers [...] All of this is later on intensified in America and Russia' (Heidegger 1966, 34-35). And I concluded by stating that it is necessary to say, "No to the modern world whose cycle is done, and vesto the New Man that today lives in the time of his conversion and transformation (Kehre)" (Dussel 1974, 126, n. 170).

But at the same time it was through works such as those of Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* that we became positioned on the horizon of the struggles for liberation in the 1960s. In Argentina at that time the masses battled against the military dictatorships of Onganía, Levingston and Lanusse. As philosophers and scholars, we assumed critical and theoretical responsibility in that process (Dussel 1994c). We endured bomb threats, expulsion from our universities, our countries, and some (like Mauricio López) were tortured and assassinated. Theoretical and practical processes were highly articulated. Critical categories began to emerge in response to modern subjectivity. Historical access was fundamental for the destruction of Modernity. The genealogy of modern categories was being undertaken from a global perspective (metropolis/colony). In situating our discourse from within the World-System (which neither Foucault, Derrida, Vattimo, nor Levinas could really access) we discovered that the "I" used by the Emperor King of Spain to sign his documents in 1519 was the same "I" used by Hernán Cortés when he said "I conquer" in 1521, long before Descartes produced his "Ego Cogito" in Amsterdam in 1637. It was not merely a matter of exploring the epistemologies of France's "Classical Age", but rather of considering how Modernity has developed in the world for the past 500 years.

The "myth of Modernity" (Dussel 1992), that is, the idea of European superiority over the other cultures of the world, began to be sketched out five hundred years ago. Ginés de Sepúlveda was certainly one of the first great ideologists of "Occidentalism" (the Eurocentrism of Modernity) and Bartolomé de las Casas the creator of the first "counter-discourse" of Modernity, established from a global, center-periphery perspective.

The "excluded", the individual "being watched" in the madhouses and "classical" French panoptical prisons, had long before been anticipated by Indians who were "watched" in the "reservations" (reducciones) and "excluded" from the Latin American towns and doctrines since

the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The blacks, who were watched in the "sensala" next to the "casa grande," already existed in Santo Domingo by 1520, when the exploitation of gold in the rivers had ended and the production of sugar began. Levinas "Other" -which, in my 1973 works, having carefully read Jacques Derrida, I termed "distinto" (because "di-fference" was defined as the counterpart of "id-entity"¹⁵)- is, in general or in abstract terms, what Foucault calls the "excluded" and the one "being watched" when making reference to the insane who is kept in the madhouse or to the criminal who is kept in prison. To see in "exteriority" merely a modern category is to distort the meaning of this Levinasian critical category, which in the Philosophy of Liberation is "reconstructed" --though not without the opposition of Levinas himself, who was only thinking of Europe, without even noticing, and of the pure ethical "responsibility" for the Other. The Philosophy of Liberation soon deviates from Levinas, because it ought to consider, from a critical standpoint, its responsibility regarding the vulnerability of the Other in the process of constructing a new order (with all of the ambiguities that implies). The philosopher of liberation neither represents anybody nor speaks on behalf of others (as if this were his sole vested political purpose), nor does he undertake a concrete task in order to overcome or negate some petit-bourgeois sense of guilt. The Latin American critical philosopher, as conceived by the Philosophy of Liberation, assumes the responsibility of fighting for the Other, the victim, the woman oppressed by patriarchy, and for the future generation which will inherit a ravished Earth, etc. (that is, it assumes responsibility for all possible sorts of alterity). And it does so with an ethical, "situated" consciousness; that of any human being with an ethical "sensitivity" and the capacity to become outraged when recognizing the injustice imposed upon the Other.

To "localize" (in the sense of Homi Bhaba) its discourse has always been the intent of the Philosophy of Liberation. It sought to situate itself on the periphery of the World-System from the perspective of dominated races, from the point of view of women in a patriarchal system, from the standpoint of disadvantaged children living in misery¹⁶. It is clear that the theoretical tools ought to be perfected, and for that, the postmodern approach needs to be taken into consideration. But the Philosophy of Liberation also assumed the categories of Marx, Freud, the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, the ideas of Discursive Ethics, and all of the other movements that could contribute categories that are useful but not alone sufficient for formulating a discourse that could contribute to a justification of the praxis of liberation.

If it is true that there is a Hegelian story, an all encompassing and Eurocentric "master narrative," it is not true that the victims only need fragmentary micro-stories to represent them (see Dussel 1992, chapter 1). On the contrary, Rigoberta Menchú, the Zapatistas, black Americans, Hispanics living in the United States, feminists, the marginalized, the working class of global transnational capitalism, etc. need a historical narrative to reconstruct their memories and make sense of their struggle. A "struggle for recognition" of new rights (as Axel Honneth would put it) needs organization, hope, and an epic narrative to yield new horizons. Despair makes sense for a while, but the hope of humanity, its production, reproduction, and development is a "Will to Live" - which Shopenhauer --though not Nietzsche-- was opposed too

The simplistic dualisms of center-periphery, development-underdevelopment, dependence-liberation, exploiters-exploited, all levels of gender, class, race that function in the bipolarity dominator-dominated, civilization-barbarism, universal principles-incertitude, totality-exteriority, should be overcome, if they are used in a superficial or reductive manner. But to overcome does not imply "to decree" its inexistence or its epistemic uselessness. On the contrary, Derridian "deconstruction" proposes that a text could be read from a totality of possible current-meanings, from the exteriority of the Other (the latter is what permits deconstruction). These dual dialectical categories should be placed on concrete levels of greater complexity and articulated with other mediating categories on a micro-level. Nonetheless, to assume that there are no dominators and dominated, no center and periphery, etc. is to lapse into dangerously utopian or reactionary thought. The time has come in Latin America to move on to positions of greater complexity, without the fetishism, or linguistic terrorism that, without any particular validation, characterize as "antiquated" or "obsolete," positions that are expressed in a language that the speaker does not like. Class struggle will never be overcome, but it is not the only struggle, it is one among many others (those of women, environmentalists, ethnic minorities, dependent nations, etc.) and in certain conjunctures other struggles might become more urgent, and of

greater political significance. If the "proletariat" is not a "metaphysical subject" for all eternity, this does not mean that it is not a collective or inter-subjective subject any more, one that might appear and disappear in certain historical periods. Forgetting its existence would be a grave error.

4. Latin American Studies in the United States

Over the past three decades, in part due to the Latin American diaspora in the United States that resulted from military dictatorships, and in part due to the poverty in Latin America as a result of the exploitation of transnational capitalism, many Latin American intellectuals (as well as many already integrated as "Hispanics" in the U.S.) have completely renewed the interpretive theoretical framework in the field of "Latin American Studies" (LASA was founded in 1963), particularly within the field of literary criticism, which assumed the study of "Latin American thought," which had been, in previous decades, the terrain of philosophers. This is partially due to the fact that much of the Marxist left, expelled from its positions in Departments of Philosophy, migrated towards Departments of literary criticism, comparative literature, or Romance Languages (French in particular), a phenomenon that contributed to a theoretical sophistication never seen before, neither in the US nor in Europe. The preponderant use of French philosophers (Sartre, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard, etc.) is also explained by the fact that this theoretical movement was born in French departments (and not in the usually more traditional and conservative departments of English).¹⁷

If we then add "Cultural Studies", particularly in the United Kingdom, which also benefit from the contributions of the Latin American diaspora (take for example Stuart Hall, of Jamaican origin, and also the case of Ernesto Laclau), we can see that the panorama has indeed broadened a great deal.

The field of "Subaltern Studies," coming from India as well as from the Afro-American and AfroCaribbean "thought" and "philosophy" which currently are in a process of expansion, allowed for a productive discussion of the innovative hypothesis of post-colonial reason,¹⁸ which emerged in Asia and Africa following the emancipation of many of the nations on these continents after World War II. But then it becomes evident that "Latin American thought" and the Philosophy of Liberation had already raised many of the questions that comprise the current debate in Asia and Africa. A "Subaltern Latin American Study" returns to many of the topics previously addressed in the Latin American philosophical tradition of the '60s, which has apparently been forgotten (in part because the specialists in literary criticism were not the protagonists in the philosophical discussions of that era).

For this reason, Alberto Moreiras explains the necessity of a critique of the first Latin Americanism (as much of "Latin American Studies" in the United States as of "Latin American thought" on the continent itself), as well as of a Neo-Latin Americanism. The task of the 2nd Latin Americanism would be "to produce itself as an anti-conceptual, anti-representational apparatus, whose main function would be to disturb the tendency of epistemic representation to advance towards its total cancellation".¹⁹

In response to the interpretation of Said's "Orientalism," a certain "Occidentalism" is also discovered (the modern self-recognition of Europe itself) and consequently a "Post-Occidentalism," theorized by Roberto Fernandez Retamar and Fernando Coronil. According to Coronil, "Occidentalism is thus the expression of a constitutive relationship between Western representations of cultural difference and worldwide Western dominance. Challenging Occidentalism requires that it be unsettled as a mode of representation that produces polarized and hierarchical conceptions of the West and its Others" (1997, 14-15). Coronil's "Post-Colonialism" is thus the sort of trans-modernity that we are proposing in other works. The "Postmodern" is still European, Western. The Post-Occidental or trans-modern goes beyond modernity (and postmodernity) and is more closely related to the Latin American situation, whose "Westernization" is greater than that experienced in Africa and Asia. Latin America's distant emancipation makes the term "Post-Colonialism" less than adequate to describe its particular condition (Mignolo 1998b).

5. Final Reflections

In the same manner, the group of anti-foundationalist thinkers opposes universal principles, the uncertainty or fallibility that are natural to human finitude, which seems to open a struggle for an a priori un-resolvable hegemony.²⁰ The Philosophy of Liberation can assess the uncertainty of the pretense of goodness (or justice) of human acts, knowing the unavoidable fallibility of practice, while at the same time being able to describe the universal conditions or the ethical principles of said ethical or political action. Universality and uncertainty permit precisely the discovery of the inevitability of victims and it is from here that critical liberating thought originates.

Thus I believe that the Philosophy of Liberation has the theoretical resources to face present challenges, and in this manner to incorporate the tradition of the "Latin American thought" of the 1940s and 1950s within the evolution that took place in the 1960s and 1970s, which prepared it to enter into new vital and creative dialogues in the critical process of the following decades. Along with Imre Lakatos we could say that a program of research (such as the Philosophy of Liberation) is progressive as long as it is capable of incorporating old and new challenges. The "hard nucleus" of the Philosophy of Liberation, its Ethics of Liberation, has been partially criticized (by H. Cerutti, O. Schutte, K.O. Apel, and others), but, in my opinion, it has responded creatively as a totality, thus far.

In fact, we face urgent tasks in the twenty-first century. For over more than twenty years H. Cerutti and other colleagues (some since 1976) have been announcing the exhaustion of the Philosophy of Liberation. Yet the contrary seems to be true. Since the year 2000, new perspectives in the South-South dialogue have begun to emerge, in preparation for a North-South dialogue which includes Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and all the minorities from the "center". In addition, we have the "transversal" dialogue of "Difference": the possibility of relating to one another the critical thinking of feminist movements; environmentalists; anti-discriminatory movements focused on different races, peoples or indigenous ethnicities; movements concerned with marginalized social sectors; immigrants coming from impoverished countries; the elderly; children; the working class and migrant workers; the countries that belong to what used to be called Third World; the impoverished nations on the periphery; the "victims" (using Walter Benjamin's term) of Modernity, Colonization, transnational and late capitalism. The Philosophy of Liberation seeks to analyze and define the philosophical meta-language of all of these movements.

All of the above mentioned was in part intuited by the Philosophy of Liberation since its inception, and if not it can at least be gleaned from, incorporated into and reconstructed from its discourse. Nevertheless, and with respect to new epistemic proposals, the Philosophy of Liberation continues to hold its own position, as much in the centers of study in Latin America as in the United States and Europe. In the first place, it is a "philosophy" that can enter into a dialogue with literary criticism and assimilate itself to it (and to all of the above-mentioned movements: Postmodernism, Subaltern Studies, Cultural Studies, Post Colonial Reason, meta-criticism of Latin Americanism such as Moreiras', etc.). As a critical philosophy, the Philosophy of Liberation has a very specific role: it should study the more abstract, general, philosophical, theoretical framework of "testimonial" literature (I prefer to refer to it as an "epic" narrative, as a creative expression related to new social movements that impact civil society). In the third place it should analyze and set the basis for a method, for general categories, and for the very theoretical discourse of all of these critical movements which, having been inspired by Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Derrida, etc., should be "reconstructed" from a global perspective (since they, for the most part speak Eurocentrically). In this process of reconstruction, the need to articulate an intercultural dialogue (if there were one) within the parameters of a globalizing system should be taken into consideration. The dualism globalization-exclusion (the new aporia that ought not be fetishistically simplified) frames the problem presented by the other dimensions.

It would still be possible to reflect upon anti-foundationalism, of the Rortyan sort for example, which is accepted by many Postmodernists. It is not merely a defense of reason for reason itself. It is about defending the victims of the present system, defending human life in danger of

collective suicide. The critique of "modern reason" does not allow Philosophy of Liberation to confuse it with a critique of reason as such, or with particular types or practices of rationality. On the contrary, the critique of modern reason is made in the name of a differential rationality (the reason used by feminist movements, environmentalists, cultural and ethnic movements, the working class, peripheral nations ... etc.) and a universal rationality (a practical-material, discursive, strategic, instrumental, critical form of reason) (See Dussel 1998b). The affirmation and emancipation of Difference is constructing a novel and future universality. The question is not Difference or Universality but rather Universality in Difference and Difference in Universality.

I believe that the Philosophy of Liberation was born in this critical "environment" and as a result it has, from the beginning, taken these problems into account with the resources it had and within the limits of its time and historical "location". Meta-categories such as "totality" and "exteriority" continue to be valid as abstract and global references that should be mediated by the microstructures of Power, which are disseminated at every level and for which everybody is responsible.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the Philosophy of Liberation was already a postmodern philosophy emerging from the global periphery. It overcame the limitations of the ontology (the *Ueberwindung*) inspired by the misery in Latin America and by the Levinasian concept of alterity. It was criticized by standard Marxism, by irrationalist populism, by liberalism and conservatism, by repetitive philosophies (analytical, hermeneutical, academic, etc.), and today by young (Eurocentric?) postmodern Latin Americans, who perhaps have not yet discovered that the Philosophy of Liberation is itself a post-modern movement *avant la lettre*, a truly transmodern movement that appreciates postmodern criticism but is able to deconstruct it from a global peripheric perspective in order to reconstruct it according to the concrete political demands of subaltern groups.

NOTES

1 See Foucault (1966,1969,1972,1975,1976,1984,1986). D. Eribon (1989) tells us that, in The History of Madness Foucault shows that the excluded are not allowed a voice (as in his critique of psychiatry), while in The History of Sexuality (since *La Voluntad de saber*), the notion of Power proliferates, and the excluded has the last word (against psychoanalysis). His intent is a liberation of the subject arising from originary negation and establishes the possibility of a differential voice. The "order" (the system) of disciplinary discourse (the repressor), exercises a Power that at first either legitimizes or prohibits. Nevertheless, at a later point the "repressed" finds a voice. Foucault is an intellectual of the "differential" whereas Sartre elaborates on the "universal". It is necessary to learn how to connect both tendencies.

2 See Deleuze 1983, 1991, and Deleuze and Guattari 1972.

3 See the early works of Derrida 1964, 1967a and 1967b.

4 See Vattimo 1968, 1985, 1988, 1989a, 1989b and 1998.

5 Welsch shows that the historical origin of the term is earlier (1993, 10).

6 Besides Herlinghaus and Walter's articles, the volume includes essays by José Joaquín Brunner, Jesús Martín-Barbero, Nestor García Canclini, Carlos Monsiváis, Renato Ortiz, Norbert Lechner, Nelly Richard, Beatriz Sarlo and Hugo Achúgar.

7 Besides Beverley and Oviedo's articles, the volume includes essays by Xavier Albó, José J. Brunner, Fernando Calderón, Enrique Dussel, Martin Hopenhayn, N. Lechner, Aníbal Quijano, Nelly Richard, Beatriz Sarlo, Silviano Santiago, Hernán Vidal.

8 See Castro-Gómez (1996 and 1997) and Teorías sin Disciplina (Castro-Gómez and Mendieta, eds.), which includes contributions by Walter Mignolo, Alberto Moreiras, Ileana Rodríguez, Fernando Coronil, Erna von der Walde, Nelly Richard and Hugo Achúgar.

9 On this issue see Castro-Gómez (1996, 18, 19). It is worth mentioning that both A. Roig and L. Zea are often criticized authors. On Salazar Bondy see Castro-Gómez (1996, 89 and ff.): "Salazar Bondy believes that psychological schizophrenia is just an expression of economic alienation" (Castro-Gómez 1996, 90). Santiago

Castro-Gómez has the irritating inclination to simplify the position of others too mucho

10 Castro-Gómez does not take into consideration that H. Cerutti criticized my position in the name of the working class (the proletariat as a metaphysical category that I could not accept as a dogmatic concept), and also in the name of Althusserianism, due to the improper use of the concepts of "the poor" and "the people" which, as I will show, constitute a very Foucaultian way to refer to the "excluded" (the insane in madhouses, the criminal in prisons those "Others" that wander outside of the panoptic perspective of the French "totality" in the classic era). E. Levinas had radicalized topics that M. Foucault approached later on.

11 Guha (1988). As one might suppose, this current is opposed to a mere "historiography of India", traditional in the Anglo-Saxon world. The difference between the two lies in its critical methodology, informed by the works of Karl Marx, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. It is in this aspect that its similarity to the Philosophy of Liberation becomes evident.

12 According to Said (1978), Bhabha's work "is a landmark in the exchange between ages, genres, and cultures; the colonial, the post-colonial, the modernist and the postmodern" and is situated in a fruitful location: the "in-between(ness)." It overcomes dichotomies without unilaterally denying them. It operates within tensions and interstices. Bhabha does not deny either the center or the periphery, either gender or class, either identity or difference, either totality or alterity (he frequently makes reference to the "otherness of the Other," with Levinas in mind). He explores the fecundity of "being-in-between", in the "border-land" of the earth, of time, of cultures, of lives, as a privileged and creative location. He has overcome the dualisms, but he has not fallen into their pure negation. The Philosophy of Liberation, without denying its originary intuitions, can learn a lot, and can also grow. Bhabha assumes the simplistic negation of Marxism, as many postmodern Latin Americans do, falling into conservative and even reactionary positions without even noticing.

13 See Dussel (1996a and 1996b).

14 The panopticon could be observed in the design of clear and square spaces, with the church in the middle, in towns designed with the rationality of the Hispanic Renaissance. At the same time, this rationality managed to "discipline" bodies and lives, by imposing on all individuals a well regulated hourly schedule, beginning at 5am. These rules were interiorized through a Jesuitical "self-examination," like a reflexive "ego cogito" discovered well before Descartes. This was implemented in the utopian socialist reducciones in Paraguay, or among Moxos and Chiquitos in Bolivia, or among Californians, in the North of México (in the territory that is today part of the US).

15 In other words, since 1973, in my book Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana I was speaking of "Différance" as a "Difference" that is not just the mere "difference" in Identity. In Filosofía de la liberación I point out on several occasions the contrast between "difference" and "Dis-tinction" of the Other (1977). In all modesty, in the prologue of this book I state (two years before Lyotard) that this is a "postmodern" philosophy.

6 Hermann Cohen explains that the ontic method begins by assuming the position of the poor.

17 The situation begins to undergo a radical transformation only when Asiatic, African, and Caribbean intellectuals start thinking about the "Commonwealth", along similar lines as the Philosophy of Liberation.

18 With excellent descriptions, Moore-Gilbert (1997) demonstrates the presence of critical thought within the post-colonial periphery in Departments of English in U.S. universities.

19 See Mendieta and Castro-Gómez (1998, 59-83). "The North American Latin Americanism" practiced within the field of "Area Studies" in United States universities counts on the massive migration of Latin American intellectuals, in a hybrid condition, and inevitably rooted out. Nonetheless solidarity is possible. "The politics of solidarity must be conceived, in this context, as a counter-hegemonic response to globalization, and as an opening into the traces of Messianism in a global world" (Mendieta and Castro-Gómez 1998, 70). The only question, then, would be whether poverty and domination of the masses in peripheral nations does not exclude them from the process of globalization. In other words, it does not seem clear that "today civil society cannot conceive itself outside global economic and technological conditions" (71).

20 This is the position of Ernesto Laclau (1977, 1985, 1990, 1996). An article of mine will soon be published offering a critical account of this crucial Latin American thinker.