

The Democratic Imaginary in the Era of Globalization

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Introduction



La démocratie et le pluralisme menacé

Candido Mendes

La crise du Moyen Orient ne nous permet pas encore de saisir toute la profondeur de ce véritable séisme historique. Elle dépasse l'alerte du 11 septembre et nous met au seuil des possibles "guerres de religion", à la rescousse des nouvelles affirmations identitaires mondiales, à longue échéance, du post-colonialisme occidental. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement de l'établissement de retours au fondamentalisme dans le monde arabe face aux chutes des gouvernements autoritaires implantés dans toute la région, à la suite de leur indépendance de l'impérialisme franco-britannique, après le deuxième après-guerre du siècle dernier.

Ce qui est inquiétant, c'est de voir tomber toute l'assurance du pluralisme des deux côtés de la scène, à

l'émergence du nouveau monde global. L'exigence de la démocratie dépasse tout ses dits universels — demandée par les acteurs de la contemporanéité au cœur-même des régimes occidentaux: Angela Merkel vient de rejeter le pluralisme en Allemagne, précédant les déclarations de Cameron lors du G20, dans une mise en garde semblable de la part de l'Angleterre. Dans ce sens, l'Occident adopterait une ligne défensive, où le régime des libertés s'accouderait sur un système d'exclusion sociale, ou de mise en brèche contre cette entière reconnaissance de l'autre qu'impliquerait la pleine citoyenneté supposée à partir de l'acquis des droits humains par la modernité.

L'explosion du monde arabe met en évidence cette irruption d'un inconscient collectif, au fin fond des cultures par le poids historique séculaire de la domination. Elle émerge à présent face à la continuité pratiquement uniforme de l'autoritarisme des gouvernements immédiatement issus des Indépendances, entérinant le braquage de ce retournement historique, dont l'indépendance serait devenue un symbole interrompu.

Le soulèvement tunisien, au sein de la culture la plus occidentalisée du bassin méditerranéen, nous a démontré l'intensification de la contradiction effectuée par une véritable — quoique retardée — prise de conscience. Elle a débuté par un effet mimétique, face aux divers niveaux où l'enjeu se serait déployé sur une grande variété de scénarios. Il s'agit d'une vraie mouvance créée par le marathon des rues au Caire, à Benghazi ou à Manama, sans aucun

leadership, sans le moindre effet d'une *intelligentzia*, ni projet effectif de changement. On ferait vraiment face à cette secousse en profondeur débordant la mécanique à outrance, en des décennies de systèmes autoritaires dans le monde arabe. La lecture d'une telle confrontation pourrait passer d'un rejet foncier et primaire de l'autoritarisme à la réémergence de rivalités claniques, ou à la tentative d'abolir des royautes en contradiction avec la majorité religieuse de ces pays.

Mais du Maroc au Bahrein, les mêmes ébranlements historiques découlent de cette affirmation identitaire largement diachronique, face au processus civilisateur occidental déployé après la chute de l'Empire Ottoman par les réifications imposées aux visions du monde et à la perception de leur en-soi collectif par le progrès de la civilisation. On ne pourrait pas réduire le risque, dans ces retours, des radicalisations sommaires, où le bassin arabe-méditerranéen suivrait la révolution khoménienne. Le retour fondamentaliste se place devant l'inexistence de toute médiation, renforcé par le laïcisme qui est devenu la "deuxième nature" des régimes autoritaires post-indépendance, à Tunis et au Caire.

Dans un même syndrome, donc, nous pourrions parler d'une suspension ou d'une *époké* dans le refus du pluralisme, de tout ce qui, encore à la fin du siècle dernier proposait la transparence, peut-être ingénue, en tant que culture de la paix, du pluralisme, cheville ouvrière de la modernité. Nous assisterions, ces jours-ci, et après

l'éveil du monde arabe, à une vision défensive de l'Occident vis-à-vis des nouveaux horizons de la mondialisation. Elle débuta par cette prise de position en Allemagne et en Angleterre, fait pendant à cette montée américaine, dans sa nouvelle politique de reconnaissance nationale. Les longues réserves contre l'émigration mexicaine contrasteraient avec le passé classique du pays, ouvert à n'importe quel influx migratoire. La résistance dépasse aujourd'hui les prémisses minimales de la reconnaissance des droits humains aux *chicanos*. Ce fut le cas de la décision de l'Arkansas — pas encore rendue inconstitutionnelle par la Cour Suprême Américaine — d'arrêter quelqu'un seulement à cause de son aspect physique en présumant une entrée clandestine dans le pays. Nous faisons face aujourd'hui à l'avance d'un exclusivisme citoyen, menant les mexicains au serment de ne jamais lutter pour l'établissement de l'espagnol comme une deuxième langue nationale. Il s'agirait, donc, d'une réduction de droits identitaires objectifs, dans une *capites diminutio* permanente, imposée aux couches sociales migratoires pour une intégration collective souveraine désireuses d'exercer le droit au changement d'un statut national quant à leur insertion planétaire.

Ce retournement défensif à l'identité peut arriver, aujourd'hui, aux vraies réifications, telles que le pronent les souches conservatrices américaines à la suite du bushisme vers un nouvel isolationnisme international, et

le culte des origines dans le culte de leur pureté irréductible, telle qu'arborée par le *Tea Party*.

Ce reflux défensif pourrait entraîner la défense d'une Amérique, personnification de la chrétienté, déjà amorcée lors du gouvernement Bush, dans un nouveau réductionnisme occidental. Une telle perspective s'ouvre sur les frontières pressenties de ces "guerres de religion" qui guetteraient la désoccidentalisation du monde, arrivée dans ces tensions de "prise de conscience", aux diachronies de cette levée du statut colonial assimilé, il y a des décennies, au progrès et à la modernisation. C'est ce qui, dans ce même contrepoint historique, face au réveil arabe de nos jours, mène à la réclamation d'une véritable laïcité, telle que réussie à Tunis ou en Egypte, comme une manche gagnée, en termes de conscience universelle, et menacée par les vagues sommaires d'engloutissement islamique dans la diachronie de leur éveil identitaire d'aujourd'hui.

L'essor du fondamentalisme serait renforcé par le *caveat* de la radicalité dans les reconnaissances limites au temps encore des réveils mimétiques, par l'effet domino consenti. C'est dans un tel cadre que se dessine le diagnostic d'une impasse dialectique pour le pluralisme à venir. On fait face à une sécularisation en diachronie, qui peut se reconnaître dans un temps, à la fois récupérateur et régressif face aux mobilisations et aux poussées ou aux demandes d'authenticité historique, comme le réveil du monde arabe de ce présent immédiat. Il faudrait,

en même temps, distinguer la différence entre la donnée simplement tolérable d'une coexistence et ce qui, en effet, impliquerait comme élément fondateur de la subjectivité contemporaine, l'intégrité de la réception effective d'un "autre", en vraie reconnaissance collective.

Nous assistons au dénouement de la démocratie comme prise de conscience historique devant les concrétions des idées-forces de la modernité, où se poursuit comme le pacte social des Lumières. Elles sont quelquefois laissées au consensus établi, sur le fait accompli de minorités permanentes, en tout refus au rejet de leur participation à la règle fondamentale de la réflexion limite entre la société civile et l'État. De même, et sans entrer dans les ontologies de l'espace politique contemporain, le refus du pluralisme mènerait, et dans un irréversible désormais, au jeu des diversités synthétiques, par lequel le monde médiatique broie et simule cette différence, au risque de perdre sa propre sémantique "vis-à-vis" d'un monde, en vrai gage de l'existence de l'autre.

Le premier ministre Cameron du Royaume Uni, mentionné au G-20 vient au gouvernement, devant une réticence encore grande des parlementaires, et après ses premières déclarations, de défendre la politique d'une "bonne migration" pour le futur du pays. Ce qui est en cause, pour la première fois en ce tournant du siècle, ce sont des mesures de contrôle sur le flux international de la population, en choc avec les assurances des droits humains déjà dans la Charte de San Francisco;

bien évidemment nous ne faisons pas face aux interdictions d'ethnies.

Nous serions face à l'émergence de ce nouveau cadre de polarisation internationale, assise sur de larges fractures culturelles, aux sentiers de ce que les nouveaux fondamentalistes appelleraient la défense d'un Occident épuré. Le droit à la migration naît d'une initiative qui n'est pas nationale, mais qui appartient à l'humanité, à la recherche universelle de meilleurs niveaux de vie et de bien-être collectifs. Une telle demande est une exigence intrinsèque de la citoyenneté, au-delà des frontières politiques ou des barbelés nationaux. Une même inquiétude renferme aujourd'hui les prises de position de toute la droite radicale du Parti Républicain en proclamant que l'Occident chrétien ne peut pas dissocier ses valeurs de l'erradication des arabes sur le territoire américain. La crise du Moyen Orient brouille encore davantage une prise de conscience sur ce néo-fondamentalisme occidental. La demande légitime de démocratie fait face à la défense de l'identité culturelle, heurtée par le maintien de monarchies imposées contre des majorités religieuses de tels États, comme conséquence de l'impérialisme occidental, survivant à la deuxième guerre mondiale. On ne fait que commencer à entrevoir le danger d'un Occident anti-arabe, à la recherche d'une globalisation appuyée sur des dénominateurs sociaux prédéterminés. La nouvelle insistance des toniques conservatrices européennes, quant à la sélection

migratoire, ouvre l'interrogation encore sans réponse de savoir si de telles ségrégations reflètent toujours les traumatismes des catastrophes du 11 septembre, ou si nous faisons face à un nouveau malthusianisme économique et social, dans le marché de la prospérité concentrée du vieux monde européen.

1

Democracy and Identity Awakening in the Mediterranean Space



The Place of Democracy in the Postcolonial Islamic World

Juan Cole

The administration of George W. Bush pursued an announced policy of democratization in the Greater Middle East. In that era, Washington initiated, or presided over the initiation of, three democratic transitions in the Middle East: in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. It also sought to pressure Egypt to adopt more open democratic procedures. By “democracy,” Bush appears to have meant a Schumpeterian process wherein there are regular free elections in which the public chooses its leaders, in which there are winners and losers and in which the losers depart.¹ This criterion is therefore a

1 Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political*

good one whereby to judge the outcomes. Bush's policies in this regard were referred to as "muscular Wilsonianism," and were articulated by administration spokesmen within the framework of his "war on terror." None of the transitions attempted could be called a success, and it could be argued that in important regards all failed. In contrast, two years into the administration of his successor, Barack Obama, many Arab countries witnessed grassroots movements for democracy that, in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, seem likely to have some success. Why did Bush's initiatives fail, whereas subsequent grassroots movements have had some success?

Bush left the legacy of fragile or failed democratic transitions to Barack Obama. The Obama administration, largely adopting a Realist foreign policy, tried to pursue pragmatic policies but was stymied by disputed elections, religious extremism and hastily or badly drafted constitutions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Its cautious realism, ironically enough, in some ways came into conflict with the idealism of the youth, women's and workers' movements that broke out in winter-spring 2010-2011. It will be argued that fragile states only claiming to be democracies have often fallen to insurgent challengers, and Obama is in the position of attempting to implement

Regimes and Economic Well-being in the World, 1950-1990, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000; Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, New York, Harper, 1942.

strong policies (withdrawal from Iraq, counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, a two-state solution in Palestine and Israel) with weak, deeply divided and often absolutist partners whose rise was engineered or accidentally fostered by his predecessor.

The mantra of democratization under Bush strangely mixed pragmatic policy considerations with an idealistic rhetoric. The Neoconservatives in particular argued that authoritarian governance contributed to the rise of Muslim fundamentalist terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, and that a democratizing Middle East would produce more eufunctional societies. They often implied, without explicitly saying so, that the authoritarian states were more likely to scapegoat Israel, and so to foment anti-Semitism and anti-Israel terrorism, than would be democratically elected regimes that had less need to take the minds of the public off their lack of popular sovereignty. A further subtext of the discourse about democratization concerned economic liberalization. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz is said to have characterized regimes such as Baathist Iraq and Syria as “Stalinist holdovers” (Wesley Clarke), and to have argued in the 1990s that the US had a window of only 15 years as the sole superpower to put an end to them before challengers such as China arose that might limit US freedom of action. These theorists appeared to have earlier hoped that after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Middle East would take the same path as Poland and the Czech

Republic in Eastern Europe, turning toward democratic, multiparty politics and neoliberal economic policies. When that development did not occur, they appear to have decided that the sort of changes that rolled through Eastern Europe in the 1990s could be provoked by external, US intervention. Democratization by military intervention or diplomatic shaming and strong-arming, then, was intended to produce a series of velvet revolutions in the Middle East that would strengthen the US and Israeli diplomatic, military and economic position in this energy- and resource-rich region.

Important contradictions in US policy should be noted, especially the inconsistent application of muscular Wilsonianism. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan, Tunisia, and the Gulf oil states, among others, were largely exempted from Bush's pressure in this direction. All were characterized by deeply pro-American authoritarian regimes that lent their facilities and security forces to support for the "war on terror." They either had a peace treaty with Israel (Jordan) or practically speaking had an entente with it. In contrast, pre-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan were both anti-American and anti-Israel. Egypt looks more like the regimes that were exempted from pressure for democratization, having a peace treaty with Israel and good relations with the United States, and it is a little mysterious why it was singled out for public opprobrium and pressure by Bush. The 2006 elections in the Palestine Authority had long been scheduled, and so

were not a Bush administration initiative, but the administration did attempt at first to fit them into its over-arching narrative of democratization.

Democratic transitions have often succeeded in the past four decades. Spain, South Korea, Taiwan, Poland, Brazil, and many other examples could be cited. On the other hand, the democracy protesters at Tiananmen Square in China (1989) and those in Burma (1990) were crushed. Algeria's brief experiment with open elections was ended by its military in 1992 when the Muslim fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Party won.² Mark Katz, drawing on the work of Crane Brinton, sees the question of whether the military supports the move to democratization as a key variable in explaining success or failure. But democratization is extremely complex, and other variables must be considered. One does not need higher math to see that the smoothest and most successful such transitions have occurred in wealthier countries. Adam Przeworski and his colleagues argue that increased gross national product does not predict whether or not a country will begin a transition to democracy—such transitions begin for many possible reasons and are somewhat arbitrary. But they argue that a country's

2 Mark N. Katz, "Democratic Revolutions: Why some Succeed, Others Fail," prepared for delivery at the 2003 Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, August 28-August 31, 2003, at http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/6/2/7/2/pages62723/p62723-1.php.

level of income is highly correlated with whether or not the transition to democracy succeeds, with poorer countries more often failing.

My argument here will set aside the question of the most salient reasons for which the Bush administration invaded Afghanistan and Iraq or pressed for a Palestinian state. Nor will I consider the issue of whether the democratization program was sincere or cynical. That is, my object of inquiry is not the motives or decision-making of Washington but rather the shape and the aftermath of its policies in the Middle East. The question I will pose is the degree to which the transitions to democracy succeeded in each of the four Bush initiatives, and the reasons for success or failure in each. I will then turn to the reasons for which popular movements accomplished what Bush could not.

Let us take the least complicated, if most baffling Bush policy first, that toward Egypt. Although Egyptian reform played a relatively minor role in Bush administration policy, the 2005 presidential elections and the 2006 elections for Egypt's lower house provoked substantial turbulence in Bush's relationship with President Hosni Mubarak. Under Bush administration pressure, Mubarak had parliament amend the constitution with regard to the selection of the president, which had earlier been carried out by a vote of parliament and then a popular referendum ratifying parliament's choice. The new procedure allowed for multiparty popular elections

for president. In June of 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice came to Cairo and called for the elections to be free and open, risking harming relations with Mubarak. Mubarak, who won a crushing victory, was later accused of using state resources to bus supporters to the polls. One of his opponents, Ayman Nur, appears to have been let out of jail briefly only for appearances sake, such as the appearances were. After the elections, in which he was permitted to gain 7 percent of the vote, he was summarily returned to prison.

The following year Egypt held elections for the lower house of parliament. The Muslim Brotherhood, which had held 17 seats, increased its bloc to 88. The Brotherhood is not allowed to run under its own banner, since purely religious parties are banned in Egypt. Other small parties are often willing to run Brotherhood candidates, however, if they think they can win in a particular constituency. Elections in Mubarak's Egypt were more a symbolic public ritual reaffirming state power than voters' choice of legitimate representatives, and bussed crowds, vote-buying, ballot fraud, and police coercion and interference in the vote counting are widely alleged to have been integral parts of the process. For the Brotherhood to improve its performance so dramatically under such circumstances raised questions of whether the state did not allow them to do so in order to send a message to Washington that pressure for democratization would backfire. If so, the ploy was successful, since

Bush's muscular Wilsonianism was never again trained on Cairo in a public way in succeeding years, nor did the succeeding Obama administration make fair elections in Egypt a priority until the people themselves pitched the issue.

The failure of Bush's pressure on Egypt to open up and initiate a genuine democratic transition derived from some key weaknesses in the policy. Bush needed Egyptian logistical and political support for his Iraq war, and so could hardly press the Mubarak regime too ferociously on this issue. Although it is true that the US gives Egypt \$1.5 billion a year in aid, half of it civilian and half military, this aid could not be used as a carrot for democratization. First of all, the aid for the most part actually goes to American corporations, which in turn provide made goods or military weaponry to Egypt, and cutting it off would hurt US concerns. Second, the aid is an ongoing bribe to Egypt to remain at peace with Israel, and it is a little unlikely that Congress would have been willing to jeopardize Israel's security for the sake of pressuring Egypt with the threat of an aid cut-off. Other than this strategic rent, the United States, had few significant assets in Egypt, whether political, diplomatic or military, and so had little leverage other than mere hectoring by Dr. Rice. Although Mubarak did permit multiparty presidential elections, few observers believe that the election was free and fair, and neither Washington's pressure nor internal activism by the middle class Ghad or

Tomorrow Party and the Kifaya or “Enough!” movement was sufficiently strong to challenge the hold on power of Egypt’s soft military dictatorship. (That Mubarak is an air force general and was made vice president by Anwar El Sadat in part for that reason, so that he came to power after the latter’s assassination, is sometimes now forgotten.) The Egyptian security police (“Amn al-Dawlah”) and military, firmly in control of the country, was deeply unsympathetic to the move toward political openness being urged by Bush and Rice, and they intervened to halt it. The “safety valve” obtained by the regime from having some 3 million workers abroad (out of a work force of about 25 million), and the dependence of the middle class on government and government-related jobs, all militated against a successful opening in the Bush period. That the opening was being forced from the outside probably also detracted from its legitimacy.

In contrast to Egypt, the Bush administration conquered and administered Afghanistan and Iraq and was central to the formation of new regimes in both countries. There is no mystery as to why Afghanistan’s democratic transition has been troubled and may well have, as of the fraudulent parliamentary elections of September, 2010, failed altogether. Afghanistan is among the least suitable candidates for a successful transition to democracy in the world, just on the face of it. Its nominal annual per capita income is only about \$500. It is deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines, having Sunni Tajiks, Sunni Pathans,

Shiite Hazaras, Sunni Uzbeks and even Ismailis. It has been torn by war since the late 1970s. A history of violence plagued the country, against the pro-Soviet Tajiks by both Tajik and Pashtuns, among the Mujahidin themselves after they came to power in 1992, between them and the largely Pashtun Taliban from 1994, and then between Pashtun guerrillas and US and NATO forces and their ally, the new Afghanistan National Army, after 2001. The wars of the 1980s and 1990s were extremely disruptive. They displaced 3 million, mostly Pashtuns, to refugee camps in Pakistan. Two million mostly Tajik Persian speakers fled to Iran. Two million were displaced internally. At least a million were killed in the fighting, and probably 3 million wounded. Large numbers of widows, orphans, and abandoned families strove to survive, inside the country or in camps abroad. The mass displacements, killings and woundings of 11 million persons over these decades is an astonishing statistic given that the population of the country in the 1980s may have been as small as 16 million (it is now estimated at 30 million).

Afghanistan is not a society easy to mobilize for mass politics. Some 75 percent of the population is rural, and as many as 10 percent are still pastoral nomads. There are no powerful unions or chambers of commerce. There are not even enough police to do routine policing. Urban institutions are overwhelmed by the rapid influx of workers fleeing the insecurity of the countryside. The Karzai regime ensconced in Kabul,

initially by the US via the international Bonn Process in late 2001, and reinforced by subsequent elections, has never allowed political parties to be founded and to engage in organizing and canvassing, so that elections are held on a non-party basis. The most organized institutions in the country are kinship groups (tribes and clans), guerrilla groups such as the Taliban and the Hizb-i Islami, and poppy growers and smugglers, whose activities account for a third of the gross national product. The heavy dependence of an economy on a single high-priced commodity is a predictor of social violence, which is in turn a predictor of low rates of success in democratic transitions. Afghanistan's poppies and heroin are a continual source of conflict and destabilization, fuelling feuds and narco-terrorism.

In addition to these local, social problems that make democratization in Afghanistan an almost fairy tale endeavor, the history of the American and NATO occupation of the country since 2003 is replete with further difficulties. The American use of air power to fight the small remaining insurgency, in the course of which many innocent villagers were accidentally slaughtered, appears to have alienated ever more Pashtuns from the foreign troops. The decision to garrison Afghanistan with large foreign troop contingents provoked nationalist opposition in some areas of the country, especially Pashtun provinces such as Qandahar, Helmand, Khost, Paktika, Ghazni and so forth. The Karzai government suffered from being seen as a

puppet of white Christian foreign patrons. Karzai proved an obsessive micromanager of affairs in Kabul and altogether unconcerned with governing the rest of the country (he is said to control only about a third of it). He and his brothers became known as the Karzai gang, for the questionable activities of some of the brothers, accused of financial corruption or involvement in the drug trade, a reputation that further hurt his legitimacy.

Karzai acted high-handedly during the August, 2009, presidential elections, which were marked by widespread fraud. By mid-September, his leading opponent, Abdallah Abdallah, was charging Karzai with using state resources to engineer the stealing of the August 20 presidential election, and even accusing Karzai of treason. Abdallah said that Karzai bribed tribal elders between \$4,000 and \$8,000 each to throw the election to Karzai. Abdallah insisted on a run-off election, required only if no candidate receives at least 50 percent of the vote. Abdallah believed that the votes that put Karzai up to 54 percent were at least in part fraudulent and the result of vote-buying with state monies.³

There were two oversight bodies for the election, the inaccurately named Independent Election Commission, the members of which were appointed by Karzai, and the Electoral Complaints Commission, which had three

3 “Full probe into rigging would lead to run-off, says Afghan leader’s main rival,” Tolo TV, Kabul, in Dari 1800 gmt 17 Sep 09, *BBC Monitoring – South Asia*, via *Lexis Nexis*.

Western members appointed by the United Nations and two Afghan members. The Afghan members were appointed by the Supreme Court and the Independent Election Commission. The Independent Election Commission unsurprisingly supported Karzai and was willing to certify the election as aboveboard. The UN-dominated Electoral Complaints Commission, however, put its foot down, insisted on a recount and threw out over a million votes that it determined were fraudulent. The recount reduced the incumbent's proportion of the vote to 48 percent and looked set to force Karzai into a run-off with Abdallah by October, but the latter withdrew from the race on the grounds that the Karzai-appointed Independent Election Commission could not be trusted to oversee upright elections in the second round more scrupulously than it had in the first. Karzai might have won the 2009 election anyway, but the process was too flawed to allow a clear answer to that question. It seems clear that democratization in Afghanistan, if by that is meant elections marked by transparency in which the loser agrees to vacate the office, has decisively failed.

Not only had Karzai packed the Independent Election Commission but in February 2010 he took control of the supposedly actually-independent Electoral Complaints Commission, announcing that he would appoint all 5 of its members, cutting out the United Nations.⁴

4 "Karzai kontrol-i komisiyon-i intikhabat ra dar dast-i khud girift," Radio Azadi, 5/12/1388 (Feb. 24, 2010) at <http://da.azadiradio.com/content/article/1966580.html>.

The subsequent parliamentary elections of September, 2010, could not be held in 20 percent of the country because of security concerns (the Taliban forbade participation in the voting and threatened reprisals). There were allegations of widespread fraud, with some 4,000 subsequent complaints flooding in.

Democracy in Afghanistan was thwarted for a number of reasons. A largely rural country with a 28 percent literacy rate that is the fifth poorest nation in the world was not a very good candidate to succeed in the first place. The new Afghanistan National Army is widely believed to be corrupt, and the officer corps was appointed by Karzai, giving him a behind the scenes ally. Much of the country is not in government control, and the state does not have by any means a monopoly on the use of violence. Indeed, armed groups roam much of the country at will, and security is poor.

The adoption of a counter-insurgency doctrine by the US military under President Barack Obama in some ways indebted Washington to the Karzai government and made it difficult or impossible for outside agencies to challenge Karzai's various power-grabs. He was publicly warned to conduct aboveboard elections by no less than Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. When he instead engaged in electoral fraud, and emerged as the winner under questionable circumstances, the Obama administration had little choice but to acquiesce. Its counter-insurgency doctrine required a reliable local political partner who could gain

the allegiance of the populace. While it seemed increasingly unlikely that Karzai could fulfill that role, no plausible alternative was on the horizon. Since Abdullah Abdullah's main power base was the Tajiks, whereas Pashtuns supported Karzai in much greater numbers, an Abdullah victory could well have worsened the insurgency, led mainly by aggrieved Pashtuns who had joined Muslim fundamentalist groups.

The Iraqi transition was if anything more troubled than that of Afghanistan. It suffered from many of the same disabilities. Iraq's per capita real income every year when the US first invaded in 2003 was only \$800 a year. Although it is \$2,000 or more in 2010, some of that increase is illusory. Petroleum production and prices have risen, but there is little reason to think that the income has trickled down to the people. The actual per capita income, once petroleum is subtracted, is therefore likely still quite low. On the other hand, as with poppies in Afghanistan, the presence of a high-priced primary commodity (in Iraq's case petroleum), combined with a weak central government, has led to very substantial gasoline smuggling and to violence among militias, gangs and tribes competing for control of the refineries and smuggling routes.

Iraq is a multiethnic society, with Shiite Arabs in the south and center, Sunni Arabs in the center and north, and mostly Sunni Kurds in the north, along with smaller groups such as Turkmen (about evenly split between

Sunnis and Shiites). The secular Baath government, dominated (though not exclusively so) by Sunni Arabs had massacred Kurds in 1988 out of suspicion they were tilting to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and seeking independence. In the wake of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, when Shiites rose up in the south, the Baath military put the rebellion down with great brutality and was said to have killed as many as 60,000. After the fall of the Baath in 2003 at Anglo-American hands and the rise of a new government dominated by Shiites and Kurds, a Sunni Arab insurgency waged a deadly campaign of violence against the new order. In 2006-2007, civil war broke out between Sunnis and Shiites, leading to the ethnic cleansing of most Sunnis from Baghdad. Violence was also common, though not on the same scale, between Kurds and Arabs in the north. This history of deep ethnic divisions and grievances, and ongoing ethnic violence, posed profound obstacles to any democratic transition after 2003.

It is not clear that the Bush administration was dedicated to a thoroughgoing democratization of the country in any case. Indeed, the administration went through post-conquest plans one after another. At first the Department of Defense was determined to install Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress in power, rather on the model of Karzai in Afghanistan. A national congress with hand-picked delegates was initially planned. The State Department discovered this plan and won an internal battle to

scuttle it, with President George W. Bush sending Paul Bremer as civil administrator. With the growth of a Sunni guerrilla movement through summer, 2003, and the massive explosion at the shrine of Ali in Najaf on August 29, 2003, which killed Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, it became increasingly clear that Bremer could not hope to rule Iraq. (Al-Hakim was the leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, among the foremost political parties among the Shiites, and his death caused confidence in American competence among Bush's Shiite allies to collapse.) In November of 2003, Bush and Bremer announced yet another plan, to hold "caucus-based" elections. The plan was to assemble the members of the provincial and some municipal councils that had been massaged into being by the State Department and its civilian subcontractors, who were Iraqi notables willing to cooperate with the British and Americans, and have them elect a prime minister. This plan was rejected by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who demanded open, one-person, one vote elections. He won, and Bush was forced to schedule them for January, 2005. In the meantime the US and the UN, in consultation with Bremer's appointed Interim Governing Council, selected Iyad Allawi, an ex-Baathist and a CIA asset who had worked in London in the 1990s to recruit defecting members of the Baath officer corps for coup attempts against Saddam Hussein.

The January, 2005, elections in Iraq did not meet international standards. Most candidates could not campaign because of the poor security. A closed list system was used, so that voters had little idea for whom they were voting, though they could pick a list on the basis of its announced ideology. Voters were in some danger as they voted, and most had to walk to neighborhood polling stations because of a lockdown of vehicle traffic. The Sunni Arab population boycotted the vote almost in its entirety, producing a parliament dominated by the fundamentalist Shiite parties, with the Kurdistan Alliance as their junior partners. The Shiite parties elected Ibrahim Ja`fari Prime Minister. A physician, he headed the returned London branch of the Da`wa Party, founded in the late 1950s to work for a Shiite, Islamic state in Iraq. The December, 2005, parliamentary elections produced the same results, though this time the Sunni Arabs joined the vote, returning Sunni fundamentalist MPs for the most part.

In the wake of the parliamentary elections, a movement grew to remove Ibrahim Ja`fari. He had alienated the Kurds by going to Ankara and discussing with Turkey how to prevent the oil-rich province of Kirkuk from being annexed by the Kurdistan Regional Government. He had alienated the Americans by his closeness to Iran and by his ineffectiveness as a leader. The Shiite clerical leadership in Najaf was disturbed at his inability to tamp down the political violence afflicting the country. And so the US and the Kurds put pressure on the Shiite coalition,

the United Iraqi Alliance, to choose an alternative. It held a party congress and Nuri al-Maliki of the Da'wa Party narrowly won out over Adil Abdul Mahdi of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, largely because al-Maliki's Da'wa support was augmented by that of the Sadr Movement of Muqtada al-Sadr, which had been brought into the United Iraqi Alliance in fall of 2005 as part of a united Shiite front for the parliamentary elections. While these events had the outward form of a democracy, insofar as an election was held and those elected took office, and those defeated went home, the reality was more sordid. Many of the parties sitting in parliament were intertwined with the militias fighting in the streets, who would ultimately decide the shape of power. The prime minister was removed in some large part through the insistence of the American ambassador. The situation rather resembled that of India or Lebanon under British and French colonial rule, where there were also parliamentary elections in the absence of true popular sovereignty, with often heavy-handed foreign intervention.

Al-Maliki had come to power through the support of the Sadrist faction of Shiite fundamentalists, which maintained a Mahdi Army paramilitary. Initially, al-Maliki depended heavily on the Mahdi Army as his own military arm, since the newly trained Iraqi military did not yet amount to much and in any case was not known to be loyal to the prime minister. In the summer of 2007, the

leader of the Sadrists and their Mahdi Army, Muqtada al-Sadr, led a campaign to have al-Maliki cease meeting and teleconferencing with George W. Bush, and to have the prime minister set a specific timetable for the withdrawal of US troops from the country. Al-Maliki declined to be so pressured, and the Sadrists withdrew from the government, sitting thereafter in the opposition benches. Al-Maliki, furious, at first turned for support to another Shiite fundamentalist group, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, led by Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim. ISCI had its own paramilitary, the Badr Corps, which had originally been formed and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps when ISCI was in exile in Iran in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2007, as part of the Bush troop escalation, the US military under Gen. David Petraeus put pressure on the Mahdi Army, and Muqtada al-Sadr, its clerical leader, was forced to flee to Iran and to declare his militia disbanded. Al-Maliki, apparently wary of being political hostage to one party-militia after another, gradually established forward operating bases in the Shiite south, to which he detailed regular army field officers who were induced to report directly to the prime minister. He thereby bypassed both the US Pentagon and CIA and his own minister of defense (who had hardly been a Maliki loyalist).

In spring of 2008, al-Maliki deployed the new Iraqi army against Mahdi Army positions in Basra. Initially

the campaign went poorly, with some pro-Sadr elements in the military defecting. But in the end, the new military defeated the Mahdi Army, it is said with help from the Badr Corps. Al-Maliki is then said to have inducted thousands of Badr Corps fighters into the army. He then sent the army against the Mahdi Army in Nasiriya and in Sadr City (East Baghdad), defeating it and making it lie low in each instance. Al-Maliki's success in becoming a military leader admittedly depended very heavily on American logistics help and on US close air support for his operations. Al-Maliki went on to establish tribal militias among Shiites in the south that also reported directly to him. His political adversaries accused him of making a soft coup and becoming a behind the scenes military dictator. But compared to his predecessor, the ineffectual and virtually powerless Jaafari, al-Maliki had begun making the prime ministership of Iraq count for something with regard to power politics for the first time since Nouri al-Sa'id in the 1940s and 1950s.

The parliamentary elections of March 7, 2010, resulted in a near-majority for the Shiite religious parties, as in the previous two elections. This time, however, they had split into two major factions, and found it difficult to form another coalition with one another. Al-Maliki had alienated the movement of Muqtada al-Sadr by his 2008 military move against it. The election thus resulted in a hung parliament, with four major blocs. These included the Iraqiya List of Iyad Allawi, which grouped secular

middle class Shiites and Sunnis, but in this election became a largely Sunni Arab party, and which gained 91 seats. Coming in second with 89 seats was the State of Law coalition of incumbent prime minister al-Maliki, at the core of which was his Da'wa or Islamic Mission Party, along with smaller Shiite religious parties. The third largest bloc, at 70 seats, was the National Iraqi Alliance, which consisted of the more fundamentalist religious parties, including the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), led by cleric Ammar al-Hakim, the Sadr Bloc, led by cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, and some other smaller factions. The Sadrist gained almost 40 seats out of the 70, and so were the weightiest bloc within this coalition. The fourth bloc was the Kurdistan Alliance. Forming a government required three of them to ally with one another so as to gain a majority (163 out of 225 seats).

Both before and after the election, the Justice and Accountability Commission, led by corrupt financier and political operator Ahmad Chalabi, attempted to disqualify Iraqiya candidates on grounds of their having had too strong a connection to the old, banned, Baath Party. This commission's work threatened to unravel the whole election, and its witch hunts cast a shadow on the legitimacy of the electoral process as far as Sunni Arabs were concerned. Its two most prominent members were themselves members of the National Iraqi Alliance, and so could be seen as acting for partisan purposes rather than neutral, national ones.

In the months after March, interminable wrangling went on. Guerrilla and militia groups took advantage of the interregnum to take turf and engage in destabilizing operations. The US government made a concerted effort to install as prime minister, or at least as a high official with power over the security forces, its old client, Iyad Allawi, whose Iraqiya party had attracted the allegiance of some 80 percent of the Sunni Arabs, who had swung back toward their traditional secularism in 2010. Allawi was emboldened by American backing to decline to make a more realistic political deal, further delaying the formation of a government. It may also be that by then the new officer corps had been so extensively coopted by al-Maliki that for it to swing around and give its loyalty to Allawi was a little implausible. While his argument, that the Iraqi constitution specifies that the largest bloc in parliament be asked by the president to form the government, was correct, he did not seem to understand that such a request would only present an opportunity to attempt to put together the 163 seats needed to govern, and did not imply an automatic accession to power. Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, a Sunni and a prominent member of the Iraqiya List, expressed anxiety and concern over the meetings in Tehran of the Shiite parties—which aimed at cobbling back together the Shiite alliance. He denounced them as naked interference by a neighbor in Iraq's internal affairs. He also argued that the next president of Iraq

should be an Arab and not a Kurd.⁵ Al-Hashimi's denunciation of the Shiites as cat's paws of Iran and his urging that the Kurds be marginalized did not help Allawi to form a government, since he needed pro-Iran Shiites as well as Kurds to do so.

At the same time, Iran made efforts to convince the Shiite parties to reestablish their old alliance, and actually called party leaders and newly elected members of parliament to Tehran for the purpose of forging a coalition between al-Maliki's State of Law and the NAI. These efforts initially foundered on the opposition to al-Maliki of Muqtada al-Sadr. By the beginning of October, 2010, however, Iranian insistence had worn down al-Sadr, resident in the seminary city of Qom, and al-Maliki for his part appears to have offered sufficient inducements for the Sadrists to join with the State of Law and finally form a government with the help of the Kurdistan Alliance. In September and October of 2010, as well, the Obama administration's objections to al-Maliki appear to have abruptly evaporated, or perhaps it finally became clear to Washington that Allawi's 91 seats did him no good, since he could not find the partners that would take him to 163. Any role for the new Iraqi military in these maneuverings was never adverted to in the Iraqi press and it probably was not central. That, however, al-Maliki had

5 Huda Jasim and Ma'd Fayyad, "Al-Hashimi li al-Sharq al-Awsat: Qaliquun min al-Hiwarat allati tajri fi Tihran," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 30, 2010.

successfully deployed the military to restore a modicum of security to Basra, that many officers were loyal to him, and that he had his own tribal militias, were certainly points in his favor, with the electorate, with potential coalition partners (other than the Sadrists), with Iran, and with the US.

Though al-Maliki finally formed a government in November, 2010, long months of indecision deeply wounded the Iraqi public's faith in the electoral process and one could not exactly say that Iraq had had a successful transition to democracy. Iranian and American intervention is still heavy-handed and widely resented. Al-Maliki's survival into a second term does not directly contradict the democratic model, since it depended on ordinary Westminster-model parliamentary elections and post-election coalition-building. But had he not also been a military leader and had he not had the fierce support of Iran and the lukewarm acquiescence of the US, it is not clear that he could have survived so long (seven months!) as a caretaker prime minister nor that he could have on his own fended off the challenges from other plausible candidates or put together a parliamentary majority.

The stunning victory of the militant Muslim fundamentalist Hamas Party in the Palestinian elections of January 2006 underlined the central contradictions in the Bush administration's policies toward the Middle East. Bush pushed for elections, confusing them with democracy, but seemed blind to the dangers of right-wing populism. As a result, Sunni fundamentalist parties, some with ties to violent cells, emerged as key players in Iraq, Egypt and Palestine.

Hamas's victory on January 26, 2006, created a profound ambivalence in Washington. In his press conference soon after the election, Bush said: "The people are demanding honest government. The people want services." Bush allowed then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to sideline the ruling Fatah Party of Yasser Arafat, to fire missiles at its police stations, and to reduce its leader to a besieged nonentity. Sharon ordered the serial assassinations of civilian Hamas leaders in Gaza, making them martyrs. Frustrated, the Palestinian public predictably swung to the far right, though opinion polling makes it clear that few who voted for Hamas shared their political and social program. Rather, they were weary of the Palestinian Authority and believed that Hamas would be more effective negotiating partners with the Israelis. As a Saudi political talk show host told the Associated Press, "They [Hamas] will be the Arab Sharon. They will be tough, but only a tough group can snatch concessions from Israel."⁶

In a mystifying self-contradiction, Bush trumpeted that "the Palestinians had an election yesterday, the results of which remind me about the power of democracy." If elections were really the same as democracy, and if Bush was so happy about the process, then we might have expected him to pledge to work with the results, which by his lights would be intrinsically good.

6 Donna Abu-Nasr, "Arabs jubilant at Hamas victory," Associated Press, January 26, 2006.

Instead, Bush was saying that even though elections are democracy and democracy is good and powerful, it produced unacceptable results in this case, and so the resulting Hamas government would lack the legitimacy necessary to allow the United States to deal with it or go forward in any peace process.

President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah had earlier been elected in a separate process. Bush said, "We'd like him to stay in power." Khaled Mashaal, the Hamas leader in exile in Syria, said that his party would be willing to work with Abbas as president, according to a party spokesman. But then when Bush was asked if the United States would end aid to the Palestinian Authority if a Hamas government was formed, he implied that it would, unless Hamas changed its platform, which opposes the existence of the state of Israel on the grounds that the territory belongs to the Palestinians. The charge that Hamas is inherently violent and therefore an unacceptable partner suffers from essentialism. From 1994 to 2004, Hamas's military wing launched many suicide attacks against Israelis, killing hundreds of people, most of them civilians. Despite Hamas' founding position that the Israeli state is illegitimate, however, violence is not foreordained. A Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, told the Associated Press that his party would continue what he called its year-old "truce" if Israel did the same.

No truce would be allowed. Bush and the Israelis announced that they would refuse to deal with Hamas, and

they cut off aid to the Palestine Authority (which had a deleterious effect on institutions such as hospitals, to which the funding had been passed by the PA). Hamas members of the PA assembly met and elected Ismail Haniyeh prime minister, and he chose a cabinet. The Israelis began capturing Hamas representatives and cabinet members, whisking them away to Israeli prisons. By summer of 2007 the Bush administration had orchestrated a coup against the Hamas government in the West Bank by the secular Fatah faction led by PA President Mahmoud Abbas. A similar attempt to overthrow Hamas in Gaza failed. Mahmoud Abbas extra-constitutionally appointed a Fatah prime minister, Salam Fayyad, who was known as a competent administrator but who was not a product of popular sovereignty or of an even vaguely constitutional process.

In the aftermath of the failed coup, the Israelis slapped a Draconian blockade on Gaza, explicitly aimed at punishing civilian Gazans for having voted Hamas into power and for having declined to overthrow it. The blockade contributed to great misery in the Palestinian population of Gaza, many of whom still live in refugee camps, having fled there from what is now Israel during the ethnic cleansing campaigns of 1948. It did not, however, lead to the fall of the rump Hamas government. In the end, and despite a long-term successful cease-fire, the Olmert government launched a destructive war on Gaza in winter 2008-2009.

The deadline passed for further elections for the Palestine Authority as called for in its charter, so that both the caretaker presidency of Abbas and the Hamas statelet in Gaza receded further and further into illegitimacy. Palestine was not a prime candidate for successful transition to democracy. The GDP per capita is only about \$1400, less than Egypt. The conditions of occupation and (in Gaza) blockade make free movement and organization difficult. Palestinians suffered economic downward mobility in the twenty-first century and many even became food insecure (a majority became so in Gaza, from which the Israelis interdicted all exports from 2007 onwards). Unlike Afghanistan and Iraq, Palestine is ethnically relatively homogeneous (most Palestinians are Sunni Muslims and the Christian population is shrinking through emigration; but there is fairly good cooperation between Christians and Muslims). But the differences in political culture between the West Bank and Gaza have provoked firefights between Fatah and Hamas paramilitaries and function as ethnic divides do elsewhere. The Western-trained and equipped Palestine Authority security forces, backed by Fatah guerrillas, successfully intervened against Hamas in the West Bank, and it is those security forces more than popular sovereignty that explain Mahmoud Abbas's extraconstitutional tenure as president.

But the primary cause for the failure of the 2006 elections to produce a democratic regime lie with the

United State and Israel, which actively undermined and ultimately destroyed the elected government because Hamas was unacceptable to them. External intervention and neocolonialism need to be added to the reasons for which democracy fails if the Palestine Authority is to be explained.

The four cases of attempted democratic transition by force or pressure from the outside considered here, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine, were chosen by Bush for short-term tactical reasons, not because they were good candidates for such an experiment based on their social indicators. All four are poverty-stricken, and poverty is negatively correlated with successful democratic transitions. Two of the four are multiethnic societies with severe ethnic grievances and a history of violence, which tells against democratic stability. Although Palestine is not similarly ethnically divided, being mostly Sunni Muslim, its secular-religious and party divide, between Hamas and Fateh, functions in a similar way. (Particular *hamulahs* or clans have thrown in with one or the other, especially given that they are geographically rooted in Gaza or the West Bank, so that there is even a proto-ethnic dimension to this political rivalry.) Egypt is fairly homogeneous ethnically, being largely Sunni Muslim but with a Coptic Christian minority of about 6 percent. Two of the four depend heavily on a single high-priced primary commodity, oil in the case of Iraq and poppies in that of Afghanistan, which is correlated with

high rates of social and political violence and political instability. Palestine's main analogue to such an income is its dependence on government and NGO aid, over which Hamas and Fatah have struggled, so that this sort of strategic rent has caused violence in the same way that primary commodity production might. Egypt is, again, an outlier in this regard, having multiple sources of income, including agriculture and tourism, and a growing light industry and services sector. In Egypt, the failure of democratic transition in the Bush era rested most heavily on the unity of the narrow elite, the cohesion of the military and security officers and officials, and the inability of Kefaya and Ghad to mobilize sufficient numbers of people in the streets effectively to challenge the regime. In the Palestine Authority as well, the coup against the Hamas democratization of electoral politics was made by the PA security forces and Fatah guerrillas. In Afghanistan, Karzai's power grab depended at least in part on the Afghanistan National Army's backing for him, as well as his knowledge that the US and NATO were fighting the insurgents for him and would support him. Despite the rise of a soft authoritarianism in the form of Nuri al-Maliki's regime in Iraq, the new Iraqi military was less salient in preserving the prime minister's power than in the other three cases. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine there are multiple warring armed guerrilla groups, tribal gangs and criminal cartels not under central government control, attesting to state failure.

Ironically, Egypt, the least democratic of the four, is also the most secure and the least like a failed state.

We may conclude that muscular Wilsonianism failed in the Middle East in part because the candidates chosen by Bush for this exercise were poor candidates. If his, and his advisers', analogy was to the post-Soviet transformations in Eastern Europe, he chose the countries that looked more like Yugoslavia than like Poland. In addition, foreign military occupation was a feature of three of the cases, and in each of the three it provoked guerrilla opposition and suicide bombings of a destabilizing sort (Hamas in Palestine, the Islamic State of Iraq in Iraq, the Taliban and kindred groups in Afghanistan). In Afghanistan the guerrilla opposition preceded the occupation, but it was quiescent for some time after the 2001 war, and it was arguably the US and NATO large military footprint that spurred it to large-scale insurgency again in the second half of the zeroes. Even in Egypt, the military benefited from 30 years of lucrative strategic rent doled out by the US, as a means of supporting American interests in the eastern Mediterranean, so the continued strength of the Egyptian army is in part a by-product of neo-imperialism. In an important dialectic in the other three cases, the antioccupation guerrilla movements impelled the foreigners to train and equip growing and increasingly effective military and security forces in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, and in each case these forces ultimately played relatively

antidemocratic roles. Muscular Wilsonianism fails, where the occupation regime lacks firm control over the occupied society or is unable to coopt significant portions of the public, precisely because the imperial powers then decide they need praetorian allies more than they need genuine democracy.

Not only did Bush's democratization largely fail, it left a series of messes behind for the Obama administration. The Obama team increasingly put an emphasis on enlarging and training the Afghan security forces, over to which it intends to hand the country as soon as possible, and talk of democratization in Kabul has rather declined. Obama seems determined to withdraw militarily, at least in the main, from Iraq, and his administration appears sanguine about a soft coup by al-Maliki, even one supported by Iran. The administration initially ceased pressuring the Mubarak regime to open up, in accordance with its Realist predilections. Obama during his first year and a half invested significant political capital in moving toward a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, but was beholden in that process to the right wing government of Binyamin Netanyahu, as well as to Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah, which made the 2007 coup and are now ruling the West Bank extra-constitutionally. Obama could have pushed for new PA elections when they were due, in January of 2010, but did not. Even the municipal elections scheduled for summer of 2010, which some in Fatah hoped might presage the declaration of a Palestinian

state in 2011, were mysteriously postponed. Obama's keynote has been realism and laying the foundation for American disentanglement from the Middle East, even if in two cases (Afghanistan and Palestine) intensified US efforts, whether military or diplomatic, were felt necessary to lay the foundation for that disengagement.

In one of foreign policy's great ironies, the democratization that the Bush administration made the centerpiece of its Middle East policy failed miserably in 2001-2009, whereas the cautious, Realist Obama administration suddenly found itself face to face with massive instability and popular movements for democracy throughout the region in spring of 2011. There is no obvious connection between the Arab Spring and the Bush projects. Iraq was cited by no activists as a model, and, indeed, twitter feeds from Tahrir Square in Cairo during the uprising against Mubarak often urged that the mistakes made in Iraq be avoided. It was if anything a negative example. The roots of these movements must be sought elsewhere than in Washington think tanks. What does explain this outbreak of democracy?

Arab politics had been stuck in a vast logjam for the past thirty years, from which its crowds are now attempting to blast it loose. The protesters put their fingers on the phenomenon of the vampire state and concluded that before anything important could change, they had to put a stake through its heart.

Under European colonialism the Middle East had a few decades of classic liberal rule in the first half of the twentieth century. Egypt, Iraq and Iran had elected parliaments, prime ministers and popular parties. However, liberal rule was eventually discredited insofar as it proved to be largely a game played by big landlords overly open to the influence and bribery of grasping Western powers. From about the 1950s, the modern one-party states of the Middle East justified themselves through the struggle for independence from those Western colonial empires and the corrupt parliamentary regimes. They undertook land reform, developed big public sectors and promoted state-led industrialization. In recent decades, however, each ruling party, backed by a nationalist officer corps, increasingly became little more than an appendage of the president for life and his extended clan. The massive networks of informers and secret police worked for the interests of the central executive.

Why did the Egyptian state, among others, lose its legitimacy? Max Weber distinguished between power and authority. Power flows from the barrel of a gun, and the Egyptian state still has plenty of those. But Weber defines authority as the likelihood that a command will be obeyed. Leaders who have authority do not have to shoot people. The Mubarak regime had to shoot hundreds, and wound more, in a vain attempt to remain in power. Literally hundreds of thousands of people ignored Mubarak's

command that they observe curfews and stay home. He lost his authority.

Authority is rooted in legitimacy. Leaders are acknowledged because the people agree that there is some legitimate basis for their authority and power. In democratic countries, that legitimacy comes from the ballot box. In Egypt, it derived 1952-1970 from the leading role of the Egyptian military and security forces in freeing Egypt from Western hegemony. That struggle included grappling with Britain to gain control over the Suez Canal (originally built by the Egyptian government and opened in 1869, but bought for a song by the British in 1875 when sharp Western banking practices brought the indebted Egyptian government to the brink of bankruptcy). It also involved fending off aggressive Israeli attempts to occupy the Sinai Peninsula and to assert Israeli interests in the Suez Canal. Revolutionary Arab nationalist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser (d. 1970) conducted extensive land reform, breaking up the huge Central America-style haciendas and creating a rural middle class. Leonard Binder argued in the late 1960s that that rural middle class was the backbone of the regime. Abdul Nasser's state-led industrialization also created a new class of urban contractors who benefited from the building works commissioned by the government.

From 1970, Anwar El Sadat took Egypt in a new direction, opening up the economy and openly siding with the new multimillionaire contracting class.

It in turn was eager for European and American investment. Tired of the fruitless Arab-Israeli wars, the Egyptian public was largely supportive of Sadat's 1978 peace deal with Israel, which ended the cycle of wars with that country and opened the way for the building up of the Egyptian tourist industry and Western investment in it, as well as American and European aid. Egypt was moving to the Right.

Politically, after the Camp David accords, Egypt largely sat out the big struggles in the Mideast, and made what has widely been called a separate peace. While the move may not have been initially unpopular, over time it stoked popular rage. Egypt's cooperation in the Israeli blockade of Gaza and its general quiet alliance with the US and Israel angered most young people politically, even as they racked up economic frustrations. Cairo's behind the scenes help to the US, with Iraq and with torturing suspected al-Qaeda operatives, were well known. Very little is more distasteful to Egyptians than the Iraq War and torture. The Egyptian state went from being broadly based in the 1950s and 1960s to having been captured by a small elite. It went from being a symbol of the striving for dignity and independence after decades of British dominance to being seen as a lap dog of the West.

On the economic front, whereas Abdel Nasser's socialist policies had led to a doubling of the average real wage in Egypt 1960-1970, from 1970 to 2000 there was

no real development in the country. Part of the problem was demographic. If the population grows 3 percent a year and the economy grows 3 percent a year, the per capita increase is zero. Since about 1850, Egypt and most other Middle Eastern countries have been having a (mysterious) population boom. The ever-increasing population also increasingly crowded into the cities, which typically offer high wages than rural work does, even in the marginal economy (e.g. selling matches). Nearly half the country now lives in cities, and even many villages have become 'suburbs' of vast metropolises.

The rural middle class, while still important, is no longer such a weighty support for the regime. A successful government would need to have the ever-increasing numbers of city people on its side. But there, the Neo-liberal policies pressed on Hosni Mubarak by the US since 1981 were unhelpful. Samer Soliman has argued that the Egyptian state of the 1980s, Mubarak's first decade, was oriented toward providing salaries and perquisites to the large class of government employees and those dependent on government expenditures. From the 1990s forward, the state suffered substantial declines in external rents that limited its ability to satisfy this salaried class. Soliman does not deal with the demographic issue, but rapid growth made satisfying the middle and working classes more difficult for the government. Egyptian cities suffer from high unemployment and relatively high inflation. The urban sector has thrown up

a few multimillionaires, but many laborers fell left behind. The enormous number of high school and college graduates produced by the system can seldom find employment suited to their skills, and many cannot get jobs at all. Urban Egypt has rich and poor but only a small “middle class.” The state carefully tries to control labor unions, who could seldom act independently.

The state was thus increasingly seen to be a state for the few. Its old base in the rural middle classes was rapidly declining as young people moved to the cities. It was doing little for the urban working and middle classes. An ostentatious state business class emerged, deeply dependent on government contracts and state good will, and meeting in the fancy tourist hotels. But the masses of high school and college graduates reduced to driving taxis or selling rugs (if they could even get those gigs) were not benefiting from the on-paper growth rates of the past decade.

The failure of the regime to connect with the rapidly growing new urban working and middle classes, and its inability to provide jobs to the masses of college graduates it was creating, set the stage for last week’s events. Educated, white collar people need a rule of law as the framework for their economic activities, and Mubarak’s arbitrary rule is seen as a drag here. While the economy has been growing 5 and 6 percent in the past decade, what government impetus there was to this development remained relatively hidden—unlike its role in the land

reform of the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, the income gained from increased trade largely went to a small class of investors. For instance, from 1991 the government sold 150 of 314 state factories it put on the block, but the benefit of the sales went to a narrow sliver of people.

The world economy's setback in 2008-2009 had a direct and horrible effect on Egyptians living on the edge. Many of the poor got hungrier. Then the downturn in petroleum prices and revenues caused many Egyptian guest workers to lose their economic cushion. They either could no longer send their accustomed remittances, or they had to come back in humiliation.

The Nasserist state, for all its flaws, gained legitimacy because it was seen as a state for the mass of Egyptians, whether abroad or domestically. The present regime is widely seen in Egypt as a state for the others—for the US, Israel, France and the UK—and as a state for the few- the Neoliberal nouveau riche. Islam plays no role in this analysis because it is not an independent variable. Muslim movements have served to protest the withdrawal of the state from its responsibilities, and to provide services. But they are a symptom, not the cause.

These governments took steps in recent decades toward neoliberal policies of privatization and a smaller public sector under pressure from Washington and allied institutions—and the process was often corrupt. The ruling families used their prior knowledge of important economic policy initiatives to engage in a kind of insider trading, advantaging their relatives and buddies.

The wife of Tunisian dictator Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, the notorious former hairdresser Leila Ben Ali, placed her relatives in key business positions enabled by insider government knowledge and licenses that allowed them to dominate the country. The US Embassy in Tunis estimated in 2006 that half the major entrepreneurs in the country were related by blood or marriage to the president. In Egypt, Ahmed Ezz, for example, benefited from his high position in the ruling National Democratic Party and his friendship with Hosni Mubarak's son Gamal. Ezz has been formally charged with usurping control of a government-owned steel concern and of rerouting its products to his own, privately owned Ezz Steel company. In the past decade, Ezz went from controlling 35 percent of the Egyptian steel market to over 60 percent, raising a chorus of accusations of monopoly practices. Since the Mubaraks rigged the elections so that the NDP always won, and the party officials favored by the president prospered, Egypt was ruled by a closed elite.

The policies of these one-party states created widespread anxiety among workers, the unemployed and even entrepreneurs outside the charmed circle, seeming to create an insuperable obstacle to the advancement of the ordinary person. Everyone could be taken advantage of or even expropriated at will by corrupt state elites, who had the backing of the secret police. Workers' strikes were crushed by security police. The presidents even began putting on regal airs and grooming

their sons as successors, ensuring that the family cartels and cronyism would continue into the next generation. The one-party states also pursued distorted development goals. Among their few achievements was the reduction of infant mortality. They put tremendous sums into universities and higher education but inexplicably neglected K-12 education for the rural and urban poor. The result was large numbers of young villagers, slum dwellers and workers with limited opportunities for advancement, and phalanxes of unemployed college graduates.

Fear of the perpetuation of a closed economic and power elite drove Tunisians and Egyptians to focus on driving the Ben Alis and Mubaraks from power. The narrowness of the dominant cliques had disgusted even the regular army officer corps, who in any case were close to the people because they commanded conscript armies. When the crowds came out so determinedly, they declared their neutrality.

Other regional mafia states have scrambled to mollify their publics. Ali Abdullah Saleh, the strongman who has ruled Yemen since 1978, announced that he would not run for yet another term in 2013, and that no attempt would be made to install his son after him. He was trying to deflect the severe criticisms of his nepotism (his half-brother is head of the air force, and nephews are highly placed in the security apparatus). These pledges were code for ending the dominance of the state and economy by relatives and friends of Saleh. The nepotism and

corruption of the ruling clique in Yemen is all the more explosive because the country is already deeply divided. The tribal north has a different history from the south, which had a lively worker movement and even, briefly, a communist government before Saleh forcibly unified the two in 1990. Religious and tribal rebellions, as with the Zaydi Shiite Houthis in the north and a radical Islamist tendency in the rural south, make Yemen anything but stable. The country's declining petroleum revenues and its increasing water crisis make the economic pie even smaller, increasing public disgust with the Saleh cartel. Having the government and the economy in the hands of an unrepresentative and greedy clique is a recipe for further unrest.

Likewise, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki said he would not seek another term; his opponents have charged him with operating secret torture cells and a private army, and aspiring to become another corrupt strongman. Since Iraq's petroleum riches are in government hands, it would be easy for a few key cabinet members to use them for sectional and even private purposes, a source of constant anxiety among Iraq's suffering populace, which lacks electricity and even, often, potable water.

Algeria's corrupt state petroleum elite, represented by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, is also being targeted by street crowds. The country's ruling generals had allowed a Muslim fundamentalist party, the Islamic Salvation Front, to run in the 1991 parliamentary elections, on the theory

that it would not win. When the fundamentalists took a two-thirds majority, the generals canceled the runoff and threw the country into a vicious civil war between secular urban elites and lower-middle-class or rural fundamentalists that took an estimated 150,000 lives. Because the generals won the civil war, and the army stands behind the regime, it is harder for the urban crowds to gain traction. In Tunisia and Egypt, there was no similar history of rancor between people and army, and no fear on the part of the officer corps that they would be tried and executed if the government was overthrown. In addition, the Algerian petroleum state, like the Gulf oil monarchies, has the resources to bribe much of the public into quiescence or to deploy well-paid and loyal security forces when the bribe does not work (as seems to be the case in Bahrain, where the Sunni monarchy has chosen violent repression of the restive Shiite majority).

In Egypt and Tunisia, once the ruling families were gone, the interim governments promptly froze the accounts of regime cronies and in many instances initiated legal proceedings against them. Seeing the writing on the wall, the ambitious resigned en masse from the now notorious former ruling party; the RCD in Tunisia was dissolved altogether.

Among the groups that made the revolutions demanding more democracy in Tunisia and Egypt (where these demands may have some hope of being met) were workers, women and youth. All the talk about the role of Facebook

and Twitter and other new media in enabling the popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Algeria has took the focus off a major player in these dramatic events: the labor movement. While university-educated new middle classes have played a key role in organizing the protests and mobilizing youths, they are typically tightly connected with labor syndicates and blue collar workers, whether urban or rural. Many of the key demands of the movement have to do with pay equity and living conditions for the working poor and the unemployed. Ignoring this central element in the revolts leads many U.S. observers to misunderstand their significance and to obsess about Muslim fundamentalism. In the midst of the uproar at Cairo's downtown Tahrir ("Liberation") Square, a new umbrella labor organization was formed, the Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions, and welcomed by the United States' AFL-CIO. It united white collar and blue collar workers on the need for reform of the Egyptian state, and seeks to supplant the state-controlled Federation of Trade Unions. Among the actions supporting the crowds were effective labor strikes that closed factories and offices, freeing workers to demonstrate.

The unrest in Egypt in some ways can be traced to the attempt of workers at the state-run textile factories of al-Mahalla al-Kubra just outside Cairo to launch a major strike on April 6, 2008. The idea spread elsewhere in the country, promoted by computer-literate working class youths and their supporters among middle-class

college students. A Facebook page set up to promote the strike attracted tens of thousands of followers. The authoritarian state mobilized to break the strike, infiltrating the factories with plainclothes security men, lining streets in downtown Cairo and elsewhere with phalanxes of riot police, and warning strikers and their supporters of three years in prison for participating. The fundamentalist party, the Muslim Brotherhood, which skews to the right on social issues, declined to support the movement, and lost credibility with many of the youths as a result.

Although the regime had some success in forestalling a successful outcome that time, an “April 6 Committee” of youths and labor activists was formed and continued to plan and agitate. They were among the major forces calling for the big demonstration on Jan. 25 at Tahrir Square that brought down the Egyptian Cabinet and placed a question mark over the government’s future. There have been more than 3,000 labor actions since 2004 in Egypt, where manufacturing now accounts for about a quarter of the economy. Recent years have given workers reason to be unhappy. The 2008-09 banking crisis in the West hurt North Africa and the Middle East by slowing trade and tourism. Some 20 percent of Egyptians already lived below the poverty line, and another fifth lived just above that line and were vulnerable to going under. Growth in the gross domestic product fell from over 7 percent in 2007-08 to only 4 percent in 2008-09. Galloping inflation rates as high as 25 percent hurt workers. The fall in petroleum prices accompanying the economic

downturn meant that the 3 million Egyptian workers abroad, many in oil states, either had to come home in humiliation or at the very least could not send back home as much money as before.

Unemployment rose to about 25 percent for ages 15-25 in the last quarter of 2008, and the ability of the economy to create jobs was much weakened. The Egyptian stock market lost about half its value in 2008 alone, making it one of the worst affected by the crisis, along with Dubai and the Russian Federation.

Declining living standards and the labor movement that inspired the mass protests in Egypt also were at the core of the Tunisian Revolution. That revolt was sparked by a young vegetable seller setting himself on fire when his permit was withdrawn by the government. Because he was rumored to be educated, the story of Mohamad Bouazizi's self-immolation enraged Tunisians living on the edge throughout the country.

In Tunisia, unemployment was estimated at 13 percent overall in 2009, but at more like 22 percent for university graduates, and nearly a third of all young people ages 15-29 were without jobs. After reaching 6 percent a year in 2007, economic growth was shaved to 3 percent once the crisis hit. Many families depended on remittances from the 650,000 Tunisian workers who had emigrated, often to Western Europe, where the economy crashed. The sums they sent back to households in Tunisia are estimated to have fallen 10 percent. Tourism, investment and exports of manufacturers were all also

hurt. Although the region was as badly affected as some others, many families were already living on the edge, and any downturn pushed them off it.

In January, once the popular protests spread from rural towns to the capital, the major union, the UGTT, swung around and supported the movement, probably, some observers have argued, as a result of the pressure that union officials felt from the rank and file. Although the UGTT initially accepted Cabinet posts in the interim government after the dictator Ben Ali fled in mid-January, they quickly reversed themselves when it became clear that members of Ben Ali's party would remain at the helm. This old, established union, once somewhat co-opted by the regime, has become part of the movement for a new and more equitable Tunisia. This labor movement has helped change the government in Tunisia, and it reinspired the repressed Egyptian April 6 labor movement, which called the Jan. 25 mass demonstrations in emulation of the Tunisian workers and students.

The technique used to open up politics in the Arab Spring in a way that eluded George W. Bush has been the flashmob, the cascade, and blackmailing the elite. Youth movements and office and factory workers used social media such as Facebook and Twitter to call for demonstrations at particular times and places, creating enormous flashmobs or spontaneous gatherings of physical crowds impelled by a spontaneous internet call to assemble. The flashmobs technique eluded many procedures of the security police because of their unpredictability

and dependence on non-transparent networks. In addition, the size of the resultant crowds was enormous and unpredictable. The more people in the street, the less likely it was that any particular person would be in danger. And, a tipping point was reached that produced a cascade. That is, 30,000 people in the street might not inspire the masses to join, but 40,000 might. Previous demonstrations never reached the tipping point and so never produced a cascade. When the movement showed itself able to consistently put tens and even hundreds of thousands of people in the streets, and in many cities around the country, it was able to paralyze the economy and so threaten elite interests. The crowds gave the elite a choice between having the army fire on them or pushing out the narrow mafia-like families and networks of cronies that dominated the upper echelons of the power structure. In Tunisia, where the army was small and poorly equipped, and in Egypt, where the vast majority of troops were conscripts in for three years, using the military against the crowds was politically undesirable. The US also did have some influence with the Egyptian officer corps and appears to have pressured it to avoid a bloodbath. In those two countries, then the crowds more or less provoked a coup by other members of the elite against the presidents for life and their families and associates. They demanded a transition to liberal, parliamentary democracy in the aftermath. In Libya, Bahrain and Syria, as I write in late April, 2011, the elite and the military in the capital proved cohesive enough to attempt

to repress the protesters. Yemen looks as though it may follow the pattern of Tunisia and Egypt. Morocco saw smaller protests but its elites are nevertheless speaking of a move toward constitutional monarchy. So far only minor reforms are envisioned in Algeria and Jordan. The two cases, Bush's projects and the Arab Spring, are not directly comparable as yet since the latter has been about initiating rather than successfully accomplishing a democratic transition. Differences of income or the impact of commodity rent and of ethnic divisions have not been central to explaining why the transition begins, but may come into play over time where one is attempted.

Many among the demonstrators in the Arab world, whether union organizers, villagers or college graduates, seem to believe that once the lead log in the logjam is removed—i.e. once the narrow, mafia-like elites at the top are removed—the economy will return to normal and opportunities for advancement will open up to all. They have put their hopes in free and fair parliamentary elections, so that the Middle East may be swinging back to a new liberal period, formally resembling that of the 1930s and '40s. If these aspirations for open politics and economic opportunity are blocked again, as they were by the hacienda owners and Western proconsuls of the mid-twentieth century, the Arab masses may turn to more desperate, and dangerous, alternatives.

Algérie: rente pétrolière, contestation sociale et violence islamiste

Luis Martinez

Comme le souligne El Houssain Abouchi: “Presque plus de quarante ans après les indépendances des États maghrébins, le problème de la démocratie, au-delà de celui de la recherche et de l’instauration d’un État stable et d’un système politique ayant l’accord de toutes les composantes politiques et sociologiques, est à l’ordre du jour.”¹ Les espoirs placés dans la décennie 1990 se sont dissipés pour laisser la place à une décennie perdue: celle de la guerre civile en Algérie, celle des sanctions internationales en Libye. Les élections organisées au cours

1 “Démocratie et gouvernance de la politique électorale en Afrique du Nord” (<http://www.francophonie-durable.org>).

de cette période n'ont pas donné naissance à un moment fondateur porteur d'un processus de démocratisation. Les "designs institutionnels" échafaudés par les régimes n'ont pas provoqué un "déraillement démocratique"² inattendu et imprévisible, mais salubre. De même, la libéralisation économique n'a pas permis l'émergence de pouvoirs concurrentiels; elle a davantage favorisé une consolidation des régimes autoritaires,³ régimes qui ont démontré leur robustesse et provoqué un sentiment d'impuissance quant à leur évolution vers la démocratie. Sursaut salutaire, les révoltes en Tunisie et en Egypte laissent espérer une transition vers la démocratie.

En Algérie, le troisième choc pétrolier a permis de restaurer un État qui a disparu entre 1994 et 1998, selon A. Bouteflika. Lors de son avènement à la présidence en 1999, les caisses de l'État sont vides et le pouvoir est dispersé entre des généraux vainqueurs de la guerre civile. Rapatrié pour restaurer la paix civile dans une Algérie dévastée,⁴ A. Bouteflika a bénéficié de la montée

2 Jean-Noël Ferrière, "Les limites d'une démocratisation par la société civile en Afrique du Nord", *Maghreb-Machrek*, n. 175, 2003.

3 E. Kienle, "Libéralisation économique et délibération politique: le nouveau visage de l'autoritarisme", dans O. Dabène, V. Geisser et G. Massardier (dir.), *Autoritarismes démocratiques et démocraties autoritaires au XXI^e siècle*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.

4 M. R. Lowi, "War-Torn or Systemically Distorted? Rebuilding the Algerian Economy", dans Leonard Binder (ed.), *Rebuilding Devastated Economies in the Middle East*, *op. cit.*

inattendue et inespérée du prix du baril de pétrole. Ce renouveau pétrolier n'a pas pour autant fait disparaître les problèmes de la violence sociale et politique. Des émeutes en Kabylie, en 2001, à la révolte des Mozabites, en 2009, la société algérienne est régulièrement secouée par des violences sociales et ethniques qui lui rappellent la vulnérabilité de sa cohésion. De plus, si la guerre civile s'est éloignée, ses produits dérivés continuent à prospérer. Ainsi, l'installation du conseil consultatif d'al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique (AQMI) dans le sud algérien a des conséquences meurtrières. Pour la première fois en Algérie, la technique de l'attentat suicide est intégrée dans le dispositif de guerre contre le régime.⁵ Le jeudi 6 septembre 2007, un attentat suicide a visé le cortège du président dans la ville de Batna (vingt-deux morts et plus de cent blessés). Le samedi 8, un autre a eu lieu contre la caserne des gardes-côtes à Dellys: il a été perpétré par un adolescent de 15 ans, le bilan est de vingt-huit morts. Le 11 avril, une triple attaque a provoqué à Alger trente morts et deux cent vingt blessés. Un communiqué d'al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique explique:

5 Dans une interview à *Echourouk El Youmi* du 5 juillet 2009, Hassan Hattab, l'ancien chef du Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat (GSPC), affirme que son groupe, affilié formellement à cette organisation, a toujours refusé les attaques suicides, pourtant revendiquées par al-Qaida! Affirmation qui relance la thèse de la manipulation de l'AQMI par les services de sécurité algériens.

Nous disons aux renégats et à leurs maîtres croisés: recevez la nouvelle de la venue des jeunes combattants de l'islam qui aiment la mort et le martyr comme vous aimez la vie de débauche et de délinquant; par Allah, nous ne déposerons pas nos épées ni ne savourerons la vie, jusqu'à ce que nous libérions chaque pouce de la terre d'islam de tout croisé et de tout renégat et collaborateur (avec l'ennemi) et jusqu'à ce que nos pieds foulent notre Andalousie perdue et notre Jérusalem bafouée.

RENTE PÉTROLIÈRE ET RÉCONCILIATION NATIONALE

Grâce à la hausse vertigineuse du prix du pétrole entre 2002 et 2008, le gouvernement dispose, en 2008, d'un fonds de 140 milliards de dollars en réserves. En 2007, les recettes des exportations ont atteint le montant de 57 milliards de dollars et, en 2008, le record de 81 milliards de dollars. Jamais, depuis le début de sa jeune histoire, l'État n'a eu autant de ressources financières. Le troisième choc pétrolier a permis de rembourser rapidement la dette,⁶ de relancer les grands chantiers dans les infrastructures civiles et surtout de refonder un semblant de cohésion nationale mise à mal par les années de guerre civile. Dans un contexte de croissance économique et d'abondance financière retrouvée (le PIB par habitant est passé de 1.600 dollars par an et par habitant

6 La dette extérieure s'élevait en 1998 à 30,47 milliards de dollars, elle représentait 63,2% du PIB. En 2008, après remboursement anticipée, elle s'élevait à 4 milliards de dollars et ne représentait plus que 2,39% du PIB. "Algeria Country Forecast", *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 1^{er} juillet 2008.

en 1999 à 3.400 dollars en 2008, sans compter une réduction massive du chômage, qui est passé de 30% à 13%⁷), la présidence d'A. Boutefflika est devenue synonyme de prospérité et de confiance retrouvée du fait du retour de la bienfaisance de l'État. Alors que les Algériens se sont violemment opposés sur l'identité de l'État et son devenir, ils sont aujourd'hui conviés à retrouver le chemin de la paix civile afin de mettre un terme à la "tragédie":

Vous savez, je ne pense pas être félicité pour faire un miracle. J'essaye d'intervenir avec un minimum de bon sens pour examiner une tragédie qui va bientôt avoir huit ans. Mon sentiment personnel est qu'il faut bien que les choses cessent. Ce n'est pas parce que nous aurons deux cent mille morts ou trois cent mille morts et trois millions de victimes du terrorisme que la vie sera meilleure. Il faut donc, à un moment ou à un autre, arrêter les frais. J'essaye de trouver une petite voie difficile à travers beaucoup d'écueils.⁸

Avec "bon sens", la présidence a organisé la mise en œuvre d'une réconciliation nationale fondée, non pas sur le souci de rendre justice aux victimes ou sur celui de dire la vérité, mais sur la préoccupation de tourner la page, d'oublier la tragédie.

La politique de réconciliation nationale a été articulée autour de la réintégration des milliers de combattants issus des maquis islamistes, de la démilitarisation des milices, de l'indemnisation des familles de victimes et de

7 "Political Risk Services", *Algeria Databank*, 1^{er} décembre 2008, p. 6.

8 Entretien accordé à la chaîne de radio RFI, 17 juillet 1999.

l'amnistie pour les défenseurs de l'État.⁹ Les lois sur la concorde civile ont pavé le chemin du retour vers la vie civile des six mille maquisards islamistes qui ont accepté de déposer les armes en contrepartie d'une amnistie. Cette politique, fondée sur l'amnésie, permet au régime de faire l'économie d'une commission vérité et justice trop longue au profit d'une approche à court terme visant à réduire l'intensité de la violence. Parallèlement, le grand défi du régime est l'intégration des cinq cent mille personnes qui ont été armées et qui forment les groupes de légitime défense (GLD) et les gardes communaux.¹⁰ L'augmentation des revenus pétroliers est une véritable aubaine pour le régime car, dans un contexte de chômage massif, leur difficile intégration économique et sociale aurait pu provoquer de sérieux problèmes d'instabilité. Le retour de la croissance économique a favorisé la création d'emplois, en particulier dans le secteur de la sécurité, avec la floraison d'entreprises privées de gardiennage et de protection, facilitant le recyclage de ces miliciens. Une partie de ces milices, disposant de puissants réseaux, a cherché à maximiser ses gains dans l'après guerre civile. Ainsi, les patriotes de l'Est (environ dix-sept mille miliciens) ont lancé l'initiative de constitution des "as-sises nationales des patriotes" afin de discuter du "constat

9 L. Martinez, "Guerre et paix: les étapes de la réconciliation nationale", *AAN*, tome XXXVII, 1998, p. 105-23.

10 *Le Journal Indépendant*, 11 octobre 2001.

d'échec de la concorde civile".¹¹ Après dix années de militarisation de la société, la question posée a été celle de la capacité du gouvernement à contrôler et à réguler l'influence de ces milices; les revenus pétroliers ont permis de satisfaire une partie de leurs revendications. Enfin, il restait au régime à indemniser les familles de victimes et de disparus. La question des disparus¹² illustre les difficultés à appliquer la politique de réconciliation nationale, car celle-ci s'adresse tout d'abord aux vivants (combattants islamistes, défenseurs de l'État accusés de violation des droits humains): les disparus n'ont pas de place dans cette politique; de plus, ils rappellent des méthodes expéditives et peu respectueuses des droits humains utilisées par le régime. Bien que ce dernier ait tenté de démontrer que l'armée et ses services avaient mené "une guerre propre", la question des disparus a soulevé le débat sur la méthode et le coût politique et humain de la victoire contre le FIS et les groupes armés. Aussi, pour mettre un terme à ce problème, Farouk Ksentini, président de la Commission consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme (CNCPPDH), précise dans une interview qu'il préconise d'indemniser les familles de disparus à hauteur de

11 *Le Matin*, 18 juillet 2002.

12 La Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme (CNCPPDH) affirme avoir reçu 4.753 dossiers de familles de disparus. La LIDH estime à dix mille le nombre réel des disparus.

“100 millions de centimes, plus un acte de décès, pour clore le dossier des disparus”!¹³

Le succès de cette politique de réconciliation nationale a reposé sur le lancement d'un ambitieux programme qui a fait sortir l'Algérie de son marasme économique. Aux défis de la réintégration des combattants islamistes et anti-islamistes, s'est ajoutée l'intégration économique et sociale d'une partie de la population active, car, sur les 8,7 millions de personnes la composant, 2,5 millions étaient au chômage en 2000 (27%). Alarmistes, les prévisions du FMI à l'horizon 2010 n'hésitent pas à annoncer un taux de chômage de 37% si le taux de croissance hors hydrocarbure demeure inférieur à 7%. Les revenus du troisième choc pétrolier ont servi à la fois à financer le retour à la paix civile et à l'achat de la paix sociale. Le plan triennal de soutien à la relance de l'économie (2001-2004) a eu pour ambition de relancer les investissements, 7 milliards de dollars, après une décennie de fuite des capitaux:

Nous n'avons jamais dit, souligne le Premier ministre Ali Benflis, que ce programme allait rendre l'Algérie prospère du jour au lendemain. Ce sont les entreprises qui créent la richesse. Il ne faut pas oublier que ce plan intervient après dix années de terrorisme, de destructions. Quoi que vous fassiez, il paraîtra toujours insuffisant au regard de l'océan de demandes auxquelles il faut répondre.¹⁴

13 *Echourouk El Yaoumi*, 3 novembre 2001.

14 “L'intelligent”, *Jeune Afrique*, 2186, décembre 2002.

Face aux besoins, une économie informelle florissante a pris la relève du retrait de l'État. Cette économie non observée représente, en 2005, 16 à 17% du PIB et emploie 50% de la population active. Présente dès la période coloniale, elle s'est amplifiée à partir des années 1970 en raison de la rigidité de l'économie, de l'offre en particulier. Les produits à prix administrés sont revenus par exemple sur le marché parallèle. De même, le monopole du commerce extérieur augmente les opportunités de le contourner. Pour les autorités algériennes, la priorité est le secteur industriel qui représente le secteur public: le secteur privé est abandonné au commerce informel. Or, 70% de la valeur ajoutée hors hydrocarbures est produite par le secteur privé. Le marché informel s'est développé dans la distribution principalement: les produits importés par les quarante-cinq mille sociétés d'import-export sont redistribués à des commerçants privés locaux grâce aux réseaux de l'économie informelle. D'autres secteurs sont profondément touchés: l'agriculture, le BTP, le foncier et l'immobilier.¹⁵ L'emploi informel est estimé, en 1985, à 25% de l'emploi total hors agriculture, il est passé à 29% en 1982, puis à 33% en 1997 et à plus de 40% en 2001!

Les activités informelles qui ont investi en particulier l'artisanat de service et la distribution sont appelées à se maintenir dans

15 N. E. Hammouda, "Secteur et emploi informel en Algérie", dans M. S. Musette et J. Charmes (dir.), *Informalisation des économies maghrébines*, Alger, Cread, 2006.

l'avenir tant que les réformes de libéralisation ne seront pas totalement achevées, que le secteur privé déclaré n'a pas atteint le niveau d'investissement lui permettant d'impulser fortement et durablement l'offre d'emplois et que le taux de chômage ne sera pas descendu à un niveau acceptable.¹⁶

Alors qu'en 2008, la Sonatrach est devenue la plus grande et lucrative compagnie pétrolière du continent africain (elle a engrangé 81 milliards de dollars, après les 57 milliards en 2007),¹⁷ l'économie rentière n'a profité qu'à "six cent mille à huit cent mille" personnes.¹⁸ En mai 2008, le ministre de l'Énergie, Chakib Khalil, a annoncé que la Sonatrach investirait dans les années à venir 45 milliards de dollars, pour atteindre les 2 millions de barils par jour et les 85 millions de mètres cubes de gaz. Cette entreprise est à nouveau la locomotive d'une économie qui peine à se diversifier: 98% des revenus extérieurs proviennent du secteur des hydrocarbures; jamais l'Algérie n'a été aussi dépendante. La crise du logement n'est plus aussi aiguë et l'amélioration des infrastructures routières est patente. La société des Émirats arabes unis Emaar Properties investira 30 milliards de dollars sur douze ans dans des *health care city* et dans des projets touristiques: le gouvernement prévoit d'atteindre 1,2 million de visiteurs étrangers à partir de 2010, le Maroc

16 "Alger, Marché du travail et emploi en Algérie", *Rapport de l'Organisation internationale du travail*, octobre 2003, p. 43.

17 "Political Risk Services", *Algeria Country Forecast*, 1^{er} juillet 2008, p. 13.

18 ICG, 2001, *Algeria's Economy*, <http://www.crisisweb.org>, p. 10.

ambitionne les 10 millions... Comme dans les années 1970, l'Algérie est un grand chantier. Mais, à la différence du passé, ce sont des entreprises chinoises et des salariés chinois qui assurent dans des délais records la livraison des produits commandés. Car, entre-temps, l'Algérie s'est désindustrialisée et ne dispose plus de diplômés qualifiés en nombre suffisant: la rente pétrolière passée a détruit le capital humain en faisant fuir "les cerveaux".

La richesse pétrolière retrouvée permet à l'Algérie de redonner de la voix sur la scène régionale et internationale et de réapparaître comme un marché émergent attractif pour les investisseurs. Pour les Algériens, la présidence d'A. Bouteflika signifie d'abord un semblant de retour de l'État après le règne des mafias. L'affaire Khali-fa a illustré l'audace de ceux qui, à découvert, se sont permis de blanchir leurs capitaux accumulés durant la décennie de violence.¹⁹ Les campagnes contre la corruption lancées dans la foulée de cette affaire s'inscrivent dans une mise en scène du retour de l'État. Entre 1999 et 2009, A. Bouteflika, aidé par le prix du pétrole, est parvenu à

19 L'affaire Khalifa concerne l'ascension fulgurante du groupe Rafik Khalifa (banque et transports) dans les années 1990. Le groupe sera accusé du blanchiment de l'argent des généraux. Réfutant cette thèse, A. Belkaid écrit: "avec des moyens financiers considérables, un soutien politique sans faille jusqu'au moins 2002, la sympathie des milieux d'affaires occidentaux, Khalifa avait la possibilité de bâtir un groupe puissant et crédible, comparable à ceux des oligarques russes", dans A. Belkaid, *Un regard calme sur l'Algérie*, Paris, Seuil, 2005.

restaurer, si ce n'est la légitimité des institutions, un retour à l'ordre dans les affaires. Cependant, sa volonté de poursuivre en 2009 "l'œuvre" entamée en 1999 soulève des doutes et des inquiétudes. Son écrasante victoire à l'élection présidentielle de mai 2009 était prévisible (90% de votes en sa faveur), les rivaux du président candidat ne disposant ni de l'appareil d'État ni de la logistique d'un grand parti politique populaire. L'élection ne pouvait que se traduire par un plébiscite. Le président souhaite faire revivre la fiction d'un président populaire sur le modèle de Houari Boumediene (1965-1979). Aussi, l'enjeu de l'élection a porté davantage sur le taux de participation. Le taux officiel de participation, 74,11%, a soulevé des interrogations sur sa fiabilité. En 1999, le "vote Bouteflika" s'expliquait par la volonté de tourner la page des années de violence, d'oublier le drame de la guerre civile. En 2009, le plébiscite présidentiel a consisté à faire croire qu'il n'y a pas de vide politique, que la nation dispose d'un chef d'État fortement soutenu par sa population: avec le retour de l'abondance financière, A. Bouteflika fait resurgir le "boumediénisme". Pourtant comme le soulignent certains observateurs, avec un cours inférieur à 70 dollars au-delà de 2011, "l'économie algérienne serait confrontée à un véritable séisme, pouvant entraîner des licenciements massifs".²⁰ Depuis 1999,

20 Chems Eddine Chitour, "Troisième contrechoc pétrolier. Que doit faire l'Algérie?", *L'Expression*, 24 novembre 2008.

à l'exception du remboursement de la dette, l'Algérie de Bouteflika n'a pas su sortir de la dépendance énergétique. Préoccupé, à juste titre, par la réconciliation nationale après la guerre civile (1991-1999), le président a mis en œuvre une politique d'amnésie qui a fonctionné: le drame de la guerre civile est enfoui dans la mémoire collective et il se dégage un accord tacite pour ne pas le faire resurgir. La peur des responsabilités mutuelles a paralysé les protagonistes d'hier. C'est une plaie qui s'est refermée sans avoir été désinfectée... Le souci du président d'entrer dans l'histoire comme le "sauveur" de l'Algérie cache l'incapacité de bâtir des institutions politiques légitimes. Le renouveau du clientélisme peut fonctionner momentanément grâce aux revenus du pétrole. Mais les problèmes demeurent toujours: dépendance pétrolière, faiblesse des institutions, chômage, corruption, etc. Autant d'ingrédients qui sapent les bases de stabilité future. L'Algérie n'est pas la Tunisie et l'État n'a ni les moyens de contraindre la population ni les compétences pour lui offrir de meilleures conditions de vie. Sans institution démocratique, ni opposition légitime, la fiction du plébiscite présidentiel ne fera que retarder la confrontation de l'Algérie à ses défis. La restauration de "la grandeur passée" sous la présidence d'A. Bouteflika ne répond que partiellement aux problèmes de l'Algérie. Si cette politique s'est traduite par une amélioration de la sécurité, elle n'a pas convaincu les citoyens lors des rencontres entre le peuple et ses représentants que sont

les élections. La très forte abstention lors des scrutins montre que, pour les électeurs algériens, les partis politiques sont dans l'incapacité de représenter la société; ils apparaissent comme des instruments au service d'un système qui leur accorde une marge de manœuvre bien réduite. Ainsi, plus que le troisième choc pétrolier, c'est l'absence d'institutions démocratiques qui alimente les inquiétudes car, comme le souligne le sociologue Zoubir Arous, le risque est grand: "Il n'y a plus de forces organisées capables de mener des changements pacifiques. C'est donc la voie ouverte au changement par le chaos."²¹ Lors des élections législatives de mai 2007, les éditorialistes ont souligné l'urgence de restaurer le lien entre électeurs et dirigeants politiques. Or, le taux national de participation a été de 35,51%, soit l'un des plus faibles enregistrés officiellement depuis l'indépendance en 1962. Pis encore, le taux "réel" de participation aurait été inférieur à 20%, selon le premier secrétaire du Front des forces socialistes (FFS), Karim Tabou, qui avait appelé au boycott. En fait, dans une chronique pertinente "Voter pour qui, pourquoi?"²² un éditorialiste algérien souligne que les électeurs

sanctionnent l'absence de politique et la transformation des partis en simples appareils et courroies du système... Cela suppose que l'on sorte des logiques de façade pour aller vers une démocratisation réelle et effective.

21 *El Watan*, 20 mai 2007.

22 *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 19 mai 2007.

La très forte abstention a montré l'incapacité des partis politiques à mobiliser des électeurs, les partis politiques apparaissant comme un instrument au service d'un système clientéliste qui ne répond plus aux attentes. Ce désintérêt a été d'autant plus surprenant pour le gouvernement que ses résultats économiques dépassent les prévisions les plus optimistes. Avec un plan de relance économique de 140 milliards de dollars en cinq ans (2004-2009), un taux de croissance moyen de 4,9%, un accroissement de 92% du PIB et de 29% du revenu par habitant, une baisse du chômage de 11%, les partis gouvernementaux auraient dû soulever un vent d'enthousiasme... Or, l'inverse s'est produit, le FLN, par exemple, ayant perdu des sièges. C'est dire que, pour les électeurs, les performances récentes de l'économie algérienne ne semblent pas un gage de développement durable, mais un effet de la montée du prix du baril. L'Algérie s'est enrichie, néanmoins ses dirigeants ne sont pas parvenus à convaincre les citoyens qu'ils en sont les premiers bénéficiaires. La redistribution paternaliste de la rente pétrolière ne fait plus recette, elle peut néanmoins continuer à alimenter un cercle restreint d'électeurs dans le cadre d'un système clientéliste.²³ Contre toute attente l'Algérie ne se soulève pas. En dépit des centaines de manifestation qui ont eu lieu (2000 pour l'année 2010), aucune

23 M. Hachemaoui, "Permanences du jeu politique en Algérie", *Politique étrangère*, n. 2, 2009.

ne s'est transformée en mouvement de masse: pour la plus part, elles sont sectorielles et réclament non le départ de Bouteflika mais des augmentations de salaires! Alors que l'on cherche à comprendre comment la Tunisie et l'Egypte sont parvenues de façon inattendue à chasser leurs présidents respectifs, on s'interroge sur l'incapacité de l'Algérie à produire une action collective pacifique à même de la faire basculer dans le camp des pays en transition. Trois facteurs structurels expliquent les raisons la retenue algérienne.

Le traumatisme de la guerre civile hante toujours les familles algériennes qui ne souhaitent pas s'engager dans un processus de contestation politique par crainte d'une régression vers une situation de violence. A la différence de la Tunisie et de l'Egypte, les jeunes ne bénéficient pas, s'ils manifestent, de la compréhension sympathique des parents. Les autorités algériennes exploitent habilement la peur des familles de voir l'Algérie à nouveau basculer dans la violence. Le deuxième facteur, qui distingue l'Algérie, et que l'on ne croit pas que le départ de Bouteflika annoncerait le début de la démocratie. Les révoltes du début des années 1990 ont envoyé Chadli Bendjedid en résidence surveillée, il l'est toujours et l'Algérie n'est pas pour autant démocratique. Chacun mesure que le Président n'est qu'une partie du pouvoir et que sans l'armée il ne saurait y avoir de transition véritable. Quant à l'idée de combattre l'armée, elle n'est plus exprimée par personne depuis la défaite de la guérilla islamiste. Enfin,

la passion du politique qui caractérisait l'Algérie et qui en avait fait un pays précurseur dans la transition démocratique (1989-91), s'est éteinte. La guerre civile a broyé la classe politique. Les vainqueurs ont construit un système clientéliste dont la fonction n'est pas de prendre en charge les doléances de la population mais de consolider des privilèges et des prérogatives. Pour la population, les partis ne servent à plus rien. La présidence de Bouteflika s'est construite sur le retour de "l'homme providentiel" et non sur l'édification d'institutions politiques capables d'aider la société algérienne à résoudre de façon pacifique ces conflits. La population a très bien compris cela aussi, elle ne réclame pas son départ mais les surplus de la rente pétrolière.

Et pourtant, le dernier discours du président Abdelaziz Bouteflika confirme les inquiétudes sur l'état de sa santé. Considéré depuis quelques mois comme malade, affaibli, vulnérable, Abdelaziz Bouteflika semble, en apparence, être une victime facile mais en apparence seulement car le régime qu'il incarne dispose de très sérieux atouts pour résister à une lame de fond démocratique. Le ministère de l'Intérieur, en particulier, dispose d'une très grande expérience en matière de gestion des manifestations, émeutes et révoltes puisque l'Algérie est secouée par des révoltes depuis les années quatre-vingt. Les effectifs de la police s'élèvent, en effet, à 200.000 hommes bien équipés, qui bénéficient de moyens considérables. Depuis la présidence de Bouteflika, la DGSN

(Direction générale de la sûreté nationale) rivalise avec les services tout puissants de l'armée. Une révolution sécuritaire s'est opérée en Algérie, à l'insu de tous et désormais, l'armée n'a plus le monopole des moyens de contrôle et de coercition. Cette montée en puissance de la DGSN explique, pour certains observateurs, l'assassinat de son directeur, le 25 février 2010. Au niveau international, à la différence de la Tunisie et de l'Égypte, le régime algérien dispose d'une rente pétrolière qui le préserve des pressions que pourraient exercer ses partenaires économiques puisque 10% de l'approvisionnement en gaz de l'Union européenne (UE) proviennent de l'Algérie. Ses ressources ne dépendent, ni de l'industrie touristique ni de la rente du canal de Suez; elle ne reçoit pas, non plus, le type d'aide que fournit l'armée américaine à l'armée égyptienne en 2010, 1.3 milliards de dollars d'aide militaire et 250 millions de dollars d'aide économique. De plus, la guerre en Libye lui permet de souligner les dérives possibles d'une révolte populaire et en particulier les ingérences internationales. Si la Libye est un repoussoir pour la société algérienne, le Maroc est sans doute un espoir. Les réformes promises par le Roi Mohammed VI, obligent l'Algérie à se réformer également: prise entre la révolution démocratique en Tunisie et les réformes constitutionnelles au Maroc, l'Algérie ne pourra demeurer longtemps dans ce calme trompeur.

Reconstructing Libya: From Jamahiriyya to Democracy?

Dirk Vandewalle

What started out as a popular uprising in mid-February 2011 in the eastern part of Libya against Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi soon turned into a stalemate that pitted loyalists around Qadhafi against a broad-ranging coalition of Libyan citizens. By mid-May 2011, as the stalemate in the civil war continued, a number of plausible scenarios had emerged.¹ In light of the country's tortured history,

¹ An earlier version of this more speculative appraisal of the Qadhafi regime's future appeared as "Libya's Divisions" in *Newsweek*, 17 April 2011. See also my "After Gaddafi," *Newsweek*, 7 March 2011, "The Reconstruction of Libya: Local and International Constraints and Opportunities," testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 6 April 2011; To The Shores of Tripoli," *Foreign Affairs*, March 2011.

none appeared likely to resolve the country's longstanding divisions and fissures that had been kept unaddressed during the Qadhafi period.² The first involved a more intense support for the rebels who, aided by NATO power, could steadily move westward and unify the country by overpowering the western province of Tripolitania. In light of the checkered history between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, this scenario would undoubtedly open up old wounds. When the Kingdom of Libya was created in 1951, Tripolitania resentfully agreed to be pushed together by the Great Powers into a single political entity ruled by a monarchy with its roots in Cyrenaica. The resentment within Tripolitania, where support for Qadhafi was traditionally strongest, would be enormous if once more a government were foisted upon it either by a Cyrenaican-led rebel movement or through the support of the international community.

A second scenario was to simply allow Libya to separate into two smaller states, focused around Tripolitania in the west, and around Cyrenaica in the east. This would have necessitated a longstanding commitment from the international coalition to protect Cyrenaica—certainly

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2 See in particular Chapter 3 of my *A History of Modern Libya*, Cornell University Press, First Edition, 2006.

not a prospect either the United States or the European Union are enamored of.

Another possible scenario involved the somewhat patient process of gradually undermining the credibility and prospects of the Qadhafi government over time. This meant systematically undercutting the regime's traditional methods of using patronage for its survival as the international sanctions took hold and the regime's financial resources were depleted, hoping that eventually internal desertions and perhaps a palace coup or more general revolt would take place within the inner circles of the regime. As individuals around Qadhafi and his remaining supporters started to make calculations, much hinged on the perception of his staying power. In a somewhat crude form of psychological warfare fought with leaflets, internet, and personal appearances by the Libyan leader, both he and the coalition against him attempted to portray their cause as likely to prevail. The language Qadhafi used still resonated among his supporters, and was not to be cavalierly dismissed.

The final scenario is one that could prove the least attractive for many Libyans, but one that may well prove most feasible to the many parties now involved in the conflict. It is perhaps also the most promising for the future of the country, and certainly would minimize the dislocations and potential infighting some of the other scenarios entail. It consists essentially of a diplomatic compromise whereby Qadhafi (and perhaps his family and his closest confidants) would depart into exile. The

range of countries willing to accept Qadhafi would be tiny, and would be made even smaller by the fact that the Libyan leader would undoubtedly try to find asylum in a country that does not recognize the authority of the International Criminal Court in case it decided to indict him for a string of human rights violations.

Despite what many would undoubtedly consider a repugnant solution to the Libyan conflict, it would keep the country unified without having to worry about the existing differences between its two most powerful provinces. It would put a halt to further destruction of the country's economy and its oil infrastructure. It would offer the possibility of a kind of psychological closure for all Libyan citizens that other scenarios do not. Libyans would still face the daunting task of creating a new government, designing new arrangements that will allow the different provinces and groups within Libya to work together in a post-Qadhafi world, and to generally engage upon a process of state-building that will be extremely difficult. But they could do so knowing they have avoided a protracted civil war and the attending deep and lasting cleavages that could perhaps never be healed.

Assuming the outcome of the ongoing conflict in Libya means the removal of Qadhafi, the economic, social, and political challenges Libyans will face in its aftermath will be enormous. With virtually all modern state institutions having been eviscerated or neglected by the Qadhafi government, Libya will confront a simultaneous need to restructure its economy away from excessive

reliance on the state and on hydrocarbon revenues; to come up with a political formula that is acceptable to a number of different players that have traditionally been antagonistic but that were held together artificially by the authoritarian policies of the Qadhafi government; and to create a system of law that serves its citizens equitably. All of this will need to be established in an oil economy that creates all kind of opportunities for different Libyans players—individuals, families, tribes, and provinces—to pursue their own interests at the expense of whatever kind of new Libya may emerge.

Strictly speaking, what will be needed is not simply the reconstruction of the political, social, legal and economic institutions of a Libya past, but in more significant ways the creation for the first time of the kinds of rules, mutual obligations, and checks-and-balances that mark modern states and how they interact with their societies. In light of the traditional antagonisms between different tribal groups and between the different provinces and the lack of institutional frameworks to resolve differences, governance challenges in the post-Qadhafi period will be enormous.

THE IMPACT OF QADHAFI'S REVOLUTION

To outsiders it is difficult to describe the impact of Qadhafi's self-styled revolution on the sense of identity and political imagination among its citizens. During a decade-long period of revolutionary upheaval in the 1970s,

the regime managed to destroy, reshape, or reorganize many of the institutions of the state in the name of popular rule. Simultaneously, it created a carefully controlled system of patronage managed by the top military elite, and by the cluster of Qadhafi loyalists who, in contradiction to the official policies of popular rule and popular management, controlled access to the country's main spending institutions—its ministries. Libya's historical problem with central authority was simply resolved by eliminating it altogether, at least in principle. By centralizing all political expression in the so-called Popular Committee system, by clearly stating that no political activity could take place outside it, and by awarding the revolutionary means of governing precedence over the formal political institutions in 1979, the regime ensured that it contained and controlled all political expression or dissent. Indeed, the General People's Congress was never used to seriously debate any of the country's political or economic objectives. Furthermore, Qadhafi's central position within the country's political and economic structures, despite the lack of a formal link to the country's executive structure and his own assertion that he no longer had a formal role to play, created a system of personal politics that continues to dominate the country until today.

The essential questions that have dogged Libya since its creation as an independent state in 1951 are still left unresolved today: the creation of an institutionalized state, and the incorporation of the country's citizens into

a meaningful, participatory system. By the time of the uprising in 2011 the territories that formed the independent United Kingdom of Libya and then the jamahiriyya had existed for six decades. During that time Libya had been changed beyond recognition—from a desert-strewn backwaters to a modern oil economy with intricate links to the international economy. A tribal, impoverished and barely self-sustaining society had endured the Sanusi monarchy with its confused sense of what political community it represented, and then four decades of the diktats of a revolutionary regime that seemed determined to refocus political identity on a sense of identity and community that had started to lose its coherence in many important aspects several decades earlier.

Until the discovery of oil in 1959 the country seemed destined to retain those social and economic features it had possessed since time immemorial. The reports submitted by the international financial agencies its independence in 1951 projected the country's future as, at best, one of hardscrabble survival and, perhaps eventually, a modest level of economic growth and development. Very few Libyans it seemed—except for some small clusters of urban elites—had a real interest in the United Kingdom as a political community. This was partly due to the colonial legacy, to the fact that the comforting and familiar sense of kinship and local—or at best regional—political allegiance could be maintained during the first few years of the monarchy but, importantly, also to the fact that there were few economic prospects for the

country that could spark interest and struggles for economic goods that would make the construction of a national community worthwhile.

This changed, literally almost overnight, when oil started coursing through the veins of a barely existing economy that could suddenly produce great riches. It also contained within it, however, the dynamics for the kind of promises and dangers of social and economic differentiation the country had never witnessed before. Oil irrevocably brought to life a series of economic, social and political interests and differentiation as, suddenly, interests were created that made it worthwhile integrating a country for. Unfortunately for Libya, during the remainder of the monarchy and during the years since, these interests were never nurtured and exploited for the purpose of creating a truly national community. Oil revenues allowed Idris al-Sanusi and Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi to create and maintain social contracts with their subjects that relied overwhelmingly on distributive largesse rather than on perfecting the state.

This was partly to blame for the low sense of political community Libya still faces today, and for the *sauve-qui-peut* attitude it engenders among its citizens. One should not blame that process purely on oil revenues, however, but equally on those who were in charge of the country. Both rulers of Libya—in different styles and by different means, but both conveying the same meaning—consistently projected a sense of community for their citizens in various combinations below or above the level of the

state and in lieu of the state: kinship, family, tribe, Islam, Arab nationalism, African unity. Under both systems of government—laissez faire or activist—Libyan citizens remained largely bystanders. Both King Idris and Qadhafi lamented the impact of oil on their societies and on its traditional values, but both failed to understand how their policies—or lack thereof—created those outcomes.

Ever since 1969—or perhaps more precisely since the publication of the *Green Book*—Libya has pursued a policy of statelessness that, at least in theory, puts all power in the hands of the people. Ironically, as statelessness was pursued, virtually all economic activity within the country came under state control. As opposed to non-oil economies where over time the state develops and fine-tunes a set of regulatory, extractive and distributive mechanisms to calibrate the interactions between the state and local societies, in Libya this evolutionary process of state- and institution-building was curtailed. Anticolonial and nationalist sentiments, the subsequent rapid inflows of capital, but in most cases simply lack of alternatives prompted the local government to take a firm hand in guiding the local economies—particularly in Libya where the political imagination was simply a tabula rasa as state-building started. In Libya until now, the panoply of social, economic and political challenges that faced the kingdom and the Jamahiriyya far outstripped the capabilities of the state to deal with them. The result has been a number of institutional shortcuts, of which wholesale state management and emerging

social contracts became a glaring example. In the Jamahiriyya, the appearance of a social contract reflected the truncated process of state-building under which it took place.

In Libya the questions that are at the heart of every political system were less pressing to the monarchy and then the Qadhafi government: how revenues are gathered, what compromises the ruler must make with his subjects to obtain them, which institutional capabilities the state needed to develop this task, and how those institutional arrangements reflected the interests of both ruled and ruler. As a result the state seemed highly autonomous, but without much regulatory capacity—a phenomenon exacerbated by an official ideology that celebrated this hollowing out of state power and regulatory capabilities. The challenge to the state was not to extract wealth but to spend it. Economic growth could during prolonged periods simply be “bought” by increasing the sale of the revenue-gathering resource. Distributive policies become the most common method to meet social contracts or to stimulate domestic economic sectors.

State institutions became intricate channels for economic largesse and distributive purposes, while their regulatory and legal capacities—already weak by the initial state-building processes described above—tended to remain inefficient and underdeveloped. The lack of economic data in Libya, the occasional physical destruction of state bureaucratic offices and records, and the state’s sporadic direct intervention in issues ranging

from employment to price setting to property rights issues were all signs of regulatory weakness. In effect, the country's relative stability until the uprising in 2011 was more than anything due to the fact that Libya had not yet been forced to flex its institutional capacity for economic activity beyond distribution. The country had become a prime example of the by now familiar litany of the "too much state, too little state" phenomenon: pervasiveness and lingering control by those in charge of the state that has not translated into efficiency, capability or capacity.

Under such circumstances social stratification in Libya resulted overwhelmingly from the distributive and spending patterns of the state—forcing the Qadhafi government to assiduously promote its clients. Much of this maneuvering was concealed by the way in which the country's revenues are shielded from public scrutiny—and much of it would not be revealed until the 2011 uprising had started. Decisions concerning economic policies, distribution and investments were traditionally kept to the purview of small coalitions, rather than assigned to the market. Not surprisingly, this distributive largesse was augmented with reliance on informal mechanisms linked to history, religion or culture. The enormous bifurcation between formal and informal politics remained a pronounced feature of Libya's political life—expressed in the supremacy of the revolutionary instruments of rule in the country.

Why is it that a seemingly omnipresent state like Libya, capable of regulating the minutiae of its citizens'

lives, never had the capacity to successfully implement political or economic reforms? The answer lies within the broader social and political structures within which its political economy is embedded. The country's institutions, often created as a direct response to international economic forces during the oil booms, appeared inflexible and undifferentiated to deal with fiscal crises that threatened previous distributive policies. Economic crises thus threaten to become profound political crises. Why then has Libya not witnessed the kind of upheaval many other countries of the area have?

Undoubtedly, one major answer lies in the presence of an extensive security sector. The combination of how state-building proceeded and easy access to revenues created in Libya a powerful and narrow political system that relied on this security sector which, in addition to the military itself, remains barnacled by layers of attendant security organizations. The continued access to revenues proved a key factor in the persistence of the security sector. In contrast to sub-Saharan Africa, for example, where successful transitions to reform were often less the work of strong societies than the "hollowing out" of the coercive organizations due to fiscal crises, in Libya they have not suffered for lack of financial resources. As in most oil states, Libya's security sector remains governed in large part by the logic of patrimonialism, is not subject to civilian control, and remains the most privileged of any group inside Libya.

These enduring legacies of the revolutionary period continue to cast long shadows over the future of the country. Whether the voices of the insurgents can now coalesce into an integrated channel for meaningful reform remains, as yet, unclear. Ultimately oil revenues, for over three decades, made the country's political experimentation—and the use of those resources in pursuit of such experimentation—possible, and it could do so again. While there are signs of pragmatism and of the realization among Libyan policymakers for the need for greater efficiency, there are few indications that the country's system of governance has changed or that a process of accountability is being implemented. With new windfalls from an expanded oil sector flowing into the country, this lack of institutional checks and balances remains problematic. While the pressure to economically perform more efficiently and to use the country's riches for the greater benefit of all Libyans has undoubtedly grown these last years, there are, as yet, no institutional guarantees that any post-Qadahfi government could be forced to do so. Clearly these challenges Libya will now need to address in the aftermath of the civil war.

LIBYA, DEMOCRACY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The challenges Libya will face therefore will be enormous after the destruction of all political, social, cultural and economic institutions that could have provided a

sense of nationhood to its citizens. The reconstruction of Libya will need to be both integrated and systemic, interweaving various social, political, legal, and economic initiatives that can help prevent the kind of backsliding that disparate efforts at economic and legal reform or political liberalization if made in isolation often provoke.

Because of the evisceration of all political, legal, and social institutions under Qadhafi, Libya will be severely lacking in even the basic understandings of how modern, representative governments and the rule of law work. The natural impulse of the international community will be to insist on elections, as soon as possible. But elections without the prerequisites for a modern democracy in place—and here Libya will be found profoundly deficient—are hollow and counter-productive. Libyans are unlikely to be impressed with calls for early elections in a country where justice and the most basic checks and balances to make a democratic system work are not yet in place. With its vast experience of political capacity building through a large number of government agencies, however, the international community is in a unique position to help create a sustainable network of civil, social, and political institutions that can build the foundations of a future, democratic Libya.

Furthermore, the economic and political reconstruction of Libya will need to go hand in hand. After four decades of inefficient state management, cronyism, and widespread patronage this will be an exceedingly difficult task. Almost 95 percent of Libya's current income is

derived from oil and natural gas. How the proceeds from this hydrocarbon-fueled economy are distributed will be seen as crucial by all sides. This will require a number of creative solutions to keep the country unified. The international community could be helpful in mediating and suggesting a number of ways out of the conundrums Libya will encounter in this regard—perhaps by suggesting a federal formula that provides incentives for the different provinces and tribes to work together rather than go their own way. A more diversified and de-centralized economy will make the reappearance of a dictator less likely: it is precisely the unchecked centralization and spending of revenues in oil economies that often sustain authoritarian governments through intricate patronage systems managed from the center. A carefully balanced federal formula once more would prove immensely helpful in this regard.

In addition, the international community should be proactive in helping establish or support those institutions, such as the International Criminal Court, that will hold the Qadhafi regime responsible and accountable for the crimes it has committed against its own citizens. But it could go even further. Since the settling of scores seems inevitable in Libya after decades of Qaddafi's deliberate divide-and-rule policies, the international community could help establish a Libyan version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that brought political opponents in South Africa to some kind of understanding. Libya is a tribal society; such societies have long

memories, and forty years of Qadhafi's rule made some collaboration with the regime virtually unavoidable for almost everyone. In thinking about rebuilding Libya, any actor who can help prevent the settling of scores will be seen as a valuable interlocutor.

In conclusion, the challenges for the reconstruction of Libya and for eventually bringing a more democratic government to power will be enormous. For the first time since its independence in 1951, Libyans at the end of their war of attrition will be asked to create a modern state—that provides checks and balances between its citizens and those who rule over them. Four decades of fragmentation of the country's society and the competition for the country's massive oil reserves will make a consensus around such a creation exceedingly difficult. Once the euphoria over the future removal of Qadhafi wears off, the hard tasks of state-building within Libya lie ahead. In a political landscape where citizen loyalties were deliberately never aggregated at the national level, this road ahead will prove unsettling and uncertain. It will undoubtedly provide ample opportunities for those who want to obstruct that process.

To avoid this, the country will need substantial expertise that will help a post-Qaddafi Libya start to build a new, democratic state, to reform and develop its badly functioning economy, and to improve local democratic governance through a number of educational, economic, and political initiatives. Libya's survival as a unified

country will not only depend on how its own citizens deal with its long-standing fissures but also on the careful planning of outside powers. The international community is uniquely situated to help Libyans address exactly those multiple, overlapping tasks, and, for the first time, create a political entity in Libya that all its citizens can truly subscribe to. Only then can we hope to find anything approximating a democratic Libya to emerge.

2

The Postnational Collective Subjectivity



La sociedad observadora

Daniel Innerarity

El poder ha supuesto siempre una capacidad de observar, ocultar e incluso ocultarse. Ver implica control social; generalmente, a medida que aumentan las posibilidades de observar, disminuyen las de ser visto (Innerarity, 2004). De ahí que el poder haya venido siempre acompañado por la construcción de atalayas y observatorios, o por la sofisticación de los dispositivos de observación de la sociedad, como los censos y las encuestas.

En el mundo actual sigue vigente esta pretensión, que ha podido incluso mejorar las técnicas de control, pero en una sociedad del conocimiento y de la información, la tecnología que hacía posible tales operaciones de vigilancia está igualmente a disposición de los vigilados. Foucault vinculó el ejercicio del poder a la vigilancia continua sobre

los individuos (1975, p. 220); el reequilibrio que se está produciendo actualmente tiene que ver con el hecho de que haya aumentado la supervisión ciudadana sobre el poder y las posibilidades tecnológicas de llevarlo a cabo. Lo que tenemos es una suerte de “panoptismo cívico” que ha reinvertido el ejercicio de la disciplina. El poder es más sujeto pasivo que activo de observación y los ciudadanos han pasado de ser meros espectadores a celosos vigilantes. La superposición del espacio de las nuevas tecnologías al espacio público tradicional tiene el efecto de hacer que la escena política sea más observada, desde cerca y a partir de todos los ángulos posibles.

La democracia representativa suponía un desnivel de capacidad entre gobernantes y gobernados que no se da cuando aumenta la información o la formación en general. En las sociedades avanzadas los gobernantes se hacen más vulnerables y dependientes (Rosanvallon, 2008, p. 61). Las tecnologías de la comunicación y la información posibilitan una vigilancia democrática que era impensable en otras épocas de asimetría informativa. “Los viejos mecanismos del poder no funcionan en una sociedad en la que los ciudadanos viven en el mismo entorno informativo que aquellos que los gobiernan” (Giddens, 2000, p. 88). La sociedad observadora es una sociedad más vigilante, que plantea nuevas exigencias de transparencia, pero que debe aprender a gestionar esos entornos informativos abiertos en los que el problema ya no es tanto la ocultación como la interpretación de la realidad.

1. NOSOTROS, LOS INTRUSOS

Toda sociedad que se democratiza genera un espacio público correspondiente, es decir, se transforma en un ámbito donde rigen unas nuevas lógicas de observación, vigilancia, voluntad de transparencia, debate y control. Así ocurrió con el surgimiento de los Estados nacionales y algo análogo está pasando ahora con el espacio mundial. En uno y otro caso, a lo que se aspira es a construir un espacio de libre debate y publicidad, que conduce a una diplomacia pública, que se alimenta y solicita a la opinión pública. La analogía es válida solo parcialmente y no conviene pensar la gobernanza mundial con las mismas categorías que rigen en el espacio limitado de los Estados nacionales, pero no cabe duda que algo muy semejante a un espacio público mundial está formándose poco a poco en virtud de la confluencia entre las posibilidades comunicativas y la extensión de los valores democráticos.

El fenómeno de *wikileaks* es un indicador de que los asuntos geoestratégicos y diplomáticos no están en condiciones de frenar este proceso de publicitación y mantenerse protegidos en el campo del secreto, que hasta ahora se les había asignado. No quiere esto decir que el secreto o la discreción vayan a ser abolidos completamente de la diplomacia mundial, sino que están siendo reducidos en virtud de la configuración de una humanidad observadora que dispone de cada vez más instrumentos para conocer lo que pasa en las tramoyas del poder. La lógica

que explica este proceso es la imparable irrupción de las sociedades en la escena política.

La diplomacia, que ha sido un espacio reservado, dominio del secreto, último bastión de la razón de Estado, un lugar inmune, el último refugio frente a los asaltos de la democratización, se encuentra hoy asediada por lo que podríamos llamar un derecho de las sociedades a mirar sobre los asuntos internacionales. Estamos transitando hacia una forma de diplomacia pública que rompe con la idea tradicional del secreto. Al irrumpir en el escenario internacional, las sociedades modifican profundamente el juego diplomático. La internacionalización supone, de entrada, una visibilidad creciente de las cuestiones sociales.

En un mundo donde todos se ven, donde todos se comparan, las fronteras pierden su capacidad de delimitación y reserva. Las sociedades no interactúan solamente con su gobierno respectivo; estas lógicas de convergencia ponen también al espacio mundial bajo la vigilancia social. El proceso de construcción del espacio público mundial se puede entender, negativamente, como un proceso por el que los sujetos se emancipan del marco estatal. Los comportamientos sociales escapan cada vez más del marco de la socialización nacional: opiniones, valores, gustos, inversiones y comportamientos se articulan al margen del tradicional encuadramiento institucional. Nos encontramos en medio de una serie de dinámicas cuya complejidad e interdependencia depende en buena medida de que están en juego estructuras *cross-cutting*,

grupos de actores e intereses solapados que permiten concluir que el concepto de “nosotros” que articulan los Estados no coincide con las realidades sociales y económicas.

El proceso de configuración de un espacio público mundial apunta a la formación de un nuevo sujeto, la humanidad global, que es la evaluadora última de las prácticas políticas. Gracias a la globalización, el mundo se ha convertido en un lugar públicamente vigilado. Las dinámicas contestatarias han supuesto la entrada de las sociedades en el debate político internacional. El espacio público global ha configurado instancias que se expresan e interpelan. Por supuesto que no hay que hacerse demasiadas ilusiones. La opinión que irrumpe sobre la escena internacional no es el contrapoder ideal, una fuerza eficaz que pueda contradecir el poder de los Estados. La función de supervisión de las sociedades apenas impide, no dispone de veto, pero recompone el juego internacional hasta el punto de hacer que la arbitrariedad sea extremadamente costosa. Esta intrusión y vigilancia ya contradice el mero juego del poder o ese beneficio de la ignorancia que ha sido de gran utilidad para los poderosos (Badie, 2004). Quince millones de personas en la calle, en febrero de 2003, no consiguieron impedir la guerra en Irak, pero contribuyeron decisivamente a deslegitimarla. El actual conocimiento de los “asuntos exteriores” es el primer paso para introducirlos en un espacio de debate en el que cualquiera puede tomar partido fuera de toda tutela gubernamental y de todo alineamiento patriótico. Vivimos en un mundo que rechaza la excusa del

secreto, que desearía modificar profundamente el sentido de la diplomacia para insertarla en una pública discusión.

La política internacional se ha beneficiado durante mucho tiempo del beneficio de la ignorancia. Los Estados podían permitírselo casi todo cuando apenas se sabía lo que hacían. El golpe del ejército soviético en Budapest el año 1956 tuvo menos resistencia que el que se repitió doce años más tarde en Praga; para entonces la televisión se había instalado en los hogares europeos y la imagen de los carros desplegados por el Pacto de Varsovia contribuyó a forjar el comienzo de una opinión pública internacional. El actual conocimiento de los “asuntos exteriores” es el primer paso para introducirlos en un espacio de debate en el que cualquiera puede tomar partido fuera de toda tutela gubernamental y de todo alineamiento patriótico. Vivimos en un mundo que rechaza la excusa del secreto, que desearía modificar profundamente el sentido de la diplomacia para insertarla en una pública discusión. En estos últimos años se ha popularizado la idea de una diplomacia pública que sustituye las viejas prácticas del secreto por un *marketing* que corteja a la opinión pública. Este cambio de estrategia corresponde al hecho de que el poder ha sido puesto bajo la vigilancia activa de una opinión celosamente solicitada. Cada vez es más difícil apelar a la democracia sin buscar la adhesión de la opinión pública, sin aceptar abandonar una parte del propio poder al juego de la deliberación colectiva.

El siglo XX ha terminado con el monopolio del que disfrutaban los Estados en su calidad de únicos actores internacionales. Dicha desestatalización se corresponde

con la creación de un espacio público de libre discusión y de compromiso en el seno del cual todos somos testigos de genocidios, vulneraciones de la legalidad, opresiones de todo tipo, desigualdades etc. La mundialización es también un espacio de atención pública que reduce sensiblemente las distancias entre testigos y actores, entre responsables y espectadores, entre uno mismo y los demás. Se configuran así nuevas comunidades transnacionales de protesta y solidaridad. Los nuevos actores, en la medida en que vigilan y denuncian, desestabilizan cada vez más la capacidad del poder para imponerse de forma coercitiva. Ningún Estado es propietario de su imagen. La humanidad observadora participa directamente en el debate que funda el espacio público mundial y actúa en nombre de una legitimidad universal, de modo que ningún Estado puede hacer abstracción de esa mirada posada sobre él. Es muy significativo a este respecto el giro que ha efectuado la discusión sobre la justicia penal internacional: estamos pasando de una justicia dictada en nombre del pueblo a una justicia que apela a la humanidad. La nueva responsabilidad internacional de los Estados obedece a que la humanidad se impone cada vez más como una referencia de la acción internacional.

2. LOS LÍMITES DE LA TRANSPARENCIA

El signo de nuestra época es la inmediatez. Nada nos resulta más sospechoso que las mediaciones, los intermediarios, las construcciones y las representaciones. Pensamos que para conocer la verdad basta que los datos

estén al alcance; que una democracia solo necesita que nada nos impida decidir. En nuestro inconsciente colectivo (y a veces también formulado de manera explícita), consideramos que son más útiles los datos que las interpretaciones y, por el mismo prejuicio, tendemos a pensar que es más democrático participar que delegar. Una similar desconfianza ante las mediaciones nos lleva a suponer automáticamente que algo es verdadero cuando es transparente, que toda representación falsifica y que todo secreto es ilegítimo. No hay nada peor que un intermediario. Por eso nos resulta de entrada más cercano un filtrador que un periodista, un aficionado que un profesional, las ONGs que los gobiernos y, por eso mismo, nuestro mayor desprecio se dirige a quien representa la mayor mediación: como nos recuerdan las encuestas, nuestro gran problema es... la clase política. Al paso que vamos, también resultará que sus pensiones son la causa de la crisis económica. La actual fascinación por las redes sociales, la participación o la proximidad pone de manifiesto que la única utopía que sigue viva es la de la *desintermediación*.

Estando así las cosas, nadie podía sorprenderse de que las filtraciones de *wikileaks* hayan sido recibidas como una confirmación de lo que ya sabíamos: que el sistema es malísimo y nosotros, inocentes. Coincide esto en el tiempo con una crisis económica cuyos exégetas llevan tiempo repitiendo que la estamos pagando los que no la hemos provocado. Afortunadamente, nosotros no

formamos parte de ese mercado que se dedica a conspirar y atacar. Identificados los problemas y asignadas las responsabilidades, nos hemos ahorrado casi todo el trabajo de pensar un mundo complejo y adaptar la democracia a las nuevas realidades. La indignación puede seguir sustituyendo cómodamente a la reflexión y al esfuerzo democrático.

La transparencia es, sin duda, uno de los principales valores democráticos, gracias a la cual la ciudadanía puede controlar la actividad de sus cargos electos, verificar el respeto a los procedimientos legales, comprender los procesos de decisión y confiar en las instituciones políticas. Gracias a Internet, esta transparencia puede ampliarse en un sentido inédito, ya que los datos pueden hacerse públicos de manera directa y anónima. Ahora bien, ¿tan seguros estamos de que disponer libremente de 250.000 documentos de la diplomacia americana nos hace más inteligentes y mejores demócratas? ¿Sabríamos más del mundo si se suprimieran todos los secretos? ¿Somos mejores ciudadanos a medida que vamos descubriendo lo torpes y cínicas que son muchas de nuestras autoridades?

No deberíamos dejarnos seducir por la idea de que estamos ante un mundo de información disponible, transparente y sin secretos. De entrada, porque somos conscientes de que determinadas negociaciones exitosas del pasado no se hubieran producido si hubieran sido retransmitidas en directo. Existe algo que podríamos denominar los beneficios diplomáticos de la intransparencia.

Por supuesto que en este aspecto muchos procedimientos tradicionales están llamados a desaparecer y quien a partir de ahora participe en un proceso diplomático ha de ser conscientes de que casi todo terminará por saberse. Pero también es cierto que la exigencia de una transparencia total podría paralizar la acción pública en no pocas ocasiones. Hay compromisos que no pueden alcanzarse con luz y taquígrafos, lo que suele provocar que los actores radicalicen sus posiciones. Pese a ciertas celebraciones apresuradas de un inminente mundo sin doblez ni zonas de sombra, la distinción entre escenarios y bastidores sigue siendo necesaria para la política.

Pero es que hay también una ambigüedad de la transparencia desnuda, no contextualizada. Es una ilusión pensar que basta con que los datos sean públicos para que reine la verdad en política, los poderes se desnuden y la ciudadanía comprenda lo que realmente pasa. Además, del acceso a los datos públicos, está la cuestión de su significado. Poner en la red grandes cantidades de datos y documentos no basta para hacer más inteligible la acción pública: hay que interpretarlos, entender las condiciones en las que han sido producidos, sin olvidar que generalmente no dan cuenta más que de una parte de la realidad.

La accesibilidad de informaciones en Internet no garantiza su visibilidad. Se invoca con frecuencia la transparencia y el acceso a los documentos como un indicativo seguro de la democracia de una institución, pero, si uno quiere saber lo que pasa, ¿qué documentos ha de

solicitar? (Weiler, 1999, p. 349). La transparencia únicamente es real si quien gobierna, además de poner a disposición los datos, proporciona informaciones. Aquí volvemos a toparnos con el problema de la mediación, que era lo que creíamos poder superar. Es engañoso mirar Internet con las categorías del espacio público tradicional, pensando que aquí todo es público y todo es información (Cardon, 2010). Para que algo sea público, no basta con que esté accesible; para que exista información, se requiere una determinada elaboración de los datos. En esta indeterminación está la grandeza de la red, pero también sus limitaciones.

Además de límites, la transparencia puede tener efectos perversos. No son pocos los que han advertido que Internet se puede convertir en un instrumento de opacidad: el aumento de los datos suministrados a los ciudadanos complica su trabajo de vigilancia (Fung, Graham, Weil, 2007). Una información que fuéramos incapaces de filtrar nos haría semejantes a aquellos personajes de Esquilo que “tenían visión pero no veían nada” (1985, p. 73). Es la opacidad y no la falta de transparencia lo que más empobrece las democracias. Obsesionarse con la transparencia descuidando todo lo demás equivale a equivocarse en el foco de atención. Nuestro gran enemigo no es el secreto, la ocultación o la intriga, sino la banalidad.

Y a este respecto cabe mencionar un efecto insólito en virtud del cual la realidad política nos resulta ininteligible no porque nos falten datos o porque no

escrutemos atentamente a nuestros representantes, sino porque lo hacemos en exceso, de una manera constante e inmediata. La vigilancia extrema sobre los actores políticos puede llevarles a sobreproteger sus acciones. Un ejemplo de ello es el hecho de que muchos políticos, sabiendo que sus menores actos y declaraciones son examinados y difundidos, tienden a encorsetar su comunicación. La democracia está hoy más empobrecida por los discursos que no dicen nada que por el ocultamiento expreso de información.

Las sociedades democráticas reclaman, con toda razón, un mayor y más fácil acceso a la información. Pero, la abundancia de datos no garantiza vigilancia democrática; para ello hace falta, además, movilizar comunidades de intérpretes capaces de darles un contexto, un sentido y una valoración crítica. Separar lo esencial de lo anecdótico, analizar y situar en una perspectiva adecuada los datos exige mediadores que dispongan de tiempo y competencias cognitivas. Los partidos políticos son un instrumento imprescindible para reducir esa complejidad. En este trabajo de interpretación de la realidad, también son inevitables los periodistas, cuyo trabajo no va a ser superfluo en la era de Internet sino todo lo contrario. Los periodistas están llamados a jugar un papel importante en esta mediación cognitiva para interesar a la gente, animar el debate público y descifrar la complejidad del mundo (Rosanvallon, 2008, p. 342). Pero, estoy defendiendo la necesidad cognitiva del sistema político y

de los medios de comunicación y no a sus representantes, que, como todos, también son manifiestamente mejorables.

No deberíamos minusvalorar las dificultades de interpretación en un mundo de flujos donde sobra información, mientras que nuestras capacidades de comprensión están desbordadas, saturadas y desorientadas. Comentar e interpretar la realidad no es algo que pueda hacer bien cualquiera, como promete el sueño de una producción de la información por los propios internautas. Validar, interpretar, comunicar la información implica competencia y constituye un ejercicio de responsabilidad.

Defender hoy este trabajo de mediación equivale a renunciar al grato favor de la corriente, porque casi nadie quiere renunciar a este cauce para el despliegue de la indignación que es la posibilidad de matar al mediador. Frente a todas las promesas de paciencia interpretativa, Internet es un espacio que ofrece participación y democracia directa, expresión y decisión sin intermediarios. Todo lo cual conecta con esa desconfianza democrática hacia el experto y la consiguiente celebración del ciudadano corriente que parece inobjetable democráticamente. La libertad del *amateur* frente al anquilosamiento del profesional, este vendría a ser el nuevo antagonismo para el que Internet constituye un formidable campo de batalla (Flichy, 2010). Algunos incluso festejan la irrupción de un nuevo periodista aficionado que vendría a reemplazar al profesional. La presencia del aficionado, del filtrador escandalizado, es muy importante y contribuye sin

duda a democratizar el proceso de creación y circulación de información. Pero, en realidad, hay una cadena de cooperación muchísimo más compleja entre unos y otros: solo los grandes diarios de referencia tienen las competencias necesarias para explotar esas montañas de información. Precisamente una señal de que la transparencia no era lo único que estaba en juego es el hecho de que la filtración fuera negociada en exclusividad con un grupo limitado de periódicos.

Al final, terminamos necesitando mediación, profesionalidad y representación. Sin ellas el mundo es menos inteligible y más ingobernable. Juzguemos si estas instancias hacen bien lo que deben y no nos dejemos capturar por la perezosa ilusión de que su mera carencia nos hará libres.

3. LOS SECRETOS ESTÁN EN OTRA PARTE

Que vivimos en una sociedad compleja es otra forma de referirse al hecho de que las cosas se nos han vuelto muy confusas. Nuestras ilimitadas posibilidades de observación e información no están en proporción con nuestra escasa capacidad de obtener una idea coherente del mundo, saber dónde está lo importante y desenmascarar las ocultaciones injustificadas. Esta opacidad se debe a que la distribución del poder es más volátil; la determinación de las causas y las responsabilidades, más compleja; las presencias, virtuales, y los enemigos, difusos. La sociedad se entiende cada vez menos a partir de

las acciones visibles de individuos o grupos concretos; se establece como una trama a partir de interacciones complejas y difíciles de identificar.

En una democracia esta opacidad no es recibida como una buena noticia sino como algo que, en principio, debe combatirse. En el origen de la democracia moderna hay una sospecha hacia el poder y especialmente hacia el poder oculto. Tendemos a pensar que el Estado tiene siempre la tentación de abusar de sus prerrogativas, que protege invocando en exceso la confidencialidad y solo proporciona información que no le perjudica. En esta tensión se han forjado nuestras instituciones y prácticas políticas, confrontadas a la exigencia de transparencia y publicidad. No debería sorprendernos ni aquella sospecha ciudadana ni esta invocación estatal del secreto, pues ambas forman parte del debate político en una sociedad democrática.

Lo que llama la atención es que miremos a la realidad con un solo ojo, por así decirlo, que escrutemos con tanto celo al sistema político y con tanta superficialidad al mundo económico, donde hemos tomado decisiones trascendentales pensando que se daban unas condiciones óptimas de información y transparencia. ¿Opacidad en la política y transparencia en la economía? Si algo ha revelado la crisis económica es que esta contraposición no es cierta, que es incluso el resultado de una deliberada maniobra ideológica, porque la observación permanente que ejercemos sobre la política contrasta con la

elevada clandestinidad de que han disfrutado los agentes económicos. De hecho, aunque todo puede mejorarse, ni la opacidad de los Estados es tan grande como a veces se lamenta, ni la transparencia de los mercados tan efectiva como proclaman algunos.

De entrada, cualquier Estado debe someterse a una serie de reglas para comunicar sus decisiones, ya sea en el momento presente (por la obligación de publicidad y por la construcción de instrumentos estadísticos que explican su acción) o de manera diferida (por la creación y puesta a disposición de sus archivos). Los controles y las evaluaciones internas, las garantías del estado de derecho, la regulación estricta de los secretos oficiales y las materias reservadas, la vigilancia de los medios de comunicación, la evaluación de las políticas públicas, todo ello alimenta una incesante actividad de escrutinio, crítica y contra-argumentación. *Ranking*, informes y estadísticas proporcionan una información sobre los Estados que ya apenas son dueños de su imagen. Por si fuera poco, los Estados son vigilados por otros (de manera especialmente intensa en el caso de la Unión Europea, donde, a causa de las interdependencias y la mutualización de soberanía, están obligados cuando menos a tener en cuenta el impacto de sus decisiones sobre los demás). Y el Estado es también auscultado por los actores económicos, que valoran las políticas fiscales o juzgan su nivel de riesgo. El Estado apenas puede escapar de la exigencia de dar a conocer sus acciones y modos de funcionamiento.

Como advierte Castells (2003), el Estado es hoy más observado que observador; muy lejos de su viejo privilegio de mirar sin ser vistos, los actores políticos están hoy sometidos a una observación continua e ilimitada.

Veamos qué ocurre donde no solemos mirar. Durante los últimos años, en cambio, la opacidad económica no ha dejado de crecer. Es cierto que el funcionamiento de los mercados requiere en principio transparencia. Un actor económico solo puede adoptar decisiones correctas si sus anticipaciones están bien fundadas, es decir, si dispone de toda la información necesaria para limitar el azar de sus decisiones. Ahora bien, desde los años 80 la teoría económica intenta explicar las situaciones de distorsión o asimetría de información que falsifican las relaciones entre los actores y la posibilidad de un equilibrio general del mercado. Esta desigualdad es aún más aleatoria en los mercados financieros o cuando los efectos de contagio de la opinión o las profecías que se autocumplen convierten a la información en un arma de la guerra económica. Lo hemos visto en la crisis financiera: la sofisticación de los productos financieros ha creado una complejidad descontrolada que alimenta riesgos capaces de desestabilizar el conjunto de la vida económica.

No me refiero solo al hecho de que la desregulación haya permitido el recurso ingenioso a las zonas fuera de control: secreto bancario, paraísos fiscales, mercados *over-the-counter*, plataformas bursátiles opacas (*dark pools*)... Todo eso podía ser entendido como algo

excepcional. El problema más grave es que hay una opacidad de carácter estructural: debido a que los productos financieros derivados, por ejemplo, están basados en otros instrumentos financieros y a menudo combinan varios riesgos adicionales, el potencial de pérdidas no puede ser medido completamente. La dinámica de la innovación en las finanzas globales configura una cadena de riesgo que potencia el riesgo general a través de influencias desconocidas y efectos combinatorios. La titulación ha actuado como un mecanismo global de irresponsabilización, que diseminaba y disimulaba los riesgos, introduciendo en los mercados títulos cuyos riesgos nadie era capaz de evaluar. El desarrollo de nuevos instrumentos financieros exóticos y no líquidos; el aumento de los productos derivados cada vez más complejos; el hecho de que muchas instituciones financieras sean opacas o poco reglamentadas han contribuido a la falta general de transparencia. Esta opacidad ha destruido la confianza de los inversores. La dificultad de evaluar los precios, los riesgos o la toxicidad se ha transformado en incertidumbre general. Al final resultaba que con determinados productos financieros uno no sabía exactamente qué compraba y cuál era el riesgo que estaba asumiendo.

No es extraño que advirtamos ahora, con posterioridad, hasta qué punto la crisis económica ha resultado de unos cálculos y mediciones que presumían de una exactitud que no están en condiciones de proporcionar (Charolles, 2008; Beauvallet, 2009). Cada vez hay más

voces que advierten de los límites inherentes a cualquier modelización o cuestionan la fiabilidad supuestamente absoluta de los sistemas de medición o la exactitud de las previsiones.

La desconfianza actual puede ser interpretada como una reacción de los inversores contra un sistema financiero opaco, cuya magnitud no terminan de comprender. “La complejidad matemática de las innovaciones y transacciones financieras ha sobrepasado no solo la capacidad de los reguladores para seguirlas (mucho más la de control *a priori*), sino también la capacidad de muchas empresas para entenderlas” (Cerny, 1994, p. 331). La economía no es, ciertamente, una realidad simple, pero, cuando la complejidad inevitable se transforma en opacidad sospechosa, los actores se bloquean y los mercados dejan de funcionar. Podríamos hablar en este caso de una opacidad ideológicamente producida. El hecho mismo de presentar los asuntos financieros como algo excesivamente técnico y complejo ha facilitado una transferencia de autoridad hacia los supuestos expertos y ha devaluado la de los gobernantes. Esto ha despolitizado tales asuntos y ha sustraído decisiones relevantes de la pública discusión.

No es justo que la vigilancia sobre el mundo esté tan mal repartida. Bastaría con que la economía estuviera sometida a la misma observación que se ejerce sobre la política para que las cosas funcionaran mucho mejor. ¿Para cuándo un *wikileaks* de los mercados? Es otro

nombre para designar, a falta de otro término mejor, eso que llamamos gobernanza económica global.

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Acculturation and its Future in Muslim Societies: An Islamic Point of View

Abdulrahman Al-Salmi

I

In writing this paper on acculturation and its potentiality in the present and for the future of Arabs and Muslims, I have faced two aspects that have attracted the Arab intellectuals in the last decade. The first aspect deals with values in Muslim societies and the second is specifically about perceptions of democracy in many Arab and Islamic countries. However, if we want to be more precise in describing these aspects, I would say that, along with others from the first decade of the 21st century, they are all based on one common perception, a perception that indicates that there is a real problem involving political,

ethical and religious dimensions between Muslims (especially Arabs) and democracy, which is described as a “value,” a “culture,” practices and, finally, a way to build political regimes and policies. The intellectuals who deal with the first aspect conclude that the problem is in the “culture” as a conflict between legislation and political freedom and its institutions, even if it is not strong and widespread. On the other hand, the second group of intellectuals, which claims to be a recognised one, comes to a different conclusion: the problem does not have to do with the understanding of Arab and Islamic societies but with their dominant political regimes. The first group suggests that in order to overcome the problem we need to enhance the role of civil society institutions and encourage democracy education programs. The second group says that the problem can be solved by the development of the regimes, or their replacement, so that there can be a rotation of authority, adoption of political freedom, and wide and developed public participation. Thus, the group of the first aspect believe that “acculturation” faces a number of obstacles that are related to the past of Muslims and their “identity policies” and strategies in an era of globalization. The second group believes that acculturation is taking place among the Arab and Muslim elites, particularly in this epoch of globalization, but they consider that “democratic activity” can be achieved through different approaches. They also emphasize that the Arab and Islamic approach should be genuine and

self motivated in order not to collapse following the change of political regimes or during development and liberation.

Why did I elaborate in summarising the findings of the two groups? Because I wanted to show that the latest Arab revolutions are inconsistent with the findings of researches and analyses developed during the last ten decades. Those who talked at length about the difficulties of democracy in religious, cultural, political and international systems were incorrect because these democratic revolutions actually erupted and attracted people without putting into question the legitimacy of democracy or the authority of the people. Accordingly, there were no problems related to considering democracy a value, a practice, or both. On the other hand, those advocating the second opinion and believing that the problem lies in the existing regimes and not in the people, again emphasized the specificity of the Arab case as requiring an Arabian democracy, so to speak. We think, on the contrary, that the Arab revolutions are free of this concern, that is, they are not interested in differentiating between what can be considered as international or foreign, Egyptian or Tunisian, or Arab or Muslim. Actually, liberty means liberty, the authority of the people is the authority of the people, and the representative institutions resulting from free and fair elections are the same around the globe. Some people even said that they joined the crowds in Tahrir Square in Cairo to prove that Egyptians aspire to become

part of the world movement and its values, societies and countries. Those young people said that the obstacles in Egypt were not genuine but created by the regime, which was dependent on popular ignorance and on its security systems. In addition, they were afraid that, in spite of an apparent welcome, their response would not be enthusiastically received by the Americans and Europeans, who were “happy” with the previous regime!

II

In view of this critical analysis, we have to go back to “acculturation” and what it means to us, both Arabs and Muslims, in the 21st century. In this regard, we have two intermediary or classical experiences, or many recent or contemporary ones. By an intermediary experience, I mean that of Baghdad in communicating with ancient and contemporary civilizations—the Greek, the Indians and the Persians—through the sciences, arts and philosophy during the 7th and 12th centuries. The second was the Andalusian experience, which lasted for seven centuries. It was a huge acculturation experience through translation (Greek and Latin—Arabic and Latin) and the coexistence between Muslims and Christians. Both these experiences were successful to some extent, (I will return to this point later). However the both ended tragically. Baghdad’s experience ended with the Crusades, which affected badly the relationship between the East and the West and turned the humanitarian and cultural

communication between the two sides (Christians and Muslims) into suffering, accusations of infidelity or killing for more than three decades. The Andalusian experience ended in war, which uprooted all levels of the Islamic, human and cultural existence in Spain.

As I said before, the intermediary acculturation, which took place in Baghdad and Andalusia and was initiated by Muslims, was of limited success because “authenticity” was a serious hindrance in both thought and practice. It is true that a strong current of culture and philosophy existed in Baghdad, and other big cities, which maintained its existence during medieval times. This was considered the “Greek wisdom” and belonged to truth, evidence and perpetuity and by which it unhesitatingly advocated the absorption of logic, sciences and the arts, and the interpretation of the Holy Qur’an in accordance with informed Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies. However, the strongest and biggest currents in our civilizations had formed quickly, and came to a standstill before retreating under the pretext of authenticity and protection of religion from corruption through idolatrous philosophies. Logic remained, in addition to pure and applied sciences, but philosophy was rejected because of its foreign nature and what remained of it was altered. The limits of the Andalusian experience came about because the coexistence between Christians and Muslims could not continue. Those who eradicated Muslims from Spain and Portugal were the grandchildren of

people who had coexisted with Muslims, regardless of the fact that they benefited from them and the Arabic translations of Latin literature that affected the subsequent European Renaissance in a major way.

The modern and contemporary experience of Arabs and Muslims with the West and their acculturation activities are different from the intermediary experiences in terms of motive, extent and results.

Westerners (Europeans) were the ones who took the initiative in imposing their culture on the world in an overwhelming way that included all aspects of private and public life. As this process was taking place, European troops were occupying most of the Muslim and Arab countries. Thus, many religious Muslims perceived this acculturation (even when this acculturation was happening in a non-violent way) to be as Ibn Khaldun said, a “defeated imitation of the dominant.” The violent and non-violent processes resulted in creating deep wounds in Arab and Muslim psychology, although many people are convinced that this “important process” was necessary to get out of the depression of “backwardness,” and regardless of its importance, should not be violent. Khair al-Din Al-Tunisi (1888-) said that this West (cultural and political) is similar to a flood that cannot be stopped by force, violence, ductility or reconciliation and, therefore, people have to assimilate its waves and accept and live with it; otherwise, they will be drowned by the force of its waves. Al Tunisi, along with other

senior officials and literates, considered this important and believed that absorption would not lead to the dissolution of Muslims or the abolition of their religion and culture because the use of modern tools would enable them to acquire immunity to develop their lives and compete with the West.

These important processes took place at a time when Muslim communities and their culture were stagnant and, accordingly, lacked any kind of immunity except the religious one. Thus, European developments soon clashed with religion, not only with Muslims but also with the old Christians of the East. Hence, Muslims were divided into two groups: the first believed in the importance of absorbing European modernity and adopting it in order to confront the Europeans and rebel against their military dominance; the second tended toward confinement and isolation in order to protect their uniqueness and their religion. The rebels did not succeed (from the late 19th century up to Ibn Ladin) and neither did the pragmatists, because they ended up practicing the idea of a “defeated imitation of the dominant.”

On one hand, many literate Muslims did not consider this development process an acculturation because it was imposed upon them, but on the other, Muslims did not offer anything beneficial to the colonizers. Thus, there was equally rivalry and participation, although many Muslims kept repeating that Europe owed its Renaissance to the work of Muslims and should repay its debt.

III

The current Arab revolutions have revealed a “vision to the world” by the masses that appeared on the streets and cities of, until now, eight Arab countries, something that was completely unexpected by researchers, strategists or the reports of international and regional institutions. These institutions have always talked about the weakness of the civil society institutions in the Arab world, what they attributed to a weakness of the values of modernity, participation and democracy, in addition to pressures by the regimes and their suppressive policies.

For many weeks, the people who amassed in the streets of the Arab cities tolerated peacefully the violence of the security organizations. They were calling for freedom, rotation of authority, separation of powers, transparency, fighting against corruption, and free elections in order to have representative institutions. All these values, principles and measures are civil values of a modern and democratic state. The majority of the demonstrators were calling for these demands and could see no reason for not having them met, apart from their long-standing rulers and organizations. When the Islamists or the Islamic political parties joined the crowds, they ignored their original calls regarding adherence to Islamic legislation. Instead they focused on the claims of the demonstrators. Thus, acculturation or adoption of modern age values was successfully perceived by the demonstrating youth. On the contrary of the expectations of the researches, there was

no outburst of religious or radical motivations, nor signs of hostility against the West. Therefore, it is not the case of discussing a conflict of civilizations or an Islamic or Arab objection to liberty and democracy.

The large demonstrations were mainly formed by youths, with 85% of them under the age of thirty. It is known that youngsters in the Arab world average approximately 70% of the population, so they gathered and organized their groups through new communications technologies. Present revolutions in the Arab world are instigated by youth, what has to do with its demographic revolution. On the other hand, middle-class youths form the majority of the demonstrators, and they know how to operate modern communications technologies effectively, unlike more traditional or conservative people. This does not mean that conservative people no longer exist in society, because they do, and in large numbers. But they are not able to determine the direction of the process and have no control over the public opinion, cannot change the prevailing values among youths and have no power to revolt against them. The discussion on acculturation is important here because conservatives and liberals alike adhered to the same values and showed commitment to modern shared values, what means that there is a strong and shared awareness among the youth about being a part of the free modern world with their democracies and civil societies. Among these values and practices are the belief in liberty and tolerance with differences of opinion. In Egypt and Tunisia, people went to the polls and they accepted the

results without complaint, even though these were not in line with their expectations and desires.

The third distinguishing feature of the youths is their peacefulness, their rejection of violence and shedding of blood, and their determination to preserve public and private property. Even when the police were using force against them, they did not retaliate. They were determined to remove the political security and physical suppression systems through continuance of their peaceful demonstration until they dissolved or collapsed. Such strong and persistent peacefulness was previously unknown to the civil, green and environmental movements that appeared after the Cold War. Consequently, we can say that these civil movements are youth movements of a new type and reflect a high level of acculturation or participation in the values of a modern civilized world. They are also welcoming other movements opposing the dictatorial regimes, and trying to communicate with all groups of people even those who did not participate in the movement. Thus, warnings of division in countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen are unfounded. The current movements actually brought together the north and the south in Yemen, Kurds and Arabs in Syria, and Berbers and Arabs in Libya. Many people discussed the reasons for this phenomenon and how should it be interpreted in the light of the specificities that are believed to be encouraged by globalisation. The revolutionist youths are enthusiastic about public liberties and place strong

emphasis on the equality of citizenship and non-discrimination in regard to race, religion and place. The Copts played a major role in the Egyptian revolution and it appears that the previous regimes were behind the former divisions and disagreements between Egyptians, divisions and disagreements that disappeared in the aftermath of the revolution.

If the process in course in the Arab countries is to be completed, some expect that there will be no serious problems related to current and future acculturation. The intensity that sometimes prevailed during the last decades was the result of exceptional circumstances experienced by the Middle East, in result of repressive regimes and the Islamists' influence, and the international and regional pressures applied by the USA and Israel. It is ironic that the era of Bin Ladin came to an end simultaneously to the end of the reigns of his rivals. In the case of Palestine, if a fair solution is found, there will be no violent or non-violent radicalism in the coming decades.

In October 2010, the well-known intellectual Mohammad Arkoun passed away. He had spent the last four decades revealing the obstructions made by the religious texts in the past and present Islamic mentality. Among these obstructions, which were observed by Arkoun and other liberals and leftists, is the fact that religious Muslim youth lacks the values of the past and its knowledge. According to Arkoun, Aljabri and Hanafi there is a deficiency in critical reading of religious texts, adoption of

the values of this age and, at the same time, an emphasis placed on the values of specificity and authenticity. According to this perception, Arabs will not move forward towards modernity unless they stop their conformism to sacred texts through radical religious reform, similar to what happened in Europe during the last three decades, unless these values become part of their ethical and civil systems. Most of the Arab youth involved in the revolutions are religious, and they manifest that acculturation largely occurs with the old values. People who achieved acculturation actually have to deny their religious texts, ie. Islam was not an obstacle in moving towards democracy. Instead, in some cases in Yemen, Libya and Syria, religious ethics prevented people from using violence and damaging public and private property, and enhanced a kind of confidence in the success of their peaceful democratic movement because God neither accepts injustice nor support tyrants, but He does help the true believer to protect human dignity and reach freedom.

Specificity and identity discussions are not yet over and they will not cease with the occurrence of revolutions. There will always be extremists who consider democracy a threat to religion. However, we now know that a public approach is a dominant acculturative approach that looks forward to communicating with the other and does not deny him/her the aspiration to participate in the civilization of the age and the world, not only in the name of modernity but also in the name of Islam.

Nightmares of the Present: Turbulence and the Politics of Place in Bolivia

Javier Sanjinés C.

The year 2003, important for many reasons, marked the downfall of neoliberal policies in Bolivia. It also initiated the rise to power of social movements that had been increasingly restless even before the impressive insurrection in Cochabamba in April 2000 known as the “Water War,” which forced Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada’s rightwing government to reverse the privatization of potable water. Like several Latin American countries that are governed today by presidents who seek to deepen democracy by rejecting neoliberalism and proclaiming ideals commonly associated with socialist principles, Evo Morales’s “turn to the Left” was overwhelmingly

supported by the Bolivian people in the general elections of 2005. Yet, at the end of December 2010, the first uprising in the region against a government of the Left took place in Bolivia. It was caused by an excessive increase in the price of fuels. The event demonstrated not only the difficulties of entering into a *capitalismo andino*, into a truly alternative mode of development, but it also revealed the limits of Evo's Leftist government's stated effort to reestablish and de-colonize the state. The event also demonstrated how today's Leftist governments have constituted an event of indisputable importance announcing the installation of a new time marked by a boundless present. It has put into question the status of our received forms of temporization by upsetting the relationship between history and the tripartite division of past, present, and future.

Confused by the appearance of movements fueled by a potent mixture of modernity and archaisms, we Bolivians seem to live the removal of the conception of the future that had once been summoned—mainly through the “perspective” established by the nationalist Revolution of 1952—to shape the experience of the present and the expectations of development toward which it ceaselessly moved. In sharp contrast, none of the many analysts observing what happened this December 2010 was able to foresee that a government that was reelected barely a year ago by 64% of Bolivians, could come to face such a critical social protest. Moreover, the regions where the

president won more than 80% of the vote were the most mobilized against the government's decision to raise gas prices. The Aymara Altiplano and the coca-growing zones of Chapare spawned collective actions, including the attack and burning of state institutions, expressing the anger of the population against the same people that they elected.

Uruguayan journalist Raúl Zibechi gives an interesting account of what happened in those five days of last December (2011, p. 1). He provides some guide to this turbulent, expansive present we live today. Zibechi indicates that in mid-December the media began to disseminate official announcements about the big difference between Bolivian fuel prices and those of the rest of the region. As was explained through the media, the difference was said to encourage contraband and the draining of the country's currency. On December 26, while Evo was on a trip to Venezuela, Vice-President García Linera, the architect of *capitalismo andino*, made public Supreme Decree 748 that raised the price of gasoline 72% and revealed the fragility of the MAS government.

On December 27, drivers began a 24-hour work stoppage. A day later, the miners of Huanuni also decided to stage a 24-hour stoppage. Civic organizations, neighborhood councils, unions, *campesinos* and indigenous organizations rejected in massive demonstrations Decree 748. Coca growers of Chapare, who formed Evo's grassroots base of support, and El Alto, the bastion of Evismo

where Morales won 81% of the vote, blocked the highways and burned tollbooths on the El Alto-La Paz toll road. In a message to the nation two hours before the end of the year, Evo Morales, who had just returned from Venezuela, revoked Decree 748. He said that the increase was inevitable, but that he had the obligation to *mandar obedeciendo* (“rule by obeying the people”) and that was the reason for his turn-about.

This summary of Evo’s ill-fated decree explains how the hope of bringing about fundamental change through an economic decision was displaced by the debilitating sense of the state’s incapacity to use the already given political system. Fernando Coronil wrote recently that in today’s leftist turns “the present—the experience of the here and now—seems to be pulled by conflicting forces. On the one hand, it is animated by numerous struggles for a better society. On the other, it is trapped by formidable barriers that block these struggles” (2011, p. 234-5). He added: “The Left pursues a just future, but its particular content eludes it. It has a sense of direction but no clear destination” (2011, p. 235). Indeed, we seem to be living a turbulent, expansive present, a “now” that hinders the future for entering the public stage Reinhart Koselleck described as “horizon of expectations” (2004), as potentiality, offering a hopeful sense of possibility. With the future in decline, Evo’s turn to the Left seems to be drifting into a political crisis.

1. TOWARDS A POLITICAL CRISIS

After the turbulent period between 2000 and 2005, when Evo became president, stability came at a price of increasing state expenses through the subsidies and a broad range of social policies focused on diminishing poverty. The cycle of rising prices in commodities allowed the government to cover the increased expenditure with a degree of ease. However, the cycle now appears to have been broken and the generalized rise in prices is beginning to have a boomerang effect. While Evo started his government dancing happily with Miss Bonanza, he now seems to be stuck with ugly Miss Turbulence.

But there's more to be said about the perils of this expanded present. The Aymara sociologists Pablo Mamani and Pedro Portugal, both exponents of the new Indian intellectualism, point to four problems: the failure of the nationalization of hydrocarbons, which in reality was a modification of contracts to improve the terms for the state; the failure of de-colonization and reestablishment of the state; the fallacy that with the present government the country's huge structural problems will be solved; and the reemergence of social conflict that weakens the government's grassroots base of support (Mamani, 2008; Portugal, 2011).

All four problems indicated are important, but the last one could lead the country into a grave political crisis since active popular support has come to be the principal argument the government uses to manage delicate

situations. Pedro Portugal's description to what happened in El Alto (assault and burning of government and social movement's buildings) leads one to conclude that grassroots leadership allied with the government has been overtaken by its own rank-and-file, who are acting even against the organizations they belong to (2011, p. 2).

The situation in Bolivia seems to confirm Coronil's perception that we are living a "crisis *of* the present and *about* the future" (2011) "Crisis of the present," because the present unfolds as a "dense field of nervous agitation, constantly entangled in (...) a conglomeration of contradictory tendencies and actions leading to no clear destination" (Coronil, 2011, p. 247), and "about the future," because the future appears as if it were a specter, "a space inhabited by ghosts from the past" (p. 247). Consequently, despite the significant achievements of Evo's government, a "nightmarish sensation of being trapped by the very social movement that gave Morales power saturates the present, as if it were jammed or moved without advancing or in the wrong direction" (p. 247).

Under this modality of historicity, the expansive present prolongs itself within lasting constraints. In the face of a history of partial achievements and constant deferrals, the ghosts of the Indian rebellions of the XVIIIth century, of the defunct Revolution of 1952, and of the never ending nation-building process, continue to haunt the present, filling with ambiguities its modernizing project. In fact, we seem to be stuck in a never ending battle

between the short and the long terms. Coronil notes that “whereas the long term has historically been the horizon of the Left, the overwhelming dominance of capitalism has now restricted the domain of the Latin American Left to the short term” (2011, p. 250). Without clear alternative images of the future, these constraints have produced some paradoxical results that turn the debate over development more confusing than ever. Let us see why.

Vice-President García Linera’s much heralded *capitalismo andino* is being enunciated largely from the state position. For García Linera, the goal of the MAS government is to achieve a high degree of control over the production of wealth and the distribution of the surplus. This control of the economy would be the basis for a pluralistic process of articulation of three modernizations: the modernization of the industrial sector; the urban micro-entrepreneurial modernization; and the modernization of the rural communal sector. García Linera recognizes that there is indeed a logic that is proper to the indigenous worlds, and that this logic is neither separate nor antagonistic in relation to the Western one. As Arturo Escobar reflects on García Linera’s proposal (2010, p. 27), it is clear that *capitalismo andino* is a novel view for the Left; however, the vice-president considers that positions started on the basis of indigenous difference essentialize the indigenous and incapacitate them from becoming modern. Hence his emphasis on equality as opposed to difference, which is best expressed in

his conceptualization of this “Andean-Amazonian capitalism.” The novel form is capable of articulating capitalist and non-capitalist forms and, through corrective state action, also capable of generating the surplus needed to support a transition to a postcapitalist order. García Linera’s proposal thus becomes “a form of capitalism which we believe contains a set of forces and social structures which, in time, could become poscapitalist” (2007, p. 158-9), and this might be arrived at in a “new period of universal ascension of society, following the dialectic between movements and the state” (2007, p. 154).

This state-centered, dialectical and teleological view of social transformation remains within the confines of Eurocentric and modernizing Left perspectives. It is also a clear indication that a “neoliberal logic” continues operating in the government in spite of loud anti-colonialist declarations. *Capitalismo andino* is a case of those constraints that produce a rather peculiar articulation between practices and ideals in the short and long terms. As Coronil affirms in his essay, while leftist governments in Latin America proclaim socialist ideals for their long term, they promote capitalism in the short term. And while these leftist states may be moving towards socialism, their reliance on the pursuit of capitalism and of modernization suggest that “capitalism has a present without a future, and socialism has a future without a present” (Coronil, 2011, p. 250). And when these paradoxes prevail, they make a turbulent reality out of the present.

Attempting to explain the paradoxical nature of our present time, I think that de-colonization proposes a new “theory of locality,” a new politics of place. I share this view with José Rabasa’s recent research on the existence of a “people ‘without’ history” (2010). I am particularly close to his belief that modernity (that is, capital, the nation-state, history) is just one temporality, even when it aspires to absorb all life. The contemporaneity of the modern and the non-modern, what Ernst Bloch defined as the “non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous” ([1918] 1990), questions the assumption that the narratives of civilization, national formation, development exhaust all possible forms of existence. Rabasa observes that “whether under the rule of capital, the state, or history, the prevailing story is that there is no outside to these structures” (2010, p. 3). He then goes on to argue that “capital, the state, and history can be observed, worked on, manipulated, and avoided from perspectives that cannot be simply translated into Western discourses (...)” (2010, p. 3). Following this rationale, there would be a “without history” that bears a corresponding “without state”. Consequently, we could thus turn the absence into a productive “exteriority,” into a “beyond” that I intend to explore as a way to keep modernity and its nationalist modes of domination prudently at bay.

2. TOWARDS A “THEORY OF LOCALITY”

There are three “beyond” I wish to discuss as ways to envision an ethos that attends to the voices, the daily practices, the forms of memory, and the strategies of

mobilization that societies in movement have devised to counteract domination. There is a necessity to reflect on reality beyond, among others, three well-entrenched liberal concepts of modernity: an “imagined community”; a homogeneous citizenship based on individual rights, and the existence of the nation-state itself.

Let me start with the concept of the nation, nowadays too easily interpreted as an “imagined community.”

Rereading the classics in the social sciences, one begins to notice that even authors who analyze social reality from the perspective of class struggle tend to interpret societies as organic “wholes,” subject to rules of analysis that reinforce the criteria of unity and homogeneity through which human events are usually evaluated. The same is true when, as often occurs in the study of postcolonial societies, a historical analysis ignores the deep ethnic and social divisions that mark political life in nations like Bolivia. Similarly, concepts as important to the study of social organizations as “national culture” are based on a straightforward assumption of a supposed national cohesiveness that simply does not correspond to reality. This is a debatable Hegelian-style European model proclaiming the lineal, enlightened construction of modernity, which after overcoming all the obstacles that present-day reality has strewn in its path, will necessarily lead to the future social utopia, be it capitalist or socialist. Like García Linera’s *capitalismo andino*, this inalterable course of historical events, this rectilinear path to seizing

control of the state, is based on a profound conviction that the various historical and economic cycles will follow, one after another, without ever casting doubt on the lineal and progressive character of History.

As I reflect upon the discourse surrounding the Andean nation—which, because it deals with the collective organization of the people, is the most important discourse in the enlightened construction of modernity—I notice that, when critics talk about imagining the nation, they rarely take the complex relationship between nation and ethnicity into account as they should. In other words, it is important to ask oneself whether an explanation of the nation also calls for an ethnic component, or whether the nation itself, unmoored from any situation predating its own organization, is the sole source of nationalism. To my way of understanding, the nation, approached from the local, can only be theorized in strict relationship with the theme of ethnicity, which is linked to profound cultural conflicts that influential thinkers on modernity have ignored. For Benedict Anderson (1983), the origin of the nation lies in a “print-capitalist” nationalism that emerged from the sphere of the educated elite. This nationalism swallows up ethnic differences with a Eurocentric vision that overlooks or minimizes local conflicts.

The “persistence of ‘then’ within ‘now,’” Ernst Bloch’s happy definition of the simultaneous and conflictive presence of the non-modern into the historical

time of modernity (Bloch, [1918] 1990, p. 129), can be seen in the stubborn present of “ethnic identities on the move” (Zibechi, 2009). These identities, uncomfortably grafted into the project of Latin American nation-building, are left unexplored in Anderson’s construction of his “imagined communities.”

Forged from the point of view of the lettered elites, this imaginary community comes under harshly criticism in a brief review by subalternist historian Ranajit Guha (1985). The validity of the Andean thesis is based, as I have indicated, on a foundation of print capitalism, which from Guha’s point of view carries a problematic colonialist touch. If we were to overlook the fact that the spread of Western liberal ideas organized the political nationalism of the colonized peoples, Guha argues that we could fall into the error of ignoring the stubborn nationalism of the masses.

According to Guha, in preindustrial societies (Bolivia fits perfectly in Guha’s scheme), where the peasantry is a major social force and with unmistakable politics, traditional values that clash with liberal culture prone ideas and with the political aspirations of the bourgeoisie are often set aside and given no importance. Omitting this working-class experience of nationalism makes it impossible for Anderson to set out a more balanced explanation of the “origins” of the nation. Guha declares that reducing the language to an expression of print-capitalism is problematic for two reasons: first, because it ignores of

everyday spoken language; second, because it uncritically accepts the discourse about modernity and the historical time that establishes it.

Guha's argument against basing the discourse of the nation exclusively on linear time is convincing. In Bolivia, if we take into account the multiple times the indigenous rebellions have haunted the construction of the nation, there are moments in national history when the community's self-image ceases to line up with the horizon of expectations in modernity. These are moments when the community returns to itself and follows a cyclical time, quite unlike the time of the flow of history. Historical time has its setbacks, its lapses, which participate in aspects of millenarianism, of utopianism, and which function as "resources of the present" that call the triumphal march of history into question.

A second "beyond" has to do with my long-standing concern with how Latin American social science promoted institutional "engineering" in the recent past. For social science concentrated in exploring modern "governability," social movement were anomalous destabilizing forces, alien to democratic institutionalization and incapable of adjusting to the new formal representative political arena. The "Water War" and the "War on Gas" revealed later on what Bolivian political technocrats were missing all along: a solid understanding of how ethnic identities on the move had been contributing to the relations between culture and politics within the struggle for democracy.

Societies on the move such as the ones operating in El Alto or in El Chapare have advanced a conception of democracy that transcends the limits both of political institutions and of “actually existing democracy.” Indeed, the distinctive feature of this conception, which points toward the extension and deepening of democracy, is the fact that it has as a basic reference not the democratization of the political regime but of society as a whole, including therefore the cultural practices embodied in social relations of exclusion and inequality. Evelina Dagnino points out regarding the politics of culture in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, that what urban popular movements had to struggle for was not only their social rights, but their very right to have rights (2008, p. 305). Dagnino goes on to indicate that

(...) the right to have rights exposes what had to be a political struggle against a pervasive culture of social authoritarianism (...) establishing a common ground for articulation with other social movements that are more obviously cultural, such as ethnic, women’s, ecological, and human rights movements. (Dagnino, 2008, p. 306.)

This meant that the term “citizenship” had to be re-appropriated, enlarged, conceived beyond the view of citizenship as an alluring individual integration to the market.

Dagnino’s main argument is that the redefinition of the notion of citizenship, as formulated by societies in movement, expresses not only a political strategy but also a renewed cultural politics. This implies the need to

distinguish the new citizenship of the last decade from the liberal tradition, which ended up misconceiving the concept. Indeed, the new conception of citizenship is not limited to the “constituted” legal provisions or the effective implementation of abstract, formal rights. It involves the creation of new rights, new “constitutive” situations which emerge from specific struggles and their concrete practices. This redefinition, this shifting from constituted into new constitutive rights, comes to include not only the right to equality but also difference. Broadening and deepening the right to equality involves the gradual political incorporation of excluded sectors, beyond the strategy of the dominant classes and the state. Consequently, the new citizenship transcends the liberal claim to access, inclusion, membership, and belonging to the constitutional political system.

Let me now explore the third and last “beyond” I wish to discuss throughout the last part of this essay. The redefinition of citizenship, which is no longer confined within the limits of the relationship with the state, but must be established within civil society itself, must move beyond the conceptualization of the nation-state. Pushed to the extreme, “beyond the nation-state” means “the total transformation of liberal society” (Patzi Paco, 2004), the end to the hegemony of liberal modernity, based on the notion of formal rights and representative democracy, and the activation of communal forms of organization based on indigenous practices. But only a society in

movement, where autonomous social actors get to play, like in Bolivia, an important cultural and political role, might they be able to push the social formation towards the elusive goal of postliberalism. In this respect, Arturo Escobar argues cogently that “beyond the nation-state” also means moving beyond the “Right-Left” political spectrum. It means entertaining the idea of a space where de-colonial politics and postliberalism emerge “as two aspects of the process by which some groups in Bolivia are imagining, and perhaps constructing “worlds and knowledges otherwise” (Escobar, 2010, p. 24)

As Walter Mignolo has theorized in his studies on “local histories” (Mignolo, 2000), and Pablo Mamani reflected in his studies on indigenous autonomies (2008), “worlds and knowledges otherwise” implies a great political, cultural, ideological, and territorial organization between the indigenous and the popular. For Mamani, the new scheme would mean that “the indigenous appears as the orienting matrix of the project, whereas the popular constitutes the ideological matrix of the new political articulation” (2008, p. 23). From the Aymara intellectual perspective, the indigenous-popular world in movement sets in motion a steady process of social reconstruction from the local and the communal to the regional and the national. While the MAS project, particularly García Linera’s developmental economics, aims at reconstructing the social order from the heights of the state, the indigenous-popular project goes “beyond the

nation-state” to focus on the people mobilized as a turbulent multiplicity—the metaphor expressing this turbulence, this rush of people, is “avalanche”—and on the actions of a communal social machine which disperses the forms of power of the state machine (Escobar, 2010, p. 29; Zibechi, 2006, p. 161).

3. THE “COMMUNAL SYSTEM”: AYMARA POLITICS OF PLACE

The distinction between the “communal forms” and the “state forms” allows Aymara intellectuals to envision forms of self-regulation beyond the modern state and its temporal organization of society. Indeed, understanding communal life means not reducing it to the temporal structures of power, which remain teleological and linear. If history is characterized as the study of the temporal other existing in the past, the communal reminds that if the past is the only temporality we can experience, we do it under the paradoxical “now.” This takes me back to my early assertion regarding the removal, or at least the indefinite deferral of the future. Since the future seems to have been emptied of its promise of progress, its evacuation from the experience of the present has led to contemporary appeals to a new temporal regime pronouncing the advent of the expanded present. This new temporal regime is the communal.

One of the more careful conjugations performed by modern industrialized societies has been to conceal

the awareness within their own precincts and often discordant temporalities. Yet we know that capitalism has always been “contaminated” with prior modes of production and that what Marx described as formal subsumption—the partial subordination of labor to capital—would continue to coexist with the process of real subsumption until the last instance, until the final achievement of the commodity form. It is the specter of the past in the present that has come back in the figure of what Harry Harootunian describes as the “non-contemporaneous contemporaneity” (2007). Instead of Benedict Anderson’s articulation of both capital and the nation form, Aymara intellectuals propose a “theory of locality” which articulates the ambiguous mixtures of modern and archaic, the past and the present recalling for us a historical *déjà vu* and welding together different modes of existence aimed at overcoming the unevenness of lives endlessly reproduced.

The Aymara calls for communalism do not share, as José Rabasa has noted, an alternative socialist state but a “politics of place,” a theory of locality that is not bound by the Western logic of capitalism and socialism as an alternative administration of capital. In so doing, communal thinkers recuperate memories of earlier Indian insurgencies in order to break up with and move beyond the dominant forms of the nation-state. Without any predetermined political system to follow, Aymara intellectuals build on strong subjectivities that are connected to the

recuperation of memories exterior to the logic of either capitalism or socialism. Rabasa points out that societies in movement should be seen “as cultural forms where the modern and the non-modern are compatible” (2010, p. 57). Furthermore, indigenous social movements, as well as their multiple subject positions are deeply “eschatological” though not “teleological.” Rabasa recalls here Walter Benjamin’s distinction between “progress” and *Jetztzeit*, the “time of the now.” Like Benjamin, communal thinkers would confront “progress,” “what keeps the Angel of History from redeeming the past,” with a “revolutionary violence” exterior to the logic of socialism and capitalism.

In his “Critique of Violence” (1999), Benjamin develops the concept of “pure violence,” of “revolutionary violence”: that be neither making nor preserving the law, but by deposing it, this act “inaugurates a new historical epoch.” In this sense, “revolutionary violence,” “pure violence” expresses the turbulence that haunts power structures. In the Bolivian case, recent huge demonstrations against Evo’s government, both in urban and in mining areas where government support is traditionally high, are indicative of the presence of multitudes that, in Rabasa’s view, always carry in their constitution the force of multiple singularities that cannot be reduced to a formal state. Rabasa indicates, and rightly so, that “it hardly makes a difference if the state in question is conceived as including a plurality of nations, if one ends up

with a plurality of forms of preserving the regime of law and system of property.” He adds:

if the state is an inevitable reality one faces today, revolutionary violence would seek to dismantle the state—not to reform the state—to construct a new world in which the state would disappear. (Rabasa, 2010, p. 257.)

Going back to communalism and the politics of place not bounded by the Western logic of capitalism, it is clear that communal thinkers emerge from the historically fixed materiality of the social groups involved in such politics. Their point of departure are the local non-state and non-liberal forms of politics and social life. These forms, which constitute the “communal system,” anchor their power in collectivity, in indigenous societies. Ayмара sociologist Félix Patzi Paco indicates that

in contradistinction to modern societies, indigenous societies have not reproduced the patterns of differentiation nor the separation among domains (political, economic, cultural, etc.). They thus function as a single system that relates to both internal and external environments (...). (Patzi Paco, 2004, p. 171-2.)

In Patzi’s proposal of a “communal system” beyond the nation-state, this system can appropriate the liberal environment without this implying the transformation of the system. As a clear indication of his reliance on the temporal structure of the “non-contemporaneous contemporaneity,” Patzi’s system is not predicated on excluding any group. The communal system can utilize the “know-how” and the technological advances of liberal society, but subordinates them to the communal logic.

The communal also benefits from technology and becomes more competitive. Arturo Escobar describes Patzi's proposal as not being

a call for a new hegemony, but for an end for the hegemony of any system, to take leave of the universal modernity and move into the pluriverse of interculturality, and as a way to build more symmetrical relations among cultures. (Escobar, 2010, p. 32.)

As an Aymara theory of locality, Patzi's communalism is neither romantic nor essentializing. Incorporating the past into the expanded present implies neither purity nor timeless cultures. Patzi historicizes the liberal present and places the communal and the liberal systems as part of the same social space. Consequently, his envisioning of the Andean "non-contemporaneous contemporaneity" implies that Patzi does not conceive the communal and the liberal existing separate from each other. In this sense, it is important to avoid implying that the indigenous in "non-modern" because in many ways it is more than that. It does not imply the rejection of modernity. Even foundational modern notions such as growth and technology have place within a perspective of indigenous modernity and non-modernity. It simply means that indigenous communities in movement apply another rationality to their life-world, different from the purely economic one.

Finally, we may ask ourselves if it is possible to move from the communal into the postliberal alternative to modernity. The term communal implies an epistemic rupture with Western discourses of the sort we scholars

with different degrees of conviction produce in association with the nation-state. In relation to the possible construction of a postliberal, postcapitalist society, Evo's government constitutes a paradigmatic case of a turbulent relationship between a self-declared revolutionary state and the growing dissatisfaction of indigenous-popular mobilizations. This indicates that we must stop being complacent about the so-called "return to the Left" in Latin America. As both Rabasa and Coronil reflect on the new political status quo of the Left, the state remains a repressive power that steps on human rights, and a protector of capital without future. Rabasa indicates that it makes little sense to talk of a plurinational state, "if one ends up with a plurality of forms of preserving the regime of law and system of property" (2010, p. 257). If the plurinational state that was born out of the *Asamblea Constituyente*—the "constituent power" that marked for Bolivia the transition in 2007 to a new constitution and its corresponding "constituted power"—is a reality today, will it be ample enough to recognize and protect the non-Western, indigenous communal systems? Will the relation between them be so light that the two players will be relying always on the force of law or pure means? Will "state terror" be frequently invoked in order to preserve the law?

Evo Morales's government also constitutes an attempt at relocating a plurality of people within the familiarizing narrative of the nation. In relation with the rebellions

of the past, Evo's government is closer to amnesia than remembering, having the intended effect of smothering the uncanny nature of collective memory. Clearly developmental in its aims, it abides by historical time. The plurinational state seems to forget that history differs from memory in its presumption of a singular, universal time rather than coexisting multiple times that correspond to the memories of different temporalities proper to indigenous societies in movement. As Harry Harootunian indicates, "the artificiality of the historical contrasts sharply with a transtemporal memory, which mixes the past experiences with those of the immediate now being lived." And reflecting on Maurice Halbwach's "collective memory," Harootunian adds: "If History is concerned with changes, with breaks that actually shorten time, memory cultivates resemblances to insure the continuous passage of past into present" (2007, p. 492).

Imbued by memory and preoccupied with the historical present, societies in movement have managed to balance the cyclical time of their collective memory with a political project of liberation inscribed in a Marxian narrative of modernity. It is a narrative free of the nation-state as well as of progressive mythologies. At the same time, societies in movement inhabit the perennial present of the contemporary world and the global dominant they are combating. What these perspectives offer is a model of a historical present in which the temporality of non-contemporaneous contemporaneity must live

in permanent tension, in “revolutionary violence” with the expansion of capital and its continuous reproduction in new registers. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to affirm the postliberal, postdevelopmental alternative to modernity. What we might still attempt to do in this current conjuncture to displace a single modernity, to suspend it at the epistemic and ontological levels, is to begin the difficult labor of creating a discourse on modernity

centered principally in understanding the history of our present as the unity of uneven times differentiating global geopolitical space, rather than merely affirming or cheering on a globalizing project that sees the world only as a true space of the commodity relation. (Harootunian, 2007, p. 493.)

And the appeal to past icons may also help express the ongoing struggles towards a better world. I use the notion “embers of the past” (2009) to evoke memory’s capacity to energize and illuminate present struggles, and, above all, to ignite new conflagrations. Likewise, José Rabasa invokes Artur Rimbaud’s *orgie* as the aesthetic of insurgency in line with the concept of “pure violence,” and Fernando Coronil recalls Marx’s “poetry of the future” as the emancipating imagining capable of freeing the present from the burden of the past. The three notions are sensible to the durational present and to the role played by mixed times in political struggles rather than merely the primacy of a single historical configuration. They express the idea that the turbulent “now” cannot be interpreted as a constituting part of a lineal, teleological succession.

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The Same Boat

Cristovam Buarque

THE RENAISSANCE TRIANGLE

Not long ago, a woman who was candidate to the presidency of France made a visit to Tunisian immigrants in Italy and made clear that they would not fit in France.¹ Not long ago, such statement would not make any sense and neither it would be welcome. Today it bears it is considered logical and is welcome in times of election, in spite of it being ethically rejected by those who believe in equal rights to all human beings.

What changed in the past decades was the perception that the social-economic-ecological space (SEES) is

1 Jean Marie Le Pen, *Philosophie Magazine*, Paris, April, 2011.

limited and that, as a result of this, the feeling of individualism began to prevail over that of solidarity.

All the socially progressive ideas and feelings that developed since the late XVIII in the West have their origin in the marriage between an unlimited progress which seemed possible and the intention of an ethics of solidarity. Historical optimism, like the capacity to overcome human hardship, can be found in remote antiquity. The story of Noah and his arch, in the Bible, is an example of this. In spite of him being supposed to choose only one couple of each species, it is said that he saved all mankind. Even though it is possible to identify yet among the ancient Greeks and in the teachings of Christ part of this feeling of Man having an evolutionary purpose, it is from the Renaissance on, with its philosophical stream coming specially from Hegel (1770-1831), and the Industrial Revolution stream, with Marx (1818-1883), that the combination of the visions of economic progress and social justice gathers strength.

Leszek Kolakowski, in his classical and monumental *Main Currents of Marxism*,² goes as far as Plotinus (204-270 AD) in his search for the origins of Marxism. Edmund Wilson in *Rumo à Estação Finlândia*³ is closer

2 Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, New York, Norton and Company, 2005.

3 Edmund Wilson, *Rumo à Estação Finlândia*, Rio de Janeiro, Companhia das Letras, 2006.

to Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) and Jules Michelet (1798-1874).

The history of the idea and of the social perception of progress is above all linked to the two latest centuries, especially when it sits on the shoulders initially of Adam Smith (1723-1790) and of Karl Marx. The first managed to formulate the base of the explication on how the new capitalist system would transform stones, plants and animals into men and their products; the second showed how that such system would walk through revolutions to lead the historical process of Man developing socialism, the egalitarian society.

Ever since, with the few exceptions of Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) and Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), the thought of intellectuals, politicians and of the general public has been one of optimism.

The Renaissance and the Industrial Revolutions it led to, both in philosophical and scientific terms, managed to link the project of mankind to a triangular basis made of economic growth, social equality and political democracy.⁴ For centuries, such triangle changed its speech but remained present in all of the projects of civilization. Even capitalism, with its exploitation and inequality, kept the dream of having equality and democracy side

4 It is important to remember that this triangle coexisted with slavery; in spite of it being questioned even at the centers of power, and with imperialism, without losing, however, the perspective of freedom to each people.

by side. The long period of real socialism stood for the three sides of the triangle, even when sustaining a very heterodox concept of democracy. Only two short termed political systems refused to accept this triangle: the Nazi regime of Germany, which rejected democracy and promoted the exclusion of non-Arians, especially Jews; and South African apartheid, which excluded native Africans.

Even though divided by the economic vision and the social one, by left and right, since the French Revolution the process of civilization has moved forward, taking into account that its purpose is that of producing the maximum and to distribute it among everyone. To this social idea and practice was added the almost spontaneous tendency of expanding democracy in the activity of politics. With the expression of humanism it was possible to move forward with the human project of mastering nature and of providing justice and democracy to the economic dimension of growth.

In the early XXI century, one comes to highest point of this project, in democracy, through the expansion of democracy everywhere: in 1945 with the German defeat; in the decades of 1950-60, with the liberation of the colonial countries; in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and everything it meant, in Eastern Europe; in 2010, with the revolts in the Arab world. But there is also the realization of the limits to growth.

Growth was a natural tendency and equality was an automatic evolution, regardless of it being by using the

free forces of democracy and of the market or the conditioning of revolution and of state planning. Besides, each society was considered within the boundaries of each nation, without the need for planetary considerations.

Only very recently, in the early 1970's, a new critical thought made its arrival, having the book *The Limits to Growth* as its landmark, ordered by the Club of Rome and especially coordinated by Donella Meadows (1941-2001).⁵ The reaction to the report of the Club of Rome reveals the predominant force of optimism regarding the historical project of Man, both on the side of the capitalist developmentists as well as on the side of the Marxists.⁶ Called neo-Malthusianism, the book was left aside by the prevailing school of thought.

It took a few decades and the empirical realization of global warming for the theoretical projections of the Club of Rome to be able to confirm the limits to growth. Yet such limits only take place if beside the idea of growth is kept the idea that solidarity is part of the historical project of man: the idea that we are all on the same Boat.

5 Donella Meadows, Jorge Randers and Dennis Meadows, *The Limits to Growth*, 1972.

6 In 1980, an article of the author was refused by the Cebrap magazine, which argued that the idea of limits to growth was an invention of imperialism to avoid the growth of the Third World. Article "The Fetishism of Energy" was published later by the *Revista Pernambucana de Desenvolvimento*, January-June, 1982, v. 9, n. 1, Recife (PE).

When we limit the number of people benefiting from progress, the limits to growth disappear. By reducing the amount of passengers, the ferryBoat can remain on its path, without ethics but in environmental balance.

THE BOAT WITHOUT A COMPASS

Since the last decades of the XX century, the long period of optimism of the Renaissance and of the revolution in Science and Technique begins to reveal its failure. It happens at the same time: globalization knocking down national, social, political and cultural borders which, however, remain alive in politics; and the realization that the ecological balance is threatened by the forces of knowledge and the continuation and expansion of inequality. The conquests and successes of civilization where the cause of their own failure in different aspects:

The current reality is one of failure on different fronts:

- a) *Failure of finance*. In order to finance the growth of the economy, banks have to finance evermore finance the consumption that makes production dynamic and for longer periods of time, but such trend has reached its limit in many countries as was shown through the large crisis started in 1998.
- b) *Fiscal failure*. The search for making social services universal—health, education, pensions being paid earlier and in higher amounts, expenditures on infrastructure—depleted the fiscal capacity to build social justice with public resources.

- c) *Failure of knowledge.* The advance of knowledge is leading to the usage of science and technology for the development of societies more efficient at a micro level, but unfair and unsustainable at the macro level.
- d) *Failure of politics.* The long development of democracy undergoes a crisis when the social and economic crisis presents itself in a planetary and enduring scale, while political leaders has to look for the individual vote of each voter, responding to his immediate and personal interests.⁷
- e) *Failure of solidarity.* Man acquired planetary power yet remains selfish. Solidarity, except for very special saints, only occurs when there is a surplus of resources available.⁸ When resources become limited, solidarity vanishes first among individuals of different nations and then among neighbors in a same country.
- f) *Failure of the economy.* The economy failed as it cannot go on transforming nature into products at the speed it was used to without harming the

7 On this failure, refer to text by author: "The 21st Century Challenges to Politicians" (presented on 15-12-2009 when on the official mission of the parliamentary meeting at COP 15, UN Conference on Climate Change, Kopenhagen.

8 The film *2012* is a good example of such and applies well to the title of this text. At the moment of boarding the saving barges, the struggle would not allow for solidarity.

environment, without causing financial crises nor making people unequal.

- g) *Failure of intelligence.* Modern world has built concepts which reveal failure of intelligence. The development of modern weapons, regardless of them being of mass construction or those ironically called intelligent, shows the failure of logic when considering intelligent what is not ethical. Intelligence moves away from sensibility. Humanist intelligence failed to the point of one being able to say that the use of crematory furnaces was an intelligent way to solve a problem; that it was not chosen cleverly or at least by an intelligence married to the general welfare.
- h) *Failure of ethics.* Actually, the failure of intelligence is due to ethics being molded by technical progress rather than conditioning it to moral values. The ethics that strives for equity and fights death penalty, slavery and authoritarianism loses strength.
- i) *Failure of order.* As a whole, human society has got into an immense disorder. In the past decades we have seen moral values, geopolitics, national political structures, scientific paradigms, demographics, social-political systems and the ecology getting disorganized.
- j) *Failure of humanism.* The idea that Man was the master of nature was fragilized through the perception of a rebellious nature causing the phenomenon

of global warming, of the economic product not improving life anymore, of power causing radiation leakages from nuclear plants, of the destruction of biodiversity and of the immense lakes caused by hydropower plants.

- k) *Failure of success*. What surprises most is the fact that all those failures result from success, not of the failure, of the civilization born from the Renaissance and developed from the Industrial Revolution. It is a situation different from the failures of previous times, which were due to flaws and frailties rather than to efficiency and strength.

The context of this failure leads to the risk of there being several disasters, interrupting the cycle of optimism in the human project:

- a) *ecological*, through global warming and pollution, including the nuclear kind;
- b) *aging*, with changes in the age pyramid;
- c) *unemployment*, caused by technical progress;
- d) *inequity*, through the increase of distance between classes;
- e) *dissimilitude*, through the possibility of the use of biotechnology to make human beings different among themselves;
- f) *chaos*, especially of the urban kind;
- g) *vulnerability*, though the growing risk of international contamination in all sectors;
- h) *scarcity*, of natural resources and therefore of food and energy;

- i) *migration*, with intense flow of people throughout the Globe in search of survival and making pressure over local life conditions in the rich sectors;

Such failures brought to mankind the need to address problems as follows:

- a) *water*: how to preserve it?;
- b) *energy*: how to generate it?;
- c) *biodiversity and forest*: how to keep?;
- d) *climate change*: how to avoid or to adapt oneself?;
- e) *new progress indicators*: how to create and accept them?;
- f) *consumption standards*: how to modify them?;
- g) *poverty*: how to overcome it?;
- h) *science and technology*: how to condition it to ethical values?;
- i) *cities*: what to do about them?;
- j) *production and distribution standards*: how to provide efficiency?;
- k) *sustainable development*: what does it mean and how to promote it?;
- l) *green economy*: how to elaborate it and adopt it?;
- m) *happy decrease*: what are its consequences and possibilities?;
- n) *world governance*: how to achieve it?

As a matter of fact, the goals to be reached proved for very long not to be viable neither enough for all. The Boat has lost its compass: it cannot take everyone to the future that has been designed throughout the past two centuries.

Having come to this conclusion, there are three alternatives for the search for a compass:

A. *The shipwreck*: caused by the acceptance of the human tragedy of inevitably going on with its civilization process, which aims at the increase of production and the distribution of it among all, but knowing that such path leads to environmental disaster. Mankind would hardly disappear, but would undergo another throwback in a proportion equivalent or even larger to the one that took place after the fall of the Roman Empire, now made worse by the difficulties placed by an unbalanced environment where human beings would have to survive. Such alternative would confirm the idea of the incapacity of human beings to control their destiny, foreseen by Arthur Koestler (1905-1983) already in the 1950's, in the sense that the human being is the product of a mistake in the evolutionary process when it evolved to the point of having an unlimitedly rational brain, capable of explaining and manipulating reality, but bearing primitive instincts incapable of controlling the use of rational force. A suicidal brain capable of creating the Atom Bomb as well as to use it over its own species and the world it lives in. Koestler was not seeing yet the Other Bomb, the one of the Economy, producing and consuming in a voracious and uncontrolled manner and with a slow and silent explosion.

B. *The exclusive Boat*, which follows the same path of the human project of making the economy grow, rejecting solidarity and the distribution purpose, adopting

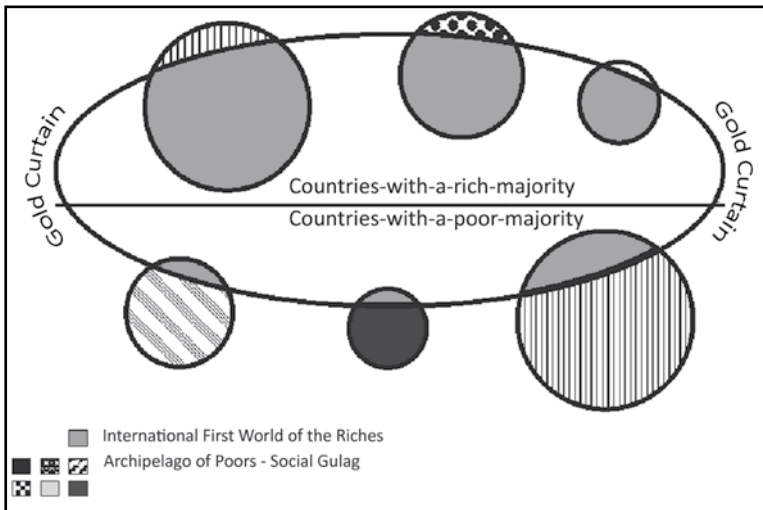
exclusion as a way to maintain ecological balance. It is the alternative adopted by the South African *apartheid* and by the Brazilian *apartação*,⁹ that is now beginning to be defended by philosophers but most of all by politicians in search of voters with an impatient and local perception, like in the speech of Ms Le Pen to the Tunisians when she makes clear that the Boat of France is not for everyone. It is the alternative shown by the movie *2012*, the mercantilist manifestation of Noah's Arc, where the fair is paid to keep ecological viability for few. Without changing production and consumption standards, it socially excludes. It is also the failure of the triangle based on democracy, social justice and growth, given the break-up with the ethics of equality.¹⁰

C. *A new orientation to the Boat*. Should we not want to sink together or exclude many, Our Boat must avoid disaster by fighting its causes and changing path through a civilization alternative; acknowledging that the Boat must have room for all of us, of today and the future. For the

9 Ver do autor *O que É Apartação, o Apartheid Social Brasileiro*, São Paulo, Editora Brasiliense, 1994.

10 What Ms. Le Pen said has much to do with the more discrete explanation given by President Obama at the meeting in Copenhagen, in the sense that there is no president of the World, that each president speaks and is committed to his voters. At that meeting, only one president spoke to all: President Mohamed Nasheed, of the Maldives. His voters have a feeling and a purpose that goes far beyond the country frontiers as global warming will lead to the flooding of all its islands. In order to survive, the Maldives require a planetary ecological balance.

ethics of solidarity to survive and to keep everyone, of today and the future, on the same Our Boat, it will be mandatory to opt for breaking up with the current way of growing, to bring down the Gold Curtain¹¹ which spreads throughout the Planet dividing each country within itself and which internationally separates the rich from the poor. The overthrowing of the Gold Curtain would make room for everyone on Our Boat, yet with another standard for production and consumption.



EDUCATIONISM: A NEW HUMANISM

Mankind finds itself at a crossroad: should we allow the Boat for All to stay on its way to shipwreck?

¹¹ On this, refer to book by the author, *A Cortina de Ouro*, São Paulo, Editora Brasiliense, 1994.

Should we choose the Boat for Few, keeping the same path and limiting the number of passengers? Or should we invent a new path, a new civilization project guided by a new humanism?

This crossroad is the consequence of a natural and cultural history that started long time ago.

The present *Homo crucis* is the result of an evolution that provoked several mutations since *Homo sapiens*.

1. Seven Turns and a Crossroad

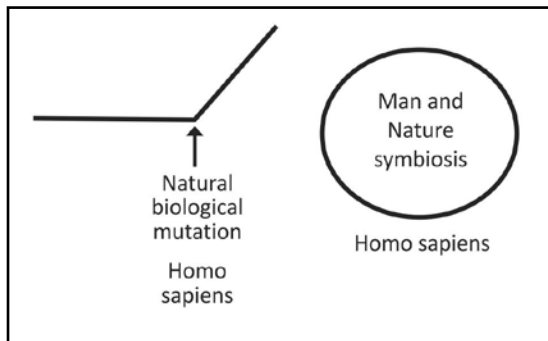
The natural history of mankind shows a constant changing, until the present stage of civilization. Usually, this long story occurred in the form of simple, steady, imperceptible developments. In other times, however it implied deep changes, mutations, as if the course of humanity made a turn. After each mutation, a new kind of man appeared, profoundly different from its earlier stage.

The observation of this historical process allows us to identify turns where the human mutations took place, until it reached the present stage of civilization: a crossroad where humankind will choose the path to the future. For the first time, humanity can anticipate which road leading to the future must be followed. All the previous turns happened spontaneously, for natural and cultural reasons, under the influence of biology, environment and intelligence, but without an anticipation of the direction to be followed. Today, humankind can foresee the risks and possibilities ahead.

a) *Homo sapiens*. The first of these historical turns was the biological mutation, which occurred probably in

Africa, between 400,000 and 100,000 years ago. This biological mutation, that gave rise to the civilization as it is today, was the result of the natural history of the Cosmos, of Earth, and finally of Life in the Planet over the past 400 million years, and of the pre-humans that exist for about 7 million years.

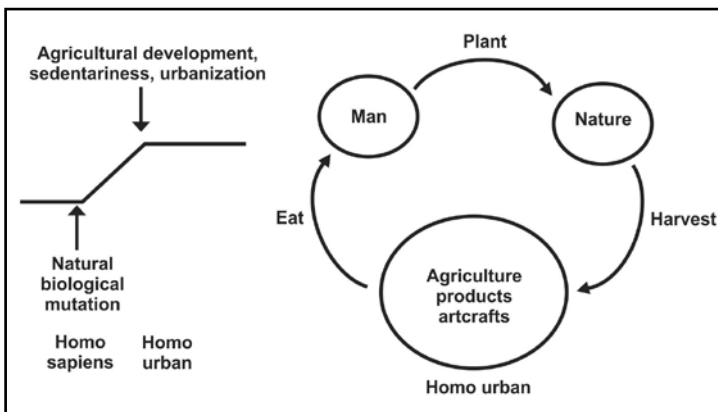
A natural, largely random process, turned mixed DNAs into a new biological being with a more powerful brain than the one of other animals. *Homo sapiens* appeared. Had this biological mutation not occurred, the entire history of humankind would still be on hold, as it still happens to other animal species that, after hundreds of millions of years, have not suffered a biological mutation to give them the ability to think, as happened to the *Homo sapiens*.



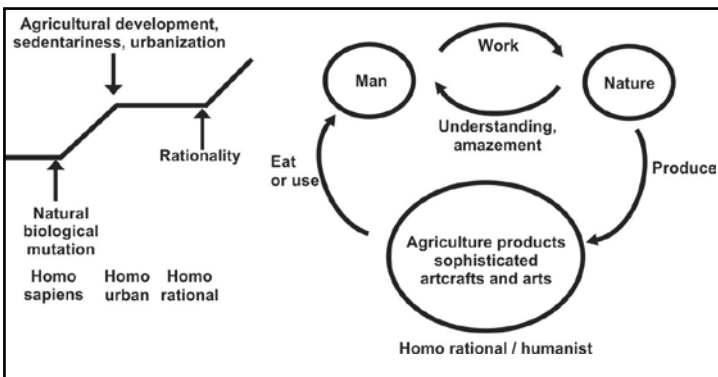
b) *Homo urban*. For thousands of years, this new animal developed a sophisticated language and the ability to use their hands to make tools, dominated the fire, created art forms, and developed habits. But he remained nomadic, living out or hunting and extracting, as many

Homo sapiens groups still live today. About 10,000 years ago, in several parts of the Globe, especially in Mesopotamia, the first possibilities of agricultural production and therefore of life in settled communities occurred. Mankind was making its second turn: the one of sedentary farming, creating the conditions for the emergence of *Homo urban*.

Although the same biological being, *Homo urban* differentiated himself from *Homo sapiens*, to an extent that he could be considered a new man. Metaphorically, it is legitimate to say that sedentarism and urban life is a social, economic and cultural mutation from the *Homo sapiens*. This turn allowed systematic dialogue, the accumulation of physical and intellectual assets that gradually created memory and written language, and developed the dynamic and evolving thinking, gathering more and more abstract, speculative and explanatory power.

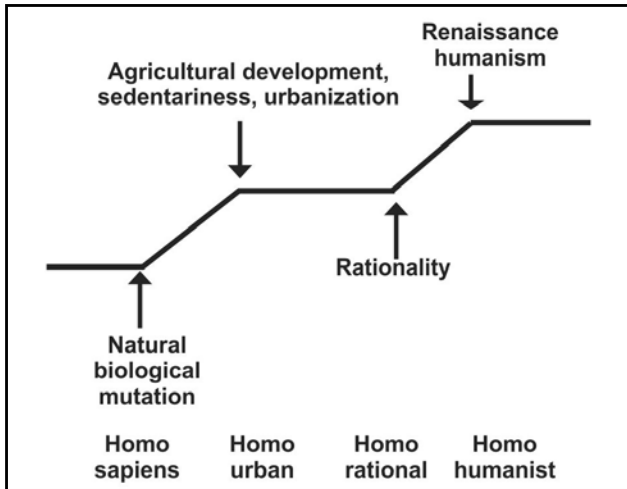


c) *Homo rational*. Without the urban evolution, it would not have been possible the following turn, in Greece, around 2500 years ago, when men developed the logical reasoning. Again, a new man appears, sapiens, sedentary, urban, and reason-biased: the *Homo rational*. He was capable of a sophisticated thinking, of developing logic, able not only to think, but also to realize this ability, differentiating himself from the rest of nature. A being possessing not only the intelligence of the *Homo sapiens*, but also with the ability to look at the world at a distance, for being different and able to translate what he saw into intellectual models. The specific formation of rational thinking in Greece lasted for centuries, but it is fair to say that suddenly—if compared with the history of *Homo sapiens*—, a group of beings, living close to each other and exchanging ideas, gave the big logic, analytical, and reasoning leap. This turn started the development of the scientific and technological potential and the formulation of ideas of democracy, tragedy, ethics, aesthetics that brought civilization to its present status.



d) *Homo humanist*. The fall of Rome, in the hands of the barbarians, abruptly interrupted the development of rationality. The end of the Greco-Roman classicism and the predominance of the Catholic Church built a barrier, made of faith and orthodoxy, which obstructed the rational debate. For almost a thousand years, *Homo rational* struggled to make rationality advance. However, in Western Europe, as of the fourteenth century, the rationality met both a rebirth and a leverage: scientific knowledge and artistic skills have allowed the emergence of modern aesthetics and thinking.

The new renaissance man not only laid the foundations of science and contemporary arts, but also the basis of humanism: separated faith from reason, discovered individuality, created the artistic painting as we know it, in addition to classifying the Earth as a small piece of matter, like billions of others, in the center of the cosmos, but giving a higher dimension to humans, giving rise to humanism. As the Earth diminished, the man grew. The *Homo renaissance* is also the *Homo humanist*: able to scientifically understand the world and to explain it with the use of mathematics, but also to understand his position and strength, regardless of any Divine will, and dream about utopias in this life built by man's hands and brain.



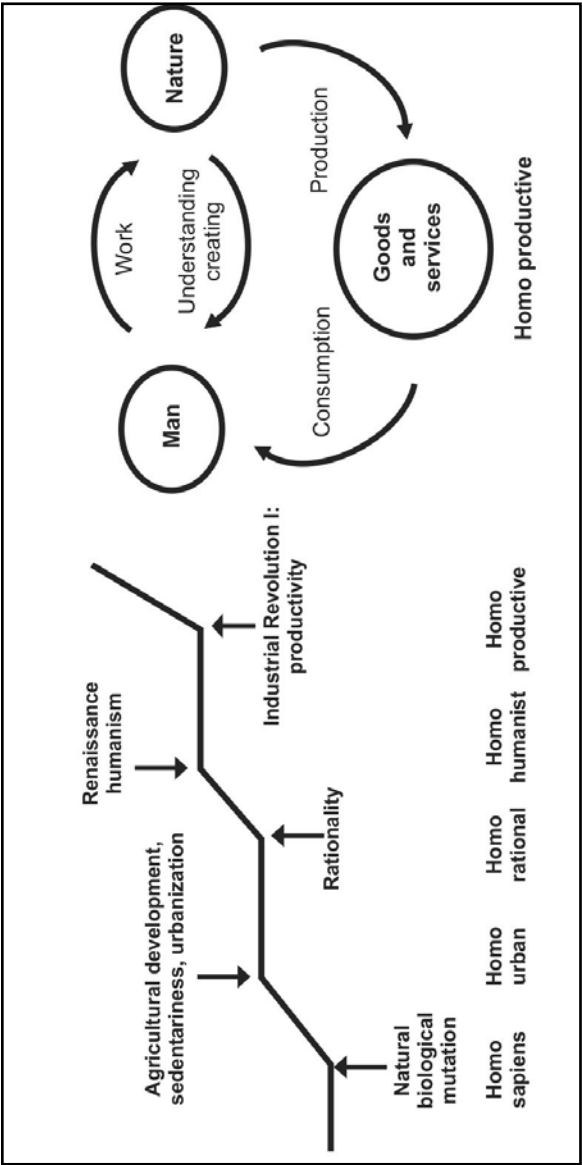
e) *Homo productive*. So far, civilization advanced in arts, philosophy, and science, but without fundamental leaps in the productive technologies used by man to transform nature in the goods and services used in daily social life. Despite all the leaps in the rational and humanistic thinking, the intelligence was still mainly used for philosophical speculation and the descriptions of science. Few revolutions occurred in the development of techniques to raise productivity in the economic life. Agriculture advanced little since the Mesopotamian and Egyptian irrigation techniques, industrial process differed little from the exploitation of energy using water, the wheel, the wind and domesticated animals.

It was only after a few decades between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, in England mostly, that the scientific thinking was put into use, aimed at the technical development, mainly to increase the production

of industrial goods. Many advances such as the discovery of the wealth in the American continent, the navigation and inventions such as the train, the loom, the telegraph, and the energy of steam, led to the Industrial Revolution. The *Homo industrial* appeared in the form of *Homo productive*. For the first time, mankind was using its thinking abilities to increase the production, so as to meet their needs, in the market. The productions are enriched by the amount of knowledge used in inventions and in the dissemination of new techniques.

Homo industrial, in the form of *Homo productive*, was a new type of man, facing the high productivity and the market as means of meeting human needs as efficiently as possible: producing more and reducing the required effort. This revolution helped consolidating man's feeling of power over nature and to brought about the dream of utopia, not as Homo humanist of renaissance's "anywhere", but as a "here & soon."

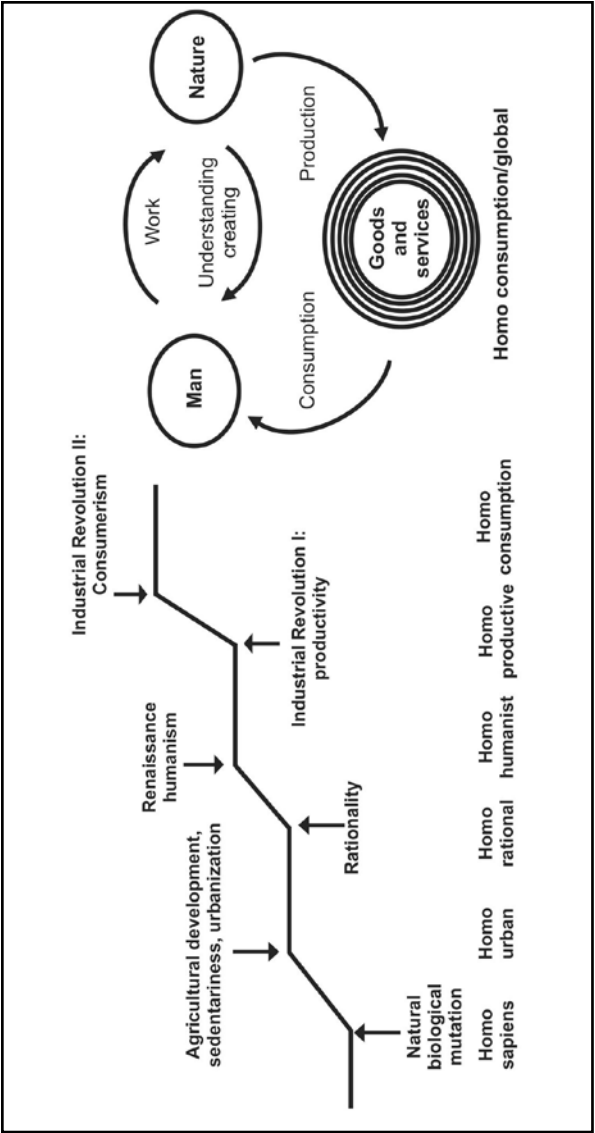
Industrial utopians arise with both capitalist and socialist perspectives. Everybody believed that history would evolve to a better world by simply increasing the productivity, and that the technical progress itself would induce social changes unlike any other turns made by civilization. The dispute was reduced to the best production and distribution system, on how the economy would produce—not on what it would produce. The historical reality would be very surprising in the upcoming turns.



f) *Homo consumer*. As of the early nineteenth century, especially in the U.S., the rationality started to be employed more in creating new products than in new ways of producing them. Mankind make the turn that created *Homo consumer*.

Humanity, that had arisen, settled down, acquired rational thinking, and developed its technical ability to produce more and faster, began—as of the early nineteenth century—to use intelligence to invent new products. The creativity from within the plant, to create new production methods, went off the factory, to create new products. Instead of reducing needs, rational intelligence started presenting new needs. Necessity was replaced by demand, driven by the originality of new products and by advertising techniques.

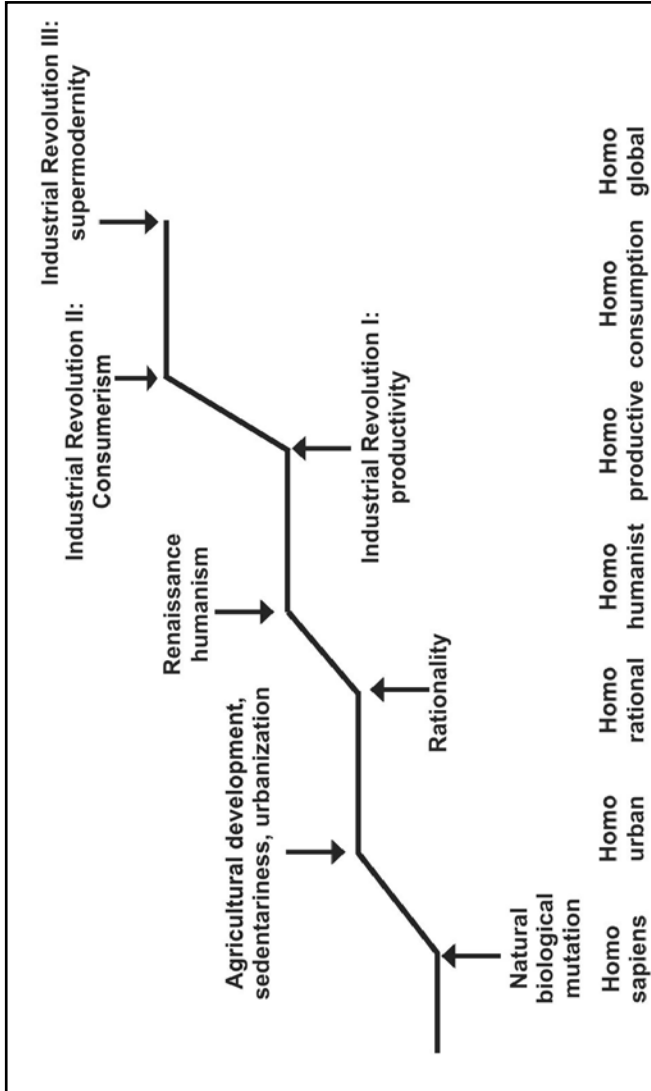
Homo consumer is a different man: he is driven by the voracious consumption. His utopian goal lays on increasing consumption, as if he had become a machine ready to devour every product of an economy apparently detached of man's will. Although each turn previously made was determinant to mold humanity as it is today, it was the *Homo consumer* turn that determined the present state of civilization. However, even with the logic of intellectual curiosity and search for reduction needs by means of the least effort, the consumerist option still requires a logical explanation—why does man looks to consume more, instead of work less, or enjoy the free time.

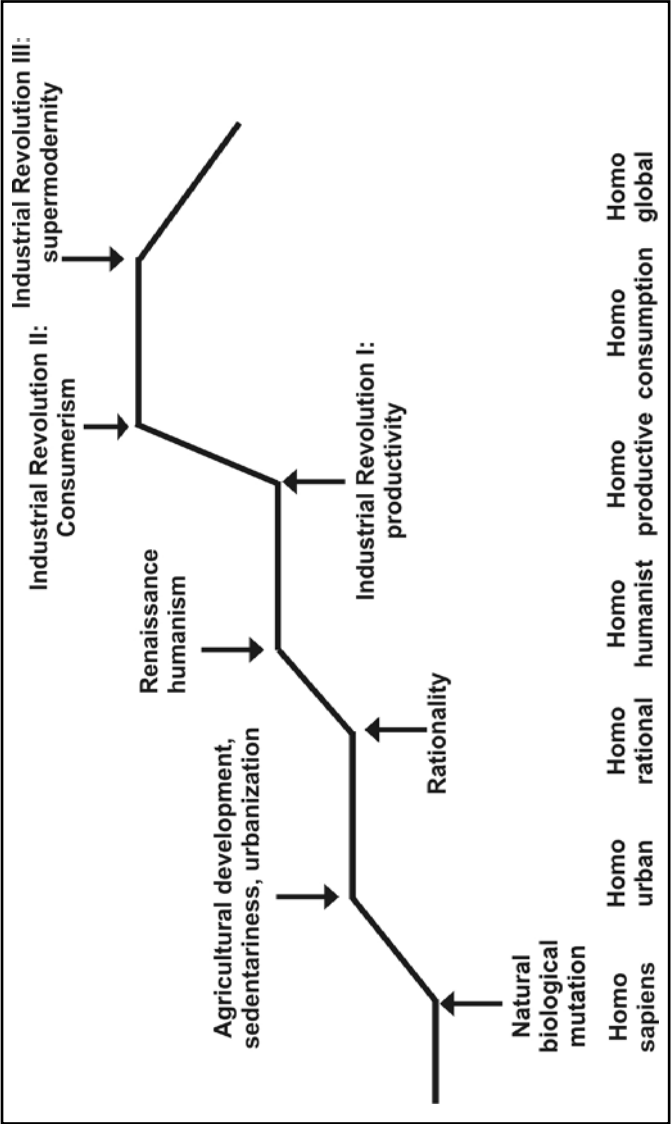


g) *Homo global*. During the last three decades, the *Homo consumer* spread all over the globe. He made another historical turn and became *Homo global*. His main feature is to keep the voracious desire for consumption at a planetary market scale: an urbanized world, united in the access to information, tastes, habits, and an uncontrolled thirst for new goods. Products are outdated and replaced at breakneck pace; while society wastes human lifetime (spent on unnecessary work or on paralyzing traffic jams), devastate nature and its resources, destroy cultures, and threatens life.

The observation of the current civilization shows a humanity that is both integrated and divided; each country crossed by a “Golden Curtain” that separates the riches from the poor by visible or invisible walls, and unites the riches of the world. One could say that this is a “civilization of walls” separating social groups, more brutally than before, when walls protected countries and cities in the medieval times.

The ecological and moral crises—global warming and growing social inequality—threaten the continuation of the natural course of history. If a different path is not taken, *Homo global* will be heading to an ecological crisis of catastrophic proportions at planetary scale, and to a level of inequalities that will lead to a division of humanity: two beings so different that may not recognize each other as the same species, causing a rupture in the feeling of similarity among human beings.



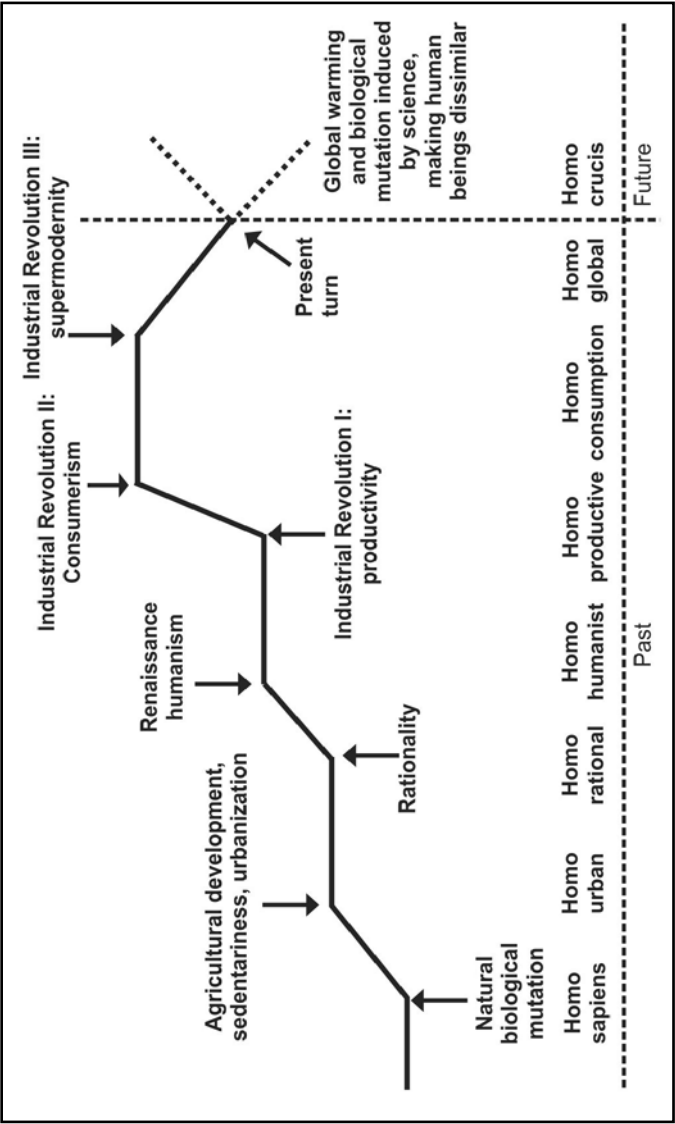


h) *Homo cruces*. *Homo global*'s greedy consumerism and thirst for technological power led humanity and civilization to a major crossroad in man's history: we're *Homo crucis*. But unlike our ancestors, for the first time we are able to experience the anguish of anticipating the potential risks ahead, aware that we can control the destiny of our species, born a few million years ago.

In the coming decades, humanity has two options: to continue the same course of evolution, moving towards the ecological destruction and a biological mutation scientifically induced to benefit only one part of human beings, or to reorient the future, subjecting the civilization advancement to the ecological balance and to equal rights ensured to all humans.

If the choice is to remain in the course of the past, another turner will be made, and a *Neo Homo sapiens* will emerge—smarter, healthier, living longer than the traditional *Homo sapiens*. A repetition of what already happened in the past, when *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis* were contemporaries, now with *Homo sapiens* and the *Neo Homo sapiens* being contemporary. But if the option is for a complete reorientation, the new turn will result in a new kind of man.

In the first case, the *Neo Homo sapiens* evolution will be the result of scientific and technological advancements, controlling humankind, and the continuation of the dehumanization of humanism at its present state. In the second case, technical advance will be subject to ethics, and a new man will be the product of a new humanism.



2. The Dehumanization of Humanism

Homo sapiens was created by the forces of nature, their civilization has been formed by the forces of intelligence. This intelligence however has proven to fail in the guiding of civilization. The humanism has emerged as the possibility of looking at the cosmic phenomenon centered on humans, placing human beings as much more than mere cosmic dust. But humanity was forgotten, and humanism began to threaten the integrity of humanity.

Humanism was crucial for the cultural differentiation between the classic and the contemporary world. It resulted from the merge of the recovered classical Greek thinking with the sense of the primacy of man over the Earth and the supernatural prospects of a man with a fate. Humanism consolidated man as a being apart from the rest of nature: separated and dominant. This vision not only prevailed, but was consolidated by the absolute domination and transformation of nature by man.

While the humanism consolidated itself, it began a course of dehumanization: the atomic bomb is a single symbol of the creation of an esquizofrenic civilization. The human being dominated nature, using the technology that he created, and humanity started to be dominated by technology, that now defines the characteristics of the social system, destroying the environment and increasing social inequality.

We continue to walk in the path to the contempt and depredation of any culture that does not adapt to the mainstream of technological advance and new developments

of the industrial economy. As a result, as foreseen in the Greek myths, “the sorcerer’s apprentice lost control of his work,” “opened Pandora’s Box,” “Prometheus was chained”, and “Sisyphus started carrying rocks in an illogical and self-consuming work.” Instead of reaching the promised freedom, humanity was trapped by human technological progress.

In this situation, enraged humanism dehumanized itself and shows its true colors—ecological unbalance and ethical wickedness—and faces a determinant crossroads. It shall either destroy its habitat and civilization, or redirect its project, launched by the new humanism.

3. The New Humanism

The new humanism must be built upon eight pillars.

a) Planetary Politics

One of the great achievements of humanism was the discovery and consolidation of the individuality of human beings. It has removed the old dilution of the individual within social classes, ensuring personality to each person. Following the discovery and acceptance of the importance of the individual, democracy has allowed the building of modern national states, and citizenship—the Greek creation that indicated the commitment of city residents to the city itself—began to indicate the level of commitment to the whole country.

The planetary crisis requires an intricate change: from citizenship to *planetany*, meaning the individual commitment to the fate of humankind and of the Earth.

Without abandoning individuality, this new humanism must be sensible to the importance of all of human beings, to the feeling of global solidarity. Any different choice will mean the end of humanism.

b) Respect to Diversity

Humanism is a product of the Western world. It was arrogant in the conversion and genocide against indigenous peoples of America, in prison and enslavement of Africans, in the destruction of cultures, even inside Europe, by widespread anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsies, anti-Islamism. The Eurocentric views of Homo industry—productive, consumerist or global (capitalist or socialist)—considered other cultures as inferior, rearward, sentenced to death. The new humanism must get rid of Eurocentrism, must become acentric and respect cultural diversity, considering the variety of cultures as a civilizational wealth indicator.

c) Respect to the Environment

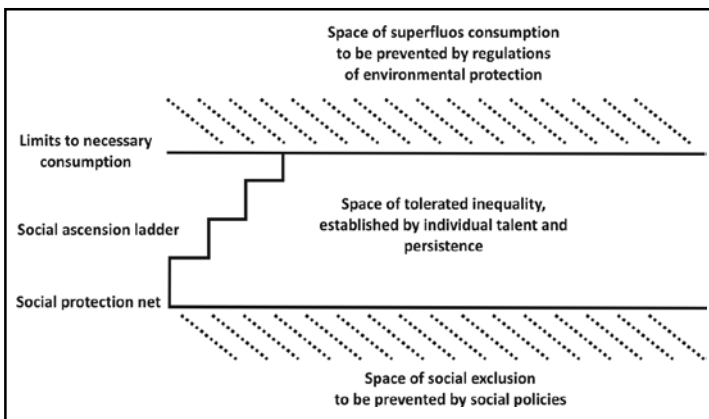
Humanism was irresponsibly arrogant in regard to nature. It has destroyed natural resources, undermined the ecological balance and consequently threatens the continuity of civilization, seeing no value in nature. Only human labor or a price set by the market generate value on a threatened and worthless planet. The value of trees was lumber; of animals was meat, leather. The new humanism must assign value to nature, even in his “raw” condition.

The new humanism should seek a civilization fully integrated to the environmental balance. The economic

output should not be measured only by the sum of material goods and services – the GDP. It must, on the opposite, take into account any cost due to wastes occurred during the production process.

d) *Limits of Inequality*

Humanism was the basis for the equality dream, but capitalism widened inequalities to an extent that allows differences in life expectancy according to the personal income. Socialism, on the other hand, tried to force an unattained equality, by sacrificing individual liberties. The new humanism must ensure equal opportunities that will act as a ladder of social ascent, drawing an ecological line to define limits to the consumption that depletes the environment and institute a safety net for those in need of protection; it shall protect the dispossessed, thus accepting the inequality resulting of effort and innate talents, provided that they are within those ecological limits.



e) *Humanist Production*

The idea of human production as a symbol of progress and the recognition of human labor as the source of value were creations of the *Homo productive*. The idea of labor value, instead of land value, made man the value-maker and put workers in the center of the production process. However, this great leap, that fit the time of *Homo productive*, has changed into an anti-humanism factor, when the value was transformed in price, defined by the mystic market forces.

After the humanism improvement from the mystic idea of a metaphysical theory of value, humanism accepted the mystic market forces as beyond human control. Explanations replace justice, demands replace will, and consumerism desires replace the fulfillment of needs. The new humanism must redefine the march of the nations and of humankind towards an ecologically balanced production process. Besides, it must assign value to non-tradable goods, those produced and consumed outside the market. The aesthetic creation and leisure time should be considered as a positive result of the production process.

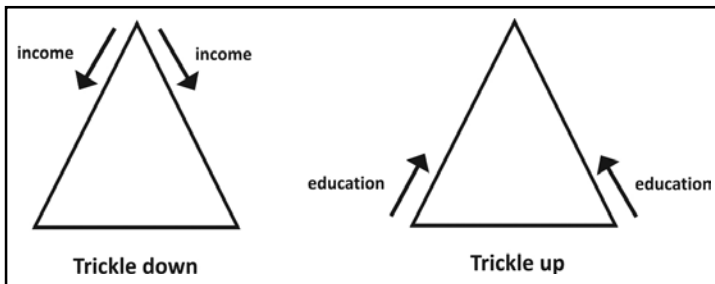
Moreover, the new humanism must be freed of the imprisonment of productivity, seeing man as an entity that exercises freedom, not as a flesh-and-bone tool that will operate other production tools. The new humanism must abolish slavery that endures, when it imprisons man as a mere piece of the production process.

f) *Integration Through Education*

Homo industrial's humanism promised a world of equal income, thanks to the economy. Capitalism said that the increase in production and the laws of the market would lead to a “trickle down”, distributing the income from top to bottom of the social pyramid; whereas in socialism, the distribution would be ensured by the state and the laws of planning.

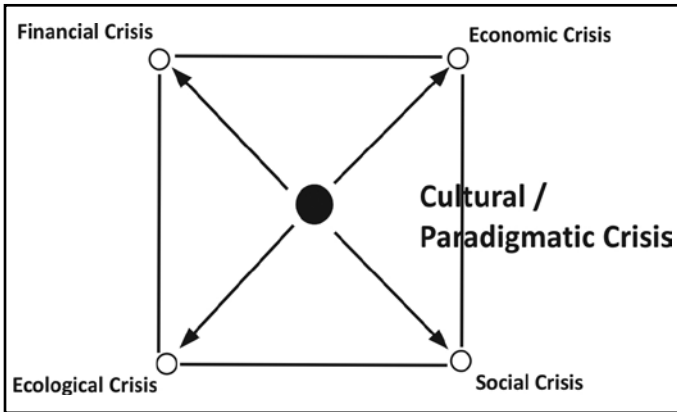
Under capitalism, there was a distribution of consumption goods, especially among half the members of the social pyramid. However, culture, and health are still concentrated in the top. Under socialism, there was restriction to the consumption and no freedom of choice, even of culture, health and educational goods.

Nowadays, under the new knowledge and human capital economy, the key to economic progress and social justice must be sought in quality education for all. The challenge of the new humanism is to ensure that each child has access to equally good education, regardless of race, family income or place of residence. The capitalism “trickle down” will no longer come from the market, but instead from a “trickle up” induced by education.



Humanism created the idea that revolution and utopia would be provided by the economy, both in capitalism and socialism. The new humanism believes the only possible revolution and utopia will be provided by education: by the educationism.

The long-term purpose of this process will be the integration of all peoples around the world, using all available techniques in a planetary network. More than the global economic integration, the utopian purpose of the new humanism should be the cultural respect and assimilation around the Planet.



g) *Subordination of the Technical*

Advancement to Ethical Principles

The industrial process of civilization is characterized by the pursuit of the technical modernity, defined by the use of up-to-date technology. This required the

creation of an economic rationality that justifies products of cutting-edge technology and leaves behind the social goals, thus relegating ethical values. The new humanism must use ethical values as vectors that set up the social goals, and will see them as the foundation of an economic rationality that defines all technical choices. Even here, techniques should be chosen according to ethical and aesthetical standards, not only in terms of economic efficiency.

The technical modernity, defined by the originality of technology and of humanism, will be replaced, in the new humanism, by the ethical modernity. For instance, instead of being defined by the number of private cars in circulation, modern transportation would be judged by its results: reduction in travel time, user comfort, punctuality, universal access.

h) *A New Vocabulary: New Words
for a New Vision of the World*

Humanism was a time of new words explosion. The new vision of the world required these new words. Five hundred years later, the world is eager for new words and new definitions for old words.

Development, progress, wealth, growth, poverty, Third World, socialism, capitalism, sustainable, employment, civilization, primitive are some words that need new definition. New words are needed to explain new concepts:

- Hot to name the new progress and development that will submit the values of wealth to the ethical

values, such as ecological balance, poverty abolition, and cultural diversity?

- How to name the assemblage of people that are integrated worldwide by culture, consumption and purposes, regardless of the country they live?
- How to name the new utopia that is beyond development, communism or any of the existing terms?
- How to name the workers that are no longer proletarians, but instead well-paid operator of intelligent tools?
- How to name the rational knowledge that is committed to ethical and aesthetical values?
- How to name the “good” goods, so different of the “bad” goods that destroy instead of create?
- How to name the new social product that indicates much more than the GNP or the HDI?
- How to name the new planetary political sentiment that will replace citizenship?

4. Peace among Civilizations

a) Avatar Is Here—Dialogue among Cultures and with Nature

Quite possibly, no book reflects better the war between civilizations than the movie *Avatar*. Using today’s cinematographic language, the movie shows the war that happens nowadays between the western civilization and other peoples worldwide, through the metaphor of the struggle between brutal humans with their heavy

technology and highly spiritualized extraterrestrials, integrated among them and with nature. Perhaps the greatest proof of the dehumanization of humanism is the human soldier of the Avatar movie, who dresses like a huge robot and gives a superior force to a heartless man, with the unique purpose of destroying nature and the people he considers as inferior.

In the movie, aliens are destroyed, mechanized, and the antiecological humanity continues, possibly preparing itself for another expedition to destroy the “primitive” Avatars. In the reality of modern civilization, the war happens on Earth, and defeat is unthinkable for nations in possession of advanced technologies. Nonetheless, the *Homo global* carries its self-destruction.

The new humanism needs to pacify the struggle between cultures: see each culture as a wealth on its own, and the relationship between them is greater than the sum of the parts. East and West, Christians and Islamic, cultures can certainly be richest together than separated—or at war. The same applies to relationships between the global *Homo sapiens* and the hundreds of groups which still live a more primitive life.

b) *The NEFA—New Education for All*

The new humanism will not allow civilization to be controlled by forces that are stronger than human will—either the market or the technical advance—nor will be tempted by the utopia imposed by an authoritarian

social engineering. Like Einstein trying to dialogue with God—in whom he did not believe—to learn how he had drawn all the details of the world, the new humanism must imagine the ideal way to build a civilization that is democratic, tolerant, efficient for humanity and for each human being, and that respects nature. The only way is the dialogue between people and between men and nature. The new humanism will promote the dialogue between cultures and mother Earth.

Like in the old humanism, before *Homo productive*, the innovative path is education. But a new education that ensures:

- i. ethics in personal behavior;
- ii. social solidarity;
- iii. respect for nature;
- iv. respect for diversity;
- v. indignation against the injustices and prejudices
- vi. proper training for the use of computers;
- vii. full learning of at least one foreign language;
- viii. taste for culture;
- ix. social habits and physically health;
- x. learning of Mathematics and Science;
- xi. ability to learn and relearn after school;
- xii. lifelong and permanent learning.

This new education can not be restricted to a few human beings. It must be spread all over the Globe, especially among children. The basis is a worldwide program of a new education for all and of a reform of the university.

The *Homo global* is a product from the economic globalization built as of World War II, thanks to the role of international financial institutions, started in Bretton Woods. The new man will be the product of an international effort for global education.

c) *A World Program for Education*

After the World War II, humankind saw an economic development jump all over the Earth, especially thanks to an international financial effort: a commitment of the international financial system, and many other institutions, to rescue the after-war Europe and to induce the take-off at developing countries. After half a hundred years, humankind looks around and sees a wonderful world of comfort, productivity, wealth, together with an atrocious world of poverty, inequality, cultural and ecological depredation, energy depletion, social deprivation. The near future needs a similar global effort, now on education for all, everywhere.

This is highly possible, if we can summon a global education program, a sort of New Global Marshall Plan to educate people, especially children of the world. This plan would cost around US\$ 200 billion per year, in some years from now. The equivalent to less than 0.5% (5/1000) of the world personal income, or to 10% of the U.S. banking system rescue package (US\$2 trillion) in the 2008 crisis, nearly equivalent to what President Obama will spend in education for American children (US\$ 127 billion), as part of the economy rescue plan (US\$ 819 billion).

Instead of the world financial system, UNESCO could be the center of the new global educational development to rescue humankind from the wreckage of a two-century industrial civilization mistakes.

3

Mass Mediation and the Crisis of Representation



Parody and Sincerity in Western Political Culture

Dominic Boyer

SATIRE AND CYNICAL REASON

Almost thirty years ago, Peter Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* ("Critique of Cynical Reason") appeared and rapidly became one of the more influential and controversial philosophical works of the late 20th century (at least in its native Germany). The book is too manifold to summarize quickly and I will not attempt to do so here. But what it is principally remembered for is its argument that the project of enlightenment has resolved into a "universal, diffuse" condition of cynicism.

Sloterdijk's characterization, it should be noted, principally concerns what he terms the "upper echelons of

the elevated superstructure.” That is, his diagnosis is directed at the “pernicious realism” that adheres to the “charmingly mediated alienation” of the western intellectual elite. For this elite, enlightenment’s centuries-long project of unmasking the contingencies of human understanding has left no onion layers left to peel, no secure grounding from which to adjudicate truth and falsity. The project of universal truth-making and truth-telling has become so various and contentious that it has very nearly destroyed its own nominal purpose. As Pierre Bourdieu would have it, the articulation of truth has become little more than a game of positions, a field of competing forms of capital. So here is our “crisis of representation.” Worse yet, according to Sloterdijk, we intellectuals continue to take ourselves seriously. Would-be critical enlighteners of today have forgotten their roots in ancient *kynicism*, “in the powerful traditions of laughter in satirical knowledge” that he argues originally nourished western critical enlightenment. Thus the companion of the elite’s rapidly receding faith in epistemic universality is the rise of mirthless, respectable, calculating epistemology whose philosophical expressions are so often “the mere administration of thoughts.”

Although Sloterdijk targets people with sociological positions similar to our own, it is interesting that the *Critique* has often been interpreted as passing judgment on the “open immorality” of the present. In other words, its indictment of intellectuals is rather conveniently

displaced into a universalist critique of the preponderance of (postmodern) cynicism in contemporary culture. In the sphere of politics, for example, Sloterdijk's thesis has been connected to what is very widely perceived to be a rising trend of political disinvestment in contemporary liberal democracy in Europe and the United States, whether evinced by mundane political apathy or by growing enthusiasm for charismatic populism. Whether Sloterdijk's critique of cynicism is truly applicable to contemporary political sentiments is a question I cannot answer here. What is certain is that Sloterdijk is himself very concerned with the relationship between affect and critique.

Recall that Sloterdijk seeks to retrieve the *Freiheit*, the cheekyness, he regards as lost within the schizoid diffusion and earnest professionalization of modern subjectivity. Cheekyness is perhaps not a total antidote to cynicism but it is, for Sloterdijk, a recurrent necessity. Without perhaps intending to do so, Sloterdijk creates a positive alignment between satire and sincerity. As though the satirical mode of laughter represented a deeper, less alienated/mediated commitment to life and to truth than serious, sophistic(ated) critique. Put in other terms, it seems that laughter is a refuge of sincerity in this era of "enlightened false consciousness."

STIOB

This point may help us to better understand certain recent developments in western political culture. For the

past three years, my collaborator Alexei Yurchak and I have been tracing the spread of a particular mode of parody on the margins of western politics. This mode of parody attracted our attention because it seemed to us in many respects uncannily analogous to a form of parody widely present in late socialist societies in the 1970s and 1980s. Since there is no English word for this mode of parody, we use its Russian slang designation, *stiob*.

Stiob refers a particular technique of parodic over-identification, the method of which was to inhabit the forms and norms of authoritative discourse so perfectly that it was impossible to tell whether the imitative performance was ironic or sincere. The performance in question might be theatrical or it might be textual but in all cases it never fully divulged or unambiguously signaled a parodic purpose. *Stiob* was particularly germane to late Soviet socialism because of the party-state's obsessive emphasis on the formal orthodoxy of its discourse. As I've discussed elsewhere with respect to censorship in East Germany, late socialist states typically invested considerable energy into the negotiation of perfected languages of political communication as a means of constituting perfected socialist citizens. Yet, rather than this desired effect, late socialist authoritative discourse most often resulted in expert overcrafting of every aspect of language. For example, if one read front-page articles in *Pravda* or *Neues Deutschland* or any other central party organ in the 1970s, one encountered an exceedingly

technical, cumbersome and not seldom absurd language filled with long sentences, proliferating nominal structures, perplexing passive constructions, and repetitive phraseological formulations. If one listened meanwhile to speeches of local communist youth leaders one heard texts that sounded uncannily like quotations of previous texts written by their predecessors (which is, in fact, precisely how they were produced). The pressure was always to adhere to the precise norms and forms of already existing authoritative discourse, and to minimize subjective interpretation or voice. Yurchak terms the result of this pressure “hypernormalization,” a snowball effect of the layering of the normalized structures of authoritative discourse upon themselves.

Under such conditions, the aesthetics of *stio*b made sense. Faced with authoritative discourse that was already recursively overformalizing itself to the point of caricature, *stio*b’s parodic technique of overidentification sent a more potent critical signal (one articulated in the language of form itself) than any revelatory exposé or gesture of ironic diminishment could have. Put another way, since the state seemed more invested in the repetition of formalized political discourse than in that discourse’s capacity to serve as a medium for literal statements about the world (following Austin, Yurchak terms this condition “performative shift”), it seemed increasingly senseless to engage political discourse at the level of literal meanings, whether critically or affirmatively.

Also, while the state easily identified and isolated any overt form of oppositional discourse as a threat, recognizing and disciplining the critical potential of overidentification was more difficult because of its formal resemblance to the state's own language. For this reason, stiob rarely occupied or promoted recognizable political positions—it existed to some extent outside the familiar axes of political tension between party and opposition, between socialism and liberalism, aware of these axes but uninvested in them. The hypernormalization of discourse in the late socialist party-state can thus be interpreted as enabling the performativity of stiob.

This may all sound quite familiar to you. Overidentifying parody has become recognizable in western popular and political culture over the past decade as well. In the United States alone, we would single out the extraordinarily popular and politically relevant “fake” news television shows *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, the parody newspaper *The Onion* and the activist hoax group, The Yes Men, all of which utilize overidentifying parody to varying extents as a performative mode. The rising frequency, variety and popularity of these stiob-like interventions have caused us to explore overformalization and hypernormalization in contemporary liberal-democratic political discourse as well.

I do not have the time to reconstruct our entire analysis in detail but the essence of our argument is that the changing institutional and ideological organization of

political culture in the United States (and elsewhere) has consolidated discursive conditions analogous in certain respects to late socialist hypernormalization. For example, we discuss how the monopolization of broadcast media production and circulation via corporate consolidation and the adaptation of news journalism to digital media have actually made political and economic news content significantly more homogeneous and experientially repetitive. We look at the cementing of liberal-entrepreneurial consensus in political news analysis (paralleled by huge growth in business journalism and the rapid thinning out of investigative reporting); we examine, in keeping with the general professionalization of political life and the central importance of 24/7 news cycles for political communication, how political performances in the United States are increasingly calculated and formalized, concerned more with efficient and precise political messaging than with riskier forms of political debate and communicational improvisation. Finally, we discuss how the collapse of Cold War geopolitics unsettled late liberal political imagination by removing the constitutive alterity of communist threat. Although various imaginations of Muslim and Chinese antiliberalism have partially filled this void, we interpret these positionings as unstable, a condition that has forced western liberalism into the situation of defining itself in increasingly abstract and untethered ways (where, for example, as in the military interventions in

Iraq and Afghanistan, mediating relentless fantasies of liberal freedom has seemed much more governmentally significant than guaranteeing actual conditions of freedom, whatever those might be, on-the-ground). The increasing emphasis upon positive image over substance demonstrates the slippage of contemporary imperial liberalism into the self-referential discursive habits of late socialism. Where such images and messages become highly repetitive, formalized and predictable, the fundamental discursive basis requisite for stioib arises. Overidentifying parody requires an overformalized discourse environment whose norms and forms are so experientially familiar that the performer no longer needs to overtly signal that s/he is embarking on an act of parody.

If classic late socialist stioib addressed the hypernormalization of post-Stalinist communism, then late liberal stioib can most appropriately be heard to address the apparently paradoxical condition where “progressive” modes of liberalism find themselves in increasingly uncomfortably intimate forms of codependency with the ravenous antipolitics of neoliberalism. It is quite agonizing to watch progressive liberalism struggle to ground a political imagination let alone an ethics of citizenship that is not, in this era of globalization and financialization, simply submission to neoliberal corporatism and consumerism. In the United States, we could call this Obama’s dilemma, where the truly

cynical reason of neoliberal necessity has all but suffocated the hope discourse of two years ago. But the prioritization of individual rights and autonomy that represents the core of liberal political imagination is itself the quicksand here. The more that institutionalized progressive liberalism struggles to differentiate itself from neoliberal market imaginaries, the more it realizes that guaranteeing the freedom and security of the globalized elite to which it belongs means sacrificing the security and freedom of everyone else. Realizing that progressive liberalism has no clear alternative to neoliberalism to offer anyway, the range of authoritative discourse increasingly narrows. There is overwhelming liberal consensus, in supranational Europe as in the United States, but the polarities of Left and Right liberalism seem at once blurry and increasingly predictable. Meanwhile, if one seeks other political messages they are scattered, more noise than signal. Neosocialism scarcely exists outside the often violent welfarist imaginaries of the radical right. Anarchism ekes out an existence in abandoned places.

It would perhaps be too simple and pessimistic to say that despair, apathy, disinvestment necessarily advance under these conditions. There is hope although the times are not hopeful. But the suspicion of political insincerity and automaticity is everywhere on the rise. Indeed, Sloterdijk's book is in this respect a remarkable performance of its own premise. In terms of our work on

stiob, it seems unsurprising that overidentifying parody is becoming an increasingly effective vehicle for political engagement (and perhaps also for political sincerity). As in late socialism, where political discourse has become more performative than literal, inhabiting the forms and norms of authoritative discourse becomes a special kind of transgression, literally a kind of “squatting” within the language of power. Let me just offer one example from a paper that Yurchak and I are currently writing, an example that we feel reflects evidence of the increasing movement of stiob aesthetics of parody toward the heart of western political practice.

JÓN GNARR AND BESTI FLOKKURINN

We have in mind *Besti Flokkurinn* (“The Best Party”), the Icelandic political movement which was formed in late 2009 and widely derided as an amusing but otherwise inconsequential “joke party” by the Icelandic political elite, until it won the municipal elections in Reykjavík on May 30th, 2010 with 34.7% of the popular vote, gaining 6 of 15 seats on the city council, only two short of an absolute majority in Iceland’s capital. With 83% of Reykjavík’s registered voters (nearly a third of Iceland’s total population) going to the polls, this was an event of national political significance in Iceland and Iceland’s Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir described the Best Party’s victory as a shock and perhaps the “beginning of the end” of Iceland’s traditional

four party system. The Best Party's victory also provoked a burst of international news coverage much of which focused on Jón Gnarr, *Besti Flokkurinn*'s founder and party leader, and for the next four years, mayor of Reykjavík.



Jón Gnarr, Mayor of Reykjavík and Founder of The Best Party.

The news media, like many Icelandic politicians, speculated variously about Gnarr's intentions. What was certain was that Gnarr was a well-known Icelandic actor, writer, and stand-up comedian. Other nuggets of information emerged in the international news media including that Gnarr never completed secondary school, was a juvenile delinquent, punker and anarchist, the son of a communist policeman, and the husband of pop singer Björk's yoga teacher and best friend. Both media and political culture reached the conclusion that Gnarr was seeking to lampoon the Icelandic political system responsible for the bubble-and-burst collapse of the Icelandic banking system in 2008 which generated six times the debt of the Icelandic GDP in a matter of months, gutting the Icelandic currency and leaving Iceland one of the most highly indebted countries in the world. This reflects, in part, statements that Gnarr made about the Best Party in the months leading up to the election.

For example, the week before the election, Gnarr gave an interview to an English-language Icelandic news service in which he described the Best Party as an effort to provoke a "cultural revolution" in Iceland but above all as intervention that sought to deprive people of the comfort and sense of wellbeing they derive from categorization and labels. Gnarr explained,

Political discourse is all dead and vapid. I've never been interested in governance or politics. (...) I've listened to all the empty

political discourse, but it's never touched me at all or moved me, until the economic collapse. Then I just felt I'd had enough of those people. After the collapse and its aftermath, I started reading the local news websites and watching the news and political talk shows—and it filled me with so much frustration. Eww! So I wanted to do something, to fuck the system. To change it around and impact it in some way.

The stio b sensibility in Gnarr and his collaborators' language is quite clear—the assertion of the emptiness of political discourse, the Best Party's disinterest in traditional political labels and ideologies, the recourse to overidentifying parody (or, in Gnarr's terms, “fun”) as a more efficacious and performative mode of engaging an ossified political system than literal politics. These emphases carried over into what the news media often glossed as a “mock” political platform (journalists focused especially on the Best Party's repeated promise to ditch its election platform the moment they were elected, just like other political parties, only more openly). The Best Party platform was popularized through an Internet campaign video to the tune of Tina Turner's *Simply the Best* that circulated widely in Iceland.

In the video, collaboratively produced with several prominent Icelandic musicians, Gnarr either satirizes the traditional form of the political campaign video or presents a sincere political message. You should decide for yourselves:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxBW4mPzv6E>
Besti Flokkurinn's Campaign Video.

Over time, in a variety of other speaking engagements, it became evident that some of the more curious features of the Best Party's platform sought to address (or at least to highlight) significant social, political and environmental issues facing Iceland and the world today. The polar bear for the zoo addressed, for example, climate change and the current Icelandic policy to shoot polar bears that swam to Iceland avoiding melting ice farther north. The free towels at swimming pools aimed at attracting greater European tourism, obliquely invoking an obscure EU regulation that for a pool to be classified as a "spa" free towels had to be provided. The drug free parliament referenced an extended rhetorical analogy Gnarr filled out later that the relationship of Icelandic political culture to the nation was one of a substance-abusing father to his injured yet enabling family. The news media also made much of a report that Gnarr refused to enter into a coalition government with any party who had not watched all five seasons of HBO's acclaimed crime drama, *The Wire*.

Gnarr's first several months as mayor have continued to confound observers at home and abroad as to his political methods and messages. His frequent invocation of the wisdom of a classic Finnish comic book series, the Moomin elves, has caused opposition politicians to roll their eyes or to stare at him uncomprehendingly. His mayoral welcome address to the Iceland Airwaves music festival last August was a brilliantly

surreal piece of governmental discourse, beginning with the scientific improbability of anyone being in Reykjavík, followed by a discussion of Schrödinger's cat and the reality of existence, a report on his ongoing conversations with elves and trolls and their advice that Iceland would do well to join the European Union. He ended the speech abruptly with "I hope these thoughts shed some light on the history of Reykjavík and its culture." Also in August 2010, Gnarr led Reykjavík's gay pride parade in full drag, complaining that the real Jón Gnarr hadn't shown up as promised, accusing him of probably talking to elves and concluding, "This is what we get for voting for a clown in elections."

Gnarr's skillful manipulation of national and international media attention is another hallmark of the performativity of stio**b** as Yurchak and I have argued previously. Gnarr frequently plays upon his apparent unsuitability for political office in serious times as a method of attracting media attention to the party,

I like appearing as a simpleton, like when I gave a speech at the University of Reykjavík and shouted that I had risen from the ashes like the bird Felix. I was just waiting for some blogger type to correct me on that. That gets the party press and exposure, and as soon as they do, I can stand aside, laugh and let the facts or essence of what I was saying do the talking.

Could these instances not be treated as kynical performance? Indeed, Gnarr has proved himself very capable of modulating parody into sincerity, including a

moving speech last December in which he presented the 2011 Reykjavík city budget. In the speech, Gnarr mused,

What kind of party is The Best Party? I don't really know. We are not a proper political party. We are maybe more of a self-help organization, like Alcoholics Anonymous. We try to take one day at a time, to not overreach our boundaries and to maintain joy, humility and positive thinking. We are grateful for the chance we have been given, and we want our stay here to benefit the city and the people in it. Our motto is: humanity, culture and peace. We do not foster any other ideals or political visions. We do not share a predetermined, mutual ideology. We are neither left nor right. We are both. We don't even think it matters. (...) We often say that we aren't doing what we want to do, but what needs to be done. We have the opportunity to do several things that the conventional political parties hesitate to do. We do not have to answer for an ideology or wrestle a party base.'

We simply try to work as well as our conscience permits. And it is work, often very hard work. These are troubled times. Our society collapsed, and we are still dealing with the consequences. We need to make cutbacks for the third [successive] year (...) We are forced to reduce services, and increase the burdens of some. This is not a fun position to be in. Sometimes we have to choose the lesser of two evils. Is it better to deprive children than the elderly?

This budget contains many propositions that I would be happy to be rid of. But this is our situation. My hope is that we can achieve solidarity about these propositions, not just us elected officials but also all of us that inhabit this city—its employees and inhabitants. We can do this if we do this together.

We have so much. We have this wonderful country and all the opportunity it offers. And we have one another, to rejoice with and to comfort. We need not be sad. We can laugh, have fun and tell jokes. We can dress up and stage events to pass

the time. Smiling is free. We are still OK. Christmas is on the horizon, and then the sun will return. The future is bright and filled with possibility.

An Icelandic political scientist recently coined the term, “Gnarrism,” for this new mutation of stíob. Gnarrism is perhaps the best evidence one can find today of what stíob might look like modulated into a more literal political discourse that nevertheless holds deeply to what Gnarr describes as his “anarcho-surrealist” convictions. Not unlike the late socialist cases of NSK or Sergei Kuryokhin (mentioned in our previous article), Gnarr never categorizes himself or his political mission as a joke even if he is unapologetically ludic in his political method. Gnarr and *Besti Flokkurinn* utilize Facebook extensively as a method of remaining in dialogue with citizens concerning political issues. Gnarr often posts home videos there too, including a Christmas address in which he appears in a Darth Vader helmet topped by a red santa hat. Another recent post suggests again an ideological kinship for *Besti Flokkurinn* in Gnarr’s reference to <http://thefuntheory.com>, a website dedicated “to the thought that something as simple as fun is the easiest way to change people’s behaviour for the better.”



Still image from Gnarr's 2010 Christmas address.

If Gnarrism indeed represents an ideological position, it is clearly not Sloterdijk's modern cynicism nor is it the pure antipublicity of late socialist *svoi* (which is Yurchak's term for the late Soviet rejection of the bipolarization of speaking for or against the state). It seems instead an affective political ideology that, not unlike Sloterdijk's, equates the emptiness and ineffectiveness of contemporary liberal democracy with its earnest self-satisfaction. Rather than playing to affects of anger, of fear or even of hope, Gnarrism emphasizes laughter and

play. As Gnarr says, “we are the only species that laughs, so why should our politics not reflect this.”

A happy ending would be to say that Gnarr and his ilk reflect the restoration of cynical disruption in the face of the monopolization and hypernormalization of authoritative discourse in western political culture. This is an entirely plausible interpretation and Gnarr would doubtless be pleased at our act of “positive thinking.” But here is another interpretation. Perhaps Gnarr’s apparently literal appeal to the therapeutic power of laughter represents another level of performance. Perhaps *Besti Flokkurinn* is an even deeper parody of the affective turn in late liberal political ideology more generally, the same turn that has brought us the American Tea Party movement fueled by righteously indignant non-cynical affect at the fact of the slow but certain erosion of American power. In other words, suppose that the Best Party was a parody of the late liberal Sloterdijkian call for sincerity itself. With stíob one really never knows. And because what stíob does so well is to suspend literal meaning, I would hate to put a message in its mouth. Indeed, if we force stíob to deliver a message it might well cease to be such an effective vehicle of political sincerity, since its efficacy appears to depend upon the camouflage of ambiguity. My conclusion is rather simply to say that the increasing salience of stíob seems to me symptomatic of the discursive, institutional, and ideological conditions of contemporary western political culture. And like any symptom it invites and frustrates further efforts of unmasking.

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Political Representation and its Predicaments: A Perspective from Political Philosophy

Renato Lessa

REPRESENTATION AND DEMOCRACY: (UN)MEETING ENDS

In the contemporary political lexicon, *democracy* and *representation* seem to belong to the same semantic field. To be sure, it requires no conceptual stretch on the part of citizens belonging to really existing republics to be able to claim for more *democracy* by demanding improvements in the quality of *representation*. Although certainly one among many of the demands at the disposal of citizens, it cannot be said either that it is among those less frequently voiced. Be it as it may, it is not the least impossible to express one's allegiance to democracy by employing the language of representation. Hanna

Pitkin, in her classic piece, *The Concept of Representation*, indicated the profound resonance of the subject in modern times: "In modern times almost everyone wants to be governed by representatives (...) every political group or cause wants representation (...) every government claims to represent."¹

Even professional political observers, couched in nominalism or belief, do not hesitate to use the expression *representative democracy* in order to designate political and institutional forms that have come to cover more than half of the globe during the twentieth century. In this amalgam, *democracy and representation* figure as parts of a necessary nexus and of a significant convergence.

Nonetheless, it has not always been so. There have been moments in the history of political thought—and in the history of politics *per se*—in which the semantic fields of the two abovementioned terms, as well as their existential implications, were the object of a careful distinction. To recall such episodes is not to appeal to the reader's possible nostalgic inclination to adhere to projects of democratic refoundation, based on an improbable return to Hellenized politics, but rather to single out the artificial character that is sensitive to human design—and which is thus ever changing and, ultimately, perishable—of the theoretical and practical association between *democracy and representation*. If it is true

1 Cf. Hanna Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972, p. 2.

that democracy was not representative at the moment of its conception, representation, on its turn, did not come into being as a natural expression of democracy. The convergence of these two principles was possible only in societies wherein democratic pressures—in the Spinozian and Tocquevillian sense of the term—was channeled toward representative institutions and practices.

Although not the one to have originally penned the term in the eighteenth century, James Madison can perhaps be presented as one of the inventors of that which have many quickly followed suit and started calling, somewhat inexpertly, *representative democracy*.² According to his judgment there was a clear conceptual distinction between what a *modern republic* and a *democratic republic*, such as that fashioned by the ancients, ought to be. Such a difference has been attributed to the existence in the modern republican layout proposed by Madison of what he designated

2 We owe the expression to Thomas Paine, to whom representation was not constituted as a means for the obstruction of the threat of democracy but rather as a possibility for the enlargement of democracy. In his immediate context and in the nineteenth century he was considered, to be blunt, a loser. At any rate, his texts are useful for those who wish to evaluate the state of representation based on claims that democratic pressure will ultimately prevail. See, particularly, Thomas Paine, *Political Writings*, ed. Bruce Kuklick, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

as the *scheme of representation*.³ *Democracy*, to the contrary, could be defined as a “society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person.”⁴ Something, therefore, that is quite distinct from the *republic*, which, according to his rendering is a “the delegation of the government to a small number of citizens delegated by the rest.”⁵ The history of the possible meanings of the expression *representative democracy* thus speaks of the trajectory whose starting point can be traced back to its first conception—“citizens who administer the government in person”—and arrives at its second one—a government “consisting of a small number of elected citizens.”

Through the artifice of representation, the operation of what Madison himself defined as a *filter* established a non-transitivity between the universe of citizens in a rough state and the predominance of legislative decision. In defending this mechanism James Madison was doing more than distancing himself theoretically from the foundations of classic democracy; he was concerned with the spread of alternative conceptions in North America during the late eighteenth century, strongly tinged by libertarian colors, that was also, so to speak,

3 For the original argument see James Madison, “Federalista # 10”, In: *Os Artigos Federalistas, 1787-1788*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 1993.

4 *Idem*.

5 *Idem*.

akratic. In times prior to the Philadelphia Convention, the predominant political mood was marked by what some analysts have described as the “politics of liberty,” expressed by an unyielding suspicion regarding any notion of government exempt from direct popular control.⁶ Madison himself in his “Federalist Paper n. 63” reflects upon “abuses of liberty,” which according to his judgment are as nefarious as “abuses of power.”⁷

According to the Madisonian formulation, representation is a mechanism that is an alternative to other forms of institutional organization, such as the public’s direct access to decision and law making, choices taken by lot, and, needless to say, hereditary monarchy. Madison’s belief in the virtue of representation and its capacity to act as a filter was based on the expectation that representative institutions at the same time they provide a foundation for the authority necessary for the government to govern also guarantee that the exercise of representation will be attached to the achievement of the public good. For Madison the matter consisted of choosing men whose

6 For a useful and vivid attempt to reconstitute the debate leading to the Constitution of the United States, see the superb essay by Isaac Kramnick, in the introduction to the *Federalist Papers*, included in its Brazilian edition (*Os Artigos Federalistas*, 1787-1788, *op. cit.*). Also see the excellent article by Gordon Wood, “The Origins of the Constitution”, In: *This Constitution: a Bicentennial Chronicle*, n. 15, Summer, 1987.

7 Cf. James Madison, “Federalista # 63”, in: *Os Artigos Federalistas*, 1787-1788, *op. cit.*

wisdom would allow them to aptly discern the public interest, something unthinkable in a scenario in which the power of sovereignty is equally dispersed among all citizens who are able to exercise it directly.

The conception elaborated by Madison never came close to becoming consensual. Amidst the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists which ensued after Independence, distinct voices emerged. One of them belonged to Brutus, one of the exponents of the latter group, who, brandishing the banner of the “politics of liberty,” thus referred to the subject of representation:

(...) the very term, representative, implies that the person or body chosen for this purpose should resemble those who appoint them—a representation of the people of America, if it be a true one, must be like the people.⁸

As per Brutus it is not a question of claiming for the need of establishing a filter which would ultimately confer the aristocracy—that class of discerning and virtuous men—the exercise of representation. Rather, the utmost mimetic capacity emerges as the main virtue to be sought. The debate concerning the meanings of representation, henceforth, no longer could dispense with the polarization between the two conceptions mentioned above. Yet, in fact, it is possible to backtrack in time and detect how the extent to which the antinomy

8 Cf. H. J. Storing, *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, vol. II, *apud* Diogo Pires Aurelio, *Representação Política: Textos Clássicos*, Lisboa, Livros Horizonte, 2009.

between the images of a *filter* or of *mimesis* were present in the process of invention of political representation.

Madison's conception as well as Brutus's at the time of their elaboration in the eighteenth century already had a history of their own and they were thus able to find in this past tradition prior elaborations of the principles of representation from which they could derive inspiration. The antifederalist defense of a representation which would be able to mimetically correspond to the will of those represented could be found, for example, in the likes of Richard Overton, an eminent member of the Levellers, a something of a left-wing political movement active in the heady years preceding the Glorious Revolution in the seventeenth century in England.⁹ Overton, facing the perspective of the tyrannical use of power on the part of the Long Parliament (1640-1660), which, on its turn, was opposed to the tyrannical use of power on the part of the king, made it known in 1647 during the famous Putney Debates to the members of that institution that: "we are your principals, and you are our agents."¹⁰

9 For a useful introduction to the world of the Levellers, see G. Aylmer (ed.), *The Levellers in the English Revolution*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1975.

10 Cf. Richard Overton, *An Appeale From the Degenerate Representative Body*, London, 1647, *apud* Mónica Brito Vieira and David Runciman, *Representation*, London, Polity Press, 2008, p. 22. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the employment of the terms *agent* and *principle* by adherents of rational choice theory has nothing to do with the original use of the terms by

The Leveller argument, in line with the general call for male suffrage, subordinated the idea of representation to a deeper social undertow of democratization. As aptly pointed out by Christopher Hill in his classic work, the Levellers—as well as other radical movements of the time—aspired to upend the world.¹¹ In other words, the base of society was to be made the seat of sovereignty and this radical inversion would lead to a reconfiguration of the political and institutional map. The Parliament in an unfettered battle for true power and according to the terms introduced by the Levellers, could only be conceived of as a direct and mimetic expression of something extraneous and, especially, as something which already existed beforehand. Any discontinuation between the *author's* will and the *actor's* behavior from this perspective appears as a tyrannical usurpation. Despite their defeat, the Levellers did not leave the stage without leaving one lesson whose merit is irrefutable:

the revolutionary equalitarians of the English Revolution. The contemporary aseptic use of both terms barely does justice to the charged atmosphere of political and social conflict reflected in the language of the Levellers.

- 11 See Christopher Hill's outstanding and essential book, *The World Turned Upside Down*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1971. Equally is essential for a general outlook of the political debate during the English Revolution is the book by Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954.

that the push for democratization must be coupled with the exercise of representation.¹²

Madison, when imagining the “scheme of representation” already had, as indicated previously, something else very much in mind. If the mimetic image of the *mirror* can be applied to the arguments of Overton and Brutus, that of the *filter* fits the scheme devised by the author of the Federalist papers to perfection. In the fashion as his opponents, the innovation he brought about has a history of its own and he was thus able to cull from tradition certain signs of confirmation.

Pointing in the direction of a place in history even more far removed, the distinction proposed by Madison distinguishing those representing and those represented can be traced to the innovation introduced by Tertullian (155-230 AD), the Roman theologian and one of the first Christian apologists, according to which the term *repraesentare* started to denote a nexus among distinct objects. The temporal remoteness of this reference is not imbued with antiquarian pretensions, but rather simply intends to indicate the civilizational fruitfulness, as it were, of an intellectual innovation.¹³

12 The English solution, consolidated after the Glorious Revolution (1688), implied an association between *political representation* and *oligarchization*. During two centuries or so, this association seemed natural for the champions of what would come to be designated as *representative government*.

13 The approximation between the theological and political realms, in approaching the subject of representation, can be

In the heat of theological debate, in the initial formative years of Christian thought, arises the idea of a *relationship among non-resembling entities*, such as in the discussion with regard to the Holy Trinity, in which the Son is defined as the representative *persona* (*representat*) of the Father. The same mysterious nexus, which cannot be reduced to the mechanisms of similarity and contiguity, is established between the body of Christ and bread during the Last Supper. What is interesting in this idea of representation is the presence of a *special nexus*, which cannot be reduced to naked-eye observation of the situation in which something is explicitly made to represent another by means of a passage that makes this evident. This would be the case, for example, of a letter of attorney whereby one person acts on behalf of another one according to previously established conditions. Or also the case of a mimetic pictorial representation in which a clear view of the represented object is the condition upon which the intelligibility of its object depends. Both possibilities—the juridical or the aesthetical—figure as intelligible from the perspective of a third party which would occupy the position of observer of the nexus and

seen, additionally, as something proximate Carl Schmitt's consideration according to which the fundamental concepts in the realm of political philosophy can be perceived as secularized versions of theological concepts. For the original argument see Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology I: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1988.

correspondence between the original source and its artificial projection.

In the representation of differences, something rather distinct occurs and causes *that which is being represented* to appear at the same time as something distinct and as something which attributes retrospective meanings *upon that which is represented*. Also contained herein is the implicit assumption of an abyss to be crossed, in which what is being represented mysteriously vanishes only to reappear at the end of the process reconstituted in the form of its representative. In this sense, representation—as *transfiguration* and *presentation anew*—appears as the condition for presence. This is what comes across from the beautiful example extracted from the speech of a member of the English Parliament—William Hakewell—during the reign of Elizabeth I:

We must lay down the respect for our persons, and put on others, and their affections for whom we speak: for they speak by us. If the matter which is spoken toucheth the poor, then think me a poor man. He that speaks sometimes must be a Lawyer, sometimes a Painter, sometimes a Merchant, sometimes a mean Artificer.¹⁴

Even if we take into account the fact that in Elizabethan times what was called a parliament had little to do with our contemporary understanding of the term,

14 Cf. Sir Edmond D'Ewes, *The Journals of All Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, London, 1682, p. 667, *apud* Mónica Brito Vieira e David Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

in Hakewell's examples there are two features that will remain relevant in future developments leading to the definition and consolidation of the concept of political representation.

The first one refers to the aforementioned presence of an idea of representation of difference, albeit it adds on to it a distinct *fictional dimension*. The exercise of representation is hypothetical in nature: here there is the enunciation of an imperative which, as such, must be based on an assumption that is not empirically grounded. This is what comes across in the aforementioned sentence: "If the matter which is spoken toucheth the poor, then think me a poor man." This translates the requirement that whoever pronounces these words is taken as a poor man, even if he is in no way at all a poor man—hence the fictional dimension. Furthermore, this requirement clearly manifests the already mentioned mechanisms of transfiguration and representation.

There is, however, another crucial aspect present in the Hakewell's excerpt, which will become a trope in the latter debates on the subject of representation: the *universal* aspirations of the exercise of representation. The poor, painters, tradesmen, artisans, and even lawyers did not enjoy political franchise. Nonetheless, the exercise of representation made them liable to being represented, even if they did not have the prerogative to indicate those representing them. Although oligarchic from the empirical and sociological point of

view, representation at the time is conceived of as way to fit into Parliament the nation as a whole. Less than a century later, the Levellers will seek to coax out the democratizing consequences of this extension: if Parliament is the transfiguration of the nation, suffrage cannot be anything but generalized.

Here we find a hallucinatory component that will become of one with the idea of representation: to believe in something which, by means of a special nexus, will result into something that is the product of that which gave it origin but is the same time something distinct and of its own. To a large extent, and standing in clear contrast, the defense of a pattern of representation based on the *mode of presence*—i.e. Overton and Brutus—indicate the will to surpress this hallucinatory component.

It then befalls Thomas Hobbes, during the hazy seventeenth century, to establish the question of representation on a foundation rather distinct from the one the mimetic tradition relied upon. One of its problems is the supposed undisputed existence of an actor, whose constitution does not depend upon and precedes what we can designate as *the fact of representation*. To a certain extent, Hobbes adds another component of mystery to the plot of this story: the mysterious nexus is precisely what makes it possible to derive from the author a distinct actor which is the core mystery which gives origin to the political community as a whole. It is the representative who constitutes those represented as a collective entity, as an aggregate capable

of “producing” representation. As it is, this is something entirely counterintuitive, yet utterly meaningful.¹⁵

In other terms, the *political people*—as opposed to a scattershot multitude—is something borne out of the fictitious original act which constitutes sovereignty. This is not a question of constituting merely the sovereign, but rather of in his creation also establishing a real political unity. The transition from sheer demographic numbers to a set of authors that can make themselves be represented assumes the presence of mechanisms that are capable of instituting this artificial person. In this sense, the sovereign produced by means of the artifice of contract is as artificial as the people who institute him. They are no longer natural parts, but rather subjects constituted by a greater artifice. The clarity Hobbes achieved in his description of this deserves transcription:

A Multitude of men are made *One Person*, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented. (...) For it is the Unity of the Representer, not the Unity of the Represented, that maketh the Person One.¹⁶

15 Mystery also lurks in Burke: the individual and empirical act of choice of electoral choice is lost in the totality of an abstract and numeric electorate which can never materialize into something capable of countering the actions of the representative. What is more, this contains a logical impossibility, which goes hand in hand with an ontological one.

16 Cf. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 114.

The terms of Hobbes's reflection obliges us to take seriously the idea that an institution of the body politic itself is a matter of artifice. It is indeed an *artificial animal*, an act of creation, and this act is the necessary condition for the institution of the social and political experiment. Being artificial, the genesis of this animal can only be configured by the enactment at the origin of fictitious acts. These acts, seen from Hobbes's perspective are contained within the fiction of the *One Person* as the artificial substitute of the multitude, just as the *personas* of representatives and the represented. With respect to the body politic, it is instituted by the very same arrangement of which it is the starting point of—as its efficient cause.¹⁷

Political representation thus does not depend on the extension of the number of those represented, but on the presence of a *special nexus* binding the represented to the representative. This is why, regardless of the expansion of suffrage, the core of the idea of representation remains unchanged. The nature of the nexus remains, regardless of the terms of electoral franchise. Arguments for the extension or restriction of franchise are therefore political in nature and contingent, and thus do not affect the nature of the artifice of representation.

17 For an excellent work on representation in Hobbes, see Lucien Jaume's, *Hobbes et l'Etat représentatif moderne*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1986.

I will conclude these remarks by stressing some propositions:

1. The subject of representation is forcefully present in the very fictional act which instituted a given public domain. Regardless of the form it assumes, societies, represent themselves as a non-natural body endowed with an identity. The initial fictitious act, more than fundamental, is necessary and Hobbes was the first to say as much. Without this act, human collectives would be merely a purely natural and demographic dimension. The Athenian *demos*, for example, although not structured according to modern representative principles, illustrates how Athenian society chose to represent itself as a political body. In this representation, the citizens, following the principle of isonomy, constituted themselves as a *demos* endowed with the prerogative of the direct exercise of collective political power. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the idea of *representation* as the original condition for the constitution of a political society from *political representation*—or *representative government*—one of its possible and contingent forms.

2. Let us call *representational form* a specific mode of constitution of a shared experience of the social realm, based on the mechanisms of representative government. Such mechanisms can be described with emphasis on its oligarchic traits based either on sociological reasons or macropolitical factors (i.e. the extension of suffrage). In societies marked by strong internal

pressure for democratization, the inherently oligarchic features of the model coexist with the necessary extension of the access to representation. These experiments give rise to the expression *representative democracy*.

3. Yet there is something inherent to *representational form* which qualifies it for the task of institutionally incorporating increasing claims for democratization. This inherent quality is what allows it to configure a *demos* made up of electors, with casting of ballots and other electoral routines becoming naturalized as the forms and spaces of public participation. In other words, what I intend to suggest is that the triumph of the *representational form* over other presence-based modes—whether direct or participative—of *demos* configuration cannot be credited to oligarchic tendencies of demophobia. These tendencies have certainly been present and operative during the longstanding confluence between democracy and representation. A minimal dose of realism requires the acknowledgment of its presence in the configuration of the so-called democratic societies. Still to be considered is one particular trait inherent to the trick of representation—if we can call it so: the aspiration to *universality*.

4. This aspiration, as indicated, is the fruit of fiction and could not be otherwise. Even if the body of the people is not made present by means of the empirical generalization warranted by the right to representation, representatives speak on behalf of and legislate for all.

The representatives act “as if” they indeed were those represented. This “as if” is at the core of the arrangement, the very same condition that allows the representative to be presented as an artifice. This is the fiction which operates as the basis both of the theory of representation espoused by Hakewell, in the sixteenth century, and of the classical defense made by Edmund Burke of the delegate’s independence relative to particular demands. In the former case, aristocrats can speak for all, in the latter, the representative’s conscience responds for the public interest.

5. The aspiration for universality, as cunning and inauthentic as it may be, renders representation a fiction whose consequences can be made universal. To be sure, hypothetical universalization, as practiced by altruistic aristocrats, can be countered by the democratic tradition—personified by the Levellers, the anti-Federalists and their heirs—and their own historical and imperative universalization. The existence of a potentially universal form, from the beginning, was crucial for its practical generalization. This is the functional advantage of the *representational form* compared to the modes of political constitution based on presence. This mode inherently, due to its rejection of hypothetical universalization, is fixated on the immediateness of its effects. This means that this mode of representation of the political space that is not based in the same terms as the *representational form*, is local in scope, restricted to those involved in

occasions in which participation is exercised. This is the price to pay for the rejection of the fictional act embedded within the aspiration for universality in exchange for immediateness.

6. The potentially universal character of the *representational* form led every expansion of suffrage such as to include all adults to exert over society the effect of binding it to a common space. Madison's filter, which can be described as a kind deflator of original participative energy, had a decisive role in the establishment of this kind of bond. At the same time it instituted a distinction between those represented and their representatives, it acknowledges an expanded and beyond local jurisdiction, even if its foundations are parochial. Voting, from this perspective, can be perceived as a *minimum level of common civic energy* needed to set the mechanism in motion. This idea of a *common minimum*, as opposed to extracting the maximum in local and particular contexts, is what renders this model something that could be generalized and at the same time provides its aspiration to universalization true content.

7. The aspiration to universalization is accompanied by a heightened sensitivity to the subject of the variability of opinion. This is the terrain *par excellence* of John Stuart Mill, exploring the subject of how to guarantee the universality of representation and, in doing so, guaranteeing that multiple voices be expressed and heard, with special attention to the conditions for

the expression of minorities.¹⁸ The subject, as one can easily deduce, is crucial and was at the core of the first defenses of proportional electoral systems. Even countries which ultimately adopted the majoritarian system, were careful enough to create mechanisms capable of ensuring some dissonance by means of minimum guarantees granted to minorities and the opposition. But the matter at hand here is not to consider the difference between majoritarian and proportional systems, but rather of arguing that the *representational form*, contrary to presence-based modes of political constitution, does not necessarily produce majoritarian outcomes. In other words, the presence-based mode—often evoked in deliberative and direct participation experiments—possesses, in addition to local characteristics, a strong majoritarian component. It is certain that such a component can be found in political bodies that result from the representational form, especially if organized according to majoritarian and non-proportional procedures. However, the link between genuine and non-mediated participation and majoritarian decision-making seems to inherent to the presence-based mode.

8. The fiction of universality and of the distinction does not abolish the fact that the *demand for presence*

18 See John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, New York, Norton, 1975 [1859, 1^a ed.] and *Considerações sobre o Governo Representativo*, Brasília, Editora da UnB, 1980 [1861, 1^a ed.].

remains. This is not a matter of doctrinal debate among champions of “direct democracy” and “representative democracy.” Democratization is associated to the fundamental means of expression of the *demos* and not to specific institutional forms. The convergence of pressures for democratization and the preexistence of representative institutions create a double-faced artificial animal: one face being the democratization of representation, and the other one the institutional seizing of democracy by representation. As a result, we are left with a specific experiment, so-called “representative democracy,” or *representative government with an expanded electoral base*.

9. The experiment is affected by a constitutive tension between an *exterior*—which is manifested in the form of the demand for presence—and an *interior*—sustained by the fictions of universalization and distinction. If the interior is the formal cause of the experiment, its substance is to be found in its exterior. Regardless of how much success it achieves, the fiction of universalization and distinction is incapable of eliminating this tension. The representational form is, therefore, coextensive to the reasons why we deem there to be a crisis. In other words, such a form, as it arises from this tension, cannot be reduced to the doctrinal terms which assumed its ontological stability. It is not possible to confuse institutional regularity and ontological stability. Otherwise there is the risk of conceiving “representative democracy” at once in the institutional

and doctrinal sense. The quality of the experiment does not depend on its intrinsic traits, but rather on how—and to which extent—it is affected by its exterior. After all, demands for presence—no matter how localistic and majoritarian—can qualify aspirations of universality and distinction. Of course, there are some dialectics in this thing. However, this should not come as a surprise for a history which begins as a mystery.

O Caso Crioulo

Mário Lúcio Sousa

Antigamente, um grande grupo de pessoas podia ser considerado um pequeno mundo. No mundo de hoje, um pequeno grupo de pessoas é um grande mundo. Nele, podemos encontrar diversas procedências, distintos traços, várias semelhanças, várias línguas, uns a falarem o francês, outros, o português, alguns o espanhol e quase todos, o inglês. Mesmo que haja diferenças nos sotaques, o espanhol é língua única, o português é o mesmo, do Brasil a Timor, o francês *idem*, da Nova Caledónia a Madagascar. E mesmo que toda a gente fale o inglês dos seus mais diversos modos, a língua inglesa também é uma só, da Irlanda à Jamaica. Porém, há uma língua una e diversa neste mundo: o Crioulo, que, embora assim se chame de Macau às ilhas Seychelles, não é nem de

longe nem de perto uma única fala. O Crioulo não é sequer uma língua única. Há Crioulo de base lexical portuguesa, falado em Cabo Verde, na Guiné Bissau, em São Tomé e Príncipe, no Curaçao, na Guiné Equatorial, em Macau, Timor e na região dos Palenqueros na Colômbia; há Crioulo de base lexical inglesa na Libéria, nas Maurícias, em Trinidad, na Jamaica, em Barbados, em St. Lucy e outros; Crioulo de base francesa em Martinica, Guadalupe, Haiti; e Crioulo de base holandesa, no Suriname. Curiosamente, a língua que deu ao mundo a palavra “crioulo”, o castelhano, não deixou um Crioulo de base lexical espanhola para a história. Da Ásia à África, se perguntarmos aos natalícios dessas regiões que língua falam?, respondem Crioulo. É um fenômeno único. Para além de único, essa noção de agrupamento une homens, homens que também, para além da língua, se identificam como Crioulos. Ora, este facto é uma evidência de que devemos falar. Pois, desde que os pigmeus, os caucasianos, os coptas, os etíopes, os negros, os amarelos e os azuis entenderam chamarem-se Homens, para além dos adjectivos gentílicos, não tinha havido outro tão amplo grupo de gente identificada sob um mesmo substantivo, o Crioulo. Isto é, se fizermos a ponte na evolução da espécie, temos dois grandes grupos de homens, o *Homo sapiens* e o *Homo crioulo*.

Estamos perante o fenómeno moderno mais antigo da era moderna, e perante uma fonte viva de ensinamentos quotidianos. Recentemente, ouvi duas afirmações óbvias

e sinceras que deixaram a Europa e o Mundo confusos. A chanceler alemã Angela Merkel afirmou que a integração na Alemanha falhou. Dias depois, o presidente Sarkozy confessava que a França não tinha conseguido integrar os outros. Falavam evidentemente da integração dos milhões de emigrantes e seus descendentes. Digo que é óbvio, porque a experiência crioula está ali para o mostrar: a Integração é uma política segregatória e nunca resulta a longo prazo, é sempre uma solução transitória de lidar com o novo, e é um adiamento da nova era inesperada. Nós sabemos que a Integração passa por um desejo de aculturação e de assimilação. Pode resultar com os emigrantes, mas não resultará com os filhos destes. Desde que o Homem sonhou com a Lua, falar de Diáspora é uma coisa lunática. O Planeta Terra é a casa da Diáspora. Os emigrantes podem se submeter à Integração, porque a Integração é previsível, é programada, é estratégica e é condutível. Mas, Crioulo, que em castelhano arcaico significava “os nascidos aqui”, supõe uma ideia de dois mundos. E a criouliização é um fenômeno imprevisível. É isso que surpreendeu o mundo há pouco tempo com as eleições nos Estados Unidos da América. A principal diferença contextual entre o reverendo Jesse Jackson e Barack Obama é que o primeiro é afro-americano, filho da Diáspora negra nascido na América, e o segundo é Crioulo, filho de um emigrante africano e uma americana de gema. É um contexto em que só afro-descendente não chega, e só americano também não. E é nesse contexto

que a maioria latina se viu espelhada, os negro americanos também, os que querem um novo espaço identitário também. É essa a situação de milhares de franceses e alemães e ingleses. São Crioulos. E não se pode tentar integrar aqueles que já estão dentro e são diferentes daqueles que sempre estiveram dentro e daqueles que sempre estiveram fora. Tentar integrá-los é excluí-los da sua particularidade. O mundo é que se deve adaptar. O fenómeno da criouliização é tão imprevisível que chegou aonde menos se esperava, o Japão. Nos anos oitenta, vários descendentes de japoneses de São Paulo, Brasil, emigraram para a sua suposta terra natal. Quando ali chegaram, não eram nem suficientemente brasileiros para serem exóticos, nem tradicionalmente japoneses para serem aceites. Hoje, têm os seus clubes de futebol, as suas rodas de samba, os seus carnavaís, os seus sotaques e a sua cultura-síntese, e até se denominam os *cariokés*.

Quando falamos de Crioulo, estamos perante um caso em que a língua materna é posterior à língua oficial. Estamos perante o surgimento de uma nova ideia de civilização e de cultura. Estamos perante um caso em que a aliança das civilizações se deu num indivíduo, depois na família, logo, na sua sociedade, e agora no mundo. E quero dizer-vos que não estou a falar de teoria, estou a falar da vivência. Se querem um exemplo de um futuro do mundo, digo-vos que ele já é velho e data do século XV. Quando um filho de um homem negro e de um homem branco se viu no dilema de decidir que língua

falar, ou se devia tocar o tambor ou o violino, se devia adorar Xangô ou Santa Bárbara, e optou por sintetizar as diferenças num terceiro elemento, ele começou a dizer ao mundo que um novo mundo já começara. Mestiços somos todos, porque ser mestiço é uma contingência genética. Mas o Crioulo não é a mestiçagem, não olha para a cor da pele, nem dos olhos; não olha para regiões nem para religiões, é uma conduta e uma assumpção. É a assumpção da cultura de um novo mundo, em que o homem não é do lugar de origem, mas de onde se sente bem, pode ter várias raízes e ser o outro na diferença. É o que podemos chamar da “Cultura da Relação”. Se a aliança é um pacto, e já é uma grande coisa, a Relação é um facto. É a necessidade absoluta da aceitação da Terra como a Casa do Mundo. A condição humana precisa disso. A Cultura da Relação é cada um existir em parte no outro, é todos sentirem o todo que existe em cada um.

Muitas vezes se sita Cabo Verde como um exemplo de democracia, de *bonne gouvernance*, de liberdade, de convivência e de direitos humanos. Estudiosos e especialistas do mundo buscam e teorizam sobre o segredo deste sucesso. Não há apologia nenhuma. Na condição de Crioulos, a nossa história ensinou-nos cedo que não é fácil ser-se um pedaço do verdugo e um pedaço da vítima no mesmo corpo; não é pacífico conviver com metade escravo e metade patrão na mesma alma; não é fácil carregar uma metade oficial e uma metade clandestina na mesma folha de papel; não é evidente ser livre com

vários nós em mim. Estamos, assim, perante um caso novo em que o melhor termo é identidades, no plural. Hoje em dia, depois do termo “Homem”, todo o termo é redutor, mas o mais inclusivo que eu conheço é Crioulo. Para além da língua, eis um termo que abarca a União Europeia (caso de Portugal, França, Reino Unido, Espanha e outros), União Africana (caso de Cabo Verde, Guiné Bissau, São Tomé, Ilhas Maurícias, Seychelles), *Coommonwelth* (Libéria, Jamaica, Barbados, Maurícias, Seychelles), Franconfonia (Casamance, Cabo Verde, Martinica, Réunion...), OEA (Cuba, Colômbia, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Brasil). Crioulo inclui cristãos, muçulmanos, budistas, umbandas, candomblés, *sante-rías*, *voudous*. Crioulo implica continentes (África, Ásia, América, Europa); surca mares: Caribe, Pacífico, Índico, Norte, Sul e todo o Atlântico. Olhando bem, estamos perante uma geografia em que não mais são suficientes cinco oceanos e cinco continentes para nos confinar cada um no seu espaço; estamos perante uma antropologia em que Quatro Raças não bastam para catalogar um indivíduo. Estamos perante uma Linguística em que uma língua não é o mesmo idioma, nem a mesma fala, nem a mesma escrita. Com a criouliização há um espaço outro onde não é preciso integrar ninguém, mas sim entrar na Relação.

Há vários estágios e processos de criouliização: há fenômenos Crioulos incipientes, como em Macau, no Timor, no Japão, e em certas comunidades migrantes na

Europa; há outros que estão em consolidação, como no Brasil, na Colômbia, nas Antilhas, nos Estados Unidos, que estão a passar a fase da Negritude; e outros que já estão no esquecimento, como Cabo Verde, Cuba. Mas, a consolidação é apenas uma toma de consciência ou uma elaboração conceitual. Porque crioulação mesmo, dizia Edouard Glissant, é dialéctico e não pode ser definido.

São fases que eu, por agora, catalogo como sendo: 1^a — *a fase da Différence*; 2^a — *a fase de La indefférence*; 3^a — *a fase de La Non-différence*.

O Crioulo é uma identidade de união. Quando nas Caraíbas um indivíduo tem o passaporte francês e o avô é senegalês, tem apelido Ndaye e a bisavó é bretã, está na América e não é índio, se diz negro e é considerado branco em África, se diz *métisse* e é considerado *black* na Europa, o factor de unidade de todos esses valores e contradições se dá no facto de se poder ser Crioulo, uma identidade inclusiva. E é ali onde se espera que o mundo venha confluír. Não num *pot pourri*, numa rapsódia ou numa salada russa, mas numa identidade-síntese e de raízes múltiplas, comunicativa com todas as diferenças. A visão é esta: não olhamos para o que nos diferencia, mas, sim, em que nos parecemos. É certo que a semelhança pressupõe a diferença. Mas a diferença está no axioma. A semelhança pode ser o único traço que nos distingue.

4

The West and Defensive Globalization



Le multiculturalisme européen en question(s)

François L'Yvonne

Le multiculturalisme n'est pas une idée neuve en Europe, comme pourrait le faire accroire le soudain et spectaculaire regain de vitalité de la notion. Depuis quelques mois, en effet, des responsables politiques de premier plan ont lancé à l'envie diverses saillies contre les méfaits supposés de ce nouvel ennemi de l'Europe. Angela Merkel, le 16 octobre 2010, devant les jeunes de la CDU, le déclara tout bonnement en faillite ("Le multiculturalisme — *Multikulti* — a échoué, totalement échoué"); David Cameron,¹ lors d'une conférence internationale consacrée aux questions de

1 Les Travaillistes, qui furent en d'autres temps les promoteurs du multiculturalisme, ont dans les dernières années de leur majorité mit en avant le concept de "*British first*".

sécurité à Munich, le 5 février 2011, lui attribua les avaries des politiques d'intégration des populations immigrées en Grande-Bretagne depuis 30 ans ("En vertu de la doctrine du multiculturalisme, nous avons encouragé diverses cultures à vivre séparées. Tout cela fait que des jeunes musulmans se retrouvent sans racines. Et la quête d'appartenance à quelque chose peut les conduire à des extrémités idéologiques"); Nicolas Sarkozy lui emboîta le pas le 10, proclamant lui aussi son "échec" ("La vérité, c'est que dans toutes nos démocraties on s'est trop préoccupé de l'identité de celui qui arrivait et pas assez du pays qui accueillait. (...) Nous ne voulons pas d'une société dans laquelle les communautés coexistent les unes à côté des autres. Si on vient en France, on accepte de se fondre dans une seule communauté, la communauté nationale"²).

2 Jean-Marie Colombani, ancien directeur du journal *Le Monde*, à propos de la déclaration de Nicolas Sarkozy, fait le commentaire suivant: "C'est une proclamation de pur positionnement vis-à-vis du territoire de la droite qui serait menacé par l'extrême droite. Car on ne voit pas à quelle réalité cela peut correspondre en France, qui n'a jamais pratiqué ni prôné un modèle multiculturaliste. (...) Les Britanniques reconnaissent qu'ils sont allés trop loin dans la tolérance de l'islam radical, poursuit Colombani. Mais cet islam-là n'a jamais été toléré en France, et le contrôle des prêches de certains imams dans les mosquées françaises ne date pas d'aujourd'hui." J.-M. Colombani repère "chez Angela Merkel un positionnement exclusivement idéologique, car elle fait mention d'une notion de "culture nationale" (www.slate.fr, avril 2011).

Si l'on laisse de côté la part de stratégie politique à court terme, en fonction des échéances électorales, cette unanimité nous semble révélatrice d'une situation beaucoup plus profonde. Non que l'Europe, comme il est coutume de le dire aujourd'hui, ait des problèmes particuliers et récents avec ses minorités, car elle n'est faite historiquement que de minorités, elle a plutôt un problème avec sa "majorité" autant dire avec elle-même. Les nouveaux spectres qui hantent l'Europe: le fondamentalisme islamique et les vagues migratoires incontrôlées qui déferlent depuis la rive sud de la Méditerranée ne sont, qu'en apparence, les motifs réels des nouveaux fantasmes qui agitent le cap occidental du continent asiatique. Malade d'elle-même, l'Europe paye les effets de son abstraction, du formalisme juridique qui la constitue, de son incapacité à se penser effectivement comme une entité incarnée, peut-être par défaut de réflexivité.

Ces trois discours ont en commun de stigmatiser le "multiculturalisme", terme effectivement employé par Angela Merkel et David Cameron, seulement suggéré par Nicolas Sarkozy. Mais aussi, et plus sûrement, d'interroger la place de l'islam dans ces trois pays qui ont connu de forts courants migratoires en provenance de pays musulmans: Pakistan, Turquie et Maghreb (ils accueillent à eux trois un tiers des 16 millions de musulmans vivants en Europe). Certes, le premier ministre britannique a pris soin de distinguer islam et islamisme extrémiste (et de rejeter, parce que "privée de sens",

l'idée de "choc des civilisations"), certes encore la chancelière allemande n'a pas nommément désigné une communauté particulière, pas plus que le président français. Mais, il est clair que l'islam était dans leur ligne de mire ou plus exactement l'était la question de la compatibilité de l'islam et de l'Europe, de l'islam et de la démocratie, de l'islam et de la modernité. Que les propos de D. Cameron aient provoqué en Grande-Bretagne une levée de bouclier, qu'A. Merkel se soit défendue de toute islamophobie ne change pas fondamentalement la donne. En France, le débat a pris des allures assez particulières, à la mesure de notre tradition "jacobine": certains responsables en ont appelé à un Islam *de* France (parlerait-on dans les mêmes termes d'une "Église de France"? sauf à vouloir réveiller la vieille tentation gallicane... ou d'un "Judaïsme de France"?); d'autres encore, à un "Islam des Lumières" (expression que repoussait vivement le regretté Mohamed Arkoun); ou, pire, ont formulé le souhait, franchement aberrant, que les imans dans les mosquées de France fassent leur prêche en français, ce qui témoigne, convenons-en, d'une connaissance particulièrement approfondie des rapports singuliers que les musulmans entretiennent avec la langue arabe, qui est celle du Coran supposée "incrée" et "descendue".

Si la dénonciation du multiculturalisme masque pour partie une islamophobie de plus en plus insistante, qui s'exprime aujourd'hui sans la moindre vergogne — une liberté de ton dans l'apostrophe qui est sans équivalent

(l'islamiste, terme on ne peut plus indéterminé, semblant occuper dans l'imaginaire collectif une partie de la place naguère dévolue au "Juif")³ — la question du multiculturalisme européen ne se réduit pas à ce seul aspect.

1

Aux détours des philippiques, aux accents si proches, s'affirment certaines spécificités nationales de nature idéologique, philosophique ou, plus simplement, par référence à des récits nationaux très contrastés. Ainsi, lorsque David Cameron dit qu'il faut "moins de tolérance passive et plus de libéralisme actif et musclé", retrouve-t-on certains débats qui ont nourri jadis la bonne vieille tradition britannique. Et s'il ne parle pas de tolérance "active", c'est que la tolérance est devenue pour lui "indifférence indulgente". N'oublions pas, tout de même, que le Parti travailliste (*Labour*), aujourd'hui accusé de "tolérance passive", a mené des guerres en Afrique, dans l'ancienne Yougoslavie, en Afghanistan et en Irak. Actions qui ont d'abord été présentées comme l'expression d'une "politique étrangère éthique", avant d'être qualifiées d'"interventionnisme libéral", au nom des "valeurs occidentales", chères à D. Cameron.

3 "Tout comme l'antisémitisme était le dénominateur commun des mouvements populistes des années 1930, la focalisation sur l'immigration musulmane est devenue le trait déterminant des partis anti-establishment de l'Europe actuelle" (Jean-Marie Colombani, www.slate.fr, mars 2011).

Angela Merkel voudrait sauvegarder une certaine “unité” allemande, qui n’est ni celle de Bismarck ni celle de la seule “réunification”. Refoulée depuis la dernière guerre, la question de l’*identité* fait retour en Allemagne. Qu’est-ce qu’être Allemand? Une question qui ne se pose plus dans les termes de la célèbre controverse qui “opposa” à travers le XIX^e siècle Renan à Herder.⁴ Le récent brûlot de Thilo Sarrazin, politicien du SPD, *L’Allemagne court à sa perte*⁵ est à cet égard révélateur des passions germaniques de l’heure, de ce qui aujourd’hui peut être ouvertement dit, quitte à provoquer des protestations indignées.

Nicolas Sarkozy, lui, se réfère à la République. La “grande nation” semble redécouvrir le fond de vertu que représente cette “transcendance”. C’est oublier

4 Selon Herder (1784), la Providence “a admirablement séparé les nations non seulement par des forêts et des montagnes mais surtout par les langues, les goûts et les caractères”, chaque nation est un organisme qui doit persister à travers l’Histoire en demeurant fidèle à sa propre culture. Pour Renan (*Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?* 1882): la nation “est une âme, un principe spirituel. (...) Elle suppose un passé; elle se résume pourtant dans le présent par un fait tangible: le consentement, le désir clairement exprimé de continuer la vie commune. L’existence d’une nation est un plébiscite de tous les jours.”

5 Dans lequel il y évoque “la bêtise qui rampe” en raison d’une immigration de plus en plus nombreuse, les dangers de l’islam, le risque qu’à terme, les Allemands deviennent minoritaires dans leur propre pays, le fait que les étrangers aient uniquement coûté de l’argent à la collectivité et ne lui aient rien apporté...

que les temps ont changé, que la carte mentale du citoyen européen s'est distendue, que l'assimilation n'a plus de sens, qu'elle est conçue davantage comme une perte que comme un gain. Plus encore, c'est faire peu de cas du fait que les revendications qualifiées de "communautaires" viennent de citoyens européens, qui s'expriment en tant que citoyens européens, quelle que soit par ailleurs leur origine. L'origine d'un citoyen ne saurait donner ou retirer une légitimité à une revendication politique.

Dans son intervention, David Cameron a appelé l'Europe à se "réveiller" et à "regarder ce qui se passe dans ses frontières". L'Europe était donc endormie, peut-être d'un sommeil dogmatique...

2

D'abord de quoi parle-t-on? "Multiculturalisme", "pluriculturalisme", "pluralisme culturel", "interculturalisme"... Les mots abondent et trouvent dans le contexte politique actuel toutes les occasions de piéger le discours. A-t-on affaire à des concepts? Il faudrait alors les rapporter aux théories qui les ont produites, pour pouvoir en discuter, juger de leur fécondité euristique... A-t-on affaire à des initiatives politiques (qui éventuellement peuvent exprimer des philosophies politiques)? Il s'agirait alors d'apprécier leur efficacité, d'analyser leur mise en œuvre... A-t-on affaire à des faits? Un journaliste, exprimant récemment sa lassitude dans un hebdomadaire

français, disait ne plus supporter la réalité multiculturelle qu'on lui imposait. Un fait est ou n'est pas. Il faudrait alors commencer par savoir si nos sociétés sont effectivement multiculturelles, avant de se demander si c'est une bonne ou une mauvaise chose.

Au plus bas niveau d'intelligibilité, le multiculturalisme serait la reconnaissance des liens communautaires au sein des démocraties modernes. À un niveau plus élevé, il serait une bannière, celui d'un combat contre le "monoculturalisme", toujours réducteur et répressif, il serait alors l'expression d'une revendication communautaire émanant des populations issues de l'immigration. À un niveau encore plus élevé, il engagerait un débat de fond sur la manière de concevoir "la" société européenne, qui pourrait conduire à considérer, par exemple, que le temps des identités closes est révolu, que la construction de l'Europe exige de nouvelles formes de "vivre ensemble", de nouvelles manières de concevoir le "bien commun". À cela, il faut ajouter la place que prend ce concept dans les débats relatifs à l'*identité* de l'Europe.

Ne nous laissons pas obséder par le terme "identité", aujourd'hui servi à toutes les sauces. Michel Serres a dénoncé avec force la grave faute de raisonnement qui conduit à confondre *appartenance* et *identité*. Appartenance, que d'être musulman ou chrétien, francophone ou arabophone, mangeur de cassoulet ou de couscous, adepte du foulard ou de la tête nue. Cela n'a jamais constitué une identité. Réduire le principe d'identité à la rela-

tion d'appartenance est à la fois appauvrissant et dangereux. Ainsi commence le racisme. L'identité est toujours ouverte, alors que l'appartenance, qui est "le collage du moi dans le nous", rejette "les autres de cette inclusion".⁶ L'Europe est une réalité "incandescente", aussi riche de promesses que la lumière blanche l'est de couleurs, et doit être l'occasion de nous affranchir de la funeste *libido* d'appartenance. S'il y a une identité de l'Europe, elle est toujours à venir et potentiellement riche de tous les apports. Peut-être gagnerait-on à partiellement déterritorialiser l'Europe...

Les traditions culturelles et politiques des divers pays d'Europe sont suffisamment variées pour que le vocable "multiculturalisme" exprime dans chacun des pays des réalités très différentes. L'Italie et l'Espagne, d'une certaine manière, ont institué le multiculturalisme en créant des régions autonomes, d'autres comme la Belgique (ou la Suisse) en instaurant la diversité linguistique. Alors que pour l'Allemagne, l'Angleterre, la France et les Pays-Bas, il demeure associé à une revendication communautaire de la part des populations issues de l'immigration. Ce n'est pas un hasard si les polémiques récentes émanent précisément de ces quatre pays. Ce qui se passe ailleurs, que ce soit aux avant-postes, dans le sud de l'Italie ou de l'Espagne, nous paraît ressortir à d'autres postures sociales, plus proche de la xénophobie "ordinaire" que d'un rejet du multiculturalisme.

6 Michel Serres, *L'Incandescent*, Le Pommier, 2003, p. 117, sq.

L'abominable "multiculturalisme" que ces trois dirigeants ont pointé du doigt dans chacune de leurs bordées est un réel anachronisme sur le plan politique. Dans son sens traditionnel — permettant à des communautés de vivre à l'écart de la société ou pour le moins en dehors de la mainmise de l'Etat — le multiculturalisme a été depuis longtemps abandonné par les pays d'Europe.⁷

3

Du fait à la réalité politique. Les pays anglo-saxons ont dans leur histoire récente conçu quelque chose qui peut porter le nom de multiculturalisme; ainsi, le multiculturalisme "constitutionnel" renvoie-t-il au Canada à une réalité politique, avec, dans le sillage de l'action de Pierre Elliott Trudeau au début des années 70, la "Charte canadienne des droits et libertés" de 1982 et la "Loi sur le multiculturalisme canadien" de 1988. Dispositions censées favoriser la représentation des minorités "visibles" au Parlement; introduire dans les programmes scolaires des révisions tenant compte des contributions historiques et culturelles des minorités ethniques; des horaires adaptés aux diverses confessions religieuses; des actions anti-racistes; une formation multiculturelle pour les fonctionnaires...

Mais, la situation canadienne n'est pas aisément exportable et sa politique d'immigration particulièrement

7 Jonathan Laurence (professeur de sciences politiques au Boston College) et Justin Vaïsse (directeur de recherches à la Brookings Institution), in www.Slate.fr, 4 avril 2011.

stricte et sélective. Rien de comparable à la situation européenne. La réalité française, par exemple, est autre. Le multiculturalisme n'occupe pas dans le champ politique une place essentielle et historique. Les débats qui ont agité le monde universitaire anglo-saxon, entre libéraux et communautariens, entre fidèles de John Rawls et de Charles Taylor, par exemple, nous sont restés assez extérieurs, pour ne pas dire franchement exotiques.

Il y a dans l'Europe d'aujourd'hui une donnée factuelle difficilement contournable: les populations issues de l'immigration résistent au modèle assimilationniste. Modèle, qui ne saurait prétendre à la pérennité sous le seul prétexte qu'il fût associé aux plus belles heures de la République. Intégration et assimilation font deux. Et même si certains analystes, nous pensons à Paul Yonnet,⁸ attachés à la tradition républicaine, voient dans l'échec des politiques d'assimilation en France un coup politique orchestré par François Mitterrand (et le Parti socialiste) pour disqualifier ses adversaires politiques et diaboliser le Front national de Jean-Marie Le Pen, il nous semble que le projet assimilationniste a vécu et que se pose à nouveaux frais la question de l'intégration, de la coexistence

8 Paul Yonnet, *Voyage au centre du malaise français*, Gallimard, 1993. Dans cet essai, l'auteur analyse un paradoxe: la lutte contre le racisme passe désormais par la destruction du principe de l'assimilation républicaine. Or, assurer la promotion ethnique et lutter contre le racisme, c'est "vouloir une chose et son contraire".

“active” entre les communautés, autrement qu’en terme d’inclusion ou d’exclusion.

Les populations d’origine arabo-musulmanes sont-elles moins bien intégrées que d’autres? Cela vaut-il pour toutes les générations? Pour toutes les communautés? Il faut ici rappeler ce qu’établissent de manière convergente les analyses économiques, sociologiques ou démographiques: les pays européens n’ont plus affaire aujourd’hui, et principalement, à des immigrés (les grandes vagues migratoires appartiennent au passé) mais, comme nous l’avons dit, à des citoyens. C’est en tant que tels qu’ils font valoir de nouvelles exigences. C’est l’Europe qui s’adresse à l’Europe... On ne peut pas éternellement considérer que le descendant d’un immigrant demeure, presque malgré lui, un immigrant. Ulrich Beck fait à cet égard une remarque judicieuse qui nourrit son ambitieux projet d’“Europe cosmopolitique”, qui est l’exacte négation de l’“ontologie sociale territoriale” selon laquelle “seuls ceux qui de tout temps ont fait partie de cette ‘communauté occidentale de destin’ font partie des ‘nôtres’. Les Autres étant les autres exclus de l’Europe”.⁹

Mais, prôner la reconnaissance de la différence culturelle ne conduit pas nécessairement à soutenir le multiculturalisme. Claude Lévi-Strauss est très clair:

9 Ulrich Beck, *Qu’est-ce que le cosmopolitisme?* (2004), Aubier, 2006, p. 320.

Mono-culturel ne veut rien dire, parce qu'il n'y a jamais eu de société qui soit telle. Toutes les cultures résultent de brassage, d'emprunts, de mélanges, qui n'ont cessé de se produire, bien que sur des rythmes différents, depuis l'origine des temps. Toutes pluriculturelles par leur formation, les sociétés ont élaboré chacune au cours des siècles une synthèse originale.

Ce qui l'empêche pas quelques pages plus loin de déclarer:

On a mis dans la tête des gens que la société relevait de la pensée abstraite alors qu'elle est faite d'habitudes, d'usages, et qu'en broyant ceux-ci sous les meules de la raison, on pulvérise des genres de vie fondés sur une longue tradition, on réduit les individus à l'état d'atomes interchangeables et anonymes. La liberté véritable ne peut avoir qu'un contenu concret: elle est faite d'équilibre entre des petites appartenances, de menues solidarités: ce contre quoi les idées théoriques qu'on proclame rationnelles s'acharnent; quand elles sont parvenues à leurs fins, il ne reste plus qu'à s'entre-détruire. Nous observons aujourd'hui le résultat.¹⁰

En effet, il faut se garder de construire un espace abstrait, celui d'une Europe introuvable — c'est la limite de la déterritorialisation — toute en idées pures et en vœux pieux. Contre les trois discours susnommés, on a pu lire ici et là des déclarations d'intention sur la souhaitable ouverture béante des portes de l'Europe, comme unique solution aux problèmes migratoires. L'avenir de l'Europe passant par la disparition de l'Europe. Lévi-Strauss, dans le même texte ajoute:

10 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *De près ou de loin*, Odile Jacob, 1998, p. 212 sq.

Si les sociétés occidentales ne sont pas capables de conserver ou de susciter des valeurs intellectuelles et morales assez puissantes pour attirer des gens venus du dehors et pour qu'ils souhaitent les adopter, alors, sans doute, il y a sujet de s'alarmer.

Rien à redire au propos, sinon que le verbe “adopter” ne nous semble pas approprié, à moins de concevoir l'adoption “active” comme “fécondation”. On peut féconder ce que l'on adopte. C'est alors une chance pour l'Europe.

Le multiculturalisme ne saurait être tenu pour responsable de tous nos maux, de la fragmentation sociale, de la “ghettoïsation” des populations immigrées, de leur isolement social, de favoriser les stéréotypes racistes, de promouvoir la radicalisation idéologique des jeunes des cités, de provoquer l'intolérance entre les communautés. Pas plus qu'inversement il ne saurait être paré de toutes les vertus.

4

Le multiculturalisme — qui suscite d'intenses discussions sur le devenir de la citoyenneté démocratique face aux défis posés par un pluralisme axiologique et culturel croissant — est-il à la mesure des enjeux de l'Europe de demain? Est-il susceptible d'en favoriser la construction, non à partir du modèle de l'État-nation, qui a joué un rôle majeur dans la naissance des États européens modernes, mais sur la base d'une coexistence d'identités diversement affirmées. Il faudrait alors adopter un modèle pluraliste

fondé, pour reprendre les mots d'Habermas,¹¹ sur un "patriotisme constitutionnel", ce qui suppose une nouvelle culture civique sans laquelle l'Europe risque de se fermer sur ses fantasmes d'identité. Non pas aller de l'un vers le multiple, mais du multiple vers l'un. Ce qui pourrait conduire à reconnaître, toujours à la suite d'Habermas, des droits culturels (attribués aux seuls individus) à côté des droits politiques et sociaux acquis de haute lutte.

Comment faire naître une volonté de vivre ensemble qui ne soit pas le seul fruit de la durée? Comment unifier cette merveilleuse mosaïque (ce foisonnement inouï de détails infimes dans lesquels William Blake voyait un caractère sacré) qui ne cesse de s'enrichir? Comment maintenir l'équilibre précaire entre les forces centripètes et centrifuges? Certes, on peut céder au pessimisme de George Steiner qui se demandait, il y a peu, si l'Europe n'était pas fatiguée de ses 2000 ans d'histoire:

Pourquoi se remettrait-elle des deux guerres mondiales, des tueries de la première aux massacres de la seconde? Dans le passé, des empires immensément doués ont disparu! Et puis, il est possible que les cultures qui tuent leurs juifs ne revivent pas.¹²

11 En particulier dans: Jürgen Habermas, "L'État-nation a-t-il un avenir?" in *L'Intégration républicaine: essais de théorie politique* (1996), Fayard, 1998.

12 George Steiner, "Il faut avoir le courage des grandes erreurs", entretien avec F. L'Yvonnet, *Le Magazine littéraire* n. 454, avec un dossier consacré à l'auteur. George Steiner, *Une certaine idée de l'Europe* (2004), Acte Sud, 2005, p. 45, sq.

La conscience eschatologique, celle dont parle le même G. Steiner, l'idée confuse, mais présente dans nos représentations collectives européennes, que l'histoire a un terme (bien avant la reconnaissance par Paul Valéry de la nature mortelle des civilisations), peut être aussi un ferment, celui d'une fragile promesse d'avenir dans l'horizon de la finitude. Les revendications des diverses communautés ne sont pas les derniers spasmes d'une Europe mourante, mais l'occasion pour elle de se revitaliser, d'interroger son histoire, de s'ouvrir sur l'avenir. L'Europe ne s'est jamais autant interrogée sur elle-même qu'avec la candidature d'adhésion de la Turquie. Est-ce à dire que l'on se définit toujours par opposition à autre chose, que pour préserver sa propre identité, il faut mettre les autres à l'écart? Mais alors, comme le dit encore Ulrich Beck, on voit s'infiltrer dans le débat de l'identité européenne la théorie politique de Carl Schmitt, avec les catégories d'ami et d'ennemi qui structurent sa pensée.

La question de l'adhésion de la Turquie pourrait être paradigmatique, car la Turquie, qu'on le veuille ou non, est déjà européenne. Elle est "arrivée" en Europe depuis longtemps déjà. L'Europe qui n'a peut-être plus le monopole de l'eupéanité. U. Beck souligne que, par de nombreux aspects, l'état de l'Union européenne est "ineuropéen". Par exemple, lorsqu'elle ferme ses frontières à une nation européenne ou encore lorsqu'elle réduit ses citoyens musulmans à l'islam. Alors qu'il ne viendrait

à l'esprit de personne d'affirmer qu'un catholique espagnol ne peut être démocrate parce que catholique. "Sans les démocrates musulmans, l'Europe serait une Europe chrétienne, c'est-à-dire une Europe non européenne."¹³ En somme, l'Europe nie ses propres valeurs lorsqu'elle met à l'écart certains de ses citoyens en raison de l'altérité de leur culture.

Il s'agit par conséquent de restaurer l'idée européenne, non par l'invocation d'un passé introuvable, mais par l'affirmation de ce qui l'anime effectivement (et dans le verbe animer, il y a "âme", *anima*), un certain attachement à des valeurs de citoyenneté, d'égalité et d'universalité, seul point d'ancrage d'un "*nous*" européen.

La question de l'identité chrétienne de l'Europe est l'exemple même du faux problème. En faire un "club chrétien" est un non-sens. Vouloir inversement sur-amplifier tout ce qui ne fut pas chrétien dans l'histoire de l'Europe ne tient pas davantage. La présence séculaire de juifs et de musulmans, plus récemment d'animistes (venus d'Afrique), la sortie du christianisme (le droit à l'incroyance) sont des traits culturels majeurs de l'héritage européen. Mais, ne pas voir que le christianisme (catholique, protestant et orthodoxe) a profondément organisé son imaginaire témoigne d'une grande cécité. La laïcité, mot ambigu, guère traduisible dans bien des langues, n'occupe qu'un moment assez court et tardif de notre histoire

13 Ulrich Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

nationale. Doit-on en conclure que l'identité de l'Europe en construction est chrétienne? L'historien Jean-Philippe Schaub,¹⁴ que nous suivons ici, fait justement remarquer que "ce qui lie ensemble le christianisme européen et l'épanouissement des libertés politiques, c'est le fait que l'Europe a été le premier théâtre d'une sécularisation globale de la société". Autrement dit, ce qui "définit le mieux la nature de la civilisation européenne, c'est sa capacité à s'arracher de ses racines historiques, et particulièrement spirituelles". Il n'est pas contradictoire, en somme, de reconnaître le poids écrasant du christianisme dans l'histoire européenne et de dénoncer comme arbitraire le désir de donner "un contenu chrétien à l'espace européen en construction". Deux arguments qui ne portent pas sur le même temps historique. En outre, la sécularisation présente qui est projetée sur l'avenir ne doit pas faire oublier la composante religieuse de l'Europe en construction, en particulier musulmane.

* * *

À un moment tragique de l'histoire de l'Europe, peu de temps avant sa mort, le philosophe Husserl prononça en 1935, au *Kulturbund* de Vienne, une conférence célèbre

14 Jean-Philippe Schaub, *L'Europe a-t-elle une histoire?*, Albin Michel, 2008, p. 187, *sq.*

(*La crise de l'humanité européenne et la philosophie*¹⁵) dans laquelle il proclame que l'Europe "désigne l'unité d'une vie, d'une activité, d'une création spirituelle". C'est cette unité, jamais acquise, qu'il s'agit de bâtir, car, comme il le dit *in fine*, le danger est dans "la lassitude".

15 In Husserl, *La Crise des sciences européennes et la phénoménologie transcendantale*, Gallimard, 1976.

The Gift of the Past

Susan Buck-Morss

1

History is layered. But the layers are not stacked neatly. The disrupting force of the present puts pressure on the past, scattering pieces of it forward into unanticipated locations. No one owns these pieces. To think so is to allow categories of private property to intrude into a commonly shared terrain wherein the laws of exclusionary inheritance do not apply. The history of humanity demands a communist mode of reception.

The goal is nothing short of a different world order. It will require rescuing the past based on a de-privatized, de-nationalized structure of collective memory. There is little danger of a new triumphalism in this task. Human universality is a scarred idea, and the sources of the

scarring must be remembered along with its moments of inspiration. Extreme inhumanities are part of a communist transmission of the past. The human disaster in Gaza cannot be made the legacy of Israel any more than the Holocaust belongs solely to the Germans. Neither historical role, of victim or oppressor, is encoded in our DNA. Past injury is not a license to kill.

2

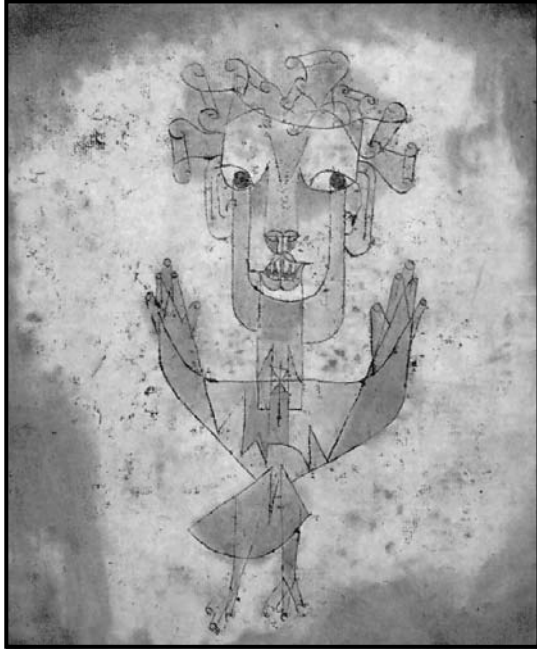
Long ago, before the name Walter Benjamin was globally famous, I asked students in a seminar to consider the 9th thesis in his late text, “On the Concept of History” (1940) and draw an image that matched his description. I read it to them:

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. (*SW* 4, p. 392; *GS* I:2, p. 697.)

My students drew mature angels, Christmas-card angels, and subtle-bodied angels from medieval art. None of these resembled the *Angelus Novus* painted by Paul Klee in 1920, and purchased by Benjamin shortly thereafter.

Today the Klee watercolor has become famous through Benjamin’s reception of it—indeed, too famous, the words so thickly applied that we cannot see the Klee

image without the overlay of Benjamin's comments on it. The elements reverse: the image is a caption for the text, rather than vice versa.



Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*, 1920. Israel Museum, C 2008. Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Benjamin wrote his comments in a particular historical situation. Today, the object is pinned down by the caption; pinned down by the determinations of a particular catastrophe as if it extended endlessly into the future. Historical philosophy (*Geschichtsphilosophie*) hardens into ontology. The world, without distinctions, is called a prison camp.

Klee's picture hangs in the Israel Museum, indelibly linked to Benjamin's suicide while escaping Nazi-occupied France, as a permanent monument to the Holocaust. How did the painting get there? Carl Djerassi tells us in dramatic form:

Benjamin: But what happened to my *Angelus Novus*?

Scholem: I'm getting to that. At the reception in Siegfried Unseld's home [Unseld was head of the Suhrkamp publishing company; this reception followed Adorno's funeral in 1969], I met your son [Stefan]. (*Pause*.)

Benjamin: And?

Scholem: I raised the question of the *Angelus*. (*Pause*.)

Adorno: (*impatiently*): What does raising the question mean?

Scholem: I told him it was really mine (...) after all, by that time I'd read Walter's 1932 will, where he'd left it to me (...) and I asked Stefan to instruct your wife [Gretel Adorno] to hand it over to me. I thought that I could personally take it back to Jerusalem.

Benjamin: And Stefan agreed?

Scholem: He most certainly did not!

Benjamin (*surprised*): What?

Scholem: He felt that since you had not killed yourself in 1932. (...)

Adorno: (*even more impatiently*): Come on, Gerhard! So what happened? Tell us.

Scholem: Your wife Gretel wrote to the famous Kornfeld and Klipstein auction house in Bern for an estimate, and when she received it, it was clear to everyone that by 1969 we were talking about the most valuable item in Walter's estate. We all argued for nearly three years (...) during which the Klee remained in Gretel's home (...) until Stefan died in 1972. So the poor man never really could enjoy that drawing.

(...)

Scholem: I persuaded Siegfried Unseld (...) to be the middle man. He went to London, settled with Stefan's widow, and got

the picture from Gretel. (...) I took it with me to Jerusalem. (From Carl Djerassi, *Four Jews on Parnassus—A Conversation: Benjamin, Adorno, Scholem, Schönberg*, p. 82-4.)

Unsold unilaterally reduced the royalties from Benjamin's published works to be paid to Stefan's widow and her two young daughters. Scholem kept the painting in his Jerusalem home until his death, when his widow was persuaded to donate it to the Israel Museum.

3

Benjamin's own reading of Klee's painting kept changing. Angels were for him ephemeral creatures. In 1922, he planned a topical journal under the name *Angelus Novus*, wherein theology and current commentary were to be one and the same.

In 1931, Benjamin bestowed the mantle of the New Angel on the irreverent journalist Karl Kraus, a "poetic, martial angel" fiercely critical of the latest news. "The very term 'public opinion' outrages Kraus"; his satire cleans the linguistic clutter from "journalistically processed" news. Benjamin calls Kraus a monster "sprung from the child and the cannibal," his writing "barbaric," like Paul Klee's painting, in that it starts "from the very beginning" (*SW* 2, p. 432-57; *GS* II:1, p. 335-55).

In old engravings, there is a messenger who rushes toward us crying aloud, his hair on end, brandishing a sheet of paper in

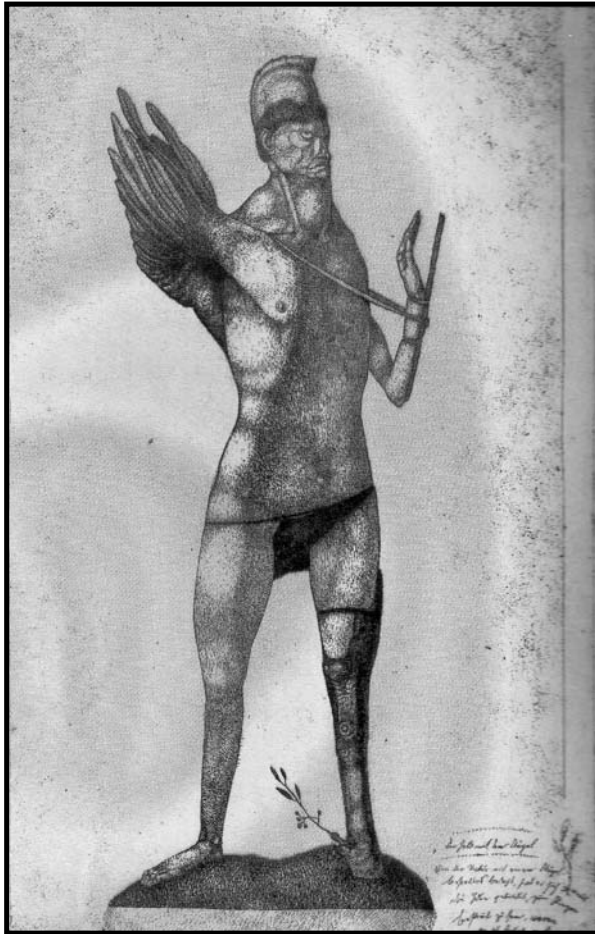
his hands—a sheet full of war and pestilence, of cries of murder and pain, of danger from fire and flood—spreading everywhere the Latest News. (...) Full of betrayal, earthquakes, poison, and fire from the *mundus intelligibilis* (*SW* 2, p. 432-3; *GS* II:1, p. 367).

(...)

Perhaps one of those [angels] who, according to the Talmud, are at each moment created anew in countless throngs, and who, once they have raised their voices before God, cease and pass into nothingness. Lamenting, chastising, or rejoicing? No matter—on this evanescent voice the ephemeral work of Kraus is modeled. Angelus—that is the messenger in the old engravings. (*SW* 2, p. 447; *GS* II:1, p. 367.)

Two years later, Benjamin described the *Angelus* as a woman, the female counterpart of himself, or indeed, himself in pursuit of a woman, a particular woman, Anna Maria (Toet) Blaupott ten Cate, whom he met in Ibiza in 1933. Benjamin is the suspended, if voracious, angel, ready to pounce on this woman he desires. Receding as time takes him forward, he hovers with persistence: “In short, nothing could overcome the man’s patience” (*SW* 2, p. 715; *GS* VI, p. 522). This is how *he* understood the relationship between image and caption. The latter was erasable, replaceable, and ephemeral, like the songs of Talmudic angels.

Paul Klee, too, envisioned multiple, topical angels. In 1905, his angel was a modern-day Icarus whose one wing signaled the earliest mechanical flights. Klee drew at least fifty different angels in his lifetime, more than half of them in the last year. (Both men died in 1940.)



Paul Klee, *Der Held mit dem Flügel* (The Hero with the Wing), 1905. Etching and drypoint; plate 10 x 6 1/4 in. (25.4 x 15.9 cm); sheet 16 x 12 1/16 in. (40.7 x 30.7 cm). Publisher: the artist, Bern. Printer: Max Girardet, Bern. Edition: approx. 30. Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase, 182.1942. © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. The caption, bottom right, reads: "Especially endowed by nature with one wing, he has therefore formed the idea of being destined to fly, whereby he perishes."

Politics and love, autobiography and transcendent truth—these were thought together by Benjamin, *pace* the loss of this polyvalence in the museum context. For Benjamin, art is just one form of human creation, no more or differently to be evaluated than any other—building type, technological invention, social institution, or object of child’s play. All of these forms consist of the human shaping of matter that is itself not humanly created. The material world is God’s creation. Its distinguishing sign is transitoriness. It manifests its divine origins by eternally passing away.

Transitoriness is the order of human happiness, which does not master nature, but speaks its name. Humans transform the “residue” of God’s “creative word” by bringing the natural world to speech in the secular language of human happiness (*SW* 2, p. 717; *GS* VII, p. 795). These two processes, secular and divine, face in opposing directions, like two parallel arrows simultaneously in play. Despite antithetical positioning, secular happiness and divine creation are in synergy, each augmenting the other in time—“just as a force, by virtue of the path it is moving along, can augment another force on the opposite path” (*SW* 3, p. 305; *GS* II, p. 203-4).

This simultaneously personal-political and theological-mystical idea of truth is the natural kernel of Benjamin’s Marxist and messianic convictions. It remains so constant in his lifetime of writing that dating the

“Theological-Political Fragment,” a text that deals with this theme directly (and contains the image of the counter-facing arrows), is the object of irresolvable philological dispute as to whether it was written in the early 1920s or in the winter of 1937-38. The passing presence of the material world and of human happiness in it leaves us with the metaphysical necessity of affirming transitoriness because only in passing is truth available to us. Its image is time-sensitive.

It is not that truth changes. We do.

4

Legenda: That which is to be read.

Creenda: That which is to be believed.

The remembered past is preserved in stories. As part of the collective imagination, it becomes legend. (What is too terrible in an individual's experience cannot be remembered.) In legend, individually lived experience is whitewashed in the process of collectivizing it, cleansing it of that which is truly terrifying: ambiguity.

When legends are appropriated by power and fixed to objects, lifting these objects out of history and preserving them within a nimbus of absoluteness—good and evil, right and wrong, redeemed and damned—legends become orthodoxy, setting the parameters of right belief. Such legends are formed out of irreducible, unchanging

elements that refer to mythic constructs: “the nation,” “the West,” “the terrorist,” “the Muslim,” “the Jew.” These constructs, reassembled in various ways, police how the past is to be read.

Securing the borders of orthodoxy violates the historical fundament of transitoriness. When the past is constrained in a timeless medium, its rescue becomes a mode of entrapment. Once the sense of the world is formulated in this way, history enters the magic circle of political theology: right belief legitimates power that legitimates right belief. Orthodox remembrance is capable of performing murder on the material world—not only what has been in history, but what exists today. Collective memory becomes conformism. Anyone who remembers differently is suspect.

Control of how the past is read is therefore no small matter. Archives, museums, libraries, legal traditions, institutional records—all of these are storehouses of the past. Their benefactors supervise the production of orthodoxy—although religious and secular ruling groups are often in competition with (and among) each other in determining just what that is.

But even a book, or an image, can be threatening if it escapes the particular manner of reading that is affirmed by power. Archivists and scribes, artists and academics, find their patrons within this ruling milieu. Indeed, learning is the passion of the powerful. The symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power is critical

for maintaining order. Rulers cannot survive its loss for long. But orthodoxy is in constant danger of being undermined by the knowledge process itself. Storehouses of the past harbor evidence of errors, ambiguities, and complexities (not to speak of outright lies) that discredit official belief and threaten to topple collective legends.

The production of knowledge without a patron has been described as apocalyptic in its historical implications (Smith, 1978, p. 81). In times of struggle between the guardians of power and the guardians of truth, historical evidence becomes a prophetic weapon. If the rulers claim the role of the restrainer (*katechon*) who holds apocalyptic disorder at bay, the prophets protest against the given order in the name of human happiness, social justice, or God's will.

History writing is the place of this struggle between the need to preserve the present order and the desire to preserve truth. But here is the irony. If the preserved past is entrusted with the task of bearing witness to truth, if the producers of meaning treat the artifacts of the transient, material world with a reverent care close to worship, then how is this painstaking effort to be reconciled with the fact that the past is never given to us whole?

5

That which survives in the archives does so by chance. Disappearance is the rule. Annihilation is the

fate of whole cities, obliterating far more of the human record than is preserved. Wars and disasters of nature are indifferent destroyers. Human intention is at work as well. Heresy, degeneracy, blasphemy, treason, disbelief—these are just some of the threats to orthodoxy that call for destruction of the historical record.

Texts and images are both vulnerable to attack. Precisely which objects are available from the past, whose written and visual sources are saved, is astoundingly arbitrary. Only a confirmed believer can be sanguine about their providential arrangement.

Great libraries disappear. More than half a million manuscripts, both secular and religious, were produced, collected, and later lost at each of these imperial centers:

- Library of Alexandria, founded in Ptolemaic Egypt, 3rd century BCE, disappeared by 5th century CE.
- House of Wisdom in Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphate, 9th-13th centuries.
- Library of Cordoba under the Andalusian Umayyads, 9th-10th centuries.
- House of Wisdom in Fustat (now Cairo) under the Fatimid Caliphate, 11th-12th centuries.

Europe was late to assemble a major collection (the Vatican Library held only 1,160 volumes when formally established in 1475), but intentional destruction was common. Two cases connected with religious and imperial expansion resulted in irretrievable loss:

- The public burning of thousands of Arabic/Andalusian manuscripts by the Spanish Inquisition, Granada, 1499.
- The obliteration of Maya sacred books by the Spanish bishop of colonial Yucatan, 1562, along with 5,000 “diabolical” cult images.

Wikipedia lists 87 historical instances of book burning. But the act itself is not the issue. Historical contexts and consequences change. There is no direct continuity between past and present in these instances, at least not for the point being made.

We are concerned with the political connection between knowledge and power that leads to the partial and arbitrary silencing of the past, and here secular modernity has added something new. If earlier, false belief was under attack, now the enemy takes on ethnic and racial tones. Modern states establish libraries and archives as guardians of the imagined national community, those who claim rights to the land by birth (*natio*). Patriotism appropriates the aura of religion. It purifies present acts of violence against perceived enemies, whose *own* past is first defiled, and then destroyed. Ethnic archives are obliterated. National libraries come under fire. Recent casualties include:

- The Irish National Archives, containing 1,000 years of historical documentation, destroyed in the Civil War, 1922.
- The Catalan library founded by Pompeu Fabra, destroyed by Franco’s troops, 1939.

- The Judaica Collection at Birobidzhan, capital of the Soviet Jewish autonomous national zone, established as a socialist alternative to Zionism, destroyed in the anti-Semitic climate of Stalin's last years.
- The Zaluski Library, Warsaw, founded in the eighteenth century as one of Europe's first public libraries, destroyed in the burning of the city as punishment for Warsaw's anti-Nazi uprising, 1944.
- The Jaffna Public Library in Tamil-dominated northern Sri Lanka, 97,000 volumes, including rare palm-leaf volumes, destroyed by Sinhalese paramilitary, 1981. Statues of Tamil cultural or religious figures were destroyed or defaced.
- Bosnia's National and University Library in Sarajevo, shelled and burned by Bosnian Serb gunners in 1992. The library held 1.5 million volumes, including more than 155,000 rare books and manuscripts.
- The National Museum and Library of Iraq in central Baghdad, destroyed in the U.S. invasion of Iraq, 2003. Statues and other ancient artifacts were looted or destroyed.



Destroyed interior of the
Bosnian National Library
(photo by Roger Richards/
DVreporter.com, February
1996), <http://www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0302/rr38.html>.

Mushin Hasan,
deputy director of the
National Museum of
Iraq in Baghdad, sits
on destroyed artifacts
in April 2003.

Photograph: Mario
Tama/GettyIraqi,
http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/art/category/heritage_antiquities/



There is a less violent, more common form of erasure. It is the practice of preserving only “our” past that provides a continuous, linear trajectory for imagining “our” future. Archaeologists dig quickly through layers of history to find what is of interest to present power. Attention to mythic origins—the stuff of national legend that shores up the dominance of those who rule—dismisses the

recent past as refuse. *Its* ground is a mere construction site for future growth. In the process, material evidence of crimes against living human beings is destroyed. Their records, declared of no value, disappear and, with them, the possibility of imagining any community at all.

Excavating the earth in search of the cultural heritage of a particular people while bulldozing the counter-evidence poisons present consciousness by shrouding it in myth. One finds only what has already been determined to be there.

For it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image. (*SW* 4, p. 391; *GS* I:1, p. 695.)

But go deeper into the historical evidence, below the level of official legend, and it becomes clear that “our” past is not, and never has been, our own. Objects survive through trading hands. Books move and thrive in diaspora; scholarship flourishes through cosmopolitan exchange. Texts and artifacts follow the lines of pilgrimages, troops, and trade.

Empires monopolize knowledge through linguistic appropriation, supporting the Great Translation Movements that have marked the rise of their power. Ptolemy’s astronomy, Galen’s medicine, Plato and Aristotle’s philosophy—all of these human achievements owe their survival to a series of imperial languages. This heritage of ancient Greece, lauded by Europe as its own, passed from Greek into Persian translations (under the Sassanids),

into Arabic (under the Abbasids), and ultimately Latin (in Toledo and Sicily), as the precondition for the European Renaissance. When vernaculars of Europe replaced Latin as the languages of power, translations became a strategy of intra-European imperial competition.

The last Great Translation Movement after Europe's decline is into English (the language of this text).

We face an uncomfortable fact: Without empires, no cultural heritage. Without diasporas, no national past. The Iraqi National Museum was founded under the imperialist mandate of the British (who are spearheading its present restoration). Sarajevo's Oriental Institute, destroyed in the civil war, housed a "Bosnian" past that included ancient manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew—not only Adzamijski (Bosnian Slavic in Arabic script). So, "our" past is possible precisely because of those who are not considered part of our story.

Today, microfilmed replicas of manuscripts lost in wartime allow the restoration of centers of learning. Electronic collections promise to prevent effective obliteration. Has global communication, then, made imperialism's appropriation of knowledge obsolete?

Eighty percent of material on the Internet is in English.

6

In a time when Europe's imperial nations were engaged in unprecedented human destruction in the name of partial, political identities, Walter Benjamin had

cause to hover, like Klee's *Angelus Novus*, rejecting all existing alternatives.

This hovering prophet of the apocalypse, who could find no patron in power, was not one to take the moral categories of good and evil and reverse their referents, whereby past victims in history are glorified as present conquerors. He wrote in 1938: "Wrongs that are endured are apt to foster self-righteousness. This has been true for the scholars who have emigrated" (*SW* 3, p. 310; *GS* III, p. 522).

Benjamin desired a home in Europe, which gave him no refuge—not Germany, not France, and not Spain. He distinguished the Zionist movement as a political organization from his own spiritual identification with certain ideas that, even if they were "expressed by a German ten times over," he defined as Jewish:

First and foremost, I must affirm what in me is valuable, and should someone say to me that this valuable aspect of myself and other 'Jews' is not Jewish, I cannot regret that for a moment. (*GS* II:3, p. 837-38.)

For him, a *weak* messianic power belongs to the living generation, those human beings who share this moment in time, not to any particular ethnic, or religious, or national collective. He did not choose Central Park in New York, where Adorno and the Institute for Social Research awaited him, or Israel to join Gershom Scholem, or Moscow where his early love Asja Lacis was politically engaged, or an ultimate return from exile to Communist

East Berlin, where his friend Bertolt Brecht lived out his natural life.

Because of his indecision (or was it revolutionary patience?), Benjamin's legacy is open to us today.

7

The temporal matrix in which truth is embedded, essentially transient, is the criterion for critical judgment—a difficult idea, because it goes against conventional procedures that narrate history sequentially and at a distance. In view of the fleeting nature of truth, any attempt at permanence of historical interpretation leads to error.

Our situation demands a new form of exegesis, one that rescues the legibility of the past against the conventions of official memory.

If “progress” yields a constant heap of debris, this is due to the continuation of the same—war's destruction, economic exploitation, and turning the other of one's own collective identity into a scapegoat as the political enemy to be exterminated. Interrupting the interminable repetition of the same necessitates remembering the past through those present inhumanities of which one is at this very moment an accomplice.

Here it is someone else's past, or someone else's present that needs to come into the picture. Past events cannot provide a key to the present unless they are radically separated from a direct lineage of inheritance. When the layers of history are superimposed in a way that only one's

own history can be read through them, the horrors of the past are repeated precisely in the process of paying them infinite due. Never again ends up being always the same.

Benjamin speaks of “smashing” the continuum of history. This process entails violence. He uses “militant terminology” and “terrorist metaphors” in order to blast apart the dominant historical narrative (Werckmeister, *Icons*, 1999, p. 24).

The past ricochets off the present and scatters into enemy territory. Historical fragments are the remains of an explosion. Blasted free of official memory, the fragments of history are preserved in images. They retain the nearness of original experience, and with it, ambiguity. Their meaning is released *only* in a constellation with the present.

They harbor a warning. The gift of the past is a Trojan horse. One thinks one knows whence it comes and to whom it belongs. But the gift is to others, those the so-called rightful heirs are presently destroying.

There is nothing in human history that is foreign to us.

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Est-ce qu'une politique peut être non-démocratique?

Renato Janine Ribeiro

Existe-t-il de nos jours une politique *qui ne soit pas démocratique*? Je ne nie pas qu'il y ait des *gouvernements* non démocratiques; la question qui se pose est bien s'ils font de la *politique* — ou plutôt autre chose. Il y a un certain temps, quelques décennies seulement, la démocratie était l'une des possibilités, ou l'un des types, de la politique; mais insensiblement les définitions que l'on propose pour la politique sont devenues de plus en plus semblables à celles qu'on suggère pour la démocratie. Politique et démocratie en sont venues à être conçues sur le modèle d'un régime où la force laisse sa place à la parole, les pressions physiques à la persuasion. Cela signifie en plus que les régimes non-démocratiques qui, au

cours de cette même période ont sensiblement perdu de terrain, perdent également leur légitimité. Il se peut aussi que les concepts de gouvernement et politique se détachent, le premier admettant des formes non-démocratiques (les pouvoirs *de facto*) et la deuxième tendant à se fondre avec la démocratie. Voici les termes de la discussion qu'on va entamer.

On a d'abord assisté à un profond changement du concept de démocratie. Mais avant d'en parler, qu'on se souvienne que presque tous les théoriciens même actuels du régime démocratique partagent une forte admiration envers Athènes. Il suffit que l'analyse devienne un peu poussée, un peu théorique et quitte le plan de la seule description de l'opération des gouvernements démocratiques actuels, pour que l'éloge des Athéniens se profile. On ne trouve rien de pareil dans notre attitude envers Rome. On pourrait sans doute s'attendre à un statut pareil pour les deux villes paradigmatiques de notre politique car, si nous faisons remonter à la ville grecque les origines lointaines de notre démocratie, la *res publica* est une création du Latium. Ce seraient les deux sources de la bonne politique contemporaine (par *bonne politique*, en ce début du XX^e siècle, je comprends celle qui équilibre, dans un dosage toujours difficile, démocratie et république, socialisme et libéralisme). Mais le siècle athénien — cette courte période pendant laquelle la ville grecque a triomphé des Persans, a conquis une hégémonie, quoique instable, sur le monde hellénique et a produit les premiers

chefs-d'œuvre qu'on a de l'art dramatique aussi bien que de grandes œuvres philosophiques — est plus important pour nous que la longue durée romaine, même si on limite celle-ci au demi-millénaire du régime républicain. J'avance ici une hypothèse sur la popularité athénienne. Ce qui est le plus positif dans la mémoire politique qu'on garde d'Athènes est l'agora. On a beau signaler que les femmes, les esclaves et les métèques n'y avaient pas leur place: toujours est-il qu'on ne trouve nulle part ailleurs un rassemblement de tous les hommes livres discutant, quarante fois par an (on doit ce chiffre à Moses Finley¹), des affaires publiques. Leur sens de ce qui est *public* peut bien trancher avec le nôtre; une part non négligeable de la vie publique athénienne avait trait aux festivités religieuses, ce qui nous permet d'ailleurs de contester certaines thèses de Leo Strauss et de Hannah Arendt: ils soutiennent que leur culture assurait le primat du politique, mais cela n'est vrai que si on accorde au mot de *politique* un sens assez différent de celui que nous lui donnons. J'ai déjà suggéré que, à comparer la vie politique athénienne à la moderne, on pourrait penser à une agora à Rio de Janeiro ou à Venise, où le principal sujet des débats sur la place publique serait l'organisation, une fois par an, d'une grande fête païenne où pendant plusieurs jours d'enfilée les habitants se déguiseraient et danseraient, peut-être au nom de groupes définis comme plus

1 Dans son *Démocratie antique et démocratie moderne*.

tard à Byzance par des couleurs, le bleu, le vert et le rose, d'autres encore. Athènes avait une vie politique démocratique, mais ce que ses citoyens comprenaient par politique avait peu de mesure commune avec le sens qu'on lui donne aux temps actuels, et si l'histoire en est venue à hypervaloriser les débats sur les guerres et l'organisation de l'Etat ou encore les discours de Périclès sur l'égalité, il est possible que l'écrasante majorité des assemblées discuterait autre chose que cela: le vécu de la démocratie athénienne était très loin du vécu, soit de nos élections tenues chaque deux ou quatre ans, soit des réunions de nos assemblées représentatives. Il est donc fort possible que notre admiration pour Athènes repose en certaine mesure sur une équivoque concernant le politique tel qu'il était vécu. On suppose chez ces quelques dizaines de milliers de citoyens qui pendant environ un siècle ont apparemment été à la tête de la civilisation occidentale une dédicacion constante à la chose politique qui peut bien être un mirage, une construction *ex post facto* qui en fait un modèle que nous ne serons jamais capables d'atteindre, mais auquel eux-mêmes, peut-être, n'accordaient pas l'importance que les théoriciens modernes de la démocratie, dont Strauss et Arendt, auraient aimé lui attribuer.

Mais, même si Athènes doit une partie de son actuel succès d'estime à une possible équivoque, pourquoi Rome ne reçoit-elle pas de notre part une admiration pareille? Athènes a pu vaincre les Persans, maîtriser une partie

au moins de la Méditerranée, assurer son emprise sur un territoire dont l'actuelle Grèce était le centre — mais tout cela n'a duré que quelques décennies. Rome a su créer un Empire et son pouvoir n'a fait que croître pendant, disons, mille ans. Mais ce qui nous détache de ce premier empire géographiquement occidental est probablement avant tout sa cruauté. A Athènes on ne trouve rien de comparable, du moins dans la même échelle, à la gladiature, à la répression des chrétiens ou à ce rituel sanglant qu'était le triomphe romain. Et le passage le plus noir de l'histoire athénienne, celui de la conquête et destruction de Mélos, qui nous est raconté par Thucydide,² tranche avec le reste de la légende athénienne — tandis qu'à Rome se multiplient les épisodes de massacres et de destruction des peuples qui ont osé faire face à sa puissance ou qui tout simplement ont éveillé sa soif de richesses. Les mots de Nietzsche sur le plaisir de contempler la souffrance d'autrui,³ de même que les études de Norbert Elias sur les supplices spectaculaires de l'Ancien régime,⁴ pourraient s'appliquer assez bien à Rome, mais n'auraient guère de place à Athènes. Mais est-ce que cette distinction explique la différence entre l'apport athénien à la "bonne politique", celui de la démocratie, et l'apport romain, celui de la république? Il semble que non.

2 *Histoire de la guerre du Péloponèse*, V, 85-103.

3 Dans la *Généalogie de la morale*, surtout la 2^e dissertation.

4 Voir surtout *La civilisation des mœurs*.

On pourrait peut-être, après Rousseau, proposer un certain lien entre démocratie et pitié, ou *Mitglied*: en régime démocratique, on serait plus solidaire de la souffrance d'autrui. Le fait que des pauvres ou démunis soient des victimes de l'oppression ou du destin nous porterait à leur aide — ou du moins, on est plus tenté de les aider que dans le contexte d'un régime autoritaire, despotique, aristocratique ou monarchique.⁵ Cette pitié démocratique aurait aussi l'avantage moral de ne pas être condescendante; elle porterait les marques de la solidarité, de la *fraternité* de 1789, plutôt que celles de la charité paternelle de l'Ancien régime. Soit. Il est possible que les régimes se réclamant de la *res publica* soient plus *froids* que ceux de la démocratie. Les moralités romaines d'esprit républicain nous incitent à mépriser nos sentiments pour mettre la société commune en première place. Brutus fait exécuter ses fils parce qu'ils ont conspiré contre la jeune république; dans le tableau de David,⁶ les femmes pleurent devant leur dépouille, tandis que le père, désœuvré, portant

5 Mais peut-être moins que dans un régime à forte pitié *religieuse*; pensons à une scène remarquable du film *Sept ans au Tibet* (1997), où les Tibétains se montrent indifférents à la magnifique et égocentrique performance du patineur joué par Brad Pitt et se portent au secours de son ami qui est tombé sur le lac glacé: le succès ne vaut guère pour eux. D'autre part, ce qu'on sait de l'esclavage au Tibet avant l'incorporation à la Chine populaire met en cause la légende d'un pays heureux et juste.

6 *Les lecteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils*, peint et exposé en 1789.

en lui toute la douleur du monde, se tait. Sa douleur n'est peut-être pas inférieure à celle des femmes de sa *familia*. Mais il ne peut l'exprimer. Il ne peut pleurer. Et en plus, il se doit d'agir en sens contraire à celui de ses sentiments ou de ses désirs. L'action du magistrat républicain tranche avec son individualité. Il ne peut être un homme privé doué de sentiments et de personnalité privés.

Cet impératif ne vaut pas que pour les magistrats. Il est également vrai des citoyens. Mucius Scaevola ne réussit pas à tuer le commandant des Etrusques qui assiègent Rome. Pris par eux, il prend le devant des supplices qui se préparent pour lui et brûle sa main, la punissant de s'être trompée. Lui, un simple citoyen, se porte comme un magistrat: il se punit lui-même. Il supporte la souffrance physique épouvantable qu'il s'inflige. Les ennemis, effrayés, fuient Rome. Scaevola n'est pas qu'un homme privé. Dans une république comme la romaine, y a-t-il à la rigueur des hommes privés? Ou tous les citoyens ne sont-ils que des hommes publics en sursis, dont on attend qu'à n'importe quel moment ils démontrent leur courage, leur capacité de se sacrifier au bien public?

Restent alors les femmes, que David autorise à pleurer les enfants Brutus. Mais, pour nous en tenir au peintre de la Révolution française,⁷ lorsque le seul Horace qui a survécu au combat avec les Curiaces rentre à Rome,

7 Dans son *Serment des Horaces*, daté de 1785.

après les avoir vaincus par son astuce, qu'il rencontre sa soeur et la voit pleurer la mort du mari — car les trois frères romains avaient fait face à des ennemis de la république qui étaient en même temps des amis de leur famille, peut-être leurs beaux-frères⁸ — il la tue. Elle pleurerait l'ennemi de Rome. Ce qui était autorisé au sein de la *gens* Brutus n'est plus permis dans la famille Horace. Ces histoires sont fortes, mais dans quelle mesure nous rendent-elles sympathiques à Rome et à sa culture? On pourrait évoquer ici l'histoire moderne la mieux apparentée à ces anecdotes morales — mais qu'on se souvienne que, plus importante que la véracité factuelle, il s'agit ici de récits qui ne sont pas forcément véridiques, mais dont l'autorité morale a été respectée à un moment ou à un autre. Le récit du XXe siècle qui fait le mieux écho à ces histoires romaines est celui de Pavel Morozov, qui aurait dénoncé son père à la police de Staline pour avoir caché un sac de grains pendant une grande famine de l'époque soviétique. Le père est déporté et disparaît en Sibérie, l'enfant qui sans doute ne mesurait pas les conséquences ni le sens de son acte est assassiné dans le village où il vit. Si on se tenait à cela, on aurait une histoire très triste mais rien que cela. Mais il y a un supplément qui donne toute son envergure à cet épisode. Il devient exemplaire. Le petit Pavel est promu à la condition

8 Certains récits disent que la jeune fille tuée était la fiancée de l'un des Curiaces, d'autres affirment que les deux familles étaient déjà liées par plusieurs mariages.

de héros, de modèle pour les jeunes soviétiques. Il est le personnage par excellence du Konsomol. Son innocence, sa sottise deviennent des vertus. Est-ce qu'on se surprendra que sa statue dans le parc portant son nom, le Parc Morozov à Moscou, ait été détruite par la foule au moment même où celle-ci s'insurgeait contre les auteurs du putsch d'août 1991, ceux qui essayaient de mettre fin à la *glasnost*? A une première vue, la fin de la dictature communiste redonne ainsi à la famille le rôle qui a longtemps été le sien, c'est-à-dire, celui du contrepoint moral et traditionnel à l'Etat, fût-il démocratique; mais il ne s'agit pas exactement de cela: la famille représente ici toutes les formes associatives qui contrebalancent le pouvoir d'Etat, y compris l'amitié, l'amour, bref, tout ce qui évite que le pouvoir phagocyte le social. Il faut ajouter que les recherches les plus récentes contestent le récit stalinien; Pavlik serait assez naïf, il est possible qu'il n'ait accusé personne de sa famille et qu'il ait été tué par la police soviétique elle-même,⁹ on a donc affaire à des récits, voire des contes, les uns romains et l'autre soviétique, dont l'authenticité factuelle compte moins que le rôle pédagogique qu'ils ont pu jouer dans ces différentes *politeïai*; mais ce qui importe pour nous est quelque chose de supplémentaire. Pour résumer, c'est le fait que l'histoire hautement morale des Romains devient de nos

9 C'est la thèse de Youri Droujnikov, auteur de *Le Mouchard 001, ou l'Assomption de Pavlik Morozov*, publié à Londres en 1987, puis en Russie après la chute du communisme.

jours quelque chose de scandaleux. Ce qui faisait morale dans la république antique, est aujourd'hui réduit à une conduite obscène, *immorale*. L'exemple romain devient au XX siècle un contre-exemple, quelque chose à ne pas faire, une attitude à ne pas imiter. Mais peut-être le meilleur jugement — rétrospectif, il va de soi — sur l'anecdote aura été porté par Mika Waltari, célèbre par son roman *Sinouhé l'égyptien*, dans un livre mineur qui a fait un certain succès, *L'étrusque*, publié en Finlande en 1955. Ce roman historique se passe du temps où Rome n'est encore qu'une petite ville. Le personnage principal y rencontre un vieillard, dont le titre assez douteux à la gloire est d'avoir fait tuer ses deux enfants parce qu'ils auraient conspiré contre la jeune et insignifiante république. Ce sénateur romain est, de l'avis de ses compatriotes eux-mêmes, un sot. Si le souvenir ne me trahit pas, c'est le seul passage ironique, voire comique, de ce roman. Ainsi le premier Brutus, dont David avait fait le grand héros républicain à un moment où la liberté des Anciens prenait le devant sur celle des Modernes, où la Révolution commençait sa trajectoire, devient après la chute des principaux régimes totalitaires un simple idiot. Du héroïsme à l'imbécillité, c'est une trajectoire qui a pris moins de deux siècles.

Si, pour reprendre notre piste d'inspiration rousseauienne, on pense que la *démocratie* fait la part à la pitié ou du moins à une solidarité qui serait responsable des liens *chauds* qui forment un peuple qui remplace la raison par les affects, tandis que la *république*

donne le primat à une divinité froide que serait l'Etat,¹⁰ si donc le contraste de la démocratie et de la république peut éventuellement être celui du chaud et du froid, des affects et de la raison, des sentiments qui tendent à l'union, à la fusion, à la proxémie, se distinguant d'une difficile construction mentale vouée à une *res publica* qui échappe à notre perception immédiate — si leur contraste est somme toute celui du proche et du lointain, de l'union et du renoncement, de l'affirmation et de l'abnégation, alors on peut mesurer la *difficulté* de la république. Ce qui nous mène à une question inévitable: pourquoi dans une société de masses, où le peuple dans tous ses états (les *polloi*, la *plebs*, les incultes, ceux qui désirent les biens d'autrui, ceux qui aiment tout ce que la société de consommation peut leur offrir en termes de produits à rapide usure et de facile ostentation) devient un nouvel acteur de la politique ou du moins le spectateur par excellence des mises en scène des politiciens, pourquoi donc la pensée politique a-t-elle donné récemment une nouvelle faveur aux thèmes républicains? Les dernières décennies semblent avoir accordé à la question de la république une importance plus grande que n'a reçu celle de la démocratie. Et pourtant Athènes conserve un succès

10 Regardez les représentations modernes de la République, surtout la "Marianne" française. Elles sont froides. Le fait qu'on ait invité des femmes connues par leur sensualité — dont Brigitte Bardot et la pin-up Laetitia Casta — est assez ironique, parce que le marbre opère une désérotisation de ces icônes sexuelles.

d'estime ou de critique, incomparablement supérieur à celui qu'on réserve à Rome.

L'hypothèse que je suggère pour ce primat de la république dans la théorie récente est qu'il s'agit d'un pari conservateur. La démocratie est le régime du désir:¹¹ si on étudie chez les Grecs aussi bien l'éloge que la condamnation de cette forme de gouvernement, si on écoute les partisans et les détracteurs du pouvoir du peuple, on en arrive à une compréhension plus riche que si on se limitait à ses défenseurs, parce qu'elle sera plus contradictoire et de ce fait même plus vivante, de ce qu'a été le camp polémique de la démocratie. Or ses critiques lui font grief d'être le régime — la déformation politique capricieuse et arbitraire qu'Aristote appelle *demokratia*, tandis qu'il réserve le nom de *politeia* au régime du pouvoir du peuple lorsqu'il respecte les lois, surtout peut-être celle de la propriété — où les *polloi* veulent s'emparer des biens des riches. C'est précisément la critique hellénique de la démocratie qui permet d'en mesurer la portée sociale, et non seulement politique. La modernité prendra des centaines d'années pour rajouter, à la démocratie presque

11 Voir notre article "Démocratie versus république: inclusion et désir dans les luttes sociales", publié dans *Diogène* (éd. fr.), 220 (2007), p. 49ss, disponible à l'adresse http://www.cairn.info/summary.php?ID_ARTICLE=DIO_220_0049, et dans la version anglaise de la même revue. On trouve sa version anglaise ("Democracy versus Republic: Inclusion and Desire in Social Struggles") dans *Diogenes*, 55 (2008), p. 45-53.

strictement politique qu'elle instaure depuis le XVIII^e siècle, un contenu social. T. H. Marshall distingue trois moments des droits de l'homme, le premier étant celui des droits civils, suivis par les droits politiques et finalement par les sociaux: ils sont séparés les uns des autres.¹² Les droits sociaux constitueront d'ailleurs toujours un ajout assez difficile, la dimension "politique" et la "sociale" se montrant en tension constante. Il semble, au contraire que, pour les Grecs les deux dimensions, sans perdre de leur tension, étaient plus proches l'une de l'autre.

Ce que les anti-démocrates helléniques craignaient dans ce régime était peut-être justement son essence: le fait que pour la majorité, pour les *polloi*, pour les pauvres, discuter des questions politiques abstraites sur l'agora n'était pas tout. A l'horizon de toute démocratie il y a toujours la justice sociale. Cette justice n'est pas non plus quelque chose d'abstrait; elle mobilise le désir des démunis qui ambitionnent, pour certains au moins, les biens dont jouissent les riches. C'est peut-être pourquoi la justice sociale n'est pas qu'une revendication digne, parce que sobre et austère; l'austérité la représente assez mal; les critiques grecs, qui traduisaient ce que j'appelle ici "justice sociale" par des termes comme l'avidité, la cupidité, le caprice, comprenaient assez bien que ce qui

12 Voir son article "Citizenship and Social Class", publié dans *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge, 1950.

meut les masses est un désir de biens; en langage actuel, la distance entre le désir de consommer et celui de la justice sociale devient assez mince.¹³

La république, par contre, est un régime de la volonté, celle qui se manifeste précisément par la victoire de la volonté sur les désirs. La vertu célébrée par Montesquieu comme le principe des républiques, que je préférerais traduire par le mot d'*abnégation*, est la capacité de se sacrifier au nom du bien commun. Je parlais de divinité froide au sujet de la république; tel en est le cas: la *res publica* est de l'ordre du transcendant, tandis que la convergence des désirs exprimés par le *demos* appartiendrait à l'ordre de l'immanence. La république semble mieux à même de faire l'objet d'un culte que la démocratie, et chacune des histoires que nous avons rappelées des républicains romains — Brutus, Scaevola, le dernier Horace — les mettent en scène en train d'offrir un *sacrifice*. Si les mouvements démocratiques doivent leur force au fait

13 Dans *The Medium Is the Massage*, McLuhan remarque rapidement que les films de Hollywood peuvent avoir mené des masses des pays pauvres à se révolter, parce que les biens qu'elles voyaient dans les foyers américains excitaient leur désir. Et dans une histoire de Mafalda, le personnage de Quino, lorsque le petit conservateur Manolo se vante que son frère, émigré aux USA, s'est acheté une auto six mois après son arrivée ("quand est-ce qu'on verra ça ici, Mafalda?"), et qu'elle lui répond "Quand les choses changeront pour que cela puisse se passer également ici, Manolo", il lui riposte: "Je parlais de la richesse aux USA, non de la subversion en Argentine". On voit ici la même navette entre la justice sociale et le désir de posséder des biens.

qu'ils organisent les citoyens autour de revendications qui émanent de leur désir d'avoir et d'être davantage, la république les exhorte à *renoncer* à de tels gains pour que la chose publique survive. Evidemment tout régime incarnant la "bonne politique" doit savoir doser sacrifice et désir, esprit républicain et corporéité démocratique. Mais, si on constate que de nos jours les théoriciens parlent plutôt de république que de démocratie, il se peut que ce soit parce que ce grand mouvement des masses qui désirent toujours davantage, et qui expriment ce désir d'une manière qui n'est pas toujours délicate et polie, affronte une certaine conviction selon laquelle la politique — sans être aristocratique — devrait être plus noble, devrait montrer une *vera nobilitas*, celle du patriciat; ce n'est pas par hasard si on assiste de nos jours à une certaine ruine des mœurs patriciennes dans la conduite politique. Si on pense aux remous qu'a causé l'élection du premier catholique romain à la présidence des Etats-Unis, il est presque amusant de penser que John Kennedy a probablement été le dernier chef d'Etat que le patriciat a su élire dans son pays; de plus en plus, des gens du commun se font élire à la tête de leurs pays, que ce soit Lula, Sarkozy, Reagan, Bush II, Berlusconi, Thatcher. Y a-t-il chez nos penseurs républicains une certaine nostalgie de l'époque où même les politiques démocrates, ceux qui pensaient au peuple, ne venaient pas du *vulgus*?

Rien, dans la république, ne la rattache à la cruauté. Les mœurs cruelles sont celles de Rome, plutôt que de la république. Celle-ci est, disions-nous, plutôt froide; mais cela signifie aussi qu'elle n'est pas méchante. Une chose est de ne pas accorder trop d'importance aux émotions, une autre de miser sur des émotions qu'on appellerait sadiques. De toute façon, république et démocratie, régimes que Thomas Hobbes appellera plus tard "des Etats populaires", subissent une éclipse d'environ deux mille ans. Il y aura des républiques en Italie au Moyen Age et aux Pays-Bas au début de l'ère moderne. Quelques-unes peuvent être appelées des démocraties, mais elles sont rares; dans la plupart des républiques, le pouvoir est au patriciat. Mais elles ne semblent pas porteuses d'avenir. Lorsque Montesquieu en parle, c'est pour les déporter dans le passé. Il ne pourrait certes pas imaginer que, à peine trente ans après son *Esprit des lois*, les colonies anglaises d'Amérique du Nord se constitueraient en république; et pourtant, cette république à grande dimension territoriale tranchait avec les républiques de l'histoire, des villes-Etat.

Revenons aux changements qui ont fait de la démocratie le régime politique par excellence, celui qu'on vante, celui que revendiquent même ceux qui dans leur pratique se montrent autoritaires, voire totalitaires. Le premier point à faire ressortir est que ce nom perd toute

résonance péjorative. Au cours du XIXe siècle, il est fréquent que des leaders, y compris des premiers ministres britanniques dont le pouvoir s'asseyait sur une majorité aux Communes, c'est-à-dire, une majorité populaire et démocratique, marquent leur distance envers la démocratie: le pouvoir "du peuple" faisait trop penser à une racaille en folie, qui serait capable de suivre des démagogues dans le but insensé de mettre fin à l'organisation adéquate de la société. Plus tard, lors de la grande décennie fasciste, celle des années 1930, quand Mussolini était déjà au pouvoir depuis dix ans et Hitler asseyait rapidement sa maîtrise sur les Allemands et ensuite sur l'Europe, il était fréquent de critiquer les démocraties, qu'on qualifiait comme libérales ou autres. Des régimes "organiques", comme ceux du *fascio*, on disait qu'ils étaient mieux à même d'assurer la bonne gestion des affaires publiques et l'enthousiasme des citoyens. Un lumpenproletariat qui donnait ses cadres à chaque parti fasciste partageait avec les classes dominantes traditionnelles, bourgeoises ou aristocratiques, propriétaires ou militaires, le pouvoir. Ni ces lumpen ni les aristocrates ou militaires n'aimaient le régime démocratique. Leur alliance n'était pas facile, il va de soi, parce que ce que les aristocrates critiquaient dans la démocratie était justement ce que représentaient ces lumpen mais, du fait que ceux-ci leur prêtaient main forte (les SA, les SS, les Chemises noires de Mussolini), ils se sont mis ensemble. Du côté marxiste, la critique des démocraties "bourgeoises"

ou formelles était également de mise, il va de soi que sur d'autres bases.

Mais, dès que commence la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les Alliés se réclament de la démocratie dans leur lutte contre les puissances de l'Axe. Leur victoire fait en sorte que le nom de "démocratie" perde toute coloration négative. Les Nations-Unies, qui avant de devenir l'organisation que l'on connaît, donnaient leur nom à la coalition des Alliés, inscrivent dans leur charte le respect de la démocratie. Les Soviétiques prennent soin, dans leur critique de la démocratie bourgeoise, de la mener au nom d'une démocratie censée lui être supérieure, qu'ils appellent "populaire". Quelques non-démocraties qui avaient soutenu l'Occident se doivent d'ouvrir leur régime aux opposants. Le cas brésilien est remarquable. En juin 1940, le dictateur Getúlio Vargas prononçait devant le sommet de la hiérarchie militaire un discours important, proclamant le déclin des démocraties et insinuant sa sympathie envers la politique de l'Axe.¹⁴ Quatre ans après, cependant, des troupes brésiliennes se battent en Italie contre les nazis. A leur retour, il devient assez insensé d'être allé en Europe pour lutter contre un fascisme que l'on conserve chez soi. La dictature est renversée le 29 Octobre 1945 par les proches de Vargas, qui ne subit d'ailleurs aucune sanction et un mois après est élu sénateur par deux Etats et député par sept. Tous les régimes

14 Discours prononcé sur le cuirassé *Minas Gerais*, le 11 juin 1940.

qui se suivront au Brésil, y compris la longue dictature militaire de 1964 à 1985, se diront des démocraties. Il est assez rare, de nos jours, qu'un régime assume qu'il n'en est pas une.

Des discours "démocratiques" tenus par des régimes autoritaires, voire totalitaires, on doit affirmer ce que disait La Rochefoucauld — que "l'hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu". Tout ce qui est démocratique est devenue politiquement vertueux. Nul ne s'y oppose. On doit ajouter, et c'est notre deuxième point, qu'elle est aujourd'hui ce qu'on pourrait appeler un *signifiant-aimant*, c'est-à-dire, un signifiant qui attire d'autres envers lui, démontrant un énorme pouvoir d'attraction. Ainsi est-ce qu'on emploie le mot "démocratique" pour désigner plusieurs qualités mises en valeur dans la vie en commun, telles le respect envers autrui, surtout envers les plus pauvres, la capacité ou la disposition d'écouter ceux dont on diverge, voire les bonnes manières lorsque celles-ci établissent l'égalité entre des inégaux:¹⁵ ces

15 Il y a historiquement deux types principaux d'étiquette. La première est celle introduite par la cour de Bourgogne qui, s'inspirant des rites d'adoration religieuse, consacre le prince comme représentant de Dieu sur la terre et établit une hiérarchie qui va du noble le moins important au souverain — ou à ce duc qui désire être roi, par exemple, Charles le Téméraire. Telle est l'étiquette qui passera de Bourgogne en Espagne et sera ensuite développée par le Roi-soleil. La deuxième naît dans d'autres domaines bourguignons, les Pays-Bas, et se distinguera par les marques d'égalité: elle met en contact des bourgeois qui se prodiguent des signes de respect afin de montrer que leur société

comportements, si louables soient-ils, n'appartiennent pas au noyau dur de ce qu'est le "pouvoir du peuple". On dit parfois qu'un parent, un enseignant ou un patron est démocratique; et pourtant nul d'entre eux n'est élu par ses enfants, ses élèves, ses employés. Mais c'est exactement cette imprécision du mot, le fait que des sens supplémentaires se soient ajoutés à celui de la définition essentielle de démocratie, qui montre les richesses dont elle s'est montrée capable de nos jours. Autrement dit, si le concept de "démocratie" s'était tenu à l'idée que le pouvoir est détenu par le peuple, son impact serait moins grand. Si on se réfère à ce qu'affirmait Aristote sur la compréhension et l'extension des concepts, on dira que, dans la mesure même où il a annexé des significations qui n'étaient pas siennes à l'origine, où donc son *extension* s'est augmentée, il a paradoxalement, et apparemment au contraire de ce que voulait Aristote, également *élargi* sa compréhension. Les plusieurs connotations qu'a aujourd'hui la "démocratie" s'enrichissent réciproquement. Les droits de l'homme, qui ne faisaient pas partie de la signification ancienne de *demokratia*, appartiennent aujourd'hui à une sorte de noyau second du mot. Le respect de la différence, qui n'était pas présent du tout dans le concept grec est devenu aussi important, voire davantage, que les processus menant à la décision. On peut dire

n'est pas hiérarchisée comme celle du duché. Voir mon *A Eti-queta no Antigo Regime*, São Paulo, 1983.

que ce qui concerne la décision par le peuple — donc, ce qui concerne le *kratos* — est aujourd'hui moins important que les *conditions* pour la décision, que ce qui est *autour* de la décision: la liberté d'expression, qui doit être assurée 24 heures par jour et 7 jours sur 7, prime peut-être de nos jours sur la liberté de vote, qui ne se réalise qu'une fois chaque deux ou quatre ans. Les démocraties deviennent des *ethoi*, des styles de vie ou peut-être des caractères humains. Ce qui compte n'est plus la décision, mais le mode de vie qui s'impose. Cela n'est pas d'ailleurs une complète nouveauté, si on pense aux Grecs. Les détracteurs helléniques de la "démocratie" lui faisaient grief d'être le régime de la canaille, là où les démunis pourraient confisquer les biens des riches sans nulle forme de procès: il n'y aurait pas de différence majeure entre la tyrannie, où le pouvoir est exercé arbitrairement par un seul, et la *demokratia*, où les décisions sont prises capricieusement par la foule. Aristote, même s'il est possible de prendre certains de ses textes pour en faire un démocrate,¹⁶ oppose radicalement la meilleure forme de gouvernement, la *politeia*,¹⁷ à la *demokratia*, dont il fait le pire des régimes déformés. Le danger de la *demokratia* réside probablement dans le fait que des démagogues y font la loi; or, l'un

16 Voir par exemple F. Wolff, *Aristote et la Politique*, Paris, PUF, 1991.

17 Qui, pour simplifier, correspond à ce que nous appelons la démocratie.

des traits essentiels de la démocratie *actuelle* est justement le rôle dévolu à la rhétorique, ce qui implique qu'on a peut-être perdu cette peur sacrée de la démagogie que ressentaient certains Grecs et les conservateurs modernes.

Une conception de plus en plus fréquente de la démocratie contemporaine pourrait être résumée comme suit. Il ne peut y avoir de démocratie sans langage. Il faut que ceux qui sont au pouvoir aient obtenu le consentement de leurs subordonnés à la domination, qu'ils exercent pour un temps. Si la liberté d'expression est essentielle, la légitimité des gouvernants se définit par un échange langagier. Les candidats parlent et par là, on vote pour eux. Les gouvernants parlent et par là rendent compte du pouvoir qu'ils détiennent. Les citoyens parlent et par là contestent les gouvernants, pouvant aussi bien les reconduire que les remplacer. Tous ces échanges renvoient à ce que les philosophes appellent la persuasion. Il ne s'agit pas de convaincre. Quand on convainc, non seulement on a l'intention de vaincre mais, en plus, on proclame avoir raison. Or, en matière démocratique, il est exclu que l'un ait raison contre l'autre. Oui, on peut avoir raison ou pas en ce qui concerne des vérités factuelles, mais pas dans les domaines des grandes interprétations ou des grands choix politiques. Si on établit que ou bien le libéralisme ou bien le marxisme a raison, le débat est forclos. Evidemment les

deux parties soutiendront qu'elles ont raison, mais c'est précisément parce qu'elles l'affirment qu'elles ne sont que des *partis*: elles ne peuvent rendre compte de la complexité et du social et du politique. Du point de vue de la société comme un tout, il faut que, à l'exception des situations de guerre ou analogues, où l'union nationale est de mise, des choix importants se présentent. Le primat de la persuasion signifie que la politique n'est pas affaire de ce qu'Aristote appelait la logique, mais de la rhétorique. Voilà peut-être la plus importante emphase de la théorie politique contemporaine depuis au moins la chute du communisme: la politique cesse d'être fonction de la vérité, de la science, de la certitude, mais de choix, de valeurs opposées, de risques pris.

Il va de soi que reste dans la démocratie l'élément de pouvoir du peuple, c'est-à-dire, que les décisions qui concernent la société doivent être prises par l'ensemble des citoyens, mais ces décisions sont devenues plus "libres" qu'on ne le pensait auparavant, parce qu'elles ne peuvent ni ne doivent être mesurées à l'aune d'une science du politique — que ce soit marxiste ou n'importe quelle autre. Si invention démocratique il y a, pour reprendre le célèbre mot de Claude Lefort, c'est justement parce qu'on détache les décisions politiques prises par le peuple de toute référence à ce qui les rendrait vraies ou même bonnes. Le fait qu'on pense à une dimension du temps comme porteur d'imprévus créatifs implique également qu'il soit presque impossible de

comparer une politique qui a été implantée à celle qui n'a pas eu cette chance. Prenons même l'exemple par excellence d'une politique malheureuse, imbécile ou criminelle, celle des accords de Munich de 1938, qui ont livré les Sudètes et dans la pratique toute la Tchécoslovaquie à Hitler; on sait depuis la fin de la guerre que, si la France et le Royaume-Uni avaient tenu leurs engagements envers Prague, les généraux allemands auraient possiblement renversé Hitler; et même si cela ne s'était pas passé, les puissances démocratiques auraient eu des alliances à l'Est pour faire face aux nazis. Mais même dans cet exemple qui paraît nous permettre une condamnation aussi claire et nette de la politique Daladier-Chamberlain, on peut regarder les choses autrement. Les peuples français et britannique n'étaient pas disposés à faire la guerre en 1938. Les leaders des deux démocraties ne pourraient imposer à leurs sociétés un choix qu'elles rejetaient. Il a bien fallu les dix mois qui vont de Munich à Dantzig pour que l'opinion publique se rende compte que toute effort en vue d'apaiser Hitler était inutile. Le coût de ces trois cents jours a été énorme. Si la guerre avait commencé en octobre 1938, les nazis auraient vite été défaits. Elle aurait probablement duré quelques mois, au lieu de six ans. Une centaine de millions de vies humaines aurait possiblement été épargnée. Mais le seul fait d'envisager cette alternative signifie qu'on est en train de réduire le caractère *politique* du choix de faire la guerre à quelque chose de *technique*. On calcule les divisions, les armes, les

soldats, on oublie le soutien politique et social qui est la première condition pour mener une campagne. Pour imaginer une grande guerre européenne débutant fin 1938, il faudrait en plus supposer que l'Union soviétique ait été l'alliée des pays de l'Ouest, ce dont ils ne voulaient pas: il faudrait donc imaginer ce qui ne pouvait se produire. De toute façon, si on trouve que je suis allé un peu loin en soutenant que l'Ouest ne pouvait faire la guerre en 1938, retenons du moins ceci: les accords de Munich n'étaient sans doute pas le seul chemin ouvert, mais ils étaient bien plus acceptables, à l'époque, que n'importe quel autre pari.

Lorsque nous disons que la démocratie est le régime du langage, nous acceptons donc que les gens dialoguent, discutent, délibèrent, mais nous acceptons surtout que la démocratie *ne soit pas* le régime de la vérité. Au fait, nous renonçons à l'idée qu'il puisse y avoir une politique qui dise le vrai. La vérité concerne ce qui est, voire ce qui a été ou sera. Or il n'y a pas de politique sans la dimension du temps à venir, et celui-ci est toujours le domaine de ce qui n'est pas sûr. On n'a nulle assurance de ce qui sera. On peut connaître ou savoir ce qui est, non ce qui n'est pas. La politique est affaire d'opinion, non de vérité, de croyances et de valeurs, plutôt que de connaissance. Évidemment les connaissances, et en particulier la science, peuvent aider la politique, mais le verbe est exactement celui-ci: aider. Le savoir a, en politique, un rôle subordonné. Il peut servir de support, mais il ne lui revient pas de choisir. Les renseignements dont on dispose nous

éclairaient sur les conséquences de nos actes, mais ils ne les déterminent pas. Il est intéressant de se rappeler que en 1974 le Parti communiste portugais a voté une “résolution scientifique”: du fait que le parti se revendiquait de Marx, ses analyses ne seraient pas que politiques, elles seraient scientifiques. Or du fait qu’en matière politique l’imprévu prévaut assez souvent, la nécessité scientifique devient impossible. On peut d’ailleurs remarquer que, du temps de la forte influence marxiste, les actions politiques à *venir* étaient souvent considérées sous une optique morale, *éthique* — surtout mais pas seulement par les trotskistes — tandis que les actes *passés* étaient plutôt soumis à l’analyse *scientifique* de ce qui ne pourrait avoir pris une autre route. Le futur étant imprévu, on peut parler éthique à son propos. Le passé ayant pris un seul chemin parmi tous les possibles, on peut — avec moins de raisons, à ce que je pense — considérer que cette voie était historiquement une nécessité. Or la deuxième moitié du XXe siècle s’est évertuée à critiquer l’idée de nécessité historique. Mais le plus important est vraiment la non-pertinence de la vérité en matière politique. Si la politique est toujours en projet, si elle est toujours tournée vers l’avenir, si elle parle de ce qui n’est pas (encore?), comment la mesurer à l’aune du vrai et du faux? La démocratie évacue la science pour deux raisons: d’abord, parce que si une science rendait compte de l’ensemble du politique elle rendrait dérisoire le choix par les citoyens; tel a été le problème du marxisme: ceux qui ne seraient pas d’accord avec les résultats scientifiques, étant dans l’erreur,

pourquoi auraient-ils le droit de s'exprimer, de s'organiser, de se faire élire? Ceux qui s'inscriraient en faux contre les "résolutions scientifiques", pourquoi pourraient-ils disputer le pouvoir? Ce qui signifie que la démocratie doit absolument présupposer que ses questions essentielles ne peuvent être résolues par la science. Mais remarquons que cette première raison n'affirme pas que la science soit dans le tort: elle dit simplement que, pour qu'il y ait démocratie, la science ne peut s'y substituer. Il serait possible que la science ait tout à fait raison et, néanmoins, il sera nécessaire pour la démocratie qu'on permette à ceux qui seraient dans le faux de disputer et de gagner le pouvoir. On a donc affaire ici à un présupposé constitutif de la démocratie telle qu'on la conçoit de nos jours, dont on peut dire, comme le disait Montesquieu de l'honneur dans la monarchie, qu'il est faux mais en même temps nécessaire:

Il est vrai que, philosophiquement parlant, c'est un honneur faux qui conduit toutes les parties de l'État: mais cet honneur faux est aussi utile au public que le vrai le serait aux particuliers qui pourraient l'avoir.¹⁸

C'est-à-dire que le présupposé qu'il n'y a pas de science capable de mener aux choix politiques démocratiques peut bien être faux, mais sans lui il n'y a pas de démocratie.

Mais il y a une deuxième raison, plus forte, pour que la démocratie réduise la part de la science: c'est que la science parle en principe de ce qui est, tandis que la

18 *De l'esprit des lois*, Livre III, chap. VII.

politique parle de ce qui peut avoir lieu. En matière humaine, que cela se doive à notre liberté, à une indétermination ou encore à l'ignorance qu'on a encore de notre espèce, on ne sait pas ce qui va se passer. Le livre *What if* est exemplaire à cet égard.¹⁹ Des auteurs y analysent de grandes batailles qui auraient pu se terminer autrement: qu'en serait-il du monde si les Persans l'avaient emporté sur les Grecs, Napoléon sur les Anglais, Hitler sur les Alliés? Et pourtant le monde n'aurait pas été simplement le contraire de ce qu'il est devenu; il aurait été une tierce chose. Ou, si on reprend le cas de Munich, la raison nous montre que c'était le dernier des bons moments pour une attaque *pre-emptive* contre les nazis, qui aurait sauvé la vie d'une quantité énorme de personnes et la qualité de vie d'un milliard ou davantage d'êtres humains; mais, si d'autres facteurs avaient intervenu? si, comme le craignaient les Soviétiques, les Occidentaux s'étaient joints aux Allemands une fois que la *Wehrmacht* se serait débarrassée de Hitler, pour mener une grande guerre à l'Est contre le communisme? Tout cela n'est que supposition, mais on n'aurait pas forcément fait l'économie d'une deuxième guerre mondiale qui, d'ailleurs, aurait probablement mené à un certain moment à un renversement d'alliances. Bref, on peut bien imaginer que le monde aurait été bien meilleur sans le blocus de Cuba,

19 Je parle de l'ouvrage collectif *What If?: The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (2000).

sans la guerre du Vietnam, sans l'écrasement du printemps de Prague, sans le 11 septembre 1973 et sans celui de 2001; on peut ajouter qu'une éducation plus démocratique est aujourd'hui notre meilleur espoir pour qu'à l'avenir de tels épisodes ne se reproduisent plus; mais reste l'imprévu, l'indétermination. Encore un mot: certains considèrent que l'idée même de projet a pour but d'assurer la mainmise du présent sur l'avenir, d'appriivoiser celui-ci, de l'empêcher de développer des richesses que nous sommes à présent incapables de nous figurer; mais les projets politiques, pour la plupart, *échouent*. Enfin, ici on a une raison *positive* pour que la démocratie ne se réduise pas à la science: celle-ci ne peut gouverner l'avenir, et le régime du pouvoir du peuple — ou peut-être tout régime, mais surtout la démocratie — a une part irréductible d'imprévu.²⁰

Mais quelle est la différence entre une démocratie ainsi conçue et d'autres régimes politiques? Notre thèse est justement que les autres régimes ont perdu, non seulement une part de leur légitimité au long de la deuxième

20 On peut presque en dire autant des autres régimes. Mais le temps n'avait pas autrefois la vitesse qu'il a acquise de nos jours. Les événements se répétaient plus souvent. La nouveauté n'était pas une valeur, au contraire: on s'en méfiait. Et cette attitude n'était pas le fait de ceux qu'on appellerait de nos jours "les conservateurs": au XVII^e siècle, les Anglais protestent contre leurs rois qui, désireux d'augmenter leur pouvoir aux dépens des Communes, introduisent des "*dangerous innovations*" dans la Constitution non-écrite du royaume.

moitié du XXe siècle, mais qu'ils ont également perdu beaucoup de leur caractère *politique*. Je ne crois pas que des *scholars* auraient nié une nature politique aux totalitarismes des années 1930. Il s'agissait de projets ou de formes politiques différentes de la démocratie, mais dans la mesure où c'étaient des gouvernements, ils étaient politiques. Dans la tradition soit d'Aristote, soit de Polybe, soit encore de Montesquieu, la pluralité des formes de gouvernement était un acquis. On pouvait en préférer l'une ou l'autre, mais de toute façon la monarchie, l'aristocratie, la démocratie étaient des formes de gouvernement, des régimes politiques. Mais on peut se reporter à cet important penseur et juriste anglais du XIVe siècle qu'est John Fortescue, dont la théorie s'inspire surtout de Thomas d'Aquin mais a sur lui l'avantage de se lier de près à la pratique politique du seul pays à avoir maintenu un Parlement sans interruption depuis aujourd'hui plus de sept siècles.²¹ La grande distinction que Fortescue propose, dans son livre posthume connu comme *De laudibus legum Angliae*, écrit vers 1470, est celle entre un régime seulement *regale* et celui *polyticum et regale*. Un gouvernement est politique lorsque l'aval des sujets est requis

21 A son époque le Parlement avait déjà deux siècles d'existence, ayant sur ses homologues continentaux, dont les Etats Généraux français, l'avantage d'être la seule assemblée élue à pouvoir approuver ou refuser la levée d'impôts.

pour les lois.²² L'élément politique est ainsi fondé sur le consentement des sujets et tempère le caractère royal d'un pouvoir qui, autrement, serait absolu. La France possède un gouvernement seulement *regale*, et c'est pourquoi les sujets de son roi sont pauvres, souvent ne mangeant que

22 On peut lire le livre en anglais ou en latin dans http://www.archive.org/stream/delaudibusleguma00fortuoft_djvu.txt. Je cite en anglais (chap. IX): "A King of England cannot, at his pleasure, make any alterations in the laws of the land, for the nature of his government is not only regal, but political. Had it been merely regal, he would have a power to make what innovations and alterations he pleased, in the laws of the kingdom, impose tallages and other hardships upon the people, whether they would or no, without their consent, which sort of government the Civil Laws point out, when they declare *Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem*: but it is much otherwise with a king, whose government is political, because he can neither make any alteration, or change in the laws of the realm without the consent of the subject, nor burthen them, against their wills, with strange impositions, so that a people governed by such laws as are made by their own consent and approbation enjoy their properties securely, and without the hazard of being deprived of them, either by the king or any other: the same things may be effected under an absolute prince, provided he do not degenerate into the tyrant. Of such a prince, Aristotle, in the third of his Politics, says, 'It is better for a city to be governed by a good man, than by good laws.' But because it does not always happen, that the person presiding over a people, is so qualified, St. Thomas, in the book which he wrote to the king of Cyprus, *De Regimine Principum*, wishes, that a kingdom could be so instituted, as that the king might not be at liberty to tyrannize over his people; which only comes to pass in the present case; that is, when the sovereign power is restrained by political laws."

des bouleaux de chêne,²³ tandis que les Anglais, profitant d'un gouvernement politique et royal, mangent mieux — et ne boivent de l'eau que lorsqu'une diète l'exige pour le bien de leur santé ou une pénitence le leur impose pour leur salut. Les formes de gouvernement sont donc responsables pour une qualité de vie meilleure ou inférieure.

Remarquons que cette thèse de Fortescue, radicalisant les idées que Thomas d'Aquin avait proposées dans son *Sur le gouvernement des princes*, implique que "politique" n'est pas un genre dont les distinctes formes de gouvernement constitueraient des espèces — monarchique, aristocratique, démocratique — mais est déjà le facteur, disons, "démocratique" dans l'exercice du pouvoir. Pour dire cela en langage contemporain, le mot de "politique" cesse d'être l'adjectif désignant tout pouvoir (une mesure politique serait, dans ce sens, celle qui émane du pouvoir d'Etat, élu ou de facto), pour devenir ce qui concerne la décision du *populus*. On ne peut oublier que ce "peuple" peut ne pas inclure toute la population, comme d'ailleurs c'était déjà le cas à Athènes, mais de toute façon il implique ce que Walter Ullmann appelait la vision "populiste" du pouvoir, celle où il va du bas en haut, et qu'il contraste avec la conception qui le fait descendre de Dieu

23 Il faudrait un jour étudier le statut philosophique de ces bizarres bouleaux de chêne, qui font leur apparition aussi chez Locke et Rousseau: comment attirent-ils autant d'intérêt de la part des philosophes?

au roi, et du monarque à ses sujets, nobles puis roturiers.²⁴ Le fait que Fortescue préfère un régime mixte, *polyticum et regale*, doit être compris comme une critique adressée surtout au régime absolu ou purement *regale*, parce que le gouvernement seulement politique n'est pas considéré par lui comme une menace, au contraire de celui où le roi seul détient tout le pouvoir. Or, sans présenter notre hypothèse comme un *revival* d'un penseur qui a eu une forte influence sur la *politeia* anglaise, il n'en est pas moins vrai que nous soutenons, ici, que seul est politique le pouvoir qui se fonde sur la volonté des citoyens — ce qui à la fin aboutit à la démocratie. On pourrait d'ailleurs rappeler que l'étymologie proposée par Fortescue pour le mot "politique" ne le fait pas dériver de *polis*, comme c'est l'habitude, mais de *poli*, plusieurs. Ce n'est peut-être pas un hasard. Une manière grecque de parler de la démocratie consiste à dire que le pouvoir y est aux mains des *polloi*, une autre forme d'écrire "plusieurs". Une chose est de rapporter le pouvoir au *lieu* où il s'exerce, la *polis* ou la ville, une autre est de le ramener à ceux, nombreux, qui le détiennent: dans le deuxième cas, il devient plus clair que *polyticum* n'est pas simplement ce qui se décide dans et pour la ville, mais ce que décident les *polloi*.

Mais on aura une raison en plus, que n'avait pas Fortescue, pour soutenir que le régime politique et le

24 Voir son livre *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages* (1965), republié en 1972 comme *Medieval Political Thought*.

démocratique convergent de nos jours. Il s'agit de la définition de tous les deux par la parole tenue en public. Nous en avons déjà développé quelques conséquences en ce qui concerne la démocratie. On doit ajouter que l'intéressante idée de la "naissance du politique", que propose Jean-Pierre Vernant dans ses *Origines de la pensée grecque* (1962), est liée au fait que le pouvoir quitte le palais où on le cachait pour s'installer sur la place publique, *tó mèsson*, rappelle l'auteur, "au milieu" des gens. Il s'accomplit dans l'agora, là où tous les citoyens ont le droit de parler et de voter. Le fait qu'ils votent est certes important, mais que ce vote soit précédé par la parole est essentiel. Il suffit de tenir compte de ce qu'est le droit de vote *sans* le droit de parole. Napoléon, premier consul, les avait séparés dans les assemblées qu'il instituait en l'an VIII: le Tribunat discutait des lois sans les voter, le Corps législatif les votait sans les discuter. Or ce qui est intéressant, c'est que cette assemblée sans le droit de décider est cependant vite perçue par Napoléon comme celle qui le menaçait le plus dans sa dictature; il a donc évincé dès 1802 son président, Pierre Daunou, et quelques années plus tard en a exclu les derniers opposants, dont Benjamin Constant. La parole serait-elle alors plus dangereuse, pour les apprentis du dictateur, que le vote? Serait-elle plus puissante? On constate aussi que des régimes dictatoriaux s'accommodent bien des plébiscites et des référendums, où tous votent, mais souvent sans qu'il y ait eu de discussion; tel a été le cas des

deux Empereurs français et dans une certaine mesure du gouvernement du général de Gaulle. Dans la littérature, le prince de Lampedusa consacre des pages précieuses de son roman *Le guépard* à l'analyse du référendum fraudé qui sanctionne l'incorporation de la Sicile au royaume d'Italie: si le maire du village de Donnafugata avait accepté de proclamer qu'une vingtaine d'électeurs peut-être sur environ cinq cents avait dit "non" au rattachement de l'île au nouveau pays,²⁵ le résultat "pratique" aurait été le même, dit-il, mais pour les mœurs politiques siciliens et italiens les effets de longue haleine, durables, auraient été bien meilleurs. Le vote nu ne signifie pas trop. Ce qui lui donne vraiment du pouvoir, c'est qu'il résulte d'un libre échange d'idée et de paroles. Prenons un autre cas. Ce qui distingue dès le XIIe siècle la société anglaise des sociétés du continent est le fait que le consentement des sujets soit requis dans beaucoup de cas. Le jury en est l'un des meilleurs exemples. Mais les jurés ne sont pas complètement libres de donner leur voix. Ils sont soumis à maintes pressions. Ils peuvent être punis si leur décision n'est pas, disons, adéquate. Leur liberté de juger ne sera pas acquise avant le XVIIe, voire le XVIIIe siècle. Le vote peut donc souvent se limiter à entériner des décisions sur le contenu desquelles les votants ne peuvent se prononcer. Pour terminer, malgré le fait que dans l'expression "démocratie représentative" l'adjectif

25 Le maire proclame la victoire *unanime* du "oui".

semble réduire la valeur du substantif, parce que la démocratie par excellence serait celle directe, athénienne, et aussi parce que l'expérience historique nous montre que souvent des représentants s'émancipent des représentés, voire les trahissent, cette version moderne de la démocratie a l'avantage, sur cet élément de la démocratie directe qu'est le plébiscite, de permettre que les textes légaux soient discutés, changés, améliorés. Le plébiscite, qu'on ne pourrait confondre avec la volonté de l'agora parce que sur la place il était possible de changer les propositions en débat, vous soumet un texte clos et vous permet seulement de dire "oui" ou "non". C'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles certains le craignent: les décisions plébiscitées, même si elles ont sur les décisions votées dans des assemblées la supériorité symbolique d'exprimer directement la volonté du peuple souverain, octroient par contre trop de pouvoir à celui qui peut *formuler* la question à laquelle on répond. Le pouvoir de poser les questions est énorme, parfois supérieur à celui de leur donner une réponse. Au fait et à la limite, on pourrait se dire que les meilleurs débats politiques sont ceux où les questions qu'on pose ne vous exigent pas de réponses élémentaires, comme le "oui" ou le "non". Ces questions, ou bien on les pose après tout un travail de décantation qui a permis de mettre en face des circonstants un éventail assez large de choix, ou bien elles s'imposent comme des *Diktate*. Cela signifie donc que, si la politique se distingue de la non-politique parce qu'elle se fonde sur le

dialogue et évacue la force, et si la démocratie se distingue de la non-démocratie parce que le droit du peuple à décider son destin passe également par la parole — la parole de la persuasion, pas celle du commandement — une longue élaboration d'un langage démocratique, d'un dialogue ouvert, est la condition pour que politique et démocratie s'établissent. J'opposerais un discours fermé, *clos*, celui qui essaie de clore les débats par le vote entre le "oui" et le "non", à ce que j'appellerais le dialogue ouvert (ou dialogue tout court, mais l'adjectif *ouvert* aide à sa compréhension), c'est-à-dire, celui qui s'épanouit partout, en ouvrant chaque fois de nouvelles "fenêtres", de nouveaux links, si on veut employer le langage de la Toile. Le discours fermé serait plutôt Dos, le discours ouvert le Windows.

Pour conclure: on oppose depuis longtemps force et droit, le politique étant du côté du droit. Le droit impose le renoncement à la force et son remplacement par un consentement qui le fonde. Cette thèse est facile à accepter lorsqu'on pense à la force physique, incompatible avec la liberté ou le droit. Mais les frontières de ce qu'est le consentement libre sont parfois difficiles à établir. Pour Locke, par exemple, et une bonne partie de la tradition libérale, si une personne est conduite à accepter un contrat parce que sinon elle mourra de faim, ce fait ne révoque pas l'obligation assumée. D'autres auteurs, par contre, considèrent qu'une liberté plus grande est nécessaire pour assurer qu'il s'agisse de la sphère du Droit et

non de celle de la force. Autrement dit, même si on parle souvent de pouvoir économique, ce qu'on comprend par cette expression serait parfois mieux défini par "force économique": si on n'a d'autre choix que d'accepter un emploi insupportable, alors on n'a pas de choix. On n'est pas dans un registre du droit ou du pouvoir, où consentement, réciprocité et liberté sont requis, mais dans celui de la nécessité, du verbe *must*, de l'imposition par la force brute ou par son alliée, la famine. La part de la liberté qui est nécessaire pour qu'on soit reconnu comme un être humain, comme une personne, cesse d'exister et on quitte le domaine du droit, du politique, de la démocratie. Ces frontières restent à définir dans chaque cas précis, mais le principe est posé; leur délimitation revient à la société, qui doit prendre son temps pour y répondre. De toute façon, le politique requiert la liberté de dire "non". Quand on ne peut que dire "oui", on est à la limite de quitter le domaine du politique. Voilà l'emphase principale du droit: que, s'enracinant dans la volonté, il s'oppose à la force. Reste à préciser, ce qui n'est pas facile, quelle serait la frontière du pouvoir économique, qui admet la négociation, et de la force économique, qui s'impose sans contrepartie.

Mais presque tout ce qu'on vient de dire sur la politique s'applique également à la démocratie; s'il y a des différences entre elle et la politique, elles ne concerneront que des emphases. Ce qui compte vraiment est que les non-démocraties sont devenues des régimes non-politiques.

L'usage de la force, qui appartient à l'essence des gouvernements non-démocratiques, les exclut aussi bien du domaine de la politique. Et notre dernière conclusion sera que de tels gouvernements n'ont pas de légitimité. Seule la volonté du peuple peut, aujourd'hui, légitimer un gouvernement. Dans le passé, la légitimité venait souvent de Dieu et se manifestait d'ordinaire par la voie héréditaire; tel n'est plus le cas. Aujourd'hui nul pouvoir ne peut être dit légitime s'il n'a pas été élu dans des élections libres et justes. Encore une fois il sera parfois difficile de déterminer dans certains cas si les résultats ont respecté la volonté populaire; par exemple, le fait que la Cour Suprême des Etats-Unis ait donné le pouvoir au candidat perdant à la présidence, en 2000, montre que même un pays qui se vante d'être une démocratie consolidée peut assister sans se révolter à une grande fraude électorale et avoir des mœurs politiques qui seraient l'apanage des républiques dites bananières. Il est également possible de contester la légitimité d'élections parlementaires où le nombre de sièges attribué aux partis est le contraire de ce qu'a manifesté le vote populaire, ce qui s'est passé à plusieurs reprises dans des pays où on élit un député par circonscription. Il existe donc plusieurs types d'illégitimité électorale, même si des préjugés nord-atlantiques font en sorte qu'on accorde plus d'attention à certaines formes de fraude plutôt qu'à d'autres. Mais le principe semble acquis, même si on n'est pas toujours sûr qu'une élection ait été libre, ou non, que sans les

libertés d'expression, d'organisation et de vote un gouvernement n'est pas légitime. Tôt ou tard, les gouvernements *de facto* se voient sommés de céder leur place à des régimes politiques, c'est-à-dire, démocratiques. Tel semble être, de nos jours, la voie que le monde est en train de prendre. Il est donc logique que les actes pratiqués par des gouvernements sans légitimité soient également illégitimes: il faudra suivre les conséquences de ce raisonnement. On ne sait pas encore tout ce que cela implique. En principe, les obligations assumées par de tels gouvernements sont sujettes à caution et ne peuvent engager leurs citoyens. Egalement en principe, leurs citoyens auront le droit, lorsque leurs pays seront libres, lorsqu'ils auront des régimes "politiques", de nier des engagements pris au nom de leur pays sans qu'ils aient été consultés. Mais il faudra aussi savoir si un droit ou devoir d'intervention est applicable à ces pays. Dans l'affaire Saddam Hussein, pour mentionner le principal cas d'intervention ou d'invasion auquel on s'est confronté ces dernières années, il est assez correct de soutenir que, n'ayant pas été vraiment élu, il n'avait pas de légitimité pour parler au nom de l'Irak. Mais cela ne signifie pas que les Etats-Unis avaient le droit de prendre la parole pour les irakiens, voire de "libérer" ce pays, comme ils l'ont prétendu après avoir dû reconnaître que leur première justification pour l'invasion était fausse. Il reste possible de dire que, dans une situation pareille, celle d'un Etat dont le gouvernement n'est pas légitime,

n'est pas "politique", ce pays n'a pas de gouvernement authentique; mais cela n'implique pas que ce soit une *terra nullius*, dont n'importe quel Etat nord-atlantique pourrait s'emparer en invoquant des prétextes humanitaires, comme ceux que les puissances européennes alléguaient pour annexer des terres en Afrique, telle la suppression de l'esclavage. Il est probable que pour résoudre ce problème, ce vide conceptuel autour de la question de la légitimation d'une éventuelle intervention humanitaire, la seule instance à même de décider serait l'ONU, mais il n'est pas évident que cela doive revenir à son sénat conservateur, le Conseil de sécurité, qui représente plutôt la force (les cinq pays ayant droit de veto) que la population mondiale. Si on déplace cette décision pour que l'Assemblée générale la prenne, il faudrait encore que celle-ci ait au moins une nette majorité de pays démocratiques. Pour ma part, je préférerais considérer que, même lorsque le pouvoir est dictatorial et que le gouvernant est en-deçà de ce monde des hommes qu'est la politique, ou la démocratie, il existe d'ordinaire des lieux où vit la société, des associations, que ce soit la famille, le syndicat, qui font face au pouvoir de l'Etat et l'empêchent de pratiquer le pire. La Boétie disait, il y aura bientôt cinq cents ans, que les tyrans craignent surtout l'amitié. Les affects reliant les personnes seraient le noyau de la résistance à ce qui est impolitique. Si un jour une intervention internationale est requise, et il ne faut oublier que presque toutes celles qui ont été menées en invoquant

des raisons humanitaires ont été de misérables échecs, il faudra qu'elle ait une légitimité interne, basée sur les associations existantes dans le pays victime de la non-politique, et une autre internationale, autorisée par un organisme qui ait le respect de l'opinion publique mondiale. On ne voit pas aisément comment cela se produira. De toute façon, ce qu'on désirait ici, c'était de soulever des questions importantes; il faudra du temps pour qu'elles puissent avoir leurs réponses.

5

The Democratic Emergences in Globalization: Pluralism under Dialectical Impasse



**El “trabajo político del tiempo”.
Temporalidad, democracia y justicia
transicional en la América Latina
del bicentenario**

Gerardo Caetano

La relación entre las ideas y nociones en torno al pasado y al futuro como tema central de la conciencia histórica y de la política, la tensión entre estas dos dimensiones de la temporalidad como clave prospectiva, constituyen en verdad un viejo tópico de muchas disciplinas. Por ejemplo, ocupan un lugar especialmente relevante en las reflexiones teóricas de la Historia, la Filosofía Política y la Prospectiva, constituyendo una temática tan clásica como de fuerte vigencia contemporánea. Las formas —diversas y a menudo conflictivas— en cómo históricamente se ha pensado la relación de los individuos y las sociedades

con lo pretérito, en tanto cimiento poco menos que insoslayable para explorar e intentar la construcción de un horizonte dirigido al porvenir, deviene, en suma, en una operación intelectual cotidiana y a la vez, como se verá más adelante, cargada de complejidades y laberintos.

En efecto, una recorrida por la historia latinoamericana contemporánea desde este observatorio particular, nos devolvería una imagen afinada de cuánto implica indagar en profundidad en torno a los balances implementados para reunir las experiencias con las expectativas, en suma, para la elaboración constante del relato del pasado en relación con la forja del futuro. En el texto que sigue, luego de unas notas teóricas especialmente propicias para reflexionar sobre la tensión pasado-futuro en el contexto latinoamericano de hoy, se plantean pistas de indagación en torno a dos temas sustantivos de la agenda del continente: la reinención democrática y la defensa de los derechos humanos tras los procesos de justicia transicional.

1. LOS REQUERIMIENTOS DE UNA "NUEVA ORQUESTACIÓN DEL TIEMPO"

En las sociedades contemporáneas de occidente,¹ los marcos generales que rodean este vínculo de los hombres

1 No se debe cometer el error lamentablemente frecuente de mundializar en forma acrítica los fenómenos que se observan y despliegan fundamentalmente en Occidente. Incluso respecto a las concepciones del tiempo, la pluralidad de visiones y experiencias radica también dentro de Occidente e, incluso, dentro de

con el tiempo se han vuelto aún más complejos. La actual “fascinación por el futuro” se tensiona con una suerte de “estallido de la temporalidad”,² en momentos en que comienza a emerger —no sin debates— lo que muchos autores, como el historiador y ensayista inglés Michael Ignatieff, han llamado la “cultura de lo instantáneo”:

En todos los medios de comunicación [señala sobre el particular este autor] hemos sustituido la narración por el agolpamiento, la coherencia por la incoherencia, la sucesión ordenada por la aleatoriedad y es nuestra memoria quien sufre las consecuencias. La narración es un instrumento nemotécnico: los relatos nos ayudan a recordar los significados a través del tiempo. Cuando desaparece la narración, comienza la amnesia.³

Esta “cultura del zapping”, que rompe los parámetros más tradicionales de la manera de concebir la dimensión individual y social de la temporalidad, se articula con nuevas pujas entre la Historia y la memoria (nada menos que el viejo e inacabable pleito entre Clío y Mnemosine), al tiempo que también se vincula con nuevos retos para “pensar” el futuro en el marco de una nueva —y a menudo incierta— “orquestración de la temporalidad”.

América Latina. Entre otros autores, Paul Ricœur ha estudiado en profundidad este tema de la diversidad de concepciones de temporalidad en el mundo.

- 2 El concepto pertenece a Pierre Nora, en particular manejado en los últimos tomos de la colección emblemática titulada *Les lieux de mémoire*, que él dirigiera y que fuera publicada en varios volúmenes por la editorial francesa Gallimard.
- 3 Michael Ignatieff, “La cultura de lo instantáneo”, en *Letra*, n. 27, invierno de 1992, p. 45-7.

El pasado ya no es garantía del futuro [ha dicho al respecto Olivier Mongin] (...). Esta distorsión de la temporalidad da lugar a una nueva orquestación de las tres instancias del tiempo (pasado, presente, futuro) que influye subterráneamente sobre nuestra actual inquietud: ¿cómo vivir el duelo de la representación histórica del tiempo (...)? ¿Qué sucede con nuestra “experiencia histórica” cuando el presente, el pasado y el futuro ya no mantienen esa relación sustancial que hasta ayer daba cuerpo a la historia? (...) [Tendríamos que] comprender que nuestra relación “moderna” con el tiempo se ha transformado y que los lazos del pasado, del presente y del futuro ya no son los mismos.⁴

Como veremos, la reflexión reciente sobre las implicaciones en terrenos diversos de esta reconfiguración abierta de la temporalidad es muy abundante.⁵

En el marco de una profusa bibliografía sobre el tema, por cierto que se discute mucho sobre los perfiles y consecuencias de ese “estallido de la temporalidad”. La ensayista argentina Beatriz Sarlo perfila una visión del tema algo diferente:

Las últimas décadas [señala en uno de sus últimos trabajos] dieron la impresión de que el imperio del pasado se debilitaba frente al “instante” (los lugares comunes sobre la posmoderni-

4 Cfr. Olivier Mongin, “¿Una memoria sin historia? Hacia una relación diferente con la historia”, en *Punto de Vista*, n. 49, agosto de 1994, p. 24-9.

5 El suscrito ha trabajado en varios textos en torno a esta temática. Cfr., por ejemplo, Gerardo Caetano, *Democracia y culturas. Reflexiones en torno a algunos desafíos contemporáneos*, en Hugo Achurar y Sonia D'Alessandro (comp.), *Global/local: democracia, memoria, identidades*, Montevideo, Trilce, 2002, p. 109-34.

dad con sus operaciones de “borramiento” repican el duelo o celebran la disolución del pasado); sin embargo, también fueron las décadas de la museificación, del *héritage*, del pasado-espectáculo, las aldeas potemkin y los *theme-parks* históricos; lo que Ralph Samuel designó como “manía preservacionista”; el sorprendente renacer de la novela histórica, los *bets-sellers* y los *films* que visitan desde el siglo XIX hasta Troya, las historias de la vida privada, a veces indiscernibles del costumbrismo, el reciclado de estilos, todo eso que Nietzsche llamó, con irritación, la historia de los anticuarios.⁶

Sin embargo, en una reflexión anterior que forma parte de la secuencia de su último trabajo intelectual, la propia Sarlo aceptaba el imperio del “instante” y sus fuertes implicaciones sobre el sentido otorgado a la temporalidad:

La velocidad define el escenario cultural desde fines de los ochenta: zapping, clip, video-juegos, procesadoras de datos, comunicación por fax, banca y correo electrónico, Internet. Ha cambiado el sentido del tiempo. Esta transformación definió el siglo XX y dentro de su campo de posibilidades puede pensarse el ingreso en el nuevo milenio. Lo instantáneo, lo inmediato, el acortamiento de la espera...^{7, 8}

6 Beatriz Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado. Cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo, Una discusión*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 2005, p. 11.

7 Beatriz Sarlo, *Tiempo presente. Notas para el cambio de una cultura*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 2001, p. 95.

8 En realidad, la discusión que proponen Beatriz Sarlo y otros autores tiene más que ver con su deseo de prevenir la tentación de un retorno a lo que Walter Benjamin llamaba “el burdel del historicismo” y Nietzsche “el exceso de historia anticuaria”. En suma, también aquí se cruzan los temas (muy vinculados pero discernibles) de las nuevas relaciones entre memoria e Historia (los peligros del avasallamiento de un tiempo de “memorialización” expansiva y de paralelo debilitamiento

También Manuel Castells, en su monumental serie *La era de la información*, en el último capítulo del primer tomo (*La sociedad red*) se ocupa del tema bajo el sugerente título de “La orilla de la eternidad. El tiempo atemporal”.⁹ Castells comienza por coincidir con Harold Innis¹⁰ en que “la mente de moda es la que niega el tiempo” y que este nuevo “régimen de tiempo” tiene mucho que ver con la emergencia de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación. Desde esas premisas y a partir del señalamiento de la complejidad y centralidad del tema, Castells pasa revista a algunos procesos contemporáneos que tienen directa vinculación con esta resignificación de los vínculos entre tiempo, historia y sociedad: “el tiempo como fuente de valor”, sustento de un nuevo capitalismo financiero al que califica de “casino global”; “el tiempo flexible de la empresa red”; “la

de la “conciencia histórica” *strictu-sensu*) y el de la reformulación profunda de los sentidos de la temporalidad, con todas sus consecuencias. El filósofo italiano Paolo Virno se ocupa de este problema en referencia a lo que él llama el “coleccionismo post-histórico” y el “modernariato”, entendido como el “exceso del “pasado” concentrado y orientador del presente, o como “la historia anticuaria del presente”, parafraseando a Nietzsche. Cfr. Paolo Virno, *El recuerdo del presente. Ensayo sobre el tiempo histórico*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2003, p. 55 y ss.

9 Cfr. Manuel Castells, *La era de la información. Economía, sociedad y cultura*, v. 1: *La sociedad red*, Madrid, 1996, p. 403 y ss.

10 Cfr. Harold Innis, *Changing Concepts of Time*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1952.

reducción y torsión del tiempo de la vida laboral”; “el desdibujamiento del ciclo vital”, que produce a su juicio “una arritmia social” que llega hasta la “negación de la muerte”; el impacto de las llamadas “guerras instantáneas”; la emergencia de un “tiempo virtual”, sustento de una cultura que es, “al mismo tiempo, de lo eterno y de lo efímero”; entre otros. En su opinión, esta radical reformulación de los sentidos de la temporalidad deviene en lo que llama “el tiempo atemporal”:

(...) pertenece al espacio de los flujos, mientras que la disciplina temporal, el tiempo biológico y la secuenciación determinada por la sociedad caracterizan a los lugares de todo el mundo, estructurando y desestructurando materialmente nuestras sociedades segmentadas.¹¹

En suma, si la relación pasado-futuro resulta un tema clásico, renovado en su centralidad por los cambios de época en curso en las últimas décadas, es bueno comenzar por romper la proclividad al provincianismo y advertir que estos temas no son “excepcionales” ni solamente “particulares” o “nuestros” en América Latina, que esta fascinación contradictoria por el pasado y por el futuro requiere para su comprensión mucho mundo y mucha reflexión. A continuación se trabajará en la consideración analítica de algunos tópicos de la relación pasado-futuro desde dos enfoques disciplinarios diversos. Por cierto, razones de espacio y oportunidad impiden un estudio más exhaustivo de un tema especialmente vasto.

11 Castells, *La era de la información...*, v. 1, ob. cit., p. 463-514.

2. DOS ÓPTICAS SOBRE UN MISMO ASUNTO: MIRADAS DESDE LA HISTORIA Y LA FILOSOFÍA POLÍTICA

La articulación cambiante de los tiempos en la Historia

En lo que hace relación a la Historia, ha resultado sin duda una cuestión clásica en los debates de la disciplina, lo que provocó una gran multiplicidad de reflexiones y estudios por parte de muy renombrados historiadores. De allí que, frente a la demanda de, al menos, una aproximación sumaria al punto, comenzar por los clásicos no resulte casi nunca una mala ruta. Los “padres” de la llamada escuela francesa de los *Annales*, Marc Bloch y Lucien Febvre, focalizaron sus estudios en más de una ocasión sobre este tema, tanto en sus textos más teóricos como en sus investigaciones aplicadas. Desde su entrañable y emblemático libro póstumo (y lamentablemente inacabado), *Introducción a la Historia*,¹² Bloch atendió

12 En su versión original de la primera edición francesa realizada en 1949 por la Librairie Armand Colin, el texto se hizo público bajo el título *Apologie pour l'Histoire ou Métier d'historien*. En sus múltiples traducciones al castellano, la primera de las cuales fue publicada —que sepamos— por Fondo de Cultura Económica en 1952, a pesar de que la mayoría de las ediciones ha preferido el primer título, existen las que han realizado la opción alternativa u otras. Cfr. por ejemplo Marc Bloch, *Introducción a la Historia*, México, FCE, 1952, Colección Breviarios, n. 64. Cfr. también Marc Bloch, *Apología para la Historia o el oficio de historiador*, Edición crítica preparada por Étienne Bloch, México, FCE, 1996.

en varios pasajes el tema. En primer lugar, en el diseño general de su obra (escrita “de memoria” en un campo de concentración nazi) figuraba un último capítulo que lamentablemente no pudo escribir, al ser fusilado por los alemanes en un *lager* de Lyon el 16 de julio de 1944. El título de ese último capítulo previsto, el séptimo, dice mucho: “El problema de previsión”.¹³

Además de la voluntad de trabajar en detalle este punto de la “previsión” como un capítulo que juzgaba indispensable para la primera formación de un historiador, Bloch convocaba entonces a la búsqueda del imperativo de que la Historia probara “su legitimidad como conocimiento”, orientando su brújula en la medición de “su aptitud para servir a la acción”. En otro plano, Bloch reflexionaba también acerca del “problema de la utilidad” de la disciplina, que apreciaba “en el sentido ‘pragmático’ de la palabra útil”, que a su juicio no debía confundirse “con el de su legitimidad, propiamente intelectual”. En esa dirección, advertía que “toda ciencia se halla, en cada una de sus etapas, atravesada constantemente por tendencias divergentes, que no es posible separar sin una especie de anticipación del porvenir”. Para cumplir con ese compromiso, Bloch convocaba a “rechazar, después

13 Si bien el concepto de “previsión” resulta algo vago y no debe ser confundido con el de prospectiva, en la terminología imperante en los años cuarenta aludía un horizonte de reflexión muy revolucionario y emparentado con la eventual repercusión de los estudios sobre el futuro en la disciplina de la Historia. Cfr. Bloch, *Introducción a la...*, ob. cit., p. 164.

de las seducciones de la leyenda o de la retórica, los venenos, hoy más peligrosos, de la rutina erudita y del empirismo disfrazado de sentido común”. Asimismo, reivindicaba a la Historia como una “ciencia de los hombres en el tiempo”, negando en forma explícita que este último se redujera al “pasado”, problematizando con audacia “los límites de lo actual y de lo inactual” y proponiendo, en forma expresa, tanto la pertinencia de “comprender el presente por el pasado” como la de “comprender el pasado por el presente”.

Sería un grave error [concluía Bloch] pensar que los historiadores deben adoptar en sus investigaciones un orden que esté modelado por el de los acontecimientos. Aunque acaben restituyendo a la historia su verdadero movimiento, muchas veces pueden obtener un gran provecho si comienzan a leerla, como decía Maitland, *al revés*.¹⁴

Por su parte, Lucien Febvre también transitó por el análisis del problema en cuestión. En su famosa compilación *Combates por la Historia*,¹⁵ en el “Manifiesto de los nuevos Annales” de 1946, titulado “De cara al viento”, el otro líder fundacional de esa escuela historiográfica exponía en tono militante varias convicciones al respecto:

14 *Ibidem*, p. 23-5, 32, 36 y 48.

15 Lucien Febvre, *Combates por la Historia*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1982. Esta reunión de discursos y textos de Febvre fue publicada por primera vez en francés en 1953 (también como en el caso del libro de Bloch por la Librairie Armand Colin). Por su parte, su primera traducción al castellano fue en 1970.

Un hecho es cierto ya desde ahora: vivir, para nosotros y para nuestros hijos, será mañana, es hoy ya, adaptarse a un mundo perpetuamente resbaladizo. (...) Sí. Vamos a estar muy amenazados. (...) Es preciso acomodarse. (...) Hacer balance cada día. Situarse en el tiempo y en el espacio. (...) Hablo de la historia. De la historia que no liga a los hombres. De la historia que no obliga a nadie. Pero sin la cual no se hace nada sólido. (...) entender bien en qué se diferencia el pasado del presente, ¿no es una gran escuela de flexibilidad para el hombre alimentado por la historia? (...) Método histórico, método filológico, método crítico: bellos útiles de precisión (...) de un pasado que detenta y que restituye, en intercambio, el secreto sentido de los destinos humanos.¹⁶

Desde su pasión, Febvre no perdía de vista, sin embargo, la advertencia sobre los peligros del historicismo ("recuerdo de soluciones que fueron propias del pasado y que, en consecuencia, no podrán ser en ningún caso las del presente"), ante el cual reiteraba dos "antídotos" poderosos:

- i. poner énfasis en la elaboración de teoría científica rigurosa ("cuando no se sabe lo que se busca, tampoco se sabe lo que se encuentra"; "¿Así es que en la base de la historia debe haber 'teorías'? La palabra no tiene nada que pueda hacerme retroceder. (...) ¿Por qué iba a ser imbecilidad y locura para el historiador lo que es válido, sabiduría y razón para el biólogo? (...) Hay que desterrar de una vez y para siempre el ingenuo realismo de un Ranke

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 63, 69-71.

imaginándose que podría conocer los hechos en sí mismos ‘como han ocurrido’);¹⁷

- ii. y en segundo término, rechazar la vía del “olvido creador” nietzscheano pero “aligerar”, desde la reflexión y de la investigación disciplinaria, las cargas del pasado. “Un instinto nos advierte que no nos dejemos hipnotizar, hechizar, absorber por [el] pasado. (...) ¿Qué hacen (...) las sociedades humanas para detener este peligro? Unas, (...) las menos exigentes mentalmente, han dejado caer todo en la sima del olvido; dejémoslas con su miseria. (...) La historia (...) es un medio de organizar el pasado para impedirle que pese demasiado sobre los hombros de los hombres. (...) Es en función de la vida como la historia interroga a la muerte.”¹⁸

Pero corresponde en verdad al historiador alemán Reinhart Koselleck el haber encarado en forma más directa y global el tópico de la relación en Occidente entre el pasado y el futuro. En particular, aunque no exclusivamente, fue en su célebre texto *“Futuro pasado. Para una semántica de los tiempos históricos”*, en el que Kosselleck abordó lo que él mismo denominaba el intercambio

17 *Ibidem*, p. 89-90. Estas frases formaban parte de un texto titulado “Por una historia dirigida. Las investigaciones colectivas y el porvenir de la historia”.

18 *Ibidem*, p. 243-5. Estas frases formaban parte de un texto que Febvre escribió en ocasión de la publicación del libro póstumo de Bloch anteriormente citado, al que consideró el “admirable testamento espiritual” de su amigo asesinado por los nazis.

central entre “experiencia y expectativa”. Dice el historiador alemán en algunos de los pasajes más significativos de su texto clásico:

(...) en cada momento presente las dimensiones temporales del pasado y del futuro se remiten las unas a las otras. La hipótesis es que en la determinación de la diferencia entre el pasado y el futuro (...) se puede concebir algo así como el “tiempo histórico”.¹⁹

A partir de un estudio erudito de las nociones de futuro correspondientes a las generaciones pasadas europeas (lo que él llamaba precisamente el “futuro pasado”) y con una especial consideración del proceso de “distanciamiento entre la conciencia política del tiempo del principio de la modernidad y la escatología cristiana” (que él ubicaba históricamente durante la Ilustración y, más precisamente, como consecuencia directa del impacto de la “Revolución francesa”), Koselleck va revisando en forma pormenorizada a lo largo de su obra la modificación de las concepciones del vínculo entre pasado y futuro en Europa desde Lutero a Robespierre. En esa dirección, focaliza su atención en el pasaje, por cierto sin secuencias rígidas, entre la “profecía apocalíptica” de sesgo religioso y el “pronóstico” como cálculo y principio de construcción política.

Quien liberó [señala el historiador alemán] el comienzo de la modernidad de su propio pasado y también abrió con un nuevo

19 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futuro pasado. Para una semántica de los tiempos históricos*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1993, p. 15. La primera edición de la obra en alemán data de 1979.

futuro nuestra modernidad fue, sobre todo, la filosofía de la historia. (...) El tiempo histórico no es el pasado, sino el futuro que hace diferente lo similar. De este modo, Reinhard reveló el carácter procesual de la historia moderna en la temporalidad que le es propia y cuyo final es imposible de prever. (...) El ilustrado consecuente no toleraba ningún apoyo en el pasado. El objetivo que explicaba la Enciclopedia era acabar con el pasado tan rápidamente como fuera posible para que fuera puesto en libertad un nuevo futuro.²⁰

Sin embargo, en su recorrida por la historia europea Koselleck registraba cómo en esa búsqueda imperiosa, tras una “muerte” del pasado que “liberara” el futuro, aquellos hombres encontraron en cambio lo que calificó como la “futuridad del pasado” (la idea que “el pronóstico implica un diagnóstico que introduce el pasado en el futuro”). Ello no se tradujo de su parte en una ratificación de la concepción ciceroneana de la “*Historia Magistra Vitae*”, sino antes bien lo hizo converger en el señalamiento sobre la gradual disolución de ese “topos” de la Antigüedad helenística. Según Koselleck, fue desde los “criterios históricos del concepto moderno de revolución” que se llegó al reconocimiento de la auténtica “prognosis histórica”:

La década de 1789 a 1799 fue experimentada por los que actuaron en ella como la irrupción de un futuro que nunca había existido antes. (...) De hecho, la revolución libera un nuevo futuro, sea progresista o catastrófico, y del mismo modo un nuevo pasado que se condensó como objeto especial de la ciencia

20 *Ibidem*, p. 36 y 61. En particular, Diderot hacía especial hincapié en esta última idea.

crítico-histórica al ir haciéndose extraño. Progreso e historicismo, aparentemente contradictorios, nos ofrecen un rostro de Jano, el rostro del siglo XIX.^{21, 22}

El descubrimiento de que la Historia podía servir a los ejercicios de Prospectiva, la convicción de que hurgar de una manera especial sobre los procesos del pasado podía contribuir a la reflexión y aun a la construcción de escenarios-horizontes posibles de futuro (“futuribles”, en la jerga de la Prospectiva contemporánea), de inmediato —como hemos anotado— recogió la réplica clásica acerca de los “peligros del historicismo”. Este, por otra parte, podía encontrar estímulos para “resucitar” por el impacto de algunas claves del contemporáneo “estallido de la temporalidad” de las últimas décadas o en ancas de la llamada “memorialización” de la filosofía “posmoderna”, procesos ya anteriormente referidos.²³ De modo que los peligros de un eventual “retorno” del historicismo, de la mano de los fuertes cambios en la temporalidad que caracterizan a las sociedades contemporáneas, al menos en buena parte de Occidente, no pueden ser considerados como una advertencia infundada.

21 *Ibidem*, p. 87-9.

22 Sobre todo el apasionante y debatido tema de la “revolución” y su quiebra del tiempo, cfr. muy particularmente la obra de Michel Vovelle, *La mentalidad revolucionaria*, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 1989. La primera edición en francés de este texto data de 1985.

23 Cfr. Paolo Virno, *El recuerdo del presente...*, ob. cit., p. 16, 54-5 y 61.

Dicha posibilidad tiene mucho que ver con los nuevos marcos que, como vimos, rodean en la actualidad las relaciones entre pasado y futuro: una renovada vigencia del historicismo clásico, entendido como señala Walter Benjamin, como el imperio de “una imagen ‘eterna’ del pasado”,²⁴ implicaría “la parálisis de la acción, acompañado con frecuencia de un irónico desencanto, [derivado] sobre todo de la incapacidad de soportar la experiencia de lo posible”.²⁵ Pero los peligros en torno a un quiebre negativo de la relación pasado-futuro no sólo pueden derivar de las cargas de un exceso de pasado, en cualquiera de sus formas. Toda visión determinista o teleológica, en cualquier sentido, más allá de las apariencias, termina casi siempre en una “parálisis” frente a los desafíos del futuro. Sólo desde visiones elaboradas que convivan reflexivamente con principios de incertidumbre e indeterminación, y que rescaten una visión más abierta y

24 Dice en forma militante Walter Benjamin en la “Tesis dieciséis” de su obra clásica “Tesis sobre filosofía de la historia”, recogida en *Discursos interrumpidos I*, Madrid, Taurus, 1973: “El historicismo postula una imagen ‘eterna’ del presente, el materialista histórico una experiencia única con él. Este deja que otros derrochen sus fuerzas con la meretriz ‘había una vez’ en el burdel del historicismo. Para una consideración más profunda y detallada de los contenidos y visiones así como de la crisis del llamado “historicismo clásico”, se puede cfr. Georg G. Iggers, *La ciencia histórica en el siglo XX. Las tendencias actuales*, Barcelona, Idea Universitaria, 1998.

25 Cfr. Paolo Virno, *El recuerdo del presente...*, ob. cit., p. 56.

flexible acerca de las relaciones entre pasado, presente y futuro, es que se puede construir relatos con potencialidad prospectiva.²⁶

Los “usos públicos” del tiempo en la construcción de la política democrática

También desde el campo de la Filosofía Política y aun, como veremos, en el de la acción política práctica, el eje “pasado-futuro” ha configurado y configura un centro de análisis y de atención especial. Uno de los textos más fecundos de Hannah Arendt —como el titulado en su versión española *Entre el pasado y el futuro. Ocho ejercicios sobre la reflexión política*— se dedica

26 En el registro de otros callejones sin salida vinculados con una aceptación acrítica y no reflexiva sobre las consecuencias de la nueva temporalidad en relación a la potencialidad prospectiva de la relación pasado-futuro, el historiador francés Jean-Pierre Rioux señala otros peligros que vale la pena registrar: la eventual imposición derivada de la informática y el multimedia de “un tiempo social sin duración, que favorece el olvido en proporción de la amplitud del stock de informaciones difundidas y de la pretendida evidencia de los saberes vendidos ‘en línea’ y, al mismo tiempo, transmitidos de manera menos atenta”; o la transferencia al historiador de “un tiempo nuevo, sin duración ni proyecto, un tiempo sin devenir, mal sopesado en la escala del presente y del futuro: un presente tartamudo, cuya aceleración y desmoronamiento niegan el origen y el destino; un presente en el cual se acampa esperando mejores tiempos.” Cfr. Jean-Pierre Rioux, “La memoria colectiva”, p. 347 y 349, en Jean-Pierre Rioux y Jean-François Sirinelli (comp.), *Para una historia cultural*, México, Taurus, 1999.

precisamente a explorar varias aristas del tema.²⁷ Resulta muy sintomático que Arendt comience el prefacio de su recopilación con un aforismo del poeta francés René Char: “Nuestra herencia no proviene de ningún testamento.” Como veremos más adelante, de esa manera tan particular apuntaba a enfatizar un punto crucial de su pensamiento sobre la política y la construcción democrática: para enfrentar la tan mentada “tentación totalitaria” resultaba indispensable la construcción de un “testamento ciudadano”, de un legado que comunicara el pasado con el futuro, la tradición con el porvenir:

El testamento [señalaba Arendt], cuando dice al heredero lo que le pertenecerá por derecho, entrega las posesiones del pasado a un futuro. Sin testamento o, para sortear la metáfora, sin tradición —que selecciona y denomina, que transmite y preserva, que indica dónde están los tesoros y cuál es su valor—, parece que no existe una continuidad voluntaria en el tiempo y, por tanto, hablando en términos humanos, ni pasado ni futuro: sólo el cambio eterno del mundo y del ciclo biológico de las criaturas que en él viven.²⁸

27 Hannah Arendt, *Entre el pasado y el futuro. Ocho ejercicios sobre la reflexión política*, Barcelona, Ediciones Península, 1996. Se trata de una recopilación de textos revisados y ampliados que la autora publicó en varias revistas especializadas, como *American Scholar*, *The Review of Politics*, *The New Yorker*, entre otras. Fue publicada por primera vez en Estados Unidos en 1954, bajo el título *Between Past and Future*. La primera edición en castellano data de 1996.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 11.

Es esa idea central sobre la necesidad de un testamento cívico como cimiento imprescindible de una política democrática, no totalitaria, la que lleva Arendt a pasar revista temas claves en torno a la relación pasado-futuro. En una breve reseña podemos repasar algunos de ellos: la presentación de la historia y de la política como “escenarios de un campo de combate sobre el que las fuerzas del pasado y del futuro chocan una contra otra”; la advertencia, como contrapartida y complemento de lo anterior, que tanto el futuro como el pasado debían percibirse como “fuerza” y no como “carga”, “de cuyo peso muerto el ser humano puede, o incluso debe, liberarse en su marcha hacia el futuro”; la necesidad de aprender a comprender en tanto “mirar el mismo mundo desde la posición del otro, ver lo mismo bajo aspectos muy distintos y, a menudo, opuestos”; la centralidad de que los ciudadanos participaran de un espacio público compartido en tanto comunidad política, que combinara tradiciones y utopías en clave pluralista;²⁹ la preocupación permanente —que, aunque de modo muy diferente, ella veía tanto en Tocqueville como en Marx— porque la indagación sobre el pasado echara luz sobre el futuro; su convicción acerca de que “la política de la historia o, más

29 Sobre este punto, cfr. Nora Rabotnikof, *En busca de un lugar común. El espacio político en la teoría política contemporánea*, México, UNAM-IIF, 2005. Ver en especial el capítulo dedicado al pensamiento de Hannah Arendt, titulado “El espacio público como comunidad política: Hannah Arendt”, p. 113 y ss.

bien, la conciencia política” derivaban en última instancia de la conciencia histórica.³⁰

En ese marco, Hannah Arendt destacaba con mucho vigor la crucialidad de aprovechar lo que llamaba “momentos de verdad”, coyunturas especialísimas en que la sabia resolución de las tensiones entre el pasado y el futuro podía aportar valores capitales para el futuro de una construcción política democrática:

(...) sería de cierta importancia advertir que la llamada al pensamiento surgió en ese extraño período intermedio que a veces se inserta en el curso histórico, cuando no sólo los últimos historiadores sino los actores y testigos, las propias personas vivas, se dan cuenta de que hay en el tiempo un interregno enteramente determinado por cosas que ya no existen y por cosas que aún no existen. En la historia, esos interregnos han dejado ver más de una vez que pueden contener el momento de la verdad.^{31, 32}

Con seguridad, muchos de los lectores conocerán el famoso y hermoso cuento de Borges “Funes, el memorioso”. Como de su lectura se infiere, un ejercicio de la memoria exige tanto del recuerdo como del olvido, requiere siempre una selección, un repertorio en el que se toma y se desecha. Sin ello, no hay memoria posible, ni individual ni colectiva. La memoria es entonces necesariamente

30 *Ibidem*.

31 *Ibidem*, p. 15.

32 En muchos otros textos de Hannah Arendt se trabaja sobre este punto. Cfr. por ejemplo Hannah Arendt, *¿Qué es la política?*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2005. La primera edición en alemán de estos manuscritos, que Arendt había elaborado para su proyecto de libro *Introducción a la política*, data de 1997.

selectiva. Pero además, en la misma línea que anotara Hannah Arendt en su trabajo antes citado, en una democracia los relatos diseñados en relación al tiempo deben ser también necesariamente libres, plurales y debatibles. No hay lugar para recuerdos u olvidos impuestos desde el poder, tampoco para futuros predeterminados como indiscutibles o “únicos caminos”. Como bien ha señalado Nora Rabotnikof en un valioso texto —“Memoria y política: compromiso ético y pluralismo de interpretaciones”—, la memoria de la República se distingue de la del Principado, en que mientras esta se nutre de la costumbre autoritaria, impuesta y reiterada, aquella solo puede constituirse desde “un testamento que seleccione y nombre”, desde un discurso que preserve la significación de los hechos y los someta a la revisión crítica como todo “objeto del lenguaje público”. La exigencia de un “testamento ciudadano” emerge así como base de la “autoconciencia histórica” y soporte del pacto fundante de un orden democrático republicano, al tiempo que contribuye a reforzar el destaque acerca de la significación de los usos públicos del tiempo en toda ingeniería política.³³

En estos tiempos de la llamada “cultura de lo instantáneo” es cuando más hay que recordar que la democracia y el republicanismo moral no son compatibles con una política meramente presentista y adaptativa, que renuncia

33 Nora Rabotnikof, “Memoria y política: compromiso ético y pluralismo de interpretaciones”, en *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política*, n. 9, 1996, p. 143 y ss.

al pasado y al futuro. Como vimos, las democracias se fundan en otra relación con la temporalidad, requieren la inscripción de las acciones cívicas entre tradiciones y utopías, necesitan por definición debatir sobre el pasado y sobre el futuro y no ser atrapadas por una suerte de “presente continuo”. Como bien prueba Marc Finley en su clásico texto *Uso y abuso de la Historia*, la palabra “utopía” contiene una ambivalencia de origen: en términos estrictos significa “ningún sitio”, pero —como él mismo señala— “ejercitando un poco la imaginación esa ‘u’ también puede corresponder al prefijo griego ‘eu’ (esto es, ‘bueno’, ‘bien’), y en tal caso obtenemos la expresión ‘lugar bueno’, ‘sitio ideal’”.³⁴ El señalamiento de esta distinción no resulta menor, pues con el tiempo ha

34 Cfr. M. I. Finley, *Uso y abuso de la historia*, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 1979, en especial consultar su capítulo 11, titulado “Vieja y nueva utopía”. También consultar M. I. Finley, *El nacimiento de la política*, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 1986. Desde una perspectiva distinta, cfr. Jacques Attali, *Historia del tiempo*, México, 1985. En un fragmento de su obra, Attali reclama el “ayudar a hacer que surja, escribiéndolo, otro nombre para el futuro”. En el marco de la reflexión que se suscita a partir de esa proposición, el historiador francés alude al escritor alemán Günter Grass, que en *El tambor de hojalata* “narra la historia de un joven alemán que, cuando su país cede al nazismo, decide detener su propio tiempo, no crecer ya. Amo de su tamaño, vive a su propio ritmo, fuera del ritmo repetitivo del calendario totalitario”. También son útiles las consideraciones sobre el tema de la “utopía” que realiza Agnes Heller en su texto *Teoría de la Historia*, México, Fontamara, 1997. Este último en su versión original en inglés fue editado con el mismo título en 1982.

generado dos conceptos disímiles acerca de la noción de utopía: uno identificaría efectivamente un “no lugar”, un concepto límite ubicado fuera de la sociedad, cuya utilidad es la de promover y hasta exigir la acción humana en procura de un futuro mejor; la segunda concepción, en cambio, refiere un “sitio ideal”, habilitando la posibilidad de su radicación histórica y política, con su consiguiente identificación con un régimen o un sistema social conceptualizado como ideal y modélico.

La diferencia entre ambas acepciones resulta muy relevante en términos políticos e ideológicos. La historia reciente en relación a lo ocurrido con ambos sentidos de los proyectos utópicos nos revela la infertilidad de esa segunda acepción. En contrapartida, existen muchas razones —muchas de ellas invocadas en este mismo texto— para renovar la vigencia de la primera acepción de utopía. En especial si se la adscribe a visiones de posibilidades y horizontes validados, entre otras cosas, por el pluralismo de miras (sin por ello caer, como bien advierte Beatriz Sarlo, en “el fetichismo gramatical de los plurales”). Como señalara Oscar Wilde, citado por Finley: “Un mapa del mundo que no incluya la isla de la utopía no merece siquiera una mirada.”³⁵ La propia operación de reflexión intelectual, en especial desde la atención a la tensión creadora del eje “pasado-futuro”, exige un horizonte utópico en la primera de las acepciones:

35 Finley, *Uso y abuso...*, ob. cit., p. 294.

Para conocer [señala al respecto Sarlo] la imaginación necesita ese recorrido que la lleva fuera de sí misma y la vuelve reflexiva; en su viaje, aprende que la historia nunca podrá contarse del todo y nunca tendrá un cierre, porque todas las posiciones no pueden ser recorridas y tampoco su acumulación resulta en una totalidad. El principio de un diálogo sobre la historia descansa en el reconocimiento de su carácter incompleto (que, por supuesto, no es una falta en la representación de los detalles ni de los “casos”, sino una admisión de la cualidad múltiple de los procesos.³⁶

Lo mismo, casi con las mismas palabras, tal vez especialmente en América Latina, podría decirse a propósito de la “utopía” democrática republicana y de su carácter inacabado e inacabable.

3. APUNTES PARA UNA REINVENCIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA EN LA AMÉRICA LATINA DEL 2011

Democracia y temporalidad en las anticipaciones de Norbert Lechner

En América Latina fue el siempre recordado Norbert Lechner quien se ocupó en forma más sistemática y profunda del tema. La cuestión de los cambios en nuestras visiones sobre la temporalidad y lo que él enunciaba hace décadas como la “necesidad de hurgar por las callejuelas de la vida cotidiana” lo llevaron, en especial en sus últimos años, a producir y reflexionar con mucha originalidad sobre estas cuestiones, de lo que da prueba una

36 Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado...*, ob. cit., p. 54-5.

buena parte de su última producción.³⁷ Fue en particular su vivencia comprometida con el proceso de transición en Chile y en toda América Latina, junto a su actualizada visión de mundo, lo que lo llevó a estas preocupaciones, como se puede registrar a cabalidad en su ya clásico texto titulado *Los patios interiores de la democracia*, publicado por primera vez en 1985.³⁸ Lo primero que Lechner advertía ya por entonces era que resultaba imperativo renovar nuestras formas de encarar las dimensiones del tiempo, en especial en relación al futuro:

Vivimos en América Latina (y no sólo aquí) una crisis de proyecto. Ello puede conllevar una abdicación a nuestra responsabilidad por el futuro. Pero también puede expresar una nueva concepción del porvenir. Intuimos que el mañana son mil posibilidades no menos contradictorias que las opciones de hoy e irreductibles a un diseño coherente y armonioso. Intuimos que también los sueños son necesariamente inconclusos, siempre reformulados. En fin, vislumbramos un futuro abierto que resulta incompatible con la noción habitual de proyecto.

37 Para confirmar esto, cfr. Norbert Lechner, *Obras escogidas*, tomos I y II, Santiago de Chile, LOM Ediciones, 2006 (Colección Pensadores Latinoamericanos).

38 Cfr. Norbert Lechner, *Los patios interiores de la democracia*, primera edición, Santiago de Chile, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985. Existen muchos textos en los que por entonces Lechner pone de manifiesto su preocupación particular por estos temas. Puede consultarse, por ejemplo, su texto sobre "*Reflexiones sobre estilos de desarrollo y visiones del pasado*", recogido en la compilación de estudios coordinada por Enzo Faletto y Gonzalo Martner, bajo el título *Repensar el futuro. Estilos de desarrollo*, Caracas, Editorial Nueva Sociedad, Unitar-Profal, 1986, p. 25 y ss.

Entonces, más que de proyecto alternativo, necesitamos una manera diferente de encarar el futuro.³⁹

Desde una fuerte reivindicación de la política, lo que suponía entonces para Lechner una preocupación particular por la atención de los procedimientos e implicaba un quehacer entre cuyas metas primordiales estuviera la de “estructurar el tiempo” luego de su “estallido”, el tópico de la “anticipación” centraba en particular su interés analítico:

¿Cómo sincronizar [se interrogaba] las diferentes temporalidades? La pregunta nos plantea un aspecto decisivo en la construcción de un orden social y, en particular, de un sistema político. (...) El realismo es una cuestión de tiempo desde dos aspectos: 1) como conciencia histórica acerca de la efectividad del pasado en el presente, y 2) como elección para qué actuar en un futuro abierto. Ambos aspectos se vinculan: la anticipación del futuro suele recurrir al pasado. Generalmente nuestros proyectos a futuro (motivos “para qué”) se apoyan en nuestras experiencias pasadas (razones “por qué”). El pasado nos ofrece una familiaridad que no requiere, en cada caso particular, la explicitación conciente del mundo y su razón de ser. (...) La estructuración de las relaciones sociales ya no puede recurrir a la familiaridad del pasado como ámbito de lo normal y natural. La renovación política tiene que crearse su propio horizonte temporal. (...) La construcción de un orden democrático exige la sincronización de las diferentes temporalidades. (...) Siempre puede ocurrir una sobrecarga y finalmente una parálisis de los mecanismos selectivos y resolutivos. Se pierde no solamente la anticipación del futuro; se pierde también el control sobre los acontecimientos en marcha y, mirando hacia atrás, incluso se desmorona la continuidad adquirida. Desde este punto de vista, ser realista exige un acucioso presupuesto de tiempo para no

39 Lechner, *Obras Escogidas*, tomo I, p. 345.

ser sorprendido a destiempo, incapaz de reaccionar. (...) En lugar de esperar el futuro, dejándolo hacer presente, se busca adelantarse a él, creándolo como el resultado proyectado de las decisiones presentes. En otras palabras, se trata de asegurar la conexión entre el presente actual y el presente venidero planificando el futuro: el plan como previsión.⁴⁰

El imperativo de la anticipación en momentos en que América Latina vivía el fin de las dictaduras de la seguridad nacional y del terrorismo de Estado, así como el trámite arduo y azaroso de las transiciones a la democracia, resultaba para Lechner el camino indispensable para estar a la altura de las circunstancias de aquella coyuntura histórica. Esta, por otra parte, podía ser interpretada sin rigideces como uno de esos “interregnos” decisivos, unos de “esos momentos de verdad” de los que había hablado Hannah Arendt, en los que se definían los rumbos centrales del futuro, en este caso del continente latinoamericano. Frente a los peligros reales de “un tiempo sin horizonte” (escondido tras el fervor entusiasta del fin de las dictaduras), de un “tiempo esquizoide”, Lechner era plenamente conciente —como vimos— de la obsolescencia de la vieja idea de “proyecto nacional”. Advertía también que la democratización en tiempos de posmodernidad no podía aguardar “una homogeneidad cultural de las concepciones del tiempo”, al tiempo que se anticipaba a registrar con sutileza que la desconfianza y el miedo emergentes en las nuevas sociedades tendían

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 381 y ss.

a “profecías autocumplidas”. También prevenía frente a la transferencia restauradora del traslado de “esperanzas escatológicas” a la política:

La creencia en que podamos salvar nuestras almas por medio de la política es un sustituto al vacío religioso dejado por la secularización. (...) [Pero] la revalorización de la política descansa sobre una premisa: una conciencia renovada de futuro. Sólo confiamos en la creatividad política en la medida en que tenemos una perspectiva de futuro. Visto así, el problema no es el futuro, sino la concepción que nos hacemos de él. El futuro mejor no está a la vuelta de la esquina, al alcance de la mano, de la fe o de la ciencia. Pero tampoco es una “uva verde” que conviene olvidar. Quizás, como dijera Rupert de Ventos, nos falta el valor para reconocer que *las uvas están maduras y que están más allá de nuestro alcance; que son deseables e inalcanzables, que hay problemas que no podemos solucionar, pero que tampoco podemos dejarnos de plantear*.⁴¹

Si las reflexiones y convicciones de Lechner resultaban tan concluyentes en aquella encrucijada de 1985, cuando se tramitaban con dificultad (muy particulares en el caso de su doliente y querido Chile) los procesos de transición a la democracia en casi todo el continente, más de un cuarto de siglo después sus ideas y preocupaciones consolidarían su rumbo, de cara a las urgencias de otro contexto histórico pero con una vigencia y oportunidad renovadas. En uno de sus últimos textos otoñales, publicado en el 2002, con el título de *Las sombras del mañana. La dimensión subjetiva de la política*, para Lechner el dilema crucial (no

41 *Ibidem*.

el único pero sí el más profundo en sus implicaciones) seguía siendo, en sus propios términos, “Horizontes de futuro versus presente permanente”:

Vivimos en el presente como tiempo único. (...) Presionada a dar respuestas inmediatas, la política tiende a perder cualquier estrategia a mediano y largo plazo. (...) Frente al tiempo del mercado —la contingencia—, el tiempo de la política sería el de la perspectiva. En realidad, la política democrática se juega en el manejo del tiempo. (...) Sería tarea de la política contrarrestar la urgencia de la realidad inmediata mediante un tiempo histórico. La historicidad entrelaza discontinuidades y duración, las experiencias aprendidas con horizontes de futuro. (...) Visto así, hacer política consiste en producir los horizontes de sentido que permitan poner las cosas en perspectiva. (...) Crear una perspectiva es crear un relato que sitúa al presente en relación al pasado y al futuro. (...) Sería contar el cuento del Nosotros que queremos llegar a ser.⁴²

Las reflexiones de Lechner proyectaban sobre el escenario latinoamericano contemporáneo un viejo asunto en el que, como vimos, convergían preocupaciones teóricas de distintas disciplinas del trabajo intelectual, así como también exigencias igualmente clásicas del quehacer político en la fragua cotidiana e inacabable de las democracias. Sorprende en verdad constatar la coherencia y, a la vez, la vigencia renovada de su pensamiento.

42 Norbert Lechner, *Las sombras del mañana. La dimensión subjetiva de la política*, primera edición, Santiago de Chile, LOM ediciones, 2002, en Lechner, *Obras escogidas*, tomo I, ob. cit., p. 580-1.

Nuevos enfoques y exigencias para los procesos de "justicia transicional"

En una dirección similar nos orienta también un balance panorámico acerca de los procesos de “justicia transicional” en el continente latinoamericano. En verdad, pese a su reciente creación y utilización, el sintagma de “justicia transicional” ha sido y es sometido a frecuente debate, tanto en el campo académico como en el de la política, el derecho o el de la acción en defensa de los derechos humanos. En primer término, su propia definición genera controversias. Hay quienes incluso le han negado legitimidad, ya que asocian el concepto a la imposición de concesiones gravosas en el plano de la búsqueda de la verdad y la justicia, en el marco de los azarosos procesos de transición que siguieron a las dictaduras de la seguridad nacional y a los períodos de conflicto armado en el continente.

Más allá de las controversias, distintos autores, desde perspectivas incluso disímiles, han coincidido en registrar un cúmulo de rasgos identificatorios de los procesos de “justicia transicional”:

- i. estos se asocian con proyectos de cambio político profundo en tanto su despliegue apunta a enfrentar los múltiples legados de pasados traumáticos signados por violencia y por violaciones flagrantes a los derechos humanos;
- ii. aunque están demandados por exigencias y lógicas contrapuestas debido al contraste entre las perspectivas involucradas, en su tramitación se

busca alterar las pautas dominantes de la situación heredada para volcarla a favor de las víctimas, en procura de un desplazamiento efectivo de los victimarios de toda situación de poder;

- iii. si bien su objetivo central es consolidar el retorno a situaciones de normalidad democrática y a estados de paz y de vigencia del derecho, quienes impulsan y conducen estos procesos descubren muy a menudo la necesidad de afrontar compromisos radicales para afirmar de manera genuina la consecución de los valores anhelados;
- iv. aunque la conducción de estos procesos está tensionada por las características locales y específicas de cada transición, existe una creciente conciencia a favor de adecuar las soluciones en cada caso a las recomendaciones jurídicas y políticas provenientes de los consensos de mayor exigencia logrados a nivel internacional;
- v. si bien su propio nombre refiere a la prioridad del tema justicia, sus objetivos resultan más generales y remiten a la necesidad de instrumentos variados (desde acciones propiamente judiciales a sanciones no criminales, desde “comisiones de verdad” a un amplio abanico de medidas reparatorias y a construcción de nueva institucionalidad en distintos campos).⁴³

43 Para visiones diversas en torno al tema de los procesos de “justicia transicional”, cfr.: Kai Ambos, Ezequiel Malarino, Gise-

En una primera exploración en torno a esta indagatoria, debe incorporarse el reto de explicar sin trivializaciones por qué los Estados nacionales del continente han eludido con frecuencia la asunción plena del reclamo de justicia y verdad como una de las principales obligaciones imperantes en el Derecho Internacional de los Derechos Humanos. En este sentido, vale la pena recordar que la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos ha establecido en varias de sus sentencias la obligación de los Estados de investigar a fondo las violaciones a los derechos humanos y de sancionar a los autores intelectuales y materiales de las mismas. Del mismo modo, en la jurisprudencia de la misma Corte puede encontrarse un consistente desarrollo en torno al concepto de reparación integral a las víctimas, el que entre otras cosas supone la

la Elsner (eds.), *Justicia de transición con informes de América Latina, Alemania, Italia y España*, Montevideo, Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2009; Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Políticas de la memoria y memorias de la política*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2008; Jon Elster, *Rendición de cuentas. La justicia transicional en perspectiva histórica*, Buenos Aires, Katz, 2006; Angelika Rottberg, *Entre el perdón y el paredón. Preguntas y dilemas de la justicia transicional*, Bogotá, Ediciones Uniandes/IDRC, 2005; Richard Decker, Elise Keppler, "Beyond the Hague: The Challenges of International Justice", en *Human Rights Watch World Report*, 2004, <http://hrw.org>; Leslie Vinjamuri, Jack Snyder, "Advocacy and Scholarship in the Study of International War Crimes Tribunals and Transitional Justice", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7, mayo, 2004, p. 345-62; Ruti G. Teitel, *Genealogía de la Justicia Transicional*, 2003, <http://www.publicacionescdh.uchile.cl>; entre otros.

consagración de los derechos a la verdad y a la memoria como vía ineludible para que el Estado afine soportes efectivos para la prevención y no repetición de actos violatorios de derechos humanos.

Como lo prueban estudios recientes, el análisis atento y profundo de estos procesos de búsqueda de justicia y verdad, luego de dictaduras y de pasados traumáticos, a menudo tiene la virtud complementaria de agregar evidencia respecto a la debilidad e inconsistencia de muchos lugares comunes que legó la llamada “literatura de las transiciones,” en boga hace dos décadas. En esta dirección, por ejemplo, en varios de sus últimos trabajos,⁴⁴ Kathryn Sikkink ha podido abogar con persuasividad acerca de cómo el estudio de lo que ha llamado “la cascada de justicia y el impacto de los juicios de derechos humanos” desplegados en las últimas décadas en América Latina no sólo ha cuestionado las principales hipótesis manejadas por algunos de los estudiosos más connotados de las transiciones, sino que ha podido fundar

44 Kathryn Sikkink y Carrie Booth Walling, “La cascada de justicia y el impacto de los juicios de derechos humanos en América Latina”, en *Cuadernos del CLAEH*, Montevideo, CLAEH, 2008; Kathryn Sikkink, “Patterns of Dynamic Multilevel Governance and the Insider-Outsider Coalition”, en Donatella Della Porta y Sidney Tarrow (eds.), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, Nueva York, Rowman and Littlefield, p. 151-73, 2005; Ellen Lutz, Kathryn Sikkink, “International Human Rights Law and Practice in Latin America”, *International Organization*, n. 54, 2000, p. 633-59..

la conclusión de que la realización y profundización de los principios de justicia y verdad no han “socavado la democracia ni ha llevado a un aumento de las violaciones de derechos humanos o de los conflictos” en el continente.⁴⁵

Luego de sistematizar algunos de los argumentos más aceptados (y a la vez más polémicos) de la revisión de la “literatura de las transiciones”, Sikkink y Booth Walling en el trabajo reciente realizan un pormenorizado estudio sobre la evolución específica en América Latina de los distintos mecanismos de “justicia de transición” (“comisiones de verdad”, procesos judiciales, juicios internos, en el extranjero, mixtos etc.). Los datos y evidencias obtenidos en su investigación permiten sustentar conclusiones fuertes:

Nuestra investigación [señalan las autoras] cuestiona algunos supuestos básicos de la literatura sobre la transición, incluyendo que los juicios socavan la democracia, que las decisiones sobre los juicios deben ser tomadas a principios del período posterior a la transición pues de lo contrario no serán posibles y que las opciones sobre amnistías y juicios que se hagan en el período posterior a la transición probablemente serán estables y duraderas.⁴⁶

De manera particular, los resultados de la investigación habilitan a sus autoras a ser especialmente categóricas al desmentir la reiteración de argumentos “pesimistas” por parte de quienes, desde

45 Kathryn Sikkink y Carrie Booth Walling, ob. cit., 2008, p. 16.

46 *Ibidem*, p. 35.

una nueva literatura de las relaciones internacionales, (...) repiten las mismas afirmaciones y añaden hipótesis aún más fuertes sobre los peligros de los juicios. (...) Nuestros elementos de prueba [advierten en este sentido] mostraron que los propulsores de los juicios en América Latina no están promoviendo atrocidades sin darse cuenta; que los juicios no aumentan las violaciones a los derechos humanos, no exacerban los conflictos ni representan una amenaza para la democracia; y que no es posible demostrar que las amnistías sirvan para impedir futuras violaciones a los derechos humanos.⁴⁷

Al final de su estudio, Sikkink y Booth Walling perfilan una nueva perspectiva conceptual en torno a cómo proyectar los desafíos de los procesos de “justicia transicional” que concita nuestro pleno acuerdo:

(...) ha llegado el momento de dejar atrás las falsas dicotomías y comenzar un debate más matizado sobre la justicia de transición. Las opciones no son entre verdad o justicia, entre juicios o democracia, ni entre idealistas o pragmatistas. En cambio, es mucho más interesante examinar bajo qué condiciones es posible que los juicios contribuyan a mejorar los derechos humanos y reforzar los sistemas de Estado de derecho, o qué secuencia o combinación sensata de mecanismos de justicia de transición puede servir para construir la democracia y resolver los conflictos.⁴⁸

Esta nueva perspectiva conceptual le otorga a los procesos de “justicia transicional” un nuevo sentido de horizonte de futuro, desde el que la faena insoslayable de intentar la mejor elaboración y sutura de los pasados traumáticos se combina en forma necesaria con rediseños

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

institucionales y reformas sustantivas en varias políticas públicas, en el marco de acciones orientadas a evitar en forma concreta y perdurable la repetición de lo padecido. En esa tarea de construcción institucional y de prospectiva cabe un amplio espectro de temas, como se advertirá a continuación.

4. EL DERECHO AL PASADO Y SUS RETOS: HACIA "UN MOMENTO DE VERDAD" PARA CONSTRUIR "MEMORIAS EJEMPLARES"

Las "fracturas de la memoria" y los "momentos de verdad" como desafíos de la construcción democrática

El campo de los balances y prospectos luego de las prácticas de terrorismo de Estado aplicadas por las dictaduras de la Seguridad Nacional y de los procesos de "justicia transicional" vividos (o en curso) en los países del continente sin duda implica tensiones en la perspectiva de reencontrar lazos consistentes entre pasado y futuro. En relación al terreno más estrictamente cívico que enmarca toda esta problemática, ¿cómo resignificar nuestras identidades, nuestros *nosotros*, después de las desapariciones forzadas, de la tortura, de los miles de detenciones y destituciones injustas, de las dictaduras opresivas, del retorno de la violencia como instrumento de la vida política, de la emergencia de los terrorismos (de izquierda o de derecha, vengan de donde vengan, sin por ello olvidar que el más ilegítimo de todos es y siempre

será el terrorismo de Estado)? ¿Cómo recrear una *comunidad de valores* luego de todo ello y del peso inmenso sobre la convivencia cívica de la impunidad y del olvido impuesto? ¿Cómo realizar una *reconversión* del pasado violentista y autoritario a los efectos de consolidar la democracia y sustentar de veras el “Nunca Más”? ¿Cómo proyectar todos esos balances de cara a una conmemoración tan especial y significativa como la del Bicentenario de la revolución independentista?

En uno de sus textos más representativos, una vez más Norbert Lechner reflexionaba con agudeza sobre este particular:

La posibilidad de la democracia supone (...) trabajar políticamente el tiempo, al menos en dos sentidos. Por un lado, una *reconversión del pasado autoritario*. Ser realista es reconocer la efectividad presente del pasado. Por lo tanto, ni lo ignora ni lo asume como mera inercia. El realismo obliga a actualizar la historia de la dictadura, incorporándola al proceso de democratización. Para que desaparezcan los fantasmas tiene que hacerse presente un “pasado superado”. Este es el significado de la reparación (material y simbólica) por las injusticias sufridas y los dolores reprimidos: una *restitución del pasado* como historia de la dignidad humana. Por el otro lado, el realismo requiere producir tiempo en tanto *continuidad a futuro*. Elaborar al orden democrático significa ante todo construir un orden en que todos tienen futuro. Para que todos tengan futuro (aunque no sea uno y el mismo) hay que concebirlo como la obra colectiva de una pluralidad de hombres y mujeres.⁴⁹

49 Norbert Lechner; *Los patios interiores de la democracia*, en Norbert Lechner, *Obras escogidas*, tomo I. Santiago de Chile, LOM Ediciones, 2006, p. 396-7.

Lechner proyectaba de manera lúcida esa tensión pasado-futuro que resulta tan clave en cualquier construcción democrática, en especial en los momentos de transición política del autoritarismo, momentos tan fermentales como difíciles. En su visión, la *restitución del pasado* y la *continuidad a futuro* eran entonces (y siguen siéndolo hoy, se podría agregar) movimientos que se referían y se configuraban en el marco de una tensión creativa. En suma, la recuperación desde la superación de un pasado traumático no se podía obviar como tarea de una transición a la democracia. Creer que se podía salir indemne como sociedad “salteándose” este desafío configuraba (y aun configura) un error que siempre se paga. En una perspectiva similar se ha pronunciado Beatriz Sarlo:

Del pasado puede no hablarse. Una familia, un Estado, un gobierno pueden sostener la prohibición; pero sólo de modo aproximativo o figurado se lo elimina, excepto que se eliminan todos los sujetos que van llevándolo (ese fue el enloquecido final que ni siquiera logró la matanza nazi de los judíos). En condiciones subjetivas y políticas “normales”, el pasado siempre llega al presente. (...) La memoria es el deber de la Argentina posterior a la dictadura militar y lo es en la mayoría de los países de América Latina. El testimonio hizo posible la condena del terrorismo de Estado; la idea del “nunca más” se sostiene en que sabemos a qué nos referimos cuando deseamos que eso no se repita. Como instrumento jurídico y como modo de reconstrucción del pasado, allí donde otras fuentes fueron destruidas por los responsables, los actos de memoria fueron una pieza central de la transición democrática, sostenidos a veces por el Estado y de forma permanente por las organizaciones de la sociedad. Ninguna condena hubiera sido

posible si esos actos de memoria, manifestados en los relatos de testigos y víctimas, no hubieran existido.⁵⁰

Como bien dice Beatriz Sarlo, “el pasado siempre llega al presente”. El problema es cómo se lo logra y cómo lo tramita una sociedad en clave de construcción democrática. Como vimos, no hay lugar para recuerdos u olvidos impuestos desde el poder. No casualmente, las renovadas controversias sobre los hechos ocurridos durante los procesos dictatoriales apuntan a uno de los centros de la consolidación de nuestras democracias en los tiempos más actuales. Las fracturas de la memoria y los intentos de cerrar “a cal y canto” los caminos para la búsqueda de la verdad y de la justicia, en relación con lo ocurrido durante las dictaduras de la seguridad nacional en América Latina, han afectado en sus bases a nuestros sistemas políticos y al ejercicio cotidiano de la ciudadanía. Esas “políticas de olvido”, esos intentos de sustentar la impunidad en visiones y propuestas que exhortan una y otra vez a “mirar al futuro” y “dejar definitivamente atrás los malos tiempos”, que invocan la “teoría de los dos demonios” o que a menudo apelan a la amenaza implícita de “no agitar las aguas del pasado” para “no despertar a los monstruos”, han terminado por empobrecer la necesaria tensión de nuestro diálogo democrático y de los compromisos morales que cimientan nuestras identidades cívicas.

50 Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado*, ob. cit., p. 10 y 24.

Pero en realidad, la pugna allí planteada no es entre memoria y olvido, como a menudo se pregonaba. Se trata de una controversia entre dos tipos de memoria, entre dos relatos del pasado y de sus consecuencias para el presente y el futuro de nuestras sociedades. Como han estudiado muchos autores latinoamericanos interesados en estos temas, la lucha por la memoria es siempre el escenario inocultable e intransferible de un conflicto político y social, es el territorio de una lucha de poder.⁵¹ Como señaló en el famoso “debate de historiadores” en la Alemania de los ochenta el revisionista Michael Stürmer: “(...) en un país sin historia, el que logra dar contenido a la memoria, define los conceptos e interpreta el pasado, gana el futuro”.

¿Cómo ganar ese futuro para la democracia y para la no-violencia, para un efectivo *Nunca más*? Precisamente, como diría Benjamin, de lo que se trata es de “peinar la historia a contrapelo”, buceando entre las mareas del olvido y la memoria en procura de un acercamiento vigoroso y valiente a un máximo de verdad acerca de los terribles acontecimientos vividos. Ello permitirá rescatar para el “testamento” ciudadano esas memorias que se quisieron ocultar o volver invisibles al conocimiento, la reflexión y el debate públicos. En una convivencia democrática, por cierto que el valor “verdad” no puede

51 Sobre este último particular, cfr. Elizabeth Jelin, *Los trabajos de la memoria*, Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2002.

ser totalitario ni absoluto. En términos de procedimiento, la defensa de ese valor requiere pluralismo, tolerancia, aceptación del debate abierto, confrontación libre de versiones y opiniones, exigidas siempre por una argumentación que pueda resultar persuasiva. Desde esa perspectiva, la negativa impuesta a investigar las prácticas de terrorismo de Estado, llevadas adelante durante los períodos dictatoriales, o su radicación y transferencia restrictiva al terreno exclusivo de lo privado configuran bloqueos inaceptables para una orientación cívica hacia el valor *verdad*.

Por cierto que no basta la verdad y que la justicia es también un soporte indispensable para la reconstrucción democrática después de las dictaduras y de los períodos de conflicto violento. Lo es desde un punto de vista cívico, humano y ético. La democracia moderna *strictu sensu* se construyó, entre otras cosas, sobre la base de la defensa de los derechos individuales. Para defenderlos, pensadores como Locke y tantos otros reflexionaron en profundidad acerca de la exigencia insoslayable de poner frenos al poder absoluto sobre la vida. Las prácticas del terrorismo de Estado vulneraron radicalmente ese principio, y la impunidad posterior en torno a sus crímenes restringió severamente la confiabilidad última del arraigo del Estado de Derecho. La experiencia internacional y en particular la regional —con algunas excepciones honrosas que revelan una tendencia creciente a la concreción de avances firmes en el terreno de la justicia— nos demuestran

las dificultades manifiestas que han tenido los Estados nacionales para lograr evitar la impunidad de los crímenes cometidos durante las dictaduras.⁵² Pero el que con frecuencia sea lento y dificultoso en determinadas condiciones políticas el logro más pleno de justicia, aun de modo restrictivo y ejemplar, no debe —como ciudadanos y también como historiadores— cegarnos, sesgarnos o inhibirnos para pensar también este problema.

De acuerdo a la distinción trabajada por Todorov entre “memoria literal” y “memoria ejemplar”, la idea es la de optar de manera firme y decidida por la segunda. Tal como señala el propio Todorov:

El uso literal, que torna al acontecimiento pasado en indispensable, supone someter el pasado al presente. El uso ejemplar, en cambio, permite usar el pasado en vistas del presente, usar las lecciones de las injusticias vividas para combatir las presentes. (...) El uso común tiende a designar con dos términos distintos que son, para la memoria literal, la palabra memoria, y para la memoria ejemplar, justicia. La justicia nace de la generalización de la ofensa particular, y es por ello que se encarna en la ley impersonal, aplicada por un juez anónimo

52 Todo el impulso de estos últimos años en torno a la necesidad de construir tribunales y orden jurídico internacional para evitar la impunidad de los delitos de lesa humanidad se asienta a nuestro juicio, entre otros factores, en el reconocimiento de esa dificultad. A este respecto puede consultarse Felipe Gómez Isa, (director), *El derecho a la memoria*, Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe, Universidad de Deusto, 2006, 624 p. Contiene un cúmulo de textos sumamente actualizados sobre temas como “el derecho a la reparación en el ámbito internacional”, “una mirada interdisciplinar a la memoria”, “el debate sobre la memoria histórica en España”, “la sociedad civil y la reconstrucción de la memoria”, entre otros.

y puesta en acto por personas que ignoran a la persona del ofensor así como la ofensa.⁵³

La remisión a la construcción de en los países de América Latina, a propósito de las atrocidades cometidas por las dictaduras recientes y sus prácticas de terrorismo de Estado, por cierto que tiene que ver más con el futuro que con el pasado, refiere más a nuestros hijos que a nuestros padres. Supone, por ejemplo, toda una definición acerca del rol que la recuperación de las narrativas plurales del pasado, siempre en un marco de polémica argumentativa no violenta y rigurosa, tiene y debe tener en el presente y en relación al futuro. Como ha señalado Elizabeth Jelin:

Se trata de una apelación a la memoria “ejemplar”. Esta postura implica una doble tarea. Por un lado, superar el dolor causado por el recuerdo y lograr marginalizarlo para que no invada la vida; por el otro —y aquí salimos del ámbito personal y privado para pasar a la esfera pública—, aprender de él, derivar del pasado las lecciones que puedan convertirse en principios de acción para el presente.⁵⁴

En suma, acicateados por este tiempo de conmemoraciones del Bicentenario de las revoluciones hispanoamericanas y por la demanda persistente de un nuevo “trabajo político del tiempo” (parafraseando a Lechner) para reinventar las democracias en el continente, no cabe duda que todavía es mucho lo que falta por investigar, todavía son muchos los testimonios que falta registrar y puede sospecharse que, pese a la eventual destrucción de algunos

53 Todorov, *Los abusos de la memoria*, ob. cit.

54 Jelin, *Los trabajos de la memoria*, ob. cit., p. 58.

archivos represivos que de todas maneras habrá que probar, con seguridad todavía es mucha la documentación que resta por descubrir e interpelar. Los contenidos de una efectiva política de derechos humanos no son decididos únicamente por los poderes públicos. Sus contenidos se forjan en pugnas cívicas, en acciones promovidas por distintos actores de la sociedad, en la construcción de toda una cultura que defienda y concrete la tantas veces reiterada invocación al “vivir en clave de derechos humanos”. Todos los ciudadanos, todas las preguntas y perspectivas deben ser convocadas a esa tarea, bien propia de “un momento de verdad”, de acuerdo a las ideas referidas de Hanna Arendt. Algunas pistas en esta dirección han podido atisbarse desde lo que se ha podido saber en estos últimos años, y con seguridad nos encontraremos con más de una sorpresa sobre este particular en el futuro. No debe temerse a ese desafío, que es, como hemos reiterado, un reto ciudadano y humanista antes que nada. Como dice Baczko, las sociedades tienen “derecho a su pasado”, y ello no sólo supone construir memoria y habilitar al conocimiento público la información disponible, sino también pasar de la memoria al campo de la Historia, desde las reglas sabias y modestas de un oficio milenario. Entre los retos del Bicentenario y los desafíos del relato en las culturas posmodernas, también allí nuestros países latinoamericanos tienen una simiente indispensable para su futuro.

The Future of the Latin American Left and the Currency of its Commodities*

Fernando Coronil

In the last dozen years people in Latin America have elected several presidents who have claimed to stand for ideals associated with the Left and with socialist principles; today, more than 300 of the over 500 million people

* This presentation is a synthesis of ideas presented in talks at New York Stoney Brook University, the University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins University, and in an article titled “Possible Futures” History and Utopia in Latin America (1989-2010)” published in *Business as Usual: The Roots of the Global Financial Breakdown*, edited by Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derluguian, vol. 1, Possible Futures Series, series editor, Craig Calhoun, New York, New York University Press/SSRC, 2011.

who make up Latin America are now ruled by these governments. How to make sense of this transformation?

Needless to say, this is hugely complex process that challenges our expertise as well as our interpretive frameworks. For example, even referring to this turn as a “Leftist” is problematical, since, in addition to the usual ambiguities of the term “Left,” what’s happening in Latin America involves some movements that challenge Western modernity including its political categories, such as the notions of Right and Left.

Still, for lack of a better term, I use the conventional term “Left” here to refer to this process, yet I use unconventionally as a very fluid signifier to refer to struggles not just towards equality, Norbert Bobbio’s main criterion to define the Left, but also towards specific conditions that give equality specific significance in Latin America at this time of renewed utopian dreams, such as liberty, justice, plurality and difference, and harmony with our Natural habitat.

Indeed, one of the features of this “Leftist Turn” has been the proliferation of utopian thought inspired by ever more diverse sources.

In fact, in order to make sense of this Leftist turn, I have narrowed my focus to the utopian imaginary the animates the Left—its images of an ideal future. For this I am inspired by an insight by Reinhart Koselleck—the idea that when historians study what happened in the past, they should include the imaginaries of the future

that informed the past, for even if these futures never came to be, they were a historical force and affected the development of history. These imagined futures Koselleck called “future pasts.”

In this presentation I will focus then on these futures, but not of the past, but of the present—what could be called futures present, or present futures. This is already a bounded topic, but I draw even more precise boundaries around it. I focus on how imaginaries of the future inhabit the state, the nation’s representative and main agent of “progress”. While I take into account everyday political actions, discourses, plans, projects, and constitutions, I try to discern how the ineffable imaginaries of the future inhabit present the present, current state-making, how the “what is to be” saturates the “what is” or, in Koselleck’s terms, the relation between the “space of experience,” that is, what has happened, and the “horizon of expectation,” that is, what is hoped will happen.

While I’m concerned with a topic that perhaps may seem ineffable—images of the future—I’m also interested in the conditions of possibility of these imaginings of the future. My argument centers on making connections between what Latin Americans are imagining as their ideal future and the economic and historical conditions that condition these imaginings—in particular, the significance of specific export commodities.

Let me express at the outset my core insight, an argument suggested by the title. My title, “The Future of

the Latin American Left and the Currency of its Commodities” seeks to evoke the themes I’m trying to relate here. One of my central arguments is that the primacy accorded by all governments in Latin America—whether Rightist or Leftist—to primary commodities affect the way the future is imagined—the currency of these commodities conditions the historicity of the Left as a historical force.

This temporal tension creates a paradoxical situation which I seek to explore here: there is indeed in the region a resurgence of political activism inspired by Leftist and even socialist ideals. Yet, at the same time, there is a pervasive uncertainty with respect to the future. My argument is that the Left now pursues a better future, but its particular content eludes it; it has a sense of direction but no clear destination. The Left does not have a map, but it has compass. This creates a particular kind of historicity, a sort of crisis of futurity—the form and effects of this futurity is main subject of this talk.

My talk is divided in three parts. First, I will offer a very brief outline of the historical context in which this Left has emerged. In the second part I will offer a way of thinking about differences among Latin American countries, a scheme or typology based on historical and structural principles, and the third, and the core of the paper, an exploration of the Left’s future.

Ok, now the First part: I will discuss the context of the rise of the Left by briefly mentioning three conditions that have affected its development.

1. The first condition was the global crisis and collapse of really existing socialism at the end of the 20th century, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the deep immersion of China in capitalist markets and logics. This collapse was widely interpreted not just as a crisis of particular historical socialisms, but as the historical end of socialism. This collapse led to the second condition:

2. The apparent global victory of capitalism. As soon as one of the two rivals of the 20th century in the struggle for world supremacy vanished, it seemed that the other was not just victorious, but that its victory was permanent. As if blinded by victory, ideologues of capitalism claimed that its promise of universal progress was now to be globally achieved. In 1989 John Williamson coined the term “Washington Consensus” to refer to a decalogue of policy prescriptions, a sort of religious ten commandments that would ensure that all nations, even those with serious economic problems, would achieve economic growth if they followed these commandments—heaven on earth. This fantasy of universal progress became best expressed by Francis Fukuyama’s famous 1989 article (and 1992 book) in which he proclaimed that “end of history,” meaning that the global generalization of the free market would dissolve ideological divides, ensure progress, and lead to universal harmony. This dream of progress, however, led to a nightmare—and this is the third condition:

3. The actual effects of free market policies: polarized societies, growing global inequality, ecological destruction, massive exclusion of populations, and the subordination of production to financial speculation. These effects undermined the capitalist system not just in the global South, but at its very center.

These conditions affected Latin America in significant ways. In almost every country there took place, first, of course, the implementation of free market policies, then protests against privatization and the dismantling of the welfare state, then movements to change specific conditions, such as unemployment or the exclusion of indigenous communities, and finally the election of a number of presidents who promised to change society and claimed to stand against neoliberal policies.

Most journalists and academics mark the shift to the Left with the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998; I prefer to identify this turn with the electoral defeat of Pinochet ten years earlier, in 1989. No matter which date one chooses, both dates are landmarks of a process characterized by the commitment to make democracy mean political as well as social Rights. Since the election of Chávez, this conception of democracy has been developed even further than in Chile in 1989—it now involves a more explicit rejection of neoliberalism and an even a more intense commitment to promote of public welfare. These goals have been the stated aims of the Leftists presidents who were elected in the following years: in 2002,

Lula in Brazil; in 2004, Nestor Kirchner in Argentina, and Tabaré Vasquez in Uruguay; in 2005, Evo Morales in Bolivia; in 2006, Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and again Chávez in Venezuela; in 2008, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina and Fernando Lugo in Paraguay; in 2009 Pepe Mujica in Uruguay; and in 2010, Dilma Rouseff in Brazil.

As you can see, this set of presidents have ruled over a large and diverse group of countries. I believe that the most influential typology developed to make sense of this turn to the Left is still the one proposed by Mexican scholar and politician Jorge Castañeda, who in a 1993 article published in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs* divided the Left in Latin America into the Good and the Bad: at one end he placed the “open-minded and modern Left,” represented by Lula da Silva, and at the other end he put the closed-minded and populist Left, represented by Hugo Chávez. Since then many schemes have been created but most have repeated this dualistic typology, but have made opposite evaluations—Lula as the compromising reformist, and Chávez as the true revolutionary.

Seeking to avoid flat dichotomies, or at least to turn them into meaningful distinctions, I offer a scheme that seeks to explore the Left’s futures in Latin America by focusing on the conditions of possibility of historical change facing each nation. My scheme centers on the interplay between political and economic conditions.

Political conditions. In countries that have experienced recent dictatorships and severe political repression, the Left has tended to underplay the notion of revolution or socialism, to emphasize formal democratic procedures, to establish broad alliances and political compromises, and to project socialist principles into the distant future. The tone of politics is moderate. Here the clearest examples are Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay; I'll call these the BrAC countries (taking Brazil, Argentina and Chile as exemplars).

On the other hand, in countries that come from periods of political and social instability, involving the insurgency of excluded indigenous populations or popular sectors, the Left tends to promote basic constitutional changes, to be confrontational, and to take up openly the banner of revolution and socialism. The tone of their politics is radical (or immoderate). Here the paradigmatic examples are Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia—VEBo countries.

Material conditions. A twin set of core economic conditions have fundamentally affected the relations between state and society during this shift to the Left: how a nation's economic surplus is produced and how a nation obtains foreign exchange.

While the production of an economic surplus depends on the relation between capital, land, and labor (a central concern for both classical liberal and Marxist theories) the capture of foreign exchange depends on the relation

between the national and international economies. When analyzed together, these two factors make visible the critical but insufficiently recognized role of ground rents in Latin American economies as “nature-intensive” or resource-based societies.¹

There are two major type of ground rents, agricultural and mineral, and they have different social implications. Whereas agricultural lands are typically privately owned and tend to be the foundation of landowning classes, mines are generally owned by the nation and controlled by the state, and their rents give the state political power and economic resources.

In the Latin American context, the dominance of agricultural rents generally goes together with a dispersion of economic and political power, a relatively diversified economy, a strong business sector, and a structural conflict between exporters and consumers over the allocation of agricultural goods as either sources of foreign exchange or as domestic consumer goods (an argument famously developed for Argentina by Guillermo O'Donnell).

During this Leftward swing, in countries where agricultural rents are central in a national economy, they have tended created conditions for the forging of alliances between classes and interest groups, the negotiation

1 I discuss these concepts and issues in Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997, 45-66.

of policies between the state and major sectors, and the promotion of a moderate political style, as occurs in the BrAC countries—Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

Mineral rents, in contrast, tend to promote the concentration of power in the state as representative of the nation, the creation of a subsidized and dependent business sector, and a structural conflict over the distribution of collective rents among citizens who have equal Rights over these rents but have unequal influence over the state that distributes them.

At this time, mineral rents have made possible the concentration of power in the state, the dependence of the private sector on the government, and the development of a radical or immoderate political style—often called “populist”—that has intensified conflicts between the state and the private sector, as well as between classes and regions, as occurs in the VEBo nations—Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

Of course, this simple scheme only begins to apprehend the complexity of each situation, not only because other factors also contribute to define each national context, but because these two factors may have complementary as well as conflicting effects. For instance, as an example of other factors, IMF Loans are also a source of foreign exchange and exert considerable political influence—they conditioned the politics of Lula in Brazil. The IMF gave Cardoso a 30 Billion dollars loan in 2002, but with the condition that he would receive

only 6 billion, and the next president would receive 24, for which all candidates had to sign an agreement—it was known that Lula was going to win. As someone said in relation to this, the IMF *not vota, pero veta*—the IMF does not vote, but it can exert veto power.

An example of conflicting factors: while Chile is an icon of the BrAC countries in which alliances are established and state power is more dispersed, even at the height of Pinochet's neoliberal project, the copper industry remained in the hands of the state, free from the free market, and copper income (and foreign exchange) granted the state extraordinary financial resources and domestic political leverage. Now with the increase of copper prices the State has even more power.

While these conditions make it possible to imagine the future in different ways, it is clear that for all these countries this period does not involve the end of history, but has become a time for struggles over History. Now History is Back—but what future inspires their history?

And this is the question I wish explore now, the last and main part of this paper.

The first thing to note is that what is rather exceptional at this juncture is not that the Future is Back, for Latin America has typically experienced history as a grand historical process, but that now it is not clear where History is going. While in the past elites had a good sense of the future, now the future is uncertain.

The ideal future imagined by Latin American elites was always already known because it was the present of metropolitan centers. In the 20th century, particularly after the decolonization of Africa and Asia following WWII, like most nations in the Third World, a category created then, Latin American nations sought to achieve modernity mainly by pursuing one or two models: capitalism, the trajectory of the first world, or socialism, the path of the Second World.

But now, facing the bankruptcy of socialism and the severe problems of capitalism, particularly as experienced in the South, Latin America cultural and political elites on the Left, confront the lack of guiding models; they face a crisis of futurity.

The current Leftist regimes in Latin America face this crisis in different ways, in part in light of the different conditions outlined here. Here I explore the *Gestalt* of this horizon of expectations, the common “future form” confronting Latin America through five interrelated themes, five faces of the same crystal ball.

1. AGITATED PRESENT, SPECTRAL FUTURE

By an “agitated Present and a spectral future” I mean a modality of historicity, of being in the world, in which the future, the horizon of expectation, appears phantasmatic, as if it were a space inhabited by ghosts from the heroic past and foggy dreams of ideal worlds, and the present takes shape as a dense field of nervous agitation,

constantly entangled in multiplying constraints, a conglomeration of contradictory tendencies and activity leading to no clear destination.

Despite even significant achievements, a nightmarish sensation of being trapped saturates the present, as if it were jammed or moved without advancing or advancing the wrong direction. Even when states manage to promote economic growth and public welfare (for example, Brazil), the ideal future remains elusive, threatened by chronic problems and newly emerging obstacles or by the sense that a capitalist future is not what the Left has fought for.

This agitated present is not only spasmodic or effervescent, but expansive: it prolongs itself through time within ever expanding constraints. While the present comes to occupy the space-time of what may be measured as the chronological future, it does not become the Future itself, insofar as the future is imagined not just as the time that lies ahead but as the anticipated epoch of transcendence, of historical fulfillment. This anticipated future keeps appearing and receding like a mirage, a haunting promise that threatens to always be a deferred presence.

Nationalist leaders in Latin America, including those on the Left, have commonly defined the promised future as a “second independence”: the achievement of economic and cultural autonomy, of real, as opposed to formal, political independence. In the past, this goal typically

had a specific historical foundation: the wars of independence, which broke the colonial link and established Latin American nations as formally independent republics.

Claudio Lomnitz, in a lucid article on the turn to the Left in Latin America, focused on seven heterogeneous “motifs”, one of which was the tendency for all Left regimes now to establish more varied foundational moments for their current struggles: as he argued, Evo Morales places the foundation of his regime in Bolivia’s five hundred years of anticolonial resistance; Hugo Chávez defines it through the heroic leadership of Bolívar in the wars of independence; Michelle Bachelet hails Allende’s struggle for democratic socialism; Néstor Kirchner used to claim as his own Argentina’s Peronist progressive culture; Lula links himself to Brazil’s transition to democracy in 1983; and Tabaré Vázquez highlights Uruguay’s social-democratic legacy of the 1920s. Juxtaposing temporal scales and historical epochs, as Lomnitz noted, this foundations moments combine different epochs—precolonial, early republican, popular regimes, and democratic socialism. As he perceptively noted, a multiplicity of “ghosts now haunt the new Foundationalism.”

Of course, this return to a heroic past is an old habit. However, its reiterative character at this moment, the insistence to refer constantly to these founding moments, reveals a distinctive anxiety concerning the future. Now this grounding in the past reflects not just the need to legitimate current struggles for the desired future in

a heroic past. It also reveals a certain fear that the desire future, its very being, has become ethereal. Facing a groundless future, and moving slowly towards it, the Left must repeatedly ground itself in the past.

As the uncertain long term recedes, the short term expands, digging into the past to resurrect its icons and pushing the anticipated historical future beyond an ever-receding horizon. Without clear alternative images of the future, struggles must focus on the here and now. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos has noted, the Left had claimed for itself the long term, the overwhelming dominance of capitalism has now restricted Left to the short term. (One must recognize, however, that liberal thought also has claimed the long term for itself—the very term “long term” was created by a liberal economist, Alfred Marshall, in his *Principle of Economics*.)

In my view, these constraints have produced a rather peculiar relation between practices and ideals in the short and long term. While Leftist governments proclaim socialist ideals for the long term, they promote capitalism in the short term. And while they promote capitalism in the short term, they regard capitalism as unviable for the long term. So we have a a funny situation: capitalism for a present without a future, and socialism for a future without a present.

When these tensions prevail, they make quicksand of the present. People must keep moving to stay on top, torn between the utopian desire to find a secure land for

all and the individualistic urge of self-preservation that compel many to desert collective project. This quicksand has been a fertile ground for corruption, a general practice at this time.

2. BEYOND REFORM AND REVOLUTION

Revolution keeps being the ideological mantra of Leftist regimes, but its meaning has changed. During the 20th century, “revolution” became the keyword of nationalist politicians. It was used to signify basic change, a means to bring the present into the future. Most governments in Latin America, of all ideological positions, claimed to be revolutionary, even when they actually sought to contain radical change.

Particularly after the Cuban revolution, for the Left, revolution came to identify two processes and to have two meanings: taking over the state through armed struggle, and unleashing radical change from the state. The defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the elections of 1989 seems to have closed this cycle of armed revolutionary struggle.

Now armed struggle is not the path to revolution; as the World Social Forum proposes, revolution, including the seizure of power, should be carried out by democratic means.

But even in this case, there are different ways of conceptualizing the state’s role in this process. Chávez has

converted the state in the agent of the revolution, first through reforms inspired in a vague model of the third way, and after 2005 through what he has called a new socialism, “socialism of the 21st century.” A similar path is being pursued by Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Following my typology, the VEBo countries (typified by Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia) more openly endorse socialism, transform the political system by rewriting constitutions, and by promoting policies associated with socialist conventions, such as the nationalization of enterprises.

At the other end, BrAC countries (exemplified by Brazil, Argentina and Chile) take more moderate positions and use existing institutions to focus on redistributive policies and social reforms. In Chile the *Concertación* governments had sought to focus on a wide range of specific policies, such as housing and health, that seek to democratize society, without invoking socialism per se. José Insulza, the General Secretary of the Organization of American States, who served the *Concertación* government for ten years, told me that he calls this approach, one that avoids general labels and focuses on a set of particular policies, “socialism by enumeration.”

Despite their differences, all these Leftist governments claim to be involved in some sort of “revolution” but they seek revolutionary change, even in the case of Chávez, through reforms.

3. BEYOND THE SINGLE REVOLUTIONARY SUBJECT

The recent turn to the Left in Latin America has taken place through the actions of a large diversity of actors. This contrasts with a historical tradition in which the Left was identified with political parties or organizations that claimed to represent workers and peasants as the main agents of revolutionary change.

In the last thirty years, as problems proliferated in Latin America, there took place a general disenchantment with traditional political parties and with conventional politics. In this context, new social movements came to play a significant role in politics, such as the Zapatistas in Mexico, the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) in Brazil, the Piqueteros (unemployed) in Argentina, and the indigenous and Afro-American movements in Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru.

At the same time, while most traditional political parties lost power, new parties became so important that in two cases they gained the national presidency through elections: the PT (Worker's Party) in Brazil and the MAS (Movement Toward Socialism) in Bolivia. Although these parties have at their core a particular social sector (workers for the PT, and coca growers for MAS), they are socially heterogeneous and do not regard this core as a universal class. In both regional and national elections, they have come to power through multiclass alliances.

The new Leftist presidents, elected with the support of a variety of movements and organizations, represent a wide range of personalities, social origins, and political experiences. They have included three women (Michelle Bachelet, Cristina Fernández, Dilma Rousseff), an indigenous leader (Evo Morales), a trade-union organizer (Lula), a former priest (Lugo), and a lower-class and low-ranking military officer (Chávez).

Their conceptions of rule vary, from the attempt by Chávez to create a uniform society through the monological voice of the state to the heteroglossic project announced by José Mujica, the new president of Uruguay. The product of a divided society, Chávez has built on this division and turned it into a chasm between “*revolucionarios*” and “*escuálidos*” (“revolutionaries” and “squalids,” the term Chávez applies to the opposition). Since 2005, he has turned this division into a struggle to death between two systems: socialism and capitalism. His slogan for the revolution during this new phase is “*patria, socialismo o muerte*” (“fatherland, socialism, or death”).²

In contrast, Uruguay’s Mujica proclaimed in his inaugural speech the goal of “*una patria para todos y con todos*” (“fatherland for all and with all”), pointedly re-

2 It should be noted, however, that despite Chávez’s division of the population into two antagonistic groups, he conceives of the revolutionary camp as plural, made up of many social sectors, as long as they agree with the goals of the revolution as articulated by the state.

jecting his earlier radical position as a Tupamaro leader (Tupamaros were an urban guerrilla organization active in the 1960s and 1970s). The same emphasis on inclusion, plurality, and freedom was strongly expressed Dilma Rousseff during her inaugural speech in Brazil.

In different degrees, all regimes recognize now a plurality of agents of change. Given widespread exclusion from the formal economy, the exploitation of labor in factories or fields is no longer considered the main factor in the formation of revolutionary subjects. Alliances are now sought among subjects affected by multiple forms of exclusion and domination.

New political actors now participate and even define public debate in Latin America. For anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena, “what is unprecedented” in this turn to the Left is “the presence of regional indigenous social movements as a constituent element of these transformations;” for her, these processes entail “plural politics in a political pluriverse.”³

Pluralizing the agents of change, particularly when these include indigenous sectors, has expanded conceptions of historical progress and eroded the hegemony of liberal conceptions of the nation as either a monocultural mestizo community or a multicultural polity. Now the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia define these nations as plurinational polities, grants Rights to diverse com-

3 Marcelo Colussi, “El pobretariado: un nuevo sujeto revolucionario?”, *Revista Amauta*, 2009.

munities and proclaim and interculturality as national ideal. In the case of Ecuador, the 2008 constitution established for the first time anywhere in the world—as far as I know—the Rights of nature as a political actor.

These changes have expanded domain of the political, granting legitimacy to more diverse social agents, validity to different cosmological orders, and challenging anthropocentric ideological formations.

4. DOUBLE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

It is common to think of double discourse in the political realm as involving duplicity and expressing a gap between claims and practices. Current Leftist politics in Latin America are certainly not exempt from this rather common form of deceptive political discourse. But what is distinctive now, in my view, is a peculiar modality of double discourse in which narratives about the present and the future produce accounts that are mutually contradictory but true, since they refer to different temporal horizons. Because it is constituted by the tension between the two temporal narratives of the short and long terms, I call this a “double historical discourse.”

By this term I seek to address not the sincerity of beliefs or their relation to practices but the structural relation that makes it possible for conflicting beliefs and practices to coexist without necessarily reflecting bad faith or deception because, in fact, they are framed within two different temporal scales: the short and the long terms.

In an insightful analysis of the current turn to the Left in Latin America, Atilio Borón notes a “disjunction” between the “consolidation of neoliberalism in the critical terrain of the economy and policy making” and its visible “weakening in the domains of culture, public awareness [*conciencia pública*] and politics.”⁴ He sees this disjunction as a reflection of the lack of an alternative economic program to neoliberalism. I would modify this acute observation by suggesting that neoliberalism’s “consolidation in the critical terrain of the economy” occurs mostly in the short term, because neoliberalism is also rejected for the future, at least rhetorically.

The perception that there is no immediate alternative to neoliberalism with respect to the economic core has led to the proliferation of this type of double historical discourse formed by narratives that contradict each other but are each true in terms of their respective historicities. The 2010 inaugural presidential speech of Uruguay’s José Mujica clearly expresses this temporal disjuncture: “We’ll be orthodox in macroeconomics. We’ll compensate this extensively by being heterodox, innovative and daring in other aspects.” In an earlier statement, he had asserted “we have many things to do

4 Atilio Borón, “Globalization: A Latin American Perspective,” *Estudos Sociedade e Agricultura*, n. 11, outubro, 1998.

before socialism” (“tenemos muchas cosas que hacer antes del socialismo”).⁵

Mujica was perhaps more candid than other Leftist presidents who also claim that capitalism is ultimately unviable but who seek to maximize income through capitalist production in the here and now. But even Bolivia’s vicepresident García Linera, a Marxist scholar who has published in the *New Left Review*, has stated that “Socialism” is a project for 100 or 200 years from now.

As a result, the present becomes particularly agitated and murky; it is a space of creative undertakings defined by different types of politics and orientations. It is also, needless to say, a space of typical forms of conventional double discourse, of multiple forms of duplicity and corruption.

In VEBo countries, where socialist ideals are constantly proclaimed, there is a sharp disjuncture between short and long terms, these discourses often undermine each other (Venezuela offers many examples). In BrAC countries, where socialist ideals are understated, the short terms seems more coherent, pushing the long term towards an ever less visible future (and this is particularly true of Brazil and Chile).

5 Daniel Chávez, “Del frente amplio a la nueva mayoría,” in *La nueva izquierda en América Latina: sus orígenes y trayectoria futura*, ed. César A. Rodríguez Garavito, Patrick S. Barrett, and Daniel Chávez, Bogotá, Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004, p. 172. Author’s translation.

5. RADICAL DEMOCRACY

The current struggles in Latin America build on the global achievements and limitations of both bourgeois and socialist democracies, but seek to go beyond them. For this reason, it would be a mistake to reduce this complex period to politics as usual, to the familiar. Politics now takes a range of forms in different locations. Its most significant achievement, in my view, has been the value now placed on democracy as a political form that requires constant expansion and transformation. As it has come to encompass ever-new areas of social life, democracy names now a process rather than a political shell or set of institutions. Boaventura de Santos has called this a “permanent democracy.” According to him, this notion of democracy has displaced “revolution” as the key term for the Left at this time.⁶ While this achievement is the result of many struggles, perhaps

6 This concept, “permanent democracy,” is borrowed by Juan Carlos Monedero from Boaventura de Sousa Santos in order to develop an argument about democracy as an ever-expanding and inclusive process (Juan Carlos Monedero, *El gobierno de las palabras: Política para tiempos de confusión*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009, p. 221-75). Monedero’s work reflects his engagement with contemporary social theory as well as his recent experience in Venezuela as a key member of the Centro Miranda, a left think tank established under Chávez; he left this center after a rather unsuccessful attempt to develop constructive critiques of Chávez’s Bolivarian “revolution” from within.

its most innovative expression has been the recognition of difference as a political principle and as part democracy itself.

In many countries, particularly in VEBo nations, people now struggle for the recognition not only of citizens' equal Rights before the law but of different conceptions of citizenship and of the law. These demands are often cast from non-Western epistemological and cosmological positions and involve a critique not just of Western liberalism but also of Western modernity itself. As such, they involve the struggle not just over distinct sets of Rights but over the Right to have different conceptions of life. This has been the major contribution of the indigenous movements.

After a long century of homogenizing projects led by elites who endorsed Western notions of progress, these movements have helped redefine the national imaginary, incorporating, as I said earlier, values of indigenous communities and conceptualizing the nation as plurinational community, as sanctioned in the new constitutions in Bolivia and Ecuador, or recognizing the Rights of nature, as in the 2008 constitution of Ecuador—in effect, making a move from anthropocentrism to biocentrism and thus radicalizing the critique of Eurocentrism. This move from anthropocentrism to bioecentrism has now become part of a collective struggles.

These struggles have expanded the agents, agendas, and conceptions of democracy. The struggle *for* democracy

now entails a struggle *about* democracy. As Boaventura de Santos has phrased it, political battles now pursue not an alternative to democracy but an alternative democracy.⁷

I will conclude this paper about imagined futures with some thoughts about the future of the real future.

Latin America's crisis of futurity involves yet a more fundamental challenge. It is not just that the Left's imagined future is uncertain but that its real future existence is in question. This turn to the Left already may turn out to be only temporary—a passing moment rather than a permanent achievement. At least at the level of the national state, the region shows signs of shifting toward the Right.

A sign of this shift is the victory of billionaire Sebastian Piñera in Chile in 2010, despite Michelle Bachelet's 84% popularity. Even Fidel Castro, certainly an astute observer and one prone not to offer negative forecasts, has stated that “before Obama completes his term there will be from six to eight Right-wing governments in Latin America that will be allies of the empire.”⁸

7 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Una izquierda con futuro,” in *La nueva izquierda en América Latina: sus orígenes y trayectoria futura*, ed. César A. Rodríguez Garavito, Patrick S. Barrett, and Daniel Chávez, Bogotá, Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004, p. 437-57.

8 Fidel Castro, “Reflections by Fidel Castro: [Obama] A Science Fiction Story,” Caricom News Network, November 13, 2009, http://csmenetwork.com/2/index.php?option=com_content&v

A more significant sign is of this possible shift to the Right is the weight of the short term in this tension between past and future. This weight of the present may give rise to a perverse paradox. Given the location of Latin America in the twin international division of labor and of nature, at the present time the pursuit of foreign exchange in the present has meant that, in practice, all Latin America states—whether on the Right or the Left—promote comparative advantages within a neoliberal framework. Since the main comparative advantage of Latin America now is its vast natural resources, the maximization of foreign exchange places all Latin American states on the same economic plane—one of dependence on primary products. If this analysis is correct, in a perverse twist of fate, in pursuit of fortune, Leftist states may be doing now the work of capital. Ollanta Humala's siding now with Lula's economic model rather than with Chávez's may be another indication of the changing times.

On the other hand—or perhaps in this case in the same hand, as Right and Left get fused or blurred—even if the Right may achieve electoral victories in the near future, my sense is that the Left has managed to redefine the terrain on which all political sectors must now move. In Latin America, as in Europe, opponents of the Left now frequently endorse many of the Left's principles, policies and aims. While some of these are realizable under

any political regimes, the most radical remain ideals the Left's exclusive goals.

Some of these radical ideals may seem utopian or unrealistic at this time, yet they express hopes and desires that affect the unfolding of current politics. As moderate a thinker as Max Weber recognized utopian strivings as indispensable in political life. As he said, "It is perfectly true, and confirmed by all historical experience, that the possible cannot be achieved without continually reaching out towards that which is impossible in this world."⁹

Recently, from a rather different position, philosopher Alain Badiou has argued for the need to reach for what seems impossible. Given that capitalism is globally unviable since it excludes majorities, degrades communal life, and erodes the natural habitat of humanity, fighting for an alternative world is absolutely indispensable for this reason he has proposed what he calls "the communist hypothesis" and has based this hypothesis on both an abstract, Kantian regulative principle as well as on concrete historical experiences that generate or prefigure communist ideals. Slavoj Žižek enthusiastically endorses Badiou's communist hypothesis but restricts its foundation to historical, not philosophical sources.

9 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 225.

These historical sources may be redemptive ideals from the past. I have argued that the Left's appeal to icons from the past is a symptom that reveals anxiety over an uncertain future. Yet, the appeal to past icons may also express their lasting significance for ongoing struggles. It is in this sense that Bolivian and Michigan lucid scholar Javier Sanjinés has coined the notion of "embers of the past" to evoke the past's capacity to energize present struggles and ignite new conflagrations.¹⁰

Sanjinés's "embers" are similar to Walter Benjamin's traditions of the oppressed. As Susan Buck-Morss argues, Benjamin's conception of the dialectic involves not just the two familiar moments of negation and supercession but also the neglected notion of "saving"—saving the past for the present. And while Marx was bent on moving forward and called for a poetry of the future to inspire current struggles, he also recognized the value of past ideals. For him, the past might be awakened and bring life to the present if it was invoked to animate struggles to transform the world rather than to adorn its dramas. As he famously argued, while the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century "awakened the dead" for "glorifying new struggles" and "magnifying the task in reality," the social revolutions

10 Javier Sanjinés, personal communication, May 1, 2010.

of the nineteenth century did so for “parodying the old” and for “fleeing from its [the task’s] solution in reality.”¹¹

Carried along by winds of history that fan old flames and ignite new struggles, the American continent has become a fabric of diverse collective utopian dreams. As a result of all these recent political changes and movements, the struggle for democracy is now deeper in Latin America, making it possible to recognize the need to respect not just all peoples in the planet, but the planet itself, and thus to value different kinds of human beings as well as different kinds of beings—and to recognize that one does not dream the same in Spanish or in Aymara, as a woman or as a man, as an adult or as a child, from a bed or from under the bridge.

Of course, given the unequal structures of power within which this Leftward turn has taken place, it is possible that its new imaginaries may be co-opted or crushed. But given that these imaginaries now unite South and North in a politics that fuses the pursuit of well-being for all and sheer planetary survival, it is likely that a counterpoint between embers of the past and poetry of the future will continue to conjure up images of worlds free from the horrors of history.

Politics will remain a battle of desires waged on an uneven terrain. But as long as people find themselves

11 Xavier Albó, “Prólogo,” in *Rescaldos del pasado: Conflictos culturales en sociedades postcoloniales*, by Javier Sanjinés, La Paz: PIEB, 2009, p. xiii. Author’s translation.

without a safe and dignified home in the world, utopian dreams will continue to proliferate and energize struggles to build a world that may contain many worlds, a world in which people could dream their future without fear of waking up.

Marginalité, accès politique et démocratie profonde au Brésil

Candido Mendes

L'INÉDIT HISTORIQUE DU PT

Le contexte de la démocratie dans l'émergence brésilienne suggère un nouveau paradigme à rebours de la tournure classique qui renvoie, entre la société organisée et l'État, à un seuil d'accès spécifique au développement et à la mouvance sociale.¹

Le pays de Lula exprime cette condition d'accès direct de la marginalité structurelle par l'intermédiaire de la mobilisation politique.

1 Rejane Maria Vasconcelos Acciolly de Carvalho, "Heterogeneidade Estrutural e Consciência de Classe — O Clima Teórico-Metodológico", *Dados*, v. 29, n. 1, 1986.

C'est ce que représentait l'arrivée du PT en tête de la dispute électorale et de toute une collectivité nantie d'une inertie ancestrale pour la dispute du pouvoir, selon le "fait social total" de l'économie coloniale.²

De par là même, le Brésil se détachait du cas normal de l'Amérique Latine laissé à cette même anomie collective originale, et dont les destitués — les cas des Farcs en Colombie ou du Sendero Luminoso au Pérou — passèrent directement à la violence — dans la perspective opposée à celle du pari fait par le PT. Dans les années 80, ce mouvement profitait de la législation électorale qui rend obligatoire le vote secret, permettant de la sorte que tout l'intérieur du pays échappe au contrôle des propriétaires terriens et de l'économie latifundiaire. En s'appuyant sur l'organisation émergente des syndicats,³ le parti se libéra de l'empoigne corporative à laquelle menait la première législation travailliste des droits sociaux issus du gouvernement Vargas.⁴ Le PT se distinguait ainsi du vieux PTB et profitait en même temps de la poussée de l'Église Catholique, provoquée par l'envol de la Théologie de la Libération, née du Concile Vatican II.

2 Alfredo Bosi, *Dialética da Colonização*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1972.

3 Adalberto Moreira Cardoso, "A Filiação Sindical no Brasil", *Dados*, v. 44, n. 1, 2001.

4 Jorge Ventura de Moraes, "Novo Sindicalismo e Democracia Sindical: um Teste e uma Crítica do Modelo Eleitoral", *Dados*, v. 38, n. 3, 1995.

LA PÉDAGOGIE DU SUICIDE POLITIQUE

Avec le PT, le pays des “sans rien” au pouvoir s’enracine dans l’expérience de Vargas et de la première législation sociale du pays, et surtout de l’importance pédagogique de son suicide, pour l’avenance d’une “nation pour-soi”.

En effet, à partir de la fin des années 30, le prolétariat allait profiter du salaire minimum, de la limitation des heures de travail et du droit aux congés payés. En force, cette première initiative était octroyée par un État franchement corporatif qui entraîna les premiers syndicats et leur dynamique dans l’organisation de l’“État Nouveau”.⁵

La déposition de Vargas, en raison du caractère dictatorial de son gouvernement, n’empêcha pas son retour en 1950 puis, face au nouveau durcissement du *status quo*, le président se suicidait en étalant, par son sacrifice, le contrepoint fondamental entre le pays des nantis et la nation destituée, poussée par le développement naissant. Sa lettre-testament n’épargnait pas la contradiction et le parti pris sans retour de ce qui serait le “pays pour soi”. La lutte qui suivit, après les gouvernements Kubitschek, Jânio Quadros, Goulart, et du régime militaire, renforça le contrepoint de fond, bien que quelques secteurs de l’ancien régime fassent cause commune avec la mouvance de fond pour le régime des libertés. Mais le tocsin

5 Hermínio Linhares, *Contribuição à História das Lutas Operárias no Brasil*, São Paulo, Alfa-Ômega, 1977.

de Vargas sonnait aussi le début du PT, lié aux premiers syndicats autonomes détachés du corporativisme initial et misant sur la nouvelle mobilité du pays sorti de l'inertie semi coloniale, en dépassant le populisme.⁶

AU-DELÀ DU CLIENTÉLISME POLITIQUE

Cette nouvelle force politique souleva dès le début, par sa position sans ambages et sans coalitions une candidature à la Présidence de la République, montrant ainsi l'influx innovateur dans la poursuite des jeux de pouvoir dans le pays.

Cette montée, parallèlement à la discipline rigide du parti, se fit dans un moulage sans alliances, au profit de son candidat au Planalto. C'était à partir d'une telle arrivée que l'on put déceler le comportement politique — à moyenne et longue échéance — de cet acteur différent, face aux cas classiques de cooptation d'intérêts et de partages du butin du pouvoir — le fameux clientélisme politique⁷ — des diverses forces rassemblées

6 Francisco Weffort, *O Populismo na Política Brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1977.

7 Renato Boschi e Eli Diniz Cerqueira, "Burocracia, Clientela e Relações de Poder: um Modelo Teórico", *Dados*, n. 17, 1978; José de Souza Martins, "Clientelismo e Representação em Minas Gerais durante a Primeira República: uma Crítica a Paulo Lammack", *Dados*, v. 27, n. 2, 1985; Vitor Nunes Leal, "O Coronelismo e o Coronelismo de cada Um", *Dados*, v. 23, n. 1, 1980.

par la dynamique du développement national, ou de son rejet. Le système se bâtit d'abord au fil des allocations nettes de pouvoir, à partir de l'octroi de ministères aux syndicats, en s'éloignant du classique maillon de groupes façonnés par la stricte campagne électorale.

Une nouvelle productivité du situationnisme petiste au Législatif fut assurée, d'autre part, par des primes et surplus de salaires. On institua le *mensalão* ("grosse fin de mois"), dont la marque de corruption ne heurta pas l'opinion publique. Le peuple de Lula ne démontra aucune commotion après ce scandale émergent, et presque tous les parlementaires dénoncés furent réélus.

À la suite de ce premier paradoxe, on remarque la permanence de l'effet sidérant produit par Lula, immobilisant ainsi la poussée de nouveaux possibles *leaderships*. Aucun renouvellement fondamental dans la ligne des successeurs naturels, et les deux politiciens considérés comme "dauphins" à l'époque — José Dirceu et José Pallocci — ne furent qu'à peine éclaboussés, bien que responsables du *mensalão* en question, et effracteurs du secret des déclarations fiscales. La reprise électorale du PT ne dépassait pas les réseaux locaux, et toute la montée des jeux de force électorale restait au niveau municipal d'accès au pouvoir. Le parti manquait de tout rayon intermédiaire pour assurer une homogénéité de profil, face aux attaques de l'opposition et aux réassemblages mobilisateurs.

PRISE DE CONSCIENCE ET CONTINUITÉ

Le succès du gouvernement Lula au niveau politique a donc conduit à ce décalage entre la force politique et la force symbolique du Président, avec une position majoritaire de la situation de moins en moins associée au PT en tant que parti dominant. En effet, cette majorité impliquait une division presque égalitaire avec le PMDB, auquel s'associaient le PSB, le PDT et divers partis mineurs porteurs d'un message pratiquement unique, tel celui des Verts ou du PCduB (Parti Communiste du Brésil). On rencontre ici un nouveau gouvernement de coalitions.⁸

L'accès au gouvernement de la présidente Dilma s'est immédiatement basé sur le fait accompli de telles coalitions et dénouait la nouvelle articulation entre l'Exécutif et les Chambres. Elle suppose d'abord que l'avance du PAC (Programme d'accélération de la Croissance) et de la politique du développement soutenu demande très peu de nouvelles initiatives législatives. Elle accorde toute la priorité à la redistribution de revenus exigeant une immédiate prise en mains de la politique du salaire minimum. Le gouvernement ne la pratique cependant pas

8 Angelina Figueiredo e Fernando Limongi, *Executivo e Legislativo na Nova Ordem Institucional*, Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Getulio Vargas, 1990; e Carlos Pereira e Bernardo Muller, "Partidos Fracos na Arena Eleitoral e Partidos Fortes na Arena Legislativa: a Conexão Eleitoral no Brasil," *Dados*, v. 46, n. 4, 2003, e "Comportamento Estratégico em Presidencialismo de Coalizão: as Relações entre Executivo e Legislativo na Elaboração do Orçamento Brasileiro", *Dados*, v. 45.

dans les nouvelles déterminations d'une hausse maximale, mais s'assure, en une initiative originale, la capacité d'augmenter ces taux dans les prochaines années de son propre chef, en dehors de manifestations du Congrès. C'était la première mesure décisive du nouveau gouvernement, ramenant à son gré cette allocation par décrets de l'Exécutif. Les reflux de la crise financière globale, par leur impact sur l'investissement national, impliqueraient en une hausse fiscale déterminée se concentrant sur l'impôt sur les grandes fortunes épargnées pendant la campagne électorale et restant, de toute façon, un principe général de la deuxième étape du gouvernement du PT, dont le slogan se déplace, de Lula à Dilma, du "gouvernement de tous" à "un pays moins pauvre".

L'appui du Législatif demeure néanmoins fondamental pour l'éventualité d'une réforme constitutionnelle susceptible de ramener au pouvoir fédéral la politique sociale de la Fédération. En effet, dans la Constitution de 88, les éléments fondamentaux d'une politique de bien-être, d'éducation, de la santé et de l'habitation étaient délégués à la compétence des États de la Fédération. L'avance du développement soutenu implique dans sa logique cette réallocation à l'Union en éliminant toute déviation dans les transferts de ses fonds, permettant en même temps, par la centralisation de cette politique, les effets cumulatifs de leurs résultats de la même manière qu'elle évite les priorités classiques des clientèles nées de la pression des demandes locales.

AU-DELÀ DU NÉOLIBÉRALISME

A côté de la plateforme sociale, le dédoublement du PT dans le gouvernement Lula réclamait nécessairement une prise de position quant au modèle économique, et par là-même, une première définition claire du rôle de l'État dans le développement.⁹ Le programme implique l'acceptation de la dominante de l'investissement public dans les travaux d'infrastructure. On dépasse de loin les mesures et les freins implicites dans lesquels le gouvernement antérieur au PSDB se maintenait selon les lignes de l'accord de Washington et en partant de la prémisse d'un modèle capitaliste pour le pays. De même, c'était dans la vision stratégique des interventions d'une économie d'État que l'appareil public se détachait de l'infrastructure pour parer aux manques survenus à certains points essentiels de l'effort synchronisé de mouvance, et à assurer exactement son saut historique. Cependant, le nouveau gouvernement ne s'attache pas aux impositions formelles d'épargne forcée ou d'investissements du secteur privé. Mais surtout, le Planalto maintient l'exploitation publique des ressources, assurées par la Constitution en résistant aux pressions étrangères pour l'exploitation des gisements océaniques de pétrole par la Petrobras et, aujourd'hui, par la compagnie

9 Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, "O Novo Modelo Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento", *Dados*, n. 11, 1973.

géante du Pré-Sal. Il faudrait même parler, en ce début de gouvernement, d'un effet intérieur de ces nouvelles économies face à l'échelle du gigantisme des fonds apprivoisés aujourd'hui par la Petrobras menant à une politique parallèle de développement urbain et d'organisation professionnelle spécialisée du marché de travail.

La plus grande compagnie du monde liée au minerai de fer, la Vale do Rio Doce, se bâtit un capital complexe où, à côté de la participation publique directe, les banques privées les plus importantes du Brésil maintiennent une position critique. Ce qui est nouveau dans un tel contexte, c'est la pression exercée par le gouvernement fédéral pour pousser l'épargne privée à s'unir au vote du Planalto et de destituer le président de la Compagnie réticent à la transformation de l'extraction brute sur le territoire national. L'avance du macro-capital privé ne peut pas se faire contre le jeu d'intérêts dans lequel de tels fonds se conditionnent, à moyenne et longue échéance, par l'échange direct de bénéfices, des réserves de marché aux limitations fiscales, toutes entre les mains du Planalto. Au niveau de la macro-échelle économique du pays, on ne trouverait pas un seul réseau privé "sauvage" capable d'organiser ces conditionnements économiques en marge des politiques publiques. Le secteur privé demeure dans une dynamique livrée à elle-même, tant qu'il ne gêne pas la politique nationale du développement soutenu.

DEMÉDIATION COLLECTIVE ET MOUVEMENTS SOCIAUX

Dans cette pleine maturité de l'option Lula pour le développement brésilien, se dégageraient les effets, peut-être plus profonds, de ces conditions d'accès social des marginaux. Ils sont marqués par l'absence déjà mentionnée de médiation classiquement exercée par les mouvements sociaux. Ceux-ci n'ont pas seulement perdu toute dimension critique dans le futur du régime. Ils démontrent surtout les nouvelles contradictions dans les organisations syndicales et les impasses de la réforme agraire, commencée et continuellement reprise, mais sans que de là ait surgi une conscience collective, ou communautaire, comme prévue par la montée établie des 'sans rien' du pays.¹⁰ Après le gain du lopin de terre, les favorisés revinrent à leur défense individualisée, échappant à toute économie collective imaginée pour leur lendemain. D'autre part, et dans cette mouvance, les bénéficiaires des bourses-famille ont commencé à s'en tenir à leurs propres et stricts intérêts de défense de leurs avantages, qui impliquaient les services d'éducation et de santé, de pair et parfois en avance sur les strictes économies de salaire et d'intégration immédiate au marché de travail.

Les premiers mois du gouvernement Dilma témoignent précisément de cette conscience de la praxis, et

10 Elisa Pereira Reis, "Mudança e Continuidade na Política Rural Brasileira", *Dados*, v. 31, n. 2, 1989; Lygia Sigaud, "Luta de Classes em Dois Atos: Notas sobre um Ciclo de Greves Camponesas", *Dados*, v., 29, n. 3, 1986.

semble impliquer le contrepoint des interrogations d'une gauche idéale sur l'avenir.

Elle se démarquerait, par force, de tout contrepoint dialectique comme il le revient aux conduites idéalistes, ou aux réclamations des puretés originaires d'une visée politique comme, par exemple, l'impératif d'une "économie solidaire", propre aux sources du Vatican II, et en refus de toute perspective de la complexité sociale contemporaine. De même, elle se plierait aux demandes et redistributions ingénues de revenus, en oubliant les premières exigences de "l'en-soi collectif"¹¹ émergent du pays pour faire face au développement soutenu. De même, elle tomberait sur la rengaine moraliste du gouvernement des "bons", et finirait avec un point commun avec l'opposition, en demande de projets prioritaires, et sauveurs comme celui de la *ficha limpa*, dossier propre de toute faute comme protocole irréprochable pour l'inscription électorale. Les premiers 100 jours de Dilma dépasseraient de 4% la popularité de Lula à la même époque.

MOUVEMENTS SOCIAUX ET ÉGLISE CATHOLIQUE

Au début du nouveau mandat, on remarque encore une contreposition émergente de plusieurs secteurs de l'Église face au gouvernement du PT entre les mains de

11 Álvaro Vieira Pinto, "Consciência Crítica e Consciência Ingênua", in *Consciência e Realidade Nacional*, Rio de Janeiro, Iseb, 1962.

Dilma.¹² Une poussée intégriste s'avère clairement en opposition avec l'atmosphère d'appui de base et d'écho que le Vatican II apporta à la naissance du PT par le soutien massif des paroisses de l'intérieur du Brésil et de plusieurs évêchés, des Lorscheider — secrétaires généraux et présidents de la CNBB — aux archidiocèses de Volta Redonda, Goiás Velho, et la présence prophétique de l'évêque de Porto National, en pleine brousse brésilienne.¹³

Le pontificat de Jean Paul II s'est appliqué aux coupes de cette inspiration vaticane aux mouvements sociaux libertaires du pays. On y remarque toute la préoccupation de la Théologie de la Libération, atteignant successivement et même à partir de Dom Hélder Câmara, les évêques-clés de l'Amérique Latine espagnole. Une vision organique de la mouvance sociale propre aux économies développées a renforcé le pontificat de Jean Paul II, aux dépens d'un strict laïcisme et des actions confessionnelles, en dehors de la hiérarchie. Le problème de la justice sociale, déjà en perte de tonique depuis les Conférences de Puebla et

12 Candido Mendes, *Memento dos Vivos — A Esquerda Católica no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Tempo Brasileiro, 1965; *Justice, Faim de L'Eglise*, Paris, Desclée, 1977; *Mudança do Século, Mudança da Igreja*, Rio de Janeiro, Educam, 1978; *Subcultura e Mudança: por que me Envergonho de meu País*, Rio de Janeiro, Topbooks-Educam, 2010.

13 Luiz Alberto Gómez de Souza, "Santo Domingo: um Encontro Difícil", in *Do Vaticano II a um Novo Concílio — Olhar de um Cristão Leigo sobre a Igreja*, São Paulo, Loyola, 2004.

de Santo Domingo, a fait face aux priorités, par l'Église, de ses demandes canoniques et de foi vis-à-vis de la régulation séculière du pays. La lutte contre l'avortement est devenue la priorité des mouvements cléricaux liés à l'Opus Dei, dans toute la souche des organisations similaires. Face aux élections de 2010, un groupe d'évêques demanda une audience au Pape Benoît XVI pour lui demander d'émettre une condamnation claire du vote catholique en faveur de la candidature de Dilma. Le geste a été désarçonné par la houle de l'opinion publique catholique du pays mais n'empêche pas un nouveau détour dans la mobilisation future, entre la quête pour la justice et la plateforme dogmatique de l'Église Catholique.

ÉTAT ET DÉVELOPPEMENT SOUTENU: LE BRÉSIL DES BRICs

Le début du nouveau gouvernement montre cette nouvelle envergure du modèle pour le développement soutenu du pays, de pair avec la politique brésilienne au Moyen Orient et surtout la recherche d'une matrice pour la stabilisation mondiale qui, face à la crise libyenne, puisse dépasser les tatonnements de l'OTAN.

Le dégagement d'une stricte politique de la périphérie latino-américaine a tout de suite marqué l'accès du PT au pouvoir.¹⁴ Mais elle manque encore aujourd'hui d'une

14 Walter D. Mignolo, "Futuros Globales y Opciones Descoloniales", in *Subjetividades Colectivas y Globalización: Fronteras*,

intégration effective avec la nouvelle escalade où l'univers des BRICs s'oppose aux mondialisations occidentales classiques, et que se dessine une différence internationale à partir du monde arabe. Bien avant les émeutes de Tunis, Lula — aux côtés de Erdogan —, a essayé de donner une résonnance à la dynamique du Moyen Orient en soutenant les voix syrio-libanaises dans le tissu socio-politique brésilien, et surtout en travaillant l'accès effectif de l'Iran aux Nations Unies. Au cours des deux dernières années de son gouvernement, d'abord en alliance avec la Turquie, puis de façon pratiquement solitaire, le maintien de cette position fut renouvelé à New York, malgré la provocation continue et croissante quant au mépris des droits humains dans le pays.

Un redressement général accompagnerait ce nouveau contexte, laissant une toute nouvelle initiative à Dilma pour la solution, par Ahmadinejad, d'un cahier de charges relevant ponctuellement de successives entorses à de tels droits, incluant la présente prison domiciliaire de Kathami et Mussavi.

En fait, le nouveau repli se doit au dédoublement de la crise lybienne: la position prise par le Brésil, aux côtés de la Russie, de la Chine et même de l'Allemagne, pour réduire les effets et la portée de la zone dite de

neutralité aérienne, et proposant de créer des couloirs humains pour épargner la société civile, à côté des empoignes sur l'exportation pétrolière du pays.

Le développement d'un nouvel appui de l'Union Africaine, à laquelle s'est jointe l'Union Arabe, écarte, une fois pour toutes, la possibilité qu'une invasion de la Libye puisse se répéter en Afganistan ou en Irak. Nous ferions face alors, pour la première fois depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale, à des forces de contrôle pluralistes et multinationales vis-à-vis des nations occidentales. Cette stabilité politique émergente se détache du contrôle classique de l'OTAN et des acquis d'une culture de paix de la fin du XX^{ème} siècle. Le mois dernier, nous avons pu en voir le contrepoint possible, entre les politiques américaine et brésilienne, lors de la rencontre d'Obama et de Dilma.

Cet échange portait naturellement sur des scénarios déjà surannés et plus que prévus où étaient en cause, respectivement:

- a) a pression brésilienne pour un siège permanent au Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies;
- b) l'émergence du Brésil au fond commun des nations continentales, dans le nouvel axe réclamé par la mondialisation;
- c) la dynamique des marchés nationaux et surtout de l'accès des collectivités marginalisées à la mou-
vance sociale, en priorité sur les échanges extérieurs
traditionnels menant toujours à la dominance finale
de bénéfices dans la balance de paiements;

- d) le dépassement des relations centre-périphérie dans la nouvelle vision de la politique défensive à outrance de l'Occident face à Israël et aux politiques réciproques de désarmement.

L'attente concernant le siège permanent s'estompait, à la bonne allure prévue par tous les protocoles, laissant la prétention brésilienne à côté de la candidature hindoue et des possibles débats fumeux sur la réforme complète de l'appareil de l'ONU. D'autre part, Obama se fait l'agent de l'intérêt immédiat du grand capital américain et ne se prononce pas sur les modèles en confrontation, ni sur une mise de conscience quant à l'écart brésilien — très net avec Dilma — du modèle libéral capitaliste.

LA PRÁXIS DE LA MOUVANCE

On commence à se rendre compte de l'impact, à longue échéance, de ces conditions particulières d'accès de la population anomique à l'univers politique brésilien, au-delà du maintien de la discipline du PT. Il ne serait pas possible non plus d'imaginer à la longue un regain de la force du parti. Le militantisme se regroupe par le lien symbolique¹⁵ et il n'y a plus lieu de penser à un meneur du jeu en restauration du premier dessein politique du Lulisme. Il n'en reste tout de même pas

15 Gilbert Dinand, *L'Imagination symbolique*, Paris, Seuil, 1976; Michel Crozier et Erhard Friedberg, *L'Acteur et le système — Les contraintes de l'action collective*, Paris, Seuil, 1977.

moins la potentialité de cette militance, mais elle ne dépendra plus des cadres ni d'une récupération de l'ancien *leadership*.

En même temps, Dilma ne possédant pas le même charisme que son prédécesseur, la dominance du *status quo* émergent dépendra de la perception d'un bien-être acquis du "peuple de Lula", lié aux avantages de l'augmentation du salaire minimum et du soutien des services de la "bourse-famille". L'effort d'une redistribution fiscale poursuivi par les impôts directs sur les grandes fortunes n'empêchera pas tout de suite une allure générale finalement régressive sur la croissance des revenus des classes C et D. C'est donc, chaque fois davantage, une identité de base de cette fidélité à Lula qui assurera la mouvance de la politique du développement soutenu au Brésil et l'appui croissant apporté à Dilma. L'opposition tend à tourner en rond, vue l'impossibilité, pour le PSDB et les partis alliés, de mobiliser le dit *povoão*, au bénéfice des classes moyennes enfoncées dans une ambiguïté croissante d'insertion politique. Elles garderaient en effet la fidélité matricielle et ne se dégageraient des strates sorties de l'anomie originale.¹⁶

16 Candido Mendes, "A Auto-Organização da Marginalidade", in *A Democracia Desperdiçada*. Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 1987.

En même temps, pour ces cinquante six pour cent d'une classe dite moyenne émergente, la grosse majorité se heurterait aux souches classiquement liées au groupe des grands revenus et par conséquent à la polarité structurelle du pays du pré-développement.

La médiation matricielle de l'accès du peuple de Lula ne passe pas par la réverbération des conflits¹⁷ classiques dans une phase ascendante de l'enrichissement national. De même, elle écarterait tout retour au patronage politique à partir de l'ensemble allocatif, et chaque fois plus fédéral, de la politique de l'éducation, de la santé et du logement. L'effet le plus important d'une telle prise de conscience, résultant de la mobilisation pétiste, reviendrait aux pertes de tout "vis-à-vis" du "gagné et du perdu" dans la mouvance d'origine, et les différences subséquentes de bénéfices nés de la même envolée.

L'accès au marché de la consommation échappe au pli classique de l'effet de démonstration et reflète tout cet immédiatisme d'accès dans la structure du budget familial et son impact sur les nécessités littéralement émergentes d'un "bien-être". C'est peut-être dans un climat politique plutôt gestionnaire que la maturation du gouvernement issu du PT trouvera les lignes d'un tel "bien-être" ou peut déjà continuer l'effort pédagogique

17 Michel Miranda, *La société incertaine: pour un imaginaire social contemporain*, esp. "Le jeu symbolique de la théâtralité", Paris, Librairie des Méridiens, 1986.

de la prise de conscience originaire. Les nécessités domestiques traditionnelles se plient aux demandes croissantes de communication et du spectacle, un vecteur culturel porté par les acteurs du pays sans visage social, voué au primarisme des relations collectives de la domination coloniale.

La situation démocratique au Brésil s'écarte des présomptions générales selon lesquelles ce régime avance par l'expression du dynamisme de la société sur tout le moulage du régime de pouvoir. Elle impliquerait donc la médiation nécessaire des mouvements sociaux, des syndicats et des partis dans le jeu intégré où la conduction de l'État exprimerait cette volonté collective exprimée. C'est cette prévision qui s'écarte de l'avènement démocratique du "lulisme"¹⁸ qui a assuré toutefois l'écart de tout monopole de pouvoir en maintenant à tous ses niveaux l'interaction des mouvances collectives par le *artung* et la permanence de tout *checks and balances*. Il s'agit, dans le cas brésilien, de l'emprise matricielle de cette "prise de conscience", née directement de l'anomie collective qui se passe, justement, de toute médiation supposée par la vision organique du tout social, d'où la démocratie,¹⁹ comme sa dimension politique serait

18 Candido Mendes, *Lula depois de Lula*, Rio de Janeiro, Educam, 2006.

19 Barry Ames, Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Getulio Vargas, 2003.

l'accomplissement à se faire ou à se dénier, face à toutes les échelles des dictatures contemporaines.

Le “lulisme”, par son expérience inédite et modulé par sa propre et stricte praxis, montre la profondeur de l’empreinte fondatrice des “prises de conscience”²⁰ collectives directes sur cette même anomie primordiale. Mais surtout, elle se maintint sur cet immédiatisme. Elle a écarté, en même temps, les réductionnismes charismatiques d’un *leadership*, le strict passage aux légitimations symboliques, et la tentation de toute permanence au pouvoir où un consensus objectif pourrait avancer sur le pacte constitutionnel et le respect effectif et transcendant de l’État de Droit.

20 Joseph Gabel, *False Consciousness: an Essay on Reification*, New York, Harper, 1978; Paul Ricœur, “Interpretion et Reconnaissance”, *Cités*, n. 33, 2008; Paul Watzlawick (org.), *L’Invention de la réalité: contributions au constructivisme*, esp. “Avec quoi constitution les réalités ideologiques?”, Paris, Seuil, 1983.

Le mal
ou:
Comment penser *a contrario*
la démocratie, l'affirmation du sujet
personnel et la capacité de vivre
ensemble avec nos différences

Michel Wieviorka

Il y a ceux qui découvrent le sujet en eux et dans les autres: ils sont ceux qui font le bien; et ceux qui cherchent à tuer le sujet dans les autres et en eux-mêmes: ce sont ceux qui font le mal (...). C'est par la conscience du mal que nous entendons l'appel au sujet.

(Alain Touraine, *Un nouveau paradigme*, Paris, Fayard, 2005, p. 255.)

Pour les sciences sociales classiques, le mal n'est pas vraiment une catégorie. Il appartient en effet, bien davantage, à la philosophie et à la religion. Une formule

souvent citée de Leibniz (Théodicée, Ière partie, §21) distingue plus précisément trois dimensions du mal:

On peut prendre le mal métaphysiquement, physiquement et moralement. Le *mal métaphysique* consiste dans la simple imperfection, le *mal physique* dans la souffrance et le *mal moral* dans le péché.

En se dégageant de la foi et des croyances pour expliquer la vie sociale, en récusant plus largement tout principe métasocial d'analyse, qu'il s'agisse de Dieu ou de la Nature, les sciences sociales classiques ont en même temps évacué le mal comme principe d'explication, puisque celui-ci a traditionnellement partie liée ou bien avec Dieu — et le Diable —, ou bien avec des forces naturelles, et même plutôt surnaturelles échappant entièrement à l'homme, même si elles se localisent en lui, de façon éventuellement magique ou satanique.

En bonnes héritières de Descartes et des Lumières, et en séparant le corps et l'esprit, tout au long de la première grande phase de l'histoire de la modernité, les mêmes sciences sociales classiques se sont désintéressées de la souffrance, qui conjugue la douleur physique et la possibilité même d'être, de se construire, et qui, pour être comprise, appelle que soient intégrés dans une seule et même analyse le corps et l'âme ou l'esprit. Plus elles se sont voulues objectives, rationnelles, scientifiques, et plus les sciences sociales classiques ont dû se débarrasser du mal, qui est pour elles une catégorie non scientifique.

Mais une évolution considérable est en jeu depuis les années 70, qui conduit à parler d'ère post-classique pour les sciences sociales. Celles-ci sont en effet engagées dans une formidable mutation, elles abordent leurs objets différemment, et ces objets eux-mêmes ne sont plus seulement ceux de l'ère classique. Et du coup, le mal pourrait devenir une catégorie des sciences sociales.

1. LA GRANDE MUTATION

Les sciences sociales se sont toujours intéressées à Dieu, à la religion, c'est même peut-être leur première et plus décisive préoccupation. Mais pour leurs représentants de l'ère classique, c'était surtout pour connaître les croyances et pour en faire un objet d'études, et, chez certains penseurs, pour les combattre. La modernité était alors d'autant plus triomphante que déclinaient les traditions et la religion, au profit des valeurs universelles de la raison et du droit, elle en était le contraire. Mais aujourd'hui, Dieu est de retour dans des sociétés qui, hier encore, pouvaient se croire comme en voie de sécularisation complète, en cours, pour parler comme Max Weber, de "désenchantement". Et, au-delà de l'idée insuffisante et déjà usée de "post-modernité", nous apprenons à penser la modernité contemporaine dans sa capacité à articuler, et non plus à opposer la raison et le droit, qui en font nécessairement partie d'une part, et d'autre part, les convictions, les choix identitaires, les passions, les émotions, qui ont longtemps été perçus comme étrangers ou

menaçants pour les projets issus des Lumières. La sécularisation ne peut plus être synonyme de laïcisation, de disparition de la foi et de la religion, elle devient dans les sociétés démocratiques d'aujourd'hui une relativisation du religieux, du croire. La religion a toute sa place en démocratie, à condition de ne pas envahir l'intégralité de la vie des croyants, de ne pas être une totalisation empiétant sur tous les domaines de la pensée et de l'action, individuelle ou collective.

* * *

Depuis les années 70, nous faisons nôtres bien des dimensions de la réflexion écologiste, et nous refusons l'idée d'une dissociation totale de la nature et de la culture. La nature est aussi ce que l'homme fait d'elle, et pour la grande majorité de ceux qui s'en préoccupent, il ne s'agit pas seulement de la conserver ou de la préserver telle qu'elle, comme dans la *deep ecology*. Plus nous sommes soucieux de réfléchir au futur de la planète, en même temps que nous désirons préserver l'avenir de nos enfants et de l'humanité toute entière, et plus nous sommes amenés à intégrer la "protection" de la nature et de l'environnement dans des politiques publiques ou privées, dans des initiatives concrètes innovantes et constructives — c'est l'esprit du "développement durable", qui connaît depuis une trentaine d'années un succès considérable.

Qu'il s'agisse de climat, d'eau, de pollution, de déforestation, de biodiversité, nous abordons les grands dossiers de l'environnement en sachant bien qu'ils impliquent l'homme et pas seulement la nature. Une catastrophe dite "naturelle", par exemple, en amont (avant qu'elle ne survienne), sur le coup (quand elle se produit), et en aval (quand il s'agit de faire face à ses dégâts) comporte toujours des dimensions humaines et sociales. En amont: le tour dramatique qu'elle revêt est plus ou moins terrifiant, selon que les hommes l'ont anticipée ou non, et selon qu'ils ont pris ou non certaines mesures. Quand un *tsunami* survient, par exemple, ses effets sont plus ou moins dévastateurs selon que le choix des lieux d'habitat et des techniques de construction a tenu compte de sa probabilité, selon aussi que des dispositifs d'alerte existent, et fonctionnent, permettant de prévenir rapidement les populations concernées, selon également que ces populations ont été éduquées, préparées, voire entraînées. Sur le coup et en aval: les catastrophes "naturelles" ne frappent généralement pas de la même façon les plus aisés et les plus démunis, les dominants et les dominés. Ainsi, il valait mieux être blanc et riche que pauvre et noir quand le cyclone Katrina a dévasté la Nouvelle Orléans le 29 août 2005, quand il s'est agi de quitter la ville puis, pour beaucoup qui y étaient restés, d'y être secourus ou aidés. Les effets de Katrina auraient été considérablement amoindris si, en amont, les systèmes de digues et de pompage des eaux du Mississippi avaient été entretenus et modernisés par la

puissance publique. Et ensuite ils se sont révélés socialement profondément inégaux. Ce type de constat vaut pour les conjonctures de catastrophe, mais aussi pour des grands problèmes structurels — pour le dérèglement climatique par exemple, ou pour les enjeux liés à l'eau.

Enfin, notre rapport au corps s'est considérablement modifié, y compris dans ce qu'en perçoivent les sciences sociales contemporaines. Hier, dans les sociétés industrielles, le corps des dominés était surtout une force de travail, qu'il s'agissait d'exploiter, qui pouvait être affaiblie, meurtrie, détruite par les conditions d'existence, incluant la maladie, le manque d'hygiène, la malnutrition ou les ravages de l'alcool. Ceux qui s'en préoccupaient tentaient de lui éviter ces dommages, de le guérir, de le préserver, d'où l'importance de l'hygiénisme et, plus tard, de la médecine du travail. Et s'il s'agissait d'exalter le corps du travailleur, comme dans les démocraties dites populaires, dans l'ex-Empire soviétique, c'était pour mettre en avant sa musculature et sa puissance productive, sa capacité à fournir des efforts tout entier tournés vers la production. Plus généralement, la pensée, depuis au moins Descartes, s'est longtemps habituée à dissocier le corps et l'esprit, et les sciences sociales classiques ne se sont pas beaucoup intéressées au corps lui-même. Mais aujourd'hui, de nombreux individus effectuent un travail **sur** leur corps, et non plus seulement **avec** leur corps, ils s'adonnent à l'expression corporelle, à la danse, au sport, au yoga, et ces activités occupent

désormais une place considérable dans leur existence, y compris dans les milieux populaires. Le corps est également l'objet de soins ainsi que de marquages, qui sont non pas tant imposés par la culture et la société que décidés individuellement, comme autant de choix singuliers. Peau (maquillage mais aussi tatouage) et chevelure notamment définissent d'immenses marchés, qu'explorent en particulier les industries cosmétiques.

La réflexion sur les liens entre le corps et l'esprit est de plus renouvelée, depuis une trentaine d'années, par les progrès des neurosciences et des sciences cognitives et par l'idée qu'il est possible sinon de combler, du moins de réduire le fossé entre psychologie et biologie, et tout au moins de tenter de mettre en correspondance les analyses qui relèvent de l'une et de l'autre.

* * *

Enfin, le mal a partie liée avec la souffrance, qui peut être à la fois physique et psychique. L'évolution récente, là encore, est un appel à ce que se développent des recherches sur le mal, et non plus des explications par la notion de mal. Sous l'effet de mouvements de malades, de la mobilisation de personnels soignants, de campagnes d'opinion, nos sociétés se préoccupent bien plus qu'avant de la souffrance. Cela est particulièrement net si l'on considère les systèmes de santé. Dans de nombreux pays, des services spécialisés se développent, proposant des

soins palliatifs, c'est-à-dire se préoccupant de la souffrance de malades que l'on ne sait pas ou plus comment soigner. De même, on débat à propos de l'euthanasie, et de la possibilité de décider de mettre fin à l'existence humaine pour des individus condamnés à une mort certaine en même temps qu'à des souffrances considérables, et eux-mêmes, s'ils sont conscients, désireux d'en finir. Une tendance récente est à la médicalisation de l'euthanasie, pour qu'elle relève de la décision médicale, et à la démedicalisation des soins palliatifs. Nos sociétés apprennent ainsi à prendre en charge le malade, et pas seulement la maladie, à se préoccuper du mourant, et pas seulement de la mort.

Le mal, ici, est traité comme un problème à la fois individuel, chaque fois qu'il y a souffrance, et collectif, puisqu'il relève d'une prise en charge institutionnelle. Il n'est pas traité comme une malédiction extérieure naturelle ou divine. La sociologie du mal, on le voit nettement avec tout ce qui touche à la maladie et à la mort, progresse d'autant plus que nos sociétés se perçoivent comme faites de sujets individuels, tous plus ou moins fragiles ou vulnérables, avec chacun sa subjectivité, elle-même en permanence soumise à des processus de subjectivation et de désobjectivation.

Ainsi, les vieilles distinctions s'estompent. La place de Dieu et celle de la nature se modifient. La dissociation du corps et de l'âme est mise en cause. Qu'il s'agisse donc de métaphysique, de physique et de morale, pour

reprendre les catégories de Leibniz, dans tous les cas, la mutation de la vie collective, et celle des paradigmes des sciences sociales comme de leurs objets d'étude ouvre un espace élargi pour l'étude sociologique du mal.

2. ÉTHIQUE ET DROITS DE L'HOMME

Cet espace où le mal devient un objet pour les sciences sociales et non plus un principe explicatif ou un phénomène non social, ou non humain, s'élargit encore si l'on considère les transformations majeures qui se jouent dans les domaines de l'éthique et des droits de l'homme.

Traditionnellement, l'éthique propose des règles philosophiques de conduite, éventuellement transcrites en normes et en lois qui orientent la prise de décisions concrètes. Elle surplombe la vie collective, elle commande, en amont de l'action, des conceptions du bien et du mal, du juste et de l'injuste, du bon et du mauvais, elle encadre des choix en proposant des principes généraux qu'il n'y a plus qu'à appliquer, quitte à ce qu'un travail d'interprétation soit possible, voire nécessaire, et donc qu'une certaine latitude soit laissée aux acteurs.

Mais une évolution sensible se fait dans les démocraties, en faveur de ce que l'on peut appeler l'éthique par le bas: la décision, dès lors, se prépare au plus près de la situation. Dans ces conditions, l'éthique n'est pas, ou pas seulement un corpus abstrait de règles et de principes, mais le fruit d'une discussion exigeante entre des personnes concernées mais pas nécessairement impliquées.

Ainsi, l'éthique médicale clinique repose, dans les hôpitaux qui ont choisi de la rendre systématique et de l'institutionnaliser, sur l'existence d'une instance où se côtoient personnels médicaux (médecins, infirmières), juristes, philosophes, chercheurs en sciences sociales, etc. Dès qu'une question délicate de vie ou de mort survient dans l'hôpital, cette instance peut être saisie. Elle enquête, rencontre les intéressés, mène une réflexion collective, et apporte un éclairage pour une décision qui ne relève pas d'elle, mais est prise en grande proximité. L'éthique par le bas n'est pas nécessairement contradictoire avec l'éthique plus classique, certains y voient même simplement une éthique "appliquée", d'après une expression apparue aux Etats-Unis dans les années 60. Les domaines de cette "application" sont nombreux — le philosophe Paul Ricœur, dans les années 90, évoquait déjà la bioéthique, l'éthique environnementale, l'éthique des affaires et l'éthique professionnelle, et notait qu'elles sont "enseigné[e]s et pratiqué[e]s dans les universités, les entreprises, les hôpitaux [comme on l'a vu], les instances gouvernementales et internationales" (dans l'entrée "Ethique appliquée" du *Dictionnaire d'éthique et de philosophie morale*, tome 1, Paris, PUF, 2004, p. 694). Le "bien", c'est-à-dire la préparation à une décision qui soit la meilleure (ou la moins mauvaise) possible est la résultante d'une approche collective en situation, au cas par cas. Il n'est pas fixé par avance. Plus des chercheurs en sciences sociales participent à cette préparation, plus le

bien — et donc aussi le mal, son contraire — entrent dans l'espace intellectuel de ces disciplines.

3. L'HISTOIRE EST DANS LA SOCIÉTÉ

Avec l'histoire, il s'opère également de profonds changements, dont les plus décisifs entretiennent un lien étroit avec la poussée des mémoires dans les espaces publics. Depuis les années 60, en effet, on assiste à ce qu'Anthony Smith, un des premiers à avoir perçu l'importance du phénomène, a appelé en son temps un "ethnic revival" — une expression qui ne suffit pas à rendre compte des développements spectaculaires du phénomène depuis les années 80. Dans le monde entier, en effet, des voix se font désormais entendre pour mettre en avant non pas tant, ou pas seulement, une identité de type ethnique, c'est-à-dire conjuguant des dimensions culturelles et des références à la nature, voire à la race, mais aussi un statut de victime historique et, éventuellement, contemporaine. Les acteurs demandent reconnaissance, au nom d'une collectivité humaine, d'un passé fait de violences extrêmes — génocide, ethnocide, massacres de masse, traite négrière, colonisation brutale, etc. Dans de nombreux cas, les demandes de reconnaissance des souffrances historiques sont associées à des revendications liées au racisme ou aux discriminations subis *hic et nunc* par les membres des mêmes groupes: être African-American aux Etats-Unis, par exemple, c'est mettre en avant une culture, une littérature, des formes musicales, etc.; c'est

également rappeler la traite négrière, l'esclavage, puis le racisme subi dans le passé. C'est encore dénoncer le racisme structurel à l'œuvre encore aujourd'hui dans la société américaine. Cette poussée est si considérable qu'elle dessine un paysage hautement compétitif entre groupes se bousculant sur la scène publique pour faire valoir leur mémoire et les injustices subies, hier et aujourd'hui, ce qu'un sociologue belge, Jean-Michel Chaumont a appelé "la concurrence des victimes".

Une conséquence de la floraison de revendications identitaires, éventuellement victimaires, est qu'elles bousculent l'histoire du pays considéré, et qu'elles interpellent la nation que cette histoire met en scène. L'histoire, et notamment celle des manuels scolaires et de l'éducation est déstabilisée par la poussée de mémoires, à laquelle elle résiste, à partir de laquelle elle peut aussi se transformer. Est en jeu une inversion, une modification considérable, en tout cas, du paradigme classique qui fait de l'histoire un récit national. Hier, les sociétés et les Nations étaient dans l'histoire, et bien des philosophies prétendaient rendre compte de son sens. Aujourd'hui, c'est l'inverse, l'histoire, via la mémoire, est dans la société, qu'elle tараude et modifie au fil de la poussée de revendications mémorielles qui transforment la Nation, l'obligeant à modifier son récit historique. L'histoire comme récit est devenue une force de changement.

Hier, la socialisation des enfants ou des migrants passait par l'apprentissage du récit historique national, aujourd'hui, les migrants et leurs enfants contribuent

à modifier ce récit, obligeant la nation à reconnaître les pages les moins glorieuses de son passé, ses zones d'ombre, ses pratique de violence, de brutalité. Dès lors, le mal devient un objet pour les sciences sociales, qui doivent bien expliquer d'une part le passé et le présent des groupes qui se mobilisent sur une base identitaire et victimaire, et d'autre part l'impact de leurs demandes sur la vie collective. Comment la violence s'est-elle mise en place dans le passé, ou dans le présent, comment fonctionnent les logiques de négation de l'Autre, de destruction et d'autodestruction, de mise à mal de son intégrité physique et morale?

Il n'est plus possible d'affirmer, comme c'était encore le cas il y a peu, que chercher à comprendre la barbarie, la violence, la cruauté, le terrorisme, le racisme, c'est ouvrir la voie au mal, qui exigerait d'être combattu, tout simplement, sans le moindre effort de compréhension, assimilé automatiquement à une marque de faiblesse. En fait, si nous voulons faire reculer le mal, mieux vaut le connaître et le comprendre. Il y a là une nécessité, une demande sociale qui appelle des instruments d'analyse et des études que les sciences sociales sont plus à mêmes d'offrir que les jugements moraux, les considérations philosophiques ou les *a priori* religieux.

4. LA DÉMOCRATIE, LA JUSTICE ET LE PARDON

La façon dont les droits de l'homme ont évolué depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale contribue

elle aussi à élargir l'espace de nouvelles approches du mal. Les droits de l'homme, en effet, sont désormais portés non seulement par des forces religieuses, politiques, par des intellectuels ou par quelques associations, par certains Etats, ou par des organisations internationales comme les Nations Unies ou l'UNESCO, mais aussi, de plus en plus massivement, par des ONG. Celles-ci témoignent de l'existence de sociétés civiles nationales, c'est-à-dire inscrites dans le cadre d'un Etat-nation, mais peut-être même aussi, comme le veulent certaines analyses, d'un début de société civile mondiale, en tout cas leur conscience est globale. Leur action, souvent, vise à contrecarrer ou à faire face aux conséquences d'une forme ou une autre de mal: la guerre et ses dégâts, le désastre "naturel", la mortalité, la faim, la migration forcée, etc. Son enjeu, sans l'ombre d'un doute, n'est pas de faire face seulement ou principalement à des forces purement naturelles, et encore moins divines, mais aux conséquences d'actions humaines ravageuses.

D'autres perspectives ont été ouvertes, là encore récemment, par l'essor des demandes d'excuse et de pardon émanant de chefs d'Etat ou de responsables d'importantes institutions. Là où, dans le passé, il n'était pas question de reconnaître des torts, la reine Elizabeth II regrette les violences raciales imposées par les Britanniques aux Maoris de Nouvelle-Zélande, l'Eglise catholique revient sur sa politique assimilationniste qui a largement contribué à la destruction des Aborigènes d'Australie, ou sur

la pédophilie de nombre de prêtres; l'Eglise Luthérienne d'Amérique sur l'antisémitisme de Martin Luther, etc. L'Afrique du Sud d'après l'*apartheid*, a inauguré une pratique du pardon institutionnelle et juridique originale avec une Commission Vérité et Réconciliation qui a inspiré de nombreuses autres expériences, en particulier en Amérique latine. En faisant entrer le traitement des effets du mal par des instances démocratiques dans lesquelles des acteurs s'expriment, s'expliquent, répondent, peuvent demander pardon, etc., ce type de pratiques constitue un encouragement supplémentaire à faire du mal un problème social, politique, juridique ou culturel, à ne pas l'absolutiser et à éviter d'en faire une catégorie purement morale, religieuse ou métaphysique. Et ce n'est pas parce que le mal est désormais associé à l'implication d'acteurs, et à l'idée d'une conscience et d'une responsabilité, que l'action pour l'affronter peut se réduire à la répression et au châtement. La démocratie, en devenant davantage participative et délibérative, tout comme la justice, notamment lorsqu'elle se veut réparatrice, impliquent au contraire une réflexion collective sur des expressions précises du mal, à partir de laquelle peuvent être mises en œuvre d'autres démarches que celles de la sanction. Il en est ainsi par exemple lorsqu'il est demandé au coupable d'un crime, plutôt que d'accomplir une peine de prison, de réparer auprès de la victime, ou d'accepter un travail d'intérêt général. Le mal devient une catégorie sociologique et cesse d'être une catégorie

purement religieuse lorsqu'il est traité comme un crime, y compris contre l'humanité, et non comme un péché, lorsqu'il peut et doit être envisagé comme un problème social, historique, qu'il relève de la volonté et de la justice des hommes, et qu'il cesse d'être un fait théologique ou la manifestation d'un instinct.

5. L'UNITÉ DU MAL

Nous parlons du mal en postulant une sorte d'unité, au point, dans certaines langues, ou dans certains écrits, de mettre une majuscule — le *Mal*, *Evil*. Cette unité peut déboucher sur une définition qui tenterait de proposer un commun dénominateur à ce qui relève plutôt de la diversité des expériences — par exemple la violence, le terrorisme et le racisme. Dans tous les cas, le mal, du point de vue des sciences sociales, résulte de l'action humaine, et implique l'altération, la destruction, la négation, en tout cas la mise en cause de l'intégrité physique, psychique ou morale de certaines personnes ou de certains groupes, directement, ou indirectement.

Mais il vaut mieux éviter de la réifier ou de le déifier, en postulant une unité qui l'absolutise et, dès lors, risque toujours d'en faire un principe extérieur aux hommes. Il est possible qu'il y ait une virtualité générale du mal, consubstantielle à la nature humaine, une probabilité qui n'épargnerait personne, et qui ferait que surgissent dans certaines circonstances la cruauté, la violence

pour la violence, le sadisme. Il est possible, autrement dit, qu'existe un noyau dur, irréductible, du mal.

La vocation actuelle des sciences sociales est ici non pas de tout sociologiser, mais d'aller au plus près de ce noyau dur, de le réduire autant que faire se peut, de faire apparaître le plus possible les dimensions sociales, anthropologiques, historiques, psychologiques des diverses formes que revêt le mal. Et s'il subsiste un tel noyau résistant à une telle démarche, un ensemble de dimensions du mal que la recherche de type sociologique ou anthropologique ne peut éclairer, alors peut-être peut-on proposer pour ce noyau dur un concept de mal "pur".

Un tel concept relève du paradoxe. Le "mal pur" — et peut-être même est-ce ici qu'il faut utiliser la majuscule — serait ce qui reste des diverses expressions du "mal", en général, une fois écartés tous les aspects qui peuvent entrer dans les explications que proposent les sciences sociales. Le mal "pur" serait donc une sorte de reliquat, en même temps que la modalité extrême, épurée, de ce qui, dans la réalité concrète, historique, se présente sous des formes "impures", c'est-à-dire relevant en grande partie de ces explications.

Si le mal est dans la société, et non venu du dehors par un quelconque maléfice, naturel ou divin, s'il est humain, s'il survient du fait de l'action des hommes, alors, il faut poser les grandes questions de la culpabilité, de la conscience et de la responsabilité de ses acteurs, comme d'ailleurs de ceux qui s'efforcent de le faire reculer. L'idée d'une irresponsabilité totale, qui fait de l'auteur du mal

un non-acteur, l'exécutant d'une consigne ou d'un ordre émanant d'une autorité tenue pour légitime, sans qu'il ait à se poser la moindre question, devient inacceptable, sauf cas extrême et très particulier. Si le mal, comme le dit une formule célèbre d'Hannah Arendt, peut se manifester sous la forme de la "banalité", celle-ci ne signifie pas automatiquement irresponsabilité ou inconscience. Dans *Eichmann à Jérusalem*, Hannah Arendt décrit en effet le criminel nazi sous l'angle de la banalité du mal, en constatant que sa défense consiste à plaider l'irresponsabilité: les crimes commis, selon Eichmann, l'auraient été intégralement sur ordre, au nom d'une autorité légitime supérieure, sans sentiment personnel — si l'ordre lui avait été donné de tuer son père, il l'aurait fait, dit-il. Mais n'y avait-il aucune adhésion de sa part au projet nazi, aucune trace d'antisémitisme chez Eichmann? Personne ne peut le penser sérieusement.

Plus le mal rentre dans les catégories et les préoccupations des sciences sociales, et plus il faut lui appliquer leurs principes d'analyse, les mêmes qui servent à l'étude d'autres problèmes ou d'autres faits de société. Et parmi ces principes, il y a l'idée que les acteurs ne sont jamais ni totalement inconscients du sens de leur action, ni pleinement conscients. Autrement dit, qu'ils ne sont jamais totalement irresponsables, qu'ils sont nécessairement comptables de leurs actes, ou qu'ils devraient l'être. En ce sens, la progression de la connaissance du mal grâce aux sciences sociales va de pair avec l'idée

que la thèse de la banalité du mal doit être sinon écartée, du moins envisagée avec la plus grande prudence.

* * *

Ainsi, en s'ouvrant au mal, les sciences sociales ne se découvrent pas une vocation nouvelle, ou renouvelée, pour la métaphysique, la physique ou la morale; elles ne s'approprient pas des registres qui n'étaient pas les leurs puisque, au contraire, elles se sont assez largement construites précisément en s'en détachant, voire en les combattant. Elles donnent un nom à des enjeux ou des problèmes qu'elles acceptent d'affronter, elles mettent en œuvre des recherches qui reposent sur leurs méthodes propres, sur des paradigmes qui leur sont propres, en affirmant que le mal, comme le bien, sont humains, qu'ils ne sont pas extérieurs aux hommes et aux relations qu'ils entretiennent entre eux, qu'ils ne sont pas le fait de Dieu, ou de la nature, mais inscrits dans la réalité de la vie collective.

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