

# From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue\*

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After considering the proper tone for my participation in this “dialogue” between Europeans and Latin Americans about “Critical Theory,” I have concluded that my argumentative strategy should primarily be to take seriously the “subjects” of the dialogue and their *locus enuntiationis: who* we are and *from where* we speak. These sorts of dialogues are not frequent nor are their terms obvious,<sup>1</sup> and it is even less common for such a debate to occur *symmetrically*, by which I mean that it takes place between philosophers within a community of horizontal communication who are respected as equals, as colleagues, but who nevertheless demand to be recognized in their alterity. Such efforts are not exempt from a certain degree of incommunicability and incommensurability that can create misunderstandings, but are nonetheless united by a solidaristic will to attempt to advance a *critical philosophy with global validity*. Such a philosophy, which would accordingly set out from the perspective of those excluded from the global system (peripheral countries) and those excluded within particular states (impoverished masses), has not existed to date: I consider its construction the specific task of philosophy in this twenty-first century that we are beginning.

## 1. The first contacts with the Frankfurt School (with the “first generation”)

As for myself, I participate in what we have called the “Philosophy of Liberation,”<sup>2</sup> which since its origin has maintained a constant dialogue with Critical Theory. Just as the events of Paris '68 did not have the same meaning as those in Berkeley, the Latin American context was equally distinct.<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, under military dictatorships (imposed by the Pentagon and the Kissinger Doctrine between 1964 and 1984), the works of Marcuse – and especially *One-Dimensional Man* – came to influence us within a context that was similar to the totalitarian horror under which the first Frankfurt School was born (the “first generation”). The “dirty war” which led to the murder, torture, and disappearance of thousands would last almost two decades (as in Brazil, for example).<sup>4</sup> But along with Marcuse, we read the Martinican Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961), since our reflections were situated in the post-colonial periphery, in the global South. Moreover, our reference point was critical social science – like Dependency Theory, which was later continued by Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory. This global structure of inequality finally burst onto the scene since the Clinton administration under the name of “globalization” (which passed from a period characterized by the internationalization of the productive part of capital – as transnational corporations – to a financial and monetarist era with global implications). The point of all this is the following: our first lesson in Critical Theory was non-Eurocentric. My

1975 work *Philosophy of Liberation* begins thus:

From Heraclitus to Karl von Clausewitz and Kissinger, “war is the origin of everything,” if by “everything” one understands the order or system that the world dominators control by their power and armies [...] I am trying, then, to take space, geopolitical space, seriously. To be born at the North Pole or in Chiapas is not the same thing as to be born in New York City.<sup>5</sup>

Through the first Frankfurt School, we discovered “materiality” in the sense of living corporeality, a question that does not frequently interest those dealing with the theoretical positions of the School<sup>6</sup>: “Whoever resigns himself to life without any rational reference to self-preservation would, according to the Enlightenment – and Protestantism – regress to prehistory.”<sup>7</sup> “Materiality,” for the Frankfurt School, consists of an affirmation of living corporality (*Leiblichkeit*) as in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, which is vulnerable and has desires (Freud), and which needs food, clothing, and shelter (Feuerbach). This anthropological materiality, a far cry from Soviet dialectical materialism, was perceptibly close to our situation in an impoverished, starving, and suffering Latin America. In the Southern Cone, the multitude of demonstrations shouted: “bread, peace, and work!” three necessities that refer strictly to life, to the reproduction of its corporeal content (*Leiblichkeit*). For that reason, the political-economic sphere had a special relevance for us, as did the need for a frontal critique of capitalism (Marx). Will, affectivity and emotions, unconscious drives, and economic requirements were all integrated into the discourse of the first Frankfurt School.

But its subject was a “negative” materiality, focusing especially on the negative effects of the dominant system, its pain and misery. The “positivity” of the system always obscures the “negativity” over which it is constructed: “Hence the convergence of specific materialism with criticism, with social change in practice [...] to abolish suffering. The *telos* of such an organization or society would be to negate the physical suffering of even the least of its members.”<sup>8</sup> “Philosophy of Liberation” set out from the *locus enuntiationis* of the material victim, from the negative effect of authoritarianism, capitalism, and patriarchy. However, this is the root of a profound divergence with Critical Theory that continues up to the present (and which should be an *explicit* subject of our dialogue), that of the material negativity of colonialism (of the indigenous peoples, the African slave, the Opium Wars in China, etc.), a phenomenon which corresponds to metropolitan capitalism, Modernity, and Eurocentrism. The victim for us was no longer – as for Horkheimer, Habermas, or the “third generation” of Critical Theory – only the worker, the persecuted Jew in Auschwitz, the citizen under Nazism, women, or the working world facing the crisis of the welfare state. We were equally concerned with the victims of a global system (a globalized *World-System*<sup>9</sup> since 1492), which included the Latin American *hacienda* system that exploited indigenous people, the *mita* system of indigenous slave labor which extracted silver (colonial capitalism's first global currency) from mines like that at Potosí in Bolivia, the plantations of African slaves brought to tropical America, the Indian women forced to serve as concubines for the *conquistador*, the children brought up with Christianity (cultural domination through foreign religion), etc.

It was in this context that the ontological category of *Totality*<sup>10</sup> – so important for Hegel,

Lukács, and Heidegger, and thereby for the first Frankfurt School – showed itself to be insufficient. Thanks to a lecture by another Jewish philosopher<sup>11</sup> – Levinas – who we met in Paris in the 60s (alongside Sartre and Ricoeur), we were able to overcome the narrow understanding of ontological Totality that dominated Critical Theory from Horkheimer to Marcuse, Apel, and Habermas. In *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*,<sup>12</sup> “the Other” (*Autrui*) was the “poor” (economically other), the “widow” (erotically other), the “orphan” (pedagogically other), the “foreigner” (politically other), etc. These were the multiple faces of alterity.<sup>13</sup> Now, “materiality” (as corporeal vulnerability), and “critique” (as theory which reflects from the perspective of the pain of the dominated, exploited, excluded) gained an *ethical* fortitude, which the first Frankfurt School failed to construct as a result of their inability to overcome the category of Totality.<sup>14</sup>

From our perspective, Critical Theory from the “first generation” to the “third” has been marked by a certain degree of ontological Eurocentrism that prevents it from glimpsing a global horizon beyond Europe and North America. It has always had a certain degree of blindness toward global alterity. As such, what is currently deemed the question of “globalization” has been the initial hypothesis of “Philosophy of Liberation” since the late 60s. In fact, *Aufklärung*, besides being justly critiqued by Horkheimer and Adorno for its instrumental rationality, was not understood as a cultural and philosophical movement which – looking from the core toward the periphery, from the perspective of colonialist capitalism and the universal pretensions of European culture – served as the *locus enuntiationis* of a triple “constitution” that was ontologically despotic and fetishist:

In the first place, the Enlightenment “constructed” what Edward Said deemed “orientalism.”<sup>15</sup> Europe, which only became a mercantile center two centuries ago (as a result of the recent Industrial Revolution), judged the “Orient” – which was up to then nonexistent as a strict category of social science or critical history – to be “despotic” and backwards.

In the second place, a counter-concept or meta-category was produced which would remain subtle and invisible up to the present: “Occidentalism” (according to Fernando Coronil at Michigan), “Eurocentrism,” from which very few intellectual movements would be able to break themselves free (as a Hegelian, Marx was equally Eurocentric, at least until 1868<sup>16</sup>; as was Freud with his Greek-European Oedipus Complex, which was of course nonexistent in Africa, for example; and the three generations of Critical Theory, among others). This thesis was set out clearly: “World history travels from East to West; for Europe is the absolute end of history.”<sup>17</sup>

Third, the Enlightenment “constructed” the concept of “Southern Europe” (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal). These regions *made* history, but they were not the “heart of Europe” anymore<sup>18</sup>; Africa begins at the Pyrenees.<sup>19</sup> If Spain is “Africa,”<sup>20</sup> as a Latin American philosopher I asked myself: What about us, the colonial periphery of peripheral Spain? We felt like the non-Humans in Heraclitus (beyond the walls of Ephesus): the nothing of the non-being.<sup>21</sup> I should mention that in Paris in 1962, I began to reconstruct the “place” of Latin America in world history to refute Hegel,<sup>22</sup> at the suggestion of Mexican Philosopher Leopoldo Zea.

## 2. The dialogue with Discourse Ethics (the “second generation” of Critical Theory)

I have had the privilege and pleasure of many long years of dialogue with Karl-Otto Apel, beginning on November 25, 1989<sup>23</sup> when, two weeks after the “fall of the Berlin Wall,” I dared to critique Apel by way of an understanding of Marx as reconfigured from a Latin American perspective.<sup>24</sup>

From the beginning, we grasped the difference between the “first” and “second” generations of Critical Theory, and in my opinion Habermas was the last member of the first as well as the second member of the second (which Apel founded<sup>25</sup>). This “second generation” extended a bridge from Continental European philosophy to American epistemology and the *linguistic turn*,<sup>26</sup> which the first School had sought to take aboard inasmuch as it coexisted with the Vienna Circle, but which it failed to construct the proper categories to fully grasp (and it is as a result of this difficulty that we see the misunderstanding between Adorno and Popper, for example). Apel extended a bridge between Germany and the United States.<sup>27</sup> Habermas, whose thought had been in crisis since 1968, understood the new starting-point and in his indicative work of the period – “What is a Universal Pragmatics?”<sup>28</sup> – opened a new panorama within which he remains to this day (this is the “second Habermas”<sup>29</sup>).

As Latin Americans and philosophers of liberation who claimed to practice philosophy in the strict sense – under constant pressure from the analytic and epistemological schools, which within our medium were reproducing Anglo-Saxon thought – the sharp and novel proposal offered by Apel and Habermas seemed to us both significant and useful. The delineation of a “communicative community,” beginning with Peirce’s “indefinite community” (of which we already catch a glimmer in Paulo Freire’s praxis of an educational and dialogical community, as well as the popular movements and “base communities” in Latin America), provided a crucial theoretical frame for our critical philosophy. Hence the overcoming of the “solipsistic paradigm of consciousness” (which inevitable and equally included the first Frankfurt School) represented an important step forward. There was no denial of skepticism in the face of Modernity’s coercive reason (which had been the position of the first School), but rather there was an affirmation of the universal character of a discursive reason, which surpassed the purely analytical reason of the *linguistic turn*.<sup>30</sup> In this formulation, the speaker *always already presupposes* the existence of a linguistic community and recognizes the other participant as symmetrical – as an end and not a means, and with equal rights – following Peirce’s “socialist logic” in which the “scientific community” presupposes such an ethic. That is to say, this community affirms the *a priori* status of the ethic with respect to the argumentative use of reason, as opposed to an analytic tradition, which, in the end, was able to fall into skepticism in the face of reason *as such* (as is the case with R. Rorty). In this way, the critique of instrumental reason has always been, since Horkheimer, at risk of drifting into irrationalism.<sup>31</sup>

The “second generation,” then, critiqued the first for remaining within a solipsistic-cognitive paradigm by beginning with consciousness. By setting out from language and the communicative community, by contrast, they created a new space for pragmatism, an ethical, political, and intersubjective horizon of validity claims. Habermas writes:

But the rational core of mimetic achievements can be laid open only if we give up the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness [...] in favor of the paradigm of linguistic philosophy – namely, that of intersubjective understanding or communication – and put the cognitive-instrumental aspect of reason in its proper place as part of a more encompassing *communicative rationality*.<sup>32</sup>

This was an important accomplishment that Philosophy of Liberation was quick to take on board (insofar as this was possible given the difference between our starting point and that of Habermas). However, faced with the discursive or communicative community, we rapidly grasped the need to develop this idea further, given that the peripheral world (which, moreover, includes parts of the core) demands a higher degree of critical complexity in two ways. Firstly, within that same communicative community, it was necessary to point out the need for detailed awareness of all aspects of the phenomenon of “exclusion,” awareness of all those who are abandoned in the *exteriority* of that community. The second complication was the need to integrate the *formal* level of communication or discursivity with the *material* level of the reproduction of the lives of the members of the community, thereby recuperating a “material community” (from both Marx as well as the first Frankfurt School).

The first of these was easily understandable. Those “excluded” from the communicative community (always the primary focus in the Philosophy of Liberation) posed a problematic which, despite not being central for Discourse Ethics, was essential for an Ethic of Liberation. Levinas's “Other” made us aware of the invalidating negativity of those excluded from the community. The barbarian, the Asiatic, the slave, and the woman of the Hellenic world speak of the negation of the humanity of those excluded. The Aristotelian definition should be read thus: “Human is he who inhabits the [Greek] city,” as the others are not fully so. When Parmenides expresses that: “Being is [the Greek], non-being is not” [barbarians, for example], he is formulating a closed ontology of domination. Someone who claims: “I have been excluded from the discussion!,” or in another case: “I have a different argument which falsifies the accepted truth-claim statement!” – this sort of person can seem excessively demanding within the totality of a community in consensus. The excluded or the dissident emerges within the totality of discourse as alterity. A. Wellmer expresses this correctly: “The *truth-claim* of empirical statements implies that these statements refer (*den Bezug*) to a reality which is, up to a certain point, independent of language.<sup>33</sup> And, “The demands of rationality refer to arguments without consideration of people, while moral obligations refer to people without consideration of arguments” (108). This would require that we distinguish between a “truth-claim” (a true reference to reality) and a “validity-claim” (an intersubjective moral reference). The dissident innovator (like Galileo, who saw that Venus orbits around the sun) or the political outcast (the woman who discovers that coercive patriarchy prevents her from voting as a citizen), remain outside the consensus currently in force, bursting in with the statement that, through a *new* “truth-claim,” they oppose the *old* “validity-claim” of the community. The pioneering statement *falsifies* the accepted truth, and attempts to *invalidate*<sup>34</sup> the dominant consensus; the practical statement of the excluded also *falsifies* the justice-claim of the system in power, and breaks

the legitimating consensus. It produces what Gramsci would refer to as the passage from a *hegemonic* consensus (accepted by all) to a situation of *domination* (the coercion exercised by political society against the excluded who have gained consciousness of its “truth” – the injustice of the system – which puts in question the “legitimacy” or validity of the system).<sup>35</sup>

For Philosophy of Liberation, exclusion is essential to the discursive moment, because it is from the “Other” and her Exteriority that the new truth-claims spring forth and demand explanation. This is not the fetishization of dissidence, but rather the contrary: it is the articulation of a consensus (with truth and validity-claims), which should be put into question by the novelty and dissensus of a *new* truth-claim. This new truth-claim, in struggling for its recognition as distinct, opposes the current validity-claim in order to transform it through falsification and invalidation into a truth-claim, which is thereby intersubjectively tested (thereby accepted as a validity-claim). This process is fundamental to politics.

As for the second aspect, the question is more crucial still. It is a question of integrating the communicative community of the participant with the community wherein their living corporeality is reproduced, without a last instance determination or the negation of one community by the other.<sup>36</sup> In a way, this represents the continuation of the first element. Horkheimer suggests this theme when he writes that: “The present crisis of reason consists [in that...] no particular reality can appear to be rational *per se*, emptied of its contents, all fundamental notions have been converted into mere *formal* knots. When subjectivized, reason is also formalized.”<sup>37</sup> If all of the symmetrical participants of a communicative community were to decide to commit suicide, for example to demonstrate their courage, their decision would not be *valid*.<sup>38</sup> The formal conditions for validity would have been fulfilled, but their *content* (in its “non-truth,” as Adorno would put it) invalidates the decision. The ultimate *content*, or truth-criteria, is the production, reproduction, and growth of human life in community, represented in the last instance by all of humanity.<sup>39</sup> This is the *orienting* principle of the debate (which also serves as the criterion for the selection of experts, and as the material and ethical corrective criterion in the discussion). On the other hand, and in the limit-case, the excluded victim has an *experience* of the system which, when she is critical, permits her to access positivity through her own negativity, the reality that she suffers in her corporeality. Injustice is lived as pain.

The community of producers, the intersubjectivity of a group of embodied living beings, which accordingly has “needs” (*Bedürfnis*), to eat, drink... demands to be integrated with the communicative moment. The victim's “speech act,” the Levinasian “Other” who cries out: “I'm telling you that I'm hungry!” is engaging in a *speech act*,<sup>40</sup> which involves not only the demand for discursive participation as ethical-linguistic “interpellation” for one who might be excluded from the communicative community, but it equally implies the *material* demand on the part of those excluded from the community responsible for the reproduction of life. In this way, we discovered a way of returning to Marx from the same problematic confronted by the “second generation.” The “poor” (in Latin American Philosophy of Liberation) is one who is excluded from the *material* community,<sup>41</sup> and as such referred us not only to sociology, but also to economics. We observed that the abandonment of the economy had been extended within critical philosophy: “In the advanced

capitalist countries, the living standard [...] has risen so far that interest in social emancipation can no longer be immediately expressed in economic terms. Alienation has lost its economically-manifested form.”<sup>42</sup> It is entirely possible that this might be accurate, and even a necessary topic of discussion today for the “core” (the “Group of Seven,” or slightly more than 15 percent of humanity<sup>43</sup>), but as Latin Americans we were outraged by the provincial partiality of such a philosophical judgment. However, it is important to point out that Habermas constructs his discourse around sociologists like Durkheim, Mead, Weber, and Parsons, but not around Smith, Ricardo, Marx, Jevons, Marshall, Keynes, or Hayek. To what can we attribute this blindness toward the economy? Has the *material* meaning of philosophical reflection been lost? And if there is no consideration of the *materiality* of human existence – no consideration of the negativity of starvation as a starting point (as Ernst Bloch makes it) – then it seems that the *critical* sense of historical reality (which was indeed this “material negativity” for the first School) has faded away.

The “second generation,” upon losing this *material* sense and thereby losing *negative critique* (not in relation to a discursive community, but rather a community of living humans), effectively fell into a moralistic *formalism*.<sup>44</sup>

Our re-reading of Marx allowed us to clarify the Exteriority-Totality theme within both the formal-discursive and material-productive communities. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes about “living labor” (*Lebendige Arbeit*) as indeterminate, as not having suffered “subsumption” (*Subsumption*) to capital (the Totality): “This living labour, existing as an *abstraction* [...], this complete denudation, purely subjective existence of labour, stripped of all objectivity. Labour as *absolute poverty* [...] this objectivity can only be an objectivity not separated from the person: only an objectivity coinciding with his immediate bodily existence.”<sup>45</sup> This naked, carnal subjectivity is the height of *materiality* in Marx's understanding (and in that of the first Frankfurt School). In Latin America, in Mexico, one would have to be blind to not see it on every street of Iztapalapa. Philosophy must inevitably confront this negative materiality. When those excluded from life-reproduction (because the subject without an income – in a world in which that subject can only satisfy her needs through the monetary mediation of the market – necessarily starves) insert their demands linguistically into the communicative community, shouting: “I demand that you take responsibility for my hunger!” we are confronted with a complex *speech-act*<sup>46</sup> which includes the *material*, economic moment.<sup>47</sup>

And in reality, we are dealing with not merely the economic level, but rather with the entire *material* sphere, which has its own economic and political origins and its own historical and systemic institutions.

### 3. Themes for a possible dialogue

As a result of our apprenticeship in the work of the first two generations of the Frankfurt School, we were promptly able to begin to delve deeply into those subjects of most importance to Latin America and the world of the postcolonial periphery (constituting more than three-quarters of humanity at present). It was clear to us that by applying what we had learned to articulating the distinction between a) Totality vs. Exteriority (or System vs. Alterity, Exclusion), b) the Material

(communal or intersubjective corporeality) vs. the Formal (normative procedure), from the perspective of c) Positivity (coercive dominance) vs. Negativity (the victims of the latter), we were able to discover intersecting argumentative and problematical chains which lead to new and unexplored elements of discourse ethics, and especially of political philosophy.

### ***3.1. The critical discursivity of the excluded and oppressed***

We should consider what happens when the validity problem – which manifests politically in the question of legitimacy<sup>48</sup> – is situated within an excluded community: in a group of indigenous Mayans in Chiapas, women in Kenya, black Americans,<sup>49</sup> itinerant merchants throughout the postcolonial periphery, the Chinese or Indian working class, the elderly who have recently been transformed into political actors in Argentina and Mexico, the farmers impoverished by unfair competition in which subsidies favor German or American agricultural producers, unprotected poor immigrants, etc. Situating legitimacy in this way results in interesting philosophical developments.

In effect, if an agreement is valid, the consensus that results from a symmetrical discursive process is one in which the excluded have by definition remained outside. This invalidates the agreement, at least with respect to the affected non-participants. But if these same outcasts constitute their own communicative community and arrive at *new* agreements – which might be illegal or illegitimate for the “government-by-law” currently in power – having participated in a symmetrical discourse among themselves, then this consensus is now valid (at least for them) and more importantly, it is *critical* (in the sense of the first Frankfurt School) with respect to the previous consensus, which now appears as coercive.

We have thus reached the point of indicating what distinguishes Philosophy of Liberation from Critical Theory, from the perspective of the postcolonial periphery of a world which has been in the process of globalizing since the fifteenth century.

From the “first generation” of Critical Theory, we should retain:

- a) *materiality* (bodily, affective, ecological, economic, and cultural), and
- b) *negativity*, since *critique* sets out from this negative materiality.

From the “second generation,” we should include:

- c) *discursivity*, which when introduced into
- d) *communitary intersubjectivity* provides us with a more adequate and complex understanding of social reality, from the perspective of a *consensus* which legitimates the present order.

But *beyond (jenseits)* the “first” and “second generation,” we affirm primarily:

- e) *exteriority (Exteriorität)*, a category which E. Levinas defined with more conceptual clarity than Horkheimer, Adorno, or Marcuse,<sup>50</sup> and which allows us to better situate the victims, those suffering subjects who are *invisible* for the present system.
- f) *critical discursivity* (and *critique* in a sense which is more radical than both the “first” and “second generation,” because it is *communitary* against the “first generation” and *material*



against the “second generation”), which emerges from the *consensus* of the community of the oppressed (women, non-whites, marginals, the elderly, children, postcolonial nations, the working classes, peasant classes, and subaltern indigenous cultures, etc.). This *negative, material, community consensus which exists in the exteriority* is the *critical* departure point, *beyond that which was suspected by the first two generations of Critical Theory*.

In effect, we find this to be *beyond* even those who at present continue the tradition of Critical Theory in Germany, because the material exteriority of the victims emphasized by Philosophy of Liberation has since the 1970s been situated in the global character of the metropolitan/postcolonial, core/peripheral, masculinist/feminist worlds, and thereby overcomes *Eurocentrism*. Following Adorno, I feel that Eurocentrism did not understand that “non-truth” (*Unwahrheit*) is situated with respect to all of these poles of domination, including the global (the “non-truth” of Eurocentric colonialism). Europe has much for which to seek a pardon (in the sense explained by Hannah Arendt) from the postcolonial world, before criticizing North American imperialism (as Iris Marion Young has indicated).

To summarize: 1) we criticize the “first generation” for its solipsistic model of consciousness (as criticized also by Apel and Habermas); 2) we criticize the “second” for losing the idea of materiality (and with it its “critical” character in the strong sense); 3) we criticize the current generation of German Critical Theory for remaining within traditional Eurocentrism, for not being able to align itself with the collective actors of the *New Social Movements*, working globally against the current Empire. “Critique” has remained trapped within a mere critique of reason, of Eros, and of many other aspects which are certainly important, but which are not those that prod most violently at the 85 percent of humanity which resides in the Global South: the effective construction of a new, postcolonial, postcapitalist, and transmodern global order.<sup>51</sup>

We are now in a position to properly understand Gramsci's intuition (although even this needs to be similarly developed, as the latter had the same limitations imposed by the paradigm of solipsistic consciousness, as well as a *standard*<sup>52</sup> materialism). The great Italian thinker writes: “If the ruling (*dominante*) class has lost consensus (*consenso*), that is, if it no longer “lead” but only “rules”—it possesses sheer coercive power (*forza coercitiva*)—this actually means that the great masses have become detached from traditional ideologies, they no longer believe what they previously used to believe.<sup>53</sup> For Gramsci, a class leads when it exercises the consensus of the majority (and is thereby *hegemonic*) – up to this point Ernesto Laclau is in agreement. However, if it loses said consensus through the appearance of a *critical consensus* of previously obedient (or excluded) sectors, it will need to exercise pure coercion, thereby passing from a *hegemonic* situation to one of *domination* (Laclau does not follow Gramsci up to this point). The *old* consensus is *now* revealed to be a *coercive* consensus, and it loses legitimacy. The *anti-hegemonic, critical consensus* then begins a *process of increasing legitimacy*. The illegal and illegitimate female suffrage movement, persecuted by a patriarchal government-by-law, begins to assert the slowly increasing legitimacy of a *new right*. It is a battle for recognition— not in equality but in Difference—which demands respect for Alterity (and as such is Levinasian, and beyond the intentions of Axel Honneth). It is the struggle for the affirmation of the Other *as other*, not *as the same*. It is not the “incorporation” of those excluded from the current juridical order, but

rather the analogic (analectic) “transformation” of that juridical order, in which *new* participants exert a diachronic change on the functional determinations of all of the previous participants, thereby constituting a *new* and *more developed* government-by-law. This process is not the mere subsumption of exteriority, but rather an organic transformation of the juridical order (by which we can understand the meaning of the historical evolution of law).<sup>54</sup>

This is not only useful in cases of *formal*, discursive exclusion. It is primarily useful for all of the negative effects – frequently unintentional,<sup>55</sup> as Adam Smith would say – of the material spheres of human existence. When the workers established trade unions<sup>56</sup> in the nineteenth century, they set out from the body of the worker who suffered in process of creating surplus value not paid back in their salaries. When the slaves rebelled against their masters, they crafted a consensus from the suffering of their black skins. When the elderly are shut up in asylums by the capitalist market as though they were “disposable,” they initiate a “white revolution” (named for their hair color) demanding the fulfillment of *new* rights, whose legitimacy is born in the very same communicative community of the excluded against the exclusive legitimacy of the coercive consensus of present-day capitalism.

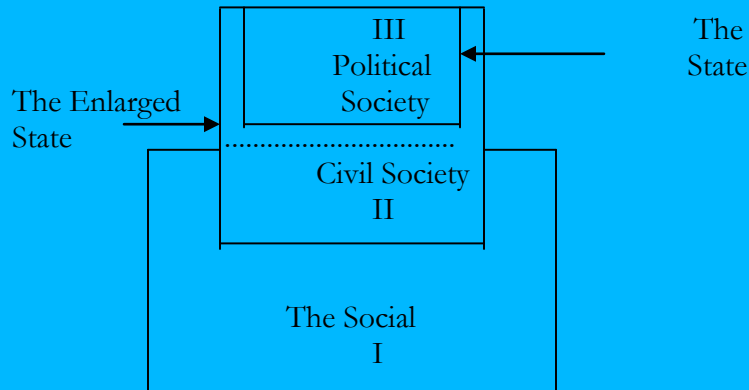
Within the same order of things we find, for example, a situation that is shocking but no less real. In Iraq, the fruit of popular knowledge, the consensus of the oppressed, has a saying that runs from mouth to mouth: “The large serpent expelled the small one!” Hussein was the small one, and the invasion by the English and North Americans is the large one. The population's discursive agreement about this situation creates legitimacy for those patriots who defend the territory of the invaded political community. For the *positivity* of the consensus in *power* – the American consensus – those who fight against the allied forces are “terrorists,” and this is the consensual judgment from the perspective of the dominant legitimacy, the political bureaucracies, and the *mediocracy* of the “core.” For the Sunni or Shi'ite patriots – from the perspective of the consensus the *social bloc of the oppressed* (Gramsci's *popolo*) – thanks to a *new critical consensus*, it is legitimate to fight the invaders. Washington used this argument for the eighteenth century emancipation from the English, Miguel Hidalgo against the Spanish in the nineteenth century, and the French Resistance against the Nazi invasion in the nineteenth century. These are examples of the confrontation of two contradictory consensuses and legitimacies. What is the answer to this apparent dilemma from the perspective of a *critical*, material, and discursive politics? Are the two military actors (the colonial or petroleum-inspired invader and the one defending her political community, her homeland) politically legitimate and normatively symmetrical? Are both perverse from a pacifistic or non-violent position?<sup>57</sup> I feel that given the above explanation, the answers are obvious.

### ***3.2. The question of “the social”: the intersection of the material and political spheres***

In the postcolonial periphery – and most especially in Latin America – the poverty of the masses results from three decades of savage neoliberal policies, and has been exacerbated in the aftermath of the collapse of existing socialism in 1989. If “the social” – as Hannah Arendt intends to propose – ought to be excluded from the field of politics, then “the political” will absolutely cease to

have any meaning in the Global South. We need to know how to integrate “the social” with “the political.”

Diagram 1: “The social,” “the civil,” and “the political”



In an otherwise unfortunate text, but one that nevertheless shows the limitations of her scheme, Arendt attacks the *material* foundation of politics:

Behind the appearances was a reality, and this reality was *biological* and not *historical*<sup>58</sup> [...] The most powerful necessity of which we are aware in self-introspection is the *life* process which animates our bodies [...] This reality [...] is what, since the eighteenth century, we have come to call the *social question* and what we may better and more simply call the existence of poverty [...] It was under the rule of this necessity that the multitude rushed to the assistance of the French Revolution, inspired it, drove it onward, and eventually sent it to its doom [...] When they appeared on the *scene of politics*, necessity appeared with them, and the result was that the power of the old regime became impotent and the new republic was stillborn; *freedom had to be surrendered* [...] *to the urgency of the life process itself* [...] They had abandoned [...] the foundation of freedom, to the “rights of the *Sans-Culottes*.”<sup>59</sup>

Arendt and many others oppose the *material* moment of politics to its *formal* moments – communication in the public sphere, legitimacy, procedural demands, the government-by-law – and do so precisely by *excluding* the material. “The social” consists of a *sub-field* or *arena*<sup>60</sup> within the political *field* where requirements of the material *fields* are integrated. This is how the economic field establishes a clear distinction within the capitalist *system*<sup>61</sup> between the owners of capital (with more goods: the rich) and the wage earners (with fewer goods: the working class). Both, moreover, are distinguished from a growing population during this historic moment of globalization (especially in the postcolonial periphery): the structurally unemployed, Marx’s *pauper post festum* (the poor proper, who cannot institutionally reproduce their lives). These latter are, in a strict sense, the “socially excluded” (that is, representatives of the phenomenon of “social exclusion”).

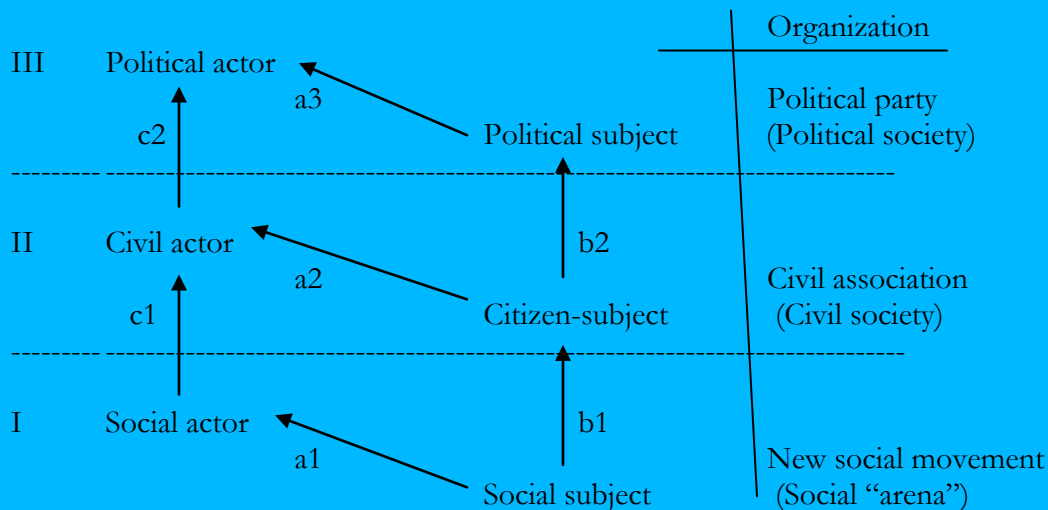
The material *fields* are not political (in that they do not form part of the political *field* as such), but they condition and determine many effects (positive and negative) in the political *field*. The

*negative* effects of the “material” *fields* in the “political” *field* are given the name “the social question.”

In effect, a *system* like capitalism that has the market or the “world of commodities” as its necessary reference point (be it for the purchase or the sale of all of the components of its essential determinations), produces by its own logic disequilibriums, which Hegel himself recognized perfectly (beginning with his readings of Adam Smith).<sup>62</sup> Politics is responsible for a certain degree of intervention to correct these inequalities. The very fact that there exist secretaries or ministries of finance, economics, labor, ecology, education, and culture, etc., within the State, shows that politics will inevitably (on the level of institutions) function in a way that directs the life of the community toward more balanced solutions on the *material* level.

And for example, those groups exiled to the social – the poor masses, women in a patriarchal system, non-whites amid white racism, the unemployed, etc. (the *negative* effects of the material *fields*) – when they gain a critical consciousness (defined above as a “discursive consensus for new rights”) as individual members or passive subjects suffering oppression or social exclusion, they are transformed into *actors*. This is how *new social movements* are born, which originally and in themselves are not political (whether they be unions, aid organizations, civil associations, etc.). When a *new social movement* (constituted by the members-victims of the material *fields*) cross the threshold of the merely social *arena* and penetrate the political *field* proper – for example, when a wage earner presents herself as a citizen of a political community – appeals for *social* justice come to acquire the character of *civil* demands. They have passed over into a *sphere* of the political *field* that we can denote “civil society.”<sup>63</sup>

Diagram 2: The various “subjects” and “actors” within the “social arena,” “civil society,” and “political society”



*Clarification of diagram 2:* “a” arrows represent the transformation from passive subject to actor (thanks to the consciousness-raising impact of the “critical consensus of the excluded); “b” and “c” arrows represent the foundational relationship (of I to II and III) and the relationship of subsumption (of III to II and I)<sup>64</sup>

But it is still possible to cross over a second threshold (indicated by arrows *b2* and *c2*). This is the

passage from “civil society” (II) to “political society” (III) – as was the case with the nineteenth-century civil association of British suffragettes, who constituted a part of the Labour Party and sought to create an effective female presence within state institutions. This was an example of a social and civil movement that transformed itself explicitly into an institutional political movement functioning within political society.

As many new social movements will appear as there manifest conflicts within the material fields (ecological, economic, cultural, household, religious, etc.), as more social groups emerge who are excluded from full citizenship, and which as such are unable to exercise their rights within the legal *corpus* of the political order. This is the *critical* moment *par excellence* of a *Politics of Liberation*, in which the *Identity* of the present order is confronted by the defiance of *Difference*, with so many oppressed faces in the material *sphere* of the political *field*, and so many excluded from the formal *sphere*, produced as unintentional negative effects of the legal *system*. Social exclusion, then, can be equally manifested as political exclusion, and new social movements originating outside the political *field* effectively transform the latter through their struggle for the recognition of *Difference*.

That is to say, the *social power* of the new social movements (as the consensually united will of an excluded group within the social *arena*, working toward the creation of a new legitimacy) struggles to develop the *political power* (as the consensually united will of the citizen-members of the political *field*) of civil associations capable of politically institutionalizing their claims.<sup>65</sup>

### ***3.3. The sphere of feasibility: Empire and the “dissolution of the particular state”?***

Confronted with the crisis of the welfare state we are inclined to consider the necessary weakening or dissolution of the particular state *as such*. This is especially important in Europe, given the appearance of a confederation of European states,<sup>66</sup> as well as in the United States, where some thinkers pose the question of the “dissolution of the state” from a quasi-anarchist and post-modernist view of Empire. In such cases, the question of *political institutions* is posed reductively, and in a way that prevents an understanding of the particular state,<sup>67</sup> and thinkers from all sides hope to convince us that it would be advantageous if that political macro-institution were to disappear or be definitively weakened: these include Habermas (from a social democratic position), someone like Robert Nozick<sup>68</sup> (representing almost a right-wing anarchism),<sup>69</sup> and thinkers like Antonio Negri<sup>70</sup> and John Holloway<sup>71</sup> (left-wing forms of anarchism).

Within the empirically possible and necessary elements of human life, we find institutions which, through the millennia, have progressively diminished the role of our instincts in order to direct them toward the cultural realm. Institutions replace to a certain degree the presumed “permanence” of our instincts, and although such institutions are not natural, they nevertheless have their own temporal status,<sup>72</sup> and are marked by an inevitable entropy.<sup>73</sup>

Hume showed – against the contemporary analytic tradition – that just as the mind infers the *principle of causality* with regard to knowledge of nature, so too does the mind infer a *principle of justice* on the practical or moral-political level, which demands institutions that would allow for the possible permanence of life.<sup>74</sup>

All institutions, responding in their founding moment to demands for the permanence and extension of life, include a certain degree of *discipline*. Anti-institutional critics are quite right to show that this discipline becomes quickly (or even from its origin) *repressive*. This was Marcuse's subject in *Eros and Civilization*.

The state is a political macro-institution. More recently, M. Foucault opposed the political binary of oppressor-oppressed as wielded by the only instance of the exercise of power (the state) and equally affirmed by standard Marxism.<sup>75</sup> He tried to show that power was disseminated, through multipolar rather than bipolar structures, in micro-institutions that discipline the body on different epistemic levels and justify the exercise of power. The panoptical power of prisons, psychiatric clinics, schools etc., fragment power, and as such undermine the over-simplified view of power as based macro-institutionally in the state. The old tradition of which this sort of critique is a part – begun by Stirner and Bakunin, continued by Sorel and Pelloutier, and which runs deeply at present in Foucault himself, along with Negri and Holloway – expresses a need for the “dissolution of the state.” This, however, brings in the entire institutional question within the philogenetic development of the human species that have progressively become “fixed” in systemic structures and institutions. Finally, it is on these latter that the entire problematic of diagnosing the nature of politics and economics is based, which provides the foundation for a properly contingent level of strategy.

Political action that seeks to change or “transform” the world *inevitably* confronts institutions. In a situation of chaos or pure original dissidence (*disidencia originaria*), there can be no transformation or dissent. To chaos one can only “con-form,” institutionalizing it toward the permanence of life by way of this “institutionalizing (*instituyente*) power.”<sup>76</sup> Original dissidence, on the other hand, is death and non-power, because when there is no consensus or agreement the “*powers-to-posit*”<sup>77</sup> of each member oppose and cancel out one another (and it is not possible to create any mediation to sustain life). The starting point should be some sort of consensus. The “form” of the institution or consensus is open to change, to be “trans-formed” through a moment of *overcoming* chaos with *creative* dissidence, into a higher form. To trans-form or change is not simply to destroy: it is to de-construct in order to innovate and move toward a better construction. Revolution is not only, or primarily, or principally destruction: it means having a principle that *orients* the deconstruction just as much as it orients the new construction (it is not the business of destroying everything, only that which is irretrievable). Those who lack criteria and principles for a new construction (note that I am not saying a “re-construction”), are not revolutionaries but simply destructive and barbaric.

It would not be possible for millions of human beings to maintain and expand communal life without institutions. Should we irrationally return to the Paleolithic era? No. We are dealing with the “trans-formation” (what Marx called *Veraenderung*) of those institutions which began as life-enhancing mediations, but which have since become instruments of death, impediments to life, instruments of an exclusion which can be observed empirically in the cry arising from the pain of the oppressed, the ones suffering under unjust institutions. Such entropically-repressive institutions exercise a *power-over*<sup>78</sup> their victims, whose *power-to-posit*<sup>79</sup> their own mediations is negated, and who are thereby repressed.

Strategic action can have a principle, or fundamental *political postulate*, much like Marx applied an economic postulate to the economic order, denoted negatively as the *realm of freedom*. Marx tells us:

In fact, the realm of freedom (*Reich der Freiheit*) actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases<sup>80</sup>; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond (*jenseits*) the sphere of actual material production.<sup>81</sup> This “beyond” (*jenseits*) already suggests the transcendental character of an *empirical impossibility*, but which is possible as we will see as a postulate. This postulate is defined as follows:

Freedom in this [economic] field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control (*gemeinschaftliche*), instead of being ruled by it as by the blind *forces* of Nature.<sup>82</sup>

The ideal content of the postulate – logically possible but empirically impossible – represents a principle for the material orientation of action. What is Marx thinking about here? I believe that he is thinking (as he often does) of the late Kant (after the *Critique of Judgment*). Kant writes the following on the question of perpetual peace:

It follows that *perpetual peace*, the ultimate end of all international right, is an idea incapable of realisation. But the political principles which have this aim, i.e. those principles which encourage the formation of international alliances designed to *approach* the idea itself by a continual process, are not impracticable. For this is a project based upon duty, hence also upon the rights of men and states.<sup>83</sup>

Kant calls these regulative Ideas, principles for the *orientation* of action. Marx knows that the “realm of freedom” (zero work time, a perfect economy, maximum free time) is *empirically impossible*, but it allows us *to orient* ourselves according to the principle that in all action or institutional transformation we bear in mind a postulate in which the workers “under their common control [...] achiev[e] this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature.”<sup>84</sup> However, all possible production – not only capitalist, but also post-capitalist – must *empirically* exist in a feasible economy, which is to say:

But it nonetheless still (*immer*) remains a realm of necessity. *Beyond it (jenseits)* begins that development of human energy which is *an end in itself*,<sup>85</sup> the *true realm of freedom*, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite.<sup>86</sup>

If communism is the realm of freedom,<sup>87</sup> it is a postulate that helps to orient critical praxis and reflection. Thus, in order to understand the fetishized world, one ought likewise to deploy the postulate of economic reason (which was only formulated later, in *Capital*):

*Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common (gemeinschaftlichen), and expending their many different forms of labour-power in full self-awareness as one single social labour force.*<sup>88</sup>

In order to understand the concealment of meaning through which the commodity comes to be autonomous from the value of its substance (living labor), Marx resorts to a postulate that allows him to describe, by default, the commodity-fetish.<sup>89</sup> But this postulate is likewise an orientation for all strategies for partial or revolutionary transformation.

Therefore, communism is not some empirical future moment in history, but rather a postulate for practical orientation whose historical realization would be impossible. To attempt to realize such a postulate historically is to open a breach for standard<sup>90</sup> Marxism, which pulls the floor from under one's feet and makes all feasible political-strategic action impossible.

We should proceed in politics in the very same manner that Marx proceeded in economics: working on the level of macro-institutional feasibility. The “dissolution of the state” should be defined as a political postulate. To seek to bring this about empirically leads to the “anti-institutional fallacy,” and the impossibility of a critical, transformative politics. To say that we need to transform the world without exercising power through institutions – including the state (which we need to radically transform, but not eliminate) – is the fallacy into which Negri and Holloway fall.

The presently given institutions, and even the particular state as a political macro-institution, are never perfect and always require transformation. But there are moments in which institutions become diachronically repressive in the extreme, in their final entropic moment. *Hegemony* – the consensus exercised over the “obedient” à la Weber's legitimate domination<sup>91</sup> – gives rise to *domination* in the Gramscian sense. The state machinery, in the service of the economic interests of the dominant classes in the postcolonial metropolitan nations, become definitively repressive. The popular masses<sup>92</sup> go on gaining consciousness in proportion to level of their oppression. This accumulation of power-to (*potentia*),<sup>93</sup> which takes place partially in the exteriority of the structures of the particular state but within the “bosom of the people” (which is not without its contradictions), confronts the political institutions currently in force. It does so to “trans-form” them (not necessarily for reforms<sup>94</sup>, but only rarely for revolution<sup>95</sup>), not necessarily to destroy them (though it could if required by the postulates), but to use them and transform them according to its ends and according to the degree of correspondence to the permanence and extension of life and symmetrical democratic participation of the oppressed people.

The anti-institutionalist believes that the destruction of the state represents an important victory on the path to revolution. This sort of destruction is irrational. They have confused the “dissolution of the state” as a postulate (empirically impossible, but functioning as a principle for strategic orientation) with its empirical negation.

How are we to understand the postulate of the “dissolution of the state”? Right-wing anarchism – like that of Nozick – proposes the dissolution of the state or something close to it under the guise of the “minimal state.” The unhindered market produces equilibrium, especially in Hayek's formulation; for this, the minimal state needs only to destroy the monopolies that impede



the free movement of the market. A union seeking a wage increase is a monopoly, because it places demands on the market that do not emanate from free competition. The duty of the state is therefore to dissolve the union.

In the service of this total market definition, the process of globalization as controlled by transnational industrial and financial capital (not with *hegemony*, because this was lost in the move to the last-instance use: the violent coercion of military power), equally proposes the dissolution or weakening of the particular states in postcolonial peripheral nations. The postcolonial state – however much it may be dominated by the private bureaucracies of the transnational corporations which impose their own members onto the political bureaucracies of those states (and we see, for example, a Coca-Cola distributor as president<sup>96</sup>) – still represents the last possible resistance for oppressed peoples. To dissolve or substantially weaken their states is to take away their only possible defense. The second Iraq War represents a war against a particular postcolonial state that, however corrupt and dictatorial, nevertheless had a certain degree of sovereignty and self-determination which interposed some resistance to the appropriation of its petroleum by foreign companies.

For all of this, it is tragic that a sector of the left coincides with the North American Empire – the home-state<sup>97</sup> of the transnationals and the ultimate example of power based on its economic-political-*military* complex – in dissolving the particular peripheral state. If Europeans alongside Habermas seemed as though they were dissolving the old particular state, it is for the strategic fortification of a Confederation of States in the European Union. In Latin America, if it were possible to proceed to organize a Confederation of Latin American States<sup>98</sup> without American or Spanish influence, such a weakening of the particular state would be equally useful. But for the moment, this is not the situation.

Any struggle for the real, effective dissolution of a particular postcolonial state is a reactionary project. It is an entirely different thing to struggle to transform the particular postcolonial state in view of a political postulate of the “dissolution of the state” as such. This would mean that in the creation of any new institution, in every exercise of institutional power, or in the transformation of all of the institutions (the transformation of the state), one would have the “dissolution of the state” as an orienting principle. However, this cannot take the form of the objective, empirical negation of these institutions, but rather must take the form of a responsible, democratic, popular, social, and participatory subjectivization of institutional functions, in which representation proceeds by *approaching* (to use a Kantian word) the represented. In this situation, the symmetrical participation of all those affected would become flesh in all political actions to such a degree that the state will cease to weigh so heavily, becoming lighter, more transparent, and more public and democratic. This would not be a “minimal state” (which leaves everything to the market or to the impossibility of perfect citizens<sup>99</sup>), but more accurately a “subjectivized state” in which the citizens will participate to such a degree that the existing institutional sphere will shift toward transparency, the bureaucracy will be the minimum necessary, while its efficacy and instrumentality when it comes to the permanence and extension of human life will nevertheless be at a *maximum*.

I do not believe that it makes sense to attempt to transform political institutions without the state, without exercising power which is communicative, democratic, legitimate, participatory,

socialized, and popular. It is, however, possible to declare a postulate which could never be realized, but which functions like the “North Star” that helped the Chinese navigators to sail at night. Despite all that I have expounded, I think that the postulate of the “dissolution of the state” is a strategic orienting principle that functions as a regulative horizon.

### ***3.4. A note regarding political organization: strategic action***

In the same way, this lack of realism with respect to state institutions results in a lack of critical realism in political strategy. I am not speaking of a “politics of organization,” but rather a “politics of events.” Lacking a strategic institutional reference – like the state (which should nevertheless always be transformed) – strategic mediations become insignificant. In the end, for Negri, the global multitude faced with the specter of Empire (which for him lacks both an army and an exteriority) confronts the efforts of some organizations like the NGOs. This multitude will accumulate very little power (*potentia*) while under the control of and managed by the mediocracy (as Giorgio Agamben, who knows well the political power of media magnates like Berlusconi, refers to it), which inevitably fabricates the *interpretation* of all political actions and institutions. It is true that it is the interpretation of the event that creates the consciousness of the multitudes, as public opinion is manipulated through a sort of “fabricated meaning” that completely distorts those same events. In the end, what occurred in Seattle, Genoa, or Cancun is what the media presented through the distortion of information. The media outlets don not argue; they present video and images, they grind them up and repeat them, and they create an imaginary, fetishized unanimity with complete control over the *meaning of the political*. Is it possible in such a situation to passively await the maturation of a *politics of events*?

It would seem that the reason and the political will of the oppressed masses, of the particular postcolonial states, of the marginalized, impoverished, of the original peoples of all the continents, of the excluded and the “wretched of the earth,” also demands institutional mediation. Be they as they may, the unforeseeable, the already known, or the transformable, such institutions are necessary so that an empirical strategy might begin to clear the path.

When the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre asserts that “Another world is possible!” – the practical postulate of all postulates – it slowly begins to invent from below, without firm presuppositions, humble in the face of the experiences of that globally-networks and united base. This base comprises political organizations on all levels, from the economic, household, neighborhood, sporting, artistic, cultural, and theoretical spheres, etc., new social movements whose participants know how to transform themselves into *political actors* in different institutions, not only in civil society but likewise in political society. Political parties, which need to transform themselves as reality demands, would need to play a new and more active role, not as a vanguard, but rather as a political school, as the rearguard of the popular masses, as a critical institution in the exercise of power, elaborating alternatives, as a site for the discussion of postulates, projects, models, ends, strategies, tactics, means... so that the reproduction and development of life in political community might be possible, so that its democratic, symmetrical, authorized participation might be possible,

within a realism of that feasibility which is situated between anarchist impossibility (which is empirically impossible) and conservative impossibility (which is empirically possible, but open to criticism). Hope, beyond conservative pessimism, but more proximate than the extreme optimism of the anarchist, becomes mobilized when it exercises a feasible power which transforms the existing structures from the perspective of a postulate which needs only be filled with content: “A world in which all worlds fit!” as the Zapatistas proclaim.

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## Notes

- \* Translated by George Ciccariello-Maher. Originally presented at the international symposium “Critical Theory in the Dialogue between Europe and Latin America and the Present Tasks of Critique,” 12 October 2004 [at the UAM in Mexico City]. Participants included Wolfgang Bonß (Universität der Bundeswehr, München), Stefan Gandler (Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), Klaus Günther (Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), Axel Honneth (Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), Wolfgang Leo Maar (Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil), Christoph Menke (Universität Potsdam), Alfons Söllner (Universität Chemnitz), and Albrecht Wellmer (Freie Universität Berlin).
- <sup>1</sup> My more than ten years of dialogue with Karl-Otto Apel – see *Ética del discurso-ética de la liberación: Debate 1989-1997* (Madrid: Trotta, 2005) – have taught me that it is good to clearly define our points of departure. Some chapters of my work *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996) are part of this debate.
- <sup>2</sup> Last year (2003) the founders of this movement met in Córdoba (Argentina) to commemorate the thirty years since its founding (although it began in the Second National Philosophy Congress in Argentina in 1971), and we will meet again in November of 2004 to evaluate this long process. [Editor: This note was clearly written in 2004. It has been left as it was originally written when first presented in the original version.]
- <sup>3</sup> In the “Three Cultures Plaza” (Tlatelolco) in Mexico, more than four hundred students and workers were murdered, something which occurred neither in Paris nor in Berkeley. In Argentina, the city of Córdoba was “taken over” by worker and student strikes against the military dictator Onganía (in an event known as the “Cordobazo”). Many events as diverse as the 1966 Chinese Cultural Revolution are not generally understood as the proper context for philosophy originating in the “core.”
- <sup>4</sup> I personally experienced the selective persecution of extreme right-wing Peronism (the fascism of the periphery). On October 2, 1973, my home was the target of a bombing, which sent my books flying into the street, damaging my complete works of Hegel and Marx (sometimes, when I am teaching my classes, I show my students these half-destroyed books, and I tell them: “this book was unbound by the bomb. We were thinking from the perspective of persecution, and later from the perspective of exile. A Horkheimer or an Adorno in California is no stranger to me: we have lived the same political experiences, some in the “core,” others in the “periphery,” different “sites of enunciation.”
- <sup>5</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, tr. A. Martínez and C. Morkovsky (New York: Orbis Books, 1985 [1980]), 1-2. “Seit Heraklit bis zu Clausewitz und Kissinger gilt *der Krieg als Ursprung aller Dinge*, wenn unter dem Begriff *alles* die Ordnung oder das System verstanden wird, mittels derer der Herrscher die Welt durch Macht und Militär kontrolliert [...] Deshalb kommt es darauf an, den Raum, den geopolitischen Raum ernstzunehmen [...] Es ist nicht dasselbe ob einer am Nordpol oder in dem Slums von New York geboren wird”--*Philosophie der Befreiung*, 1.1.1 (Hamburg: Argument, 1989), 15-16). I note that the German translator did not include the reference to Chiapas from the Spanish text, which was written in Mexico in 1975; I knew the poverty in Chiapas..., I was at the Indigenous Congress of 1974 ... what an omen! Moreover, the translator did not understand that I am not referring to the “slums” of New York, but rather to Wall Street bankers. The global system bears within it the contradiction between a poor indigenous

Mexican and the center of global economic power. The treachery of the translator!

- <sup>6</sup> For example, in Seyla Benhabib, Wolfgang Bonß, and John McCole, eds., *On Max Horkheimer: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), while the authors touch on the economic question, they fail to clearly define negativity in its radical material sense.
- <sup>7</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. J. Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1999), 29.
- <sup>8</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, tr. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1997), 203-4.
- <sup>9</sup> [English in original, tr.]
- <sup>10</sup> See Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- <sup>11</sup> I say “another” because all of the members of the first Frankfurt School were Jewish, and received the funding to begin their research from a Latin American Jew, the father of Felix Weiss (a friend of Horkheimer) who was an Argentinean landowner and wheat exporter.
- <sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961).
- <sup>13</sup> At the beginning of the 70s we had already begun to travel along the path of *Difference*, long before the postmoderns, but this difference was defined in terms of “transmodernity.”
- <sup>14</sup> My *Philosophy of Liberation*, already cited, sets out from the “proximity” (*Proximität*, 2.1) of the face-to-face encounter of corporeal subjects, and not from the ontological Totality of the world (*Welt*) as conceived in Heidegger or Hegel. In my first ethical work (the five volumes of *Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana*. Vols. 1-2: Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1973; vol. 3: Mexico City: Edicol, 1977; vols. 4-5: Bogota: USTA, 1979-1980), I explicitly highlighted this critique of the first Frankfurt School. “The Other,” trans-ontological exteriority, ethics, the transcendentality internal to the system (Franz Hinkelammert), was constructed as a phenomenological category by Levinas. To this, we added economic, political, psychoanalytical, and geopolitical dimensions (the settler in the periphery, the exploited indigenous person, the oppressed slave, the woman violated by patriarchy as described in my 1973 treatise on gender and sexuality, the “child” and the nation [*pueblo*] educated by the coercive pedagogy highlighted by Paulo Freire, etc.). Many dimensions of Exteriority, which years later would be deemed the *Difference* of the woman, the “American black” [English in original, tr.], the marginal, the future generations indicated by Hans Jonas, immigrants, etc. “Philosophy of Liberation” has since the 1970s dealt with these themes.
- <sup>15</sup> See my 1992 lectures in Frankfurt: *Von der Erfindung Amerikas zur Entdeckung des Anderen. Ein Projekt der Transmoderne* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1993; English translation *The Invention of the Americas*, Continuum, New York, 1995); especially “Das europäische Ich und das Verschwinden des Anderen” (p.15) [Tr: in the English translation, this is “From the European Ego: The Covering Over” (from p. 15) but neither this nor the Spanish edition refers as clearly to the Other as the German to which Dussel refers]. The critique of Hegel was a timely one, because he was the first philosopher to provide a total reconstruction of world history from a *Eurocentric* perspective after the collapse of China, which could have begun the Industrial Revolution before the United Kingdom in the middle of the eighteenth century, but didn't. Against Max Weber's erroneous hypothesis, this was due to the lack of coal and an ecological crisis which kept the farmers in the countryside, as they were therefore not able to carry out the already nascent industrialization of the Yangtze valley (see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). We will deal with these questions in our present history of political philosophy.
- <sup>16</sup> His contact with Russian populists like Danielson awakened him from his “Western European” dream, see my *El último Marx y la liberación latinoamericana (1863-1882)* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1988).
- <sup>17</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason in History*, tr. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975 [1830]), 197.
- <sup>18</sup> Germany, France, Denmark, and Scandinavia are “[...] the *heart of Europe*” (Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 195). This leaves out England, of which Hegel writes, in what is perhaps the acme of cynical Eurocentric fetishism: “Die Engländer haben die große Bestimmung übernommen, die Missioneren der Zivilisation in der ganzen Welt zu sein”--Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*; en Hegel, *Werke*, Theorie Werkausgabe, vol. 12 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 538. It is interesting that we need not wait until George W. Bush to see the sacralization

“missionaries”) of a “civilization” (his own, like Samuel Huntington) with pretensions of universality. This is “Christiandom”; see Karl Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1964), II, cap. V: “Das Problem der Christlichkeit”, 350. Hegel's expressions are horrible: “In contrast with the absolute right which it possesses as bearer of the present stage of world spirit's development, the *spirits of other nations* are without rights”--*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, tr. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1821]), § 347, 374, [Dussel's emphasis, tr.]. A European philosopher could imagine what a Latin American feels like in the face of such a civilizational “disproportion” (as Kierkegaard would say).

<sup>19</sup> Hegel adopts this notion from [Cornelius de] Pauw.

<sup>20</sup> This double-insult shows us a Hegel who is *both* Eurocentric *and* racist: Africa is barbarism as such; therefore, if Europe ends at the Pyrenees, so does “being,” and beyond that is only “non-being.”

<sup>21</sup> “Figures (*Gestalten*) who wander *outside (ausserhalb)* their limits”-- Marx, *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956), 523-524. Ghosts! [Editor: The quote is in Spanish in the original essay, and was translated to English.]

<sup>22</sup> Upon returning from Europe in the 60s, I expounded on this subject in my first university course: *Latinoamérica en la historia universal* (this work can be found in the “virtual library” of the Latin American Federation of Social Sciences as “Hipótesis para el estudio de latinoamérica en la historia universal” – <http://www.clacso.org> – under the first heading: “Obra filosófica de E.D.”). [Editor: As of December of 2011, the text can be found as a pdf file here: <http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/histouniv/intro.pdf>]

<sup>23</sup> These annual meetings have been edited in German by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt (Aachen: Augustinus Buchhandlung, since 1990). As I have mentioned, the entire debate is available in Spanish: Karl-Otto Apel and Enrique Dussel, *Ética del Discurso-Ética de la Liberación*; it has appeared in Italian as *Etica della comunicazione ed etica della liberazione* (Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica, 1999). [Editor: For the German versions of the debates between Apel and Dussel and relevant literature see the series Concordia Reihe Monographien, particularly volumes 4 and 6, listed in the works cited under Raúl Fornet-Betancourt as editor.]

<sup>24</sup> I had already finished my trilogy: *La producción teórica de Marx: Comentarios a los Grundrisse* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1985); *Hacia un Marx desconocido: un comentario a los manuscritos de 1861-1863* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1988); translated in English as *Towards an Unknown Marx* (London: Routledge, 2001); *El último Marx* (cited above).

<sup>25</sup> Apel explicitly and openly criticized – as have we – the idea that there was a “second” Frankfurt School, and as such we agree with Helmut Dubiel that it is better to speak of “generations”; see Helmut Dubiel, *La teoría crítica: ayer y hoy* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa, and Plaza y Valdés, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>27</sup> See above all his articles from the second volume of *Transformation der Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), which were written between 1967 and 1971. The most programmatic of these was certainly the last: “Das Apriori der Kommunikationsgemeinschaft und die Grundlagen der Ethik” (vol. 2, 358-435), as well as the “Introduction” (vol. 1, 6-76). See my *Ética de la Liberación* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta; México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana--Iztapalapa, and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), § 2.3.

<sup>28</sup> In *Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zur Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), 353-440.

<sup>29</sup> See § 2.4 of my *Ética de la Liberación*, cited above.

<sup>30</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>31</sup> Clearly, Apel's effort at creating an ultimate and transcendental foundation for procedural rationality can in turn be criticized as extreme rationalism, as foundationalism, which postmodernists will decry.

<sup>32</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, tr. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 390.

<sup>33</sup> A. Wellmer, *Ethik und Dialog* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), 203.

<sup>34</sup> To “falsify” is to deny the “truth-claim” with reference to the reality of a statement (the *material* moment); to “invalidate” is to negate the intersubjective “validity-claim” (the *formal* moment). This distinction lies in the background of the first three chapters of my *Ética de la Liberación*.

<sup>35</sup> In the same way, Galileo was condemned by [Saint Robert] Cardinal Bellarmine in 1616 and excluded from the

scientific community, at least in the pontificate states (for a certain amount of time).

<sup>36</sup> By the way, the arguer doesn't live to argue, but rather argues to live. The living being has reason as its "cunning," and it is not the case that the "cunning of reason" has life as its mere condition.

<sup>37</sup> M. Horkheimer, *Crítica de la razón instrumental* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1973), 19 [My translation, tr.].

<sup>38</sup> See the development of this argument that Franz Hinkelammert presented to Karl-Otto Apel in a meeting in São Leopoldo (Brazil): "La ética del discurso y la ética de la responsabilidad: una posición crítica", in F. Hinkelammert, *Cultura de la esperanza y sociedad sin exclusión* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI, 1995), 225-272.

<sup>39</sup> See my article "La 'vida humana' como 'criterio de verdad'," in my *Hacia una filosofía política crítica* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001), 103.

<sup>40</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>41</sup> This is "material" in terms of *content* (*Inhalt*), not in terms of physical reality.

<sup>42</sup> Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 228 [Tr: my translation from Spanish].

<sup>43</sup> This is when one compares the inhabitants of "core" countries to the nearly 5.3 million inhabitants of the postcolonial "periphery." This formulation does not hold for the other 85 percent. See the annual statistics of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) *Reports*. The statistics from the 1992 *Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, back cover) are already too well-known: the richest 20 percent of humanity receives 82.7 percent of the global goods (as income); the remaining 80 percent receive 17.3 percent of that income; the poorest 20 percent receives only 1.4%. The proportion between the richest and poorest quintiles is 60/1. In no other epoch of human history has the species seen such a tremendous disproportion in the distribution of goods. This proportion is estimated to reach 120/1 in the year 2020.

<sup>44</sup> This was the subject of my article "Materielle, formale und kritische Ethik," in *Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie* (Lüneburg) 6 (1998), 39-67.

<sup>45</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, tr. M. Nicolaus (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), 295-296. See my comments on the *Grundrisse* cited in note 24 above.

<sup>46</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>47</sup> See my article "The Reason of the Other: *Interpellation* as Speech-Act," in *The Underside of Modernity*, 19-48.

<sup>48</sup> Habermas deals with this subject in his *Faktizität und Geltung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992). This work – representing the political policy of the "second generation" – only manages to excel as legal philosophy, a theory of "government-by-law" and nothing more. This shows how *formalism* prevents him from developing a politics of strategic action, of the material institutions of the state, of material political principles and *feasibility* [English in original, tr.] (since he only develops a "democratic principle"), and above all he fails to develop a *critical* politics rooted in the perspective of the material negativity of the victims. The "second generation" failed in its effort to construct a complex politics with global validity. It is partially valid – for Western Europe and the United States – where the survival of citizens is guaranteed (by a globalized system of the massive extraction of surplus value from the periphery).

<sup>49</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>50</sup> This category is not adequately understood by J. Derrida, and is considered by A. Honneth to be "theological": they do not understand the *semitic* narrative which allows a non-habitual *philosophical* hermeneutic to appear within Western philosophy.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding "trans-modernity" see my article: "World-system and Trans-modernity", in *Nepantla* 3, no. 2 (2002): 221-244.

<sup>52</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>53</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, ed. and tr. J.A. Buttigieg, Vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 32 [The Italian phrases are inserted by Dussel, tr.]

<sup>54</sup> See my work: "La transformación del sistema del derecho", in *Hacia una filosofía política crítica*, 159-170.

<sup>55</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>56</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>57</sup> Given that I lived for years in Israel, and written about and found myself inspired by Semitic tradition, I can take a risk

and put forth a more polemical example: Are the Palestinians, defending their small territory which has been effectively made into a *ghetto* by the anti-Semitic Zionism of A. Sharon (with immense walls enclosing it like a prison), a group of terrorists? Or are they patriots who are defending a community which faces a space-clearing genocide in accordance with the theory of the *Lebensraum*? Confronted with this question Michael Walzer, for example, doesn't know what to say, and his arguments fall apart. See my collaboration on "La política de E. Levinas", in Moisés Barroso-David Pérez, *Un libro de huellas: aproximaciones al pensamiento de Emmanuel Levinas* (Madrid: Trotta, 2004), 271-293.

<sup>58</sup> Here one can see a lamentable confusion, given that the biological constitution of the *human being* is inevitably *historical*.

<sup>59</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 53-55. [Dussel's emphases, tr.]

<sup>60</sup> An "arena" is a space in which many "*material fields*" come together (for example, the ecological, economic, cultural, etc.) which relate to "human life" (as Arendt sensed in an unanalytic manner, under the ambiguous rubric of "biology").

<sup>61</sup> The "field" is broader than the "system" (in the existential sense of the Heideggerian *Welt*, or in the sociological sense of Pierre Bourdieu's *champ*). A "field" can consist of various "systems" (and the latter is taken in approximately the same sense as N. Luhmann).

<sup>62</sup> See a few paragraphs in the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* [*Rechtsphilosophie*], §§ 242-248. What is interesting, and rarely indicated by commentators, is that Hegel finds a solution for the "great masses" of poor in the European cities which would involve sending them to the colonies. Where are we – a postcolonial periphery without colonies – to send our poor today? Do we send them as illegal immigrants to the countries of the North? Do we send them to the cemeteries? Or do we need to radically transform the global system?

<sup>63</sup> a) *Civil society* (represented by the II in diagram 1) is the micro-institutional or *private* organization operating *implicitly* inasmuch as it operates politically (that is to say, insofar as it is civil and partial). It doesn't involve the state as a totality, but rather that *part* of the political community which – as it specializes in the interests of the group – depends on private groups in civil society or the social movements arising in a sub-field thereof. The citizen's membership of civil society is equally natural as that of political society, but can always act directly as a participant in the organizations of civil society.

b) *Political society* (III) is the macro-institutional *whole* which operates *explicitly* in the public sphere, insofar as the latter is both political and constitutes a whole. Its actions involve the state as a totality, and its principal actors are the representatives who make up the government. All represented citizens are always full members – representing the permanent and last instance of the state as political society – at least potentially or virtually. It can exert its agency on the state, for example, in a plebiscite or referendum to change previous decisions or to recall a government, as well as during the regular election of representatives and the filling of other institutions (we will call this – following the institutional framework of the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela – "Citizen power," which includes the organization of districts, open town halls, popular assemblies, etc.). These are all necessary in order to complement representative democracy with participatory democracy, in which changes to representation must be made *more transparently and immediately*.

<sup>64</sup> The "social subject" materially *grounds* the "citizen-subject," but the latter formally and politically *subsumes* the former. Their social appeals provide the base for the demands put forth by the civil organization, providing its content, but the civil association is more complex than the social movement and subsumes it, because it maintains the claim of the latter but transmutes it into the *politics* of a government-by-law.

<sup>65</sup> I will be analytically discussing this subject at more length in a work currently in progress: *Politics of Liberation*.

<sup>66</sup> "But not only the German Federal Republic: all European countries have evolved since the end of the Second World War in such a way that the integrative plane of the national state has lost its weight and importance"--Jürgen Habermas, *Identidades nacionales y postnacionales* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1989), 116-117. [My translation from Spanish, tr.].

<sup>67</sup> I refer to the "particular state" (and never the "national state"), because no European or Latin American state is simply "national." For example, the Spanish state comprises at the very least the nations of Cataluña, Vascongadas, Galicia, Castilla, etc. The same is the case in France, Italy, and even more so in the *United Kingdom* (whose very name

indicates a *united* plurality of “nations”). [Tr: for Dussel, this “particular” character is to be understood in Hegelian terms, as neither Universal (*Allgemeine*) nor as Singular (*Einzelne*), but rather as between the two (*Besondere*)].

<sup>68</sup> Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

<sup>69</sup> See Franz Hinkelammert, *Crítica de la razón utópica* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1985).

<sup>70</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>71</sup> John Holloway, *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

<sup>72</sup> The merely non-contingent or that which presumes a certain permanence is opposed to that which is contingent properly speaking: the possible to the impossible, the necessary (in the practical, not the natural sense) to the necessary. Institutions, as opposed to contingent strategic actions (as in fixed capital, which is non-circulating, but ends up doing so), are necessary (not because of natural or physical laws, but rather in the sense that life cannot reproduce itself without their mediation) and possible.

<sup>73</sup> See Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law and the Economical Process* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

<sup>74</sup> “The avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly *destructive of society* [...] So that, upon the whole, we are to esteem the difficulties in the establishment of society to be greater or less, according to those we encounter in *regulating* and *restraining* this passion.” David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 2, ed. A.D. Lindsay (Dutton: NY: Everyman's Library, 1966), 197; see bk. III, pt. II: “The origin of justice and property”. Starting from this *fact (to be)* Hume infers a *duty (ought to be)* [These parentheses are in English in the original, tr.], as opposed to those who would attribute to Hume a vulgar inversion in the form of a “naturalistic fallacy,” and this duty is to limit destructive passion. From such an argument – and since earthly goods are not infinite (though such a world is logically possible) but rather scarce, and as we are not able to carry out miracles (another world which is logically possible) – finding ourselves in the *empirically real* world would infer the need for institutions to “regulate and restrain” passions. This is a dialectical inference of the type found in Marx.

<sup>75</sup> [English in original, tr.]

<sup>76</sup> See Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975).

<sup>77</sup> See: “La voluntad de poder y el poner-valor (*Wert-setzung*)”--Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, en *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1996), 480; which refers to the text by M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. II (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 107. We refer to *potentia* as the “power” (in the positive sense) of a people as a multiplicity of wills which are united by rational consensus from below; on the other hand, *potestas* is that determinate and institutionalized power which exercises power which is delegated (from *potentia*). *Potestas* can dominate (as Holloway interprets it: “when those in command command by *commanding*”, as the Zapatistas say), but this can also be in the service of the *potentia* (which is, then, positive: “when those who command command by *obeying*”; against Holloway). [Tr: Dussel's term here is “*poder-poner*,” or literally “power to put/place” (which he associates with the Hegelian *setzen*), and elsewhere we see the content of the term specified as the “power to put the mediations for survival.” The “*positive, creative power*” (*potentia*) is now that “power [logically] prior to and standing above the power-over” (*potestas*) (“*poder-anterior-y-por-sobre-el poder-sobre*”), which, in the critical moments, “accumulates in the exteriority of the system, in the interiority of subjectivity, in critical communities.” Enrique Dussel, “Diálogo con John Holloway (Sobre la interpelación ética, el poder, las instituciones y la estrategia política,” *Revista Herramienta*, 16 (July 2004): n. Pag. Web. 1 Dec. 2011.

<sup>78</sup> *Potestas* as negative domination.

<sup>79</sup> *Potestas* as a positive force, obedient to *potentia* [See note 77 above, tr.]

<sup>80</sup> Notice that this would be empirically impossible.

<sup>81</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume III, Book III: The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, F. Engels, ed. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962 [1894]), 799. [German phrases and emphasis added by Dussel, tr.]

<sup>82</sup> Marx, *Capital III*, 800. [Tr: German phrase and emphasis added by Dussel. The English translation seems to gloss over Dussel's second emphasized phrase, as the original invokes “einer blinden Macht,” which is closer to Dussel's Spanish rendering of a “blind power” (un *poder ciego*) than the English translation above (“the blind forces of Nature”) which



besides being somewhat misleading is also strangely redundant.]

- <sup>83</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970 [1797]), 171. For a full treatment of this theme, see my *Política de la liberación: historia mundial y crítica* (Madrid: Trotta, 2007), Ch. 3, §10 [Editor: this reference was updated after the publication of the book].
- <sup>84</sup> Marx, *Capital III*, 800.
- <sup>85</sup> This is to say that it transcends instrumental reason and empirical economic action.
- <sup>86</sup> Marx, *Capital III*, 800. [Tr: Dussel's emphasis. He also emphasizes the fact that for Marx this “always” (*immer*) remains a realm of necessity. The translation inserts “nonetheless,” completely glossing over the permanence of the realm of necessity (and is therefore rather politically suspect), and moreover distorts Dussel's point.]
- <sup>87</sup> Marx writes “*Communism* is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development – which goal is the structure of human society”--Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. D. Struik, trans. M. Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 146.
- <sup>88</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, ed. E. Mandel, tr. B. Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1977 [1867]), 171. [German phrases and emphasis added by Dussel, tr.]
- <sup>89</sup> See more on this subject in my work *Las metáforas teológicas de Marx* (Estella, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1993), 296 ff.
- <sup>90</sup> [English in original, tr.]
- <sup>91</sup> For Weber, power is the exercise of legitimate domination. This is a contradiction in terms. If it is domination – negation of the Other's power-to-posit – it cannot be “legitimate,” or the word legitimacy will have lost all of its normative meaning. And this is the case with Weber.
- <sup>92</sup> With Gramsci, I understand the people (*pueblo*) to consist of “the social bloc of the oppressed,” which includes classes, fractions of classes, indigenous ethnic groups, civil associations like feminists, those struggling against racial discrimination, etc.. Fidel Castro defined the “people, when it is a question of struggle...”, in his early works (see my work *La producción teórica de Marx*, 400 ff).
- <sup>93</sup> [Tr: Dussel's invocation of this term can be interpreted a reference to power-to: *potentia* (as opposed to *potestas*). See note 77 above]
- <sup>94</sup> For the difference between “reform” and “transformation,” see my *Ética de la liberación*, cap. 6, § 6.4.
- <sup>95</sup> Transformative or liberatory action is not always revolutionary (as the latter is only realized a few times every century), but nor is it reformist. The difference is based as much upon the content of the action (which can be conjuncturally the same as that of the reformist) as it is upon its orientation or strategic and tactical criteria, of its means and ends in the short and long term. Those who “transform” construct toward a pole which allows them to advance, correct errors, and modify tactics, without losing their strategic horizon: the critical political postulate.
- <sup>96</sup> [Mexican president Vicente Fox, tr.]
- <sup>97</sup> [English in original, tr.]
- <sup>98</sup> On 8 December 2004, the agreement for the Community of South American Nations was signed in Cuzco, Peru (but without, for now, the participation of Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean), which signals the beginning of a new historical process of major geopolitical significance.
- <sup>99</sup> If all citizens were politically perfect, ethically honest, etc., the state would be unnecessary. There is a species of political utopianism which, based as it is upon this subjective perfection as a postulate, objectively destroys institutions and makes politics irrational. The most suitable course is precisely the opposite. Since it is impossible for all citizens to be perfect, institutions are *necessary*. But because institutions can never be perfect, it is always necessary to *transform* them. This is the critical realism which Marx showed in economics, and which we apply analogically to politics.

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