

Derrida's Role in Anti-Oedipus: The Colonial Archi-territorialization

by ULYSSES PINHEIRO

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to show that the references to Derrida in *Anti-Oedipus* may serve as a reminder that life forms and thinking situated in a post- and decolonial position possess an element that is undeconstructible and impervious to schizo processes. If this analysis is correct, then the philosophy of difference, whether in its Derridean or its Deleuzian-Guattarian version, cannot be applied, without qualification, to the colonial situation. But it will also be shown that this is not an indication of a flaw in their theories, but only a way of pointing out some of their extrinsic limits.

The great flaw of the Europeans is always to philosophize about the origin of things according to what happens around them.

Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages*.

(I) Introduction

Jacques Derrida's name is mentioned four times in *Anti-Oedipus*, three of them in footnotes. This graphic position suggests that Derrida generally appears in the book as an ally, being invoked to corroborate or make more precise certain theses defended by Deleuze and Guattari¹. It is true that the only time it is mentioned other than in footnotes, Derrida's name is the sign of a partial disagreement – but, precisely because of this restricted character, it is at this point more a matter of establishing the precise terms of an alliance than of marking a frontal opposition². Derrida would be one of the numerous allies called upon by its authors in their peculiar synthesis – a disjunctive and subversive

¹ In a joint interview with Guattari about *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze thematizes his politics of alliances: « Nous cherchons des alliés. Nous avons besoin d'alliés. Et nous avons l'impression que ces alliés sont déjà là, qu'ils ne nous ont pas attendus, qu'il y a beaucoup de gens qui en ont assez, qui pensent, sentent et travaillent dans des directions analogues : pas question de mode, mais d'un 'air du temps' plus profond où des recherches convergentes se font dans des domaines très divers » (Deleuze 1990 : 36).

² Nevertheless, some have identified in this passage a radical opposition between the central theses of *Anti-Oedipus* and Derrida's philosophy. See, for example, Cross 2017.

synthesis – between psychoanalysis, Marxism, and ethnology, and would compose with these other conceptual personae a network of references that would give to the theses defended therein the status of a new movement of thought.

Underneath this initial impression, however, lies a more complex relationship, in which fundamental questions are articulated and crucial metaphysical-political decisions are made. We will address one such question, concerning the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's work for postcolonial and decolonial philosophy, by examining it through the way in which Derrida's thinking on deconstruction (insofar as it deals with the phenomenon of coloniality) is figured or disfigured within *Anti-Oedipus*. The fact that non-European peoples are thematized by Derrida from the point of view from which European anthropology has described them, what also occurs in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (although all three adopt a critical tone toward anthropology), could reinforce the suspicions of some, such as Gayatri Spivak, that their theories remain circumscribed within the narrow confines of Eurocentrism (although Spivak exempts Derrida from this problem, at least to some extent). These suspicions will give us the opportunity to show that there is a kind of secret alliance uniting Deleuze, Guattari, and – despite Spivak – Derrida, and separating them *en bloc* from what would be the impossible colonial *position*.

Before beginning what could only improperly – we shall see – be called a "comparison" between deconstruction and schizoanalysis, it is important to emphasize what we all already know – but which needs to be said: that this congress around *Anti-Oedipus* takes place in a former colony, in a country that occupies the periphery of the capitalist empire, and that, therefore, the effects that this book-machine has produced in the last half century receive a singular inflection from this political geography. It is also important to notice, within the initial limits of this lecture, that Brazil is not mentioned in this book, at least not insofar as Brazil is the name assumed by this former colony in the context of the formation of nation-states during the 19th century. And yet *Anti-Oedipus* contains an indirect reference to Brazil, in a footnote in chapter 3 – actually a two-fold indirect reference, since it only appears as a quotation of the formula used by Derrida in *On grammatology* to account for the impossibility of incest. Derrida examines therein the drift that unites and separates Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau, especially insofar as it occurs around the phenomenon of the prohibition of incest; in this context, Derrida comments on Lévi-Strauss's descriptions and analyses of the Nambikwara, the Native American people living in the high headwaters of the Juruena and Guaporé rivers. Therefore, the presence of Brazil in Deleuze and Guattari's book could only improperly be described as the presence of something like a "Brazilian" subject, if we understand this adjective from the perspective of the state formation created by the Portuguese – but, for this very reason, such absence and such impropriety concern us to the highest degree.

(II) The internal splitting of metaphysics

Oppressive identity systems always have, in *Anti-Oedipus* (but also for Derrida), a more or less visible fracture that divides them from within. Given that the recognition of the constitutive indeterminacy of thought and power structures fundamentally characterizes both the procedure of deconstruction and that of schizoanalysis, we propose in this presentation is the following hypothesis: life forms and thought situated in a post- and de-colonial position have an element that is indeconstructible and impermeable to schizo processes, such that neither *Anti-Oedipus* nor *On Grammatology* can be "applied", without qualification, to the colonial situation. This is not to point out a "flaw" in these theories, but only to delineate some of their extrinsic limits. It is worth noting, in this respect, that asserting that there are indeconstructible events should not be a problem if we accept, with Derrida, the thesis that deconstruction is not a method, that is, it is not a procedure *a priori* available for any and all realities that present themselves as presence – after all, for Derrida, justice, for example, is indeconstructible.

Let us examine, then, the limits of deconstruction and schizoanalysis together. Deleuze and Guattari quote, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Derrida's two important works at the time, *On Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*. The quotations made by them revolve around the aforementioned incest, but also around dreaming and writing. What interests us in the present context is the first of these themes, because it is where Derrida's work is invoked in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the psychoanalytic and ethnological interpretation of the prohibition of incest, the Oedipal topic *par excellence*.

Indeed, the first mention of Derrida in *Anti-Oedipus* is made in order to corroborate the thesis that the prohibition of incest does not repress the desire for a particular member of the family group, but, on the contrary, that the object of this desire is produced by the very act of prohibition. What is repressed [refoulé] is not the Oedipal desire, but an intensive state of indifferentiation, which is determined by the repression "in relation to extensive affiliations and lateral alliances" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 188). Instead of being a symptom of an erasure of the object of desire, Oedipus operates the repression that shapes and, therefore, creates the desire for the forbidden object by becoming the disfigured image of the true repressed [refoulé] object. This idea resumes a central point of the previous chapter of the book, "Psychoanalysis and familialism", which already understood the supposedly private Oedipal dramas on the basis of social formations. But whereas in chapter 2 the family of capitalist societies was the focal point of the analyses³, the section of chapter 3 in which Derrida is first summoned deals with the way European and North American ethnology has described non-(or: not yet) capitalist, so-called

³ « Le refoulement est tel que la répression devient désirée, cessant d'être consciente ; et il induit un désir de conséquence, une image truquée de ce sur quoi il porte [...] *C'est dans un même mouvement que la production sociale répressive se fait remplacer par la famille refoulante, et que celle-ci donne de la production désirante une image déplacée qui représente le refoulé comme pulsions familiales incestueuses* » (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 142; emphasis in original).

"savage" societies. The colonialist temptation to "oedipianize" these societies takes as one of the main examples, in chapter 3, the analyses made by Marcel Griaule of the Dogon people (in the area of present-day Mali). It is in this context that Deleuze and Guattari affirm "that it is not Hamlet that is an extension of Oedipus [...] on the contrary, a negative or inverted Hamlet is first with respect to Oedipus" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 187). The Dogon myth reported by Griaule is, according to the authors of *Anti-Oedipus*, the record of the institution of the somatic order in which the son is no longer figured as the twin-brother of his mother, so that what he recriminates the uncle of is not having performed what was interdicted to the son's position, but rather "not having done what he, the son, could not do" - and what he "could not do", what the uncle himself did for the wrong reasons, was to unite with the mother "in the name of that germinal filiation, marked by ambiguous signs of gemination and bisexuality, according to which the son could have done it too, and be himself this uncle in intensive relationship with the mother-twin" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 187). What is repressed, in short, is this "great nocturnal memory of intensive germinal filiation" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 188). Incest is logically impossible, because it is impossible that concrete persons belonging to a social group (the mother, the sister, the father, the child) can be objects of sexual fruition if they are *named* as such (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 190). It is in this context that Derrida's *On Grammatology* is invoked; here is the passage from the note that interests us:

Jacques Derrida wrote, in a commentary of Rousseau: "Before the feast there was no incest because there was no prohibition of incest. After the feast there is no longer any incest because it is prohibited... The feast *itself* would be the incest *itself* if any such thing - *itself* - could take place" (*De la grammatologie*, p. 372-377) (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 189).

We should notice that this quotation is not taken directly from the section of *On grammatology* in which Lévi-Strauss and the Nambiwara are examined, but rather from the chapter devoted more specifically to Rousseau, concerning his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; this makes reference to the Brazilian and American colonies even more indirect than we pointed out above, insofar as they now appear only as the implicit object of Rousseau's considerations on the so-called primitive societies. We know well the role that the discovery of America, in the 16th century, played in European culture - and, in the 18th century, the paradisiacal image of peoples without a state and without civilization continued to structure the political thought of philosophers, including Rousseau⁴. In the framework of the deconstruction of Rousseau's philosophy of language, Derrida shows that the boundary between the state of nature and civilization - or what is usually called "culture" - is indeterminate. Derrida's reading of Rousseau attributes to the

⁴ In the opposite direction of this movement, we cannot forget the role that Rousseau's reading will play in the independence processes in the colonies, among them the Brazilian "Inconfidência Mineira", also in the 18th century.

latter a kind of movement of denial. On the one hand, deconstruction tries to introduce indeterminacy into supposedly closed and well-delimited systems, thus opening them to an Outside that makes the production of meaning infinite – and the criticism against Rousseau on this point is precisely that he supposed that there is a determined limit between nature and culture, i.e., *between indeterminacy and determination*. In order to be able to "imagine the unimaginable" that is this determinate boundary, Rousseau had to suppose, as a founding fiction, that "negativity, the origin of evil, society, articulation, *come from outside*" (Derrida 1967a: 363) – it is as if the State appeared from nowhere on the horizon, already entirely ready and functioning (Cf. Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 257). On the other hand, however, deconstruction shows that Rousseau himself (and here we might paraphrase Derrida, wondering if something as such – *Rousseau himself* – can take place) takes care of blurring such a precise boundary: the feast in primitive societies would be precisely the thicknessless but endless moment that infinitely precedes the establishment of the Law. This means that systems, like Rousseau's, that oppose exclusive disjunctions, characteristic of metaphysics, never fail to present a constitutive fissure, a "condition of impossibility" that at the same time allows and prevents the binary opposition and the determined limit. That is to say, because the passage from nature to culture is both impossible and necessary, it is required to introduce between them a moment that is both natural and cultural, an arbitrary and yet instinctive artifice. The "age of the supplement" would be preceded by itself and by its opposite, thus constituting a continuity and a rupture with the state of nature. In other words, metaphysics itself would already contain in itself – if something like "metaphysics itself" were to take place – its own deconstruction. In this sense, if there is a movement of denial in Rousseau, it is precisely insofar as he represses such a fracture, imposing on the system a closure that it never had.

The sharp separation between these two apparently distinct domains, that of the feast and that of the Law, is also what would be denied by Deleuze and Guattari when they claim that "incest does not exist". In fact, the idea of a determined limit is foreign to the thought of Deleuze and Guattari. In the folds involved in the processes of individuation and actualization, the absence of a crucial limit that would separate the inside from its outside is precisely what is in question, although this indeterminacy should not be confused with an indifferenciation (on the contrary, it is where there is a profusion of differential processes that indeterminacy is produced). In the same way, the idea of invagination proposed by Derrida in his writings, especially those of a more directly political character, has in view a similar kind of indeterminacy through excess of determination – this is why deconstruction is, in a certain sense, constructivism.

In examining the passages of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* in which Rousseau fictionally retraces the origin of civilization, a central moment is the one that locates in the "hot countries" (Africa, the Mediterranean, but also South America⁵) the birth of

⁵ Cf. Rousseau 1995: 395: « Les véritables langues n'ont point une origine domestique, il n'y a qu'une convention plus générale et plus durable qui les puisse établir. Les Sauvages de l'Amérique ne parlent

culture: it is in them that language is more original, closer to music, and in which men finally leave the reigning solitude of the state of nature to a communal life. Now, in these "hot countries", says Derrida, paraphrasing – that is, deconstructing – Rousseau, lies "the intangible [*insaisissable*] limit where society was formed without having begun to degrade" (Derrida 1967a: 370). It is at this moment that the feast occurs. As we have seen, if incest does not exist, it is because we are always before or after this limit, which is figured by Rousseau as the eternal present of the feast, or the feast as a paradigm of presence. Subtracted from ordinary temporality, it "has *properly* [the emphasis is Derrida's] no place" (Derrida 1967a: 377). The birth of society is this unstable point that subtracts itself from time and passage, as a kind of infinite instant. In other words, in having to account for the passage from nature to culture, Rousseau must oppose two realities that have nothing in common: society is the accident that comes from outside and strikes like lightning upon natural innocence. The instant of this transmutation is the condition of the impossibility of Rousseau's discourse, as well as of every discourse that, after him, pretends to speak of something like a "culture." Let us not forget that, for Lévi-Strauss, Rousseau was the patron of ethnology.

If *Anti-Oedipus* is to be distinguished from the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* it is because it does not conceal (and neither does Derrida) the indeterminacy of the feast with an operation of denial that represents it as pure instantaneous and immediate passage, without depth. It would not be unfair, then, to conclude that Derrida, Deleuze, and Guattari criticize classical metaphysics through by exploring its fractures, already mapped – but duly repressed – by its own official representatives, such as Rousseau. It remains to be investigated to what extent the colonial situation subtracts itself from metaphysics, that is, from the deconstruction of metaphysics, precisely by the act of categorically inscribing itself in it.

(III) Spivak's Critique of *Anti-Oedipus*

According to the hypothesis we would like to propose here, the colonial situation would occupy a place analogous to the one that justice, forgiveness, gift, and hospitality have in Derridian deconstruction: it would be precisely that situation in which something like a "determined limit" could take place, the one in which there was no time of the feast, in which the Law and the State literally and suddenly appeared from outside. In other words: in the colony, Oedipus has been crowned emperor, and between a before and an

presque jamais que hors de chez eux ; chacun garde le silence dans sa cabane, il parle par signes à sa famille, et ces signes sont peu fréquents parce qu'un Sauvage est moins inquiet, moins impatient qu'un Européen, qu'il n'a pas tant de besoins et qu'il prend soin d'y pourvoir lui-même ». If, in this passage, the "savages" are situated outside society, in other Rousseau seems to hesitate about where to situate them in the genetic description of society; thus, on p. 385, they are described as belonging to one of the stages in the history of men gathered [*rassemblés*] into nations.

after there is a precise boundary. Or again: the forms of life and thought situated in a colonial position possess an element that is indeconstructible and impermeable to schizo processes, precisely insofar as here the real took place, and a sharp border was drawn separating us from Europe, that is, from this binary system of oppression crossed by a more or less perceptible internal fracture.

We should note that this hypothesis about the emergence of the real in the colonies has nothing to do with the various realisms that still haunt us, because, contrary to what the advocates of the latter propose, the real we are dealing with here depends on European indeterminacy, from which it is distinguished and from which it is formed. That is, what is called "real" here does not refer to the supposed mode of being of things themselves, understood as the origin of representations and their criterion of correctness, but rather to an unapproachable remainder – less a fracture of the symbolic, in Lacan's key, than what remains, often in the form of merchandise, as pure opaque presence, under the processes of social and political production. Far from being the place of the feast, before incest and guilt, the "*tristes tropiques*" would be the great laboratory of the production of the real – not because of the commonplace according to which we would be anticipating today what will soon come to be reality in the metropolitan centers, such as the climatic cataclysm, but rather because of the fact that the real (that is, Europe) only came to be in the colonies, and that since the 16th century. The colonies would be, in short, the actualization of the unrealized past of and by Europe, what Europe could never be – namely itself. It is as if the colony were the fulfillment of the dreams – or rather the nightmares – of the metropolis.

Let us examine whether this hypothesis is plausible.

In her famous paper "Can the Subaltern Speak?", originally published in 1988, Spivak made a polemical intervention in the area of post- and de-colonial studies. As is well known, this text is structured around a harsh criticism of the supposed Eurocentrism of Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari – and, in relation to the latter two, her analysis of *Anti-Oedipus* has a certain importance in the course of the argument developed there (which is not surprising, given Spivak's affinities with Marxism). Her essay is complex and cannot be easily summarized; as it has become an inescapable reference in this field of investigation, we will limit ourselves to highlighting its central critique of Deleuze and Guattari's book.

Before we do that, however, we must remember that Spivak was the translator of *On Grammatology* into English: her translation was published in 1976, only four years after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*. This affinity to Derrida's thought, then still relatively unknown in the United States, leads her to state that the merit of the author of *On Grammatology* lies in the fact that his critique of the concept of subject shows that the latter is "not a general problem, but a *European* problem," (Spivak 1994: 89) in contrast to Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, who would have succumbed to the "danger of appropriating the other by assimilation" – and, in the same tone, she points out that these

last three authors are "dangerous" precisely because they are "enthusiastic radicals" (Spivak 1994: 104).

The core of Spivak's critique lies in the identification of what she believes to be an unacknowledged kernel of Enlightenment universalism at the very moment when Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault claim to give up representing or speaking on behalf of the oppressed, assuming in this way precisely *that the subalterns can speak* – i.e., assuming, according to Spivak, that the peripheral otherness can integrate into an ideal cosmopolitan speech arena. Precisely because of this, she concludes, Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault, despite appearances of promoting a radical critique of the sovereignty of the classical subject, would have kept it intact. As a consequence of this assessment, Spivak identifies, in the theories of these three authors, the impossibility of an ideological critique based on class interest and an admission of the foreclosure that, according to her, characterizes the absence of the colonial (non)subject.

There are already some critical analyses of Spivak's critique of Deleuze and Guattari. In Spivak's more direct criticism of *Anti-Oedipus*, she could perhaps be accused of committing a petition of principle, insofar as she assumes the validity of her more orthodox version of Marxism against the heterodox reading proposed in the book⁶. In a recent paper, Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey show, quite convincingly, that the validity of Spivak's position depends on the acceptance of a false exclusive disjunction, namely either the subject is to be understood as barred, on the basis of a constitutive lack, or s/he is to be understood as the self-transparent subject of the Enlightenment tradition. From this disjunctive premise, Spivak concludes that since Deleuze and Guattari do not accept the first definition of the subject, they inevitably fall into the second, despite their intentions. Robinson and Tormey's criticism of Spivak consists of denying the premise of her disjunctive syllogism: instead of only two alternatives, there would be a third way, ignored by her: "Deleuze offers, against the lacking divided self, not an undivided self, but a non-lacking divided self" (Robinson and Tormey 2010: 35).

Even accepting this critique of Spivak's critique, yet *something* of the latter's position perhaps holds. *De jure*, she suggests, the colonial condition, insofar as it is a condition of subalternity, was necessarily constituted as absolute inaccessibility, as incommensurable difference and radical otherness in relation to European thought. Coloniality is essentially silence. Attempts by anthropology and the so-called "human sciences" to describe this otherness cannot, therefore, erase the constitutive position of its "object" as "fully other", under the risk of projecting inadequate spatio-temporal– that is, Eurocentric and anachronistic – schemes onto the colony. In sum: in order not to be Eurocentric, European science has to be Eurocentric, because it must construct its object of studies as an absolute otherness; and this construction, if it wants to be coherent, cannot access such a radical

⁶ For example, in the following passage: "I have tried to argue that the substantive concern for the politics of the oppressed which often accounts for Foucault's appeal can hide a privileging of the intellectual and of the 'concrete' subject of oppression that, in fact, compounds the appeal" (Spivak 1994: 87).

otherness, but must adopt a kind of pure and simple reverential silence, which assumes beforehand that the subaltern can speak⁷. This is where Spivak's objection comes in: the subaltern is essentially the one who cannot speak, her/his constitutive aphasia defining the colonial position.

(IV) Afropessimism and colonization

Retaining this aspect of Spivak's critique, we can reverse it in an unforeseen direction, namely if nothing is shown in the colonies, it is because nothing is given here except a Europe that has finally fully actualized itself. The "real" of the colony is the reified presence of Europe, a fullness that does not admit internal differences, fissures, or becoming. If the simulacrum marks the absence of the origin and the reversal of Platonism, we can say that the colony has become the origin of Europe, which is only its image and likeness.

It is in the contemporary context of Afropessimism that we will find a common ground for thinking of the colonial situation as the form *par excellence* of non-being and for characterizing (post)colonial thought as the absence or lack of ontology – a vacuity that expels from its empty domains the becoming and indeterminacy. Going back to one of the cores of Frantz Fanon's thought – by the way, one of the "allies" listed in *Anti-Oedipus* –, a lineage of authors have been thinking about the enslavement of black people precisely from the point of view of this character of total nullification, of the transformation of subjects into objects; as Fanon says: "I came into the world preoccupied with arousing meaning in things, my soul full of the desire to be the origin of the world, and here I find myself an object in the midst of other objects" (Fanon 1952: 88). One thinker who opposes Afropessimism, but precisely insofar as he recognizes that his own position is in some sense indiscernible from it, is Fred Moten; in his essay "Blackness and Nothingness," Moten takes the positionality of enslaved black lives as a "displacement of ontology" (Moten 2013: 739). If ontology is the inventory of things from a certain inescapably political circumscription, enslaved people would be the objects – the commodities – expelled from the political realm and therefore reduced to nothingness, mere objects endowed with exchange value. The mass of enslaved people and their descendants would therefore not occupy a perspective, since the latter would be the privilege of those who are recognized as individuals in the political field. We must remember that, in modern times, to be an individual is precisely to be endowed with a perspective. It is only by assuming the radicalness of the thesis according to which blackness is nothingness that a thought about this nothingness can give way – even if in the form of atopy – to forms of

⁷ Lévi-Strauss attempted to avoid this paradox by characterizing anthropology itself as a Western "myth." For a critique of this move by Lévi-Strauss, see Derrida, "The Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (Derrida 1967b).

resistance to the colonizer, to the white European man, that is, to Being and Becoming.

Moten himself does not see his position as opposable to some themes in Deleuze's philosophy. Thus, at a certain point in his essay, he formulates a series of questions, taken as equivalent, namely "What is nothingness? What is blackness? What is the relation between blackness, thingliness, nothingness, and the (de/re)generative operations of what Deleuze might call *a life* in common?" (Moten 2013: 742). "A life," that is, the Deleuzian form of indeterminacy, would then be, for Moten, the way to account for the nothingness that (de)characterizes black lives. Nothingness, Moten warns, is not absence – rather, we might add, it is the objectness of the commodity fetish. That is why Moten makes another approach to Deleuze in the same essay, this time to the way the latter deals with the combinatory in Samuel Beckett's texts: the exhausted, says Moten, marks "the real presence, the presence of the thing in exhaustion" (Moten 2013: 774). If we were to move closer to the field of psychiatry, which was Fanon's, but using a reference that is not his, we could perhaps say, with Lacan, that this nothing, understood as pure presence, is the real itself, that is, the impossible; in the words of Slavoj Žižek, "one must keep in mind Lacan's *motto* according to which *nothing is lacking in the real*: every perception of a lack or an excess ('not enough of this', 'too much of that') always involves the symbolic universe" (Žižek 1994: 11).

Extending these reflections on the equivalence between blackness and nothingness to the colonial situation beyond the desubjectivation involved in the transformation of living bodies into inert commodities, we can say that the colony is the absolute realization of land as a real estate – and we must remember that the word "estate" comes from the Latin word "*status*", meaning condition, position, and place⁸. A real estate is, in this context, a property without becoming. If enslavement transforms people into commodities, the colonization of land constitutes its geopolitical structures into mere economic instances of territorial administration. More than an ahistorical place, the colony is the instance that allows the opening of modern history in metropolitan societies: to the extent that it ontologically derives from and precedes, at the same time, the metropolis, it is what makes such historicity possible. As Carl Schmitt has already shown, the constitution of modern European nations and their system of international jurisdiction depended on the domination and sharing of the "free" seas. The colony is the inert block of land separated from the civilized nations by the infinite oceans, an original soil conceived as archi-territory, in both senses of the prefix "archi-": origin and preeminence. Imagined as mere static soil from which wealth is extracted (agriculture, cattle, minerals), many colonies – among them the South American ones – never really constituted themselves politically as an intrinsic unit. The internal wars in the various former African colonies illustrate this point exemplarily. Or still, to use a South American event as an illustration of the same

⁸ In Portuguese, "real estate" is translated as "propriedade imobiliária" or "bem imóvel", and in this last expression, the adjective "imóvel" indicates, in a broader way, the quality of everything that does not have movement, as when I say that someone is motionless.

thesis: when the Portuguese court was introjected into Brazil in 1808, fleeing from the Napoleonic wars, what happened was not a Derridian invagination of metropolitan power, but a real encapsulation of power in Rio de Janeiro – Brazil then became, in Maria Odila da Silva Dias's words, a colony of itself (Dias 1972) (which is true even today).

If the colony is the originary being-in-itself and for-itself, the thing itself in itself, and if, nevertheless, this *ens realissimum* has been derived from Europe, are we not, with all these formulations, courting too much the taste for paradoxes? It would not be necessary to resort to the *ex-nihilo* creation of the Christians to dispel these metaphysical concerns: it is enough to consider that the real is taken, in this context, as a remnant of the colonial enterprise, as the waste left over from the processes of extracting the wealth of the devastated land, conceived only as real estate. If it were still the case to believe in the opposition between the symbolic and the real, the latter would be the eternal present – not even the so-called "nature" yet, but that which allows us to think of it from a constitutive meaninglessness.

Therefore, if the "real" of the colonies can be approximated to the real in itself, it is only in the Kantian sense of the thing-in-itself, by designating something unknowable – but a thing-in-itself strangely *caused* by phenomena. More than Kant, however, it is Hegel who can clarify this sense of the real in which being is immediately converted into nothing. In the First Section of Book I of the *Science of Logic*, titled "Determinability (Quality)", Hegel states that being is the "immediate indeterminate"; however, by opposing itself to any qualities or determinations, the very indeterminacy of being becomes its characteristic quality. In this immediate determinacy, no difference is thought and nothing is intuited – the nothing "is the pure empty intuition" and, in this sense, in it nothing itself is thought. The conclusion of this movement is that "Being, the indeterminate immediacy, is in fact nothing, and neither more nor less than nothing"; in this immediate passage from being to nothingness, it is also possible to conclude, in the opposite way – but, as we have seen, it is *the same way* – that nothingness "is the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and is therefore completely the same as that which pure being is" (Hegel 1983: 69). To think about the colony, or at least some of its geopolitical structures, is to think as if this dialectic ended in this first initial moment of identity, violently denying to it the *passage* from being to nothingness – that is, the becoming –, the third figure of the *Science of Logic*. In this sense, the colony is the place of the *proper*, of property taken both in an ontological and economic sense, the place of all places, the fixed point on the globe that allowed the reconfiguration of European politics in the 16th and 17th centuries – and, hence, the primitive accumulation of nascent capitalism.

At this point, one might object that modern colonies undoubtedly have peculiar qualities distinct from each other, have a history and have a becoming, and that they are therefore not to be confused with pure being in general – thus the Iberian colonies of the Americas are quite different from the Asian colonies of England or the French colonies of Africa, even when we consider the colonial world in the same time period. To answer this

objection, let us admit that the colonies are indeed qualitatively different from each other. In assimilating the colony to nothingness, that is, to being, we are not proposing that all aspects of colonial life fall under this ontological characterization. The situation of the globalized world-system is too complex and varied to allow such a broad extension of the assimilation between coloniality and nothingness. But the terrible aspect of colonial life is that, unlike what happens in the metropolises – which, in a proper sense, do not exist, just as incest does not exist (if existence means being fully determined and identical to oneself) – the colonies exist, that is, they are identical to the nothingness of pure presence. If, therefore, deconstruction and schizoanalysis do indeed encounter an extrinsic limit in the face of this ontological characterization of certain central elements of colonial life, would there be a clear criterion for enunciating what these elements subtracted from becoming and history would be? In other words: what exactly, in the colonies, would be opaque to the conceptual instruments of *Anti-Oedipus*?

A first answer would be what remains opaque are the operators of totalizing identity syntheses, such as the State and other geopolitical institutions, which are complete presence to itself – that is, they are presence to the metropolitan other that inhabits it. Let us understand well: there is certainly a *history* of these syntheses. The Brazil of the 16th century is not the Brazil of the 21st century. However, whenever a totalizing synthesis is set in motion in the colonies, it takes place without leaving room for internal indetermination and, therefore, without leaving room for its deconstruction. The operators of totalizing syntheses escape attempts at deterritorialization and de-stratification, insofar as they always succeed in creating a real and true unity, without internal fractures, due to their character of simple merchandise. The "history" of the succession of these identity operators is more like the projection of cinematographic frames that give the illusion of movement, but that are, within each of them, perfectly still and well determined, in an eternal return of the same. Or even: if the former Latin American and African colonies are subtracted from history, taking the latter in its modern sense, perhaps they are inscribed in the seventeenth-century conception of "natural history" – and we can remember the numerous treatises that took Brazil as a privileged example of natural history⁹. In this sense, it would be ironically true to reread the "Geographical Foundations of History," which opened Hegel's *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*, as the most accurate description of South American colonial reality: Hegel does not recognize in South America any internal principle of unification; its unity would be purely extrinsic, given by military force, in an uninterrupted succession of *coups d'état*. South American history, Hegel says, lacks the stability that guarantees the manifestation of the constitutional state; without such stability, South America revolts in a "permanent revolution" (*fortdauernder Umsturz*) (Hegel 1986: 111).

Let us return to a point made earlier: to affirm that there is something

⁹ The scientific travels and scientific works of zoologist Johann Baptist von Spix and botanist Carl Friedrich Martius are the best known example of this kind of natural history as it was conceived in the 19th century.

indeconstructible in colonial reality not only does not refute deconstruction but is, in fact, its condition of possibility, insofar as deconstruction is itself indeconstructible. That is, deconstruction is the experience of the impossible. This is why, in *Force of Law*, Derrida, in a Benjaminian key, states that justice, situated beyond the positive systems of laws, is indeconstructible and, for this very reason, that deconstruction is justice. In other words, deconstruction itself has conditions of possibility, that is, of impossibility, to the point of being identified, in a certain sense, with the impossible.

(V) Conclusion: The Derridian Supplement to Anti-Oedipus

In the last lecture Derrida gave, a few months before his death, he draws the colonial situation closer to the indeconstructible. This lecture took place in the year 2004, right here in Rio de Janeiro, at the Maison de France, a few kilometers from this building and auditorium where we are now, there on Avenida Presidente Antonio Carlos. Already very ill, Derrida addressed the audience with a demand for justice regarding Europe's – that is, America's – enslaving past. In this address, when discussing the process of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the occasion of the end of the apartheid regime, Derrida was obliquely addressing Brazilians, whose slave heritage is as terrible as that of the former South African racist regime. It was a matter, in this last conference, of pointing out once again the existence – but perhaps this word is inappropriate – of an experience of the impossible, namely, one that opens up to unconditional forgiveness, that is, to a forgiveness that is not inscribed in an economy of symbolic exchanges, mobilizing compensations, forgetfulness, negotiations.

One of the parts of this lecture is entitled "*Aufhebung* of slavery". The specter of Hegel, Derrida says, haunted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by the Anglican pastor Desmond Tutu, giving it an excessively Christian tone, insofar as it inscribed forgiveness in a dialectic of recomposition, mediated by the forgetfulness of past crimes. Africa, says Hegel (also in his *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*), has not *yet* reached representation, that is, the category of universality; its inhabitants, reduced by Europe to the condition of merchandise, are not *yet* self-conscious of their own freedom. Derrida underlines this "yet," [*encore*] a word that indicates a future progress and a promise of redemption, similar to what Tutu's Christianity promised at the end of the Commission's work. Note that Hegel does not explain the nothingness status of enslaved black people by the fact that they were subjected to slavery, but, on the contrary, he explains slavery by the Africans' character as worthless things. In this promise of redemption, the same one that Father Antonio Vieira promised the enslaved Brazilians in a future life, is played out the injunction of an etapist politics, in which abolition must be the fruit of a process that is itself dialectical – "the gradual abolition of slavery", Hegel says, "is a more convenient and more just thing" (*etwas Angemesseneres und Richtigeres*) (Derrida 2016:

90). In sum, he proposes a gradual abolition, without a "sudden supersumption" (*plötzliche Aufhebung*), which culminates ironically, in the case of the Hegelian *Lessons*, with the sudden abandonment of Africa from its theoretical horizon ("We leave Africa here," Hegel concludes, "without making mention of it in the sequel. For it is not a part of the historical world: it shows neither movement nor development..." (Derrida 2016: 91)). This sudden and untimely silence may well be a symptom of the objectification and the nullification of Africa and Africans and would illustrate the constitutive situation of the subaltern as those who cannot speak – provided, of course, that we reverse the direction that Hegel assigned to them: it is enslavement and colonization that produce nullification, and not the other way around.

To conclude, let us return to the meta-philosophical question about what could only improperly be called a "comparison" between deconstruction and schizoanalysis. It is quite common for parallels between Deleuze and Derrida to mention the eulogy that the latter delivered before the former's grave; it is also relatively frequent to doubt Derrida's sincerity – but, in our view, this doubt is not pertinent. It is true that Derrida hated *Anti-Oedipus*; as his biographer Benoît Peeters recounts, in a chapter meaningfully entitled "Ruptures", Derrida said at a dinner with friends soon after the launching of the work that *Anti-Oedipus* "is a very bad book (confused, full of crisp denials, etc.)", and that its success in the eyes of "a very suspect sector of public opinion" only proved his judgment (Peeters 2010: 301). Even taking note of these reservations, which make Derrida a less obvious ally than Deleuze and Guattari thought in their *Anti-Oedipus* footnotes, it is inaccurate to situate them simply in *opposing* trenches. Just as Moten could say that he was located at the opposite pole from Frank Wilderson's Afropessimism, and, *for that very reason*, that they were saying the same thing, we should take Derrida's eulogy at Deleuze's funeral seriously when he says that *almost nothing* separated them. Placed in parallel series, like Hegel and Genet in *Glas*, the differential relation between Deleuze and Derrida should not be thought of from the usual terms of comparison, in which a common and general predicate is complemented by a specific difference. It is more productive to think of them united and separated as two strategies that, in their difference, affect each other, but without this meaning that they complement each other. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that one is the supplement of the other, taking the word "supplement" in the Derridian sense of the term. Or again: that if Derrida appears in *Anti-Oedipus* as an ally, perhaps it would not be too much to take this alliance in the same sense in which, in chapter 3 of the book, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that extensive alliances are preceded by an intensive affiliation, an undetermined common ground in which differences are real but articulated in inclusive disjunctions. In this mirrored difference, what is left out, decisively excluded by an exclusive disjunction, are the colonies, situated through the looking glass.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cross D. J. S. (2017). "Apocrypha: Derrida's Writing in *Anti-Oedipus*." In *CR: The New Centennial Review* 17/3, pp. 177-197.
- Deleuze G. (1990). « Entretien sur *L'Anti-Œdipe* (avec Félix Guattari). » in *Pourparlers. 1972-1990*. Paris: Minuit.
- Deleuze G.; Guattari F. (1972). *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. L'anti-Œdipe*. Paris: Minuit.
- Derrida J. (1967a). *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit.
- Derrida J. (1967b). « La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines » in *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris : Seuil, p. 409-428.
- Derrida J. (2016). « La conférence de Rio de Janeiro. Le pardon, la vérité, la réconciliation : quel genre? » in *La solidarité des vivants et le pardon*. Paris : Hermann, p. 61-120.
- Dias M. O. L. S. (1972). *A interiorização da metrópole e outros estudos*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.
- Fanon F. (1952). *Peau noir, masques blancs*. Paris: Seuil.
- Hegel G. W. F. (1983). *Gesammelte Werke*, Volume 21; *Werke*, Volume 5. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Hegel G. W. F. (1986). *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Moten F. (2013). "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)" in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112/4.
- Peeters B. (2010). *Derrida*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Robinson A.; Tormey S. (2010). "Living in Smooth Space: Deleuze, Postcolonialism and the Subaltern" in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*. (ed.) S. Bignall; P. Patton. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 20-40.
- Rousseau J-J. (1995). *Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Œuvres complètes*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Spivak G. C. (1994). "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*. (ed.) P. Williams; L. Chrisman. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 66-111.
- Žižek S. (1994). "The Specter of Ideology" in *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso.