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NOTA DE APRESENTAÇÃO

A organização do número que aqui e agora se apresenta pautou-se pelo mesmíssimo objetivo que presidiu à dos transatos: produzir um volume como os anteriores, melhor que os anteriores. Serão, porém, os seus leitores, como não poderia deixar de ser, a ajuizar se ele foi alcançado.

A sua publicação, no entanto, é feita num contexto que bastante se alterou relativamente ao de anos outros. Com efeito, ditou a última avaliação da FCT a que o CEHUM foi submetida que este tenha de melhorar as suas atividades de investigação em praticamente todos os aspetos com uma dotação financeira significativamente menor que a que tem vindo a dispor. O CEHUM foi, pois, assim parece, mais uma das vítimas da política de investigação nacional seguida desde há quatro anos que, procurando dissimular os seus autênticos propósitos numa retórica que apregoa a excelência como mínimo, se obstina obsessivamente em concentrar recursos financeiros cada vez mais magros em determinadas áreas e, sobretudo, em determinados centros de investigação, que favorecem grupos de interesses com mais ascendente e capacidade de influenciar as decisões do poder, a expensas de um desinvestimento meticulosamente programado nas Humanidades e nas Ciências Sociais, sacrificadas a cada dia no altar de um pragmatismo empedernido.

Apesar disso, o nº 29 da *Diacrítica – Série de Filosofia e Cultura* está cá fora. Ele encontra-se composto por quatro partes. A primeira reúne cinco textos relativos à problemática da “democracia de proprietários”, antecedida por um ensaio introdutório que funciona ao mesmo tempo como resenha e comentário crítico dos mesmos. Na segunda são recolhidos dois contributos dados nas “Conferências sobre Filosofia Continental Contemporânea”

que tiveram lugar no auditório do Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade do Minho em outubro do ano passado. Seis textos sobre temáticas diversas, nomeadamente retórica, filosofia da história, epistemologia política, cultura lusófona, teoria da paisagem e pensamento filosófico italiano, preenchem a terceira parte. A recensão crítica de obras culmina, como habitualmente, o volume.

João Ribeiro Mendes

Property-owning democracy

INTRODUCTION TO PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY

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1. Inequality, democracy and the philosophical debate on economic alternatives

Inequality has been on the rise for the past three decades and the pace at which it has been progressing has accelerated vertiginously in the past twenty years (Piketty, 2014; Atkinson, 2015).^[1] The fall of the URSS and, with it, of the “socialist threat” and the market globalization that quickly ensued, creating an extremely unfavourable relation of forces between (organized) labour and capital, took their toll. The closely related phenomena of systematic recourse by national governments to privatizations of public services and assets, and the retrenchment of the *welfare state*, in some cases in a radical form, may be added as additional causes of this surge in inequality (Glyn, 2006). Moreover, the recent financial crisis of 2007-2008, followed by the massive transfer of public resources to private banks, and combined with austerity policies that were supposedly implemented so as to improve the economic situation, have only aggravated both the crisis itself and the rise in inequality. In fact, this recessive economic tide affecting the whole world, but Europe more intensely, does not seem to be receding any time soon. Meanwhile, the debacle of “real socialism” in 1990 in the east and the triumphalism of advocates of western capitalism that quickly ensued made discussion of alternatives seem somewhat pointless beyond the walls of the academic world. To be sure, even as socialism crumbled,

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1 In the US, if one focuses on the extremely rich, this trend is quite radical: “(...)while the share of the top 100 in the total wealth of the 400 [400 wealthiest Americans] was about 50% in the early 1980s it had risen to 65% by 2002(...)” (Davies, 2009, p.140).

there were attempts to resist the neoliberal avalanche and among scholars there were many who sought for egalitarian economic alternatives to capitalism itself, even when conceding that state socialism of the sort that had so far existed was no longer a viable option (Nove, 1991; Elster and Moene, 1989; Roemer, 1993, 1994). These attempts continued, for instance, with the *Real Utopias* project, organized by Erik Olin Wright (Cohen and Rogers, 1995; Bowles and Gintis; Fung and Wright, 2003; Ackerman, Alstoot and Van Parijs, 2006). Notwithstanding such efforts, these authors faced (and still face) an unfriendly environment that puts them in the defensive: it is the alternatives they propose that need justification and evidence of its efficiency and justice and not capitalism as it exists, even as it has become more aggressively neoliberal, attacking the foundations of its social-democratic variants. At about the same time, an emerging discourse on the alleged economic inefficiencies and relative injustices generated by European-style welfare states progressively became pervasive, if not dominant, and part of their once consensual legitimacy was eroded, paving the way for subsequent alterations and attacks. Indeed, most reforms – and there have been many -, big or small, on welfare-state rules and institutions have been preceded by and premised on this dominant discourse. It has often happened that many of these reforms have also been presented as if they were undisputable and inevitable, much in the vein of Margaret Thatcher's TINA rhetoric.

However, the rapid progression of inequalities, in both income (Brandolini and Smeeding, 2009:96; Leigh, 2009) and wealth, is now well-documented – even if serious measurement issues remain - and has received scholarly and media attention (Glyn, 2009:121), and there is mounting popular discontent with this phenomenon. Discontentment has also turned on what seems to be the related distortion of polyarchical political systems, in which popular will and political equality have been all but annihilated, with political representatives becoming accountable only to a restricted plutocracy and pursuing policies that cater only to the interests of this 1% or 0,1% that thrive while all others sink into poverty, precariousness or economic dependence - the twilight of the “middle classes”. Additionally, the popular notion that political systems display a strong bias in favour of economic elites – and that this is the consequence of the inequalities that the economic system allows and promotes - seems to be confirmed (Bartels et al., 2005; Jacobs and Skocpol, 2005, p.11).

Partly as a consequence of this, it is becoming increasingly apparent that neither existing socioeconomic systems are natural, nor inequalitarian reforms of their institutions are an “inevitable” consequence of “econom-

ics”, but rather the product of political will and contestable political choices that require discussion: a discussion regarding ends and means; a discussion as to what political communities must strive to achieve, on what ideals they ought to pursue and how. Economic systems and economic institutions are not to be taken as granted. This is the proper terrain for political theorists to work on.

2. Economic Justice, Rawls and the rediscovering of Property-Owning Democracy

And this is precisely what they have been doing intensely as of lately. It is in this context that the organizing topic of this special issue, the ideal of Property-Owning Democracy (POD), frequently coupled with the concept of redistribution, has been eliciting the interest of several political philosophers in the past few years (O’Neill and Williamson, 2012). Their more immediate inspiration has been the work of the late philosopher John Rawls who contended, in his book *Justice as Fairness* (2001), that the requirements of his two principles of justice could only be thoroughly satisfied under two socioeconomic “regimes”, liberal socialism or “Property-Owning Democracy”, but not under a capitalist welfare state (Rawls, 2001:135). It was not the first time that the term had surfaced in his work, in tandem with “liberal socialism”, but it had been ignored, or treated as irrelevant, when *Theory of Justice* (1970) was first being discussed. In fact, despite the astonishingly abundant attention and commentary that Rawls’ *magnum opus* elicited, it was assumed by most, if not all, scholars that studied and debated it, whether critical or sympathetic, that Rawls’ work was meant to be a staunch moral defence and justification of the welfare-state as we know it – or knew it at the time.^[2] As it seems, it was the merit of Richard Krouse and Michael McPherson (1986) to have, for the first time, dispelled this mistake, by showing how Property-Owning Democracy was not just a watered-down and “human-faced” sort of capitalism, but rather a socio-economic system of its own, quite distinct from Welfare-State Capitalism, a veritable “alternative to capitalism”, as Rawls stresses (2001:136). Rawls himself seems to have become, with the passing of time, more radical and bitter in his criticism of Welfare State Capitalism (WSC), probably due to

2 One should note, however, that the error was probably understandable, as Rawls himself later acknowledged that the distinction had not been made as clear as it should in his *Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 2001, p. 135).

the visible growth in the concentration of economic resources and the distortion it caused in the political process. On the other hand, he seems to have been drawn more and more to the merits and potentialities of POD.

The contrast he establishes between the two systems is radical and some may question if he does not overstate his case, eventually distorting somewhat the functions and logic behind the Welfare State. In any case, it is worth reminding his characterization of both systems, even if this requires quoting the author at length:

(...)[T]he background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy and indirectly, political life as well. By contrast, welfare-state capitalism permits a small class to have the near monopoly of the means of production.

Property-owning democracy avoids this, not by the redistribution of income to those with less at the end of each period, so to speak, but rather by ensuring the widespread ownership of productive assets and human capital (that is education and trained skills) at the beginning of each period, all this against a background of fair equality of opportunity. The intent is not simply to assist those who lose out through accident or misfortune (although that must be done), but rather to put all citizens in a position to manage their own affairs on a footing of a suitable degree of social and economic equality (...) (Rawls, 2001:139).

Rawls goes on to link WSC with a single-minded concern for ensuring a “social minimum” to all, by means of redistribution, not “predistribution”, a fact that has as its side-effect the neglecting of the fundamental goals of achieving a fair value of political liberties (reasonably equal chances for influencing the political process), and equality of opportunities, both of which are essential to fulfil his two principles of justice:

In welfare-state capitalism the aim is that none should fall below a decent minimum standard of life, one in which their basic needs are met, and all should receive certain protections against accident and misfortune, for example unemployment compensation and medical care (...) The redistribution of income serves this purpose (...) Yet, given the lack of background justice and inequalities in income and wealth, there may develop a discouraged and depressed underclass many of whose members are chronically dependent on welfare. This underclass feels left out and does not participate in the public political culture. (Rawls, 2001:139-140)

One must not be deceived by our exposition, though: Rawls was neither the inventor of either the term or the ideal of POD, nor must his exact understanding of it be regarded as “canonical”. Quite the contrary. There is no canonical definition of POD, nor “intellectual owners” of the ideal. There is a plurality of authors, throughout the history of political thought, that have developed conceptions of economic systems, with significant institutional differences between each other, that can fit within a broad notion of POD (Jackson, 2012). Even among those who have used the expression itself, there is a great deal of diversity. Therefore, the exact policies and means used to implement a POD are still a point of frequent divergence and discussion. While the goals it is meant to achieve, such as significant dispersion of property and some sort of independent source of income that will provide people with economic security and independence are pretty much consensual, there is great uncertainty as to what follows from or is required by these in terms of institutions and policies. For instance, Rawls himself puts great emphasis in the steep and progressive taxation of inherited wealth while being surprisingly unconcerned with income taxation, which, as he says, could be altogether replaced by a well—devised “tax on consumption at a constant marginal rate” that would make people “be taxed according to how much they use the goods and services produced and not according to how much they contribute” (Rawls, 2001:161). All the rest is left sketchy at best. However, both James Meade (1964), in whom Rawls looked for inspiration, and other contemporary authors such as Richard Dagger (2006), who believes that republicanism demands POD in the economic realm, or Stuart White XXX (2016), considered an unconditional basic income as a fundamental tool for achieving POD’s goals, whereas Rawls vehemently rejected such a social policy on the grounds that it violates the principle of reciprocity among free and equal citizens which must be respected in a fair society. While Meade positively proposed worked-managed cooperatives for his project, Rawls merely accepts that this idea is “fully compatible with property-owning democracy, since such firms are not owned or controlled by the state” (Rawls, 2001:176). It is one thing to say that a policy is compatible with an ideal, another that it is required by it or desirable in order to obtain it. Furthermore, Meade thought of Property-Owning Democracy as a hybrid and complex system that combined a set of policies typical of socialist and welfare-capitalist ideals and systems (Jackson, 2012:46): it was this mutually reinforcing combination of policies that gave the system its distinctive egalitarian outlook and its sustainability – a perspective that is hard to perceive in Rawls himself. Krouse and Mcpherson (1988), who may

be said to sustain a version of the POD ideal, believe that if it is to have a chance to be sustainably egalitarian in the long run, the State must be given a more preeminent role, with stronger coordinating, planning and redistributive competences than Rawls seems to admit. There is no shortage of examples, but the conclusion to withdraw from all of them is that there is no consensus or canonical view on what POD requires or allows in terms of policies.

Naturally, besides different “ideological leanings” or moral sensitivities that necessarily produce divergence, this lack of consensus regarding what POD is or might be only complicate the furthering of debate and the reaching of final judgments: depending on how one conceives POD will be implemented and what it will entail, authors’ judgment of its virtues and vices will greatly vary and dialogue will become confused. Two authors may apparently concur that POD is desirable and realizes the goals it sets itself, but such agreement be deceiving, as it only exists because each of them is thinking of different economic regimes and institutions under the same designation. The opposite may also occur: two people may only in appearance disagree as to the goodness or feasibility of POD simply because what one believes the expression to mean does not correspond to the other’s concept of POD.

3. An overview of the arguments to come

The five essays in this special issue all deal with Property-Owning Democracy, although they approach it from very different angles and express different attitudes towards the ideal itself.

Two of the authors, who accept it as a more or less thoroughly persuasive proposal for the socioeconomic reorganization of society deal – or deal more intensely - with what, in their perspective, are the most adequate and cogent arguments for justifying a POD . This is the case of the article written by Eric Fabri as well as the one written by Haye Hazenberg, for instance, albeit each taking a radically different path.

Another author, Lucas Petroni, while not questioning the egalitarian and democratic credentials of POD, seems to believe and seek to prove that Rawls actually overstated his case. He may have been too dismissive of the idea of a Welfare State Capitalism society being able to establish institutions compatible with his two principles of justice. While present-day welfare states may indeed be at least partially worthy of Rawls’ criticisms, there

seems to be no conceptual obstacle to devising some form of a WSC regime, such as that of the “social maximum”, that displays concern and is able to deal with the problem of extreme capital concentration and its tendency to create domination in both the economic and political sphere.

The other two authors seem more doubtful or agnostic regarding POD’s intrinsic or necessary goodness and have as their main goal to complement what is still potentially lacking or under-theorized in it. Such is John Wilesmith’s concern with the choice of corporate governance models that, in his opinion, for instance, is an institutional device of fundamental importance, as it is bound to have a significant impact on the egalitarian goals of “widespread economic security and control”. Somewhat similarly, António Baptista questions the relative merits of POD regarding the overarching goal of attaining the fair value of political liberties, or, simply put, political equality. In so doing, he is also, albeit in a much more indirect way than Eric Fabri, dealing with the normative justification of POD. The central purpose of his article, however, is to understand the sources of political inequality and the way in which POD may or may not provide adequate answers to the challenges they pose. Given the relative lack of definition on what POD may actually entail institutionally-wise (as proposals abound and display significant differences between them), answers can only be provisional as they will depend on the specific sources of political inequality one is dealing with, the way in which they are generated, and the way the mechanisms that are proposed to tackle them operate.

A more detailed account of each of these five contributions, their differences and similarities is now in order.

While all of the other articles in this special issue and most authors in general are usually content to speak of economic systems as if their consequences and their application would be unrealistically restricted to a fully-closed domestic economy, Haye Hazenberg’s article in this special issue seeks to assess the promises of the ideal of Property-owning democracy in the much more complex scenario of a global economy and changes in global inequality (or inequality among national economies). The author believes there are strong reasons, based on global justice, that justify POD apart from those usually quoted in support of it that are based solely on domestic justice. A typical “domestic-justice-based” argument attempts to justify POD by claiming that state power is basically a coercive apparatus that serves to maintain the property of things (parts of the “external world”) in the hands of its legal owners while excluding all others from enjoying them. A just society must, for this reason, provide a justification for the

exclusion of these other people. A just social system, in particular a POD that disperses property in an egalitarian and universal way, provides such a justification, as it allows all to enjoy a scheme of equal freedoms (among them, political freedoms and their “fair value”). When it comes to the international sphere, however, the argument seems to be all but forgotten by political philosophers, but, the author insists, this oblivion is arbitrary and illegitimate: state borders too can and effectively do exclude people that live outside of them from the enjoyment of all things contained within, and this exclusion calls for an equivalent justification. That exclusion can only be justified, according to Hazenberg, by offering a just “compensation” to all, particularly to those worst-off in the globe as a whole. Doing so requires promoting world growth and a just international division of labour, something which can only come by, according to the author, with an expansion of free trade.

In defence of this idea, Hazenberg draws on recent literature which contends that while domestic inequalities, *i.e.* inequality among groups of citizens within countries, have been rising exponentially with globalization and recent policies, the inequality between nations, *i.e.* international inequality, has been, for the first time, on a descending trend. Inequalities between nations have always been huge, much larger, in fact, than internal inequalities between citizens of any given country, even those with the most egalitarian social structures. What this drop in international inequality means is that the differences in the level of GDP per capita (or total GDP divided by total population) between third-world countries and the rich western societies, due to international trade and the enhanced mobility of capital, are now less radical. A great deal of capital and production has migrated to former low-GDP countries and, as markets in the rich west are now open to commodities coming from these countries, a significant share of global GDP has been transferred to such countries as China, Brazil, India, etc. A much larger share of global wealth is still concentrated in the US, Europe and Japan, and these countries have smaller populations by which to divide their GDP, which limits the drop in international inequality. Also, and more importantly, measuring real global inequality would mean knowing how much income (and wealth) each person has and how it compares vis-à-vis others everywhere else in the world, and, in that respect, as the author himself acknowledges, there is neither a clear picture nor the one we have is all that bright. Still, in the overall balance, globalization and freer international trade has had, in the author’s perspective, a positive effect. Poverty, it is argued, is reduced, growth promoted, and convergence with

rich nations more strongly obtained only through massive industrialization of poorer non-industrialized states, something which is promoted by capital mobility and open trade. However, one must also acknowledge the fact that domestically, inequality has exploded in recent years, due in part to the same phenomena that have led to the drop in global inequality. Those with strong mobility of resources gain with globalization, their opportunities expand and with them, their wealth, whereas those whose “capital remains tied to local factors have lost out”.

If, as Hazenberg argues, further liberalization of trade is necessary to improve international justice, by elevating wealth in poorer countries, and therefore reducing disparities between them and the industrialized north, then, POD, inasmuch as it focuses on regaining public control over property-ownership, so as to spread it more equally, can create a political environment favourable to keeping international markets open. Under POD, the domestic costs (social and political) of maintaining free trade, measured in terms of national inequality, are reduced and, with it, resistance to market globalization is also reduced. Therefore, POD would be desirable also for reasons of global justice.

The focus of Eric Fabri’s article in this special issue is somewhat different. In both political theory, as well as in the everyday discourse on politics, private property rights have occupied a pivotal role in the justification of capitalism, in either its radical free-market version or its more moderate and pleasing Welfare-State variants. A number of arguments have been produced, against traditional challenges posed by socialist tradition and thought which have focused on the inherent moral qualities of rights to private property, and the immensely positive “side-effects” of having a socio-economic system that duly respects and enacts them. The differential property-rights accorded to individuals and the inequalities that result thereof in capitalist regimes are seen to be legitimate either because 1) those who labour are entitled to the fruits of said labour, in the form of a right to appropriate and to keep whatever one has appropriated (the traditional “labour justification” that can be found as early as in Locke’s labour-value theory); 2) or because a system of well protected property rights will create the right sort of incentives that will greatly enhance economic productivity and efficiency environment, ultimately making everyone better-off (the efficiency argument); or, 3) finally, because private property is perfectly tailored to promote and maximize individual autonomy (the liberty justification). However, by means of a systematic analysis of these common and powerful arguments, Eric Fabri seeks to demonstrate that, regarding all

three, it is Property-Owning Democracy, as an economic system based on private property, that is better legitimized by them. It is POD, and not WSC, that better fulfils the requirements of the arguments. As the author himself summarizes: “[...]if one thinks that private property is legitimate because the worker has a right on the fruits of his labour, because the efficiency it promotes benefits the whole society, or because it encourages individual liberty, one has therefore to support a move towards the implementation of a POD rather than WSC”. Regarding the labour justification, the author contends that, since the times of Locke, the idea that labour “creates” property, or that it justifies the appropriation of the things with which it is “mixed”, has rested on an ambiguity: is it present or past labour that legitimizes the creation and maintaining of property? Nozick, in his attempt to give moral credibility to his minimal, *laissez-faire* state, has presumed that it is past labour. However, if one attaches moral precedence to present rather than past labour, the inequalities in property ownership that result from inheritance and bequest – which have their origin in past and alien labour (of one’s forebearers) – will be seen as illegitimate. Conversely, steep taxes on these forms of property transfer will be deemed as *a priori* legitimate. POD, which relies to a great extent in such measures, is therefore in more accordance with the labour justification, as it effectively protects property based on present labour and limits the accumulation of property based on past labour – *i.e.* labour that has not been performed by those who received the asset. In other words, POD would best fit the meritocratic *ethos* behind the labour justification of property. It would also ensure that all citizens today will have an approximately equal “appropriative power”, thus ensuring that the distribution of this ability will not be distorted by previous accumulation, on one side, and material unfreedom caused by radical non-ownership, on the other.

Regarding the efficiency argument, Eric Fabri mainly seeks to challenge the notion that any restrictions on the free play of market forces involve inefficiency, since those at the bottom of the social ladder, on the one hand, would only work (or work hard) if they were constantly constrained by material necessity (*i.e.* if they were unable to obtain income from property that would allow them not to work) and those at the top, on the other, would only be willing to work or to do their best if and to the extent that they would be allowed to enjoy maximum economic rewards for their labour. Fabri contends there are other strong motivations for those at the top (such as the satisfaction of being responsible for making big decisions and obtaining the respect from their peers and subordinates) beyond

maximum gains and, regarding the majority of the population, not being forced to work is not a synonym for shirking work altogether. More economic independence for these individuals would only mean a stronger and fairer bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the wealthier. The incentives for economic efficiency presupposed in the “efficiency argument” result from an adequate protection of property, not from economic necessity at the bottom or unlimited prospects for wealth and income accumulation at the top. In fact, there might be positive effects on economic efficiency resulting from some specific institutions of POD: for instance, cooperatives, as they eliminate the separation between capital and labour, rewarding people for their actual work, could create incentives for workers in them to become more innovative and productive; and a property-generated income could lead some people to invest their free time in acquiring skills or education and become, in this way, a more qualified and productive labour force.

Finally, regarding the “liberty argument”, POD can be said to maximize autonomy for all, by giving them the economic basis for independence *vis-à-vis* others (either State or other powerful individuals): a guaranteed and stable source of income deriving from property. While this could be equally obtained by means of a basic income, it would seem that the first option would be more feasible, as seeing an individual living off the income of his property is socially thought to be more acceptable than having him living off a basic income for which he has not worked.

While most authors writing on the subject of property-owning democracy and predistribution have, for the most part, accepted the allegation of John Rawls himself that Welfare State Capitalism (WSC) is inherently plagued with inegalitarian and unjust institutions and results that make it less amenable than a POD to the goals espoused by social egalitarians and, more in particular, to Rawlsian principles of justice, Lucas Petroni article purports to show that, regardless of how short actually existing WSC societies may fall from these objectives, nothing prevents us from considering that an ideal regime of WSC, far different from the present ones, may, if well structured, become as compatible as any sort of POD with egalitarian principles of justice. In fact, one must always avoid the common mistake of comparing ideal oranges with real apples, or, in this case, an ideal socio-economic system such as POD (which has no real equivalent so far and, therefore, is untainted in scholars’ eyes by the shortcomings that eventually befall all “real” systems) with actually existing welfare state societies, which have been the product of complex interactions between social forces and, consequently, have suffered all the distortions that history and politi-

cal conflict can impose on any attempt to fulfil an abstract ideal of justice. John Rawls contends that Welfare State Capitalism is incompatible with his two principles of justice mainly because it shows no concern for unlimited concentration of wealth and property, which leads ultimately to the impossibility of realizing the fair value of political liberties, since concentrated economic power will dominate both the economy and the political arena. According to Rawls, in actuality, WSC societies are single-mindedly obsessed with ensuring nothing but a “social-minimum”, “a decent minimum standard of life” “(...) in which people’s basic needs are met” for all citizens that are also protected against “accident and misfortune”, and this limited focus would eventually undermine the obtaining of equality of social opportunities as Rawls understands them. Even if one considers this to be an accurate description of existing WSC societies, it is not –at least not necessarily – an accurate description of all potential or imaginable WSC societies. Petroni contends that an ideal system of WSC can be devised so as to work as effectively as a strong form of POD against wealth concentration, ensuring in this way that a rawlsian equality of social opportunities and the fair value of political liberties are both obtained. However, in order for this to be possible, this must be a WSC regime based not only on the notion of a “social minimum”, but also a “social maximum”. With this “social maximum” regime, WSC can be said to be concerned with dispersion of wealth and income just as much as POD, allowing for equivalent or similar economic policies as those proposed to implement POD: more say for all citizens (*e.g.*: workers, local communities, technical associations and civil society advocates) in the way means of production and economic resources are used and a high progressive taxation on total income (that which results both from labour and wealth sources), that ensures the functioning of public inclusive (and redistributive) institutions for all and may additionally be expected to provide a certain measure of transparency regarding capital, since to tax it, one must know where and how much of it there is. A “social maximum” Welfare state regime is one in which economic power cannot be concentrated above such a level that would make it unaccountable to the citizenry: it establishes therefore a “maximum” relative ceiling for economic concentration. The normative threshold for a social maximum of wealth or affluence must be relative in the sense that it is not the amount people have in itself that is morally and politically objectionable, but rather the amount they have, after due consideration of the specific society in which these people live, particularly of the total existing wealth in it and how it is distributed among all citizens. If someone has a great deal of property and income,

but everyone has pretty much the same or something equivalent, the social maximum threshold is not violated (since there are no great imbalances in terms of the fair value of political liberties or a Rawlsian equality of opportunities). As the author stresses, the social maximum threshold is not meant as some sort of “punishment” against any supposedly moral wickedness of the rich, nor does it intend to be a form of coercing people to adopt a particular way of life to the detriment of another – a goal which would be incompatible with liberal neutrality –, but is rather a device for ensuring justice in society, namely, the non-domination of economic and political life by the wealthy and equality of opportunity.

John Wilesmith’s argument in his article starts from the belief that “in an economy that retains large-scale corporations, widespread private ownership of productive assets is insufficient, and quite possibly counter-productive, for realizing the social egalitarian aims of widespread economic security and control”. As he goes on to explain, small and dispersed shareholders do not possess much information, particularly technical knowledge, nor the incentives to acquire it, whereas managers of complex and large corporations do and this creates a severe imbalance that easily results in actual control being transferred, unwittingly, to the better informed. Large and complex corporations in modern capitalist economies, by their sheer nature, make it inevitable that ownership cannot be a synonym for control: shareowners appoint a board of directors who are then supposed to oversee the internal operations of the corporation. They are there, in principle, to represent shareowners; to perform their task in accordance to the interest of the owners who chose them, but agents can easily pursue other interests and evade control of the principals in an environment in which the distribution of information is strongly imbalanced in their favour. In POD, according to Wilesmith, this can be actually aggravated, as a very large group of very ill-informed and very small shareowners are no match for their information-rich “principals”. The interests of each of the parts in this unequal relation are also bound to diverge, and therefore, one may expect that the interests and strategies of managers, that focus on “managerial perquisites” and risky, short-term investment strategies, will prevail, damaging in the process the economic security of shareholders.

This makes plain that the choice of corporate governance models is central for POD, given the strong and fundamental effects that each of them can have on those two egalitarian goals to which POD is committed: economic security and effective control over one’s economic life (and, therefore, over one’s life in general). The concern with control reflects the ethical

importance of not submitting people to paternalistic structures, in which fundamental (economic) decisions for a person's life rest in the hands of other people. Wilesmith also argues that the importance of this lies in its connection to the preservation of people's self-respect, which is hard to obtain when social structures ostensibly treat them as unequal citizens. The relevance of economic security, on the other hand, is founded on the notion, that can be traced as far back as old "republican" political thought, that people who do not enjoy a safe economic situation (*i.e.*, do not have a reliable source of income) will be extremely vulnerable to domination by the powerful (be they wealthy private individuals, or the state apparatus – not infrequently a tool wielded at will by the former).

The balance each model establishes between these two distinct goals is unique and one's choice ought to reflect the relative importance one attaches to each. The author sketches three models: 1) shareholder activism through investment fund managers; 2) labour-manager firms; and 3) labour capital partnerships.

The first regime of corporate governance, that of "investment fund activism", creates a body of representatives (managers of large funds made up of pension funds of thousands of workers) between board of directors and shareowners. The members of this representative body are armed with technical knowledge that puts them "on a par" with the managers of corporations and they are motivated to make the corporation track the interests of the funds (and so, of those who have their money in them), either through "voice" or "exit" strategies. However, these are representatives too, just like the board of directors, and the problems of "principal-agent" relations are simply relocated: how can principals, the shareowners, control the "controllers"? They can't. They just yield their control to their agents. They are not called upon to defend directly their own interests, they are strictly passive and leave fundamental decisions to their agents. So, while economic security seems to be promoted in this regime, its architecture is fundamentally "paternalistic" in the way it treats shareowners.

The second model, the labour-manager firms, is conceived as the perfect opposite of the other. In it, it is the workers of the corporations who are the equal shareowners and who manage on their own the operations within it. This means the democratizing of the corporate structure and maximizes control, avoiding the paternalistic risk that plagues the first model. However, economic security is affected, since workers will probably have all or most of their assets and sources of income concentrated in the corporation in which they work. The value of what they own and their sole

source of income are therefore particularly vulnerable to the fluctuations of the market and the health of the corporation itself. Problems in the corporation can mean both the loss of their job and all their assets. Once this happens, ex-workers whose company went bankrupt will become an easy prey to economic domination by the wealthy and powerful.

The third model, the one preferred by the author, would, in his opinion, constitute a sort of golden mean, performing satisfactorily well regarding both economic security and control, while not being as protective of the former as “investment fund activism”, nor of the latter as “labour-managed firms”. This third model, “labour-capital partnerships”, is divided in two variants. One is the German system of codetermination, in which half of a board of directors is chosen by workers and another half by shareholders. This board then appoints another board which is responsible for running the everyday life of the corporation, while keeping it under control. The other possibility is inspired by James Meade and while somewhat more complex, involves the granting of an equal number of shares - both of them entitling their owners to dividends according to a given rate - to both capitalist shareholders and employees. Capital shares are tradable in the market unlike Labour Shares, which remain attached to the individual worker who holds them until he leaves the corporation. Both these schemes are compatible with strong economic security –equivalent to the one obtained under “investment fund activism”- as they do not exclude the possibility of investment funds managing “property owners’ portfolios”, whose shares need not be concentrated in one enterprise alone, thus dispersing the risk. Also, some degree of “workplace control” is kept, due to the fact that workers actually get to have their own elected representatives in the corporate boards. While far from the democratic exuberance of pure labour-managed firms, it still provides a minimum of control that puts it well above the performance of the investment fund activism model. Given this scenario, it is argued that the model of labour-capital partnerships strikes the “perfect” balance between control and economic security and is, therefore, the most adequate to complement POD’s egalitarian project so as to make it a philosophically attractive alternative to social egalitarians.

António Baptista sees the ideal of political equality as occupying a decisive role in the concept of POD. In fact, he argues that Property-owning democracy must be understood as instrumentally tailored to achieve political equality. In a sense, then, the legitimacy or persuasiveness of the ideal must be judged according to how well it fares in protecting and promoting democracy. But to know if it does promote or not democracy, one must

previously define what one's concept of democracy is (or what its founding value is). The author contends that democracy can be understood as the ideal of *isegoria*, *i.e.* the ideal of a decision-making process that is characterized by systematic and continuous respect and reproduction of all the necessary conditions for the equal political participation of all citizens. In other words, democracy's defining value is political equality and its continuous preservation. The discussion then turns on identifying some of the main obstacles to political equality that plague modern societies and that have their origin in social and economic inequalities. The author identifies four main problems that amount to processes in which social and economic inequalities are easily converted into political ones. Firstly, the poor and less well educated participate less in political activities than the affluent and well-educated. Because of these inequalities in access to quality education, they also usually suffer from relative deficits in cognitive abilities that impair their ability to develop an "enlightened understanding" of their political preferences, or, in some cases, of developing any political preferences at all. Secondly, precariousness of condition for workers and potential employees, due to the increasingly degraded status of labour *vis-à-vis* capital can coerce or impede the capacity of the common people to participate in political life and become intellectually and politically independent from their employers and other social superiors. Thirdly, access to the deliberative sphere, or the "modern agora", where preferences get to be formed in the first place, is heavily restricted. Positive freedom of expression, in which all ideological and social groupings would have equal and effective opportunities to have their ideas to be known by their fellow citizens, is impossible under a regime of plutocratic ownership of the means of mass persuasion as we presently have. Fourthly, concentrated capital can yet act in other ways to distort the political process in their favour and against popular will: through corruption or irresistible lobby, before or after election, or by means of intimidation, insulation or boycott, they may resist any desire for change that runs counter to their interests, blocking majority will with their informal "veto powers" that are born of their wielding of large economic resources.

In light of this, POD, or any other socioeconomic system will be "isocratic" insofar as it provides solutions to these problems. At this point, the discussion reaches another turning point, as specific policies and institutions that could be implemented in order to limit the effects or prevent the problems from even occurring are assessed. Regarding the first set of problems (lack of educational opportunities), the argument is made that they

can be most successfully tackled, at least in part, by creating and promoting a public, universal, free of charge, centralized and quality educational system. Such a system may be the most immune to “market pressures” that distort educational curricula so as to respond to the appeals of the labour market (i.e. the needs of corporations), instead of focusing on the formation of well-capacitated, intellectually critical, democratic citizens. Also, by eliminating market criteria and diminishing the scope for “freedom-of-choice-for-parents-policies”, ghettoization of the poor can be effectively countered. Regarding the second point, enhancing economic security and independence, POD may have a definite advantage, by providing secure and independent sources of income for people (universal basic income or universal capital grants) that would reduce worker’s or poorer people’s vulnerability to arbitrary interference from more endowed individuals. However, this may only be true if these would be complementary, rather than substitutive of other existing institutions and policies typical of WSC, such as policies directed to full employment, social security and a more protective labour law. Redistribution would be as relevant as “predistribution”. Otherwise, people may actually become more, rather than less, at the mercy of “bad brute luck” and concentrated economic power. Regarding the third problem detected (the oligopolic structure of the deliberative dimension of current politics), it would be of fundamental importance to fully (or as extensively as possible) democratize the access of all social and ideological groups to the production of political information via mass media outlets and to ensure to all citizens the enjoyment of a genuinely pluralistic and egalitarian deliberative environment. Democratizing deliberation, so as to ensure this sort of modern “*isegoria*” (equality of voice or speech), would require radical alterations of property rules regarding the media (including the creation of a “third sector”, a lively civic sector, independent of both market and government interferences). Fourthly, and lastly, combating informal veto powers of concentrated economic power, particularly those that result from its easy access to, and intimidation capacity against, political representatives, would require eliminating the cause of such veto powers altogether: the extreme concentration of capital in itself. A radical and strongly egalitarian version of POD could be said to fulfil such a task. Still, even when private monopolies or oligopolies are inexistent, the political will of the democratic majority can be faced with illegitimate boycott, insulation (capital flight) or intimidation by organized and prosperous minorities. This calls for public (state) ownership of fundamental resources and means of production, particularly those that have a pivotal role in the

functioning of the whole national economic system. Isocracy, then, is a demanding ideal. “Taking it seriously”, would, thus, require from POD that it be strongly egalitarian and that it would combine a large and diverse set of policies and strategies, so as to successfully address in a sustainable way all of the difficult obstacles that socioeconomic inequalities pose to political equality.

4. Concluding remarks

Despite analysing POD from different angles and displaying somewhat contrasting attitudes towards it, these five articles have a common, overarching purpose uniting them. We hope with these modest contributions of ours to further stimulate and elicit more debate and deeper investigation among other members of the academic community regarding the topics we address here, namely the justification and normative consequences of POD and, more broadly, how egalitarian goals relate with and may be affected by socioeconomic systems and specific institutions. As always, our work is not the isolated, strictly individual, product of the minds of each of the contributors, but the result of our critical intellectual interaction with what other scholars have been producing so far and it intends to become itself part of that collective intellectual work, another link in the great chain of the progression of knowledge.

Finally, the editors would like to thank all those who have helped in making this project go forward: naturally to the contributors themselves, including those who, for unexpected circumstances, have not been able to publish their work at this opportunity; to all the reviewers who so gracefully accepted their task and dutifully fulfilled it; and to all those, who supported in one way or another this project.

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PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL JUSTICE

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How do we justify property-owning democracy from a global justice perspective? This short paper outlines a diverse array of domestic justifications for property-owning democracy, and relates them to recent developments in the study of international inequality and international trade. It finds that far from there being an opposition between the domestic and the global demands of distributive justice, these can actually be construed as complementary. While an open economy is the best guarantee for continuing the rise in living standards in poor countries and the decline in global inequality, the rise in domestic inequality threatens to derail the project of a globally intertwined economy. Property-owning democracy, as defended by Rawls, is suggested as a timely corrective to the rise of domestic inequality, and defended over and above both welfare-state capitalism and liberal socialism as the preferred path towards greater global distributive justice.

Keywords: property-owning democracy; globalization; inequality; international trade; poverty relief; distributive justice.

Como justificar a democracia de proprietários a partir de uma perspectiva fundada na justiça global? Este breve artigo esboça um conjunto diverso de justificações internas para a democracia de proprietários e relaciona-as com recentes desenvolvimentos no estudo da desigualdade e comércio internacionais. Conclui-se que não só não existe uma oposição entre as reivindicações por justiça distributiva a nível global e doméstico, como estas podem ser entendidas como complementares. Ao passo que uma economia aberta é a melhor garantia para que prossiga o aumento do nível de vida nos países pobres e o declínio da desigualdade global, o aumento da desigualdade doméstica ameaça pôr em causa o projecto de uma

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economia globalmente conexonada. Propõe-se a democracia de proprietários, tal como defendida por Rawls, como um correctivo oportuno au aumento da desigualdade doméstica, e como a melhor via, por comparação com o Estado de bem-estar social capitalista e com o socialismo liberal, para a obtenção de uma maior justiça distributiva a nível global.

Palavras-chave: democracia de proprietários; globalização; desigualdade; comércio internacional; combate à pobreza; justiça distributiva.



0. Introduction

Up to now, the debate on property-owning democracy (POD) has largely turned away from questions of global justice. In their foreword to a recent volume on POD, Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers contrast inquiries into the domestic development of POD with inquiries into global distributive justice:

[POD focuses on] domestic justice and institutions. For the past 15 years, much political philosophy has focused on global justice, especially global distributive justice – important subjects in view of the extraordinary importance of globalization, global politics, global inequality, and global poverty. Still, justice in a domestic society is a subject of great importance, and a focus on domestic institutions has much to be said for it. To be sure, it might be said that we simply cannot work out what a just domestic society is except as part of a larger argument about global justice; perhaps, for example, a global difference principle makes concern for the least advantaged in wealthier societies less pressing. But most reasonable ideas about global justice permit us to reflect, as a distinct practical matter, on principles and institutions for domestic justice. [...] Without minimizing the importance of global justice, [one] can make progress understanding just domestic institutions while abstracting from the global setting. (O'Neill and Williamson 2014, xiv)

It would however strengthen the case for POD if we could work out what a just domestic society is as part of a larger argument about global justice. The relation between the globally least advantaged and those least advantaged in domestic societies is at least as pressing as the domestic question, and POD fares all the better when it does not abstract away from the global setting. This paper will try to make headway in connecting both, by arguing that when we look at the facts of contemporary international economic cooperation, a strong case can be made for moving towards POD, as

its domestic egalitarianism is essential in order to sustain the spectacular decrease in global inequality and global poverty that has characterized the last couple of decades. POD is attractive not just to establish more egalitarian societies at home and reverse the staggering increase in domestic inequality that has accompanied the decrease in global inequality, but also to maintain support for an international division of labor that generates the greatest benefits for the globally least well-off. (Rodrik 2015; Bourguignon 2015; Milanovic 2011) The apparent trade-off between enhancing domestic distributive justice and enhancing global distributive justice is hence a false one, or so this short paper will argue.

In order to get at that argument, the paper will, like the debate on property-owning democracy, rely on some empirical arguments. Too often, it is assumed that arguing in favor of domestic justice implies some trade-off with global distributive justice claims. But when we look closely at international political economy, it becomes clear that economic cooperation is under the right circumstances no zero-sum game, so that an increase in domestic social justice can also lead to an increase in global distributive justice.

The paper will consist of three sections. The first section will briefly set out the case for property-owning democracy from a domestic perspective. In making this case, I will cast the net as wide as possible, outlining reasons that can be unearthed from Rawls' work pertaining to liberty, democracy and equality, as well as reasons stemming from the nature of property ownership. These latter reasons, I will argue, extend beyond the domestic context, so that they provide a *prima facie* case for extending equal property ownership globally. In the second section I will somewhat change tracks, and set out how global inequality has developed over the last couple of decades. Far from tempting us to establish a kind of world state to secure equal property ownership across borders, the data actually reveals that increased market-based globalization has generally given priority to the global worst-off, so that both global inequality and absolute global poverty are now decreasing. I will give some reasons for why this might be so, and pile onto them further reasons for why retaining open economies will in the foreseeable future continue to be the best strategy for effecting distributive justice across borders. The greatest danger to both global and domestic distributive justice is however also generated by such increased market globalization, and is that inequality within states as between the very richest and the very poorest is rapidly increasing. The third and last section will suggest some of the drivers behind this latter development. Fortunately, moving from wel-

fare-state capitalism towards property-owning democracy places a greater emphasis on not just a domestic reduction of inequality, but can retain what is important about international market competition. This has two global benefits. The first is that if real capital is more widely owned, political liberties are strengthened, and if that is realized, further trade liberalization can take place without costs to domestic inequality. The last section will hence argue that global justice must focus on POD, so that the domestic divergence between the very rich and the poor can be brought under control, and so that support for international market exchange can remain strong. In its focus on these two elements (sustaining growth in poor societies through trade and dispersing capital ownership), I will finally distinguish POD from both welfare-state capitalism and economic socialism as the preferred path that towards greater global and domestic distributive justice.

1. The case for property-owning democracy

To many readers' surprise, in John Rawls' 2001 'Justice as Fairness' restatement of his central political ideas, Rawls came out in decisive opposition to the policies of welfare-state capitalism. His political theory had often been read as a normative justification for the welfare-state capitalism that characterized late twentieth century social-democracies, but in 2001 Rawls interjected that "a property-owning democracy, [...] realizes all the main political values expressed by the two principles of justice, [while] a capitalist welfare state does not." While Rawls admitted that his remarks on this matter would remain "illustrative and highly speculative", he nevertheless proposed that his principles of justice required nothing less than a "[property-owning] democracy as an alternative to capitalism." (Rawls 2001a, 135–136) So what is a property-owning democracy, and how does it improve upon the failures of welfare-state capitalism? For Rawls, welfare-state capitalism failed because it

rejects the fair value of the political liberties, and while it has some concern for equality of opportunity, the policies necessary to achieve that are not followed. It permits very large inequalities in the ownership of real property (productive assets and natural resources) so that the control of the economy and much of political life rests in few hands. And although, as the name "welfare-state capitalism" suggests, welfare provisions may be quite generous and guarantee a decent social minimum covering the basic needs, a principle of reciprocity to regulate economic and social inequalities is not recognized. (Rawls 2001a, 138)

Upon close reading, Rawls thus found three reasons for favoring POD over welfare state capitalism, which correspond to his three principles of justice. The first reason concerns basic liberty and is where Rawls puts most of his money. It is that the ‘fair value’ of the political liberties, which are included under his first principle that guarantees equal basic liberties for all, cannot be adequately guaranteed for all under welfare-state capitalism. Unlike the other equal basic liberties Rawls sets out, the political liberties must have ‘fair value’, and not be merely secured formally, as they would through for example enforcement by the courts, because “the usefulness of the political liberties [is] far more subject to citizens’ social position and economic means than the usefulness of other basic liberties.” (Rawls 2001a, 150)

A substantive economic solution must thus be sought to the establish equal political liberties for all. This rather radical economic conclusion takes hold at the most fundamental level of Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness. Because of this, its effects shape the direction of permissible social and economic inequalities, providing for lower-level second and a third reasons, which are that POD further ensures equality of opportunity and that it further ensures that inequalities are to the greatest benefit of the least well-off. Equal opportunity fairs better under POD because with a fairer value of political liberty offices are truly open to all, and the difference principle is better satisfied as roughly equal political power ensures the reciprocity in social relations required to give the most benefit to the least well-off. But what is POD exactly? In Rawls’ words

property-owning democracy work[s] to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus [...] prevent[s] a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well. [...] Property-owning democracy avoids this, not by the redistribution of income to those with less at the end of each period, so to speak, but rather by ensuring the widespread ownership of productive *assets* and human capital (that is, education and trained skills) at the beginning of each period, all this against a background of fair equality of opportunity. The intent is [...] to put all citizens in a position to manage their own affairs on a footing of a suitable degree of social and economic equality. (Rawls 2001a, 139)

Simply ‘re-distributing’ income streams after that income has been generated does not cut it, as each member of society must hold sufficient property to not be disadvantaged in terms of democratic political power. If not, and here Rawls is unusually political, “there may develop a discouraged and depressed underclass many of whose members are chronically depend-

ent on welfare. This underclass feels left out and does not participate in the public political culture. [...] Institutions must put in the hands of citizens generally, and not only of a few, sufficient productive means for them to be fully cooperating members of society on a footing of equality.”(Rawls 2001a, 140) Rawls also gives some institutional pointers about the kind of property that should be widely owned; at the very least fair equality of opportunity should be ensured through education and training, healthcare should be provided to all, and most issues surrounding gender fairness should be resolved by ensuring political independence for women through property ownership. So to sum up, because the large accumulations of wealth in “welfare-state capitalism permit a small class to have a near monopoly of the means of production,”(Rawls 2001a, 139) and “legislators and political parties [must] be independent of large concentrations of private economic and social power in a private-property democracy”(Rawls 2001a, 150), POD fits better with the fair value of political liberty, with equality of opportunity and with the difference principle. POD counters the failures of welfare-state capitalism by taxing away inequalities in property ownership through a progressive or inheritance tax, and by dispersing capital ownership widely in the shape of productive assets, human capital, public provisions or through worker-managed cooperative firms. While the precise shape of POD remains quite speculative, it shouldn’t merely redistribute income streams, but rather provide a roughly equal amount of both human and ‘real’ capital to each person.

Now another set of (complementing) arguments for POD than those employed by Rawls can be derived from a close analysis of the concept of property and its relation to political power. These arguments focus, unlike Rawls, more directly on the coercive power of the state apparatus employed to secure a stable regime of private property ownership, and goes as follows. Because state power is used to exclude those not holding a particular piece of private property, any such exclusion needs to be justified to every person excluded (Brettschneider 2012; Ripstein 2009; Flikschuh 2000; Hazenberg 2015). As private property apportions a part of what Kant dubbed the ‘external world’ to individual persons, it gives them hereby a *prima facie* reason to exclude others from using, owning, destroying or trading that particular part of the world. When state power is utilized to publicly enforce this exclusion, so the argument goes, those excluded deserve justification for this exclusion. When any person is thus excluded more than any other person, that person need to be given reasons for that exclusion, so that POD,

or an 'equal structure of freedom' becomes an attractive default justification of any private property arrangements.

Note that this argument does not necessarily limit itself to the domestic context. Where the Rawlsian case for POD is limited to the presumption of a 'closed political society', the justification owed to each excluded more by private property than the others can extend beyond borders (Abizadeh 2008; Flikschuh 2000; Hazenberg 2015). State borders also use coercion to exclude persons from owning any particular piece of the external world, so that those outside a domestic context where private property is held deserve a similar kind of justification.

But how is it possible to justify the exclusive nature of private property globally, when no public political culture, no basic political liberties, and no democratic institutions exist outside of the state? (Nagel 2005) Here, we might simply opt for the Rawlsian solution, and say that such exclusion through state borders is fully justified because the causes of wealth are wholly determined by national and cultural factors, as well as by the institutions of the state, so that no outsider can reasonably lay claim to any private property inside any domestic context. (Rawls 2001b) We might, with Rawls, on this basis further dream of the domestic end of capitalist economic growth, finding that there is nothing wrong with a POD becoming a stationary economy, or with opting for liberal socialism (Rawls 2001a, 64, 159). It would then be fully just for rich western states to finally turn off the engine of economic growth, as sufficient wealth is thought to exist within their borders for each citizen to have their primary goods. Now that the rich West has perched itself on a comfortable position of wealth, it can pull up the ladder and lean back, and look down on the global poor. I find this a dangerous and objectionable line of thought, and will show that there is in fact nothing in the idea of POD that requires us to pursue it. Most importantly, a mutually beneficial configuration of international economic growth can justify the exclusivity of private property across borders by decreasing global inequality. But order to do all that, allow me to briefly set out the how inequality has developed globally.

2. Globalization and Inequality

So how does domestic equality relate to global equality, and what can be said about its development over time? It might firstly be worthwhile to get a sense of the scope of problems. Global inequality stands at about 90:1, which means that the average person in the global richest 10% earns about

90 times as much (26 000 dollar) as the average person in the global poorest 10% (270 dollar). When it comes to domestic inequality, no country approaches such spectacular levels; the highest ratio can be found in Brazil, and is about 50:1. Global inequality is hence about twice as big as any domestic inequality. Global poverty is moreover staggering. If we deviate from the usual measure of absolute poverty, which is about 1.25 dollar a day to come at a more realistic measure of 2.5 dollar a day, about 3 billion people live in absolute poverty, which is half of all the people in the world.

But while these figures might appear overwhelmingly depressing, there is much cause for optimism. Global inequality is, for the first time since empirical data on it is available, rapidly and momentously declining. (Bourguignon 2015, 26) Some definitional matters are required to understand and properly contextualize this development. The first is that global inequality can be measured in different ways. The most readily available measurement looks at country GDP, and then weighs this GDP by the population within each country. The income of any person in the world thereby becomes the mere mean of the income of the country in which that person resides. The income of a person in China hereby becomes just the mean of what a Chinese person earns, and this measurement does therefore not take into account the domestic inequalities that inevitably obtain within countries. On this measurement, international inequality is consistently and spectacularly declining, so that the GDP of all countries in the world is moving closer together. Let us call this measurement 'international inequality' (II), as it measures the inequality in wealth between countries, even as it weighs such wealth by the population of each country. International inequality approaches a measure true global inequality, but cannot stand for it (Milanovic 2011). For if we want to know what true global inequality (GI) is, we must look at the real income of every individual in the world, and see how much the income of any one person differs from any other person, regardless of the state in which this or that person resides. This measurement is more nuanced but also more recent and therefore more tentative (Milanovic 2015), as it requires us to weigh the international inequality measurement to the inequality that obtain within countries. And when we do so, the picture becomes more complicated, as even though international inequality has rapidly declined, inequality within countries has rapidly increased.

We thus get a mixed, but nonetheless positively encouraging picture of global inequality. Global inequality, that is the domestic inequality weighted measurement, has starkly increased since the beginning of the 19th century

up until the last decade of the 20th century. (Bourguignon 2015) But since 1990, it has begun to decline rapidly, so much so that around 2011 we are back at 1900 levels. In a small matter of 20 years, the increase in global inequality that characterized most of our modern period has been nullified. But this is no cause for complacency, for two reasons. First, as said, domestic inequality has been rapidly increasing with the advent of a decrease in global inequality. The overall balance has been positive, but even as global inequality is decreasing, the perception of inequality that citizens have is that inequality is increasing. The second reason is that inequality at the extremes is also on the rise. Both the very poorest persons living in a small subset of extremely poor countries have not seen their prospects improve, while the very rich in each and every country have seen their fortunes increase spectacularly. The 2008 financial crisis has not halted this latter development, but, it now seems, only exacerbated it. The nuanced picture we get is thus that while global inequality has decreased overall as almost all poorer countries have steadily become richer and as very large swaths of very poor persons have seen their incomes rise spectacularly, inequality within almost all states is increasing while both the very poorest countries and the very richest individuals continue to separate themselves from the pack.

So what has driven this development? Unlike with the analysis of statistical data that underlies the picture of the development of global inequality, a clear answer to this question is much harder to come by. The most common answer is that globalization is the driver, as an increase in international market competition has taken place since 1990. The spread of technology, the increased scope of the market and the attendant liberalization of trade matter most in this story. According to recent research by Dani Rodrik (Rodrik 2015), only the industrialization of manufacturing leads to ‘unconditional convergence’, which means that, whatever else a country does, poverty is relieved by opening up to manufacturing. Note that no other factors, such as education, democratization or the spread of rights exhibit such unconditional convergence. In plain terms, the reason that global inequality has decreased is then because rich western states have allowed poorer states to manufacture goods and trade them across borders. Over the last decades, rich states have opened up their economies to the production of textiles abroad, and Asian, African and Latin-American countries have jumped on this opportunity. To continue the trend of decreasing global inequality, all things remaining equal, further liberalization of trade thus seems most promising, as many trade barriers remain, such as those on agriculture and on intellectual property protection (Bourguignon 2015, 153–158).

But while liberalization of trade and the spread of technology that characterizes globalization has driven the decrease in global inequality, it has also led to increasing domestic inequality within states as to the spectacular increase in the wealth of the world's very richest. As domestic economies have become subject to global market forces, overall country GDP has increased while large swaths of the rural poor have benefited spectacularly by entering manufacturing, but at the price of a shift of both economic and political power towards those most able to take advantage of the mobility required to operate on a global market, and at the price of governments subjecting themselves to the global market-led re-organization of domestic markets. International financial institutions, but also those persons with substantial capital have hereby become more able to capitalize on the mobile nature of their assets, while those whose capital remains tied to local factors have lost out. Put simply, if you can move your assets across borders without much loss, you win, and those with most capital to spend have been most able to do so, while the governments most willing to accede to this trend perform best, even as their societies become more unequal.

3. Global Justice and Property-owning democracy

So does this mean that there is some kind of trade-off between global justice and domestic justice? Does the decrease in global inequality depend, as it has appeared over the last decades, on the increase in domestic inequality and the rise of a global plutocratic class? Fortunately, it doesn't appear to have to be this way. In fact, the more open an economy is (the more it liberalizes international trade), the larger the size of its government is, or the larger its domestic demand on a more generous set of public policies is. (Rodrik 1997, 52) As societies open up to international trade, the calls for greater government support in mitigating the risks to different classes in society also becomes greater. But if that holds true, then why has domestic inequality increased, and why has a global class of super-rich consolidated its power? Here, it helps to look at the development of state income and expenditure over time. As Thomas Piketty points out, (Piketty 2014, 39–40, 333–334) tax revenue as a share of total national income has historically never been higher in western states, making up between 30 (US) and 60 (Sweden) percent of national income. The share of resources devoted to governmental allocation has grown by 3 to 5 times over the last half century, so that the role of governments in the domestic economy has never

been greater. But at the same time, wealth owned by the state is in most developed countries insignificant, or even negative, as debts exceed public assets. Governments hence do not own the wealth they spread around, but merely act as temporary intermediaries between private property owners. In a sense, it becomes ever more difficult to argue that governments really control wealth, as they are fully dependent on the willingness of private holders to pick the state as a legitimate intermediary (Streeck 2014). Rather than dealing with zombie corporations or zombie banks, we thus seem to be dealing with zombie states.

Authors focusing on the domestic attractiveness of POD are hence right that regaining public control over property ownership and spreading it equitably around is required to salvage what is left of political liberty. In the model of welfare-state capitalism, no such public ownership is necessary, as the state merely acts as an intermediary that spreads wealth around. In a POD by contrast, the state does for political liberty reasons actively engage in publicly creating equitable private property ownership. While welfare-state capitalism dovetails with the further erosion of public ownership, and the expected attendant increase in capital inequality and a decrease in support for any kind of international trade, a move towards POD might be able to buck this trend. But then why go for POD and not instead for liberal socialism, where the state owns the means of production? Here, it becomes clear why Rawls remained indifferent to the choice between liberal socialism and POD (Rawls 2001a, 138–139), because he remained adamant that global justice did not matter, as he believed the causes of wealth lay in domestic cultural and institutional factors. As we saw in the discussion of global inequality, increased globalization has accompanied a decrease in global inequality, proving Rawls decisively wrong, if not conclusively in factual assertion, at the very least in the underlying moral sentiment. Pursuing growth is internationally significant, because it does not just spur domestic market competition, but an international division of labor. As the increased scope of the market through further trade liberalization is needed for ever more growth, and as the attendant re-allocation of manufacturing to poorer states is their best bet for both reducing poverty and for decreasing global inequality, POD, where the means of production remain in private hands, is to be much preferred over liberal socialism for global justice reasons. Please do note that for POD to remain compatible with global justice, distributing capital ownership that is both taxable and tradable is to be much preferred over capital that is not. Investing merely in human capital thus appears *prima facie* unwise, and it would for global justice reasons be pref-

erable to accompany POD by dispersing real (tradable) property widely, which would seem to include worker-owned cooperative firms. Such firms both disperse property ownership widely and allow its productive assets to be internationally traded and multi-nationally owned. POD, where large accumulations of wealth are limited for political reasons and distributed in the form of capital ownership to all, is thus the preferred alternative to both socialism and welfare-state capitalism, as it strikes a balance between the global justice need for international capitalism and domestic justice need for political control over the economy. It is thus that we must for both reasons of domestic and global justice advocate property-owning democracy, and regain the proper balance between international trade and domestic political liberty.

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LEGITIMATING PROPERTY RIGHTS IN A PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY: LABOUR, EFFICIENCY AND LIBERTY

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This article examines the institutions of private property in a Property-Owning Democracy (POD). It aims at determining in which system, POD or Welfare State Capitalism (WSC), the requirements of the arguments justifying private property rights are better satisfied. It had been classically argued that private property rights are legitimate (a) because the worker has a (natural) right on the fruits of his labour (the *labour* justification), (b) because securing private property rights implements a structure of economic incentives that ultimately benefits all individuals in the society (the *efficiency* justification), and (c) because private property promotes individual autonomy (the *liberty* justification). In the different sections of this article, I briefly sketch the logic of each argument and examine how it is satisfied or not in a POD in comparison to WSC. My conclusion is that on many aspects, a POD better fulfills the requirements of those three arguments than does WSC.

Keywords: Property-Owning Democracy; Property Rights; Private Property; Labour Justification; Rawls.

Este artigo examina as instituições da propriedade privada numa Democracia de proprietários. Pretende determinar qual dos dois sistemas – a democracia de proprietários ou o Estado de bem-estar social – melhor realiza os requisitos invocados pelos argumentos usados para justificar os direitos de propriedade. Segundo a argumentação clássica, o direito à propriedade privada é legítimo: a) porque o trabalhador tem um direito natural aos frutos do seu trabalho (a justificação *labo-ral*); b) porque assegurá-lo permite criar uma estrutura de incentivos económicos que resulta, por fim, em benefício de todos na sociedade (a justificação por meio da *eficiência*); e c) porque a propriedade privada promove a autonomia individual (a justificação por meio da *liberdade*). Em cada secção deste artigo, esboço sucinta-

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mente a lógica de cada um dos argumentos e examino como esta é satisfeita ou não numa democracia de proprietários em comparação com um Estado de bem-estar social. A conclusão é a de que, em muitos aspectos, a democracia de proprietários realiza mais efetivamente os requisitos destes três argumentos do que um Estado de bem-estar Social.

Palavras-chave: Democracia de proprietários; direitos de propriedade; propriedade privada; justificação laboral; Rawls.



0. Introduction

In *Justice as Fairness*, Rawls famously supports Property-Owning Democracy (POD) as a solution to the problems raised by inequalities and concentration of wealth in Welfare-State Capitalism (WSC). As he writes: “the background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well. By contrast, welfare-state capitalism permits a small class to have a near monopoly of the means of production” (Rawls, 2001, p. 139). The cornerstone on which lies this preference for POD is the institutional reform of private property rights which aims at a widespread ownership of property, and particularly of property in productive assets. A POD retains the main advantages of a system based on private property (namely markets), while getting rid of its worst consequences in terms of economic and political inequalities (Krouse & McPherson, 1988). Implementing this widespread ownership of property therefore implies some reforms of property rights as we know them in WSC. If a lot of attention has been devoted to examine whether a POD better implements Rawls’s principles of justice than WSC (see among others: Freeman, 2013; Krouse & McPherson, 1988; O’Neill, 2009, 2012), it had never been asked whether the kind of property rights individuals may have in a POD would satisfy the requirements of the arguments justifying the institution of private property.

Would private property rights in a POD be legitimate? This is the question I will address in this article. Along the multi-secular debate on the legitimacy of private property, three main argumentations have been brought to legitimate private property. To sum up: a. the worker has a (nat-

ural) property right on the fruits of his labour (the *labour* justification), b. private property promotes economic efficiency through implementing the structure of incentives necessary for a capitalist economy to produce its benefits (the *efficiency* justification), and c. private property promotes individual autonomy (the *liberty* justification). I open this article with a section that aims at clarifying how a POD would affect property rights as we know them in WSC. Then, in the three following sections, I present each of those arguments more in detail and examine whether POD or WSC provides a better context to meet each argument's demands. Furthermore, my goal in this paper is to demonstrate that a POD better suits those three arguments than WSC.

1. Private Property Rights in a POD

To start, it is important to clarify the main features of a POD and briefly recall how and why Meade, and after him Rawls, thought it could solve the political problems raised by economic inequalities. Meade decomposes total personal income into two distinct sources: earned income (like wages) and property income (like dividend, rent, or loans). Total personal income equals the sum of earned income and property income. With this distinction at hand, Meade stresses that the key factor for analysing the structure of inequalities and their plausible evolution is “the proportion of total personal incomes that is made up of income from property” (Meade, 1964, p. 28). If this proportion is small, then the distribution of earned income has more weight than the distribution of property income in determining the future evolution of total personal income, and hence of inequalities. In this case, inequalities in property ownings between individuals can be overbalanced by (eventually artificially entertained) differential earning powers.^[1]

But for Meade, who wrote this text in the Sixties, the plausible future of western economies was rather that, as automation progresses, less labour will be needed, so that, “for society as a whole, the proportion of income which accrues from earnings has been greatly reduced by automation” (Meade, 1964, p. 40). In this perspective, the ownership of property is therefore crucial. If property of productive assets is concentrated in a few hands, with earned incomes decreasing as automation develops, the global

1 The kind of property I will consider in this article is therefore “productive property”, meaning the property of something that produces a property income, the distribution of which has important economic and political consequences.

income generated by property will go to some very rich owners, while their property-less fellows will compete to have a share in the few last available earned incomes. A POD avoids this by enforcing a widespread ownership of property (and of property income) among individuals. It does so without sacrificing the positive efficiency effects of private property in productive assets. Meade's support for POD precisely stems from the fact that it allows "to combine efficiency in the use of resources with equity in the distribution of income" (Meade, 1964, p. 75).

To realize this widespread ownership of property, Meade advocated a list of measures, of which the most significant are: an aggressive taxation on capital transmission (between generations and *inter vivos*) to avoid the perpetual reproduction of wealth concentration, increased State investments in education and training, institutional reforms to encourage small properties to expand (through cooperative or profit-sharing companies), and the reduction of the national debt (Meade, 1964, pp. 75–76; O'Neill, 2012, pp. 79–81). Besides, the redistribution of property-ownership should not put an end to existing social policies, but rather complement them, and be complemented by those measures. Since earned income has a marginal influence in Meade's theoretical framework, he doesn't examine policies to limit earned property through implementing something like a maximal wage as Rawls seems to suggest (see Rawls, 2001, p. 161; and *infra*). To sum it up, the average individual in a POD would therefore have a small or medium property, would be granted a social minimal if needed, would have access to education, would have a property income, and can decide freely to engage in market activities.^[2]

I want to add two remarks to this brief description of POD. First, as Meade put it: "the essential feature of this society would be that work had become rather more a matter of personal choice" (Meade, 1964, p. 40). For Meade and Rawls, it is obvious that owning a property is a security that allows you not to depend on the labour market for buying the most basic commodities of life. To be actually property-less means that you have no other option than to desperately search for an earned income, which means selling your labour at any price you can get which allows you to satisfy your urgent and inescapable physical needs. On the contrary, the owner is not pushed in his back by the bare necessities of life. He can face the pressure of time and need with much more flexibility: the owner can wait for

2 For the purpose of this article, I lean essentially on Meade's version of POD. A larger account of Rawls's conception can be found in chapter five of Freeman's "*Rawls*" (Freeman, 2007, pp. 219–235).

a better opportunity, make a plan, develop his own projects *because* he has a property income, or because in the worst case he can exchange his property rather than selling his labour for a survival wage like the property-less. In this sense, private property appears to support individual emancipation and independence.

Second, owning a property seems to have a tendency to raise the total personal income in an exponential way. Indeed, if total personal income equals property income plus earned income, it is obvious that if you compare two individuals having a similar earned income, and if one of them has an additional property income, the one who has a property will have a higher total personal income than the other. Consequently, he will be able to save, or to invest his surplus in education or capital in order to increase his future earned incomes. Also, over the next period of time, this surplus will be converted in property and will produce an additional property income.³ Having a property increases his ability to save and get more property income over the next period of time, or to invest in education or training and have more earned income (and more surplus that might be converted in productive property). There is therefore something like a “multiplier effect” of property on earning power. The more you own, the more this additional property income increases your existing property, and the more your property income will increase, and so on.

2. Property and Labour in a POD

I now turn to the examination of the different arguments supporting the claim that labour creates a private property right in what the labour of an individual has produced. Although they significantly differ, those arguments are usually grouped under the general label: “*labour justification*” of private property. Since it is neither possible nor useful to present all of them here, I briefly recall the core of the two most famous: the *labour-mixing* argument, and the *labour-value* argument. We owe the typical formulation of the first to John Locke who, in the fifth chapter of his *Second Treatise of Government*, argued that an individual owns his labour, and that if he mixes his labour with an unowned thing, the natural law commands that he acquires a right of private property in the thing he has mixed his labour with:

3 It might be opposed that a property doesn't *necessarily* produce a property income: one can lose his or her property because the investment was risky and something went wrong. This is of course true, but I think that it doesn't infringe the fact that the general tendency of property is to produce a positive property income.

The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then, he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, hath by this labour something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other Men (Locke, 1960, pp. 287–288).

By the action of working, the labourer mixed his labour with the thing, and “transferred” the kind of property rights he had on his labour on the unowned thing. It has to be noticed that following Locke, it is assumed that the worker should have the same right on the thing as the right he had on his labour *before* mixing it with the thing, when the idea of this labour was only an intention on which he had absolute power. As a consequence, the property right the individual has on the thing is presumed to be an absolute right.

The relation Locke establishes between labour and property supports the broader claim that what labour has produced should be the property of the worker because his labour is the main source of the thing’s value. The argument here is that the valued thing should be the property of the individual whose labour created his value, or, if possible, should be distributed according to the share of the value each individual’s labour has produced. This argument, usually known as the *labour-value* argument, echoes secular claims of the same kind and is also present in Locke’s *Second Treatise*.^[4]

It could be objected that those two arguments are very weak to justify private property. Indeed they face strong limitations. The Lockean argument is pretty far from the reality we face in our societies: it is nothing but rare that individuals mix their labour with an unowned thing. While in our modern highly specialized economies, the *labour-value* argument always faces the difficulty of impossibly isolating the contribution of each individual’s labour to the final product. Despite these limitations, it is however important to examine whether a POD could better satisfy the claim that labour legitimates private property than WSC for two reasons: on the one hand, libertarian thinkers still believe that this argument (or a slightly revised version of it) could legitimate some kind of absolute property rights; and on the other hand, the idea that “the more you exert yourself and create some value, the more of this value your labour has created you should receive”, is a very powerful representation, massively endorsed in contemporary western societies.

4 The labour-value argumentation is immemorial, as attests the fact that when Aristotle criticizes Plato’s community of goods in the *Republic*, he namely argues that giving the same share of the products to contributors who made a very different contribution to the harvest will for sure lead to continuous quarrels (Aristotle, *Politics*, II, 5, 1263a).

So, is the claim that labour creates property left unsatisfied in a POD? The answer seems to be negative *a priori*. As in WSC, the individuals in a POD are the owners of what their labour has created, or of the wage they sold their labour for on the labour market (if they decide to take a job). POD retains free enterprise and the labour market, so that labour and individual exertion remain the best way to acquire property. The main difference with WSC lies in the fact that some limits would probably be set to the right to bequeath and donate property in a POD (cf. *supra*). Is this problematic in regard to the labour justification? To answer this question, we have to explore some problems of this argumentation, and first how appropriation *without labour* can be legitimate.

Indeed, according to the labour justification, private property right allows the owner to decide what will happen to his owned thing after his death. The right to bequeath and the right to donate are considered important features of the right of private property (Honoré, 1961). Although the beneficiary of a bequest or of a donation hasn't mixed *his* labour with the thing by himself, the fact that the prior owner did legitimates the transfer, and allows the new owner to have the same right to bequeath or donate the thing to someone else, and so on.^[5]

But this mode of appropriation *without labour* can lead to paradoxical situations. As many authors from J.S. Mill to John Rawls have pointed out, inheritance, bequest and donation are the core mechanisms for the reproduction of inequalities: from the moment inequality develops, some receive more than others without having worked at all, and this inequality is likely to amplify since on one hand the ownership of property allows the wealthiest to earn additional property incomes, and on the other the wealthier are encouraged to transmit their capital by inheritance or bequest to their relatives. Additionally, as underlined in the first section, the labour of the property-less soon happens to generate less earned income than the labour of the wealthy. The original inequality in property develops also into an inequality in the means to appropriate by working. As a consequence, it is plausible that in the end, the labour justification of property gives rise to a situation where labour and property are totally disconnected: the wealthier

5 The idea is that the owner has a right to decide how he will give up his property right on the thing: he can choose to exchange it against another property on the market, or give it for free. The idea that having a property right allows you to decide what happens to the thing when your property right ends is particularly clear in Nozick's entitlement theory (even if Nozick has an ambiguous position towards the *labour justification*: he spends a lot of energy to exhibit his defaults, but seems to implicitly rely on it or on a revised version as a Principle of Justice in Acquisition (Nozick, 1974, pp. 150–153).

might have never worked at all while the workers earn a subsistence wage that only allows them to earn the bare means of subsistence day after day, and leave them property-less the day after.⁶

Although such a situation seems to be paradoxical in regard to the labour justification, thinkers like Nozick argue that the right of the first owner on his property include the rights to donate or bequeath it. Consequently, the concentration of wealth is legitimate if the wealthiest received their property without labour, but by legitimate means (voluntarily transfers, contracts, gifts, inheritance, etc.), even if it ultimately discredits the claim that *present* labour creates property (Nozick, 1974, pp. 150–153). The distribution of ownings in a society depends on the history of property rights created by *past* labour in immemorial times. Therefore, if both the original appropriation and the history of its ulterior transfers are fair, the present owner has a legitimate property right in the thing. The concentration of wealth is not a criterion to determine if a distribution is fair. Moreover in this paradoxical situation, capital owners can appropriate the value created by *present* labour because they have a property right in those productive assets that were created by *past* (or immemorial) labour, and legitimately came into their hand. The rights of *past* labour clearly have precedence over the rights of *present labour*.

But conversely, it is also possible to read the labour justification as giving priority to *present* labour over *past* labour. Under this last interpretation, the worker should have a property right in the fruits of his present labour, and every labour should create some kind of property right on what it has created. It doesn't imply that *past* labour is meaningless for determining who should have a property right on what: if an individual worked and acquired a property years ago, this *past* labour that was his property should still grant him a legitimate property right in the thing. But he could not transmit this property right generated by his *past* labour to someone else. What appears to be illegitimate is "individual appropriation *without working*", that is: appropriation because of the rights of a *past* labour that never belonged to the present

6 J.S. Mill elegantly describes a situation of this kind in his Principles of political economy (and draws a radical conclusion of it) when he writes : "If, therefore the choice were to be made between Communism with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour – the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessaries of life; if this or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism would be but as dust in the balance" (Mill, 1965a, p. 207).

owner. What separates those two interpretations is a dispute on whether the original property right included the right to decide of the future owner of the thing. If property includes the right to bequeath and donate, appropriation by *present* labour can only apply to the few unowned things left, since appropriation *without* labour already distributed property rights among individuals according to the rights of *past* labour.

By contrasting the precedence of *past* vs *present* labour, it appears that the labour justification lies on a fundamental ambiguity: it was never thought as a diachronic argument. The labour justification simply argues that labour should give the worker a right on the fruits of his labour, but it remains silent on which labour is pertinent to judge the distribution of property rights: *past* or *present* labour? Should the property right the worker acquires include the right to donate, inherit, or bequeath property, so that this *past* labour that legitimated the original appropriation decreases or annihilates the appropriative power of *present* labour? Should the right of the *present* labourer take precedence on the right of the *past* labourer? The labour justification remains silent on those questions.

With this ambiguity in mind, we can now turn back to our initial question: in a POD, do the limitations to property concentration infringe the requirements of the labour justification? The answer to this question depends on whether priority is given to *past* or *present* labour to legitimate the ownership of property.

I think that we have at least three reasons to give priority to *present* labour and to reject the libertarian primacy of *past* labour. First, the distribution of property rights should be judged at the edge of present considerations, and not on the basis of immemorial appropriations and transfers. Property right has no existence out of the political community that guarantees it in the present time, so why should some present injustices be legitimated by immemorial appropriations and transfers? If we do so, we subordinate the scope of our legitimate action to out of reach past events. Second, the precedence given to past labour is grounded on an indefensible version of the *labour-mixing argument*. It is not the place to demonstrate this claim here, but it is already quite intuitive that the idea of an original mix between individual labour and an unowned thing is deficient to legitimate an absolute right of private property on the thing that should be respected hundreds or thousands of years after the original appropriation.^[7] Third, the idea that labour creates property is widely shared in our contemporary societies. But this representation

7 For some critics of this argument, see among others: Simmons, 1992; Waldron, 1983, 1985.

doesn't refer that much to the right of *original* labour than to the right of *present* labour. When it is argued that the worker has a property right on what his labour has created, the labour it is referred to is the labour of the *present* worker, not of the first appropriator. The meritocratic ideal similarly points out that *present* labour - this very labour that created the value of the thing - , should have precedence on *past* labour for determining who is legitimate to have a property right on the thing.

So, if we now consider that the labour justification gives priority to the rights of *present* labour, does POD better satisfy its requirements than WSC? I think the answer is irremediably yes because the kind of inequality that WSC allows is not so much due to individual differences in *present* labour capacity or exertion, but rather to inequalities grounded in *past* labour, to individual appropriation of property *without* labour, or to differential earning powers caused by the ownership of un-earned property. While in a POD, property (and property income) will be more equally distributed among individuals. This has three important consequences in regard to the (*present*) labour justification:

- a) all individuals will be more or less equals in regard to the amount of property they can acquire *without labour*;
- b) as a consequence, individual labour will have approximatively the same appropriative power for everybody (fair equality of appropriation by labour);
- c) and no individuals will be pushed in their back by the bare necessities of life; so that their labour will appropriate them more than the bare means of survival.

Point a) underlines that if individual labour is the principle that legitimates private property, then appropriation without labour has to be minimized. POD does so by better distributing appropriation without labour among the members of a society. Point b) emphasizes an important consequence of this initial distribution of property: since individuals begin their life more or less equals in terms of property, their labour should have more or less the same appropriative power. The "multiplier effect" of property on earnings is fairly distributed among the members of that society. Property therefore really becomes a function of individual labour and exertion, instead of inheritance or of individual ability (or luck) to acquire property without working. Point c) simply emphasizes that in WSC, the labour of the property-less working for a subsistence wage cannot be said to give them a

property. Indeed, if their whole wage is perpetually used to buy the goods that are consumed the day after, the worker remains property-less. How can it be said that his labour earns him a property? A POD rectifies this by giving him a property and a property income so that if he decides to work, his labour will really appropriate him some additional property. If we consider those three features, it therefore appears that POD better satisfies the requirements of the labour justification than WSC.

3. Property and Incentives: Economic Efficiency in a POD

The second classical argumentation claims that private property is the very condition of a market economy, and that this efficient organization of the economy brings desirable consequences for the whole society. It produces an abundance of goods while maximizing individual freedom, which both benefit all members of society. The core of the argument lies in the idea that by securing the fruits of their labour to the individuals, private property encourages hard work, entrepreneurship, innovation and risk taking behaviour, all features that contribute to growth and economic efficiency. Private property is therefore legitimate because it is expected to develop a structure of incentives that brings as a *consequence* a market economy whose advantages benefit the whole society. Even if the worst off don't benefit from the advantages of a capitalist economy as much as the wealthy, the first are thought to be in a better situation than if they lived without capitalism, or under another kind of economic system such as socialism or communism.^[8]

This argumentation also provides a coherent defence of economic inequalities by highlighting the positive effect of wealth concentration. Indeed, it is expected that the capital-owners seeking high profit rates will invest their capital in promising firms or projects, thereby selecting, creating and entertaining efficient economic activity. Their property-less fellows will have opportunities to sell their labour to capital owners. They will therefore have a chance to become capital owners themselves, while being able to buy consumption goods which raise their standard of living beyond that possible in any other economic system.

8 Alan Ryan presents a similar version of this argument in chapter nine of his book "Property". Compared to our account of the *efficiency argument*, he simply puts more emphasis on the fact that giving an individual a property right in a resource will give him an incentive to use it in the most efficient way, thus bringing an optimal allocation of resources in the society: "In general, the thought is that giving people property rights in anything of value is the best way of ensuring that resources are used as efficiently as possible" (Ryan, 1987, p. 106).

However, it has to be noted that WSC doesn't meet the requirements of this argument as much as the regime of "laissez-faire capitalism", as Rawls qualifies it (Rawls, 2001, p. 137). In the latter, economic actors have a strong incentive because they expect to appropriate the whole of the value they create, while in WSC they are promised only a part of it since the State collects taxes on labour. Of course, the level of taxation has an important impact on incentive, but what I want to underline is that, despite taxes, individuals in WSC continue to work and exert themselves. It is not necessary to appropriate the whole created value to have an incentive to work. Additionally, in WSC, most of the population doesn't appropriate the value or a proportion of the value their labour has created, but rather sells his labour against a fixed wage. The main incentive of an employee isn't his will to appropriate what his individual labour has produced, but rather his wish to have a wage by the end of the month. There is no direct link between work and appropriation for the vast majority of the population.⁹ The wage-society in itself is an obstacle to the idea that securing property rights in what labour has produced will act as an incentive to encourage individuals to work, innovate and exert themselves.

Acknowledging that WSC stands with structural defaults in regard to the *efficiency* justification, we now turn to examine how a POD would affect the structure of incentives existing in WSC. The goal is to assess whether a wide dispersion of property could better satisfy the requirements of the efficiency justification.

So, how would the structure of incentives in a POD differ from what we know? Krouse and Macpherson correctly emphasize that in Rawls' thought, the widespread ownership of property equalizes the "opportunities to invest in the acquisition of human capital" (Krouse & McPherson, 1988, p. 92). Consequently, there would be a) an increase in the labour supply of qualified or highly educated workers (and a parallel decrease in the price of qualified labour), and b) a decrease of unskilled labour supply (and a parallel increase in the price of unskilled labour). The final effect is that the wages of skilled and unskilled labour are expected to ultimately converge (Rawls, 1999, p. 270) while "differentials that remain would tend to be compensatory, reflect-

9 This argument is inspired from J.S. Mill's examination of communism in the second book of his *Principles of Economy*. Mill stresses that the classical objection to communism "that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his fair share of the work" perfectly applies to English capitalism of that time, since the vast majority of workers exchange their labour against a fixed wage. He concludes that: "A factory operative has less personal interest in his work than a member of a Communist association, since he is not, like him, working for a partnership of which he is himself a member." (Mill, 1965a, pp. 203–204)

ing differences in the cost of training for and the attractiveness of different sorts of jobs” (Krouse & McPherson, 1988, p. 92; Rawls, 1999, p. 270).

But libertarian and neoliberals doubt that this reformed structure of incentives remains compatible with economic efficiency. Jan Narveson, in his reply to Tilo Wesche’s article on the concept of property in a POD (Narveson, 2013; Wesche, 2013), perfectly illustrates this fear, and the logic behind it, when he writes:

And we can add that those at the ‘bottom’ in market societies are virtually always in fact made better off in market economies – compare the ‘working class’ of today with that of a decade ago, let alone a century, and the point is obvious. (...) However, if you disallow incentives, then you are headed toward thoroughgoing equalization of wealth – with all its incredible inefficiencies and unfairnesses – at the hands of the difference principle (Narveson, 2013, p. 116).

The idea here is that, in the absence of incentives, the economy would regress and become *inefficient* and *unfair*. So that “what the author’s proposal [Tilo Wesche’s POD] certainly will undercut is the production of the very things the redistributor would like to redistribute” (Narveson, 2013, p. 115). Besides the “convergence” of wages expected by Rawls, a POD would also allow individuals to earn a property income without working. Narveson’s fear therefore lies on two different expected effects of POD on incentives. If on one hand low and middle class individuals have a property income that allow them to live a decent life without working, and if on the other, higher class entrepreneurs are not granted the fruits of their labour, why would all those people engage in market activities that lead to economic efficiency? Since this intuition raises a real difficulty, we have to examine the two different effects of POD on incentives in more detail.

To begin with, let us examine how a POD would affect the incentives of high level entrepreneurs. Besides inheritance and bequest laws, there is also room, in a POD, for laws instituting a maximal level of earned income or a maximal wealth level. Rawls clearly states that it might be legitimate to use taxation not only to raise public funds, “but solely to prevent accumulations of wealth that are judged to be inimical to background justice, for example, to the fair value of the political liberties and to fair equality of opportunity” (Rawls, 2001, p. 161). I cannot discuss here such measures in detail, but it is in any case plausible that in a POD, high level entrepreneurs or top managers will have limited or lower incomes than in WSC, in order to prevent large accumulation of wealth.

In such conditions, would those high-level entrepreneurs stop working as Narveson seems to believe they will? It supposes that they have no other reasons to work than their will to acquire the value their labour has created. But this claim is highly controversial, and, just like John E. Roemer, I think that the wage is only part of the motivation for engaging in market activities, especially for medium and upper social positions: “For their main incentives are not, I think, to earn huge incomes, but rather to be important people, who make big decisions, and garner the respect of their peers for being important people.” (Roemer, 2013, p. 59). Roemer also underlines that this view is confirmed by a study of Piketty, Saez and Stantcheva. Examining how the top 1% of income distribution responds to increased taxation, they found out that a socially optimal top tax rate would be 83% (Piketty, Saez, & Stantcheva, 2011, p. 4), suggesting therefore that “the right-wing claim of high labor elasticities among the very highly paid is just a big, self-serving lie” (Roemer, 2013, p. 60).

It has also to be noted that the impact of such reforms on the incentives of high incomes highly depends on the level at which the earned-income or wage limit would be set. It is obvious that limiting earned-incomes at 100.000\$ a year or at 10.000.000\$ a year would have a very different impact on incentives. This also points out that a relatively high limit (say 1.000.000\$ a year –net after taxes) would not directly affect the incentives of the vast majority of the population, since it would only affect those in the top percentile. Furthermore, in contemporary WSC, high level incomes are already aggressively taxed. But on the opposite of what Narveson would expect, the perspective of being deprived of more than half of the value their labour has created, does not entail the will of high level managers to continue working hard. For all those reasons, and particularly because the will to appropriate (a part of) the fruits of one’s labour is only one among many other incentives that contributes to develop economic efficiency, there are strong reasons to think that a POD could limit or rise additional taxes on very high earned incomes without throwing away all the benefits of a market economy in terms of incentives.

The dispersion of property is supposed to have a second negative effect on incentives. Lower and middle class workers would have fewer incentives to work, since most of them would receive a property income that might allow them to live without having to work^[10]. Does that really change something as to the requirements of the efficiency justification? In my opinion,

10 To simplify, we assume here that *all* the individuals have a minimal property income that allow them to live a decent life, although this might not be the case in a POD.

no: in a POD, individuals have no obligation to work, but they still have the same incentives to do so. If they work, they will still get a wage (or a part of the value they created) to improve their living standard. The entrepreneur who wants to start his business will still have the same incentives to do so.^[11] The main difference with WSC is that, in a POD, people who took a job just because they had no other choice would have real bargain power allowing them to negotiate the price of their labour. On this point, POD performs even better than WSC, since individuals would take decisions on whether to accept a job (or not) depending on how much can be earned through their labour – i.e. depending on their property incentive – , and not because they have no other choice.

It could be opposed that a POD would face the same problems of incentives as those associated with a basic income: if people don't *have* to work, they will stop working. To answer this objection, it is important to notice that it lies on the assumption that people work only because they have no other choice, and not because they want to appropriate the fruits of their labour. This assumption therefore has nothing to do with the efficiency justification of private property. The idea that people work because they have no other choice is not an argument used to legitimate private property rights. It might be one of the worst Machiavellian arguments in favour of a capitalist economy, but it is not what is discussed here. I am not denying that in a POD important changes in market conditions would occur, and that a part of the population would probably exit the labour market, but what I want to emphasize here is that if we consider that private property, and not economic necessity, generates a structure of incentives able to produce economic efficiency, this structure of incentives is maintained in a POD.

Moreover, there is another point I can only mention here that supports the claim that a POD would better fulfil the requirements of the efficiency argument than WSC. As Freeman and many others have highlighted, a POD constitutes an adequate economic context for the development of a cooperative economy (Freeman, 2007, pp. 219–232). The main feature of a cooperative company is that its productive capital is owned by the workers of the company: the workers are the share-holders of their company and therefore share among them the profits generated by this capital according to one or another maxim of distribution. Besides its virtuous effects on education and democratic ethos, the cooperative economy puts an end

11 Until the point where he earns so much that the state taxes him more than what he would have been taxed in WSC.

to the division of society between the owners of capital on one side and those who own nothing but their labour on the other, since the owners are the workers. Just like in a cooperative economy, a POD could implement a “widespread ownership of capital and other means of production, whether by individual workers, unions, corporations, and so on, with perhaps varying degrees of worker participation and democratization of management” (Freeman, 2007, p. 220). The point is that it is difficult to imagine an economic system where private property acts more like an incentive than a cooperative economy. As JS Mill pointed out, in a cooperative the worker has a strong interest to exert himself, to be innovative, and to acquire the skills needed to participate in the management of the company as he will have a fair part of the fruits of his labour (Mill, 1965b, pp. 758–796). The requirements of the efficiency argument in terms of incentives are perfectly met in a cooperative economy, and this economic organization is highly complementary to a POD.

To conclude, I want to assess the general effect of a widespread ownership of property on individual incentives by balancing its negative and positive effects in regard to the efficiency justification. We have underlined that a POD might have a slight negative effect on high-level workers, but that this effect is unlikely to cut all other incentives that motivate these workers. On medium and low class workers, we have concluded that a POD might decrease the “pressure” to work and thereby provoke a decrease in the general labour supply, but that this objection was not relevant in the eyes of the efficiency justification. A POD doesn’t affect the core of its requirements, since a worker or an entrepreneur will continue to appropriate a significant part of the fruits of his labour, just like in WSC. But a POD can also raise new incentives and foster economic efficiency in comparison to WSC. First, a wide diffusion of property will favour access to capital for individuals who face important difficulties to finance their project in WSC, thereby stimulating economic activity. Second, the bargaining power that the worker will gain might cause a decrease in labour supply. But as a side effect it will also on the one hand put a term to many jobs with very low productivity levels in which the workers do the less in order not to get fired, and on the other it will reinforce the incentives of those workers who decide to work. The general effect on efficiency might be frankly positive. Third, a generalized property income would allow many people to invest their income in skills or education. This would also raise the general productivity of the economy. And fourth, if a cooperative economy develops in the context of a POD, workers will have a strong incentive to exert themselves since

they will directly appropriate the value their labour has created. Overall, I think it is reasonable to expect that these positive effects will overcome the slight negative consequences of setting an earned income limit (or wealth-limitations) on the incentives of high level workers.

4. Property and Liberty

The third classical argument to legitimate private property claims that it promotes individual freedom by giving the owner a right of control on the material means of his life and projects. A minimal amount of property gives every individual the means to live a decent life, a security against the “pressure of basic needs” (cf. *supra*), as well as the means of realizing some of his projects. Rawls identifies private property as a basic right for the same kind of reasons:

Among the basic rights is the right to hold and to have the exclusive use of personal property. One ground of this right is to allow a sufficient material basis for personal independence and a sense of self-respect, both of which are essential for the adequate development and exercise of the moral powers. Having this right and being able effectively to exercise it is one of the social bases of self-respect (Rawls, 2001, p. 114).

In a POD, the widespread dispersal of property extends the advantages of owning a property to the vast majority of individuals. If private property is to be legitimate by its positive effects on individual autonomy, a POD clearly better fulfils the requirements of this justification than WSC. Therefore, I won't spend as much attention on this point as to the two others. Instead, I will only make two brief remarks about how a POD can promote individual freedom.

My first remark is that the positive effect on individual freedom of owning property highly depends of what “kind” of property is granted to the individual. Owning a parcel of land, a fixed amount of money, or some shares in the capital of a company you work for obviously has different emancipatory effects. In the idea of “Property-Owning Democracy”, the kind of property that has to be more or less equally distributed is not defined *a priori*. It depends on social representations about what has to be equally distributed and how it can promote a certain kind of freedom. As Ben Jackson points out, early supporters of POD like Harrington and Rousseau “were agrarian and austere critical of commerce and luxury. Such authors

envisaged a community predominantly made up of small-scale agricultural producers, each with sufficient property (i.e., land) to be economically independent of one another and hence independent of each other's wills" (Jackson, 2012, p. 34). With the emergence of the commercial society, this agrarian conception of POD soon appeared "sociologically implausible, not to say anachronistic" (p. 35), and from the works of Thomas Paine, individual independence was thought to be better supported through property in a defined amount of money than in a parcel of land.

For contemporary thought however, the question remains open: it still has to be determined whether individuals in a POD would better receive (or earn?) a share of the global wealth as an (in-)alienable capital, as shares in a company (of which the individual is a part?), or else. A principle on which to judge the advantages of these different types of property might precisely be the kind of freedom they promote: liberty as independence, as non-domination, as autonomy, etc.

Second, the arguments that legitimate the implementation of a basic income by its positive effects on individual emancipation also partly applies to the argumentation in favour of POD. Indeed, when an individual owns an amount of property that allows him to live on his "property income", the emancipatory effects of such a predictable and regular income are similar to those of a basic income. As Meade puts it: "A man with much property has great bargaining strength and a great sense of security, independence and freedom; and he enjoys these things not only *vis-à-vis* his propertyless fellow citizen but also *vis-à-vis* the public authorities. He can snap his fingers at those on whom he must rely for an income, for he can always live for a time on his capital" (Meade, 1964, p. 39).

Of course, the gap with a basic income remains huge. In a POD, property income is neither unconditional nor universal by definition.^[12] Despite these limitations, it is plausible that, thanks to their property income, many individuals in a POD would enjoy more real freedom, since they would have a real "exit option" on the labour market: "there would be no class of workers who were forced to sell their labor power in order to survive. When "exit" is a viable option, the bargaining power of labor is strong. The 'worst aspects of so-called wage-slavery are removed' ([*A Theory of*

12 Although it is possible to imagine a POD in which the distribution of capital would take the form of a "universal capital dotation", taking place at the birth of every child, of such an amount that this property generates a property income allowing each individual to live a decent life. In fact, this universal "property income" would be quiet similar to a basic income (except if this capital is thought as alienable).

justice], p.281)” (Krouse & McPherson, 1988, p. 91). If basic income and POD may have similar effects on individual emancipation, the latter presents the advantage of being presumably more “acceptable” for public opinion: the idea that an individual lives on the income of his property seems less disturbing than the fact of receiving a basic income *without working*. Strategically, POD might therefore be a more reachable intermediary step on the way towards a basic income.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I have presented three classical justifications of private property rights and assessed whether their requirements were better satisfied in WSC or in a POD. Concerning the *labour* justification of private property, I have highlighted that it remained problematically silent on whether the right of *present* or *past* labour has to be considered for judging the fairness of a distribution. I have concluded that if priority is given to *present* labour, a POD better satisfies the requirements of this justification. Then, I have examined the libertarian fear that in a POD, wage limitations and a generalized property income would cut economic incentives and therefore undermine the efficiency of a capitalist economy. But in a POD, as we have seen, individuals have the same kind of incentives as in WSC: they are still granted the main part of the value their labour has produced and therefore have strong incentives to exert themselves. Although slight changes in the general structure of incentives would occur, the core of the argument remains valid, and a widespread ownership of property might additionally have positive effects on productivity. A POD could also promote the rise of a cooperative economy that would give all the workers even stronger incentives by associating them to the profits. In the last section, I have recalled the claim that private property is legitimate because it promotes individual liberty. Since it is rather obvious that POD better satisfies this justification than WSC, I have only made two comments on how different types of property can support different types of autonomy, and on the links between POD and basic income.

The general conclusion to draw is straightforward: if one thinks that private property is legitimate because the worker has a right on the fruits of his labour, because the efficiency it promotes benefits the whole society, or because it encourages individual liberty, one has therefore to support a move towards the implementation of a POD rather than WSC. The three

classical arguments brought to legitimate private property actually call for widespread ownership of property rather than the concentration of wealth allowed by WSC. However provocative in some ways, this conclusion is not so surprising: it simply stresses that the reasons we have to prefer private property over other forms of property rights should benefit all the members of a society, and not only some of them. Widespread ownership of property better distributes the advantages of owning private property among the members of a society than a system that allows a highly inequalitarian concentration of wealth. It also gives them similar opportunities to appropriate the means of a decent life and to reach higher social positions.

To conclude, I want to stress that the reforms of inheritance law proposed by Meade and Rawls to equalize the ownership of property and move towards a POD are not contrary to the principles that legitimate private property. Especially, Meade's proposal for limiting the accumulated amount of wealth an individual can receive along his life doesn't infringe the principles that legitimate private property (Meade, 1964, p. 57). Such reform of the laws regulating appropriation *without labour* (inheritance, bequest and gifts *inter vivos*) is compatible with the justifications of private property we have examined. It allows individuals to earn more, but only limit the amount they can receive without working. As J.S. Mill points out: "the guarantee to them [the individuals] of the fruits of the labour and abstinence of others, transmitted to them without any merit or exertion of their own, is not of the essence of the institution, but a mere incidental consequence" (Mill, 1965a, p. 208). With the kind of reforms Meade proposed, the owners of large fortunes remain free to decide what they want to do with their property. But, in the name of political equality, they just cannot give it to those individuals that have already been favoured by receiving the maximal amount of wealth from others (or they could do it but at an increasing tax rate depending on the amount the beneficiary had already received). Such a measure is compatible with the principles that ground private property, and would be an important first step towards the implementation of a POD.

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JOHN RAWLS AND THE SOCIAL MAXIMUM^[1]

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The debate about predistribution is a highly pressing one. Based on the most important normative argument for predistribution - John Rawls' defense of property-owning democracies - political egalitarians are committed to the dispersion of wealth or productive assets as a necessary condition for any just society based on the private ownership of the means of production. Despite the soundness of the Rawlsian argument, in this paper I intend to show that, first, the argument is misleading regarding the egalitarian potential of welfare institutions and, second, that there are no conceptual obstacles within contractualist moral theories to make conventional welfare institutions as egalitarian as those of property-owning democracy. Two things must be ensured though: (1) a right-based theory of welfare institutions and (2) the idea of a social maximum - that is a bundle of institutions for checking unreasonable exclusion from capital control. In the last section of this paper some reasons for a reasonable notion of a social maximum for democratic societies are addressed.

Key-Words: Predistribution, John Rawls, Egalitarianism, Social Maximum

O debate a respeito da redistribuição é extremamente relevante para formas de igualitarismo orientadas politicamente. Seguindo o argumento normativo mais importante a favor da redistribuição - a defesa de democracias de cidadão-proprietários por John Rawls - o igualitarismo político assume que a dispersão de riqueza,

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ou recursos produtivos, é condição necessária para garantir a justiça de sociedades fundadas na apropriação privada dos meios de produção. Apesar da coerência do argumento rawlsiano, procurarei mostrar nesse artigo que, em primeiro lugar, o argumento é impreciso em relação ao potencial igualitário de instituições de bem-estar social e, em segundo, que não existem obstáculos conceituais relevantes, internos às teorias contratualistas, para tornar, em princípio, instituições de bem-estar social tão igualitárias quanto as instituições de uma democracia de cidadãos-proprietários. Duas coisas precisariam ser garantidas, no entanto: (a) uma teoria das instituições de bem-estar fundada no direito e (b) a ideia de um máximo social, isto é, um conjunto de instituições voltadas para contrabalançar exclusões não aceitáveis de controle sobre capital. A última seção do artigo apresenta alguns argumentos para a defesa de uma concepção razoável de máximo social para sociedades democráticas.

Palavras-Chave: Predistribuição, John Rawls, Igualitarismo, Máximo Social



0. Introduction

Much of the debate in political philosophy today is more devoted to tinkering at the edges of actual economic and political institutions or to design piecemeal public policies against a particular social problem rather than to consider feasible alternatives to our socioeconomic regimes. As a major figure of XX century political philosophy, John Rawls, though, has never hesitated to conceive or to argue for such alternatives. In fact, the pressing problem of exploring new limits for the political world was taken by Rawls as one of the main tasks of political philosophy itself.^[2] His most original contribution to this debate was certainly his lifelong commitment to a property-owning democracy (POD) regime considered by Rawls as the only *capitalist* background, *i. e.* leaving aside democratic forms of socialism, capable of realizing “all the main political values expressed by the two principles of justice”.^[3] In a POD regime every citizen would have reasonable access to productive or financial assets throughout his or her life by means of the systematic dispersion of wealth across successive generations. This could be granted, according to Rawls, by an array of distributive

2 See, particularly, his *Lectures in the History of Political Philosophy* in which Rawls describes the task as the “forth role of political philosophy” (2007; 5).

3 See, Rawls (2001; 135).

arrangements such as a highly progressive or confiscatory tax-system on inheritances and *inter vivo* bequests applied at the receiver's end, a national capital dividend based on natural resources exploitation, or a universal capital grant financed by financial transactions or corporate gains, all of them encouraging "a wide and far more equal dispersion of real property and productive assets" among the citizens.^[4]

Notwithstanding such a strong claim made by one of the leading philosopher figures of our time, the Rawlsian concern for alternative economic systems has remained relatively unnoticed in the mainstream philosophical debate. Fortunately, this picture has been changing in the last years. Some authors have rescued the theoretical grounds for POD as a highly serviceable ideal for the egalitarian thought, under the label of predistribution.^[5] Authors such as Martin O'Neill, Thad Williamson and Stuart White have taken the Rawlsian case for a POD seriously, turning it into a fruitful source for radical new ways of conceiving social inequality and establishing social justice in market societies. Although none of them actually endorses a full-blown replacement of our actual productive regime, all agree that structural economic reforms encouraging a direct distribution of economic power across society, that is, *pre* tax-and-transfer distribution, could make market-oriented institutions, and through them society as whole, more equal and just. Following the British economist James Meade, the goal of a redistributive politics is to build up a mixed citizenship based on both work and property ownership – a kind of citizenship more suitable for capital-labor mixed economies.^[6]

In face of the shocking increase of socioeconomic inequality over the last three decades in rich countries, predistribution is certainly a desirable novelty for political theory.^[7] Moreover, shedding light on productive justice - besides the conventional redistributive account - is a crucial step to be made by an important branch of contemporary egalitarian theories, a

4 Rawls (2001; 139).

5 The term predistribution was first used by Hacker (2011). The most comprehensive theoretical efforts that have been made so far for clarifying the notion are found among the papers edited by O'Neill & Williamson (2012) in which many sides of POD and predistribution are addressed. See, also, Williamson & O'Neill (2012) e Williamson (2012) and (2013) for a concrete political proposal based on POD lines. See also White (2009) and Jackson (2012) for a broader historical picture of this ideal in the history of post-war British politics.

6 Cf. Meade (1948) apud. Jackson (1992; 43). See, also, Meade (2012).

7 Picketty & Saez (2014) for wealth concentration in Europe and US, Hacker & Pierson (2010) for the increase of the top 1% income in US, and Barros (2000) for the enduring levels of high inequality in Brazil.

branch that we can call *political egalitarianism*. Political egalitarians normally hold two distinctive claims. On one hand, political egalitarians hold that there are several different reasons for objecting distributive inequalities in a democratic society and, because of that, a single rationale for justifying distributive equality is philosophically and politically misleading.^[8] Severe forms of material deprivation, structural social domination, stigmatizing relations and procedural unfairness are examples of different harmful unequal relations among individuals. It is impossible to find just one rationale to taken all of these reasons in account. Because of that, the very value of equality underpinning egalitarianism is best understood as a *political* ideal regarding how people should share a social world by means of institutional rules whose most fundamental concern is to respect them as equals in standing.^[9] On the other hand, political egalitarians are egalitarians *all the way down*, that is, they hold that social relations based on the grounds of equality are a necessary requirement in a just society. In this sense, the value of equality is neither a contingent way to improve collective welfare nor an obscure proxy for sufficient standards of material comfort for all.

However, an essential part of holding these two claims together – equality as moral value and as a political ideal – depends on the permanent assessment of the variety of ways in which practices and institutional arrangements jeopardize citizen's equal standing. If predistribution theorists are right, then making the access to capital more equal will not only curb a set of unjust relations so far ignored by egalitarians but also to steer clear from structural limitations on traditional redistributive institutions.

In this paper I want to make a complementary, but as I see it, an important point regarding the Rawlsian claim that a POD regime is the only capitalist economic background available for a just society. I intend to address the issue from the political egalitarian perspective showing that there are some reasons for a second look at the objections against POD's most important rival regime, what Rawls has called Welfare-State Capitalism (WSC). Despite the soundness of the argument as it is presented in *Justice as Fairness* (JaF), I believe that there is a sense in which some of its premises are false. Moreover, there are no conceptual obstacles within the own contractualist framework to make a WSC regime as egalitarian as a POD regime could be. Two things must be granted though: (a) a right-based theory of welfare institutions and (b) the introduction of a social maximum against unrea-

8 For the varieties of objections against inequality, see, Scanlon (2002; 2013) and O'Neill (2008).

9 For a defense of equality as a complex political ideal, see, Anderson (1999; 313-314); Scheffler (2003; 21 - 22); and O'Neill (2008; 125).

sonable exclusion from capital control. Although a regime with (a) and (b) is quite different from the WSC's picture provided by Rawls, there are no reasons internal to the contractualist argument against this addition.

I finish this introduction with an important disclaimer. Rescuing welfare institutions from egalitarian evaluation is not the overall aim of this article. Nor is to deny the obvious fact that our actual welfare institutions fall short from the demands of a just society. Rather it is an attempt to use the compelling normative arguments supporting predistribution reforms to establish a more egalitarian account of *redistributive* institutions as well. There are many routes for a more equal society. It is part of political egalitarianism to keep as many of them opened.

1. Property-Owning Democracies

In general terms Rawls' conception of justice holds that to be fully just, a society must be designed in such a way that the main political and social institutions are to be compatible with (I) a strict egalitarian scheme of individual liberties and political rights (the First Principle of Justice) and (II) two strong conditions regarding the distribution of social resources, namely, a principle of fair equality of opportunities and a principle of reciprocity among the citizens, according to which all economic and power inequalities - after the prior application of the other criteria - must benefit maximally the least-advantaged members of social cooperation (the Difference Principle).¹⁰ To put it differently, the two principles of justice demand that society's basic institutional framework must guarantee, to whomever happens to have his or her life shaped by them, that every citizen be on equal foot regarding the effective exercise of their status as equal and free persons.

Rawls' case for POD and, by consequence, his case against available alternatives to it, is established by way of a series of normative comparisons between distinctive ideal socioeconomic regimes, in which they are assessed according to how best each of them fully realizes the demands imposed by the Two Principles. By "ideal systems" Rawls has two things in mind. First, the regime's basic economic institutions, such as the kind of ownership system set up, and how much it allocates to provide essen-

¹⁰ See, Rawls (1971; 302 – 303) and (1999; 42 – 43) for a more detailed exposition of the Two Principles of Justice. I will leave aside in this paper the equally crucial matter of *how* exactly each of these normative principles stated should be understood.

tial public goods.^[11] Five possible candidates are presented: two of them based on public ownership – State Socialism (SS) and Liberal Socialism (LS)^[12] – and three of them based on private ownership – Laissez-faire Capitalism (LFC), Welfare-State Capitalism (WSC) and, finally, Property-Owned Democracy (POD). Second, to each regime is assigned a specific aim, or goal, which its main economic institutions must achieve under ideal conditions. Take LFC for instance. Its aim is to foster efficient and sustained economic growth over time, restrained only by natural market failures and a minimalist social security system designed for humanitarian reasons.^[13] By contrast, POD aims to disperse income and wealth ownership across society “pulling up” citizen’s economic starting points and life perspectives along their lives.^[14]

The overall comparative argument between different regimes presented by Rawls takes the form of an “inference to the best explanation”, *i.e.* inferring from the fact that a certain hypothesis, among others, would fit the evidence, to the truth, or in this case the correctness, of that hypothesis.^[15] The ideal economic systems are the set of given possibilities and the fulfillment of the principles of justice the right outcome. Inference of this kind entails two important features: (i) the argument is essentially comparative in nature, and (ii) its outcome is open-ended. The argument is essentially comparative in nature because the conception of justice itself does not settle the issue of the most adequate background institutions; *i.e.* there are no *a priori* preferences derived in a deductive way from its principles. Rawls is pretty clear that his theory of justice is underdetermined by basic economic institutions (“Which of these systems cannot, I think”, concludes Rawls, “be determined in advance”^[16]) as well as by institutional ends.^[17] In principle any economic system could work *provided that* it is capable of attending the two principles and it is empirically feasible under an ideal situation.

11 See Rawls’ remarks on political economy developed in TJ (§ 42).

12 It is important to note that there is a fundamental distinction, in Rawls’ conception of justice, between, on one side, personal property, to be fully protected under the heading of basic liberties and justified as one of the material requirements of personal independence, and, on the other, the ownership of the means of production and natural resources, to be decided according to the most adequate background justice. See TJ, 274 and JaF, 114.

13 Rawls (1999; 137 – 138).

14 Rawls (1999; 137 and 140).

15 Harman (1965).

16 TJ, 274; JaF, 138-139.

17 For instance, only auxiliary reasons (*e. g.* transitional costs and motivational restraints) empirically informed by local traditions and prevailed expectations could settle the balance among different ownership systems.

Now, the argument is also open-ended in regard to its outcome insofar as it allows inclusions of new regimes on the list (the inclusion of LFC and WSC on the list between *TJ* and *JaF* are two examples of this) or allows further rehabilitations of the set of given regimes under a new light. In this sense the inferential choice among just economic institutions converges with the basic contractualist claim according to which a right or just outcome is justified as the most reasonable alternative from the point of view of informed, non-coerced agreement between free and equal agents.^{[18] [19]}

The argumentative core for selecting POD as the only capitalist economic system compatible with the Two Principles of justice is that:

[the] background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well.

While in a WSC regime, by contrast,

[the economic system] permits a small class [the owners of productive assets] to have a near monopoly of the means of production. [WSC] *aim* is that none [citizen] should fall below a decent minimum standard of life, one in which their basic needs are met, and all should receive certain protections against accident and misfortune [...] The redistribution of income serves this purpose when, at the end of each period, those who need assistance can be identified.^[20]

There are at least three distinctive objections at stake in regarding the normative priority of POD over WSC regimes: (i) POD regimes equalize effective economic agency across society preventing economic disparities from undermining equality of social opportunities, (ii) mainly because of (i), it indirectly forecloses the possibility that an elite of owners seize representative institutions up insulating their interests from deliberative politics, and (iii), alongside their high rates of wealth inequality, WSC regimes tend to carry out social benefits based on peoples' direct needs which, in turn, endanger the equal standing of democratic citizenship democratic

18 See, *TJ* (§ 20 and 87) for the essentially comparative account in choosing different conceptions of justice and Scanlon (1982) for an overall account of contractualism as a moral theory.

19 Of course, all that have been said so far could justify a reexamination of other rejected alternatives as LFC, for instance. To my mind, John Tomasi's work is as an attempt to provide a more reasonable foundations for free market regimes in a slightly similar way (Tomasi, 2013). However, so little expectations about free-market institutions bringing up justice have I that I concede this possibility merely as a conceptual point.

20 *JaF*, 139 (emphasis added).

citizens?^[21] For the sake of simplicity I will recast these objections into two distinctive clusters, a positive thesis based on POD's equalizing effects over power and economic concentration (reasons (i) and (ii) or capital concentration), and a negative one, based on WSC's stigmatizing effects on the self-respect of the economically worst-off (reason (iii) or stigmatization).

Capital Concentration. It seems unquestionable that capital can remain very concentrated in the hands of a few families, say the upper 1%, even when income redistribution and universal public services are being fully provided by means of tax-and-transfer mechanisms. In fact, capital ownership has always been extremely concentrated in industrial societies over the last two centuries even in societies that are relatively egalitarian regarding income. As economists Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez have recently put, “the very *notion* of capital is fairly abstract for large segments – if not the majority – of the population [in contemporary democracies]”.^[22] The most obvious consequence of holding capital is, of course, extracting income from it. However, disregarding direct benefits from profit and rent, holding a relative large amount of capital, such as real state and productive assets, provides other important resources such as financial security and social independence in the long-run and the exclusive right to have a say on important productive decisions.

First of all, from the point of view of the two principles of justice, the concentration of capital is an obstacle to a more substantive interpretation of the principle of equality of opportunities, radically altering the life prospects of non-owners or non-heirs. As Thomas Scanlon has defined it, a substantive principle of equality of opportunities, “requires not only unbiased selection” among competitors for social positions, “but also the provision to all of the resources necessary for talented individuals to become good candidates”.^[23] Growing up among a minor social group who owns the greater part of national wealth is a privileged starting point indeed. Second, capital concentration is inclined to bring about two kinds of political domination: one in regard to representative politics and another in regard to the direct impact of control over economic decision.^[24] The expensive cost

21 Here I follow O'Neill (2012; 77-78).

22 Piketty & Saez (2014; 839). In spite of being moderate egalitarian countries concerning incomes, countries such as France and Sweden can be extremely unequal concerning wealth, with more than 60% of the national wealth going to the top 1%. For highly unequal countries in general the range of appropriation is astronomic going up to 80% or more. See Piketty (2014; esp. part III) for an elucidative account of these comparative findings.

23 Scanlon (2013; Lecture 3); see, also, *JaF*, 43 – 44.

24 What Rawls calls “the fair value of political liberties”, *JaF*, 148-149.

of candidacies and lobbying in contemporary democratic elections makes stocks of money a highly valuable resource, not only because owners tend to have more income and time to expend in politics but also because policy-making is a long-term risky investment, unequally open for all.^[25] It can also threaten the effective value of democratic rights when property-owners are able to impose indirect political restrictions on democratic decisions through economic sanctions or, unilaterally, instigate capital flight as a veto for non-desirable outcomes. As political scientist Adam Przeworski used to put it, concerning productive political decisions capital owners vote on every day.^[26]

It is important to bear in mind that the Rawlsian argument cuts in both sides, that is, the benefits of owning capital holds equally against non-owners and public authorities as well. This point is part of the original Meade's account of POD societies: in regard conventional capitalist regimes, an owner can act independently from his or her employee ("snap his fingers at them" according to Meade) but also from those responsible for providing public goods, such as education, transportation, healthy neighborhoods and security.^[27] A POD regime, by contrast, could "ensure the widespread ownership of productive assets and human capital [...] at the beginning of each period, all this against a backdrop of fair equality of opportunities".^[28]

Stigmatization. Now, the second (negative) thesis holds that not only do WSC regimes lack efficient mechanisms to cope with large concentrations of capital but also that WSC's very *aim* is misleading regarding citizens' status as equal and free agents. Because social justice in WSC is carried out through the idea of a social minimum, *i.e.* a level of material resources beneath which no member of society is allowed to live without public assistance, it has harmful consequences for citizens' sense of self-respect as equal in standing and, therefore, for the stability of just institutional arrangements across time. As a matter of fact, no aspect of welfare

25 The last Oxfam Annual report illustrates this well-known fact about democratic politics. In 2013, firms from the financial sector alone expend more than \$ 400 million on lobbying against taxation and market regulation and, during the 2012 campaigns, companies of this sector had expend almost \$ 600 million in electoral contributions, being "the largest (single) source of campaign contributions to federal candidates and parties" (Oxfam Report: Wealth: Having it all and Wanting more, 2015).

26 Cf. Przeworski (1985; 139): "Capitalists are thus in a unique position in a capitalist system: they represent future universal interests while interests of all other groups appear as particularistic and hence inimical of future development".

27 Meade (1964; 41).

28 *JaF*; 139.

politics has taken a more preeminent role in philosophical literature than the potential social stigma generated by poverty-relief programs.^[29] Social stigmatization is brought about when public institutions should single out a class of persons - the “truly needy” - among the whole set of citizens, normally by means of intrusive bureaucracy, making the group the object of, using Rawls’ own words, “our charity and compassion” instead of our reciprocal respect as equals.^[30]

The basic rationale behind stigmatization can be stated as follows. As soon as a need-based poverty-line is established, questions regarding who counts as beneficiary and what needs are to be fulfilled have to be debated and decisions must be publicly settled by all. Indeed, there are many different reasons for adopting social minimum policies, being humanitarian concern about the basic needs of a decent life the most common one. However, from an egalitarian point of view the justification of distributive mechanisms are to be understood as enabling free and autonomous moral agency for all. Nobody should live without the basic material components for an *autonomous* life – something more demanding than decency only. Now, because it is common knowledge that there is a set of citizens who lack the material bases for a fully autonomous agency, it turns out that they happen to *depend on* others’ will - in this case the political society as a whole - a kind of relation which fulfills the very definition of social domination. Citizens’ status as equal autonomous agents is a positional good by excellence. Trying to achieve it directly by absolute need-based provisions turns out to be a self-defeating political argument: the intended goal (autonomy) is undermined by its own side-effects (economic dependency).^[31] It is important to keep in mind that stigmatization takes place regardless of the amount of distributed income envisaged. Even a robust welfare system can impair people’s inner sense of respect and outer social relations among equals.

2. Minima and Maxima^[32]

In spite of Rawls’ convincing two arguments for POD regimes over conventional welfare arrangements, I believe that there are at least two important caveats to be made regarding the selection of economic systems.

29 See Rothstein (1998), for a good account of the literature.

30 JaF; 139.

31 Elster (1983; 91-92).

32 I thank Bru Lain Escandell for a clarifying discussion on the content of this section.

Contemporary welfare-states differ greatly both in size and nature. An accurate picture of the matter demands more than a normative theory could deliver. There is a wide range of distinctive models of welfare politics and their respective mechanisms are quite different from each other.^[33] However, following other authors^[34], I would like to point out that the WSC ideal description provided by Rawls does not attend to a basic, but necessary, distinction regarding the scope of welfare institutions. Need-based social security systems must be distinguished from universal, right-based, provision of high quality public services for *all* citizens, including high-incomers.^[35] While the former fits appropriately the aim ascribed by Rawls' argument, it is possible to state that the latter has a different moral logic underpinning its institutions and, because of that, the system as a whole presents a different institutional aim. While matters of aim address the question of systems' distributive goals and contents, matters of scope address the question of how inclusive their institutions are. In a right-based welfare system public high quality services are effectively open to all citizens, regardless of their respective socioeconomic background and particular conceptions of good. Its justificatory dimension is grounded on the principle that the aim of just social arrangements is to secure people's equal standing regarding both their life prospects and the resources for taking part, as autonomous agents, in the political life. Once everyone is to live under the same institutional arrangement, and *this fact* is part of citizens' common knowledge about social institutions, problems of stigmatization and paternalism are expected to decrease substantially. As was put by Bo Rothstein, in a universal welfare system the crucial question is not what to do about *they*, the poor or the truly needy, but what *we*, as free and equal citizens, should do about our common institutional problems.^[36]

It is important to note that begging the question of the *scope* of social institutions is a problem not only for WSC institutions but also for POD's as well. In fact, this is a distinction to be made for any system of background institutions. In a weak version of POD, the wealth dispersion is designed by public policies focused not on *every* citizen but mainly on those already slightly wealthier than the worst-offs, a property middle-class for instance, by means of subsidized real estate buying, compulsory household saving or through conventional shareholding politics among blue-collar workers. It's

33 See Esping-Andersen (1990) for one well-established classification among political scientists.

34 O'Neill (2012) and Jackson (2012).

35 I took the distinction from Bo Rothstein (2002).

36 Rothstein (2002; 160).

quite easy to show how a weak version of the predistributive ideal is going to fall short of egalitarian standards of justice: the fair equality of opportunity of the non-owners would remain the same (or get even worse if direct access to capital were envisaged to replace, rather than complement, conventional welfare institutions).^[37] Conditionalizing capital subsidies to household criteria or because they would be attached to conventional paid work would work to enforce two of the most unjust barriers imposed by selective welfare institutions in our actual societies.^[38] It follows that a strong POD regime is the only normative option available, a regime in which every citizen would hold some amount of property. Not to mention that even if universal capital grants are secured, a strong POD regime would have to rely also on *redistributive* institutions as long as human capital formation is to be achieved fairly and, as we see, rights-based welfare institutions are the only non-stigmatizing way to do it.^[39]

For now, I will leave aside the negative thesis on WSC's to carry out a different argument. Besides eventual mischaracterizations on WSC's scope and aim it is clear that welfare intuitions have problems to make capital concentration fairer. Although this analysis seems correct for actual versions of welfare states I believe that nothing prevents us from conceiving a more equalizing distributive arrangement for welfare institutions. If this is the case, then the contractualist comparison among economic regimes would have to admit a new regime to the list. By lack of a better name, I will call the set of redistributive institutions I have in mind as a *social maximum* regime. A regime in which the right to distributive fairness every citizen holds is carried out also by the recognition of a line of affluence (or a social maximum) above which no private economic concentration goes unchecked. Social maximum is the idea that there is a level of control over economic resources above which no private decisions can remain unaccountable.

This idea calls for further clarification. But as a starting point it is important to note that the concern about economic domination and legitimate ceilings over wealth concentration are important components of the contractualist and republican traditions. The most emblematic example is Rousseau when he says that: "as regards wealth, [...] no citizen should be rich enough to be able to buy another and none so poor that he has to sell

37 See White (2002) and Jackson (2012) for an account of how center-right parties in UK have endorsed POD policies in UK.

38 See, Williamson (2014; 226) for strong and weak versions of POD.

39 Rawls adds that "*human* as well as real capital" is crucial for POD. *JaF*, 140.

himself”.^[40] Rawls himself has endorsed a similar view concerning concentration of wealth: “the purpose of these [taxing] regulations is not to raise revenue (release resources to government) but gradually and continually to correct the distribution of wealth and to prevent the concentration of power”.^[41] Politics of social maximum illustrate an important contractualist/republican insight that distributive justice cuts both ways and, from an institutional point of view, securing citizen’s autonomy implies supporting public provisions as well as imposing institutional checks against economic domination.

As it happens to the analogous idea of social minimum, the idea of a social maximum can be conceived in quite different ways not all being equally morally legitimate or economically desirable. The basic idea behind it, though, is compelling for our current discussion: in a capitalist society, *i.e.* one in which the control over productive assets and natural resources is established by the legal framework of private ownership, and, in a WSC, the access to it is highly selective, the concentration of capital must be checked by a set of procedural democratic institutions under the risk of the very idea of democratic standing falling prey to the privileges extracted from this monopoly. The two most important features of a social maximum regime are located in tax structure and sharing-authority mechanism.

First of all, a highly progressive taxation on *total* income, that is, from labor and wealth incomes, is justified due to its obvious redistributive consequences supporting public inclusive institutions for all. However, tax progression is justified also due to its consequences for capital transparency and intergenerational fairness. The first reason why it is so difficult to cope with increasing capital concentration is caused by its “opaqueness” in regard to public debate. To get a minimally accurate picture of total income distribution is a hard collective enterprise and even symbolic tax rates on top marginal total incomes can help to get a clearer picture of it. Furthermore, progressive tax rates upon receiver’s end can be a poor way to improve revenues but it certainly is a powerful tool for creating the right sort of incentives against undesirable wealth concentration.^[42]

40 Rousseau (1993;87). See, also, Neuhouser (2013) for an illuminating account of the Rousseau’s critique of economic inequality. According to Neuhouser it is possible to find out two sorts of criticism in Rousseau’s theory, one related with equal freedom and another with communitarian well-being. As I intend to show below only the former is compatible with a Rawlsian account of the social maximum.

41 TJ; 277. See, also, Rawls remarks on Rousseau’s idea of equal citizenship in JaF; 132.

42 Piketty (2014; 640 ft. 51): “progressive tax plays two very distinctive roles [...]: confiscatory rates on the order of 80-90 percent on the top 0.5 or 1 percent of distribution) would end inde-

Secondly, widening the opportunities to have a say regarding the means of production is a necessary feature of a social maximum politics. It is argued that the accumulation of capital itself can be a necessary condition for capitalist economic production.^[43] It is also argued that it is far from clear if after a wide dispersion of capital across society the amount of investment left would be enough to keep important capital-intensive sectors of the economy working smoothly.^[44] Alternatively, maybe there is simply no way to legislate over ownership distribution in ordinary representative politics without a serious threat of institutional disruption. Problems as these ones deal much more with the *ownership* of capital rather than its *control*. Owning something is not the only way to exercise control over it. The right to control or having a say on important economic decisions is a quite different matter. Two kinds of participation in the means of production and natural resources would be essential for making capital concentration more compatible with democracy. Sharing economic authority with relevant agents, such as workers, local communities, technical associations, and civil societies' spokespersons can be a direct restraint on unilateral resolutions. It is quite probable that not every single citizen would happen to fulfill this role, and new kinds of distinctions and segregations would emerge from these power structures as well. This fact justifies indirect forms of participation alongside direct ones. Besides fiscal transparency and financial regulation, another powerful indirect instrument would be citizen's funds raised up from environmental taxes and royalties from natural resources' exploration.

Still, there are several reasonable objections to the idea of social maximum. Three sets of objections against it seem to be crucial for the idea success: (i) objections based on matters of economic efficiency, (ii) objections based on matters of political legitimacy, and, finally, (iii) objections based on justice.^[45] Providing a conclusive answer to all of them is far beyond

cent and useless compensation, while high but nonconfiscatory rates (of 50-60 percent on the top 5 or 10 percent) would raise revenues to finance the social state above the revenues coming from the bottom 90 percent of the distribution”.

43 Przeworski (1986).

44 I thank Rolf Kuntz for drawing my attention to this fact.

45 The common conservative complaint against the institution of taxation *itself*, as a kind of “governmental theft”, shall not to be considered here. This kind of complaint tends to reject the very idea behind tax-systems and because of that they tend to reject also any kind collective distribution- including need-based distribution. Because all the egalitarian views under question here take need-based distribution for granted, the theft objection is not a *reasonable* objection against the social maximum. Being said that, (iii), the unfair-objection, can be read as a soft version of the theft-objection.

the scope of the paper - and the abilities of the author. In spite of that, I will attempt to present some guidelines for answering them based on how I think these three objections could be overcome.

Efficiency-objection. Objections against heavy tax progressivity and rights to participation in capital's decisions based on economic efficiency count as the most direct and easily found ones in political debate. All the same, they usually are the least compelling objections. The first thing to note in this case is that as the objection tends to be put forward in conventional debates, it takes for granted unrestrained economic growth as the genuine *meaning* of efficiency. It is far from clear that it is so from the moral point of view, since its premises hold upon the economic induction of low-paid workers with the prospect of unemployment and loss of standard of living. That being said, worries about the overall efficiency of redistributive schemes must be acknowledged in a democratic society especially to the extent that they collide against other equally legitimate concerns such as stability in the long run and overall welfare.

The first problem with progressive taxation is that it is bound to adversely affect individual economic decisions such as the incentive to work and save and, maybe most important, the decision to take risks. However, if on one hand the rewards paid by strenuous efforts and acclaimed novelties tend to be low, it is also true that, on the other hand, in a universal welfare system risk-taking decisions are much less harshly punished than in a free-market society. In addition, the range of social innovations is more diverse as well: efforts and social improvements in non-marketable activities, such as pure science, environment and care-taking can be in principle more rather than less stimulated (maybe this fact helps to explain why some actual non-selective welfare states have higher work productivity *per capita*).

Part of the difficulties in regarding a heavy-burdening tax system can be overcome shifting from income taxation to *total* income taxation. The social maximum is better understood when both kinds of economic resources, income and wealth, are taken into account with their respective particularities. Each dimension of the total amount of economic resource owned by an individual holds specific incentives and disincentives. For instance, the very meritocratic argument against raising taxes upon productive high-incomers can be used against high concentration of wealth from inheritance and donations (people are supposed to *earn* their rewards throughout life) and, when applied on the receiver's end, certainly would discourage unproductive rent-seeking behavior among the non-working

rich.^[46] It is difficult to fit the bill regarding claims of inefficiency – in part because it is hard to figure out what would count as a good answer to begin with. Economic efficiency is, from an egalitarian point of view, a permanent or on-going challenge rather than an all-or-nothing objection to any distributive system.

Legitimacy-objection. The idea of social maximum must not be conceived as a sort of punishment against high-incomers. Nor as an arbitrary persecution against one particular style of life – let’s say, the “filthy rich”. In a liberal society public coercion cannot be used to persecute or oppress reasonable ways of life based solely on their intrinsic moral value. Would the reasons behind a social maximum go against the liberal requirement of legitimacy? A reasonable notion of social maximum must accept that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with aspirations of being *richer than* others. The point is a matter of justifying expectations under the prospects of just institutions: if one wants to exercise unusual economic power over others, one must be willing to carry out also the fair burdens of one’s choice. Running away from them (as some top-incomers do when promoting capital flight or running to international tax havens) must be understood as an illegitimate plan of life.

By contrast, I believe that the legitimacy objection would be right if the reasons for justifying a social maximum regime were based on communitarian values. It is widely accepted that unequal economic societies present some undesirable consequences on collective well-being. For instance, segregation and social strife between owners and non-owners are more likely to happen in unequal societies than on egalitarian ones.^[47] According to this line of thought, collective harms caused by inequality can be tracked down to the permanent feeling of economic insecurity or cross-class envy and resentment caused by the desire to be an “economic winner”. Based on such considerations it can be plausible to advance forms of egalitarian arguments in which the very desire of being filthy-rich would be a threat to social cohesion. What is aimed in this case is not exactly a more equal society but a more homogenous one regarding citizens’ economic expectations. And, because of that, the potential values attached into a life-style of wealth should be discouraged by an official virtue of economic humbleness or the symbolic exhortations of the average citizen.^[48]

46 This argument has been put forward, among others, by Stiglitz (2012) and Piketty (2014; cap. 11).

47 See Pickett & Wilkinson (2010) for some cross-national comparisons.

48 In general terms, this seems to be an important part of the Rousseauian objection against economic inequality. See, Neuhaus (2013). In this kind of arguments it seems that the

None of this happens with a legitimate social maximum though. If economic institutions cannot foreclose what people want, in a society in which a social maximum holds being a filthy-rich would be a more difficult business. The desire to carry a life of luxury and economic privileges is neither an unreasonable choice nor something to be blamed by public institutions. However, enjoying the benefits of this decision must be fairly weighed against the demands of equal citizenship and, particularly, against the prevailing structure of inequality. Because a social maximum is designed in a procedural way the more just a society is the less common a filthy-rich ethos is expected to occur in the long run.^[49]

Justice-objection. Even if social maximum is an efficient and a politically legitimate social institution, it remains an open question whether it is a fair one. Progressive taxation on total-income and shared control over capital imposes heavier burdens on the top of distribution and, considering the promises of free-market societies, this could be seen as unfair. Conservative contractualists, such as James Buchanan and Jan Narveson, have developed strong moral objections against tax progression – not to mention legitimate confiscatory marginal top tax rates.^[50] One way to understand such objections is the following: because high-incomers, normally assumed also to be naturally higher-productivity individuals (something very questionable concerning intergenerational income transmissions), would be strongly penalized under social maximum institutions. In fact, the very principle of reciprocity secured by the Rawlsian second principle of justice would not hold since high-incomers would have never chosen, and are not ready to commit themselves with, such terms of social cooperation.

Does social maximum foreclose social reciprocity between high and low incomers? Concerning the overall contractualist justificatory framework the argument is true. Principles of justice should be justified from the perspective of all and, in this respect, the interests of the well-off are as important as anyone else's.^[51] The very aim of the Difference Principle can be conceived as a way to justify the lowest acceptable economic position for all. What would be the minimal economic conditions *you* would be ready to live without endangering your self-respect as an equal?^[52] If high-

operative reason is equality as social homogeneity than equality as fair terms of social cooperation.

49 I thank António Baptista for helping me to clarify this point.

50 Buchanan (1984; 108-110); Naverson (2002; 15-16).

51 TJ, 102-104.

52 See, Cohen (1986;740-741).

incomers can be understood as the more talented or skilled citizens (again, something that I will assume just for the sake of the argument) and, if upper economic positions are to be fulfilled according to the principle of equality of opportunities, it seems unfair to rule out such positions arbitrarily. Note also that the mere fact that high-incomers would earn merely more is not a convincing counter-argument because the point here is that they want to earn relatively to their productivity potential, not only relatively more.

The first thing to be said against this objection is that absolute ceilings on individual wealth seem unreasonable indeed. The affluence line required by the idea of social maximum cannot, in contrast to conventional social minimum thresholds, be established by absolute standards - let's say, the amount of income beyond which consumption is "excessive". The aim of social maximum is not to punish excessive capital concentration just for the sake of equality. A fair affluence line must be settled based not on how much people have *per se*, but on how much they have given the society they live in. Because the case against capital concentration relies on a positional conception of political freedom and social opportunities, it is to be expected that the normative threshold for a social maximum has a relative nature as well. Two ways of setting relative limits are (i) by fractioning incomes in percentiles (*e. g.* the upper 1% or 0.1%) or, maybe even more adequate, considering that these percentiles can be somewhat arbitrary, or (ii) by establishing a line that specifies the accumulated economic resources necessary for the eradication of poverty.^[53] No absolute limits of economic resources established and no fixed economic positions are ruled out. The important fact here is that because, on one hand, unequal income structure is unavoidable in a capitalist society and, on the other, it is necessary to take into account the deep impact that economic stratification has over peoples' life prospect, the overall income structure must work to impose heavier tax burdens and participatory obligations upon the upper shares. What a relative social maximum does is to make economic positions more costly along the income structure: the more unequal a society is the more economic and political responsibility top economic positions will have. Following the reciprocity criteria proposed by Rawls, this requirement "seems to be a fair basis on which those better endowed [...] could expect others to collaborate with them"^[54].

53 See, for instance, the efforts made by Marcelo Medeiros to construct affluence lines in relation to given poverty lines (2006). As Medeiros argues, in this sense, a relative affluence line is also an "anti-poverty" line.

54 TJ; 103.

In spite of its undeniable conceptual oddness and the dire technological challenges it imposes on social institutions, the idea of social maximum is the natural extension of rights-based welfare institutions, at least from a political egalitarian point of view. An institutional, relative, and total-income-based social maximum would work to protect citizen's basic claims as equal participants in social cooperation without challenging the basic tenets of a capitalist economy. If this claim holds, then social maximum regimes will have a second stance against PODs.

3. Conclusion

It remains an open question whether actual welfare systems would be able to cope with the demands of a just society or not. The most we can safely say by now is that without making private control over economic resources fairer between individuals and more accountable to democratic politics - either by predistributive mechanisms or by social maximum politics (or probably both) - it seems that they will not. Having said that, however, I can see no reason why a strong form of POD would be an intrinsically better solution than right-based welfare institutions and social maximum thresholds for achieving social justice. From a political egalitarian point of view, as I tried to show, this is a matter of scope, rather than essence, and opportunity, rather than necessity.

It may appear that, at the end of the day, the arguments provided so far brought us to a somewhat disappointing conclusion. After all, it is widely accepted that the Difference Principle defended by Rawls requires considerable restraints on a person's income and wealth. Nevertheless, the politics of redistribution, on one hand, and arguments for a legitimate social maximum, on the other, represent two distinctive ways to provide a feasible institutional interpretation of the most important claim made by political egalitarians: that being economically worse off in a capitalist society is as potentially dangerous for the effective exercise of our democratic rights as being absolutely poor. Both relations can entail forms of social domination and procedural unfairness. Being free and carrying a dignified life is always a relative problem concerning citizen's equal status rather than the mere lack of something. If political egalitarians have reasons based on rights for establishing welfare institutions, they will accept the idea of social maximum institutions as a consequent one.

However, as it happens with mechanisms against minimum floors as well, it is always hard (and potentially wrong) to decide on pure philosophi-

cal grounds which social maximum parameters are the most suitable for each society. Particular historical processes, on one hand, and specific socio-economic conditions, on the other, have a role to play in our final decision and there is little room here for philosophical arguments outside deliberative politics. It is reasonable to assume, nevertheless, that democratic checks on private wealth and a more balanced dispersion of incomes along the social structure stand out as valuable social institutions against distributive inequality as much as POD mechanisms. In my view, the proper justification of social maximum institutions has the benefit of guiding egalitarian thought safely through one of its most dangerous pitfalls: watering down the right to distributive fairness, a powerful theory of social transformation, into a humanitarian but non-political claim about people's needs.

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SOCIAL EQUALITY AND THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE OF A PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY^[1]

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In recent years, a number of theorists have argued that Rawls's vision of a property-owning democracy seems like a promising way to institutionalise an ideal of social equality. In this paper, I distinguish two economic aims that appear central to these accounts of social equality: widespread *security* and *control*. I then argue that, insofar as Rawls's property-owning democracy retains many large-scale corporations, it is poorly placed to realise these two economic aims unless it is supplemented with an adequate regime of corporate governance. I go on to assess three possible regimes of corporate governance for a property-owning democracy: (1) investment fund activism; (2) worker-managed firms; and (3) labour-capital partnerships. I argue that all three regimes offer different trade-offs between widespread economic security and control; however, there are social egalitarian reasons – albeit of a provisional nature – to see regime (3) as a superior option to regimes (1) and (2).

Keywords: property-owning democracy; social equality; corporate governance; labour-capital partnerships; labour-managed firms; investment fund activism

Nos últimos anos, uma série de teóricos tem argumentado que a visão de Rawls de uma democracia de proprietários parece ser uma maneira promissora de institucionalizar um ideal de igualdade social. Neste artigo, faço a distinção entre dois objetivos económicos que parecem importantes em termos de igualdade social: a generalização da *segurança* e do *controlo*. Defendo então que, na medida em que a democracia de proprietários de Rawls permite manter muitas grandes empresas, é incapaz de concretizar estes dois objetivos económicos exceto se for complementada com um regime adequado de governo das empresas. Prossigo avaliando três

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possíveis regimes de governo das empresas para uma democracia de proprietários: (1) ativismo de fundos de investimento; (2) empresas geridas pelos trabalhadores; e (3) parcerias trabalho/capital. Defendo que estes três regimes oferecem diferentes *trade-offs* entre a segurança económica e o controlo generalizados; porém, há razões sociais e igualitárias – embora de natureza provisória – para ver o regime (3) como uma opção superior aos regimes (1) e (2).

Palavras-chave: democracia de proprietários; igualdade social; governo das empresas; parcerias trabalho/capital; empresas geridas pelos trabalhadores; ativismo de fundos de investimento



0. Introduction

There has been a renewed interest in the idea of a property-owning democracy in contemporary political theory, particularly among those who subscribe to social egalitarian views. Broadly speaking, social egalitarians are concerned with preventing inequalities of power, rank and status among citizens that entail domination and lead to the erosion of self-respect. Many such theorists have come to see the idea of a property-owning democracy that Rawls (2001, pp. 135–79) advocates in his later work as a promising way to organise economic life in accordance with these aims (Dagger, 2006; Freeman, 2013; Hsieh, 2012; O’Neill, 2012; White, 2015; Williamson, 2012).^[2]

Rawls’s idea of a property-owning democracy draws heavily on the work of James Meade (1964). Although there are gaps in Rawls’s account, he clearly follows Meade in viewing the widespread private ownership of productive assets as the *sine qua non* of this form of political economy.^[3] This has been taken to have two attractive features from a social egalitarian standpoint: first, it affords all citizens economic *security* in the sense that they have a substantial and reliable income from productive assets and are therefore less vulnerable to domination by wealthy fellow citizens or state officials. Second, it allows all citizens to enjoy the self-respect that comes from *controlling* their own economic lives insofar as they have each been put in a position to manage their own economic affairs.

In this paper, I argue that, in an economy that retains many large-scale corporations, widespread private ownership of productive assets is insufficient,

2 I explain why I classify these theorists as social egalitarians in the next section.

3 For simplicity, I take “widespread” to mean “universal” in an individualist sense.

and quite possibly counter-productive, for realising the social egalitarian aims of widespread economic security and control. This is because, in a society of many small dispersed shareholders, each shareholder will have neither the incentive nor the expertise to hold the managers of complex large-scale corporations to account, thus ceding effective *control* of productive assets to management. Furthermore, in such circumstances we can often expect corporate managers to pursue managerial perquisites, organisational growth and short-term investment risks, rather than sustainably maximising shareholder returns, thus undermining the economic *security* of shareholders. So, any vision of a property-owning democracy that looks to realise the social egalitarian aims of widespread economic security and control must supplement a focus on widespread ownership of productive assets with a theory of corporate governance.

With this concern in mind, I assess three possible regimes of corporate governance that have been proposed by theorists in the property-owning democracy literature: (1) shareholder activism by investment fund managers (Alperovitz, 2012; Meade, 1964; T. Williamson, 2012); (2) labour-managed firms (Freeman, 2013; Krouse & McPherson, 1986; Malleon, 2014; Schemmel, 2015; White, 2015);⁴ and (3) labour-capital partnerships, such as German-style codetermination (Hussain, 2012; Meade, 1986, 1993). I draw two conclusions. First, I argue that, taken in their most promising forms, regimes (1) and (2) reflect different trade-offs between the aims of widespread economic security and control. For instance, in regime (1) property owners sacrifice effective control to fund managers for the sake of greater economic security, whereas in regime (2) property owners sacrifice economic security by concentrating their savings in their own businesses for the sake of greater effective control. Second, I argue that regime (3) looks likely to do as well as regime (1) in terms of widespread economic security and better than regime (1), though not quite as well as regime (2), in terms of widespread economic control. As such, if we adopt certain plausible assumptions about the types of trade-offs between widespread economic security and control that social egalitarians should be willing to make, and the rates at which regimes (1), (2) and (3) trade off these two economic aims, then there are reasons for social egalitarians to prefer regime (3) to regimes (1) and (2).

4 Malleon and Schemmel see this as a departure from a property-owning democracy towards a liberal socialism, but I side with Freeman and White in seeing certain forms of worker-management as compatible with a property-owning democracy.

In terms of structure, I use the next section to clarify the two central concepts in my argument, namely “social equality” and “property-owning democracy”, and elucidate why theorists have come to see the latter as a promising institutionalisation of the former. I then build on this analysis in section two to argue that a property-owning democracy risks undermining social equality unless it includes an adequate regime of corporate governance. Sections three and four are then devoted to assessing the three abovementioned regimes of corporate governance from a social egalitarian standpoint, and section five concludes.

1. Social Equality and a Property-Owning Democracy

For many contemporary theorists, social equality is seen as a favourable alternative to the distributive notions of equality that came to dominate debates about social justice in the 1980s. Theorists in these debates generally looked to identify the correct *distribuendum* of egalitarian justice (e.g. Arneson, 1989; Cohen, 1989; Dworkin, 1981). In contrast, social egalitarians argue that the primary purpose of egalitarian theory should be to specify a form of political community in which individuals stand in social relations that are not significantly stratified by socially imposed differentials of power, rank or status (Anderson, 1999; Miller, 1997; Scanlon, 1996; Wolff, 1998; Young, 1990). Put another way, egalitarians’ *primary* concern should be *social*, rather than *distributive*, equality.

This commitment to a social conception of equality has precedents in diverse traditions of political thought,^[5] and this probably explains why, although there is a broad consensus among contemporary social egalitarians about what they are against, there is less agreement on the specifics of a positive social egalitarian vision. Nevertheless, I believe we can pick out two economic aims that appear central to a number of contemporary social egalitarian theorists, as well as to other theorists who are “socially-egalitarian-inclined”.^[6]

The first such economic aim is widespread *security*. This can be seen as one element of a broader social egalitarian concern with social arrange-

5 For example, in Rousseau’s republicanism, Wollstonecraft’s feminism (Fourie, Schuppert, & Wallimann-Helmer, 2015), Tawney’s socialism, Marx’s communism (Wolff, 2015), Walzer’s communitarianism (Miller, 1997), and Rawls’s liberalism (Scheffler, 2003).

6 In this category I refer to the Rawlsian theorists Freeman, Williamson, Hsieh, and O’Neill, and the republican theorists Dagger and White. For brevity’s sake, I hereafter refer to all these theorists as social egalitarians.

ments that leave citizens vulnerable to domination by other private citizens or state officials. The basic worry is that, if some citizens have an unreliable source of income, then this can leave them particularly vulnerable to such domination. For instance, if they are reliant on the whims of either an employer or state official for their income, then they may feel the need to act deferentially towards them, rather than as a civic equal. Similarly, if they lose a large portion of their income, then they will thereafter be vulnerable to being forced into degrading or humiliating economic relationships in order to survive. These types of concerns are detailed in the writings of a number of contemporary social egalitarians (Anderson, 1999, pp. 297–300; Dagger, 2006, p. 166; Scanlon, 1996, p. 12; White, 2015, p. 4; T. Williamson, 2012, p. 226; Wolff, 1998, pp. 113–15).

The second economic aim that appears to be central for many social egalitarians is widespread *control*. This can be seen as one element of a broader social egalitarian concern with social arrangements that erode citizens' self-respect. The basic worry is that, if decisions that have a large impact on the economic lives of certain citizens are reserved for other citizens, then members of the former group will not see themselves as the civic equals of the latter group, and this will undermine their self-respect. For instance, if a certain group of citizens are not given the chance to manage their own investments, but are instead given a weekly allowance by a wealthy benefactor or the state, then this will erode their self-respect. Or if workers are not given a meaningful input into decisions about their working conditions, then this will also erode their self-respect. These are best understood as concerns about paternalism: even if these citizens were to enjoy a high weekly allowance, or pleasant working conditions, they are still being treated as one might treat a child, and this is a legitimate threat to their self-respect. This type of concern can be seen in the writings of a number of contemporary social egalitarians (Anderson, 1999, p. 301; Dagger, 2006, p. 161; Freeman, 2013, pp. 23,32–3; Hsieh, 2012, p. 157; O'Neill, 2012, p. 89).

In recent years, many social egalitarians have commended Rawls's vision of a property-owning democracy (e.g. Dagger, 2006; Freeman, 2013; Hsieh, 2012; O'Neill, 2012; White, 2015; T. Williamson, 2012). As already noted, the defining feature of Rawls's property-owning democracy is the widespread private ownership of productive assets, including financial and human capital. This is primarily to be achieved by the state applying steeply progressive inheritance and gift taxes at the beneficiary's end, and then redistributing the receipts more equally, in particular through the provi-

sion of high quality education (Rawls, 2001, p. 161). These “predistributive” policies operate alongside an economy that allocates goods using the price mechanism (Rawls, 1999, pp. 241–42), traditional welfare state social insurance programmes (1999, p. 243, 301, 2001, p. 276) and redistributive taxation of incomes and expenditures (2001, p. 161).^[7]

A number of social egalitarians view this type of society as a promising way to realise the economic aims of widespread security and control. First, certain theorists emphasise that Rawls’s property-owning democracy is well placed to offer all citizens economic *security* in the sense that they each have a substantial and reliable income from the productive assets they own (Dagger, 2006, p. 166; Hsieh, 2012, p. 155; White, 2015, p. 7; T. Williamson, 2012, p. 230). Second, certain theorists emphasise that citizens in this type of society appear well placed to enjoy economic *control* insofar as they each have the skills, resources and opportunities to manage their own economic affairs (Freeman, 2013, pp. 23, 32–33; Hsieh, 2012, p. 157; O’Neill, 2012, p. 89). However, in the next section I argue that Rawls’s property-owning democracy risks undermining both widespread economic security and control unless it is supplemented with an adequate regime of corporate governance.

2. Managerial Threats in a Property-Owning Democracy

One notable gap in Rawls’s depiction of a property-owning democracy is his lack of attention to the size, structure and regulation of corporations, beyond noting that there may be a place for labour-managed firms (Rawls, 2001, p. 178). Contemporary social egalitarians with a penchant for Rawls’s property-owning democracy have largely followed him in this regard.^[8] In this section, I shall argue that this is a significant oversight because, in an economy that retains many large-scale corporations, widespread private ownership of productive assets is insufficient, and quite possibly counter-

7 In my view, Rawls retains a prominent role for welfare state institutions in his vision of a property-owning democracy, but if the reader disagrees, then consider this as a charitable reinterpretation of Rawls’s vision.

8 To clarify, most theorists who have addressed this issue defend some form of economic democracy on the grounds that it prevents hierarchical relationships between managers and workers (Freeman, 2013; Hsieh, 2012; O’Neill, 2008). An exception is Hussain (2012) who argues for a corporatist property-owning democracy on the grounds of improved social stability. But it remains an open question whether either of these arrangements adequately addresses the managerial threats to widespread economic security and control that I outline in this section.

productive, for realising the social egalitarian aims of widespread economic security and control.

Let us begin by focussing on the threat that large-scale corporations pose to the realisation of widespread economic *control* in a property-owning democracy. To recall, for social egalitarians one of the main attractions of Rawls's property-owning democracy is that the widespread *ownership* of productive assets puts all citizens in a position to *control* their own economic affairs. This type of control is seen as an important social basis of self-respect, in contrast to paternalistic arrangements. But, if this type of society retains large-scale joint-stock corporations of the type that have come to dominate modern capitalism, then its economy will be structured around an institutional form that *separates ownership from control*. This is because, in a joint-stock corporation, the owners (i.e. shareholders) appoint a board of directors/managers who then oversee the running of the business.^{9]}

Of course, in theory the shareholders are seen as *principals* who task the directors/managers, as their *agents*, to faithfully realise their interests in getting the best possible return on their investments. But, as Jensen and Meckling (1976) argued in an early contribution to a vast literature, in practice there is a problem of asymmetrical information between the principals and their agents in the modern corporation: the directors/managers are likely to have a level of expertise and familiarity with the workings of the company that is not matched by the shareholders, thereby making it hard for the latter to hold the former to account effectively.

Somewhat counter-intuitively, this principal-agent problem is exacerbated in the context of a property-owning democracy, like Rawls's, that ensures widespread ownership of shares. This is because, as Berle and Means (1932, pp. 44–67) first pointed out, in a society of many small dispersed shareholders, where each shareholder owns only a very small amount of any particular corporation, then any given shareholder will have neither the incentive nor the expertise to hold the directors/managers of any given corporation to account. Furthermore, Williamson (1975, pp. 126–29) has convincingly argued that this principal-agent problem is exacerbated in larger firms, because there is a more complex bureaucracy for directors/managers to hide behind. As such, in a property-owning democracy that retains many large-scale corporations, widespread private ownership of productive

9 Sometimes boards of directors are comprised wholly of the firm's managers (executive directors), sometimes they are comprised wholly of people from outside the firm (non-executive directors), and most commonly they include a mix of the two.

assets is quite possibly counter-productive for realising the social egalitarian aim of widespread economic control.

There are two reasons why social egalitarians might be concerned by this lack of widespread economic control. First, they might be worried about it in itself. For instance, suppose we follow Alfred Marshall (1920, p. 253) in thinking that, although numerous small shareholders may lack the power to hold the directors/managers of large-scale corporations to account, we can nonetheless expect these directors/managers to pursue their shareholders' pecuniary interests out of a sense of moral duty. Even if this holds true, this economic system is based on powerful directors/managers acting paternalistically towards the vast majority of powerless property owners. From a social egalitarian perspective, this sort of paternalistic arrangement is a legitimate threat to these property owners' self-respect.

The second reason why social egalitarians might be concerned by the directors/managers of large-scale corporations enjoying economic control comes into view if we plausibly stipulate that, oftentimes, these directors/managers will not pursue their shareholders' pecuniary interests out of a sense of moral duty. In this scenario, the presence of large-scale corporations threatens to undermine not only shareholders' economic control, but also their economic security, understood as a substantial and reliable income stream from their shareholdings.

Adam Smith first raised this worry about the directors/managers of large-scale corporations pursuing goals other than ensuring the most substantial and reliable returns to shareholders (Smith, 1776, p. 700), and more recent empirical work supports his concern. First, there is evidence to suggest that directors/managers often maximise managerial perquisites and the growth rates of their companies, rather than returns to shareholders (Marris, 1998; O. Williamson, 1964). Second, there is evidence to suggest that, when faced with a market for managerial talent with a high turnover, directors/managers will pursue risky business strategies that boost shareholder returns in the short-term but leave the corporation, and its owners, at risk of heavy losses thereafter (Narayan, 1985; Palley, 1997).

From a social egalitarian perspective, these managerial behaviours pose two threats to the economic security of property owners. First, if directors/managers prioritise perquisites and organisational growth, then shareholders will reap a poor return on their investments, and will therefore be more reliant on income streams from employment and the state. Second, if directors/managers succumb to short-termism, then this will leave shareholders vulnerable to the systemic risk of losing many of their investments in

the long run, even if they are diversified across a number of companies. In either scenario, property owners will not enjoy a substantial and reliable income from their productive assets, thus leaving them vulnerable to domination.

In sum, insofar as Rawls's vision of a property-owning democracy retains many large-scale corporations, it is not a promising institutionalisation of widespread economic security and control unless it is supplemented with an adequate regime of corporate governance. Hence, I will now assess three possible regimes of corporate governance that have been proposed by theorists of the property-owning democracy in terms of, first, whether they neutralise the abovementioned managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security and control and, second, whether they introduce other threats to the realisation of these economic aims.

3. Common Corporate Governance Options for a Property-Owning Democracy

In this section, I will assess the two most commonly proposed regimes of corporate governance in the property-owning democracy literature: *investment fund activism* (3.1) and *labour-managed firms* (3.2). These two regimes are not explicitly proposed by theorists as ways of tackling the managerial threats to economic security and control that I outlined in the previous section; however, each regime finds support among social egalitarian theorists. As such, it is appropriate to assess each regime in terms of how well placed it is to ensure widespread economic security and control in the context of a property-owning democracy that retains many large-scale corporations. In doing so, I will consider each regime in its most promising form.

3.1 Investment Fund Activism

The first regime of corporate governance that I will focus on is *investment fund activism*. Thus far I have been assuming that small shareholders in Rawls's property-owning democracy invest directly in large-scale joint-stock corporations. But, in those modern capitalist societies where small shareholders ultimately own the majority of corporate shares, most of their shares are invested in large-scale joint-stock corporations by investment funds, such as pension funds and mutual funds. These investment funds typically consist of the savings of a large number of workers, and the man-

agers of these funds then act as financial intermediaries who make investment decisions on behalf of the ultimate share owners (Mueller, 2003, pp. 94–8).^[10]

In the property-owning democracy literature, Meade (1964, p. 40), Williamson (2012, pp. 236–8) and Alperovitz (2012, pp. 274–5) all advocate a central role for investment funds. But, although these theorists argue for a property-owning democracy on broadly social egalitarian grounds (e.g. Meade, 1964, p. 39; T. Williamson, 2012, p. 226), they do not assess whether investment funds might neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security and control. So our task is to answer the following questions: first, to what extent can we expect a property-owning democracy that adopts a regime of investment fund activism to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security and control? Second, does such a regime introduce other threats to the realisation of these economic aims?

Beginning with widespread economic *security*, the prospects are promising. To recall, there are two managerial threats to the realisation of this economic aim in a society of small shareholders: first, directors/managers prioritising perquisites and organisational growth; second, directors/managers succumbing to short-termism. The introduction of investment funds looks like a promising way to combat the first of these managerial threats. This is because, unlike any given small shareholder, the managers of large investment funds have the expertise and incentives to hold the directors/managers of corporations to account (Tricker, 2015, pp. 246–8). Following Hirschman (1970), we can distinguish two ways in which they might do so. First, they could “exit” corporations whose management appears to be underperforming by selling the shares under their control. Second, they could exercise “voice” in underperforming firms by using the voting rights of the shares they control to take an active role in managing the corporation in the ultimate share-owners’ pecuniary interests. Either way, the more symmetrical distribution of information between investment fund managers and the directors/managers of corporations allows for a better functioning capital market.

Things are more complicated when we come to the second managerial threat of short-termism. This is because there is evidence to suggest that, in modern capitalist societies where investment funds predominantly exercise

¹⁰ In legal terms, the investment funds own the shares, but I will speak of the investors in these funds as the “ultimate owners” in order to keep track of the genealogy of ownership of productive assets.

“exit” but not “voice”, the directors/managers of corporations tend to engage in risky short-term profit-maximisation that can leave their companies vulnerable in the long run. However, this mainly occurs when fund managers make their “exit” decisions based on fairly simple decision rules that favour corporations that prioritise short-term gains (Black & Fraser, 2002; Vitols, 2001, p. 340). As such, if we stick to the method of assessing each regime of corporate governance in its most promising form, then we can plausibly imagine a regime of investment fund activism that combines more nuanced exercises of “exit” and “voice” by fund managers to ensure substantial and reliable incomes for the small property owners whose wealth they manage.

So a regime of investment fund activism looks well placed to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security. However, it does not look so well placed to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic *control*. This is because the gains in economic security that small shareholders enjoy in this regime stem from handing over investment decisions to fund managers. However, similar principal-agent problems to those that applied to the relationships between small shareholders and the directors/managers of joint-stock corporations will also apply to the relationships between small shareholders and the managers of investment funds, albeit to a lesser degree. As such, investment funds will only do a better job of ensuring that small shareholders enjoy substantial and reliable incomes from their shareholdings if their managers either act on a sense of moral duty towards these small shareholders, or are forced to pursue these small shareholders’ pecuniary interests by state regulatory agencies. In either scenario, widespread economic security is being achieved through paternalistic measures that trade off, to some extent, small property owners’ investment control.

Furthermore, a regime of investment fund activism only achieves widespread economic security by introducing another threat to the realisation of widespread economic control. Up to this point I have discussed economic control purely in terms of citizens being provided with the skills, resources and opportunities to manage their own investments (hereafter: *investment control*). But in section one I noted another form of economic control that social egalitarians see as an important social basis of self-respect: the control that comes from workers having meaningful input into decisions about the conditions in which they work (hereafter: *workplace control*).

Now, the gains in economic security that small shareholders enjoy in a regime of investment fund activism stem from corporations being run purely in their pecuniary interests. This being the case, there is no space in

this regime of corporate governance for workers to exercise control over the conditions in which they work. If they happen to work in good conditions, then these workers are lucky, not powerful, in the same way that a child who receives a large weekly allowance is lucky and not powerful. As such, a regime of investment fund activism achieves widespread economic security for citizens *qua* property owners through measures that threaten the realisation of widespread economic control for citizens *qua* workers.^[11] So, when assessed in its most charitable form, a corporate governance regime of investment fund activism does well in terms of realising widespread economic security, but this comes at the expense of widespread investment and workplace control.

3.2 Labour-Managed Firms

The second regime of corporate governance that I will focus on is *labour-managed firms*. In the property-owning democracy literature, Freeman (2013), Krouse and McPherson (1986), Malleon (2014), Schemmel (2015) and White (2015) all advocate labour-managed firms for broadly social egalitarian reasons. However, these theorists do not offer much detail on the specific forms of labour-management they favour, nor do they assess labour-management in terms of how well it neutralises managerial threats to widespread economic security and control.

To keep things manageable, I shall focus on the most promising form of labour-management that is compatible with the private ownership of productive property that characterises a property-owning democracy. In my view, this is the model of labour-managed firms that Meade (1986, pp. 17–28) and Dahl (1985, pp. 91–2, 140–42) describe, in which the workers of a firm own all of its shares in equal proportion. This might take the form of each worker owning one share that is only transferable to other workers in the firm upon departure, or it might take the form of collective ownership of shares in a joint corporate account that pays out equal dividends to each worker. Either way, each worker must initially invest an equal amount in

11 An anonymous reviewer noted that some liberals, such as (Taylor, 2014, p. 448), see *widespread ongoing opportunities* to create workplaces that allow worker-control, rather than the *actual existence* of such workplaces, as the appropriate social basis of self-respect, in which case this version of a property-owning democracy looks more promising. Whilst I recognise the importance of this deeper disagreement about the appropriate social bases of self-respect, my arguments in this paper are addressed to those social egalitarians who accept the more demanding *desiderata* of actually-existing workplace control.

the firm's capital and is thereafter entitled to the same rate of dividend from the firm's profits and to one vote at shareholder meetings. The internal management structure of the firm and the wage levels that accrue to positions of differential responsibility are among the things to be decided by shareholders using a majoritarian decision rule. (Whereas Dahl advocates something like this model of labour-management, Meade prefers the labour-capital partnerships that I examine in the next section.^[12])

Again, we are faced with two questions: first, to what extent can we expect a property-owning democracy that adopts this model of labour-management to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security and control? Second, does this arrangement introduce other threats to the realisation of these economic aims?

Beginning this time with widespread economic *control*, the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management looks better placed than the regime of investment fund activism to neutralise managerial threats to widespread *investment* control. This is because the Meade-Dahl model avoids the residual principal-agent problem that arises between small property owners and fund managers in the regime of investment fund activism. It does so by ensuring that property owners retain direct control rights (in a democratic, rather than liberal, sense) over their investments. Although principal-agent problems might be thought to return if worker-owners create hierarchical structures of internal management in their firms, this should be offset to a large degree by worker-owners having the incentives and expertise to hold any such managers to account. So, the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management looks relatively well placed to put citizens in a position to manage their own investments. In addition, unlike the regime of investment fund activism, the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management does not introduce a threat to the realisation of widespread *workplace* control. This is because the one-worker-one-vote system adopted in this model of labour-management offers workers meaningful input into decisions about the conditions in which they work.

Moving on to widespread economic security, the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management again looks better placed than the regime of invest-

12 Vanek (1970, pp. 1–8) describes an alternative form of labour-management within which workers do not own the firms they work in, but instead capitalise their firms by selling perpetual bonds in a private bond market (Vanek, 1970, pp. 177–81). In my view, which I do not have space to defend here, Vanek's model looks as well placed as the Meade-Dahl model in terms of realising widespread economic security and workplace control, but worse placed in terms of realising widespread investment control. Hence, I focus on the more promising Meade-Dahl model.

ment fund activism to neutralise managerial threats to this economic aim. This follows from the fact that the shareholders are now also the directors/managers of the firm (or, if they create separate managers, the shareholders are now in a better position to be effective principals). However, the Meade-Dahl arrangement introduces a new, and more substantial, threat to widespread economic security. This is because it relies on each worker concentrating their savings in the firm that they work in. An oft-cited weakness of this arrangement is that it leaves the income that workers enjoy from their productive assets highly vulnerable to market fluctuations in a way that the diversified portfolios of property owners in a regime of investment fund activism are not (Meade, 1986, p. 20; Miller, 1990, p. 87). As such, in a property-owning democracy that employs the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management, we can expect to find a class of ex-workers without independent sources of wealth, who are therefore vulnerable to domination by other citizens or state officials.

To summarise, this section assessed the two most commonly advocated regimes of corporate governance in the property-owning democracy literature – investment fund activism, and labour-managed firms – in terms of the social egalitarian *desiderata* of widespread economic security and control. I argued that a regime of investment fund activism looks well placed to realise widespread economic security, but that this comes at the expense of widespread economic control. I then reached the opposite conclusions for a regime of labour-managed firms. So, it looks like social egalitarians with a penchant for Rawls's property-owning democracy must supplement this social system with either a regime of corporate governance that trades off a substantial amount of citizens' economic control, or one that trades off a substantial amount of citizens' economic security. However, in the next section I highlight an alternative regime of corporate governance that looks as well placed as the regime of investment fund activism in terms of realising widespread economic security, whilst enjoying some of the advantages of a regime of labour-managed firms in terms of widespread economic control.

4. A Superior Option?: Labour-Capital Partnerships

The regime of corporate governance that I focus on in this section has gained little attention from contemporary social egalitarian theorists with a penchant for Rawls's property-owning democracy. It is the regime of *labour-capital partnerships*. Again, to keep things manageable I shall restrict myself to two models of labour-capital partnerships that are compatible with the

private ownership of productive property that characterises a property-owning democracy.

The first model of labour-capital partnerships I shall consider is *German-style codetermination*. This refers to a regime in which large-scale corporations have a two-tier board structure. First, there is a board of directors, half the members of which are elected by the corporation's shareholders to represent their interests, and the other half by the corporation's employees to represent their interests. This board of directors then appoints members to a separate management board that runs the day-to-day activities of the corporation. Furthermore, the board of directors has a range of powers that allow it to determine the strategic direction of the corporation and hold the management board to account, and typically members of the board of directors have a level of expertise that matches that of the members of the management board (Proctor & Miles, 2002, pp. 87–96). In the property-owning democracy literature, Hussain (2012) advocates German-style codetermination, but he does so for reasons of increased social stability rather than widespread economic security and control.

The second model of labour-capital partnerships I shall consider is one advocated by Meade. As he notes, the simplest way to understand this type of partnership is to imagine it being applied instantaneously to an existing joint-stock corporation. If we begin with a joint-stock corporation that pays out 20 percent of its revenue to capital owners, and 80 percent to employees, then this can be transformed into one of Meade's labour-capital partnerships by the issuance of two kinds of share certificates. First, Capital Share Certificates will be issued to all of the capital owners at a distribution that is *pro rata* to their existing income from the corporation (i.e. totalling 20 percent of the corporation's revenues). Second, Labour Share Certificates will be issued to all employees *pro rata* to their individual earnings from the corporation (i.e. totalling 80 percent of the corporation's revenues). Both types of share certificates carry an entitlement to the same rate of dividends; however, whereas Capital Shares can be traded on the stock market, Labour Shares are tied to an individual working partner until they retire or voluntarily leave the corporation. The capitalist shareholders and the labour shareholders then each elect the same number of members to a board of directors/managers that runs the company (Meade, 1986, pp. 38–53, 1993, pp. 107–10).^[13]

13 Meade specifically advocates an arrangement whereby labour-capital partnerships can accept new partners on worse terms, calling these firms "Discriminating Labour-Capital Partnerships"

So, we must once more answer two questions: first, to what extent can we expect a property-owning democracy that adopts either model of labour-capital partnerships to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of widespread economic security and control? Second, do either of these arrangements introduce other threats to the realisation of these economic aims?

Beginning with widespread economic *security*, both models of labour-capital partnerships look as well placed as the regime of investment fund activism to neutralise managerial threats to the realisation of this economic aim. To recall, I initially distinguished two managerial threats to the realisation of this economic aim in a society of small property owners: first, directors/managers prioritising perquisites and organisational growth; second, directors/managers succumbing to short-termism. Both models of labour-capital partnerships are compatible with the introduction of investment funds to manage property owners' portfolios, and, as was noted earlier, this looks like a promising way to combat the first of these managerial threats. In addition, unlike with the Meade-Dahl model of worker-management, there is no need for property owners to concentrate their shareholdings in one business, thus avoiding this separate threat to economic security.

However, in either model of labour-capital partnerships, investment fund managers are not the only ones with a say over how property owners' investments are used, because there is employee representation on corporate boards. Does this introduce a new threat to widespread economic security for small property owners? It does not because, in short, there is evidence to suggest that employee representatives generally have a greater interest in protecting the long-term viability of a company, even if this sometimes comes at the expense of short-term profit-maximisation (Streeck, 1997; Vitols, 2001). As such, when assessed in their most promising forms, these models of labour-capital partnerships are as well placed as the regime of investment fund activism to neutralise not only the first managerial threat of prioritised perquisites and organisational growth, but also the second managerial threat of short-termism.

Moving on to widespread economic control, both models of labour-capital partnerships look only as well placed as a regime of investment fund activism to neutralise managerial threats to *investment* control. This is because, in both of these corporate governance regimes, small property owners effectively hand over control of their investment decisions to oth-

(1993, pp. 117–24). However, in what follows I frame my remarks so that they apply to either Discriminating or Non-discriminating versions of Meade's Labour-Capital Partnerships.

ers – either fund managers, or a mixture of fund managers and employee representatives – and then rely on either paternalistic motivations or wider legal arrangements to align the incentives of these empowered individuals with their own pecuniary interests. As a result, neither a regime of investment fund activism nor a regime of labour-capital partnerships look as well placed as a regime of labour-managed firms in terms of neutralising managerial threats to widespread investment control, because only in the latter regime do small property owners retain control rights over their investments.

But, crucially, in terms of realising widespread *workplace* control, both models of labour-capital partnerships look better placed than a regime of investment fund activism, though not as well placed as a regime of worker-managed firms. To recall, I noted earlier that the gains in economic security that small shareholders enjoy in a regime of investment fund activism stem from corporations being run purely in their pecuniary interests, thereby eliminating any space for workers to exercise control over the conditions in which they work. In contrast, the one-worker-one-vote system adopted in a regime of labour-managed firms gives priority to ensuring workers a meaningful input into decisions about the conditions in which they work. As such, it follows that the even split of employees' and capital owners' representatives on the boards of labour-capital partnerships places this regime squarely in between a regime of investment fund activism and a regime of worker-managed firms in terms of realising widespread workplace control.

To summarise, both models of labour-capital partnerships considered in this section look as well placed as a regime of investment fund activism to realise widespread economic security and investment control, and better placed to realise widespread workplace control. Conversely, both models of labour-capital partnerships looks better placed than a regime of worker-managed firms to realise widespread economic security, but worse placed to realise widespread investment and workplace control.

This result has two potentially significant implications for social egalitarian supporters of the property-owning democracy. First, if we assume that social egalitarians are wary of trading off too much widespread economic security for the sake of increases in widespread economic control and *vice versa*, then the corporate governance regime of labour-capital partnerships looks like a “golden mean” between the regimes of investment fund activism and worker-managed firms. Second, if it can be shown that the regimes of investment fund activism and worker-managed firms each trade off widespread economic security and control in different directions

at the same rate of one-to-one, and if we assume that social egalitarians are indifferent between equal increases in widespread economic security and control, then they should prefer a corporate governance regime of labour-capital partnerships to a regime of investment fund activism or worker-managed firms. This is because, if this trade-off rate holds, then a regime of labour-capital partnerships will realise a greater combined amount of widespread economic security *plus* control than the other two corporate governance regimes.

5. Conclusion

I began this paper by delineating two economic aims that are widely shared by social egalitarians, many of whom have a penchant for Rawls's property-owning democracy: widespread economic *security* and *control*. I then argued that both of these economic aims would be threatened by the directors/managers of large-scale corporations in Rawls's property-owning democracy. As such, I assessed three possible models of corporate governance for a property-owning democracy in terms of whether they neutralise managerial threats to widespread economic security and control, and whether they introduce other threats to the realisation of these economic aims. My main conclusion is that there are social egalitarian reasons to favour a corporate governance regime of labour-capital partnerships. But this conclusion only follows if a number of conditions hold regarding the types of trade-offs that social egalitarians should be willing to make, and the rates at which different corporate governance regimes trade off different economic aims. Each condition, though plausible, requires further examination. I hope to have persuaded social egalitarians who find Rawls's property-owning democracy attractive that these issues are worth pursuing.

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WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC ABOUT PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY?

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One of the defining features of the ideal of “property-owning democracy” is the central role played in it by the democratic principle to the service of which all social and economic institutions must be tailored. I contend that democracy should be understood as the ideal of a self-sustaining political procedure in which all conditions for equal political power are ensured (Isocracy). I identify 4 main sources of impediments to isocracy that plague contemporary capitalist societies: A) the lack of political competence and interest that derives from low economic and educational capabilities; B) the psychological dependence caused by economic precariousness; C) the oligopoly of voice in the deliberative dimension; D) the structural dependence of the State on Capital. The relevance and political attractiveness of POD rests in its ability to counter these impediments. I seek here to question in what ways and how effectively can POD address these impediments.

Keywords: Property-Owning democracy; isocracy; economic inequalities; political inequalities.

Uma das características definidoras do ideal da “Democracia de Proprietários” é o papel central que nele assume o princípio democrático, de tal modo que todas as instituições socioeconómicas a ele se deverão moldar. Argumento que a democracia deve ser entendida como o ideal de um processo decisório no qual se reúnem todas as condições para a constante obtenção de um igual poder político (isocracia). Identifico 4 principais fontes de obstáculos à isocracia que afectam as modernas sociedades capitalistas: A) a falta de competência e interesse político resultantes de fracas capacidades económicas e educacionais; B) a dependência psicológica produzida pela precariedade económica; C) o oligopólio de voz na fase deliberativa; D) a dependência estrutural do Estado face ao Capital. A relevância e atractividade da Democracia de Proprietários reside na sua capacidade para ultrapassar estes obstáculos. Busco questionar de que forma e com que efectividade poderá ela fazê-lo.

Palavras-chave: Democracia de proprietários; isocracia; desigualdades económicas; desigualdades políticas.

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0. Introduction

While reading and assessing John Rawls' Theory of Justice (1972) in the 70's and 80's, most authors, if not all, assumed that, when Rawls stated that the only sort of economic system compatible with his two principles of justice were market socialism and 'property-owning democracy', he did not mean to say that capitalism itself was being discarded. As it seems, they were mistaken (Krouse and Mcpherson, 1988).

Property-owning democracy ("POD" from here on) is not a synonym for a 'well-regulated-welfare-state-sort-of-capitalism'. It is actually intended to be an autonomous economic system. The exact institutions on which it must be founded, however, were left extremely under-specified by Rawls himself. Still, as a general rule, it might be said that such a system must be characterized by a radical dispersion of property and economic power, even though market rules will continue to be used as the main vehicle for resource allocation. We are also invited by Rawls to take James Meade's (1964) proposals as a good example of the sort of framework for society he himself had in mind when writing on the subject.

Another aspect of POD that is deemed central to the understanding of what such a society would look like is the role the democratic ideal assumes within this economic system. In other words, property-owning democracy, as a model of justice and as an economic system, would be instrumentally tailored to the promotion and protection of democracy as a specific and highly important political value.

This means, of course, that if we are to unveil more of what a conception of property-owning democracy entails institutionally-wise, particularly in terms of the economic organization of society and the distribution of rights and resources, we must first specify what democracy as a political value and as an ideal of politics stands for. Depending on the meaning or conceptions of democracy we are working with, the requirements in terms of institutions and economic background conditions necessary to "put it in practice" will vary substantially.

In this article, I suggest that the most adequate understanding of the democratic ideal is that of 'isocracy': a process of decision-making in which all conditions for equal political power are systematically met and continuously reproduced (Baptista, 2010)^[1]. Albeit procedural, this conception is

1 This definition of the democratic ideal as systematic equality in the political process is shared by many other authors, such as Robert Dahl (2006) and Thomas Christiano (1996), although they do not name it isocracy as I do.

far from “formal” – as most procedural notions of democracy are accused of being – and is by no means concerned only with aggregation, or the “aggregative dimension” of the political process. This is so because the term “political process” here comprises not just those electoral moments during which people enact and aggregate their political preferences – nor even the political campaign periods that precede it – but the whole continuous process that stands in between elections, during which deliberation occurs and in which preferences are continuously formed and reformed in response to new and deeper political information reaching citizens. Isocracy, then, requires that all the preconditions for political equality must be obtained and that their continuous reproduction is ensured in both the aggregative and deliberative dimension of the political process as a complex whole.

This seems to be in accordance with the evolution of Rawls’ own thought^[2], in which political equality progressively becomes a more central element in his conception of a just society - or at least the author becomes more explicit about it. In “Political Liberalism” (1993) he was very keen to insist – in a way that had not been seen previously in “Theory of Justice” – that one ought to ensure that the fair value of political liberties^[3] was obtained and as an illustration of its importance and meaning he made a detailed criticism of the Federal Supreme Court’s decisions. Later on, in “Justice as Fairness: A Restatement”, he considers that a fair value of politi-

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- 2 This does not mean, of course, that Rawls would endorse many of the points made in this article concerning the requirements of political equality. Also, it should be noticed that, for the purposes of this analysis, I will not be presupposing here Rawls’ specific conception of POD, nor any other in particular - as the idea has no “intellectual owner” – but will identify it only as a set of conceptions that share the goal of enhancing equality through the dispersion of property and economic power. In fact, this article intends to show, among other things, that, once one recognizes the importance of ensuring “the fair value of political freedoms” - and regardless of accepting or not, as I do not, the full validity and relevance of Rawls’ theory of justice or his two principles of justice - and interprets them as a synonym for political equality (see note 3 *infra* for Rawls own interpretation of it), one ought, then, to recognize that any very moderate version of POD, such as Rawls’ own, due to its excessive reliance on the market as an efficient and roughly fair resource allocation device, is bound to be inconsistent with the preservation of said goal (i.e. political equality), given that the economic inequalities it produces are easily converted into political ones. My main purpose here will be that of investigating in what ways can a POD provide mechanisms to deal successfully with 4 kinds of obstacles to political equality that I identify further ahead. There are many conceptions of POD and therefore the answer to the former question will naturally depend on the particular conception of POD one holds and the specific policies it entails or allows for. I am indebted to both reviewers of this article for having revealed the necessity of making this clarification early on.
 - 3 “Basic freedoms”, in Rawls’ Theory of Justice, refers to mere “negative freedoms” or the negative dimension of freedoms: i.e., the absence of deliberate obstacles (created by the state or other individuals) to the exercise of a given right. The “value” of a freedom regards what people could actually do or get with such freedom (positive freedom).

cal liberties is, after all, an equal value.^[4] In other words, a just society, one that genuinely follows his two principles of justice, and that must, therefore, take the form of either a POD or democratic socialism, ought to ensure political equality, or an equal ability to influence political decisions in society. While no society may fully reach such a stage, the ideal of isocracy can be used as an inspiration for democratic reforms and also as a measuring tool that allows us to assert the degree of “democraticness” any given society has achieved.

Once one accepts political equality or isocracy as what is constitutive of the democratic ideal, one is both entitled and capacitated to start answering in what ways, and to what extent, can POD strengthen or enfeeble political equality vis-à-vis contemporary welfare state societies. The question has no straightforward answer because there are multiple conceptions of what POD is and of what kind of policies it demands. Also, it is of fundamental importance to establish a previous and proper diagnosis of how social and economic inequalities exactly affect political equality. We now turn to this task.

1.

Among other obstacles to political equality that arise from wealth concentration and inequality, we may highlight some which are well documented and studied by empirical political science and which seem particularly troubling in modern capitalist societies.

- A) The poor and less educated segments of society systematically display significantly lower levels of voting and other forms of participation in political life be it involvement in civil society associations; attending rallies; signing petitions, attending and speaking at public meetings, etc. (Freeman, 2004; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 2004) The reasons for this are legion and explanations are not (entirely) consensual among scholars. Still, lack of access to some fundamental social rights, such as universal quality education, is bound to affect the cognitive abilities which constitute the basis for the formation of stable political preferences or an “enlightened understanding” of one’s interests. These cognitive abilities are what

4 “The fair value of the political liberties ensures that citizens similarly gifted and motivated have a roughly equal chance of influencing the government’s policy and of attaining political authority irrespective of their economic and social class”. (Rawls, 2001)

make deliberation meaningful. Ideological coherence and political sophistication are highly correlated with educational attainment.

- B) On the other hand, some features of the socioeconomic system, namely the status of labour and labour relations, will inevitably affect the ability of those at the bottom of the social ladder to engage effectively in all sorts of political activity. Apart from the non-negligible effects of physical and psychological exhaustion from long work-hours and the all-consuming concern with “daily survival” that derive from an increasingly precarious and unregulated labour market, labour precariousness and weak unions not only weaken the bargaining power of both (at industry level and in the political arena), but may also make the exercise of democratic rights risky or difficult. Participating in a strike, a rally or a demonstration; organizing political groups or unions; being vocal about one’s political preferences, particularly when they are opposed to the interests or views held by the employer, all of these are hardly a prudent strategy when the threat of easy dismissal and unemployment is ominous and pervasive.
- C) Access to the mass media, which are the major source of (political) information for the great majority of the population (including political elites) and which, therefore, play a central role in how ideological and partisan preferences get to be formed, is distributed according to an extremely inegalitarian criterion under contemporary capitalism: “to each according to his wealth and income” instead of the democratic one, applied in the aggregative dimension, of “one man, one vote”. As the costs of owning and keeping major media outlets operating have soared – particularly with the advent of television – only states and those extremely wealthy are able now to establish and own them. This means that only they have actual direct access to the media. A strong “filter” through which information and ideology are syphoned has emerged and has become solidified. The deliberative dimension of contemporary polyarchies is now much more “oligarchical” in nature than aggregation. However, as many authors from the “deliberative democracy” current have contended, deliberation is at least as important as aggregation in a democracy and, in fact, it is the quality of deliberation that gives meaning to the choices being made by popular will. Mere “negative” freedom of expression is a necessary but insufficient condition for democracy to be obtained.

While it prevents blatant and active censorship of content by governments, it does not allow for a genuinely free and plural flow of information and communication, since editorial criteria work, even if inadvertently, as a form of censoring or constraining what data and information actually get to the general population.^[5] Only in an environment that allows for some form of “positive freedom of expression” can the deliberative dimension of a political regime become fully democratic. Any economic system which purports to be “democracy-enhancing” must address this issue, by expanding and equalizing the right to speech, or the right to inform and be informed, in a similar way to what happened previously with the expansion of voting rights towards universal suffrage.

- D) In representative polyarchies, the great risk to political equality that was early perceived was that of representatives becoming independent of their electors, distancing themselves from them and the promises made to them. This was thought to occur due to the easy and direct access that economic elites had to political officials when compared to the distance and lack of influence that characterized relations between the “common people” and “their” representatives. As it seems, this scenario is not only confirmed but rather aggravated under an economic system that allows for huge concentrations of capital and wealth in the hands of few people or organizations (Bartels et al, 2005, pp. 112 and 116). Electoral results are dependent, to a great extent, on the resources one may muster for political campaigns and these resources, as campaigns become more and more expensive, will be available only to those who are

5 Sheer economic (and other) interests of the owners of the media inevitably get reflected in the way their media frame issues and these are the single most distorting elements of the deliberative arena. As Ben Bagdikian (1997, p. 71) writes: “Owners hire and fire those who make the everyday decisions on content. It is a rare corporation that hires an influential executive known to be inimical to the owner’s heartfelt social values.(...) Most reporters and writers insist that they are never told what to write, by which they usually mean that they are not told to write something they believe to be false. But most are told what to write, in the sense that it is a necessary function in the media to decide which of the infinite number of possible subjects to pursue, assign, publicize and which to ignore. (...) [I]t is within this necessary professional decision making that corporate values and the central aims of owners are embedded”. However, one ought not to forget that these private media are dependent not only on their owners, but on the incomes they derive from publicity. This publicity, in turn, is originated in large corporations or, eventually, State institutions. One ought not to bite the hand that feeds him (Baker, 2002, p.344) and biting that hand would mean creating material that is seen as hostile to their sponsors or to publicize facts that could harm their image. These phenomena restrict the “bounds of the expressible” (Chomsky, 1989; Herman and Chomsky, 1994)

sympathetic - or promise to be sympathetic - to those social classes that can provide them with such huge resources. Even regulation on campaign spending may be evaded and is therefore ineffective. Furthermore, after election day, lobbying is quite effective when backed by huge amounts of money; corruption, too, seems to thrive more if economic inequality and wealth concentration are high. Elected officials who may nevertheless wish to pursue democratically chosen policies against moneyed interests, will be confronted by large holders of capital that may opt to resist any offensive through a number of alternative strategies, that eventually lead to the demise of the uncooperative officials or to their final yielding: boycott or evasion (i.e., capital flight; creative use of loopholes in laws, etc) and intimidation or direct confrontation, through legal or illegal methods (eg: the “employers’ strike” against the Allende administration in Chile, preceding and preparing the ground for Pinochet’s coup d’état).

2.

Given this diagnosis, in what ways can a property-owning democracy provide effective mechanisms to deal successfully with these obstacles to political equality? The answer depends, predictably, on the particular features of the system and on how radical and egalitarian the system is intended to be. It also depends fundamentally on the type of social inequality one is dealing with and the way in which it gets to be converted into political inequalities.

A) Political competence and egalitarian educational policies

Regarding the connection between education, political sophistication, political interest and participation, it seems that attention must be focused on obtaining a public education system that provides universal, free and, above all, equal education to all, avoiding the common trap of educational ghettoization that frequently plagues those countries with a more economically liberal outlook. It would be of fundamental importance to avoid having a segmented educational system, with elite schools, on the one hand, where the wealthy and academically brilliant alumni get together and create an intellectually stimulating atmosphere for each other, and, on the other hand, schools for the “plebs”, under-funded, over-crowded, and in which the

academically “under-achieving” concentrate in disproportionate numbers, generating a “pull down” effect that artificially depresses the educational chances for each and all that frequent such an environment. Although this seems to be a goal rhetorically espoused by all reformers – and therefore, nothing but an innocuous platitude – preventing this ghettoization of the educational system and ensuring genuine equal education would actually collide with recent trends and proposals in educational policy which have been stressing: 1) the importance of “empowering” parents with greater “freedom of choice” regarding their children’s schools; 2) more autonomy to schools (decentralization of criteria); 3) favouring markets or “quasi-markets” in education, which, through the effects of competition, would supposedly improve the quality or efficiency of the education provided.

Justifying appropriately this position would take us too far away from the more contained purposes of this article. I will, then, only suggest a succinct argumentative path which could be used to attack parental “freedom of choice” and the introduction of a “market logic” in the educational system. Giving more choice to parents by means of school vouchers and similar schemes^[6] should not count as something particularly valuable. Even if one were to presume that parents know best what their own children’s (educational) interests are and how to achieve them^[7], still, they are natu-

6 Something which was and is proposed not just by ideologues of the “third-way” (Le Grand, 2003), but, more surprisingly by egalitarian authors such as Bowles and Gintis (1998).

7 Which is not as obvious as may seem at first sight. Parents which in their days had little schooling or little success in school, will probably be limited – in a way that teachers or ministries of education may not be – in their ability to understand what is essential and what is not for their children’s academic success and even more so in perceiving what the education system’s role might be in making their sons and daughters critical, well-prepared citizens for democratic politics. Additionally, in some circumstances, parents may actually hold interests that are radically opposed to those of their children: due to radical and sectarian religious beliefs, for instance, they may wish to prevent their children from gaining acquaintance with theories and perspectives they repute immoral and dangerous by enrolling them in schools that will remove such topics from curricula or present them in what they believe is an appropriate manner. While moved by a desire to protect their loved ones, they may actually be undermining their children’s future prospects as intellectually and politically autonomous and critical citizens of the democratic community. And while parents undoubtedly have special moral duties towards their children, and despite presumably more concerned with their welfare than any other citizen, there is no reason why their particular options should be regarded as a right that trumps the rights of all children to an education that enhances the chances of becoming a politically autonomous, equal and active citizen. Moreover, it does not seem to necessarily constitute a form of religious oppression not to be able to choose their children’s school based on religious grounds, as parents may still have their children taught religious contents in public schools by means of an optional (not mandatory) discipline, for instance. A somewhat similar and more developed argument regarding the superiority of children’s rights to an “autonomy-facilitating” education against their parents interests may be found in BRIGHOUSE (1998), although, in

rally oblivious as to the consequences of their options on other people's children – whose interests it is not their duty to watch for: the natural tendency of more freedom would be to cluster the best students in a few schools and the underprivileged in others, as the parents of the well-off would struggle to isolate their offspring from those of the poor (for fear of their negative influence on academic performance), creating just the sort of “ghettoization” previously referred to. When inequality is prevalent, unrestrained freedom of choice in a market system tends to enhance that inequality, producing more “unfreedom” for those who are at the bottom of the social system.^[8] If, and to the extent that a regime of property-owning democracy is concerned with equalizing “human capital” among students, it ought to seriously contemplate the need for having a non-market allocation of resources and students, through a centralized educational system – which would demand that it be publicly owned and controlled – that would disperse, according to criteria as objective as possible, the various students, with their specific needs and disadvantages, among the various schools, striving to keep a healthy and equal ratio between social classes and educational needs throughout the national territory.^[9]

this case, the author is not so much concerned with autonomy in this restricted sense of a set of intellectual capabilities necessary for equal and critical political deliberation and participation in democratic politics, but rather with autonomy understood in a wider sense as the ability to permanently examine and revise one's fundamental ways of life.

- 8 This serves, I believe, as a good illustration of what H. Hart (1975) meant when he criticized Rawls – who later recognized the soundness of the criticism – for characterizing his principles of justice as a framework that allowed for the maximization of freedom. There is no such thing, at least when one's goal is to produce a liberal theory of justice. Rights and liberties, in general, are bound to collide with each other in a number of circumstances and any liberal theory worthy of that name will attempt to regulate in the most fair and equal manner the various trade-offs and mutual accommodations that must be imposed on each and every right. In doing this, it will establish the boundaries and inevitable restrictions to all rights. No right shall be limitless – lest we accept a Hobbesian state of nature – , but rather and appropriately constrained so that the liberal regime will be the most adequate. This will not “maximize” “freedom”. What matters to all liberal theories are distinct freedoms or rights (“freedom of expression”, “the right to free and equal education”, property rights, etc) and how they are combined in a balanced and complex system. These distinct, specific freedoms don't add up and accumulate like numbers to form a single conglomerate, a “maximized freedom”. And, in this case, a proper, or adequate egalitarian theory of justice that stresses and prioritizes the value of political equality, and the preconditions for its continuous existence, must recognize the need for ensuring that “freedom of choice” for parents regarding the schools where their children will study must be tempered and subordinated to the overarching goal of achieving (as far as possible) equal education for everyone's offspring and, with it, equal abilities for democratic citizenship.
- 9 A good framework for how this might be obtained is sketched in Thad Williamson's proposals (Williamson, 2013, pp. 76-80).

While this alone strongly militates against introducing or reinforcing market mechanisms or vouchers schemes – at least if these are not residual and complemented with the State’s very strict enforcing of educational standards and egalitarian criteria – there are further democratic arguments that strengthen the case for public, centralized provision of education. One ought to avoid looking at the educational system predominantly as a means for obtaining valuable market skills (or “human capital”). While the educational system may work indeed to equalize “human capital” and, in that way, promote a “predistribution” of resources that will later ensure that people will have more equal incomes in their adult life, the educational system also provides – or may provide - some of the indispensable tools for the development of political competence and interest. Parents and private schools (pressured by them) may very well be so concerned with the obtaining of the former, that they may undermine the successful transmission and development of the latter. In other words, more power to parents concerned with the acquisition of marketable skills, and to private schools that seek to respond to their client’s anxieties or, alternatively, to market demands, will predictably result in the distorting of curricula and of the whole learning process to fit the needs of the “labour market” of the future and this will tend to come at the cost of strengthening political inequalities. While this may be unproblematic for the children of economic and intellectual elites, as these may find outside of the school environment the necessary stimuli for engaging in politics, the same is usually not true of non-privileged segments of society. A public system, more immune to market and parent’s pressures, seems to be the natural candidate for keeping the “democratic focus” of education while establishing a right balance between the two goals of an egalitarian educational system (Levine, 1998, p. 128). Establishing or maintaining such a public system is compatible with – and ought to play a central role in – all egalitarian systems, be they either socialism (under its state or market versions), POD or a more traditional social-democratic welfare-state.

B) Economic independence and political autonomy

Granting all citizens some form of property, or establishing a universal basic income could insulate them – up to a certain degree – from dire economic insecurity or the worst and most immediate effects of unfortunate events such as unemployment or temporary or definitive disabilities. While the existing welfare state institutions already seek to constitute a safety net that

protects all people from such events - and from the fear itself deriving from the perception of this vulnerability - they may be said to be unsatisfactory. Having property or an unconditional income could be argued to provide a more solid basis for the economic, social, intellectual and, ultimately, political independence of citizens. It would level the playing field or the bargaining power between labour and capital, precisely because no one would be a pure “proletarian” deprived of autonomous means of survival. This, in turn, would reduce “the extent to which individuals are subject to the capacity for arbitrary interference at work” (Hsieh, 2012, p. 155). As the republican and neo-republican arguments stress, domination emerges always and as soon as someone may depend on the goodwill of another. Coercion or any act of actual arbitrary interference is not a necessary condition for domination; the mere potentiality that someone may exert power if he so wishes (even if its improbable he will so wish) suffices to create domination. He who is put in a situation of uncertainty vis-à-vis the holder of power (as a mere potentiality) is already a “slave” (Skinner 2008, 96 ff).

Being able to live a decent life without needing to pay heed to either the state or other individuals – just making frugal use of the resources to which one is fully entitled, such as an unconditional basic income or a capital grant – would make one much less “coercible” and more autonomous, namely regarding one’s political options and activity.^[10] In this respect, the institutions of POD could be said to offer something more than the contemporary Welfare-state already does.^[11] However a few questions surface then. The first is that either an unconditional basic income or a capital grant, in order to have the desired “autonomizing” effect, would have to be substantial, and this raises the questions of their immediate feasibility and their subsequent sustainability (both economic and political). Steep inheritance taxes or strong limitations of the right to bequest combined with some sort of universal grant of a stipulated amount of wealth at the start of one’s adult

10 Another argument in favour of the democratic value of economic security (applicable to a universal basic income policy but not so strongly to a capital grant scheme) is that it enables people with enough (“leisure”) time which may be dedicated to non-market or non-productive activities if they so wish. Among these activities may be found all those that are instrumental to political competence and interest: participating in debates, rallies, demonstrations, and, more importantly, perhaps, reading and studying all sorts of material that may be required for an “enlightened formation of preferences”. I will not pursue the argument here but it strikes me as having been very persuasively put forward by Carole Pateman (2006).

11 Richard Dagger (2006) contends that the concern of (neo)republicanism with preventing arbitrary interference and preserving equal political participation in politics (as instrumental for the preservation of other freedoms) converges with Rawls’ political thought and with his defence of POD.

life, for instance, would still be perceived as a form of radical redistribution. And, as such, it would predictably be subject to fierce resistance, as can be attested by the history of the socialist movement. Even if one were successful in implementing such policies at a given point in time, these would be very vulnerable to subsequent fluctuations in popular mood: inheritance taxes are usually unpopular, since people feel morally and emotionally compelled to leave something – and something with material value – behind to their children. This is no strong ethical objection, but it does raise the question of why not simply opt for some form of democratic socialism instead of POD, given that the political and economic costs of implementing either one of these systems would be similar.

Another troublesome issue would emerge if these policies (universal basic income or universal basic capital) were to replace entirely or to a great extent the existing institutions of the welfare state and traditional social-democratic policies (full employment policies; public provision of basic services in health, education, access to water and energy, etc; unemployment benefits, pensions, and other benefits) instead of working as complement to them. In such a case, one might end in a situation in which people would become more, rather than less, vulnerable and dependent on others. This seems to be particularly true of universal capital grants, since people have different abilities for risk calculation and investment acumen (not to speak of “pure brute luck”) which would, under a more “free market regime” – with little subsequent redistribution –, in the medium-to-long run, determine for some – at least – a major loss of their initial capital and, therefore, of their economic independence and safety. The stability and relative insulation with which POD is supposed to ensure individuals – regarding public and private powers that may wish to coerce or constrain them – would then collapse and with it, one of the main sources of POD legitimacy and of its democratic credentials. Any POD proposal that takes the democratic ideal seriously must not only be concerned with “pre-distribution”, but with subsequent and regular re-distribution so as to prevent concentration of wealth throughout life.

A final question I would like to raise is if such isolated policies – unaccompanied by more “traditional” social-democratic and socialist ones – could not endanger certain “collective solidarities” that are instrumental in solidifying isocracy. Democracy is about solving collective issues, the issues of the polis, but also of social groups – particularly the downtrodden – in the political community. And the weapons of the weak are numbers, organization, solidarity and self-awareness. Being able to solve or even address their

collective problems depends on each recognizing them as problems that are also one's own, and not the issues of distant "others" towards which we feel indifferent at best (White, 2012, pp. 136-143). Equality can be argued to be a foundation of this sense of belonging and unity, but perhaps one needs more than just equality; perhaps also the sense of equal economic co-dependence, or the need one has that others prosper in order for one's own success, is necessary. Such a "feeling" is arguably less prone to arise when people are apparently radically independent from each another.^[12]

3.

The simple fact that everyone may be entitled to some sort and amount of property is fundamentally irrelevant when considering other sorts of hindrances to political equality. In order for property-owning democracy to be able to ensure political equality in an economy still ruled, in general, by the market, it must not only be an economic regime in which everyone has some property and independence, but a regime in which wealth and resources are significantly dispersed, and not concentrated as they inevitably tend to be under capitalism. Otherwise, concentrated economic resources become, one way or another, concentrated political power. This conversion of economic and social power into political power may occur through several means, many of which were stated earlier in this article. One of these processes of conversion works through the development of an oligopoly of "voice". Another is through what some have called the "structural dependence of the State on Capital".^[13] Let us analyse these two aspects more in detail.

12 As Ben Jackson (2012, pp. 46 ff) recalls us, alongside a progressive one, there is a strong conservative tradition of POD, which was designed as an alternative project to the socialist ideal. It was not just a rival project, but actually an anti-socialist, anti-egalitarian strategy. In the days of Margaret Thatcher's executive, this became quite evident. The idea, then, was that of alienating workers from socialism and to crush workers' natural solidarities and union by making them property-owners who were, or could be made to believe they were, now members of another, distinct class, made up of autonomous, responsible individuals, who had their own fate in their hands to command and could legitimately be oblivious to "proletarian" workers, on the one hand, and independent vis-à-vis other "property-owners". Indeed, that was the whole point behind the policies of popular capitalism at the time that enabled tenants to buy their homes (which had been, up until then, public housing with low rents) or that allowed people to buy shares of the recently privatized public industries: to change people's ideologies, through the illusion of property, from an egalitarian, socially-minded, and "communitarian" perspective, to a neo-liberal, libertarian, socially-indifferent one.

13 For a critical assessment of this notion see: Przeworki and Wallerstein, 1988. While these authors are right to stress that the "structural dependence" argument has been used as a self-fulfilling prophecy and sometimes even as an excuse or pretext for left-wing parties to hide their own culpable timidity or "embourgeoisement", they seem excessively dismissive of the real constraining effects that concentrated ownership of the means of production exerts on States

C) Oligopoly of voice versus *isegoria*

The point was made earlier and succinctly: political equality as an ideal concerns equality in the ability to influence the formation of political preferences, as much as it concerns equality in the counting of votes (i.e., in the enactment of preferences as they were expressed and became ‘crystalized’ during the electoral act). Political equality, if well understood – i.e. in a demanding sense -, means that all members of the demos must have the opportunity to develop an “enlightened understanding” of their own preferences –regardless of all the caveats that one must bear in mind here so as not to fall back to blatantly elitist or vanguardist positions.^[14]

Equality of vote (enacting expressed preferences) must be preceded and accompanied by equality of voice, i.e., equality in capacity for: (1) influencing the formation of preferences in the first place, and; (2) for being informed about public issues through a pluralistic and deliberative environment.

Understandably, then, it is not just “access” to property, or the right of all citizens to some property, that may re-instate anything even remotely approaching the ideal of *isegoria*, or “equality of voice” in the deliberative arena of today, given the deeply oligarchical system of contemporary mass media. A “positive and equal freedom of expression” for all can only be obtained through equal and genuine access to the mass media, something which, in turn, depends on effective property and control of these same gigantic media outlets (so as to determine the content of its messages; the biases and framings of political information that it necessarily must display), not just the possibility for the “underdogs” of benefiting from occasional appearances, legally mandatory during political campaign periods. It would be naïve to expect that any single media outlet can ever be “impartial”, much less so that it, or even the media system as a whole, portrays “reality as it is”. Reality is an incredibly rich, almost chaotic flow of information. There is an excess of data. All people deal with the overwhelming abundance of information by using filters, or heuristic devices that allow us

and governments. These constraining effects have also become more powerful after the extinction of socialism in the Eastern Bloc and the ensuing process of globalization.

14 As Robert Dahl (1989, pp. 111-112) once noted, “This criterion implies, then, that alternative procedures for making decisions ought to be evaluated according to the opportunities they furnish citizens for acquiring an understanding of means and ends, of one’s interests and the expected consequences of policies for interests, not only for oneself but for all other relevant persons as well. Insofar as citizen’s good or interests requires attention to a public good or general interest, then citizens ought to have the opportunity to acquire an understanding of these matters. (...)”

to “make sense of the world”, by placing new bits of information in understandable categories, by providing a framework of analysis, explanations and causal links between them and, more importantly, by ignoring, forgetting or excluding some information while highlighting other facts. We would be lost without these “perspectives”, these ideological biases that help us understand reality. We do that as individuals, and the media and their agents must do that too, necessarily, when relaying information to the wide public: highlight some facts, downplay others. There is no sense in striving for a “non-ideological” unpolluted pure transmission of information. Therefore, if one is to ensure that people are not deprived of the knowledge of the relevant facts when developing their preferences, the only viable solution is to make sure the media system, as a complex whole, is characterized by a genuine pluralism of “biased” information: i.e., that all ideological and social perspectives and groups get an egalitarian access to the production of political information.^[15] This is no easy task, as genuine access demands

15 It is worth stressing that nothing of what has been said so far means that people are “entitled to believe their own facts” - as one reviewer would have it. I assume here - unlike relativists - that facts exist, that there is an external reality beyond our imagination and even that it is possible - not always, and not always easily - to make accurate judgments regarding facts. What has been said is that there is an incommensurable supply of facts oozing from reality and that all human beings must, of necessity, interpret these facts, organize them into a coherent whole through some “structures of thought”, a belief system (an ideology). As this is so, it is essential, for the sake of political equality in the phase in which preferences are formed, to ensure that all citizens are able to have access to all ways of understanding and organizing facts and then to decide for themselves which of them sound more plausible and to what extent. In order for this to happen, all relevant “ideological groups” must be entitled to present not “their own facts”, but their own interpretation of facts: how they perceive the connections among various facts and their relative explanatory relevance. This has nothing to do with fabricating facts, nor even with wilfully silencing or ignoring others. To provide an example, while some journalists and authors, convinced of the “Hard-working-protestant-ethic-driven-Germans-against-the-profligate-and-negligent-south-europeans” narrative will be particularly attentive and insist on (true) news and facts such as the manipulation of deficit and debt statistics by the Greek government, or high indices of corruption, others, whose belief systems collide with such narrative, will be able more easily to detect and perceive as particularly noteworthy other (true) facts that combine with the former to form a different picture, in which the defects of Greek (and southern-european) governments and society are seen to be not only exaggerated but explaining very little of the current problems faced by their economies: facts such as the number of hours Greeks and other south-europeans work (higher than those of German workers), the dramatic effects that entering the euro had in their countries, or the fact that countries such as Spain, which had a healthy financial situation prior to the banking crisis and the rating agencies’ speculative attack (potentiated by the EU’s attitude) also fell victim to a similar situation as that of Greece: an economic crisis, with gigantic rates of unemployment, negative growth for several years in a row and a continuously mounting public debt that has only now improved slightly, although, it must be said, only after being treated in a much more generous way by the EU and IMF. Another fact to which such journalists might have their attention drawn would be that of the UK’s severe deficit situation at about the same time of the first Greek bailout that, notwithstanding never

fundamental alterations in property relations regarding media outlets. In this area, at least, market criteria must be trumped by democratic ones. As some experts in the area have contended, this probably demands the coexistence of not only a private and public (i.e. state) sectors, but also, and more importantly, of a third, non-market sector, belonging to civil society, lively and independent of both government and market pressures (Keane, 2004, Baker, 2002).

Arguably, even the dispersal of smaller media outlets (such as newspapers) among diverse social and political groups (particularly those emanating from subordinated and underprivileged social classes) might not be effective enough, as long as property, and therefore access, to the far-reaching, influential and most expensive media outlets (such as tv-networks and major newspapers) remain the monopoly of a social class. Democratizing the media today means democratizing access, and therefore property and effective control, to the most pervasive, most influential media outlets.^[16]

D) Structural dependence and informal veto powers of capital holders

It is usually considered that a corollary of the ideal of democracy is that, when consensus is unavailable (and in pluralistic societies this will be inev-

produced identical reactions on the part of rating agencies or the “markets”. To conclude, facts exist, but so do ideologies (in a non-pejorative sense) and no one is immune to them, as all need them to make sense of a reality which they cannot access in its integrity. Only the extremely naïve can believe that they or anyone else has “direct” and untainted access to “all of the reality”. The more one believes he is ideology-free, the more enslaved is he by it (and the more distant he becomes of approaching reality “as it is”).

- 16 Some might argue that the advent of social media and the internet, in which everyone can produce, look for, and share political information, may have already democratized the deliberative sphere of current polyarchies, making somewhat superfluous the more radical reorganization of the media system here proposed. Given space constraints, I cannot obviously be expected to answer to this objection adequately here. I would venture, however, that, despite its democratic ethos, the real potential of the internet and social media is still limited. Mass media outlets such as television seem still to be much more influential in the development of political preferences and worldviews regarding the vast majority of the population than social media. One can speculate that this phenomenon may be rather natural. In fact, most of the material that is shared in social media has its origin or is first produced by the oligarchical or hegemonic mass media. Also, an outlet such as television channels demands much less cognitive abilities and previous interest from its consumers to arrive at them than what happens with those who go to the internet to look for information: one must have a more proactive, non-passive attitude, so as to search for what one wants to know about. This attitude will usually only be found among those that are already “mobilized” or politically interested. It serves well, then, those that are politically more informed. It is less effective over the vast majority of the citizenry. I thank the reviewers for alerting me to this issue.

itable) majority will ought to rule, as long as enacting this will does not affect the conditions for maintaining political equality in the long run.^[17]

This however can easily conflict with the unequal private distribution of wealth – particularly the major means of production and resources – typical of capitalism. Political will is not “self-executing”. It needs resources in order to become a reality. All collective projects, like building and staffing hospitals, schools, courts and other public facilities and services, involve significant investment and must be backed by economic resources, obtained through taxes or other sources of public income. If the main resources of the nation are in private hands, and if they are hostile to these projects and interests, majority will may be said to be constrained by a sort of “informal veto power” held by wealthy minorities.

If POD is to deal successfully with these “informal veto powers” of concentrated wealth, it must ensure not only that all have access to some property, but that none – either individually or as a member of a distinct social class - has enough property to be able to “blackmail” the political community into submission or deprive it from the much needed resources. This suggests, in turn, that the main resources and means of production, particularly those that are instrumental or central to the functioning of a national economy, ought to be publicly or collectively owned.^[18] In non-central sectors, even if collective property is not required, at least much care must be taken so as to avoid large private concentrations of resources, that may constitute forms of monopoly or oligopoly or that can function either as 1) a “coercive” tool against the democratic will of the political community, or as 2) a means of gaining privileged access to political representatives, through either lobbying or corruption. Preventing this would demand that, even if market rules are still the main mechanism for resource

17 This constitutes what I term “the endogenous limits of the democratic principle”. A very obvious example can be illuminating here. A majority may want to enact laws that work so as to curtail the freedom of expression of the minority. If they succeed in doing so, then, the members of the minority will be reduced to a status of political inferiority regarding the deliberative dimension of democracy: they will not have the same ability to influence the formation of preferences among their fellow citizens than the members of the majority. If they become political inferior, isocracy is no longer obtained. This same simple reasoning can be applied to whatever other preconditions for political equality. Democracy as isocracy, then, is necessarily a “reflexive” regime: some preconditions of political equality must be constitutionally ensured against majority will, even if majority will is itself, *prima facie*, a condition for political equality itself.

18 What these may exactly be, will inevitably be contested and, ultimately defined by public deliberation in a democracy. However, some of them seem to be patently obvious and necessary: the banking system (or a large portion of it), the energy and water supply, fundamental means of transportation and logistics resources, etc.

allocation, these must be regulated and limited by strict laws and even stricter state enforcement of them. All pre-existing inequalities will tend to be aggravated and property to become concentrated, in the medium-to-long run, by the sole mechanism of market transfers if left unchecked. This demands from a POD regime much more redistribution than Rawls, for instance, probably thought necessary. It also requires taxing and limiting not just bequests and inheritance rights (“intergenerational transmission of acquired advantages”) but also *inter vivos* transfers. Finally, the State must retain control of the “commanding heights” of the economy, namely so as to define public investment and be able to engage in some sort of social and economic planning or guiding.

These concerns are also valid even if most large and medium scale firms were to be worker-owned and worker-managed, as was originally proposed by Meade himself. While inequality within firms would probably be much more contained than is usual in capitalism under such a hybrid regime, inequalities between firms could arise and, in time, become severe. And these, in time, could endanger equality system-wide¹⁹. Also, while industrial democracy is usually hailed as having a positive psychological effect on workers, enhancing their democratic and deliberative abilities for public life, it can also generate strong group identities (a sort of “collective selfishness”) and interests that could come to collide with those of the larger political community. A dramatic instance of such a phenomenon would be that of a large industry, generating a great deal of the exports and income of a nation, whose workers could use their privileged position to constrain and blackmail a democratically legitimate government and the larger community so as to further their own private goals. In this case, we would be back to a situation of informal “veto powers” held by a privileged minority.

Conclusion

Political equality, or isocracy, is a demanding ideal. If POD is thought to be instrumentally tailored to achieve such an ideal, it must tackle the most important sources of political inequality. Success in doing so, however, depends on the particular features of POD and on how egalitarian the eco-

19 Roemer (2009, p. 701) himself has arrived at the conclusion that his market socialism proposal, if unaccompanied by the redistributive policies of the contemporary social-democratic welfare state, would generate more inequality than the one existing in present-day capitalist societies. This, he contends, illustrates how differential marketable skills are today as relevant as differential capital ownership in producing inequality.

conomic system can be made to be. It is also true that some forms of either democratic socialism or even a radically egalitarian welfare-state capitalism may, if well devised, also address some of the significant impediments to political equality. For instance, providing a public educational system that equalizes both human capital and political competence and democratizing the deliberative sphere seems perfectly compatible with any of the three economic systems. Where POD may be said to provide a unique contribution to isocracy is in its ability to insulate individuals from the coercive effects of economic insecurity or precariousness by means of, for instance, an unconditional basic income or universal access to capital grants. These devices, however, must complement and not (entirely) substitute existing (redistributive) institutions and policies of the welfare-state, since any system in which the market is the main allocation mechanism will inevitably generate and reinforce economic inequalities that are later translated into political ones. Therefore, redistribution is required as much as predistribution. Finally, if isocracy is to have any chance of being realized, market criteria and operations must be kept under a short leash and concentration of economic resources cannot be allowed to grow into an informal veto power for wealthy minorities.

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Filosofia continental
contemporânea:
pensamento francês

NOTA INTRODUTÓRIA

No início de 2014, o Departamento de Filosofia da Universidade do Minho, decidiu criar um evento denominado “Conferências sobre Filosofia Continental Contemporânea”, com o intuito de redespertar o interesse do público universitário, mas não só, por contributos notáveis, produzidos no último século, provindos de tradições de pensamento externas ao *main stream* do movimento analítico, originadas e desenvolvidas na parte continental da Europa desde o século XVIII, que continuam a evidenciar indeclinável vitalidade e encerram um potencial para a orientação da reflexão atenta aos tempos que correm e àqueles que se avizinham.

Depressa se consensualizou que a sua primeira edição fosse dedicada ao pensamento francês atual, filosofante e filosófico, que prolonga uma das mais ricas dessas tradições reflexivas e que constitui também uma das que mais influência sempre exerceu no nosso país, em particular no universo académico.

Na sequência de um convite dirigido por uma colega do Departamento de Estudos Românicos da Universidade do Minho para que as Conferências integrassem o “Juillet Français”, um evento celebrativo da cultura francófona, a sua realização esteve inicialmente agendada para a última semana desse mesmo ano. A pouquíssimos dias da sua ocorrência, todavia, esse evento foi inexplicavelmente cancelado e, em consequência, as conferências tiveram que ser reagendadas para o dia 9 de outubro.

Este apartado recolhe dois contributos dados a essas inaugurais “Conferências sobre Filosofia Continental Contemporânea”, um apresentando uma leitura à la Barthes da relação quiasmática entre a linguagem *qua* política e a política *qua* linguagem, da autoria de Bernhard Sylla, e outro um estudo exploratório do conceito de “violência”, através das perspetivas cruzadas de Ricoeur e Girard, como tecível nos termos de uma dialética entre pulsão individual e expiação social, lavrado por Luís Pereira.

João Ribeiro Mendes

ROLAND BARTHES: “A LÍNGUA É FASCISTA” – APROXIMAÇÕES A UM *TOPOS* DA FILOSOFIA DO SÉCULO XX

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Na sua conferência inaugural no *Collège de France*, Roland Barthes usou a frase que consta do título deste ensaio e que nos parece, hoje em dia, bastante estranha e, à primeira vista até, difícil de entender. Pretendo mostrar que esta frase se associa a um *topos* filosófico, cujo surgimento está vinculado a uma recepção específica das ideias fundamentais do estruturalismo. A articulação do *topos* é binária, opondo antagonicamente duas instâncias, nomeadamente a de um sistema que detém um poder máximo e ubíquo, e a de um falar e agir que combate este mesmo sistema. Barthes concebe esta oposição como aporética e dilemática, e estabelece explicitamente uma analogia entre linguagem e política. O presente ensaio tem como objetivo esclarecer a configuração específica do dito *topos* em Barthes, limitando-se a indicar apenas tangencialmente a presença do mesmo *topos* em outros autores da filosofia do século XX.

Palavras-chave: Barthes – estruturalismo – pós-estruturalismo – linguagem – poder

In his inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France*, Roland Barthes used the phrase that appears in the title of this essay. Nowadays, this phrase sounds rather strange and, at first glance, difficult to understand. The aim of this essay is to show that this phrase is associated with a philosophical theme, whose emergence is linked to a specific reception of the fundamental ideas of structuralism. The articulation of this theme is binary, opposing two antagonistic instances: a system that has a maximum and ubiquitous power, and the individual speaking and acting that combats this system. Barthes sees this opposition as aporetic and dilemmatic, and explicitly draws an analogy between language and politics. This paper aims at clarifying the specific configuration of this theme in Barthes, mentioning only tangentially the presence of this theme in other authors of the twentieth-century philosophy.

Key-words: Barthes – structuralism – post-structuralism – language – power

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0. Introdução

Para além de ser um dos mais importantes teóricos da teoria da literatura, Roland Barthes merece, sem dúvida, um lugar entre os grandes filósofos franceses do século XX.

Nascido em 1915, Barthes faleceu no ano de 1980 em Paris, vítima de um acidente nos *Champs-Élysées*. Três anos antes da sua morte, Barthes deu a sua conferência inaugural no célebre *Collège de France*, como professor da cátedra de Semiologia literária. É nesta conferência, editada em 1978 sob o título *Leçon*,^[1] que Barthes usa a frase que consta do título desta comunicação: A língua é fascista. No breve texto que se segue, gostaria de dar uma visão geral do contexto em que se situa tal constatação que hoje nos parece tão estranha.

Como é que uma língua pode ser fascista? E quais são as teorias, as ideias, as doutrinas que poderão ter motivado esta constatação?

Veremos primeiro como o próprio Barthes especifica esta sua acusação; depois do veredicto: “Mas a língua não é nem reacionária nem progressista; ela é pura e simplesmente fascista;” segue-se, imediatamente, esta justificação: “porque o fascismo não consiste em impedir de dizer, mas em obrigar a dizer.” (Barthes 1997, 16).^[2] Penso que, com esta especificação, ainda não estamos mais esclarecidos. Como, por quê e em que medida a língua nos obriga a dizer?

Atentando no restante texto da lição inaugural, torna-se óbvio que a constatação se insere no contexto de uma corrente de pensamento que adquiriu grande impacto não só na linguística do século XX, mas também na filosofia e em outras ciências humanas. Refiro-me ao estruturalismo, cujo grande inspirador foi Saussure.

1. O *background* do estruturalismo

Não me posso deter aqui na apresentação dos fundamentos e da história de sucesso do estruturalismo. Quero apenas transmitir a ideia básica do seu começo. Segundo Saussure, qualquer que seja a suposta unidade linguística, seja o som, o afixo, a palavra, o sintagma, a frase, etc., esta unidade

1 Barthes, Roland (1978). *Leçon*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. Citei, neste ensaio, tanto o original como a tradução portuguesa: Barthes, Roland (1997). *Lição*. Trad. de Ana Mafalda Leite. Lisboa: Edições 70.

2 “Mais la langue (...) n'est ni réactionnaire, ni progressiste; elle est tout simplement: fasciste; car le fascisme, ce n'est pas d'empêcher de dire, c'est d'obliger à dire.” (Barthes 1978, p. 14).

apenas tem significância devido ao seu valor no nexos de todas as outras significâncias. Daí que a significância não derive da unidade enquanto instância material e positiva, mas antes e somente do *nexo das relações* que existem entre todas as unidades linguísticas e determinam os seus respectivos valores.^[3] Foi precisamente esta consideração do *valor* de cada unidade linguística que obrigou a criar uma nova terminologia que desse conta deste fenómeno. Em vez de som, sílaba, palavra, etc., passou então a falar-se de fonemas, morfemas, lexemas, etc. São, assim defendeu Saussure, os chamados princípios de diferença e de arbitrariedade que estão na base de um qualquer fenómeno de significância.^[4] O valor não é um fenómeno fixo e de antemão estabelecido, mas antes um fenómeno que se cria no e através do uso reiterado e coletivo das unidades linguísticas e através da maneira como são relacionadas entre si. Somente assim um sistema de valores se torna real e efetivo.

Desde os anos 20 até aos anos 70 do século XX, a linguística na Europa ocidental e oriental, e sobretudo na Alemanha, França e Rússia, era predominantemente estruturalista. Fonética, morfologia, lexicologia, sintaxe, semântica, e mais tarde também a teoria do texto, usaram o método estruturalista.

Mas o que é que isso tem a ver com a dita obrigação de dizer? São vários os pressupostos que devem ser tomados em conta se queremos responder a esta pergunta:

(i) O estruturalismo linguístico parte do princípio de que tudo o que pode ser dito só o pode ser nos moldes do respetivo sistema de valores em vigor, i.e. das *estruturas* que uma língua particular possui;

(ii) este sistema de valores vigora *sem que se tenha consciência disso*;

(iii) o pressuposto (ii) é determinante em dois sentidos:

(a) em primeiro lugar, por constituir o *ethos* iluminista do estruturalismo. Considerando que se está perante um vasto domínio de factos que, em larga medida, é desconhecido e aplicado, por assim dizer, cegamente, é óbvio que a descoberta científica das regras e estruturas que regulam a nossa fala e o nosso pensamento terá um valor inestimável.

3 Saussure, Ferdinand de (1999). *Curso de linguística geral*. Trad. José Victor Adragão. 8ª ed. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, pp. 190ss. e *passim* [título original *Cours de linguistique générale*, editado primeiramente, por Charles Bally e Albert Sechehaye, em 1916].

4 Cf. Saussure 1999, pp. 199, 202ss.

(b) Por outro lado, como todos os meios linguísticos que usamos e que podemos usar para descrever e desvelar as estruturas, se inserem, eles mesmos, no interior do sistema que se almeja descrever, surge aqui um *dilema*: como posso descobrir o funcionamento de um sistema se eu me encontro sempre dentro, e nunca fora, dele? Ou seja, não fará a análise científica das estruturas de uma língua parte do próprio sistema desta língua? E daí: será esta análise capaz de esclarecer o funcionamento deste sistema?

Ora bem, parece óbvio que estamos aqui perante um dilema. Em termos científicos, um dilema não tem apenas um lado negativo, antes pelo contrário, pode funcionar como um momento impulsionador para a investigação científica. A meu ver, é precisamente isso que aconteceu no desenvolvimento do pensamento estruturalista. O dilema impulsionou o surgimento – para usar um termo husserliano^[5] – de ‘atitudes teóricas’ muito diversas e, por vezes, até mesmo antagónicas. Distinguirei três atitudes teóricas diferentes que, a meu ver, marcaram uma parte considerável do debate científico e filosófico do século XX em torno das ideias e teorias estruturalistas, e cujos mais ilustres representantes provêm da tradição francófona.

Atitude teórica 1: É a atitude que pode ser identificada com o estruturalismo no sentido estrito. Aquele que suporta esta atitude acredita que *as estruturas são as entidades mais fundamentais* e que são, no fundo, os verdadeiros *factos*, e acredita também no grande valor científico da sua descoberta.

Atitude teórica 2: Esta atitude corresponde a um posicionamento que, em princípio, não põe em causa o valor dos conhecimentos alcançados pelo método estruturalista, pois fundamenta-se, ele próprio, nestes conhecimentos. Mas encara estes mesmos conhecimentos das ciências estruturalistas de uma maneira muito diferente da atitude teórica 1 por *abandonar* a atitude fundamentalmente afirmativa assumida pela atitude teórica 1. Tudo aquilo que para a atitude teórica 1 é uma mera facticidade, transforma-se para a atitude teórica 2 num *desafio*, para não dizer num *escândalo*. Perspetivar o ser humano como refém de um nexo de relações que domina e determina o seu agir, o seu pensar e a sua realidade social, cultural e política, acaba por transformar o ser humano numa marioneta que funciona à mercê de

5 Cf. Husserl, Edmund (2006). A Crise da Humanidade Europeia e a Filosofia. In E. Husserl: *Europa: Crise e Renovação*. Intr. e trad. Pedro M. S. Alves. Lisboa: Centro de Filosofia, pp. 119-152; [título original: *Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums und die Philosophie*, ed. primeiramente em 1936].

um sistema superior. Os adeptos da atitude teórica 2 procuram o lugar perdido da liberdade humana, o lugar onde o ser humano ainda seria capaz de se libertar das regras de ferro do sistema. Penso que a filosofia de Roland Barthes se enquadra nesta categoria da atitude teórica 2.^[6]

Atitude teórica 3: Penso, no entanto, que se deve dar conta da existência de uma terceira atitude teórica. Esta difere das primeiras duas por *rejeitar os pressupostos fundamentais do próprio estruturalismo* (o que não acontece com a segunda atitude teórica), procurando mostrar a insuficiência do pensamento estruturalista e dos seus princípios fundamentais. Filósofos que se inserem nesta categoria seriam por exemplo Paul Ricoeur, que alertou para a necessidade de superar o estruturalismo através da hermenêutica,^[7] ou Michel Foucault, cujas primeiras obras foram interpretadas, a meu ver com alguma razão, como estruturalistas,^[8] facto que levou o autor a protestar fervorosamente contra esta leitura.^[9]

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- 6 Que Barthes parte dos fundamentos do estruturalismo linguístico, não colocando a sua cientificidade em questão, torna-se evidente na sua obra Barthes, Roland (s.d.). *Elementos de Semiologia*. Trad. de Izidoro Blikstein. São Paulo: Editora Cultrix [título original: *Éléments de Sémiologie*, publicado primeiramente em 1964].
- 7 Cf., a respeito da crítica ricoeuriana ao estruturalismo, Rocha, Acílio da Silva Estanqueiro (1998). *Da função semiológica à semântica: Lévi-Strauss e Ricoeur*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Consultado em junho 25, 2015, em <http://hdl.handle.net/1822/9355>. São várias as obras em que Ricoeur frisa o assunto, menciono aqui apenas Ricoeur, Paul (1996). *Teoria da Interpretação*. Trad. Artur Morão. Lisboa: Edições 70 [título original: *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, publicado primeiramente em 1976].
- 8 Principalmente Foucault, Michel (2002a). *As Palavras e as Coisas: uma Arqueologia das Ciências Humanas*. Trad. António Ramos Rosa. Lisboa: Edições 70. [título original: *Les Mots et les Choses*, publicado primeiramente em 1966]. Foucault rejeita principalmente o estruturalismo na versão universalista de Lévi-Strauss e Lacan (se bem que ainda tece elogios ao estruturalismo de Lévi-Strauss em *As Palavras e as Coisas* (Foucault 2002a, pp. 412-416), alegando o caráter não universal, contingente e genealógico do seu pensar sobre ordens, estruturas e formas de *epistemes* e/ou discursos. Há que salientar, porém, que o estruturalismo se deixa facilmente combinar com a mudança contingente de estruturas / sistemas ao longo da história, pois é exatamente isso que o pai do estruturalismo, Saussure, defende. Cf., sobre este assunto, também Ruffing, Reiner (2010). *Michel Foucault*. 2ª ed., Paderborn: Fink, pp. 40-54.
- 9 Cf. Foucault, Michel (2002b). *Microfísica do poder*. Org. e trad. Roberto Machado. 17ª ed., Rio de Janeiro: Graal [coletânea de artigos de 1972-1976, traduzidos primeiro para o alemão sob o título *Mikrophysik der Macht: Über Strafrecht, Psychiatrie und Medizin*, em 1976], particularmente p. 5, onde Foucault diz: "Eu não vejo quem possa ser mais anti-estruturalista do que eu."

2. Como as estruturas embruxam o nosso pensamento

Mas voltemos à atitude teórica 2 e a Roland Barthes. Atentando no essencial da atitude teórica 2, devemos primeiro dar conta da conotação extremamente negativa, na teoria de Barthes, daquilo que é a estrutura ou o sistema. Dito de outra forma e usando um termo wittgensteiniano: como é que as estruturas da língua embruxam o nosso pensar e agir? A primeira resposta de Barthes move-se inteiramente dentro do horizonte do estruturalismo linguístico: *A língua embruxa o nosso pensamento por causa da sua estrutura gramatical*. Barthes menciona, no texto sob análise, i.e. na *Leçon*, explicitamente^[10] as formas pronominais e os géneros, que tal como outras formas gramaticais obrigariam o pensar a adequar toda a matéria do pensamento aos esquemas formais que a própria língua lhe fornece de antemão, como *non plus ultra* e *sine qua non* daquilo que pode ser pensado. Não admira, pois, que Barthes relacione os conceitos de sistema e/ou estrutura com o conceito de poder, ao *associar o impacto das estruturas linguísticas ao impacto de um poder sociopolítico*.^[11] Em 1977, portanto quase uma década após as revoltas estudantis dos anos 60 que começaram em Paris e que se alastraram para outros países, principalmente a Alemanha, Barthes associa o poder incorporado na linguagem ao poder tecnocrático das instâncias políticas da sociedade.^[12] Na lógica desta analogia entre linguagem e política, Barthes sustenta que a luta antagonica entre poder coletivo e contrapoder revolucionário também acontece na linguagem. E vai ainda mais longe, pois dá a entender que a verdadeira raiz do antagonismo político se encontra no seio da própria linguagem.

Este antagonismo afigura-se, no entanto, tanto na realidade sociopolítica como na linguagem, como luta entre dois poderes desiguais. Perante a supremacia esmagadora da instância do poder coletivo, o poder da resistência quase não tem hipóteses de sobreviver. Ora, se por um lado nos é fácil aplicar a lógica de uma tal controvérsia à realidade sociopolítica, já não o é no que diz respeito à linguagem. Será que a supremacia do poder do sistema da linguagem devém, pura e simplesmente, do poder das estruturas

10 Barthes 1978, pp. 12s.; Barthes 1997, pp. 14s.

11 “(...) a língua (...) pode (...) dar a entender, com uma ressonância por vezes terrível, outra coisa além do que [o sujeito através da sua mensagem] diz, sobre-imprimindo à voz consciente e racional do sujeito, a voz dominadora, teimosa, implacável da estrutura (...)” (Barthes 1997, 16; “(...) la langue (...) peut (...) faire entendre, dans une résonance souvent terrible, autre chose que ce qu’il dit, surimprimant à la voix consciente, raisonnable du sujet, la voix dominante, têtue, implacable de la structure (...)” (Barthes 1978, p. 14).

12 Barthes 1978, pp. 12s.; Barthes 1997, pp. 14s.

gramaticais? Embora haja autores que defendem uma tal posição,^[13] não é essa a posição de Barthes. Segundo este, há uma outra instância que colabora com o poder da *langue*. Esta outra instância é o *discurso*, sobretudo o discurso corrente e quotidiano em todas as suas formas.

3. O papel do discurso

A par das restrições estruturais impostas pela própria *langue*, haverá, segundo Barthes, outras restrições suplementares de cariz sobretudo semântico impostas pelo discurso. As duas restrições, cujo impacto se deixa entender como repressivo, colaboram, segundo Barthes, estreita e eficazmente.^[14] Uma vez congregadas no lado do poder sistémico, e como já não resta nada na instância da linguagem se a *langue* e a *parole* enquanto discurso se juntam, cria-se um sistema de supervisão superpoderoso que domina e vigia todos os atos de fala, i.e. toda a nossa prática quotidiana do falar. A tese sobre o poder repressivo do discurso remonta às primeiras obras de Barthes, sobretudo à obra *Mythologies*.^[15] Aí, Barthes dirigira a sua crítica às mais diversas formas de distorção do ideário coletivo, viabilizadas pelas restrições semânticas quase que inconscientemente adotadas pelos discursos públicos, seja na imprensa, seja na literatura, seja na vida académica ou no dia-a-dia.

Para elucidar esta tese de Barthes, indicarei três exemplos. O primeiro é do próprio Roland Barthes:

- (1) [E]stou na barbearia, dão-me um número de *Paris-Match*. Na capa, um jovem negro vestido com um uniforme francês faz a saudação militar, com os olhos erguidos, fixados certamente numa prega da bandeira tricolor. Esse é o *sentido* da imagem. Mas, quer eu seja ou não ingénuo, vejo bem o que ela me significa: que a França é um vasto Império, que todos os seus filhos, sem distinção de cor, servem fielmente sob a sua bandeira, e que não

13 Sobretudo na Linguística houve, a partir dos anos 20 do século XX e na esteira das primeiras receções eufóricas de Saussure, um vasta corrente teórica que defendeu o poder supremo do sistema da *langue*, sobretudo da língua materna. Cf. acerca deste fenómeno Sylla, Bernhard (2014), *Humboldt reloaded. Vier Paradigmen der meaning-zentrierten Sprachphilosophie*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, pp. 48-88.

14 "(...) a língua afluí ao discurso, o discurso reflui na língua, persistem um sob o outro como no 'jogo da sardinha'" (Barthes 1997, p. 30); "(...) la langue afflue dans le discours, le discours reflue dans la langue, ils persistent l'un sous l'autre, comme au jeu de la main chaude." (Barthes 1978, p. 31).

15 Barthes, Roland (1957). *Mythologies*. Paris: Éditions de Seuil [trad. portuguesa: Barthes, Roland (s.d.). *Mitologias*. Tradução e prefácio de José Augusto Seabra. Lisboa: Edições 70].

há melhor resposta aos detratores de um pretensão colonialismo do que o zelo deste negro em servir os seus pretensos opressores. Encontro-me pois, ainda aqui, perante um sistema semiológico privilegiado: há um significante, formado já, ele, de um sistema prévio (*um soldado negro faz a saudação militar francesa*); há um significado (que é aqui uma mistura intencional de francesismo e de militarismo); e há, enfim, uma *presença* do significado através do significante.^[16]

Temos aqui o caso simples de uma manipulação da opinião pública, ao criar, delimitar e restringir um determinado significado através de um suporte que combina imagem e palavra. O preenchimento restritivo do significado transmite a mensagem de que os oprimidos pelo poder colonial colaboram de livre vontade e entusiasticamente na defesa dos ideais e fins dos seus próprios opressores. Dito de forma simples, estamos perante uma distorção do significado de patriotismo.

(2) Críticas muito semelhantes encontram-se na obra de Derrida. Quando entrevistado sobre os ataques terroristas às Torres Gémeas em Nova Iorque,^[17] Derrida alertou para a bagagem ideológica de certos termos, entre eles o de tolerância.^[18] Este termo que costuma ter conotações positivas, como pertencendo ao leque das virtudes democráticas, é desconstruído por Derrida como termo que incarna uma relação de desigualdade, pois quem tolera o outro é sempre aquele que possui mais poder, que tem um estatuto legal superior, facto que o dispensa de refletir sobre a legalidade da sua suposta superioridade.

(3) A manipulação da opinião pública é um fenómeno corrente em todos os tempos. O que desafia a filosofia e o espírito crítico é, no entanto, o facto de restrições ou alienações do significado se inculcarem quase que inconscientemente no pensamento corrente. Um exemplo atual seria a transformação do significado de 'mercado'. Quando se fala de um mercado que não gosta de certas medidas políticas, que é sensível a certas decisões, é óbvio que se está perante uma hipóstase muito perigosa, que faz do mercado uma inteligência superior que deve ser reconhecida, respeitada e temida, podendo exigir de todos nós certos sacrifícios que contribuam, alegadamente, para o nosso bem-estar.

16 Barthes, Roland (s.d.). *Mitologias*, pp. 268-269.

17 Borradori, Giovanna (2004). *Filosofia em tempo de terror: diálogos com Jürgen Habermas e Jacques Derrida*. Trad. de Jorge Pinho. Porto: Campo das Letras.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 200-217.

4. O ato da resistência

Voltando a Barthes, coloca-se a questão se e como se pode fazer frente à manipulação ideológica que provém tanto da *langue* como da *parole* enquanto discurso e que, daí, pareça ser inevitável e, face à sua *ubiquidade*, até mesmo 'totalitária' e 'fascista'.

Analogamente à politização do poder da *langue* enquanto instância fascista, também o papel da sua contraparte é politizado. Segundo Barthes, cabe aos intelectuais e escritores desempenhar o papel de uma *resistência* efetiva, uma *agitação* e um *combate* ao poder. Por outro lado, parece que este combate *já está desde o início impossibilitado, uma vez que o poder ocupa e domina todos os lugares, todas as falas, i.e. todos os significados em uso.*

No texto de Barthes, este dilema surge com toda a nitidez: a resistência apenas seria possível *fora* do poder da linguagem, no seu além, *mas este além* que conferiria um espaço à liberdade, *não existe*, porque a linguagem é um lugar hermeticamente fechado, encerrado:

(...) a liberdade de que falamos não poderá existir senão no exterior da linguagem. Infelizmente a linguagem humana não possui um exterior: é um lugar hermético.

(Barthes 1997, pp. 17s.)

(...) il ne peut donc y avoir de liberté que hors du langage. Malheureusement, le langage humain est sans extérieur: c'est un huis clos.

(Barthes 1978, p. 15)

Todos os intelectuais que ambicionaram combater este poder, voltaram do combate vencidos e desiludidos, pois, ao fim e ao cabo, tiveram que se render ao poder:

(...) pode dizer-se que nenhum dos escritores que tenham travado um combate muito solitário contra o poder da língua pôde ou pode evitar ser por ele recuperado (...).

(Barthes 1997, p. 25)

On peut dire qu'aucun des écrivains qui sont partis d'un combat assez solitaire contre le pouvoir de la langue n'a pu ou ne peut éviter d'être récupéré par lui (...).

(Barthes 1978, p. 25)

Contudo, segundo o nosso autor, o intelectual deverá ser persistente na resistência, embora esta se pareça com uma espécie de missão impossível. Mesmo que pare, sobre todos os atos de resistência, a ameaça da assimilação pelo poder do sistema, o intelectual não se deve render.

Como é evidente, este voto a favor da persistência da resistência apenas faz sentido se surgir, no horizonte deste dilema, alguma razão para a esperança. E é exatamente isso que acontece na obra de Barthes. Não havendo um exterior à linguagem num espaço fora ou além da linguagem, *cria-se então este além no interior da própria linguagem*, precisamente pela estratégia da criação de não-lugares, *u-topoi*, i.e. lugares não ou dificilmente detectáveis. Mas o que é, mais concretamente, este não-lugar?

Penso que a descrição de duas estratégias, que estão no centro de interesse de Barthes e que, no fundo, são uma e a mesma estratégia, nos permitirá entender melhor a ideia do não-lugar. A primeira estratégia consiste no jogo ilimitado com o material da *langue*, um jogo sem regras que permite “fazer batota com a língua”, ou seja, usando as próprias palavras de Barthes, “uma trapaça salutar, uma esquivança, um logro magnífico” que, por sua vez, permite conhecer e entender a *langue* fora do poder.^[19]

Semelhante estratégia é o assim chamado *déplacement*,^[20] traduzido na edição portuguesa da *Leçon* por *deslocação*.^[21] Mantendo-se no âmbito da lógica metafórica, *déplacement* pode ser descrito como uma permanente mudança de lugar. Enquanto *permanecer no mesmo lugar* significa, usar e transmitir sempre o(s) mesmo(s) significado(s) estereotipado(s), a mudança de lugar evoca a noção de uma flexibilidade total. Esta pode ser subdividida em várias subcategorias:

(1) A deslocação pode significar que há um uso oscilante entre vários significados do mesmo *signifiant*,

(2) pode significar, num sentido muito ricoueriano, que o significado de uma palavra nunca se deixa determinar e esgotar definitivamente, que se mantém aberta a uma cadeia de novas interpretações e de novas dotações de sentido,

19 “Esta trapaça salutar, esta esquivança, este logro magnífico que permite conhecer a língua no exterior do poder, no esplendor de uma revolução permanente da linguagem, é aquilo a que eu chamo *literatura*.” (Barthes 1997, p. 18); “Cette tricherie salutaire, cette esquivance, ce leurre magnifique, qui permet d’entendre la langue hors-pouvoir, dans la splendeur d’une révolution permanente du langage, je l’appelle pour ma part: *littérature*.” (Barthes 1978, p. 16).

20 Barthes 1978, p. 17 e *passim*.

21 Barthes 1997, p. 19 e *passim*.

(3) pode significar que o autor de um texto verdadeiramente 'literário' deve procurar explorar a totalidade, em última análise infinita, da polissemia de uma determinada unidade linguística.

Esta estratégia, seja qual for a subcategoria, garante que o ato de conferir sentido a uma palavra, a uma frase, a um texto, não se deixa identificar inequivocamente, uma vez que o sentido / significado não tem um domicílio fixo, não ocupa nenhum lugar determinado, encontrando-se, muito antes, permanentemente em fuga. Daí que seja u-tópico, i.e. não está em lado nenhum. A aporia de que aquilo de que se fala é, por um lado, indetectável, ou seja, *insistant, irréparable, inconnu*,^[22] mas, por outro lado, também reconhecível (*reconnu*)^[23], não é nenhum defeito, mas antes precisamente aquela característica que o ato de resistência ao poder deve possuir. Pois a resistência deve ser, simultaneamente, visível e invisível. Habitando no interior do sistema e usando os meios da própria *langue* para resistir ao seu poder, a resistência é um poder *subversivo* que se esconde no interior da entidade que combate.

Embora exista obviamente uma analogia entre a resistência como fenómeno político e a resistência linguístico-literária, esta analogia não é total, uma vez que, a nível linguístico, o próprio poder foge de si mesmo, ou seja, a *langue* ela mesma foge ao seu próprio poder, porque é ela o guardião do potencial infinito de significações. Entregar-se a esta infinidade, saber jogar com o tesouro precioso da *langue*, desrespeitando todas as hierarquias e todas as *arquai*, ser "an-archiste",^[24] como o próprio Barthes diz, é um dom que apenas os verdadeiros autores possuem.

Em outras obras tardias, Barthes realça muito mais o aspeto hedonista do anarquismo. Libertar-se do poder repressivo, torna-se, no último Barthes, num assunto ligado não só ao prazer do texto, da leitura, da literatura, mas também e sobretudo ao prazer corporal. Redescobrir o potencial ilimitado dos sentidos linguísticos e dos sentidos corporais, para celebrar o seu festejo total, é o desejo íntimo de Barthes ao qual se entregou, de corpo e alma, no decurso final da sua vida.

5. Conclusão

Em jeito de conclusão, gostaria de salientar o seguinte:

22 Barthes 1978, p. 20.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

(1) O tópic do combate entre sistema e poder revolucionário antagónico parece-me um motivo forte na filosofia do século XX, sobretudo na tradição estruturalista e no espaço francófono.

(2) Penso que a versão barthesiana deste combate, que aponta para uma certa ‘hedonização’ da problemática política, seja significativa para as tendências gerais dos anos 70 e 80, em que os movimentos políticos de revolta dos anos 60 se transformaram paulatinamente em tendências e hábitos meramente culturais.

3) Julgo, no entanto, que a raiz deste tópico, tão diversamente trabalhada por autores como Derrida, Deleuze, Adorno, Rorty, Lyotard, não se perdeu por completo, como demonstram, a título de exemplo, os mais recentes e acima já mencionados comentários derridianos aos ataques terroristas do *11 de setembro*,^[25] que trazem novamente à tona a questão da aporeticidade que inere à preservação do ‘sistema.’ Um sistema que procura à força garantir a sua longevidade e imunidade, acabará, inevitavelmente, por implodir e cavar a sua própria sepultura. Qual o papel do discurso subversivo, poético, anarquista, revolucionário, eis no entanto uma questão que permite e permita respostas diversas. A de Roland Barthes merece certamente não cair em esquecimento.

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VIOLÊNCIA, ÉTICA E RELIGIÃO

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A violência, sobretudo numa leitura literária, é um conceito difícil de definir por si-mesmo. A noção declina-se em campos empíricos extremamente diversos. A violência pode qualificar uma multidão de objetos, desde as tempestades até à paixão amorosa. Mas talvez o mais significativo seja que ao falar de violência, todos nós sabemos já do que se trata.

A violência, na perspetiva ricoeuriana, habita a interseção entre a ética e a moral, pois é nela que emerge a necessidade da aspiração a uma *vida realizada* passar pelo reino da norma, sob a égide da obrigação. E daqui se estende a todos os níveis da *praxis*, sobretudo o político até tocar o profundo da convicção humana no religioso. Mas, e se esta violência, mais que um instinto ou uma pulsão agressiva não fosse a manifestação, como Girard entende, da rivalidade entre humanos, por causa de um desejo mimético. Talvez os mitos religiosos e os rituais sacrificiais não sejam mais que expiações coletivas, que através da eleição de um bode expiatório, exorcizam esta rivalidade destruturante e apaziguam momentaneamente a comunidade.

Palavras-chave: Violência, religião, ética, Ricoeur, Girard /

Violence, especially in a literary reading, is a difficult concept to define for itself. The notion may also be decline in extremely diverse empirical fields. Violence can qualify a multitude of objects, from storms to amorous passion. But the most significant is when we talk about violence, we already know what it is.

Ricoeur's perspective of violence inhabits the intersection between ethics and morality; because it is here that emerges the need of accomplishing life go through the empire of norm, under the aegis of the obligation. Violence also extends to all praxis levels, especially the political, and the human belief in religion.

But if this violence, more than an instinct or an aggressive impulse, was not the manifestation, as René Girard believes, of antagonism between humans, because of a mimetic desire. Perhaps the religious myths and sacrificial rituals are nothing more than collective propitiation that through the election of a scapegoat, exorcise this deconstructive rivalry and briefly appease the community.

Keywords: Violence, ethics, religion, Ricoeur, Girard

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Uma escolha...

O nosso propósito não é de tentar compreender o fenómeno da violência, nem as suas manifestações, mas, tão-somente, interrogar dois grandes pensadores, que se questionaram acerca desta realidade e tentaram, cada um à sua maneira, desvendar os seus mecanismos e os meandros pelos quais se torna manifesta.

Não deixa de ser curioso que René Girard e Paul Ricoeur se encontraram historicamente em 1999, nos Encontros Internacionais de Genebra, subordinados nesse ano ao tema “Violences d’aujourd’hui, violence de toujours”, para falar precisamente acerca desta questão. Girard intitulou a sua conferência: “Violence et religion”. Já Paul Ricoeur fez uma longa dissertação sobre a Shoah, a que o mesmo deu o título de “Le mal que l’homme fait à l’homme: donner la mort”, acentuando a sua dimensão penal, histórica e literária.

Nesta apresentação, pareceu-nos de melhor grado apresentar o pensamento de cada autor de forma separada. Não queremos fazer qualquer disjunção ou justapor simplesmente ideias e conceitos. O propósito é tão-somente expor de forma clara e resumida o gesto de cada um, que, pelo menos, tem algo em comum: o fascínio pelo mundo do texto, a sua hermenêutica e aquilo que nos pode ensinar.

Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur é um dos grandes filósofos do século XX, desaparecido há precisamente 10 anos, mas cuja obra continua a ressoar no campo geral das ciências humanas. Humanista, filósofo e crente, desde sempre se interessou pela problemática do mal, do sofrimento e da violência. Neste seu gesto são particularmente importantes as suas obras *A Simbólica do mal* (1961), *O Justo I* (1995) e *II* (2001), bem como um conjunto de artigos publicados na revista *Esprit*, posteriormente republicados na coletânea *Lectures I: Autour du politique* (1991).

No quadro de uma identidade narrativa, onde a pessoa é marcada por uma temporalidade constitutiva e uma história concreta, o “si-mesmo” é definido por um conjunto de capacidades: dizer, agir, recontar, a que se acrescentam a imputabilidade e a promessa. Uma dessas capacidades é o “poder de agir”, entendido como o poder de introduzir acontecimentos novos na natureza e na sociedade, introduz também a contingência, a incerteza e a imprevisibilidade no curso das coisas (Ricoeur, 2005: 126).

A tese que o autor defende é que estas capacidades implicam um face-a-face, uma relação de reciprocidade entendida no sentido forte do termo. Vejamos: o discurso dirige-se a alguém; a ação faz-se com outros agentes; a narração encerra um conjunto de protagonistas; a imputabilidade é a responsabilidade diante de um outro; a promessa exige uma testemunha. A presença do outro, desde sempre operante na constituição dialógico de “si próprio”, torna possível o aparecimento da violência, sintoma visível da manifestação do mal.

A ação implica a capacidade de fazer e exerce-se sobre a forma de *poder*. Esse *poder* pode ser exercido da parte de um agente sobre o outro. Esta ação pode tornar-se a qualquer momento um exercício da arbitrariedade e da violência nas suas mais diversas formas, desde a mentira, passando pela imposição de sofrimentos e pela morte, até à vontade gratuita de humilhar o outro.

1. A violência no campo ético-moral

A violência é a realidade maior que conduz o autor a seguir um percurso triádico desde a ética à sabedoria prática, passando pela moral. “A existência da violência constitui a *circunstância* maior da transição da perspectiva teleológica para o ponto de vista deontológico” (Idem, 1995: 19). O meio através do qual esta passagem se opera é o exercício da *violência*.

Se no campo ético a relação ao outro é marcada pela solicitude e assume a forma da amizade, a passagem à moral é marcada pela obrigação e o respeito que é devido ao outro, não na figura do próximo, mas do cada um. Ao considerar como absolutamente necessário tratar o outro como fim e não como meio, atestamos que a relação do homem ao homem não é marcada, inicialmente, pela interação ou pela cooperação entre agentes de força igual, mas pelo exercício de poder de uma vontade sobre a outra. “A ocasião da violência, para não dizer a passagem à violência, reside no *poder* exercido de uma vontade sobre outra vontade” (Idem, 1990a: 256) e “a moral [...] é a figura que reveste a solicitude face à violência e à ameaça de violência” (Idem, 1990: 11). Esta *vontade de poder* pode passar pela simples dominação ou exploração, percorrer a estrada da violência física ou psicológica e chegar a pontos sem retorno como a agressão bárbara e a própria morte.

O trágico da ação emerge também através das decisões difíceis que é necessário empreender no seio de situações de incerteza, conflito e violência. O respeito pela norma e a solicitude pelas pessoas entram em conflito

face à necessidade de escolher entre normas de igual peso num clima de incerteza e de grave conflitualidade (Idem, 1995: 24). A escolha não se faz entre cores opostas, como branco e preto, mas entre tons de cinzento. O que está em causa já não é o bem ou o mal, mas a escolha entre o mal menor e o pior.

2. O justo e o político

A sociedade procura criar os seus mecanismos para parar ou, pelo menos, controlar os efeitos devastadores da violência, sobretudo quando esta entra no círculo vicioso que se pode tornar infernal da *punição-vingança*. A filosofia do direito e a filosofia política representam as justas aspirações de um povo na luta contra a violência. E, enquanto a guerra é o tema lancinante de toda a filosofia política, a violência desempenha a mesma função em relação a qualquer filosofia do direito.

A violência projeta-nos no justo e no sentido da justiça. Aliás, Ricoeur nomeia o injusto antes do justo, pois, evocando as recordações de infância, o nosso primeiro contacto com a região do direito foi marcada pelo grito : “É injusto!” (*Ibidem*, 11). Este grito inflamou a nossa *indignação* diante de várias situações típicas de injustiça que o autor sintetiza em três: as divisões desiguais, as promessas não cumpridas e as retribuições ou punições desproporcionadas (Idem, 1991: 177-179). A intenção moral da nossa indignação assume a expectativa precisa de uma palavra que instaure uma *justa distância* entre os antagonistas (Idem, 1995: 12). Assim se compreende que a justiça se entenda inicialmente como a procura de uma “justa distância, meio-termo entre a falta de distância característica de muitos sonhos de fusão emocional e o excesso de distância próprios da arrogância, do desprezo e do ódio do estrangeiro” (*Ibidem*, 72).

Ora, o obstáculo maior a ser vencido, para que esta *justa distância* possa ser instaurada é o desejo de vingança, ou seja, “a pretensão de fazer justiça pelas próprias mãos visa acrescentar violência à violência, sofrimento ao sofrimento” (*Ibidem*, 12). E, no fundo, a invasão do espaço legítimo do outro e as formas de retribuição injusta, objeto inicial da nossa indignação, não são mais que formas de *violência* infligidas pelos humanos uns aos outros. A separação entre os antagonistas só pode ser concretizada pela introdução de um *terceiro* que não seja nenhum dos protagonistas e represente também o sentido da *imparcialidade* para que o justo comece a distinguir-se do injusto. “Justa distância, mediação de um terceiro e imparcialidade

enunciam-se como os grandes sinónimos do sentido de justiça, caminho ao qual a indignação nos conduziu” (*Ibidem*, 13). Esta é, por exemplo, a função do *judiciário*, onde o juiz, enquanto terceiro instruído, separa as partes em conflito e pronuncia uma palavra de justiça, que embora finita e revisível, possa instaurar a paz social.

Da justiça e do direito passamos necessariamente ao campo político. O político é caracterizado desde logo por uma racionalidade específica à qual adere um mal específico. Este é um dos campos privilegiados da ação, onde a violência está presente e toca a esfera do estado de direito.

Todo o Estado nasce da violência e transporta com ele as suas cicatrizes. Mesmo assim não é o facto desta violência fundadora que define a sua finalidade. O que marca a função do Estado, em primeiro lugar, é a *forma* e não a *força*. “A formação dos laços políticos, que nos constituem, enquanto cidadãos de uma comunidade histórica, não procede unicamente da necessidade de segurança e da defesa dos interesses articulares desta comunidade, mas de outra coisa como a ‘amizade política’ essencialmente pacífica” (Idem, 2005: 129).

O Estado enraíza-se na natureza história e social da humanidade cuja finalidade específica é a de ajudar uma comunidade a fazer a sua história. Neste campo, a racionalidade do estado acentua o aspeto constitucional, a igualdade de todos perante a lei, a independência do poder judicial, o controlo parlamentar e a educação de todos na liberdade de discussão.

Porém, o Estado detém também o monopólio da violência legítima. Mesmo assim, conceder a um Estado o privilégio da violência *legítima*, não é defini-lo pela violência, mas pelo *poder* (Idem, 1985: 7). O paradoxo do Estado de direito e da sua fundamentação política está na confrontação e conjugação no seu seio da *forma* e da *força*. Se o estado é Vontade, como corpo político ele caminha na história, não apenas como intenção razoável, mas como tomada de decisões. Apesar disso, ele não deixa de transportar a cicatriz original da violência que o constituiu na sua formação. René Girard vê mesmo a construção do estado como um avatar para controlar todas as violências intestinas (Fournier, 2013: 46).

O paradoxo do poder está no facto de ser ao mesmo tempo um instrumento legítimo do Estado, mas também uma grandeza usada pelo homem, sujeita ao mal. O *estado*, o *cidadão* e a vida política estarão sempre marcados pela conquista, reconquista e manutenção do poder. No entanto, a sabedoria prática deve intervir numa democracia, promovendo a participação dos cidadãos, o caminho da discussão livre e a formação de uma opinião pública. Internamente ao Estado, ela é a arte de concii-

liar a racionalidade técnico-económica e a razoabilidade acumulada pela história dos costumes; externamente, a sua função é a passagem à não-violência generalizada e à paz civil (Ricoeur, 1985: 8). Já Girard mantém que o estado é um avatar do sacrifício que nasceu para controlar a violência que nasce, como já veremos, do desejo mimético que pode contagiar toda a ordem social.

3. O religioso

No diálogo entre Paul Ricoeur e Hans Küng no canal *Arte*, a 5 de abril de 1996, tendo por base a publicação por este último do *Manifesto para uma ética planetária*, um dos aspetos que emerge é a violência no campo religioso. Neste diálogo, parte-se do facto sólido de as religiões continuarem a inspirar guerras e de no planeta se continuar ainda a matar em nome de Deus. Como poderá esse obstáculo ser transposto, ao mesmo tempo, por cristãos, mas igualmente por outras religiões?

Ricoeur começava por reconhecer a tendência sempre atual para a violência no interior de uma convicção religiosa. E, neste sentido, o preço a pagar é, por isso, muito elevado para cada confissão religiosa. É preciso antes de mais conhecer as razões desta tendência para a violência existente na religião e como podemos purgá-la do seu interior. Não se pode estigmatizar um credo religioso, como alguns o fazem atualmente em relação ao Islão, dado que mesmo os cristãos que são fundamentalistas gostariam também eles de lançar uma guerra contra aqueles que não acreditam, contra os agnósticos, contra os ateus, e esta guerra chegaria certamente a atos de violência.

Os dois autores reconhecem que esta tendência emana do dogmatismo que está presente em todas as religiões. Porém, Ricoeur afasta-se da tese central de Küng que visa o estabelecimento de uma ética planetária como fundo para o qual contribuiriam também todas as religiões. Além de duvidar da sua eficácia, o autor mostra bem que a convicção está muito para além de um exercício simplesmente ético.

Neste sentido, Paul Ricoeur mostra a necessidade de uma autocrítica que deve partir do próprio fundo de uma convicção forte. O perigo da violência não está somente em instrumentalizar a religião, mas no apego das religiões à sua missão profunda de dizer uma Palavra que as ultrapassa, onde pode haver uma pretensão em dominar os outros, a impor a sua força. Como purificar então essa convicção da força de uma Palavra que nos pre-

cede e da tendência a impô-la pela violência? Eis a questão fundamental que o autor coloca (Ricoeur & Küng, 1996: 2).

A resposta a estão pergunta fundamental está no fundo da própria convicção religiosa e passa pelo reconhecimento de que existe qualquer coisa que não é dito numa dada religião e que talvez é dito numa outra. O autor compara a herança religiosa a uma língua na qual crescemos, e esta língua, certamente, praticamo-la com conhecimento de outras línguas. Como receber então, como num exercício de tradução, numa espécie de hospitalidade linguística, esta verdade dos outros que talvez não seja dita na minha língua?

Citando Karl Jaspers, o autor assume a dificuldade da tarefa, pois a mesma afigura-se como um “combate amoroso” [lieberder Kampf] e não como uma espécie de convivência fácil (*Ibidem*, 7). A única forma de vencer a tendência para a violência de uma confissão religiosa está em esta procurar na sua tradição específica o fundo que ela própria não domina, que ela não pode expor como fórmula dogmática e que, por assim dizer, a dirige de longe, a partir de um ponto obscuro e da sua luminosidade. É necessário reconhecer que esse ponto de luminosidade obscura está presente noutro lado, não sabendo o crente de que forma. “Para reencontrar, por assim dizer, a motivação da não-violência da minha própria convicção, é preciso que eu encontre no próprio fundo da minha convicção o motivo para condenar e quebrar o momento de violência da convicção, para reencontrar no fundo da convicção o que não posso dominar. Dito de outra forma, não sou o mestre do sentido” (*Ibidem*, 9-10).

Ricoeur vê o crente como o depositário de uma mensagem. Mas esta mensagem não somente o ultrapassa, como também o desarma. E é na medida em que ela o desarma, que este se pode dirigir ao outro e esperar que ele faça o mesmo caminho. Ricoeur pensa em particular no caso do Islão. “Estou convencido, é a minha grande convicção, que o Islão fará à sua maneira um caminho semelhante ao nosso. O Islão foi vítima de tanta violência que foi igualmente impedido de fazer esse caminho. Está verdadeiramente aí a minha convicção religiosa profunda de que todas as religiões são capazes de fazer esse caminho contra elas mesmas e contra o seu próprio fundamentalismo. Tenho grande confiança no Islão que hoje condena as violências ditas em nome do Islão” (*Ibidem*, 10). E Ricoeur termina dizendo que “deve existir aí, nos recursos de cada religião, qualquer coisa de semelhante ao que nós chamamos conversão, que é um movimento de retorno contra a componente de violência de uma convicção” (*Ibidem*).

4. Luta pelo Reconhecimento

“A ideia de luta pelo reconhecimento está no coração das relações sociais modernas” (Ricoeur, 2005: 127). A falta de consideração, a humilhação, o desprezo e a violência têm um papel decisivo na motivação destas lutas que atingem o nível afetivo, jurídico e social, que ultrapassam em muito o direito natural e fixam-se sobretudo no papel central que tem a luta na conquista da igualdade e da justiça.

O problema é que esta relação ao outro não é um facto espontâneo, mas uma procura que não se efetiva, pelo menos, dizemos nós, grande parte das vezes, sem conflito e sem luta. Esta luta que constitui sempre uma violência, uma força potencialmente descontrolada, não termina ao nível dos direitos mas atinge o humano no seu ponto mais fulcral, ou seja, no seu valor pessoal e na sua capacidade de alcançar a felicidade segundo o ideal próprio a cada um do que é para si uma vida realizada. Esta luta pela estima está presente nos mais diversos lugares de vida: nas relações laborais, nas relações de proximidade, nos múltiplos encontros que tecem o quotidiano da pessoa humana.

O autor coloca a questão se não podemos fazer esta experiência do reconhecimento de uma forma pacífica, que não passe pela luta, que gera entre outras formas a violência, mas através de uma espécie de boa vontade originária. O argumento utilizado é o cansaço que esta luta pelo reconhecimento nos provoca, numa espécie de círculo vicioso insaciável, onde nunca estamos satisfeitos, caindo numa espécie de infinito mau.

Ricoeur procura apontar um caminho possível que quebre este círculo infernal. Socorrendo-se dos dados da sociologia, aponta um percurso pacificado sobre o bem conhecido modelo do dom cerimonial. A lógica da troca de dons, neste ritual cerimonial, não obedece às leis do mercado, mas a uma reciprocidade que consiste não numa obrigação, mas num “apelo” a dar novamente. A troca de dons é o reconhecimento de um pelo outro, uma contrapartida pacífica da luta pelo reconhecimento. “Esta cadeia de generosidade é o modelo de uma experiência efetiva de reconhecimento sem luta que encontra a sua expressão em todas as trevas das nossas lutas” (*Ibidem*, 128).

E as nossas sociedades extremamente pautadas pelas trocas comerciais? Aí podemos encontrar traços dos antigos dons cerimoniais das sociedades arcaicas na generosidade e na partilha de bens. Este desinteresse encontra-se em geral a sua expressão pública nas festas familiares ou amicais. “O festivo em geral é o herdeiro da cerimónia do dom nas sociedades mercantis”

(*Ibidem*, 129). Estes momentos são o armistício da paz, pois interrompem as lutas, a lógica cruel do mercado e os seus mecanismos insensíveis. Talvez esta experiência nos mostre que luta e festa estão entrelaçados num laço primitivo, onde do desafio da guerra passamos ao cuidado que suscita o encontro do outro, sobretudo aquele que nos é diferente.

René Girard

René Girard, arquivista-paleógrafo de formação, é antropólogo e membro da Academia Francesa desde 2005. O seu pensamento decifra o mecanismo fundador e mimético da violência, raiz de toda a ordem simbólica. Professor emérito de literatura comparada na universidade de Stanford, nos Estados Unidos, onde habita, é autor de uma trintena de obras, das quais se destacam *Mentira romântica e verdade romanesca* (1961), *A violência e o sagrado* (1972), *O Bode Expiatório* (1982).

René Girard pretende situar-se fora da esfera de todo o humanismo e de toda a filosofia da consciência, mesmo disfarçada de psicanálise existencial. Girard faz do homem um desejo e do desejo um mimetismo. Fala-nos da violência e do homem, de uma violência que é o homem, na sua relação recíproca ao outro. No seu livro, *A violência e o Sagrado* recusa o ponto de vista da psicanálise de tipo freudiano, assim como a visão estruturalista de Lévi-Strauss. Mesmo em relação à etnologia, que lhe fornece o seu *instrumentum laboris*, toma as devidas distâncias.

O seu gesto remonta às origens de todo o edifício cultural e social. Aí, Girard encontra a violência, não como um caso limite ou então um conceito regulador, mas como evidência cega e realidade eficaz. Uma das dificuldades está no facto de a sua teoria se basear em acontecimentos que não podem, nem são verificáveis empiricamente. Tal corresponde à própria natureza da violência, pois o seu desconhecimento aparece como uma impotência, que corresponde ao próprio facto do seu aparecimento (Girard, 1972: 438). Por outro lado, a tese da violência como facto primordial é a única que torna compreensível realidades culturais tão complexas, quanto opacas, como o canibalismo, o incesto sagrado ou os sacrifícios humanos, exemplos privilegiados dados pelo autor.

E se a violência estivesse na origem das sociedades. E se esta antes de ser um mal-entendido, um constrangimento, fosse o elemento indispensável à formação e à continuidade de todas as sociedades. Como um incêndio, uma tempestade, um maremoto, a violência propaga-se através dela

mesma, foge do controlo de tudo o que está à sua volta. Controlar esta violência, desviá-la, dominá-la, é o papel do sacrifício em todas as suas formas.

1. Desejo mimético

Girard começou por interessar-se pelo fenómeno da violência mimética, estruturante em todas as sociedades. No seu ensaio *Mentira romântica e verdade romanesca*, o autor, analisando a tragédia, homólogo arcaico no domínio da literatura do romance moderno, confronta esta com os dados mais recentes da etnologia.

O autor defende a famosa tese do desejo triangular, isto é, entre o sujeito que deseja e o objeto desejado existe um mediador que o sujeito procura imitar. “O verdadeiro modelo do desejo não é uma linha reta entre o sujeito e o objeto, pois não é o sujeito que é decisivo como no romantismo, como também o não é o objeto como no realismo, mas sim a relação ao modelo” (Idem, 2013: 45). O decisivo é a relação ao modelo que nós admiramos. Assim, o que nós desejamos é o que o modelo que nós admiramos deseja e, por conseguinte, concorreremos com ele até ao combate para obter o objeto do nosso desejo. Nesta rivalidade, o objeto perde o seu valor inicial e opera-se a passagem do “desejo triangular” ao “desejo mimético”.

No seu primeiro grande ensaio, *Mentira romântica e verdade romanesca*, já atrás referido, o autor elucida o princípio do objeto do desejo, designado como o terceiro e provocador e origem de uma escalada de violência. Assim, os heróis de Stendhal, de Proust ou Dostoïevski, tanto tecem entre si relações de admiração, como, rapidamente, estas se transformam em inveja e ciúme (Idem, 1972: 341). Girard dá o exemplo de todas as primeiras peças de Shakespeare onde existem sempre dois amigos que tudo partilham até se apaixonarem pela mesma mulher. Aí é a catástrofe (*Ibidem*, 78).

Através da teoria mimética, René Girard lança as bases de uma nova antropologia da violência. O que caracteriza a nossa moderna civilização é o facto que ela nega, de uma certa forma, a violência. Portanto, quer o pensamento mítico (a tragédia grega), quer as sociedades arcaicas, estão cheias desta violência.

Pensamos que somos livres, mas esta é uma “ilusão romântica”. Somos constantemente manipulados por fenómenos, como a moda, o marketing, a publicidade, etc. Hoje, o princípio da publicidade não está em dizermos que um produto é melhor que o outro, mas em mostrar-nos modelos de pessoas, que nós queremos ser, consumindo os produtos publicitados. Se

consumirdes esse produto, tornar-vos-eis como as pessoas que vós admirais (Fournier, 2013: 46).

Aprendemos na escola que os veados lutam pelas mesmas fêmeas, mas, geralmente, o macho dominado acaba por se afastar. Ora, os homens são capazes de inventar algo extraordinário que não é nem da ordem do instinto, nem da instituição, e que se chama vingança. Este mecanismo não tem limites, nem no espaço, nem no tempo, pois é religioso, ou seja, é sagrado. A vingança é aquilo que não podemos aceitar, pois se a aceitarmos, todos os cidadãos correm risco de vida. Ao mesmo tempo, caímos no seu círculo vicioso, pois sancionando-a estamos já a entrar no seu círculo de morte. Quando dois indivíduos desejam um objeto, o peso mimético tende a aumentar e a estender-se a um terceiro e assim por diante, criando o efeito bola de neve.

Como a violência mimética é contagiosa, corre-se o risco desta contagiar todo o grupo, por isso, as sociedades e todas as ordens sociais instauraram paulatinamente o sacrifício para dirimir este perigo e assim instaurar a paz social (Idem, 1972: 51). É neste sentido que o Estado, construído para dominar as violências intestinas, é uma metamorfose do sacrifício (Fournier, 2013: 46).

2. A violência

A violência que vivemos hoje é um princípio fundador do homem. O homem é mais violento que os animais porque também é mais imitador que estes (*Ibidem*, 48). O autor recorda o pensamento de Aristóteles para quem o homem é o mais imitador de todos os animais, porque o mais dotado para a aprendizagem (*Ibidem*, 45). Pode aprender qualquer coisa, por isso é o mais inteligente. Mas, o que os homens imitam são os desejos uns dos outros.

Girard evoca no seu pensamento a ontologia trágica dos pré-socráticos. O cosmos, a civilização, a consciência e o homem são um equilíbrio frágil, constantemente ameaçado por forças antagónicas. “A violência é pai e rei de tudo” (Girard, 1972: 203) e o homem é violência. No âmago da tragédia, o autor descobre o rito e, no centro deste, a violência. No seguimento desta constatação, enuncia a tese que a tragédia e a etnologia têm o mesmo discurso, ou seja, a constatação que o religioso está na origem das sociedades, dado que na origem do religioso está o sacrifício, facto primordial e ponto culminante de todos os rituais (*Ibidem*).

A função primordial do sacrifício em todas as suas formas está no facto não de expiar uma falta, mas em transferir a violência e a possível vingança dos seres que procuramos proteger, ou seja, a comunidade, para outros seres, as vítimas, cuja morte tem menos valor. “Instintivamente, procuramos um remédio imediato e violento para a violência insuportável. Os homens querem convencer-se que os seus males relevam de um único responsável do qual é fácil libertar-se” (*Ibidem*, 118). Daí que o sacrifício é uma forma de enganar a violência através da violência (*Ibidem*, 18).

Girard não procura defender a violência, muito menos propor que a *Polis* está fundada sobre a mesma. O que funda a *cidade* são os interditos. Todas as sociedades procuram criar uma zona de não-violência significada pelo interdito como espaço indispensável ao desenvolvimento de tudo o que faz o humano e a sua humanidade. O sacrifício não deixa de ser uma transgressão ritual do interdito. Porém, não podemos enganar a violência a não ser que lhe criemos um propiciatório (*Ibidem*, 17). Esse papel é desempenhado pelo sacrifício que guardando sempre qualquer coisa de criminal e destruidor, não deixa de ser benéfico pela sua função ritual, ou seja, parar a violência (*Ibidem*, 203).

O homem não é naturalmente amigo do homem. E, o encontro do homem com o outro homem acaba por provocar uma violência recíproca que, se não for parada, conduz inevitavelmente à destruição total. Desde o início a violência revela-se pronta a ser substituída por um objeto de troca que cumpre uma dupla função: uma única vítima une e substitui todos os membros da comunidade; essa vítima sacrificial é substituída pela vítima emissária no sacrifício ritual. A violência de todos contra um tem uma função fundadora. Ela liberta a comunidade da sua culpabilidade.

3. O sagrado e o sacrifício

O sagrado não é mais que o absoluto da violência. O sacrifício arranca a violência ao homem, torna-a uma entidade separada e coloca-a à distância. Cria-se um processo de dessacralização que conduz às instituições políticas e sociais e à ordem cultural no seu conjunto. O homem cai numa teia delicada, um autêntico dilema existencial. Se, por um lado, não pode viver no sagrado, com a sua própria violência, correndo o risco de cair no fascínio da autodestruição, por outro, também não pode habitar o esquecimento desta violência fundadora sempre capaz de regressar. O rito desempenha, então, essa dupla função de manter a violência a uma justa distância, pois

recolhe os seus efeitos benéficos, preservando, ao mesmo tempo, o homem dos seus malefícios.

O sacrifício desempenha tanto o papel de manifestar, como o de aplacar a violência. O grupo reúne-se em torno de uma vítima emissária, simbolizada numa vítima ritual que é imolada depois de ser devidamente selecionada. Esta catarse menor deriva de uma outra maior, ou seja, o sacrifício assume o papel preventivo, pacificador e unificador, que afasta o espírito de vingança e conduz a sociedade à vivência de um tempo de paz. “A sociedade procura desviar para uma vítima relativamente indiferente, uma vítima ‘sacrificável’, uma violência que pode atingir os seus próprios membros, precisamente aqueles que ela quer a todo o custo proteger” (*Ibidem*, 17).

A ligação entre a religião e a violência é mais evidente nas religiões arcaicas onde o sacrifício está no coração da organização social e o mito é uma das formas das sociedades falarem das suas origens violentas. A violência ritual tem a particularidade de ser dirigida a vítimas, significantes ou não, que a sociedade aceita de destruir: animais ou homens, prisioneiros de guerra ou vizinhos que se tornam *bodes expiatórios*.

As sociedades primitivas instauraram progressivamente o sacrifício para exorcizar esta violência. Não podemos dizer que tal mecanismo foi instaurado voluntariamente, pois a mimese, ou seja, a imitação conflituosa, sendo da ordem do voluntário, torna-se de tal forma forte que os objetos desaparecem, permanecendo somente os adversários. Porém, haverá um momento onde a mimese se concentra num único indivíduo. Todos vão adotar o mesmo adversário, isto é, de repente e sem sabermos porquê, tudo e todos estão de acordo contra a mesma vítima.

René Girard revisita também o pensamento bíblico, pois quer o judaísmo, quer o cristianismo relevam do mecanismo do bode expiatório. Quer numa religião, quer noutra, a crise sacrificial (estado de violência contagiosa e indiferenciada que precede a definição de uma vítima emissária) está presente, como nos cultos arcaicos. Mas, contrariamente a estes, o aspeto relevante sublinhado é a inocência da vítima emissária. Podemos citar os exemplos bíblicos de José, objeto da inveja e ciúme de todos os irmãos, de Job que clama a sua inocência diante dos seus amigos, mesmo o mito adâmico das origens e o crime fratricida de Caim em relação a Abel (*Ibidem*, 17-18).

No texto evangélico, contrariamente ao mito, estamos claramente numa situação de questionamento. Cristo nos Evangelhos revela ao mundo o mal que o consome e é eleito como o bode expiatório das elites judaicas.

Os relatos evangélicos da paixão utilizam o termo profético de “Cordeiro de Deus”, inocente, levado para o matadouro sem abrir a boca. É a multidão aturdida que condena um inocente e, a partir deste momento, por analogia, todas as vítimas emissárias são inocentes.

As relações humanas são essencialmente instáveis e caminham na direção de dois extremos: o amor ou a violência. Se caminhamos na direção da extrema violência, a sociedade torna-se impossível. A única forma de parar a violência, para o autor, é o efeito mimético sobre uma mesma vítima. E Girard, chega mesmo a afirmar que “quantos mais bodes expiatórios existirem numa instituição, menos ela se arrisca a degenerar” (Fournier, 2013: 52).

4. Crise sacrificial

Pertencemos a uma sociedade de “crise sacrificial” permanente, pois aparentemente o sacrifício não existe. Esta tensão se, por um lado, nos redime, pois é criadora de uma ciência extraordinária, por outro, ameaça-nos constantemente de destruição. O autor afirma que só a Teologia da Cruz de São Paulo e os Evangelhos podem desvelar o origem escondida das instituições humanas e servirem de antídoto contra a violência, quer sejamos crentes ou não. Para recusarmos a violência precisamos de recusar as represálias e seguir a nova ordem do Reino de Deus. Porém, a Cruz prova que os homens preferiram seguir um outro caminho. Face a esta realidade, Girard não esconde o seu interesse pelo pensamento apocalíptico e não hesita nos seus últimos livros a aceitar cada vez mais esta tonalidade específica.

Paradoxalmente, os homens não podem mesmo amar o cristianismo, porque o cristianismo diz-nos que a violência não está em Deus, nem é Deus, mas nós. Aliás, os primeiros textos da bíblia são ainda marcados pela violência divina, o “Deus dos exércitos”, mas a partir do movimento profético ela desaparece completamente. As religiões arcaicas dizem precisamente o contrário, por isso são muito agradáveis. O cristianismo revela-nos a natureza do sagrado que nos protegia da violência. Porém, o cristianismo nunca foi tão violento como hoje (*Ibidem*, 59).

Estamos atualmente num estado de *crise sacrificial* (Girard, 1972: 69). Temos alguns bodes expiatórios, mas não podemos mais divinizá-los. Porém, como não temos mais ritos sacrificiais, não sabemos como expurgar a violência. E, se no plano da inteligência criadora, somos extremamente fecundos, na prática, não deixamos de estar constantemente ameaçados

por ela. A nossa inteligência e a nossa malícia tornam-se cada vez mais argutas no universo e nós somos permanentemente levados por esta espécie de caminho sem retorno.

O sacrifício é capaz de parar a violência e de “fazer a paz”. Porém, o seu efeito acaba por perder-se e é a memória do sacrifício passado que nos diz que é necessário recomeçar, escolhendo uma nova vítima sacrificial. O que é essencial é que a vítima pareça culpável e é, por isso, que a matamos. A ideia de divindade é isto, embora nada tenha de divino, pois é mesmo uma ideia realista, material e cínica.

Conclusão

A violência é uma realidade transversal a toda a história da humanidade. Povos, culturas, nações exercem entre si formas de violências, mais ou menos declaradas, e esta irrompe quando menos se espera nos comportamentos ou nas relações sociais. Os conflitos estão sempre latentes na história dos homens e o homem parece ter dentro de si um apetite sórdido que o inclina tanto à violência, como a exorcizar as enormes tensões acumuladas, fruto de um ritmo de vida frenético, crispações históricas herdadas, ódios e rancores cultivados, sobretudo no seio da exclusão social ou do radicalismo ideológico.

Paul Ricoeur e René Girard não procuram fazer da violência um ponto de partida ou então um eixo central de pensamento, qual chave hermenêutica da ação. Refletem sim sobre a sua origem, os lugares onde se manifesta e as consequências que produz. Ricoeur diz-nos mesmo que o espaço público não é moralmente neutro concernente à violência. Sabemos o que é um ato violento, mesmo que não saibamos ainda definir o seu conceito. Isto quer dizer que o seu conceito é bem mais problemático que o seu uso.

A violência é algo ou pelo menos alguma coisa com a qual nos temos de confrontar ao longo da vida e que reclama uma estrutura de análise. Cada um à sua maneira procura decompor as suas formas, constatando ao mesmo tempo que ela está já presente, ao menos como possibilidade, na *praxis*. O que não deixa de nos interrogar sobre “o que é o homem?” e quais as circunstância e possibilidades de uma antropologia do viver em comum, tributária de um equilíbrio frágil, constantemente ameaçado e ameaçador para o devir humano.

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Vária

EXÍLIO E DIÁSPORA EM CABO VERDE

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O exílio, a emigração e a diáspora são elementos determinantes para a definição da identidade de Cabo Verde. A literatura tem sido a principal expressão artística na representação desses traços identitários do arquipélago.

Os propósitos principais do ensaio são: 1) identificar, num percurso cronológico, as mais significativas abordagens literárias do exílio e da diáspora dos cabo-verdianos, através da análise dos seguintes textos: poesias líricas publicadas em *Claridade*; romance *Chiquinho* (1947), de Baltasar Lopes; coletânea de contos *Cais do Sodrê té Salamansa* (1974), de Orlanda Amarílis; e romance *Eva*, de Germano Almeida (2006); 2) mostrar que os fluxos migratórios de cabo-verdianos constituem objeto privilegiado de tratamento literário, convertendo as personagens que os cumprem em protagonistas de narrativas de exílio; 3) clarificar as dicotomias simbólicas e geográficas criadas pelos romances; 4) evidenciar as atitudes de personagens literárias cabo-verdianas em exílio, destacando a sujeição a discursos xenófobos (nomeadamente em contexto colonial, com massivas migrações para a capital portuguesa) e a persistente nostalgia da pátria; 5) sublinhar o contributo valioso da literatura cabo-verdiana para a compreensão da experiência humana do exílio.

Palavras-chave: Cabo Verde – exílio – diáspora

Exile, emigration and diaspora are key elements for defining the identity of Cape Verde. Literature has been the main artistic expression in representing the features of the archipelago.

The main purposes of the essay are: 1) to identify, in a chronological sense, the most significant literary approaches of exile and diaspora of Cape Verde, through

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the analysis of the following texts: the lyrical poetry published in *Claridade*; the novel *Chiquinho* (1947) by Baltasar Lopes; the collection of short stories *Cais-do-Sodré té Salamansa* (1974) by Orlanda Amarílis; and Germano Almeida's novel *Eva* (2006); to show that Cape Verdean migration flows are privileged object of literary treatment, transforming the characters in actors of exile narratives; 3) to explain the symbolic and geographical dichotomies shaped by the novels; 4) to show the attitudes of Cape Verdean literary characters in exile, highlighting the exposure to xenophobic discourses (particularly in the colonial context, with massive migration to the Portuguese capital) and persistent nostalgia of the homeland; 5) to display the valuable contribution of the Cape Verdean literature for understanding the human experience of exile.

Key-words: Cape Verde – exile – diaspora



1. Introdução

Difícilmente se pode compreender a identidade do povo cabo-verdiano omitindo o papel que nela desempenharam a emigração e o exílio. O percurso histórico de Cabo Verde revela que a abolição da escravatura, na segunda metade do século XIX, se traduziu num progressivo abandono administrativo da colónia, que até aí fora essencialmente um entreposto de escravos. O ciclo de recessão económica então iniciado converte a emigração num fenómeno marcante do arquipélago: os Estados Unidos, o Brasil, vários países europeus (Portugal, Holanda, Itália, Bélgica e Suécia) e diversos territórios africanos (com destaque para S. Tomé, onde emigrantes cabo-verdianos são contratados para as roças) tornam-se os principais destinos da diáspora cabo-verdiana. Até à atualidade, estudos demográficos e migratórios demonstram que existem mais cabo-verdianos vivendo fora do que dentro do arquipélago.^[1]

Entendida com frequência como exílio em busca de melhores condições de vida, mas tendo como ambição maior o regresso ao arquipélago, a diáspora cabo-verdiana manifesta-se sobretudo no continente europeu – mais concretamente em Portugal – e no continente americano – mais especificamente nos Estados Unidos. Cumpre, do meu ponto de vista, um dos significados do termo identificado por Nicholas Hewitt e Dick Geary (2007: 7):

1 Cf. Rodrigues, 2011: 79.

aquele que representa uma saída forçada da pátria: “Travel and migration were not always by any means voluntary and were often dictated by political persecution, economic necessity and, at its most extreme, enforced emigration in the form of slavery (...). This raises important questions of identity”.

Tais questões que remetem para a emigração deste povo implicam aceitar o princípio de que a identidade transcultural de Cabo Verde “necessarily coincide with gravitational centres found in other societies and cultures” (Rodrigues, 2011: 80). Ou seja, os movimentos migratórios são cruciais para a construção da identidade cabo-verdiana e como alimento de obras literárias, que, tal como outras manifestações artísticas (a pintura e a música),^[2] retratam a emigração forçada de homens e mulheres que, ao longo dos séculos XIX e XX, reconstruíram as suas vidas noutros territórios.^[3]

Por razões que se prendem ora com a insularidade,^[4] ora com condições climáticas adversas, ora ainda com a incapacidade de aceitação de um regime colonial, a experiência do exílio foi vivida por diversos escritores cabo-verdianos, pelo que as suas obras acabam por denunciar uma índole autobiográfica intensa, a par de um marcado realismo literário. Eugénio Tavares, Abílio Duarte, Ovídio Martins, Onésimo Silveira ou Mário Fonseca são apenas alguns desses escritores que conheceram o exílio. Considere-se apenas o exemplo de Onésimo Silveira, o poeta e contista nascido em 1936, na ilha de S. Vicente, e do seu romance *Toda a gente fala: sim senhor* (1960) enquanto relato que traduz a própria experiência do escritor que para S. Tomé e Príncipe emigrou, como tantos outros cabo-verdianos forçados a trabalhar nas roças.

Neste ensaio, procurarei deixar manifesto de que modo a literatura cabo-verdiana representa esses traços fundamentais da identidade cultural do arquipélago (a diáspora, e emigração e o exílio) desde aquele que é considerado o seu movimento fundador – *Claridade*^[5] – até à atualidade. Para

2 A morna – género musical original de Cabo Verde – canta o amor à pátria, a saudade, o mar, a emigração.

3 Segundo Manuel Ferreira (1977: 108), o poeta Eugénio Tavares (1967-1936) foi o primeiro escritor cabo-verdiano a abordar o tema da emigração na composição “Hora di bai” (“Hora da partida”, “Hora da despedida”, “Hora di dor”).

4 O tratamento dos motivos da seca e da insularidade é constante nos textos de *Claridade* e deixa uma herança duradoura na literatura cabo-verdiana. No caso específico de Cabo Verde, a insularidade é um conceito com duas significações: denotativa, remetendo para a geografia do arquipélago, e existencial, projetando-se no isolamento social, económico e cultural (cf. Maria Luísa Baptista (1994: 21).

5 Num depoimento sobre o ficcionista e co-fundador de *Claridade*, Germano Almeida (2001: 125) considera que, “sem pretender minimizar a importância daqueles que escreveram em Cabo Verde e sobre Caso Verde antes do aparecimento da *Claridade* em 1936, o facto é que o surgimento

a concretização deste propósito, começo por traçar um percurso cronológico de algumas abordagens literárias do exílio e da diáspora dos cabo-verdianos, destacando composições poéticas publicadas em *Claridade*, analisando um romance de aprendizagem – *Chiquinho* (1947), de Baltasar Lopes – e narrativas curtas que abordam a emigração cabo-verdiana em período colonial – os contos de *Cais do Sodré té Salamansa* (1974), de Orlanda Amarílis – e concluindo com uma reflexão sobre a abordagem da emigração depois da independência de Cabo Verde em 1975, apresentada no romance *Eva* (2006), de Germano Almeida.

Este percurso permitirá evidenciar: em primeiro lugar, a relevância (que a literatura, melhor do que qualquer outra manifestações artística soube traduzir) dos fluxos migratórios de cabo-verdianos; em segundo lugar, a percepção dos emigrantes do arquipélago como protagonistas de narrativas de exílio; em terceiro lugar, o valor simbólico das dicotomias geográficas criadas pelas ficções narrativas; em quarto lugar, os sentimentos mais marcantes veiculados pelos sujeitos líricos e pelos protagonistas dos contos e romances que, com frequência, traduzem uma vertente autobiográfica da escrita: a nostalgia da pátria e a sujeição a discursos xenófobos (particularmente em contexto histórico colonial).

2: O passado e o presente: uma linha de continuidade da diáspora cabo-verdiana

Omnipresentes na literatura cabo-verdiana, os motivos da emigração e do exílio observam-se já em poetas que precedem o movimento de *Claridade*. Com frequência, a saída de muitos cabo-verdianos do arquipélago tem como causas principais as precárias condições de sobrevivência em Cabo Verde, impostas por condições climatológicas muito severas, ou a fuga ao autoritarismo do colonizador. As duas causas podem encontrar-se na mesma composição. Assim, no poema significativamente intitulado “Estiagem”, Aguinaldo Fonseca (nascido em 1922 na ilha de S. Vicente) manifesta o desejo desesperado de abandonar um lugar marcado por uma seca que destrói sementeiras e vidas. Todavia, considerando o contexto colonial em que a composição foi publicada, pode ainda inferir-se dela um grito de revolta contra a alienação do colonizado imposta pelo colonizador, que lhe proporciona unicamente um “horizonte estreito” e uma “voz amordaçada”:

nas ilhas de uma literatura intrinsecamente cabo-verdiana, quer na forma quer no conteúdo de denúncia das misérias do nosso quotidiano, fica a dever-se ao grupo que fundou essa revista”.

Esta segura pregada na garganta
não sei bem se veio do vento
ou das entranhas do inferno.

Este horizonte estreito
a estrangular distâncias e esperanças
não sei se é feito de sangue
ou de poeira vermelha.

(Oh! Que desejo duma carícia
de sombra fresca
de verdes ramos
e rochas húmidas!)

Será que perdi a voz
neste mar de sol
onde a paisagem é figura desfocada?

Se grito
o grito em mim persiste a esbracejar
porque não sai
do poço desta angústia amordaçada.

Oh! Quero lagos, lagos,
muitos lagos de água clara
para mergulhar os olhos

Oh! Quero campos, campos,
verdes campos,
para libertar a voz amordaçada. (Andrade, 1975: 27)

Será, todavia, nos números da revista *Claridade* que o sentimento de angústia do cabo-verdiano que sabe que tem de partir, mas deseja ficar no seu país, se manifestará de modo mais penetrante e iterativo.

Antes de o analisar, será útil, penso, uma abordagem sumária da revista e do movimento que ela funda. Em 1936, Baltasar Lopes, Jorge Barbosa e Manuel Lopes projetam uma publicação literária norteada por dois princípios fundamentais: o afastamento dos cânones portugueses, como manifestação explícita de resistência ao colonialismo; a expressão da voz do povo cabo-verdiano, das suas angústias, dos seus anseios, da sua autenticidade.^[6]

6 Cf. Laranjeira, 1995: 190. Afirma Jane Tutikian (2007: 236) que “O movimento propunha o deslocamento de uma visão europeia para o passado do arquipélago, ao mesmo tempo em

Encarada como marco fundador da cabo-verdianidade, a revista assume no lema que adota – “fixar raízes na terra cabo-verdiana” – o desafio declarado ao sistema colonial e a defesa das origens do povo cabo-verdiano, com a publicação de um poema em crioulo no número inaugural.

A emigração e o exílio marcam tanto as poesias líricas, quanto as ficções narrativas publicadas pelos claridosos. No primeiro caso, referir-me-ei a Jorge Barbosa, no segundo, a Baltasar Lopes.

A viagem é o motivo literário mais destacado do conjunto da obra poética de Jorge Barbosa. Apresentada em duas vertentes principais – real, quando imposta por condicionamentos socioeconómicos e geográficos; mental, quando desencadeada por reflexões sobre a procura da identidade e do mito das origens, ou ainda sobre a morte como derradeiro percurso humano –, a viagem parece evocar, nas suas composições, o mítico percurso marítimo de Ulisses. O mar é representado em metáforas antinómicas – aprisionamento e fuga, cerceamento de liberdade e evasão – como pode ler-se em “Panorama” – Ilhas perdidas no meio do mar, esquecidas / num canto do Mundo – que as ondas embalam, / maltratam, / abraçam...” (Andrade, 1975: 17) – e “O mar” – “Ai o mar / que nos dilata sonhos e nos sufoca desejos! // – Ai a cinta do mar / que detém ímpetos / ao nosso arrebatamento / e insinua / horizontes para lá / do nosso isolamento! // Convite da viagem apetecida / que se não faz.” (*idem*: 19).

Como poeta profundamente comprometido com as tragédias que se abatem sobre a sua pátria, Jorge Barbosa interpreta os motivos da seca, da fome, do isolamento, da falta de recursos e da exiguidade das ilhas, caracterizando o povo cabo-verdiano como fatalmente destinado a “Viver sempre vergado sobre a terra, / A nossa terra / Pobre / Ingrata / Querida!” (*ibidem*).

Inteiramente harmonizado com os ideais de *Claridade* e com o movimento regionalista brasileiro, *Chiquinho*,^[7] publicado por Baltasar Lopes em 1947, é um *Bildungsroman* que narra a infância, a adolescência e a juventude de um rapaz cabo-verdiano. Nascido na ilha rural de S. Nicolau e conhecendo precocemente os efeitos devastadores do clima sobre as vidas dos seus conterrâneos (sobretudo as consequências dramáticas de longos

que recusava a tradição portuguesa. Procurava assumir a modernidade, sobretudo a realista, a busca das raízes antropológicas e culturais, manifestada no gosto pela etnografia e filologia do crioulo e, ainda, a valorização da criatividade popular. Apontava, dessa forma, a descoberta de um espaço marcado pela insularidade, pela fome, pela seca, pelo mar feito prisão e caminho de uma cultura essencialmente mítica”.

7 Defende David Brookshaw (1985: 185) que o romance de Baltasar Lopes se situa “dentro do contexto dos ideais do movimento Claridade, ao qual o autor pertencia, sendo o seu romance um espelho mais ou menos fiel desses ideais”.

períodos de seca), o protagonista viverá em S. Vicente a experiência de estudante que aspira a que a formação escolar lhe permita escapar às difíceis condições da infância. O abandono temporário da ilha de S. Nicolau alimenta em toda a família (avó, mãe e dois irmãos) a esperança de um futuro economicamente tranquilo. Concluídos os estudos secundários, Chiquinho regressa para a breve trecho tomar consciência que nada mudara na vida dos familiares e amigos: reencontra a extraordinária resistência de muitos cabo-verdianos contra períodos de seca prolongados, perdas de colheitas, pobreza, miséria e morte:

Era seca, nua, devastadora como nas crises mais terríveis de que rezava a crónica da minha ilha. Desaparecidas todas as esperanças, enganadas as promessas de chuva. De todas as ribeiras a notícia que vinha era a mesma. Não se colheria um grão de milho, e dos feijoeiros nem falar, que a lestada de Novembro crestara tudo (Lopes, 2006: 188-189).^[8]

Conclui que a função de professor para a qual se preparara é inútil num espaço onde a maioria das crianças não frequenta a escola, ora por-

8 Os romances de Manuel Lopes, *Chuva Braba* (1956), *O galo cantou na Baía* (1959) e *Os Flagelados do Vento Leste* (1960) podem ser lidos como retoma do tratamento dos motivos da seca, da fome, da miséria, que tão marcantemente definiram a obra dos claridosos, tal como é sustentado por Germano Almeida (2001: 128):

“É de facto sobre Cabo Verde, sobre o problema do povo de Cabo Verde, que Manuel Lopes conta nos seus livros, mostrando que Cabo Verde não é de forma alguma o jardim das Hespérides, não é o lugar onde os deuses vêm repousar. Pelo contrário, Cabo Verde é uma terra desprezada e esquecida onde os homens lutam desesperadamente contra uma natureza madrastra e vivem na miséria, e morrem de fome, abandonados por aqueles que viram e acreditarem serem seus irmãos”.

Em *Os Flagelados do Vento Leste*, o romancista retrata o destino dos cabo-verdianos vitimados pela fome, apresentando-os como um povo de extraordinária resiliência:

“Havia ansiedade nos seus olhos, mas também dureza e persistência. E havia esperança e coragem e medo. A esperança nas águas e o temor da estiagem faziam parte de um hábito secular transmitido de geração em geração. Todos os anos era assim: a esperança descia em socorro daqueles que tinham o medo na alma. Por isso ela era a última luz a consumir-se. Sim, a chuva chegaria um dia. Esperavam por ela como se espera pela sorte, no jogo (...). Se não viesse, a alternativa seria apertar o cinto, meter a coragem no coração para a luta, como qualquer homem pode fazer quando cai no meio da borrasca. Já estavam habituados. Vinha de trás, de longe, esta luta. Esperavam sempre: até ao último momento. Até mesmo para lá do último momento. Mesmo aqueles que não sabiam esperar, e não acreditavam nas previsões dos homens, mesmo esses, não se atreviam a apagar, depressa, aquela luzinha; só no último momento desesperavam, porque alguma coisa pode acontecer quando já ninguém pensa nela” (Lopes, 2001: 14-15).

que tem de auxiliar os pais na agricultura, ora porque morre de fome. Chiquinho acabará por tomar consciência, como anos antes fizera o seu pai, que a emigração é a única alternativa a uma existência miserável, na qual muitos cabo-verdianos se resignam à condição de “escravos da terra” (*idem*, 45).

Os Estados Unidos ocupam um lugar determinante nas três partes que estruturam o romance: na primeira, “Infância”, o protagonista recorda numa extensa analepse os primeiros anos de vida na casinha do Caleijão e a omnipresença do pai, emigrado para os Estados Unidos: móveis, quadros, fotografias e dólares evocam essa figura que abandona Cabo Verde quando Chiquinho tem apenas cinco anos:

Mesmo depois de ausente, ele era uma presença constante na nossa casa. Bastava olharmos para a mobília americana, o gramofone, os quadros na parede para sentirmos Papai assistindo connosco, embora tão longe. (...) Foi quando da seca de noventa e quinze. Os sequeiros não deram nada e no regadio a água quase secou. (...) tudo na nossa vida, a casa, as mobílias, as recordações, os nossos interesses, faziam uma reportagem sentimental que dava a Papai uma presença quase física no meio de nós (*idem*, 35 e 37).

Aos olhos de uma criança, a América não é apenas o país para onde o pai emigrou, aquele em que qualquer mulher cabo-verdiana poderá “parir em casas caiadas e telhadas”, aquele que, em última instância, permite a sobrevivência dos familiares que permanecem em Cabo Verde. A América é sobretudo um espaço imaginário que alimenta ilusões, um lugar paradisíaco onde o sonho se transforma em realidade, onde a fome e a pobreza dão lugar à abundância e à prosperidade:

A América ficava bem perto de mim. Meu coração de menino não a colocava mais longe do meu círculo de afeições do que a Água do Canal ou o António Gegê, onde eu ia brincar com a meninência e correr navios de purgueira e de cana de milho.

Quando eu era mais tamanhinho, figurava a América uma ribeira muito bonita, cheia de hortas muito verdes (*idem*, 38).

Se a América é uma promessa de felicidade para os cabo-verdianos que emigram, o mesmo não pode dizer-se de um outro tipo de emigração tratado no romance: a que leva muitas cabo-verdianas para Dakar. Trata-se de uma emigração que objetualiza as mulheres como prostitutas e que em *Chiquinho* são representadas pela personagem de Maninha: “Ela

contratada, com outras cabo-verdianas, para dançar num clube nocturno. Gabinetes reservados. Os franceses escolhem” (*idem*, 103).

Os Estados Unidos são para Chiquinho o que a bíblica Israel tinha sido para o povo eleito: uma “Terra da Promissão em que eu poderia realizar todas as minhas virtualidades” (*idem*: 204).

A última parte do romance aprofunda o dilema do protagonista: a perspectiva de, emigrando, obter bens que lhe assegurem uma existência confortável confronta-se com a permanência junto de familiares e amigos, mesmo que esta ponha a causa a sobrevivência de muitos deles; a emigração oferece-lhe a oportunidade de adquirir “gramofone, pianola, cómodas, louça fina, um ror de coisas”, ao passo que as ilhas lhe destinam quase fatalmente a “escravatura. Escravo não merece mais do que cama de cancarã, uma caixa de goiabeira, louça da Boa Vista e um pote ao canto da casa” (*idem*: 207). Chiquinho sonha, portanto, com *the American way of life*.

O sonho de Chiquinho é idêntico ao de muitos rapazes do Caleijão, que esperam a contratação como baleeiros para abandonarem definitivamente a ilha. O mar aparece então como porta de fuga a uma realidade árdua, ainda que acabe por ser substituída por outra igualmente penosa. Sair surge como desígnio inevitável, acabando muitos daqueles que emigram por não retornarem ao arquipélago:

Chegaram navios baleeiros na terra. Correu logo a notícia. Navio-de-baleia era fatura para a ilha. Os rapazes alvoroçaram-se, porque todos tinham vontade de ser recrutados. Começaram a chover pedidos aos encarregados do engajamento, pois o número de tripulantes de que os navios careciam era menor do que o dos pretendentes. Desembarcaram para ver a família muitos rapazes que faziam parte das tripulações. Mas não eram rodeados da admiração que cercava os *americanos* de verdade, que voltavam das fábricas e plantações da América com a algibeira pesada de dólares. Rapaz-de-baleia não traz dinheiro. Trabalha para os outros. Meses e meses nas pescarias do mar do sul e quando regressam à América recebem um pataco furado (*idem*: 64).

“América”, termo que encerra o romance de Baltasar Lopes, revela que a emigração, determinada pela precariedade de recursos em Cabo Verde, é o lugar onde Chiquinho projeta a concretização de uma vida feliz, como tantos outros cabo-verdianos.

Para além de admitir associações autobiográficas, o romance de Baltasar Lopes apresenta os motivos nucleares da literatura cabo-verdiana, elaborando uma espécie de lista identitária dessa literatura: a seca, a crise económica, a morte, a emigração, o amor, o apego telúrico, a tenacidade

dos que se recusam a abandonar a pátria, a nostalgia do desconhecido e a saudade.^[9]

3. Histórias de emigrantes cabo-verdianas

A biografia de Orlanda Amarílis (Santa Catarina, ilha de Santiago, 1924) é em si mesma uma realização da diáspora. Os seus estudos secundários foram iniciados na cidade do Mindelo (ilha de S. Vicente) e concluídos em Goa e em Lisboa. Com o marido, o investigador de literaturas africanas de expressão portuguesa Manuel Ferreira, viajou por todo o mundo. Orlanda Amarílis é, nas palavras de Claudia Pazos Alonso (2005: 46) “a displaced Cape-Verdian” que conhece com profundidade “the contradictions of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider”.

O sentimento de pertença e de ligação a Cabo Verde está omnipresente nas personagens das suas três coletâneas de contos: *Cais do Sodrê té Salamansa* (1974), *Ilhéu dos Pássaros* (1983) e *Casa dos Mestros* (1989).

Cais do Sodrê té Salamansa admite uma leitura simbólica: a estação lisboeta de comboios é o lugar de partida para vários destinos, o último e mais ambicionado dos quais a praia de Salamansa, em Cabo Verde. Metaforicamente, Salamansa representa o regresso à pátria, a materialização do sonho de muitos cabo-verdianos emigrados para Portugal. Ao mesmo tempo, o título sugere um movimento de circularidade: se o cais do Sodrê pode ser o ponto de chegada de emigrantes cabo-verdianos, ele é passível também de uma interpretação simbólica como lugar de partida para Cabo Verde, território de chegada, real ou sonhada, de muitos cabo-verdianos emigrados.

O primeiro conto da coletânea descreve a existência lisboeta de uma emigrante cabo-verdiana que, enquanto espera o comboio, tenta identificar noutra mulher traços típicos de uma compatriota. Este impulso da protagonista, Andresa, corresponde a uma necessidade vital de encontrar “pessoas como ela, vindas daquelas terras de espreguiçamento e lazeira” (Amarílis, 1991: 11) para “estabelecer uma ponte para lhe recordar a sua gente” (*idem*: 15). Os momentos de decifração da identidade de anónimos que encontra na estação abrem a esperança a um reencontro, ainda que breve e despoleador de uma intensa nostalgia, com as suas origens.

9 Todos estes temas surgem integrados no ambiente social cabo-verdiano, como é sustentado por Alberto Carvalho (1998: xx): “Mediante uma criatividade muito hábil, o autor vai mais além da superfície de dados históricos para problematizar uma consciência em formação, a instituição formadora e o conflito que se gera entre ambas”.

A situação vivida por Andresa corresponde à definição de exílio proposta por Helder Macedo, numa leitura da obra de Claudio Guillén *O Sol dos Desterrados. Literatura e Exílio*. Sustenta o professor e escritor português (2007: 235) a dimensão comparativa da experiência do exílio: “todo o exílio é, em si próprio, uma situação existencial comparativa”. Também Edward Said destaca, pelo empréstimo do termo musical “contraponto” – sobreposição de uma melodia a outra –, a natureza comparativa de toda a experiência do exílio: “For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally” (Said, 2000: 186).

Cabo Verde representa para a protagonista do conto o lugar da memória, da saudade, das raízes porventura perdidas para sempre: evocar a pátria constitui um reencontro com um universo rural, povoado de narrativas ancestrais, superstições, feitiçarias, histórias que unem a comunidade. Todavia, a memória significa também uma consciência mais apurada da solidão e do isolamento em Lisboa. A comparação entre a pátria e o país de acolhimento significa também uma oposição temperamental: para Andresa, Cabo Verde é a terra do carácter amável – a *morabezza* –, pacífico, tranquilo e solidário, ao passo que Lisboa é o lugar de um novo tipo de escravatura: aquela que é imposta por preconceitos raciais e pelo ritmo frenético do quotidiano.

Estes sentimentos tornam-se ainda mais marcantes na protagonista do conto “Desencanto”, que narra também a existência em Lisboa de uma cabo-verdiana inconformada com a condição de muitas mulheres no seu país, remetidas exclusivamente para tarefas domésticas. Para esta emigrante, a profissão de “escriturária de segunda classe” e os múltiplos empregos temporários no país de acolhimento confrontam-na com a repulsa perante o constante assédio masculino – “Nunca conseguiu enfrentar os clientes sabidos e desnudaram-na com os olhos lascivos” (*idem*: 42) – e, sobretudo, os comentários racistas que a inferiorizam. Ela tem consciência que o esforço que fez para iludir a cor da sua pele é inútil perante um diálogo entre dois homens brancos: “Malandro, estás a fazer-te prà mulata” (*idem*: 45). A mestiçagem constitui um estigma que a reduz a uma condição errática e solitária: “Sempre a fugir de andar com os patrícios de cor para não a confundirem e afinal é um branco que lhe vem lembrar a sua condição de mestiça. Oh céus! É uma cigana errante, sem amigos, sem afeições, desgarrada entre tanta cara conhecida” (*idem*: 45).

Ainda que utópico, o regresso a Cabo Verde abre um caminho onírico de felicidade para as personagens femininas que protagonizam os dois con-

tos. Por isso, elas realizam um percurso que recorda a experiência do exílio vivida por Ulisses e por Jasão, apresentada num soneto do poeta francês Du Bellay:

Heureux qui comme Ulysse a fait un beau voyage,
Ou comme celui-là qui conquiert la toison,
Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,
Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge ! (*Apud* Guillén, 1995 : 79)

O desenraizamento imposto pela emigração é um motivo que Orlanda Amarílis retoma na segunda coletânea de contos, *Ilhéu dos Pássaros*. Tomarei em atenção apenas o conto de abertura. O drama da seca é novamente apontado como causa primeira do abandono do arquipélago na narrativa “Thonon-les-Bains”: Nh’Ana confessa as expectativas que alimenta com a emigração e o projeto de casamento em França da sua filha Piedade:

Sabe, comadre, a vida aqui já não podia continuar como era. Sete anos sem chuva é muito. Eu não tenho nem uma migalha de reforma de Deus-Haja. Nós vivemos da renda dos bocadinhos de terra e de mais alguma coisinha, encomendas dos nossos rendeiros, um cacho de banana de vez em quando, uns ovinhos, um balaio de mangas uma vez por outra, umas duas quartas de milho e é tudo. (...) se nha fidja me mandar algum dinheirinho, posso começar um negócio de comidas, assim uma caldeira de catchupa com mandioca e toucinho para vender à boca-da-noite, um groguinho ou um pontche para emborcar em cima, e pronto (Amarílis, 1983: 14).

O desfecho trágico do conto expõe a discriminação a que muitos emigrantes são sujeitos, como pode inferir-se do relato feito por Gabriel, no regresso a Cabo Verde: Piedade é assassinada pelo namorado francês, mas nem o seu meio-irmão Gabriel nem os amigos se sentem capazes de denunciarem o homicídio, pois sabem que a imagem do emigrante é profundamente desmerecida:

Nh’Ana não consegue compreender por que motivos Gabriel não contou a verdade à polícia. E Gabriel responde: “Isso não adiantava nada. Eles sabiam mãe Ana, sabiam, isto é, desconfiavam, mas eu sou emigrante. Emigrante é lixo, mãe Ana, emigrante não é mais nada” (...).

Não sabia mais que dizer sobre aqueles dias de pesadelo, nem ia contar como ele e os companheiros tinham sido enxovalhados na polícia (*idem*: 25).

“Thonon-les-Bains” é, no conjunto de narrativas de Orlanda Amarílis, o conto que representa de modo mais trágico a experiência da emigração de cabo-verdianos, focalizando o drama numa personagem feminina, como é recorrente nos textos da autora.

O homicídio de Piedade e a ausência de denúncia fazem supor que os próprios emigrantes cabo-verdianos aceitam de algum modo – ou se resignam – a condição inferior de estrangeiros e a supremacia do europeu. É esta, creio, a conclusão a que chega Gregory McNab (1987: 66) a propósito da explicação do crime, afirmando que “Thonon-les-Bains” é:

A story about the experience of a Cape Verdean as well as that of a woman. The first of them may be labelled the primacy of the native (Jean) over the foreigner (Piedade). The implied existence of belief in such a primacy in the native society explains why the Cape Verdeans, who committed no crime in Thonon-les-Bains, were nevertheless evicted from their rooms and rejected as tenants for other quarters. It clarifies why Gabriel, the half-brother, did not denounce Jean to the police. (...) The second of those other embedded primacy statements related to the murder of Piedade is a racial one. We may designate it as white supremacy over non-white; we may also label it European over non-European or even First-World over Third-World.

4. Visões pós-coloniais da emigração e do exílio

Germano Almeida é atualmente um dos mais reconhecidos escritores cabo-verdianos. A sua extensa produção não abandona aqueles motivos que definem a identidade e os problemas que fazem parte da vida do arquipélago. Acrescenta-lhes outros que permitem caracterizar a sua obra literária como pós-colonial.

O romance *Eva* (2006), cuja diegese se localiza temporalmente no início do século XXI, contempla uma marcada componente política e civilizacional, da qual fazem parte, entre outras, reflexões sobre a guerra colonial; a importância do 25 de abril de 1974, quer enquanto manifestação de revolta contra totalitarismos, quer como momento que abre o caminho para a independência das colónias africanas sob domínio português; o isolamento, a agitação e a impessoalidade da vida moderna numa capital europeia; as dificuldades de acesso a bens culturais que persistem no arquipélago de Cabo Verde – “quem nos dera haver livros à venda em Cabo Verde, mesmo que nas ensebadas tascas das fraldas, perdidos entre garrafas de grogue, linguça assada ou peixe frito de escabeche!” (Almeida, 2006: 14); o devir

histórico do país depois da independência. A este propósito, a visão do narrador, temporal e criticamente distante dos acontecimentos, procede a uma revisão da perspectiva que, em Cabo Verde, imputava todos os problemas do país ao Estado que o colonizou: “A população (...) de repente começou a ver a independência como a mágica solução de todos os seus seculares problemas de secas e fomes, e ausência de saúde, e falta de escolas, e falta de trabalho, e o mais que durante toda a sua existência de 500 anos não tinha tido” (*idem*: 16).

O regime de partido único, que vigorou em Cabo Verde até 1990, merece também uma crítica do narrador, na medida em que ele “fez grandes promessas de saúde para todos, educação para todos, trabalho para todos, enfim, a sociedade de abundância com que se tinha sonhado, não dava mostras de poder ver-se cumprida nos tempos mais próximos” (*idem*: 17).

O narrador mostra que, uma vez mais, é a emigração, sobretudo para Portugal, que se apresenta como a única forma de sobrevivência de muitos cabo-verdianos: estes novos emigrantes são aqueles que conservaram ou conseguiram obter a nacionalidade portuguesa, puderam adquirir um passaporte – pejorativamente chamado “folhinha de couve” por aqueles que o não conseguiram – e saíram do país.

As duas principais personagens masculinas do romance são emigrantes: Luís Henriques foi forçado a abandonar clandestinamente Cabo Verde para não ser integrado nas tropas de resistência; Reinaldo obtém uma bolsa para fazer a sua formação no Brasil. Prolonga a sua estadia por muito tempo, porque conclui que conheceria melhor o seu país e o seu povo “a partir da comparação com outras realidades e outras gentes” (*idem*: 16). Regressa a Cabo Verde onde se torna professor de liceu apenas porque não aceita a função de jornalista ao serviço do governo: “Uma das grandes preocupações do Poder era impedir a emigração de quadros que num futuro que se esperava breve viriam a ser de todo necessários ao desenvolvimento de Cabo Verde. Porém, não me interessava como emprego ser mais um porta-voz do Governo” (*idem*: 19).

A missão jornalística de Reinaldo é entrevistar doze compatriotas que voluntariamente se exilaram em Lisboa, porque sentiram que a independência os desamparou: “Queria ouvir os que durante toda a vida souberam e sentiram Cabo Verde como parte integrante de Portugal, e de repente se tinham visto desmamados e perdidos, porque abandonados pela Mãe Pátria e entregues a terceiros pelo próprio governo do país que era o deles” (Almeida, 2006: 21).

O conflito entre os dois apaixonados de Eva passa com frequência pelo desmerecimento da experiência da emigração: Reinaldo pensa que grande parte do êxito de sedução de Luís Henriques se deve relato de narrativas compungentes junto de Eva:

Você resolveu (...) falar-lhe abertamente da precariedade da sua vida em Lisboa, afinal muito pouco diferente da de qualquer dos nossos emigrantes analfabetos que partiram e nunca mais regressaram a casa, menos por vontade que pela falta de coragem de assumir perante os seus, isto é, a família e os amigos, a derrota das suas vidas nas famosas e cobiçadas terras de promessa (*idem*: 125).

O interesse de Reinaldo pela emigração de compatriotas é explicitamente manifestado: nas entrevistas que faz em Lisboa e numa viagem a Roterdão, onde procura emigrantes do seu país, o seu grande projeto jornalístico é a pesquisa sobre as influências da emigração na cultura cabo-verdiana (cf. *idem*: 176).

Não obstante a distância cronológica que o separa dos textos de Baltasar Lopes e de Orlanda Amarílis, o romance *Eva* possibilita uma aproximação a essas narrativas de tempos coloniais. Ainda que tome em consideração protagonistas doutro contexto histórico, continua a reconhecer a experiência penosa dos “novos” emigrantes. Eva e Reinaldo dialogam sobre “a precária situação em que viviam os nossos emigrantes de segunda e terceira geração a quem Portugal não reconhecia a condição de emigrantes, afora um ou outro que tinha a sorte de se revelar excelente em alguma arte, fosse música, desporto ou atletismo” (*idem*: 128).

Depreende-se deste diálogo um exame sobre o modo como Portugal acolheu emigrantes cabo-verdianos depois da independência. Eva torna-se por vezes um *alter ego* do narrador, questionando também “a vida miserável por que passavam os trabalhadores trazidos de Cabo Verde para não morrerem de fome nas ilhas, mas que ali sofriam com a rudeza de um clima impiedoso, para além da nostalgia que os compelia a juntarem-se em guetos que lhes impossibilitava toda e qualquer hipótese de integração nas terras de acolhimento” (*idem*: 147). Significativamente, esta meditação acontece durante uma recepção realizada na embaixada de Portugal em Cabo Verde comemorativa do 10 de junho, consagrado como Dia de Camões e das comunidades portuguesas.

5. Conclusão

Em função das observações produzidas, julgo que podem retirar-se algumas conclusões:

Em primeiro lugar, a identidade cabo-verdiana é em grande medida construída pela memória da pátria, pela saudade e pelo desejo de voltar.

Em segundo lugar, a literatura do arquipélago jamais se alheou do papel que a emigração e o exílio têm na história e na configuração mental do país. Embora sejam tratados por outras literaturas africanas de expressão portuguesa – por exemplo, pela poesia lírica moçambicana, através de diversos poemas que José Craveirinha dedica à vivência sub-humana do magaiça, o jovem moçambicano obrigado a emigrar para as minas de ouro na África do Sul –, estes motivos assumem uma relevância determinante em Cabo Verde, configurando identitariamente o povo do arquipélago e a literatura nele produzida.

Em terceiro lugar, as abordagens literárias da emigração e do exílio representam um antes e um depois: se o antes é formado por expectativas e sonhos – sobretudo pelo *American dream* figurado em *Chiquinho* –, o depois reporta-se a experiências pouco compensadoras que passam a alimentar um outro sonho – o regresso a Cabo Verde, exemplarmente manifestado por Orlanda Amarílis na epígrafe da coletânea *Ilhéu dos Pássaros*: “Se eu pudesse estar agora no ilhéu dos Pássaros!”

Em quarto lugar, a ficção pós-colonial continua a interessar-se pelos motivos da emigração e do exílio, mas aporta uma visão inovadora que pode ver-se representada no romance *Eva*: interessam também ao narrador as histórias daqueles cabo-verdianos que, depois da independência do arquipélago, decidiram emigrar para Portugal. Trata-se de uma perspetiva original que se volta para aqueles cabo-verdianos que preferiram Portugal a Cabo Verde enquanto este viveu sob o domínio de um regime de partido único.

Em quinto e último lugar, ainda que distanciadas nos seus contextos históricos, as obras literárias cabo-verdianas fazem da emigração e do exílio experiências de desenraizamento, de comparação constante entre a pátria e o exílio, de choque cultural e de nostalgia do país natal Mas são também, como defendeu Orlanda Amarílis,^[10] a materialização da diáspora e porventura a marca mais profunda da identidade cabo-verdiana.

10 “Para nós, caboverdianos, a nossa diáspora concretiza-se na emigração” (Amarílis, 1999: 43).

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LA CIENCIA DE LA HISTORIA DE GIAMBATTISTA VICO ENTRE MODERNIDAD Y ANTIGÜEDAD, FILOSOFÍA Y RETÓRICA

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Situada en un momento histórico decisivo, la obra de Vico no ha dejado de sorprender por su originalidad, perspicacia, y la amplitud de su visión. Definido como ‘un Janus, que mira al mismo tiempo hacia delante y hacia atrás’, este intelectual supo conciliar las enseñanzas de la antigua cultura retórica y humanística con un anhelo típicamente moderno por la (re)constitución de nuevos sistemas científicos. En particular, a Vico se le considera el primer filósofo de la historia, ya que fue el primero en combinar el estudio de ésta con el análisis filosófico, para crear una ‘nueva ciencia’ de los asuntos humanos. Sin embargo, a diferencia de otros pensadores modernos, para Vico esta operación no significó reducir la historia a un proceso impersonal con una lógica ineludible, sino atribuir un sentido coherente a una amalgama indistinto de acontecimientos, a través de un ejercicio interpretativo-narrativo bajo el control crítico de la filosofía.

Palabras-clave: Vico, filosofía de la historia, retórica, humanismo, modernidad,



1. Introducción: Vico entre el mundo antiguo y el moderno

En la historia de la cultura occidental y especialmente de la filosofía, a Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744) se le recuerda principalmente por haber sido el primer pensador en hacer de la historia, “como entidad independiente... completa con sus propias leyes y fases” (Vašíček, 2009, p. 35), el principal objeto de reflexión; es decir, por haber sido el primer filósofo de la historia, así como actualmente entendemos esta expresión. De hecho,

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si es cierto que, como apuntó Hannah Arendt (1961, p. 64), la centralidad de la idea de ‘proceso’ para entender los fenómenos, tanto naturales como humanos, está ciertamente entre los elementos que diferencian más la era moderna de la antigua, entonces a Vico, con su teoría de los procesos de civilización, se le puede considerar sin lugar a dudas un pensador moderno. Sin embargo, continuando con el análisis de Arendt, también hay que considerar que la introducción de la categoría de ‘proceso’ como categoría explicativa y el abordaje de la historia como un todo implicó en general un salto en dirección de la abstracción, ya que la multiplicidad de personajes y de hechos históricos, particulares, concretos, significativos por su propia excepcionalidad, que los historiadores antiguos cuidadosamente recopilaban, fue substituida por un sujeto único, inmaterial, llamado ‘humanidad’, y un único movimiento de desarrollo histórico, dentro del cual exclusivamente los eventos singulares cobraban sentido. Desde este punto de vista, entonces, hay que decir que la modernidad de Vico necesita ser ampliamente matizada y ‘problematizada’ (Sevilla, 1994). Porque, como veremos más detenidamente en las próximas páginas, será precisamente la necesaria unión entre la concreción de los acontecimientos y los personajes históricos particulares, revelada por lo que él llama ‘filología’, y la universalidad de los “principios de la historia universal eterna” (Vico, 1990, párr. 245)^[1] descubiertos por la filosofía, una de las características más sobresalientes de la *Scienza nuova*.

Existe también otro aspecto importante de la obra de Vico que nos advierte de su ambigua posición con relación a la categoría antiguo/moderno: el extraordinario interés que en ella se encuentra para los orígenes, tanto del pensamiento como, más ampliamente, del desarrollo histórico de las civilizaciones. Un interés por el cual muy acertadamente ha sido definido como un “filósofo del alba” (Battistini, 1998), un pensador más atraído por el “nacimiento del primer hilo de luz: el naciente pensamiento humano”, que por el “día realizado, el día pleno, todo lo que está desplegado”.^[2] En este sentido, Vico se nos muestra otra vez como un pensador típicamente moderno, que comparte aquella preocupación tan típica en los albores de la modernidad con la cuestión de los fundamentos del

1 De aquí en adelante las citas a la *Scienza nuova* de Vico (versión de 1744) se referirán entre paréntesis, con la abreviatura SN y el número del párrafo correspondiente. Para la traducción al español me he apoyado en la edición Tecnos de la *Ciencia nueva* traducida por Roció de la Villa (Vico, 1995).

2 Capograssi citado por Battistini (1998, p. 284). Como dice Vico “las tinieblas... son la materia de esta Ciencia, incierta, informe, oscura...” (SN 41).

pensamiento y la racionalidad (Said, 1975, pp. 345-350, Mooney, 1985, p. 21). Aun así, lo verdaderamente interesante es que Vico se aproximó a esta cuestión característicamente moderna con una sensibilidad antropológica que ahonda sus raíces en la tradición de la filosofía práctica antigua, y más precisamente en la retórica clásica y humanística; una tradición que estaba siendo duramente cuestionada por el vuelco racionalista que la cultura dio en aquella época.^[3] Gracias a esta sensibilidad, cultivada a lo largo de toda una vida y reinterpretada de una manera originalísima, Vico pudo llegar a formular el núcleo de su filosofía de la historia, su más profunda contribución a la cultura occidental: la idea de que nuestras civilizaciones tienen sus orígenes en una sabiduría poética e imaginativa.

El objetivo de este artículo es ofrecer una lectura introductoria a la filosofía de la historia de Vico que muestra cómo, en un momento histórico en el que se estaban sentando las bases racionalistas y cientificistas de la cultura moderna, este pensador supo recuperar, reinterpretándolos, elementos centrales de una tradición cultural antigua gracias a los cuales pudo prever y esquivar algunas de las tendencias negativas que marcarán lo que sucesivamente ha sido llamada la ‘crisis de la racionalidad’ moderna.^[4] Con su *Scienza nuova* de hecho Vico logró conciliar una sensibilidad antigua con la búsqueda de la sistematización típicamente moderna, dando lugar a una ‘nueva ciencia civil’ en que sentó las bases para el desarrollo de una auténtica conciencia histórica y una hermenéutica antropológica muy actual. En las páginas siguientes, más que analizar el contenido de su concepción de la historia, me dedicaré a dilucidar el particular enfoque con que Vico estudió la historia y que hizo posible estos resultados.

3 Vico desarrolló una carrera académica como profesor de retórica en la Universidad de Nápoles; una cátedra que obtuvo presentando una disertación sobre una de las obras fundamentales de esta disciplina: la *Institutio oratoria* de Quintiliano. La influencia de la tradición retórica, y más en general de la filosofía práctica antigua (de la que la retórica forma parte), estuvo presente constantemente a lo largo de todo el recorrido intelectual de Vico (Grassi, 1980 y 1992, Garin, 1979, Battistini, 1975 y 1995, Mooney, 1985).

4 Como escribió Eric Voegelin (1998, p. 102), en un breve pero incisivo estudio sobre Vico publicado póstumamente, “Vico se encontró en oposición a la Edad de la Ilustración y de la Razón, cuando ésta había apenas comenzado su curso. Esto fue tal vez una ventaja porque las causas de un desastre intelectual se pueden discernir con más claridad antes de que se apaguen por el nivel de crecimiento de sus efectos. El enemigo era todavía claramente reconocible, y el ataque de Vico posee una simplicidad enorme”. El primer estudioso en proponer a Vico (y más en general el movimiento del humanismo renacentista) como el inicio, frustrado, de una época moderna diferentemente concebida fue Ernesto Grassi, en un ensayo del 1940 titulado *Der Beginn des modernen Denkens. Von der Leidenschaft und der Erfahrung des Ursprünglichen*, que se tradujo recientemente al español (Grassi 2001-2002).

2. La teoría de los orígenes poéticos de las civilizaciones

El núcleo del pensamiento viquiano sobre el desarrollo de las civilizaciones estriba en la idea, formulada en la *Scienza nuova*, de que en los albores de la humanidad los primeros pueblos eran poseedores de una sabiduría de tipo poético (SN 34, 375). Esta idea constituye el núcleo de una teoría de la historia según la cual todas las civilizaciones pasan por determinados ciclos históricos —los ‘cursos’ y ‘recursos’— que se repiten. Los cursos se desarrollan en un proceso de evolución y decadencia marcado por tres épocas, cada una caracterizada por una manera específica de pensar y expresarse. A la primera fase, la que Vico llama la ‘época de los dioses’, poblada por hombres ‘mudos’ incapaces de comunicarse mediante un lenguaje articulado, que entendían el mundo como un ambiente constituido exclusivamente por divinidades, sigue la ‘edad de los héroes’, una época en la que los hombres empezaron a generar un verdadero mundo humano, sustituyendo paulatinamente a los dioses por figuras heroicas en relatos mitológicos cada vez más articulados. Después de estas dos fases, en las que las facultades extraracionales del ingenio y la fantasía controlaban la manera de pensar, viene la tercera y última, una edad completamente secularizada, racionalista y reflexiva, y en la cual la fuerza de las religiones y del mito prácticamente ha desaparecido y ha sido sustituida por la ciencia y la filosofía (SN 31-32, 151, 173, 401, 434, etc.).

Esta división de la historia según tres fases ya nos advierte de la presencia, en el corazón de la teoría de la historia viquiana, de una visión antropológica según la cual la naturaleza humana no es una entidad que se presenta siempre igual a sí misma, sino algo en un proceso de desarrollo gradual de sus facultades. Así nos encontramos con unos primeros pueblos constituidos por hombres dotados de “raciocinio nulo, robustísimos sentidos y vigorosísima fantasía” (SN 375) que, a causa de su incapacidad de abstraerse, hacían el mundo inteligible mediante un proceso de transposición metafórico de significados guiado por la fantasía y la memoria. Por esta razón Vico sostiene que el lenguaje de estos hombres era poético, ya que era constituido por imágenes metafóricas —los ‘universales fantásticos’— en las cuales se condensaban en representaciones fantásticas fenómenos distintos mantenidos en la memoria, cuya naturaleza común era percibida mediante el ingenio (por ejemplo Jove, como representación del temor y el respeto divino, Aquiles del coraje, Ulises de la prudencia (SN 379, 402-403). Estas representaciones fantásticas e imaginativas constituyen los fundamentos del pensamiento que luego se articulará de manera racional. Principios que

funcionan con una lógica extrarracional: la creación de relaciones inteligibles mediante mecanismos tropológicos, en que el proceso de atribución de significado ocurre sin ningún tipo de mediación racional. Son estos universales fantásticos los que, según Vico, constituyen los fundamentos no solo de la sabiduría poética y primitiva de los primeros pueblos sino también de la sabiduría racional y civilizada de la tercera época. Es en los universales fantásticos que se encuentra el germen de las civilizaciones.^[5] Vico, de hecho, recupera uno de los significados originales del término ‘poesía’, como derivación del termino griego *poiesis*, es decir actividad creadora. Para él, los primeros pueblos eran pueblos de “poetas”, en el sentido de “creadores” (SN 376): seres humanos que creaban una realidad humana dando significado al mundo a través de *tropoi* (figuras retóricas) originales, que son como “pequeñas fabulas”, primeras explicaciones del mundo de carácter fantasioso e imaginativo. Estos “principios fabulosos” dan origen a una sabiduría original que, a diferencia de lo que pensaban los filósofos de su época, resulta no sólo “poética”, sino también “tosca”, al ser guiada por fuerzas extrarracionales, e incapaz de producir las elaboraciones abstractas y articuladas propias de la “razón desplegada” (SN 34, 186-187, 204-10, 361, 367, 376, 400-410, 774, 819, 933-34, et al.).

En suma, para Vico, los primeros pueblos se diferenciaban de los modernos por su *forma mentis*, ya que su manera de pensar (y de expresarse) era muy diferente de la nuestra actual, basada sobre todo en el uso de la racionalidad. Una manera imaginativa y fantasiosa, donde la relación con la experiencia directa, sensible, era mucho más directa e inmediata. Es por este motivo que Vico define esta sabiduría poética como “tosca”. Y sin embargo esto no quiere decir, en absoluto, que se trate de una sabiduría sin ningún fundamento, completamente fantasiosa y sin valor. Al contrario, para él es precisamente en este tipo de sabiduría primitiva que se encuentra el potencial que llevará al desarrollo de la cultura siguiente, más racional y sofisticada. Así que, como declara expresamente en la *Scienza nuova*, todo lo que existe en la segunda como resultado del proceso de reflexión racio-

5 Entre las interpretaciones más interesantes de la sabiduría poética hay que mencionar las de Ernesto Grassi, Donald P. Verene y Isaiah Berlin. Para Grassi, ésta representa el corazón de la crítica viquiana a la epistemología racionalista de matriz moderna, ya que revela como a raíz del pensamiento racional existe una lógica poética, fantasiosa y sensitiva (1992, pp. 54 y ss.). En una línea parecida, Verene sostuvo que Vico descubrió por primera vez la importancia desde el punto de vista epistemológico de los mecanismos metafóricos y de las facultades de la fantasía y la memoria (1987, pp. 33-35, 67-69). Berlin, por último, recaló la importancia como principio hermenéutico de esta teoría viquiana, encontrando en ella un importante punto de apoyo para su nota teoría sobre el pluralismo político (2000, pp. 62-76).

nal ya existía en la primera como resultado de este proceso de figuración imaginativa y sensitiva (SN 363). El punto fundamental de todo esto es que, según la perspectiva viquiana para reconstruir esta mentalidad originaria, desde la mentalidad ilustrada y filosófica de los modernos, se vuelve indispensable un difícil proceso hermenéutico y de autoanálisis de las maneras en que se forma el pensamiento, mucho más complejo que lo implícito en las nuevas filosofías modernas. Porque, siguiendo este hilo argumental, resulta que en la base de nuestra cultura, del desarrollo de las civilizaciones y, por lo tanto, del pensamiento en general se encuentran las necesidades humanas más concretas, las pasiones más vivas, y las facultades extrarracionales más creativas, que los filósofos a menudo menosprecian. Y es por eso que esta sabiduría poética, aunque sea “tosca”, aunque sea producto de las elaboraciones fantasiosas de los que sienten las pasiones, no constituye un acervo de creencias ilusorias, sino las primeras, fundamentales, respuestas a las exigencias que el hombre vive en su primer contacto con el mundo; respuestas que se perfeccionarán y consolidarán en aquella sabiduría colectiva que Vico denomina “sentido común”, que se encuentra en la base de las instituciones humanas (SN 22, 141-42, et al.).

Es aquí que radica el significado político y concreto de esta poesía originaria; un significado muy diferente de lo que a partir del Romanticismo hemos aprendido a dar a la creación poética como producto de un genio individual y aislado del mundo. En el surco de la tradición romana y luego humanística, desde Cicerón hasta Brunetto Latini, Dante, y Coluccio Salutati, marcada por la idea de que la palabra poética, elocuente, es la que conduce al origen de las comunidades políticas^[6], Vico descubre que en el origen de las civilizaciones y del conocimiento existe una poesía creadora.^[7] En esta poesía originaria Vico incluye todos los mitos antiguos que, lejos de ser meras invenciones o supersticiones, define como “fabulas verdaderas” y “verdades civiles”: o sea, explicaciones de acontecimientos reales que, al ser

6 Grassi (1980, pp. 6, 8-10, 91-92), considera esta idea viquiana uno de los ejemplos de las fuertes continuidades entre esta tradición romana y luego humanística y Vico. Recordamos por ejemplo, que en el *De inventione* Cicerón ensalzaba la elocuencia como la grande fuerza capaz de sacar a los hombres de su estado de naturaleza y constituirlos en una comunidad política; o la idea del trabajo y de la palabra como fundación de la política en Brunetto Latini, o del poeta-orador político en Dante, o finalmente la relación entre poesía y política en Coluccio Salutati. Cicerón, y luego Leonardo Bruni, consideraban que la definición de la esencia de una cosa (*res*) no parte de una idea abstracta, sino de su uso concreto (*usus*).

7 Las funciones de esta poesía para Vico son: “hallar fábulas sublimes conformes al entendimiento popular, y que ella mueva el ánimo lo máximo posible, para obtener el fin que se ha propuesto, enseñar al vulgo a operar virtuosamente” (SN 376). Estas funciones reflejan las que la retórica clásica atribuía a la elocuencia: segundo Cicerón, *docere, conciliare, movere*.

las primeras interpretaciones del propio pasado, constituyen “las primeras historias de los primeros pueblos”, es decir los cimientos sobre los cuales se forma su ‘memoria’, su conciencia en cuanto sujetos históricos (SN 34, 403, 198).

Ahora bien, resulta evidente que con este “descubrimiento” (SN 34) no sólo se revelaba el significado político y creativo de la poesía y de los mitos, sino que se ponía en causa el núcleo mismo de la epistemología cartesiana — uno de los pilares de la nueva cultura moderna— con su reivindicación de la autonomía y la supremacía de la razón. En la reconstrucción de Vico, de hecho, el pensamiento racional y científico no puede deducirse lógicamente de unos principios abstractos, no derivables y absolutos, como quería Descartes; sino que emerge de unos inicios, igualmente metafísicos y universales, pero fantasiosos e imaginativos, que derivan de necesidades concretas que se imponen a los individuos en su experiencia contingente del mundo (SN 460). El pensamiento, el lenguaje con que se expresa, y por lo tanto el conocimiento, no se presentan como un proceso uniforme de deducción lógica, sino que se desarrollan en varias fases, también todas ellas necesarias: desde un estado primariamente ‘mudo’, en el que una multitud de pasiones en constante fermento es incapaz de expresarse, seguido por una fase en la que éstas encuentran expresión a través de metáforas originarias, guiadas por la fantasía y la imaginación, y finalmente por uno de un lenguaje sistematizado y racional.^[8] Es esta verdad que Vico afirma no solamente contra Descartes, sino, en un sentido más amplio, contra la que define la “arrogancia de los doctos” (*boria dei dotti*): la errónea idea de aquellos intelectuales de sus tiempos que, reflexionando desde sus tiempos “luminosos, cultos y magníficos”, consideraban que los orígenes de las civilizaciones eran teoría abstractas y sofisticadas como las suyas (SN 59, cf. 127-128). De este modo, estos sabios desconocían las raíces concretas del pensamiento, su relación directa con las necesidades humanas más urgentes, y con las facultades creativas extrarracionales, terminando así en la que Vico llamó notoriamente la “barbarie de la reflexión”, que no es otra cosa que el empobrecimiento más extremo de una razón que se ha vuelto árida ya que ha perdido definitivamente el contacto vital con la experiencia del mundo (SN 1106).

8 Así, Vico reconstruye el significado de la expresión ‘lógica’ escribiendo: “Lógica proviene de *logos*, que primero y propiamente significó ‘fábula’, que pasó al italiano como *favella* (lengua). La fábula griega se llama también *muthos*, de donde procede el *mutus* latino, fábula que era mental en los tiempos *mudos*, la cual, según Strabón, existió antes que la lengua articulada o vocal. De ahí que *logos* signifique ‘idea’ y ‘palabra” (SN 401).

Para extrapolar el significado de estas consideraciones al campo de la filosofía de la historia y, a través de ello, a la cuestión de la contribución viquiana al diagnóstico de la 'crisis de la racionalidad moderna', podemos citar un fragmento de Hayden White en *Metahistory*, su famosa obra sobre la imaginación histórica en el siglo XIX en que se habla de Vico en estos términos:

Vico fue el único en su tiempo en percibir que el problema histórico era precisamente entender la medida en que una aprehensión del mundo puramente 'fabulosa' o 'mítica' podría ser adecuada, según cualquier tipo de racionalidad, como base para comprender una forma específica de vida y acción histórica. El problema, como Vico lo veía, consistía en revelar la racionalidad implícita incluso en las formas más irracionales de los imaginarios humanos, en la medida en que tales imaginarios habían realmente servido como bases para la construcción de instituciones sociales y culturales... Los Ilustrados, dado que veían la relación de la razón con la fantasía en términos de una oposición más que de una relación de una parte con el todo, eran incapaces de formular la cuestión de una manera fructífera desde el punto de vista historiográfico (1973, p. 52).

El hecho de haber recompuesto la unión entre razón y facultades creativas extrarracionales en una época en la cual ésta era seriamente cuestionada es sin duda uno de los grandes méritos de Vico y la mejor manifestación de la amplitud y la riqueza de su concepción filosófica; concepción que heredó, como veremos, de la tradición de la filosofía práctica y la retórica clásica y humanística. Y sin embargo la originalidad de este pensador no estriba solamente en su oposición a algunas tendencias culturales que se estaban asentando, sino también en el hecho de haber reinterpretado esta sabiduría antigua, con una sensibilidad moderna, con su gusto para las sistematizaciones científicas y las miradas amplias sobre los fenómenos. Es a causa de esta combinación de antiguo y moderno que Vico pudo desarrollar una filosofía de la historia, la primera en el sentido actual de la expresión, que tiene más puntos en común con las teorías hermenéuticas o antropológicas contemporáneas, y con las críticas contemporáneas del racionalismo ilustrado, que con las típicas filosofías de la historia modernas y su tendencia a reducir la historia a un proceso progresivo e impersonal con una lógica ineludible. La siguiente parte de este artículo será dedicada precisamente a mostrar cómo, bajo la superficie de la concepción viquiana de la historia, operan las enseñanzas de la retórica antigua y cómo éstas, reinterpretadas, dieron origen a una ciencia civil cuya actualidad es aún hoy sorprendente.

3. La *Scienza nuova*: una nueva ciencia del mundo civil, con raíces antiguas

Confirmando la aspiración a la sistematicidad y la cientificidad de la *Scienza nuova*, en la segunda sección del libro primero Vico procede a enumerar, según el modelo de la geometría y de las nuevas ciencias naturales, las que llama “*degnità*” (axiomas, o máximas), es decir los principios axiomáticos sobre los cuales se sostiene toda su análisis (SN 119).⁹ Fiel al principio metodológico aristotélico según el cual las ciencias deben comenzar desde los comienzos de sus materias, Vico establece que su *Scienza* tendrá que empezar a reflexionar desde cuándo “los primeros hombres comenzaron humanamente a pensar, y no desde cuándo los filósofos comenzaron a reflexionar sobre las ideas humanas”, ya que “la naturaleza de las cosas no es otra cosa que su nacimiento en ciertos tiempos y en ciertas maneras” (SN 347, 147). Se encuentran en estas consideraciones las raíces de los principios hermenéuticos con los cuales pudo llegar al descubrimiento de la sabiduría poética y a la reconstrucción de una mentalidad lejana en el tiempo. Principios que le permitieron no sólo proporcionar a la historia una profundidad inédita, sino mostrarnos también las limitaciones de aquellas concepciones de la mente humana que la querían reducir a una entidad estática y definible de una vez por todas. Es en la profundidad de nuestra mente, en su indeterminación, de hecho, que en última instancia radica para Vico la profundidad de la historia; y como ésta va desarrollándose por fases y cursos de evolución y decadencia, así aquélla muestra sus potencialidades (y sus regresos) en el curso del tiempo.

Pero, en tal densa noche de tinieblas en que se esconde encubierta la primera, para nosotros lejanísima, antigüedad, aparece esta luz eterna, que nunca desaparece, de esta verdad, de que de ninguna manera se puede dudar: que este mundo civil ha sido hecho ciertamente por los hombres, por lo que se pueden y se deben hallar sus principios en las modificaciones de nuestra propia mente humana. Por lo cual, cualquiera que reflexione sobre ello debe asombrarse de que todos los filósofos intentaran seriamente conseguir la ciencia de este mundo natural, del cual, puesto que Dios lo hizo, él solo posee la ciencia; y renunciaron a meditar sobre este mundo de las naciones, o sea mundo civil, del

9 Sin embargo hay que recordar, con Battistini (1997, p. 43), que para explicar la función de las ‘*degnità*’ en su teoría, Vico recurre a una analogía organicista comparándola a la función de la sangre en el cuerpo humano; analogía que pone de manifiesto la diferencia con los axiomas estáticos y metafísicos de las ciencias abstractas (SN 119).

cual, puesto que lo habían hecho los hombres, ellos mismos podían alcanzar la ciencia (SN 331).

En este celebre fragmento de la *Scienza nuova*, no se anuncia solo la intención de revalorizar el estudio del mundo civil respecto al ámbito natural, consecuencia del principio epistemológico *verum ipsum factum*, sino que también se vuelve a presentar en toda su problematicidad la cuestión de la condición humana.^[10] Como era para su admirado Platón, también para Vico la sociedad es el individuo escrito en grande; con la consecuencia que para entender la historia para él es necesario partir de la comprensión del alma humana.^[11] Así, por ejemplo, el paso que Vico descubre del pensamiento y el lenguaje, desde una fase muda y completamente sensitiva, sucesivamente poética imaginativa y fantasiosa, hasta un final abstracto y racional, se fundamenta en uno análogo en el alma humana por el cual “los hombres antes sienten sin advertir, luego advierten con ánimo perturbado y conmovido, finalmente reflexionan con la mente pura” (SN 218). Y, de la misma manera, el desarrollo histórico en tres fases —comienzo, desarrollo y decadencia— encuentra un correspondiente común a todos los individuos:

Los hombres primero sienten lo necesario, luego se preocupan por lo útil, sucesivamente advierten lo cómodo, más adelante se deleitan en el placer, a continuación se disuelven en el lujo, y finalmente enloquecen por apoderarse de las sustancias (SN 241).^[12]

Comprender el ánimo humano para Vico no significa, así como la filosofía tradicionalmente ha hecho, intentar conocer su esencia, sino comprenderla como algo en última instancia inagotable, con una hermenéutica

10 Según este notorio principio, que Vico introduce en su obra *De antiquissima italorum sapientia* (1710), para los hombres lo ‘verdadero’ coincide con lo que ellos han ‘hecho’. Es decir, para el hombre la categoría de ‘verdadero’ es aplicable solo para las cosas que él mismo ha producido, sus acciones, ya que la naturaleza, que es producto de Dios, no puede ser conocida como ‘verdadera’. Este principio deriva del presupuesto aristotélico según el cual conocer algo significa remontar sus causas, que implica que sólo quién hace algo puede conocer realmente sus motivos y por ello la naturaleza de lo que ha sido hecho. Este principio Vico lo recuperó y reinterpretó, en contraposición al *cogito ergo sum* cartesiano, hasta transformarlo en uno de los pilares epistemológicos de su teoría.

11 “... en el mundo de los ánimos humanos, que es el mundo civil, o sea el mundo de las naciones” (SN 2).

12 Siempre según la analogía entre el desarrollo de las civilizaciones y el de los individuos, Vico define los primeros pueblos como los “niños del género humano” (SN 498). Sobre esta analogía entre individuo y sociedad, véase también los párrafos: 186-187, 206, 211-212, 231-232, 375.

que revela, a través del análisis de sus obras y actos a lo largo de la historia, sus potencialidades. Es este proceso de humanización del mundo mediante el cual el hombre “de sí mismo ha hecho un mundo entero” (SN 405) el que se vuelve el principal objeto de estudio de la nueva ciencia viquiana, proceso que no es otra cosa que la historia de la humanidad.^[13]

A la reducción del sujeto a una entidad abstracta y finita por parte de cierta filosofía moderna, Vico opuso una profundidad psicológica de antigua descendencia con la cual consiguió, por primera vez, atribuir al estudio de los asuntos civiles una conciencia histórica. En primer lugar, contra la teoría cartesiana, que, debido a su obsesión con la búsqueda lógica de la verdad y su menoscabo de las teorías humanísticas, era incapaz de entender el desarrollo históricos de la humanidad, sus orígenes míticos, y en general la complejidad de la condición humana. En segundo lugar, también contra aquellos pensadores de la teoría del contrato social, como Hobbes, o de la ley natural, como Grocio, Selden, o Pufendorf, que postulando una naturaleza humana siempre igual a sí misma, obtenían la misma visión simplista de Descartes. Este tipo de planteamientos no ofrecen las herramientas hermenéuticas para penetrar en la riqueza de significados contenida en la infinita variedad de situaciones concretas, y determinada por la igualmente infinita variedad de respuestas que la creatividad humana ha dado a la exigencia de satisfacer sus necesidades, tanto materiales como espirituales. Por lo contrario, la ciencia nueva propuesta por Vico supo sacar provecho de las herramientas hermenéuticas de la retórica antigua y de la filosofía práctica, con las que consiguió entender mejor que nunca la especificidad del ámbito de la historia, liberándolo tanto de la casualidad absoluta de los epicúreos (y de su epígono, Hobbes) como del mecanicismo de los estoicos (y de su epígono, Espinoza) (SN 335, 179, et. al.). En palabras de Berlin:

La idea central en el corazón del pensamiento de Vico es que, tanto en el individuo como en la sociedad, una fase no sucede a otra de manera casual (como en el pensamiento de los epicúreos), y tampoco según una secuencia de causas mecánicas y efectos (como enseñaban los estoicos), sino como etapas en la búsqueda de un propósito inteligible: el esfuerzo del hombre de entenderse a sí mismo y a su mundo, para realizar sus capacidades en ello (2000, p. 55).

13 Como escribió Isaiah Berlin (2000, pp. 8-9), Vico mostró que: “la naturaleza del hombre no es, como se ha pensado durante mucho tiempo, algo estático e inalterable o incluso inalterado; que tampoco es tanto que ella contenga un núcleo central o una esencia, que permanece idéntica en el cambio; que los propios esfuerzos de los hombres de entender el mundo en el que se encuentran y de adaptarlo a sus necesidades, físicas y espirituales, transforman continuamente sus mundos y ellos mismos.”

Si nos detuviéramos un instante a considerar la sensibilidad con la que Vico supo percibir la especificidad del ámbito de la historia, no nos sería difícil discernir los motivos por los que se le ha considerado un precursor de la moderna diferenciación entre la *Geisteswissenschaften* e *Naturwissenschaften* y uno de los fundadores de la moderna tradición hermenéutica. Ahora bien, lo que queremos destacar aquí es cómo esta capacidad de interpretación, que Vico transformó en una originalísima filosofía de la historia, encuentra su raíz en las enseñanzas de la retórica antigua y humanística.

En la sección anterior, ya hemos visto cómo el gran ‘descubrimiento’ de Vico, la teoría del origen poético de las civilizaciones, nos reconduce al corazón mismo de la retórica antigua: la idea de que es la palabra poética, elocuente, la que funda y mantiene en vida las comunidades políticas. Continuando el análisis, podemos afirmar que también los requisitos que Vico consideraba necesarios para el estudio de los acontecimientos históricos coinciden en buena medida con las facultades intelectuales y caracteriales, y el mismo tipo de formación, que para la tradición retórica eran indispensables para un buen orador y hombre político. Esto resulta evidente, en primer lugar, si nos fijamos en esta misma teoría de la sabiduría poética de los primeros pueblos. Pues el mismo hecho de remontar hasta los orígenes, para desde allí recorrer con la mente otra vez el camino del proceso de desarrollo, es un acto que requiere en gran parte las mismas capacidades interpretativas que la retórica consideraba indispensables para aquella identificación emotiva con el interlocutor, presupuesto de cada auténtica comunicación. Lo que la nueva ciencia viquiana cumple, de hecho, es un acto de reconstrucción, desde una época racionalista, de una mentalidad antigua y muy diferente, movida por “pasiones violentísimas” y “robustísimas fantasías” (SN 340, 34). Vico se refiere a esta tarea en un párrafo de la *Scienza nuova*:

Para encontrar la manera de este primero pensamiento humano en el mundo de los gentiles nos encontramos con ásperas dificultades que nos han costado veinte años de investigación y (tuvimos) que descender desde estas nuestras naturalezas humanas civilizadas hasta aquella completamente fieras y desmedidas, que nos es del todo imposible imaginar y sólo con grandes esfuerzos podemos entender (SN 338, cf. 34).

Para este difícilísimo ejercicio hermenéutico y de comprensión es sin duda necesaria la capacidad de raciocinio que tanto alaban los filósofos.

fos modernos, y sin embargo será igualmente indispensable recurrir a las mismas facultades imaginativas y mnemónicas en que se distinguían los antiguos, y que, aunque permanecen vivas en esta época moderna, pierden fuerza por la hegemonía de la razón.^[14] De esta manera, Vico está trazando el perfil de una ciencia basada en una concepción de la actividad reflexiva mucho más amplia que la moderna, racionalista; una en que las capacidades racionales deben siempre ir acompañadas por aquellas extrarracionales: siendo éste precisamente uno de los principios básicos de la retórica antigua, que entendía que la auténtica persuasión no sólo necesita argumentos lógicamente correctos, sino también emotivamente afinados.

Comprender los hechos históricos requiere para Vico un tipo particular de razón, que podríamos llamar ‘razón histórica’ y que se diferencia en parte de aquella necesaria para las ciencias naturales. Esta razón engendra un tipo de conocimiento mediante una forma de argumentar, y de hacer inteligible los hechos, que es esencialmente narrativa. La ciencia viquiana es una ciencia que no procede con deducciones lógicas a partir de axiomas absolutos, sino que, partiendo de los orígenes míticos del pensamiento, reconstruye el desarrollo de los acontecimientos sucesivos dándoles un significado coherente a través de una forma que se asemeja mucho al modo de funcionar de un relato. De la misma manera que Quintiliano, uno de los autores canónicos de la tradición retórica, consideraba la *narratio* como el fulcro del arte de la persuasión, Vico puso ésta en el centro de su filosofía, redescubriendo su eficacia para representar los acontecimientos distintamente humanos que componen la historia. Esta razón narrativa, así como enseñaba la retórica, se fundamenta: en la memoria, con la cual se recuerdan los eventos y los personajes del pasado, para darles nuevamente vida en el presente; en la fantasía, con la cual se les da forma, cuerpo y sensibilidad; en el ingenio con que se crean conexiones significativas entre cosas que a primera vista parecen lejanas y desconectadas; y finalmente en la razón, que

14 Sobre este importante punto de la teoría viquiana existe un cierto debate entre los estudiosos. Si, como hemos visto, estudiosos como Verene, Berlin, y Grassi, recalcan el papel fundamental que para Vico tiene la imaginación y la fantasía en la creación del conocimiento histórico, en particular en la reconstrucción de la mentalidad antigua poética; otros, como Leon Pompa (1990), sostienen que aunque la imaginación es ciertamente importante, para Vico el verdadero conocimiento sería posible solo gracias a la contribución fundamental de la actividad racional. De hecho, en los párrafos 34 y 338 Vico habla de una “imposibilidad” para los contemporáneos, marcados por una mentalidad racional, de pensar de una manera completamente imaginativa y fantasiosa así como lo hacían los primeros pueblos. La cuestión es naturalmente muy compleja. Será suficiente señalar, en sintonía con los tres primeros estudiosos mencionados, que la función de la imaginación y la fantasía para Vico viene antes de la sistematización racional, asumiendo de esta manera una función crucial.

controla la coherencia de los significados creados. Además, es imprescindible otra capacidad que la retórica consideraba la primera en intervenir en la creación de un discurso: la *inventio*, es decir, la capacidad de encontrar a través del ingenio los argumentos más significativos con los que desarrollar un discurso.^[15] De esta capacidad la retórica hizo un verdadero arte —la *topica* (del griego *topoi*, o sea, lugares)— que Vico definirá como “un arte de conducir bien la primera operación de la mente, enseñando todos los lugares que hay que recorrer para conocer cuanto hay en la cosa que se quiere conocer bien, es decir, integralmente” (SN 497, cf. 498); o en la interpretación de Grassi (1992, cap. 1), la capacidad de encontrar creativamente aquellas premisas sensitivas y extrarracionales desde las cuales cualquier tipo de pensamiento, y por ende de conocimiento, debe necesariamente comenzar.^[16]

La nueva ciencia imaginada por Vico, por lo tanto, es una ciencia de la historia, que hace inteligible el pasado erigiendo una especie de “teatro de la memoria” (Verene, 1987, p. 100) una reconstrucción que nos hace comprender los acontecimientos del pasado a través de una narrativa con la que los recordamos y revivimos. Es esta misma arte que, en su opinión, autentificaba la ‘cientificidad’ de esta ciencia y la ‘veracidad’ de su conocimiento. Como escribe en un importantísimo pasaje:

Quien medita esta Ciencia se narra a sí mismo esta historia ideal eterna, pues —habiendo sido este mundo de naciones ciertamente hecho por los hombres... y por eso debiéndose hallar el modo dentro de las modificaciones de nuestra propia mente humana— con aquella prueba ‘debió, debe, deberá’, él mismo se la hace; ya que, cuando quien hace las cosas es el mismo del que las cuenta, allí la historia no puede ser más cierta (SN 349).

A pesar de teorizar una diferencia entre ciencias naturales y ciencias humanas, Vico no renuncia en absoluto a la pretensión de científicidad para estas últimas. Aún más, según el principio del *verum-factum* son justo las

15 Es ciertamente plausible que no sea casual, como ha sugerido Battistini (1998, pp. 284-85), que en la famosa frase “... por lo que se puede y se debe encontrar sus principios dentro de las modificaciones de nuestra mente humana” (SN 331) en que se enuncia el principio por el cual para investigar la historia es necesario investigar las “modificaciones de la mente humana”, Vico elija la palabra “encontrar” por su conexión semántica con la palabra *inventio* (*re-invenire*, es decir re-encontrar).

16 Uno de los mayores deméritos del método cartesiano, según Vico, estriba en su desinterés para el arte tópica. Puesto que toda la atención se concentra en el proceso de deducción de conclusiones verdaderas desde premisas dadas axiomáticamente, la búsqueda creativa de aquellas premisas es sistemáticamente olvidada.

ciencias humanas las que pueden conseguir un verdadero conocimiento, ya que el hombre sólo puede conocer realmente lo que él mismo produce: sus acciones. Entonces, ¿cómo se consigue una narración ‘verdadera’? En los comienzos de la *Scienza nuova*, Vico se refiere a su ciencia como a una “nueva arte crítica” en la cual:

la filosofía se pone a examinar la filología (o sea la doctrina de todas las cosas que dependen del arbitrio humano, como son todas las historias de las lenguas, de las costumbres y de los hechos tanto de paz como de guerra de los pueblos), la cual, debido a su deplorable oscuridad de motivos y la casi infinita variedad de efectos, ella tuvo casi horror de tratar; y la reduce a una forma de ciencia, descubriendo en ella el diseño de una historia ideal eterna (SN 7).

Para Vico la capacidad crítica de la filosofía es la que tiene la responsabilidad de descubrir los principios verdaderos sobre los cuales se rige el relato que esta razón narrativa crea con los sucesos históricos que la filología halla, llegando así al resultado final de una ‘historia ideal eterna.’ Y aquí otra vez emergen las enseñanzas de la retórica: de hecho, detrás de la ‘nueva arte crítica’ viquiana resultado de la soldadura entre filosofía y filología, se ve claramente el antiguo ideal de la unión entre filosofía y retórica, promovida desde Isócrates, Cicerón y Quintiliano, hasta los humanistas renacentistas. Un ideal de conocimiento comprensivo, en el que las competencias prácticas ofrecidas por la educación cívica de la retórica encontraban su fundamento en el saber general sobre los problemas fundamentales de la filosofía, y a su vez, esto su era confirmación concreta en el ámbito de práctica al cual la retórica preparaba. Este mismo ideal, que tendrá una gran influencia en la cultura humanística renacentista, será una vez más recuperado por Vico en su concepción de un exhaustivo ‘nuevo arte crítica’, donde una filosofía que “contempla la razón, de donde viene la ciencia de lo verdadero” se complementa con una filología que “observa la autoridad del arbitrio humano” (es decir la certeza de los hechos históricos) (SN 138).^[17] Ello nos demuestra la existencia en Vico de dos impulsos cruciales que él intentó, lucidamente, conjugar en su *Scienza nuova*: por un lado, la atención hacia los hechos concretos y la preocupación con que las verdades de

¹⁷ Recuperando este antiguo ideal, Vico escribe que “este mismo axioma [la *degnità* enunciada en el párrafo 138, NdA] demuestra haber fallado por mitad los filósofos a no dar certeza a sus razonamientos con la autoridad de los filólogos y, de la misma manera, por otra mitad los filólogos que no se curaron de dar a su autoridad la sanción de la verdad con el razonamiento de los filósofos; que se lo hubieran hecho, hubieran sido más útiles a las republicas y se habrían anticipado a nosotros al meditar esta Ciencia” (SN 140).

los filósofos no se quedasen, por así decirlo, en el aire, y por otro lado, la exigencia de que el conocimiento histórico de la filología asuma un valor más general, a través del examen crítico y la capacidad de abstracción de la filosofía.

4. Conclusión

Cabe repetir, en conclusión, que Vico no fue un intelectual con la mente nostálgicamente dirigida hacia el pasado, incapaz de entender los desarrollos culturales más novedosos de su época. Al contrario, en él era clara la percepción de estar viviendo en una época de grandes transformaciones en la que no cabían actitudes de este tipo, como demuestra el interés respetuoso que siempre tuvo en pensadores emblemáticamente modernos como Hobbes, Bacon, Descartes, o Espinoza, y la fascinación que los grandes descubrimientos de la nueva ciencia natural ejercieron sobre él. En particular, como hemos visto, Vico compartió aquel anhelo típico de los modernos hacia la refundación y la sistematización del saber, tanto que es probable que el adjetivo ‘nuevo’ en el título de su obra maestra quisiera aludir al *Novum organum* de Bacon y a los *Dialoghi delle scienze nuove* de Galileo. Para su nueva arte crítica —unión de filosofía y filología— Vico reclamó explícitamente el título de ‘ciencia’, proclamando haber llegado al descubrimiento de los principios de la ‘historia ideal eterna’. Y, sin embargo, esta aspiración a la universalidad científica se debe matizar por dos razones. En primer lugar, porque para Vico existe un abismo insuperable entre el saber absoluto accesible sólo a Dios y aquello accesible a los hombres. El famoso principio del *verum-factum* aplicado al ámbito de las ciencias naturales implica que entre la nueva ciencia de Vico y las de Galileo y Descartes hay una diferencia crucial, pues aquel principio sanciona la imposibilidad para la mente humana de alcanzar un conocimiento absoluto sobre las cosas que no son producto de nuestras acciones. Y, en segundo lugar, porque sí por un lado el mismo principio aplicado al ámbito de los asuntos humanos implica la posibilidad de una auténtica ‘ciencia’ civil; por el otro, esto va entendido junto con la diferencia que Vico establece entre *genitum* —lo que es dado al hombre en cuanto producto de la creación divina— y *creatum* —el producto de la creación humana. Lo que el hombre puede conocer, siempre retrospectivamente, es el significado de sus acciones, pero no el significado último de la historia, que para Vico es fruto de la Divina Providencia (Voegelin, 1998, pp. 96-102). De este modo, su filosofía resulta

indemne ante la tentación en la que cayeron muchos filósofos modernos al considerarse poseedores de la llave del misterio de la historia. En este sentido, la teoría de los *corsi e ricorsi* debe ser entendida como la comprensión de una regularidad histórica, más que como la afirmación de una necesidad histórica (Mazzotta, 1999, p. 219). Se evita así la necesidad de las 'leyes de hierro' de las filosofías de la historia modernas y, al mismo tiempo, con la posibilidad de un nuevo *ricorso* se abre el espacio para la libertad humana. Esto debería aclarar porqué, a la luz de los desarrollos culturales sucesivos, la denuncia viquiana contra la 'barbarie de la reflexión', su preocupación para evidenciar los límites de la mente humana, debe considerarse, junto con su descripción de la riqueza de sus capacidades, uno de los legados más importantes de Vico.

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CARLO MICHELSTAEDTER Y EL DEBER DE SER UNO MISMO

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El pensamiento de Carlo Michelstaedter es un ejemplo de filosofía italiana que se sale de las líneas académicas oficiales para liberar y ampliar el mundo del pensamiento occidental de los dogmas de la industria de la cultura que verá su cumplimiento en el siglo XX. El deber de liberar al individuo de las cadenas de la vida retórica, que todo determina, es la tensión producida por el camino de la persuasión, un recorrido que tiene que empezar por el individuo mismo para llegar a sí mismo. La posesión de la propia individualidad es una continua búsqueda, sin límites, que solo se puede lograr, en parte, gracias a la ayuda que nos propone la reflexión del filósofo. El mensaje de Carlo Michelstaedter es totalmente actual y siempre lo será. Este artículo tiene el objetivo de poder difundir la palabra del autor y subrayar sus aspectos principales.

Palabras claves: Michelstaedter, retórica, persuasión, philopsichia, existencia, autenticidad, deber

The thought of Carlo Michelstaedter is an example of Italian philosophy that goes out from official academic lines, to freeing and to widening the world of Western thought from the dogma of cultural industry which will see its completion in the twentieth century. The duty of liberating the subject from the chains of rhetoric life, which determines everything, is the tension generated by the persuasion's way, a path that has to start from the subject and arrive to the subject itself. The possession of his own individuality is a continuous research, limitless, which it's possible to reach, partially, with the help of the philosopher's reflection. The message of Carlo Michestaedter is totally current and forever will be so. This article has a diffusion purpose of the autor's teaching and point out its major features.

Key words: Michelstaedter, rhetoric, persuasion, philopsichia, existence, authenticity, duty.

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El pensamiento de Carlo Michelstaedter^[1] intenta representar la contradicción interna de la existencia, caracterizada por la presencia de la *rettorica* y de la *persuasione*.

Su intención es de denunciar la existencia inauténtica de los seres humanos, que viven una vida hecha de ilusiones y falsas esperanzas. Michelstaedter, nacido en una familia de Gorizia, de origen judía, amaba pasar sus días filosofando con los amigos Nino Paternolli y Enrico Mreule, protagonistas de uno de sus diálogos. Seguirá su vida académica, entre el 1905 y 1910, en el Istituto di Studi Superiori de Florencia. Aunque había pensado en estudiar Bellas Artes, acabó eligiendo la carrera de Letras. En Florencia vivió cuatros años, y maduró la idea de la persuasión. Durante este período conocerá a los que serán sus amigos Gaetano Chiavacci, futuro curador de sus obras, y Vladimiro Arangio Ruiz, que será un conocido filósofo académico. Estos años de estudios y diversión, de nuevas amistades, permiten al autor conocer una realidad nueva de la de Gorizia, su ciudad natal, donde siempre tuvo una vida intelectual muy activa en la que será su última habitación, la buhardilla del amigo Paternolli. Durante su permanencia en Florencia su vida quedó marcada por el suicidio de su hermano Gino, emigrado en Nueva York por razones de trabajo, y por el suicidio de Nadia Baraden, una mujer a la que daba clases particulares de italiano y a la cual estaba muy ligado. Marcado por el dolor de las muertes de estas per-

1 Carlo Michelstaedter nace en Gorizia el 3 de junio de 1887 en una familia de origen judía, cuarto y último hijo de Alberto Michelstaedter y Emma Luzzatto. De su infancia se sabe poco y casi exclusivamente a través de los recuerdos de su hermana Paula, solo dos años mayor que él. De los otros dos hermanos, Gino y Elda, le separan la edad y los eventos de la vida. Gino en 1983 se embarcará con rumbo a New York, para trabajar como empleado en la empresa de su tío Giovanni Luzzatto, y Elda deja de vivir con su familia después de su matrimonio. De 1897 a 1905 estudia en el Staatsgymnasium de Gorizia donde conoce los que serán sus amigos, Nino Paternolli y Enrico Mreule. En 1905 se inscribe en la Facultad de matemáticas en la Universidad de Viena, pero deshecha esta idea para trasladarse a Florencia donde empezará sus estudios en el Istituto di Studi Superiori. La lejanía de su familia le hace sufrir, pero aprovecha para gozar del arte de la ciudad y para desarrollar sus dotes artísticas.

En los años venideros el entusiasmo inicial deja sitio a la amargura y a la desilusión, debidas a algunos tristes eventos personales y a la toma de conciencia de la hipocresía del mundo académico y cultural en general. Michelstaedter en Florencia estudia de forma febril, en particular el pensamiento griego, el evangelio y el pensamiento oriental. Numerosos fueron sus intentos para encontrar trabajo como traductor sin tener éxito. En 1909 tras haber finalizado el último examen del curso de *laurea*, vuelve para Gorizia y en otoño de ese mismo año empieza a redactar su tesis *La persuasione e la rettorica*. Su amigo Enrico Mreule parte para Argentina para vivir como *persuasore*. Michelstaedter quedará en Gorizia sufriendo por no encontrar su camino. El trabajo de su tesis se le hace siempre más intenso, hasta aislar al autor del mundo exterior. Dada la premura impuesta por los límites para la entrega de su trabajo intenta terminarlo y lo concluye el mismo día del aniversario de su madre. El 17 de octubre de 1910, tras una dura discusión con su madre se suicida a golpe de pistola.

sonas queridas, en octubre de ese mismo año, ve partir para Sudamérica el amigo Mreule, que para el autor será siempre un ejemplo de seguir.

Lo que está a la base de la reflexión michelstaedteriana es el reclamo a la interioridad, a la reapropiación de sí mismo por parte del individuo, que tiene el deber de convertirse en dueño de su existencia y no quedarse pasivo frente a los condicionamientos y las reglas impuestas del mundo exterior. Lo que describe el autor es un recorrido de liberación, también a través de la ayuda de pensadores como los Presocráticos, Sócrate, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Jesús y Leopardi. Michelstaedter se relaciona con estos autores para testimoniar la vida ilusoria de los seres que viven fuera de la Persuasión. Ellos son los individuos incapaces de estabilidad, consignados totalmente al devenir, para los cuales la necesidad es el movimiento, son y no son, conocen y no conocen. Contra ellos el autor amonesta que el ser es necesario que sea de todo o que no sea para nada, sugiriendo explícitamente, a través una interpretación original del dicho parménideo, que el camino de la persuasión ha de ser entendido a la luz de la estabilidad del ser, y el de la retórica bajo la luz de la vía recorrida por los mortales, marcada por la inestabilidad del devenir. La retórica representa la realidad cotidiana de cada individuo, la máscara del dolor, el engaño de vivir la propia vida. La unidad del ser, es decir, del individuo con el propio “yo”, es algo que tiene que venir desde el individuo mismo, de la propia interioridad, no es una teoría para seguir o una doctrina filosófica. El sujeto persuadido tiene que luchar en contra de la retórica de la vida que le obliga a pensar al futuro y a satisfacer las necesidades que lo ligan a su propia continuación en la Tierra. Michelstaedter nos lleva a la salida de un recorrido ya escrito, nos pone enfrente del origen del declino de la historia de Occidente, donde la palabra se convierte en un signo abstracto y sin sentido que ilusiona a los seres con el hecho de tener una propia individualidad autónoma. El mundo retórico abraza por entero la vida de los individuos, está presente en el lenguaje y en la experiencia. Fijar la realidad exclusivamente en conceptos es la forma para alejarse de una existencia auténtica. En esta perspectiva la ciencia es para el autor el mundo de las falsas certezas, es un medio para aliviar la condición angustiada propia del vivir. La ciencia es el mundo de la separación; el individuo contemporáneo es el individuo científico por excelencia. La ciencia obra en la separación por medio de la actividad de los especialistas; el destino de la técnica es la sectorialización global y el especialismo técnico-operativo. La técnica para Michelstaedter representa el máximo nivel de la separación del individuo de sí mismo y del todo. El especialista es el retórico contemporáneo. El lenguaje auténtico, la única palabra capaz de escapar de la

retórica, debe darse a la acción, debe ser la expresión de la identidad entre pensamiento y vida. El lenguaje retórico es un lenguaje de contraseñas, una colección de definiciones útiles para no perderse en la correlación de los eventos. El lenguaje de la Persuasión tiene que coincidir con la elección ética del individuo de reencontrarse a sí mismo, y esta será la ocasión para reconstruir las bases para una sociedad persuadida.

La crítica de la sociedad hecha por el autor es una de las más penetrantes y radicales del Noveciento. Michelstaedter ha podido denunciar a la sociedad burguesa a él contemporánea, poniendo en evidencia sus patologías y contradicciones. El concepto de Persuasión contiene en su fuero interno un mensaje de amor y de no violencia, de justicia y deber, entendidos de forma nueva. La relevancia ética de la Persuasión asume una nueva dimensión política, inédita, en la cual los seres no son reducidos a funciones de un engranaje supraindividual, sino que encuentran en las relaciones interindividuales la ocasión de descubrirse juntos libres. El encuentro con el “otro” se convierte en una oportunidad para ser sí mismos y no una limitación. El practicar la acción de donar crea a seres libres y justos, y solo entre individuos llenos de vida y amor pueden surgir relaciones fundadas en la justicia y la no violencia. El individuo debe entender la posibilidad de poderse crear todo por sí mismo y de no depender de los demás. En la elección de encontrarse a sí mismo el sujeto agarra su “yo” auténtico adentrándose en un recorrido interior caracterizado por la ausencia de estrellas fijas para orientarse, siempre objeto de los ataques del mundo retórico por el cual está totalmente rodeado. El persuadido está en constate equilibrio entre la lucha contra el miedo a la muerte y la tensión hacia la justicia. El autor se interroga de forma profunda sobre el sentido de la vida, pero en la tentativa de darnos una respuesta se enfrenta a la insuficiencia del lenguaje. Delante del ideal de la persuasión, la razón reducida por el uso retórico a simple cálculo para la supervivencia, olvida su destino universal. Con su obras, desenvuelven un papel fundamental para entender el pensamiento del autor, las cartas escritas a los amigos y a los familiares. En la última carta a la madre, que data del 10 de septiembre de 1910, la brecha entre la retórica y la persuasión en la vida del autor se hace insoportable:

“Io ho qualche cosa da fare a questo mondo, so quello voglio fare [...] perché io so come si può avere qualche cosa nella vita, come si può essere uomini; so che non si può attender questo dagli altri né chiederlo in nessuna delle situazioni preparate – ma che sta in me, nella rettitudine della vita, nel fare tutto – nell’aver la forza di viver la propria vita: la condizione unica per avere qualcosa, e per essere qualcuno. E non si può dar niente a nessuno, non si può essere

niente per nessuno, se non s'ha, se non si è per se stessi. Io so cosa devo fare per poter essere qualche cosa per te, per voi, per gli amici, per tutti gli altri. E in questo sono sicuro e tranquillo – perché mentre gli altri si fan- no illusi sulle cose o sulle persone e da queste dipendono - io so che non ho da attendermi niente da nessuno; perciò non ho niente da temere dalla vita, niente mi può cambiare, niente mi può fermare”. (Michelstaedter, 1983: 450-451)

El trabajo para la tesis de licenciatura en este momento es febril, su aislamiento total, come muy poco y duerme en el suelo como un asceta. Palabras ordinarias como amor, posesión, muerte, dolor, relación, voluntad, conciencia y temporalidad, cruzadas por la corriente de la persuasión se cargan de un sentido distinto y al mismo tiempo resuenan como un preludio del gesto trágico del autor que puso fin a la vida del autor. Los conceptos clave de la obra de Michelstaedter se encuentran en la tesis de licenciatura que acordó con el profesor Girolamo Vitelli al final de sus estudios en el Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze, que tenía en consideración I *concetti di persuasione e retorica in Platone e Aristotele*. Detrás estaba la elaboración de la *tesina* de tercer año *sull’Orazione pro Q. Ligario* de Cicerone, traducida por Brunetto Latini, que lo había conducido a confrontarse con los textos de Platón y Aristoteles. La existencia para el autor está marcada por una insuperable duplicidad, es una polaridad compuesta por la Persuasión y la Retórica. La vida puede ser vivida de forma auténtica o de forma inauténtica por parte del individuo. *Rettorica* deviene cada relación inauténtica de la conciencia individual con el mundo, y eso puede ser superado solo gracias a la *Persuasione*. El camino de la autenticidad es lo que va en dirección del ser persuadido; un individuo que no poniendo más su atención para las cosas y los demás de forma instrumentalista, violenta e injusta, se identifica con ellos, los ama por lo que son y se relaciona con justicia. Su pensamiento es unidad entre teoría y praxis, intersección de pensamiento y vida. En esto estuvo inspirado por la palabra de Parménides “lo stesso è pensare de essere”. El camino hacia la persuasión no está indicado por el autor, es un camino sin señales, para trazar, una vía oscura e indefinida que tiene que ser buscada de forma individual por cada ser. Este concepto no puede ser exprimido, sino vivido y responde a una exigencia ética de justicia. El individuo es el único que puede buscar el camino auténtico de la existencia, empezando por sí mismo para llegar a sí mismo, saliendo así del dominio de la lógica retórica que lo rodea. Un dominio omnipresente, que se esconde de la mirada humana y que la aleja de la verdad. El ser humano tiene que darse cuenta de la no verdad de su propia existencia cotidiana, reflexionando sobre sí mismo y escapando de lo que le viene presentado

como verdadero y justo. Tiene que coger las riendas de su existencia y encaminarse a la vía de la persuasión, la única que le permitirá ser consciente de la realidad. Seres persuadidos de la antigüedad fueron para Michelstaedter Parménides, Heráclito, Empédocles e Sócrates; estos encontraron el camino tan buscado por el autor. Desde las primeras páginas de la *Persuasione e la Rettorica* es posible encontrar sus nombres como ejemplos indiscutibles de una existencia consciente y auténtica:

“Lo dissero ai Greci Parmenide, Eraclito, Empedocle; ma Aristotele li trattó da naturalisti inesperti; lo disse Socrate, ma ci fabbricarono su quattro sistemi” (Michelstaedter, 1995: 3).

La vida de los individuos es descrita por el autor en términos dramáticos, de hecho es equiparada al imagen de un peso que nunca se sacia de su deseo de caer siempre más hacia abajo:

“So che voglio e non ho cosa io voglia. Un peso pende ad un gancio, e per pender soffre che non può scendere: non può uscire dal gancio, poichè quantè peso pende e quanto pende dipende. Lo vogliamo soddisfare: lo liberiamo dalla sua dipendenza; lo lasciamo andare, che sazi la sua fame del più basso, e scenda indipendentemente fino a che sia contento di scendere. – Ma in nessun punto raggiunto fermarsi lo accontenta e vuol pur scendere, ché il prossimo punto supera in bassezza quello che esso ogni volta tenga. E nessuno dei punti futuri sarà tale da accontentarlo, che necessario sarà alla sua vita, fintanto che lo aspetti più basso; ma ogni volta fatto presente ogni punto gli sarà fatto vuoto d'ogni attrattiva non più essendo più basso; così che in ogni punto esso manca dei punti più bassi e vieppiù questi lo attraggono: sempre lo tiene un ugual fame del più basso, e infinita gli resta pur sempre la volontà di scendere. - [...] La sua vita è questa mancanza della sua vita. [...] Il peso è a se stesso impedimento a posseder la sua vita e non dipende più da altro che da se stesso in ciò che non gli è dato di soddisfarsi. Il peso non può mai essere persuaso” (*idem*: 7-8).

El individuo corre tras el futuro en busca de poseer todo lo que es contingente y provisorio, preocupándose por su continuación. La realidad de la cotidianidad, en la cual el individuo es totalmente absorbido, está dirigida hacia la satisfacción de las necesidades en vista del futuro. El ser humano dirige su atención a las cosas que le dan placer. El logro del placer es la voluntad de dicho ser hacia el futuro. El mundo de la retórica es el mundo de la cotidianidad, un refugio del miedo a la muerte y los seres humanos prefieren este mundo al de la persuasión. Quien quiere deshacerse de los recorridos ya preconcebidos de la existencia retórica, tiene que aprovechar

su presente y percibir cada instante como si fuese el último. El ser *persuaso* es creador de su vida. El persuadido es el que detiene el tiempo de ansiedad del dios de la *philopsichia*, el amor por la vida, el dios del placer; una vida que no es vida sino supervivencia. Carlo Michelstaedter quiere atacar una organización social consolidada y cerrada en sí misma. En su obra maestra, en la parte que dedica a la “Rettorica della vita” y en particular en su “Discorso al popolo” podemos encontrar una crítica muy radical dirigida a la clase burguesa. En ella, el autor imagina una conversación con un señor grueso que representa a la burguesía, el cual pasa su tiempo entre deberes y ociosidades varias, depositando su confianza en la sociedad en cuanto organismo defensor de sus derechos, y en contra de cualquier evento impredecible y que amenace su seguridad. Este individuo simboliza los valores de su tiempo, representados por el equilibrio entre los placeres del cuerpo y del espíritu, por el culto a los derechos y a los deberes, por el sentido de respeto hacia las instituciones. Michelstaedter quiere demostrar la irracionalidad de estos valores, quiere desmitificar la racionalidad burguesa como algo que trascende al individuo, pretende abatir todo tipo de racionalidades supraindividuales propuestas por cualquier clase o género. El autor critica a la clase burguesa para exaltar la individualidad. El aspecto ético de su obra está estrechamente ligado a lo político, que representa el cambio social por parte del individuo; el autor analiza las relaciones humanas derivadas de una visión inauténtica de los eventos, y quiere restaurar estas relaciones sobre la base de la persuasión. A través del problema social quiere encontrar una redención para el individuo. Cada ser viviente es un medio para la continuación del otro, que se impone a sí mismo a través de la violencia. La organización social es un falso remedio para esta violencia, la cual pretende extirpar, haciendo aparecer la lucha entre los individuos, provocada por su apego a la vida, como un acto de amor. El individuo se ilusiona con ser libre pero depende de las necesidades; es víctima de un espejismo, creyendo tener posesión sobre sí mismo, pero es totalmente dependiente de los otros. Para Michelstaedter es el individuo mismo el responsable de su propia autenticidad, y la sociedad constituye un factor limitativo para su propia realización. El autor destruye de forma anarquista y en nombre de la individualidad el Estado como tal. En la segunda “Appendice critica”, que se refiere al argumento del “Esempio storico”, contenido en el capítulo sobre el saber retórico, se sitúa la degeneración del saber ocurrida a partir de Sócrates en adelante, a través de Platón y Aristóteles. El saber se ha dividido de la vida con Platón, que fundaba su existencia en el miedo a la muerte y en la continuación de la existencia. Platón es el fundador de la sociedad

retórica y será el ejemplo para todos los legisladores. Lo que Miclestaedter critica es la *Repubblica* platónica como ejemplo para el Estado en cuanto garante de violencia e injusticia. La idea de justicia deriva de la que propone el Estado, en cuanto el individuo (ciudadano de la *Repubblica*) es justo en la medida que participa de la idea de justicia estatal. La justicia del individuo es, para Platón, la virtud según la cual cada uno cumple con sus deberes como ciudadano del Estado. Esta idea de justicia impide a los seres humanos tener su propia individualidad como fuente de justicia. La justicia de la que habla Platón es algo basado sobre la utilidad y la conveniencia, es una justicia ilusoria y aparente. El Estado que piensa que forma individuos justos, en realidad ejerce violencia e injusticia sobre estos. De un Estado injusto por naturaleza es imposible formar individuos justos. No puede existir justicia en una comunidad de individuos que ven en el otro la afirmación de sus propias determinaciones. El miedo a la muerte y a la no satisfacción de las necesidades impiden una armonía social. Cada uno, según el autor, ve en la sumisión del otro su propia vida.

El autor contrapone la sociedad al individuo, como Stirner, enseñando como cada organización supraindividual, basándose en la violencia y en la injusticia, solicita una subordinación del individuo a sí misma. El culto del individuo era en los primeros años del siglo diecinueve uno de los valores de la burguesía que como fin tenía el funcionamiento de un mecanismo del cual el sujeto no podía saber nada. Michelstaedter y Stirner quieren transmitir el fin de cada valor ilusorio y de cada ideal extraño al individuo. La vida mirando al futuro, depende de algo que está fuera de ella, y por esto se encuentra fuera del presente.

La corrupción del ser es causada por el miedo a la muerte. El sujeto no tiene una relación auténtica con los otros seres, porque los usa para su propia continuación. Solo el ser persuadido logra tener relaciones libres de la necesidad, sin poseer nada. La filosofía para el autor tiene el deber de perseguir el camino de la persuasión. El individuo temiendo a la nada y a la soledad que la persuasión requiere, se siente solo ante todo esto, y prefiere construirse, gracias a la ciencia, un saber que posponga en el futuro la negación del mundo y el miedo a la muerte. El conocimiento del mundo será verdadero si está libre de la necesidad. La ciencia contribuye a este alejamiento del ser de sí mismo a través de las máquinas y del método estadístico. Michelstaedter analizando las relaciones humanas quiere encontrar una redención para el sujeto. Cada individuo, para el autor, es en su vida un medio para la continuación del otro, que se impone con violencia. El ser, ilusionado con ser libre, en realidad depende de sus necesidades, piensa

poseerse a sí mismo, y sin embargo depende de los otros. El miedo a morir y la realización de sus necesidades impiden una armonía entre los individuos. Cada uno ve al otro como la posibilidad de su propia continuación. Esta relación representa la relación social. La violencia es la base de las relaciones sociales pero está enmascarada por la concordia. El Estado es aquella entidad fantasma que da al ser humano la seguridad de que nadie irá a quitarle con la violencia los frutos del propio trabajo, que nadie le alejará de su vida. Platón para Michelstaedter quiere eliminar la original guerra entre los individuos a través de la complementariedad de las necesidades. Esto es posible a través de las leyes y de las reglas gestionadas por el Estado. Los individuos se someten a estas reglas a cambio de su propia seguridad; están dispuestos a trabajar para la sociedad para tener derechos. Los ciudadanos son pobres infelices, que no siendo capaces de realizar sus vidas sin aplastar las de los otros, se crean un dueño al cual someterse. Este dueño hace que cada uno posea lo que le espera, para eliminar de forma aparente la violencia que se esconde detrás todas las relaciones entre seres humanos.

“La sua ragione d'essere sono i suoi bisogni materiali, e solo per calcolo questi soddisfa nella via che la città impone. Per sua natura dunque essendo ingiusto, egli si trova a poter vivere nella città senza compiere atti d'ingiustizia, e ad avere così l'apparenza della giustizia, e in premio la propria sicurezza. È questa apparenza che Socrate costituisce in risposta alla disperata richiesta di Glaucone e di Adeimanto, che pure in ogni modo l'avevano pregato di non parlar della doxa, ma di dar la giustizia in ciò che essa è e apporta a chi la possiede” (Michelstaedter, 1958: 154).

La violencia está en la base de las relaciones sociales, pero está disfrazada de concordia. La voluntad del individuo es una voluntad de autoafirmación, de aniquilación del otro. Solo el individuo puede crear una justicia verdadera en cuanto puede negar el valor de una existencia vivida bajo el miedo a la muerte y de las necesidades, ambos elementos del Estado. Michelstaedter y Stirner niegan una definición de justicia que llega desde arriba, de un entidad exterior al individuo como es el Estado. La justicia puede tener lugar solo en la consciencia del individuo. Lo que Michelstaedter y Stirner intentan hacer no es la valoración de si la justicia se trate de un bien o un mal, sino de interrogarse sobre su existencia para extirparla del mundo de los fantasmas que acabarían dominando a los seres humanos. Su objetivo es mejorar las relaciones entre los seres humanos a través de una liberación del Estado y una reapropiación por parte de ellos mismos de una justicia libre de leyes. Este nuevo tipo de justicia, según

Michelstaedter, sería posible trascendiendo al utilitarismo de las relaciones humanas, siendo esta la única vía de salida de la condición *retórica* de la existencia. La justicia como *Persuasione* no es algo que se pueda tener, sino un límite al cual tender infinitamente. El Estado es una invención de los individuos; estos tienen la ilusión de poder proveer la salvación del otro. El ser humano para ser justo tiene que existir, y esto pone al autor en estrecha correlación con el pensamiento de Stirner. Michelstaedter concentra su reflexión sobre el individuo y sus potencialidades, un individuo que tiene que ser del todo o no ser para nada, como nos lo describe el dicho parménido, que aquí trasladado significa que el individuo o se posee del todo o es condenado a existir en su nulidad. El individuo de Michelstaedter para poseerse a sí mismo de forma completa y ser justo tiene que ser un autarca, no necesitar de nadie y de nada. El ejemplo de ser del cual habla el autor en sentido parménido es el de un ser absoluto, que no admite su negación; “È necessario il dire e il pensare che l'essere sia: infatti l'essere è, il non-essere è nulla” (Michelstaedter, 2003: 16).

El concepto stirneriano de individuo como dueño de sí mismo y que no necesita nada del exterior, es muy similar a lo que quiere describir Michelstaedter. El individuo propietario de Stirner es el que tiene la conciencia de ser sí mismo y de poseer su propia individualidad en cuanto esa representa su singularidad. Él es “único” en cuanto toma distancia del mundo de las entidades superiores que lo ligan a una existencia necesaria y lo mantienen alejado de su autenticidad.

Es un ser que tiene conciencia de ser de sí mismo y por supuesto de tener una individualidad propia, la que lo hace ser singular. Ese individuo único y que tiende a la persuasión es una figura autónoma, que no espera nada del externo. Hasta que este individuo tenga fe en dios, en el Estado y en la humanidad, siempre estará en la condición de encontrarse dividido en sí mismo. El sujeto tiene el deber de reapropiarse de su persona, de alejarse de los fantasmas de la vida *philopsichica*. Lo que diferencia a los dos autores es que la figura del *persuasio* de Michelstaedter da valor a su propia existencia en cuanto quita valor a la vida, toma posesión de todo rechazando cada cosa y se hunde en el mundo separándose de esto. El *persuasio* puede tener su mundo sin poseerlo de hecho, resistiendo a las adulaciones de la retórica, quedando inmóvil en el medio de la corriente. El sujeto egoísta del cual habla Stirner se apropia de todo lo que necesita en cada instante, ignorando la autoridad de cada entidad supraindividual que pretende gestionar las vidas de los individuos. La distinción entre los dos autores en este ámbito es posible notarla en la visión que tienen de Sócrates. Para Stirner, Sócrates

representa el ejemplo de quien se ha anulado en el Estado, obedeciendo a sus leyes y a su moral, porque habría podido engañarlo escuchando los consejos de Critón y quedar en vida. Para Michelstaedter, Sócrates representa la imagen del *persuaso* del Estado, que le amenaza con quitarle la vida, afirma que la vida no tiene valor ninguno si no se actúa conforme a las leyes de la propia conciencia, no contaminadas por el miedo a la muerte y por caminos preconstituidos. El individuo *retorico* michelstaedteriano mira y desea cada cosa en vista de la propia continuación, busca el sentido fuera de sí, anulando su individualidad. El *persuaso* niega el valor de la vida para salvarse a sí mismo como individuo. Él valora su vida, quitándole el valor (en cuanto considerada ilusoria porque esta inmersa en la oscuridad de la *retórica* del vivir), se identifica con el mundo separándose de eso, toma posesión de las cosas rechazando cada una de ellas. Entre el individuo *persuaso* de Michelstaedter y el “egoísta” de Stirner falta el elemento hedonista de la vida al que el segundo aspira. Para el autor la voluntad es parte de la *retórica*, del mundo de la ilusión, esta es hija del dios de la *philopsichia*. La voluntad en Michelstaedter adquiere un sentido shopenhaueriano, una voluntad que no quiere. El *persuaso* no quiere poseer nada, en cuanto no acepta una existencia que mira al futuro, anula su voluntad de vivir para hacerse uno mismo con el mundo. El *persuaso* en su camino hacia la *Persuasione* es inconsciente de serlo; afronta un camino sin dirección, que tiene que recorrer. Para el sujeto retórico las cosas tienen valor solo para su autoconservación; para el *persuaso* estas tienen valor en cuanto existen. La organización estatal intenta engañar al individuo con la ilusión de vivir una vida auténtica y de ser libre de la violencia, obligándole a vivir en un mundo artificial que enmascara las dinámicas de lucha y poder entre los seres humanos. Como en Stirner, también en Michelstaedter existe una total oposición entre individuo y Estado en cuanto ese último quiere ejercer una ilusoria función de tutela en contra de las necesidades y del miedo a la muerte. La organización social, como el saber filosófico y la ciencia, resulta ser *retórica* porque intenta superar el carácter de invalidación de la relación con el mundo.

“Accettata come vita libera quella che è fatta dei bisogni elementari, fondiamo nella città la libertà d'esser schiavi; accettato come giusto il principio della violenza che afferma la necessità del continuare, è giusta ad ogni bisogno la sua affermazione”. (Michelstaedter, 1958: 155)

Los individuos están satisfechos de haber encontrado esta justicia aparente semejante a aquel mecanismo de engranajes donde el diente de una rueda, en su círculo continuo, coincide con el hueco del otra. El individuo

se rinde porque está convencido de no poder ir más allá de este mecanismo, pero el camino de la persuasión nos recuerda lo difícil que es seguirlo. Platón para Michelstaedter ha construido un Estado hecho por convenciones, olvidando la justicia y la felicidad de los ciudadanos. Los seres humanos son privados de su individualidad y de su capacidad de afrontar la vida a cambio de su seguridad. Para que todo quede en su sitio y el mecanismo no se atasque, el individuo tiene que ser justo según la justicia del Estado y no por la propia. Es el Estado el que enseña y obliga a los ciudadanos a seguir un determinado recorrido. La sola justicia es su autoridad que dirige a los seres en sus elecciones para su propio bien. La educación resulta ser un problema fundamental porque es impuesta desde la infancia. “Questo problema (pedagogico) è importante come tutti i problemi sociali; in realtà esso è più importante in fondo perché tutti i problemi sociali riposano su questa base” (Stirner, 1982: 29). El problema de la educación está en la base de la sociedad retórica. Michelstaedter llama esto tipo de educación “educazione corruttrice” que es la peor forma de violencia que puede ser ejercida sobre el individuo en cuanto esta tiende a cancelar la creatividad, transmitiéndole el arte de imitar. Todo se resuelve en imitar, en la alienación de sí mismos en gestos automáticos y repetitivos. El Estado no quiere seres, quiere campesinos, zapateros, comerciantes, banqueros, soldados, políticos que cumplan su función para la continuación de su vida. La educación es la obligación de asimilar y aceptar formas mentales, costumbres, derechos y deberes hechos por el Estado con el fin de su continuación. El Estado, que era el que otorgaba la garantía de la felicidad y de la justicia de los seres, se convirtió en un dueño.

La educación de Platón forja instrumentos para el Estado, no seres, es contraria a un desarrollo de la personalidad. En la *República* platónica no hay sitio para almas desnudas, para seres autárquicos, es decir, para espíritus libres. A esta tipología de educación Michelstaedter contrapone la de Sócrates que es creadora, orientada a la posesión del alma. Solo esta tiene el poder de liberar al individuo de la injusticia, del miedo a la muerte y de las necesidades, convirtiéndolo en un ser autónomo, autarca. El ser socrático no ve las cosas y a los individuos como simples instrumentos para su continuación y desarrolla una personalidad libre y autocreadora. Este momento pedagógico consta en liberarse a sí mismo y en deshacerse de cualquiera autoridad. En la educación retórica se forman individuos útiles para la sociedad y no se habla nunca de formar personas. El saber tendrá que hacer espacio a la voluntad que cada día se expresará en una individualidad no ilusoria. La voluntad de Stirner es la capacidad de crítica, de la cual, para

Michelstaedter, los ciudadanos de la *República* platónica han sido privados. La educación personal de Stirner coincide con la educación creadora de Michelstaedter, en cuanto ambos tienen como deber el de forjar individuos autosuficientes e idénticos a sí mismos. Los seres de Michelstaedter y Stirner no buscan su seguridad en el Estado y en la sociedad. Michelstaedter ve una relación estrecha entre la *República* de Platón y las modalidades de funcionamiento de la sociedad burguesa. Su crítica no se basa sobre una particular tipología de Estado, sino que también está en contra de cualquier tipo de relación humana, tendente a construir por encima de sí misma cualquier órgano supraindividual. La crítica del autor a la sociedad burguesa contemporánea se extiende a la crítica de la sociedad en general. La verdadera revolución de Michelstaedter es la de haberse liberado de la perspectiva burguesa que afectaba a la mayoría de sus contemporáneos y de haber convertido lo que parecía un problema político en un problema moral. La justicia no es atributo del Estado y de la sociedad sino del individuo, esta no tiene que ser confundida con aquella proclamada por las leyes estatales; el ser justo es el que actúa respetando el principio de la no violencia. La sociedad burguesa tiene que ser desmitificada porque no responde a la exigencia crítica del individuo de instaurar una relación auténtica con los otros seres; al contrario, los obliga a ser vivientes como seres útiles para algo. El liberalismo en principio parecía ser un movimiento que se habría opuesto a cualquier forma de autoritarismo, reivindicando una libertad individual, pero después se convirtió en la ideología de una clase política que tenía el interés de mandar sobre la economía y de estar en simbiosis con el capitalismo. El nuevo tipo de organización social burguesa está en la base del capitalismo que no quiere ninguna interferencia por parte del Estado en las transacciones privadas de los ciudadanos. El Estado garantiza la igualdad ante la ley a sus ciudadanos, permaneciendo neutral, o mejor dicho, intentando no quedar apartado; es por ello que facilita este tipo de relaciones en vista de su propio capital. Los conceptos de igualdad ante la ley, de libertad individual, de libertad en pos de un objetivo propio, llevan al individuo a ser dependiente de los otros seres, provocando así que aquel que esté en una situación de superioridad quede como ganador mientras que el otro sucumbirá. Las relaciones entre los individuos son una continua lucha por la supervivencia y el Estado es el juez. Los análisis que hace Michelstaedter de las relaciones sociales emanan del individuo, que por necesidad transforma a su conveniencia la naturaleza, violándola. Con esta agresión a la naturaleza el individuo se garantiza la seguridad de la vida y su futuro. Con el trabajo transforma la naturaleza a su placer, y a través de la propiedad

manda sobre los demás. Cada individuo quiere apropiarse del resultado del trabajo de los otros para asegurarse la salvación, y quien resultará ganador, será el dueño y el perdedor será su esclavo. La vida aparece como una infinita correlatividad, caracterizada por la repetitividad de las necesidades que obligan al individuo a buscar su vida lejos de sí mismo. La persuasión de Michelstaedter, como el ser único de Stirner es una tendencia, un objetivo, no un resultado. La persuasión nunca será posible obtenerla, es una infinita búsqueda, no tiene límite. Esta búsqueda debe estar hecha por el individuo, tiene que ser un acto interior del ser consciente. En su propia dimensión, el individuo encontrará el camino de la persuasión que lo liberará del miedo a morir.

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LA FUITE EN AVANT?

THE RHETORIC OF FEAR AND THE EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION

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This essay will analyze several famous speeches pronounced throughout the European Project across thirty years, from The Hague Congress until the late seventies of the twentieth century. It aims to explore the rhetoric of fear in the European Construction, that is, recurring statements on the fear of losing Europe, going back to an era of division. It will aim at answering this question through the analysis of the speeches of protagonists of the European Project (mainly members of the European institutions). This essay will analyze how this fear is part of the constitutive matrix of the European idea as Dennis de Rougemont pointed out.

Keywords: Europe, Isaiah Berlin, Denis de Rougemont, Technocracy, Nation, Rethoric.

Este ensaio analisa vários discursos famosos que foram pronunciados ao longo de trinta anos de projecto Europeu, do Congresso Europeu de 1948 na Haia até ao fim dos anos 70 do século XX. Tenta-se explorar a retórica do medo durante a construção europeia, i.e., várias declarações que foram feitas sobre o medo de perder a Europa e vê-la regressar a uma época de divisões. Tenta-se responder a esta questão através da análise de discursos dos protagonistas do projecto Europeu (principalmente membros das instituições europeias). Talvez este medo, que parece estar presente em momentos pontuais e parece bastante residual senão irrelevante, faz na verdade parte de uma mundividência presente na teoria política que Isaiah Berlin descreveu com agudeza e é parte da matriz constitutiva das ideias europeias como apontou Denis de Rougemont.

Palavras-chave: Europa, Isaiah Berlin, Denis de Rougemont, Tecnocracia, Nação, Retórica.

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1. The European project at the light of continuities and ruptures in contemporary politics

Isaiah Berlin identified two major political trends in the nineteenth century, “humanitarian individualism and romantic nationalism” (Berlin, 2000, p. 59). Showing his proverbial talent to grasp complex phenomena in a simple formula, he noted that in spite of their dissimilarities — “profound enough to lead to a sharp divergence and ultimate collision of these two ideals” — these currents shared a common belief, that is, the conviction that the “problems both of individuals and societies could be solved.” Liberals believed in education, socialists in a complete change of distribution of property and the control of economic resources, conservatives believed in institutions, etc.

It was not without malice that Berlin also noted that “[I]f chronological frontiers are seldom landmarks in the history of ideas,” (Berlin, 2000, p. 68) the picture was altered with the entering of the twentieth century, and these trends “finally ended in exaggerated and indeed distorted forms as Communism and Fascism” (Berlin, 2000, p. 60). It became apparent that the administration of things would not replace the government of men and that no universal solution could be found to the most pressing problems. This implies that we can no longer believe that “great edifices promote solidarity, security and (...) strength” (Berlin, 2000, p. 60).

Some apparent lines of continuity can be discerned: “to the casual observer of the politics and the thought of the twentieth century it might at first seem that every idea and movement typical of our time is best understood as a natural development of tendencies already prominent in the nineteenth century” (Berlin, 2000, p. 61). This almost looks like a truism in the case of the growth of international institutions, from the old Hague Court to the post-war Hague Congress, passing through the League of Nations.

The European project is one of these cases of both continuity and rupture. According to Berlin, what marks the divide are two main changes in the political view (Berlin, 2000, p. 61): the role of irrational or unconscious forces driving events often outweighing the “forces of reason;” and a trend to remove the problems not by argument but by their “removal.”

Rhetoric is an instrument to “tame” these irrational forces. It is not only useful for a politician or a statesman to rationally explain what he has in mind in order to convince his audience, but also in academic circles or in rational argument. However statesmen need to add emotional dimension

to rational argument through the building of a narrative, the construction of a challenge, the appeal to a utopia or an ideal. Within the European project, fear is certainly a key aspect of this rhetorical narrative: the idea that Europe will fall back to an era of war, nationalism and divisions, if the project is not carried on.

The argument that, without the European institutions, Europe can recede into a state of war makes sense in a rational way. Nonetheless, when one gives enough emphasis to this idea by forcefully repeating it, making suggestive analogies, dramatizing and using specific key-words, then one is faced with a discourse that is reinforced by emotional appeal. A politician frequently uses powerful narratives in order to instill fear and hope in his public target, thus acquiring a new persuasive dimension.

The analysis of some speeches from protagonists of the European project can enlighten how Berlin's trends exist within the European project. As it will be shown, the diminishing of fear in those speeches coincides with the emergence of Berlin's trend of "removing" the problems instead of debating them. After some necessary historical contextualization, this article will proceed with the analysis of fear *per se*.

2. Tragic dimension of History and awareness of a common danger

Unreason and dreams — the tragic dimension of history — are in the deep roots of the European the situation after the Second World War.

We may follow Raymond Aron's efforts to understand the post war situation. After the guns of World War II went silent (Aron, 1948b, p. 13), nothing remained of the European concert of powers and Europe became a no man's land between two giants. No one expected a Russian-American idyll (Aron, 1948b, p. 1948), but many expected a truce. What happened were two important changes that were expected to last: the unification of the diplomatic field on the planet, which is the result of the solidarity between continents and the progress of technology; and the formation of a bipolar world, an almost mechanical consequence of the devastation of Europe.

Two other effects were to be less permanent but no less important. The first is the partial destruction of the equilibrium of the "balance of powers," that kept war within limits through the XIX century. The other is the expansion of the empire's rivalry in a "total diplomacy" that is not limited to military intervention: any election campaign is now an episode of the Cold War. This situation changes the normal concept of peace that, so far, involved the

limitation of what was at stake and of the means used. Now everything is at stake: economy, political system, ruling class. That is what Hitler called “comprehensive strategy” and that Raymond Aron had already analyzed in the draft text on machiavelisms written in 1939-40 (Aron, 1993).

If the world seems divided between the hegemony of the two “state-continent,” this does not mean that the choice between the American and Russian side are equivalent. The American ruling class does not want to shift its industrial potential into a military one and it sees its own action as a “burden” to endure. The United States also do not maintain a state police or the monopoly of power in countries occupied militarily, while the entry into the Soviet sphere is irreversible, which gives a peculiarly ironic meaning to the word “contention” in the Stalin’s mouth.

But “the absence of peace is not war” (Aron, 1948b, p. 26). It is not likely that war will be triggered by an incident like Sarajevo in 1914. There will be war only if any of the great powers desire it resolutely and, given the uncertainty of the military balance, no one wants it and, therefore, it will only happen if one of the sides wants to reach a goal that the other considers unacceptable. “In this way, the current balance that does not exclude precariousness is explained” (Aron, 1948b, 29). Stalin is not a romantic: he is as ambitious as Hitler was, but less impatient. Therefore, Aron predicts, he will first try to increase its industrial potential.

Europe is divided by an “Iron Curtain” (Baverez, 2006, p. 206)^[1] but, although it refuses to recognize this situation, it has a shared common culture with America - whose originality lies in science, industrialization and social rationalization - and West Germany is an integral part of this Europe, which despite the current vacuum, it is still a great power. The idea of European unity was more inspired by prudence than by enthusiasm, but “it would not be the first time that unity is born from the awareness of a common danger” (Aron, 1993, p. 68).

The common enemy was for a long time the communist danger. Against the hopes of those who mistook the communist regime with a personal despotism, Raymond Aron foresees a long period of time for this great schism, a schism that the death of Stalin will not overcome (Aron, 1981, pp. 329-340)^[2], because communism was not an ordinary tyranny.

1 A formula that Aron uses in his printed work of 1948, right after Churchill’s famous speech in Fulton in 1946, but he used this expression much before that. (Baverez, 2006, p. 206).

2 This idea is explained in a chapter that is lacking in the original version but that is present in the English translation of *Les guerres en chaîne*. Cfr. Raymond Aron, *The century of total*, Westport (Conn), Greenwood Press, 1981, (ed. or. Garden City (NY), 1954, Doubleday), pp. 329-340.

In spite of these circumstances, there has been in the European project two symmetrical discourses: one of fear and hope, and the other of experts and solutions.

3. Hague Congress of 1948

The first meeting to address the question of a federal Europe was, without a doubt, the Hague Congress of 1948. This is where many of the ideological foundations of the European Project would be established. Most notably, it was in this Congress that the duality between a “positive” way of thinking the Union (federation of common market) and a “negative” way (fear of war and nationalisms) saw the light.

Denis de Rougemont, an influent pro-federalist, reflects this duality in a speech he gave a few days before the Hague Congress: the European ideal is a kind of a reversed utopia, one that defines itself more by the fear of what it wants to avoid than by a positive plan. In the words of Rougemont: “The slogan of fear, ‘The defence [sic] of Europe’, defines today’s utopia.” (Rougemont, 1948, p. 2) But this, says Rougemont, is not sustainable: we need to desire a federation, a Europe without borders. The idea of fear as a stimulant to move towards a unified Europe is clearly present in this text, but always goes in hand with the idea of a positive plan. For instance, and after listing some reasons for why there should be such a Europe, Rougemont finally adds:

Lastly, we want Europe because without it the world is sliding towards war, and the only option we have left now is to prevent that war or to perish in it. Separated and isolated, none of our countries can prevent anything; we will be colonised [sic] one after the other, for all our national sovereignty (...) If we have a federation, on the other hand, we will be as strong as the two Great Powers (Rougemont, 1948, p. 3).

Those words of Rougemont were quite clear: divided, we are weak, close to war, and powerless. The only way is forwards, with a positive plan that will make Europe strong. At this time, the Russian threat was serious: Rougemont says that it is a danger which causes fear and that the Europeans can only counteract by creating a Western bloc. However, although Rougemont talks significantly about the Soviet Union, he did not consider this to be the most dangerous problem Europe was facing:

(...) the real obstacles to a federation of Europe are not primarily in the East; they are here among us. It all comes back to our internal problems, especially the two burning issues that I referred to a short while ago: the problem which nationalist prejudice causes us, and, parallel to that, the problem of partisan spirit (Rougemont, 1948, p. 7).

Nationalisms and their divisive spirit: those are, according to Rougemont, the real threat of a united Europe:

Ladies and gentlemen, if Europe, the mother of nations and parties, does not devise ways of overcoming nationalism and the partisan spirit, I cannot see who in the world could do it with any prospect of success.

This speech is quite representative of the spirit that would animate the Hague Congress some days later: a delicate combination between “positive” reasons for a federal Europe and “negative” reasons to do so. There were, on the one hand, speeches full of hope: many speakers supported a “European utopia” and freely spoke about it. Étienne Gilson, for instance, speaks about the necessity of a “foi animatrice” in Europe through a cultural and intellectual union (Gilson, 1948, p. 2). Paul Reynaud also made a speech on the necessity of involving the common people through a European Assembly, elected by universal suffrage (Reynaud, 1948). On the other hand, it is clear that fear and hope are always combining, even if in an unequal manner: there are more “positive” than “negative” reasons, more hope than fear. For instance, Reynaud’s speech criticizes the ones that have a too moderate and gradual stance on the European Project:

M. Macmillan, ancien ministre britannique (...) m’a oppose [sic] avec une charmante courtoisie un de ces dictons qui résument la sagesse française. Il m’a dit: Vous oubliez votre proverbe: « Hâtez-vous lentement ! »

To which he adds:

Mais, dire: « Hâtez-vous lentement » à un homme qui est en train de se noyer, c’est une ironie un peu macabre ! (Reynaud, 1948, p. 3)

There are no illusions throughout this foundational Congress: Europe must be done, not only for the sake of a greater good, but also to avoid something worse. Raymond Aron, for instance, speaks of a European Culture Center in order to avoid dictatorial institutions (Aron, 1948a). What is clear

for everyone is that things are not looking good for the European Nations: there is no other choice but to move on and, if not to forget nationalisms, at least to greatly diminish them. In the Hague Congress, the hope of an entirely new project is the norm, but this hope is always in some way intertwined with a sort of fear that pushes this movement forward. There is a positive and a negative impulse: a “we have to avoid something” that leads to a “we have to achieve something”.

This idea is reinforced in the very first sentence of the Schuman Declaration of 1950: “World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it” (Schuman, 1950). Therefore, the creation of institutions is necessary in order to create the basis of a European Federal order that will secure peace, i.e., avoid war:

By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace (Schuman, 1950).

It could be argued that, after all, we were in the aftermath of the war: it is therefore not surprising to see that fear is so present in those speeches. Nonetheless, and as I said, there is actually more hope than fear in these notable speeches that I quoted. In fact, what seems to be clear is that this mixture of fear and hope has never fully disappeared: the European Project is seen as an ideal, but also as an avoidance-mechanism.

For instance, at the Messina Conference of 1955, where the six foundational countries (France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Netherlands, and Belgium) started to draft a nuclear and economic union, the situation was desperate: the European Defense Community (EDC) Treaty failed to pass in France, which was a huge drawback for the European utopia. But, says Jean Monnet right after the Conference, the Europeans are assisting to a renewal of the European ideal: there must a progression toward the United States of Europe.

Il est très important que l'opinion publique comprenne la différence entre ces deux perspectives: l'une est l'avenir et le progrès; l'autre, le retour aux méthodes du passé dont nous avons connus l'inefficacité et qui entraîne la guerre (Monnet, 1955)

This dualism never disappears: the hope of progression in the European Construction is always present with the fear of regression. Even ten years after the Second World War, it is not necessarily the war that is invoked: it seems that the pro-European discourse recycles the events of the day in order to show that Europe is a necessity. For instance, in 1956, René Mayer, president of the Coal and Steel Community, talked about the fact that, after the setback of the EDC, there was a rebirth of the European ideal for two reasons:

In the first place, the successful experience of the European Coal and Steel Community points the way toward similar (...) formulations in the other areas. Second, just as was the case with the Schuman Plan, the initiative of the Messina conference proceeded from no doctrinaire enthusiasm for constitutional-making but rather out of urgency, out of a recognition that national solutions to the problems confronting us are inadequate (Mayer, 1956, pp. 11-12).

Almost as a kind of pattern, the same “positive-negative” vision of Europe emerges. Mayer talks at length of future successes of a unified market that would embrace 160 millions of consumers. But he also speaks about the political security and stability that a unified Europe could bring: “United Europe, for us, is not only an article of faith, it is a policy of insurance” (Mayer, 1956, p. 13).

Because ten years have passed, there are no more references to the disaster of the Second World War, but more to the “frustration of Western hopes and policies”. What are they? If one takes a look to the European 50’s, they are not hard to spot: those were the years of the Korean War, of the Suez Crisis, and when the French IV Republic fell. Those were times where everything was happening. But Europe could only watch without acting. Then, it is not surprising to see that the “negative impulse” of the European Project was still present, but in a different form: the Second World War is not pointed out as the European fear anymore; the pro-Europeans leaders replaced it with other events, like the inability of Europe to act in the global chess.

This shift is very well highlighted by the first President of the European Economic Community (EEC), Walter Hallstein, right after the Treaty of Rome of 1958 that would create the Community:

The danger which threatens us is not that we shall be relegated to a lesser place among the powers which decide the fate of the world, but that we shall be completely eliminated. That is a deadly danger. Before our eyes, in this mid-twentieth century, a world tragedy is being played out which is nothing less than the tragedy of freedom (Hallstein, 1958, p. 12).

4. Technocratic discourse

Nonetheless, from the mid-fifties onwards, the speeches tend to be more dispassionate and reflect less the negative and positive dualism we have been analyzing. Part of this change may be related to unprecedented optimism during “les Trente glorieuses” year of economic growth in Europe. Again History seemed to follow a clear path, wars were far abroad and the new Europe an Oasis.

Hallstein’s speeches, for instance, are quite pragmatic: he is always cautious in talking about the direct vantages of having a united agricultural policy (Hallstein, 1958) or a common market (Hallstein, 1960), but he is not very extensive on the European ideals or fears.

Even in the famous “empty chair crisis” of 1965 where France was blocking the decisions of the European institutions, the rhetoric of fear seem to have considerably disappeared. There are many references to the fact that Europe needs a bigger market and a common security policy, but the “negative-positive” rhetoric that has been analyzed is clearly blurred, even though Hallstein, in 1965, described the empty chair crisis with these words:

For months now the European Economic Community has occupied the headlines in the papers and new broadcasts. It is going through a crisis, the most serious crisis since it was established in 1958 (Hallstein, 1965, p. 2).

Maybe this lack of rhetoric of fear is due to the fact that divergences in the European Process are gradually seen as being part of the process itself. Jean Rey, member of the EEC, said in a speech in 1965 that there was a negative and a positive aspect in the European Project: one based on the disagreements between governments, and the other based on the progresses that have been made despite those disagreements (Rey, 1965, p. 7). Hallstein is also convinced that, thanks to the treaties of Rome and Paris, the European Project has a basis to continue to carry on despite of the crises (Hallstein, 1965, pp. 15-16). Divisions do not seem to be so frightening anymore because they are seen as being part of the European Construction. As Pierre Werner, president of the Council of the European Communities, said in 1966 after the Luxembourg Compromise that would settle the empty chair crisis:

(...) nos industriels et nos agriculteurs raisonnent aujourd’hui en termes de marché commun et une crise institutionnelle, tout en les inquiétants, ne les en détourne pas (Werner, 1966, p. 5).

Time has worked in favor of the European Community, argues Werner. Now that the countries have created the first European institutions, it is impossible for them to come back despite the crises: they always have to find the equilibrium in their interests.

Those statements show that the Hallstein (1958-1967) and Jean Rey (1967-1970) years were periods of much pragmatism for the European Process. "(...) a German weekly tells me that the idealistic drive to unite Europe has given way to a mole-like activity concerned with regulation of the market for lard and cheese" (Hallstein, 1967, p. 3), says Hallstein in one of his last speeches. But this, for him, is great news. Europe finally made it from dream to reality, says Hallstein, from a rhetoric based on an idyllic "*esprit européen*" to a more down-to-earth politics. I would say that, in the end, this "realistic" discourse that toned down the positive European rhetoric also had the same effect on the negative part of its rhetoric. In other words: without grandiloquent dreams, there are no dramatic apocalypses and, therefore, no rhetoric of fear.

5. Warnings

But many members of the European institutions, throughout the years, have been advising against this too institutional and technical way of seeing Europe.

Voices raised saying that the youth had to be heard and that more political integration was necessary (Coppe, 1970, pp. 2-3; Deniau, 1969, pp. 5-8). Nonetheless, the 1974 energy crisis occurred and the first European elections had to be postponed for 1979. In the meantime, and because of the crisis, we can see a regain of the rhetoric of fear. Many speeches picture this moment of anxiety that took over the European institutions. For instance, the vice-president of the Commission, Wilhelm Haferkamp, says that the energy crisis is creating divisions among the states of the Union. In a speech he made in 1974, the vice-president warns that, if the member states persist, then they can paralyze the European market, the Commission, and Europe's ability to act politically in the world, problems which in turn can undermine the global peace and the very democracy of the European nations.

Que nous le voulions ou non: la rechute dans l'autarcie des petits Etats nationaux est désormais impossible sur le plan technique, économique et politique. Le repli dans la forteresse nationale entraînerait des effondrements structurels, la récession et un chômage massif dans une mesure telle que certains Etats démocratiques pourraient ne pas y survivre (Haferkamp, 1974, p. 16).

The same year of crisis, Altiero Spinelli, member of the Commission, repeats this idea: this crisis brought deep divisions in the Union and Nationalism is clearly coming back. Europe will be incapable to act in the world if it starts to dream, once again, of autarchy. In these gloomy speeches, the criticism that the Community has been undemocratic is recurrent: Europe has to open itself to its citizens. The idea that Hallstein and Rey cherished of a “necessary convergence” of the interests of the member states is explicitly criticized: all the political forces must be brought in the European process in order for it to grow (Spinelli, 1974, pp. 16-17).

Using Isaiah Berlin’s words, maybe we cannot expect to be completely free of hope and fear. What we put out of the door comes back through the window. Humanitarian individualism and romantic nationalism are at the front of the stage but no comprehensive solution seems available.

When we come to the end of this analysis, it seems that the years of the Hague Congress are long gone: if everyone spoke in very colorful terms in 1948 about the European utopia and the disasters that would arise without it, the European rhetoric on fear has been progressively toned down and, today, seem to be punctually used in moments of greater anxiety. The rhetoric of fear seems to be one that is mainly called upon in moments of crises.

It is nonetheless interesting to see this constant relationship between “positive” and “negative” rhetoric: in moments where great blueprints for Europe are absent, catastrophic scenarios seem to lack too.

In the Hallstein and Rey years, two commissions that were explicitly pragmatic and “unromantic” in their approach, both components strongly disappeared. The more the positive discourse of the Union is present, the more its negative side is altogether present. As Rougemont believed, the positive and negative sides of Europe are always together.

À l’origine de la religion, de la culture et de la morale européenne, il y a l’idée de la contradiction, du déchirement fécond, du conflit créateur (...)
L’Européen typique sera tantôt un révolutionnaire ou un apôtre, un amant passionné ou un mystique, un polémiste ou un guerrier, un maniaque ou un inventeur. *Son bien et son mal sont liés* (Strenger, 2015)

Concluding, the idea of fear is an important aspect of the European Project, and not merely a rhetorical aspect that mainly appears in moments of crises. It is something structural to Europe, an essential side of it: it is more of an alarm bell that rings when the situation seems to be exceptionally desperate. In general, this alarm will trigger the words “nationalisms”,

“doubts”, “protectionism” and “divisions”, the eternal enemies of a deeper European integration. There is no way to deny that this rhetorical trick is very powerful to remember the European states and citizens that, in order for Europe to maintain a global leading position, there are still no alternatives to a deeper Union.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper intended to present just an “exploratory” analysis of a limited set of political speeches and did not aim to show the overall role of the rhetoric of fear in the EU’s institutional discourses, but nonetheless we conclude that Rougemont was right in saying that “the real obstacles to a federation of Europe are not primarily in the East; they are here among us.” And today’s Europe’s leaders understood this idea quite well. If Isaiah Berlin was right, sharp divergence and ultimate collision of the ideals, individualism and nationalism will be part of the European landscape for long time.

The actual *malaise* is often diagnosed as a lack of truer leadership that was maybe present in Adenauer’s era, or close to us, in Delors’ vision, but no longer exists. Today’s bureaucrats are not true statesman. It was also long ago diagnosed as a lack of democracy that the strengthening of the European parliament, a new constitution, and other great edifices could not however solve. The European project, to use Raymond Aron’s dichotomy, has “*not yet* struck deep roots in society” and “no longer work” (Aron, 1990, p. 110).

Our suggestion is that any analysis should take into account both the “irrational” and “unconscious” forces and the limitations of any institutional solution. We do not rule out that fear can be an emotional response expressing a valid cognitive assessment. It can foster social cooperation against common enemies and external threats. But we think that the “peoples” of the different European nations—the audience of “great institutional discourses” of European leaders—are maybe less sensitive and so this rhetoric is less effective, if the barbarians are within our borders. The clash of values and inner contradictions are now a given.

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IDEAL THEORY AND ITS APPLICABILITY – ARE PRINCIPLES INDEPENDENT FROM FACTS?

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In this article we will analyse the relationship between ideal theory and nonideal theory. We will discuss problems that ideal theory faces concerning its applicability in unfavourable circumstances. Some arguments about the role of ideal theory to real politics and possible limitations will be displayed. Finally, we will analyse G.A. Cohen's claim about the independency of principles from facts. We will argue that if principles are independent from facts, then it is not required that ideal theory concerns itself with questions about the applicability of its prescriptions. But if they are not completely independent from facts, we will try to answer the problem of knowing if we should always endorse them regardless of the facts.

Keywords: Ideal theory; Nonideal theory; Noncompliance; Principles; Facts

Neste artigo será analisada a relação entre teoria ideal e teoria não ideal. Discutiremos problemas que a teoria ideal enfrenta no que diz respeito à sua aplicabilidade em circunstâncias desfavoráveis. Serão apresentados alguns argumentos sobre o papel da teoria ideal para as políticas reais, e as suas possíveis limitações. Finalmente, analisaremos a afirmação de Cohen acerca da independência dos princípios em relação aos factos. Argumentaremos que, se os princípios são independentes dos factos, então não é necessário que a teoria ideal se ocupe da aplicabilidade das suas prescrições. Mas se eles não forem completamente independentes dos factos, tentaremos responder ao problema de saber se deveremos sempre apoiá-los, independentemente dos factos.

Palavras-chave: Teoria ideal; Teoria não ideal; Não cumprimento; Princípios; Factos

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0. Introduction: ideal theory and nonideal theory – a preliminary introduction

The distinction between ideal and nonideal theory is a very important one, since it deals with the boundaries of political philosophy. Nowadays, one of the main critics that philosophers deal with is that their theories have no practical application, because they are simply too utopian, and therefore detached from the real world. According to this point of view, any attempt to develop an ideal theory that prescribes how the world should be in perfect conditions, rather than concerning with dealing with real problems in the real world, trying to solve some of the problems in a realistic way, is an unnecessary and counterproductive task. This distinction deals with this kinds of remarks about the usefulness of ideal theory.

This distinction goes back to Rawls. His work is an attempt to prescribe principles of justice that can be shared by reasonable and rational individuals within a political society. These principles form an ideal theory, in the sense that they presuppose full compliance of all the members that constitute the political society, under favourable circumstances (Rawls, 1971: 216).

Nonideal theory, on the other hand, assumes that it is not possible to have full compliance with the theory's prescriptions (*ibid.*).

So, the main difference between the two theories relates to what we can call the achievability condition. Nonideal theory concerns itself more with feasibility constraints than ideal theory, in the sense that it accommodates in its prescriptions the possibility of changing due to unfavourable circumstances that can happen in the real world. Those unfavourable circumstances may take many shapes, such as economic crisis, or false assumptions that can be displayed by facts, and that could not be foreseen by the theorists.

In order to illustrate this issue, one of the criticisms that the principles of justice by Rawls face is that, under unfavourable circumstances, it can be a bad thing to do to give priority to the principle of liberty over the principle of difference, which the theory prescribes and assumes that should be done in an ideal society. For instance, Farrelly notes that all rights granted to citizens have costs, and, under unfavourable conditions, giving priority to the basic liberties over the fight against inequalities may not result in increasing of justice. Let's analyse this excerpt:

The right to vote is a basic liberty and a just society should ensure that no adult citizen is denied the right to vote. But the difficulty arises when decisions

must be made concerning the allocation of the public funds needed to run an election and ensures citizens can exercise their right to vote. Prohibiting citizens from voting is not the only way citizens can be disenfranchised. The distribution of polling stations within a geographical territory and the hours of operation of a polling station, etc. Will also have an impact on the opportunity citizens have to exercise the right to vote (Farrelly, 2007: 853).

This means that, given the scarcity of resources in a poor country, it may be more important to fight against inequalities than granting the right to vote for everyone. Since that all rights have costs, fighting poverty may be more useful than investing funds so that everyone can vote.

This is a classic example of a criticism that ideal theory may have to answer. Sen also argues against this emphasis in the liberty principle, claiming that this priority may be too extreme. In unfavourable circumstances there is no reason to think that hunger, starvation or medical neglect is less important than any kind of personal liberty (Sen, 2009: 65). So, by focusing too much in the assumption that the theory is going to be fully complied, ideal theory is ignoring that the principles endorsed may be counterproductive in order to achieve the goal of going towards a more fair society. However, it is not clear that Rawls could not answer this criticisms. He does not ignore that sometimes it may be difficult to implement the ideal principles, and, in those circumstances, nonideal theories have an important role, provided that they fulfil the task of making it easy to pursue the goals prescribed by the ideal theory (Rawls, 1971). So, for Rawls, nonideal theory is a means for achieving ideal theory under unfavourable circumstances. For instance, Rawls gives the example of obeying an unfair law. He admits that citizens should obey that law, provided that those laws are reasonably just (Rawls, 1971: 308). So, in that circumstance, citizens should obey if the law is not too unjust and the society is, on the whole, just. But, if the laws do not fulfil in any way the purposes of ideal theory, then there is a justification to put a nonideal theory in action. In this particular case, civil disobedience is legitimate.

So far we have explained the origin of the distinction between ideal and nonideal theory. We have seen that it appeared firstly in the work of Rawls. The most important difference between the two of them is related to the full compliance and the partial compliance distinction. It is important to note, however, that there are many other ways in which we can make a distinction between ideal theory and nonideal theory. Several authors have stressed many important differences between the two theories.

For instance, ideal theory is considered to be less fact-sensitive than nonideal theory (Hamlin & Stemplowska, 2012: 6). According to this definition:

(...) a theory is more fact-sensitive the more facts it recognizes and incorporates as elements of the model or as constraints on the model (*ibid.*).

In other words, ideal theory is less fact-sensitive than nonideal theory because its goal is to prescribe how a fully just society must be. In order to do that, it must assume full compliance, and that assumption does not require any special attention to facts in the sense that it tells us how the world should be rather than showing us how it really is.

These considerations lead us to another distinction: the distinction between utopian and realistic theories. If ideal theory is less fact-sensitive than nonideal theory, one tends to say it is utopian. The main criticism made by those who think ideal theory is utopian may be summarized in this way: a perfect ideal of justice may be imagined but not achievable^[1] (Valentini, 2012: 658). Therefore, a utopian theory does not concern itself about feasibility constraints, because it does not address the problem of achievability. It assumes that the theory will be fully complied (or should be). A more realistic theory is the one that addresses the possibility that the theory will not be completely fulfilled. However, even though utopian theories are related to ideal theories, it does not mean that an ideal theory is always utopian. Rawls thinks that principles should be implemented in an ideal society, but he also acknowledges the need to implement nonideal theories in unfavourable circumstances.

Valentini also points out that ideal theory is an end-state theory, and nonideal theory is a transitional theory. An end-state theory is a theory that shows us a final goal that a society should pursue. A nonideal theory is transitional because it gives us gradual steps in order to achieve a better world (*ibid.*:660-661). So, ideal theory is an end-state theory because it guides our action towards a final goal – the perfectly just society. Nonideal theory is a

1 Vide: Valentini (2012). Valentini gives us an example of a utopian theory. She shows us that Cohen endorses a utopian argumentation because he claims that the principles are fact-free. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that he would ignore factual constraints to the values and principles supported by an ideal theory. But, it does mean that an ideal theory tells us what we should think rather than showing what we should do (Cohen, 2008: 268). The consequence of this claim is that, even though an ideal theory is not implemented, it should be, in the sense that the principles endorsed are right. We will analyse these problems in the following chapters and we will try to show what their relevance is to the problem of ideal theory's achievability.

transitional theory because it assumes that the improvements of justice are made in small steps.

In the following chapter, we will address the problem of noncompliance. Like we have seen, there are many other possible distinctions that we can find in the literature, but we will focus our attention on the problem of noncompliance. Our claim is that, although these distinctions are very important, they all relate to the problem of noncompliance. For instance, if ideal theory is less fact-sensitive than nonideal theory, it is so because it assumes strict compliance of the theory, no matter what the problems of implementation are. Ideal theory is also related to utopian theories for the same reason, as we have seen. In that context, we will analyse the arguments of two important authors, Stemplowska and Robeyns.

After that, we will analyse the relations between principles and facts. We will focus our analysis in G.A. Cohen's work. Our main claim is that principles are not completely independent from facts, but they are important too. Also, if facts can make us reanalyse principles, we will try to see how it can be done, and whether that analysis should make us still endorse those principles or not.

1. Ideal theory and the problem of noncompliance

Several authors have analysed the relationship between ideal and nonideal theory. Some of them argue that ideal theory can be useful to develop public policies to increase justice in the real world, others argue that it is not useful at all. In order to discuss this subject, one must analyse the problem of noncompliance. Ideal theory is a theory that assumes full compliance, under favourable circumstances, as we have seen. But in the real world, what we consider more just may not be followed due to economic constraints or lack of motivation of individuals to whom it applies, or other reasons. We will analyse some arguments regarding this problem.

1.1. Robeyns and the problem of bad idealizations

According to Robeyns, idealizations are assumptions that are not met in reality (Robeyns, 2008: 355). The reason why they are not met in reality is connected to the definitions we have analysed in the previous chapter. Ideal theory makes assumptions that are not met in reality because it tells us how a perfect society should be – it is an end-state theory. So, the prescriptions

made by ideal theory are also less fact-sensitive than prescriptions made by nonideal theory because they do not accommodate possible constraints that can be evidenced by facts. But there are some good reasons to do so. One possible reason is that ideal theory should not be concerned about how the world really is, but should be concerned about how the world should be. Even if facts show that an ideal theory is not complied, that does not mean it should not be, as Estlund, for instance, argued (Estlund, 2011)^[2].

One example of an assumption that may not be met in reality is the one made by Rawls. Considering that all citizens are free and morally equals is an essential aspect of his theory. But there is another important aspect. All people have common sense and all are capable of conceiving the best for them and the others (Robeyns, 2008: 352). What if some people cannot show those qualities? It may happen that in the real world some people may prefer a different theory of justice, because they are willing to take the risk that they can be poor, but they prefer that they are not coerced to pay taxes, because they believe that they are talented enough to succeed. Maybe this example does not show an incapability of thinking in a rational way, but at least it shows that in the real world people may disagree about the best way of thinking about what is the best thing to do to care about themselves and the others. Robeyns stresses that, by its own nature, ideal theory is compelled to use idealizations. But she also recognizes the importance of an idealization for the success of a theory:

The use of idealizations is necessary to keep the complexity of the theory within manageable boundaries. By introducing idealizations, we reduce the number of parameters that the theory has to deal with (*ibid.*: 353).

For instance, in the real world there are prejudices and discrimination. But, of course, if one wants to prescribe how the world should be, we may make the assumption that in an ideal society there is no prejudices nor discriminations. However, not all idealizations are good. For Robeyns, a bad idealization is an idealization that does not serve legitimate purposes (*ibid.*:358). One of the examples of this is a theory that ignores the need that human beings have of each other (*ibid.*). If human beings are, by their own nature, social, a theory that demands that they do not have that need is not legitimate. Let us analyse the example of Robeyns about the distribution of

2 Vide: Estlund (2011). One of the main distinctions made by Estlund is the *won't do/can't do* distinction. The main issue is that the fact that an ideal theory is not followed does not mean necessarily it could not be.

care in modern societies. Her claim is that the distribution of care is not equally distributed in modern societies. Also, most of the care services are made by women and immigrants. By making the assumption that human beings do not need each other, we are biasing against the groups that are in worst social conditions (*ibid.*: 359).

There is another problem regarding idealizations. Being an end-state theory rather than a transitional theory, ideal theory will not be very helpful in order to reach the principles it endorses. It is the task of nonideal theory to think about how we will reach those principles. That is why Robeyns compares ideal theory with a paradise island where we ideally would like to be, but we do not know the way to achieve it (*ibid.*: 361). So, what are the options when it comes to implementing idealizations in the real world? According to Robeyns, there are two options. The first one is to wait that idealizations materialize. The problem with this is that researches within cognitive psychology show that the causal mechanisms of injustices are very persistent. The other option is to implement those principles, even though the circumstances are not favourable. The problem is that, since those principles depend on conditions that do not exist in real world, that implementation may have unpredictable consequences (*ibid.*: 358).

But there is no reason why ideal theory cannot answer this problem. First, if we agree that there are good and bad idealizations, we will endorse the need to be moderate and be careful with idealizations that are so difficult to implement that we should avoid them³. If we think about the analysis of Rawls, we will reach a conclusion similar to this one. According to Simmons's analysis of Rawls principles, ideal theory must be a realistic utopia (2010: 7). This means that ideal theory must take human nature, economic restraints and other factors into consideration. Moreover, Rawls thinks himself that nonideal theory may be useful as a means to achieve ideal theory's prescriptions. In Simmons's analysis of the role of ideal theory and nonideal theory in the theory of justice, we can see some examples about the importance of nonideal theory. First of all, nonideal theory is required in a noncompliance's scenario. Noncompliance can be deliberate or can be the consequence of a certain impossibility. For instance, when

3 This problem seems, however, somehow difficult to solve. For instance, on Estlund's account, a theory that is not followed because people are selfish is not necessarily a bad one, because motivational reasons are not requirement-blocking to ideal theory (Estlund, 2011). Only something impossible to do can block ideal theory. How can one say the difference between good and bad idealizations if they are, by definition, assumptions that are not met in reality? Robeyns gives us the example of the assumption that human beings do not need one each other. Would this count as an impossible thing to do or is it socially constructed?

it comes to basic structures, a deliberate noncompliance can be the cause of an institutional unfairness. In that case, civil disobedience is legitimate, because it is a means to confront those who hold the power with the need to stop promoting that institutional unfairness (*ibid.*: 17).^[4]

Robeyns, on the other hand, reach the conclusion that theorists should pay more attention to the limitations of ideal theory, and thus, she thinks that it has a limited role in making the world more just (2008: 361). Although it is not necessarily true that all idealizations are bad, ideal theorists are, in some cases, dismissive about empirical information that is useful to implement ideal theory in a nonideal world. Let us analyse this little excerpt:

If ideal theorists want to produce theories that are action-guiding in the real world, and want to avoid the dismissive reactions of nonideal theorists or scholars working on effective justice-enhancing strategies that these ideal theories are of no use in reality, then they have to be much more upfront about the limitations of ideal theory, and invest much more time and effort into working out how ideal theory can be developed into nonideal theory and ultimately into action design and implementation (*ibid.*: 361).

In other words, even if we have common sense and are not deluded as ideal theorists, we must compromise with facts in order to make our idealizations valuable to the task of really improving justice in the real world. When we analyse the connection between principles and facts, based on G.A. Cohen's work, in the chapter two, we will endorse this point of view. From now on we will address the arguments of another important author, Stemplowska.

1.2. Stemplowska – AD recommendations

Stemplowska is also concerned with feasibility constraints and assumes that ideal theory must deal with the problem of noncompliance.

She begins by characterizing the structure of a normative theory. A normative theory is made of principles, which are normative statements expressing positions on values. Those principles are connected by analytical devices, such as arguments (Stemplowska, 2008: 323).

Ideal theory is a normative theory, in the sense that, by prescribing how the world should be, it advocates a set of principles that should be followed by a political community.

4 This issue is discussed primarily by Rawls (1971: 309).

The problem that she identifies is that some of those normative theories also give recommendations for action. Those recommendations should be desirable but also achievable, because there is no point in prescribing recommendations if they will not be successfully applied (*ibid.*: 323-324). So ideal theory must concern with achievable and desirable recommendations – what Stemplowska calls AD recommendations.

Nonetheless, the usual criticism that ideal theory faces - such as the tendency to make false assumptions, once that ideal theorists usually concern themselves more with how the world should be than how the world really is, neglecting the facts and jeopardizing the possibility of fully implementing the theory - is not always fair. Stemplowska recognizes the usefulness of false assumptions, because a theory that removes false assumptions also removes the possibility of dealing with broader problems that are very important, such as: What is justice (*ibid.*: 326-327)? That is because when we are tackling broad problems such as this, we will inevitably make false assumptions, because our theorization will be forced to make approximations that are necessarily false in the sense that, applied to a given society, they will require adjustments in order to succeed.

This, of course, does not mean that there are not any problems with ideal theory (Stemplowska began by saying that recommendations should be desirable but also achievable, after all). One of the main failures of a normative theory is that its prescriptions will not result in an increase in real justice (*ibid.*: 329). That is because the theory fails to issue achievable recommendations. That may happen because theories ignore nonmarginal noncompliance or because, even with full compliance, it fails to solve the problem it was supposed to solve (*ibid.*: 331).

Even though this happens, Stemplowska still claims that ideal theory is important, because it helps us to clarify the values we wish to pursue. Let us take the example that she analyses. Imagine that in perfect conditions we consider that it is wrong to have private education. That means that if the public schools gives families all the conditions necessary for a good education it is unfair to allow families wealthy enough to pay for it to give their children a private education. But, as we have seen, there may be constraints to this principles. If in a particular society public schools do not offer those conditions, it is legitimate that parents call upon private schools. But Stemplowska argues that, even in this situation, it is important to have this general principle, because it gives us the direction to which we want to go in order to have a perfect society (*ibid.*: 332).

2. Are principles from ideal theory independent from facts?

Until now we have been analysing the problem of noncompliance faced by ideal theory. As we have seen, many authors stress that the main problem of ideal theory is its applicability in the real world. Being less fact-sensitive than a nonideal theory, it may fail because it fails to take into account feasibility constraints regarding its implementation.

But, what if principles are independent from facts? If general principles can be considered right or wrong, no matter what the facts are, than it is possible to claim that there is no need to worry about feasibility constraints.

First, we will consider Cohen's arguments on this subject, and then we will point some problems.

2.1. Values and principles against reality?

Our general aim when analysing ideal theory and nonideal theory relates to the question raised by Sen: is a transcendental theory of justice necessary and sufficient to improve justice in the real world? His answer is negative. What he calls transcendental justice is neither necessary nor sufficient to improve justice in the real world. First of all, what Sen calls transcendental justice is the kind of theory that focuses in the perfect justice, that is, a fully perfect society. Also, it is a theory that focuses more in the institutional rules that a fair society must have, rather than concerning with the actual behaviour of citizens (Sen, 2009: 5-6). So, transcendental justice is related to ideal theory, because it assumes full compliance in order to achieve a perfect idea of justice.

But why does Sen argues that transcendental justice is neither necessary nor sufficient to improve justice in the real world? The answer is that it is not a good theory in order to make comparisons between nonideal states of the world. That is so because a descriptive approach is different from an evaluative approach. A descriptive approach is the definition of an object, which comprises its main characteristics. An evaluative approach is the evaluation that we make of those characteristics. One example may help us to clarify this matter. For instance, if we consider red wine the perfect wine, it will not help us to decide between a white wine and a blend of red and white wine. That happens because there is no reason to consider that the blend is closer to the perfect wine just because it contains red wine along with the white wine. The fact is that the mixture makes it different from red wine (*ibid.*:16). If we guide ourselves by a descriptive approach, we

should say that the blend is better than the white wine, because it contains red wine, so it contains some of the characteristics of the best wine. But the problem is that, on an evaluative level, the blend may not be better than the white wine because, even though it has some of the characteristics of the red wine, it does not contain all of them^[5].

So, the point is that ideal theory does not help us deciding between two different nonideal circumstances of the world. That is why ideal theory is neither necessary nor sufficient on Sen's account. These considerations tell us that ideal theory may be useless to consider the best options in a non-ideal world.

Nonetheless, this argument may be too hasty. When one says that a blend of white and red wine is further away from the red wine alone than white wine, why are we saying that? Because the flavour and the general main characteristics of the blend can be at a greater distance from the red wine than the white wine. It is possible to seek for that main characteristics, and by doing that we are getting closer to the red wine. So, it is possible to make comparisons with perfection as well, by making a clarification of the main characteristics and, if it is necessary, by ranking them. Sen points out other comparisons as well. For instance, he claims that knowing that *Mona Lisa* is the ideal picture won't help us deciding between a Dalí or a Picasso. It may seem odd to compare wines or pictures with perfect justice, though. The issue at stake is this: transcendental justice will not help us to decide between two available nonideal choices. Even though ideal justice is a more complex issue than wines or pictures, the idea of Sen seems is very straightforward and it seems plausible. If it is not possible to achieve the principles endorsed by an ideal theory we should strive to get as near as possible of those principles. If our theory demands that several values such as liberty and equality should be pursued, but it is not possible to implement all of them because of conditions of scarcity, we should choose the second best available option. The problem is this: it is not necessarily true that the second best option is the one who preserves more values endorsed by the theory (Goodin, 1995: 53-54).

Our claim is that the problem of not being able to compare nonideal states of the world with the perfect idea of justice can be reduced by making a clarification of the values we endorse in our ideal theory. That clarification allows us to rank the values, and that makes it easier for us to decide which

5 This problems relates to the problem of second best. According to Goodin's example, if our favourite car is a silver Rolls Royce, but it is not available, our second choice may not be the car that has two of the three main characteristics we like in that car (Goodin, 1995: 53).

of the available states is closer to our ideal conception. If we analyse what do we really enjoy in the red wine (weather it is the texture or the acidity, or other characteristics, and which one is the most important), it is easier for us to know if the white wine is preferable to the blend or not. Likewise, when we clarify the main values we wish to endorse, ideal theory can be useful to make comparisons as well.

Adam Swift analysed this issue as well. He approves the idea that ideal theory is a good theory to guide our action in a nonideal world. If so, it allows us to make comparisons between nonideal circumstances and the ideal of perfect society. Of course, in a nonideal world, we can be faced with the impossibility of implementing principles we consider very important. Science is important because it tells us which states of the world are possible to achieve, but philosophy is important because it clarifies which of those states are better (Swift, 2008: 368). But, according to Swift, philosophy has a practical application too, even in a nonideal environment. When it is not possible to apply all the principles we believe in, we will be faced, once again, with the problem of second best. For example, if we support the idea that an ideal theory requires that children are cared for properly without gender inequality, but social science tells us that such a society is not possible in the short term, what political decision should be taken if one wants to proceed according with the theory (*ibid.*: 375)? Swift's answer is precisely that one should clarify the values behind the principles we endorse. By doing that we will be able to know what to do while it is not possible to comply with all the principles endorsed by the theory (*ibid.*: 376-377).

In short, nonideal theory is fundamental but ideal theory is important because it helps us to evaluate practical action. So, in that sense, it has a practical application too.

So, the main conclusion of this part is that not only ideal theory allows us to make comparisons with nonideal circumstances, but also that those comparisons are desirable, because they allow us to evaluate our available choices and they give us a guidance in order to achieve a more just world^[6].

6 In this regard, Stemplowska also claims the importance of ideal theory, even if it has false assumptions, because those assumptions serve the purpose of clarifying the values one think is important, even if they are not met in reality (2008: 331).

2.2. G.A. Cohen, on principles and facts

Even if we reach the conclusion that ideal theory allows us to evaluate which states of the world available are the best ones, a question remains: can ideal theory tell us what the best political action is, regardless of the facts?

Why is it important to clarify if principles are independent from facts? Because if so, ideal theory is correct, in the sense that it survives to evidence from factual propositions. Even if the facts show that where those principles were implemented they were not completely followed, or, if they were, justice was not improved, if they are independent from facts, than facts cannot disprove them.

Cohen's argumentation is as follows:

Even if there is a fact grounding a principle, that happens because there is a more general principle grounding that fact.

Example:

Fact – Religion is important in at least some people's lives (F1).

This fact grounds the following principle:

Principle – There must be freedom of religious practice (P2).

But this happens because there is a more general principle grounding that fact:

Principle – If something is important in some people's lives, then they should be free to pursue it (P1).

So, we have the following scheme:

$P1 \rightarrow F1 \rightarrow P2$

Does this example show us that principles are independent from facts?

In Cohen's opinion it does show, because there are no facts grounding the more general principle (Cohen, 2003: 225).

Let us analyse Cohen's example. Imagine this other fact:

Fact – In a specific social context, religious freedom causes severe social conflicts, increasing violence and putting citizen's security at risk.

That fact makes it difficult to accept the conclusion of our former example.

A supporter of Cohen may argue that there is another general principle grounding our decision of blocking religious freedom:

Principle: No one should be free to achieve their goals when severe damage can follow from it.

So, implementing the principle that says that people should be free to pursue things important to them depends on knowing if that pursuit will harm others or not.

Given this, we can reformulate the principle:

Principle – If something is important in people’s lives, they should be free to pursue it, unless that pursuit will cause social conflict or be harmful in anyway to others.

Even if we still hold that this principle is independent from facts, we will need facts to decide whether we concede religious freedom or not. Also, maybe if there wasn’t facts denying the virtues of our principles, we couldn’t reformulate them.

But this may not convince everybody that principles can be reviewed by facts. Estlund tells us that philosophers should not be concerned with feasibility constraints, because their duty is to imagine ideal conditions of justice, rather than concerns about its implementation. On Estlund’s account, the only thing that can block ideal theory is something impossible to be followed (Estlund, 2011). Hence, considerations of lack of motivation and other limitations of human nature cannot be used to set ideal theory aside. In short, “won’t do” does not imply “can’t do”. Moreover, the main task of an ideal theorist is to imagine how the world should be, rather than to concern itself with how the world is. If a principle is not followed, it does not mean it is wrong. Paying too much attention with how the world is leads us to what he calls *complacent realism* (Estlund, 2014: 115). If we are too cautious, we will not change the world. So, what an ideal theorist should pursue is a *hopeless aspirational theory*, that is, he should pursue a theory that aspires to imagine how the world should be, even if its recommendations are not followed, since that «the fact that people will not live up to them even though they could is, evidently, a defect of people, not of the theory» (*ibid.*: 118).

Given this, if we assume that the principle: *If something is important in some people’s lives, then they should be free to pursue it (P1)* is right, than the

fact: *in a specific social context, religious freedom causes severe social conflicts, increasing violence and putting citizen's security at risk* should not block that principle. If the principle is right, than people should always be free to have their religious freedom, even in a conflict area. Those who commit crimes should be punished and the others should be left alone, even if the result of this politic could lead to some amount of violence.

Thus, in the previous example, the principle: *If something is important in some people's lives, then they should be free to pursue it*, which is independent from facts, may have bad consequences in a particular situation, as we have seen. In that case, what's the best thing to do? Taking into account what we have argued before, we should clarify which values we think are the most important. In this particular case, we can claim that the most important value is freedom, for instance. In an ideal society, people should have all the conditions to be happy, and that means that they should be able to pursue what they want. But, that principle may have bad consequences in a social environment of religious intolerance. If facts show that in that particular circumstance, violence and riots decrease if there are limitations to the religious practice, what to do with the principle we are supporting? We must clarify, as we argued, the values behind the principle. Innocent people who do not commit crimes should be free to practice their religion, but we are faced with empirical data that show us convincingly that giving those innocent people the opportunity to do that is dangerous for them and for the rest of the community. Therefore, we should pursue the second best option, clarifying and ranking our values. We have two different values competing here: safety and freedom. Thus, in order to choose what we should do in this situation, we must argue which of those values are more important. We are, of course, simplifying this issue. There are many other questions one could raise. For instance, this may not be only a matter of safety or freedom, but also a matter of dignity. If someone is innocent and tolerant, it is maybe intrinsically unfair to forbid that person to do something clearly important. Of course, there are intermediate solutions. In that scenario, people could still practice their religion at home, for instance, they could not do it only in public spaces. So, we must analyse all the values and rank them to solve this problem.

Let us see a last example: the principle of Marx, according to which private ownership should be abolished, is a principle that can be defended for different reasons. Let us assume that the implementation of that principle is not successful in the sense that in a society in which it is applied,

workers have lower wages compared with workers in capitalist societies. Should we stick to the general principle because it's right no matter what the real conditions in a nonideal context are? It depends of the values we really want to endorse. The classical reason for defending this principle is that it is intrinsically wrong that those who contribute with their work for the wealth only receive a very little amount of the produced value. But if what we really want is that people live well, have a good standard of living and have access to the goods and the services necessary to have a good live, than it is questionable if we should maintain that principle, knowing that the result of its implementation will not promote that. Nonetheless, if we support the idea that it is intrinsically unfair that workers receive less than they produce, even if the economy in such a society that abolished private ownership cannot allow them to receive better wages than those in capitalist societies, than it is possible to think that the principle should be defended after all.

In short, when the ideal principles are not followed, it is necessary to take the facts that put that noncompliance in evidence. But, if empirical data shows us that a principle is not followed, that does not necessarily mean we have to give up implementing it. We can analyse it to see what caused the failure.

In any case, principles can be informed by facts if they don't work out persistently and in several contexts. If that's the case, it is not enough to say that the theory is good, and people don't comply with it because they don't want to, and not because they cannot do it.

If we want to know if we should stick to the principles or not, we should clarify the core of indispensable values we hold on to.

3. Conclusion

We have discussed the problem concerning the relationship between ideal and nonideal theory. Our main goal was to discuss the problem of the applicability of ideal theory. We began by clarifying the distinction between ideal and nonideal theory. There are lots of distinctions made in the literature but we argued that the essential distinction is that ideal theory assumes full compliance and nonideal theory does not assume it. So, the main problem that ideal theory deals with is the noncompliance of its prescriptions. Some authors, such as Robeyns, stress that ideal theory has a limited role in real life politics due to its lack of connection with facts and constraints.

In this regard, we have analysed the arguments of two important authors that have addressed this issue, Robeyns and Stemplowska. Both authors agree that the assumptions made by ideal theory can lead to unpredictable consequences, and may not improve real justice^[7]. Robeyns recognizes that not all the idealizations are bad, but she stresses that ideal theorists should pay attention to the limitations of the ideal theory, since that nothing follows from its prescriptions (2008, 359). In other words, it is true that the fact that an ideal theory is not accomplished does not necessarily mean that it will not be in the future, but it is the task of nonideal theory to apply the theory to the real world, and the more demanding an ideal theory is the more difficult it may be to apply its principles.

Stemplowska claims that false assumptions are important because they give us an important guidance for political action^[8]. Nonetheless, she recognizes that the conclusions of such a theory may not result in any increase of justice in a particular society (Stemplowska, 2008: 330).

In chapter two we have analysed to which extent ideal theory is dependent from facts. First, we have seen the arguments of Sen about the insufficiency of ideal theory to make comparisons between several contexts. We have concluded that ideal theory can be used to make comparisons too. Nonetheless, when the demands of ideal theory are not met in reality, there is a problem of the second best. In that case, just like Swift claims, one must analyse the values behind the principles that are not completely followed, so that it is possible to make the choice that it is closer to the principles we endorse.

The main conclusion until this part was that ideal theory does have an important role in a theory of justice, because it is an important guide to political actions and also it allows us to evaluate the available choices that we have in a nonideal circumstance.

But a question remained: if our principles are not fully complied now, should we simply conclude that we must try to see how they can be complied in the future, and meanwhile we should try to see the second best option? Or, by the contrary, should the empirical evidences displayed by social sciences, for example, make us rethink about our principles? In this context we analysed the arguments of Cohen about the relations between facts and principles. Our first assumption was that if principles are independent from facts, than it is not required that ideal theory concerns about

7 Vide: Robeyns (2008), Stemplowska (2008).

8 In order to illustrate this idea, we have analysed the example of public and private education (Stemplowska, 2008: 332).

feasibility conditions. Cohen claims that principles are independent from facts.

Our claim is that, even if we can think about a principle that is independent from any fact, there are two important things to point out: a) sometimes facts are important to make us rethink about principles, and even change them^[9]; b) even if one can always claim that if a principle is never implemented it is not necessarily a problem of the principle but only a problem of application, the truth is that if an important part of the principles endorsed by an ideal theory was implemented historically and by some reason it did not improve justice, it means that those principles were not complied and if there is a historical pattern of noncompliance, it means that it is unlikely that they will be fulfilled in the future, although it is not impossible. But the point is, if we clarify the values that are indispensable and the principles that should convey those values fail persistently, it is probably a better thing to do to reformulate those principles, provided that the new principles do not betray the values we wish to endorse^[10].

9 In our example, we have reformulated our principle because of facts that made us rethink about it. We changed the original principle to: *If something is important in people's lives, they should be free to pursue it, unless that pursuit will cause social conflict or be harmful in anyway to others.* If we lived in an ideal society, maybe we would not have the need to reformulate it.

10 Robeyns defined bad idealization as an idealization that does not serve legitimate purposes (Robeyns, 2008: 358). For example, an idealization that goes against human nature is a bad idealization. One possible criticism to this is that it is very difficult to know what human nature is, since that societies change throughout history, and what seems difficult or even impossible to achieve now may be possible in the future. But when a significant part of an idealization is applied several times in diverse contexts and the consequences are bad, it seems a good reason to argue that the idealization is bad, because even though we never know if what is now difficult to implement will be possible in the future, it has now costs that should be taken into consideration. The reason why we can claim that it is a bad idealization is because the probability of that idealization will be successfully implemented in the future (we never know if it will be or not) is hardly worth the bad consequences of its application now. By making a clarification of values in a nonideal situation, and, if necessary, by changing the principles we have endorsed, we can try to avoid the problem of noncompliance without giving up trying to improve justice in the real world.

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A PAISAGEM COMO ELEMENTO DE APROPRIAÇÃO ARTÍSTICA

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A paisagem presta-se a inúmeras leituras consoante os contextos geográficos, culturais e individuais do observador. É um suporte que tem tanto de físico como de imaterial que resulta da sua condição de espaço cultural porque construído pelo Homem seja ao nível da sua forma, como dos (pré)conceitos do olhar.

A proposta do presente artigo assenta numa reflexão sobre o conceito como unidade de estudo e de compreensão do mundo como entidade construída (ou a construir) e a sua (re)interpretação ou apropriação pelas expressões artísticas. Esta síntese provocada pelo observável (espaço exterior) e pelo sentido (domínio do indivíduo) contribui fortemente para a transformação cultural da paisagem, especialmente numa sociedade altamente mediatizada como a ocidental.

Palavras-chave: Geografia, Paisagem, Cultura, Artes, Geografia Cultural

The landscape lends itself to numerous interpretations depending on the geographical, cultural and individual observer. It is an unit that is both physical as intangible that results from its status as a cultural space, built by man in terms of their shape and characteristics, as well as with individual (pre)concepts.

The aim of this article is set on a reflection on the concept of landscape as a unit of study and interpretation of the world as a crafted entity (or in process of construction) and its (re)interpretation or appropriation by different artistic expressions. This synthesis caused by the observable (physical space) and the senses (of the individual domain) contributes meaningfully to the cultural transformation of the landscape, especially in a highly mediated society as Western.

Key-words: Geography, Landscape, Culture, Arts, Cultural Geography

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A Paisagem: da Geografia e do cotidiano às Artes

O conceito de “paisagem” constituirá na atualidade um dos termos de uso e compreensão mais universais da cultura ocidental, cultura essa que, em virtude do elevado grau de desenvolvimento atingido, se preocupa com questões que contribuam para a fruição do tempo e do espaço. Neste sentido, o termo “paisagem” tornou-se um conceito subjectivo fortemente enraizado em quadros conceptuais que derivam da cultura e educação de um grupo ou dos afectos de um indivíduo. É cada vez mais um conceito intangível que procura traduzir uma realidade mais visual(izada) do que vivenciada.

A “paisagem” é na sua essência o objecto de estudo da Geografia. Esta, ao ter a superfície da Terra como campo de ação, devido à sua imensidão viu-se na necessidade de a fragmentar em unidades mais ou menos homogêneas, mais ou menos entendíveis e traduzíveis. A “paisagem” constitui então um dos elementos-chave para a compreensão do espaço que nos envolve e do qual somos atores de tal forma que a “paisagem” mais não é do que o cimento aglutinador das várias correntes que estudam o homem e o espaço assim como será o conceito que mais sentido ou unidade pode conceder à Geografia.

No entanto, na sua essência, a “paisagem” como conceito está associada a uma multiplicação e/ou emancipação de ciências que têm o planeta e os problemas que o afectam como linha fundamental de estudo. Desta forma, cada disciplina desenvolveu metodologias que encaram a “paisagem” como um objecto de estudo e sujeita às mais variadas abordagens e interpretações.

A grande dificuldade na análise de uma paisagem assenta na forma como o objeto visual real é captado pelo observador e como este, fruto do seu quadro intelectual e afetivo, perceciona o que vê. Para um dos fundadores desta área de estudo, Sauer, ([1925] 2007):

The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result. The natural landscape is very important for it supplies the material out of which the cultural landscape is formed. The shaping force, however, lies in the culture itself (p. 343).

Um problema se coloca com a abordagem de Sauer, nomeadamente a importância que concede à morfologia da paisagem não valorizando suficientemente elementos de índole mais subjetiva que provêm da natureza

humana. Essa dimensão tem vindo a ser compreendida e estudada, sendo crescentemente considerada um elemento essencial na construção, apreensão e transmissão da noção de “paisagem”. É isso que nos recorda Cosgrove (1984) que na sua análise da paisagem a encara na vertente do simbolismo que a mesma contém:

The frequent association in geographical writing of Landscape with studies of the impact of human agency in altering the physical environment serves to remind us that landscape is a social product, the consequence of a collective human transformation of nature. The elision of landscape with wilderness or nature untainted by human intervention is a recent idea generally involving a rejection of the evidence of human action. The artistic use of landscapes stresses a personal, private, and essentially visual experience (p. 14).

A “paisagem” é, assim, a redução de uma macrounidade complexa numa escala abarcável e passível de estudo. O conceito ultrapassou fronteiras científicas e tornou-se um conceito polissémico, aberto às mais variadas e infundas definições consoante a linha problematizadora que se pretender seguir. É, no entanto, também um reflexo de tradução da realidade em conceitos afetivos e culturais. Comumente associamos uma paisagem a conceitos subjetivos positivos como “belo”, “deslumbrante” sendo elemento de apropriação de projeções do estético que uma comunidade ou indivíduo detém. Igualmente invoca sensações de bem-estar intimamente ligados com aquilo que nos é confortável ou nos dá prazer, cada vez mais assente em conceitos que derivam da exploração dos espaços como áreas de turismo. É, então, comum o epíteto de “paradisiaco” quando referimos a fruição do espaço que corresponde à paisagem vivenciada.

Nas nossas interações sociais raramente traduzimos a paisagem como um elemento negativo ou que nos proporcione más memórias ou sensações. Pelo contrário: crescentemente a “paisagem” é valorizada como algo benévolo e benigno. De acordo com os nossos referenciais culturais e sócio-afetivos, com a importância das memórias visuais mas também ao nível dos odores e sabores, construímos os aspectos valorativos que constituem a qualidade da paisagem sujeitando-se esta a inúmeras interpretações e reinterpretações de acordo com os quadrantes geográficos (aqui entendido como espaço físico e cultural) dos quais o “olhar” inquisidor da paisagem é proveniente e o “sentir” na paisagem que nela se acomoda.

É uma dimensão diversa da paisagem que não a de puro e directo objeto de ciência; uma variação universalizada por factores artísticos e eco-

nômicos no qual a “paisagem objecto” se transforma em “paisagem cenário” sendo este o sentido que se encontra massificado pelo *marketing* e pela comunicação social. É esta abordagem e apropriação da paisagem como cenário que forma um novo cânone na sua apropriação e na nossa vivência através da literatura, da música, da fotografia, do cinema, da televisão, da pintura e da banda-desenhada. Qualquer suporte cultural moderno inclui como dispositivo narrativo uma “paisagem” utilizando como elemento contextualizador de ação (muitas vezes espoletador dessa mesma ação), elemento metafórico, ou simplesmente como interlúdio da narrativa para pincelar aquilo que nos é descrito. No fundo uma perspectiva visual (mesmo que literária ou sonora) e estética do dispositivo proposto mais como um “product of the same forces that produced the wilderness landscape, and exists in a symbiotic, interdependent and intertwined relationship with it” (Robertson & Richards, 2003, p. 9).

É da apropriação e relação que estabelecemos com uma dada “paisagem” que nela lançamos o nosso olhar individual e cultural, apropriando-nos dela mas construindo um valor figurativo alicerçando numa imagética de simbolismos vários e conceitos estéticos e poéticos subjectivos dos quais podem resultar a “paisagem arte”. São essas “associations of nature, beauty, and a sense of order, together with the secular role they play, still structure the understanding of landscape in nature and painting” (Kemal, 1995, p. 2) mas também na arte em geral.

A literatura é pródiga na descrição de paisagens sendo aliás este um dos artifícios comumente utilizados para a imersão literária do leitor na narrativa proposta. Por outro lado permite-nos igualmente perceber a estrutura cultural dos elementos a valorizar na paisagem, pois

words are like paint: they can approximate to what the scene is like, but they can't reproduce it. Therefore good writers don't claim to deliver a likeness: they offer a version of the scene that may have a stimulus from real life, but it is better understood as being something newly created (Siddall, 2009, p. 9).

Por sua vez, a pintura permitiu ao ser humano a representação pictórica daquilo que via ou pelo menos uma aproximação a essa realidade, procurando representá-la – muitas vezes de forma simbólica – sendo quase sempre evocativa, procurando transmitir a paisagem de acordo com as características do lugar retratado ou, no limite, com os valores daqueles que o olham (Casey, 2002). Sendo a pintura uma das mais antigas manifestações artísticas é possível documentar a evolução que o tratamento da pai-

sagem teve. Ao longo dos tempos o espaço que ocupava no retrato pictórico estruturado pelo artista, o carácter da “paisagem” foi-se alterando, desde a quase inexistência até à onnipresença. Na pintura renascentista a paisagem ocupava o segundo plano e podia ser desprovida de valor geográfico. O que interessava ao artista representar era o conceito cénico humano das cenas religiosas ou do quotidiano; a paisagem era figurativa servindo o dispositivo principal (Kemal, 1995). Da mesma forma estava igualmente quase ausente da literatura de viagens do período, na qual é possível encontrar referências à arquitetura e às populações de um lugar mas não a descrições de paisagens sendo necessário esperar pelo séc. XVIII para que tal se torne uma marca identitária na cultura (Bell & Lyall, 2012) .

Uma forma mais abstrata e complexa de traduzir a “paisagem” é aquela que é captada e projetada pela música. A música é capaz de traduzir através de ambientes sonoros paisagens – ou pelo menos, provocar em quem escuta a música sensações que conduzem para a construção interior de uma paisagem – que na linguagem corrente traduzimos por “paisagens musicais”. É comum reconhecermos mentalmente nos sons de uma orquestra, de uma composição, as “imagens” que evoquem uma estação do ano, uma cultura, um povo (a sua alegria, a sua dor, o seu quotidiano), uma terra (Casey, 2002).

Aliás, o carácter e poder imagético da música no seu posicionamento a um determinado lugar ou espaço é-nos dado pela utilização no parágrafo anterior das expressões “ambiente musical” e “paisagens sonoras” que nos remetem para algo físico ou visualizável. Esse poder da música na criação de imagens é utilizado no cinema e na televisão, quantas vezes valorizando o drama ou contextualizando de forma poderosa a “paisagem em movimento”.

O cinema e a televisão apresentam uma complexidade em muitos aspetos similar ao nível da captação e disseminação da paisagem, mas diversa das outras formas de arte. O cinema e a televisão são suportes artísticos e de comunicação fluidos e dinâmicos. Ambos são imagem em movimento, criadoras de ilusão quase palpável sendo paisagens que “look like we could touch them, walk through them and smell them, as well as those that look entirely fanciful or theatrical, are presented to us through the medium of film” (Horton, 2003) com o potencial de manipular o espaço e o tempo de forma plástica levando-nos para qualquer época ou geografia.

A paisagem é no cinema como linguagem de imagens o elemento estruturador da história que nos aparece como personagem principal ou secundária - determinante ainda que invisível -, diluída na acção do filme. Pode

ser um universo previamente reconhecível imbuído de um código apreendido pelo olhar como o são as paisagens associadas pelo imaginário cultural ocidental ao género *western* ou quando a história decorre numa urbe como Nova Iorque. Mesmo quando a ação se situa num mundo de fantasia (para lá do cinema, reino da fantasia *per se*) com paisagens idealizadas ou sintetizadas num *pastiche* de referenciais intemporais e geográficas (Game of Thrones) para um universo particular como o seja um mundo paralelo ou a vida num outro planeta (Star Wars ou Star Trek) num universo que vai muito para lá do conceito de “não-lugar”. Como escreve Horton (2003) sublinhando o carácter manipulador do cinema:

“reel landscapes” can be created using all of the artifice of Hollywood including rear projection (projecting a film or single shot of a real landscape behind the actors in the foreground) and, more recently, digitally added details or landscapes, specially constructed sets, ingenious lighting and, lastly, real landscapes (p. 80).

Neste contexto, é de sublinhar a dimensão que a tecnologia tem ao possibilitar a criação de cenários virtuais com um horizonte infindo de lugares permitido pelo digital levando a um extremo impensável na criação de “paisagens”.

A Paisagem na forma de relevo e suas representações

Utilizemos como exemplo uma das paisagens mais facilmente reconhecíveis no nosso planeta: os Himalaias, alvo de inúmeras representações nas mais diversas formas de arte. Sabemos que são a maior cordilheira acima do nível médio das águas dos mares, com as montanhas de maior altitude do nosso planeta, e por isso agrestes e pouco convidativas à vida devido aos fortes declives e características climáticas; isolam mais do que aproximam e, como tal, criam culturas características. Cruzemos então ciência com algumas das formas de arte possíveis de serem utilizadas neste suporte de papel: o cinema (não com imagens em movimento mas com a captura de um *frame* o que o torna fotografia), a banda desenhada, a pintura e a literatura.



FIG. 1 – SETE ANOS NO TIBETE, Jean Jacques Annaud (1997)



FIG. 2 – TINTIN NO TIBETE, Hergé, 1960

A *frame* do filme “Sete anos no Tibete” mostra-nos um grupo de tibetanos numa jornada pelos Himalaias. O que ressalta na imagem não é o grupo em si, ou a narrativa de um refugiado austríaco durante a II Guerra Mundial naquele país. O que é evidenciado é a paisagem que apesar de se encontrar em segundo plano é ela que domina projetando uma ideia de vazio: humano e de vegetação. Apenas o ocre granítico e, no plano distante, a brancura alva do gelo de altitude. A separação entre o grupo e a natureza-cenário é claramente evidenciada por dois artificios dramáticos; por um lado a imersão na sombra dos viajantes, sombra essa projetada por outra montanha em contraplano, por outro a neblina que se interpõe entre planos e acentua a sensação de isolamento. Não muito diferente deste efeito produzido é a abordagem de Hergé (1907-1983) com o seu seminal “Tintim no Tibete”: a mesma sensação de esmagamento da paisagem sobre o individuo

e uma vez mais, no *plot* é a paisagem que separa; no filme referido separa o protagonista da clausura, no livro de Hergé, separa os protagonistas do amigo que buscam. E, no entanto, o efeito dramático é diverso. No primeiro caso a paisagem é sinónimo de liberdade e novas oportunidades por apartar da prisão, no segundo caso é a sensação de aprisionamento e de impotência face à impossibilidade de se libertarem de uma “paisagem-cenário” que aprisiona e condiciona. Encontramos assim, duas formas distintas de apropriação da paisagem como elemento narrativo e, igualmente artístico.

Mas uma nova problemática deve ser abordada tendo como perspectiva a arte como artifício de ilusão e a subjectividade das formas de arte na manipulação do “real” e do “artístico” com base no real.

Os desenhos de Tintim resultam de um profundo trabalho de pesquisa do autor que cuidava escrupulosamente dos contextos geográficos e paisagísticos nos quais o seu personagem se movia que vão muito além daquilo que conhecemos sobre esse mesmo personagem como sublinha Dunnett (2009), referindo que a descrição frugal do personagem Tintim:

contrasts effectively with the surrounding landscapes and settings of the stories, and Hergé went to a great deal of effort to research into the minutiae of real objects such as automobiles and buildings. The results of this approach have been referred to as ‘Hergéan realism’ (p. 586).

A crise interior em que o autor se encontrava mergulhado abre espaço na estruturação da sua narrativa, criando um álbum no qual existe um forte subtexto de jornada interior. A paisagem aqui ocupa um duplo artifício: a da leitura metafórica do *eu* consciente e elemento estruturador de uma narrativa que tem tanto de “géographique avec la représentation du fait montagnard, géopolitique avec le problème du Tibet et de son annexion par la Chine, géo-environnemental avec la question du maintien ou de la disparition d’espèces faunistiques étranges” (Girard, 2009, p. 77) mas também de jornada interior funcionando “comme allégorie moderne et laïcisée du bon samaritain que nous souhaiterions privilégier” (p.77).

Em “Sete Anos no Tibete” a abordagem é diversa e de discussão complexa. O filme é a adaptação de um livro autobiográfico o que implica o confronto de visões distintas, ajustadas a suportes diversos, com códigos e linguagens próprias. Se em termos de paisagem como espaço físico da acção poderá não ter grande impacto, a narrativa pessoal terá múltiplas implicações. No entanto, foquemo-nos apenas na questão da “paisagem”. O filme narra o período de vida de Heinrich Harrer (1912-2006) no Tibete, e

as transformações que sofre em contacto com uma cultura e meios distintos do seu em período de grandes convulsões mundiais que vão desde a II Guerra Mundial até à ocupação do Tibete pela China (1951). A abordagem desta história não foi bem vista pelas autoridades chinesas que recusam autorização de filmagem, tendo a equipa de produção optado por filmar no Canadá e na Argentina, em que os Andes substituíram os Himalaias (Nesselson, 1999). No entanto, a equipa de produção conseguiu enviar duas equipas de filmagem para clandestinamente proceder à captação de imagens que foram posteriormente incluídas no filme (“Jean-Jacques Annaud: Mountains, Mantras, and a Movie Star -,” 1997) que nos remete para o carácter manipulador da imagem filmada que vemos projectada “too often we accept a film as a window on reality without noticing that the window has been opened in a particular way, to exclude as well as include” (Braudy, 1977). Ou seja, as paisagens que vemos são apresentadas como uma realidade geográfica e paisagística percebida que se tornam híbridos ou *pastiches* dessa mesma “realidade”.

Por sua vez, o livro autobiográfico (1963) no qual se baseia o filme descreve da seguinte forma aquilo que fora visto em primeira mão mas já filtrado pelo tempo e experiências subsequentes de Harrer:

Foi uma caminhada inesquecível. Andávamos muito além do limite de altitude, por serras de declives suaves; apesar de tudo, não havia monotonia na paisagem. Em certos pontos, era o colorido que deleitava a vista; e raramente me sucedeu ver todos os tons da paleta, em sucessão tão harmoniosa. Ao pé das águas límpidas do Indo, espriavam-se campos amarelados de bórax; além deles, brotavam os verdes tenros da primavera que nestas paragens só principia em junho. Os luminosos cumes nevados das montanhas formavam o segundo plano. Justamente por ocasião da nossa passagem, um temporal distante no Himalaia desdobrava o encanto indescritível dos seus jogos de matizes (p. 50).

Em ambos os casos a montanha é elemento de encontro do humano com a espiritualidade: os altos declives, o simbolismo da brancura, a provação das forças da natureza marcam a ascensão do humano numa jornada tanto física como interior para, posteriormente, regressar às tépidas planuras um novo homem. Este misticismo transversal a diversas culturas e patente em inúmeras obras de arte pode ser confrontado com duas formas culturais de apreensão e representação de uma mesma realidade, de uma mesma paisagem. Vejamos a representação da paisagem dos Himalaias sob a forma de pintura no olhar de duas culturas distintas: a representação num autor europeu e numa pintura oriental.



FIG. 3 – EVEREST, Nicholas Roerich, 1929



FIG. 4
SEIS SÍMBOLOS DA
LONGEVIDADE,
autor desconhecido, s.d.

A pintura terá sido a primeira forma de expressão artística a captar e a cristalizar a paisagem, perfeccionando-a através de filtros de (pré)conceitos que advêm do substrato cultural “may be valued differently by diferente cultures, which are themselves (...) in the process of change and development” (Andrews, 1999) e a disseminar ao olhar de quem se detém a fruir da manifestação artística.

“Everest” é uma pintura de 1928 do pintor russo-europeu Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947), produzida durante uma longa expedição pela Ásia. O deslumbramento pela paisagem, pela cultura, levaram-no a captar aquilo que vê e sente:

where can one have such joy as when the sun is upon the Himalayas; when the blue is more intense than sapphires; when from the far distance, the glaciers glitter as incomparable gems. All religions, all teachings, are synthesized in the Himalayas... (Roerich, 2003, p. 41).

A experiência do pintor naquele espaço físico e cultural contribui profundamente para alterar a sua visão de vida tendo sido reconhecido pela sua ação em prol daquelas comunidades. A sua heterógena obra conhece aqui uma metamorfose “the Himalayan period, we see this striving to express a spirituality in nature and to link that spirituality with man’s own striving to perfect himself” (Edgar Lansbury, 1974, p. 5) são traços facilmente reconhecíveis num olhar cultural ocidental.

Na abordagem cultural oriental a representação da paisagem está imbuída de princípios filosóficos nomeadamente “the Taoist vision of nature (...) [that] derive from a number of cultural and religious sources, including Confucian, Buddhist, and even shamanistic traditions (...)” (Clarke, 2000, p. 4). O foco está no equilíbrio entre os elementos naturais: a natureza como elemento físico telúrico mas também a sua força vital invisível, e o humano como criatura humilde em harmonia com o espaço (Clarke, 2002) sendo mais do que uma forma de arte mas um prolongamento do espírito do equilíbrio interior de tal forma que mais do que elemento dominante a paisagem é o elemento determinante.

Na figura 4, os Himalaias, retratados em plano afastado no fresco baseado numa lenda que narra a existência de uma terra de bonança, são aqui símbolo de vida. Não dominam ao nível de imagética, antes o fazendo através do simbolismo; uma omnipresença distante. É a água proveniente da fusão dos seus glaciares que dá vida ao local idílico que permite o verde da vegetação e a abundância de alimento. O rio que liga o lugar às monta-

nhas é o fluir da vida, a passagem de estado físico que permite a criação de um lugar harmonioso onde tudo está em equilíbrio.

A Paisagem de um lugar e suas representações

Desçamos de altitude e de latitude e vejamos outra abordagem num espaço geográfico diverso: as ilhas do Pacífico com as paisagens do Taiti utilizando como base de comparação a indústria do turismo como elemento de construção de “paisagem comércio” vs “paisagem arte”.

Os destinos turísticos têm a capacidade de se transformar e readaptar ao longo do tempo, oferecendo novas experiências numa dinâmica construída para atrair o turista. Neste contexto a valorização de uma “paisagem cenário” é essencial para suportar a actividade turística, pois “since early commercial tourism is the desire to experience beautiful landscapes (...) where consumers want maximum pleasure in minimum time” (Bell & Lyall, 2002, p. 3-4). Dessa forma, a paisagem é conformada àquilo que o turista deseja experienciar (ou pensa que deseja) devendo reunir um determinado número de características que a tornem suficientemente apelativa e desejável, recheada de elementos distintos do quotidiano normal de quem a frui mas, ainda assim, suficientemente reconhecível e familiar para não se estranhar. Ou seja, a experiência que se procura proporcionar ao turista passa por uma construção paisagística que leve a que o turista

go forth looking the unique, distinct, and unusual – somewhere exotic, maybe erotic – but certainly someplace that offers an atmosphere different from that to which they are accustomed. (...) The visual display of people, places and things makes them forms of ‘spectacle’ and tourism involves the ‘spectacularization of place’ (Bell & Lyall, 2012, p. 5).

E é aqui que entra a transformação de um lugar e de uma paisagem numa representação do paraíso, da “paisagem cenário” em “paisagem comércio”. O Taiti é comumente percebido (e conscientemente vendido) como um lugar de fartas belezas ou, como se encontra descrito no *site* oficial do turismo no arquipélago: “Tahiti. The word evokes visions of an island paradise. With 118 islands boasting high, rugged mountain peaks, coral reefs, turquoise-blue lagoons, white sand, palm-fringed beaches, and luxuriously intimate resorts, each island paradise has something for everyone” (<http://www.tahiti-tourisme.com/>). No entanto, a realidade mostra ser um produto mitificado pelo *marketing* e pela poderosa imagética a ele associado.



FIG. 5 – IMAGEM DE UM FOLHETO TURÍSTICO REFERENTE AO TAITI

A questão da construção do mito do “paraíso do Taiti” e a projeção no imaginário universal desse paraíso tem vindo a ser estudada por antropólogos, nomeadamente por Miriam Khan. A realidade é outra: as praias de fina areia branca são escassas estando remetidas a uns poucos atóis e mesmo essas não estão isentas de riscos para os banhistas pois o fundo marinho é coberto por cortantes pedaços de coral; as poucas lagoas de azul-turquesa não estão ao alcance da maior parte dos turistas; o clima perfeito é sazonal e os habitantes com os seus característicos trajés, perfis e tatuagens quase não existem pois também se adaptaram aos tempos, sendo escolhidos a dedo pelos hotéis para representar o papel junto aos turistas (Kahn, 2011).

Parte da imagem do paraíso e do bom selvagem a que culturalmente atribuímos ao Taiti provêm das obras de Gauguin (1848-1903), pintor expressionista francês que viveu e criou parte da sua obra naquele arquipélago onde captou a essência e as cores das vivências das gentes mais do que das paisagens, submergindo por completo na admiração daquela cultura como profusamente regista na sua correspondência para Paris. Mas Gauguin também se apropria da cultura polinésia travestindo-a de um carácter ocidentalizante patente, por exemplo, nos quadros representativos da Santíssima Trindade, incorporando neste e em diversas outras obras ico-

nografia europeia (Walther, 2000) mas igualmente incorporando elementos pictóricos gregos, japoneses, egípcios e europeus (Kahn, 2011), produzindo uma síntese na representação daquela cultura que influenciaria a forma como olhamos para ela.



FIG. 6 - PAISAGEM TAITI, Gauguin, 1893

Diversa é a abordagem do espaço e das paisagens que o caracterizam assim como do artista que as pintou vistas pelos olhos de um outro artista e de uma outra expressão artística. Mário Vargas Llosa, escritor peruano, na sua obra “O Paraíso na Outra Esquina” (2003) retrata os últimos anos de Gauguin no Taiti. Nesta obra é parco na utilização do artifício de descrição da paisagem para a contextualização do espaço e acções/pulsões do protagonista, estando mais interessado nos demónios interiores e processos criativos do pintor. No entanto, encontramos algumas descrições que remetem para a paisagem como deslumbramento/paraíso reflectindo as primeiras sensações de Gauguin ao desembarcar no Taiti:

Assim que respirou o ar quente de Papeete e os seus olhos ficaram deslumbrados devido à vivíssima luz que caía do céu azulíssimo, e sentiu em redor a presença da natureza naquela erupção de árvores de fruto que irrompia por todo o lado e enchia de aromas as poeirentas ruelas da cidade – laranjeiras, macieiras, coqueiros, mangueiras, as exuberantes goiabeiras e as nutridas árvore-do-pão -, veio-lhe uma vontade de trabalhar que já não sentia há muito (p. 21).

Em contraponto com um primeiro deslumbramento encontramos um mergulho no negrume do desespero em paralelo com as provações de Gauguin, do paraíso transformado em temor/inferno.

Era aquilo o Paraíso, reinventado por um pintor selvagem instalado na ilha de Taiti? Essa tinha sido a tua vaga intenção inicial. Ou, melhor, pintar do inferno em que tinhas caído nestes últimos tempos de encarniçamento do infortúnio, um Jardim do Éden não abstracto, não europeu, não místico, mas maori. Um Éden material, encarnado aqui e agora (p. 203).

A ironia assenta em que tratamos da visão que um artista (Llosa) tem de outro artista (Gauguin) que atuam sobre um espaço. Gauguin viveu no Taiti, com tudo o que isso implica; Llosa visitou todos os lugares em que o pintor esteve numa busca da “fidelidade narrativa” da história a contar (Nunes, 2003), portanto na condição de viajante. A este último interessava a sua própria visão da arte, adequando os esquemas pictóricos de Gauguin aos seus esquemas mentais e artísticos (Kristal & King, 2012) “but on the creation of a new reality that erases the boundaries between the subjective and the objective” (p. 136).

Paisagem – uma síntese

A paisagem é eminentemente um conceito cultural. Cultural na sua mais ampla acepção; desde o povo ou gentes que imbuídas de uma forma de representação e organização da sociedade – e portanto das atividades económicas e, assim, do espaço – constrói a sua paisagem ao artista que, de acordo com o seu ofício, a representa ou traduz. É um lugar dinâmico e plástico que muda com o tempo, com o evoluir das comunidades que o habitam e com os indivíduos que constituem essa comunidade; muda com os reflexos políticos, sociais e económicos nas mais diversas escalas humanas. No limite reflete o estatuto conjuntural de uma “civilização” ou o olhar civilizacional de quem a representa.

Como tal, fruto das ambivalências provenientes da vivência ou do olhar, do uso ou do disfrute, a paisagem é uma entidade de análise complexa e variável que só é entendida e vivenciada plenamente através dos filtros que os cinco sentidos nos permitem, projectando desta forma afetos e preconceitos intrínsecos ao indivíduo independentemente do seu carácter de artista, cientista, viajante em fruição, actor territorial ou decisor político.

No limite, a questão que fica na observação de uma paisagem consiste em algo simples e subjectivo na percepção de cada qual: “Porque é que uma paisagem gera sensações diferentes em cada um de nós?”.

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Recensões

SYMBOLON III – PAZ E CONCÓRDIA

Belmiro Fernandes Pereira e Jorge Deserto (orgs.), Porto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2014; 94 pp.

SYMBOLON IV – MEDO E ESPERANÇA

Belmiro Fernandes Pereira e Ana Ferreira (orgs.), Porto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2014; 114 pp.

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São várias as formas de revisitar o passado clássico. Quando fazemos essa visita guiados pela pena de especialistas, então o regresso ao passado vale mesmo a pena. É o que acontece com os volumes em apreço, da Coleção *Symbolon*, dedicados aos temas da *Paz e Concórdia* e do *Medo e Esperança*, que se seguem a dois outros volumes, dedicados igualmente a pares de emoções, o I sobre *Amor e Amizade*, e o II sobre *Inveja e Emulação*. Esta coleção corresponde a um projeto que pretende proceder à análise das Emoções na Literatura Greco-Latina, mediante o estudo de pares de emoções ou paixões e de conceitos éticos que se tornaram símbolos do mundo moral, político e religioso da antiguidade.

A primeira impressão que se colhe da leitura destes volumes é a

de que as emoções humanas, que chegaram até nós mediadas pelos autores greco-latinos, não mudaram significativamente ao longo dos tempos. Lendo os Clássicos, reencontramo-las lá, na épica homérica, na tragédia grega, no teatro aristofânico de intervenção, na história de Tucídides, nos tratados de Cícero ou nos tratados e epístolas de Séneca, em Virgílio, em Horácio ou Ovídio, em Agostinho de Hipona, na literatura medieval, no Renascimento, enfim, até aos nossos dias. E, como não poderia deixar de ser, em Aristóteles, que lhes dedica grande atenção reflexiva no livro II da Retórica, falando sobre a ira, a calma, a amizade e a inimizade, o temor e a confiança, a amabilidade, a piedade, a indignação, a inveja, a emulação. As palavras que Belmiro

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Pereira escolheu para figurarem em epígrafe do “In Limine” do primeiro livro da Coleção são a este título muito significativas e projetam a sua luz sobre qualquer dos livros que a integram, funcionando como enquadramento orientador. São retiradas das *Memórias de Adriano*, de Marguerite Yourcenar, e dizem o seguinte: “Os nossos vícios e as nossas virtudes têm modelos gregos”. É nesta perspectiva que os diversos estudos se enquadram, o que lhes confere um interesse muito actual.

Dada a heterogeneidade dos autores estudados, referirei o essencial de cada contributo, por forma a despertar a curiosidade e o interesse para a sua leitura.



Symbolon III - Paz e Concórdia (ed. de Belmiro Pereira e Jorge Deserto)

Este livro oferece ao leitor, como diz Jorge Deserto no texto prefacial (p. 6), “alguns olhares, episódicos e parcelares (mas nem por isso menos rigorosos), sobre o tópico da paz e da concórdia em alguns autores clássicos, autores que fizeram ouvir as suas vozes em grego e em latim.” De Homero a Erasmo, passando por Aristófanes, Sócrates, Cícero e Virgílio, eis os autores abordados sob este ponto de vista.

A abrir o volume, Jorge Deserto começa por apresentar algumas pis-

tas para a compreensão dos conceitos de paz e concórdia recorrendo à raiz destas palavras, em grego e em latim, o que permite definir esses conceitos com a precisão que é apanágio das línguas clássicas. Assim, o sentido ínsito na palavra *pax* (“paz”) revela-se na etimologia, pois, estando ligada à raiz do verbo *pango* (que significa ‘fixar’, ‘plantar’) e do seu correlato *pactum*, veicula as ideias de duração, solidez e pacto. Mas a análise dos termos relacionados com o conceito de ‘paz’ sai enriquecida quando estes se revestem de roupagens mitológicas, e então ficamos a saber que *eirene* (‘paz’ em grego) é irmã da *eunomia* (‘boa ordem’) e de *dike* (‘justiça’). Quanto à palavra latina *concordia* (*cum* + *cord-*), tem correspondência no grego *homonoia* (‘maneira igual de pensar’, ‘harmonia’, ‘consenso’) e é o oposto de *stasis* (‘discórdia’, *discordia* em latim), que leva a confrontos e à violência no seio de um mesmo povo.

O ensaio de Marta Várzeas sobre “Paz e Concórdia em Homero” tem subjacente a convicção de que convém desconfiar das ideias feitas, pois a cada passo questiona a ideia dominante de que a *Ilíada* é a glorificação do ideal heróico, como geralmente se diz. Na verdade, na *Ilíada* o poeta não se cinge à glorificação do herói em combate, pois dá a ver o outro lado desse ideal, a realidade penosa da morte de quem cai em combate.

Não será por acaso que a proposição do poema fale desde logo em cólera e no seu resultado funesto. Também ao desejo de morrer gloriosamente em combate se contrapõe, no poema, um comportamento que diríamos muito pouco heróico, mas muito humano: a expressão do desejo de abandonar o combate, ou então o pedido de clemência, o pedido de que a vida seja poupada pelo inimigo. Há em muitos episódios da *Ilíada* uma visão negativa da guerra, ditada pelo sentimento de que ao ideal heróico se sobrepõem outros valores, como o da amizade, o da compaixão, o da consciência de que a morte de um jovem é uma perda individual e distinta de qualquer outra. Como escreve Marta Várzeas (p.15): “existem [no poema] muitas figuras cujo papel se resume a serem mortas, mas elas têm sempre um nome, uma linhagem e até uma história, por breve que seja.” É a humanização que dá sentido a tantas cenas de guerra... Assim acontecerá na *Eneida*, também.

Três comédias aristofânicas são convocadas por Jorge Deserto para nos falar de paz e concórdia em Aristófanes: *Acarnenses*, *Paz e Lisístrata*. Todas têm subjacente o sentido de que a guerra prejudica o desenvolvimento da *polis*, isto é, dos cidadãos, e que se impõe caminhar no sentido da paz. Mas os caminhos percorridos em direção à paz são diversos – diz Jorge Deserto -,

embora todos se apresentem divertidos, fantasiosos e utópicos, como convém à comédia. Assim, em *Acarnenses*, Diceópolis, a personagem principal, desejoso de limitar os prejuízos comerciais decorrentes do estado permanente de guerra, decide estabelecer um pacto individual com o inimigo (Esparta), à revelia dos restantes concidadãos. Ora o coro é constituído pelos habitantes de Acarnas, que têm a vida dura de quem trabalha no carvão, e por isso protestam contra tal pacto unilateral e chegam dispostos a castigar o traidor. Acabarão, contudo, depois de acesa disputa, por aceitar os benefícios do pacto e da paz dele decorrente. Por seu turno, a comédia *Paz* põe em cena o vinhateiro Trigeu, que entra disposto a libertar *Eirene*, a Paz, feita prisioneira por *Pólemos*, a Guerra. Depois de libertada, a Paz vai trazer a prosperidade individual (Trigeu casa com uma sua acompanhante, a Colheita) e em simultâneo a prosperidade da comunidade, que se associa em festa. Finalmente, *Lisístrata*, a peça que traz no título o nome da líder de um movimento de resistência feminina contra a manutenção interminável da guerra. Lisístrata sabe que só um motivo muito forte afastará os homens da guerra; propõe às mulheres, por isso, uma greve ao sexo. No entanto, o seu movimento acaba por ter um alcance diferente, distante do universo erótico: reu-

nidas na ágora, elas vão impedir que os homens tenham acesso ao tesouro da cidade, de que se serviam para financiar a guerra. Assim, sublinha Jorge Deserto, a um estereótipo – o de que os homens não renunciam ao sexo por nada deste mundo –, soma-se outro – o de que as mulheres, por saberem administrar a casa, saberão muito bem gerir o tesouro da *pólis*. Por isso Deserto pode concluir (p. 32): “A guerra e a paz não são, claramente, apenas assuntos da *pólis*. Entram em casa de cada um, invadem-lhe todos os gestos do quotidiano.” As três peças não deixam de o refletir, como vimos. Mas o artigo de Jorge Deserto tem um interesse suplementar. No final, o autor sublinha aspetos comuns a dois tempos tão distintos como o longínquo séc. V a.C. e o nosso tempo, considerando haver muitos sinais da Atenas de então que “parecem inquietantemente actuais”. Por um lado, a ideia de que as guerras começam, muitas vezes, por motivos fúteis; por outro, a tristeza, o “compreensivo desgosto do Mercador de armas”, que, na comédia *Paz*, “vê o seu negócio arruinado pelo tratado que termina as hostilidades.” Ainda nas palavras de Jorge Deserto, “Tudo isto, e não só isto, é desesperantemente moderno.”

“Paz e Concórdia em Isócrates: Ideias e Conjecturas”, de Ana Lúcia Curado. Nas suas reflexões iniciais, a

Autora começa por abordar a grandeza do tema “Paz”, acrescentando, muito judiciosamente: “Parece ter sido mais fácil falar sobre a guerra e aquilo que a motivou do que falar da arte de a contrariar e do estado de ausência de guerra, a paz.” (p. 33). Foi o que Isócrates tentou fazer, quando procurou conciliar a atenção dos Atenenses para a necessidade de evitarem a guerra, e quis fazê-lo mediante a palavra, através do discurso. Foi isso que o levou a compor o *Areopagítico* (relativo à moralização da política interna de Atenas) e o discurso sobre a *Paz* (que trata da moralização da política externa). E Ana Lúcia Curado interroga-se (p. 35): “Qual o papel de um orador como Isócrates nesta situação?” (isto é, no período da *Guerra Social*, em 357-355). Sabemos que, em comparação com Demóstenes, o maior orador grego seu contemporâneo, Isócrates teve dificuldade em fazer ouvir a sua voz, em difundir as suas ideias, pois é, como afirma a Autora, “um teórico do pensamento, pensamento que exprime através da palavra.” (p. 36) Ele pretende, com a sua palavra, contribuir para a salvação da cidade de Atenas, cuidar da saúde do estado, que tem sido maltratada por governantes inferiores aos de outro tempo. Em oposição às más políticas de outrora, Isócrates lembra qual deve ser o papel de quem governa: “É tarefa dos que mandam tornar, com os seus cui-

dados, mais felizes os governados” (p. 44). Sejam um exercício pedagógico ou texto de intervenção, os discursos de Isócrates têm como mensagem principal o “procurar a concórdia conducente à paz, estado ideal para a sociedade progredir e se manter em harmonia democrática no seu próprio interior e com as outras cidades com que mantém alianças.” (p. 37) Por ironias da história, o pan-helenismo desejado por Isócrates veio a concretizar-se, mas apenas depois da perda da independência da Grécia com a conquista da Macedónia e sob o domínio romano. Seja como for – conclui Ana Lúcia Curado – Isócrates tem a seu favor “a sua arte diplomática à distância de vinte e cinco séculos: uma arte humanista e essencialmente pacificadora.”

Num livro dedicado ao tema da paz e a concórdia, não podia deixar de figurar Cícero e o seu *Tratado da República*, aqui apresentado por Francisco de Oliveira, autor da recente tradução para português deste importante tratado de filosofia política e moral. Com este tratado, o Arpinate tentou preencher o espaço deixado pela ausência de ocupação em negócios políticos, que no final da vida lhe foi sendo negada. Quis, nesse tratado, ser útil ao estado romano, quis estabelecer as bases de um consenso que permitisse governar. É significativo que no diálogo (pois é um tratado

sob a forma de diálogo), uma das personagens, Lélío, comece por se interrogar: “Como entender que num estado existam dois senados e já como que dois sóis?” Assim se referia à crise suscitada pelo assassinato de Tibério Graco, que criou em Roma divisões políticas, sociais e familiares. Defende-se depois a ideia de que importa trabalhar no sentido da harmonização de interesses, da *concordia* (termo de conotação afetiva) e do *consensus* (termo intelectual), como observa Francisco Oliveira. Defende o Arpinate que “Nada é mais firme do que um povo unido pela concórdia” (p. 49), que a concórdia e a paz são o garante da perenidade de Roma e do Império, e que, ao contrário da guerra ofensiva, de conquista, só a guerra justa é admissível. Segundo Cícero, a concórdia entre Roma e as províncias é essencial à preservação do império. E tinha razão. O período histórico que se seguiu, dominado por Augusto, veio confirmar o acerto desse velho sonho de Cícero.

No artigo de Cláudia Teixeira (sobre o tema da *Pax e Concordia* na *Eneida* de Virgílio), começamos por ler: “*Paz e Concordia* são dois conceitos que, na *Eneida* de Virgílio, se desenvolvem em forte correlação com a época histórica coeva – uma época em que Roma conseguiu dissolver os seus conflitos internos e externos, inaugurando um período

de moderação e de paz, sob a égide de um novo modelo civilizacional, que marcaria as raízes europeias até ao presente.” Não obstante, a ideia de domínio do mundo por parte de Roma e dos Romanos está muito vincada no poema, culminando nos famosos versos do canto VI (vv. 851-853) nos quais Anquises incita Eneias a comportar-se como Romano, a “impor regras de paz, a poupar os vencidos e a debelar os soberbos.” Eneias, a figura fulcral do poema, como que prefigura a posição fulcral de Augusto no caminho para a concórdia e a paz, poupando os vencidos, associando os povos bárbaros, de costumes diferentes, ao quadro de valores civilizacionais dos Romanos, mas derrubando os orgulhosos. Neste contexto, assume particular significado o escudo de Eneias, no qual tudo evoca o sentido moral da missão de Roma, mediaticada pela longa história da cidade desde a sua fundação, pela batalha de Áccio, que opôs povos civilizados a povos bárbaros, e muito em especial pela figura de Augusto à entrada do templo de Apolo, a receber as dádivas dos povos vencidos. É deste modo especialmente sublinhada a mensagem de que o caminho para a paz não se faz sem guerra (só assim se compreende que a parte iliádica do poema ocupe metade dos cantos). Por fim, é impossível não sublinhar a importância significativa do quadro final do poema,

que espelha a fragilidade e imperfeição dos desígnios da alma humana: segundo Cláudia Teixeira, a morte de Turno às mãos de Eneias mostra como a *amicitia* se sobrepõe, muito humanamente, “às normas morais do império”.

Por último, “Paz e Concórdia em Erasmo”, do professor Jorge Osório. Erasmo é apresentado como um homem de paz, avesso à guerra e à discórdia. Mas a sua postura é essencialmente a de um homem de letras e de ideais. Como escreve Jorge Osório (p. 78): “O seu ponto de partida é uma espiritualidade culta, mesmo erudita, indissociável das *litterae humaniores*. Por isso, não estamos perante uma atitude de filosofia política ou de mera crise política, mas diante de uma atitude religiosa e espiritual.” Com esta premissa, Jorge Osório detém-se na análise de três escritos anti-belicistas, os adágios famosos *Dulce bellum inexpers*, *Scarabeus aquilam quaerit* e *Sileni Alcibiades*, três adágios que, pela aceitação pública que tiveram, mereceram as honras de publicação própria. Segue-se, a estes, o comentário da *Querela Pacis*. Neste texto, a Paz queixa-se do dissídio entre o apregoado e a realidade dos comportamentos, em especial de monarcas e frades. No que diz respeito ao problema urgente da guerra contra os Turcos, que chegaram a ameaçar Veneza, Erasmo aceita que se possa actuar

no âmbito do conceito de guerra justa. No entanto, como sublinha Jorge Osório (p. 85), o humanista de Roterdão denuncia “a inconsequência de uma defesa da cruzada contra os Turcos com o pretexto de os converter, quando os cristãos – o papado, os príncipes, os frades – mostravam tamanho desrespeito pela doutrina de Cristo (...)”.

Como foi dito no início, vale a pena visitar autores e textos como os que compõem este volume III do *Symbolon*. Eles fazem parte do património cultural da nossa história europeia.



O volume IV do *Symbolon*, vindo a lume em 2014, é organizado por Belmiro Fernandes Pereira e Ana Ferreira e é dedicado ao tema *Medo e Esperança*, reunindo trabalhos em torno de Ésquilo, Tucídides, Plutarco, Séneca, Santo Agostinho e Carlos de la Rica. Abarca, assim, um arco temporal que vai do século V a.C., o tempo do primeiro tragediógrafo, até à segunda metade do século XX, o tempo de Carlos de la Rica, que foi sacerdote em Cuenca, Espanha, e escreveu obras de intervenção. No texto introdutório (“In Limine”), Belmiro Pereira lembra o pensamento aristotélico relativo a estas emoções (medo e esperança), exposto no já referido livro II da *Retórica*, e esclarece o âmbito do

uso de cada termo, considerando que “o medo não é irracional, pelo contrário, chama à deliberação, convoca a reflexão, obriga a avaliar a situação” (p. 7). E, mais adiante: “Que o medo e a esperança constituem emoções básicas do discurso político comprovam-no ao longo dos séculos inúmeros exemplos.”

O primeiro estudo (“Medo e esperança em Ésquilo”) pertence a José Pedro Serra, que começa por tecer algumas considerações em torno da esperança que nos legou a herança cristã. Segundo o autor, “a esperança possui uma dimensão temporal, histórica e escatológica que integra a certeza das promessas por Deus já reveladas, aqui e agora.” Mas o modo de pensar do mundo grego antigo é diferente, observa Pedro Serra. Daí que, perante uma esperança desassossegada, se possa dizer que “a morada próxima da esperança é o medo” (p. 10), como afirmou Aristóteles e Ésquilo exprimiu nas suas tragédias. Em *Prometeu Agrilhado*, o castigo de Zeus é justificado com o facto de Prometeu ter tirado dos homens o medo da morte dando-lhe “cegas esperanças”, que o fazem alhear-se do essencial (a inevitabilidade da morte). Em *Os Persas*, o temor e a esperança ensombram a longa espera de notícias sobre o desfecho da guerra que o poderoso exército persa foi travar em terreno grego. Todos têm consciência de que, mais

do que o valor de cada um, pesa no destino o poder dos deuses. E assim o homem balança entre a esperança e o temor.

Maria de Fátima Silva desenvolve o tema “Medo e esperança em Tucídides: Dois fatores dinâmicos de progresso e de história”. Considera, com outros autores, que o medo é uma constante do devir histórico do homem. Remetendo para Romilly – que “encarece a diferença entre *phobos* – o medo emotivo e irracional que de repente se apodera da alma e do corpo, e *deos* [‘temor’] – a apreensão de ordem intelectual, que implica um cálculo em relação ao futuro e a consequente tomada de medidas correctas” (p. 20), expõe como Tucídides, no preâmbulo da sua obra, de teor arqueológico, explicou a progressiva passagem de um estado primitivo, de incomunicabilidade, a outro em que os homens se vão protegendo coletivamente, construindo muralhas auto-defensivas, como reação ao medo. E foi também por medo que, segundo Tucídides, Agamémnon, por ser o mais forte, conseguiu reunir aliados para a expedição a Tróia. O mesmo vai ocorrer quando Tucídides narrar as várias fases da guerra do Peloponeso, que se desenrola entre o medo (gerado pelos Atenenses) e a esperança (de que Esparta se faz arauto). Ora os Atenenses são por natureza, segundo Tucídides (1.70.3), *euelpides*, otimistas, são

“audaciosos sem contabilizar forças, aceitam o risco sem se deter em reflexões, são optimistas nas situações graves”. Mas o imperialismo ateniense vai provocar medo e as hostilidades com Atenas vão terminar na derrota desta cidade. Como se viu quando se falou de Isócrates, o imperialismo ateniense verá o seu fim com o domínio macedónio sobre Atenas, a que se seguirá o domínio romano. Assim avança a história, atingida por conflitos decorrentes de medos e esperanças.

Ana Ferreira trata o tema “Medo e esperança como condicionantes da actuação do homem de Estado em Plutarco”. As figuras de Estado analisadas – Alcibíades, Nícias e Péricles – apresentam-se com virtudes e fraquezas, uns mais dados à superstição, outros audaciosos e sem medos. Alcibíades e Péricles são vistos como modelos de coragem e audácia, enquanto Nícias é visto como covarde, receoso. Quando a armada ateniense se preparava para zarpar para a Sicília, ocorreu um eclipse da lua, e todos ficaram atemorizados. Mas Péricles não se deixou amedrontar, pois tinha conhecimentos suficientes para não acreditar em superstições e temores infundados. A verdade é que Atenas foi derrotada. Atitude contrária teve Nícias perante acontecimento idêntico, ao acreditar no mau preságio associado a um eclipse da lua. Relativamente à ação destes homens

como homens de Estado, Alcibíades revela-se audaz, destemido, perante as perseguições populares de que foi vítima. Sem nunca ceder perante os contratemplos, “Foge do povo, refugiando-se junto dos Espartanos, fuge dos Espartanos, refugiando-se junto dos Persas.” (Ana Ferreira, p. 39). Nícias, apesar dos medos, no final da vida lutou até ao fim, sem qualquer esperança na vitória, para não abandonar os que estavam sob as suas ordens. Péricles, por sua vez, é o meio-termo, o equilíbrio entre a audácia de Alcibíades e o temor de Nícias.

Paulo Sérgio Margarido Ferreira apresenta, em “O medo e a esperança na obra de Séneca”, o estudo mais extenso (trinta páginas) do livro. Antes de entrar em Séneca – que afirma que “pior do que a guerra é o temor da guerra” –, Paulo Sérgio recorda a teoria dos estóicos em torno das emoções, sublinhando a “insistência estóica na natureza física de acontecimentos, emoções e outras respostas afectivas, e nas mudanças psicofísicas a elas associadas” (p. 51). A seguir, trata do medo enquanto *affectus* e da importância do medo e da ira na caracterização do tirano. O pensamento do filósofo romano vai ser documentado com base no *Oedipus*, a peça que trata especificamente do medo neurótico. A ação começa *in medios affectus*, isto é, já num estado avançado e irreversível do medo que se apoderou de Édipo.

As reflexões do protagonista suscitam uma dupla leitura: a do próprio e a do espectador, que sabe que as profecias se concretizaram ou não de concretizar-se. É a ironia trágica senequiana. No Édipo de Séneca, a tónica é posta na falta de autoconfiança e no temor do futuro, ditado pelo oráculo, o que o levou a deixar Corinto e a cumprir, sem o saber, a profecia. No que se refere à relação do medo com a esperança, esta, como a ira e o desejo, pode servir para refrear o medo. Mas também o contrário pode acontecer, isto é, a esperança suscitar medo e ansiedade. Para Séneca (Ep. 47.17), todos os homens são escravos da esperança e do medo, pelo que aconselha a que todo o género humano perca o medo da morte, “a considerar o dia final não como um castigo, mas como uma lei natural” (p. 72), “a ver nesse dia o termo dos nossos receios”. Quanto ao sumo bem, esse encontra-se onde só a virtude poderá ascender (p. 73) e o autoconhecimento é indispensável ao domínio dos temores. Estes são alguns dos tópicos da filosofia moral de Séneca evocados no artigo de Paulo Sérgio, que se caracteriza por uma grande densidade de informação, toda do maior interesse. Seja como for, a própria obra de Séneca é difícil de circunscrever quanto a estes temas, pois é um manancial inesgotável de questões relativas à mente ou à alma humana.

O estudo de Paula Oliveira e Silva tem por título “Medo: de quê? Esperança: como? A proposta de Agostinho de Hipona”. Nas palavras da A., “De uma forma simples, dir-se-ia que, na obra de Agostinho, o que está em causa na compreensão do binómio medo – esperança é a questão, inseparável do humano, acerca da conquista da felicidade pela posse do bem e pela fuga do mal.” Para a compreensão da mundividência agostiniana, a A. parte das *Confissões*, nas quais Agostinho narra o processo da sua conversão (do maniqueísmo e platonismo ao cristianismo), muito influenciada pela sua formação intelectual, assente em modelos literários, transmissores de cultura, desde os clássicos Cícero, Virgílio, Séneca, à literatura maniqueia, à literatura neoplatónica e à literatura bíblica. Segundo a A., “Trata-se sempre de *Livros* que transmitem visões do mundo e propostas de itinerários de vida feliz e de salvação, explanando uma concepção da relação do homem com o divino, isto é, uma *religião*.” (p. 81) Para Agostinho, o ser humano que segue os bens terrenos é terreno, carnal e exterior; o que segue os bens eternos é designado como o homem celeste, espiritual e interior. “O primeiro vive sempre intranquilo e amedrontado. O segundo construirá progressivamente a posse da vida eterna em paz.” (p. 85) Interroga-se Agostinho:

Como identificar os bens eternos e saber que a posse deles é o fim do ser humano? Mediante um movimento ascendente de reflexão, que parte do exterior para o interior. Paula Oliveira e Silva traz ainda a terreiro uma outra importante obra de Agostinho, *A Cidade de Deus*, escrita sob o impulso da invasão de Roma pelos bárbaros de Alarico, em 410, acontecimento histórico que surgiu como “o fim do Mundo”, o mesmo é dizer, o fim de Roma. “O acontecimento [da queda de Roma], afinal, comprovava o acerto das teses de Agostinho acerca das fontes do medo e da esperança. Aqueles – e fora toda uma civilização – que colocaram a esperança na eternidade do Império são agora abalados pelo terror.” (p. 89) “Os que caminham em união com o Verbo caminham na esperança e constroem a paz. Os que caminham na aversão com ele caminham no medo e espalham a discórdia”. (p. 95) – assim termina o artigo.

Carlos Morais, “Antígona, ‘a razão suprema da liberdade’: intertexto e metateatro na recriação de Carlos de la Rica (1968)”, situa-se no âmbito da revisitação contemporânea do mito de Antígona, prestando particular atenção a Carlos de la Rica (1929-1997), que, além de exercer o sacerdócio numa povoação de Cuenca, foi também escritor comprometido e de vanguarda, dedicado aos povos oprimidos e

a quantos lutam pela liberdade e pela democracia. O artigo de Carlos Morais começa com a utilização do mito de Antígona na Espanha Franquista e trata depois, de forma desenvolvida, da Razão de Antígona (um texto de 1968, mas apenas vindo a lume em 1980, por motivos de censura), em luta pela liberdade e pela democracia. Por fim, a Conclusão, que insiste sobre o *exemplum* intemporal de Antígona. São estas as etapas de um texto que se debruça sobre o medo e a esperança e a sua relação com a inescusável figura da filha de Édipo. Antígona acaba por ser libertada por Creonte, a isso forçado pelo povo, mas as suas propostas subversivas acabarão por condená-la:

morrerá com um tiro, como morreu Luther King, ou tantos outros pacifistas e defensores dos direitos humanos, transformando-se assim em símbolo de liberdade, de paz e amor. O autor conclui o artigo deste modo, datando-o, muito significativamente: “28 de agosto de 2013, 50 anos depois do discurso de M. L. King”.

Ao refetir sobre a intemporalidade dos mitos gregos, Carlos Morais recorda Ragué Arias, que escreveu: “O carácter aberto dos mitos torna possível a sua utilização em momentos de crise, para convertê-los em símbolo de valores alternativos à ordem estabelecida”.

É este, como se sabe, um dos grandes usos do Clássico.

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