



LONDON: THE (ONLINE?) CRY FROM MINORITIES

I've never seen so many protests as in London. However, I have observed certain things in some of them that have left me thinking about the act itself. Thinking from the point of view of social dynamics, and not anchored to an ideological thought or tendency, or any other kind...

The 'lives': from offline to online

David Graeber (2013) argues that democracy needs actions in the public space – a space that nowadays extends itself, of course, more and more towards the online. But my question is whether, in these particular cases, is the space actually growing, therefore needing to be filled online and offline at the same time by the same people, or whether this simultaneous duplication weakens the collective moment, because people are not fully there, becoming “split” between online and offline. In this regard, I recall that Hannah Arendt (1998) wrote that human beings need a “space of appearance”, and that's fine. We need a space where actions gain meaning in the encounter with the other, whether this encounter is more offline, as in the past, or more online as it is currently. But in these particular cases, when a person fills both at the same time, are their actions expanding from the physical to the digital, or just fragmenting between the two, thus losing their presence in both? I don't know, but I'd like to know...

Filtered: between tears and laughter

Another aspect that intrigues me, and which ties in with what I explored in *A Cultural History of Laughter* (2024), is how some of the protests that I witnessed, although quite light-hearted at the time, were later reported in the news as . For those who saw them, what remained were moments of laughter and relaxation. My question is: why, under the heading of so-called “demonstrations” or “protests” in the media in general, is more value given to symbolic crying than to real laughter? I can't understand – perhaps my vision is limited in this particular field, as in so many others, certainly – what harm there could be in reporting that these people were laughing, drinking and having fun together (rallying for or against something). History reminds us that laughter can be just as revolutionary – if not more so – than crying. To laugh in times of adversity is to resist; to cry is to give in...

In short...

Manifesting between offline and online, and between negative and positive emotions, has caught my attention recently. It seems to me that there is an ambiguity, a mixture of seriousness and celebration, that marks some of today's demonstrations. I would say that this phenomenon fits well with the concept of postmodernity, but that would be reducing social complexity to a label – something that doesn't do justice to its true richness. So I'll just say that I don't know why this is happening, but I'd like to know.

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