

**ROUTES INTO THE
FUTURE**
NEW MAPS FOR THE
SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES



18 > 21 June 2008
* International Colloquium

Teatro Académico Gil Vicente
Auditorium of the Faculty of Law
Auditorium of the University of Coimbra

SESSION III: Interculturality and post-colonialisms: Is equality possible within difference?

June 19th, 17:00 -19:00

Globalization and liberalization processes and critiques of modernity and the colonial legacy have transformed the SHS, both in the global North and in the global South. This session aims to examine these transformations within different contexts, their impact on North-South relations within the SHS, and the ways in which the SHS themselves have reflexively discussed such transformations. This raises a series of questions of an epistemological, theoretical, political and institutional nature, which can here be centred around two main issues. The first concerns the impact of post-colonial criticism on the production, reception and appropriation of knowledge within the SHS and beyond. This circumstance implies analysing the theoretical options which allow for a decentring of the Western scientific legacy and for integrating cultural differences, all the while maintaining the possibility for dialogue and for political involvement. It further implies a questioning of the ways in which the SHS have succeeded in counteracting the supposedly unquestionable hierarchies and assumptions which turn subjects into objects of knowledge and reduce the diversity of knowledge to the monoculture of scientific knowledge. A key concept in this context is the way the interrelation of the academic and the everyday use of the concepts of culture and interculturality have shaped new epistemological frameworks and different processes of political mobilization.

The second issue has to do with the impact of globalization on the SHS in different contexts. A crucial feature of this issue, related to co-development policies, arises with the consequences of the migration, in North-South, South-North and South-South directions, of academics and of the knowledge produced by the SHS. There is a need to analyse critically themes such as the type of research which the North carries out on the South; the frequency and the impact of journeys by SHS research and theories effected in a North-South, South-North and South-South direction; the effects and meaning of "flight" on the part of intellectuals moving from South to North and of the return to the South of those who studied in the North. It is thus essential to reflect on the type of dialogue undertaken in North-South and South-South relations within the SHS and on the international recognition of the knowledge produced by the SHS of the South. Has there been a more pronounced and more

egalitarian exchange in North-South and South-South relations on the part of SHS research centres?

Rámon Grosfoguel | “From Postcolonial Studies to Decolonial Studies: Decolonizing the Western Concept of Universality”

This essay discusses the concept of the Universal within the Western philosophical tradition and proposes An-Other, more decolonial ways of thinking Universality through the thought of Aimé Césaire, Enrique Dussel, and the Zapatistas. The first part discusses the concept of the "Universal" from Descartes to Marx. The second part discusses the concept of the Universal which Aimé Césaire proposes from an Afro-Caribbean decolonial perspective. The third part analyzes the concept of transmodernity proposed by Enrique Dussel. The fourth part discusses the difference between postmodernity and transmodernity, using as an example the postmodern understanding of hegemony proposed by Laclau and Mouffe and the transmodern understanding of politics proposed by the Zapatistas in the Other Campaign. Finally, I discuss the implications of all this for the debate on the left regarding the vanguard party vs. the rearguard movement.

Maria Paula Meneses | “Forms of Knowledge and Translation in Africa: Challenges to Interculturality”

One of the ‘classic’ dichotomies of modernity, especially in the area of the social sciences, sets up a constant opposition between ‘traditional’ societies, presented as ‘local’ - and ‘modernisation’ - the immediate source of progress - and synonymous with an intense social dynamics. Even in our day, modernity takes on contours of globality, of the expansion of a more developed way of viewing and explaining the world; that is, it perpetuates the imperial myth of the ‘North’.

With colonisation, and as a result, with the post-colonial, the situation of the power-knowledge relation remains a locus of dissension. In this presentation, the centre of analysis will focus on the false distinction between colonisation as a system of power and exploitation and of colonisation as a system of knowledge and representation. This approach paves the way for a discussion of the persistence, after the processes of independence, of colonial relations which subordinate. Indeed, the colonial difference is a reflection of an epistemic construction localised by the dis-qualifying of the knowledge held by the Other, symbolised by the global South.

Scientific ‘monoculture’ linked to modern rationality, brings the issue of interculturality to the centre of debate. Seeking to leave behind stereotyped solutions, this paper will endeavour critically to discuss, taking African realities as its starting point, some examples of alternative analyses which make it possible to act in two directions: one, seeking to combat the dominant notion of knowledge, a synonym of monoculture in modern science; another seeking to understand, from a grassroots perspective, how different social groups enter into dialogue with these impositions placed on them in the forms of resistance they have mobilised against these.

This multi-institutional proposal is neither radical nor new, but it requires that we question the legitimacy of a simple, unilinear reading of history, and especially of its universal status, querying it as to its limits. This attitude demands another, self-reflective history, one that can draw attention to the variety of competing paradigms, and, even more so, that accepts the existence of different forms of

relating between them, provincialising the world. Intercultural dialogue does not result from transforming conceptions of rights and citizenship at Nation-State level into apparently more universal conceptions. The answer seems to lie in building up 'new' partnerships enabling equality in difference. That is to say, in a cosmopolitan concept adjectivised by a kaleidoscope of encounters between community and individuals, where post-colonialism emerges as a pre-requisite for radical cultural liberation.

About the Participants

Chair:

Maria Ioannis Baganha is Associate Professor at the School of Economics, Coimbra University, a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and a member of the Administrative Council of the IMISCOE network (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion). She is currently developing research in the areas of immigration and labour markets in Portugal, Eastern-European immigrants in Portugal and migratory politics. She is the author of, among other titles, *New Waves: Migration from Eastern to Southern Europe*, Lisbon: Fundação Luso-Americana, 2004 (with Lucinda Fonseca).

Speakers:

Rámon Grosfoguel is Associate Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies, Berkeley University, a specialist in ethnic studies, Latin American studies, international immigration and comparative international development, global systems, urban sociology and global cities. He is the author of, among other titles, *Colonial subjects: Puerto Ricans in a global perspective*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Maria Paula Meneses is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, executive co-coordinator of the doctoral program "Post-Colonialisms and Global Citizenship" and teaches in the doctoral programs "Democracy in the Twenty-first Century", "Governance, Knowledge and Innovation" and "The Law, Justice and Citizenship in the Twenty-first Century". Her areas of interest include identity processes, colonialisms and post-colonialisms, conflict resolution and interlegality, the production and representation of knowledge, human ecology. She is the author of, among other titles, *Law and Justice in a Multicultural Society: The Case of Mozambique*, Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2006 (with Boaventura Sousa Santos and João Carlos Trindade),

Comments:

Ana Gabriela Macedo is Associate Professor in the Department of English and North-American Studies, Minho University. Her main areas of interest and research are Comparative Literature, English Literature (Modernism and Post-Modernism), feminist studies and visual poetics. She is the author of, among other titles, *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista*, Edições Afrontamento, 2005 (with Ana Luisa Amaral) and *Narrando o Pós-moderno: reescritas, re-visões, adaptações*, Centro de Estudos Humanísticos, Un. Minho, Braga, 2008.

Margarida Calafate Ribeiro is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and is in charge of the Eduardo Lourenço Chair, Bologna University. She is also executive coordinator of the doctoral program "Post-Colonialisms and Global Citizenship" and teaches in the doctoral program "Democracy in the Twenty-first Century". Her areas of interest are post-colonial studies, twentieth century Portuguese literature, the literature, politics and history of the Colonial War, and women and war. She has written, among other titles, *Uma História de Regressos: Império, Guerra Colonial e Pós-Colonialismo*, Porto: Afrontamento, 2004 e *África no Feminino - as mulheres portuguesas e a Guerra Colonial*, Porto: Afrontamento, 2007.