From Vietnam to Afghanistan, or Searching for Utopia in the Midst of War

TEXTES DE RÉFÉRENCE

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The current "war against terrorism" has allowed neo-liberalism and market democracy to present themselves once more again as the desired dream of humankind or the utopia of all. While during the 1990's the reasons to comply with these forces were mainly tied to self-interest (loans and national "development"), now they seem to have acquired a moral dimension of their own: one complies in order to fight terror and evil. Bush is prepared to eradicate evil and terror from the face of the planet. That the cold war disappeared, Bush insists in reminding us, does not mean that the tension of the conflict is over, but that actual conflict may become the order of the day. The end of the cold war represents not the cessation of war but the active pursuit of war. I think that this reveals a fundamental contradiction in neoliberalism: its conception of order leads to complete disorder. The Dialectics of Neo-liberalism are unfolding right in front of our eyes and are dressing themselves up with a moral discourse. This perverted moralistic discourse is joined by an emerging vulgar Eurocentrism that disavows critical thought and that has led to explicit rejections or straightforward re-domestications of the heritage of the 1960's. If the 1960's began to educate us about the possibility of conceiving utopia in a way other than those outlined by cold war politics and by

traditional Marxism, what can they teach us now, when the ethos of our age has turned so directly against this heritage? I will make a short visit to the philosophy of the sixties, both to the sixties of the north and the sixties of the south, in order to attempt to unthink once more the utopia of liberalism and to suggest a more progressive, humanist, and radical view of the possibilities of our early twenty-first century humanity.

1. Pierre Bourdieu and the Utopia of Neoliberalism

Pierre Bourdieu once referred to neoliberalism as "the Utopia (Becoming Reality) of Unlimited Exploitation."[1] For him neoliberalism represents the implementation of an utopia converted into a *political programme* (94). Like all utopias, neo-liberalism generates a faith, in this case, the faith in "free trade." But neo-liberalism easily exorcizes the possible accusation of fundamentalism by dressing itself up in the garments of mathematical reason. The economist is elevated to the status of a public intellectual–only matched up by psychologists who specialize in self-help. One thing is clear in this scenario, for the economic system to work we should preserve our sanity–even though we may lose our humanity in the process. Economic efficiency is what matters. In this context quantity takes over quality and extension over depth.

In addition to the genius of mathematical reason, who elevates the faith in the market to the status of logic, Bourdieu also considers what he refers to as the "negative intellectual." The "negative intellectual" is in charge of "symbolic policing," which has as its ultimate aim to break

the bonds of solidarity with certain kind of subjects or certain kind of struggles. The work of the "negative intellectual" aims to "give satisfaction to superficial pity and racist hatred" but is "masked as humanist indignation" (92). With the collaboration of "the cream of the media intelligentsia and the political class" it brings advances of critical scholarship back to zero (92). What we see today unfolding according to the distorted logics of a "clash of civilizations" was anticipated by Parisian intellectuals who criticized the feeble forces of a politics of hospitality. They portrayed Algerian immigrants as "murderers and rapists," as "madmen of Islam," enveloped under the abominated name of Islamicism, the quintessence of all Oriental fanaticism. According to Bourdieu all this is "designed to give racist contempt the impeccable alibi of ethical and secular legitimacy" (92). This form of thinking clearly anticipated what was to become the core of the current war against terror.

The rhetoric of opposition to terrorism has proven to be insatiable. It consumes opposition wherever it finds it: in the present and in the past; in the United States and everywhere where its interests are affected–that is, in this our global context, virtually everywhere. The success of the rhetoric of opposition to anti-Western terrorism is partly due to fear, to hate, to the legacy of Western modes of approaching non-Western peoples, but also, as Bourdieu suggests, to the sense of an almost realized utopian project that should not be contested. The "war against terrorism" has allowed neo-liberalism and market democracy to present themselves once more again as the desired dream of humankind or the utopia of all. While during the 1990's the reasons to comply

with these forces were mainly tied to self-interest (loans and national "development"), now they seem to have acquired a moral dimension of their own: one complies in order to fight terror and evil. The morality of opposition to all evil, as Jean Baudrillard pointed out in his comments about the war on terror, can only produce more evil.[2] In this situation the world turns upside down: the search for peace produces terror and the claims for justice turn into injustice.

Just a few years before the beginning of the war against terror Bourdieu made a double call: a call to pursue "symbolic struggle against the incessant work of the neoliberal 'thinkers' aimed at discrediting and disqualifying the heritage of words, traditions and representations associated with the historical conquests of the social movements of the past and the present," and a call to defend in an intelligent way institutions like labour law, social welfare, social security, and the state, which for him can be construed as forces of resistance and not merely as conservative forces that belong to an old geo-political and economic order. I would like to focus here on the first of these two calls: on the call for "symbolic struggle." This call for a "symbolic struggle" invites both artists and intellectuals to fight for the value of the heritage of "historical conquests of the social movements." To be sure, as Sylvia Wynter and others make clear, perhaps no other recent period than the decade of the 1960's, and within it, the events of 1968, have unsettled the tranquil waters of political authority and the values of capitalist civilization in the Western world.[3] The 60's have been condemned in many ways by revisionist historiography since its inception. But this critical trend perhaps has not been as strong as to-

day when it is both denounced and commodified in mass media and culture. Many young people today in the United States do not know much more about the sixties than what they learn from Britney Spears in a Pepsi commercial, or what they are exposed to in films like *Austin Powers*.[4]

Bourdieu's call for "symbolic struggle" becomes very pertinent today. Perhaps he did not imagine how pertinent it was to become: the legacy of the sixties has been demonized once more, now more than ever before in the context of yet another war. This context makes clear that the need for reflections on the sixties obey to more than historical revisionism or the defense of memory. They partly respond to the need of looking for an-other utopia in the midst of war.

2. The Sixties

In a recent article entitled "1968 and all that…," Michael Watts revisits 1968 and portrays it as a global "great rehearsal" aimed to "enlarge the field of the possible."[5] Watts is aware of the many different interpretations of the sixties, yet, for him 1968 cannot be reduced to any of its demonizing interpretations. For him, they ignore the extent to which 1968 advanced a project of building counterinstitutions and of "working against the institutions while working within them" (167). In their hybridity and their diversity 1968 provides for Watts "a striking illustration of what Hardt and Negri call the multitude against empire" (176).

Watts makes an excellent job in showing how the radical democratic "great rehearsal" of 1968 had global, regional, and local dimensions. 1968 is a transnational phe-

nomenon whose different expressions responded to geo-political dynamics and to local particularities. 1968 did not occur in exactly the same way in the East and in the West, in north and south (171-2). It also had different manifestations in India and Japan, Ethiopia and England. Watts shows that there were not one, but multiple 1968's. Yet, for this very reason it is most intriguing that he labels his exploration of the continuities between 1968 and the present as "Three roads from Paris." Social movements in Chiapas, Seattle, and Berlin are all traced back to Paris. Thus, while Watts conceives the struggles of the 1960's diverse and multifarious, he maintains the notion of a solid and firm genealogy with Paris at its center. It would probably have been more interesting and more politically progressive at the same time to show how the struggles that occurred in the United States and other places defy the already traditional genealogy that can only find the traces of pertinent political and conceptual change in Europe. Following Wynter, one could try to discern what were the unique forms of thought and political activity that emerge in the 1960's. Instead, Watts followed Marshall Berman in believing that the innovations of the sixties can be traced back to "a political struggle to unite two logics of different provenance, one Marxist, the other libertarian" (182). In this way, the "grammar of dissent" of many different groups and upheavals is automatically deciphered and articulated. The erasure of specifics and the imposition of a Eurocentric genealogy also appear in Watts article when he dilutes the need for uncovering multiple tactics and contributions to political thought by unambivalently relying on Hart and Negri's concept of the anonymous "multitude."

The centrality of Paris in his analysis of the upheavals of 1968 is reaffirmed in the concluding part of Watts essay when he firmly endorses the view of whom he describes as a French sixty-eighter *pur et dur*, Pierre Bourdieu. Watts's strongly favorable mention of Bourdieu at the end of his article illustrates an interest coincidence. Thirty years after 1968 Bourdieu calls us to fight against the neo-liberal negative intellectual by reaffirming our commitment to past struggles. The very same year Watts engages in the activity of retrieval by revisiting 1968. Watt's then concludes his essay with a celebration of Bourdieu, whom he portrays as a 1968er. I do not mean to suggest that Bourdieu and Watts were necessarily in direct communication with each other, or that Bourdieu is not a 68er. What is interesting to me is that by looking at this equation at first sight it seems that Bourdieu's call for "symbolic struggles" ultimately collapses into a call to himself, the Parisian philosopher and sociologist of 1968. Put differently, the idea is that the call to engage in "symbolic struggle" culminates in Bourdieu himself, who calls us to engage in "symbolic struggle." This apparent product of fortune or pure contingency points to limits in the way in which "symbolic struggle" is carried out. Here symbolic struggle seems to lose any dialectical character and rather collapse into the form of a tautology. It is also very clear that symbolic struggle does not necessarily entail the defense and articulation of liminal dialectics. Before spelling out the difference between these forms of engagement I would like to explore another possibility. To see if we can liberate ourselves from the close circle or tautology that was forming itself above let's explore a critical account of the Parisian of 1968 and of Bourdieu himself.

I would like to focus now on Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut's virulent critique of the thought of 1968 in their *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*.[6] According to Ferry and Renaut, the French intellectual invested much time in a critique of the modern world, inspired by Marx and Heidegger. The camps were divided between Marxists and Heideggerians, with a few people in between, but as Marxism was each time more identified with authoritarianism and economism the balance ended up inclining with the Heideggerian critique of the subject. Marxism did not disappear completely, but was put in the service of the critique of "Man." While Marxists pointed out the ideological character of humanism, Heideggerian took care of the metaphysical aspects. In short, both ended up advocating the death of the subject or the Death of Man. The subject appears in this light as the expression of either a monadic bourgeois egoism or as the invention of modern metaphysics. It is seen as Consciousness or Will, as a means of representation or as the ultimate ground of decision. Ferry and Renaut sympathize with the critique of the excesses of humanism. Yet, for them reducing the legacy of humanism to ideological expressions or to a vicious metaphysics can only lead to a repetition of the proverbial act of "throwing out the baby with the bathwater." And this is precisely for them what took place in the thought of 1968. The thinkers of this time anticipated the radical individualism and the economies of desire that unfolded in Western societies only two decades after 1968. Declaring the death of the subject was indeed liberating, but in its turn came an egoistic and indifferent Self (227). At the end, the right to differ-

ence turned into the right for indifference–a right alternatively claim by some groups in society and by the state.

Ferry and Renaut claim that in great part because of its indebtedness to Heidegger (rather than to Marx), the thought of 1968 exploded only one dimension of the ambiguous heritage of the historical moment: individualistic freedom was emphasized over comradeship, institutional transformation, and action. Ferry and Renaut believe that the total rejection of modern humanism and the discourse on the Death of the Subject or the Death of Man are too excessive and ultimately lead to indifference or to a restatement of the "law of the fittest" (229), where might makes right. In order to oppose this problematic tendency, outlined by Lipovetsky in his *L'Ere du vide: Essais sur l'individualisme contemporain*, they call for a "*nonmetaphysical humanism*" (xxviii, italics in original).[7] And this consists in "conferring a coherent philosophical status on the promise of freedom contained in the requirements of humanism that its metaphysical development (…) led it to betray" (xxviii). They make clear what kind of modernity they are thinking about when they praise the virtues of democracy and human rights. It is the modernity of the French Republic. Ferry and Renaut's intent is to oppose the problematic influence of German anti-humanism, which is seen by them as a virus that consumed the French spirit from 1968 on, with a defense of the French republican tradition (121). They want, as it were, to combine what is for them the best of 1789 with the best of 1968. I believe, in contrast, that they ended up reproducing some of the worst features of both. The centrality

of France's contribution to modernity and French civilization serves in their work to erase the crucial interventions to the project of modernity that have emerged from the darker side of France, its own colonies. It is as if the Haitian Revolution were not sufficiently connected with France or did not make any contribution to the critical engagement or to the rearticulation of the Rights of Man.[8] It is also as if Fanon, who called for a new humanism in his native Martinique and later in his second home the other French colony of Algeria, did not have anything to contribute to the task of rethinking humanism. I suspect that for Ferry and Renaut is not so much that they don't think that Fanon does not have anything to contribute. For them Fanon is simply invisible, invisible to them as invisible to the French Republic. Ferry and Renaut expand the circle that begins and ends with Bourdieu. They expand it and maintain its epicenter intact. At every moment the glorious France remains at the center. Theirs is a French centric critique of French and German anti-humanism.

In their respective admiration and criticism of 1968, both Watts on the one hand, and Ferry and Renaut on the other, leave untouched the basic coordinates of legitimate critical theorizing. The coordinates are well known to all of us. In this case they take the form of a dramatic tension between Marx and Heidegger, French humanism and French anti-humanism, Marxism and libertarianism, 1789 and the Parisian 1968. Watts, Ferry and Renau, along with the French theorists of the Death of Man still leave untouched the fundamental primacy of European Man. Compare these gestures with Fanon's call: "Leave this Europe where they

are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of everyone of their streets, in all the corners of the globe (…). So, my brothers, how is it that we do not understand that we have better things to do than to follow that same Europe? (…) For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man."[9] Fanon's call contrasts sharply with both humanist and anti-humanist European currents, for he calls not for the Death of Man, but more particularly for the Death of European Man.[10] Different from Ferry and Renaut, Fanon challenges us to formulate, not merely a non-metaphysical humanism, but a non-Eurocentric humanism. Fanon makes clear that the critique of metaphysics and the critique of ideology are not by themselves conducive to the radical critique of Eurocentric privilege that he calls us to abandon.

Fanon's critical gesture toward Europe also radicalizes Bourdieu's posture: for him Eurocentrism appears as a sort of an unacknowledged "symbolic capital" of Western academe. Eurocentrism becomes what could be referred to as the "intellectual capital" of Western *homo academicus*. He may be culturally decrepid or poor, but as long as he has Kant, Nietzsche, Foucault, or Bourdieu on his side he feels comfortable. There is an investment of value in the tradition of Western thought. What must be maintained at all costs is the monopoly of theory. Unlike economicism, which, as Bourdieu points out, collapses the time of giving and receiving into immediate and calculable transactions, Eurocentrism recognizes temporality, but only in the form of the history of Europe as exclusive giver of the gift of reason and

theory. European Man is not merely *homo academicus*, he is more precisely *homo academicus imperiosus*, the one who has the right to know and the duty to give, but who never receives. For "symbolic struggle" to be effective it has to take the form of a decolonization of knowledge.[11] This involves an elucidation of the challenges and contributions made by liminal subjects to the overcoming of modernity/coloniality. A critique of Eurocentrism, but also a critique of racism and sexism are at place here. One must not forget that the discourse of the "neo-liberal negative intellectual" embodies some very definite characteristics: it carries the traces of whiteness, maleness, and Eurocentrism, all of which inhibit the possibility of generous interhuman contact, of giving and receiving the gift that is the self.

The critique of capitalism has to provide an alternative to the logic of accumulation and it cannot do so without criticizing the ways in which economic, symbolic, and intellectual capital work. Our version of "symbolic struggle" should include an explicit engagement with all this. It must become a project of decolonizing knowledge "against the incessant work of the neo-liberal [White Male European] 'thinkers' aimed at discrediting and disqualifying the heritage of words, traditions and representations associated with the historical conquests of the social movements of the past and the present." And for this it is convenient to turn to the sixties, but not only to the sixties of Derrida or Foucault in Paris, but to the sixties of third-world intellectuals and activist who visited Paris but who never settled there intellectually, intellectuals like Fanon and others.[12] This is the beginning of a more systematic alteration of the geography

of reason.[13] But reactions against this move abound, and even more so in the last decade, particularly after September 11. The context of the Vietnam war is quite different from that of the war against Afghanistan. What are the challenges of talking about the 60's today?

3. Outcome of the 60's

There are many ways in which the 1990's appear very much as the inversion of the 1960's. Immanuel Wallerstein described the movements of the 1960's as anti-bureaucratic, anti-authoritarian and anti-Western.[14] The post-cold war, or what looks to some as the information age, has seen the subsumption of anti-bureaucratic and anti-authoritarian demands to a new form of despotism: the brutal forces of transnational capital. Conservatives in the United States oppose intervention of the government in the regulation of their lives, but very easily endorse the intervention of the state in the affairs of other peoples. They want the protection and respect of their way of life, the American way of life. They don't want the state intervening with their lives, but they don't want to see international organisms intervening with the plans and actions of their state. Anti-westernism has turned into a strong sense of Americanism.

Even the left has taken a nationalist turn. We did not have to wait until the publication of Richard Rorty's *Achieving our Country* to realize this.[15] Already in 1989, the very year of the collapse of the Soviet Union, a once student of Rorty, Cornel West, was calling intellectuals in the United States to question the "American obsession with theories from continental Europe" and to embrace their "own nation-

alist traditions of thought."[16] Cornel West argues that this obsession was one of the intellectual legacies of the sixties. And in fact, the sixties generated a strong critique of the United States, as it was testified in the protests against the Vietnam war. The incidents of the decade led to the idea, as Rorty puts it, that America was unachievable (Rorty, 38). The period was followed by a massive import of French theory (see West, 239). Rorty and West's can be seen as late responses to the sixties. If Ferry and Renaut make French-centric critiques of the French theory of the 60's, Rorty and West, very much in the spirit of the 90's, offer US-centric critiques of European thought. Although both Rorty and West have important considerations in mind, e.g. that the cultural left becomes political, what they do very much seems like another episode in the tension between the Old World Europe and the country that has appropriated the virtue of itself being entirely the New World, that country known to many as America. The problematic tendencies of this Americanism are evident in Rorty, who castigates Habermas for his praise of the "unfinished" project of the Enlightenment, while he calls for the "unfinished" business of America. What makes America redeemable and the Enlightenment not is hardly evident in his reflections, particularly considering that to a great extent they are both outcomes and protagonists of the drama of modernity/coloniality.

After September 11, calls for intellectual patriotism in the United States have only increased. Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, a professor of American foreign relations at San Diego State University states:

> I understand modern historian's dilemma. As a fortysomething person, I grew up with Che Guevara, Bob Dylan and the Vietnam War. I come from the activist left, and I am proud of that heritage. I remain a liberal [that she includes Che in her liberalism is by itself interesting here]. Like many of my colleagues, I hesitate to write books or give lectures that might appear to whitewash America's character flaws or its choices as a superpower.
>
> But it is time to admit that this generation of historians–with some notable exceptions–has yet to deliver to students, and to the public, a usable and balanced interpretation of the past.
>
> Too many researchers have done a better job documenting the republic's weaknesses than revealing its strengths (…).
>
> If some American intellectuals are not as prepared to defend the nation as they are to criticize it, they may deserve the accusations of "unpatriotic" that we have parried for 30 years. The political right will capture the American flag only if we hand it to them.
>
> Last, it would not hurt professional skeptics to meditate–only briefly, if it hurts too much–on the nature of American goodness (…).[17]

I have been discussing so far the limits of the modes of critique that emerged in the 1960's in the north. Much to the contrary, Hoffman argues that the critique has gone too far and that it has been too one-sided. I agree that it has been too one-sided, but not so much because it was too critical of the United States, but simply because it was never critical enough. Either France or the United States remained at the center. Always devalued were the intellectuals of the south, not to mention the immigrant population who were redefining the very meaning of what it was to be an "American." With this I mean that the critique of the United States was still relative and did not question the dominion of theory by the north. On the contrary the one-sidedness of the critique

increased, and it was each time easier to simply dismiss the contributions of third-world intellectuals. As an example of this, consider the following statement about Fanon's work published a few months before September 11:

> Fanon was very much a figure for the 1960's: only in that decade could he have achieved his fame, which was almost entirely posthumous…. His evident hatred of Europe fitted in well with the exhibitionist self-loathing of the era: a hatred and self-loathing based largely on ignorance. When in Rome, for example, Fanon displayed no interest whatever in the monuments of that marvelous city, in case–I suspect–he were confronted with the astonishing glory of Europe as well as its degradation, a confrontation which would have required him to moderate his views…. The ruins of Rome threatened his world view, and therefore his justification for the violence he lauded.
>
> In the last analysis, Fanon is more interesting as a sociological phenomenon–both for himself and for the reaction he called forth in the parts of the world he excoriated–than as a thinker (…).[18]

Daniels is hardly making an original conclusion here. He is simply restating in one of the most stupid ways ever seen a general consensus: that the life of intellectuals of colour is of more value than their intellectual production. What is characteristic of our times is this concession to the lack of arguments, which shows a desire not merely to continue the repression of radical critical voices, but to actually make them entirely vanish. The utopia of neoliberalism is giving birth to a proto-fascism that masks itself with celebration of a skewed democracy and with the defense of a very selected set of freedoms.

4. Toward a Different Utopia

Elsewhere I have articulated the idea of a weak utopian project as bringing about the Death of European Man.[19] I think that the peculiar intricacies between *estadounidense* patriotism, Eurocentrism, the propensity to war, and the continued subordination of the theoretical contributions of peoples from the south call for a reformulation of this idea. Today, after the post-1989 and post-September 11 patriotism we shall call more directly simply for the Death of American Man. By American Man I mean a concept or figure, a particular way of being-in-the-world, or else, the very subject of an episteme that gives continuity to an imperial order of things under the rubrics of liberty and the idea of a Manifest Destiny that needs to be accomplished. American Man, as its predecessor and still companion European Man, are unified under an even more abstract concept, Imperial Man. Many of the struggles of the sixties and their outcomes have put into question these conceptions of the human. They have partly done so by going against the grain from within but also by proposing alternative futures, utopias, or ways of being human. Fanon referred to colonized and racialized peoples as the *damnés* or condemned of the earth. Following Fanon, Wynter proposed the category of the *damné* to refer to the liminal subjects of Western modernity, including many of those subjects who rebelled in the sixties.[20] I will now clarify the concept of the *damné* and articulate the alternative ideal of being human to which it refers.

The *damné* is not only a victim. The *damné* is a category that enunciates the condition of subjects who are locked in a position of subordination. The *damné* lives in a hell from

which quite literally there is no escape. When history passes and the dialectic advances the *damnés* usually remain as recipients of still new orders of injustice, degradation, dehumanization, and suffering. The *damné* is, as it were, a liminal subject at the second or third degree. It is often the liminal of the liminal or the almost permanently liminal subject. From her perspective the dialectic seems almost frozen. In the far side of oppression, domination, and coloniality there is thus no such thing as a dialectic of the subaltern. What begins to emerge at the extreme point of irritation, frustration, and desire for conceptual and material transformation is a renewed sense of agency that seeks *an-other* understanding of the human.[21] This is the meaning that I propose for Fanon's often misunderstood words: "Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of everyone of their streets, in all the corners of the globe… So, my brothers, how is it that we do not understand that we have better things to do than to follow that same Europe?… For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man."[22] Fanon proposes post-colonial agency as an antidote to the Non-dialectics of Damnation. The concept of agency that Fanon proposes is intrinsically tied to the confrontation with the realities of damnation. That is to say, what stands as the background of his conception of agency is not the achievement of a modern bourgeois or socialist revolution or the ethereal insights of any given classical text in political theory. What informs his understanding of agency is an acute perception of coloniality and what is needed to overcome its pernicious effects.[23]

As Fanon's work suggest, and as the very etymology of the term *damné* makes clear, the damned is the one who wants to give but who can't give because what he possesses has been taken from him.[24] The *damnés* are the subjects who by virtue of their gender or skin colour are not seen as subjects who can participate in generous intersubjective contact with others. Fanon's characterization of the *damné* includes not only systematic and long-standing dehumanization, but also a particular kind of desire to establish generous human contact. In her most consistent attempts to elevate herself beyond the struggle for recognition that takes place within the dialectics of lordship and bondsman, the colonized, wretched or condemned, engages in a struggle for non-sexist human fraternity that involves, both self-critique and an ethics of receptive generosity.[25] When Fanon referred to the colonized as the *damné* he was not only describing a situation but also raising a challenge to colonized subjects. This challenge was to set afoot a new ideal of the human, one that would take us beyond the limits of modernity/coloniality as incarnated in its European expressions and elsewhere.

For Fanon it was clear that the utopia of the colonized would remain within the horizons of modernity/coloniality and its masculine charged ethno-class conception of the human if it were based on rights of possession. Beyond obtaining property rights or social equality the utopia of the *damné* consists in giving birth to a world where human subjects could give themselves as who they are to others while others would recognize them as givers. The *damné* does not merely desire to possess (to have or to be), but to give and receive as well. Fanon pointed out that what the master resists most is

not a formal recognition of rights or the equal division of property. Concession of property rights does not end racism. What the master resists most is to recognize the slave as someone who can give something to him. This alone challenges his status as absolute owner and absolute giver. The radical suspension of this privilege is what I have in mind when I call for the Death of Imperial Man, both in its European and American expressions. Calling for the Death of European and American Man means to divorce ourselves from the ideas, feelings, and actions that inhibit the generous transaction of gifts. This is a call to engage in a praxis of liberation which is also an ethics of risk and of generous encounter articulated from the position of the *damné*. Against the utopia of neo-liberalism, which functions as a reification of economism to the point of making authentic livelihood a constant preparation for a war against terror, it is possible to conceive and fight for a non-imperial, non-sexist, and non-racist way of engaging with different subjects, with different cultures, and with different ways of thinking. The "negative intellectual" should be opposed by a "decolonizing intellectual," by someone who is neither patriot or universal cosmopolitan and who promotes epistemic and cultural decolonization. This "decolonizing intellectual" must be ready to engage in a project of epistemic and material decolonization that cannot be limited to the standards or viewpoints of the Parisians of 1968. The task is particularly difficult now, since the U.S. mainland has been attacked. Many *estadounidenses* relate the current events to Pearl Harbor and not to Vietnam. They are thirst for revenge and armed conflict. It is thus probably harder today than it was in

the sixties to oppose the war machine. This is all the more so as the left turns every time more to the right, as both right and left insist on their typical Eurocentric monolingualism, and as those on the right use nationalist discourses, flags, and the menace of terror to justify a policy of *ideological pre-emptive strikes*. The monolingual Eurocentric left becomes complicit with this policy when it is only willing to find alternatives in text of classical political theory and when it assumes that non-Western, non-Christian, and subaltern responses to liberalism and the modern episteme can never escape fundamentalism or vicious forms of identity politics. The fight is thus difficult, but it must be fought. The decolonizing intellectual must learn how to fight it in solidarity with those whose voices have been occluded by the modern episteme and by the more recent terrorist discourse against fundamentalism and terror. The decolonizing intellectual must be able to formulate alternatives utopias and find sources of hope in the midst of war.

Notes

1. See the short essay with the same title in Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, translated by Richard Nice (New York, The New Press), p. 94-105.
2. See Jean Baudrillard, "L'esprit du terrorisme," *Le Monde*, November 3, 2001.
3. See, for instance, Sylvia Wynter, "On Disenchanting Discourse: 'Minority' Literary Criticism and Beyond," in *The Nature and Context of Minority Criticism* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 461-2. See also Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (New York, Routledge, 2000), p. 130.

4. It is revealing that the same actor, Mike Myers, plays the role of both Austin Powers and his nemesis, Dr. Evil. In some way he anticipates the thesis of Tariq Ali that Bush and Bin Laden represent two sides of the very same coin. See Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity* (New York, Verso, 2002).
5. Michael Watts, "1968 and all that…," *Progress in Human Geography* 25(2):175 (2001).
6. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*, translated by Mary Schnackenberg Cattani (Amherst, Mass., The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).
7. Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'ere du vide: essais sur l'individualisme contemporain* (Paris, Gallimard, 1983).
8. For a contrasting vision about Haiti see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass., Beacon Press, 1995).
9. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York, Grove Press, 1968), p. 311-12, 316.
10. For an elaboration of the term "Death of European Man" see Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Post-imperial Reflections on Crisis, Knowledge and Utopia: Transgresstopic Critical Hermeneutics and the Death of European Man." Forthcoming in *Review* 25(3), 2002.
11. The idea of "decolonization of knowledge" is articulated in, among others, the compilation by Edgardo Lander, *La Colonialidad del Saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas* (Buenos Aires, CLACSO, 1993. See also *Revista del Centro Andino de Estudios Internacionales*, n. 2 (2001), and the Special Dossier "Knowledges and the Known: Andean Perspectives on Capitalism and Epistemology," *Nepantla: Views from South* 3(1), 2002. The concept is also key in Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2000). For an exploration of decolonization within the field of Western philosophy see Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Latin American Thought and the Decolonization of Western Philosophy," *The*

American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latinos Issues in Philosophy Forthcoming in Vol. 100(1), Spring 2001.

12. For an analysis of the epistemological contributions of Fanon and other third-world intellectuals see the work of Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
13. I owe the term "geography of reason" to Lewis R. Gordon. See among others his *Existentia Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (New York, Routledge, 2000).
14. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Antisystemic Movements," *in Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World-System*, edited by S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A.G. Frank, and I. Wallerstein (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1990).
15. Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998).
16. Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison, Wis., The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 239.
17. Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, "What Intellectuals Owe to America," North Carolina Herald Sun, January 13, 2002. A 11. PAGE
18. Anthony Daniels, "Frantz Fanon: The Platonic Form of Human Resentment," *The New Criterion* (on line: http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/19/may01/fanon.htm) 7.
19. See Maldonado-Torres, "Post-imperial Reflections."
20. See Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason*, p. 136. Henry's discussion is based on a paper that Wynter delivered at Wellesley College: "After the New Class: James, *les damnés* and the Autonomy of Human Cognition" (April 19-21, 1991).
21. I follow Walter Mignolo in giving the adjective "an-other" both the sense of disruption from the genealogy of European thought and the opening to a diversity of views that emerge from the perspectives of histories marked by the colonial experience. The difference between what Mignolo refers to as "an-other paradigm" and a genealogy of critical movements and thought like the one proposed by Watts is evinced in that while for Watts the political thinking of the

Zapatista movement is explained by tracing it back to Paris, Mignolo interprets it in the context of similar uprisings by colonized peoples, like those of many indigenous movements in South America and other struggles in Africa, the United States, and elsewhere. Mignolo does not argue that the Zapatista uprising is not related to Paris in any way. His point is rather that the coordinates of the movement are best explained in relation to struggles that do not assume Paris as their center. See Walter Mignolo "Prefacio a la edición castellana. Un 'paradigma otro': colonialidad global, pensamiento fronterizo y cosmopolitanismo crítico" [Preface to the Spanish edition. "An-other paradigm:" global coloniality, border thinking, and criticial cosmopolitanism], *Historias locales/diseños globales: colonialidad, conocimientos subalternos y pensamiento fronterizo*, trans. Juan María Madariaga y Cristina Vega Solís (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2003), p. 22. For a more comprehensive analysis of the Zapatista movement see Walter Mignolo "The Zapatista's Theoretical Revolution: Its Historical, Ethical, and Political Consequences," *Review* 25, n. 3 (2002), p. 245-75. For an expanded exposition of some of the main arguments in these essays see Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000).

22. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 311-12, 316.
23. The following exposition is based on the fourth chapter of my doctoral dissertation entitled "Recognition from Below: The Meaning of the Cry and the Gift of the Self in the Struggle for Recognition." See Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Thinking from the Limits of Being: Lévinas, Fanon, Dussel and the Cry of Ethical Revolt," Ph.D. Diss., Brown University, May 2002, p. 155-213. A brief version of the argument appears in Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "The Cry of the Self as a Call from the Other: The Paradoxical Loving Subjectivity of Frantz Fanon," *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture* 36, n. 1 (2001), p. 46-60.
24. See Émile Benveniste, "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary," In *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generos-*

ity, edited by Alan D. Schrift, translated by Mary Elisabeth Meek (New York, Routledge, 1997), p. 33-42.

25. For an elegant and creative exposition and analysis of the ethics of reciprocity see Romand Coles, *Rethinking Generosity: Critical Theory and the Politics of Caritas* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1997). For a development of these ideas in connection with the work of feminists of colour see Romand Coles "Contesting Cosmopolitan Currencies: The Nepantlist Rose in the Cross(ing) of the Present," *Nepantla: Views from South* 4, n. 1 (2003), p. 5-40. Important in this regard is also Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed.*