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(Post)colonialism, Globalization, and *Lusofonia* or The ‘Time-Space’ of the Portuguese-Speaking World

My objective today is to briefly offer a critical framework that will provide historical, geopolitical, discursive, and cultural coordinates in order to understand the emergence and development of Portuguese-speaking nations as individual entities, but also as a group of nations, varyingly interconnected for several centuries through the experience of colonialism as well as the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but more recently, through globalization. In agreement with Boaventura de Sousa Santos, I argue for the importance of looking at the situatedness of specific colonial and postcolonial experiences that theoretical currents emanating mostly from the Anglophone world since the late twentieth century, as a result of the experience of British colonialism, cannot fully account for in their nuanced differences. Nevertheless, postcolonial theory has provided key insights into European discursive constructions of its others and their deployment in the fields of power (Said), the psychic underpinnings of the relations between colonizers and colonized in the contact zones, with their manifold effects in reference to racial, ethnic, gender, or class differences (Fanon, Memmi, Bhabha, Spivak), or the cultural place of postcolonial diasporic intellectuals in the metropole (Hall, Bhabha), among others. I do not intend to rehearse the main arguments, terminological or others, within the field of postcolonial studies, or for that matter, the arguments in favor or against hegemonic or counter-hegemonic globalization. Instead, I wish to focus on the specificities of the (post)colonial experience as they pertain to the Lusophone

world and how they inform the historical and epistemic turn from postcoloniality to globalization *em português*.

The Portuguese maritime-colonial empire in its various geopolitical arenas—Asia, Africa, and Brazil—became subordinate to more dominant imperial powers such as Spain (by virtue of annexation between 1580-1640 in the wake of the battle of El-Ksar-El-Kebir in Morocco), Holland (by fierce competition throughout the seventeenth century over maritime trade routes and strategic posts in Asia, Africa, and Northeastern Brazil), and England (by virtue of an unequal friendship treaty, but more specifically, the Methuen treaty of 1703, signed in the midst of England's rise to imperial hegemony worldwide, giving it preferential commercial treatment by Portugal). Ruler of the seas by the nineteenth century, England had an enormous influence on Luso-Brazilian affairs, among others, in relationship to the Portuguese crown transfer to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 and in connection to the prohibition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade after 1845. However, it was the British Ultimatum of 1890 that sealed the subordinate character of Portuguese colonialism in the context of the scramble for Africa by European colonial powers in the late nineteenth century.

Even if Portugal's condition as subalternized colonial power was one of its primary historical traits, characterizations of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism must be tempered by the reality that Portugal was still able to forge a tightly centralized and interdependent triangular trade system across the Atlantic after it lost its commercial and military hegemony in the Indian Ocean by the end of

the sixteenth century. During the annexation of the Spanish crown, such system served the overseas' strategic interests of the Iberian kingdoms. Furthermore, Portugal, at various points of its colonial trajectory did not hesitate to violently exert power over its subjects directly or indirectly through the arm of the Inquisition, either in Brazil or Goa, or through sometimes devastating military campaigns in Angola, Mozambique, and (former Portuguese) Guinea at various historical junctures.

Yet, the colonial (and even postcolonial) relationship between Brazil and Portugal was (and is) indeed exceptional in ways that differ greatly even from the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. Already before its independence, Brazilian economic output and natural resource base was far greater than that of the metropole, therefore creating a relation of economic dependence of the mother country vis-à-vis the former colony. No other colonial power transferred its capital from the metropole to the colony as Portugal did between 1808-1821 due to the Napoleonic wars. This particular move led to the emergence of Rio de Janeiro as the center of the Portuguese empire. In fact, as Carlos Guilherme Mota and Fernando Novais point out, during this era there was an inversion of the colonial pact between Portugal and Brazil whereby the metropole became a de facto appendix of the colony (as cited in Santos' *Pela mão de Alice* 130-31). This is one of the most blatant examples of a Portuguese condition that Boaventura de Sousa Santos describes as intermediate and semi-peripheral from a geopolitical point of view; simultaneously semi-

colonizers and semi-colonized (this, in relationship to Brazil but also to England). Borrowing a major trope from Shakespeare's "The Tempest," but also from Hispanic American postcolonial reelaborations of this trope, Santos adds that the Portuguese colonizer was a hybrid who combined aspects of Prospero and Caliban: "If Prospero ever disguised himself as Caliban, it was through the mask of the Portuguese" ("Espírito de Timor Invade o Rio" 2). In his article, "Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-Identity" (2002), Santos develops the suggestive trope by arguing that the identity of the Portuguese colonizer does not only encompass the identity of the colonized other, but also that the identity of the Portuguese colonizer is in itself colonized: "The Portuguese Prospero is not just a Calibanized Prospero; he is a very Caliban from the viewpoint of European super-Prosperos. The identity of the Portuguese colonizer is thus doubly double" (17). While I partially subscribe to Santos' re-codifying of the colonial bipolarity between Prospero and Caliban by introducing the figure of the "hybrid Portuguese colonizer," on account of Portugal's subalternized position in the world system after the late sixteenth century, or the fact that the Portuguese have been viewed at various points in history as a "barbaric other" by Northern Europeans, or by many Brazilians who after independence harbored deep feelings of anti-colonial resentment towards the Portuguese and/or disdain for the condition of many of them as poor rustic immigrants to Brazil. Nonetheless, I would like to still bring attention to unambiguous Prospero-like figures in the history of Portuguese colonialism such

as Mousinho de Albuquerque, commander of major war campaigns against native populations in southern Mozambique in 1895; Kaúlza de Arriaga, commander in chief of Portuguese armed forces in Mozambique in the war against nationalist forces between 1969-74; or Tomé de Souza, first governor general of Brazil who in 1549 was in charge of centralizing the colonial administration as well as pacifying the native populations through extermination and/or catechism.

In spite of the autonomy gained by Brazil in all spheres of national life after independence, the political framework that was first established was a bi-national monarchy, whereby the same monarchical family ruled both countries (the father, João VI in Portugal, and the son, Pedro I in Brazil). Thus, strong political ties (as well as economic and cultural ones) between both countries continued after independence. However, Emperor Pedro II's rule (1840-88) was characterized by a gradual but definitive disentanglement and distancing from the European colonial matrix. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Empire was firmly anchored in a conservative, plantation-based, slave-holding system that critics (Nelson Vieira, Boaventura de Sousa Santos) describe as tantamount to the continuation of colonialism but in the form of internal colonialism (this is a socio-historical dynamic dramatized in the epic historical novel by João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Viva o povo brasileiro (1984) [Invincible Memory, 1989]). In fact, the key importance of slave labor to the economic survival and development of colonial Brazil meant that the Portuguese as well as the Luso-Brazilian elites had as much

at stake in the continuation of the slave trade. Thus, in the struggles against the Dutch occupation of the Brazilian Northeast and Angola during the first half of the seventeenth century, Luso-Brazilians and Portuguese acted as co-colonizers in their quest to recover the Angola-Brazil lifeline that the Dutch had wrested away from them. The continued dependence on slave labor in independent Brazil during the nineteenth century, meant that even after independence, Brazil was still inextricably linked to the colonial Black Atlantic matrix until the abolition of slavery, lending credence to historian Luiz Felipe de Alencastro's view of the territorial basis for the formation of Brazil. He argues that Brazil emerged from an economically and socially bipolar space located in the south Atlantic, created by Portuguese colonialism and largely based upon slave labor, encompassing an area of slave reproduction centered in Angola and an area of slave production in various enclaves throughout Portuguese America. Hence, this line of reasoning suggests a space-time disjuncture occurring during Brazilian independence, that is, a break from the European colonial matrix, thus empowering the Luso-Brazilian ruling class who, by the same token, became responsible for extending Brazil's colonial economic dependence on the African slave-trading matrix. Consequently, Brazilian independence entailed the passage from colonial power structures to the power structures of "coloniality" (a term borrowed from Santos), both internally and externally.

Even though Brazil severed formal ties from Portugal in the course of the nineteenth century, the large Portuguese presence in the daily life of Brazil,

especially in Rio de Janeiro, continued unabated (this phenomenon is widely documented in nineteenth-century Brazilian literature from Manuel Antônio de Almeida to Machado de Assis, Adolfo Caminha, and Aluísio Azevedo). Heavy immigration from Portugal to Brazil did not come to a halt in 1822 but in fact continued well into the twentieth century, only subsiding after the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 that toppled the Salazar/Caetano right-wing authoritarian regime. The constant migratory wave from Portugal to Brazil is a manifestation of a peculiar (post)colonial dependence. In fact, emigration throughout the history of Portuguese colonialism in Brazil since the sixteenth century (as well as in Angola and Mozambique, particularly after Salazar's ascent to power in 1933) served as an escape mechanism for millions of rural Portuguese in search for a better life, at the same time as it served as an economic strategy to rid the country of its poor, while avoiding some of the pressing developmental problems that plagued Portugal since the "epic navigators" set sail to India in the fifteenth century. Hence, colonialism and emigration went hand in hand in the case of the Portuguese, and its relationship of dependence vis-à-vis Brazil continued on after Brazilian independence.

In the discursive field, one remarkable instance of Luso-Afro-Brazilian interconnectedness that has had lasting effects in the (post-)colonial time-space of the Portuguese-speaking world is the theoretical work of sociologist/anthropologist Gilberto Freyre. His concept of *Lusotropicalism* has become one of the most powerful and controversial metanarratives to explain (or

some would argue, to justify) Portuguese colonialism. In synthesis, Lusotropicalism argues that due to a series of interrelated climatological, geographical, historical, cultural, and genetic factors, the Portuguese have been more inclined to racially intermix with peoples of the tropics. This inclination would have somehow made the Portuguese a softer, more benign colonizing nation. The epistemological basis for Lusotropicalism is laid out in Freyre's Casa grande e senzala (1933) [The Masters and Slaves], emerging as the other side of the coin of Brazilian national identity as posited in his magnum opus, which the myth of racial democracy, attributed to Freyre, would encapsulate. Hence, the national identities of both Brazil and Portugal would be inextricably intertwined. In fact, for anthropologist Miguel Vale de Almeida, the discursive field of Lusotropicalism is "built like a game of mirrors played by Portuguese history, the formation of Brazil, and Portuguese colonialism" (An Earth-Colored Sea 49). As Freyre elaborated his Lusotropicalist theorization in subsequent lectures and publications, its epistemological reach would be extended not only to the African colonies, but also to the various Asian enclaves that were part of the Portuguese empire. Ultimately, Freyre provides a discursive nexus of cultural exceptionalism in order to explain Portuguese, Brazilian, as well as Lusophone individualized and collective identities. In the particular cases of Brazil and Portugal, the Freyrean Lusotropicalist nexus, in spite of its many detractors and critics, has proven to be quite resilient as it has migrated from the intellectual field to the realm of politics and that of mentalities with lasting effects until today. In fact,

notions such as miscegenation, *mestiçagem*, and hybridity in the Lusophone world have become, according to Almeida, “discursive knots that contaminate (political) emancipatory practices with ambiguity” (79). The ambiguity derived from the lasting seductive power of Lusotropicalist ideology is illustrated by a fascinating conversation between former Brazilian and Portuguese presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Mário Soares published in O mundo em português (1998) :

FHC—Na especificidade cultural brasileira há uma parte que é também portuguesa: a plasticidade, a capacidade de absorção de fatores culturais exógenos. Por que digo isso? Por causa do livro de Gilberto Freyre *O mundo que português criou*, que talvez, como já dissemos, tenha sido mal percebido na época por causa da proximidade de Freyre com o regime salazarista. Mas, a despeito disso tudo, mostra que o português criou um mundo diferente. Claro que há um pouco de ideologia conservadora, sabemos que há. Mas há na cultura lusa uma percepção do “outro” e a capacidade de aceitar o “outro.”

MS—E uma grande curiosidade pelo outro.

FHC—Há uma curiosidade pelo outro que é portuguesa e nós a herdamos, faz parte do *ethos* luso-brasileiro. Nesse sentido, Gilberto Freyre tinha razão em buscar identidades que não eram aceitas naquele momento, principalmente por razões políticas, e talvez também porque nessa altura ainda existia um preconceito antiportuguês. Talvez não fosse agradável às elites brasileiras perceberem, naquele momento, que eram fruto do mundo português. Hoje não, hoje aceitamos essa influência com muito prazer. Se é assim, e eu acho que é, por que razão não vamos trabalhar juntos na África? (276-77)¹

Aside from the obvious reiteration of the Lusotropicalist vulgate by both leaders, this exchange also underscores the continued prominence of Gilberto

¹ FHC—In the Brazilian cultural specificity there is also an element that is Portuguese: the plasticity, the capacity to absorb exogenous cultural factors. Why do I say this? Because of Gilberto Freyre’s book, *The World Created by the Portuguese* [O mundo que o português criou], which probably, as mentioned previously, was misunderstood during the time period due to Freyre’s closeness to the Salazar regime. However, in spite of that, it shows that the Portuguese in fact created a different world. Of course there are elements of a conservative ideology, but there is in Portuguese culture an awareness of the “other” and the capacity to accept the “other.”

MS— And great curiosity with regard to the other.

FHC— There is a curiosity for the other that we inherited from the Portuguese, it is part of a Luso-Brazilian ethos. In that sense, Gilberto Freyre was right in searching for identities that were not accepted at the time, especially due to political reasons, and maybe because at the time there was an anti-Portuguese prejudice. Maybe it wasn’t pleasant for Brazilian elites to realize at the time that they were a result of the Portuguese world. That’s no longer the case today. We gladly accept such influence. And if such is indeed the case, and I believe it is, why not work together in Africa?

Freyre's intellectual contribution as the former Portuguese colonial empire has re-configured itself into the community of Portuguese-speaking nations, otherwise known as *Lusofonia* or its formal institutional name CPLP (*Comunidade de países de língua portuguesa*), and as both Portugal and Brazil reflect upon their possible roles in such a community.

As far as Portuguese-speaking Africa is concerned, the independence of the five former colonies took place as a result of the collapse of the fascist-colonialist regime of Salazar/Caetano under the pressure of a protracted three-front national liberation war in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique, as well as the strong dissent within the Portuguese military which was a direct consequence of the colonial wars in Africa, eventually leading to the Revolution of 1974 that signalled the beginning of the end of Portuguese colonialism. The collapse of the Salazar/Caetano regime brought about a peculiar post-colonial scenario of a short-lived belated marxist regime in Western Europe and the emergence of marxist-nationalist parties to govern in every single former Portuguese colony, even in briefly independent East Timor before the Indonesian invasion of 1975. These single-party and economically-centralized regimes lasted until the early 1990s with the shift to multiparty systems and market-oriented economies. Angola and Mozambique, the largest and richest of the five Lusophone African states, sunk into the depths of two of the most tragic human conflicts of the late twentieth-century with devastating consequences for both nations. The civil war in Angola, in circumstances that are still an object of

reflection and debate among historians, started immediately after independence in 1975, lasting until the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in 2002. Meanwhile, the armed conflict in Mozambique lasted between 1977 and 1992, when a peace treaty was signed between the governing party FRELIMO and guerrilla movement RENAMO. Both scenarios were to a large extent microcosms of the Cold War, indirectly pitting both super powers at the time, though directly involving Cuba (in the case of Angola), and apartheid-era South Africa (in both Angola and Mozambique).

In the context of contemporary globalization, Portugal and all of its former colonies —Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, as well as newly independent East Timor— occupy today in differing degrees and at times simultaneously, core, semi-peripheral or peripheral locations, either in the world system at large, or in their respective regions and/or sub-regions. The material empire has now dissolved into a transnational symbolic as well as institutionalized heterogeneous community (embodied by the *CPLP*) linked by common historical, linguistic, and cultural bonds. There are substantial constitutive asymmetries in terms of territorial size, demographics, levels of material and technological development, economic output, and/or geopolitical weight, while as a whole, on the global stage, the community of Portuguese-speaking countries occupies a decidedly peripheral location (though Brazil on its own is fast becoming a world agricultural super power). *Lusofonia* as a collective project is shared varyingly by individuals and

elite groups in the political, cultural, artistic, and academic domains in the countries involved, but it is still an open question as to the degree with which Brazilian society, with a relatively insular and self-contained view of itself as a culture, is even fully aware of such project or feels interpellated by it. In Portuguese society *Lusofonia* is a contested signifier, where nostalgic neo-colonial discourses in the political arena or in the media compete with uncompromisingly anti-colonial views (Margarido) or pragmatic postcolonial positions (Lourenço, Santos, Almeida) in the intellectual field. Meanwhile, the Lusophone African states (as well as East Timor) wait expectantly for the actual dividends to be gained from belonging to such a community, at the same time as they pragmatically cultivate relations with other regional or multinational organizations.

Lusofonia is a concrete, though differently experienced, reality in the countries that share it. Portugal, even though it constitutes its original linguistic matrix, must abandon claims of being the center and instead recognize as well as foster a multi-polarity where Brazil, the five African states, and East Timor (where the future of the Portuguese language is still an open question), together with Portugal, may build a community of mutual interests in a decidedly postcolonial setting and under the aegis of a global order that continues to evolve before our own eyes and intellectual discernment.

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