



TOWARDS
THE DECOLONIZATION
OF **ENVIRONMENTAL
THOUGHT**

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Critical Notes to Debate

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FOREWORD

The concept of Mother Earth is not something that can be deduced from the type of knowledge that the modern world has produced. Capitalism itself is sustained from the type of rationality that modernity has produced, to legitimize its claims of exponential domination. This trend is born from the categorical imperative to “dominate” nature. An explicit purpose is already contained in that bet: domination as a way of life. Modernity is the only “civilizing” project in all of human history that has proposed that.

That is why we can affirm that, his birth certificate is in 1492; because such a project can only be consolidated by imposing itself with blood and fire. The devaluation of nature as an available object, subject to unprecedented control, domination and exploitation, which science is responsible for legitimizing, is the prelude to the consequent devaluation of humanity itself.

Only under these conditions is capitalism possible, as an economic system; whose logic of infinite and concentric accumulation of capital is the counterpart of the systematic production of universal misery. That is why, we can also confirm that, the rationality produce by modernity originates irrationalities. It is a strategic-instrumental use of reason divorced from life. This civilizing project is developed outside the real conditions that make life itself possible; the

contradiction never before perceived, between nature and culture, is shown as the most evident separation between human beings and the entire vital context that nourishes and makes their very existence possible.

This text: *Towards the Decolonization of Mother Earth: Critical notes for the devate*; It is presented to us as a necessary introduction to the theme of decolonization in the matter concerning this ontological devaluation of nature for its subsequent irrational use in favor of an economic system, that has completely altered human and natural coexistence. Its relevance is also underlined by the fact of the evident consequences of a systematic economic production that only conceives, even as fatality, the amputation of all future possibility: "to destroy to produce".

That is why, decolonization is presented, in all areas, as the necessary methodology for the systematic dismantling of meta-narratives that, having as content the horizon of modern prejudices, are the epistemic basis of modern rationality, expressed secularly as science and philosophy.

In this sense, we value this text, which is also presented as part of a series of materials for popular education; fundamental question in the constitution of the driving force of a revolution of contents as novel and purposeful as those emanated in our "mature land", so called by our original peoples: Abya Yala.

Rafael Bautista Segales

500 YEARS

In this historical time that humanity lives, we must comment on the “why” the issue of the environment and nature does not concern so much, how it should be in the priorities of thousands of people. It happens that in fivehundred (500) years of colonization that we thought we had overcome with the signing of our Latin American “independences”, a form of coloniality is still present in the attitude and way of understanding the world. (Quijano, 2000).

The modern civilization that we know today is the product of a historical-political-economic, but also mythical-epistemic evolution that has its roots in the Greek worldview before Christ; because Europe uncritically took such a civilization as the “center” of thought, assuming for itself geo-historical roots and thought under the logic of domination with “universalist” pretensions.

Subsequently, the rationality, or modern ideal model would be deepened and expanded in the processes of later colonial domination; both to Africa and to our America. Hence, in our continent, such a worldview “did not fall from the sky”, this “modern” ideal model was implanted with blood and fire, from the one called by the Spanish academy as: “discovery” or “encounter between two worlds,” which of “fraternal encounter” nothing really happened on October 12, 1492; with the arrival of the Spaniards to our lands that

day that our writers, Mantuans-aristocrats-liberals, called “the day of the race”.

For what we must point out -it would be unfair not to do so, that said “discovery” was not such, but a RE-DISCOVERY, well, well registered and documented is that between 1421 and 1425 (eighty years before the “day of the race”) It was mapped, and its coasts were traveled from Central America to Patagonia, by Chinese fleets, in vessels called “juncos”, with greater cargo capacity, both in crew, provisions, and other necessities of navigation, than the Spanish Ships: “La Niña, la Pinta, and la Santa María.” could fit together, only in one of these wessels¹.

Therefore, already entering our contemporary realities, linear “development” and “progress” have promoted the ideal model of “modern” thought, without solving the social problems that afflict the great majority of peoples; both from the peripheries of the globe, and those existing within the countries of the so-called first world.

On the Origins of Capital

On the other hand, no less important, the basis of all wealth is in human work, without it, all production processes do not generate goods. In this sense, let us briefly see what the colonization of Amerindians by Europe meant and what was later conceptualized as modernity.

Entire indigenous peoples of the Abya Yala were exterminated and dominated, suppressing their cultures, cosmovisions, myths, aesthetics, engineering, systematically appropriating their resources. In fact, the wealth produced in the Abya Yala was consequently taken to Europe. In this way, the centuries of our “administered” populations, “managed” from Europe by the colonial and colonizing power, went by.

¹ Dussel, E. (2004). Razones para cuestionar el Eurocentrismo. China 1421-1800. México: UAM-Iztapalapa.

Subsequently, the commercial world-system that would generate such colonial domination, in the so-called “West Indies”, motorized the first steps of the modern-capitalist-world-system that we know today from the eighteenth century with the rise of the industrial revolution. From there it follows then -affirming it with Aníbal Quijano-, that coloniality was, and is, a founding element; constituent of modernity. Generating, after the second post-war (1945-1948), a whole system of global inter-relationships for domination.

This wealth stolen from the bowels of our America and transferred to Europe throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, is what we consider the Original Capital (Marx) that constituted Capitalism as the hegemonic economic, political, and transnational system in the modern world.

A Technology for Life

Being aware of the processes of coloniality experienced, what is now a matter of thinking-feeling-acting based on the creation of an ethic for the common good (Dussel, 1998), which is considered as a strategic horizon, life (human, and non-human), and its reproduction on our planet.

Therefore, under this thought for life, let us drive and promote a science-technology that contributes substantially to the well-being of humanity, of Mother Earth. It is not then a question of denying contemporary technology; nothing further from our thoughts. The real problem to be thought about lies in whether technology is responsible for everyone’s life, that is, for humanity (the example of the atomic bombs, 1945, are compelling: by the end of the year, the number of deaths had increased to 140,000 and many victims succumbing to the effects of radiation sickness²).

² Red Cross Red Crescent Magazine (October 23, 2020) Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital: why nuclear weapons must never be used again. <https://www.rcrcmagazine.org/?s=hospital+of+the+red+cross+of+hiroshima>

Consequently, we can point out that the expansion of this logic based on means-ends, - that is, actions to, through the means (whatever they are “effective”), reach the ends-, started from modern thought to mid-XVIII century, expanding internationally, so to speak, during the industrial revolution under capitalist instrumental-thought-reasoning.

The technology began to be produced by, and for specific “purposes” (logic-thought), focused on the generation-concentration of capital for the countries of the center, not to improve the conditions of life and its reproduction; much less, for the life of ecosystems, species, and nature, since the latter was perceived as “infinite”.

The result of this “rationality”, which not a few thinkers call “a rationality for death” (Hinkelammert, 2008), is the current state of the global climate crisis.

It is this “rational” thinking of modern man, which impacts our future as a species, as is well known, the increase in human activities to the detriment of nature, is causing an accelerated and irreparable loss of biodiversity, in much of the cases. The main cause is the destruction of ecosystems, as a result of global-commercial interests, is when land is put into cultivation, drying up swamps, or cutting down forests; when the conditions of the waters or the atmosphere are changed by pollution; when entire forests are destroyed seeking the extraction of mineral or hydrocarbon resources, ending the life of ecosystems.

In addition to hunting, trawling by transnational corporations, or the introduction of exotic species in other environments in which they suffer and die, because they are not in their habitat; and other actions of this type, product of the world-market system, have caused the extinction of a good number of species.

As can be seen, the irrationality and irresponsibility with which technologies are implemented from the logic of capital, are a real problem, which is affecting the prospect of future life in all its forms. What it is about then, is to produce a science-technology for life; and to guarantee its use for good, with responsibility, (ethics for the common good), so that this technology does not affect the processes of reproduction of human and non-human life on the planet.

On the Colonization of Thought

Faced with this harsh and real critical scenario, it is worrying some to observe that, the vast majority of people continue to act without realizing what is happening in their environment. We owe this to a type of subjectivation of reality that has been subsumed by the dominated subject himself as “natural.”

In such a way, it is this capitalist-modern reality, the one that the social subjects understands today as “rational” and adequate to his experiential reality (his world); that is, under the values with which they act in capitalist society, but these values (competitiveness, individualism, efficiency, excellence, among others) are not taken from their conscience, but from objective reality, because certainly, these values they exist in this type of rationality that science, philosophy, and modern thought offer.

Therefore, these subjects subjectify these realities, those of capitalism and those of modernity. Thinking of themselves, as within modernity; then they begin to deny what they really are, (Indo-Americans-Amerindians-Latinos), wanting to be what they are not Moderns. Out of this consistent denial of what they were, and no longer “want” to be, they now identify their own culture as inferior, underdeveloped, backward, obsolete, retrograde, unfashionable, unmodern. And this perception of reality is precisely what prevents him from being aware that he

is denying himself (Bautista S, 2015). This denial of what is one's own is exactly what persecutes and strengthens the logic of modernity to expand ideologically; be able to reproduce, and achieve its perpetuation in time.

Then we have as a result, that such "modern rationality" is a consequence and expression of a way of life that was imposed, with blood and fire, (literally), since the savage invasion of our lands in 1492; and that now assumes it, in an "autonomous" way, the dominated subject himself. That is to say, it is affirmed, determined, secured, objectively and existentially in a state of "consciousness", which is actually against itself. This is called BEING COLONIZED. The way in which he structures and thinks the culture, aesthetics, philosophy, politics, economy of his own country, responds to the foreign, westernized, and westernizing needs of the modern Eurocentric-North American world-market-system, never to the local, national, or regional needs of the geographical space, or continent where he was born.

In such a way, that said ideal model, together with its values, is not only reproduced in time, but also denies other worldviews in the world. We must affirm that we are not "a nothing" as modernity-postmodernity "intuits" the negation that was made of us, of our cultures, feelings, metaphysics and perspectives of the world, to make an exclusive affirmation of its "universal" vision and world civilization. Modernity, we say now, could never be implanted, but destroying other forms of life and cultures in the world, assuming today, its ideal model uncritically, means giving up what we were centuries before the so-called "discovery".

For this reason, and for a thousand more fair reasons, the Latin American and decolonial positions in this regard are very firm, we start from the point that: if we want to reverse the damage and return to the path of a life in harmony with

nature, we have to go through a process of decolonization, and un-learning to truly shed light on what was previously veiled from us, and take on the challenge of change. A change that begins in the individual-existential to project-expand to the collective; and return to our more supportive, communal, respectful of the environment, and conscious of the role that we should have as sons and daughters of the same Mother, the Earth.

Latin American Decolonial Thought

This arises, or rather insurgence, approximately since the seventies, we can say that one of its main promoters of the Decolonial Thought in Latin America was the Argentine philosopher E. Dussel from his philosophy of liberation, with the aim of elucidating core aspects of Latin American thought that product of the worldview and epistemic dominator Hellenic-Eurocentric, and later, North American, was hidden, denied and internalized over the centuries in our entire America.

Such thinking emerges questioning and questioning hegemonic epistemologies, and proposing new knowledge alternatives to dismantle the supposed “universality” of modern thought.

The first step has been to advance in decolonizing knowledge to overcome the Cartesian world view, which is based on a reductionist method of dividing the whole into its parts to try to understand the universe. This is also known as positivist thinking. The method of thought Subject (knowledgeable) Object (known), is found constituent of this ideal model of thought.

When considering the human being as the fundamental center of knowledge (subject-man-Being), he is distanced from the totality and his environment, nature, is objectified or reified; ecosystems and species; to the universe, the cosmos, to

the point that contact with life and its diversity is lost, causing that in the name of a supposed “development” or “progress” of modern man, the resources of the Earth can be destroyed and exploited without limits from our Mother Earth.

This modern vision-thought of life itself is what has created the value crisis that modern thought is experiencing; and for the first time, in the history of his thought, he begins to question the exhaustion and finitude of life on our planet; and therefore of the species that inhabit it. That is why, today, the worldview of the original peoples is more valid than ever.

Mother Earth is not just a metaphor

The ideal model of our native peoples is based on a dialectic as complementarity, which we can state as follows, conceives the human Being, and Mother EARTH, as LIVING SUBJECTS: we then have a philosophical relationship, SUBJECT-SUBJECT, I AM, (BE), SUBJECT, who is in a PLACE (locus), historical-cultural, as a living human body, in the world, in COMMUNITY, (seeks harmony with otherness), in COEXISTENCE with another LIVING Being (SUBJECT), Mother Earth, (PLANET EARTH), foundress of life; that complements, (is part of), our life; and existence as BEING (with consciousness).

Hence, without this, COMPLEMENTARY reciprocity, there is no possible prospective existence for living otherness; and for the future creation of human family community. There is here, an ethic for the common good (as it should be): an understanding of US, and our ENVIRONMENT MOTHER EARTH, (Abya Yala), as SUBJECTS with material content Real life. Faced with the current crisis of climate change produced by the capitalist system, overpopulation, the depletion of natural resources, the weakening of the ozone layer, the

disappearance of species, and the breakdown of environmental balances, today more than ever such a worldview Subject -Subject, it is very necessary to think about the prospective future life of humanity and the species.

In effect, we are the consequence of a historical process of geological cycles whose volitional sense has been to improve the conditions for the reproduction of life, until reaching the levels of biological complexity that we see in the world today. We can now ask ourselves: Will we continue to travel on the path towards the “modern” self-destruction of life on our planet?

This, and other questions are the beginning of a period of deep reflection, and that we believe is very necessary, that we must truly think now to try, through real-concrete actions, to reverse in time the damage caused by the prevailing capitalist system today. Therefore it corresponds to us to study, debate, un-learn and begin to learn again, this time, from our Indo-American cultural-historical horizon; amerindian Think-assess what we were before 1492, to see what we have become in the present, and envision what we want to be in the future.

As a sign of gratitude and contribution in his journey through the Homeland of Bolívar and Chávez, in tribute to the strengthening of the Latin American and Caribbean Union, we included below the presentation “Decolonizing Leadership” by comrade philosopher Rafael Bautista Segales, from the Plurinational State of Bolivia , aimed at the Youth Brigades Against Climate Change, environmental movements, workers, students and teachers, held in the Waraira Repano Hall of the Popular University of the Environment “Fruto Vivas”, located in the facilities of the Ministry of People’s Power for the Ecosocialism, in Caracas on 21th of January 2022.

Lecture “Encounter with the Youth for Climate Change” Theme “**Decolonizing Leadership**”, by the philosopher of

the Plurinational State of Bolivia Rafael Bautista S., held in the spaces of the Waraira Repano Hall, headquarters of the Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism. Caracas, January 21, 2022

Good afternoon. I am going to talk to you about a topic that concerns you, the young people, and that is called "decolonizing leadership". First of all, I would like to tell you the following: being young is not a state, being young is rather knowing how to be in continuous renewal; That is why there is nothing sadder than seeing a young man tired of living, and there is nothing more encouraging than an old man with a desire to live. If death is inevitable, what ultimately defines that climax of life is: how do we get to death? Paradoxically, one can arrive at death full of life.

When one arrives at death full of life, one does not die, but transcends; even when the physical forces abandon him, one crosses the river, which separates life from death, full of the impulse that gives him to have been able to transcend death. That you have seen; They have witnessed how Chávez went to another level, because eternity is not a state beyond life, nor is death the opposite of life. The opposite of life is not life but indifference (because even when I die I suffer and suffering is not indifference). So when I cross the river that separates life from death, I see my whole life like in an instant movie, and there I realize if my life has had meaning or not.

If it hasn't made sense, then I suffer crossing that river, I don't find peace or rest. But if my life has made sense, then I enter an area in which - say the wise - everything is clearer. That is why the dead appear in our dreams and warn us, protect us, take care of us and even reveal mysteries and secrets to us. So, now that we are talking about youth, about what it means to be a decolonizing leader, it is necessary to make a diagnosis of the current human condition. Because

one never thinks in a vacuum but from a concrete situation and the most concrete is the maximum horizon of intelligibility, which is always the world-horizon. From my situation, which is local, I always think global, because being oneself is always being in the world, and the world is what we all share because we all live it. That is our last and maximum reference.

We are going through a time, in which the knowledge we had is lagging behind, not only because of the vertiginous and hyper-complex dynamics of a world in crisis, but also because of the very limitations of that knowledge that no longer knows how to account for the crisis. To make matters worse, we have been trapped in a time, whose speed does not allow us the necessary peace to think, it is a time that makes us sick, causes us stress, and does not allow us to make adequate decisions in our own lives.

One has to have time to think, but to think one has to be at peace, one has to have time in which one can even breathe calmly. But current life does not let us, does not allow us to have that time. Moreover, time oppresses us now.

Temporality is the most human thing there is, because time is something that is created, lived, however, today, we no longer live in time, but suffer from it, in our jobs, in our university classes, in meetings with friends; that is, we have been enslaved by the dictatorship of schedules, of the clock, of time at the service of the economy, of capital.

When I say that time is the most human thing there is, it means that, by definition, time is creation, time is testimony, it is manifestation, that is why Einstein said that time is relative. The time when I am counting down the hours to leave work is not the same as being next to the loved one; It is not the same experience of time and, in those details, I am creating or not, my own life.

The world has taken away from us the possibility of taking time out of time, that is, creating time. Moreover, time for us has been reduced to a spatial concept, because when we talk about time, the image of the clock immediately comes to mind. The clock is a mere chronological administration, of an inexorable nature, that imposes on us the idea that everything is definitive, invariable, irreversible, that is, it imposes on us the idea of the fatality of the world. However, there are experiences in life that show us the opposite. For example, in messianic time, which many cultures understand as cyclical time, time as a kind of spiral, which reaches a point of convergence, a culminating point in which all times meet. Experiencing that is impossible in the time of clocks, but it is possible in another experience of time; what we can call: true time.

It is a mystical experience. That is within everyone's reach, but they make us believe that mystical experiences are impossible to have in everyday life. However, one of the ways to start a mystical experience occurs in something as everyday as falling in love. In falling in love one does things that one did not think possible, that is, one invents oneself (for example, some people become poets). What I couldn't stand before, I can stand in love and I don't know why. My partner may not have the attributes that I thought were the ones that I liked, but in falling in love I discover that human beings invent ourselves from that small corner where we do not fake ourselves, where we are really authentic, and where we appear as novelty even to ourselves.

So, in those little experiences one begins to discover that there are channels through which one accesses, no longer to another life beyond death, but accesses another life in this life. Many mystics say that every human being lives parallel lives. Some speak of reincarnation, but as those who know say, reincarnation does not occur chronologically, it

is not that you have lived before in a X period and now you live, chronologically, in the present, and remember your past life as something past. No, one lives all the lives in this life, and being aware of that, for example, is the beginning of a mystical experience. That is the relativity of time. Time is my experience and, in this sense, I can create it, take time to paroxysm, and make all times appear in the present that I am living, transcending the moment into eternity.

If we make a graph of the universe, it appears that the universe is curved, and in the curve of the universe, one discovers that the universe is infinite. It has a limited shape, it is like the figure of the number eight, but horizontal (∞), but that shape allows infinite continuity. Moreover, now the quantum say that, in reality, there are not five dimensions but ten dimensions, and we all live in those dimensions, although we are not aware of it.

What does this mean? That the education we have does not teach us to know the essentials of life. They say we only see 1% of life, we don't see 99% of it, but it's there. For example, you are with your cell phones and each cell phone is emitting electromagnetism. If we now had those devices that are capable of observing this flow of electromagnetic energy, we could observe a lot of luminous threads that project and receive their cell phones.

In the same way, you believe that you are at the present here alone, however, you are with people that you have brought here spiritually. At the moment that I am thinking of someone, that person is already here. That is to say, here there are more presences than those present, what's more, if we pay attention to the hard experiments (those that question scientific certainties) of Heisenberg, Max Planck, John Wheeler, etc., we discover that in the last corner of the subatomic structure there is nothing solid,

everything is empty. If we condensed all the mass of the universe, what is really solid, the whole universe with all the galaxies, the nebulae, the solar systems, everything would fit into the size of a ping pong ball.

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If everything is so, then what are we? We see ourselves with body, hair, face, weight; but they say it is not. In the last corner of subatomic space everything is empty, but that empty vibrates, it is energy. That is, what we touch is pure energy, either condensed or dissipated.

When at school, because of conventional education, they make us believe that we are nothing, they turn off our energy, and because of that constant reiteration, our energy decreases, our power is diluted. So we end up being just a social mass. However, when moments of social upheaval

arise, such as revolutions, those only considered “masses” produce social transformations.

How people deprived of education can produce changes that can completely transform reality? If supposedly ignorance does not produce anything. How are peoples reduced to ignorance capable of transforming reality? How are people who come from these peoples capable of being an example of life for multitudes, for other peoples and for other cultures?

You have heard of Spartacus, 2nd century BC; have heard of Moses, more than 1000 years BC; from Hammurabi, 1700 BC; of Gandhi; of Simon Bolivar; and Hugo Chavez. How are these people produced? That is today’s topic: how each of us can become a leader? That is something that is taught, but not in universities.

There is no chair that can give a diploma that ensures that you are going to be a leader. That is learned through another type of teaching and learning, through another logic. So, getting into the subject, this is the initial common denominator: a leader is not someone who seeks to be a leader, but someone who does not feel capable of being a leader, who is afraid of being a leader.

There is a verse in Exodus, when Moses sees the burning bush that is not consumed, and God tells him: “I have heard the cry of my people and I entrust you to go and free them.” Moses’ feet tremble, he is afraid, he stutters and he questions God. He tells her: how are you going to choose me, that I don’t even have a way with words? And, as God is not someone who imposes something, so he discusses, rather, he reasons with him, Moses speaks with God as he would speak with his father. Respect is not fear. God argues and Moses counter-argues. Moses obeys, but not blindly, God entrusts, he does not oblige. So, the first condition for the Eternal to see you, consider you, have faith and trust in you, is that you have to be humble.

The Psalms say that God cannot dwell in the heart of the proud, because the heart of the proud is full of the ego. The ego fills everything and does not allow there to be room for another. Instead, humility allows you to be a vessel. With humility you learn to predispose yourself to receive what life teaches you, and this is not taught in universities. Nor is humility celebrated, for example, in the media; what soap operas commonly teach is the opposite, soap operas convey the idea that the good ones, the humble ones, are stupid, that's why the good ones are portrayed as stupid, that's why they always do badly, and the bad ones are portrayed as cunning, resourceful, intelligent, that's why they do well. So don't confuse kindness with naivety. The one who bets on being good is because he has decided not to be bad, that is, he has freely chosen that path, because he knows, initially, intuitively, what that means, the intellectual work is the one that later explains with arguments what has already happened as an existential wager. Ethics comes before logic. Experience precedes theory.

The logic of life is circular. One believes that nothing will happen by cheating on another, but that is not true. Because the world is circular, the bullet that I shoot in front of me turns around and hits me in the back. That is, every act of mine has subsequent repercussions, on others and on me. As the theories of complexity says, the flapping of a butterfly's wings at one end of the world can cause a tidal wave at the other end of the world. That is, everything has unforeseeable consequences, each action of mine can create a whole new world.

When we notice and are able to consider the consequences that each of our actions unleashes, we begin to understand what responsibility means. That is, we begin to act as responsible beings. Because life has a symbiotic circular

logic and what happens to the other also happens to me. So, when we realize that life has been produced not only to feed us, but that, in life itself, the ethical principles that make it possible to live well are present, we discover that life has its own wisdom, and that wisdom is the ability of self-awareness that life generates, for example, in the human being.

That is why the Mayans say that nature creates the human being to achieve self-awareness. That means that the human being would have to be ultimately responsible for everything created.

But we live in a world in which everything has been distorted. In the translation of the Christian, Latin and Catholic Bible, it is said that God gave the earth to man to dominate it, subdue it. So, it seems that man can do what he wants with nature. But in the original writings, in Hebrew, it doesn't say that.

Our people do not consider nature as merchandise or as an object at their disposal, they consider it as Mother. The relationship with something that I have for my individual purposes, in the sense of ownership, and the relationship between "I", as a person, as a subject, and the "Mother", to whom I owe obedience, are different.

There another type of relationship is awakened, which allows another type of production. They are different logics. We live in a world that has built a civilization divorced from nature, that is, from life; that is why it has created a system of production and consumption that has disregarded the very logic of life. Because modern culture is the only one that has considered the divorce between humanity and the PachaMama. We are already suffering the consequences, for example, with the climate crisis.

That is why we have to question development. There is no such thing as "sustainable development". They have

given a lot of last names to “development”, to make it a little more likeable, but deep down there is no sustainable development. Development contains an inescapable logic of constant and growing accumulation, which only leads us to continuous dissatisfaction. For development to be possible, I have to be someone compulsively predisposed to consume exponentially, because development has no brakes; the logic of exponential accumulation of capital must be in constant growth. Capital, if it does not grow, dies. Development responds to an exponential logic, that is, its expectations become infinite and this is what unleashes an increasingly faster dynamic.

For example, if when you are in a car, the speed is constantly increased, inevitably that produces vertigo, because you know that you are about to have an unwanted end. Therefore, stress and vertigo is what produces the dynamics of “development” and “progress”, and both show an incompatibility with the natural and spiritual dynamics itself, which is slow, not accelerated like the fateful train of “development” and “progress”.

In modernity, the human condition is trapped in a labyrinth that constantly and increasingly displaces the essential component that humanity possesses, which is respect for its natural condition. So we not only live a cultural malaise, but an existential malaise.

We all suffer from the same situation; life itself is no longer compatible with us, when, in an accelerated way, we are disconnecting from it.

We have a world in which life is not livable. Life appears to us as a fatalism in which, if we intend to live something, it has to be against others. In competition we are no longer brothers or human beings, but potential enemies. This does not produce bonds of solidarity and reciprocity in us but destroys them.

We currently live in a situation of dependence on analgesics and antibiotics, which are the big business of pharmaceutical companies, because they do not cure, they simply calm the pain. The pain doesn't go away, it comes back. In daily life we have become accustomed to resorting to painkillers. For example, a romantic relationship can be a painkiller, going out to drink on Fridays can be another painkiller. But painkillers do not remedy my situation, my existential malaise. From there arises the ability to think about our situation, which is everyone's situation. The problem then is the type of world that reduces us to objects, clients, consumers, mere obedient, etc., etc.

That is why, I told them, we need time to think. Silvio Rodríguez wrote most of his songs -about 500- when he was a soldier at Playa Girón. Recalling that moment in his life, he said: "I left home because the pressure was too much (...) You have to be a doctor, you're lazy, etc. (...) I went to the barracks, and there I had time to think".

I grew up in the generation that had time to think. We didn't have cell phones. The cell phone is designed so that we do not have time to think.

Moses goes to the desert and there he has time. In the desert there is nothing, one has to create everything. It is easy to be at home, where I have everything insured, they give me food, they iron my clothes, etc. But when I become independent, there I know how much everything costs. When I go out, freely, to the exterior, to the unthinkable, to the beyond of my world, I am in a position to have the experience of what we call the infinite Other, that is, the most transcendental. Each one of us has that possibility, but that possibility must be created or provoked; the city makes that impossible, because in the city everything is noise and there is no time.

The highest thought that exists has never been produced in the major capital cities, but has always been in the peripheries, even in the countryside. Now we have a world, in which, that is difficult to achieve. In the cities the noise increases, the lights of the city also increase and blind. And, every day, we need stronger things to feel something.

We live in a world in which we even like to suffer, that's why we even look for a partner to suffer, we watch horror movies, because daily life becomes more and more monotonous and we need any kind of stimuli to continue with our addictions. Then everything becomes a dependency, where I myself promote a technology that promotes much more challenging satisfactions, but, in turn, more risky for my own affective, emotional, and spiritual stability. I myself bet on my own destruction.

Hence, when, for example, Moses goes out into the desert, he is going out into peace, and peace is a state, that is to say, it is an experience and every experience occurs in time, generating that type of time is when you can have a different, transcendental experience. That is why, when, for example, you generate a different time than usual and enter yourself, you discover that you are no longer you but, you realize, that you yourself are a bridge to something greater, a channel, to access the entire universe. In the subatomic world, the universe is presented as the most immediate. Eternity then is not outside, but begins inside.

So if, ultimately, we are energy, we can consciously generate a specific type of energy, and since everything is interconnected and reality reflects what we are, we can cause even the universe to generate the same type of energy. Because reality is a mirror, that is, I look at reality not as it is, I look at reality as I am, because I am the subject, creator of reality. That is why the maximum self-awareness of life, nature, has produced the human being, to make

reality the maximum possible splendor of life. That is why all of life is our entire responsibility.

But we live in a world, in which, that knowledge has been hidden from us; that is why we are not aware of the power that each one possesses, that is why we emit, without realizing it, a negative type of energy that amputates all our real possibilities and turns us into conformists, conservatives, prejudiced and even fascists, that is, enemies of the noblest ideals of justice and equality.

So, what is it that awakens in us that self-awareness, which translates into a type of energy emission that I want to emit even as a purification of the prevailing uncertainty?

Here appears the need to thematize the significance of prophetic thought, which is what is behind what we know as critical thought. Being critical is an ethical option and it appears when I put myself in the place of the other, that is, when my consciousness transcends my particularity from those who suffer the structural injustice of the world-system, of which I am a part.

It's funny enough, when I started to investigate my suffering, I discovered that my suffering is nothing compared to the suffering of others. There is always someone who has a worse time, and since I am now aware of that, then I can show solidarity, that is, transcend my egocentric limitations, that is, open myself to exteriority, consolidate my vital relationships and become a subject, reconnect with life, as what makes my life possible: I am if you are, I live if you live.

Thus my ethical conscience is born from existential experience, not from theoretical lucubrations. Theory helps me to clarify the experience that has already happened in me, and to be able to generate the necessary argumentation to make intelligible what, as an experience, is now the foundation of the thought that I am beginning to produce.

So, goodness is not naivety, but the culmination of responsibility, which is expressed as critical thinking, that is, as the perspective that starts from the victims to, from there, issue the diagnosis of the pathology of the world-system. The theory arises from the need to talk about the reason of my assumed position, since the theory is not a speculation, it is a necessity, because I need to clarify for myself and for others the type of option that I have assumed and I consider the most true.

It is here that an also humble consciousness is born in me, because I realize that everything I know, I do not owe to myself, but has been granted to me from beyond my own certainties. Then I can see that I have had an experience of the transcendental, this experience produces humility and is essential for someone to become a leader. That is why the leader does not want to be a leader, because he never feels equal to what has been entrusted to him.

Do you remember the episode of Moses? The verse says: "I have heard the cry of my people and I commend you to go and free them." That ethical, moral imperative, which I receive, occurs in something we call an "event." I've had an "event" that has changed my life and I can't say no. Like the example of Jonah. God told him: "You have to tell this to the people of Nineveh". Jonah says no, and he runs away. And he ends up being swallowed by a whale, because the ship he was escaping on sank. This is also a code: running away from your own responsibility does not make you happy, but can even cause misfortune.

Because we all had been called to do something, we all have a place in this life, and when someone discovers his place in life, as the Lakota say, it becomes beautiful. That is, when one discovers their true place in life, one finds happiness, because happiness is not having everything, happiness is

having discovered the meaning, the purpose of our own existence and that fills us with humility and gratitude.

So, I no longer give thanks for what I have, I give thanks because I am capable of giving thanks; all of that constitutes someone who, the entire universe, now recognizes as someone capable of leading. This is totally different from those who force their presence on everything, those who talk too much, those who seek notoriety, those who are for the photo; They always appear with those above, the opportunists, those who read to show off, but not to fill themselves with commitment. Those are never going to be leaders.

The leader is not for the photo, the leader is not buying favors, the leader is humble and even usually quiet, because he knows that, when he speaks, he must speak with the truth. A leader is someone chosen, and when he knows that he has been chosen, he does not hide from that call, he receives that summons not with pride but with humility. That is why Chávez used to say: "It is no longer me, I am a whole people that speaks through me", that is, "it is no longer me, it is us".

The people recognizes others with that will -just as a mother recognizes her son from afar-, because his tone, his accent, his cadence when speaking is compatible with the rhythm of the people's heart. It is as if the people were listening to themselves, it is as if the people themselves were speaking there. For this reason, even though he crosses the passage between life and death, Chávez is still alive, because he is with the people, because death cannot cancel the vitality he had when crossing the river that separates life and death.

So, a leader teaches us that death is not the end, and that we can always give more than we have. That faith is what allows us to reach death full of life; and when one is facing death, impotence consists in realizing that we could have given more (and it is in this that we transcend ourselves).

That is what the leader is for. We would all like to be like that leader, and that reference, even if he dies, is there, like a teacher, always present.

We the living only have to summon them, because they see everything more clearly and can give us that strength that they can channel from that other type of levels that we do not know, but that we can experience, with the absent presence of the leader.

That is why each young person, in that continuous renewal that being young means, can awaken in others the ability to always reinvent themselves. It's what artists do. We musicians find, for example, a sound that reflects us and that identifies us, but if we do not renew it, we inevitably fall into monotony, into boredom, that is, into our own cancellation.

We always have to reinvent ourselves, to reinvent life. That is what it means to be free. When we free ourselves and experience it in our lives, then we produce the need to always reinvent ourselves. That is the metaphysics of expression. When we acquire that, it is impossible to grow old. It is always in constant renewal. And when that is achieved as leadership, it is when gratitude is experienced and makes constant self-sacrifice its way of life.

Here begins the dialectic of the decolonizing leader. So, the true leadership is the one that disappears, the one that withdraws and opens up that necessary environment for the people to believe in themselves and become subjects. The true leader (who decolonizes relations of power and domination) is the one who knows how to always withdraw behind the people, to give place to the people, which is always the sovereign seat of political power; because the people are, ultimately, the true subject of politics, that is, of transformation.

Leader is the one who knows how to highlight the best of the people. He is the one who produces anticipatory awareness, because he places himself in the best that the town contains

as a project and as a horizon. That is why he can summon the people and show them the way, because he knows how to highlight the most positive, the best that the people have as political, existential and historical capacity.

Then the people realize that the leader is already living what the people are projecting. The leader is not just words and speech, the leader is an example, he is a human being; he rejoices, toasts, dances, because he unleashes vitality at every moment, so that everyone else realizes that being a leader is not something unattainable, but the closest thing to what one also is. That is why the people recognize in the leader what the people themselves are capable of achieving.

There are times, when a leader must position himself as a sniper, this sniper is at the forefront of the popular movement, seeing possible enemies, who are hidden from the advance of the people, and as a sniper he has a privileged view, and can dismantle and eliminate the obstacles that they can prevent the people from advancing in its consolidation as a historical-political subject (history becomes self-conscious in order to become political, that is, the capacity for utopian projection, and this is what makes a people be a subject, that is, to be a people as people).

Finally, a leader can be someone who does not have an academic degree. With the type of education we have, the leader must even be trained outside the academy (which only transmits hegemonic knowledge).

His anticipatory awareness also becomes historical awareness, which begins to see past struggles as his struggles; he begins to converse with the past heroes and begins to bring them to the present life, because he has already entered that level that, in life, is in continuous dialogue with all of history.

It is like the Messiah, when he converses with Moses and Elijah. The disciples (Peter, James and John) are absorbed, they cannot believe what they see, their teacher in dialogue

with the first teachers, who come down from heaven to listen to the Messiah (do you know why we believe in a Messiah?, because we all we would like to be the Messiah, the redeemer of the world).

Chávez was also talking with Bolívar. Is that possible; the only thing we need, us, is to believe that this is possible, because believing is the most difficult thing, believing (especially in something new) is a complete challenge to reason. Reason demands demonstration, it needs to see to believe, but there reason continues to start from itself, to reaffirm its own certainties.

But, curiously, what makes us grow, as human beings, is not what reaffirms us but what challenges us, and what challenges us does not come from one but from the other. So, the leader is the one who says: I want to be like my ancestors, think like my ancestors, live like my ancestors, write like my ancestors, and that is when the ancestors recognize him as one of their own. It is no longer he but the people, but not only the present people but the immortal people.

Remember: "it is no longer I but the people". I am no longer myself but jiwasa, my community, where the self becomes infinite. That is why he does not seek fame, because his interlocutor is someone else. It is that beyond, as history made presence, that enhances his own life and, before which, death gives up its irrevocable character.

Then we can understand what the poets say. When the moment of death arrives, the ancestors take their own, in the chariot of eternity; So there the leader meets with the ancestors and, as he said the other day, paraphrasing César Vallejo: "And we will see the day that Chávez, Bolívar, Che, Fidel, Martí, Allende, Julián Apaza, Willka Zárate are having all of them breakfast, in the midst of all the righteous, under the joy of the immortal people, on the verge of an eternal morning.

Thank you very much ¡Jallalla!

Final Thoughts

In the contemporary world, the scientific-technological evolution, and the socialization of informative content through the web and Internet platforms have allowed us to advance in the acquisition of a collective conscience about the great problems that humanity currently faces, that is, of which puts the future reproduction of the species at risk; of human and non-human life. The biggest of the problems is, without a doubt, the climatic crisis that we are going through on our planet; From there, our concerns stem from the direct link to narrative and the school of decolonial thought for the liberation, along with other thinkers such as Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Catherine Walsh, Juan José Bautista Segales (1958-2021), and his brother Rafael Bautista Segales; with whom we recently shared at the Popular University of the Environment Fruto Vivas (UPA) in Caracas, in the “Decolonial Leadership” Conference that we included in this edition; among other contemporary critical thinkers.

Now, why is it profoundly necessary to re-think our world, our modern “rational” logic; and even our forms of modern social organization? Because today more than ever we have realized that the promises, visions and perspectives raised by the paradigm of modernity and its narrative of development, progress, success, infinite natural resources; among others, they have been unfulfilled, failed in their goals. On the contrary, the levels of poverty, misery and social inequality in Latin America continue their vertiginous increase; According to a United Nations report: “Five million more

people on the continent entered extreme poverty in 2021, which has already reached 86 million. While it is estimated that the general poverty rate would have decreased slightly, from 33.0% to 32.1% of the population, standing at 201 million” (ONU-2022).

That is to say, such concepts and semantic contents enter into deep performative contradictions given the current reality; since, for the epistemic and theoretical elaboration of our work, we had to transcend the borders of modern thought to advance in a decolonial and transmodern narrative. In such a way, his criterion of analysis of reality was ethical-critical and concrete.

In other words, from the real facts inherited from neoliberal modernity; not of the values: of the good or the bad, but the real reality. We understood then that if the modern, Eurocentric-North American worldview were truly a unique and ontologically “universal” rationality (of all humankind), as it was raised from modern philosophy, starting from Descartes and his disciples, passing through the successors post-modern, neoliberal, among others; five centuries of merciless violence did not exist; domination of entire populations; of expropriation of the territories, of death, misery and a depredation of nature: its species and ecosystems in all of America, including African and Asian Continents.

Hence, in order to structure and think of an alternative approach to what modern thought “rationalizes” as ecology, we must start from a different worldview and begin with a re-evaluation of our cultures (that is amerindian, african, european creole and the result of that mixture), historically denied, inferiorized, hidden, by the “universal truth” narrated from modernity; to then advance in a thought, beyond modernity; that is, a trans-modern and decolonial thought. From now on we could think of the category: trans-ecological,

That is, to go beyond what modernity understands as “ecological” or “ecology”.

From the worldview or modern thought, nature is and will be conceived as an “object”: that is, an object that needs to be cared for; but object to transform and dominate; It is the modern capitalist instrumental rationality that justifies its depredation, “logically” the extraction of “resources” or raw materials for the generation and accumulation of wealth from the “modern” transnational market.

It will only happen from a deep appreciation of our own Indo-American Being, which we will be able to transcend, to truly create alternatives different from the westernized and westernizing logic that modernity implanted in our America from 1492 and that, permeated the different forms of Latin American political, aesthetic, economic, philosophical, ecological and cultural thought, for this reason we insist, thematize, and theorize towards (on the way to), a decolonization of environmental thought.

500 years after

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