

## VOICES FROM THE SOUTH: DECOLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL CONVERSATIONS

*Vozes do Sul: conversações pós-coloniais e decoloniais*

**BÁRBARA INÊS RIBEIRO SIMÕES DAIBERT<sup>1,2</sup>** 

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Juiz de Fora, MG, Brasil.

<sup>2</sup>University of Toronto, Toronto, Canadá.

E-mail: [barbara.simoes@ufff.edu.br](mailto:barbara.simoes@ufff.edu.br)

### ABSTRACT

Over the last ten years, although a certain amount of critical effort has gone into bringing the debates around Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies closer together, these two areas still remain on opposite or different sides of a debate that is often heated and irreconcilable. Particularly at the beginning of the current century, following the publication of Walter Dignolo's (2000) *Local Histories/Global Designs*, much of the postcolonial criticism found itself on a collision course with decolonial discourse. In the same way, the main authors of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality group became critics of Postcolonial Studies by formulating the bases of Decolonial thought under the concept of the "Decolonial Turn", which demands a disconnection and break with the Western structures of thought, under which Postcolonialism built its responses to the literature of the former colonialist empires. In this sense, this text intends to investigate the theoretical path that culminates in the break between Decolonial and Postcolonial studies, and our aim is to open up questions that can favor dialogue between the two theoretical fields and also open up possibilities for a South-South dialogue based on a new understanding of the new and old epistemologies.

**KEYWORDS:** Decoloniality, Postcolonialism, dialogue, Latin-America.

### RESUMO

Embora certo esforço crítico tenha se direcionado a aproximar os debates em torno dos Estudos Pós-coloniais e Decoloniais nos últimos dez anos, essas duas áreas permanecem como faces opostas ou diversas de um debate não raras vezes acalorado e irreconciliável. Sobretudo no início do século atual, após a publicação de Walter Dignolo (2000), *Local Histories/Global Design*, grande parte da crítica Pós-colonial se viu em rota de colisão com o discurso Decolonial. Da mesma forma, os principais autores do grupo *Modernidade/Colonialidade/Decolonialidade* se tornaram críticos dos Estudos Pós-coloniais ao formularem as bases do pensamento Decolonial sob a concepção do "Giro Decolonial", que exige o desligamento e rompimento com as estruturas ocidentais de pensamento sob as quais o Pós-colonialismo construiu suas respostas à literatura dos ex-impérios colonialistas. Nesse sentido, este texto pretende investigar o percurso teórico que culmina com o rompimento entre os estudos Decoloniais e Pós-Coloniais, e nosso objetivo é abrir questões que possam favorecer o diálogo entre os dois campos teóricos e, ainda, abrir possibilidades de audibilidade a um diálogo Sul-Sul a partir de uma nova compreensão de novas e antigas epistemologias.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Decolonialidade, Pós-colonialismo, diálogo, América Latina.

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In “Postcolonial and Decolonial Reconstructions”, Bhabra (2014b) discusses the traditions of thought associated with Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, arguing that they are diverse in many aspects. He points out that Postcolonialism emerged from the works of Edward W. Said (1978), Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri C. Spivak (1988), diasporic scholars from the Middle East and South Asia, who write about their original location and its relation to their previous Empire and how it remained mostly in the realm of the cultural. As a contrast, Decoloniality comes from the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality group, developed by Anibal Quijano, María Lugones, and Walter D. Mignolo, scholars from South America who refer back to Latin America and its relation to Europe and the Global North.

Whereas Postcolonialism addressed mainly the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Decoloniality refers back to the time of the first large European incursions in the lands they would later call the Americas or the New World, from 1492 onwards. But this is not the only difference between these two fields of contemporary thought.

In fact, Bhabra also argues that another important difference between Postcolonialism and Decoloniality is the fact that the first one addressed issues of the material, and of the socio-economic, nevertheless remaining firmly in the realm of the cultural. In contrast, the works of Mignolo and Quijano were considerably linked to world-systems theory from the outset, as well as to scholarly work in development and underdevelopment theory, and also to the Frankfurt School critical/social theory tradition (Bhabra, 2014b).

Before discussing some of the mentioned assumptions, it is important to underline that Bhabra’s project in *Connected Sociologies* is definitely an attempt to approximate the various trajectories of Decoloniality and Postcolonialism, and, while the only one, is still important, because her text also notices and underlines the differences between the fields, pointing to a potential collaboration between them, since they both represent a power capable of unsettling and reconstituting standard processes of knowledge production (Bhabra, 2014a).

Most critics have explained that the initial rupture movement between Postcolonialism and Decolonial studies was through geographical differences that generated the two fields, but some of the postcolonial critical response to that failed to see the crucial problem of the different status of knowledge production that comes from these places. In 2004, Uruguayan writer Hugo Achugar published *Planetas sin boca*, referring to the marginalized Subalterns, non-valuable beings, who did not have a voice because they did not have any value as marginal, peripheral subjects. Their lack of value, he explains, was related to the place they inhabited in the globe. Therefore, even though they were part of specific systems of knowledge and produced theory, some countries and regions of the Earth had their voice silenced because, eventually, they spoke from a specific undervalued place on the planet, and therefore, remained silent, unheard, “sin bocas”, despite being whole civilizations, cultures, with specificities never to be heard by central systems that worked and operated in another language, which was not the one these unheard peoples used to convey their ideas.

Language and its aggregate power or lack of power, which is addressed by Achugar, seems to be another issue of what I am going to call the South dialogue or *broken bridge*, which I believe is a catalyst of the interruption or discontinuity between Postcolonial and Decolonial studies in

contemporary times. Also, Achugar's persistent critique on the Postcolonial studies underlines the fact that part of them disregarded internal differences and diversities within Latin America, building instead a Pan-American version of a place full of variety, and with specific historical processes (Achugar, 1997). His analysis goes further, pointing out that in fact, as a block, this version of Latin America is a collection of planets without mouths, who cannot be heard, and which remains at a very ambiguous and uncomfortable place for most of the postcolonial criticism. In other words, Achugar based his analysis on examining the "place" of critical production and came to the conclusion that Latin American invisibility for Postcolonial critics had to do with its peripheral place in the world. This marginal condition that Latin American culture inhabited could explain its invisibility, since the voice of these planets remained unheard in the Anglophone World by most of the Postcolonial critique to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In fact, as Fernando Coronil (2008) argues in "Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Global Decolonization", most critics were unable to decide on the legitimacy of using postcolonial theory to refer to Latin American literary production since Postcolonial criticism became a strong academic field and conquered spaces in departments in the Northern Hemisphere. After the boom of Postcolonial studies and by 1990, when Postcolonialism had become a field in departments in the Northern Hemisphere, although the Latin American criticism and literature had a lot in common with what groups of Postcolonial studies were discussing based on Spivak, Said or Bhabha writings, the main concepts of subalternity and hybridism, historical postcolonial work were centered on British colonialism, and the literary criticism was focused on Anglophone texts, including English-speaking Caribbean and

the use of postmodern and poststructuralism perspectives in these works became so intimately associated with postcolonialism that the "post" of postcolonialism has become identified with the "post" of postmodernism and poststructuralism. For instance, a major postcolonial Reader argues that "postcolonial studies is a decidedly new field of scholarship arising in Western universities and the application of post-modern thought to the long history of colonizing practices. (Schwarz, 1995, p. 6).

First, a division line appears from the argument of this quotation above. If it is correct to say that Edward Said's integration of Gramscian and Foucauldian perspectives in his critique of Orientalism is a reality, Spivak's work and the Subaltern Studies group, the strongest historiographical current of postcolonial studies, is also based on a tension between Marxism and poststructuralism. Spivak criticizes French post-structuralist theory and suggests that to work with "a self-contained version of the West is to ignore its production by the imperialist project", therefore addressing the question of how what is currently dominant and hegemonic actually became *dominant* and *hegemonic* (Spivak, 1988, p. 289). Deleuze and Foucault's silence on the epistemic violence of imperialism is criticized by her, but the division line of Decolonial studies is precisely the fact that European epistemologies should not be considered universal, or should forever not be considered the main source of critique and analysis of issues and realities from other parts of a diverse world. Also, the main critique developed by Mignolo (2021) in *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* is precisely the hegemony of Eurocentric thought that served to eradicate other knowledges in non-European languages and praxes of living and being. His conclusion or what he calls "the urgent task" of Decolonial studies, therefore, would be the epistemic

reconstitution of categories of thought and praxes of living destituted in the very process of building Western civilization, and a revision of the idea of *Modernity* by delinking Decolonial thought from traditional forms of Western knowledge and subjectivities.

In fact, decolonial authors reject and criticize European epistemologies – Poststructuralism included – based on the assumption that the systematic use of European authors and methodology is both insufficient to understand Latin American reality and, most importantly, is part of the Colonial project, contained in the idea of Modernity. Before examining Mignolo's theory more carefully, and returning once more to Fernando Coronil's assumptions about the exclusion of Latin American studies in the first Postcolonial debates and criticism, the second point to be underlined in this text, which seems to be the origins of a relative rupture between the two fields, is this very exclusion that Coronil points out.

As highlighted before, Postcolonial studies affirms itself as an academic field in Western metropolitan centers since the late 1980s, addressing mostly Anglophone critical works from countries that had achieved their independence in the 20th century, or the so-called “Third World” countries. As part of this underprivileged group of countries in the geopolitical scenery called Third World, Latin American countries however had specificities that put it outside of this group – even though their critics were producing enough theory and thought about its condition of dependency. Latin American nations achieved their political independency in the nineteenth century but, as Coronil argues, “as ‘old’ postcolonial nations that had faced the problem of national development for a long time, the key word in Latin American social thought during this period was not Colonialism or Postcolonialism, but ‘dependency’” (Coronil, 2008, p. 223).

If “Postcolonial” was used at first by sociologists and political scientists to characterize changes in the states and economies of ex-colonies of the “Third World”, later in the Anglophone world, the term develops in connection with critical studies of Colonialism and colonial literature. These critical studies occur under the influence of postmodern perspectives and hardly ever take Latin America into account. Thus, it is not surprising to see that *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Aschroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin), published in 1989, acknowledges a focus on Anglophone literatures and includes the ones produced in the Caribbean, but disregards other parts of Central and South America, as if, as Coronil argues, “these literatures were not cross-fertilized by the travel of ideas and authors across regions and cultures – or at least as if the literatures resulting from the Iberian colonization of the Americas had not participated in this exchange” (Coronil, 2008, p. 226).

According to Coronil's historical account in the first general anthology of postcolonial texts, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory* (P. Williams and Chrisman 1993), the exclusion of Latin America is clearly reflected. However, Bill Aschroft later presents Latin America as “modernity's first born and thus, as a region that has participated since its inception in the production of postcolonial discourses” (Coronil, 2008, p. 227). As Coronil informs, Aschroft presents Menchu's *I, Rigoberta Menchu* and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo* as “examples that reveal that the transformative strategies of postcolonial discourse, strategies which engage the deepest disruptions of modernity, are not limited to the recent colonized” (Coronil, 2008, p. 227). Robert Young, on the other hand, in *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001) presents what he calls “Postcolonial Latin American thought”, discussing

Trasculturation and Cultural Dependency in a perspective he calls *tricontinentalist* and presenting Latin American theories previously ignored by the main Readers of Postcolonialism. The most significant authors quoted by Young are Brazilian Oswald de Andrade and his concept of “Anthropophagy”, the formation of Latin American identity being the digestion of “world-wide cultural formations”; Brazilian Roberto Schwarz’s “misplaced ideas”: the problem of juxtapositioning ideas from different times and places in the Americas; Argentinian Nestor Garcia Canclini with his concept of Hybrid cultures (the negotiation of the traditional and the modern in the cultural formations of Latin America) and Fernando Ortiz “Trasculturation”, meaning the transformative creation of cultures out of colonial confrontations. Nevertheless, as Coronil notes, Young does not mention monumental critiques on colonialism produced by Anibal Quijano and Walter Mignolo, that were being produced at the same period as the Said, Bhabha and Spivak critiques.

The final important step in this rupture between Postcolonialism and Decoloniality happens after the creation of The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, founded at a meeting of the Latin American Studies Association in 1992, which divided several critics in regards to the adequacy of postcolonial theories to Latin American literature. The group was composed of literary critics who attempted to develop readings of texts produced by authors “considered subaltern or dealing with the issue of subalternity” (Coronil, 2008, p. 231). Although it called attention to disregarded and minority authors, such as Brazilian Carolina Maria de Jesus, or Cidinha da Silva, Florencia Mallon criticizes the “Founding Statement” of the Latin American Subaltern Group, for its dismissal of historiographical work on subaltern sectors in Latin America, receiving critique from John Beverley and Guillermo Bustos. While Mallon places Foucault and Derrida “at the service of a Gramscian project in a subordination of deconstruction to the Gramscian project”, Beverley notes the importance of subaltern perspectives over non-subalternist ones and Bustos criticizes the Anglocentric and metropolitan focus of Mallon discussion (Coronil, 2008, p. 233).

Quijano, Mignolo, and Achugar, among other critics, have suggested, on the other hand, that the appropriateness of postcolonial studies in Latin America would be a controversy since they responded to the academic concerns of metropolitan universities. They were developed by critics from Asia and Africa, with different context, and, most significantly, they were more audible, because they were written in English, and not in Spanish or Portuguese. Thus, although Mignolo did not disregard Postcolonialism in its relevance for Latin American studies, he suggested it should be treated as a “liminal space for developing knowledge from our various loci of enunciation” (Coronil, 2008, p. 230).

In this sense, by the end of the 20th century, Decoloniality had its origins deeply set in the rupture of the application of Postcolonial studies to Latin American studies. Just as the colonization and decolonization of Latin America had differences from the same processes in Africa and Asia, critics like Mignolo, Catherine Walsh and Anibal Quijano understood that it was necessary to develop concepts that would be different than Asian and African ones. However, as we mentioned before, Postcolonialism had been used as a thought and tool by some critics to refer to Latin American literature, especially after the creation of Latin American Subaltern Group. The rupture with the group then takes place, because Decolonial critics understand that a critical analysis considering specificities of Latin America was primordial, and could not be developed from the perspective of Indian theorists. Although accused

of being xenophobic, the argument defending the creation of Decolonial thought was pointed out by Bernadino-Costa and Grosfoguel (2008) as necessary, since Coloniality in Latin America could only be analysed if its specific concepts and categories were taken into consideration. This marks the birth of the group Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality.

Some of the most important voices of Decoloniality that work on the subject of Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality are Aníbal Quijano (2007), Catherine Walsh (2007), Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2016), and Walter D. Mignolo (2007a). Nevertheless, the classics from the Caribbean black thought produced by Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon are also brought to the discussion. Mignolo (2011) suggests that Decoloniality has its origins in the 16th century, when Europe defines Modernity. Similarly, Walsh (2007) is another author who affirms that Decoloniality has existed for more than 500 years, expressed in resistance and fights against the instituted power. The most evident issue for Mignolo (2007b) is the fact that Modernity was constructed and given to the world as a European illusion, and Coloniality was its hidden half. It is concealed in the colonial system, but also in the system of knowledge in an asymmetrical way, suffocating other forms of knowledge that must be heard in contemporary times.

This awakening to the reality of what “Modernity” really represents is what Mignolo calls *Giro Decolonial* (*Decolonial Turn*), which brings a Decolonial action, which is the very consciousness of Coloniality as part of Modernity, that the ones who have lived in a permanent state of dependency know very well. This awakening is however necessary to a decolonial process that will come from the Decolonial Turn, that has to be assessed to displace knowledge, power, religion, language, thus allowing other forms of being in the world to be understood and recognized as legitimate.

Furthermore, Walter D. Mignolo discusses how this combination of the self-fashioned narratives of Western civilization and the hegemony of Eurocentric thought served to eradicate all native knowledges in non-European languages and praxes of living and being in the Americas. One of the main arguments in Mignolo’s writing is the need to amplify categories and concepts that could assist in the reading of Latin American literature and politics. As Catherine Walsh argues, Decoloniality means “resistance and refusal”, which means it is a continuous battle against colonialities that were once forced on subaltern groups, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, disguised under the name of Modernity.

Decoloniality necessarily follows, derives from, and responds to coloniality and the ongoing colonial process and condition. It is a form of struggle and survival, an epistemic and existence-based response and practice—most especially by colonized and racialized subjects—against the colonial matrix of power in all of its dimensions. (Mignolo; Walsh, 2018, p. 17).

Thus, beyond the decolonial urge to review concepts and categories that come from Latin America and not from Europe or the metropolitan world, the central topic in Decolonial studies is the understanding of Modernity as inseparable from Coloniality. As Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2018) both state, Modernity’s obscure side is Coloniality, or Coloniality and Modernity are opposite sides of the same coin, because one has emerged as the only way to keep the other in place. Modernity, in other words, presents itself as salvation, progress, civilization, hiding the obscure side of the capitalist modern world-system called Coloniality. For Mignolo, Coloniality made Modernity possible, and the main pillar of the argument was racism and the assumption that white Europeans were superior

to non-white groups from other parts of the world, as Fanon discussed. Thus, race was the idea that formatted world colonial capitalism and organized modern relations of colonization. In this sense, Modernity is a monster with three heads, who exhibits only one – the rhetoric of salvation and progress, which was the one head exhibited in the process of Colonization. The other two heads of this monster, as depicted by Mignolo, are Coloniality and Decoloniality, and are kept hidden, because poverty, oppression and the subjugation of the knowledges are contained in them, subjugating the Other through the idea of race.

From this reflection, it is possible to understand that Decoloniality and Postcolonialism have differences that are significant, especially concerning the *loci* of enunciation, as Mignolo states, but also considering different theoretical choices. Nevertheless, as stated by Bhambra,

both postcolonialism and decoloniality are developments within the broader politics of knowledge production and both emerge out of political developments contesting the colonial world order established by European empires, albeit in relation to different time periods and different geographical orientations. (Bhambra, 2014b, p. 119).

As we mentioned before, some efforts have been made in the past ten years to approximate and compare Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, although the debate has been insufficient to build a bridge that would focus more on South-South dialogues than on epistemic divergence, with rare exceptions. A good example of this permanent theoretical crisis is in the recent publication of the 25<sup>th</sup> volume of *Postcolonial Studies*, an issue collecting articles whose task is to stage critical dialogues between Postcolonial and Decolonial approaches on different topics and terrains. Although the issue is a good effort to map Postcolonial and Decolonial theory in perspective, it focuses more on the critique from the Postcolonial studies to Decoloniality than on the reasons where, when and why this crisis started to carve an abyss between two sides of the same theoretical battle against Colonialism or Coloniality. As stated by Colpani, Mascot and Smiet in *Postcolonial responses do decolonial interventions*,

While advocates of Decoloniality have been very vocal in their critiques of postcolonial theory, we note among postcolonial critics – with some exceptions – a predominant tendency either not to respond to these charges or to downplay them in favour of reconciliatory moves. As an alternative to this tendency, we stress the value of a postcolonial critical response to the decolonial intervention. (Colpani; Mascot; Smiet, 2022, p. 1).

The words that open the volume clarify that the authors want Postcolonialism to “write back”, and the argument used is that

in order for the conversation between post-colonial and decolonial approaches to be more fruitfully developed, it is exactly these potential incommensurabilities and points of friction that need to be explored and investigated further, rather than disavowed. In other words, such reconciliatory gestures might be at least premature, especially when articulated by postcolonial scholars themselves, who therefore seem to be unable or reticent to face their decolonial critics. (Colpani; Mascot; Smiet, 2022, p. 8).

Colpani, Mascot and Smiet criticize the Decolonial approaches of Grosfoguel, as his sharpest critiques to Postcolonial theory state that the subject would need to be “decolonized” itself. In fact, in Grosfoguel’s appeals for this “decolonization of post-colonial studies”, there is the implicit critique

to the “imperialism” of English-centered studies and to the Anglophone legacy of poscolonial theory which, also for Mignolo, could not be applied to help understand the specificities of Latin America (Grosfoguel, 2006, p. 142). Colpani, Mascát and Smiet acknowledge this aspect of Grosfoguel critique, and criticize the contradictory fact that

the Decolonial option has significantly expanded its geopolitical reach beyond Latin America. In North America and Oceania, the language of Decoloniality has become widespread in discussions of Indigeneity and settler colonialism. (Colpani; Mascát; Smiet, 2022, p. 6).

This geographical expansion, as pointed out by the authors, is indeed a controversy for a field that advocated as its foundation the claim of the singularity of the Latin American experience. Furthermore, their text, as a postcolonial critique on Decolonial studies, is a sceptical criticism towards the radical idea of “delinking” contained in Mignolo (2007b) and the subsequent “emphasis on relinking with knowledges traditionally diminished and despised by modern colonial narratives of progress” (Colpani, Mascát and Smiet, 2022, p. 12). Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern speak* would, in this case, be the best “antelitteram response” to the impossibility contained in such a radical decolonial move. Moreover, from a postcolonial perspective:

the decolonial enterprise of fully retrieving pre-colonial and non-modern cultural and social formations to play them against the unfinished project of Western modernity relies on the illusion that something could have escaped the totalizing colonial remaking of the modern world and its epistemic violence. (Colpani; Mascát; Smiet, 2022, p. 9-10).

The implicit contradiction of such an enterprise is inconsistent with Hybridity, a crucial trait of the postcolonial condition, and also an undeniable Latin American trait, according to Nestor Garcia Canclini (1995), Ricardo Piglia (1991) or Silviano Santiago (1978). In this sense, Colpani, Mascát and Smiet’s assumptions and conclusions on the contradictions of the controversy contained in the expansion of Decolonial studies out of Latin America seem to be very coherent. Also, the fact that the denial of Hybridity in the colonial process is considered too drastic for many critics, makes the radical idea of delinking almost beyond reason. Nevertheless, the point that seems to be missing in Colpani, Mascát and Smiet’s postcolonial answers to Decoloniality is exactly the point that gave birth to this field in the first place.

These authors reconstruct the early encounters and debates and rupture of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality group, highlighting their persistent and increasing critical battle against the postcolonial studies. However, as Mignolo affirms : “if indeed postcolonial theories claim globality, if not universality, it may be problematic. For such a claim will reset the imperial pretensions that postcolonial studies critiques imperialism for” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 57). His statement should be given more attention because it is precisely in that moment when Latin American studies are confronted with their permanent exclusion from a theoretical debate they should have been invited to that Decoloniality comes to being as the alternative. This undeniable and permanent entry of Postcolonial Studies in the agenda of Departments and centres of Comparative Literatures in the Northern hemisphere from 1980 onwards, and the publication of issues about literary criticism produced by diasporic English-speaking critics from countries sharing the common ground of a colonial past, a reality of dependency, hybrid

cultures where the European ascendance guarantees implicit privilege, a deep social and economical abyss, technology and the permanence of infra-structural problems is now read in Latin America in English.

Subsequently, there is a group of scholars who immediately recognize Latin American reality in most of the postcolonial reflection born in India or Africa, and try to produce an answer including themselves in a postcolonial discussion or interpretation of a reality that experiences the effects of coloniality on a daily basis. Nevertheless, Latin America remains the subcontinent that produced “experience” for the Global North to analyse with knowledge produced there. Mignolo’s and Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s (2008) idea of south epistemologies are then crucial for a better understanding of this division. Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a refusal of everything that was produced by the Global North, but a “turn” of resistance towards this permanent work division: the North develops theory and philosophy, the South offers experiences to be analysed and interpreted, a fundamental and historical process in the colonization which is also commented on by Said in his works about East-West relations. Thus, this group of critics reacts to the permanent absence of Latin America in the postcolonial readings, and understands that a specific interpretation of a specific reality cannot come from African or Indian interpretations of their realities, or, even worse, be mediated by theory produced in the USA in the English language by diasporic intellectuals that are speaking once again from the Global North.

It is never too much to remember the continuous dependant circumstance of Latin America to the USA and the post-traumatic relation that the former develops with the latter after the Truman doctrine and Condor operation and its resulting silence for decades in the subcontinent. If Decoloniality assumes a radicalism of speech in this case, it also must be heard in terms of a rejection with political and maybe subconscious limitations. That would also explain some of the uncomprehended “decolonial efforts to enlist Fanon and other revolutionary figures into the project of decoloniality” (Colpani, Mascot and Smiet, 2022, p. 6), a fact criticized by Colpani, Mascot and Smiet in their postcolonial responses to what they call “repositioning anticolonial figures as decolonial thinkers *avant la lettre*” (*Idem*).

On a more conciliatory movement, Priti Ramamurthy and Ashwini Tambe note Decoloniality and Postcolonialism share a common ground despite their fundamental “intellectual incommensurabilities” (Ramamurthy and Tambe, 2017, p. 510). Bhambra, as mentioned before, also emphasizes dialogues between the two fields. If, for Quijano, Eurocentrism from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards makes the inferiorization of other cultural formations possible and constitutes itself through intellectual discourse which is manipulated by the Coloniality, for Edward Said, Orientalism “demonstrated how the idea of the universal was based both on an analytic bifurcation of the world and an elision of that bifurcation” (Bhambra, 2014b, p. 116).

Despite all the convergence of ideas, the call for a South-South dialogue has been challenging, especially when part of the South speaks and publishes in English, and can therefore be more audible in the Global North than the non-Anglophone South. This is also one aspect of the criticism that accuses authors of impoverishing or fragmenting Latin American debate by reproducing postcolonial criticism and overapplying theories discussed in Anglophone centres to the reality of Latin American studies. For Mignolo, new epistemologies have to be heard, simply because they have always been there, but

have been systematically disregarded by the European-centred knowledge. Decolonial studies thus comes also from the urgency of visibility to new epistemologies that can be able to read and discuss other worlds and systems.

What would then be the path to enable more South-South dialogues without erasing differences of perspectives or ignoring part of the criticism that comes from non-Anglophone speaking authors in the contemporary times? The common ground among Latin American, Asian and African countries is the shared experience of dependency and Coloniality, and also Subalternity, that some of the characters of postcolonial literature or Latin American literature know very well. These shared experiences as well as their different knowledge should be put more in perspective and dialogue, comparatively.

Finally, like Ogum, an Afro-Brazilian deity who goes from one side of the mountain to the other, carrying travellers over a huge abyss, South-South dialogues reflect contemporary global inequalities and may also need to go from one side to the other of the South-Atlantic in order to mirror themselves and resignify their submission to European systems of knowledge, as well as the historical basis of their own emergence. Decoloniality and Post-Colonialism are two sides of one single debate, with specificities and diverse origins, but sharing a common ground of the effect a colonial past had in different parts of the Global South. The two other heads of the monster that Mignolo has called Modernity have only began to be unveiled. The complete unveiling of the hypocritical and historical processes that eventually silenced most of the Southern and Eastern cultures in favour of a Centre is still in its dawn. The Postcolonialism and Decoloniality debate, and the urgent inclusion of diverse voices from the South, are all catalysts for this day to rise in a still distant horizon. The first step may be to break up with a binary and dual - actually Platonic, point of view that has always defined who is out and who is in the debate. Like Ogum, all these voices could be in the middle of somewhere else, in the *travessia*<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Portuguese word for: crossing, journey.

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