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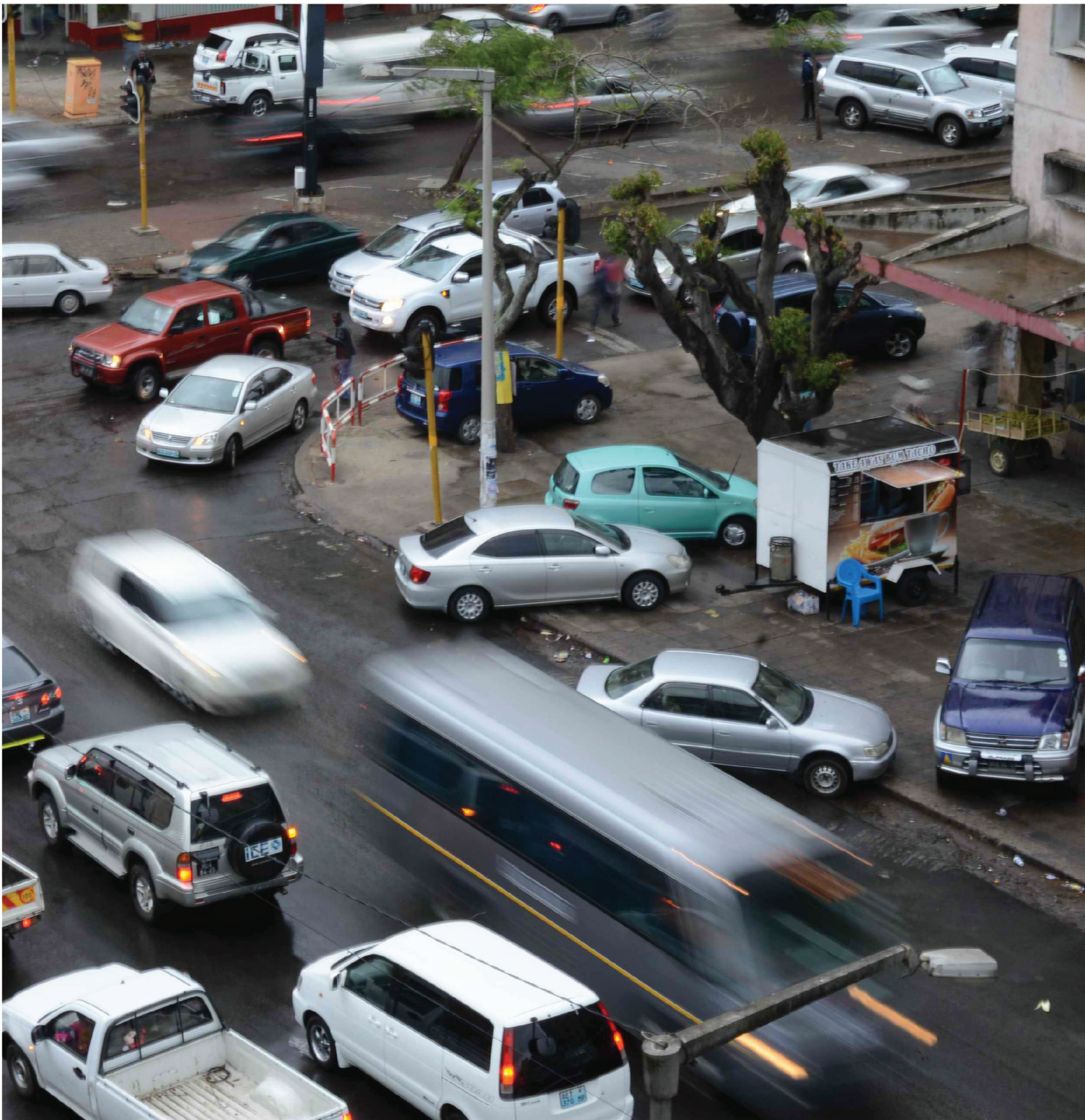

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Editorial – The Archive, the Subaltern, and the Archive of Subaltern History

Carolien Stolte*

This special issue takes inspiration from a series of events surrounding Dipesh Chakrabarty's visit to Leiden University in October 2015. Especially thought-provoking was the Faculty Roundtable entitled 'Minor Archives, Meta Histories: Rethinking Peripheries in the Age of Global Assemblages'. Together with Nira Wickramasinghe, Ksenia Robbe, Wayne Modest, and Ethan Mark, Chakrabarty discussed the potential of the 'minor mode': scholarship that seeks to give voice to the marginalized, foregrounds history's 'unlikely subjects' and critiques the larger historiographical frames that rendered them invisible in the first place. Questions that drove the roundtable were how we might use micro-voices, -histories, and –archives to articulate different conceptions of the global and of global history; how they might help to imagine a post-national historiography in the Global South; but also where we might look for the appropriate sources for such histories. In other words: what is the archive of the minor?

A full transcript of the roundtable is included with this issue, in which the speakers touch on issues ranging from the interpretation of Australian Aboriginal songs, to discursive power imbalances within the Global South, to the ways in which scaling up – even to the planetary level – can still be considered part of the 'minor mode'. Making this roundtable available to the wider public was an initiative of António da Silva Rêgo. From that starting point we developed the idea of a dedicated special issue, for which we recruited reflections on the nature of the archive and the possible sources for writing subaltern history.

* Leiden University.

In the first research article, 'Travellers in Archives, or the Possibilities of a Post-Post-Archival Historiography', Benjamin Zachariah shows what the historical profession stands to gain from a more active conception of the archive. It is time, he argues, to recover from the 'post-archival' condition, first contracted by historians in the wake of the postmodernist interventions of the 1970s and, more pertinent to this special issue, Ranajit Guha's influential intervention in *Subaltern Studies II*.[1] The archive was generalized into a state-created collection of documents, meant to reinforce the state's own legitimacy. With the colonial archive, in this view, the statist perspective was further exacerbated. As Zachariah notes, the colonial archive was seen as a 'repository of prejudice', reflecting colonial viewpoints rather than historical reality. Any effort to be attentive to the way the colonial archive was constructed, to read sources critically or to compensate for the biases inherent in the archive, was doomed to failure: Guha concluded his essay by stating that even historians seeking to write from the subaltern's point of view are distanced from colonial discourse 'only by a declaration of sentiment'.[2]

Zachariah calls upon historians to join a recent historiographical trend that, while maintaining a critical perspective on the archive, can overcome some of the limiting aspects of Guha's view of it: by seeing the archive not as a place, but as a rhetorical move – a set of sources collected and combined by the historian, driven by his or her research questions. For archivally-minded historians his conclusions will be cause for optimism: 'the singular control over history and memory attributed to 'the' archive has never existed. We invent an archive every time we have a question to answer; and then someone reinvents the archive in the service of a new question.'

Next, Dale Luis Menezes questions Indian nationalist discourses in Portuguese India, and the sources we need to consider these discourses critically. 'Christians and Spices: a Critical Reflection on Indian

1 Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, (New Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1988 [1983]), 45-85.

2 *Ibid.*, 84.

Nationalist Discourses in Portuguese India' illuminates the unique colonial trajectory that set Portuguese India apart from British India, and the way this has shaped a postcolonial trajectory for the region that likewise sets it apart from the Indian nationalist mainstream. Examining debates in the Konkani language press, in pamphlets and in other political writings, he problematizes the widespread understanding of the Portuguese period as one of spiritual and cultural destruction, as well as its mirror image: the problematic ways in which the region was discursively 'made' into an integral part of the Indian nation.

With Ruy Llera Blanes' article, our discussion stays within the realm of archives and their representation of subaltern interests and perspectives. His contribution, too, is ultimately optimistic when it comes to archival potential, but like our other contributors, he locates this potential outside the archives of the state. In 'A Febre do Arquivo. O "efeito Benjamin" e as revoluções angolanas' (Archival Fever. The "Benjamin effect" and the Angolan Revolutions'), Blanes discusses the crucial importance of the archive in understanding recent political upheavals in Angola. Taking his cue from Derrida's concept of archive fever[3], he argues that Angola's contemporary political dialectic produces a distance between hegemonic and subaltern interests in confrontation. Blanes analyzes the archive of the so-called Revu movement as a subaltern archive, and elucidates the processes through which it poses an epistemological alternative to the official narrative of the Angolan regime. This includes rendering 'invisible chronologies' of protest and repression visible, and the 'recovery' of lost memory: it offers a rereading of the history of Angola as an independent country.

Orazio Irrera concludes the research section with an article entitled 'De l'archéologie du savoir aux archives coloniales. L'archive comme dispositif colonial de violence épistémique' (On the Archaeology of Knowledge in Colonial Archives. The Archive as a Colonial Device of Epistemic Violence). Irrera problematizes the archive as a

3 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* [first published as *Mal d'Archive: Une Impression Freudienne*] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

place of production of truth at the intersection of its epistemological and juridico-political matrices, in order to show to what extent the archive reflects European modernity and its colonial expansion. With Benjamin Zachariah above, he notes that recent projects, both documentary and artistic, have made the archive into an object of derision, the device of an alternative history or counter-memory. Irrera argues, however, that the force of subversion revealed by these projects cannot be understood without grasping the specific type of violence that once accompanied the establishment of the archives. Referring to strategies of objectification, surveillance, and control, he shows how the archive is linked to the proces of extracting and registering knowledge. Analyzing the archive's direct relationship to such forms of epistemic violence, he focuses on two different aspects: 'gestures of silence', which create discernable absences in the colonial archive, and the ways in which the colonial archive testifies to an anguish linked to discrepancies between colonial intent, and practice on the ground.

Ranging from India to Angola and from the Goan vernacular press to records of the colonial state, each contribution to this issue takes forward questions around the archive and the minor mode. Fittingly, the issue is completed by an in-depth interview with Sanjay Seth, known for his thoughtful interventions on the theory and practice of writing history, conducted by José Neves.

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Benjamin Zachariah

Travellers in archives, or the possibilities of a post-post-archival historiography

For some time now, archives have been viewed as a conspiracy of state-power with which the historian must not collude. It is possible now to discern a slow process of recovery from this post- or anti-archival condition. As historians learn to operate with a more active conception of an archive, 'the' archive is revealed to be a rhetorical move rather than a place where documents are deposited, and 'archives' become the body of material we draw upon, or can plausibly draw upon, to answer our research questions. This essay offers a reading of two peculiar archives whose own histories need to be written into the historiography that draws upon them. Discernible in the move from a passive to a power-knowledge view of archives is the acknowledgement of the possibility that archives have an intellectual history. But you cannot control the meanings of the archives you create: your own emplotment is undermined by what you have invented as an archive, in your own ordering and of course in others' reordering. The singular control over history and memory attributed to 'the' archive has never existed. We invent an archive every time we have a question to answer; and then someone reinvents the archive in the service of a new question.

Viajantes em arquivos, ou as possibilidades de uma historiografia pós-pós-arquivística

De há algum tempo para cá, os arquivos têm sido vistos como conspirações do poder estatal com as quais o historiador não deve pactuar. É agora possível discernir um lento processo de recuperação desta condição pós- ou anti-colonial. À medida que os historiadores aprendem a operar com uma concepção mais activa de arquivo, 'o' arquivo revela-se enquanto movimento retórico mais do que um lugar onde documentos são depositados., e 'arquivos' tornam-se no corpo de material onde vamos buscar, ou onde podemos plausivelmente ir buscar, respostas para as perguntas da nossa pesquisa. Este texto oferece uma leitura de dois arquivos peculiares cujas histórias precisam de ser inscritas na historiografia que deles bebe. Discernível no movimento de uma perspectiva passiva do arquivo para outra centrada em poder-conhecimento é o reconhecimento de que também os arquivos possuem uma História intelectual. No entanto, não se pode controlar os significados dos arquivos que criamos: os nossos próprios enredos são enfraquecidos por aquilo que inventamos enquanto arquivo, no nosso ordenamento e, claro, no re-ordenamento de outros. O controlo singular sobre a história e sobre a memória atribuido a 'o' arquivo nunca existiu. Nós inventamos um arquivo a cada vez que temos uma pergunta a que responder; e, nesse momento, outra pessoa re-inventa o arquivo ao serviço de uma nova questão.

Travellers in archives, or the possibilities of a post-post-archival historiography

Benjamin Zachariah*

Over the years, the idea of an archive has undergone a number of changes, and we seem to be coming out of a tunnel towards the light of a sudden blinding insight, or at least we ought to be: we need not think of an archive merely as a grand building storing a static state-created collection of self-serving and self-legitimating documents that reiterates and reifies elite and statist perspectives. Perhaps this should be obvious; but the peaceful co-existence of different kinds of history, with widely divergent views of what a source is, archival or otherwise, and the relationship of that source to what we write, is indication enough that a few clarifications might be in order. My perspective in this short essay is that of a historian who started off, in area studies terms, as a 'South Asianist', a label imposed rather than earned or claimed, and is now apparently a practitioner of 'global history' or 'transnational history', new labels that I have likewise not been born to or achieved, but have instead had thrust upon me. The advantage of the disciplinary, area studies and specialisation perspectives pulling in different directions, however, have made it possible to map certain trends and disadvantages better.

At least a generation of historians trained in 'postcolonial' forms of history-writing had more or less abandoned archives to the more 'traditional' historians, with archives being viewed more or less as a conspiracy of (especially colonial) state-power with which the historian

* Trier University, Germany

must not collude. 'The colonial archive' was the repository of prejudice against the 'native', who was only visible when he (usually he) was a problem: as insurgent, criminal or savage; and a malaise was diagnosed among historians (especially of South Asia) where they were deemed to be reproducing the assumptions of the archive and/or the authors of its documents. A suggestion that the historian 'read against the grain' of the archive required, of course, an attention to that grain, and therefore some acquaintance with that archive,[1] but very soon The Archive, along with 'Eurocentric models' were seen as causes of the oppressive nature of History itself,[2] and by then there was nothing outside the text, [3] and certainly nothing much of value deemed to be in the archive.

If this seems like a caricatured view of the developments in historiography told here in a condensed narrative, I would argue that it is this condensed and caricatured view that was absorbed as received wisdom by much of the historical profession working in postcolonial mode, serving to remind us of the literary origins of postcolonial studies which in turn also gives us license for such a condensed narrative as we now seek to provide for what we now affectionately call PoCo (this sentence should be three or four sentences, but it would then lose its gravitas).[4]

Given that, at least in fields such as South Asian history, the narrow interpretations of transparency that has led to the flouting of the limited rules of archiving that the state has deemed fit to provide (in India, for instance there is in theory a 50-year rule for the depositing of official records in the National Archives of India), there is no such thing as a 'postcolonial archive' to speak of, there has therefore been less material to 'read against the grain' for the period after formal independence. And the discussions on the nature of historical narrativisation

1 The classic statement of this position can be found in Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency", in *Subaltern Studies II*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 45-88.

2 Dipesh Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*: *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

4 See Benjamin Zachariah, "Postcolonial Theory and History," in *Sage Handbook of Historical Theory*, ed. Nancy Partner and Sarah Foot (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2013), 378-96.

suggesting that historians simply made up their stories like every other writer, backing them up with 'truth-claims' made from the 'archive', then directed attention to our strategies of representation rather than at our archives.[5] 'Archive fever' was described;[6] 'dust' celebrated;[7] still there was a touch of derision attached to those who actually believed that trying to find archival evidence for a claim was a worthwhile activity. 'The archive' became a monolith and a straw man, even as some historians refused to abandon and still others returned to them in self-effacing embarrassment.

It is possible now to discern a slow process of recovery from this post- or anti-archival condition. Perhaps this is an over-optimistic reading (and this is the place to confess that I think archives are a Good Thing); but I think that as historians learn to operate with a more active conception of an archive, 'the' archive is revealed to be a rhetorical move rather than a place where documents are deposited, and 'archives' become the body of material we draw upon, or can plausibly draw upon, to answer our research questions – which makes the unusualness of an archive proportionate to the unusualness of our research questions. This modest proposal can serve therefore as a hope and a conclusion. What, then, can you get out of a specific set of sources from particular archives? Before you read your sources, we might paraphrase EH Carr as potentially having said, read your archive[8] – or rather, we might add, describe it, and in describing it, invent it. I shall explore this question by providing an assessment of the readings I have made as a historian of the archives I have used over the years to answer specific research questions; but here I shall talk about the archives concerned rather than the research projects that led me to them. Two archives stand out as

5 Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7.1 (Autumn 1980): 169-90; Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (3 vols, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1987); Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23.1 (February 1984): 1-33; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

6 Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression", *Diacritics* 25.2 (Summer 1995): 9-63.

7 Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: the archive and cultural history* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

8 EH Carr, *What is History?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990 [1961]).

peculiar archives whose own histories needs to be written into the historiography that draws upon them, or specifically two collections, put together by individuals: PC Joshi's collection at the core of the Archives for Contemporary History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi; and the Horst Krüger Nachlass from the remains of the East German Academy of Sciences, at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin.

What follows is a brief set of notes in part based on observations in the archives, by which I mean an ethnographic account of academic and non-academic practices involved in the imagining and creating of an archive in addition to archival research, with the added caveat that the methodology of an anthropologist is mostly 'someone told me' added to 'I was there' – one day the archival evidence for some of this might be available, but then we ourselves will be citing our own writing from this period as *Zeitzeuge* and memoirists.

Archives: accessible and private

Given that 'archive' refers both to the space where records are stored and to the records themselves, a certain ambiguity can arise as to which is meant when 'the archive' appears as an entity in a set of writing; and indeed the metaphoric, metonymic or polemical value of the term 'the archive' relies on the awkward palimpsest of a large official-looking building that embodies the authority, power and (discursive) violence of the state and the documents it contains being inscribed upon and sharing the power of the building itself. The document or the building, or the document and building together, is a metonymy of the state and a metaphor of violence at the same time. While we can, and should, separate the uses and definitions that archivists habitually make about archives from this metonymic-discursive complex that 'the archive' has become in the usage of historians who don't use them, we should recognise that the power attributed to 'the archive' relies on the failure to make these distinctions – on which subject, more will be said below.

Making such abstract distinctions, however, are seen by many researchers who never abandoned their archives as self-indulgent luxu-

ries. In a world that South Asianists in particular (though not exclusively South Asianists) will be familiar with, where so many archives are treated by archivists as their private domain where the researcher is an intruder into their uninterrupted contemplative hours, and where anything sensitive or liable to generate uncomfortable narratives for states or other vested interests disappear into archives' most inaccessible corners, it becomes important to identify ways to make an archive speak to you, and through you, to your (often imagined) readership. By now historians are acutely aware that all archives are actually engaged in hiding things: sometimes very cleverly, in plain sight, sometimes by making certain things overly accessible to divert your attention from what they do not wish you to see. Many historians, like magpies, can be persuaded to gravitate towards the shiny objects put before them.

All states have had a long history of the 'secret state', whose existence and records were for the longest time not fully acknowledged to exist, but also whose records in their own times were hidden from the non-secret state's operatives, and not just from a larger public. The necessary illusions of democratic transparency by which many of us choose to live give us a sense of archiving practices that are illusory (one needs only to wait for the requisite number of years to elapse, and the state will 'come clean' by placing its documents recording its dastardly deeds as well as its benevolent ones on the table before us). Recent times have provided plenty of such examples, where colonial atrocities' records have mysteriously been relocated to spaces whence they do not emerge at the appointed time of thirty years.[9] But democratic states, and still more so democratic archival practices, should not be assumed by historians to exist; and the 'secret state' is an integral feature of stateness, which makes the 'democratic' part more of a vocabulary of legitimation than a substantive set of transparent or enforceable rights and duties. Translated into historiographical and methodological terms, what this means is the old axiom that what gets to be archived is far from 'complete', whatever one's view of completeness might be,

9 See, for instance www.africareview.com/analysis/mau-mau-file/979190-1146520-cgfx4wz/index.html, last accessed January 27, 2017.

is still relevant; and there are dangers of assuming that the 'logic' of archival practices, proclaimed or implicit, are consistently observed, observable, or readable.

To provide a quick example: the Indian Political Intelligence (IPI) files were not known to exist until their release in 1995; IPI was considered a predecessor of MI5 and MI6,[10] and its information on Indian political activities at home and in the wider world, based on testimony gathered by blackmail, the use of secret informants, interceptions of mail, and occasionally by torture, was seldom admissible in a court of law. Magistrates were known to refuse to convict on the basis of secret evidence, and a plea was often made by the government prosecutor that to make the evidence public would be to compromise the source; whereupon the magistrate could simply dismiss the case. Meanwhile, colonial policemen had occasionally to make the trip to London to consult the IPI records, from which they made notes – and even though the IPI records were in part drawn from the police records themselves, it was the collation of police records with various kinds of information the police did not have that made the IPI files worth consulting.[11] The conspiracy of the state archives thus cannot be a conspiracy, and if you are reading 'against the grain' or 'with the grain' part of the excitement of the archive is to learn how to read an archive's grain.

These files have now become central to those who are interested in South Asians abroad in the first half of the twentieth century – and can be delved in by non-South Asianists, in particular those without knowledge of a South Asian language, who want some 'transnational' window-dressing. But there were archival resources for this set of themes before. When Mushirul Hasan was the Director of the National Archives of India, he found a cache of files on the travails and movements of Indians abroad in the early part of the twentieth century in his office – and he asked S Irfan Habib whether he was interested in

10 See for instance Richard Thurlow, *The Secret State: British Internal Security in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

11 'Notes made by Mr Kidd in "London regarding Bolshevism and Indian agitation abroad", West Bengal State Archives (WBSA), Calcutta, IB Sl No 124/1921, File No 83/21.

working on them. (The latter suggested that since this was not his current work, the files simply be replaced on the shelves.)[12] But this cache explains why ever since Tilak Raj Sareen, still active and travelling among his old contacts from the GDR days, had been Director of the NAI and had written several slight books on Indians abroad,[13] these files had vanished from the collection at the NAI, and why so many of us had the experience of ordering files that he and others had once cited and the requisition slip came back with 'NT' on them – the joke was that 'NT' stood for 'not transferred' (the official explanation), or 'no time'. Coincidentally, a small group of people working on aspects of this phenomenon of political exile had been active in the few years prior to this discovery, and we have collected our slips; should Mushirul Hasan's cache have been listed or catalogued in some way, we'd like to do a comparison of our 'NT' slips with those 'discovered' by Mushirul Hasan. But the route to some, if not all those files, was not altogether closed: they would often surface either at PC Joshi's collection at JNU, or at the Horst Krüger collection at the ZMO, Berlin.

Joshi, Krüger and the Communist History Plot that Failed

Puran Chand Joshi (1907-1980) was General Secretary of the Communist Party of India from 1935, when the CPI was still illegal, to 1947. He was therefore General Secretary for the difficult years of the Second World War, and before that during the Popular Front years – the Indian interpretation of the Dimitrov Line is usually attributed to him. It would seem that Joshi was eased onto the back-burners of the by-then slow-burning communist movement after Indian independence and the partition of India – expelled in 1949, and reinstated two years later, Joshi began to take refuge in history. He set himself the task of collecting and collating documents relating to the foundational years of the communist movement and the part played by the Communist Party of

12 Conversation with S. Irfan Habib, Berlin, summer 2010, reconfirmed in subsequent conversation January 2017.

13 The least unsound of these is Tilak Raj Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad (1905–1920)* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1979).

India and its fellow travellers and exiles across the world. In doing so, he gathered extensive material from archives mainly in India and Germany on the great movements of the first half of the twentieth century: socialism, of course, with all its contradictory strands; fascism, in its occasional meanderings in and out of socialist thematics and rhetoric; and many entangled strands in between, caught in the cross-currents of the century's opening decades. This is a collection that is self-consciously pioneering of a more international history of Indian movements abroad[14] – Joshi collected a large amount of information on Indian activities in Germany, the USA, Japan, and elsewhere – activities of both left-and right-wing political engagements, plus an engaging social history of varieties of anti-imperial networks. The histories that he might have written from these strands were never written, although from December 1970 the documents found a home at the newly-founded (in 1969) Jawaharlal Nehru University, becoming the core of its Archives for Contemporary History. Joshi himself lived in semi-retirement from political life in JNU for the last ten years of his life.[15] Had he written his histories of the early years of the CPI under his own name from the documents he gathered, he almost certainly would not have been able to keep his party membership.

Horst Krüger (1920-1989) can be said to have been the senior historian of South Asia in the German Democratic Republic; trained in history and *Germanistik*, among his first published work was a monograph on Prussian manufacturing in the eighteenth century.[16] After a period from 1957 to 1959 as 'Kulturberater an der Handelsvertretung der DDR in Indien' (Cultural Advisor to the GDR Trade Representation in India'), he

14 See Ali Raza, Franziska Roy and Benjamin Zachariah, ed., *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds and World Views, 1917-1939* (New Delhi: Sage, 2015), for a sense of these engagements.

15 "Archives for Contemporary History (ACH)," Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), last accessed August 29, 2016, http://www.jnu.ac.in/SSS/Archive/about-joshi.html; Bipan Chandra, "P.C. Joshi: A Political Journey," *Mainstream* XLVI.1 (2007), last accessed August 29, 2016, http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article503.html. Bipan Chandra's history of the CPI in this article is deeply flawed, and no endorsement of those details should be implied by my citing the article here.

16 Horst Krüger, *Zur Geschichte der Manufakturen und der Manufakturarbeiter in Preußen* (Potsdam: Rütten & Loening, 1958).

was assigned, from 1960, to be a historian of contemporary India, at the AdW (Akademie der Wissenschaften) and at the Institut für Orientforschung (Institute for Oriental Research).[17] (His West German colleague and younger contemporary Dietmar Rothermund (1933-) completed a PhD on the American colonial period in 1959, and only later, in 1968, a *Habilitation* on India: careers in South Asian history in both Germanies were made by Cold War imperatives).[18] When Krüger died in March 1989, his collection of books and papers became a part of the collection of AdW, and thereafter of the Zentrum Moderner Orient, an institution created from the debris of the East German Academy of Sciences. At a time when the GDR's academic landscape was being remodelled in Cold War revenge format, bits were cut out of the East German Academy of Sciences that were deemed usable in the new dispensation. The ZMO was the site where those deemed useful for the project of 'modern Oriental Studies', whatever that might have meant in a post-Saidian-critique world (Said's book appeared in 1978; the 'Forschungsschwerpunkt Moderner Orient' was founded in 1992, becoming the 'Zentrum Moderner Orient' in 1996.[19] Krüger's career as a historian of India was not a *Beruf*, a 'vocation', in the sense that it was connected with historical privilege among the *Bildungbürgertum*; in addition to his days as cultural attaché to a trading delegation, he had earlier been a motorcycle courier for the Nazis during the Second World War (as his interlocutor in India Majid Siddiqui, who shared his joy of motorcycles, remembers).[20]

If Joshi did not to a large extent write what he set out to write, neither, for that matter, did Horst Krüger, though in comparison he was by far the more productive of the two on the subject of contemporary India and the world. The ideological imperatives of writing in East Germany were often no more than an obligatory set of formulae

17 https://www.zmo.de/biblio/sammlung_krueger.html, last accessed August 29, 2016.

18 Dietmar Rothermund, *The Layman's Progress: Religious and Political Experience in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1740-1770* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961); Dietmar Rothermund, *Die Politische Willensbildung im Indien 1900-1960* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965).

19 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

20 Conversation with Majid Siddiqui, New Delhi, December 2009.

in the introductory remarks, but writing on India had often to be more clearly delineating of the onward march of India towards a progressive and potentially socialist political order that justified the GDR's special relationship with a non-socialist state – the politics of Cold War friendships were often pre-emptive government-to-government contacts to prevent the other side from cashing in on the need for alliances. As historian of India, Krüger's contribution to the telos of socialist emancipation was a planned four-volume history of modern India, *Die internationale Arbeiterbewegung und die indische nationale Befreiungsbewegung*, of which two volumes saw the light of day: *Indische Nationalisten und Weltproletariat* (1984), and *Anfänge sozialistischen Denkens in Indien* (1985).[21] Krüger was, however, as a practicing historian and quasi-diplomat, a prolific presenter of papers, some of which were published, and some of which appear in PC Joshi's archive, in some cases at second remove, having been presented first at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; and there is a good deal of material that he published in various fora that bears the heavy burden of his official hat. For his 'beginnings of socialist thought in India', there were many questionable figures he claimed for the socialist cause – he even argued that the Bengali writer and anti-Muslim ideologue Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) had been a socialist in his early thinking, before moving to less progressive themes.[22] For this latter claim he had the support of no less a person than the philosopher and Marxist Debiprosad Chattopadhyay, with whom he shared a correspondence; it seems that Debi*da* allowed Krüger to make this claim by providing him with the requisite hints as to a selective reading of sources.[23]

The two collections are to a large extent a set of archivings from other archives, with an added insight available in the collections them-

21 Horst Krüger, *Indische Nationalisten und Weltproletariat: der nationale Befreiungskampf in Indien und die internationale Arbeiterbewegung vor 1914* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984); Horst Krüger, *Anfänge sozialistischen Denkens in Indien: der Beginn der Rezeption sozialistischer Ideen in Indien vor 1914* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985).

22 Krüger, *Anfänge.*

23 Debiprosad Chattopadhyay, letter to Horst Krüger, including typed extracts of the book by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, "Samya", dated Calcutta, June 24, 1974, in Krüger Nachlass Box 48 No. 352.1.

selves into the politics of access to such other archives, the politics of (non-)writing of the expected research papers or monographs that could have been written from the new collections, and a hint of the nature and demands of self-censorship. There are also some interesting overlaps and intersections between the two archives, which indicate the continued cooperation of communists beyond the government-to--government layer that settled into the convenient Cold War lies of the Congress Party in India as a progressive government and therefore a partner-state of the GDR. Some of Joshi's material comes from the Potsdam archives of the GDR, especially on the activities of Indians in Germany; his research assistant Helga Meier was provided by the East German Academy of Sciences.[24] Meanwhile, Krüger, with semi-diplomatic status in India, had access to materials that ordinary mortals like us still do not: the Bombay Police records, which were sent to him as photocopies by order of the Maharashtra Government, for instance.[25] A complicated politics of the interaction of movements can be seen here: Krüger represented a state that was seeking to appropriate the histories of an anti-statist internationalism from the interwar years; but Joshi represented a movement that in India was not anywhere near state power. As the interwar anti-statist internationalism became the statist internationalism of the Cold War years, the movement-that-became-the-state, Krüger's GDR, dealt with the state-that-excluded-the-movement, India-without-Joshi. Joshi's archiving-the-movement project could be assisted by Krüger's statist patronage.[26]

Both archival projects sought to cover the period of the formative years of the twentieth century's greatest movement, the communist movement. The emplotment sought, to borrow from the textualists' dictionary, to narrate the history of the attempted creation of a more

24 Conversation with Helga Maier-Singh, Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, May 2012; file references from PC Joshi's papers: see for example PC Joshi Papers on the League Against Imperialism: File 76: LAI, IML, ZPA, Berlin, 'Support the Indian revolution. Appeal to LAI', *Rote Fahne* 104, May 6, 1930. Notes by P. C. Joshi, dictated by Dr Helga Meier, Berlin, 1967.

25 See for instance Bombay Police Commissioner's Office File No. 3120/H in Krüger Nachlass, Box 85 No. 624.

26 See Raza, Roy and Zachariah, "Introduction: The Internationalism of the Moment", *The Internationalist Moment,* for the difference between statist and non-statist internationalism.

progressive world. But both archival projects ran into the difficulty that in creating their archives, they were undermining their own narrative, and opening up other narratives that they had perhaps not expected to find: Indian collaboration with and enthusiasm for Fascism and Nazism, Soviet Union-returned pan-Islamists-turned-Nazis, communists-turned-police-informers, and the like.[27]

How to Do Things with Archives

Could you and I with fate conspire to grasp the sorry scheme of things entire, we might return to the discovery that there are an infinity of possible narratives in any archive, even those that someone self-consciously invents in the concrete or abstract sense; to which the correct response would be, and yet there are less than infinite numbers of *plausible* narratives – and we are no further than before. However, before a longing like despair sends us yearning for the unity of knowledge or any other larger-than-life framework, let us linger on the notion of the frame, and use it as a visual metaphor. Presuming that we use pre-existing archives but frame our questions and reframe those archives as we frame our questions, the two being mutually dependent, we might suggest that the frame (and the lens that frames) are active parts of a visual field. Pushing any analogy too far or attempting too detailed an explication of a metaphor destroys its efficacy, of course, but nevertheless, it is these reframings that are the everyday, even subconscious, acts of historians; and the predilections of historians are the lenses. The archive is approached with these framing devices, and the more peculiar the framing (the more peculiar the photographer or painter and the lenses or points of view s/he chooses) the more peculiar the outcome. For 'peculiar' read 'unsettling', and for 'settled' read 'historiographical consensus', and I think a reader will get the picture, or at least the metaphor.

27 Benjamin Zachariah, "Indian Political Activities in Germany, 1914-1945," in *Transcultural Encounters Between Germany and India: Kindred Spirits in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed Joanne Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander and Douglas T McGetchin (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 141-54, summarises some of these trends.

In the two instances selected here, various 'official' archives were trawled by two pioneers of research who did not do much of the writing they planned to do, but in not doing so nevertheless created (or invented) an archive. We have here a sense of how political activists or party functionaries (applied variously in ungenerous or generous manner to the two central characters behind the collections) turned historians turned accidental archivists; their archives then became the basis for archival collections that formed the core of future archives: the Archives for Contemporary History at JNU, or the ZMO, Berlin. It is of course bad practice simply to use someone else's primary sources to write histories they left unwritten: we don't quite know their framing practices or the focal lengths of their lenses in order to do this safely. But we are also able to reframe our research into these collections in terms of other questions: the relations between the GDR and India, the politics of the Cold War and its operation in the creation of historiographical frameworks, the victims of Stalinist terror and their posthumous reinstatement (albeit only in the realms of historiography), the rehabilitation of Indian collaborators with the Nazis and their elevation to diplomatic power, or the status of the Indian Communist Party in its undivided and post-split forms (the CPI split in 1964 largely as a consequence of the Sino-Indian border dispute and the war of 1962),[28] to name a few possibilities (and it is beyond the scope of this short essay to do more than name them).

"The" Archive? In Lieu of a Conclusion

Even an archive created for a particular purpose, then, is not the equivalent of a tuna-friendly net, and even a tuna-friendly net is intended not to catch tuna but its user doesn't quite know what else it might accidentally catch, and even less what else it has failed to catch. While publishing archivists have indeed spent some time understanding the anxieties of archive-users or archive-refuseniks, they have also continued to focus on seemingly banal considerations such as the usability of an archive, the expectations of archi-

28 Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (London: Cape, 1970).

ve users, and the purposes of archives other than for historical research.[29] Discernible nevertheless, in the move from a passive to a power-knowledge view of archives, was the acknowledgement of the possibility that archives, and therefore the archival profession itself, had an intellectual history.[30] That an archive was expected to assist the process of collective memory was acknowledged: and it was possible to raise questions as to the deliberate effacement of memory by non-archiving or by strategic destruction of the built environment, itself an archive.[31] We have known, of course, since the 1920s, that collective memory is taught, rather than being anyone's actually lived memory;[32] and it was acknowledged that archives produced memory and identity, with archivists complicit in the process.[33] It made sense, therefore, that in order to cement memories or identities that were not part of a dominant narrative, other archives could be self-consciously created to serve that purpose, to be part of such a differentiated diversification of archivally-available voices.[34] But as we still had to read 'the colonial archive', we needed to pay attention not just to the content of colonial archives, but also to their form, because 'the archive was the supreme technology of the late nineteenth century colonial state'.[35] And of course, before we could read against the grain, we had to know how to read with the grain.[36] In

29 See for example Louise Craven, ed., *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), which attempts a survey.

30 Tom Nesmith, "Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 259-74.

31 Kenneth E Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990): 378-92.

32 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (new edition, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). His theorisation dates from 1925.

33 Joan M Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 1-19: Joan M Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 171-85.

34 Catherine Hobbs, "The Character of Personal Archives: Reflections on the Value of Records of Individuals," *Archivaria* 52 (Fall 2001): 126-135: Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell, "Autonomous Archives," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, Issues 4-5 (2010): 255-68; Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream," *Archival Science* 9 (June 2009): 71-86.

35 Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87-109: 87.

36 Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance": 100.

some ways we can consider all of this in the vein of Bernard Cohn's article on the census and the production of hard categories of social stratification:[37] and it is both obvious and necessary to place on record that archives produce the realities that they claim merely to collect descriptions of. But they cannot do that without the historians, and the historiography, that draw upon them. And if we work, as all of this implies, with an active as opposed to a passive conception of archives, then historians definitely produce, or invent, the archives that produce the realities they choose to call into being.

Let us, for the sake of argument, call this process of production 'playing the archival game' – there isn't an obvious archive for the study of 'x' or 'y', so let's create it and start collecting, creatively looking for material wherever we may find it – and whether we house it in a particular physical space or it remains in our imagination, collated and ordered, though its component bits come from different archives (in both senses, repository and content) is not important. But you cannot control the meanings of the archives you create: your own emplotment is undermined by what you have invented as an archive, in your own ordering and of course in others' reordering (or partial reconjuring, following footnotes and bibliographies to reconfigure that which remained in your imagination), where you cannot control what meanings or narratives it generates. Why, though, is this not true of 'the' archive, state-run celebrations of the state's stateness? Given the scale and nature of the operations, does the dream-catcher not catch other people's dreams?

Jacques Derrida reminds us of what he thinks are the origins and meanings of the Archive:

> the Greek arkheion: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house,

37 Bernard Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia," in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians*, ed. Bernard Cohn (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 224-54.

> family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives."[38]

Obviously the European impulse to return, etymologically or historically (the distinction is often forgotten) to a Greek or Latin origin (mirrored today by counter-indigenisms from South Asia) does not make for a reliable history of that origin, far less of the continuation and continuities of the entities themselves. Does this power exist in the collections described in this article? What power to interpret, with any authority, resides in these collections that have become archives? Is the act of archiving them an attempt to challenge the Archon? Or is a 'real' archive, in the Derridean sense, only that which embodies the power of the state? And to complete the journey round the circle that passes as an argument in this vein, an archive is state authority is an archive; without state authority it is not an archive.

What I am suggesting is that the singular control over history and memory that is implied by this Derridean position has never existed; and that an etymology is not a history. Inventing the archive is not the same as reading the archive, with or against the grain: in the first, material is made to serve as archival evidence, called into being in the service of a question or set of questions; in the second, the material is already archival, only to be 'read' differently by different historians. 'The' colonial archive – where is that? When was that? The Invention of the Archive can now be a phrase that is recoverable from the enormous condescension of historiography: we invent an archive every time we have a question to answer; and then someone reinvents the archive in the service of a new question.

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38 Derrida, "Archive Fever", 9-10.

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Dale Luis Menezes

Christians and Spices: A Critical Reflection on Indian Nationalist Discourses in Portuguese India

Indian nationalist discourses in Portuguese India have a direct relation with the political developments in British India. I use the terms 'British India' instead of 'India' and 'Portuguese India' instead of 'Goa' (and the territories of Daman and Diu on the coast of Gujarat), in order to critically re-think the writing of history from an Indian nationalist and post-colonialist perspectives. The post-colonial reality of Portuguese India under the Indian nation-state after 1961 does not readily fit into the imagination of Indian nationhood. Nor does it fit easily into the theoretical perspective emerging out of a reading of the British colonial archive. This is due to the fact that modes of colonialism of the Portuguese and the British differed from each other. Since the perspective of British India ultimately became the norm, there have been attempts to fit the ill-fitting history of Portuguese India into the British Indian mold. This has serious repercussions for understanding the history of Portuguese colonialism. It also has repercussions for understanding the political representation and identities of the various communities living in Portuguese India under Indian nationalism and the Indian nation-state.
Keywords: Goa, Indian nationalism, Portuguese Empire, colonialism.

Cristãos e especiarias: uma reflexão crítica sobre os discursos nacionalistas indianos na Índia portuguesa

Os discursos nacionalistas indianos na Índia portuguesa têm relação directa com os desenvolvimentos políticos na Índia britânica. Uso termos como 'Índia britânica' em vez de 'Índia' ou 'Índia portuguesa' em vez de 'Goa' (e os territórios de Damão e Diu, na costa de Gujarat), de forma a repensar criticamente a escrita da História segundo as perspectivas nacionalista indiana e pós colonial. A realidade pós-colonial da Índia portuguesa sob o Estado-nação indiano depois de 1961 não se encaixa de forma imediata no imaginário da nacionalidade indiana. Também não se encaixa facilmente na perspectiva teórica que emerge de uma leitura do arquivo colonial britânico. Isto deve-se ao facto de os tipos de colonialismo britânico e português diferirem um do outro. Desde o momento em que a perspectiva da Índia britânica se transformou em norma, houve tentativas de encaixar a história da Índia portuguesa no molde britânico. Isto tem sérias repercussões para a compreensão da história do colonialismo português. Também tem repercussões para a compreensão da representação política e das identidades das várias comunidades a viver na Índia portuguesa sob o nacionalismo indiano e sob o Estado-nação indiano.
Palavras-chave: Goa; Nacionalismo Indiano; Império Português; Colonialismo.

Christians and Spices: A Critical Reflection on Indian Nationalist Discourses in Portuguese India

Dale Luis Menezes*

Introduction

The title of this paper draws from the famous (or infamous) phrase attributed to Vasco da Gama in 1498, when asked why he had sailed halfway across the world to the Malabar Coast. He is believed to have answered that he, along with his crew, had come in search of "Christians and spices".[1] Vasco da Gama's answer can be taken as an iconic template on which Indian nationalists based their own view of the subsequent history of the *Estado da Índia*. While Vasco da Gama's successful journey from Lisbon to Calicut is understood as the commencement of European or Western dominance of trade in the Indian Ocean as well as the start of colonialism, the voyage is also implicitly understood to have started the process of Christianization in some parts of the Indian subcontinent, opening Indian or Asian souls to spiritual and cultural domination.[2] This is not to suggest that the Indian nationalist writers did not recognize the existence of Christian communities before

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1 Anonymous, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama. 1497-1499*, ed. and trans. E. G. Ravenstein (London: Hakluyt Society, 1898), 48. It has been recently suggested that the anonymous text was possibly authored by Álvaro Velho, who was a member of Vasco da Gama's crew on that voyage. However, the jury is still out on the question.

2 See for instance K. M. Pannikar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945*, new edition (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), 13-15, 279-81; A. K. Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India: Its Beginnings and Early Development* (Bombay: Marathi Samshodhana Mandal, 1958), 2-3, 23; D. P. Singhal, "Goa - End of an Epoch," *The Australian Quarterly* 34: 1 (1962): 77-89; Margaret W. Fisher, "Goa in Wider Perspective," *Asian Survey* 2: 2 (1962): 3-10.

the arrival of Vasco da Gama. Indeed the difference that they drew between the pre-Portuguese and Portuguese periods was the interventions in the cultural lives of the "native[s]". The Portuguese "Christianized" and "Westernized" the people, it was claimed.[3] Nationalist writers tried to demonstrate that Christianity had a claim to be Indian as the apostle St. Thomas had landed in Southern India long before Christianity could reach Europe. The incident wherein Vasco da Gama and his party mistook a Hindu temple for a church, led nationalist writers to argue that the pre-Portuguese Christianity could have developed from an earlier Hinduism and that the Christian religion flourished according to the culture and environment there,[4] unlike the one that came in the wake of the Portuguese conquest. In part the Indian nationalist writers also reacted to the histories that were written in Portugal that glorified the colonial and imperial enterprises.[5]

It is crucial to recognize the problematic manner in which the Portuguese period was understood as a spiritual and cultural destruction of the Indian nation. Given the manner in which the Portuguese Empire in Asia – and particularly in India – has been understood as an economic, political, and a spiritual conquest by Indian nationalist writers and scholars, 'Christians and spices' seems to be rather an apt metaphor in summarizing the historiography of five centuries of Portuguese presence in pockets of the Indian subcontinent. At the heart of the issue is cultural nationalism that imagined itself to be ancient and eternal, destroyed by colonialism, and one which eventually had to revive itself through the struggle for national liberation. Such a cultural

3 Bento Graciano D'Souza, *Goan Society in Transition: A Study in Social Change* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975), 344-45.

4 See Manohar H. Sardessai, *Gomantakiya Christian Samaj. Nirmiti va Karya* (Panjim-Goa: Department of Art and Culture, Goa Government, 2001), 24.

5 In this context, see the comments of Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto, "Introduction," in *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*, ed. Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto, trans. Neil Safier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8-11; Francisco Bethencourt, "Political Configurations and Local Powers," in *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*, ed. Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 197-98; R. Timothy Sieber, "Remembering Vasco da Gama: Contested Histories and the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Nation-Building in Lisbon, Portugal," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 8: 4 (2001): 553.

nationalism was not unique to the thinking of Indian nationalists. One can make the suggestion that the idea which held colonial oppression as responsible for the destruction of national culture was a global one. It was developed by several leaders and thinkers of the anti-colonial movements across the globe. I would like to refer to Franz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral in this context. Fanon and Cabral had argued that colonialism had suppressed the natural national cultures from emerging across the globe. For Fanon and Cabral, this national culture was not marked by any internal diversity and the place of this national culture in history was solely for the purpose of realizing national freedom from colonial oppression.[6] This view that locates 'culture' as central to national liberation, holds the cultural life of different communities that lived under colonial rule – whether oppressed or not – as having no internal diversity. Such a view erases the power dynamic between the colonial state, local elites and local subalterns.

This paper critiques this historiography by focusing on how Indian nationalism operated (and operates) within the territory of Portuguese India. Indian nationalism first entered the territory of Portuguese India as a counter to colonial rule. As such it had positioned itself against Portuguese colonial rule and culture. In post-colonial times Indian nationalism was (and is) used as a way to counter cultural practices antithetical to the Indian way of life. Rather than consolidating a 'national community', Indian nationalism in Portuguese India can be viewed as a disciplining force. Indian nationalism operated and operates within this terrain of 'taming' those outside its imagined idea of nationhood, which according to a recent study on the formation of the Indian nation-state was largely Hindu and upper-caste.[7] This oppositional nature of Indian nationalism that tried to end colonial rule and rectify Western cultural

6 See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 9; Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture (1959)," in *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings*, ed. Vincent P. Pecora (Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 267, 272-73; Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches*, ed. Africa Information Service (New York and London: Monthly Review Press and Africa Information Service, 1973), 42-43, 45.

7 See Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950*, The "Opus 1" Series (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), 14-15.

practices produced a singular view of history tied solely to the Indian nation. Indian nationalist historiography ignored the fact that territories like Goa, Daman, and Diu could have a different history owing to the fact that they were formally under the *Estado da Índia* and not the British Raj.[8] In other words, the historiography emerging from Indian nationalism assumed that all regions of South Asia would (or should) fit the mold of Indian nationalism. This mold no doubt drew from the global anti-colonial discourse as well as the belief that the Indian subcontinent was essentially a cultural unit from times immemorial. That the Indian subcontinent was not one cultural unit is clearly seen if we consider the different visions that emerged for the political future of Portuguese India.

One was the pro-Government and wanted the continuance of Portuguese rule. Another demanded complete autonomy, in which power would be absolutely transferred from the Portuguese State to the natives, read as the landed elites, and lastly, there were those that demanded that Goa, Daman, and Diu be merged into the newly-formed Indian Union, as they believed that Goa shared primordial ties with India that were supposedly broken by the intervention of the Portuguese five centuries ago. The latter two were both opposed to the Portuguese State, but had very different ideas for the political future of Portuguese India. Needless to say, as we have observed in the decades that followed the incorporation of Goa, Daman, and Diu in the Indian Union, the vision of the pro-Indian Goan nationalists won, with due help from the armed annexation by the Indian army in December 1961.

But even if Indian nationalists – both in British India and in Portuguese India – believed that Portuguese India shared primordial ties with India, Portuguese India had to be constantly 'made' into an Indian region, by highlighting that not just its past but also its future, was best served through Indian interests.[9] The argument of primordial ties was

8 See Rochelle Pinto, *Between Empires: Print and Politics in Goa*, SOAS Studies on South Asia (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-7.

9 See Robert S. Newman, "Goa: The Transformation of an Indian Region," *Pacific Affairs* 57: 3 (1984): 449.

itself not enough to incorporate Portuguese India seamlessly into India. The press in Portuguese India immediately after the Indian army's action reported that people in Portuguese India were dissatisfied with the changes effected by the Indian administration, and were anxious about their political future.[10] Recently, new studies have been published that have analyzed the operation of political economy in post-colonial Goa in relation to the Indian nation-state. On the political and economic level, Raghuraman S. Trichur's argument is crucial to consider. Trichur argues that it was only from the 1980s that Goa was truly integrated into the Indian economy with the rise of the tourism industry.[11] The tourism industry in post-colonial Goa is based on the European-ness, and the Southern European and Latinate character of the culture of Goa.[12] Trichur's argument exposes the contradictions in the Indian nationalist position. While Indian nationalists had asserted the illegitimacy of Portuguese rule owing to the primordial ties with India, in post-colonial Goa the Indian nation-state could only make inroads (its armed aggression notwithstanding) into Goa by recognizing its Portuguese and European cultural make-up. The irony might strike only a few in post-colonial Goa as it was precisely the Portuguese and European cultural heritage that the Indian nationalists had sought to reform, ostensibly to overcome the debilitating effects of colonialism on Goan culture.

In Portuguese India, Indian nationalism had to deal with the history of Portuguese colonialism which included a history of Christianization. This, as stated before, was understood to be Westernization as well. Both Western culture and the Christian religion were heavily attacked by those who were against the Portuguese State, especially since the Christian religion was seen as a tool to enslave and impose Western culture and dominance on the people of Portuguese India. A culture inflected by the Roman Catholicism, as practiced by many in Goa, was therefore seen as alien to the soil, and one that needed to be discarded.

10 Editor, "Goeam Asleleancho Vhodd Usko," *Ave Maria*, March 25, 1962, 1, 8.

11 See Raghuraman S. Trichur, *Refiguring Goa: From Trading Post to Tourism Destination* (Saligao, Goa: Goa 1556, 2013), 160-61.

12 Ibid., 12, 16.

While there are works that view the history of Portuguese India outside the framework of Indian nationalism, much of the recent scholarship on the history of Portuguese India, unfortunately, falls in the trap of Indian nationalism (not necessarily consciously). These works hasten to fit Goa within an Indian nationalist landscape and assert categorically that Goa is Indian despite its long history of Portuguese rule. "Goa is thus thoroughly embedded into the Indian nation", asserts Alexander Henn even while acknowledging that Goa's culture has elements of European or Portuguese culture. In keeping with the Indian nationalist idea that colonial policies destroyed culture absolutely, Henn asserts that the Portuguese or European element in the Goan culture emerged against the "historical background...[of] Goa's early and long-lasting colonial domination, which subdued the region for almost half a millennium...under Portuguese rule and Catholic hegemony".[13] On the other hand there are academics who while trying to view the history of Portuguese India outside the framework of Portuguese nationalism, which glorified empire and conquest, also end up affirming the worldview of Indian nationalism. Rosa Maria Perez's study of the encounter of the Catholic and Hindu communities in Goa claims that the "lack of systematic ethnographical research favored the reiteration of stereotypes that chose to ignore that Goa is dominantly Hindu (as it always has been, even in the more 'golden periods' of conversion to Catholicism) and that Goan Hinduism merges into a larger Indian background prior to the Portuguese rule of the territory and subsequent to its end".[14]

Both Henn and Perez, and indeed many contemporary scholars recognize that Portuguese colonialism produced a 'difference' – a difference between the historical trajectory of Portuguese India and that of British India. Yet recognizing this 'difference' many scholars would insist on using anachronistic frames of 'Indian nationalism' and 'Hindu

13 Alexander Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Engagements in Goa: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2014), 1; cf. Trichur, *Refiguring Goa: From Trading Post to Tourism Destination*.

14 Rosa Maria Perez, *The Tulsi and the Cross: Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter in Goa*, Reprint (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Limited and RCS Publishers, 2013), 1.

culture'.[15] That terms like 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' are related to recent historical processes is not an argument that influences scholars like Henn and Perez.[16] If indeed Hinduism is a recent invention that emerged in various parts of British India, as scholars like Romila Thapar have argued then what kind of religiosities other than Christianity and Islam existed in Portuguese India?[17] From an Indian nationalist perspective the territory that the Portuguese ruled is marked as 'Hindu' before it was conquered by the Portuguese, and also is viewed as a place that needs to re-claim its pre-Portuguese 'Hindu' past. While such a view is politically problematic, it is also historically inaccurate.

Religion, Culture, and Nationalism in Portuguese India

T. B. Cunha is a central figure in understanding the influence of Indian nationalism on the political discourses and historiography of Portuguese India as his ideas and writings had a large circulation within the lay and academic circles. Much before the ouster of the Portuguese from Goa, Daman, and Diu the Indian nation-state had promoted his writings in order to further the cause of Indian nationalism in Portuguese India. Post-1961, the state in Goa also repeatedly published some of his writings through its official press. His ideas had a deeper impact than any other pro-India nationalist in Portuguese India. Moreover, being fluent in English and living most of his life in Bombay Cunha became the bridge between Indian nationalist thought (chiefly Gandhian thought) and Portuguese India.

Cunha's effort was an attempt to fit the people and history of Portuguese India within the nationalist views of British India.[18] Cunha

15 See Paul Axelrod and Michelle A. Fuerch, "Flight of the Deities: Hindu Resistance in Portuguese Goa," *Modern Asian Studies* 30: 2 (1996): 387-421.

16 See Romila Thapar, "Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity," *Modern Asian Studies* 23: 2 (1989): 209-31; David N. Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41: 4 (1999): 630-59.

17 See Romila Thapar, "Syndicated Hinduism," in *Hinduism Reconsidered*, ed. Gunther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 54-81.

18 See Parag D. Porobo, "Tristão Bragança Cunha and Nationalism in Colonial Goa: Mediating Difference and Essentialising Nationhood," *Economic and Political Weekly* 50: 31 (2015): 62.

could not recognize – or did not want to recognize – that Portuguese India had historical trajectories that were different from British India, and that Portuguese India and British India were not a unified cultural and political unit if one subtracted colonial rule. Cunha was against the Portuguese State and preferred a political future under the rule of the Indian nation-state. His most biting critique of the Portuguese State was published in the form of a pamphlet entitled *Denationalisation of Goans* in 1944.[19] Cunha argued that under the rule of the Portuguese State, the Goan in Portuguese India was politically, culturally, and mentally enslaved, and that the Christian religion was the tool by which the State effected this enslavement. In his pamphlet, Cunha made clear that he was not against the Christian religion but against the "exploitation of religion for the benefit of foreign rulers and to the disadvantage of India's unity".[20]

As is evident, Cunha did make a separation between faith and its mis-use by the Portuguese State. In fact, this was his position long before he wrote his pamphlet *Denationalisation of Goans.* Writing in 1929, Cunha argued that it was not Catholic bigotry or "doctrinal intolerance" that bestowed upon Catholicism a privileged position in Portuguese India, but a "political order" that was hypocritical in terms of religion. Cunha wrote that even when Portuguese government officials did not profess the Catholic faith when living in Portugal, they afforded all respect and ceremony to the religion once in Goa as it was a tool of political dominance. Against this 'Catholic' bigotry of the Portuguese State in India, Cunha argued, the Hindu religion "being the native religion of this country [bore] the seed to *national resurgence*, which constitute[d] a danger to foreign dominance".[21] While Cunha may be justified to view the Christian religion as aiding the Portuguese State in political, cultural, economic, and spiritual domination,

19 T. B. Cunha, *Denationalisation of Goans* (Panaji-Goa: Goa Gazetteer Department, Government of Goa, n.d.).

20 Ibid., 2. Cunha was not a practicing Christian and throughout his life he had conflicts with the Catholic Church in Goa and Bombay.

21 T. B. Cunha, *Goa's Freedom Struggle (Selected Writings of T. B. Cunha)* (Bombay: Dr. T. B. Cunha Memorial Committee, 1961), 277-79.

his positing of the Hindu religion as a bulwark against foreign domination was problematic. It is the same as saying that the 'Hindu' kings of India were a bulwark against the 'Muslim' rulers, effectively making the entire community – with its internal diversity – responsible for the actions of a few.

According to Cunha, the Portuguese State together with the Christian religion had exploited the people by imposing violent policies, hindering their authentic cultural progress. Such violent cultural policies were the forced mass conversions, the destruction of temples and mosques, and the prohibition of local customs. For Cunha, the Portuguese State and its propaganda extolling heroic seafarers and western culture was responsible in creating a "denationalised" Goan. This person born and raised in Portuguese India was someone who was removed from her Indian roots. This person was moreover incapable of fighting either the imposition of Western culture or the propaganda of the Portuguese State, which according to Cunha had created a Goan subjectivity that aped Western culture, and therefore their alien masters.[22]

> Having lost their national dignity, our countrymen are fond of aping the ways and manners of the rulers in the firm belief that they must strictly follow them in order to enter the ranks of the civilized and be their equals. The false idea that the conventions of European social life are the essential and indispensible characteristics of progress has created an inferiority complex from which Goans suffer. It has reduced Goan society to a grotesque caricature of the West and deprived it of qualities of originality and invention which are essential for real progress. It hinders all original thinking and initiative in them, having suppressed the genius of the race. Hence the decadence and stagnation of their social life.[23]

22 See Porobo, "Tristão Bragança Cunha," 65.

23 Cunha, *Denationalisation*, 29.

The problem lies in Cunha's acceptance of Indian nationalism as being de facto based on the Hindu religion. Thus, along with Western practices the Christian religion was held to be suspect under the nationalism that Cunha championed, as the Christian religion was positioned as the 'other' to the Hindu one.[24] Thus, the violence of colonialism and the many ill-effects that it had brought on the suppressed national culture of the people of Portuguese India could only be remedied "by going back to the Indian tradition", Cunha argued.[25] One had to follow the example of India and participate in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism to "share in the material and moral benefits of National Independence". More pragmatically, Cunha suggested that it is only be aligning with the Indian national movement that Goans or the people of Portuguese India could "claim equal rights in a Free India".[26] The 'denationalized' Goan was an obstacle in the realization of a national life – specifically an Indian national life.[27]

Though Cunha was the most important political activist propagating the 'denationalization' thesis, he was not the only one. At the heart of the 'denationalization' thesis was a belief that the authentic national culture was lost due to colonial policies and history. In this context, reference can also be made to another pro-India nationalist who wrote in favor of Indian culture as a defense against Western colonialism in Portuguese. Evagrio Jorge wrote a short pamphlet *A Reforma do Vestuário* in 1942.[28] Jorge headed a pro-India political party Liga Regional (the Regional League), and promoted the *khadi* cloth, championed by M. K. Gandhi in neighboring British India during this time. Jorge proposed in his pamphlet that those who joined his Liga Regional should start using the *khadi* cloth as a way to switch to Indian nationalist culture.

24 See Victor Ferrao, *Being a Goan Christian: The Politics of Identity, Rift and Synthesis* (Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011), 41, 44.

25 Cunha, *Denationalisation*, 25.

26 Ibid., 34.

27 Ideas like those of Cunha also found its ways in discussions in the popular press. See Editor, "Gone West," *The Goan World*, October 1940, 5.

28 Evagrio Jorge, *A Reforma do Vestuário* (Margão: Tipografia Central, 1942).

Jorge had to deal with the fact that both the Hindus and the Christians in Portuguese India not only wore, what he termed, "Western" clothes, but the cloth itself was of a non-Indian manufacture. Jorge recognized that Western and/or European culture had touched all communities in Portuguese India – including those that practiced the Hindu religion. While Cunha's project was entirely focused on 'nationalizing' the Goan Christian, Jorge identified the Hindu, along with the Christian, of Portuguese India as needing reform. The solution that was prescribed to the Hindus and well as the Christians was a return to a pristine 'Indian' or 'Hindu' culture. Accordingly, Jorge addressed the Hindus and exhorted them to reform their ways and refrain from Western manners and customs. He said:

> To the Hindus of Goa who, perhaps carried by a supposed superiority [of the European], leave the ancestral habits of their land and adopt those of the foreigners, as there is no greater inferiority than to accept all that is imposed on us, without the slightest reflection and criticism! Also there is no reason to be ashamed of the dress and the traditions of the country, which are admired all over the world.[29]

In dealing with a material basis of culture – such as cloth or dress – Jorge's writing testifies to the fact that culture in colonial times was diverse and it was the aim of nationalist politics to straightjacket it with a singular national way of being. Jorge not only tried to reform the dress or clothing but also the mentality of the Goan. In order to suggest this reform Jorge made similar arguments like Cunha. He too treated the Catholic Church as an instrument in the hands of the Portuguese State that imposed "Western (*occidentais*) dressing and customs". Jorge also believed that five centuries of Portuguese rule had promoted the destruction of culture by prohibiting "the manners and customs of the land, burning books in the vernacular language, and

29 *Ibid.*, 11.

preventing the use of regional dress and the speaking of the mother tongue..."[30] Change of clothing was therefore the first step at recovering the cultural progress of Portuguese India.

Of course, not everyone agreed with Cunha. There were, as I mentioned earlier, different political visions and discourses pertaining to the political future of the territories of Portuguese India. Amongst one of them was Leo Lawrence, an official in the Portuguese administration who protested the armed annexation by India and argued that the territory of Portuguese India had a right to self-determination. Lawrence viewed the history of Portuguese India and its European/Western/ Portuguese culture as not opposed to the cultural lives of the local people. Chiefly reacting to the sharp attacks against the Portuguese State, Lawrence argued that it was Afonso de Albuquerque who had aligned with the native Hindus against "the tyranny of the Saracens". This was essentially a partnership of the Portuguese with the local Goans or Hindus in order to "build a greater Portugal because they [the Portuguese] had proved themselves true friends in their [the Hindu Goans'] distress".[31] One cannot help but notice that the defense against the views of the Indian nationalists had to also view the Portuguese past as constituted by a monolithic 'Hindu' culture. The history of the Portuguese presence in the Indian subcontinent was considered to be legitimate based on the treatment given to this imagined and monolithic 'Hindu' culture.[32]

While for Cunha, Albuquerque's conquest of the City of Goa against the Bijapuris was essentially a display of religious intolerance against the native Hindus – especially the Muslim women whom Cunha believed Albuquerque had forcibly converted and married off to his soldiers – and an act of barbarism and violence directed at the helpless natives in Portuguese India,[33] Lawrence provided a cultural argument from the perspective of the Portuguese State arguing that "the impact

30 *Ibid.*, 3.

31 Leo Lawrence, *Nehru Seizes Goa* (New York: Pageant Press, 1963), 19, 20.

32 See also D'Souza, *Goan Society in Transition*, 151.

33 See Cunha, *Denationalisation*, 5-11.

of Portuguese culture on the Goan soul has brought about a perfect synthesis of cultures of east and west, preserving the best in both and rejecting the dross that weighs down other populations across the barrier of the Ghats [in British India]".[34] Moreover, he also argued that having lived under Portuguese laws, institutions, and administration there was no denying that the people in Portuguese India had acquired a way of life that was Portuguese as well as a distinct political status due to the five centuries of history.[35] Against the view of Cunha, Lawrence did not feel that Portuguese rule or colonialism had produced a deracinated Goan, even if he argued for a political future of Goa either as continuing with Portugal or as a separate country.[36]

The argument that Portuguese colonialism had produced an enslaved and a mimic man had a fall-out in Portuguese India, especially post-colonial Goa. Identifying the Christian religion with the State, the pro-India nationalists had reduced the Church as an agent of colonial and imperial rule. With the formation of the secular Indian nation-state such an understanding did not cease.[37] The fall-out was clearly visible in the case of Christians in Goa who were the 'other' to Indian or Hindu nationalism, and were expected to reform and change their ways of being and living in order to suit those of Indian culture, nationalism,

34 Lawrence, *Nehru*, 19.

35 See ibid., Introduction.

36 Lawrence was not the only one to hold a view that Goans were Portuguese in terms of culture and citizenship. One might think, and perhaps rightly so, that Lawrence's closeness to the Portuguese administration may have influenced his views on culture and citizenship. However, new work on Goan migrant communities in East Africa highlight how many of them viewed themselves as being Portuguese, not least due to the fact that they traveled to British colonies in Africa using their Portuguese passports. See Margaret Frenz, "Global Goans. Migration Movements and Identity in a Historical Perspective," *Lusotopie* 15: 1 (2008): 193; Margret Frenz, "Migration, Identity and Post-Colonial Change in Uganda: A Goan Perspective," *Immigrants & Minorities* 31: 1 (2013): 57-58, 63; Margaret Frenz, "Representing the Portuguese Empire: Goan Consuls in British East Africa, C. 1910-1963," in *Imperial Migrations: Colonial Communities and Diaspora in the Portuguese World*, ed. Eric Morier-Genoud and Michel Cahen, Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 194, 196, 200; Pamila Gupta, "The Disquieting of History: Portuguese (De)colonization and Goan Migration in the India Ocean," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44: 1 (2009): 19-47.

37 Felix Alfred Plattner, *The Catholic Church in India: Yesterday and Today* (Allahabad: St. Paul's Publications, 1964), 2-3, 13; Arun Shourie, "Missionaries in India," in *Paths of Mission in India Today*, ed. Augustine Kanjamala svd (Mumbai: St. Paul's Publications, 1997), 65-92.

and patriotism. It seemed to be a logical step that the enslaved and westernized Christian was identified as the 'other' under Indian nationalism[38] as such a person was precisely the problem that the pro-India nationalists had identified and tried to reform.

This can be seen in the debates in the Konkani language press after the incorporation of Goa in the Indian Union. Interestingly we have a case of Jorge's *A Reforma do Vestuário* being discussed in the 1970s, which allows us to gauge the effect of Jorge's views long after he wrote his pamphlet. Fr. Martinho Noronha in his weekly column made a reference to Jorge in the context of Goan Christians finding appropriate place in Indian culture. Being a Christian priest, Fr. Noronha obviously was concerned about the effect of Jorge's writings on Christian faith and the faithful. The author recalls how Jorge as a young student (both of them attended the same school) was inspired by the anti-colonial movement in British India.

Fr. Noronha argued that Jorge conflated colonialism and the Christian religion to the extent that this history was viewed by Jorge not through "historical" but through a "nationalist" lens. He wrote that Jorge had "thrown the baby [Christian faith] out with the bath water [Portuguese colonialism]" and admitted that the writings of Jorge pertaining to the change in dress, names, food habits, and other such customs and manners were important for the Church in India, as it too was thinking of the same issues that Jorge had written about some decades ago.[39] Fr. Noronha was not against Indian culture and the project of Indianizing the Christian religion, but was an advocate of caution.[40] Convinced that Indian clothes (and therefore Indian culture) were not necessarily Hindu and that the Christian religion could be made compatible to the ways of being and living of Indian culture and nationalism, Fr. Noronha's views reveal the implications of the Indian

38 See Ferrao, *Being a Goan Christian*, 38-57.

39 Martinho Noronha, "Renver Borovp - 5: Vosnnukponn Ani Dhorm'," *Vavraddeancho Ixtt*, September 2, 1978, 5.

40 See Martinho Noronha, "Renver Borovp - 7: Vachpiank Zobab," *Vavraddeancho Ixtt*, September 23, 1978, 5.

nationalist project on the Christians of Goa. He observed that if the Christians of Goa had tried to make themselves 'Indian' through a change of dress and other customs and habits, Indians would not have viewed them as the "other".[41]

It would be quite erroneous to assume that Fr. Noronha was only reacting to the writings and ideas of Jorge. In fact to say that the Christian religion needs to be reconciled to Indian culture owing to its close association with Portuguese colonialism, even with caveats, is to still work within the framework of Cunha's "denationalisation" thesis. It is to admit that the colonized subjectivity can escape the violence of colonialism only through the redemption offered by Indian culture – as in fact suggested by Cunha.[42]

Cunha's ideas, with their potential of neatly fitting into the agenda of Hindu nationalism, were precisely used for this purpose by later writers. We will look at some prominent Marathi intellectuals in Goa in the 1980s and 1990s, who based their ideas about Portuguese colonialism and Goan history in the writings of Cunha. These later writers viewed the history of Portuguese presence from the standpoint of conquest and religious conversions as the two main events. Many of these later writers argued that the demand for freedom had a logical explanation in the history of the Portuguese conquest and religious conversions. Jagannath S. Sukthankar noted, "All in all the history of Goa after 1510 is a history of the destruction of a thousand year old culture, and similarly it is also a history of a brave people who opposed and resisted religious persecution and oppressive government of the Portuguese".[43]

If Sukthankar felt that 1510 marked the date when seeds of national dissatisfaction and resistance were sown, another well-known Marathi writer, Manohar H. Sardessai argued that the commencement

41 Martinho Noronha, "Renver Borovp - 12: Kaim Ghoddnio," *Vavraddeancho Ixtt*, October 28, 1978, 5.

42 See Cunha, *Denationalisation*, 34.

43 Jagannath Sukthankar, *Portugez Rajvatitil Svatantrya Ladhayachi Pane* (Panaji-Goa: Gomantak Marathi Akademi, 1992), 1, 3.

of the Pinto Rebellion of 1787, led by a few disgruntled local Catholic priests was the commencement of the freedom struggle.[44] Sardessai's invocation of the Pinto Rebellion of 1787 was to demonstrate that the Christians had also demanded freedom as early as 1787, and was not always a comprador class of the Portuguese State.

Sardessai believed that the commencement of the Portuguese rule and Christian proselytization marked a destruction of primordial cultural ties with India and 'Hindu' culture. But Sardessai also held a contradictory position vis-à-vis Christian porselytization. He argued that even if some had converted to Christianity these people did not lose contact with their primordial 'Hindu' culture:

> Those who had been shaped by Hindu culture for thousands of years could not change themselves just by changing the name of the religion and the image of God. That is why the Portuguese Government introduced the Inquisition, for those who had become Christians... But even doing so, the Government could not destroy the Hindu culture in their minds and blood.[45]

That Sardessai's Indian nationalist position was also a de facto Hindu nationalist one is indicated by the fact that he argued that the Hindus considered it an "insult to society" that some had sacrificed their own religion to embrace the Christian one.[46] Cunha also could not separate Hindu culture and Indian nationalism – or in other words these entities were one and the same in Cunha's nationalism. Sardessai's opposition to Portuguese colonialism and the Portuguese State manifested in the understanding that the Christian and Hindu religions were pitted against each other due to the religious and political policies of the Portuguese State, an understanding that we have constantly observed as part of Indian na-

44 Sardessai, *Gomantakiya Christian Samaj*, 253.
45 Ibid., 278.
46 Ibid., 279.

tionalist views of the history of Portuguese India. Which is why even if Sardessai invoked the rebellion of some local Catholics priests in 1787 as evidence of the anti-colonial feeling amongst the Christians of Goa, it was done within the understanding that the fight was to recover a political and cultural Hindu unity, or alternately an Indian cultural and political unity.

Christians and Spices in Our Times

This critical reflection on nationalist politics in Portuguese India started with an incident involving Vasco da Gama, who was believed to have said that his sea voyage was a search for "Christians and spices". I have argued that, seen from an Indian nationalist perspective, much of the history of the Portuguese presence in India takes it for granted that the period was marked by violence, exploitation, persecution of the body, body-politic, and the soul. It also takes for granted that the Indian freedom-struggle emerging in British India was the culmination of the history of colonialism – both British and Portuguese. The works discussed above suggest that Vasco da Gama's (in)famous statement could have a different meaning and significance, as recent works on the early modern Portuguese presence has demonstrated.[47] Contemporary conflicts of communalism and casteism in India have forced many nationalist writers to re-think the Portuguese past in Goa. Such a re-look has made these authors acknowledge that the period of Portuguese presence in India was not always marked by violence and that the elites or upper-castes at least had received a better treatment from the Portuguese State in certain periods of its history.[48] Yet the understanding that the Portuguese period was a fundamental rupture with one's native culture due to conversions to Christianity is a persistent one.

47 Ângela Barreto Xavier, "Disquiet on the Island: Conversion, Conflicts and Conformity in Sixteenth-Century Goa," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 44: 3 (2007): 269-95; Joy L. K. Pachuau, "The Spiritual Concerns of a Mercantilist Empire: Church-State Relations in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Portuguese India," *Studies in History* 20: 1 (2004): 31-58; Ângela Barreto Xavier and Ines G. Županov, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge (16th-18th Centuries)* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).

48 See Maria Aurora Couto, *Goa, A Daughter's Story* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004), 195. Perez, *Tulsi*, 36-83 also acknowledges such conflicts within a colonial set up but retains a singular power-relation between the "colonizer" and the "colonized" in that colonial setup.

Maria Aurora Couto writing about Goa's history from the commencement of Portuguese rule in 1510, together with her personal reflections of Goa's identity crisis and culture, makes an attempt to explore different identities and subjectivities with a sensitivity that nationalist histories lack. Yet the cultural personality of Goa that she describes is one that is Hindu and upper-caste, searching for a culturally pristine past pre-dating the Portuguese.[49] Couto says, "Truth must prevail. Conversion with state power was effected with extreme pressure and inducement, not with violence against the human person but with violation of freedom and violence against the symbols that continued to draw the converted population back to their old faith".[50] Even if one recognizes that the history of the Portuguese State and the history of Christian conversion in Portuguese India was not an endless episode of violence and dominance, seen from an Indian nationalist perspective, the essential cultural unity of India was still believed to have been violated and destroyed.

The nationalist discourses in Portuguese India had (and have) a common thread running through them: the destruction of primordial culture by colonialism and its subsequent recovery through nationalist politics. This paper presented a variety of views and debates on the history of Portuguese presence written in English, Portuguese, Marathi, and Konkani. These writings in various languages represented the myriad public spheres and the communities associated with them in Portuguese India. By observing similar ideas of cultural and religious nationalism being debated over the decades starting from the 1940s, it can be argued that dogmas of Indian nationalism has a pervasive hold on how the history of Portuguese India or the Portuguese empire has been viewed thus far.

Indian nationalist historiography assumes that India was also a unified religious unit in the form of the Hindu culture. It assumes that this history will only be legible within the frameworks of Hindu cul-

49 See Couto, *Goa*, 121-23.
50 Ibid., 97.

ture. Such a historiographical understanding has masked the conflicts of caste and gender that pre-dated the Portuguese rule,[51] and indeed persisted during the Portuguese rule, only to erect a cultural conflict between the Catholic and Hindu religions, and between the Christians of all castes and classes with the Hindus of all castes and classes. Such a historiography not only obscures our view of the past marked by the interventions of diverse historical processes such as empire, trade, missionary activity, European culture, Westernization, but also runs into the risk of anachronism. One needs to view the history of Portuguese India outside the paradigm of cultural and religious nationalism – Indian or otherwise. Portuguese India cannot be viewed as a monolithic culture, and neither can Portuguese India be understood by placing the pre-Portuguese 'culture' and imagined primordial ties at the center of our analyses.

51 See Xavier, "Disquiet on the Island."

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Orazio Irrera

De l'archéologie du savoir aux archives coloniales. L'archive comme dispositif colonial de violence épistémique

Dans cet article il sera question de problématiser l'archive comme lieu d'intersection de matrices épistémologiques et de matrices juridico-politiques, et de montrer la manière dont il a caractérisé la modernité européenne et son projet d'expansion coloniale dans des mondes extra-européens. En un premier temps on se focalisera sur la manière dont l'archive se lie aux processus d'extraction et enregistrement des savoirs pour permettre certaines formes de gouvernement. Sur cet arrière-plan, ensuite, on problématisera l'archive coloniale prise dans son spécificité, en analysant ses rapports avec les formes de violence épistémique qui y sont entremêlées à partir deux perspectives différentes : la première porte sur ce que dans les archives coloniales demeure en soi inaccessible par un geste de mise sous silence qui néanmoins produit des effets considérables sur le statut des archives elles-mêmes. La seconde se concentre sur les manières dont les archives coloniales témoignent constamment d'une angoisse liée à un manque de correspondance entre les plans de la gouvernementalité coloniale et ses réalisations concrètes ainsi qu'aux troubles que cet écart engendre par rapport à toute tentative de fixer une identité raciale et sexuelle.
Mots-clés: Archéologie; Archive; Études Subalternes; Gouvernementalité Coloniale; Histoire Coloniale; Violence Épistémique.

Da arqueologia do saber aos arquivos coloniais. O arquivo como dispositivo colonial de violência epistémica

Neste artigo procuraremos problematizar o arquivo como lugar de cruzamento de matrizes epistemológicas e jurídico-políticas, bem como mostrar como o arquivo tem caracterizado a modernidade europeia e o seu projecto de expansão colonial nos mundos extra-europeus. Num primeiro momento, concentrar-nos-emos no modo como o arquivo se liga aos processos de extracção e registo de saberes, para permitir certas formas de governo. Sobre esse pano de fundo, problematizaremos de seguida o arquivo colonial tomado na sua especificidade, analisando as suas relações com as formas de violência epistémica que estão ligadas a partir de duas perspectivas diferentes: a primeira debruça-se sobre o que nos arquivos coloniais permanece em si mesmo inacessível, por um gesto de silenciamento que, no entanto, produz efeitos significativos sobre o estado dos próprios arquivos. A segunda concentra-se nas formas como os arquivos coloniais reflectem constantemente uma ansiedade relacionada com uma incompatibilidade entre os planos de governamentalidade colonial e as suas realizações concretas, assim como os problemas que esta lacuna gera em relação a qualquer tentativa de fixar uma identidade racial e sexual.
Palavras-chave: Arqueologia; Arquivo; Estudos Subalternos; Governamentalidade Colonial; História Colonial; Violência Epistémica.

De l'archéologie du savoir aux archives coloniales. L'archive comme dispositif colonial de violence épistémique

Orazio Irrera*

Dans cet article il sera question de problématiser l'archive comme lieu de production de vérité à l'intersection de ses matrices épistémologiques et juridico-politiques, afin de montrer dans quelle mesure l'archive a caractérisé la modernité européenne et son projet d'expansion coloniale. Cela ne veut certainement dire que l'archive est toujours et intrinsèquement liée aux dispositifs d'enregistrement propre à certaines technologies de pouvoir. De nombreux projets assez récents, aussi bien documentaires qu'artistiques, visant à brouiller les codes historiques, institutionnels, journalistiques et romanesques, font de l'archive même un objet de dérision, ou encore le dispositif d'une historie alternative ou d'une contre-mémoire. Mais la force de subversion dégagée par ces projets ne seraient pleinement compréhensibles sans saisir le type spécifique de violence qui a autrefois accompagné la mis en place des archives ainsi que ses formes politiques hétérogènes d'objectivation, surveillance et contrôle. C'est pourquoi dans cette contribution, nous tenterons dans un premier temps de mettre en relief la manière dont l'archive se lie aux processus d'extraction et enregistrement des savoirs pour permettre certaines formes de gouvernement. Sur cet arrière-plan, dans un deuxième temps, nous problématiserons l'archive coloniale dans sa spécifi-

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cité, en analysant les rapports qu'elle entretient avec des formes de violence épistémique qui lui sont propres, à partir de deux perspectives différentes: la première se focalise sur ce qui dans les archives coloniales demeure en soi inaccessible en vertu d'un geste de mise sous silence qui produit néanmoins des effets considérables sur les archives elles-mêmes; la seconde se concentre sur les manières dont les archives coloniales témoignent constamment d'une angoisse liée à un manque de correspondance entre les plans de la gouvernementalité coloniale et ses réalisations concrètes ainsi qu'aux troubles que cet écart engendre par rapport à toute tentative de fixer une identité de race, sexe et classe.

I. Pour aborder les relations entre archive et pouvoir il faut néanmoins distinguer, du moins analytiquement, deux niveaux strictement imbriqués l'un dans l'autre: d'une part le niveau épistémologique, qui permet de repérer à l'intérieur de la matérialité brute des archives le caractère historique et les dynamiques transformatives des *a priori* de la connaissance; d'autre part, le niveau plus matériel se référant plutôt à l'enquête historienne dans l'archive, où l'archive est à la fois objet d'analyse et ensemble de sources pré-formatées par différentes dynamiques de pouvoir.

Ces deux niveaux ont été mis en parallèle notamment par Michel Foucault qui a parfois décrit sa perspective comme la tentative d'introduire "des fragments philosophiques dans des chantiers historiques".[1] C'est pourquoi dans cette problématisation de l'archive il nous semble utile de s'arrêter sur la manière dont, entre les années 1960 et les 1970, l'archive fait chez Foucault l'objet d'un changement de statut tout à fait remarquable. En effet, tout au long des années 1960, l'archive a pour lui constitué "la chair de l'archéologie". Sous cet angle l'archive sera, d'une part, envisagée "en dehors de toute métaphore géologique, sans aucune assignation d'origine, sans le moindre geste vers le commencement d'une *archè*".[2] D'autre part, elle ne sera pas non plus ni "la somme de tous les textes qu'une culture a

1 Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 2 vol., éd. D. Defert et F. Ewald avec la collaboration de J. Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, coll. "Quarto", 2001), vol. II, 840.

2 Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 2 vol., éd. D. Defert et F. Ewald avec la collaboration de J. Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, coll. "Quarto", 2001), vol. I, 736.

gardés par-devers elle comme documents de son propre passé, ou comme témoignage de son identité maintenue; [... ni] les institutions qui, dans une société donnée, permettent d'enregistrer et de conserver les discours dont on veut garder la mémoire et maintenir la libre disposition".[3]

En revanche l'archive sera l'ensemble des règles de formation, fonctionnement et transformation des énoncés alors que l'archéologie permettra d'entreprendre une histoire des transformations de certains énoncés et de la manière dont ils sont arrivés à relever du vrai ou du faux et à occuper ainsi une certaine place à l'intérieur d'un discours scientifique. Mais l'archive nous livre également l'histoire des transformations des énoncés à l'intérieur d'un champ inter-discursif, concernant des domaines scientifiques divers à une époque donnée, pour se focaliser sur l'émergence de nouveaux objets de connaissance au sein d'une même épistémè. Enfin, il faut aussi ajouter que si chez Foucault l'épistémè se réfère aux conditions de possibilité "internes" au discours scientifique, l'archive porte néanmoins aussi sur l'histoire des pratiques discursives et non discursives qui précédent et rendent possible la connaissance scientifique – ce "savoir implicite" relève alors des conditions "externes" de possibilité (d'un discours scientifique) qui détermine en dernière analyse le partage entre le vrai et le faux. Par là on s'aperçoit que l'archive relève donc d'une dimension discursive hétérogène, ce que Foucault désigne comme "savoir", c'est-à-dire ce qui rassemble "les connaissances, les idées philosophiques, les opinions de tous les jours, mais aussi les institutions, les pratiques commerciales et policières, les mœurs".[4]

Cette conception de l'archive est davantage développée dans les années 1960, notamment dans des ouvrages comme *Les Mots et les choses* et *L'Archéologie du savoir*. Néanmoins, à partir des années 1970, l'archive fait chez Foucault l'objet d'un changement de statut[5] au fur et à mesure qu'elle commence à être considérée dans une perspective

3 Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 169-170.

4 Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 2 vol., éd. D. Defert et F. Ewald avec la collaboration de J. Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, coll. "Quarto", 2001), vol. I, 526.

5 Jean-François Revel, *Le vocabulaire* de *Foucault* (Paris: Ellipses, 2002), 9.

plus large. C'est dans ce cadre que l'archive devient un support indispensable pour le fonctionnement des "matrices juridico-politiques" censées produire et stocker le savoir dans toute la multiplicité de ses formes en vue d'obtenir des corps disciplinés et normalisés en mesure d'être docilement fixés aux appareils de production. L'archive devient à la fois condition de possibilité et effet d'une entreprise d'extraction de savoir de plus en plus massive à travers des pratiques comme "la mesure, l'épreuve, l'enquête". Ainsi, chez Foucault, la formation des énoncés scientifiques selon le partage épistémique entre le vrai et le faux (l'archive au sens épistémologique) se branche progressivement sur l'exigence de pratiques gouvernementales et de normalisation sociale (l'archive comme dispositif de gouvernement).

Pour saisir la manière dont d'après Foucault cette normalisation sociale se joue, entre autres, dans et par l'intermédiaire des archives il faut donc s'arrêter sur l'ensemble des conditions historiques d'institutionnalisation des archives dans la modernité occidentale, y compris les archives que Foucault lui-même a travaillé, en nous restituant des morceaux et des fragments très significatifs[6]. Afin de problématiser ce nouvel rôle de l'archive – un type déterminé d'archive, il faut le préciser, qui est notamment une archive judiciaire ou médico-légale – il est important de considérer l'archive non seulement comme un dépôt matériel de documents, un simple objet, ou encore un lieu physique, mais aussi et davantage comme le résultat d'un processus d'enregistrement et d'archivage dont il faut souligner deux aspects qui deviennent capitaux à partir

6 Je me réfère en particulier aux archives du Calvados d'où provient la mémoire de Pierre Rivière (Michel Foucault, *Moi, Pierre Rivière, ayant égorgé ma mère, ma soeur et mon frère... Un cas de parricide au XIXe siècle* [Paris: Gallimard, 1973]), ou encore aux archives de l'enfermement de l'Hôpital général et de la Bastille d'où Foucault devait tirer "une anthologie d'existences" – dont le texte célèbre de 1977 *La vie des hommes infâmes* aurait dû constituer l'introduction (Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 2 vol., éd. D. Defert et F. Ewald avec la collaboration de J. Lagrange [Paris: Gallimard, coll. "Quarto", 2001], vol. II, 237-253). Enfin, ce projet ne se réalise que partiellement, avec la publication dans la collection "Les Vies parallèles" chez Gallimard de deux volumes: le mémoire d'Herculine Barbin en 1978 présenté par Foucault lui-même (Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin, dite Alexina B* [Paris: Gallimard, 1978]) et *Le Cercle amoureux d'Henri Legrand*, en 1979, présenté par Jean-Paul Dumont et Paul-Ursin Dumont (Paris: Gallimard, 1979). C'est en outre de ces mêmes archives que, par le biais d'une collaboration avec l'historienne Arlette Farge, est publié en 1982 *Le Désordre des familles*, anthologie consacrée aux lettres de cachet (*Le Désordre des familles. Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille au XVIII*e siècle [Paris: Gallimard, 1982]).

de la fin du XVIIe siècle: le premier, comme annoncé précédemment, est celui en vertu duquel l'archive devient un élément important d'un pouvoir souverain et étatique au moment même où ce pouvoir est en train d'être progressivement débordé et dévidé par une forme de rationalité gouvernementale dont l'archive elle-même va permettre la mise en place. Au lieu de constituer un instrument prêt à enregistrer la volonté du souverain et les effets de son exercice, l'archive en vient plutôt à faire partie d'un dispositif complexe d'administration sur lequel s'appuie la production des normes et des régulations par l'intermédiaire de sciences comme la statistique ou la démographie. Cette production ne peut en effet avoir lieu qu'à partir de l'enregistrement systématique de toute une séries de cas qui vont constituer la base empirique à partir de laquelle et sur laquelle une norme ou un ensemble de normes exercent leur pouvoir effectif de régulation. Le deuxième aspect est au contraire lié à ce que Foucault appelle "la prise du pouvoir sur l'ordinaire de la vie" à travers le jeu de véridiction propre de l'enquête, de l'aveu judiciaire et de l'expertise médico-légale avec tous les effets d'objectivation et d'assujettissement qu'il dégage, contribuant à fabriquer des individus normalisés jusqu'aux replis les plus cachés de leur conduite.

Entre ces deux aspects, l'émergence d'une rationalité normalisante d'une part et les traces qu'elle laisse sur l'existence des individus de l'autre, il y a parfois un écart très significatif. C'est cet écart qui permet de saisir la manière dont Foucault traite les archives dans leur matérialité. Même s'il y a bien sûr des différences considérables entre le mémoire de Pierre Rivière, le cas d'Herculine Barbin et les petits fragments auxquels se réfère *La vie des hommes infâmes*, toutes ces histories constituent des "ombres exemplaires", des *traces* d'existences, nous rappelant que toute archive n'est au fond jamais à même de restituer pleinement une parole ou "une âme" populaire. En dépit des formes de rationalité gouvernementale que les archives permettent de reconstruire, là où on parle de cas singuliers il y a toujours la possibilité de quelque chose d'irréductible, ne se laissant pas entièrement expliqué à partir de l'archive elle-même. Il ne s'agit pas de quelque chose qui empêche une compréhension tout court, mais qui invite à se concentrer

davantage sur les vides, les silences, les éléments forcement effacés dans et par l'archive. C'est pourquoi ces vies singulières ne peuvent témoigner adéquatement que des seules *traces* de leur heurt avec le pouvoir. Cela nous permet aussi de comprendre pourquoi, placé face aux matériaux d'archive qu'il a édité dans les années 1970, Foucault refusait de fournir "une interprétation" visant à mettre exhaustivement en relation le discours de Pierre Rivière et celui de l'expertise médico-légale desdites sciences "psy-", en ne se limitant qu'à présenter cette source, ce mémoire, cette écriture singulière arrachée aux archives du Calvados et à en souligner l'intense fascination qu'elle provoquait, ce que l'historienne Arlette Farge a significativement désigné comme "Le goût de l'archive".[7] Cette attitude marque une différence très considérable entre l'usage que les historiens ont fait (ou faisaient à l'époque) de l'archive et celui "non-historien" de Foucault. À ce propos, l'historien italien Carlo Ginzburg, dans l'introduction de *Le fromage et les vers* a reproché à cette posture d'aboutir à "une muette contemplation esthétisante"[8] qui, depuis *L'Histoire de la folie*, se dérobe à l'interprétation et à l'analyse de ce type de sources, dès lors qu'on assume que la "culture populaire n'existe pas en dehors du geste qui la supprime".[9] C'est pourquoi selon Ginzburg le projet foucaldien d'une archéologie du silence consisterait finalement dans un "silence pur est simple".[10] Si l'impossibilité d'interpréter le mémoire de Pierre Rivière s'explique pour Foucault par la tentative d'éviter de faire violence à ce texte "en le réduisant à une raison qui lui est étrangère", d'après Ginzburg cela ne produit finalement qu'un irrationalisme esthétisant qui prend la forme de la "stupéfaction" et "du silence".

Ce qui pour Ginzburg manque chez Foucault et qu'en même temps on retrouve dans sa manière à lui de se rapporter à l'archive et, plus particulièrement, si l'on pense au protagoniste de son livre, le meunier

7 Arlette Farge, *Le goût de l'archive* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).

8 Carlo Ginzburg, *Le Fromage et les vers. L'univers d'un meunier du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 13.

9 *Idem*, 12.

10 *Idem*, 13.

frioulan Domenico Scandella dit Menocchio, c'est davantage la relation, les liens, avec "la culture dominante" et les manières dont elle a pu se sédimenter et être réélaborée par un usager appartenant au peuple (que ce soit par l'intermédiaire de certaines lectures ou d'autres éléments appartenant au contexte culturel où cet usager était situé). Pour Ginzburg il s'agit par là de repérer une sort d'arrière-plan qui, en dépit de son hétérogénéité et de sa conflictualité interne, soit à même de rendre compte des possibilités historiquement déterminées d'action pour les classes populaires, ce qui est pour lui une des tâches les plus incontournables pour tout historien. C'est pourquoi ce dernier doit se focaliser sur les modalités et les différents degrés à travers lesquelles des croyances populaires fragmentaires se greffent "sur un ensemble d'idées extrêmement clair et conséquent" appartenant aux "groupes intellectuels les plus raffinés et les plus conscients de son temps", de retrouver donc un certain schéma polyphonique, d'inspiration bakhtinienne, des influences mutuelles entre les élites intellectuelles et les classes populaires.[11]

Mais dans ~~tous~~ les deux cas, le fait que les sources présentes dans les archives soient formatées par un rapport de force qui code, filtre, déforme ou encore exclu et efface une parole populaire (en soi déjà très hétérogène) ne doit pas induire à croire qu'il y ait des méthodes interprétatives en mesure de restituer cette parole telle quelle. Ce sur quoi il faut plutôt se focaliser c'est sur la dimension épistémologiquement et politiquement conflictuelle de la production de la source elle-même qui est gardée et parfois générée par l'archive elle-même. À travers cette conflictualité apparaissent les cadres épistémologiques et culturels qui se heurtent et souvent se modifient suite à leur interaction. Autrement dit, c'est la forme historiquement spécifique qu'assume ce rapport de force à la base de la production de la source qui nous montre que la trace déformée laissée par l'exclu (ou par un individu appartenant aux classes populaires) et l'action déformante de la pression gouvernementale se constituent et émergent dans un seul et même geste. Ainsi, "l'archive livrera une image du passé qui est plutôt celle des rapports de

11 *Idem*, 14-15.

forces ayant refoulé d'autres réalités jadis vivantes"[12], ce que Foucault, pour sa part, lors de son Cours de 1976 "Il faut défendre la société", a désigné comme des "savoirs assujettis" essentiels à toute entreprise généalogique.[13]

II. À partir de ces considérations autour de l'archive se dessinent deux niveaux problématiques concernant ces rapports de force. Il s'agit de deux niveaux entremêlées, mais qu'on peut du moins distinguer d'un point de vue analytique: le premier est celui de l'archive comme "instrument d'une règle à imposer, d'un ordre social à instaurer", d'un "enregistrement du point de vue de la norme"[14]; c'est donc le niveau de la gouvernementalité et de la normalisation. Le deuxième porte sur les significations pour ainsi dire "involontaires" de l'archive, à savoir les traces déformées d'une culture ou d'un style d'existence populaire et subalterne. Si d'un côté l'archive travaille comme agencement d'une multiplicité d'instances gouvernementales afin d'imposer une ou plusieurs normes, de l'autre elle ouvre sur ce qui se refuse à cette imposition et qui est donc codé comme "anormal". Or c'est exactement ici qu'il faudrait s'interroger sur la spécificité géopolitique de l'archive coloniale et de son rapport (à son tour géopolitiquement spécifique et constitutif) avec ce que Gayatri Spivak a appelé "violence épistémique"[15], et prendre alors en considération ces deux niveaux de problématisation comme de véritables conditions historiques de possibilité de l'archive coloniale.

Cela impose quelques précisions préliminaires sur ce qu'il faut entendre, ou du moins, ce qui sera ici considéré comme "archive coloniale" sur la base de la problématisation générale de l'archive qui vient d'être esquissée. Cette entreprise d'enregistrement dont se charge

12 Andrea Cavazzini, "L'archive, la trace, le symptôme. Remarques sur la lecture des archives," *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* 5 (2009).

13 Michel Foucault, *"Il faut défendre la société". Cours au Collège de France. 1976*, éd. M. Bertani et A. Fontana (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 1997), 8-9.

14 Andrea Cavazzini, "L'archive, la trace, le symptôme. Remarques sur la lecture des archives," *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* 5 (2009).

15 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Les subalternes peveunt-elles parler?* (Paris: Éd. Amsterdam, 2009).

l'archive coloniale n'est pas mise en acte par une compagnie commerciale qui s'établit en dehors des frontières d'une nation ou d'un État, mais répond à l'exigence de construire des structures administratives et gouvernementales propres à la modernité européenne ou occidentale sur un territoire étranger annexé (à différents degrés qui vont du protectorat à la domination coloniale proprement dite) à une entité étatique qui le plus souvent prend le nom d'"empire". Donc, première précision, l'archive coloniale concerne davantage l'impérialisme territorial. Mais à cela il faut ajouter, deuxième précision, que cette annexion n'est pas seulement une affaire d'occupation d'un pays étranger, mais d'un pays qui met en avant une prétendue "différence de civilisation". Ce qui charge l'impérialisme de ce que, tout au long du XIX^{e} siècle, on appelait "une mission civilisatrice" ou ce qui, en d'autres termes et à d'autres latitudes, a été désigné comme "le fardeau de l'homme blanc".

Les sciences humaines avec leurs archives de savoirs (au premier sens que ce terme prend chez Foucault) sont massivement mobilisées de cette manière tout au long du XIX^{e} siècle pour objectiver, connaître et gouverner de nombreux groupes d'individus hors de l'Europe. De plus, c'est justement là que l'opacité scandaleuse et irréductible qu'on a retrouvé chez Pierre Rivière prend une forme géopolitiquement variée en mesure de jeter une lumière oblique sur les échecs épistémologiques et gouvernementaux du savoir occidental. Ces derniers laissent ainsi entrevoir l'historicité et la spécificité coloniale des rapports de force qui, d'une part, ont fabriqué les archives coloniales et se sont reproduits par ce même biais, alors que, de l'autre, ils ont, de manière différentielle, élaboré, filtré, déformé et exclu les savoirs assujettis, l'histoire et les formes politiques d'existence des peuples colonisés. C'est exactement la forme spécifique que prend ce rapport de force interne aux archives coloniales qu'avec Spivak on peut qualifier de "violence épistémique", une violence qui, en d'autres termes, s'exerce là où la rationalité européenne propres aux sciences de l'homme s'imbriquent avec des formes de gouvernement colonial, où l'objectivation et la domination des colonisés se révèlent comme des passages fondamentaux pour la construction de l'identité européenne. À ce propos il n'est pas

sans intérêt d'observer, ne fût-ce qu'en passant, que Spivak envisage ici "une fracture ou discontinuité impérialiste, dissimulée par un système juridique étranger s'affublant du masque de la Loi en soi, par une idéologie étrangère qui se pose comme l'unique Vérité, et par un corpus de sciences humaines qui s'affaire à instituer "l'indigène" comme un Autre auto-consolidant".[16]

En dépit de la méfiance de Spivak envers Foucault, on ne peut ignorer le fait que cet "Autre auto-consolidant" renvoie aux réflexions foucaldiennes sur l'acte d'exclusion de ceux qui sont hors-norme – et dont la folie constitue les cas à la fois extrême et paradigmatique –, un acte d'exclusion comme geste qui permet l'affirmation de la raison occidentale. Or, d'après Spivak, ce qui manque chez Foucault est justement une "réinscription topographique de l'impérialisme" en mesure d'éviter que ses analyses sur la clinique, l'asile, la prison ne soient que des "allégories écrans" aboutissant à la forclusion de l'impérialisme lui-même.[17] Par conséquent, sous cet angle, l'enjeu est de "supplémenter" Foucault en un sens (post)colonial, et cela à partir de la célèbre critique que Derrida avait adressée à Foucault lui-même dans son "Cogito et Histoire de la folie" en 1963, dont il vaut la peine de reporter ici un passage: "Tout notre langage européen, le langage de tout ce qui a participé, de près ou de loin, à l'aventure de la raison occidentale, est l'immense délégation du projet que Foucault définit sous l'espèce de la capture ou de l'objectivation de la folie".[18] Autrement dit, d'après Derrida, Foucault finit à son tour par réduire la folie à la raison en en écrivant l'histoire.

On passera vite sur cette célèbre diatribe, en remarquant seulement que Spivak retient justement cette relation entre l'impossibilité de dire (ou de parler de) ce qui est exclu (dans son cas "l'indigène" ou le subalterne) et la possibilité de faire une historie de ce geste d'exclusion qui n'aboutit pas à la même rationalité que celle qui a opéré ce même

16 "Trois textes de femmes et une critique de l'impérialisme (nouvelle version révisée)", *Les cahiers du CEDREF* 17 (2010), 107-46.

17 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Les subalternes peveunt-elles parler*? (Paris: Éd. Amsterdam, 2009), 61.

18 Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 58.

geste. C'est à partir de cette position qu'elle s'interroge quant à la possibilité de rapporter au silence; ce qui correspond à la problématisation de l'archive coloniale face à la violence épistémique de l'impérialisme. Dans un passage de son célèbre texte, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* [19], et en s'appuyant sur certaines analyses de Pierre Macherey sur la production littéraire, Spivak cherche à mettre stratégiquement ensemble la textualité littéraire (à savoir la littérature dite "coloniale") et la textualité de l'archive coloniale, en se focalisant sur ce qu'un texte *refuse de dire*. Par le biais de cette lecture "symptômale" Spivak qualifie ce refus comme le site idéologique d'un intérêt à forclore la violence épistémique, ce qui est ici désigné comme "la pratique légale de la codification de l'impérialisme" et qui sera le point de départ de Spivak pour la problématisation du *sati*, de la manipulation britannique du sacrifice de veuves, donc ce qui sera aussi au cœur de la quête des traces qu'elle mènera sur ladite "Rani de Sirmur" dans les archives coloniales bengalaises.

Dans ce cadre, Spivak, en citant ici et là quelques passages de Ranajit Guha, affirme que "le travail archivistique, historiographique, de critique disciplinaire, inévitablement interventionniste consiste bien en effet ici à "mesurer des silences"[x]"; ce qui correspond à une description de l'acte consistant à "étudier, identifier et mesurer [...] la déviation par rapport à un idéal irréductiblement différentiel".[20] Cet idéal irréductiblement différentiel est pour Spivak "la conscience du subalterne" qui pourtant reste en soi inaccessible. Néanmoins, cette dimension de "cécité" par rapport à l'inaccessibilité de la conscience subalterne ouvre sur une "vision" paradoxale et oxymorique, pour emprunter ces termes à Paul De Man qui a exercé sur Spivak une influence considérable. Il s'agit d'une vision que Spivak désigne comme "le privilège de la perte". À cet égard un passage de *Can the Subaltern Speak?* précise:

> "Dans les sémioses du texte social, des élaborations [cette question de l'élaboration est liée à la question déjà

19 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Les subalternes peveunt-elles parler?* (Paris: Éd. Amsterdam, 2009).
20 *Idem*, 51.

> rencontrée de la déformation opérée par le rapport de force qui est à la base de l'enregistrement de l'archive, OI] de l'insurrection occupent la place de l'"énoncé". L'expéditeur – "le paysan" – n'est marqué qu'en tant qu'indicateur d'une conscience inaccessible. S'agissant du récepteur, nous devons nous demander : qui est le "vrai récepteur" d'une "insurrection"? L'historien qui transforme "l'insurrection" en "texte pour la connaissance"x", n'est que l'un des "récepteurs" de tout acte social qui se veut collectif. Sans possibilité aucune de nostalgie pour cette origine perdue, l'historien doit suspendre (autant que possible) la clameur de sa propre conscience (ou effet-conscience régi par la formation disciplinaire), de sorte que l'élaboration de l'insurrection, avec laquelle est présentée une conscience-insurgée, ne soit pas figée en "objet de recherche" ou, pire encore, en modèle à imiter [...]. Les intellectuels postcoloniaux apprennent que leur privilège est leur perte. En cela, ils sont le paradigme des intellectuels".[21]

Dans ce passage, d'une part, Spivak nous met en garde contre la répétition de l'objectivation du subalterne propre à la violence épistémique (si des subalternes ne restent que des traces, dans la mesure où l'impérialisme a tout effacé, en codant ses sources selon son intérêt, autrement dit selon sa "volonté de savoir", alors prétendre reconstruire la subjectivité subalterne ne signifie finalement que perpétuer le geste de l'impérialisme lui-même). Mais, d'autre part, Spivak nous rappelle aussi que l'opacité du subalterne nous restitue néanmoins une *agency* paradoxale, ou comme elle l'écrit, "catachrèsique", comme celle de Bhuvanesvari (l'ancêtre de Spivak mentionnée à la fin *Can the Subaltern Speak?*). En décidant de se pendre au moment où elle a ses règles Bhuvanesvari n'est pas simplement une altérité inaccessible, mais au contraire une subjectivité qui exprime, par la négative

21 *Idem*, 52.

et de manière tragiquement paradoxale, son impossibilité de signifier. Elle le fait négativement puisque son suicide, bien qu'il soit à l'apparence énigmatique, empêche à la fois qu'il soit attribué à une relation sexuelle illégitime et qu'il soit perçu comme l'immolation volontaire du Sati (qui interdit ce sacrifice aux femmes menstruées). L'agentivité de Bhuvanesvari demeure énigmatique dans la mesure où les codes de la domination coloniale et ceux de la domination de genre vont saturer l'espace de dicibilité à sa disposition. Mais cela lui permet d'adresser paradoxalement (sous la forme d'énigme) une demande d'interprétation et de ré-signification visant à lui rendre justice qui survit à sa mort et interpelle politiquement sa postérité. Ce qu'il faut arracher à l'archive coloniale, en en mesurant les silences, est donc moins "la conscience" de Bhuvanesvari, que l'émergence de cette impossibilité à parler qui la rend subalterne, au sens d'une impossibilité d'occuper une position assignable et autonome dans l'ordre des discours qui, eux seuls, peuvent enfin être enregistrés dans les archives. Cela implique que l'acte catachrèsique de Bhuvanesvari doit nécessairement passer par le corps, en l'occurrence par l'association entre corps pendu et sang menstruel, pour pouvoir signifier. C'est avec ce genre d'*agency* qu'un usage différent, ou si l'on veut, un contre-usage de l'archive coloniale doit se confronter pour dégager des effets épistémologiques et politiques visant à récupérer ce que les archives coloniales se sont préoccupées, sans pour autant y parvenir complètement, à effacer.

III. Mais il faut sans doute élargir cette problématisation de l'archive coloniale à une réflexion qui porte sur les manières dont les sources présentes dans les archives coloniales ont été encodées à partir des modalités gouvernementales de fonctionnement des institutions qui les a produit. Il s'agit d'un angle d'attaque qu'Ann Laura Stoler adopte dans la continuité d'une réflexion engagée depuis les années 1980, notamment dans son livre de 2010, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, où elle se propose d'aller dans le sens de l'archive (*along the grain*) pour retracer les intentions qui ont présidé à leur mise en place ainsi que les conflits qui s'y sont inscrits.

C'est en ce sens qu'elle adopte un cadre d'analyse se réclamant explicitement de l'ethnographie, dès lors que "l'ethnographie dans et des archives coloniales s'occupe des processus de production et des relations des pouvoir à l'intérieur desquels les archives sont créés, séquestrées et réaménagées".[22] Loin de restituer un projet monolithique de domination coloniale, cette entreprise ethnographique tente au contraire de mettre en relief ses zones d'ombre et ses lignes de fragilité en se focalisant davantage sur une rationalité administrative incertaine qui opère néanmoins la désignation arbitraire de ce que Stoler appelle "les étymologies sociales" et des faits sociaux qui comptent et font l'objet à la fois des intérêts et des préoccupations sécuritaires des autorités coloniales.

C'est sous cet angle que Stoler propose de traiter les archives non comme objets, mais comme processus. Autrement dit, elles sont envisagées non seulement comme des dépôts de pouvoir étatique permettant de retracer une rationalité administrative sans faille, mais aussi comme un champ instable de forces en mesure de circonscrire le décalage entre la production normative de catégories raciales et un ensemble beaucoup moins figé et sans cesse réarrangé des relations sociales définissant le monde où vivent les individus en situation coloniale. C'est justement cet écart entre une volonté coloniale de savoir et l'incertitude des taxonomies qu'elle produit, ou encore celui entre ses prescriptions normatives et ses réalisations effectives que Stoler désigne comme "l'espace ethnographique de l'archive coloniale".[23] C'est en vertu de ce décalage que, tout comme chez Spivak, mais d'une manière assez différente quoique pas incompatible, la violence épistémique du colonialisme laisse des traces qui imposent à l'entreprise ethnographique de procéder elle aussi à travers une certaine lecture symptômale des archives coloniales. Mais si dans le cas de Spivak cette lecture s'adressait davantage au silence et à l'impossibilité de s'exprimer ou d'agir dans lequel étaient enveloppés les subalternes ou les colonisé(e)s en tant qu'objets et cibles privilégiées de cette violence épistémique, l'espace

22 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 32.

23 *Idem*, 24.

symptômale que Stoler vise n'est pas principalement ou directement celui des subalternes, mais celui des échecs, des vides, des lacunes, des hésitations de la gouvernementalité coloniale dans l'acte même où elle s'exerce comme violence épistémique. Par là la violence épistémique sédimentée à l'intérieur des mêmes archives coloniales qu'elle a contribué à produire apparaît cette fois comme saturée en permanence par son double négatif: l'anxiété épistémique qui à toujours accompagné et troublé la rationalité gouvernementale du colonialisme avec ses inquiètes taxonomies raciales.

Les archives telles qu'elles sont analysées par Stoler ne laissent pourtant pas apparaître seulement des préoccupations pour des faits effectivement constatés ou enregistrés, mais aussi une inquiétude profonde pour ce qui aurait pu être, dans cet espace qui s'ouvre entre la construction de savoir instable, des récits contradictoires, la compréhension partielle de certaines situations et toute la rumeur que cela pouvait engendrer. Toute source d'anxiété qui, pour une raison ou une autre, était perçu comme une menace dans l'ordre du possible, montrait comment au fond les États coloniaux n'étaient ni omniscients, ni encore moins en mesure d'imposer par la force les distinctions raciales qu'il cherchaient à instaurer. Ce sont en effet ces débats et ces soucis qui, loin d'appartenir à une dimension purement idéelle, témoignent du fait que la production des taxonomies raciales repose sur des catégories dont le contenu reste flou et susceptible de se transformer au gré des conjonctures et des rapports de force. Ce sont les traces de cette angoisse qui pour Stoler doivent guider une perspective ethnographique vers une "épistémologie coloniale de la race"[24] pour mettre ainsi en évidence les manières dont elle préside à la création d'une certaine grammaire de la différence raciale qui a opéré dans la fabrication normative d'une identité simultanément blanche, bourgeoise et coloniale.

Ce qu'il n'est alors pas abusif de qualifier d'"ethnographique symptômale" de l'archive coloniale devra être à même de problématiser

24 Ann Laura Stoler, *La Chair de l'empire. Savoirs intimes et pouvoirs raciaux en régime colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), 37.

l'écart entre deux plans: d'une part un niveau "manifeste" concernant les discours et donc les matériaux d'archive engendrés par cette grammaire raciale, c'est-à-dire un niveau restituant simplement "la manière dont [les Blancs] percevaient l'Autre indigène"; d'autre part, un niveau qu'on appellerait "latent" par rapport auquel il faut plutôt se demander "comment [les Blancs] se représentaient eux-mêmes" [25] pour poser par là de nouvelles questions qui n'ont néanmoins jamais cessé de hanter la scène coloniale, à savoir: "que signifie être européen?" ou encore "qu'est-ce qu'être blanc?". À l'égard de ces questions, les archives coloniales montrent qu'il n'y a jamais eu une seule réponse. Du reste l'idée selon laquelle les Européens formaient une "seule et même entité biologique séparée et aisément identifiable"[26] était loin de posséder à l'époque l'évidence qu'aujourd'hui semblent en revanche lui accorder un nombre important de spécialistes des études coloniales – comme en témoigne le problème de ceux que, dans le contexte des Indes néerlandaises, on désignait comme les "Européens artificiellement fabriqués"[27]. Tout au long des archives coloniales, le souci et la profonde inquiétude de la préservation de la "race blanche" s'exprimaient en réalité à travers une profusion de discours et de pratiques, plus ou moins convergents, de restriction et de prescription des unions, de régulation des rapports sexuels et affectifs, d'inclusion et d'exclusion des enfants métisses, etc.

De ce point de vue, la sexualité se révèle un point de transfert particulièrement dense et incontournable pour saisir à l'intérieur des archives coloniales les formes de cette angoisse épistémique. Dans le sillage de Foucault, mais en découpant par rapport à ses analyses des chronologies différentes, la sexualité constitue d'après Stoler "la substance même de la politique impériale"[28], "le fondement même des conditions matérielles sur lesquelles se sont érigés les projets coloniaux"[29]. L'angoisse épistémique circulant à travers les archives coloniales montre

25 *Idem,* 69.
26 *Idem,* 71.
27 *Idem,* 139.
28 *Idem*, 73.
29 *Idem*, 31.

comment le pouvoir colonial a investi les corps, les traversant, s' "incarnant" en eux et entre eux et montrant par là sa nature productive. Il y a là en effet ce que Foucault aurait pu appeler une "microphysique de l'ordre colonial"[30]. Cependant les archives coloniales révèlent, de surcroît, que la politique coloniale, poussée par cette anxiété épistémique, était aussi une "politique des sentiments"; des sentiments qu'il s'agissait de contrôler, de prohiber ou d'inciter, mais aussi et avant tout de faire naître et de former – d'où le rôle capital attribué à la question de la formation du sujet, c'est-à-dire de l'éducation. L'espace psychique de l'empire se constitue d'ailleurs à l'intersection de ce qui est quotidien, voire banal – à savoir la dimension que Stoler appelle "sens commun" – et ce qui est, au contraire, matière explicite de calcul politique. En témoigne la relation stricte entre cette "*éducation sentimentale*" et le processus d'acquisition d'une identité et d'une civilité bourgeoises : l'ordre colonial était par définition un ordre bourgeois et il ne pouvait s'établir qu'en cherchant à élaborer politiquement cette éducation sentimentale, en la transformant en une "*éducation raciale du désir*".

En montrant l'importance de la gestion des sentiments dans l'incorporation des normes visant à créer parmi les Européens un attachement à l'empire et à la métropole, Stoler arrache aux archives les contours d'une mission moralisatrice (bien que racialisante) qui met en avant la sphère de l'intime où se jouait en réalité une régulation éminemment politique des corps, des affects, du désir et de la sexualité. La gestion politique des sentiments, des états affectifs, devient le pivot autour duquel il fallait bâtir des dispositions à la fois morales et raciales en mesure de concerner – de manière différentielle – aussi bien les administrateurs coloniaux que les indigènes. En d'autres termes il s'agissait de créer, par le biais de l'éducation, des dispositions visant à introduire ou maintenir des distinctions et des hiérarchisations sur une base raciale. C'est pourquoi d'après Stoler toute épistémologie coloniale de la race doit s'accompagner, d'une analyse du sens commun qui se forge par l'intermédiaire de cette gestion des sentiments en donnant lieu à ce qu'on pourrait appeler un dispositif

30 *Idem*, 22.

biopolitique colonial. Mais, d'autre part, il faut aussi préciser que le sens commun est un élément crucial moins parce que cette sensibilité serait effectivement "commune" ou partagée parmi les indigènes ou les Européens. Au contraire, elle est importante parce que, au fond, elle ne l'est pas, ni jusqu'au bout (dans la sphère de l'intime), ni complètement (au sens qu'elle n'est pas ainsi massivement répandue). C'est pourquoi le sens commun définit moins quelque chose d'effectif que les contours d'un problème de normalisation et un champ d'intervention politique.

Cette imbrication profonde entre violence épistémique, organisation des taxonomies raciales, et gestion racialisée et racialisante des sentiments qu'on retrouve comme fil rouge dans les archives coloniales laisse apparaître que, dans les métropoles comme dans les colonies, la "conscience de classe" se révélait elle-même imprégnée par la "rhétorique d'une nomenclature "raciale"[31] ancrée dans des dispositions affectives, au point que Stoler en vient significativement à affirmer que la complexité d'une "pensée raciale ne suit pas l'ordre bourgeois, elle le constitue".[32] Dans ce rapport ethnographique à l'archive coloniale on ne peut pas ne pas rappeler l'anxiété épistémique dont a fait l'objet le problème des "Blancs pauperisés". Ces "petits Blancs", du moment où ils brouillaient les frontières entre classe et race, constituaient ainsi la cible de toute une série de "politiques sociales réformistes" dans la mesure où leur simple existence (leurs modes de vie, leurs relations, leurs goûts, etc.) représentaient la menace permanente d'une transgression des frontières raciales, de telle manière qu'était posée la question de savoir si au juste ces gens étaient (ou restaient) de "vrais Européens". Autrement dit, si la définition de la pauvreté était produite selon le rang qu'un Européen *devait* tenir, selon l'ordre racial des choses en situation coloniale, alors les Blancs pauvres n'auraient pas pu exister. Ainsi les archives néerlandaises analysées par Stoler détectent l'instabilité intrinsèque des catégories raciales et la manière dont cette fragilité s'immisce dans la reproduction des normes coloniales visant à fabriquer

31 Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Repenser le colonialisme* (Paris: Payot, 2013), 77.

32 Ann Laura Stoler, *La Chair de l'empire. Savoirs intimes et pouvoirs raciaux en régime colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), 198.

des grilles d'intelligibilité qui rendent ces conventions acceptables, en essayant de fabriquer une "seconde nature". La force de la perspective de recherche de Stoler consiste à montrer comment les archives coloniales peuvent contribuer à une analyse de la formation historique et politique d'un sens commun raciste encore profondément enraciné dans notre présent.

IV. On peut conclure que ces deux perspectives sur le lien constitutif entre archives coloniales et violence épistémique convergent dans la mesure où il s'agit de troubler les identités monolithiques que l'archive coloniale a longtemps été censée restituer. Si dans le cas de Spivak l'accent est mis davantage sur la remise en question des objectivations du subalterne (ou du colonisé), Stoler quant à elle insiste surtout sur ce qui hante l'identité bourgeoise et blanche des Européens (bien que cela implique des conséquences importantes même sur l'autre terme du rapport colonial de force, à savoir les indigènes ou les métis). Néanmoins, dans ces deux manières de problématiser l'archive coloniale, cette dernière s'avère quand même l'horizon fondamental où ce rapport colonial de force, qui code et déforme la fabrication des sources pour tout historien, produit également des effets à la fois épistémologiques et politiques qui retombent sur notre présent. Il s'agit d'effets qui ne peuvent donc cesser de faire l'objet d'une critique qui assume l'expérience du colonialisme comme moment incontournable pour ce qu'on ne peut se limiter à circonscrire comme la simple émergence de la modernité européenne. L'enjeu serait plutôt de redéfinir cette modernité et l'envisager, plus précisément, comme une "transmodernité" plus large[33] dont la généalogie (coloniale) est encore invoquée avec urgence par notre présent global.

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33 Enrique Dussel, *Posmodernidad y transmodernidad. Diálogos con la filosofía de Gianni Vattimo* (Cuidad de México: Universidad Iberoamericana, Plantel Golfo Centro, 1999); Rosa-Maria Rodriguez Magda, *Transmodernidad* (Barcelona: Anthoropos, 2004).

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Ruy Llera Blanes

A febre do arquivo. O "efeito Benjamin" e as revoluções angolanas

Neste artigo, discuto a importância do "arquivo" no contexto das atuais lutas políticas que estão a ter lugar em Angola. Partindo do conceito de *mal d'archive* de Jacques Derrida, argumento que a atual dialética política produz uma distinção entre arquivos hegemónicos e subalternos em confronto. Ao analisar o arquivo subalterno do chamado movimento Revú, descreverei os processos através dos quais ele cria uma epistemologia alternativa à narrativa oficial do regime angolano.
Palavras-chave: Angola; Arquivo; Anamnese; Benjamin.

The Archive Fever. The "Benjamin effect" and the Angolan revolutions

In this article I discuss the importance of the "archive" in the context of the current political struggles which are happening in Angola. Departing from Jacques Derrida's notion of *mal d'archive*, I argue that the current political dialectic produces a distinction between hegemonic and subaltern archives, which exist in confrontation with one another. Analyzing the subaltern archive of the so-called Revú movement, I will describe the processes through which it creates an alternative epistemology to the official narrative of the Angolan government.
Keywords: Angola, Arquivo, Anamnesis, Benjamin.

A febre do arquivo. O "efeito Benjamin" e as revoluções angolanas

Ruy Llera Blanes*

Introdução

Em 1995, Jacques Derrida escrevia sobre o *mal d'archive* ("*archive fever*", na sua tradução inglesa), para se referir à ansiedade aparentemente inevitável e própria da modernidade, de um *arkhē*: uma organização do mundo nomológica, que passa obrigatoriamente por princípios de *commencement* (isto é, de identificação dos inícios ou géneses das coisas), e de *commandment* (isto é, de identificação das hierarquias ordenadoras das coisas). Isto por sua vez deriva em duas "ordens das ordens": sequencial (temporalizante) e jussiva (politizante)[1].

Ao invocar neste artigo a ideia de *mal d'archive* para a questão angolana, não estou de todo interessado em ensaiar uma replicação psicanalítica da ansiedade freudiana num contexto nacional específico. Pretendo olhar para o problema do arquivo como expressão dessas duas "ordens das ordens": temporalidade e política. Em particular, exploro a ideia do arquivo enquanto instrumento ou veículo de luta e contestação, pois, como dirá o próprio Derrida, "não existe poder político sem o controlo do arquivo"[2]. Utilizo aqui uma noção abrangente de arquivo, que se refere a um processo de anamnese: a invocação e sistematização de memórias e factos históricos em função do estabelecimento de uma historiografia concreta, politicamente informada. Neste contexto, seguindo Ann Stoler, entendo o arquivo enquanto "monumento do Esta-

* INCIPIT.

1 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1.

2 Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 4; tradução minha.

do", isto é, uma tecnologia reflexo de um contexto de produção política de conhecimento, tal como acontecera no âmbito dos arquivos coloniais[3]. Isto, numa primeira instância, implica reconhecer a importância da dimensão epistemológica no processo - a "*command of language and language of command*" de que falava Bernard Cohn[4] -, ou seja, a forma como os registos semânticos se inserem em processos de inscrição e autoinscrição identitária[5] e reconhecimento político[6].

Consequentemente, o "arquivo" de que falo aqui pode ser composto tanto por materiais arquivísticos como por metodologias de sistematização temporal – isto é, de cronologias necessariamente parciais e politizadas. No caso que aqui abordo, veremos como determinadas datas assumem relevância política num contexto de "disputa histórica", no sentido explorado por Michel-Rolph Trouillot, que afirmava que o poder e a história se conjugam mutuamente: se a história é o fruto do poder, a história também pode fazer descobrir as raízes do próprio poder, e portanto os atores na história são também os seus narradores e vice-versa[7]. É precisamente através de Trouillot que se levanta o problema do passado como objeto que é produto do presente, obedecendo mais a lógicas de relacionalidade atual do que de sedimentação objetiva, sujeito tanto a exposição como a silenciamento. Terá, portanto, uma dimensão necessária de "artifício", tal como diria Dipesh Chakrabarty[8].

3 Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87-109; tradução minha. Ver também Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge. The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Ruy Llera Blanes, "O tempo dos inimigos. Reflexões sobre uma antropologia da repressão no século XXI," *Horizontes Antropológicos* 18 (2012): 261-84; Ruy Llera Blanes, "Da Confusão à Ironia. Expectativas e Legados da PIDE em Angola," *Análise Social* XLVIII (2013): 30-55.

4 Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 16.

5 Achille Mbembe, "As Formas Africanas de Autoinscrição," *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 23 (2001): 171-209.

6 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins White Masks* (Londres: Pluto Press, 1986 (1952)), 8 e seguintes.

7 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), xix e 2.

8 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?," *Representations* 37 (1992): 1-26.

Seguindo esta pista, interessa-me portanto pensar no arquivo enquanto "necessidade" quase febril em Angola, involucrado num contexto político de contestação e "refração", isto é, de disjunção entre governos e cidadanias[9]. Esse contexto é próprio de um momento histórico particular onde, após 41 anos de independência, o país não conhece outro agente, instância ou protagonista da governação que não o MPLA[10], que chegou à liderança do país através de um contestado processo de transição para a independência que culminou nos acordos de Alvor de janeiro de 1975. Após as várias décadas de guerra civil, e uma vez eliminado aquele que foi considerado desde o regime como o principal "inimigo do Estado" e "obstáculo para o país", Jonas Savimbi[11], Angola vive hoje praticamente 15 anos de paz.

No entanto, apesar do contexto de prosperidade económica e autointitulado progresso verificado até 2014, o país continuou (e continua) a experienciar graves problemas no que diz respeito às condições de vida da grande maioria dos seus cidadãos, distribuição da riqueza, justiça social, pluralidade política, liberdade de expressão, etc., fruto de um sistema oligárquico, nepotista e autoritário[12]. No entanto, a narrativa oficial do regime – aquela que emerge dos seus canais oficiais de informação e divulgação – continua a insistir naquilo que um colega angolano uma vez chamou de "país das mara-

9 Ver António Tomás, "Refracted Governmentality: Space, Politics and Social Structure in Contemporary Luanda" (Tese de doutoramento, Columbia University, 2012).

10 O MPLA, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, foi, junto com a UNITA e a FNLA, um dos protagonistas da guerra de libertação em Angola. Nesse período, a chamada "geração da utopia" (citando o famoso romance de Pepetela) assumiu uma ideologia independentista e revolucionária própria do marxismo-leninismo na sua expressão soviética (ver Ruy Blanes e Abel Paxe, "Atheist Political Cultures in Angola," *Social Analysis* 59 (2015): 62-80). Desde então, evoluiu para uma auto-intitulada social-democracia e perpetuou-se no poder através da figura de José Eduardo dos Santos, presidente do país desde 1979.

11 Emídio Fernando, *Jonas Savimbi – No Lado Errado da História* (Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2012); Justin Pearce, *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975-2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

12 Rafael Marques, *Diamantes de Sangue. Corrupção e Tortura em Angola* (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2011); Paulo Faria, *The Post-War Angola: Public Sphere, Political Regime and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013); Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *Maginificent and Beggar Land. Angola since the Civil War* (Londres: Hurst & Co., 2015); Nelson Domingos, *Transição pela Transação. Uma Análise da Democratização em Angola* (Rio de Janeiro: Polo Books, 2015); Domingos da Cruz, *Angola Amordaçada. A Imprensa ao Serviço do Autoritarismo* (Lisboa: Guerra e Paz, 2016).

vilhas": um país em progresso e desenvolvimento, em direção à "Nova Angola"[13].

Como procurarei demonstrar, através desta disjunção existe na Angola de hoje uma necessidade de produção de um arquivo subalterno, alternativo a outro que se configura a si mesmo como hegemónico, próprio de uma "temporalidade vitoriosa", como diria Walter Benjamin[14]. Benjamin introduziu essa noção de "história vencedora" – hoje traduzida na ideia de "história dos vencedores" – nas suas *Teses de Filosofia da História*, onde abordava a narrativa histórica (em particular, o materialismo histórico) como um problema de hegemonia "redentora", isto é, que cumpria o papel de produzir um presente quase "messiânico", cumprindo uma teodiceia política específica. No entanto, como o próprio Benjamin defenderia, existem contrapontos em "momentos messiânicos" através dos quais essa história vitoriosa é colocada perante uma *citation a l'ordre du jour*, isto é, um questionamento dos seus fundamentos, métodos e configurações[15]. Neste sentido, Benjamin especula sobre uma "temporalidade revolucionária" que não só desconstrói a temporalidade hegemónica mas também elabora uma "descoberta retrospetiva"[16] e re-liga passado e presente através de novos itinerários conceptuais. É neste contexto que direi que existe uma espécie de «efeito Benjamin» em Angola, através do qual se procura «ajustar contas» com uma memória vitoriosa, aquela que emana do discurso do MPLA.

Essa procura de um arquivo subalterno emerge a partir de um movimento recente que procura, ao fim e ao cabo, tornar visível, expressivo e público aquilo que poderíamos chamar de "arquivo pessoal", isto é, as memórias de episódios históricos que se ficam pela esfera privada e familiar, histórias que se deixam de partilhar em coletivo por

13 Jon Schubert, "'Working the System. Affect, Amnesia and the Aesthetics of Power in the New Angola" (Tese de doutoramento, University of Edinburgh, 2014).

14 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections* (Nova Iorque: Schocken Books, 1968).

15 Ver Ruy Blanes, "Extraordinary Times. Charismatic Repertoires in Contemporary African Prophetism," in *Ecstasies and Institutions. The Anthropology of Religious Charisma*, ed. Charles Lindholm (Nova Iorque: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 147-68.

16 Tomoko Masuzawa, "Tracing the Figure of Redemption: Walter Benjamin's Physiognomy of Modernity," *MLN* 100 (1985): 514-36.

receio a represálias – a "cultura do medo" que continua a persistir em Angola[17]. São, voltando às palavras de Benjamin, arquivos do domínio da experiência pessoal, produto da rejeição da narrativa hegemónica que é diariamente imposta por canais mediáticos "oficiais" como a Televisão Pública de Angola, a Rádio Nacional de Angola e o *Jornal de Angola*.

Revolução: onde tudo começa

Recentemente, os jornalistas Coque Mukuta e Cláudio Fortuna editaram o livro *Os Meandros das Revoluções em Angola*[18]. O livro, assumidamente posicionado do ponto de vista político como sendo antirregime, faz referência à emergência do chamado movimento "Revú", por vezes referido como Movimento Revolucionário[19], que tem protagonizado vários episódios de protesto (e subsequente repressão) contra o regime de José Eduardo dos Santos. Nos cinco anos que mediaram entre essa génese e o dia de hoje, muitos dos membros do movimento foram perseguidos, torturados, ameaçados, presos e mesmo assassinados. Outros ativistas foram alvo de tentativas de cooptação ou corrupção. Um momento particularmente marcante desse processo de contestação deu-se em 2015, quando 17 ativistas Revús foram presos e acusados de tentativa de golpe de Estado. A prisão dos chamados "15+2" teve o condão de tornar mais visível e internacionalizar o movimento Revú, graças ao envolvimento de entidades políticas e organizações internacionais na sua defesa e na acusação contra o Estado por violação dos direitos humanos.

17 Ruy Blanes, 15 de dezembro de 2015 "Revolutionary States in Angola: 'Events' and Political Strife in Angola," Focaal Blog, http://www.focaalblog.com/2015/12/15/ruy-llera-blanes-revolutionary-states-in-luanda-events-and-political-strife-in-angola/.

18 Coque Mukuta e Cláudio Fortuna, *Os Meandros das Revoluções em Angola, Volume 1* (Brasília: Kiron Editora, 2011).

19 É preciso notar, no entanto, que a categoria de "Revú" engloba confluências e sensibilidades contestatárias ao regime que vão mais além do chamado Movimento Revolucionário, um movimento de associação política por parte de alguns dos ativistas que expressa apenas uma dimensão desse ativismo, que inclui artistas, jornalistas, advogados, estudantes, etc. É preciso ter igualmente em conta que no início da década de 2000 existiu um Movimento Revolucionário Independente, fundado em 2004, mas sem intervenção significativa no espaço público.

Um dos vários elementos interessantes do livro em causa é o facto de o mesmo ter sido publicado no próprio ano em que o movimento Revú se "inaugurou", isto é, se transformou de um conjunto desagregado de pessoas que partilhavam uma visão crítica num movimento ativista mais proactivo e organizado. Neste contexto, por exemplo, é em 7 de março de 2011 que se localiza a génese do movimento, pois foi nessa data que a primeira (tentativa de) manifestação por parte da sociedade civil angolana teve lugar. O evento ganhou uma mediatização até então inédita graças à intervenção, poucos dias antes da data, do rapper Brigadeiro Mata Frakus[20] num concerto de Hip Hop no Cine Atlântico, apelando à participação na manifestação e entoando o slogan "Ti-Zé, Tira o Pé!" (pedindo portanto a demissão de José Eduardo dos Santos) e assumindo-se como um dos presentes na manifestação. A utilização dos telemóveis e dos *social media* como meios de divulgação também contribuiu para essa visibilidade[21].

No entanto, o resultado da convocatória foi... uma "não-manifestação". Isto porque, à chegada dos primeiros manifestantes ao Largo 1º de Maio, a Polícia de Intervenção Rápida entrou em cena e prendeu as 17 pessoas presentes naquele momento, entre as quais se contava Mata Frakus e o igualmente rapper Carbono Casimiro, assim como vários jornalistas do *Novo Jornal*. Apesar de a manifestação ter sido marcada para a meia-noite do dia 7, o aparato policial mobilizou-se no largo até à manhã do dia seguinte. Essa repressão policial, apesar de bem-sucedida no que se refere à neutralização da manifestação, teve o condão de despertar a consciência ativista por parte de muitos angolanos e motivar movimentos de associação e organização no seu seio. Entre outras coisas, por exemplo, a plataforma Central 7311, criada ainda em 2011 por alguns dos protagonistas da manifestação de 7 de março como uma plataforma de "jornalismo cidadão" através da qual

20 Brigadeiro Mata Frakus (grafia alternativa Matafrakuxz) é um dos *alter-egos* artísticos do ativista e músico Luaty Beirão, também conhecido como Ikonoklasta.

21 A convocatória para a manifestação apareceu em primeiro lugar no Facebook, através do pseudónimo "Agostinho Jonas Roberto dos Santos", uma "súmula" dos líderes dos partidos históricos de Angola. A publicação no Youtube da intervenção de Matafrakusz também foi detonante.

se denunciaram (e continuam a denunciar) situações de injustiça e repressão no país[22].

É verdade que antes da referida data existiram outros contextos prévios de contestação. São frequentemente referidas, por exemplo, as manifestações organizadas pelo antigo PADEPA (Partido de Apoio Democrático e Progresso de Angola) ou pelas associações de estudantes da Universidade Agostinho Neto e do grupo MEA liderado por Mfuka Muzemba, das juventudes da UNITA[23], em protesto contra os custos da frequência escolar na época. Igualmente, com a viragem do século, alguns jornalistas começaram a engajar-se numa atividade de denúncia política, até então silenciada pelo regime desde os primeiros anos da independência através dos seus canais de comunicação oficiais. Foi o caso, por exemplo, de alguns meios de comunicação privados que emergiram após a reforma política de 1992 (por exemplo, os jornais *Agora, Imparcial, Rádio Despertar, Folha 8,* e mais recentemente as plataformas digitais *Club-K, Rede Angola* e *Maka Angola*, por exemplo), ou da publicação do texto "O Baton da Ditadura" (sic), da autoria de Rafael Marques (*Agora*, 3 de julho de 1999)[24]. Estes casos constituíram exemplos de simultânea contestação do panorama mediático angolano e da sua pluralização – sendo que a pluralização nem sempre garantiu a liberdade de expressão no país[25].

Por outro lado, como afirma Susan de Oliveira[26], o movimento rap e hip-hop angolano também se constituiu desde o final da década de 1990 como um dos poucos focos de contestação aberta ao regime. Figuras mais públicas, tais como o Brigadeiro 10 Pacotes e mais tarde o próprio Ikonoklasta *aka* Mata Frakus, transformaram-se durante alguns

22 Ver https://centralangola7311.net

23 Mukuta e Fortuna, *Os Meandros*, 23.

24 No referido texto, Rafael Marques elabora uma crítica mordaz ao regime do MPLA, chamando a atenção para a diabolização que o partido faz do então líder da UNITA, Jonas Savimbi.

25 Ver Domingos da Cruz, *A Liberdade de Imprensa em Angola. Obstáculos e Desafios no Processo de Democratização em Angola* (Luanda, Mundo Bantu, 2013).

26 Susan de Oliveira, 9 de outubro de 2015, "O rap e o ativismo pelos direitos humanos em Angola," *Por Dentro da África*, http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com/noticias/o-rap-e-o-ativismo-pelos-direitos-humanos-em-angola-por-susan-de-oliveira>. Acessado a 21 de janeiro de 2016. Ver também Blanes, "Revolutionary States".

momentos no único rosto de questionamento da governação em Angola. Mas também movimentos mais *underground* como o grupo Filhos da Ala Leste, ou os coletivos Circuito Corrente Contínua (CCC, do bairro dos Blocos) e a 3ª Divisão (de Cacuaco), entre muitos outros, foram produzindo, por via áudio e vídeo, conteúdos de contestação explícita contra o regime e em particular José Eduardo dos Santos.

No entanto, a partir de 2011 ergue-se uma "nova era"[27], um novo e específico contexto sociopolítico. Por um lado, a nível continental, ocorre a chamada "Primavera Árabe"[28], que de certa forma alertou para a possibilidade de que os regimes não são eternos e podem, tal como me afirmou um professor angolano, "cair de podres"[29]. Por outro lado, a partir da implantação constitucional de 2010, emerge um contexto jurídico problemático. Se por um lado, através do artigo 47º da nova Constituição, se consagrava a liberdade de expressão e manifestação[30], por outro lado incluíram-se vários artigos que não só reforçavam os poderes presidenciais como "fechavam a porta" à participação da sociedade civil no processo político. Esta ambiguidade jurídica produziu uma situação em que se pôs à prova a "veracidade" da autointitulação, por parte do regime, de país verdadeiramente democrático. Tendo em conta o que descrevemos na secção que se segue, essa prova falhou.

Neste contexto, tal como os próprios autores me confirmaram pessoalmente, o livro de Mukuta e Fortuna é, de certa forma, o produto de uma sensação de urgência, uma necessidade de cristalizar, o quanto

27 Mukuta e Fortuna, *Os Meandros*, 25.

28 Referimo-nos aqui aos movimentos de origem revolucionária que deram lugar a processos de transição política, com resultados diversos, no norte de África (Tunísia, Líbia, Egito, etc.) desde 2010.

29 Ver também Asbel Quitunga, "O Poder da Informação nas Relações Internacionais: os Efeitos da Primavera Árabe em Angola" (Tese de mestrado, Universidade de Évora, 2015); e Nuno Dala, *O Pensamento Político dos Jovens Revús. Discurso e Acção* (Luanda: Edição de autor, 2016).

30 O Artigo 47º da Constituição da República Popular de Angola, relativo à "Liberdade de reunião e manifestação", refere que "*1. É garantida a todos os cidadãos a liberdade de reunião e de manifestação pacífica e sem armas, sem necessidade de qualquer autorização e nos termos da lei. 2. As reuniões e manifestações em lugares públicos carecem de prévia comunicação à autoridade competente, nos termos e para os efeitos estabelecidos por lei.*" No entanto, na prática o que se observa é que a grande maioria das manifestações, em particular as que contestam o regime, são reprimidas com o argumento de "segurança do Estado" ou de "perturbação da ordem pública".

antes, uma série de movimentos e acontecimentos que corriam o risco de "desaparecer" por causa do efeito repressivo do regime angolano. Ao "fazer arquivo", o próprio livro transformou-se ele próprio numa fonte de arquivo subalterno. O mesmo viria a acontecer cinco anos mais tarde com a publicação do livro *O Pensamento dos Jovens Revús*, em 2016, cujo autor, Nuno Álvaro Dala, à data de publicação se encontrava em prisão preventiva e em processo de condenação por parte do regime na qualidade de integrante dos 15+2. Estes dois livros, junto com a muito recente publicação dos diários de prisão de outro membro dos 15+2, Luaty Beirão[31], constituem exemplos mais ortodoxos do conjunto de materiais mais heterodoxos que compõem o arquivo subalterno e a partir do qual se constroem as referidas cronologias: desde materiais audiovisuais (fotos, vídeos) a documentos (de ordem jurídica ou quase-jurídica), testemunhos (orais, escritos, audiovisuais) e, também, os próprios eventos que descrevemos na cronologia abaixo.

No entanto, há que referir que esta ansiedade cronológica não tem como objetivo único ou principal selar ou reificar determinados acontecimentos e personagens. Neste sentido, esta ambição arquivística estende-se em duas outras direções. Em primeiro lugar, na tentativa de recuperação de antecedentes, isto é, de acontecimentos e movimentos prévios que permitem entender que os Revús não apareceram "do nada", e que existe um contexto político, social e moral de legitimação do movimento. E em segundo lugar, no reforço de um "olhar arquivístico subalterno" que combate aquilo que chamei noutro lugar de "progressivo encolher" dos materiais históricos disponíveis em Angola, a promoção estatal de uma historiografia que não admite qualquer conceito de pluralidade ou sequer debate[32].

Através dessas duas proposições, apercebemo-nos que estamos perante um movimento de anamnese, uma tentativa de elaborar um relato sequencial que possa de certa forma competir com o registo

31 Luaty Beirão, *Sou Eu Mais Livre, Então. Diário de um Preso Político Angolano* (Lisboa, Tinta-da-China, 2016).

32 Ruy Blanes, "Places of No History in Angola" (comunicação apresentada no workshop Atlantic Heritages. Memories, Spirits, Places, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, Janeiro de 2016).

oficial. Esse relato, por um lado, constitui-se como um "arquivo", no sentido em que se organiza e sistematiza a partir de uma cronologia. Por outro, emerge com um carácter dialético, isto é, em oposição a uma narrativa hegemónica. Neste contexto, tem algum interesse recuperar a famosa análise de James Scott sobre os *hidden transcripts* em contextos de dominação política (1990): a sua referência a um "espaço social de dissidência"[33] através do qual não só emerge uma ideologia de "negação" da dominação, mas também a identificação dos lugares e atores protagonistas que materializam essa linguagem de dissidência – aquilo a que Frantz Fanon chamaria de "substantificação das atitudes"[34]. Pensando no contexto angolano, os participantes no dia 7 de março de 2011 acabaram por corporizar um sentimento mais difuso de descontentamento social e, ao mesmo tempo, identificar e concretizar o espaço de violência do processo de dominação: os "batons" (bastões) e as armas das forças policiais que os agrediam enquanto procuravam fazer uso do seu direito ao descontentamento. Criaram um espaço de reconhecimento mútuo ao mesmo tempo que sofriam na pele a sua condição externamente imposta de subordinação.

Hoje, cinco anos volvidos desse acontecimento, introduz-se um elemento novo a esse processo de constituição de espaço social de dissidência: a dimensão cronológica. Nas duas secções que se seguem, explorarei duas dimensões daquilo a que chamo de anamnese angolana: a disputa política em função de cronologias, calendários e arquivos divergentes.

Cronologias visíveis e invisíveis

Uma parte significativa do livro de Mukuta e Fortuna organiza-se em torno da elaboração de uma cronologia de eventos, tendo como ponto fulcral o dia 7 de março. A partir daí, a cronologia é composta por datas marcadas por outros episódios de protesto, repressão e violência. As

33 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 108 e seguintes.

34 Frantz Fanon, *Os Condenados da Terra* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1968 [1961]), 197.

datas são as seguintes, adaptadas dos livros de Mukuta e Fortuna e de Dala, assim como de testemunhos diretos e indiretos que fui recolhendo ao longo do meu trabalho de terreno em Angola nos últimos anos:

2011

7 de março: Tentativa de manifestação antigovernamental, convocada pela pseudo-organização Movimento Revolucionário do Povo Lutador de Angola, que culminou com a detenção de 12 pessoas.

2 de abril: Convocada uma "Manifestação pela Liberdade de Expressão em Angola". Contando com mais de 300 pessoas, foi a única manifestação que não culminou na detenção ou agressão dos manifestantes.

22 de abril: Tentativas abortadas de manifestação no município do Cazenga (em protesto contra condições sanitárias) e na vila de Caxito (em protesto pela melhoria salarial dos professores).

25 de maio: Tentativa abortada de manifestação convocada pelo Movimento Revolucionário Independente, sendo que um dos seus militantes, Luís Bernardo, foi sequestrado pelas forças policiais, enquanto outros terão sido "desmobilizados" pelo MPLA.

3 de setembro: Repressão violenta, por parte das forças policiais, da "Manifestação contra o Presidente José Eduardo dos Santos" (convocada por estudantes universitários) dirigida aos manifestantes e aos jornalistas presentes. Um dos ativistas, Pandita Nehru, encarregue da logística (cartazes, posters, etc.), é sequestrado por desconhecidos. Outros 21 ativistas são agredidos, presos e condenados sumariamente a penas entre 45 dias e 3 meses de prisão por crime de ofensas corporais simples, entre outros.

8 de setembro: Detenção de 27 manifestantes que procuravam protestar, na baixa da cidade, contra a detenção dos ativistas no dia 3 de setembro. Entre os detidos encontrava-se Mfuka Muzemba, posteriormente acusado de conspiração contra o Presidente da República.

3 de dezembro: Dispersão de tentativa de manifestação por parte de aproximadamente 100 pessoas, culminando em 14 feridos.

Esta listagem permite um mapeamento que, de certa forma, ajuda o leitor a preservar uma certa noção cronológica que pontua os primeiros momentos do movimento Revú. Tanto no livro de Mukuta e Fortuna como nas conversas e entrevistas que mantive com vários elementos do movimento, entendi que estava em causa uma mnemónica, uma narrativa testemunhal – em muitos casos em primeira mão – que, através do encadeamento de datas e acontecimentos, produz uma sistematização de "provas": pessoas, ações, acontecimentos que demonstram a ação repressora do regime angolano.

Entretanto, depois da publicação de *Os Meandros...*, várias outras datas passaram a fazer parte desta cronologia marcada pela violência, invocada pelos Revús. Damos como exemplo, numa lista não exaustiva, os seguintes:

2012

10 de março: Cerca de 40 manifestantes são atacados no Cazenga. Vários manifestantes, assim como jornalistas e membros do partido Bloco Democrático, são agredidos.

23 de maio: Um grupo de indivíduos pertencentes a milícias governamentais ataca e vandaliza a casa do ativista e rapper Carbono Casimiro, onde se encontravam vários ativistas reunidos. Registam-se avultados danos pessoais e materiais.

27 de maio: Data de desaparecimento dos ativistas Alves Camulingue e Isaías Cassule, posteriormente reconhecidos como assassinados às mãos dos Serviços de Inteligência e Segurança do Estado (SINSE), e cujos cadáveres foram atirados ao rio Dande, no Bengo, e devorados por jacarés (ver *Club-K*, 9 de novembro de 2013).

7 de junho: Manifestação de cerca de 3000 veteranos de guerra em Luanda, em protesto contra o atraso no pagamento das suas pensões, no que terá sido uma das manifestações de protesto mais multitudinárias da história de Angola.

2013

30 de março: Cerca de 20 pessoas são detidas em Luanda pela Polícia Nacional durante uma tentativa de manifestação pelo "Direito à Vida e Liberdade para Quem Pensa Diferente" e em protesto pelo desaparecimento de Cassule e Kamulingue.

27 maio: Manifestantes que participavam numa vigília convocada pelo Movimento Revolucionário, em protesto pelo desaparecimento, desde 27 de maio de 2012, de Isaías Cassule e Alves Kamulingue, são dispersos à bastonada.

23 de novembro: Assassinato do ativista do partido CASA-CE Hilberto Ganga, às mãos de um elemento da Segurança Presidencial, após ter sido detido por colar cartazes políticos perto da residência do Presidente da República. Morreu com um tiro pelas costas. O réu foi absolvido e citado pelo juiz da causa como tendo "prestado um serviço relevante à pátria" (*Club-K*, 26 de novembro de 2015).

2014

23 de novembro: Brutal agressão à ativista Laurinda Gouveia por parte de agentes do SINSE à paisana, numa manifestação que pedia a demissão do Presidente da República.

7 de dezembro: Tentativa de organização da "Marcha contra a Violência Policial", inviabilizada pelos agentes do SINSE (Serviço de Inteligência e Segurança do Estado) e culminando na retenção ilegal de vários ativistas durante horas.

2015

20 de junho: Detenção de vários ativistas que participavam num "Grupo de Debate" na Vila Alice, e posterior acusação aos mesmos de "tentativa de golpe de Estado", num processo que veio a ser internacionalmente conhecido como "15+2". Os presos discutiam a tradução do livro *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, de Gene Sharp (publicado em 1994), e a sua adaptação ao contexto angolano por um dos presentes,

Domingos da Cruz[35]. Após vários meses em prisão preventiva (excedendo o limite legalmente previsto), os 15+2 são julgados e condenados, já em 2016, a penas entre 2 e 8 anos de prisão por "associação e malfeitoria" e "tentativa de rebelião".

2016

28 de março: O ativista Francisco Mapanda (Dago Nível Intelecto) é condenado sumariamente a 8 meses de prisão por injúrias, após ter afirmado em tribunal, aquando da leitura da sentença dos 15+2, que o julgamento era "uma palhaçada" e que "os palhaços estavam identificados".

6 de agosto: Assassinato à queima-roupa, às mãos da polícia angolana, do adolescente de 14 anos, Rufino, por tentar defender a sua casa de chapa durante uma intervenção de demolição forçada de duas mil casas, no bairro do Zango II.

Uma primeira constatação que esta lista nos oferece é que muitas das datas aqui indicadas fazem referência a "não-eventos"[36], tentativas abortadas e reprimidas de organização de acontecimentos de carácter público e com efeito político, por parte (e sem exceção) das forças da autoridade governamental. No entanto, a sua própria condição de "eventualidades" acaba por determinar o seu conteúdo político e histórico: não são episódios de vitórias políticas, mas sim de resistência subalterna. Voltando ao conceito de "espaço social" de Scott, a "eventualidade" surge precisamente no ponto de encontro (ou melhor, confronto) entre a tentativa de manifestação e a sua repressão.

Neste contexto, apercebemo-nos que as datas assumem o carácter de mnemónica, pontuando o calendário com episódios de confronto político e produzindo uma sensação de "diacronia infeliz", que por sua vez contrasta com a diacronia glorificadora emanada da pedagogia estatal, que

35 Domingos da Cruz, *Ferramentas para Destruir o Ditador e Evitar Nova Ditadura: Filosofia Política da Libertação para Angola* (Luanda: Mundo Bantu, 2015).

36 Blanes, "Revolutionary States".

abordamos na secção seguinte[37]. Há aqui, claramente, aquilo a que Cristina Sánchez Carretero chamou recentemente de "arquivo do luto"[38], assente na vontade de "guardar", para além do efémero, memórias traumáticas para lá dos registos e formalidades oficiais. Será este, precisamente, o "efeito Benjamin" que os Revús propõem para Angola: uma releitura do movimento histórico em função das experiências de repressão e resistência.

Recuperando memórias perdidas

O movimento de anamnese dos Revús também é, de certa forma, um movimento de releitura da história de Angola como país independente. Neste sentido, o país e a sua capital estão cobertos de referências cronológicas à história vitoriosa do país – em particular aquela que emerge da guerra de libertação –, plasmadas em monumentos, onomásticas, etc. As principais são:

4 de fevereiro de 1961: Data em que um conjunto de angolanos ataca a prisão de São Paulo em Luanda, onde se encontravam detidos vários presos políticos. Data tida como o início da sublevação armada na colónia portuguesa.

11 de novembro de 1975: Data de declaração da independência de Angola, proferida por Agostinho Neto no Largo 1º de Maio. Nesta data enquadra-se também a Batalha de Kifangondo, entre as forças armadas do MPLA (FAPLA) e a FNLA, apoiadas respetivamente pelos exércitos cubano e zairense e sul-africano.

10 de setembro de 1979: Data do falecimento de Agostinho Neto, primeiro presidente de Angola.

4 de abril de 2002: Assinatura, após a morte do líder da UNITA Jonas Savimbi, do Memorando de Entendimento de Luena (Moxico), que pôs fim à guerra civil em Angola

37 Ver também Blanes e Paxe, "Atheist Political Cultures".

38 Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, *El Archivo del Duelo. Análisis de la respuesta ciudadana ante los atentados del 11 de marzo en Madrid* (Madrid: CSIC, 2011).

Estas datas fazem parte do vocabulário quotidiano dos angolanos, devolvendo-os ciclicamente a um passado revolucionário e independentista, marcado pela inauguração da promessa de uma "Nova Angola", liberta dos "grilhões do colonialismo"[39], No entanto, 41 anos volvidos, essa "Nova Angola" tarda em chegar. Neste contexto, o "efeito Benjamin" proposto pelos Revús produz um vocabulário temporalizante paralelo, através do qual se descobre uma espécie de *doppelgänger* angolano, um duplo histórico com os mesmos marcos históricos, localidades e protagonistas, mas com diferentes tonalidades morais, efeitos e consequências.

Neste contexto, talvez um dos episódios mais invocados neste processo seja o do chamado "fraccionismo" que ocorreu a 27 de maio de 1977, em que um movimento de oposição interna no MPLA, liderado por Nito Alves, foi brutalmente reprimido pela liderança de Agostinho Neto com a ajuda das forças armadas cubanas, motivando igualmente uma perseguição e execução sumária dos seguidores e simpatizantes de Nito Alves em Luanda. O resultado foi o massacre de dezenas de milhares de angolanos, naquilo a que Dalila e Álvaro Mateus chamariam de "purga em Angola"[40].

Este episódio não é de todo desconhecido na realidade angolana, antes pelo contrário. Circulando por zonas como o Cazenga ou Cacuaco, por exemplo, foram-me indicados várias vezes locais de execução coletiva, hoje sem qualquer vestígio físico do acontecimento. No entanto, após uma breve declaração pelo atual Presidente da República em 1992, encontra-se banido da memória oficial, constituindo-se como "trauma reprimido"[41].

Mas a história dos massacres não termina em 1977. A 30 de outubro de 1992, na sequência dos Acordos de Bicesse que permitiram

39 MPLA, *História de Angola* (Porto; Afrontamento, 1965).

40 O livro em causa, recorde-se, foi altamente contestado por figuras do regime angolano à altura e motivou vários processos em tribunal (Angonotícias, 21 de março de 2010). Mateus, Dalila e Álvaro Mateus, *Purga em Angola. Nito Alves, Sita Valles, Zé Van Dunem, o 27 de maio de 1977* (Lisboa: Edições Asa, 2007).

41 Lara Pawson, *In the Name of the People. Angola's Forgotten Massacre* (Londres ; IB Tauris, 2015).

uma (breve) interrupção da guerra civil e a concretização das primeiras eleições "democráticas" em Angola, produziu-se o assassínio de milhares de apoiantes da UNITA e do FNLA que se encontravam em Luanda após o ato eleitoral desse ano, numa tentativa de "decapitar" a liderança política dos adversários do MPLA (*DW*, 29 de outubro de 2012)[42].

Poucos meses depois, a 22 e 23 de janeiro de 1993, teve lugar ainda outro massacre: a chamada "sexta-feira sangrenta", que vitimou igualmente dezenas de milhares de angolanos de etnia bakongo, na sequência de um rumor que circulou sobre a presença em Luanda de três esquadrões de zairenses, chegados do Soyo e do Huambo, que pretendiam assassinar o Presidente José Eduardo dos Santos[43]. Apesar de assentar num mero rumor, o resultado foi catastrófico: forças de segurança e cidadãos comuns atacaram membros bakongo, produzindo-se vários casos de assalto, pilhagem, agressão, linchamento e assassinato, tanto em Luanda como em Benguela[44].

Outro episódio bastante menos notório que os acima referidos foi o assassinato de Mfulupinga Lando Vítor, professor da Universidade Agostinho Neto, antigo militante da FNLA, fundador-presidente do partido minoritário PDP-ANA (Partido Democrático para o Progresso de Aliança Nacional) e deputado pelo mesmo partido. Lando foi executado por desconhecidos, com uma metralhadora AK47, no bairro do Cassenda a 2 de julho de 2004. Era conhecido por ser um deputado crítico e interventivo na Assembleia da República, o que terá culminado na sua execução. Os autores do crime nunca foram encontrados.

42 O massacre não se resumiu a Luanda, estendendo-se de norte a sul do país. Na província do Namibe, por exemplo, foram assassinadas 610 pessoas (*Voz da América*, 5 de janeiro de 2015). Ver também Fernando, *Jonas Savimbi*.

43 Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali, "La Chasse aux Zairois à Luanda," *Politique Africaine* 57 (1995): 71–84 ; Luena Pereira, "Os Bakongo de Angola: Religião, Política e Parentesco num Bairro de Luanda" (Tese de doutorament0, Universidade de São Paulo, 2004).

44 Existe, nestes dois últimos episódios, um pano de fundo relacionado com a questão étnica em Angola. Em particular, com a ideia recorrentemente invocada de que o projeto de nação do MPLA é um projeto oriundo da etnia "umbundu" e que, apesar da sua tentativa de construir um projeto de nação supraétnico, exerceu uma discriminação ativa sobre grupos étnicos que pudessem supor uma ameaça à sua liderança, em particular os ovumbundu e os bakongo. Em qualquer caso, é revelador do pendor tribalista que marca a política partidária em Angola. Ver, por exemplo, Marcelo Bittencourt "A criação do MPLA", *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 32 (1997); 185-208; Carlos Serrano, *Angola. Nascimento de uma Nação. Um Estudo sobre a Construção da Identidade Nacional* (Luanda: Kilombelombe, 2008); Pearce, *Political Identity*.

Na visão dos Revús que fui conhecendo, estes episódios não só revelam uma história alternativa de Angola mas também se colocam em continuidade com os episódios que marcam a sua própria luta. Muitas das suas reivindicações plasmadas nos seus cartazes e nas redes sociais reivindicam memória e justiça para estas datas[45]. Neste contexto, o "arquivo Revú" também emerge, de certa forma, em interlocução com estas datas alternativas. Podemos apreciar essa confluência nos vários *posters* que anunciam manifestações dos Revús, que pedem justiça histórica e simultaneamente se constituem como factos históricos.

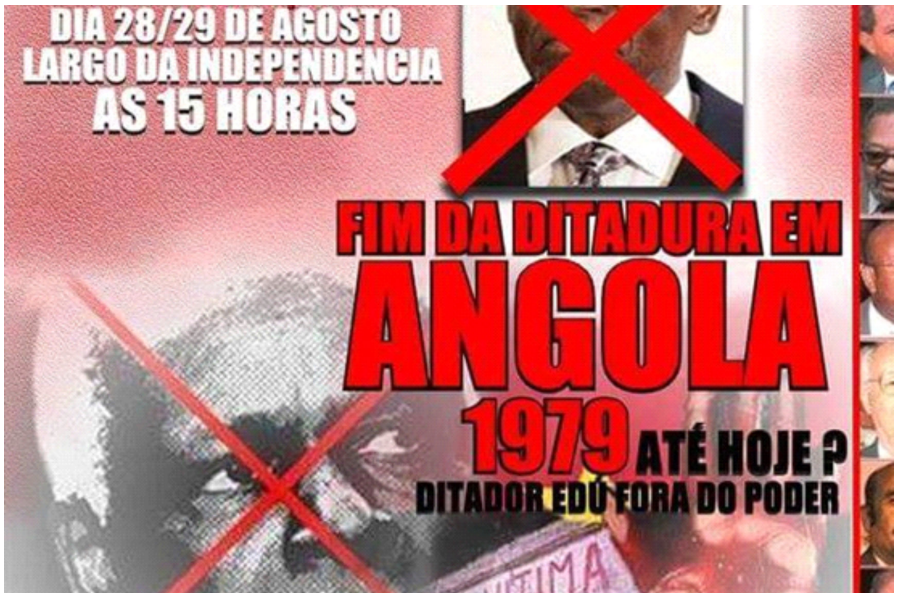

Imagem 1: Poster de manifestação com referência visual ao fracionismo de 1977 e ao início da governação de José Eduardo dos Santos. Fonte: Arquivo pessoal de Ruy Blanes.

Conclusão: arquivo e utopia

Recentemente, Paul Basu e Ferdinand de Jong referiram-se aos arquivos como "instituições utópicas" produtoras de determinados "espaços públicos" onde a promessa de um "entendimento total" das coisas emerge[46].

45 Um dos ativistas mais conhecidos do movimento Revú, também ele um dos 15+2, utiliza o *alias* "Nito Alves", precisamente numa lógica de recordar um personagem incómodo para o MPLA. Outro ativista do Movimento Revolucionário que conheci fazia-se chamar igualmente de "27 de Maio".

46 Paul Basu e Ferdinand de Jong, "Utopian Archives, Decolonial Affordances. Introduction to Special Issue," *Social Anthropology* 24 (2016): 5-9.

Quem já trabalhou com arquivos coloniais, descobrindo e navegando por universos de informação recolhida, sistematizada e enquadrada, certamente se identifica com essa noção. Mas também já se terá sentido frustrado ou frustrada ao encontrar-se perante os limites, silêncios e ausências provocadas pelo enquadramento heurístico idealizado pelos criadores e gestores dos arquivos[47]. Neste sentido, os arquivos nascem e reproduzem-se no seio de pré-configurações epistemológicas, determinadas pelos processos de *commencement* e *commandement* de que falava Derrida.

Existe certamente um lado utópico nos arquivos que aqui descrevi – tanto o hegemónico do MPLA como o subalterno dos Revús e de quem contesta o atual regime. Ambos procuram criar um "espaço social" marcado pelas suas opções políticas. Se o arquivo do MPLA, dominado pela ideologia escatológica da "Nova Angola", é marcado por uma estratégia explícita de memória seletiva e amnésia, o arquivo dos Revús, por seu turno, é anamnésico, na medida em que transforma essa amnésia num problema político. É precisamente através do "efeito Benjamin" deste arquivo subalterno que se descobrem histórias alternativas. Neste caso, emerge um problema implícito: a questão geracional – ou o momento a partir do qual, para uma camada sociodemográfica angolana, a referida "geração da utopia" de Pepetela se transforma na "degeneração da utopia" através da repetição dos erros do passado, ou mais concretamente a perpetuação de um sistema de tipo colonial. Noutras palavras, a desconstrução de uma semântica histórica construída em função de uma ordem de poder gerontológica.

Em qualquer caso, não se vislumbra nestes arquivos um "fim", tal como se pôde estabelecer a propósito dos arquivos coloniais: eles são inerentes à disputa política que decorre em Angola. Neste sentido, este texto também faz, de certa forma, parte do arquivo subalterno.

47 Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (Londres: Verso, 1993); Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87-109; e *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Ricardo Roque e Kim Wagner, eds., *Engaging Colonial Knowledge: Reading European Archives in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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Minor archives, meta histories

GLASS Faculty Roundtable

On 16 October 2015 in Leiden University

Chair and Moderator

Ethan Mark (LIAS - Japan Studies, Leiden)

Panellists

Dipesh Chakrabarty (History, Chicago)

Nira Wickramasinghe (LIAS - Modern South Asia, Leiden)

Ksenia Robbe (LUCAS - Literary Studies, Leiden)

Wayne Modest (Research Centre for Material Culture)

Dipesh Chakrabarty (DC): The problem of minor histories or 'subaltern pasts' came to me and my colleagues in subaltern studies because, as we explored the role of Indian peasants in nationalist mobilisation, it became very clear that someone like [Mahatma] Gandhi was understood by peasants through rumours that circulated about him. All those circulated rumours, which one of my colleagues studied, clearly showed that people were ascribing to Gandhi the sort of powers that they would ascribe to local gods and goddesses. In the Hindu hierarchy there are gods with all India jurisdictions and all-subject jurisdictions, and they can basically decide your fate on anything. Then, there are specialised minor gods – somebody who is in charge of cholera, some-

body who is in charge of smallpox – and Gandhi was given the power of minor gods in these rumours. He was assimilated to some understanding of powers of intervention that local gods and goddesses had. It became clear that in writing history, a peasant's narration of his or her own past could not immediately be made into history. You had to sort of do something to it. So, you had to say something like "The peasants believed", but for them [the peasants], it was not a matter of belief. As Charles Taylor says in his book *A Secular Age*,[1] when you live in a society where you have something like what he calls the 'porous self', a society in which you are not called upon to justify your belief in divine powers, a society in which the question "Do you believe in god?" is not a legitimate question, because god or divinity or divine power or bad powers exist everywhere around you and are part of your life, the existence of these powers does not depend on something called 'belief'.

Talal Asad wrote interestingly on the word 'belief', saying how belief itself is probably a Protestant category that eventually became a category of social thought. In a lot of Catholic practices, the question of belief doesn't arise. My friend David Lloyd, who got me to read Deleuze on Kafka[2] and introduced me to the whole idea of minor literature, told me a story (which I cite in *Provicializing Europe*)[3] about a certain old lady who had been visited by the poet [W.B.] Yeats, when Yeats was collecting Irish fairy tales. As he [Yeats] was leaving he asked the old Irish lady: "Do you believe in fairies?" She said: "Of course not, Mr. Yeats, of course not." And then, when he had turned around to go out and leave the house, she said: "But they exist." So, the idea is that they exist and that their existence was not dependent on anything called 'belief', because the notion of belief may not make sense to the peasant.

1 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

2 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

3 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000).

In order to bring those voices into history, you had to engage in a particular operation of analytical thought. You had to say: "They believed and therefore they did that". It's this problem that made me think about why it was that the peasants' statement about the past was not necessarily the historian's statement. For instance, in African history, traditional tales will have places, like Indian stories do, for curses. You know, so-and-so became ill because so-and-so was cursed. Indians are full of such stories. Again, you have to do the same thing: state that they had a belief there was something called "curse". Then you could justify the belief. That's not the question. Thinking about it and reading Deleuze on Kafka and the idea of minor literature sent me through this circuitous route back to Kant's 1784 essay *What is Enlightenment?*'. In this essay Kant argues that Enlightenment is about the deployment of reason in public life. If history is a discourse of public life, the exercise of historical reason lies in the use of evidentiary procedures. And of course ghosts or bad powers or good powers cannot be proven to have existed through evidentiary procedures. So, in some ways, I thought of these kinds of pasts as 'subaltern pasts', i.e. pasts you have to subordinate to the past that historians, using the rational procedures of their discipline, reconstruct. The peasant's statement about the past almost occupies a position similar to the so-called native-informant position in anthropology, to which I then do something to make it into an understandable, acceptable story which can be debated on the basis of the very reasonable procedures of verifying evidence, weighing evidence and other such considerations. It is in addressing this question that I found a similar thing happened in Australia. Aboriginals have a song about Captain Cook in the northern territories. Now, everybody knows that Captain Cook never went to the northern territories. Still, Aboriginals were saying: "But that is my history." And then somebody justified it by saying: "But look at the structure of the song, it speaks to the experience of colonialism." And, of course, that general experience of colonialism cannot be proven by evidentiary sources. Evidentiary sources are usually about somebody's experience, and the historian's position would have to be: 'Oh, this is not the actual historical subject's experience or generalisation.'

I'd like to make another point that goes back to a discussion I had in *Provincializing Europe*. In many ways, 20th century democracies came to people without the assumption that people had to prepare themselves for the rule of citizenship, like in John Stuart Mill's famous statement: "You can't have universal adult franchise without universal adult education." If you look at the 20th century, however, the history of democracies is precisely the undoing of this statement. So India gave everybody universal vote on the assumption that something called 'Indian civilization' had prepared people already for such a citizenly task even if they lacked in formal education. So, in a way, it's what [Eric] Hobsbawm once called 'the most revolutionary aspect of the 20th century', which is that tribal, peasant and all these people became part of modern societies and became citizens without having to go through the kind of personal transformation that Eugen Weber talks about in his book *From Peasants to Frenchman*. That's the distinction that I made between the 'waiting room of history', where you have to wait until you are ready for citizenship, and the whole anticolonial, anti-development emphasis on the *now,* the idea that you have always been ready for democracy. The situation was similar in Australia. The first time the Aboriginals were included in national censuses was in the mid-1960s. Before that, they were not counted except, sometimes, locally. A similar development took place in the US. The vote was extended as a result of the civil rights movement of the '60s. You can see that, suddenly, the past was a matter of disputation in many democracies: and this disputation was not simply about the past, it was also about different ways of talking about the past.

I just want to say very quickly that this whole question of disputation of the past has become increasingly important to me. The whole question of public history – how you actually talk about history in public and how you use different methods – has also assumed importance. And I just want to make two points based on two experiences from which I have learned a lot. The first one is from a trip to South Africa, two years after Apartheid was dismantled. There was a fascinating exhibition called *Miscast* which was organised by a group of academics at the

University of Western Cape including Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes, and all these people did not yet have post-Apartheid textbooks to teach from. All the textbooks were from the Apartheid period and they didn't want to use them. Therefore, they created this exhibition which was actually about colonial anthropology and they had these resin casts of actual African people. The glass floor was completely covered with magnified prints of 19th century newspapers reports on colonial ethnographic expeditions. One side displayed all those tools with which you measure the breadth of somebody's nose, their skull size and all that sort of stuff. It was full of that. It was remarkable. Ciraj [Rassool] said to me: "Dipesh, I held this woman's pelvic cast from the 19th century and her pubic hair was still in it." There is a peculiar way of being in the presence of this woman which can never happen in written history. It happens in the archives: when historians go to the archives, they are actually in the presence of the past, but when it gets written down, this presence recedes. Then, Ciraj Rassool said to me: "Come in my car." He took me to a place that was a kind of a nowhere place, except there was a little strip of a road, which was cut off in the middle of a field. And he said: "Get out of the car." So I got out and stood on the road. And Ciraj said: "This is the road on which I grew up." I said: "What do you mean?" And he said: "I grew up in District Six" – the mixed neighbourhood which the Apartheid government wanted to make white. And the project wasn't finished, I think, but they have now created a museum, a wonderful District Six museum which is completely interactive. There's a map of District Six projected which is a completely imaginary conceptual map instead of being a projection of reality. If you have memories of the place, you can write them on the map, such as: "This is where the tea shop was, where we used to gather". And when I went in, people were still sending in their artefacts. It was an amazing experience of what you might call public history. People have written plays about District Six. The whole problem of District Six has been that the past has been performed in many different ways. That gave me one set of ideas about how to bring history into public life and how to put into contestation different forms of talking about the past.

The other experience I had that made me think about it again and which goes against historians' and also museums' principle of preservation of relics from the past, was more than a decade ago. At this time Australia's first republican movement argued for independence from the British crown. The republicans lost the referendum about this question, but I am sure it will come back. I was in the country and one day in Canberra when an artist, who was known there by the name of Greg Taylor, suddenly erected this statue of old couple, a man and a woman. Both their bodies were sagging, they were completely naked but for the fact they both wore crowns. The statues appeared by the side of Lake Burley Griffin in the middle of the city. The title of the sculpture was *Liz and Phil by the Lake Side.*[4] Only the crowns told you who they were. One night the monarchists turned up and cut off their heads. So, next day people woke up and found out that the statues were missing their heads. It was an act of vandalism. The artist had actually taken the risk of putting his sculpture in a public place, knowing that it could be vandalised. He was not at all committed to the idea of preserving big art. In contrast with the nearby National Gallery of Art of Australia, where a Rodin sculpture it is accompanied by a sign which says very clearly "Do Not Touch", Taylor's statue was made to be touched and eventually destroyed. The destruction immediately made it into the evening news and post-news discussion. In this way, the whole republican point of view actually got a second airing through the destructive act of vandalism to which this artist was prepared to submit his work. It made me realize that an act of vandalism can contribute to the public debate as long as it is not an act of shutting down a discussion – which often happens in India with pro-Hindu vandalism of all kinds, including killing of dissidents. It ultimately made me realize that you cannot bring this contestation of history into public life if you're completely committed to the historian's principle of preserving every relic of the past. So, I actually thought that it could be interesting if democracies, on the condition that it must give rise to more

4 *Down by the lake with Liz and Phil*, by Gregory Taylor (1995)

debate instead of shutting it down, would have vandalism parks where you invite artists to submit their work to public disputation, including vandalism. Obviously it would be considered a case of failure if the vandalism was only meant to shut discussion down by threatening people.

I realize that these are not complete comments and I will not tie them up. I am simply throwing some ideas out to help our discussion. Thank you.

Nira Wickramasinghe (NW): Thank you very much. My comments are going to deal essentially with the idea of minor histories or minority histories. I will look at it in slightly different ways. Actually, I re-read your articles and it sort of pushed me in a different direction. It made me think of the whole idea of minor histories again. Now, I'd like to make two points regarding these tropes of minor histories or minority histories. The first deals with the issue of what we can do as historians beyond recognising the important task played out by minority histories or subaltern pasts, which is to show us the limits of historicising. The second point takes the notion of minority histories outside the frame of the nation. I would like to highlight new hierarchies of knowledge that have emerged between nation states in the global south, a condition that has spawned new forms of minority histories. Dipesh Chakrabarty mentions in his work democratically minded historians who have fought the exclusions and omissions of mainstream narratives of the nation by using the minor to cast doubt on the major. Now, I must admit that I am personally not engaged in an exercise in writing minor histories for the sake of retrieval or giving a voice to silenced people, and I tend to agree with someone like Marilyn Strathern, who advocates that, to quote her words, "We need to go precisely where we have already been, back to the immediate here and now, out of which we have created our present knowledge of the world."[5]

5 Cited in Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain. Espistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 32-33.

So, my modest intention is to intervene in the writing of major histories, creating a critical space where colonial, global and national histories are destabilised, reading anew the old tropes of power, resistance, nationalism, and also the newer ones of, for instance, governmentality. My own work on colonial Sri Lanka has been haunted by the need to explore political imaginaries outside given frameworks of religion, nation, state or empire, both in the colonial period and in the post-colonial period. I always felt that devoting separate chapters, as it were, for minority histories, and in so doing reconfirming the value of marginality, is less transformative than inserting these histories between the seams of the mainstream narrative. So, subalternity appears more as a contingent historical experience rather than bestowed with perennial and virtuous ontological status. I tried to do this in a modest way when I wrote a history of Sri Lanka called *Sri Lanka in a Modern Age*.[6] In this book, I wrote a history of communities and of the political that, in many ways, subverted the mainstream narrative without explicitly stating my position, allowing minority histories, to use Hélène Cixous' term, to insinuate themselves in the text. I'm very pleased actually that this book is now adopted as the main text in most Sri Lankan departments that teach modern Sri Lankan history as well as in some universities that teach South Asian history with a Sri Lankan component without them actually realising that it is a kind of subversion of the mainstream. So, that's the first point I really wanted to make, which is really what we can do and what role minority histories can do, as either separate or inserted in mainstream histories. I think Dipesh Chakrabarty means that when he speaks about [Eric] Hobsbawm and various histories.

Now, to my second point. Within the academic history space – to borrow from [Pierre] Bourdieu – it is interesting to identify relations of force and historical domination by new actors that were once dominated, but now exert power over smaller entities. Now, I don't have time

6 Nira Wickramasinghe, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History* (2nd edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

to sketch in detail how this field of academic history operates, but I think someone should uncover its boundaries, its capitals, its highways and how certain historical provinces, or no-history zones, are created. Today I see with more and more clarity an emerging field where new hierarchies are taking shape in the academy and where the trope of the minor operates at two levels. It continues to operate in a hierarchical manner between European, western histories and histories of the south, but it also has currency within subfields of histories of the south. This state of affairs is partly due to geopolitics, with newly emerging states that aim for superpower status and are able to globally propagate types of representation of their nation that support this dream or delusion. It's also due to the restructuring of university teaching and research along cultural clusters – area specialisations – where larger states dominate the teaching curricula. Let me take an example I am familiar with, South Asian Studies. If I'm to ask who speaks today for South Asian pasts, rather than Indian pasts, I would answer: "definitely not any of the peripheral nation states of South Asia". History as a field of scholarship is most often appropriated by historians of India, where the smaller nation states – let's take Sri Lanka or Nepal – are anthropologized. The number of anthropologists of Sri Lanka, as compared to historians in international academia, and some of them very illustrious, whether it is [Gananath] Obeyesekere or [Stanley Jeyaraja] Tambiah, is quite telling. Smaller nation states like Bangladesh or Pakistan are also politicized and studied as theatres of current violent terrorist politics. But of course there are exceptions, and I must say I am one of them: an historian of Sri Lanka, professor of modern South Asian studies, and at my inaugural lecture I actually praised Leiden University for being revolutionary in many ways. But what I'm trying to describe is still really the norm. I'm just an exception, I think. This minor status is also visible in the publishing arena, where all these scholars working on India and perhaps on Pakistan are given the legitimacy to write in the name of the whole of South Asia. This is even accepted when they only deal with a very minute area of the subcontinent and their language skills are limited to one single region of India. They have the authority

to speak for the entire nation and region. So two things are happening. In the first place works relating to South Asia as a region are edited or written by scholars of India and, secondly, books referring to South Asia in its entirety in the title of the book make often no mention at all of any of the countries or societies of the periphery. They simply do not exist. So, 'minor' has taken a new meaning. And as a scholar whose initial work was on Sri Lanka I take note of these inequalities with some apprehension.

What then are the options for a scholar working on the periphery of South Asia? Based on observation of what is really happening in the field, there are two possible options. One is that she might transform herself into a global historian and many excellent historians of smaller states of South Asia are doing exactly that, not only at Leiden University, but also in places like Cambridge, where you have Sujit Sivasundaram**,** who is an excellent historian of early 19th century India, who has now become a global historian, or at Oxford, where Alan Strathern, who worked on the Portuguese period, also had to become a global historian. So, that's the first option, you go global. And to a certain extent, I am also doing that. In my work on *Metallic Modern*, I tried to cast a more multiscopic view on Sri Lanka and sort of extend the borders. And I published not in a South Asian studies collection, but in a broader series. The second option is really to move out of South Asia to a more welcoming space – and Indian Ocean studies has provided a refuge for historians of the periphery who, for instance, study Sri Lanka, the Andamans or Mauritius. Islands also play a significant conceptual role, constituting a kind of anti-continental geography that relativizes the territorial obsession of much nation state-focused history, but of course for Nepal it is much harder. So, as a domain, the Indian Ocean world offers rich possibilities for working beyond the templates of the nation state and beyond conventional area studies. It makes visible a range of lateral networks broadly falling within the global south or the global. In short, what I'm trying to put into words is that the notion of minority histories plays out differently in different fields and if we are to delve deeper into this question, we need to recognise and challenge

the various and changing asymmetries that rule over the writing of history today.

Ksenia Robbe (KR): Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here and take part in this discussion. I don't know if I can speak with any authority about history, but I'll speak about historical issues from a perspective in literary studies and studies of representation. Dipesh Chakrabarty finished his lecture yesterday with some comments on what kind of strategies of representation we can use when we speak about 'planetarity' and attempts to decentre the human. I would like to think further through this question using examples with which I engaged recently in my studies of postcolonial, more specifically, South African writing and visual culture. You [Dipesh Chakrabarty] also mentioned the possibilities of the novel in terms of representation. I think all representation is ultimately about possibilities and limits, confronting the limits of representation. I would agree with what you were saying about the novel because the novel is about description and world-making: It is a mode of imagining a unity of time and space, thus creating a universe. At present, however, it is very difficult to think of such a unity and coherence – we rather think of the world as a disjuncture, and if we are talking about artistic representation, film and photography would be the means of representing the present, the disjuncture of temporalities. And if we are talking about literature, it would probably be poetry and non-fiction, due to their openness in capturing disparate times and their public character. If we are speaking about the possibilities of public history, poetry is a genre which addresses audiences – and I'm thinking particularly about African poetry as a public genre, not the way poetry has been practised in modern western cultures.

An example I was also thinking about – which speaks to the question of how we can access the subaltern – is a film that I saw recently. It's an Indian film titled *The Labour of Love*, by Aditya Vikram Sengupta. It came out recently and won a lot of awards. What is interesting about this film is that there is no speech, practically. It is speaking,

but it is speaking in those different languages which are not linguistic. That made me think about how to decentre the linguistically organised human using, as this film does, a subaltern minoritarian minor mode.

The film is a story about a couple living in Calcutta, both working at factories. She is working during the day; he is working during the night. They meet each day for only a couple of minutes, but they communicate through objects. The whole narrative of the film is focused on objects, or, more precisely, on surfaces. This metaphor of the surface is something, I think, that is useful for speaking about the minor and the subaltern. We can speak about the surface beyond which it is very difficult to move. It can give an impulse to our imagination, but it still remains a surface. It is a surface like a wall, for example, or textile surfaces, or water and bubbles in water. These surfaces can possibly provide a kind of language to think about planetarity through the minor.

Another example I was thinking of in connection to the minor and contemporary approaches to the minor is the works by a South African artist, William Kentridge. In his most recent project, *The Refusal of Time*, he sets out to think beyond Einstein's relativity of time-space together with a physicist. How can we go beyond the modernity of this theory? And again, as I mentioned in relation to the novel, does it make sense to break the unity of time and space? If so, how can we break it? The whole performance and installation is about disobedience in relation to time. It includes many different intersecting performances: there is film, dance, music and singing. The way these performances are interacting, while each of them enacts a certain narrative, goes against the modern conceptions of time. Therefore, I was thinking about it as another way of representing the minor in terms of its simultaneity and contemporaneity (with the major).

'Contemporaneity' is another concept I use in my research drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty's work, particularly *Provincializing Europe* and *Habitations of Modernity*[7]. Thinking about the minor – which is

7 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002).

habitually located mainly in the past and related to what within the discourse of modernity would be called 'irrational' – as contemporary, equal and simultaneously existing. Therefore, I was happy to hear you [Dipesh Chakrabarty] talk about the District Six Museum, because I think that's a very interesting example of enacting this contemporaneity and translating it for the younger generations. One of the media that the Museum uses is photography. Many walls in this house with two or three rooms are covered with photographs of people who lived in District Six who were forced to leave, while the floor in the hall is covered with a big map of the area as it was fifty years ago. So, how can the combination of photography and maps bring about structures of contemporaneity? What is interesting, since you were talking about vandalism and how vandalism can lead us to think about the public, is that next to the District Six Museum is this empty space which was planned to be a 'white' residential area, but because of the strong resistance movement during the Apartheid period no buildings were constructed there. It was left empty and it still is. So, this gap, this surface, is still there reminding us of this incredible imagination of Apartheid and at the same time about the power of the struggle against it. Next to this empty space is a district where many street artists, who have become well-known in Cape Town, live and use the opportunity to re-create city spaces. How these two sites – a silent and a vocal one - co-exist now side-by-side, in a disjunctive more, is very interesting.

Another point I wanted to talk about shortly is how we conceptualise these representations that seem to reflect 'minor' perspectives in terms of thinking about history of literature or history of art. If we compare developments in these fields to Dipesh Chakrabarty's summary of developments of history proper, we would find many similarities. This has been one of the significant problems in literary studies over the last twenty years or so: how do we conceptualise history of literature on local, global and planetary scales at the same time? What does using these scales mean? I would like to look at it from the local perspective of young South African writers who take positions in relation to the demands of going beyond the post-transitional, beyond the

postcolonial. These are mostly the demands of cosmopolitanism. So, we should write not just about local situations, but we should try to imagine links to other globalised spaces. This is exactly the problem of conceptualising 'global literature'. How can these young authors enter the market of world literature, which is at present open only for white writers, writing in English and writing what has been called 'born translated' texts[8]? What alerts me in this concept is the idea of 'already-translatedness' of texts (has it already been decided which issues are relevant for global audiences and which not?) rather than their being 'in-translation'.

What is interesting to me is the strategies of resistance used by young black artists who are confronted with these issues. And here in conceptualising history, I think one of the key notions, which I am taking from Dipesh Chakrabarty's work, is the notion of translation beyond a third universalising term. Translation is, in the words of Gayatri Spivak, a constant shuffling between two localised modes. And in this sense, writing by the new generation of South African intellectuals might be becoming cosmopolitan, but cosmopolitan in a vernacular, localised way. So, I think in this regard, the notion of the minor or the vernacular helps us think about not the global, which I would relate to 'world literature' in literary studies, but about the planetary.

I would like to end by asking a question. As we are thinking about the planetary today, and celebrating this mode, doesn't it mean that we are in a way returning to the minor? In the sense that thinking of the planetary – of our interconnectedness, not as peoples, as nations, but as individuals and people in the medical sense - might lead us to developing political modes of thinking as well, but primarily what we are dealing with are ethical questions, which posit the problem of the minor and its agency So, in order to think about the planetary, we need to return to the minor, or thinking about the planetary *is* actually thinking about the minor?

8 Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Born Translated, The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

Dipesh Chakrabarty: Yeah, that's really interesting. We will come back to that.

Wayne Modest: I must admit, initially I asked myself the question 'why would a person from a museum sit and talk about this kind of topic?' But then, Dipesh Chakrabarty brought up the museum and preservation, which gave me a modality for speaking.

I want to start off with 1907. There was a massive earthquake in Jamaica and that massive earthquake destroyed part of Kingston. There was a big court case in London about whether or not the fire started the earthquake, or the earthquake started the fire. Because, if the fire started the earthquake, it wasn't an act of god and therefore there could be claims. If the other way around, then there could not be claims. Marcus Garvey, at that moment, was upset at one of the white persons who went to the court in England to say that it was the earthquake that came first. There was also a spiritual leader, what we call 'revivalist' in Jamaica, who had actually imagined the earthquake before it happened, and nobody could tell him that that earthquake didn't happen, because he had felt it and he was on this square before it had happened, and he was preaching about the changes that would happen. So, in a way, I started to wonder why those histories of Marcus Garvey never get written. The other histories, the big ones, get written, but those small histories never get written. And the histories of that revivalist also never get written because he doesn't necessarily fulfil that fact-finding notion that we need. So, thinking about that, I just wondered whether or not – and this is my first question – there is a disciplinary possibility for thinking differently about what histories become important, or whose histories become important. Whether or not, for example, if you were to think of the anthropologist, would the anthropologist have asked such a question about the validity of the source of the spiritual or the religious. What is the disciplinary basis for how facts or specific things are immobilised or theorised? So, that is the first thing I want to throw out there.

I'm excited that you brought me into the 'museum sphere' just to think about the idea of past or present pasts. We need to talk more about that because one could suggest that all of the 375.000 objects in art collections are presenting the past. We are there in a kind of preservationist drive, to try to understand that past. One of the things that we tried to do recently in the museum - and here is where I am not theoretical but very practical - was to ask this question. We just set up a research centre, so thank you for introducing me as the head of the Tropenmuseum curatorial department, but that is what Google does, as we've been talking. Google has an afterlife that you can't get rid of. I'm actually the head of a research centre that we just started. One of the research centre's aims is to ask how we write particular other histories, whether minor histories or histories that are articulated as part of bigger history, but that have been ignored. How do we write a particular history of cultural representation, for example, that does not start from the moment the West found out about these cultural others? How do we write a history of globalisation that does not only connect South East Asia or wherever with the West, but that also envisions other regionalisms and other possibilities for writing those other histories? How do we write history in a museum which has always kind of disavowed history? So, we had this thing called 'histories of the present' or 'alternative histories' that we wanted to write because we wanted to ask the question, whether or not those histories are still necessary or urgent to be written.

There is one other thing that I wonder when we speak about minor histories. The difficulty I have when we have a discussion about it is that it always seems as if we must mobilise these histories to cast doubt on the western histories or the bigger histories and that it is only in the articulation between the two that they get their validity. And I wonder about that. It still seems to me that it is predicated on the idea that a bigger history is what gives validity or necessity to the minor histories and that troubles me. Therefore, I'm interested in trying to think about it from a very positioned space. One of the things we were talking about at lunch was the question of a museum person working in

Jamaica. One could call this working from a position of the periphery within the British colonial context. I always told people,when I was setting up a museum in Jamaica, that a part of my project was exactly fighting this big history and that I was constantly in a process of trying to recover a history that was never written. That's how I felt. I was interested in trying to understand what it would mean for the Caribbean to be a generative space, a space where histories can be written even if it is a space where there is a lot of loss because there is no archive. Then I come to Europe and I start asking myself the question - I'm political in that way - 'What is my project now? What work, what labour am I going to dedicate to this kind of museum? And is that the kind of work or labour that needs to be written as well?' That led me to this question about public history and the role of institutions like minor public histories. I like the starting point of the chapter from *Provincializing Europe,* which starts off talking about European multiculturalism and the crisis there. I can tell you that one of the issues that we've been thinking about is what role do museums play in this crisis and whether the contestation about who belongs is exactly about that question, of whose history is written, and how it is written, and how it becomes heritage and what power relations helped to write it into structures of heritage. I'm interested in those things from a perspective of the museum itself.

The last thing I was thinking about is this notion of the human. I wasn't at Dipesh Chakrabarty's lecture yesterday. I had some really human thing to do – a baby – but I heard a reference to it earlier today. It is something that I have been struggling with because I've been cautious about the moment or meaning of the post-human, the moment of the Anthropocene. I'm cautious there primarily because I am working from a Caribbean perspective, from a space that I think, for a long time, has not been allowed to be human. Therefore at the moment when we in Europe decide that we are going to move beyond the human, it is once again Europe that decides that it is time to move on to something else. For me it is quite interesting when Paul Gilroy uses the word 'planetary humanism'. He goes back to the notion of humanism

in a way that I think is still trying to claim its possibility, because it is always Europe that decides that it is time to move on because 'we've done it'. Can these minor histories do something else, so that we don't always move on so quickly?

There is one last point that I would like to make. I was hopeful, recently, when there was this thing that came up called 'world histories'. I say that because my museum is now the National Museum of World Cultures because we couldn't find any good names. It's hard to find a good name for these things, one that everybody agrees on. We've been criticised to death about this notion of 'world cultures' because people said that it is like 'world music', it just means other people out there. We tried to claim all of that. It caused me to go back to a question raised in a Johannes Fabian's book on world anthropology. Fabian writes a very interesting afterword in which he criticises it without even criticising it. That was quite nice. It is interesting that in his introduction he writes a lovely thing about how we're going to incorporate people from all over the world. At the same time, however, the seat of power where these histories are being written and where most journals are being published, is still the US. Even when the person who is publishing it is of a non-US background – he comes from one of the peripheries – he is still in a US university. So, in a way, the idea of how these locations still dominate what we do with minor histories or not is something that concerns me. I would like to think it through, because one of the things I have always said - and I lay myself bare here, I don't normally talk about the fact that I am black, but I lay myself bare - is that one of the interesting things that I have realised is how hegemony works. And one of the things about hegemony that I have come to understand recently is how even the notion of blackness that is written and understood today is American. So, where is it that we are in all of these minor/major, highly shifting relationships of power, when the position from which we do it is consistently where power has always resided, to be able to say that temporal moment of "can we move on now?" It is like the slavery question: people always say "get over it", but who decides that?

Audience (directed at DC): I wonder if the way that you were talking about the minor doesn't emphasise it too much. I am saying that because one of the things that the idea of *Provincializing Europe* inspired in my work is to start looking for the fragments inside the culture that pretends to provide all those big histories and large categories – the western history, so to speak. I'd like to give a very brief example that connects also to the discussion about what the media representation of these different public histories is. I've written a piece reflecting on what happens when you enter the south cloisters of University College London, where, already for a long time, the *Auto Icon* of Jeremy Bentham is being exhibited. The *Auto Icon* was the product of Bentham's will. When he died in 1832, he asked his personal physician to do a public lecture on his remains in which, as he put it, the animal part of his body was supposed to be elucidated in a public anatomy lesson. His identity - so his more human part, you would say - was supposed to be preserved by a form of taxidermy that set him up and that was supposed to maintain his identity forever afterwards. So, there's this stuffed Jeremy Bentham in the south cloisters that does something to people, regardless of whether they know that history or not. It made me reflect on material culture studies, in the sense that this thing will stop people in their tracks, even if they don't know that it is Jeremy Bentham. It is hard to miss because it says it in huge letters that it is him, but even people who do not know Jeremy Bentham will stop there and be sort of ambivalently attracted to this particular thing. I look at this as a moment in modern history - he is one of the most modern of philosophers in a way - that at the same time exemplifies a tentative possibility that never materialised later on. We don't stuff ourselves as a memento to the people that we leave behind, although Bentham did write a piece that argued that that should happen. In fact, he argued that it was preferable to burying people and having to pay all these taxes to churches and authorities. So, there are maybe also minor histories inside the western types of history that I feel provide possibilities that might change the landscape a little bit.

DC: I think you are right. Maybe the way I spoke about it gave that impression. I think that deep down, I was wrong. I like the way Ksenia Robbe was formulating it – the object from which you take analytical distance ends up being one from which you take temporal distance as well, whereas in the archive you are always in the presence of a relic. This act of 'being in the presence of' has been written about interestingly by Frank Ankersmit. However, it's actually by overcoming the feeling of "being in the presence of" of the past that you create this distance necessary for the writing of history. I think nothing is inherently minor. It really depends on what your method 'minoritizes'. Therefore, I liked her formulation: it is that which, in spite of your method, is seeking contemporaneity with you. What sort of comes back to demand contemporaneity is really what is minor, what gets 'minoritized'. So, the method is saying "I'm seeking distance, you happened then, I happen to be in the now" – and this distance underlines our sense progress, improvement, in a word, our development. So, by seeking contemporaneity, this element disrupts your story. The story about the woman's pelvic cast with her pubic hair in it for instance – it's what Ciraj said: "I was holding it in my hands. I was that close to her privacy, her body." It's that kind of 're-presencing' of the past and being in the presence of it that brings back the auratic power of the relic of the past. It is because it has an auratic power that it subverts the distancing strategy. Nothing is inherited.

I like the point that Ksenia Robbe was making. Earlier, I was talking to her about planetarity. I was telling about this young friend of mine, a German woman who is doing her PhD now in Paris. She just sent me her PhD proposal and I was very struck by the title. It said: "The Forgotten Earth". So, what she is saying is that even though Earth could be this huge object, in the way we have told the human story to ourselves - whether it's about rights, whether it's about roads, or going to Mars and colonising it, whatever - we have always abstracted this planet. So, the pilot has computer representation in front of him in order to navigate. The more we have abstracted this planet and produced these representations of it, either as a globe or on a computer

screen, however, the more we have forgotten the actual materiality of the planet - how it works, the interlinked geo-biological processes that constitute it. So, in a way we have 'minoritized' the planet. Then, the crisis of climate change or our planetary environment crisis is the planet claiming its contemporaneity with us. The crisis is basically putting us in the presence of the materiality of the planet. You could say we have forgotten our earthly condition. Bruno Latour made this interesting connection. He mentioned in a lecture in Virginia a couple of weeks ago that "the word 'human' is tied to the word 'humus' and tied thus to soil." He was saying that we have forgotten that we are earthly creatures and that the earthly processes affect us. In that sense, the entire story of human enterprise, however you think about it - India achieving ten percent growth, or China being the biggest economic power, the Americans being the most dominant - is based on many abstract representations of the planet, in physics, in geology and climate science. The more we have done that, the more we have forgotten the actual materiality of this planet and what sustains life.

So you could metaphorically describe the frequency of extreme weather events as the forgotten materiality of the planet that is now trying to come to the fore of our consciousness. It's trying to come to the foreground of our consciousness and, in that sense, it is a bit like claiming contemporaneity. It is claiming "I am here and you are in my presence". So, that which brings you to its presence, in spite of your methods, which are methods of forgetting, is really what would define 'minoritisation', both in the mode of making something minor and in the mode of it coming back to you. So, thank you for your formulation, it helped me. Maybe by talking about peasants in that particular instance, it might have looked like certain societies are 'minoritised'. I didn't mean to say that. I mean, it very much applies to Europe, there's no question. Henri Lefebvre, the situationist theoretician, has this beautiful essay called "One excursion to the French countryside on a Sunday afternoon"[9] and it talks about his going back to the catholic

9 Henri Lefebvre, "Notes Written one Sunday in the French Countryside," in *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction*, Henri Lefebvre (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

church that he grew up in and he talks about the way in which the niches in the church all call out to him and how the distance between his analytical Marxist head and his childhood experience almost collapses causing him to enter another time space. So, absolutely, there is nothing that it actually emphasises or should emphasise as a concept.

Audience: Hi, my name is Anne Gerristen, I teach here at LIAS-LUCAS but most of the time I actually teach at the University of Warwick in England. I just wanted to comment on a couple of the things I have heard that struck me. First of all, I think that Wayne Modest's comment about who decides whether we move on and who decides which topic we are now all supposed to be working on really resonates, particularly in light of the point you were making about global history and the route to becoming global. This is something that's imposed on a lot of us and there has been this slipstream towards global history, as you were saying yesterday. And like it or not, somehow we all have to respond to that, in one way or another. At Warwick, I direct a global history centre. Your colleagues that you mentioned yesterday, Arnold and Abdul, before they moved on to the global history centre, clearly had followed that path, too. They came from a very different trajectory, a different kind of institutions, but at Warwick, then, global history became the place for them to do the kinds of things they wanted to do. In a way, that struck me because the decision about what language you use to discuss the problems that we face is hugely normative and restricted not just in regard to who decides what we study, but also in regard to what is the accepted language in which we can have those discussions and what's the discourse. In a way, that's always the problem I run into when I teach my undergraduates *Provincializing Europe* as part of a survey historiography course. I challenge them by saying: shouldn't we all be 'provincializing' Europe, and yet the language in which we do that, the style of the essays they write, the course in which that book is presented to them is all entirely structured by the western academic discourse of what history is. It is a course in historiography. So, the point I want to raise is the significance of languages and in a

way that is following on Sanjay Subrahmanyam's direction, too. The key to all this challenging and reading and accessing the wider archive has not just to do with the structures we use to access it intellectually, but also with the basic linguistic skills, which in England is a huge problem. Everyone started everything in English, there's nothing else.

DC: Sure, two points I want make here. One is that I totally agree with you on the question of acquisition of language skills, and there England has been a laggard. European or American universities' research faculties from the beginning insisted on language acquisition. In my university we actually teach eleven South Asian languages, which is probably the biggest number outside of South Asia and we insist on that. I think language learning is a very important part of humanistic scholarship. I grew up in the British tradition, both in India and Australia, and I regret it now in terms of not having learned more languages and not having been told to learn more languages. So, I'm totally with you on that question and it's good to hear somebody from England saying that. Going back to the bigger question, Wayne's question, which is partly Nira's question as well but in a different form. Now here's my take on it. I say it, and I mean it with respect: the question about whether you are being 'minoritised' by some structure is always a problem. Even within India, they always ask "Are the Bengalis talking too much?", "Are Bengalis taking up the available international space?". There's always this thing. So, this bit comes within India: who speaks for whom, even India? Now, here is my take on it and I learned this from Gandhi's life. Gandhi is a very interesting character. So, going by Ashis Nandy's argument, what does this guy do? He recognises from the beginning that the structure of hearing, being audible, being heard in the world, is already a structure of power. There's no automatic audibility. So, you have to work to find the method by which you will be heard. So, what does he do? First of all, he makes friends with completely marginal people in European cultures, so his friends are vegetarians and homosexuals and Christians who are actually marginal and who have some critical relationship to the empire. Then, he is also friendly, both

in his reading and in his friendship, with American communitarians, who become transcendentalist. So, at one level, he's actually talking a lot to structures that are marginal but that are also western structures. Secondly, I think about his decision to come back to India when he's fifty. Given the lifespan of those days, he could have died at sixty. So, it was a late life decision and it is a decision partly made strategically with the knowledge that the colonial theatre, that the theatre of anti-colonialism, was going to amplify his voice. If Gandhi had stayed on in South Africa, he would have been a minor figure in world history because he was not linking up with the African black struggles. There are now books actually showing that he was quite problematic on that question. On the other hand, he knew that if he came back to India he would be able to play an important role in anti-colonial struggle as a whole. He's a great strategist, Gandhi. You have to give it to him, he's a genius. He amplified his voice a thousand fold by actually choosing the theatre. In a way, I think, there's no innocent speaking, there's no innocent hearing. You have to be strategic.

Here is now my second take on it. My first language is Bengali and I'm a deeply Bengali person in many ways – as deeply Bengali as they come – but I also describe myself as a very badly trained European intellectual, born and brought up in India. The traditions in which I had to learn to speak and think are not the Buddhist logic and the Jataka tradition. I read about them from time to time but those are not the traditions I have been brought up in. I've been brought up in squarely European traditions. So, I'm already within that structure. And that structure has decided who hears, who speaks, who talks. Before I wrote *Provicializing Europe,* I wrote the essay *Who speaks for Indian pasts?.* One thing that made me write it was that, at one point, I thought the academic conversation in the world is organised like a conference. There are many parallel sessions going on, and there are few plenary sessions. The plenaries are hogged by white people. We speak in the parallel sessions: twenty-minute presentation while the plenary person gets an hour. I thought we need to get into the plenaries but the condition of getting into the plenaries - and I say this

as a very deeply Bengali, deeply Indian history person - is that you have to find a problem that interests people across cultures. I believe that all cultures, intellectually, are equally interesting if you take the interest. Part of our problem, however, is that we are no longer historians of particular communities. There was a time when historians were historians of different reading communities. Therefore, there is a lot of vernacular writing in Indian languages of scholarship that is unknown in English. It is very good scholarship, but it's addressed to a particular community. Our home scholars might write for their own community. The flourishing of such scholarship was possible because globalisation hadn't happened yet. But when I was asking this question to myself an important change had already happened in the West: a Homi Bhabha was already speaking to a Stuart Hall! Stuart Hall found a place in the Birmingham cultural studies workshop, which itself happened because of post-war expansion of mass education and the English working class finding itself unrepresented in the history syllabus and other curricula. Where would you actually make room for studying pop culture, working class cultures, working class youth culture? Richard Hoggart's use of literacy is the foundational text for the Birmingham school of cultural studies. Then, Stuart Hall takes on this matter and then the London Municipal Council, which had a tradition of having left-wing people elected to it, gives money to the Institute of Contemporary Arts to bring Stuart Hall, Isaac Julien and Homi Bhabha together. They are thus enabled to organize a conference on Frantz Fanon. The postcolonials would later get criticised by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri for pushing a door that was already open. The state had already opened it. But you see, it was all happening within that sign-chain of the West. So, when you say the West decides, this West is now in its self-representation no longer the West of exclusively white domination. Our presence in the West owes something to those global changes. Those global changes may have begun in the '50s because of English search for cheap labour because of post-war demographical changes. When the West Indians, the Indians and the Pakistanis came, there were massive cultural changes in the West. That itself has changed the condition of

hearing. If I had given this talk in the 1930s and said that "I'm a poorly trained European intellectual" I would have been laughed at.

On the other hand, to go back to the climate question, "who decides when to move on", and I totally agree with you when people say "Move on from a particular wound that I have given you," it is a problematic statement. This happens in India too. You know, two thousand Muslims were killed in 2002. Most of my business school friends are pro Mr. Narendra Modi, the prime minister. When we had a discussion on this, many said: "We have to move on." I said: "Hang on, you haven't lost your parents and brothers, so what you know of grief here? Who are you, belonging to the community that gave grief, to ask the grieving person to "move on"? And what does moving on mean for a person? My mother's dead now and I've moved on, but that doesn't mean I've forgotten her death and, if she had been killed, I wouldn't have forgotten the murderer. I'm with you on those questions, but there's the question of humanism and I totally buy the humanism point of Frantz Fanon or even Paul [Gilroy's planetary humanism]. But at the same time it's not a question of being a humanist. It's a question of thinking whether a point has come when we should also think about the limits of humanism. Now, who decides? That's a very interesting question. The entire climate problem would not have been possible to define after the war without American military investment in space research.

You gave me a very noble form of that question, "Who decides?" I got a very ugly version of it from Indian friends, who said: "Just when we start to consume? They said stop consuming." But it's not just that question. The question is, really, whether to even grant the validity of that question. One can live contradictorily. One can think contradictorily, and that's what W.E.B Du Bois talks about: double consciousness. He used his forked tongue. Try and really think: the science of climate change is actually not something that is trying to shore up western interests. The science is actually about enlightened self-interest. It's actually saying, even to western societies, that you can't go on playing this game of capitalism in this way because it is going to affect your own future generations. One of the best climate scientists, James Han-

sen, has a book called *Storms for my Grandchildren*. It doesn't say "storms for my Indian friends' grandchildren". So, in a way, the point is that while these scientists are not anti-capitalist scientists, they are clearly saying "capitalism, as business as usual, cannot go on". Now, saying that does not stop me from making humanist choices. Saying that does not stop me from talking about justice between humans. But talking about justice between humans does not stop me from talking about justice between humans and non-humans. If you give it a moment in which these questions are getting interrelated, then it just makes our job more complicated. We will have to do more things at the same time than we are used to. That's all I got to say.

Audience: I wanted to relate to the comment that Wayne Modest has made and which was actually a point of discussion with what Professor Chakrabarty was saying earlier about blackness and slavery and about getting over it. I often hear, also personally, that white people suggest that we just forget about race or that we just get over gender. This is interesting as I think Professor Chakrabarty said that it was exactly those who were not hurt that think it is possible to get this over with while it is those who have been hurt who have to find a way to move on. The point I was trying to make is really the other one, not this one. As Professor Chakrabarty has been saying, there is a shift, so, as Professor Chakrabarty was also mentioning, we all inherited western academia and function within western academia. Of course we also inherited the capitalistic mode. We function within this structure and we communicate in this one language which is the English language. So, there's also the question of to which degree we are conscious or critical about the degree to which we have inherited the modes and the norms and the rules of capitalism and western academia, about the degree to which we actually uphold, create, or re-create, or reproduce these norms, and about the degree to which we criticise them. The point that I was trying to make is: I think it is not about that, but it is more about the dominance and about the power and about the flow of power, because, as Professor Chakrabarty again is saying, the subject is shifting. It's

shifting away from white people, from western people, the intellectuals. At the same time the power is shifting and when the power is going from somewhere to somewhere it is thrown from somewhere. If we, for example, observe contemporary culture, movies such as *Snowpiercer* or *Gran Torino*, we see in those movies that the people who represent the future of the world are non-white people. In *Snowpiercer*, it is a Korean girl and a black boy, African-American or African. In *Gran Torino*, the one who inherits American culture is a non-white male boy from Hmong. The point that I'm trying to make is that, like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri were saying in *Empire*, there is a new empire already in the making. In this new empire, the capitalists, the power holders, the ones who are dominating others are not exclusively white people, nor are they exclusively male. Of course we still have at least the idea of the white male who is dominating. He's still dominating, maybe he's ninety percent dominating, but there is a shift. What I'm trying to say is that, as Hardt and Negri say in their book, it is not exclusively white and it is not exclusively male, but that doesn't really matter in the sense that there is still the dominating and the dominated, and there still are the structures of power that shoot down responsibility, self-criticism and the ability to see these new structures that come into being. I think I was trying to say something about that, because when we inherit power, we inherit all the other things that come with this power. Maybe we did not inherit it yet. Maybe we have only inherited five percent but we are inheriting it more and more. I was just trying to say: to which degree are we really critical about that? I don't know, maybe I haven't expressed myself clearly.

WM: I think what I have to say is going to take a lot of discussion, because I'm actually just coming back to what you were saying, in a way, also about the planet. But similarly to you, if I may, it might be a bit rude, I always say to people that I inhabit a particular colonial condition and that particular colonial condition is British. It is similar. There is a particular way in which certain things become known and accepted, also in the education system. Just going back to your thought

about Gandhi and how you use that, it was interesting as well, for me, that we were talking about these networks where minority histories connect. Where minority stories connect and how 'minoritizing' can be a political project and part of a political imagination that connects different places. It is a political project that connects Stuart Hall with Homi Bhabha, as a part of another network of structures. We were also talking about what happened at the Bandung Conference and what networks it created to facilitate a certain kind of "writing back" in terms of the minority projects. For my last question, I would like to go back to your response to try to understand it. This is just troublesome, I'm sorry. I didn't understand your point because I thought your point was more or less to suggest that to think the planetary is not necessarily to think of the planet as a minority, but to think of the human as becoming part of the minority history in the bigger project that is the planetary concern. I thought that that was the point you were raising, which is a little different from what you were saying just now. I would like to ask about the materiality of the Earth, because I see the western imperialist project as having exactly that materiality. It is exactly in that materiality that we've been able to create the modern empires, whether or not it is through mining, through this, through that, whatever.

DC: There are two traditions of thinking about materialism and how we approach matter. One way to approach matter is how Marxists do it. Marxists say "you have to be materialistic and think of the logic of capital". You're actually being idealistic because the logic of capital is not matter. It's a concept. So, if you think the planet can be represented in a globe, if you think that the planet can be represented by certain numbers, you are thinking like a Marxist. You're thinking about the materiality of the planet, but by evacuating all matter from it, you are converting this matter into information that is manageable, that is extractable, and that is then represented. As opposed to that form of materialism, think of Martin Heidegger's wonderful essay on what is called

"the Thing",[10] where says something like this: "If you ask what this bottle is and you say it's plastic and this is its chemical composition, you have done in your mind what the atom bomb was meant to do to the world. You've actually smashed its materiality to smithereens." Then he talks about the pitcher. He says that the pitcher is what receives, contains and can pour out. So, he turns your mind back to the actual materiality of the object. The more we deal with this planet as just a collection of resources, map it for its prospect of mining and fossil fuels, the more we abstract it from its actual networked functioning. So, the planet we are forgetting is in the second mode of materiality, not in the first mode. You're totally right that capitalism deals with it in the first mode of approaching matter, which is by evacuating matter of all its immediate materiality and going and looking at matter through the chapter on chemistry elementary books called "Properties of matter", or René Descartes' definition of matter, which is *res extensa*. It occupies space. In thinking thus, you have forgotten the actual materiality, the networked materiality of this planet. That's what I meant.

KR: Let me respond very shortly. I was indeed thinking more about decentering the human with regard to the materiality, but more about how we can think about connections between humans and between humans and objects and nature in a different way. As you suggested yesterday, in your lecture, we should try and go back to indigenous knowledges and how we can rethink them as contemporary. So, basically I always try to draw, for example, on what research the comrades do. Also, in looking at indigenous knowledges of African people, for example, and showing how these are contemporary, not only for the community that they study, but for all of us. It's sort of how we can adopt them in our being and see human relationships and relationships between humans and objects, in terms of entanglement.

10 Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

EM: Okay, we are at about the full limit of time. I want to ask if the panellists have any brief final comments they would like to venture.

NW: I just wanted to respond to your comment about the plenary. I think it's still important to state that between these minority histories there are hierarchies – that not everybody is going to make it to the plenary. Some people would always remain in the, you know, the side lines.

DC: But there is a question of whether we inhabit now a condition where it's almost impossible to forget the dominant majority. Whereas those scholars inhabited spaces where they actually really didn't care about what somebody sitting in Cambridge thought of what they did. Maybe we need to retrieve those spaces because the dominant structure is not going to change.

EM: Okay, with that, I'd like to thank all the panellists.

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Macaulay's bastard children

A conversation with Sanjay Seth on the Code of History, Post-colonialism and Marxism.
Interview by José Neves

Once he completed his education in Sydney and Canberra, Professor Sanjay Seth held positions at Sydney University and La Trobe University, where he became one of the founding co-editors of the Journal *Postcolonial Studies*. He also held a Fellowship at Tokyo University. Then he moved to Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 2007, to take up the Chair in Politics and the directorship of the Center for Postcolonial Studies. He has published in the fields of modern Indian history, political and social theory, postcolonial theory and international relations. As he explains in the following pages, he is particularly interested in how modern European ideologies, and modern Western knowledge more generally, 'travelled' to the non-Western world. His work is trying to grasp what effects this had both on the non-Western world, and on modern Western knowledge (see his *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2007). The following conversation was held when Professor Sanjay Seth was visiting the New University of Lisbon. José Neves conducted most of the conversation, trying to range from Seth's first works on politics (*Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: The Case of Colonial India*, New Delhi, Sage, 1995) to his more recent interventions on the epistemological, cultural and political aspects of the writing of history. In the final part of the conversation, students and colleagues who were listening to the interview also addressed questions to Professor Seth.

José Neves – I will start with some personal questions... Let me quote parts of the last paragraph of your book *Subject Lessons*: "Western knowledge arrived in India through the coercive agency of colonialism. We were told, most forthrightly by Macaulay, that this knowledge was true and that our own knowledges, like our gods, were false. (...) Nonetheless, that knowledge has now become global. There is no easy point outside it, no escape from it other than by engaging with and through it. (...) But if those who were once 'subject to pedagogy' can, long after they are gone, be studied in a fashion that subjects modern western knowledge to critical scrutiny, there is a pleasing irony in the thought that Macaulay's bastard children will have contributed to the critical appropriation of a knowledge that was once imposed upon them." We will surely return to this book as our conversation develops, but I would start by asking you to reflect about your childhood as a subject of western knowledge pedagogy...

Sanjay Seth –Let me begin firstly by thanking you and my hosts for inviting me and giving me the chance to speak to you all, and for your hospitality. I have to apologize to you for the fact that I do not speak in Portuguese and you are having to make all the effort to follow me in another language.

It has always struck me as odd that many people in India – but this is not uniquely an Indian phenomenon, it's a much wider story than that – grew up in two worlds: one the world of formal knowledge, where they learnt science, rationality, etc., etc.; but also a world (this was sometimes represented or embodied by women in the family) of modes of being and of affect that were not secular, scientific, and so on. So – and this is not unique in India, and many of you probably have this experience –we inhabited two worlds, which however never really came together. Now, if we follow the logic of what I learnt at school and so on, some of the people around me, whom I cared deeply about, belonged to a world of superstition, or unreason, or irrationality... And yet, this world was all around me, this was not some minor remnant of a time past that had somehow survived into the twentieth century. So,

at some point, much, much later – I mean, obviously as a child I didn't think of any of this – I became interested in how it was that so many of us managed to inhabit these different worlds without ever using one to reflect upon the other; it was if we kept them separated.

But that came much later. In fact, my earlier work – the book you referred to on Marxist theory and nationalist politics – was my PhD. dissertation, which I undertook when I was a member of the Communist Party in Australia and active on the left. And it began as the project of a militant; I was going to come up with really big answers to big questions - I was going to find the solution to what the Indian communist movement should have done and what it could now do. The arrogance of youth! But as it proceeded, it became a very different sort of enterprise. By the end of that project, which later became a book, some of the presumptions that I began with had now actually become problematic for me. And what I argue in that book is that the way Marxism in the colonies made itself relevant to countries where capitalist enterprise was not highly developed, where the proletariat was very small in numbers, and where otherwise Marxism really should have been irrelevant – was through the development of an analysis of imperialism. Lenin argued that there is a global capitalist system, but it is not one that requires that all the elements of that system themselves be highly developed or capitalist. It was a brilliant analysis, and I think in many important ways, right. But one of its consequences politically was that what the Communist movement in the colonies, and certainly in India, ended up doing, was assuming that nationalism was progressive in a twofold sense: it was politically progressive because it would be a blow against imperialism, and therefore would weaken capitalism globally; and it was historically progressive because nationalism represented bourgeois democracy, which is historically more advanced than feudalism. And the assumption here was that these two different senses of 'progressive' were isomorphic – they mapped onto each other. So, the anticolonial nationalist movement was progressive because it was anti-imperialist, and it was progressive because it was bound to be carried by historically progressive social forces. By the end of that book,

I saw that this assumption that the two mapped on to each other was wrong, or at least, needed to be fundamentally rethought.

Soon after I finished that book, I also began to become more critical of each element of that argument, not just the assumption that they mapped onto each other, and this (with the benefit of hindsight) was the beginning of my move from Marxism to post-colonialism[1] (which is not a term in which I have a great investment - it just represents a space from which to think), albeit a post-colonialism that remains indebted to Marx and conceives itself as part of the Left. More and more I became interested in critiques of the nation-state and critiques of nationalism in the colonies - not just the common leftist position that bourgeois nationalism is not radical enough in its nationalism, that it compromises with the imperialists, etc. – but critiques of the nation-state itself, and not just the insufficient realization of it. And the historicist narrative, which thought the bourgeois modern was better than the so-called feudal, and therefore that the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were historically progressive classes, and the peasantry, even if it could be politically mobilized, was somehow the repository of something that was already part of the historical past, and destined to be consigned to the dustbin of history... This too now seemed to me extremely problematic. These doubts and questions led me to reflect upon the categories and the knowledge through which we encounter and understand the world, and much later (there's a long gap between those two books) become central to my *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*, in which I address the issue of our forms of knowledge and their universality.

There's another way of describing my intellectual trajectory, which is retrospective: that is, it does not describe what I was thinking as these changes took place. But a lot of our recounting of our lives is retrospective, and all history writing is retrospective; it's from where

1 On this 'journey' see Sanjay Seth, "Modernity Without Prometheus: On Re-reading Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*," *Third World Quarterly* 33:7 (July 2012): 1377-86; published in Spanish translation as "Modernidad sin Prometeo," in *De Ruinas y Horizontes: La Modernidad y sus Paradojas*, ed. Jorge E. Brenna B. and Francisco Carballo. (Cidade do México: Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, 2014), 105-21.

you are now that you look backwards and construct a coherent narrative in which things link up in some sort of intelligible fashion. So the other way I could tell the story of my intellectual trajectory, and sometimes tell it to myself of my own work, is that what I was doing all along, without knowing it, was looking at how knowledges born in Europe travelled to the non-western world, first in the form of systematic ideologies, like Marxism (first book) and then, in a more general and a more ambitious sense, to look at how the whole corpus of modern western knowledge travels to the non-western world (in this case India) and what happened to it, as it travelled, what happened to the places that it travelled to, what the consequences of all this were.

From the critique of eurocentrism to the limits of history

JN – Part of your project, in a sense, participates in a general movement of critique of Eurocentric perspectives, namely historiographical Eurocentric accounts of the non-western world, or of the history of Europe itself. And, of course, postcolonial theory or postcolonial theories – if we say it in the plural – actively participate in this critique. But, as you were mentioning, the problems that you were – at a certain point at least – facing... It was not just the problem that Eurocentrism poses to knowledge, but whether knowledge is in itself condemned to be somehow ethnocentric, or parochial, or provincial, as your colleague Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it. This makes a clear difference regarding several other contributions to the critique of Eurocentrism, some of which want to achieve a "better science", as you put in your article "Historical Sociology and Postcolonial Theory: Two Strategies for Challenging Eurocentrism".[2] How do you look at these different types of critique of Eurocentrism?

SS – The article you refer to is deliberately very short, and partly because it's short, it's very stylized and exaggerated; you know... in two

2 *International Political Sociology*, 3:3 (September 2009): 334-38. Translated into Portuguese as "Sociologia Histórica e Teoria Pós-Colonial: duas estratégias para desafiar o eurocentrismo," *Expedições: Teoria da História e Historiografia* 7:1 (2016): 263-70.

thousand words you make stark distinctions, and in this case I make a stark distinction between a historical sociological way of being anti-Eurocentric and a theoretical-philosophical way of being anti-Eurocentric, and I declare my preference for the latter. Nonetheless I am sympathetic to historical sociology. It seems to me an important enterprise to contest the conventional narrative about the making of the modern world, according to which capitalism and modernity first developed in western Europe and then spread outward. And a lot of recent work, some of which I admire, has sought to contest that by showing that the discovery of the Americas was absolutely essential to the emergence of capitalism and modernity, and that Africa and Asia were not simply the recipients of a modernity that came with gunboats and goods and colonialism, but were actually involved in its production, albeit unwittingly and under highly unequal, coercive and exploitative relations. It seems to me that work of this sort in historical sociology, which of course varies in quality, is extremely important.

However, to the degree that such work is driven by the desire to undermine Eurocentrism, I think it's hostage to empirical fortune, because it's essentially an empirical argument. And, you know, one day I was talking to a colleague and I asked myself: what if someone could definitively show that the Eurocentric account was true? It's never going to happen, because in such complex stories, there will always be endless room for argument. But, in principle, it could happen: there could be an overwhelming empirical case for showing that the conventional story is right. Would we then give up our anti-Eurocentrism? Is it only dependent upon empirical data? It seems to me not, and it seems to me that it is important that we recognize that political and ethical desire is invested in our contestations of Eurocentrism. So, an empirical account might not be the best way of achieving the end that one is seeking to achieve. But a second and more important reason for being critical of anti-Eurocentric historical sociology was the one you alluded to, namely that I became more and more interested in the limits of our knowledge systems, and it seemed to me that anti-Eurocentric historical sociology was trying to correct what it saw as biased or

problematic explanations by producing 'better' explanations. But these better explanations still accept the fundamental categorical grounds of the Social Sciences. A lot of my work, especially the more recent work, for at least the last decade, if not more, has been interested in what the limits of those categories are...

So, in summary, while I think that the distinction I make in the short article is real, it's perfectly possible – for instance as a teacher – to combine the two forms of anti-Eurocentrism. When I teach my undergraduates, I make available to them a historical-sociological literature which contests the conventional account of the development of modernity; at the same time, I try to push them in a sort of theoretical, post-colonial direction.

JN – You were mentioning that you need to problematize the categories we use while analysing past realities – that kind of work is a work without which you could not even imagine doing history nowadays. I mean, it's as if there is no distinction between your theoretical reflection on what is the practice of history and the practice of history itself. And you gave an example on your first answer regarding your personal account of your past: the case of religion. How do we, secular intellectuals – if not in our private life, in our public activity – engage with religion as an object of study, and the difficulties it raises? The case of religion could also be made referring to magic, myth or even memories, of course...

SS – Can I start with religion? Because the problem with religion is, as you say, how do we deal with the fact that the academy, the social sciences, are scientific, secular, etc and yet very large numbers of people are not... How do we, as historians for instance, write about those whose world is not like that? The question has been very well raised by my friend Dipesh Chakrabarty. But the problem is not simply that our categories are secular and yet the subjects we study are not always so, but that even the category of religion is a problematic one. We assume

that there is something called religion, a genus of which Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc. are the different species. Now, I want to suggest to you, drawing upon the work of Talal Asad, Jonathan Z. Smith, Peter Harrison and many others, that the very category of religion is, in some important ways, actually a Christian category, because the construction of the idea of religion as something which is universal but then particularized rested upon the idea that religion is essentially a matter of belief. On the basis of this understanding of religion you could catalogue Hindus as those who believe this, Buddhists as those who believe that, and so on and so forth. But the idea that religion consists of 'beliefs' is itself a product of the Protestant Reformation and its aftermath, as Peter Harrison has shown. And there are parts of the world, even today, where religion is simply not a matter of belief, and where therefore the category of 'religion' is a deeply problematic one. I'll give an example, one that comes from the horse's mouth. Max Müller, who is often called the founding father of comparative religion, and who was a brilliant Indologist, worked in Oxford. Müller never went to India, because he felt that the India of the nineteenth century would disappoint him bitterly, it would be dirty and dusty and hot; he preferred his India of ancient grandeur and of Sanskrit texts. When the first generation of Indians began to go to Oxford and Cambridge - these were elite Indians who hoped to sit the Indian civil service exams when they went back - Müller was very excited, because he could now actually ask contemporary Indians about their religion. In a revealing footnote to one of his books he describes how he ran after these young men to ask them questions. (In my mind's eye I imagine these poor young men, first subjected to the appalling weather and the appalling food of England, already suffering culture shock, and then, on top of that, confronted by this professor who runs after them to ask them questions!) Muller himself describes how when he asked them "What do you believe?", they would look at him puzzled and say: "We don't understand your question." Because for them Hinduism was not a matter of 'beliefs', in the same way that Japanese people today can go to a Shinto shrine and to a Buddhist temple even on the same day, and

they see no contradiction between these two activities; because these are *practices*, not just 'beliefs' happening in our heads. So, the category of religion is a prime example of one of those modern categories deeply imbedded in our history, so thoroughly naturalized that we all use it - me too! But actually it won't serve its purpose, it's not a universal category.[3] Sorry, there is a second part to your question, which I forgot...

JN – We can return to the second part, because you also mentioned a problem with another category, which is the category of belief. In some of your texts, you argue that actually one thing that historical practice entails is that there is something that is a subject that produces knowledge and that gets to know something due to that production – something that is exalted as an object... Differently from this, mythological accounts do not stress this division between what we are speaking about and what is being discoursed, represented, in the sense that there is no clear division between representation and reality. When you state that we are never studying something that is beyond our research agenda, our perspectives, doesn't that come close to the ways myth develops?

SS – You are quite right that some of the things I am working on now are in part about this question. I gave religion as an example of a specific category just now. The past and the ways we represent it is another example, at a higher level of abstraction. History-writing mobilizes all these categories: religion, civil society, state, etc. And I think history as a category also needs to be interrogated. I think that it too, like 'religion' and 'belief', has built into a series of presumptions, of which one of the most important, as you've just pointed out - one which is a presumption of all of what I call 'modern, western knowledge'- is that knowledge is a relation between a knowing subject and an object. Now, again, this is so deeply imbedded in us, myself included, that these are

3 See Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*. **(Durham: Duke University Press, 2007)**, 62-69.

not just things we believe, these are almost part of our muscle memory, I mean, these have been part of our way of inhabiting the world. So it's very hard to get the critical distance from it, to even see that this is a presumption, not a fact about the world. One way we could do that is to know that there are other people in the world, some from times past, some our contemporaries, who do not make this presumption. The point is not initially whether we are right or whether they are right, it's just to be able to relativize ourselves in the sense of being able to see ourselves as particular and not universal... to see our knowledge as "our knowledge", and not as Knowledge as such, with a capital letter.

Now, in a moment I'll get to history, which is the big category... But let me give you an illustration of how I came to problematize the subject/object distinction in a very concrete way. It comes from *Subject Lessons*, from the first chapter, on cramming. I collected a lot of historical material on how the British and many Indian educators, public officials, colonial officials, etc., complained all the time that Indian students, having been provided with modern knowledge in schools and universities, chose to pass their exams by cramming, by which the complainants meant rote learning - memorizing everything. And this is a persistent complaint across 150 years. Educators and others tear their hair out in frustration as they voice this lament: "We finally provided these people with the right way to know the world, and what do they do? They do exactly what they did with their traditional knowledges, namely learn it all off, memorize what we teach them, and then they regurgitate it in the exams, and to make matters even worse, sometimes they regurgitate it quite well, and they get good marks in their exams! But we are failing in what we set out to do, which is to educate them, to actually engage and know the world in a new way, not in their old ways." Now, it took me a very long time - I'm embarrassed now how long it took me - to ask what is the most fundamental question: namely, what presumptions do you have to make to see rote learning as a failure of knowledge rather than a form of knowledge? Rote learning has a long history, not only in the non-western world but also in the western world. You know, Thomas Aquinas was greatly admired

because he had committed hundreds of texts to memory. Why and when did we start thinking that to memorize something is a failure of knowledge rather than a form of it? And once I asked this question, and it took me an embarrassingly long time to realize this was the real question, then my work was easier, because then I could see that built into our conception of knowledge is an almost Romantic subject, who must encounter the world and make the knowledge of it his or her own. It's only genuinely knowledge if, as it were, it wells up from inside us. If it's simply a repetition of something else, then it's not genuinely acquired. Now that, it seems to me, is a very fine illustration of how the subject-object relation defines what we understand to be knowledge, so that when we encounter any other form of knowledge, it only seems to us like a failed form of knowledge.

As a teacher in a modern university, I tell my students: "do not rote learn". So my point is not to say "return to rote learning"; the point is to recognize the historical and cultural specificities of our forms of knowing. And I think that applies to history writing as well.

JN – But what about the category of history itself?

SS – Ok, let me be provocative and say we normally assume that history has a very long genealogy: there were the great Greek historians, some great Roman historians, then a not-so-great period for a very, very long time – most of the medieval period – and then we get to the Renaissance, and so on. I want to suggest to you that history writing, as we understand it, is actually a quite modern invention, and that the genealogy that we normally give it is largely fictional. We should all read Herodotus, but the idea that this is the precursor to history seems to me utterly fanciful. And Thucydides makes up the speeches of many of his historical actors; the famous Melian dialogue is in Thucydides' words, not anyone else's words. It seems to me that we academics construct these elaborate genealogies for ourselves in order to endow our present activities with a dignity that goes back thousands of years.

So, if it's true that history is a modern practice, no more than a few hundred years old, and in its academic and professionalised form, even less, then it seems to me it's also true that history as a practice has a series of presumptions built into it. One of these is that the past is dead; one of the most important presumptions of modern history writing is that the past is dead, you can't resurrect it, you can't bring it back to life... You know the famous quote from Ranke, that everyone quotes, that the task of history is to represent what really happened? This is endlessly quoted as the charter of objectivity, and nowadays people proceed to criticize it, because objectivity is considered impossible, the facts don't speak for themselves, etc. I think what's often missed, and what seems to me more important, is that Ranke is saying that history is a cognitive enterprise; it has nothing to say morally, ethically, theologically etc. Why is it a cognitive enterprise? It's a cognitive enterprise because the past is dead; we can only know it, nothing else.

Now, all peoples have a sense of historicity. I think a sense of historicity is universal. But not all people think of the past as dead, as we do. Now we get to your question: what privileges our sense of history over theirs? I'm asking myself that question and increasingly it seems to me that I am not sure that our sense of historicity is privileged in relation to that of others. That doesn't mean we should stop doing it. We can't stop doing it; it's a feature of our culture, of our institutions and collective practices, etc. But I think it would be useful to start thinking about the limits of our knowledge forms rather than constantly assuming their inevitable superiority, and assuming that they lie at the *telos* of a development where modern history writing is superior to and supersedes all the other forms of historicity that have characterized human life.

Subaltern Studies and Maoism

JN – As you were saying, almost all historians nowadays would recognize that our historical accounts of the past are accounts that depend on a certain point of view, which is our present point of view; what

they perhaps do not accept is the inexistence of the past as something objective, as something that is not only the cause but also the effect of a specific sense of historicity. Still, I was wondering if we can find within the debates among historians some indications of the past as something presumed by historians and not simply a fact of the world. For instance, all the critiques that medieval or early modern historians make against modern, contemporary historians, saying that they actually don't study the past, but that they study the present, that their objectivity is less accurate because they actually are studying the period they are living within. Even if cunningly, this suggests the subjectivity of the division between present and past. And another indication can be seen on the debates on memory, which you know much better than me. For instance, the concept of 'trauma' is a concept that we, as historians, are often available to accept and that encompasses the idea that there is a past that has not yet passed. So, perhaps even modern western history opens the door for some of the arguments you are making.

SS – Absolutely! Look, I would be mortified if anyone here thought I was claiming that I had come up with all these reflections solely by myself ... Like all of us, I've learnt so much from others. So, the point is not originality; I'm absorbing like a sponge... So, I'm very much indebted to Hayden White, Ranajit Guha, perhaps above all, to my friend Dipesh Chakrabarty, and to many others. And I'm engaging with and drawing upon modern western knowledge, not opposing it. You began by quoting from the end of *Subject Lessons*, where I describe myself as one of "Macaulay's bastard children". I teach in a university, and a university, by definition, is an institution of modern western knowledge. So, I'm not against this knowledge, I'm trying to think through it; its possibilities and also its limitations.

On the first part of your question, you're right... to the degree that anything is ever settled in the human sciences, I think that is settled. Today, very few historians would claim, in a Rankean mode, that history is objective. So, that is sort of largely finished.

We all agree that there is a past. I'm not saying pasts are made up. But, as I will be arguing on Friday, there isn't a past that we just stumble upon, there isn't a past in the sense that there are rocks or there are trees. The past is an object that has to be constituted. This is a point made by Lévi-Strauss, by Louis Althusser, and many others. And 'pastness' is constituted in different ways. I give an example in one of my essays:[4] in India, people of my class get horrified that 'ordinary' people will walk up to the wall of a historic monument and piss. Middle-class Indians with a historical sensibility are always horrified: "What's wrong with these people? Don't they realize that this is part of our glorious national past... and here they are, pissing on it!" But it's not that these people are stupid, it's not that they don't have a sense of pastness, for they have myths, epics, legends... they very much have a sense of pastness, but it's not constituted on similar thoughts or grounds as ours. So, I think there is a past, but we never encounter a past in the raw, we always construct it in advance. And I think modern history writing is one way of both constructing the past and constructing a relation with it. And I think epic, for instance, is another way of doing that.

Pastness, I think, is a human universal. So my argument is not that there are people without a past; I think there are people without a sense of modern history, but they have other relations with their past.

JN – Let me just insist on this, but now trying to move to a different place... One of the major problems you have been working on is how modern western knowledge – and you make a strong argument on the need of defining it both as modern and western, that is, giving it a time and a space – encounters or disencounters itself from non-western pasts. At the same time, you also mention that this kind of disagreement between the code of history, the code of modern western knowledge, and the pasts it's trying to grasp happens as well when modern

4 "Reason or Reasoning, Clio or Siva?," *Social Text* 78 (2004): 85-101; translated into Portuguese as "Razão ou Raciocínio? Clio ou Shiva?," *História da Historiografia*, 11 (April 2013): 173-90.

western knowledge faces pre-modern (even if western) pasts. There's a text you wrote where you quote Michel de Certeau when he refers to the ways we, modern European intellectuals, fail to engage or to analyse our pre-modern ancestors in relation to religion or other matters. But then sometimes you also say that there is a specificity on the disagreement between western knowledge and non-western pasts, that there is a kind of more deep disagreement, I would put it like this. Why the distinction?

SS – There is a wonderful quote from Michel de Certeau, who addresses this question. He says something like: "The modern French historian writing about seventeenth-century France, can encounter in his subject, or the text he is studying, someone who attributes agency to the Christian god. So this person, or this text, is explaining certain historical events as a consequence of God's agency". And Certeau says, what history-writing does is reverse the order of explanation. He uses the apt metaphor of castling – I don't know if any of you play chess, but in chess there is a moment when you can 'castle' the rook with the king, that is, swap them over. Similarly, when the text explains things as an effect of God, the modern historian explains belief in God as an effect of the world. The text says: the social is to be explained in terms of God; we say: God is to be explained in terms of the social. Now, this is an example of how the modern historian of Europe confronts the same problem as the modern historian of India, or Africa, or anywhere else. I think the difference is that for the historian writing about Europe (and it doesn't matter whether the historian is European or not, for this is not about identity; it's the knowledge form that matters, not the person doing it) can presume that that text of the seventeenth century has some sort of historical continuity with the now, with our knowledge systems now. In other words, in Gadamerian terms you can say: "There can be no fusion of horizons between me and this text because we cannot agree on God as an agent. However, in encountering this seventeenth-century text, I encountered an earlier moment in my own tradition, a tradition which I now re-appropriate and revivify, which I keep alive through changing it."

Now, what happened in India and in many colonial countries is that, instead of a continuity, there was an absolutely sharp break, a caesura. Sanskrit knowledge forms and vernacular knowledge forms were alive and flourishing at one point, and then suddenly there's a cut-off, an abrupt end. So for the historian of India, I think there's a deeper problem. He or she has the same problem as the historian of France, but with the addition that he or she cannot even assume the historical continuity which will 'redeem' the anachronism that the European historian also faces. And this is because of that sharp line dividing us from past traditions of thinking. In Europe you can read Renaissance texts or medieval texts and, even if they sound strange to you, they're not purely or not necessarily purely of historical interest, right? People can read them as if they were in some way alive. The striking thing in India, the one place I know a little bit about, is that hardly any scholar reads earlier texts as if they spoke to the present. They've become the subject of annotated editions. The only approach you can have to them is a historical approach. In Europe you can read Aristotle or Aquinas as if they were interlocutors, part of an ongoing tradition (it does not matter for present purposes that this tradition might be constructed); but there is nothing in our past which still has that status (at the level of formal knowledge - it is very different in the 'popular' domain), because the break has been so profound.

JN – Let me make one final question. The move we were discussing some minutes ago, that is, from a critique of Eurocentrism to a critique of the limits of Social Sciences, can also be identified with the trajectory of the Subaltern Studies group. In this case there was also a first attempt to provide an alternative and better history ... And then, from the mid-80s on, there was a turn from this kind of Marxist scientific approach to a more post-structuralist, postmodern (if we can use this word) approach. Is this correct? Your work is actually much more engaged with this second kind of Subaltern Studies approaches, close to Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, to quote what is perhaps the most relevant – for us, historians – of many other titles. Could you

talk a bit about your relation to the Subaltern Studies group. I know Ranajit Guha was your PhD supervisor...

SS – I should say, first of all, that I was never a member of Subaltern Studies. But it is true that in some ways intellectually it was very important for me. I was influenced by Subaltern Studies, very much so.

Now to answer your question, I agree with your distinction, but I'd introduce one qualification: I don't think Subaltern Studies ever, even in its beginning, sought to be scientific. Ranajit Guha, who was such a decisive influence, especially but not only over the early volumes of Subaltern Studies, was certainly a Marxist, and was influenced by Maoism, but he never aspired to scientific socialism, and least of all the kind that came from Eastern Europe. But it is true that there was a change, partway through the project. This also split the group to some degree – one of its very important members, and a friend and teacher of mine, Sumit Sarkar, became a very vocal critic of the group that he once belonged to, on the grounds that it had missed its vocation by becoming a form of culturalism and being hijacked by postmodernism, when it should have stayed resolute, should have remained an intelligent and critical form of Marxism.

I think that the change, however, actually arose out of the logic of the project itself. In the programmatic statement that opens volume one, Ranajit Guha says something about the 'failure of the nation to come into its own'. And what was present in that remark was the idea and the desire that the nation could come into its own; that the problem with the Indian nationalist movement was that it was, in some sense, insufficiently radical. I think a few years later many members of the group are beginning to think: "Well, that may be true. But there is a problem with the nation-form in itself, whether in its radical version or in its non-radical version". Similarly, I think the project in its early stages had a sense that somehow you could recuperate a subaltern consciousness and agency. And I think that along the way – again partly because of external influences, post-structuralism, certainly the

interventions of Gayatri Spivak and others – some people in the group began to think that the aim should not be to recuperate an insurgent subject, but to problematize the idea of subjectivity itself. So, I think there was without a doubt a change in the group, but I think it was partly driven by its own earlier presumptions coming under critical examination by those who were using them. But that was an uneven process: some people did that more than others and, you know, one of the striking things about Subaltern Studies, and I say this as someone who was not a member of it, is that the earlier volumes had a greater thematic unity, because there was a shared sense of a project, and later on there are still many interesting articles, but it's clear that there is no common project any more.

JN – You mentioned also the relation between Maoism, as a political movement and ideology, and Subaltern Studies. Could you just develop that a little bit?

SS – I've written about it, arguing that Subaltern Studies could not have been possible without a short-lived Maoist uprising in India in the late 60s.[5] This was short-lived, was decisively crushed and, in the big screen of history, it looks like a tiny little blip. But I think for cultural and intellectual politics it was quite important. And the reasons... well, I would have to rehearse a long argument, which I won't do. But I think one of the consequences of that uprising was that a section of the left, instead of desiring modernity in the form of the socialist modern, became more willing to interrogate the premises and promises of modernity. Instead of wanting a more genuinely emancipated Indian nation-state that would be free of imperialism and colonialism and comprador elements, it started to ask questions about whether the nation-state could ever be an adequate vehicle for expressing the aspirations and desires of a very large place with all sorts of diverse people.

5 "Revolution and History: Maoism and *Subaltern Studies*," *Storia della Storiografia* 62:2 (2012): 131-49.

In other words, I think that Maoism as it played out in India (and not so much Mao per se) actually somehow unleashed other critical energies and became important. And I think Subaltern Studies tapped into and was partly shaped by those critical energies. There were of course also biographical connections. Ranajit Guha was in India - I think it was at the later part of that insurgency - and wrote about it. Dipesh Chakrabarty was in a minor way involved in it. But not for me, I was six years old when the revolt in Naxalbari happened, so...

JN - ...So, it's not your fault.

SS – Yeah! [laughs]

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JN – I now will open the floor for comments, questions, interventions...

Marcos Cardão – Thank you very much for such great insights. My question has to do with the first generation of Subaltern Studies. I was wondering if it is so resolutely Marxist because, when we think about peasant revolts, we see that they make a critique of the most common interpretation of western Marxism – seeing peasant revolts as pre-political, peasants always as irrational, superstitious, sustaining that they should make first a transition to capitalism and that only by then could they be explicitly political...

SS – Absolutely, and I'm glad you said that. Because when one's talking, one simplifies. They were Marxist but they were already Marxist with a very critical eye, and remember they were at odds with all the Marxist parties of India; they were never party intellectuals. They were already highly critical of the received tradition but, at the same time, seeking to work, kind of within it, while challenging and expand-

ing and improving it. It's also often said that the early volumes of Subaltern Studies were the "history from below" of the type pioneered by Hobsbawm, Rudé and others, now belatedly happening in India. And I think that's wrong. I mean, it's certainly true that everyone had read Rudé, Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, and was deeply influenced... all of that is true. But, again, I think when it's happening in India, you can't repeat those moves, because you're at a different place ... So, I think they – Ranajit Guha in particular – were already self-conscious about the differences between what they were doing and the "history from below" that was being written in Europe. So I think you're absolutely right: this was a very critical appropriation of Marxism, rather than simply an application of Marxism; and it had a friendly but critical relation to western Marxism, by which they were certainly influenced, but they were not simply reproducing it for Indian conditions.

Rui Lopes – My question has to do with the dichotomy of west" and "non-west" and, in particular, with the risk of essentializing the "west". Usually when you refer to Eurocentric ideas, the centre is not just Europe but specifically an elite within Europe. How can we find ways of pluralizing the different types of so-called reason within western society, since the same imperialist attitude that was applied to the history outside of the west was also applied to social groups within the geographical space of Europe?

SS – Thank you, that's a very interesting question. I agree with you entirely that of course there was never an undifferentiated Europe, that imperial and colonialist expansion were not undertaken by 'Europeans', they were undertaken by specific classes and groups, and we must always remember that and register that in our thinking. Moreover, Europe is a historical construct, there hasn't always been a Europe. And so people who generalize about Europe are sometimes told: "Look, it's not just one thing, it's many things". Of course that's true; inasmuch as you make a historical point, you're right. But for the colonized, there's

a sense in which that distinction is not so important, because they were told for a very long period that there was a Europe, that Europe was the fount of reason, freedom, progress, etc. So, as my friend Dipesh puts it, it may be that the Europe we talk about is a hyperreal Europe, but it doesn't make it in one sense any less real for that.

Marxism, nationalism and Man

Sofia Lisboa – My question is a bit of a change in the subject. It's much more about your work on Marxist theory and nationalist politics. In the conclusion of your book on these matters, you talk about how Marxism, in this context, became nationalist, and you don't say there is a corruption in the sense of Marxism, it's just that it was the way in which it realized it could achieve the goal for Marxism. So, my question concerns how Marxism had to use the problematic and the form of a national struggle...

SS – It's an important question partly because it's still a relevant question in parts of the world. Now, I don't think the desire for national independence was wrong ... I mean, for goodness' sake, the British had to get the hell out of India! This is not up for debate. I think the problem for Marxism, to put it slightly crudely, was that for understandable reasons, it confused the politically progressive and the historically progressive. And I think the unfortunate legacy of that was that Marxism (but not all Marxisms) often became a form of nationalism. And that never went away. In the postcolonial period, it often got worse.

I give you the most depressing proof of all: the fact that today official Marxism is, for instance, amongst the biggest champions of India's nuclear program. Why? Because India's nuclear program is anti-imperialist. What does that mean? It means America disapproves of it. We are fighting our battle for global justice basically by giving the finger to America! Now, frankly, this is the reduction of everything important to absurdity. I don't give a toss that the western world says: "You're abrogating rules". The handful of powers that have the nuclear

bomb have no moral right to lecture anyone else. And the presumption that the United States, the only country to have used the bomb, has the right to lecture anyone else on acquiring the bomb is so outrageous as to defy anything. But that's not the point. The point is: do we need the bomb? Is this a priority for us? And it seems to me that, unambiguously, the answer is no. And I think that the fact that the communist Left is amongst the most resolute supporters of India's nuclear program is one of the proofs of the fact that Communism or Marxism often ended up being a kind of nationalism on steroids, which would rationalize its positions using the language of anti-imperialism. Well, if this is anti-imperialism, frankly it doesn't do us any good. I don't know how this translates into the Middle East, but I can immediately think of at least a few instances in which, again under the guise of anti-imperialism, nationalist positions were legitimated that did not warrant the support of the Left.

JN – I also have one question concerning this debate on Marxism and nationalism. It has to do with one of the most relevant issues you address while debating this relation: the identification between progress understood as something that we politically and morally stand for, and progress as a concept of the world itself, that is, a concept of history itself. And the problem with this identification is that it entails a kind of looping effect: science is legitimizing politics and politics is legitimizing science. And this has also something to do with all the debates we were having regarding the writing of history and modern western knowledge, and with the fact that it seems that we always need to ground our own political, ethical and moral options on a scientific basis. So, at the beginning you were saying that we often tend to shape the image we give of our own trajectory in order to give it some kind of coherence, but actually it seems to me that in your PhD thesis we can already see the critical approach to the relation between knowledge and politics that your more recent work has been addressing so clearly... This was not a question, actually....

SS – It's actually a very helpful observation because now I have a third way of re-describing my intellectual trajectory! I think there was a historicist and teleological element in Marxism, which it shares with other Enlightenment derived philosophies, and there was a political element, and they were sutured together. To put it simply, what was historically progressive was equated with what was politically progressive: Marxists declared that bourgeois societies are historically advanced, that a certain form of politics is politically progressive, and then they tried to marry the two. And another way in which I could characterize my intellectual trajectory is that I have been disassociating these elements, as well as questioning them individually. I still believe in politically progressive...I feel like I'm of the Left... not all of my Marxist friends would concur in that judgement, but I think I am! But certainly the teleological historicist narrative that has been part of Marxism I completely disavow, and moreover, I find it morally problematic.[6] Because I think we really have to ask ourselves the question: if we believe in that narrative, what do we do with tribal peoples, with aboriginal peoples, with indigenous peoples? It seems to me that both the Left and the liberal intelligentsia are hypocritical or, at least, very inconsistent on this. They say: "We'll be nice, we'll be liberal, we won't say they're backward anymore, we won't call them primitive"; but actually our historicist and teleological intellectual presumptions leave us no choice but to regard such peoples as backward and primitive. I think that's morally and politically unacceptable, and thus we must abandon the teleological and historicist presumptions that underpin our politics, and live with the undoubtedly problematic – because I don't want to make it sound like it's easy – consequences. One of these is that our political positions are no longer secured nicely in some sort of cement, whether scientific or historicist; they now begin to look a little more arbitrary, like the choices that they in fact are. The attraction of Marxism, I presume for all of us, was that it allowed you to have a political

6 On this, see my "Modernity Without Prometheus: On Re-reading Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*," *Third World Quarterly* 33:7 (July 2012); 1377-86, or the Spanish translation; *op cit.*

position with the conviction that this was not just an arbitrary choice but was somehow anchored in the movement of history and in the certainties of science. I still believe in the politics, I'm pretty shaky or sceptical on the science and I absolutely have no conviction in the movement of history.

JN – One final question ... You have already mentioned your relation to Marxism as a political and intellectual tradition, specifically your relation to Subaltern Studies. You also mentioned your relation to some relevant authors, like Foucault, De Certeau and others. But there is one specific – I would not call it tradition – set of authors that is not a permanent presence in your work but still seems to play a relevant role for you. I'm referring to the case of the works of Bruno Latour, for instance, as they relate to your critique of Man itself as a historical construct. Can you talk a little bit about that? Because when you mentioned that history is something that does not exist, or the past is something that does not exist as trees exist or as objects exist, we could probably add that not even trees actually exist. And then I recall the problems you deal with in some of your articles related to religion, for instance on your article *Clio or Shiva*, where you give a brief account of this case, in the mid-70s I believe, when the Indian government supports a judicial case against the British Museum and the British court accepts it, considering Shiva 'itself' as a juridical person. Would you say that the problem of considering gods as potential subjects of history, with an agency of their own, is perhaps somehow similar to the problems that Latour is advancing when he demands a "parliament of things"?

SS – That's a great question to end this conversation. By the way, the story about Shiva, I should mention - I certainly do in the article- comes from Richard Davis' book *Lives of Indian Images*.

On your question, of course you're right. A very major influence for me, as for certainly many people in this room, is the work of Michel

Foucault, and behind him Nietzsche. I tread lightly on the footnotes for the most part because, you know... the academy is a funny place, it's sometimes a place where people display their knowledge through name-dropping, show they know all the latest trends... and it's tedious; one uses these things because they speak to the questions you are asking, not because they're footnote fodder. But Foucault ... my God, I could not have written anything that I've written had I not read Foucault; he's a looming presence. Bruno Latour not in the same degree, but I think *We Have Never Been Modern* is a wonderful book, and I think everyone should read it. French anti-humanism generally, more recently Latour's work, all of these have been enabling for me... I read these people avidly and I've learnt a lot from some of these figures you mentioned.

There's another dimension to your question which I've now forgotten, I'm sorry. You mentioned those names and you also mentioned something else about... no, now I forgot, sorry.

JN – Me too [laughs]. So thank you very much for this conversation. For me it was really interesting.

SS – And thank you all for listening.

Referência para citação:
Seth, Sanjay. "Macaulay's bastard children A conversation with Sanjay Seth on the Code of History, Post-colonialism and Marxism. Interview by José Neves." Por José Neves. *Práticas da História, Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past*, n.º 3 (2016): 125-149.

Dipesh Chakrabarty

The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth

Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 320 pp.

Girija Joshi*

The Calling of History is, in the first place, a work inspired by very rich material. It revolves around the story of one of India's most prominent and later, much-criticised historians, Sir Jadunath Sarkar. In the mid-1990s, Chakrabarty stumbled upon excerpts of letters exchanged between Sarkar and his close friend and intellectual ally, Bahadur Rao Govindrao Sakharam Sardesai, and was quick to recognize their significance. The letters, exchanged over the course of nearly half a century, reveal how closely the private and public lives of the two prominent historians were intertwined. Sarkar's story is especially a poignant one, for reasons that are not solely of biographical interest but of broader relevance to anyone interested in the history of academic history in the Indian subcontinent.

Sarkar's career as an historian was shaped by the contests between different cultures of history that characterized the early life of the discipline in India. At one level, these contests can be read as the jostling of mutually hostile interpretations of what loyalty to the infant Indian 'nation' meant. Sarkar, who was easily (and not inaccurately) pegged as a sympathiser of the British Empire, was nonetheless deeply

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patriotic. Yet unlike some of his contemporaries, he did not believe that cultural pride ought to be allowed to intercede between the historian and the truth, in the objectivity of the latter he firmly believed. His wish for the emergence of a politically independent Indian nation, his commitment to objectivity and fairness, his belief in the decisive role that character played in shaping destiny and his correspondingly harsh judgment upon historical actors who deterred rather than facilitated the nation's development made him unpopular amongst his contemporaries. Using modern, and thereby intellectually European standards to measure historical figures, he often found the latter wanting and thus appeared, in an age of growing nationalism, to be a spokesperson for what Chakrabarty calls "imperial liberalism" (p. 49).

While Sarkar and his scholarly detractors broadly agreed that collecting original testimonies constituted the core of the historical discipline, their specific understanding of what a reliable source was and what constituted a good historian appeared to be shaped, at least partly, by their respective cultural sympathies. For Sarkar, just as history turned on the actions of individuals, so was a scientific history dependent upon the historian's character. From his point of view, only a hard-working, scrupulous, fair and non-partisan scholar could be relied upon to tell a good source from a worthless one. For Sarkar's intellectual rivals (many of whom were Maharashtran historians of the *Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal*), on the other hand, it was not so much technical skill, but an ability to understand 'the spirit' of the source that was of value; and this latter ability was not something that could be learnt like grammar, but that had to be empathised with. This argument automatically shielded nationalistic histories from 'objective' criticism, while positing cultural identity and intuition (rather than fairness, hard-work and skill) as the preeminent criteria for identifying a good historian.

The fault-line that divided Sarkar and his detractors was thus the question of how to reconcile the modern European provenance of their scholarly occupations with their identities as patriotic but colonized Indians. For Sarkar, admirer of the Raj, the answer lay in beating the

West at its own game; in cultivating all the skills of the historian as recognized in Europe more scrupulously than European scholars themselves. Yet this also led him to reproach his Indian peers for their laziness in source-criticism, their careerism and their lack of objectivity, all of which rendered their work sloppy and unreliable. Such patrician dismissiveness was all the more stinging for the cultural inferiority it implied – Sarkar's critique echoed the popular British conviction in the unscientific temperament Indians (and 'Orientals' in general). One misfortune of Sarkar's life as an historian was thus its timing: his resolutely non-partisan histories and his admiration for Europe's progress in scientific research were doomed to be poorly received in a climate of growing mass discontent with British and more broadly 'Western' dominance.

The criticism of Sarkar's work by other Indian historians continued much after his death in 1958. The scant attention he paid structural and institutional factors in his narratives, his equation of 'historical change' with the action of politically influential men and his use of European standards of 'civilization' to assess the pre-modern past rendered his works 'dated' as historiographical trends shifted in favour of a more representative social history. Yet to call Sarkar pro-British and to dismiss him for anachronism is, as Chakrabarty demonstrates, not only to do injustice to his competence and diligence as a scholar (this was a man who knew eight languages). It is also to miss the larger theoretical question that Sarkar's life as an historian poses, viz.,what are the circumstances under which a society values the 'objectivity' (aspired to, if not achieved) of historical research? When, if ever, does the public life of history pay at least token deference to its "cloistered life" (p. 6), and when do the scales tip and the balance alter? And what impact does that equation have upon the skills and virtues that the historian is encouraged to cultivate?

Sarkar's answer to these questions was clear: only a modern society, which espoused the 'civilized' ideals of the Englightenment was one that could appreciate critical, scientific research. In his attempts to foster a public culture that appreciated history, he wrote both in

Bengali and in English while also using the Indian Historical Records Commission to disseminate a general awareness of the importance of archiving documents. Whatever one may think of his "imperial liberalism", at a moment when the public appreciation of historical research in India is perhaps at an all-time low, Sarkar's attempts to bridge the gap between society and academy can only be admired.

Referência para citação:
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David Matthews
Medievalism: A Critical History: A Response
Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015, 211 pp.

Richard Utz*

In his 2015 study, *Medievalism: A Critical History*, David Matthews proposes that, after a period of modernity during which medievalism appeared in some of the central cultural practices in the western world, much of the medievalist energy and excitement visible in canonical texts, architecture, and the arts gradually diminished from the this general domain and concentrated around the various institutionalized forms of inquiry of medievalia at the modern university. As a result, medievalism was displaced from the central cultural position it held during Britain's Victorian or America's pre- and post-Civil War periods to an increasingly marginal one. Matthews declares that this move to the margin ironically rendered medievalism almost omnipresent, albeit in smaller doses and with lesser consequence. Matthews terms this kind of medievalism "residual," remarking how medievalism now left its mark no longer with the lead genres, authors, and texts of its time as in the works of Tennyson, Scott, and Thomas Carlyle, but as mere substrates, implications, and references as in Joyce, Eliot, or Pound, or as mere tropes in twentieth-century genre fiction by Eco, Fuller, or Unsworth. Similarly, Matthews expounds, there are no English-language medievalist movies that have achieved both popularity and won sufficient cultural capital to be thought of as canonical.

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At first glance, Matthews has a point: It is during the nineteenth century that the study of medieval texts and art progressively passes from the hands of antiquarians, bibliomaniacs, dilettantes, and enthusiasts into those of university-educated specialists; and it is during the nineteenth century that movements like the English Medieval Revival or the French Catholic Revival dominate certain subsections of cultural production; and it is also during the nineteenth century that terms such as "medieval," "Middle Ages," and "medievalism" enter into the vocabulary of those numerous scholars who would now historicize the past. However, as I was reading Matthews' chapter, I could not rid myself of the impression that the distinction between "central" and "residual" medievalism he is writing into existence is mostly a function of his tacit agreement of the theory that, by the end of the "Great War," the acceptance and adaptation of medieval ideas and teleologies became too complex, perhaps impossible. Following Michael Alexander and Alice Chandler, he confirms that medievalism had a "boom" in the nineteenth century, but had lost most of its vitality by the 1890s. According to Matthews, then, the aftermath of this boom is the reason why Tolkien created an "infantilized" version of the Middle Ages, often "on the edge of bathos" and "about the lives of satirically small people" in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* instead of the serious epic and "high-art vision" of English mythology he intended to write (137-38). The end of the "boom" can also be seen in Eliot's *Waste Land* which, while beholden to the Arthurian legend, also "draws heavily on Sophocles, Ovid, the Bible, Shakespeare, Donne, Baudelaire, and Verlaine" (122). Matthews summarizes:

> The general tendency [...] is one in which medievalist art forms have fallen outside normative canons of value and medievalist art has not regained the distinction conferred on it in the mid-Victorian period. The canonical status achieved for medievalism in that period in the spheres of art, architecture, and poetry was [...] an exception – in Britain at least, it was medievalism's bright shining moment.

> Subsequently, medievalism was transmuted by modernist poetry, and it is perhaps in contemporary poetry more than anywhere else that its high-art ambitions are fulfilled today: in the verse of Seamus Heaney and Geoffrey Hill, for example, and the creative translations and adaptations (in the wake of Heaney's *Beowulf*) of Simon Armitage (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *Alliterative Morte Arthur*, with *Pearl* to follow) and Lavinia Greenlaw (*Troilus and Criseyde*) (138-39).

What is most surprising about this passage is not Matthews' undisputable claim of a boom time for medievalist activity in art, architecture, and poetry during the mid-Victorian era, but that he seems to posit what he calls medievalism's "high-art ambitions" as the measuring rod for its centrality or marginality. Matthews does admit that

> medievalism outlasted modernism and adapted, eventually to take the place it currently holds in postmodern popular culture, where its presence in a range of cultural forms today is easy to detect – especially in films, computer games, graphic novels, music (from folk to heavy metal), heritage and tourism (122).

This passage could be read as suggesting that medievalism can only ever be said to be central to a culture when that society's cultural elite is involved in originating medievalist works of art. The way Matthews describes the lower-level remnants of medievalism's Victorian "boom," postmodern popular culture, films, computer games, graphic novels, folk and heavy metal music, heritage, and tourism, sounds dangerously close to what Hans Naumann once defined as *gesunkenes Kulturgut*, the kind of low-brow and merely imitative borrowing or copying by socially inferior strata of superior and original cultural productions springing from the upper social strata and intelligentsia. Naumann's

theory, which originates out of folklore studies right after the end of the nineteenth century, looked down on such borrowings as ignorant and 'degenerated' misunderstandings of their superior models.

Nothing could be further from Matthews' mind. He mentions early on in his study that he has gleaned his specific semantics of "residual" from Raymond Williams's 1977 book on *Marxism and Literature*. Based on Williams' keywords, "medievalism may be," so Matthews, "within a given phase of a culture, dominant, emergent, or residual," "a cultural formation 'effectively formed in the past, but ... still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but an effective element of the present'" (19). Channeling Williams further, Matthews states that he is specifically interested in whether "this residual cultural element has an 'alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture,' or whether it 'has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture'" (19).

In a chapter entitled, "Medievalism in the Crypt" he seems to indicate that medievalism's impact in a culture might actually be at its most pervasive when it is residual, i.e., fragmented, but omnipresent, rather than dominant, i.e., central and canonical, but limited to the social and intellectual elite. He then goes on to exemplify these fugitive and fragmented but omnipresent medievalist inklings in the dominant genre of the Victorian period, the novel, discussing Defoe, Charlotte Bronte, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, Elizabeth and William Gaskell, Hardy, and Allan Hollinghurst. At this point, readers may ask themselves: What is it now: Did medievalism slowly grow from early modern fugitive presences towards a "boom" in the nineteenth century, only to recede again into other fugitive presences? Do the also existing nineteenth-century fugitive presences actually constitute the most pervasive kind of medievalism even during that most centrally medievalist century? Do, in the end, "residual" and "central" mean the same, depending on one's cultural ideology?

In his "Conclusion" (which does not want to provide a conclusion and is called: "Against a Synthesis: Medievalism Cultural Studies, and Antidisciplinarity"), Matthews reveals why he has presented

his readers with these seemingly contradictory statements about the central or residual nature of medievalism. Hinting at the distinction, which he diagnoses at least for the British academy to exist between "the real thing" and the "simulacra of medievalism" (166), he likens the strained relationship between "medievalism" and "medieval studies" to that between "cultural studies" and "literary studies". Like cultural studies which, according to Matthews, forced literature departments to include noncanonical, nontraditional, and nonliterary forms of culture into their curricula, so medievalism managed to make medieval studies scholars become more aware of the epistemological limitations of their concept of the "real" Middle Ages, embrace their own imbrication in the full history of reception of medieval texts and artifacts and, in the best of cases, their own emotional involvement with their research and scholarship. Matthews recommends that medievalism replace its ongoing "paralyzing lack of self-definition" with the kind of "productive uncertainty" that defines the "undiscipline" of cultural studies. Matthews states emphatically:

> The study of medievalism would be greatly advanced by the recognition that rather than existing as a separate and new discipline, it is simply one part of medieval studies – and an inescapable part of it. This would be resisted from within both medievalism studies and medieval studies: in the latter, by those who wish to maintain their grandfather's Middle Ages; in the former, by those who cherish the idea of a separate discipline (178).

Matthews proposes two examples of what "the altered landscape with a conjoined medieval-medievalism studies" already looks like, Arthurian studies and Robin Hood studies.

While some of the practitioners of Arthurian studies see its medieval material as separate from, even more authentic than, the later material, the Arthurian material exists in an undeniable continuum from the twelfth century until today. There is, Matthews concludes, "evidently no authentic Arthur story, but rather multiply disseminating and proliferating texts, medieval, early modern, modern, and postmodern, none of them able to claim primacy" (179). Matthews sees Robin

Hood studies as owning "even more compellingly impeccable credentials" than Arthurian studies for a cultural studies approach. He states that the "exemplary peculiarity of Robin Hood from a disciplinary point of view is that this quintessentially medieval figure has in fact hardly any medieval existence. [...] As a result while Robin Hood as a figure is quintessentially medieval, almost all study of Robin Hood necessarily relates to modern phenomena. Hence the marginality of Robin Hood to medieval studies until relatively recently; despite good medieval credentials, Robin Hood could only be studied as a piece of medievalism. It took the advent of cultural studies to revolutionise understanding of the outlaw figure" (179-80). Matthews continues:

> Robin Hood studies, once dominated by discussions of Robin's authenticity or otherwise, can be taken as exemplary of a medievalist cultural studies. With its volumes of essays, its key monographs and its regular conferences, Robin Hood studies is a paradigm of how "medievalism" might work. It is a field founded on the Middle Ages, yet necessarily unconfined by traditional period boundaries. Today it is large-scale, but internally coherent and limited: it brings the medieval period into engagement with the post-medieval, and it draws on cultural studies methodologies to do so. Robin Hood studies has in fact developed the disciplinary coherence that "medievalism" cannot achieve (180).

David Matthews' mapping of medievalism as a subset of medieval studies sounds completely logical, but only if we accept his positing of medieval studies as a somehow superior epistemology. Similarly, his recommendation to practice medievalism in analogy to cultural studies is based on the conviction that formal academic training, something called "studies," must always precede and have priority over other kinds of engaging with medieval culture. I tend to agree with Kathleen Verduin (the former co-editor of *Studies in Medievalism*), who once stated:

"[I]f 'medievalism' as we define it denotes the whole range of postmedieval engagement with the Middle Ages, then 'medieval studies' themselves must be considered a facet of medievalism rather than the other way around."[1]

Matthews' two examples, Arthurian and Robin Hood studies, are well suited for proving his point, but leave to be desired when it comes to texts and artifacts without ongoing reception histories. How, for example, would his "cultural studies" paradigm deal with the likes of Margery Kempe, about whom almost nothing was known between the early sixteenth century and 1934? In addition, Matthew's concentration on cultural studies undervalues the pivotal role of feminism and women's studies (in concert with reception studies) for the more inclusive way of reading the Middle Ages that has been the hallmark of medievalism in the last 30 years. This is probably also the reason why Carolyn Dinshaw's name appears only four times on the 200 pages of the study; Aranye Fradenburg's seminal work does not appear at all; the word "feminist" appears twice, "feminism" not at all; "gender studies" appears once; "women's studies" not at all.

Historically, "medievalism" precedes "medieval studies," and it remains the more inclusive term semantically as it unites the continuing process of constructing and reconstructing the Middle Ages in postmedieval times. Central or residual, all instances of receiving the Middle Ages, and not only Arthurian and Robin Hood studies, can be read and mapped productively by abandoning the epistemological primacy David Matthews and many other medievalists continue to attach to the academic over any and all non-academic engagements with medieval culture.[2]

Referência para citação:
Utz, Richard. "Recensão a *Medievalism: A Critical History*: A Response, de David Matthews." *Práticas da História, Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past*, n.º 3 (2016); 155-161.

1 Kathleen Verduin, "Shared Interests of *SIM* and *MFN*," *Medieval Feminist Newsletter* 23:1 (1997), 33-35.

2 I have tried to recommend some ways toward achieving this goal in "Don't Be Snobs, Medievalists," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 24, 2015.