BEYOND POST-STRUCTURALISM: EMPOWERING POSTCOLONIAL SOCIETIES
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INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial perspectives are indebted to Foucault’s writings in many and important ways. In fact, since the publication of Edward Said’s major work, *Orientalism*, postcolonial thinkers often invoke Foucault’s notion of the nexus power-knowledge. Drawing on Foucault, they point out that the way we frame events around us necessarily carries relations of power that serve to dominant interests (Young, 1995; Darby, Paolini, 1994). Although Foucault had a lot to say about power, he was quite silent about the ways in which it operated in the arenas of race and colonialism (Young, 1995). Broadly, the main purpose of this paper is to explore the political implications of this omission for a critical understanding of global politics. To this end, the first section discusses the limitations of Foucault’s work to understand agency and resistance in the colonial arena. Then, it will be suggest that these limitations are related to the fact that Foucault’s writings overlooked the temporal disjunctions of global politics. In the third section, the paper problematizes Foucault’s conception of Europe as a fixed and continuous space and explores its implications to his view about the presence of racism in the modern state. Finally, the paper suggests that the intervention of the colonial into European genealogy complicates Foucault’s account of the emergence of a European international society.

1. EMPOWERING POSTCOLONIAL SOCIETIES

There is no agency for Bhabha outside the discursive context of the colonizer. In Ilan Kapoor’s words, “without discursive subjection no agency is possible” (Kapoor, 2003: 564). This happens because agency is conceived in Bhabha’s work as the “translation” of a text, an “original”, imposed by the colonizer. Through translation this “original” is always subverted, transformed, resulting in “something new and unrecognizable” (Bhabha, 1990: 211). As a result, the attempt on the part of the colonizer to impose a text on the colonized is always frustrated if we consider that in the very act of imitating, the meaning of the text is displaced.

Echoing Derrida, Bhabha argues that there is no possibility of effecting any change from some place out of the text. However, according to Bhabha, the oppressed can act subversively, despite the domination of the master, subtly changing the terms of the discourse. In the operation of “translation”, suppressed memories and knowledges of the oppressed can

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1 Kapoor observes that Bhabha does not restrict his notes only to colonial times, since he also refers to contemporary examples of political subversion (Kapoor, 2003).
surface, but always in the liminal spaces open inside the hegemonic representations. This negotiated aspect of the encounter is what makes possible the subaltern agency (Kapoor, 2003).

Kapoor (2003) calls attention to the centrality of the idea of repetition in Bhabha’s notion of agency. Drawing on Derrida, Bhabha (1994) regards every discourse as iterative which means that when someone articulates a discourse, this discourse is in fact being re-articulated. In this sense, by repeating the colonizer’s discourse, the colonized modifies it. Hence, the colonial discourse is not only re-appropriated and re-interpreted, it is also misinterpreted, mistranslated, corrupted and object of mockery. By imitating the colonizer, the colonized shifts and hybridizes the signs of colonial domination, depriving them from the symbology of domination and obstructing its full presence (Costa, 2006). As such, mimicry discredits the colonial knowledge by revealing its ambivalence and artificiality (see Bhabha, 1994). Drawing a parallel between mimicry and fetish, Bhabha (1994:137) says:

> Under cover of camoufbackwardnesse, mimicry, as fetish, is a partial object that radically re-evaluates the normative knowledge of race priority, of writing, of history, for fetish imitates the forms of authority at the same time as it discredits them. Similarly, mimicry rearticulates the presence in terms of its “alterity”, precisely what it denies.

According to Bhabha (1994), colonization is a deeply contradictory enterprise, since the trust of the colonizer in its racial and civilizational superiority is constantly weakened by the ambivalence expressed in its search for the recognition of such superiority in the eyes of the colonized, someone regarded by the colonizer as sneaking, unreliable and as a congenital liar (see Krishna, 2009). Hence, at the same time that the colonizer fears and tries to differentiate itself from the colonial “Other”, it needs the Other’s recognition and appreciation. This way, as Kapoor (2003) shows us, in the very practice of domination, the language of the colonizer becomes hybrid. Such hybridity reveals itself every time that the colonizer resorts to stereotypes to represent the colonized which is seen simultaneously as a savage cannibal and as an obedient servant or as both the incorporation of an unbridled sexuality and as an innocent child. Thus, this repetition process exposes the instability of the colonial power/knowledge. To give an example: during colonization, Somalia was represented in very ambiguous ways. On the one hand, Somalia was seen as a land of economic abundance and sexual freedom and for this reason it attracted a great number of poor Italians (Srivastava, 2006). On the other hand, as shown by Robert Hess (1996:180), the Italian colonization was characterized by a “benevolent paternalism” and as such Somalis were described as children being guided by their Italian parents. By revealing the ambiguities of the colonial discourse, the
subaltern agency unveils the contingency of the authority, which in order to maintain its domain must hide the unnatural nature of its discourse (Kapoor, 2003).

In which ways does this postcolonial idea of agency complexifies Foucauldian notion? According to Foucault, it’s clear that there are no power relations without resistance. So, if there were no possibility of resistance, there would be no power relations since there is no sense in talking about power if there are no resistance sites (see Kapoor, 2003, Couzens Hoy, 2005). In fact: “resistance cannot be external to power because power is not a system of domination with an inside or an outside”. However, while to Foucault the agency is comprehended restrictively, to Bhabha the agency is creative (Kapoor, 2003). This occurs because, according to Bhabha, the process of cultural hybridity creates a third space, a “new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Bhabha, 1990:211).

Bhabha shares with Foucault the skepticism about modern emancipatory politics derived from a rational, autonomous Enlightenment subject free from constraints. Although Bhabha, as Foucault, problematizes the notion of a stable and sovereign agent, he does not deny the possibility of a creative agency from which the “third space” emerges, setting up new structures of authority and political initiatives (see Kapoor, 2003, Bhabha, 1990:211). In this sense, Bhabha innovates regarding Foucault and poststructuralism in general by conceiving the possibility of a creative agency that operates inside the dominant discourse, undermining and subverting its message. Bhabha points out the limitations of the Foucauldian thought in the following excerpt:

[I]f the interest of post-modernism is limited to a celebration of the fragmentation of the ‘great narratives’ of postenlightenment rationalism then, for all its intellectual excitement, it remains a profoundly parochial enterprise (Bhabha, 1994: 4).

As Foucault, Bhabha also suspects all great narratives or politics articulated by the elites or by the state and focus on the micro-techniques of power that operate in the local levels. Both

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2 However, it is important to keeping in mind that Foucault articulates power as productive and positive since power produces systems of knowledge and discursive formations.

3 According to Ashley (1989), the discourse of modernity originates from the idea that, through reason, the sovereign man can reach total autonomy. See: Ashley, Robert: “Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War”, In James Der Derian; Michael Shapiro: International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Reading of World Politics, New York: Lexington Books, 1989.

4 Richard Devetak (1995) calls attention to the absence of a consensual definition of the term “postmodernism” as well as to the fact that many theorists associated to the term have never employed it, even, at times, rejecting any attempt of labeling. Thus, the term is understood here in quite broadly sense to refer not only to those theories which are considered as “post-modern”, but also to those whose label is attributed by others, as is the case of Foucault. See: Devetak, Richard. “Postmodernism”, In: Theories of International Relations, Deakin University, 1995.
authors focus on the dispersion and capillary of power exercised by subalterns, displaced, minorities and marginalized groups in their everyday lives. However, Bhabha goes beyond Foucault, by showing how, in these marginal spaces, the hegemonic power is routinely fractured by the creative agency of the local actors and as such never manages to impose itself as effective or totalizing (Kapoor, 2003). Resistance to Bhabha is pervasive, always exceeding and ironizing any attempt of control. It can be find through all postcolonial subjects even among those who embrace with fervor the master’s narrative.

In order to illustrate the meaning of resistance in Foucault’s thought, it is worth bringing to light one of the rare engagements of the author with the non-Western and non-liberal world, namely, with the Iranian revolution of 1979 (see Jabri, 2007). According to Jabri (2007), Foucauldian writings about this revolution help us to understand how Foucault conceives the effects of power over those located beyond the West and subject to its domination. Foucault understood the Islamic Revolution as a rebellion against the oppressive practices of modernity and its rationalities. In the following quote, Foucault conceives the Iranian revolution in terms of its opposition or resistance to modernization:

[R]ecent events did not signify a shrinking back in the face of modernisation by extremely retrograde elements, but the rejection, by a whole culture and a whole people, of a modernisation that is itself as archaism (apud Jabri, 2007: 176).

In this sense, Foucault interprets the Iranian revolution as a frustrated attempt of modernizing an Islamic country from a European model due, mainly, to the rejection on behalf of an entire culture and people. This way, in Foucault, modernization is understood as a structure imposed upon non-Western cultures whose members have an exclusionary choice: to either accept or, in the case of the Iranian revolution, completely reject it. Furthermore, he regards Iranian people as cohesive, unified, by arguing that the rejection occurs by a whole culture and people. As stressed by Young (1995:1), Foucault discusses the Iranian Revolution in terms of what he considers to be an expression of “an absolutely collective will” in contrast with more mediated forms of European revolutions. In Young’s words: “This distinction is constructed according to very European, indeed Orientalist, categories: the fantasy of Iran as subject of a collective will, as pure being, screens the historical relation of the revolution to its colonial adversaries” (Young, 1995:1).

Thus, diverging from Bhabha, Foucault does not foresee the possibility that modernity be reinterpreted and rearticulated in different ways from the experiences of these non-Western societies and that the agency may be exerted in the context of modernity itself, and not only in opposition to it by indocile bodies. So, Foucault does not consider that the local agencies can
contaminate, transgress and hybridize the modernization efforts of the international agents in multiple an unpredictable ways. The moment in which the act of domination/modernization is fractured by ambivalence constitutes precisely what Bhabha calls hybridity or the “third space”. Therefore, the postcolonial agency corrupts and transgresses the hegemonic discourse of the international agents, but always within it, which imply the existence of a certain complicity among colonized and colonizer, even though each one seeks to deny it.

In what follows it will be emphasized the temporal dimension of Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and the limitations of Foucault’s work to capture this important dimension of global politics.

2. TEMPORAL DISJUNCTURES AND AGENCY

Concerning temporality, Bhabha introduces the notion of “time-lag” in order to expose the temporal disjunctions in modern global politics. Such disjunctions are evidenced, for instance, by the fact that the colonial powers were, in the nineteenth century, establishing the foundations for democracy and citizenship in Europe at the same time they were engaging in economic exploitation, authoritarianism, and abuse of human rights in the colonies (Kapoor, 2003). Bhabha (1990:218) draws attention to the fact that the advent of Western modernity during the 18th and 19th centuries coincides with another history, namely, the history of the West as a colonial power. The postcolonial author sheds light on this last repressed history to reveal the contradictions of Western modernity that spread itself through the colonial world as a despotic power at the very moment of the birth of democracy and citizenship at home (Bhabha, 1990). The point Bhabha is trying to make is not only that the history of colonialism is the silenced history of the West but also that this history is “a counter-history” to the normative, traditional history of the West” (Bhabha, 1990:218).

In this sense, European powers did not extended its Enlightenment claims of universal rights and freedom to the colonial world. If, during the 18th century, discipline became in Europe, as Foucault observed (2000), a general formula of domination, different from slavery (since it was not grounded on a relationship of appropriation of bodies), even after this period, in the nineteenth century, colonial powers were resorting to practices, such as forced labor, that impacted violently upon the bodies of the colonized. This contradiction reveals that Europe is resorting to outdated ways of punishment, unacceptable in the European modern context, to deal with its “Others”.

In Discipline and Punish, Foucault (2000) describes the history of the power to punish showing how the punishment mechanics of body torture from the medieval times were substitute, by the end of the 18th century, for more subtle punitive practices. The latter has the
pretension of creating, through disciplinary power, docility, and extracting utility from body strengths. Thus, torture and torment are increasingly being hidden from the public and replaced by new and more efficient organizations with the power to punish. Foucault observes that the abominable spectacle of the body torture acquires, in modern Europe, a negative connotation, equating or even surpassing crime in terms of savagery. Hence, the old executioner is replaced by an entire army of technicians such as guards, chaplains, psychiatrists, and educators who guarantee to the Court that body and pain are no longer the final object of punitive action (Foucault, 2000). During the Enlightenment, physical suffering and body pain are replaced by penalties that translate into an economy of suspended rights, aiming at correcting and reeducating, and not punishing the human being from now on found in the figure of the criminal. Therefore, the body is no longer destroyed, but, instead, arrested and isolated for it carries a soul that can be disciplined. By that time, a new legislation defines the power of punishment as a general function of society, having to be exerted in the same way upon all of its members, understood, from now on, as equals before the law. Thus in a society in which all are provided with freedom, prison, understood as a temporary privation of the right to individual freedom, is conceived a “civilized” and equalitarian punishment (Foucault, 2000). As stressed by Akerstrom Andersen (2003), Discipline and Punish is a book concerning not only prisons, but also a particular means of normalization, discipline, and vigilance molded along with the growth of prison, but which is propagated and generalized in modern societies. Thus, according to Foucault’s understanding: “The judges of normality are present everywhere” (Foucault apud Andersen, 2003).

It is argued here that these new polished means of punishment, anchored in modernity, were not employed by metropolitan states in their colonies where they were still resorting to non-modern punitive practices. Frantz Fanon (1963), a psychiatrist from Martinique, describes this bifurcated nature5 of the world in the following way:

In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. In capitalist societies the educational system, whether lay or clerical, the structure of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary honesty of workers who are given a medal after fifty years of good and loyal service, and the affection which springs from harmonious relations and good behavior—all these aesthetic expressions of respect for the established order serve to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably. In the capitalist countries a multitude of moral teachers, counselors (...) “separate the exploited from those in power. In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the

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5 The expression is borrowed from Edward Keene (2002).
soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native” (Fanon, 1963: XX).

Through the above commentary, Fanon shows us, in a very clear way, the ambiguous behavior of the colonial powers. On the one hand, and in line with Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power, the colonial powers lightened the oppression at home, hiding domination from the European eyes with the help of several institutions. On the other hand, the metropolitan powers, despite the physical distance from the colonial world, exerted a direct and non-mediated violence upon the bodies of the colonial subjects, akin with the medieval punitive practices abolished in Europe during this time. Nevertheless, unlike what happened in the European context, the colonized does not see himself as part of the same community of the colonizer. As observed by Fanon:

In the colonies, the foreigner coming from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines. In defiance of his successful transplantation, in spite of his appropriation, the settler still remains a foreigner. (...) The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, “the others”.

Unable to resolve the above contradiction, the history of the West as a despotic colonial power, as shown by Bhabha (1990:218), “has not been adequately written side by side with its claims to democracy and solidarity”. This paper suggests that the colonial powers tried to resolve or, at least, to mask this contradiction through the dehumanization of the native, by regarding him as an absolute alterity. In fact, this is the vision denounced by Fanon (1963:XX) when he says that the colonizer paints the native as “a sort of quintessence of evil”. According to Fanon:

The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces.

One example of this process of dehumanization and of conceiving a radical “Other” can be found in the Haitian case (Moreno at al., 2012). Conceived by colonial discourse as not
properly humans, Haitians were seen as not ready to understand, or even to mimic, the ‘true’ (French) revolution. The racist discourse made it impossible to Europeans to conceive the subhuman slaves of the Caribbean as being prepared to have the unalienable rights which, according to the French Revolution ideals, should be enjoyed by all human beings. In this sense, Haiti exposed the limitations of the French Revolution, whose ideals were not considered valid for the colonial world. This discourse enabled multiple violent practices over the slave black body of Haitians. The Haitian Revolution thus exposed the limits and ambiguities of French universalism – what Aimé Césaire called the ‘false universalism’ of the French Revolution (Munro; Shilliam, 2011). The Haitian Revolution was dissonant with the ‘regime of truth’ of the time, which (re)produced the superiority of the coloniser vis-à-vis the colonised, and made it unimaginable that the colonized could occupy the same discursive space of the colonizer. To the extent that Haitian revolutionaries defied the Western imaginary, they were silenced in European narratives (see Buck-Morss, 2000; Moreno at al., 2012).

This strategy was informed by the medieval idea of what Arthur Lavejoi has called The Great Chain of Being according to which every form of existence has its place in an orderly cosmos (Boucher, 1998). God was at the top of hierarchy being followed by the angels, people on other planets, human beings, animals and inanimate objects (Boucher, 1998). Each being is subordinate to that which comes after it (Boucher, 1998:189). In the European context of the 18th and 19th centuries, biological racial theories were introduced in this Chain, hierarchizing homo sapiens and locating black colonial beings in the lowest ranks of it (Mazrui, 1968).

It is worth of mention, given the focus of this paper on temporal issues, that the Great Chain of Being was understood as eternal and immutable, as a perfect and complete divine creation (Ferguson, 2006). As such, the Chain was time(less) in that it did not imply any notion of a progressive or evolutionary temporality. Referring to the rigidity of the Chain, Lavejoi (apud Ferguson, 2006:181) noted the following:

[I]nconsistent with any belief in progress, or, indeed, in any sort of significant change in the universe as a whole. The chain of being, in so far as its continuity and completeness were affirmed on the customary grounds, was a perfect example of an absolutely rigid and absolutely rigid and static scheme of things.

This “location of race” in an allegedly natural and unchangeable order given by God authorized, during colonization, several inhumane and despotic practices over black colonial bodies unconceivable in the European space during the 18th and 19th centuries. In this sense, the colonized was constructed as a population of degenerated types on the basis of its origins in order to justify European conquest (Bhabha, 1991).
However, as we have seen in the previous section, the colonial stereotypes are inconsistent and ambivalent. In this sense, the black is not only seen as an intractable “Other”, but also as an innocent child that can become mature adults under (and only under) the guide of its European parents. While the latter suggests a teleology according to which the native can be modernized under certain conditions of colonial domination, the first idea, anchored in a biological racist science, denied the colonized the capacities of self-government and Western modes of civility (Bhabha, 1991). This way, during colonial times, the modernizing, progressive teleological narrative coexisted, in the colonial discourses, with biological racist narratives who suggested the immutability of the “native”.

Thus, side by side with the colonial discourse that represents the colonial subject as an irreparable “Other”, there is another discourse that temporalizes difference, regarding the colonial “Other” as a backwardness version of the European Self (see Blaney; Inayatullah, 2004). In this sense, the colonial discourse articulates a discontinuous temporal gap between the white world of the colonizer and the black world of the colonized (Nicholls, 1997). In Fabian’s terms, they are not coeval which means that these worlds are not contemporaneous or that they do not exist in the same timeframe (Johanes, 2002). This gap, according to Brett Nicholls, reveals that “the black world arrives too late, it is always one step behind in the myth of progression that sustains the white sense of superiority” (Nicholls, 1997:9). If the colonized arrives too late in the modern world, then it is said that the colonized speaks from Europe’s past or from the “time-lag” of cultural difference (see Nicholls, 1997).

Many authors date this strategy from the first encounters between Europeans and Amerindians in the New World. This is the case of Beate Jahn (1999:417) who argues that “the view of Amerindians as living in a state of nature led to a redefinition of history along a linear scale providing a secular telos as the basis of the historical process”. The idea of the state of nature as a universal condition from which humankind started its historical development, adopted by the European authors, introduced, according to Jahn (1999) a linear time scale into the history of humanity. Furthermore, these explanations justified and naturalized the particular European path of development (Jahn, 1999).

In a similar vein, David Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah (2004) regard the Dominican theologian, Francisco de Vitoria, as a precursor of development and modernization theories. While Vitoria paternalism is evident, he rejects the Aristotle’s category of the natural slave since he considers Indians as fully human and, hence, as rational human beings. So, the Amerindians appear as a lesser developed version of European self or as rational human beings whose still dormant potential of reason need to be activated. Nevertheless, Vitoria shows us that the Indian’s own efforts to realize such potential have failed, what means that
they need the intervention of teachers or tutors to save them from a barbarous education (Blaney, Inayatullah, 2004). If on the one hand the recognition of a common humanity between Europeans and Amerindians has reduced the ontological space between them – very delimited in Aristotelian theory – on the other hand Vitoria inserted, in its place, a temporal variant that kept marking the difference. In this process the Indians came out of the condition of natural slaves incapable of rationality to the status of children or pupils. On the other hand, the Europeans assumed the role of parents or teachers. Thus, it becomes clear that Vitoria conceives the possibility of progress and updating of the Indians’ rationality, but only if they are subjected to Spanish tutelage. By inserting a temporal gap between the Europeans (teachers) and the Indians (children), Vitoria temporalizes the difference, presenting it as a backward version of the European Self. Thus, one can see an early version of the theory of modernization or development in Vitoria’s thought (Blaney; Inayatullah, 2004). As a consequence, the European tutelage is seen as an agency of order and progress conducted by the labor of the pedagogue. Afterwards, this way of thinking, according to the authors, authorized and gave an idealist leaven to the “white man’s burden” and the European imperial conquest (Blaney; Inayatullah, 2004).

In line with this colonizing impulse, the colonial “Other” is said to carry not only a body, but also a soul that must be guided towards salvation. By means of the metaphor of the pastor, Foucault (2008) refers to a model of power in which the pastor exercises a minute supervision on the daily life of his flock, taking charge not only of the bodily actions but also of the souls of its members in order to assure their salvation. The colonial religious discourse here seems, at a first glance, akin to the pastoral power introduced in the West by the Christian Church from the third century onwards (Foucault, 2008). Nevertheless, this type of power as formulated by Foucault assumes that the pastor and his flock are coevals, or in other words that they exist in the same timeframe dictated by the Christian eschatology and its promise of final salvation. As presented above, the colonial domination is informed by both the ideas (i) that the colonized, despite having a soul, does not occupy the same temporal site as the colonizer or (ii) that some colonized people does not even have a soul and as such are deemed beyond salvation and outside Christian eschatology. Furthermore, the colonized does not see himself as part of the same community of destiny of the colonizer. Even when the colonized conceives the colonizer as a representative of God, he interprets the colonizer’s God according to their own cosmologies and, by doing this, he gives rise to an altered God: “neither the colonizer’s God nor the God(s) of the colonized”. One example given by Bhabha is that of the Hindu question to the Christian missionaries in India. Disallowing the authority of the English Bible, the native asked: ‘how can the word of God come from the flesh-eating mouths of the English?” Thus the
missionaries’ project of conversion is frustrated by the emergence of a hybrid demand: a “vegetarian Bible” in line with the Hindus’ dietary law (Nicholls, 1997; Bhabha, 1994).

Again, it becomes clear that Foucault’s notions of power overlook the important problem of the ambivalent temporality of modernity as stressed by Bhabha (2004:239). The temporal gap between the white colonizer and the black colonized authorized the first to employ several punitive practices over the colonial bodies and religious practices oriented, mainly, towards the souls of the natives that give rise, in the colonies, to new articulations of power mechanisms that do not obey the same sequence of dominant mechanisms of power emphasized by Foucault regarding the European context. The inconsistencies between these two histories of power relations, one told in terms of progress and civitas and the “Other” experienced in terms of repression and despair undermine the very ontology of the white world with its assumptions of rationality and universality.

It is argued here that the silence of Foucault about the colonial history cannot be excused by simply saying “it is not his focus” since the colonial history is a constitutive part of his object of study, namely, of European modernity. Thus, one of the limitations of Foucault’s approach resides in the fact that the author did not devote enough attention to the process through which the colonial “Other”, or the colonial alterity, had (and continues to have) a central participation in the production of European modernity. As observed by the postcolonial thinker Achille Mbembe (2008): “It’s as if the colonial event belonged to another age and another place, and as if it had absolutely nothing to teach us about how to understand our own modernity, about citizenship, about democracy, even about the development of our humanities”.

Postcolonial thinkers, such as Fanon and his teacher and compatriot Aimé Césaire, help us to understand these extra-European origins of modernity. For both authors, Europe is dependent. Anticipating Fanon’s famous proposition that “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World”, Césaire argues that the colonizer’s sense of superiority and their sense of mission as the world’s civilizers depends on turning the “Other” into a barbarian (Kelley, 2000:9). Fanon calls attention to the binary structure of power and authority that produces the black man as the opposite side of the white man. By rejecting the “belatedness” of the black man, refusing to locate him in the past of which the white man is the future, Fanon destroys the two times schemes from which the historicity of the modern human is thought (Bhabha, 1994: 237-8). Postcolonial agency emerges, precisely, in terms of disrupting time, by destabilizing the gap between these two supposedly insulated histories (the history of progress and modernization of the colonized and the history of belatedness and tradition of the
colonized). Thus, agency emerges in an enunciative space that contradicts the metaphysical idea of progress so that “Western modernity does not pose as History” (Kapoor, 2003:574).

Therefore, hybridity emerges in the temporal gap between colonizer and colonized (Nicholls, 1997). It is located in time in-between two prior moments (that of the colonizer and of the colonized). However, it is important to note that Bhabha denies the essentialism of a prior moment of being or meaning, and as such, he does not give to these moments the authority of being original, but they are prior only in the sense of being anterior (Bhabha, 1990:210-1). In his words: “the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which a third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’, which enables other positions to emerge” (Bhabha, 1990:211). Hence, what emerge in Bhabha’s ‘third space’ are new and incommensurable social practices where neither the colonizer nor the colonized are recognizable in them. Thus, postcolonial identity cannot be defined in terms of an essence, rather “it seems the postcolonial exists in a state of flux which is groundless and indeterminate” (Nicholls, 1997: 18). Agency, as argued by Nicholls (1997), emerges in terms of disrupting time instead of capturing a physical or institutional space. In this sense, cultural agency is located in the temporal gap between colonizer and its “Other” in order to produce hybrid sites (Nicholls, 1997). Temporal disjunction between black and white worlds becomes the site which makes politics of resistance possible (Nicholls, 1997).

3. SPACE AND TIME IN FOUCAULT’S THEORIZATION OF MODERNITY

In this section, it will be argued, in line with Bhabha critique, that Foucault privileged space over time in his theorization of modernity (Bhabha, 1994, Nicholls, 1997).

To Bhabha, even though Foucault exposes a discontinuous view of history through genealogy, he conceives the European space as fixed and continuous (Kapoor, 2003, Nicholls, 1997). In Bhabha’s words:

The ethnocentric limitations of Foucault’s spatial sign of modernity become immediately apparent if we take our stand, in the immediate postrevolutionary period, in San Domingo with the Black Jacobins, rather than Paris. What if the ‘distance’ that constitutes the meaning of the Revolution as a sign, the signifying lag between event and enunciation, stretches out not across the Place de la Bastille or the rue des Blancs-Monteaux, but spans the temporal difference of the colonial space? (Bhabha, 1994:224).

According to Bhabha, the Eurocentric character of Foucault’s theory is revealed in its insistence in spatializing the time of modernity and, by doing this, in ignoring the existence of “Third Worlds” in the context of the “First World” as in the case of the colonial conditions of
current North American native communities or the existence of substantial non-European migrant communities in Europe as well as of the “First Worlds” in the “Third World” as in the case of the “global” and cosmopolitan cities in the South (Kapoor, 2003).

The meanings of modernity were not only produced in different ways through time, but also, in a same historical period. Thus, for example, during the 19th century, modernity was constructed in many and different ways in the European space, which, due to this reason, could not be understood as a homogeneous space, but instead as a space where different and conflicting narratives coexisted. As an example, Italian fascists proposed, during the interwar period, an alternative modernity vis-à-vis European modernity regarded by them as sick and decadent (Ben-Ghiat, 2006). Curiously, the reinvention of Europe proposed by fascists should be guided by the Roman Empire model or, more specifically, by a rereading of this Italian past of glory (Gentili, 2003). By regarding the European space as fixed and continuous, Foucault is unable to conceive alternative modernities such as the one pursuit by Italy during fascism. Thus, temporal disjunctions are evidenced in the multiple nuances assumed by modernity in the European context.

Furthermore, these temporal disjunctions are also evidenced in the recognition of the existence of internal “colonies” to Europe itself. The presence of the “Other” in the European Self is recognized, for example, by Gramsci, when he refers to the South of Italy as its “internal colony” (Gramsci [1920], 1994). Hence, the postcolonial perspectives help us to reveal the ambiguities of modernity and the presence of the colonized “Other” in the European “Self”. By doing this, postcolonial perspectives contribute to destabilize not only the clear spatial demarcation of Europe/rest of the world, but also the temporal binary of modernity-progress/tradition-backwardness.

The ambiguities of modernity here emphasized reveal the existence of multiple genealogies beyond and within the European space. As pointed out by Timothy Mitchell (2000:12-3), uncovering the plural genealogy of what we unify under the name of “modernity” put into question its coherence. As argued here, Foucault failed in his writings to engage with the colonial genealogies of modernity. One striking example of this, concerns Foucault’s comments on race that are concentrated on the European context and Nazism in particular, and as such, his domain of reference remains resolutely fixed within the Western world, mainly in France (Taylor, 2011; Young, 1995).

Foucault shows us that the early version of race was articulated in the 17th and 18th centuries as a social discourse. According to such discourse the nation is not at peace even if it is not at war with other states for the reason that monarch’s power is, in fact, violent, unstable and unjust and not an inevitable power as it tries to present itself (Taylor, 2011). While this
early version of race war discourse was enunciated by those at the margins who need to defend themselves against society, by the end of the 19th century, later versions of race war discourse would declare that is society that needed to be defended against the abnormal, against those at the margins (Taylor, 2011). From now on, the idea of race that during the 17th and 18th centuries was employed to refer to qualitatively neutral cultures, acquires a new meaning: the hierarchically ranked biological groups (Taylor, 2011). Race war discourse at this point has become crucial to the modern biopolitical state as a normalizing power that justifies the death of the abnormal as enemies of the state. The question that intrigues Foucault is: “If it is true that the power of sovereignty is increasingly on the retreat and that disciplinary or regulatory disciplinary power is on the advance, how will the power to kill and the function of murder operate in the technology of power, which takes life as both its object and its objective?” (Foucault, 2005: xx). According to Foucault, it is precisely at this point that racism comes in. So, although biopower is a technology directed to affirm life, it justifies death through racism. According to Foucault, racism: “is, firstly, the means for introducing, finally, in this domain of life of which power has been entrusted, a cut: the cut between what should live and what should die” (2005: 304). Integrated into the mechanisms of the modern state, racism fragments the biological body, hierarchizing the species into races and sub-races and, then presenting the death of the races deemed as inferior as a means of making life healthier and purer, of regenerating the race itself (Foucault, 2005). Therefore, for Foucault (2005), racism is the condition of acceptance of the right to kill, of the murder function of the state in the name of the protection of society from internal and external dangers. Foucault sees this operating through Nazism which posited a superior race that excludes Jews and gypsies while simultaneously defending itself against the Aryan deviant (Taylor, 2011). In fact, according to Foucault, Nazism can be understood as the paroxysmal development of biopower mechanisms since no state was so tightly regulated (Foucault, 2005).

As discussed above, Foucault differentiates the new power mechanisms from the “old” sovereign power. In contrast to sovereign power, biopower is not primarily a power to kill but one that fosters and manages life (Foucault, 2005). However, as shown by Foucault, the following problem arises for the biopolitical state when it wishes to wage war, kill or expose to death: how can a biopolitical state engage in these actions that are typically sovereign? And as we have seen, he answers this question through racism, but what he did not realize or mention is that a kind of racism has been practicing in the European colonies by a power that projects itself as sovereign. In fact, through the above brief account of the metamorphosis of the idea of race one could notice that Foucault’ analysis lacks any substantial discussion about European colonialism in general (Rasmussen, 2011) as well as about the 18th and 19th European
racism as a product of colonial racism (Mitchell, 2000). By not taking into consideration the colonial genealogy and the temporal disjunctions in modern global politics, Foucault was unable to think about this ‘boomerang effect’ of racism from the colonies to Europe. This way, colonial racism is understood by Foucault as an overflow of the power technologies prevailing in the European modern states. Control and discipline internal to Europe are shifted outwards through the colonial enterprise, not existing, therefore, temporal contradiction between such logics. The temporal disjunction that the colonial experience of racism would introduce into the modern biopolitical state is disallowed by Foucault’s conception of time. In line with what Walter Benjamin, modernity for Foucault occurs in a homogenous empty time in which time is apprehended as the uniform, unfilled spaces marked out by the calendar, the timetable and the clock (see Michell, 2000).

Pondering on the role of the “Other” in the production of the European “Self”, Césaire emphasizes the inverse process, that is, how Fascism should be read as colonial totalitarianism brought to Europe (Césaire, 2000; Young, 2000). Far from civilizing Africans, colonialism “uncivilized” the civilized (Césaire, 2000). Concerning Nazism, for example, he says: “What he [the European or white man] cannot forgive Hitler for is not the crime in itself, the crime against man...it is the crime against the white man...the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs...the ‘niggers’” (Césaire, 2000: 36). In a similar vein, Edward Keene (2002) argues that in the context of World War II Europeans experimented, for the first time, the uncomfortable feeling of being themselves the target of racial discrimination on behalf of Germany. In this new context, as pointed out by Keene (2002), it would be strange to affirm the supremacy of the white race over the African or Asian races while simultaneously denying the validity of Nazi efforts in demonstrating Aryan supremacy. Thus, according to this author, by projecting civilization against Nazism, its defenders were inevitably questioning the old assumptions on racial frontiers of the civilized world. Hence, both authors blur the clear demarcation line between Europe and the colonized world, or between the European progress and the colonial backwardness, by calling attention to the presence of the colonized and of backwardness in the European “Self”.

4. RAISON d’ETAT, INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY and BALANCE OF POWER

In his March 1978 lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault engaged with a language very familiar to International Relations’ students and scholars. Particularly, there are striking similarities between these lectures and a book published just one year before: Hedley Bull’s
The Anarchical Society (see Chamon, 2013). On March 8, 1978, Foucault refers to the disappearance of a sort of great spiritual and temporal pastorate: the two great poles of historical-religious sovereign (the Empire and the Church) that dominated the West promising salvation, unity and the fulfillment of time. This break up leaded to a new reality (discussed in March 22, 1978) that had much in common with Bull’s anarchical society. Foucault not only argues that states, from Westphalia on, form something like an international society in the European space, but also stresses that this society is sustained by the same five key institutions identified by Bull: diplomacy (Foucault, 1978:405-6), international law (Foucault, 1978:406), the great powers (Foucault:1978:401), war (Foucault, 1978:403) and the balance of power (Foucault, 1978:398-9). As Bull (1977), Foucault assigns a privileged role for the balance of power in this society and regards the treaty of Westphalia as the “first complete, conscious, explicit expression of the politics of European balance” (Foucault, 1978:407). For both authors the balance of power emerged in the post-Westphalia context as an institution that in Bull’s view reflect the existence of a collective commitment to the survival of that society (see Little, 2009). Bull acknowledges that for the balance of power to operate as an institution there has to be a self-conscious recognition of how power is distributed among all the great powers (Little, 2009). Thus in Bull stability seems to require an accurate perception of power and as such any considerable mismatch between the objective and subjective balance of power would lead to a fragile balance (Little, 2009). In a similar vein, Foucault argues that the effective preservation of European equilibrium is seen as requiring that each state is in a position to know its own forces as well as to know and evaluate the forces of others, thus permitting a comparison that makes it possible to uphold and maintain the equilibrium (Foucault, 1978:424). Foucault goes beyond Bull by arguing that states, in this context, will measure their own forces and the force of others through a new science, namely, the statistics through which states will produce knowledge about its own and others. Colonization is understood by Foucault as contemporaneous to this new European regime of power-knowledge since it provides extra-resources to the European states that also need to be measured due to its impact upon the dynamic of forces in the European space. In fact, as pointed out by the historian of the English School, Adam Watson (2004), the European balance of power was then calculated taking in consideration the European colonial possessions.

Apart from the several similarities between Bull and Foucault’s ideas of international society, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that: while Bull takes for granted the state from where the international society emerges, to Foucault the society of nations is a specific problematization that is the effect of a specific art of governing and international politics is a problematization, an invention whose descent and emergence can and should be traced
(Chamon, 2013). However, Foucault traces the emergence of the idea of an international society overlooking the (non-material) role played by the colonial world in it. The colonial world is seen here as merely a space of colonial conquest with which Europe develop a relation of commercial utilization (Foucault, 1978: 391, 400).

In Foucault, the idea of Europe that emerged during the 17th century as an object of thought was constructed exclusively against European references. Europe is constructed, firstly, against the universal vocation of the Empire and the Church and, secondly, against Germany. In fact, according to Foucault “Europe is the means of forgetting (Germany) Empire” (Foucault, 1978: 408). Thus, the only alterities regarded as crucial by Foucault for the construction of the European Self are internal to Europe, or more precisely, to an outdated Europe. From Westphalia onwards, Europe is defined against hierarchical forms of state. According to Foucault, Europe is fundamentally plural as each sovereign is emperor in his own domain (Foucault, 1978: 399). Surprisingly, Foucault overlooks the main manifestation of Empire that is in course and well alive during this moment in the colonial world. By neglecting this important (colonial) dimension of global politics, Foucault is able to regard Empire as an anachronism, as a form of political organization outside of the new European reality. Through this movement, Foucault disavows the time-lag of Empire as a signal of cultural difference and overlooks the temporal disjunctions introduced by the colonial empire into the discourse of the raison d’Etat.

According to the discourse of the raison d’Etat, the state is organized only by reference to itself and as such it seeks its own good and has no external purpose (Foucault, 1978:389). It must lead to nothing but itself, neither to the sovereign nor the men’s salvation. Hence, through raison d’Etat emerges a world characterized by a plurality of states “that have their own law and end in themselves” (Foucault, 1978:389). The European space is from now on defined by a multiple spatiality that entails an open time, any longer temporarily oriented towards a final unity or Empire. Raison d’Etat exists within a world of indefinite history, without any form of fulfillment or eschatology (Foucault, 1978:398). Instead of a sort of absolute eschatology that posits an empire as the culmination point of history, we have, according to Foucault (1978:402), what could be called a “relative eschatology”, precarious and fragile. As shown by Foucault (1978:402), this precarious and fragile eschatology is peace, a peace no longer guaranteed by an unchallenged supremacy like that of the Empire or Church, but by the states themselves through the balance of power. From this, one can infer that raison d’Etat and the European equilibrium function in a single European space of temporal coevalness which excludes the Empire from its Self. It is the emptied conception of time that allows Foucault to speak about the apparatus of the balance of Europe and about
Europe itself as quite interchangeable. The meaning of the past, where a specific eschatology prevailed, is constructed in terms of modern time’s differentiating function, the present judged in terms of the past from the space of Europe.

Edward Keene (2002) helps us to identify the disjunctures of the so-called “Wesphalian system”. While within Europe the leading purpose of international order was to promote peaceful coexistence in a multicultural world through the toleration of other political systems, cultures and ways of life, beyond Europe, international order was dedicated to a different purpose: the promotion of civilization and white racial supremacy (Keene, 2002). Hence, in the colonial world, Europeans believed that they know how other governments should be organized and actively worked to restructure societies that they regarded as uncivilized in order to encourage economic progress and stamp out barbarism and corruption that they believe to be characteristic of most indigenous regimes. In contrast to the Westphalian system, Europeans were “quite prepared to entertain the possibility of violent actions and others interventions might have to be made in order to civilize savage peoples, or to prevent them from retarding the civilization of the wilderness that they insisted on treating as their homelands” (Keene, 2002:99). From the perspective presented in this paper, this bifurcation does not lead to two separate and disconnected worlds, but to a connected world full of ambiguities and contradictions. Hence, any European genealogy should include the colonial world where, during the “Westphalia system”, one could see a sort of “great spiritual and temporal pastorate” still alive through the agency of the European colonial powers even if, in Europe, it has disappeared. Therefore, Europe cannot be defined exclusively against an old version of itself (the Empire and the Church), but also against its colonial “Others”.

CONCLUSION

The dualism, shown in the previous section through Keene, characterized the state system since Grotius’s conception of an outer circle that embraced all humanity and an inner circle bound by the law of Christ (Doty, 1996; Bull, 1977). Scholars of the English School tradition such as Bull and Robert Jackson presuppose the occurrence of historical progressions from one set to the next that result from normative changes in international society according to the criteria for statehood and sovereign recognition (Doty, 1996). Accordingly, as stated by Siba Grovogui (2002), “the end of European empires through decolonization completed the transformation of the international system into one of fully autonomous states, dependent upon a Western-based political ethos which is encoded albeit imperfectly into a singular regime of sovereignty”. The conclusion is that European conquest and colonization facilitated
the convergence in international morality that laid the groundwork for the international society (Grooguoi, 2002).

Diverging from Bull and Jackson, Roxanne Doty (1996) understands the above dualisms as structures of exclusion consisting of a privileged inner core and inferior peripheries. Drawing on Foucault, Doty (1996:155) suggests that one structure of exclusion create the niches for others and just as, for Foucault, the poor vagabond, the criminal, and the deranged person took up the niche previously occupied by the leper, the members of each of these circles were characterized alternatively through time.

Since the end of the Cold War, critical scholars have exhibited a growing interest in the concept of “failed states” and have debated how this new discursive instance are taking up the niche previously occupied by the uncivilized and by the periphery during the Cold War.

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