



Introduction



## **Humanity and difference in the global age**

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Centered on the theme “Humanity and difference in the global age,” the China Conference allowed for a level of response in itself elucidative of this limit-question of our days, implying as well the loss of the universals for the understanding of the so-called contemporaneity as a plunge into the discourse of the fracture of the social times in the universe of the assertion of identities released from the western universalism.

With China as scenery, the critical consciousness of multiculturalism becomes more acute in face of a new questioning on the emergent subjectivity. From the beginning, we proceed to the search of these limit-conditions in which the task of social recognition will require the heuristic of what could be the very idea of globalization. And,

in this work of foundation, we pay attention to the rupture of the dialectics itself, which, in Mignolo's approach, confronts the limit challenge represented by the advancement of the concepts of de-westernization and decolonization. In the same sense, the first requirement of such heuristic is the phenomenological dislocation of subjectivity itself, involving, at the same time, the new prospective "social place" of the cybernetic instance, in face of the anthropological and biological ones, in the view presented by Gilbert Hottois. Or, in a first founding configuration of humanity vis-à-vis the Freudian robot, in the intuition of Lydia Liu. In such turning point, we face, initially, the extreme critical analysis of the "organic totalities," proposed by Sanjinés, who

**12** shows that the westernizing assumptions obliterated the recovery of the ethnicity and the identity matrices in the Latin American continent, including in the postcolonial stage. Concepts as those of subalternity and people are indispensable to the perception of the Andean America, as viewed by Mariátegui. In addition, in the prospective of the *techné*, we are warned by Lydia Liu about the need to distinguish between its prosthetic extension and its dimension properly interactive, which allows for the transformation and, following the path of Minsky, the new synthesis between the human psyche and the computer.

We will certainly be in debt with Longxi for his epistemological caution in the confrontation West-China. Appealing to the metaphor of Mount Lu, that we cannot entirely evade an inner view when referring to other, Longxi faces the theoretical dilemma of the "China centered" *ver-*

*sus* “Western centered” approaches in contemporary sinology. In this heuristic limit, Longxi may remember us of Gadamer’s warning on how much the *a priori* of homogeneity represents the real epistemological problem of history. The search for a critical framework for understanding the differences in a time of essential diachrony, and in the same prospective required by the Conference, François L’Yvonnet will be taken—along with the territorial discard and based on the French example—to the discussion of the statute of the intrinsic acceleration of this new “coming-to-be.” Following Paul Virilio’s analysis on the *diktats* of the instant, and turning it into a prospective focused on the survival of cultural identities, L’Yvonnet discusses the question of the emergent Latinity, asking whether one could find in it a universe rather of expectancy than of passive waiting. It is also in accordance with these extreme requirements that Maria Isabel Mendes de Almeida asks whether the references of sense remain or not within the new relational configurations of modernity. Or, conversely, on how is it possible, in an extreme intent of deconstruction, observe a genuine creativity and its outburst in our days. A whole investigation about the impersonal production of identities rises on the discussion presented by Bruno Latour on Viveiros de Castro’s relationalism. A whole mesh of a new subjectivity is examined in the network of aggregate collaboration, still in the scenery of the controlling societies, confronting, as well the ever more rhizomatous logic of capital, following the path of De Certeau, Boedanski or Lazzarato. It is in this dimension that Mario

Lucio Souza has discussed the question of a Creole identity in Africa, as detached from a true matrix of the deep-rooted Portuguese influence in Cape Verde.

14 Still in the frame of the emergent epistemological phenomenology, the loss of homogeneity in contemporary cultural *vis-à-vis* involves as well the discussion of the effective importance of the “event” in the Baudrillardian sense. This leads also to the discussion presented by Santiago Zabalá, in which is suggested that the prominence of the event today would be in fact the lack of it. In the axis of such new set of questions, current reflections also involves the Arab Spring and the new tensions unexpectedly arisen from by the democratic interplay in the assertion of the Islamic return marked by growing fundamentalism. Hélé Béji’s considerations make us aware of the contextual frame of such tension, escaping from the obvious visions of the process of bringing down secularism in Tunisia or Egypt. She induces us to an approach towards what could be—in the historical paths that abandoned the convergence of western universalism—the game of excesses and of counter-hegemonies affecting rather the emergent than the residual culture.

He Xirong works on the *vis-à-vis* between the West and the Chinese culture, elaborating on the matrix of the Zhang Tao thought that characterizes the subcontinent since the Quim period and has remained as the panel of the arrival of modernity. This was made clear by the first deconstruction of what was the mind of the Chinese intellectual elites exposed to the nineteenth century imperialism, and of its inevitable counterpoint, the “reversion of expectations” in-

volving the problem of the centrality, western or Chinese, affecting the specific reality of the subcontinent. In his presentation of the tradition of the Chinese thought, through the Zhang Tao and the reflexions of Confucius and Mencius, Xirong argues about the intrinsic maintenance of the centrality and perennial adhesion to the “medium course” of any thought. It is no other the assurance of impartiality that would be commanded by the Zhang Tao, followed by the reasonability and of the unity of the oppositions and their intrinsic interdependence. In this very sequence, Xirong proposes a heuristic of the contemporaneity, advocating for a multidimensional interaction of cultures, putting emphasis on their effective innovation.

Yang Guorong goes to the foundations of the Chinese way of thinking, paying attention to the ethical-phenomenological counterpoint in such specific foundations. What would be the notion of virtue, as equivalent of the *areté* in the western matrices? And in the same framework presumes the formation of value accorded to the individual and to the others. He stresses specially the extent to which all the metaphysical emphasis in the affirmation of the reality is replaced, in the Chinese case, by the strict exemplarity of the wise men, what implies the necessary immanentism of all virtue. On the other hand, Innerarity proceeds to the most rigorous prospective in the quest for difference and universality in our days. He inquires about the emergent subjectivity implied in the appearance of the “community of the indignant,” putting into question the very intrinsic principle of representation. From the very beginning,

he shows caution on whether revolution, or the complete rupture of the of contemporary reference codes concerning change, is or is not at stake. He goes further to the critical reason in the investigation of protest, discussing, in this sense, whether such phenomenon could be considered as a sign of depoliticization or as a kind of hyper-response already marking an idealization in the discards between the institutions and the civil society. No other is the impasse characterizing the search for the universal maintaining, at the same time, the old democratic congruence in political conducts.

Susan Buck-Morss goes to the extreme counterpoint of identity and difference, allowing for its literal reversion.

- 16** The technological advancement in photographs of the Earth serves as metaphors to what existed of predetermination of the inclusiveness, in what comes to the perception of the involvement, for instance, between nationality and collective identity, in a kind of response to the greatest challenge of George Lukács, that what characterizes modern society is its loss of any image of totality. In the affirmation of the radicalness of the prospective, such intrinsically fragmentary view has also multiple affinities and multiple constellations of senses, in what comes to the creation of the endless task of the transnational expropriation, an objective that can only be captured by the new heuristic of a “*communist yield*,” proposed by Husserl. The new representation of the global universe requires the detachment of its circular mapping and a dialectical rupture, having in mind the permanence of the presumption of a con-



tinuum in contemporaneity, as revealed by the history of the arts in our days.

The Innerarity's extreme questioning of democracy has its rebuttal in the analysis of Janine Ribeiro of its configuration in the diachronies and the *mimesis* of Latin America, as well as of the semantic perplexities imposed to sovereignty within the history of its domination. Focused on the Brazilian case, Janine advances the hypothesis that, in that cultural frame, progress will not depend so much on democratic rationality, but rather on the effectivity of the intertwining and enlacement through which civil society would succeed in imposing itself to public power.

Always within the view of de-territorialization within the true cardinal points of the new globalization, Gerardo Caetano goes deep into the *vis-à-vis* of what is the notion of a small country in this new geography. Uruguay is the canonic example in this emergent subjectivity that relativizes territoriality. And, at once, Caetano proceeds to the dialectic consideration of the neighborhoods, in the context of the new continental protagonisms. It is along this line that it follows a prospective already opened by Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, precisely through the first *vis-à-vis*, that is, of Uruguay in its relation with Brazil. This is the context in which takes place the emergent consciousness of the linkages or the "radial relationship," implied by the relations with the Mercosur and the Unasur.

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In this same approach, Walter Mignolo deconstructs decolonization along a line of time, in order to project it into the core of the BRICS, discussing the extent to which the

mark of this nation building would counterpose Brazil to South Africa and to India—and also to their contrasts—to Russia and China, immune to this historical experience and also to the *vis-à-vis* in their national coexistence.

As a final awareness regarding the inner meaning of difference nowadays, Gianni Vattimo asks about the real dimension of technology as indeed one of an ontological nature in strict relation to what we call “Being,” truth or value.

Living an historical momentum, so far from our beliefs at the turn of the century, the search still for a dialogue in the verge of a “war of religions” outstretches even an epistemological framework, bound by the concern of human rights far beyond a “western ideology.”