

## FAREWELL DIFFERENCE. A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF GLOBALIZATION

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**Abstract:** *More than twenty-five years ago I published a book: Farewell to the differences, translated into Romanian. In this book there was a chapter devoted to a commentary on Husserl's 1935 text on the Crisis of European consciousness. I think that since the factors of standardization, in particular economics, militaries, scientific and cultural have strengthened, and today offering the spectacle of a planet where the differences become more and more microscopic, which does not mean that conflicts are less acute. As the German historian Nolte wrote about the Second World War, it was the largest Weltbürgerkrieg (World Civil War) we may think that we are currently faced with the same phenomenon extended to all the peoples of the planets*

**Keywords:** *globalization; postmodernity; difference; standardization*

### 1. COLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

At the end of his famous book, *A World on the Wane* (Tristes tropiques) published in 1955 (Plon, France), Lévi-Strauss spoke of “the rainbow of human cultures”. This very poetic expression suggested to us a world, our world composed of many different human cultures juxtaposed which certainly communicated between them only on restricted spaces, even if, as we have learned from a number of ethnological descriptions, in these small spaces some inhabitants could be polyglots.

That is why it should be recalled that before the generalization of the few languages belonging to the great colonial powers, the functional communication between peoples speaking very contrasted languages, supposed this superficial multilingualism for trade, various exchanges. But when it was the great narratives of origins, myths, and religions there was only one language, the mother tongue of every primitive people that it usually was called “the language of humans”.

To understand this cultural state of mind, there is little need, even not to appeal to primitive peoples, but to the one which has provided one of the foundations of our learned culture, I like to say to Greeks of classical antiquity. Everyone knows that the word “barbaros” means not really a savage, but simply a human being who does not speak Greek and therefore who can't communicate with the gods, and not only with the gods, but can't exchange with this unique mode of self-reflexive

and rational consciousness, philosophy. Indeed, the great inaugural moment of philosophy as creation of metaphysics is formulated by Socrates-Plato dialogues at the very beginning unfolded in one language. Those who did not practice were excluded from this way of building the world, of giving meaning to the world.

Thus, many peoples of classical antiquity, although very civilized, did not communicate between them in the strongest sense of the term. It was during the expansion of the Roman Empire that a language (lingua franca) would become the instrument of communication between different peoples. *Civis romanum sunt* says St. Paul to escape the prison whose mother tongue was to be Aramaic or Syriac, and Greek as language of culture. With the Roman empire begins something which, when Christianity becomes official religion of the Empire with its philosophical argument from Greek metaphysics, will be presented as a sort of proto-globalization. Certainly, it was stopped first by the fall of the Western Roman Empire, then by the rise of Islam which later destroy the Eastern Roman Empire. But anyway, the Empire was a model. Certainly, the Holy Roman Germanic did not have this vocation in a limited to parts of Europe, but among elites, the universal language was Latin. But the world was still divided in vast regions that did not know each other.

We had to wait for an event, – Hannah Arendt speaks of “a step forward” – for the idea of world empire to regain strength. This step forward is

known, its name is the conquest of America that opened the Christian Europe (Catholics and a little later Protestants) to the domination of the world. This conquest has a name in the realm of politics, that is colonialism, and in the realm of economics when it became extended capitalist, imperialism.

This genealogy must be resumed as I have recalled from the colonization of America. Not that exotic societies of Africa and Asia were unknown to Europeans, they are known since the empire of Alexander and the Roman Empire, but the conquest for the most part left the local elites in charge of power with allegiance to the central power. The colonization that begins with the "step forward to America" had a very different nature from the previous incursions of the West out of itself. The American conquest and all conquests that followed resulted in the enslaved use of the natives, the Indians, and after their massive refusal to work as slaves their systematic extermination, followed by the importation of black Africans source of a very profitable capitalist trade, "the triangular trade", and origin of the most the great fortunes of the New World.

This colonization has been not only the greatest genocide of humanity in modern history, but also the first step toward a standardization of the world. Three European languages share America, English and French in the north, Spanish and Portuguese in the south; three religions occupy the continent, in the south Latin Catholics, in the North various Protestantism, Catholicism, and in Latin America various syncretic religions, mixing Africans goods with Indian goods and some elements of Christianity: Candomble in northeastern Brazil, Voodoo in Haiti, Santeria in Cuba.

That was the first elements of standardization. Then come a second moment with the decline of the Spanish, Dutch, then French imperial power. During this time, on the one hand, the extension of Christianity on the one hand, extension of slavery and after wage labor on the other, all that unified the objective conditions of non-European peoples. This uniformisation also had directly a political origin, linked to the previous ones, but with extremely powerful effects on the ideological forms of these colonial societies. I want to talk about the struggles for national liberation or decolonization. Led by modern ideological representations, generally derived from the British and French Enlightenment and the ideals of French Revolution. These conflicts between an indigenous vanguard intellectuals able to gather people, finally wielded the most modern social classes (workers, small local employees, petty civil servants). And

these people fighting with the colonial power, often allied to the half-breed's people, fed not only discourses, but also identical practices and hopes among peoples that some centuries before did not even know each other. So much so that colonization nurtured social formations with identical or almost identical speeches.

## 2. FROM GEMEINSCHÄFT INTO GESELLSCHAFT

Why is there in postmodernity a generalized communication between human being from different civilization origins?

However, we must nuance the question and say through the majority of men because some still remain or a kind of archaeological residue out of generalized communication or in a mixed culture which is summarized with the concept of syncretism. Nevertheless, globalization or mundialization is on the verge to be generalized.

Among these many and diverse intercommunications, which will perhaps surprise you in Bucharest, I will choose to give one example, the one of West Papua-New Guinea's struggle for independence. Anyone who is somewhat familiar with ethnology and anthropology, and interested in politics of the South Pacific, as well as in geopolitics of the area brought about by the transformations of decolonization and recolonization, know that an island as large as New Guinea, where in northern-west part there are about sixty tribes from the coast to the most remote mountain valleys (and some still unexplored), know the big problem of communication among that dozens of different languages were spoken and sometimes as different as Romanian from German or Estonian. The fact that indigenous struggles for independence from Indonesia are currently heard around the world is due to the fact that opinion leaders have chosen to communicate not with Indonesian language, but with English in general (French for an island like New Caledonia).

This generalization of a lingua franca in the South Pacific is not an original social and political fact, simply here is more spectacular because of the multiplication of the local languages. So that lingua franca lets natives able to communicate with the world and in particular with their former and new colonizers. Nevertheless, it was not only the use of a common European language which is at stake, but deeper the fact that adopting a language you still adopt modes of thought of your colonizers. We know well that beyond language as

a sum of words organized by a grammar (formal rules) there is a semantics that carries an historical, social, cultural and spiritual experience. At the end, to communicate with colonizers is not simply to exchange at the lowest level words necessary for simple everyday life or commandments, in that new exchange there is also concepts, axioms, theorems, visions and conceptions of the world, *Weltanschauungen*. It was from the moment when colonized peoples grasped Western conceptualizations, both political and technical that they began to fight efficiently against Europeans for their own independency. Wars against Westerners required understanding of their tactics and strategies in order to oppose its owns. War became slowly a war articulate on the same metaphysical foundations This is the difference between American Indians or Australian Aborigines and Asiatic peoples when confronted with Europeans colonizers. The first did not understand the western way of thinking and practicing wars and treaties, and therefore they were unable, beyond even a battle win to see the global issue of fight, the real transitivity of treaties. The case of Australians Aborigines is worst, because they were very peaceful people, even unable to understand the process they were involved in, the total conquest and their extermination. While the Asian peoples have never been totally submissive to Europeans conquerors. Their cultures had already known States power and administrative centralized management, they know the relativity of all treaties, and they developed a literature of military strategy and diplomatic tactics. Thus, it was not easy to colonize totally a people like Chinese who gave a Sun-Tse or Vietnamese who constantly fight against the French. It was not easy to colonize a country like Algeria where elites have read medieval Muslim political thought. In short, modernity is precisely characterized by the end of the strongest, most powerful, most original cultural differences that prevented men from communicating with each other.

From the conquest of Mexico to the last unknown lands of Melanesia and Paouasia, the modern technical and capitalist Western world has indeed destroyed the traditional communities, as it has done simultaneously in the European countryside. Gradually each tribe, each clan lost its transcendental references replaced by those brought to them by the White people: religions, slavery then wage labor, revolts turned into struggles for national independence (independence of Latin America in the early nineteenth century), revolts transformed into class struggles (case of

Latin America) or the mixture of these two aspects in the constitution of a modern state as is the case in the Middle East Arab-Muslim and Arab-Christian societies and in the Far East. I could even add that wars between Europeans in which colonized peoples participated as colonial troops (Indians, Nepalese Gurkhas, Blacks of East Africa among the British; Vietnamese, Blacks of West Africa and Arabs of the North Africa for the French), have developed in these peoples references to modern politics. All these tragically existential experiences drove them toward modernity. Don't forget that national political theories of modern States or the one of Marxism-Leninism are modern thoughts coming from European philosophy that exotic people learned from us. Of course, we witnessed some adaptation to local culture, but in a general way it is not a mere coincidence if many of the first revolutionaries of the colonial World, from Indonesia and India to Ghana, from Vietnam and China to South Africa from the leaders of the Vietminh or those of Algerian NLF (National liberation front) or Kenya Mau-Mau had all either studied in France or in England or had participated as non-commissioned officers in special in the Second World War.

No one can deny today that the process of globalization set up by the West since the conquest of America has gradually succeeded in transforming the world into new forms of socialization. The main trend of this process was to evolve towards the form of Nation-state, even if it was a micro-State as we meet among islands of the South Pacific or the Caribbean. This transformation of the form of communities (tribes, clans, fractions of clan), so *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft* according to the classical terminology of German sociology, has obviously changed the modes of communication at all levels: economic, political, technical, educational, interpersonal. This mutation, which can be defined as anthropological or civilizational, organized at least by the elites and a part of the people, is currently leading to another, at least now in Europe which witnesses the decomposition of the Nation-state and its foreseeable end, in spite of strong resistance as shown by Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary today.

If it is possible to say that contemporary communication is global because most people speak the same language, not so much an English of airport or super market, but a language where notions, axioms and concepts are the same. This universal language is both that of political economy, that of Technics in general and military

technology in particular, because in modernity there is no political and economic power that do not go hand in hand with technology power.

### 3. TOWARDS A GLOBAL CIVIL WAR

At the moment of the fall of communist regimes in Europe and the Soviet Union, an American analyst (having read Hegel too quickly) asserted that the cold war was over and won by the United States, so we had reached the end of history that is to say the fulfillment of the American model of world power and the democracy (but more likely an oligarchic and plutocratic democracy), as the achievement of the absolute Spirit (*Leistung des absoluten Geistes*). It seems that his prophetic words are not only meaningless words, but above all it seems that his head is emptied of lucid thoughts. He proposed a world of political relations motionless, not a dialectical Hegelian model of history, but a kind of Kantianism revisited at the end of the 20th century by a new "project for a Perpetual Peace". There is a serious blindness in the mind of Mister Fukuyama who believes in the eternity of the moment, a new kind of *Philosophia perennis* of the relations of power (which implied as such a passivity among peoples). It seems that our Hegelian did not understand that the unification of the world under the force of an economy globalized to the extreme, puts face to face countries with are charring identical concepts of politics and power, so that power relations cold or hot have become the origin of a world-wide civil war, as the First World War had already offered a premonitory beginning. It is what Carl Schmitt had brought under the concept of *Weltbürgerkrieg*. There is no and cannot be an end of history unless we are, as Voltaire told Rousseau formerly about natural life, cows grazing in the meadows, or more present, if a nuclear catastrophe

would abolish our lives. There cannot be any end of history because of the essence of human nature, both its essential violence (I am on Hobbes' ground here), and its ability to think about its actions, interests, future in short, its ability of self-reflection which has given birth to philosophy and all the social sciences which derive from it.

We speak the same language of the political and we fight with the same modern weapons which like all technical objects carries not only a functionality, but also concepts giving our world the sense of that founding relation, the one between object and subject....

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