
Tlahtoani/Temachtiani. On the History of Ruptures and Continuities between Political Power and Culture in Latin America

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There was no longer *Tlahtoani* [the Mexican ruler] and *Temachtiani* [the teacher]. The year was 1553 and these Mexican terms were articulated at the Royal College of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, perhaps for the first time, to name another reality: that of the viceroyalty and the priest. Later, this colonial articulation sealed a particular manner of exercising the relationship between political power and culture in Latin America, although with significant local variations. Therefore, putting these articulations into question is neither an antiquarian's curiosity nor a cultural atavism characteristic of the periphery, and much less a harmless intellectual exercise. The present issue of CROLAR revisits these relationships in the age of global neoliberalism and its authoritarian or progressive drifts at a regional level.

There is an extensive, significant tradition of research and analysis of power and the political sphere in Latin America. Over the last few years, however, and due to disciplinary as well as political biases, approaches that circumscribe the actuality of the political to democratic processes and institutions have prevailed, hence isolating politics from its social and economic context and blurring its links to the

cultural realm. Nonetheless, intellectuals, notables, mandarins, experts, and technocrats have historically nourished and masculinized those links, thus contributing to their naturalization.

On the other hand, and even though they are subjects sensitive to the exercise of political power, cultural producers have but few spaces to reflect on the ways in which those links determine their practice, discourse, and products. As tributaries of a certain aura of relative creative autonomy, cultural producers have historically oscillated between a critical distance from the government of the day and the vindication of such distance as a condition for value-neutrality towards politics. Nonetheless, in times when neoliberalism overtly exhibits its patterns of extractivism, low-intensity democracy, multicultural citizenship policy-making, and criminalization of poverty, marginality, and otherness, it becomes urgent to take notice of what forges contemporary neoliberal cultural circuits, which affect not only (the actual or alleged) intellectual independence but more notably the potential contestations of the neoliberal order from the realm of cultural production.

Given the strength that these relationships exhibit within our regional context, the guest editors of this issue aimed to return to the questions: What is the state of the relationship between political power and cultural production in Latin America? What are the particularities of the array of practices and discourses that characterize it? The current issue provides valuable keys to answer those questions. Conversely, the articles reflect upon the political conditions of cultural production based on relevant angles, such as the role of the state, economics and political parties; the transnational configurations of knowledge and the circuits of cultural and epistemic dependence; and racial and sex-gender subalternizations, which have been consistently present throughout the entire colonial and postcolonial history of Latin America.

The contributions also explore the ways in which, historically as well as contemporarily, the intellectual field has been part of the dynamics and endeavors associated with politics. They point out important insights on the possibilities, tensions, and misencounters brought to the fore of cultural production by the political commitment of marginalized sectors and subjects. Importantly, the papers highlight the reemergence of indigenous peoples' mobilizations and the more recent –although with similar or more mobilization power– feminist and sexual-diversity movements. All of these allow for the re-opening of questions about the intersections and mutual determinations of class, race and sex-gender under neoliberal

capitalism and their manifestations in cultural, intellectual, artistic and *artivistic* expressions.

The articles and contributions to this issue are a good demonstration of the multiplicity of dimensions that neoliberal reconfigurations of the relationships between politics and culture entail. They are contributions from Argentina, Chile, Germany, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Edgar Góngora opens the section “Focus” with his review of *Dependencia académica y profesionalización en el Sur. Perspectivas desde la periferia [Academic dependency and professionalization in the South]*, a volume organized by Fernanda Beigel and Hanan Sabea. The book's chapters offer a number of analyses that help to understand how the international division of scientific labor defines the conditions of subalternization and epistemic dependence from the part of the sciences –particularly, the social sciences– in the global South. Héctor Ríos-Jara reviews another collective book, *Chili actuel: gouverner et résister dans une société néolibérale [Actual Chile: Ruling and resisting within a neoliberal society]*, which invites the reader to rethink the conceptual and political tools used by the social sciences to analyze anti-neoliberal social mobilizations. In doing so, this work elects Chile and its “mature neoliberalism” as an observational field.

The section is concluded by Eliana Largo's comments on Alejandra Castillo's *El desorden de la democracia. Partidos políticos*

de mujeres en Chile [Democracy in disarray. Women's political parties in Chili], which poses a question around the acknowledgement of the long history of women's struggles and organizations. Historically, the national society has neglected and silenced them, thus reinforcing political identity as a supposedly masculine universe. The reflections about women's ability to disarray and overflow the established political framework are certainly representative of other Latin American countries, too – which has been recently demonstrated (and with special intensity and dramatism) with the regional re-emergence of feminist mobilizations and demands for sexual and reproductive rights. In doing so, Largo's article establishes important points of dialogue with the subsequent sections.

In the section "Review Essays", Tomás Peters introduces to us the eclectic, essayistic pathways of cultural theorists John Kraniauskas and Nelly Richard. From a myriad of literary and filmic works that does not neglect the material conditions in which they are produced and reproduced, their works converge in the search for an understanding of the interstices of colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal power in Latin America –so often unobserved or wiped out by apparatuses specifically associated to such power. Peters proposes to conceive Kraniauskas' and Richard's exercises as "poetics of dispossession" that draws us, in turn, to reconsider the "politics of discontent" that emerges from neoliberalism's operations of dispossessions. Sebastián López Vergara brings to the forefront the increasingly

public and political activities of indigenous intellectuals. From the works of Waskar Ari and Claudia Zapata, a reconsideration of the particularities of these political and cultural practices is proposed. These intellectual formations have been subjected to historical experiences of collective oppression and exclusion from legitimized cultural circuits, as much as from national societies and their sovereign apparatuses. Highlighting the way in which stereotypes associated to indigeneity –among them rurality and orality– have contributed to its obscuring in the academy, López's essay concludes by pointing out the indisputable contributions of decolonial indigenous thought to overcome the rigidity of divides such as the oral/written or the modern/traditional, thus bringing the colonial foundations of both the former developmentalist state and the current neoliberal regime into light.

Felipe Lagos Rojas' essay revisits the thought of two central Latin-American political thinkers of the second half of the 20th century, namely, José Aricó and René Zavaleta Mercado. While the latter introduces the notion of *abigarramiento* [disjointedness] to come to terms with societies that otherwise appear to be "unknowledgeable" or "illegible" to the colonial gaze, the former characterized the relationship between Marxism and Latin America as one of *desencuentro* [misencounter, or mismatch]. Both concepts are brought forward in Lagos' essay as part of an exercise aimed to readjust the Marxist categories of conceiving politics, proposing that pretensions of a universal grammar for social struggles be abandoned. Carlos

Acevedo's essay on the texts of Ricardo Yocelovsky, Jaime Osorio, and Immanuel Wallerstein closes the section. These works join paths as they affirm the need to renew our conceptual and epistemic devices in order to open the path for new tools capable of accounting for the region's conflicts and social mobilization. In doing so, they may contest hegemonic neoliberal representations in Latin America.

In "Classics Revisited", it is an honor to present a semblance of José María Aricó's *oeuvre* by Martín Cortés, one of his main scholars. With a thorough knowledge of the most prolific veins taken on by the Cordovan Communist thinker, Cortés points these out from the former's stance as polemicist, translator, and founder and organizer of important intellectual projects such as journals and editorial collections. With careful attention dedicated to finding a Latin-American expression to the Marxist tradition, Aricó contributed with some of the most powerful reflections about intellectuals' political practices and commitments in a non-Eurocentric, but deeply *Nuestramericana* [Our-American] way –José Martí *dixit*.

The remaining sections offer significant insights to come to terms with the historical and contemporary articulations between capitalism, feminism, diversity, coloniality, and cultural production. The interviews and interventions propose a rethinking of the logics of emergence, negotiation, and contestation of what is now known as "intersectionality". The conversations with Verónica Gago and Verónica Schild, as

well as Alejandra Castillo's text, go deeper into the potentialities and difficulties that feminist and sexual-diversity vindications bring to the re-articulation of a Latin-American emancipation project. They pose questions that once again become topical, in an epoch in which conservative, patriarchal power has closed lines to defend its privileges, but from which sharp critical balances on the cycle known as progressive governments or "pink tide" are also displayed. The interview with Javier Auyero proposes to reconsider sociology's public vocation via his research of Latin America's and the United States' marginality and poverty. María José Yaksic reopens the thought of Stuart Hall from a lucid, topical reading of the documentary film dedicated to him in 2013 by John Akomfrah. Finally, Manuel Macía offers his own translations into Spanish and English of a brief text, "Requiem", by the Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, which evinces disquieting affinities with the current escalation of neoliberal-stamp authoritarianism, particularly in Brazil.

To close this brief introduction, we wholeheartedly thank both the editorial board of CROLAR for the invitation to coordinate this issue and the authors that responded to the call and took part in this project. We would also like to reiterate our central conclusion in yet another call: to rethink the relationships between power and intellectual and cultural production through the different re-articulations of neoliberal political regimes.