

DECOLONIAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE HISTORICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL BLINDNESS OF THE THEORIES OF MODERNITY: A NEW WAY TO LATIN-AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY¹

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Resumo: o artigo reflete sobre a filosofia latino-americana enquanto uma *práxis* decolonial que desvela e supera a cegueira histórico-sociológica das teorias da modernidade, que é caracterizada pela separação entre a cultura europeia e a moderna *Realpolitik* do colonialismo como momentos não-dependentes e pela reconstrução do processo de constituição da modernidade europeia enquanto um movimento de evolução endógeno, autorreferencial e basicamente interno que, entretanto, assume um sentido, um alcance e um movimento universalistas. Aqui, o papel crítico e emancipatório do paradigma normativo da modernidade somente é possível de ser sustentado por meio da afirmação daquela cegueira histórico-sociológica. Desse modo, a filosofia latino-americana, no momento em que denuncia e desvela a cegueira histórico-sociológica das teorias da modernidade, aponta diretamente para a auto-limitação do paradigma normativo da modernidade enquanto a agenda e a *práxis* teórico-políticas fundamentais de uma filosofia decolonial, também enquanto condição para a autocorreção da própria modernidade.

Palavras-Chave: Modernidade, cegueira histórico-sociológica, emancipação, colonialismo, filosofia decolonial, auto-limitação.

Abstract: the paper proposes Latin-American philosophy as a decolonial *praxis* to unveil and overcome the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, which is characterized by the separation between European culture and the modern *Realpolitik* of colonialism as independent moments and by the reconstruction of the process of constitution of European modernity as an endogenous, self-referential and basically internal movement of evolution, but with a universal sense and range. Here, the critical and emancipatory role of the normative paradigm of modernity is possible only by that historical-sociological blindness which separates cultural modernity and social-economic modernization-colonialism. Therefore, Latin-American philosophy, the moment it denounces and unveils the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, points directly to the self-restraint of the normative paradigm of modernity as the basic theoretical-political agenda and *praxis* for a decolonial philosophy and as a condition also to the correction of modernity itself.

Keywords: Modernity, historical-sociological blindness, emancipation, colonialism, decolonial philosophy, self-restraint.

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1. The normative paradigm of the theory of modernity: Basic presuppositions

The theoretical-political starting point of the theories of modernity endorsed by Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas is the idea that Europe is a very specific and particular evolutionary societal, cultural and epistemological process in relation to the rest of the world and to all other societies and cultures. Europe has developed a rationalist societal organization which differentiates it regarding the other societies or cultures. *Only in Europe*, Weber says, there is valid science in terms of systematic and rational research; *only in Europe*, Weber continues, there is rational art; and, finally, *only in Europe*, yet according to Weber, there are rational political, juridical and economic institutions which organize and orientate social life. The truth is that the sons of Europe are very impressed with the fact that the European civilizational process is very rational, specific and singular regarding the rest of the world, which is characterized by many forms of traditionalism. So, contrarily to the closed and particularized traditionalist worldviews (which are attached to their own context of emergence), European societal, cultural and epistemological worldview is marked by a form of living, thinking and acting with a universal range and validity. *Only in Europe*, it is Weber again who speaks, all the problems, practices and codes are streamlined and grounded as *historical-universal problems*, very rationalized. In Europe – and only in Europe – has emerged the cultural and epistemological way of grounding, living, thinking and acting defined by claiming for a universal-rational sense and range, this characteristic being very specific of Europe, differentiating it in relation to traditionalism. In other words, *there is Europe and all the rest*, there is Europe as a rational societal, cultural and epistemological organization, and all the rest of the world characterized by traditionalism. There is also the universal Europe and the contextualized traditionalisms. And the societal, cultural and epistemological constitution and dynamics of Europe are based on and streamlined for the correlation and intrinsic linking between *rationalism and universalism* (see WEBER, 1987, p.11-24; HABERMAS, 1990a, p.1).

Now, that is the fundamental core and role of the theories of modernity which reconstruct an idealized notion of European cultural modernity as allowing a normative paradigm based on a universal epistemological-moral foundation associated with rationalization, from which criticism, framing and orientation are made possible and must be started. Therefore, what could seem at first an innocent methodological procedure of research becomes a very normative-political basis for the comprehension and future of European modernity itself. In other words, Weber's understanding of

the European societal, cultural and epistemological constitution is not just an innocent research procedure for sociological analysis, but fundamentally a normative-political concept of modernity itself as an epistemological-political-normative *praxis* within itself and in terms of international politics (therefore, without itself). The use of rationalism by theories of modernity in order to reconstruct the history and the sense of Europe's evolutionary process is very singular by the fact that at the same time that it singularizes Europe's constitution and dynamics and separates, by idealizing, European cultural development and the *Realpolitik* of colonialism as non-dependent and non-correlated moments *of the same dynamics*, that is, the totalizing (or universal) movement of assimilation of all contexts into the self-assumed universal and rationalized European pattern of civilizational, cultural and epistemological constitution, dynamics and grounding. In the theories of modernity, therefore, the idealization of rationalism and universalism, as intrinsic points of Europe's culture and epistemological-moral consciousness, allows an endogenous self-development and self-constitution which ignores all correlations with other cultures and civilizations, as it singularizes modernity regarding all the rest of the world, at the same time as it autonomizes cultural modernity in relation to the *Realpolitik* of modern colonialism.

So, the separation between a normative model of European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of European colonization as the *separation between a normative model of European cultural modernity and an institutional model of social-economic modernization* are the *theoretical starting point and the political choice* from which theories of modernity in general, and Habermas's theory of modernity in particular, are constructed and based on. But why? If we look at Habermas's theory of modernity, the reason is very clear: He intends to reconstruct and renew a normative model of European cultural modernity as an epistemological-moral paradigm not just for a critical social theory of the process of Western modernization, but, after, a universal epistemological-moral paradigm for the entire world *as cultural-epistemological modernization and universal epistemological-moral rationalization*. For that, Habermas has two justifications. First, if there is an intrinsic link and dependence between cultural modernity and colonialism, between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, then there is no reflexivity in modern epistemological-moral universalism, by the fact that it is attached to Europe's material civilization and legitimizes such material process of both colonialism and capitalism. In this case, modernity's normative paradigm based on the idealization of European cultural modernity *must be independent* regarding social-economic modernization. Second, an epistemological-moral universalism is the condition for criticism and framing of all particular cultural contexts and practices; only it allows a

critical social theory. Now, it means that an epistemological-moral universalism cannot be a normative principle for a particular form of life like the other forms of life (and particularly traditionalism, which is always based on contextualist principles and practices), because that does not enable a transcendental epistemological-moral point of view which allows judging and framing all forms of life from an impartial, neutral and formal procedural paradigm. In this case, a universal epistemological-moral paradigm must acquire a post-conventional constitution, that is, a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric sense and range which is overlapped with and generic regarding particular and contextual forms of life. Only from that non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric constitution and grounding are the critical social theory as an epistemological-moral universalism possible.

The theoretical-political conditions for a critical social theory based on the reconstruction and renewal of a normative notion of modernity are double, defining the way and the sense of Habermas's theory of modernity. First, cultural modernity must be independent regarding social-economic modernization, that is, the epistemological-moral universalism must be independent of modern social systems, which also means that communicative reason (normative-cultural modernity) is independent and different concerning instrumental reason (social-economic modernization) (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.148-151). The contrary does not hold: social-economic modernization and instrumental reason are made possible by that normative model of cultural modernity, because the emergence and the consolidation of the process of Western modernization are generated from the constitution and development of cultural modernization in the sense that modern social systems are within the lifeworld, enabled by the development of the lifeworld (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.151-152). Therefore, here, cultural modernity as a normative paradigm is not directly linked to social-economic modernization and, as a consequence, it is not the epistemological-moral legitimation of the pathologies caused by modern social systems. Likewise, cultural modernity as a normative paradigm cannot be held responsible for the political-economic-cultural colonialism due to the inexistence of that intrinsic link. On the contrary, the normative model of European cultural modernity enables a kind of epistemological-moral universalism which allows a *critical* social theory, a *critical* paradigm for theoretical analysis and political framing-changing of social-economic modernization, of its internal pathologies and colonialism (Habermas, 1990a, p.01-04; 1998a, p. xxxv-xxxvi; 1984, p. xxix-xl). Second, cultural modernity must be a universal form of life and culture in order for European modernity to assume *and exert* the ability to judge, think and speak in the name of humankind. In other words, in order to speak, act, think and judge in a

universal way and sense, European cultural modernity can constitute itself as a universal, not a particular, form of culture and life (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.58-59; 1997, p.143-144). A critical social theory and a non-fundamentalist epistemological-moral universalism based on the reconstruction and renewal of a normative model of European cultural modernity must be constructed from the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization and from the understanding that European cultural modernity, because of its rationality, is a universal form of culture, consciousness and epistemology which enables exactly the social criticism from a universal normative paradigm (see HABERMAS, 1990b, p.195-211). These are the two basic theoretical-political starting points of Habermas's theory of modernity.

Indeed, the theoretical-political starting point of Habermas's theory of modernity is characterized by the assumption of the superiority of European rationalized culture and epistemological-moral consciousness in terms of generating, grounding and fomenting an epistemological-moral point of view which is non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric by its proceduralism, formalism, impartiality and neutrality regarding epistemological-moral foundations and the correlation between intersubjective justifications and contextual forms of life (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.44-45). Traditionalism cannot do so, and that is the reason why Habermas compares and opposes, in the beginning of his *The theory of communicative action* (which is the contemporary theory of modernity's *magnum opus*), European culture and epistemological-moral consciousness and the traditional culture and epistemological-moral consciousness (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.44-45; 1988, p.8-23; 1979, p.95-177). Here, as it occurred in Weber's theory of modernity, the separation between Europe and the rest of the world, between a rationalized culture-consciousness and a traditional culture-consciousness appears as the central presupposition on which a theory of modernity is based and must start. At the same time, it is a presupposition that a theory of modernity must prove from an internal reconstruction of the process of Western modernization (see HABERMAS, 1997, p.140-154; 1987, p.401). Which are the specificities of both Europe's culture-consciousness and traditional culture-consciousness? Habermas (as Weber) believes that Europe's culture-consciousness is rational, generating a rational form of life and thinking, while traditional culture-consciousness is not rational nor generates social-cultural rationalization. Traditional culture-consciousness is marked by a strong imbrication and dependence between nature, culture-society and individuality, with no separation. As a consequence, the social stratification and *status quo* appear naturalized, as natural phenomena become anthropomorphic-magical. Likewise, the individual is subsumed into the naturalized societal dynamic and anthropomorphic natural constitution,

becoming abrogated. There are no social mobility and criticism in traditional societies, because the societal-cultural constitution, legitimation and evolution are not political, but naturalized. In the same way, by the fact that there is not a notion of rational individuality opposed to nature (as Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum*) and independent of society (as modern political liberalism), the political *praxis* is not possible (political subjects do not exist, society is not secularized-politicized-historicized). Therefore, traditional societies are not rational nor generate social-cultural-epistemological rationalization because they have no need for justification – all is naturalized and magical; there are no politics and politicinity in traditional societies (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.45-71).

It is here that European cultural-societal evolution appears as a new – and more explosive – form of life when compared to traditionalism. Habermas (and Weber and the whole of classical sociology) believes that traditionalism does not enable social criticism and social mobility, because it is marked by the naturalization of all social relations and by the effacement of the individualities as critical political subjects. As a consequence, there is no rationalization in traditional societies (all is naturalized and unpolitical, which means that the only valid social explanation is metaphysical-theological, an explanation based on essentialist and naturalized foundations). Modern European society is a new form of societal-cultural-epistemological organization because it is characterized by a process of consolidation of social-cultural *rationalization* as the basic point of its constitution, legitimation and evolution. Social-cultural rationalization means firstly the strong and decisive separation between nature, culture-society and individuality which correlatively signifies the historicization-politicization of society and the centrality of the self-reflexive subjectivity in terms of framing and changing social institutions. Here, the societal-cultural constitution, legitimation and evolution can no longer be justified with an essentialist and naturalized basis (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.71-72; 1987, p.290; 1988, p.36-37).

Accordingly, social rationalization means, secondly, a foundational procedure of public justification concerning institutions' and social relations' dynamics, codes, principles and practices. In this situation, the *public justification* is a kind of rationalization which cannot appeal to essentialist and naturalized foundations, as *it cannot be based on contextual principles and practices*: here, rationalization means both the victory of the best (the universal) debate and the necessity of an argumentation which is post-conventional, impartial, neutral and formal regarding contextual forms of life (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.87, p.134; 1998b, p.03-05). In European modern culture, the imbrication (and mutual dependence) of cultural-institutional secularism and self-reflexive subjectivity leads to the denaturalization of society, its politicization and

historicization, which means that the political institutional grounding and the social mobility are a matter for a radical criticism which denies and destroys any suspicion of essentialist and naturalized foundations as the basis of social life and political institutional constitution. European modern society, therefore, institutes two fundamental epistemological-political points in terms of normative grounding and of societal political evolution: First, the correlation between institutional-cultural secularism and self-reflexive individuality leads to the *linguistification of the sacred*; second, the separation between nature, culture-society and individuality leads to denaturalization, politicization and historicization of social structures. And both of them lead to the end of metaphysical-theological foundations as the basis of legitimation and streamlining in modern societies (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.106-107; 1998a, p.10-11).

The linguistification of the sacred, in Habermas's terms, is the direct consequence of the separation between nature, culture-society and individuality; it is the direct result of the imbrication and mutual dependence between institutional-cultural secularism and self-reflexive individuality. It means that the structuration, legitimation and evolution of modern societies need a public justification whose procedures, practices, codes and political subjects are not based on essentialist and naturalized foundations. In other words, modern procedures, codes and practices of epistemological-moral foundation cannot appeal to contextual, particularized worldviews, as modern political-normative subjects of foundation cannot assume a metaphysical-theological performance in terms of public dialogue and of political *praxis*. Modern societies are not only societies which have overcome traditionalism as a binding worldview and principle of grounding-orientation, they also have consolidated and recognized multiculturalism as a basis and fact of social life (see HABERMAS, 1990b, 1992, 1987; RAWLS, 1993; HONNETH, 1995; FORST, 2002). Thus, modern epistemological-moral foundations and political-normative subjects must have other procedures, codes and principles of grounding, as they must think-act beyond the *prison of the context* of traditionalism. The correlation between secularism and self-reflexive individuality provides the way to modernity's normative specificity: the social foundations for institutional and intersubjective life of modern societies are achieved from the radical social criticism by different cultural groups and individuals which argument and interact from a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric point of view, assuming an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism that generates codes and practices aimed to rationality and universality – that is also the foundation of post-metaphysical times (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.290-291; 1998b, p.307-312). Here emerges European

cultural modernity's universalism as an impartial, neutral and formal procedure of rationalization regarding epistemological-moral foundations based on secularism and individualism, which leads to communicative action as *medium* of constitution, legitimation and evolution of both social dynamics and intersubjective-individual epistemological-moral consciousness. Differently from the non-reflexive traditional culture-consciousness, the modern culture-consciousness must become rationalized in order to ground binding social values and practices, acquiring a post-conventional constitution and dynamics marked by a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric epistemological-moral posture which is universal, that is, impartial, neutral and formal regarding particular forms of life (see HABERMAS, 1998b, p.60-61; 1984, p.216). In this sense, European rationalism, by its formality, impartiality and neutrality, becomes the normative umbrella from which all particular forms of life are embraced and streamlined over time.

That leads to the denaturalization, politicization and historicization of modern society, which means that nothing is sacred, because all can be framed from political *praxis*, social criticism and rationalism (see RORTY, 2010; CATROGA, 2006). Therefore, the combination, in European modern society, of the *rationalization* of the societal-institutional constitution and grounding, *universalism* and *historicity* becomes the more explosive political-normative basis ever consolidated by humankind exactly because it denaturalizes the societal structuration, legitimation and evolution, by politicizing the institutional-cultural practices and codes, and mainly by politicizing the subjects of epistemological-moral grounding. What emerges directly from this is the idea that modern societies have not an essentialist and naturalized foundation which is uncritically established as the basis of the societal-cultural-individual constitution, legitimation and evolution. The epistemological-moral foundation of modern societies must be constructed from a process of political-normative rationalization which fundamentally requires the possibility of a post-conventional epistemological-moral consciousness by every individual and cultural group. As an intersubjective construction made possible by the rationalization-politicization of the subjects of foundation, Europe's normative objectivity can assume a universal sense and range, because it is a form of non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric culture-consciousness which demands – and generates – the possibility of thinking-acting in the name of others by an impartial, neutral and formal procedure of normative-political foundation which is fundamentally based on the rationalization of all codes, practices and epistemological-political subjects.

2. Modernization and human evolution, modernization as human evolution

However, a question remains: how this European post-conventional epistemological-moral consciousness is effectively a universal principle of foundation? The European culture-consciousness would be in fact a human evolutionary tendency? Indeed, that is a decisive question for a theory of modernity which is at the same time universalism, and Habermas does not fear to answer it positively. Now, a theory of modernity like that of Habermas is very interesting because it does not intend only to interpret and ground a notion of social normativity which would be used to frame the European social-cultural-institutional constitution and evolution as modernization, but also – and more important – which could serve as epistemological-moral paradigm to the framing and changing of all problematic situations in the world. In other words, Habermas's reconstruction of an idealized notion of European cultural modernity is first and foremost a normative theory based on universal presuppositions in terms of epistemological-moral grounding – and that is its beauty and richness, because of his provocative intention of renovation of epistemological-moral universalism as modernization in contemporary post-metaphysical times (see HABERMAS, 1990b, 1992, 1998b, 1984). It is, of course, a theory of Europe's process of cultural-institutional-epistemic modernization as overcoming traditionalism, but this also signifies the correlation between modernization and human evolution which leads to the correlation between European culture-consciousness, rationalization and universalism. Normative-political emancipation is, therefore, the result of this correlation enabled by the process of cultural-institutional modernization (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.74; 1987, p.397). What Habermas is saying is that, for the first time, we have, through the process of European cultural modernization, an authentic model of universalism that is not based on metaphysical-theological foundations, which is not dependent on the affirmation of an essentialist and naturalized grounding that is proper to contextualist epistemological-moral positions – Habermas's comparison and opposition between traditional culture-consciousness and European culture-consciousness, as his correlation between human evolution, modernization, rationalization and universalism show it.

Now, the basis of that understanding is the idea that human evolution goes through the road of modernization, so that human evolution becomes modernization, is modernization (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.71-72; p.397-398; 1987, p.400). Human evolution does not take traditionalism as its ending point: Traditionalism is at best a primitive and particularized stage of human

evolution, but it is not the final result of the learning process of cultural-civilizational development-improvement. This means that traditional culture-consciousness, which is attached to its own context of emergence according to the theories of modernity, is a primal stage of human evolution by the fact that it is not rationalized and reflexive, at least when compared to the model of culture-consciousness allowed by European cultural modernity. The *secret of human evolution* is given exactly by the epistemological-moral openness of the culture-consciousness regarding otherness, which is the same as the epistemological-moral openness of the culture-consciousness to the discursive rationalization of values, practices and subjects of each society-culture. Therefore, each culture can be measured by rationalization as the way and the practice from which the epistemological-moral grounding as universalism is reached by individuals and groups (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.58-59, p.70-72). How much can a culture be rationalized? How much does it allow internal rationalization (by secularism and individualism) of its values, practices and subjects? Those are decisive questions when we think about the route of human evolution toward universalism and cosmopolitanism. Here there are three presuppositions of the theories of modernity: First, human evolution is made possible by the rationalization of the traditional worlds by secularism and individualism which lead to the communicative rationalization as the basis of the societal-cultural-institutional constitution, legitimation and evolution (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.72-73, p.75-136); second, human evolution is a process of progressive universalism and cosmopolitanism, and that is possible by the correlation between modernization and rationalization (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.77-78, p.297-298); third, this evolutionary way is common to all cultures, to all human groups, so, in the last instance, the universal epistemological-moral grounding is the same to all cultures and all human groups, despite their particularized contents and practices, which are determined by their proper contexts of emergence, and singular experiences over time (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.180).

These ideas have to be investigated in more detail. The *sociological-normative* reconstruction of Europe's societal-cultural-institutional constitution and evolution has shown that the overcoming of traditionalism by the consolidation of a modern form of life was very positive, because modernization means more openness to otherness; more modernization means more openness to otherness; modernization means denaturalization and politicization of all social relations and political-cultural subjects; therefore, more modernization implies more normative-political reflexivity regarding the society's constitution, legitimation and evolution as well as the practices and values of all social-cultural groups. So Europe's societal-cultural-institutional

evolution has shown that modernization *is an overcoming of traditionalism* in very specific points. The traditional culture-consciousness cannot formalize their epistemological-moral grounding, because its normative basis is dependent on essentialist and naturalized foundations. The consequence, here, is very clear: traditional groups can only conceive of their lives and social relations from the basis of their own culture; they cannot assume others' perspectives, so they cannot develop a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric epistemological-moral perspective which is given and enabled by the rationalization and formalization of the worldview. Contrarily, modern culture based on secularism and individualism obligates all individuals and groups to rationalize their claims, codes and practices in order to achieve an intersubjective agreement, meaning that modern individuals and groups must argue on the basis of impartial, neutral and formal procedures, codes and practices, if they want a general and voluntary intersubjective agreement between different and sometimes opposed individuals and groups. For that, modern individuals and groups *must learn* to think-act in a formal way; they must learn to argue-think-act from generic principles and impartial practices which are not directly linked to and dependent on material principles of organization, which are not committed to contextual values, codes and practices. This leads to the consolidation, in Europe's process of modernization, of a post-conventional culture-consciousness characterized by an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism conducting to a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric point of view in terms of thinking-acting and grounding. That is the specificity of European modernity, and it shows that European evolution, which has started as traditionalism, became modernization, that is, a form of culture-consciousness which is universalistic, in the sense that it is impartial, neutral and formal regarding contextual forms of life (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.198-199, p.216-217; 1987, p.106-107).

As a consequence, rationalization becomes the basis of European societal-cultural-institutional modernization as an overcoming of traditionalism's essentialist and naturalized foundations and their closure and intrinsic dependence on contextual dynamics. Rationalization could be understood, here, from a theoretical-normative perspective that assembles (a) the public dialogue based on an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism, (b) the centrality of the self-reflexive subjectivity independent of the context, denaturalizing and politicizing such context, and (c) the scientific justification-explanation of the natural and even of the social constitution, legitimation and evolution, which removes any magic-animist perspective regarding both nature and society. However, rationalization as a process of understanding and justification completely historicizes and politicizes the societal-cultural

constitution, by denaturalizing metaphysical-theological foundations and locating them into the social-political clashes between individuals and social-cultural groups (and as a historical matter). At the same time, modernization historicizes and politicizes all social relations and subjects and leads to the need of a self-reflexive and secular agreement which is only possible through the individual-intersubjective experience of rationalization of the proper practices and values regarding itself and about the others. Now, here we arrive at a very interesting correlation which is constructed by Habermas in order to associate European societal-cultural-institutional modernization, rationalization and universalism. First, modernization is based on the rationalization of culture-consciousness, in the sense that it has lost its essentialist and naturalized basis, becoming totally profane and politicized, and allowing a radical criticism regarding its normative constitution, legitimation and evolution. Second, such a social criticism regarding modernity's normative grounding is only possible from the rationalization of the culture-consciousness which reveals the very politicized nature of modernity, its explosive political-normative structuration and dynamics. From these theoretical-normative points, according to the theories of modernity, it must be perceived that rationalism constitutes a new and more accurate step in human evolution, so that human evolution as universalism is rationalization. That is the association which is made by theories of modernity in general and by Habermas's theory of modernity in particular.

The rationalization of culture-consciousness is not merely a process that allows the epistemological-moral universalism by denaturalizing and politicizing essentialist and naturalizing foundations and by affirming multiculturalism as the normative-political basis on which social agreement must be grounded and constructed. It is also *a universal process in human evolution*, a universal process of human evolution – as the reconstruction of the European societal-cultural-institutional evolution has shown. Therefore, what Max Weber saw as European modernity's singularity regarding the rest of the (traditional) world is, in Habermas's theory of modernity, a general and basic tendency which is proper to all humankind in the process of evolution toward modernization, by the fact that he associates human evolution with modernization, defining modernization as a process of rationalization of the culture-consciousness, leading effectively to a universalistic culture-consciousness – that is the renewal of the concept of modernity by Habermas in order to ground the epistemological-moral universalism in a new normative basis rather than on the philosophy of subject. Now, rationalization as a universal process of evolution means that all cultures-societies-peoples, in their civilizational constitution over time, assume two perspectives which approximate them to a modern, rationalized and universalistic society: First,

each society must objectively ground their codes and practices, even if they are based on essentialist and naturalized foundations (no society can evolve over time without an objective epistemological-moral basis for the intersubjective orientation-integration – this is a very basic sociological teaching); second, as a consequence, each society must use the everyday language to justify these intersubjective values-practices as the normative paradigm on which social life is based on and streamlined. In other words, each society needs and establishes a process of social justification and public dialogue in order to maintain its stability over time and social integration as well. This means that rationalization is not distant of any particular society; on the contrary, rationalization is an internal tendency and core of each culture-society in the moment that it must evolve as a totality based on an objective epistemological-moral paradigm.

Here, from that generic description of human evolution as a whole, we have two important ideas which define the sense of modernity's normative paradigm and its correlation between rationalism and universalism: (a) rationalism is a common tendency to all cultures-societies, even if it has not the same intensity in all of them, because all of them need to justify and to *publicly* inculcate their values and practices as a condition to societal legitimation and evolution; and (b) this means that all cultures-societies aspire to universality, they have a very objective – therefore, universal – internal constitution and legitimation in terms of epistemological-moral values. The skepticism, the relativism and the subjectivism concerning objective epistemological-moral values is a theoretical luxury of philosophers, by the fact that not one society can survive and stabilize itself without these (very) objective values. Now, what does that mean? It means that all cultures need to justify the objectivity, the legitimacy of their internal values-practices to all individuals and groups which constitute such a society. In order to do that, they must publicly rationalize their principles and practices, from an intersubjective process of teaching-learning based on argumentation which acquires a formal-conceptual range and sense, at least to some extent. Each culture-society must speak-act in universal terms, that is, in an objective way of epistemological-moral grounding, which signifies a kind of epistemological-moral rationalization of these practices-values as the normative condition for their social validity. So, the correlation between rationalism and universalism is not only possible as the condition to intersubjective – and objective – legitimation of the epistemological-moral values; it is also and fundamentally a nuclear tendency of human evolution and for human evolution. All societies – and European society more than any other – have as their living core the objective justification of their values and practices and, as a consequence, the

rationalization of these values and practices as the way and the sense to their objectivity, to their intersubjective justification and validity. That is the formal condition of all cultures-societies-languages that Habermas uses in order to argue about the rational-universal constitution of all cultures-societies (and of European culture-society more than others). Likewise, that is the basis of Habermas's affirmation that a process of rationalization of culture-consciousness correctly constructed can enable the recovery-justification of the epistemological-moral universalism represented by European modernity as a universal epistemological-moral paradigm.

Indeed, if all cultures are rational and universal, if all of them need to objectively rationalize their epistemological-moral values and practices, so all can be framed and orientated from a process of rationalization based on a notion of epistemological-moral universalism. That is actually a proof that the *European normative paradigm* is not just a contextual form of life-acting and grounding, but the *general tendency of/for human evolution*, a more acute, perfected and formal normative-critical basis for judging, framing and changing contextual practices. That is the reason why the normative paradigm of modernity can serve as normative umbrella for all contextual principles-practices – due to its formal, impartial and neutral proceduralism based on the rationalization of the culture-consciousness which leads to a post-conventional (non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric) culture-consciousness. The consequence is very clear: All cultures can be rationalized by such a kind of formal, impartial and neutral proceduralism in terms of both their internal constitution and their mutual relations. It is from here that the normative paradigm of modernity acquires a universal range and sense, becoming human evolution as modernization itself, a form of human evolution which associates modernization, rationalization and universalism as intrinsic points of human evolution. This offers a normative basis from which European modernity itself and the rest of the world can be framed, criticized and changed from a model of epistemological-moral universalism which is impartial, neutral and formal regarding particular forms of life.

Therefore, in Habermas's theory of modernity, there is a very intrinsic association between European modernity, rationalization and universalism as the way of/for human evolution over time, as the final stage of/for human evolution over time, in the sense that human evolution as rationalization – *as a general tendency* which is proper to all cultures-societies – is made possible, perfected by modernization, so that modernization becomes a more developed stage of human evolution. This means, of course, that human evolution walks toward modernization, becoming modernization itself. Here, the most important characteristic of modernity, its universalistic and

rationalized culture-consciousness, correlatively allows the openness to the differences by denaturalization and politicization of society-culture and of political-cultural subjects, as the objective epistemological-moral grounding from the consolidation of an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which is based on the centrality of the differences *as subjects and contents* from which the intersubjective process of foundation is made possible and streamlined. That is the sense of European cultural modernity's post-conventional culture-consciousness, that is, the fact that modern individuals and social-cultural groups must think-act from the rationalization of their social-cultural belonging, which means the necessity of thinking-acting in formal ways, from formal codes and practices. To put yourself in the place of the others, and vice-versa – that is the basis of modern social normativity. And from here the reconstruction-framing of the process of Western modernization is linked to the criticism-framing of the world as a whole: the notion of social normativity based on the correlation between modernization, rationalization and universalism serves from now on both to the understanding-criticism of Western modernization in particular and of global relations, of contextual practices-codes in general. Modernization as normative *criteria* and general tendency to human evolution, therefore, becomes its own judge and guide and beyond it, saving and affirming a critical-propositive universal epistemological-moral paradigm to all of humankind. It becomes the normative umbrella from which criticism, framing and changing are possible in contemporary times – that is the self-comprehension and the *praxis* of the normative paradigm of modernity (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.178-179).

3. Latin-American philosophy and the normative paradigm of modernity

As said above, such an affirmation of European cultural modernity as enabling, generating and fomenting a universal epistemological-moral paradigm is only possible by sustaining a double problematic point regarding the constitution and the development of Western modernization as a whole: The separation between European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of the social-economic modernization, which also means the separation between European cultural modernity and colonialism as unrelated moments; and the association between modernization, rationalization and universalism with human evolution, which leads to the fact that modernity's normative paradigm becomes the normative umbrella for all particular and contextual practices, values and subjects. According to Habermas, as I also said above, this allows – as it is the condition for – modernity's self-reflexivity and self-correction from within. As a consequence, that is the condition for a critical social normativity based on the idealization of European cultural modernity (see HABERMAS,

1984, p.120-121, p.340-341). In the rest of the paper, I will argue that such a separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization-colonialism, as the association between human evolution and modernization – which I am calling *the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity* – does not enable such a critical-normative perspective to European modernization, because, by separating those moments above mentioned, the theory of modernity ignores the mutual dependence between culture and material civilization, sanctifying cultural modernity and condemning social-economic modernization, and silencing about colonialism. The historical-sociological blindness, therefore, maintains cultural modernity's claim of a universal culture-consciousness as the basis of its own constitution and global framing-orientation, which means that modernization is the supreme judge-guide-criterion both within itself and in the international context. As a counterpoint to the use by theories of modernity of European cultural modernity as a normative paradigm and its association with universalism and human evolution, I will formulate-propose the concept of *reparation for colonialism* as a critical-normative paradigm that can basically allow the framing-restraint-orientation of Western modernization as a totalizing and unidimensional process of cultural rationalization and social-economic integration. As I think, such concept is more critical (and much less pretentious!) in terms of understanding-framing-changing the pathologies of Western modernization than the notion of European cultural modernity and its association with universalism, which is used by the traditional theories of modernity (such as Habermas's). It is more critical by the fact that it is based *on the correlation and mutual dependence-support* between culture, material civilization and colonialism as the basis of the understanding and framing of modernity's normative paradigm.

What is the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity? It is characterized by three epistemological-political options assumed by European theories of modernity. First, the idea that the process of Western modernization is a self-referential, self-subsistent and endogenous societal-cultural development, although, at its end, it discovers humankind itself, allowing the correlation between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, modernization as human evolution; second, the separation between cultural modernity as a normative sphere, pure and holy, and the social-economic modernization as a pure technical-logical sphere, the only responsible for the modern pathologies; third, the effacement of colonialism as a constitutive part of the process of Western modernization. It could be asked how can European modernity assume a universalistic range and sense even from its internal pathologies, its colonialism and imperialism

regarding other societies-cultures? Based on this perception, it could be said that European modernity has caused a colonialist epistemological-cultural-political process, so it cannot claim or affirm such a universalistic sense and range. It is here that the selective and peculiar understanding of Western modernization by theories of modernity act in order to answer positively that question-observation.

Habermas's theory of modernity answers that critic-observation from the separation between a model of European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of social-economic modernization and of colonialism. European modernity is first and foremost a process of cultural-epistemological rationalization of traditional worlds allowed by institutional-cultural secularism and by the emergence of a notion of self-reflexive individuality which is independent and even opposed to nature and society. As a consequence of that, modernization implies denaturalization and politicization of the societal-cultural constitution, legitimation and evolution (see HABERMAS, 1987, p.148-150). Now, Western modernization is from the beginning a *cultural-societal-epistemological* process of evolution. *Only in a second moment* we have the development of the modern technical-logical social systems and, accordingly, the institution of different forms of rationalization of the social-cultural world. Here some characteristics of the process of Western modernization appear as defining the construction of Habermas's theory of modernity. (a) The constitution and development of Western modernization is dependent on a cultural-epistemological rationalization of the metaphysical-theological worldviews which leads to the separation between nature, society and individuality, denaturalizing and politicizing the societal structures and relations. (b) The normative-communicative reason is the basis from which instrumental reason was made possible and generated. (c) Likewise, the consolidation of particularized modern social systems was made possible by cultural-epistemological rationalization in the sense that the constitution of different social institutions is dependent on modernity's internal division into particularized social fields, each of them with specific procedures, codes, practices and legal staffs. (d) The internal differentiation of Western modernization into lifeworld and social systems, into communicative reason and instrumental reason means that, with the end of traditional societies' totalizing structuration, modernization institutionalizes different principles of social integration (and not only one, as traditional societies do) which are centralized and monopolized by particular institutions or social systems (see HABERMAS, 1984, p.341; 1987, p.153-154, p.201-202). Therefore, the consequence of the process of Western modernization is that modernity is not characterized and defined by the affirmation of one single normative principle

for social integration as the basis of the processes of socialization and subjectivation, but by many principles (see HABERMAS, 1998b, p.39-40).

Here emerges the particularity-peculiarity of the theories of modernity in terms of the recovery of an objective notion of social normativity based on the renewal of the notion of European cultural modernization. Such process of Western modernization *must be comprehended from the separation* between European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of social-economic modernization and colonialism in the sense that European cultural modernity does not legitimize the social-economic modernization and colonialism. How is that possible? Exactly because the process of Western modernization is, in the first place, a cultural-epistemological rationalization of the lifeworld, and only *after that* it leads to the consolidation of the modern social systems based on instrumental reason. Thus, although modern social systems are a consequence of the lifeworld's cultural-epistemological rationalization, the European cultural modernity cannot be held responsible for the pathologies of the social systems caused by the totalizing process of instrumental reason, as for the *Realpolitik* of colonialism – the pathologies of social systems defined and streamlined by instrumental reason have the tendency of colonizing the normative-political constitution of the lifeworld, because social systems are self-referential and self-subsisting regarding political-normative principles and practices. On the contrary, such reconstruction of the process of Western modernization allows the understanding that cultural modernity can serve as an objective notion of social normativity from which the social-economic modernization-colonialism can be understood, framed and even changed (see HABERMAS, 1998b, p.05-06, p. 16, p.351-352; 1987, p.196). Likewise, the *ontogenetic primacy of cultural modernity regarding social-economic modernization* means also that we can separate theoretically, normatively the European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of the social-economic modernization, which implies the possibility of a critical self-reflexive *praxis* of modernization regarding itself, a critical self-reflexive *praxis* by modernity regarding itself. In other words, from the ontogenetic primacy of European cultural modernity regarding social-economic modernization and by the separation between lifeworld (culture, normativity, communicative reason) in relation to social systems (material civilization, institutions and instrumental reason), modernization is saved as a normative concept because (a) social-economic modernization is dependent on cultural modernization, but the contrary is not true. As a consequence, (b) cultural modernity is strongly separated in relation to social-economic modernization, but not the contrary. As a result, modernity's self-reflexivity enables a critical normative paradigm from which the *self-correction* of modernity is performed. Such a situation enables a new role-

core for modernity-modernization, that is, it allows the reaffirmation of modernity's normative paradigm as the basis of understanding-framing-legitimation of both Western modernization itself and global relations as a whole – European cultural modernity's universalistic sense and range is saved and affirmed because of that separation and by the ontogenetic primacy of cultural modernity regarding social-economic modernization, including the effacement of colonialism as a constitutive part of the theory of modernity (see DUSSEL, 1993; MIGNOLO, 2005).

Now, this critical normative-political paradigm enabled by European cultural modernity, by that separation between culture and material civilization-colonialism, also by that association among modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, can be used for political subjects which interpret, denounce and perform an emancipatory *praxis* regarding the pathologies of modernization itself and of contextual practices-values-subjects. And how can political subjects use modernity's normative paradigm? More: *what kind of political subject can use modernity's normative paradigm?* First, the political subjects who can use modernity's normative paradigm must accept the cultural-societal-epistemological presuppositions of European culture, which means that the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm must become modern. As a consequence, they must accept the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity in the double sense in which I have developed it along the paper, namely the separation between culture and material civilization, which means the separation between modern normativity and social systems, as the non-correlation between modern normativity and the *Realpolitik* of colonialism; and the association between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution. From the very beginning, therefore, in order to use modernity's normative paradigm and to maintain its self-reflexivity, the political subjects must assume an uncritical presupposition. The critical normative paradigm of modernity requires of the political subjects an uncritical, blind acceptance of its theoretical-political starting point – of its historical-sociological blindness. Here emerges a second problematic point in terms of the use of modernity's normative paradigm: The separation between European culture and European material civilization, as that between European culture-universalism regarding the *Realpolitik* of modern colonialism, means that all political subjects which will use modernity's normative paradigm will become incapable of unifying the historical-sociological reconstruction on the evolution and development of modernity as a worldview with universalistic cultural-epistemological-material pretensions, that is, *as a form of life* which is totalizing concerning other contextual forms of life – a totalizing form of life based on the unceasing

rationalization of all contextual practices-values-subjects as the condition for their legitimation and validity (see BHABHA, 1994; DUSSEL, 1996).

Indeed, all political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm must ignore the association between culture and material civilization, between modern culture-universalism and the *Realpolitik* of modern colonialism as the condition for its epistemological-political universality. By sustaining this blindness, the critical perspective of modernity's normative paradigm is enabled and streamlined. Therefore, it leads to the theoretical-political impossibility of a historical-sociological analysis of the emergence and development of Western modernization, because such separation, *by dividing* culture and material civilization-colonialism, blocks a critical reconstruction which tries to theoretically and politically unify its process. It seems that its historical-sociological reconstruction should be characterized by a dual argumentation which, on the one hand, presented the advantages of European cultural modernity and, on the other, presented the evils of social-economic modernization-colonialism from a very rigid separation between them. In other words, such dual argumentation about Western modernization, caused by the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, prevents a unified theoretical-political perspective on it by blocking its historical-sociological reconstruction based on the dependence between culture and material civilization-colonialism. This historical-sociological blindness is generated and sustained by a very singular philosophical understanding of universalism and its association with modernization: We need a very pure notion of social normativity which is not contaminated by the material contradictions of institutional life, as it must be general in order to serve as a normative umbrella for all particularities, contexts and subjects. Such a separation between European culture and European material civilization-colonialism required by philosophy as a condition to a strict universalistic grounding generates a very uncritical posture which legitimizes colonialism by eliminating it from the very development of Western modernization as a unified epistemological-cultural-societal structure. In Habermas's theory of modernity, there is not a history of colonialism, but the history of modernity as a universal form of culture-consciousness-epistemology. On the other hand, by the separation between culture and material civilization, the recovery of universalism, based on cultural modernity, enables modernity's global pursuit without colonialist intentions. From now on, the values, practices and subjects of modernity, that is, *the civilization and the civilized ones*, can affirm themselves as normative soil and actors of global relations, for global relations, as global relations – here, the concept of universalism masks the epistemological-cultural-political colonialism. Colonialism, once more, is not the consequence

of modernization at all, because this modernization is, in the first place, pure normativity, basically universalism, freedom, equality and intersubjective *praxis* in the purest and most essential meaning of these concepts.

The political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm, by accepting its historical-sociological blindness and its epistemological conditions of use (rationalization; impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism; association between modernization and human evolution; separation between culture and material civilization-colonialism etc.), become incapable of thematizing both the normative-political-epistemological justification of European material civilization-colonialism, and the very correlation between Western modernization, colonialism and globalization. Is European material civilization-colonialism a pure institutional, logical-technical, non-political and non-normative process of constitution and evolution? Does material civilization-colonialism have an epistemological-normative-political comprehension and grounding? Now, that dualism regarding the understanding of the process of Western modernization means that both the reconstruction of this process and the use of a normative paradigm based on European cultural modernity need to sustain an epistemological-political dualism which correlatively (a) separates a *holy* or *pure* model of European culture and an *evil* model of social-economic modernization-colonialism, as it separates modern normativity and modern institutional *Realpolitik*, and (b) autonomizes cultural modernity in relation to social-economic modernization-colonialism, so that European cultural modernity becomes a universalistic epistemological-moral paradigm from which criticism, framing and changing are streamlined and made possible. The political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm, therefore, must construct a dual history of modernization if they want to save a normative model of modernity as the basis for social criticism and cosmopolitan ethics; on the other hand, they must be blind about and omit the correlation and mutual support between culture and material civilization-colonialism as the condition to the universality and self-reflexivity of modernity's normative paradigm. Again: these political subjects must always emphasize the historical-sociological blindness of Western modernization to correlatively save modernity's self-reflexivity and internal critic and modernity's normative comprehension as a universal form of life-thinking-acting-grounding. But, for that, the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm must renounce to a historical-sociological analysis of modernization that works from the intersection and mutual dependence between culture, material civilization and the *Realpolitik* of colonialism. Likewise, these political subjects must construct a very problematic philosophical notion of modernity which, by separating cultural modernity and social-economic modernization-

colonialism, by ignoring their intrinsic link and correlation, imposes a new form of colonialism as a soft epistemological-moral universalism that is directly associated to European cultural modernity as the normative umbrella from which the *Realpolitik* is made and streamlined.

Indeed, the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm by accepting the separation between European culture and European material civilization-colonialism, must tackle a third problematic point, namely a new, soft, cool, refined notion of colonialism as the basis of globalization. Such a soft-refined kind of colonialism is based on the direct association between modernization (both in cultural and material terms), rationalization and universalism with human evolution, in a way that modernization becomes the apogee of human evolution. Here, the basic characteristics of modernity are simply associated with a model of humankind and of human being which becomes paradigmatic in terms of constitution, legitimation and streamlining of a concept of social normativity that serves modernity itself and to the rest of the world, because it is comprehended as a fundamental condition to all peoples-cultures-societies, not as a singular condition of a particular, contextual form of life. In these terms, European cultural modernity is humankind itself, because it has structurally the epistemological-normative characteristics that all peoples-cultures-societies have, but in a more developed and universal stage than these other peoples-cultures-societies. From European cultural modernity we can speak and act in the name of all humankind. By this association between European culture and humankind, therefore, it is possible to speak, act and ground in universal terms, in the name of all humankind. This means that the universal epistemological-moral foundations are based on and streamlined by modernity's normative paradigm which is grounded on the basic epistemological-normative presuppositions of European culture, but not on the conditions of European material civilization-colonialism. Therefore, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity obligate the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm to be very selective regarding the understanding and the use of it as the basis of a universal epistemological-moral paradigm. These political subjects must associate only one part (an idealized part) of modernity's normative paradigm with universalism, with humankind, but they must keep quiet regarding European social-economic modernization-colonialism. As a consequence of this historical-sociological blindness, the real target-enemy of modernity's normative paradigm is constituted by traditionalism in a way that social-economic modernization-colonialism is omitted from the normative-political *praxis*. On the other hand, even by the effective thematization and framing of social-economic modernization-colonialism, modernity's normative

paradigm remains untouched, because of the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, which means that European cultural modernity continues as a universal epistemological-moral paradigm to all peoples-cultures-societies, as the apogee of human evolution (in normative terms; the material civilization-colonialism is another thing), despite the irrationalities of modern social systems and their instrumental reason. The normative-political criticism has as its fundamental target social-economic modernization-colonialism, but never European cultural modernity itself, because of the historical-sociological blindness, which purifies cultural modernity and denigrates social-economic modernization. Thus, the normative-political criticism never thematizes the historical-sociological blindness which is its condition of legitimacy.

It can be perceived in the fourth problematic point about the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm as epistemological-political fundament for the political *praxis* and the normative framing-orientation, namely the fact that modernization is the only theoretical-political alternative for the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm in order to think-act-ground universal norms, practices and normative-political subjects. Modernization is the only theoretical alternative by the fact that its epistemological characteristics – an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism; the rationalization of the values-practices-subjects; the non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric culture-consciousness – are the only which can enable an intersubjective agreement-grounding, because only they are the actual stage of human evolution, effectively representing the current moment of the process of human evolution – in other words, they are now the generic essence of humankind. The world is plural and different, it is a fact. But the common point of this plural and diverse world is constituted by the epistemological-political-normative characteristics of European cultural modernity. If we want to unify perspectives, foundations and political subjects, we must use modernity's normative paradigm – its impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism is so generic that allows that purpose; if we want to ground universal patterns-codes-practices, we must act from modernity's normative paradigm – its characteristics enable the common ground and the intersubjective principles-practices from which the agreement can be rationally justified; finally, if we can construct an intersubjective critical perspective-worldview, modernity's normative paradigm will show that we must think from its epistemological-normative basis, because it allows the post-conventional epistemological-moral consciousness from which the universal point of view is reached. In other words, if we want to ground universal epistemological-moral codes-practices-subjects, we must use modernity's

normative paradigm. There is no other normative alternative – and traditionalism is certainly not a normative alternative to modernization (see SPIVAK, 2010).

Now, that is the fifth problematic point to the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm as a universal epistemological-moral paradigm, namely the division between modern European culture and traditionalism, Europe and the rest of the world. Such a separation also implies the direct association between modernization, rationalization and universalism; on the other hand, traditionalism is a primitive stage of human evolution, at least if we associate modernization, rationalization, universalism and *human evolution*. It also means that modernization can ground a critical-reflexive normative paradigm, contrarily again to traditionalism, which is not reflexive-critical because of the closed worldview-culture-consciousness that is attached to its own context of emergence. The political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm must affirm such a division between modern European culture and traditionalism as the condition to both (a) modernity's normative paradigm's specificity (its universality; its link with the essence of humankind) regarding the rest of the world, and (b) the association between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, which means the association between modernization, criticism and emancipation, contrarily once more to traditionalism. In other words, the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm must sustain the separation between modernization and the rest of the world, as the link between modernization, rationalism, universalism and emancipation, at the same time as they deny the epistemological-political-normative role-core of traditionalism, to traditionalism as a political subject-context which is more basic than modernization. As a consequence, modernization becomes a political-normative sphere, and traditionalism becomes a very fundamentalist-ossified context-power, which proves once more the association between modernization, rationalization and universalism with human evolution as the current stage of human evolution, totally delegitimizing traditionalism as a normative-political field of human evolution. Modernization becomes the basic and only alternative-context-subject.

Here, two other problematic points emerge for the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm, namely the need for an aseptic ideal of European modernization as the basis of the normative-political criticism and self-reflexivity, as the basis for the epistemological-moral universalism; and, for that, the ontogenetic primacy of European cultural modernity regarding social-economic modernization-colonialism. In the first case, the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm have a need for

purity-chastity regarding the epistemological-moral paradigm on which all criticism-*praxis* is grounded and streamlined. Indeed, only after this aseptic foundational condition-state, the original sin takes place. That is the justification, the basic motto for the ontogenetic primacy of the European cultural modernity regarding European social-economic modernization-colonialism. That is, the philosophical-sociological reconstruction of a dual process of evolution of modernization, which is characterized first as a cultural constitution and only after that as an institutional differentiation, intends to purify, by separating, European cultural modernity, condemning social-economic modernization-colonialism for its sins, and at the same time absolving European cultural modernity for an association that it has not made or legitimized. Now, the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm have to force the legitimacy of this dualism – of European culture's purity and ontogenetic primacy, and of social-economic modernization-colonialism's sin and pathological conditions – as the basis of a critical reconstruction and emphasis in the universality of modernity itself, as of its purity and chastity as the condition for the universal epistemological-moral paradigm. In this case, modern normativity appears very pure, because of its separation regarding the technical-logical constitution of modern social systems and of the *Realpolitik* of colonialism, which means, on the other hand, that social-economic modernization-colonialism has not a normative justification based on European cultural modernity – a normative justification allowed by it.

These are, in conclusion, the theoretical-political consequences of the historical-sociological blindness caused-assumed by theories of modernity when they reconstruct, from a dualism, the emergence and development of Western modernization in order to affirm a normative-sociological concept of modernity which is associated with epistemological-moral universalism. And, as a consequence, that is the reason why I am affirming in this paper that the concept of European cultural modernity cannot ground and guarantee the social criticism and the emancipatory political *praxis* neither within modernity by modernity's sons nor without modernity by modernity's other. European cultural modernity cannot be a critical normative concept for modernity's sons in order to interpret, frame and change social-economic modernization's pathologies by the fact that it is constructed from a historical-sociological blindness regarding the constitution and development of modernization. In this case, there is a very strong barrier-differentiation between a pure normative concept of modernity allowed by European culture and the basically technical-logical, non-political and non-normative understanding of modern social systems and their *Realpolitik*. How can a *normative concept* interpret, frame

and change *technical-logical institutions* which are self-referential, self-subsisting and autonomous concerning political *praxis* and social normativity? Here, political *praxis* and social normativity have no ability to change these technical-logical social systems because they are non-political and non-normative structures which are closed to political-normative principles, practices and subjects. Likewise, modernity's sons, using a normative paradigm based on the historical-sociological blindness, develop a kind of soft colonial mind which presupposes two unsurpassable conditions to social criticism and political *praxis*: First, only within modernity and by modernity's rules, codes and practices universalism is possible and, therefore, emancipation; second, modernity's self-reflexivity and critical perspective about itself enables modernity's universalistic claiming-core-role, so that a globalized world can only be understood, framed and changed by epistemological-cultural-societal modernization. In other words, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity autonomizes and absolves modernity's normative paradigm of any problem or irrationality, making it totally universalistic, legitimizing it as the route-way-path-basis for global orientation-integration. Indeed, this is exactly what the historical-sociological blindness intends, that is, the legitimization of the pursuit of modernity's normative paradigm as a universal epistemological-moral paradigm. Here, a mixture of modernization, rationalization and universalism is the epistemological-normative-political basis for the global era, which means that the global era is the same as modernization. In this sense, modernization – in epistemological, cultural, societal and institutional terms – becomes naturalized, that is, it is the route of human evolution, the basis for human evolution. Human evolution started as traditionalism and has become modernization, so that human evolution will not return to traditionalism, but it will run as more reflexive modernization. As epistemological-cultural-societal-institutional concept, modernization becomes the only platform on which our contemporary codes, practices and subjects are based and streamlined.

At this point, I want to introduce the concept of *reparation for colonialism* as epistemological-political-normative alternative to Habermas's concept of European cultural modernity. I think it is more critical and less pretentious than that concept. Why is the concept of reparation for colonialism more critical than the concept of European cultural modernity? First, it has no need for the historical-sociological blindness as theoretical-political condition to the recovery and renewal of a critical and universalistic concept of modernity. As I have argued above, such a historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity legitimizes a partial history of the evolution of Western modernization by covering the correlation and mutual

dependence between culture and material civilization-colonialism, by separating them, which become non-dependent. Therefore, the consequence of the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity is that the political subjects who use modernity's normative paradigm adopt an uncritical theoretical-political starting point which (a) is based on a false dualism that empowers the pursuit of modernity as a universalistic epistemological-moral paradigm and form of life; (b) autonomizes modernity-modernization of their internal irrationalities and pathologies, so that modernity-modernization becomes the only epistemological-political-normative basis from which we can think-act-ground-live; and (c) generates a soft colonial mind that, by liberating modernity of its internal pathologies and irrationalities, points to traditionalism as the real problem of contemporary world, so that more reflexive modernity-modernization becomes the platform on which globalization as modernization is founded and streamlined. Now, who judges modernity-modernization? The theories of modernity, based on the historical-sociological blindness about the emergence and the development of modernity-modernization, say: Modernity itself, because of the purity and chastity of cultural modernity, because of its universalistic sense, range and constitution, which enables the direct association between modernity, universalism and humankind. Here, nothing can substitute or delegitimize modernity, because of the historical-sociological blindness that autonomizes and liberates European cultural modernity of any critical-framing-changing which is always directed to social-economic modernity.

The concept of reparation for colonialism deconstructs both this historical-sociological blindness and the association between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution. It does that, first, by unveiling and denouncing the mutual dependence between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization-colonialism as the basis of the constitution, development and universal movement of Western modernization. As a consequence, cultural modernity is also the direct legitimation of social-economic modernization and colonialism. Here, normative justifications are totally related to material institutions and provide a basis for colonial delegitimation, exclusion and violence of modernity against the others of modernity – this is, in fact, the very beginning of the philosophical-sociological discourse of modernity. In this sense, the unveiling of the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity by the concept of reparation for colonialism points to the fact that modern social systems and colonial assimilation of the others of modernity was and is always grounded on and streamlined by epistemological, political and normative justifications, that is, they are always legitimized by cultural modernity – this is its ambiguity, and

such an ambiguity cannot save the purity and chastity of cultural modernity, it cannot purify and separate culture regarding social institutions and material colonization. On the contrary, such an ambiguity puts the correlation between cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism *as a fact* from which we must start up epistemologically and politically, as the real problem that we must face in terms of cultural-economic globalization. Here, the intrinsic link between modernization, universalism and humankind, dependent on the separation between culture and material civilization-colonialism and the association between human evolution and/as modernization, is deconstructed in favor of the voice-*praxis* of the victims of modernity, of the others of modernity.

In the second place, by unveiling the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity and, as a consequence, by showing that the ambiguity of modernity undermines the correlation between European cultural modernity, social criticism and self-reflexivity, the concept of reparation for colonialism enables the deconstruction of modernity's self-comprehension which links modernity-modernization with rationalization, universalism and, finally, human evolution, modernization as human evolution. Accordingly, the differences do not need to assume modernity's theoretical-political presuppositions in order to speak-act about themselves and in relation to modernity. We are not in the same boat epistemologically, politically and normatively speaking, because each culture-society-people has specific forms of life which determine specific forms of thinking-acting-grounding. What does it mean? It means that modernity-modernization is not the final stage of human evolution and, therefore, it does not represent a universal epistemological-moral form of life-culture-consciousness-epistemology. That is a fallacy which has serious consequences to the *Realpolitik*, because by the historical-sociological blindness that bases-grounds this association between modernity-modernization and human evolution, the only paradigm from which social criticism is possible is allowed by cultural modernity and from its association with human evolution, as overcoming of traditionalism. It means, of course, that modernity-modernization must be restrained in its totalizing movement in terms of colonization-rationalization of all the world-cultures-societies-peoples. Likewise, it means that other epistemologies and political *praxis* are the only basis for modernity's correction and limitation. The historical-sociological blindness assumed by the theories of modernity basically legitimizes and autonomizes modernity-modernization to continue its totalizing movement of universal colonization, because it blinds the modern political subjects and modernity's social criticism, making them uncritical

regarding their own basis, regarding their own principles, practices and self-understanding.

The concept of reparation for colonialism, by unveiling and deconstructing the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, by criticizing modernity's ambiguity and correlation with rationalization, universalism and human evolution, points directly to the others of modernity as the epistemological-political-normative subjects for the understanding, framing and changing of the blind, uncritical and colonial culture-consciousness-epistemology of modernity's normative paradigm. It reveals and offers new epistemologies, the marginalized ones' epistemologies, as new political-normative practices, the marginalized ones' political-normative practices. It shows the traditional epistemologies', cultures' and peoples' perspectives regarding modernity's normative paradigm, and here it confronts, by the marginalized ones' practices, codes and voices, the correlation between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution. Likewise, the concept of reparation for colonialism performs an implacable and unceasing epistemological-political denunciation both against the historical-sociological blindness and in relation to modernity's ambiguity as the basis for the contemporary *Realpolitik* of modernity-modernization, in the sense of permanently and pungently alerting about the correlation between modernity-modernization and colonialism allowed by that historical-sociological blindness regarding the understanding of the process of Western modernization and the ambiguity of modernity's normative paradigm. Now, by doing that, the reparation for colonialism has as basic epistemological-political purpose to frame modernity-modernization as the main challenge for contemporary social-political stability both inside and outside modernity-modernization. It is modernity-modernization as a totalizing and colonialist form of epistemology, culture and material integration which we must face urgently. Latin-American philosophy as a decolonial *praxis*, therefore, has a very important epistemological-political starting point as basis of its *praxis*: the permanent denunciation-unveiling-deconstruction of the historical-sociological blindness and of the ambiguity of modernity's normative paradigm, which make modernity both uncritical regarding its own basis and epistemology-culture-consciousness, and colonialist in relation to all which is outside of it. Now, by the concept of reparation for colonialism, new epistemologies, cultural practices and political subjects become very central in normative terms, they become the epistemological-political basis from which modernity-modernization is enlightened, framed and changed about its blindness, ambiguity and colonialist mind-practices.

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