



COLONIALITY AND DECOLONIALITY ANALYTICS: SOME BASIC SPATIAL DIMENSIONS IN ARCHITECTURE¹

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ABSTRACT

Based on an article by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, in which he presents ten theses with a view to an coloniality and decoloniality analytics, however, his little attention given to spatial analysis is highlighted, as does much of the decolonial literature. Thus, it is proposed an outline of another analytics, based on the decolonial turn but focused on space and, in particular, architecture. In a first movement, fundamental issues of the decolonial turn are presented, highlighting some basic spatial dimensions that are rarely considered. Then, four new “theses” based on decolonial turn and focused on architecture are discussed.

Keywords: decolonial turn, space, architecture, coloniality, decoloniality.

RESUMO

Parto de um artigo de Nelson Maldonado-Torres, no qual ele apresenta dez teses com vistas a uma analítica da colonialidade e da decolonialidade, mas ressalvo sua pouca atenção concedida à análise espacial, como faz boa parte da literatura decolonial. Assim, proponho um esboço de uma outra analítica, com base no giro decolonial, mas voltada ao espaço e, em especial, à arquitetura. Em um primeiro movimento, apresento questões fundamentais do giro decolonial, delas destacando algumas dimensões espaciais básicas poucas vezes esmiuçadas. Em seguida, delinco quatro novas “teses” alicerçadas no giro decolonial voltadas à arquitetura.

Palavras-chave: giro decolonial, espaço, arquitetura, colonialidade, decolonialidade.

RESUMEN

Basado en un artículo de Nelson Maldonado-Torres, en el que presenta diez tesis con miras a una analítica de la colonialidad y la decolonialidad, sin embargo, se destaca su poca atención al análisis espacial, como lo hace gran parte de la literatura decolonial. Así, se propone un esbozo de otra analítica, en base del giro decolonial pero orientado al espacio y, en particular, a la arquitectura. En un primer movimiento, se presentan cuestiones fundamentales del giro decolonial, destacando algunas dimensiones espaciales básicas que rara vez son objeto de atención. A continuación, se discuten cuatro nuevas “tesis” basadas en el giro decolonial y centradas en la arquitectura.

Palabras clave: giro decolonial, espacio, arquitectura, colonialidad, decolonialidad.

¹ An outline of this text received attentive reading and the fruitful suggestions of the architect Oswaldo Freitez Carrillo and the urban sociologist Frank Andrew Davies, to whom I am very grateful.

The title of this work makes an obvious allusion to the article “*Analítica da colonialidade e da decolonialidade: algumas dimensões básicas*” (“Analytics of coloniality and decoloniality: some basic dimensions”), by Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2018) – fundamental name of the so-called “Latin American decolonial turn” (WALSH, 2005; CASTRO-GÓMEZ; GROSGOUEL, 2007; RESTREPO; ROJAS, 2010). The Puerto Rican intellectual starts from a critical analytics of “*scientific presuppositions regarding time, space, knowledge and subjectivity*”, to elaborate five theses on the characteristics and effects of coloniality and another five on actions in relation to decoloniality. The power of his propositions is unquestionable: times and temporalities are analyzed in a complex way (juxtaposed and grounded in long-term analysis), where modern subjectivities permeated by colonialities are problematized and the knowledge imposed as universal is dismantled. A careful reading recognizes in the text, however, what is complained about decolonial literature (ESCOBAR; VERÍSSIMO, 2020; FARRÉS; CUNHA; NAME, 2020; GUTIÉRREZ; NAME; CUNHA, 2020; MOASSAB; RUGERI; FREITEZ; NAME, 2020): in none of the ten theses there is attention to *spatial dimensions*, that is, to spaces and spatialities and, specifically, to the role of architecture in the production of coloniality.

This article is written at the time of the rise to power of ultra-conservative forces in Latin America and the Caribbean – which, in Brazil, have undisguised genocidal, ethnocidal, ecocidal and memoricidal characteristics – and the advance of the covid-19 pandemic. As the structural racism of a civilizing project increases – that, after all, produces and reproduces certain spaces through the usurpation, destruction and invisibility of others –, the worrisome

current situation makes decolonial contributions more relevant, which present the idea of race as main operator of hierarchies still present – in addition to instigating fields, such as architecture, to rethink their theorizations.

Thus, in the next section, primal and fundamental issues of the decolonial turn are exposed regarding modernity/coloniality, highlighting basic spatial dimensions, which I think are rarely explored in detail. Next, I will launch my own “thesis” on coloniality and decoloniality: only four and related to architecture.²

WESTERN MODERN CIVILIZATION AS MODERNITY/COLONIALITY: BASIC SPATIAL DIMENSIONS³

Maldonado-Torres denounces the fallacious idea that Western modern civilization is an apogetical socio-spatial formation, compared to others considered barbarian, savage or primitive (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2018, p. 31). He unveils the ethnocentric, dualist, evolutionist, diffusionist and colonizing *ethos* of the conception that sees modernity as a succession of *events led by Europeans in intra-European spaces*, which would result in higher levels of society, culture, progress, development, sovereignty and nation –unattainable for most other peoples and places, because emoluments that few obtain depend on the losses of many. It can be pointed out that such criticisms are not restricted to the decolonial debate: they are in a broader set whose writings – anti-colonial, feminist, post-colonial and subaltern, among others (BLAUT, 1993; HARAWAY, [1988] 1995; WALLERSTEIN, [1997] 2002; FANON, [1961] 2005; [1952] 2008; CONNEL, 2007; MEMMI,

² I name the sections and the first three of my “theses” in this text, referring to the titles of Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2018) for his own sections and theses. With this, I intend that my article be read in parallel to this author’s article. Thus, it is possible to identify his general panel of coloniality and decoloniality in equal step with the spatial dimensions I will point out, absent in his debate (and in other decolonial writings). I think “thesis” is a pretentious term, but I kept it to reinforce the comparative exercise – so I use it in quotation marks when exposing my ideas. The fourth “thesis” has its own title because it refers to a debate that is very specific to the field of architecture, pointing to final considerations. Obviously, other theses are possible for the field.

³ I am referring here to the title of the first section of Nelson Maldonado-Torres’ text: “Western modern civilization as modernity/coloniality”. Op. cit., p. 30-32.

[1985] 2007; SANTOS; MENESES, 2009; SPIVAK [1985] 2010; COMAROFF; COMAROFF, [2012] 2013; ROY, [2011] 2017; MBEMBE, [2013] 2018 CÉSAIRE, [1955] 2020) – share judgments about the maintenance of capitalist and racist patriarchy, the perpetuity of the legacies of colonialism and Eurocentrism and the privileges of enunciation.⁴

Therefore, what makes the decolonial turn distinct?

I believe that three basic spatial dimensions make it unique, the first one presented by Walter Mignolo. This Argentine semiotologist discredits the Cartesian postulate of the universal individual, pointing out as inexorable the relationship between geographic spaces and epistemological locations. He also invites us to the dispute over the conception, production and sharing of knowledge, based on an analytic that, by opting for decoloniality, assumes its location from the subaltern and the South – open to ways of thinking that denaturalize the centrality of North Atlantic epistemologies (MIGNOLO, [1999] 2015a; [2003] 2015b). The second spatial dimension comes from Enrique Dussel, when pointing out that modernity emerged in the invasion of the Americas, he accuses that such centrality is derived from a military, political, social, cultural and pedagogical imposition – driven by the Portuguese and Spanish expansions and, later, by the imperialisms of England and the United States. The Argentine philosopher does not treat it as a concept, “spirit” or “essence” applicable to different geo-historical achievements, he says that modernity is a singular, situated and unrepeatable event: it cannot resurface or renew itself, nor become entangled with other cultural traditions and political intentions. Better future worlds will

only be designed from other *places* – geographical, ontological, historical, anthropological and ethical-political (DUSSEL, 2000; 2018).

Aníbal Quijano provides us with a third spatial dimension. Before, a notorious name for Latin American dependentism, the Peruvian sociologist thought about coloniality only from the 1990s onwards (QUIJANO, 1992; 1999; 2000; GROSGOUEL, [2000] 2013; NAME, 2019; RUBBO, 2019; VELLOSO, 2020). Like black Marxists who previously pointed to racism as the organizing principle of capitalism (GROSGOUEL, 2018; ROBINSON, [1999] 2018), he conceived coloniality as a global racial classification that, since 1492, created and renewed identities. “Indian” and “black” were hierarchical classifications, non-existent before the enslavement of Amerindians and Africans in colonialism, collated to “European” – which no longer only marked geographic origin, but which still values the whiteness that regulates differences (QUIJANO, 1999; MIGNOLO, [2007] 2008). Varying in time and space, what is conceived of as distinct from this whiteness “*is located elsewhere, in territories where it is considered that it is not dominant; it is also inferior, barbaric; and it is also earlier, from a primitive stage of humanity or, at the very least, from a ‘tradition’ to be supplanted*” (NAME; ZAMBUZZI, 2019, p. 124). That is why the end of colonialism was not the end of coloniality (MIGNOLO, [2000] 2003) and that the idea of race and its nefarious consequences, objective, subjective and intersubjective, always situated, are at the core of decolonial analysis.

Usually, Maldonado-Torres reminds us (2018, p. 29-30), the decolonial turn is accused of aiming for a return to pre-modern socio-spatial formations. Other

⁴ The decolonial debate has only emerged in Brazil in recent years, but in the rest of Latin America and the United States, the issue has been addressed for a long time – given that the first text on coloniality is from the 1990s (QUIJANO, 1992). Considering this delay and being “decolonial”, now and here, a fashionable term, there are at least two risks. The first is that of the epistemic sequestration: black feminisms, southern epistemologies and postcolonial studies, for example, have clear alignments with the Latin American decolonial turn, but cannot be confused with it because they have genealogies rooted in very different geo-historical moments. Furthermore, if the dialogue with such contributions or even with intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon or Lélia González (citing just two examples), is more than necessary, calling them “decolonial” – something stimulated, at times, by intellectuals of the turn – reproduces the colonial practice of naming subjects with adjectives they did not choose, deflecting and clouding trajectories and concepts. The second risk, in the words of design researcher Karine Gomes Queiroz – in personal communication –, stems from a certain planned academic obsolescence: the fad will pass away and concepts may fall into disuse without their potential being really understood.

mistrusts are a historical error that is made in indicating a role for race before the 18th century that would have seen it emerge as a concept (NAME, 2010; 2019); and that, by “*simply proposing a replacement of centrality*”, putting in place of Eurocentrism an “*Americocentrism*” or a “*Latinocentrism*”, maintains the “*idea of a single cohesive center, that is, it is a reductionist way of understanding processes always in motion, heterogeneous and multiple*” (JACQUES, 2020, p. 112-113).

The decolonial option, however, does not advocate a simple return to the past or a cartographic transfer. As Mignolo, Dussel and Quijano elucidate, modernity is not an unfinished emancipatory project or a set of disputed aspirations, but a provincial idea imposed as universal through all sorts of violence. Based on this agreement and considering knowledge normally disqualified or silenced, decolonial literature turns to asymmetries in *local* and *transatlantic circuits* of resources, capital and, above all, of *geo-historically racialized ideas* and *bodies*, to which benefits and disadvantages are granted. Enunciating the 1492 invasion as the inaugural fact of modernity also informs an *epistemological location* that alters the phenomena to be considered and the way of evaluating them, crossing situated synchronies with long-lasting diachronies.

Furthermore, the idea of race, in the conceptualization of coloniality, does not strictly refer to the taxonomic classification capable of “*reducing the body and the living being to a matter of appearance, skin and color, giving skin and color the status of a fiction of a biological nature*” (MBEMBE, [2013] 2018, p. 13). Considering that race was already present in the conflicts of late-medieval groups (FOUCAULT, [1997] 2010) and that, even in ancient scientific texts, it never denoted only biological understandings (NAME, 2010), coloniality and whiteness establish a connection with the *zone of being* and the *zone of not being*, previously proposed

by Frantz Fanon ([1952] 2008) to outline moralities, practices and discourses that humanize or dehumanize groups (MALDONADO-TORRES [2004] 2008; GROSFUGUEL, 2012). This is how the decolonial option can guarantee that the past and asymmetrical relations between “whites”, “Indians” and “blacks”, since the Conquest, still make up the conflicting contemporary global relations, considering that “race” is a *floating signifier* (HALL, [1995] 2013): geo-historically operates differences – phenotypic, but also geographic, linguistic, cultural or gender, for example –, making it as *discourse*, writing of the power of every time and place.

FOUR “THESES” ON COLONIALITY, DECOLONIALITY AND ARCHITECTURE⁵

Spatiotemporal contexts influence the ways in which race translates into coloniality and this, in turn, affects how space is conceived, perceived, lived, represented, occupied, expropriated, intervened or destroyed. The decolonial turn instigates an analytics that points out the ways in which coloniality manifests itself in spaces, produces and reproduces them, in addition to giving rise to other ways of thinking – and designing – spaces in architecture.

In this regard, I outline the four “theses” below.

First “thesis”: Colonialism and decolonization provoke anxiety in relation to statues, toponyms and the field of architecture⁶

Modern/colonial thought values narratives about heroic whiteness, such as those of colonizers who would have “discovered” lands and indigenous people, granted Afro-descendants the end of slavery and, even today, would be maintaining order and

⁵ I allude to the section “Ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality” in Maldonado-Torres (2018, p. 32-50).

⁶ Here, I refer to the first thesis by Maldonado-Torres (2018, p. 33-35): “Colonialism, decolonization and related concepts provoke anxiety”. I also dialogue with what he exposes in his fifth thesis (p. 42-44).

peace for the common good. Decoloniality denounces them as fallacies that aim to legitimize the racist ferocity of the civilizing process. It also brings out the insubordination of the subaltern, which enhances social change (MIGNOLO, [2007] 2008; MALDONADO-TORRES, 2020). This is exemplified by the events following the murder of African descendant George Floyd on May 25, 2020 – asphyxiated for nine minutes by Derek Chauvin, a white police officer who approached him in Minneapolis, USA. Even during a global pandemic, several protests around the world denounced the contrast between brutal State actions against minority ethnic groups and the symbolic place reserved for white figures that decorate public spaces in the form of statues, most often linked to slavery and to colonialism. Many were overthrown, others replaced (G1, 2020; REUTEURS, 2020; TRAVERSO, 2020). Streets were also given new names (AFP, 2020), because, as Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe (2006), “*there is not a single white adventurer, gold or diamond prospector, pirate, torturer, hunter, who [...] do not have an alley with his name*”.

Claims of historical reparation are often refuted with dissimulation, violence, and anxiety. Critics charge that the condemnation of these people takes place outside their geohistorical contexts and systems of thought. They seem to ignore, however, that whoever knocks down a statue of Christopher Columbus or changes the name of an avenue from Francisco Fajardo to Cacique Guaicaipuro does not fight the characters (which will remain in the books), but the myth surrounding them: that the Americas would have been *discovered* – and not *invaded*, resulting in the genocide and enslavement (LAGO, 2020). Nor do they think that the right to memory of the subaltern is constantly denied and violated.⁷ If we understand, however, that erecting statues and naming streets are

spatial marks of the authoritarian discourse of the winner, the exchanges of a sculpture or a toponym for others, even if significant to the subordinate, seem to resonate with the phrase said by the African-American lesbian feminist Audre Lorde: “*the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change*” (LORDE [1979] 2020, p. 137). On the one hand, maybe micropolitics of anti-monuments can delineate limits between depredation and artistic intervention, memory and forgetting (SELIGMANN-SILVA, 2016). On the other hand, perhaps, it is a question – for lack of another word – of curatorship and, as Mbembe (2006) it is necessary to gather these sculptures in a park-museum that serves as a cemetery of colonialism, encouraging no longer to erect statues to anyone.

The issue is complex and requires that the debate on history and memory extend to the field of architecture, which is particularly important in the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Here in Brazil, and in architecture and urbanism courses in that country, despite several curricula and intellectuals defending that spaces matter, most theories and references to cities, landscapes, architectures, technologies, languages and styles are located elsewhere, especially in part of Europe and the United States (LARA, 2018). Furthermore, a colonial pedagogy incorporates this set into a timeline that confuses becoming with civilizational, artistic or technical evolution. It is not uncommon, also, that anyone who requests a broader design of philosophies in the pedagogical projects of courses – encompassing Afro-Latin, African and indigenous knowledge,⁸ for example –, receives an answer as anxious as the one given to those who complain about statues of genocidal whites: “is a revanchist, an essentialist”...

⁷ I elucidate it with two events in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: the graffiti on the monument to Zumbi dos Palmares and the breaking, by Rodrigo Amorim and Daniel Silveira, of a street sign in honor of Marielle Franco, a murdered black and lesbian councilor (TORRES, 2014; REDAÇÃO, 2018).

⁸ In addition to the mandatory nature of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in Brazilian secondary and primary education – as provided for in the largely unfulfilled Federal Law No.10.639/2003 and Federal Law No. 11.645/2008 –, content on Afro-Brazilian, African and indigenous history and cultures in a pedagogical course project is an indicator of the quality of a bachelor degree or a graduation degree – according to instruction from an autarchy of the Ministry of Education of Brazil (INEP, 2017, p. 11-12) –, which is also ignored by most architecture and urbanism courses in the country.

Second “thesis”: Coloniality of architecture is different from colonial architecture, but both relate to the whitening of architecture⁹

It must be appreciated an analytics that distinguishes modern colonialisms – the ways in which Western empires have dominated overseas territories and populations since the Conquest – from the global order of dehumanization based on race that coloniality deals with, which still crosses knowledge and social relations (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2018, p. 36-37). The coloniality of architecture must also be distinguished from colonial architecture – the last one referring to the set of buildings erected by the owners of power in the territories invaded from 1492 until the independences. Both, however, establish a connection with what Abdias Nascimento ([1978] 2016) called cultural genocide – and which, in the debate in our field, and also pointing out their effects on patrimonialization initiatives in Brazil, the architect Andréia Moassab (2019) calls architecture whitening.

Yasser Farrés Delgado, a Cuban architect domiciled in Colombia, tells us that the power patterns of coloniality establish hegemonic conceptions of the territory, the urban and the architecture that validate superiorities to the modern city regulated by the modern, white-bourgeois nation-state. They also diminish other forms of existence, spatial organization and construction: rural settlements, slums, *quilombos*, gypsy communities and indigenous villages, for example. Finally, they also legitimize that certain practices and certain knowledge, conducted by economic, professional and institutional elites – often ethnoracial, because they are predominantly white – hold the enunciation on how to conceive, design, build, inhabit, appreciate, historicize and preserve architecture and the city (FARRÉS, [2016] 2020; FARRÉS; CUNHA; NAME, 2020).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the role of the architecture of the past in the spatial translation of

the racial hierarchies of the present is crucial. The buildings of the colonial, imperial or new republics administration, the slave economy enterprises and the Catholic temples are mainly elected as heritage to be protected. In Brazil, recent surveys show that more than half of the architectural material assets listed as historical heritage by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute meet this profile, and only 1% concern African matrices. Furthermore, there is no protected indigenous architecture. In contrast, African and indigenous matrices account for more than 50% of the records of intangible assets (MOASSAB, 2016; NAME; ZAMBUZZI, 2019). As problematic categories – as there are tangible aspects in what is said to be intangible and vice-versa –, one can imply hierarchies in the distinction between the definitive listing (commonly of “tangible assets” of European matrix) and the provisional listing (usually of “intangible assets” of other ethnoracial matrices).

As not only decolonial writings comment, patrimonialization is interested in memory in attention to those who hold power, speculates space and hides conflicts (RIBEIRO, 2014). There are many examples of cities, in Latin America and the Caribbean, that preserve and foster tourism to buildings or complexes that denote “European heritage”; or who seek to erase or forget the traces of occupation by other groups that coexisted or still coexist in the formerly “colonial” city (COSTA, 1989; NAME; MOASSAB, 2014; LARA, 2018; SILVA, 2018). And if it is solidity, perpetuity and monumentality that confers the “civilization certificate” of an archaeological site to the great sets of the past of non-European matrices, such as Machu Picchu or Teotihuacán, at present value is still given to the hardness and boldness of reinforced concrete and, by extension, temporary or light materials – adobe, rammed earth, straw, wood, bamboo etc. – are depreciated and knowledge related to the anti-monumentality of architecture in *lajes* of favelas, *palafitas* (riverside houses on stilts) and lake *chinampas*,

⁹ Here, I borrow and modify the title of Maldonado-Torres’ second thesis (2018, p. 35-36): “Coloniality is different from colonialism and decoloniality is different from decolonization”. His fifth thesis also (p. 41-43) inspires my exposition.

indigenous *malocas* and *quilombos* and *palenques*, for example, is disregarded (MOASSAB, 2016; CUNHA, 2019; FREIRE-MEDEIROS; NAME, 2019).

It is also true, however, that marginalized ethnoracial groups sometimes see listing as the only resource capable of preventing the disappearance of the built environments that house their culture, and cannot discard the instrument. This is a situation that leaves them in doubt about whether the protection of what they judge to be their values and the support of the ocularcentric and whitecentric logic that make them inferior are superimposed.

Third “thesis”: Modernity/coloniality is a metaphysical catastrophe that naturalizes the extraction of nature, architecture as a vehicle of civilization and which lives do not matter¹⁰

Maldonado-Torres (2018, p. 36-37) tells us that the invasion of the Americas was a metaphysical catastrophe. If in what would become Europe, before, there were already radical distinctions between humans, the monotheistic cosmology of the world was maintained as a divine creation in which all beings harmonized and justified (FOUCAULT, [1997] 2010; NAME, 2010; GROSGOUEL, 2012; MIGNOLO, [1995] 2016). The “discovery” of a fourth territory clashed with the Catholic ideal of the Trinity, producing a heightened alterity that made Europeans redesign their ontology (O’GORMAN, [1958] 2010). In view of this, *terra incognita* became a New World, an *diseño ontológico* (ontological design) (ESCOBAR, 2016, p. 127-156) the result of everything that was renamed, classified, occupied and used for the benefit of conquerors, at the expense of ecocides and genocides, that is, to the detriment of humans and non-humans who, in the new radical and racial distinction between individuals, have lives that no longer matter.

In the Americas, environmental destruction is defined

as “endless extraction and as the objective in itself of colonizing action” (MACHADO ARÁOZ, [2014] 2020, p. 93). Due to the extraction of red-blood brazilwood, the extractive monocultures of plantations and the glittering shine of gold and silver, obtained with slave and servile labor, forests were decimated, soils were depleted and mines were exhausted, killing thousands of blacks and indigenous people – by torture, murder or exhaustion (PORTO-GONÇALVES, 2006, p. 25). While such productive systems were implanted, cities and buildings were also erected. Thus, contrary to what European humanists will say later, “*the spirit of capitalism was not Calvinist, but Catholic*” and “*the first modern urbanization took place not in Manchester or London, but in Potosí*” (MACHADO ARÁOZ, [2014] 2020, p. 113).

Architecture became a vehicle of civilization and control, at the expense of death and destruction. Furthermore, it was not in the European medieval palimpsest, but in the Americas, seen as blank sheets, that Leon Battista Alberti’s architectural postulates were able to find their most productive experimental laboratory (FERNÁNDEZ, 1998): Jesuit missions overcame indigenous villages; the regular grid was applied to most of the new cities of Spanish colonization; the landscape was marked with Catholic towers, fortresses and other distinctive elements that made the scope of parish regions or colonial administration visible and intelligible; and over the ruins of original sites, *plazas de armas*, Christian temples and administrative buildings were built, often with the stones of what had been destroyed (NAME; MOASSAB, 2014). The invasion designed, after all, “*a city to exclude and induce respect for fear*”, which is “*very different from a city to make people free. This has been the rule since the beginning of the 16th century: the city as a machine of exclusion*” (LARA, 2018, p. 71), which continues “*segmenting, fragmenting, stratifying the population in its urban order. Neighborhoods for Indians [and blacks], for the poor, for trades considered of little value [...] Other neighborhoods, for the rich, for elites, for whites*” (RODRÍGUEZ, [2013] 2016, p. 303).

¹⁰ In this “thesis”, I indirectly allude to the third thesis by Maldonado-Torres (2018, p. 36-41) – “Modernity/coloniality is a form of metaphysical catastrophe that naturalizes war, which is at the root of modern/colonial forms of race, gender and sexual difference”. I also dialogue with his fourth thesis (p. 41).

There is no contemporary Latin American or Caribbean city without Africans, indigenous people or their descendants having built it with their own hands, whether those who were enslaved or those who, in the production of architecture, currently occupy precarious jobs at the construction site or those that self-build due to the lack of decent housing options (CUNHA, 2019; MOASSAB, 2019). It was also here that Brasília was built, which promised the hygienist salvation of the Modern Movement, but whose construction killed workers coming from other regions for the construction work of the new capital; and that great works like the Itaipu Power Plant decimated workers' lives and destroyed landscapes in two countries on behalf of development. The damned of the city, mostly racialized as non-whites, are those who still live in places of poverty, slums, clusters of exclusion, risky areas and zones of sacrifice: the capitalism of modernity/coloniality is racist and the poor who are more exposed to risks and environmental degradation have "color".¹¹

Finally, there is no possibility, in our very delicate Brazilian moment, that an analytics that seeks decoloniality disregard such evident data on coloniality: it does not seem a coincidence that, at the time of publication of this text, four of the five countries with the most deaths by covid-19 are in the Americas (United States, Brazil, Mexico and Peru); and that, while white elites crowd the bars of elegant neighborhoods in many Brazilian cities, the pandemic continues killing, contaminating and affecting more non-white populations and peripheral territories (ALBUQUERQUE, 2020; BARROCAL, 2020; GOES, RAMOS e FERREIRA, 2020; IPAM AMAZÔNIA, 2020).

Fourth "thesis": There is no decolonial architecture because there is no teaching of decolonial architecture because there is no decolonial architecture

I take the title of a text by the Brazilian architect Ana Paula Baltazar (2020) to refer to the impossibility of

the emergence of decoloniality if the traces drawn since the Renaissance are maintained in the teaching of design in architecture: a paradigm of representation that, still in the present, reifies the split between project and construction site – also a racial division of labor denounced for decades (FERRO, [1976] 1979; ARANTES, 2008; MOASSAB, 2020) – and the production of extraordinary spaces, which deny solutions to everyday life.

Mignolo ([1995] 2016) and the American historian Alfred Crosby ([1997] 1999) – the last, closer to the postcolonial – point out that cartography and perspective unite pantometry and visualization. Coming from a *geometrically exact* but *inventive* technique, they forge a point of view that apprehends much more and in more detail than the human eye can. Furthermore, as the French cultural geographer Augustin Berque warns us ([1999] 2012, p. 6-7), of the objects represented in this way only their position in space, their outline and their measurements are of interest. Contemplated in the idea of architecture formulated by Alberti, such principles spread in techniques, aesthetics and ethics no longer based on what is built here and now, considering the accumulation of knowledge from the past; but in how here and now what is represented two-dimensionally is what will only later be constructed in three dimensions. The word "*project*" itself alludes, after all, to a "*projectile*" launched into the future (LARA, 2018; GUTIÉRREZ; NAME; CUNHA, 2020).

Maps, perspectives, floor plans, sections and facades *are not realistic* and their accuracy and predictability *are not neutral*. They were the result of a geo-historically located observer, that is, who has specific ethnicity, place, class and time – White-Europeans, bourgeois and linked to the desire to conquer territories at the time of the "discoveries", aided by mathematical accuracy. Expanding the assumption that good space is allocated to the projected future, they therefore draw an unbearable present, which expands the range of

¹¹ The theme obviously does not arise in decolonial literature and has long been debated by political ecology (cf. HERCULANO; PACHECO, 2006; VIÉGAS, 2006; SVAMPA; VIALE, 2014).

discomforts that animate the profligate contemporary consumption – and that, from the object to the landscape, it is socially, environmentally and racially unfair (GUTIÉRREZ, [2015] 2020; NAME, 2020).

An analytic of decoloniality requires detachment from old habits and opening up to projective disobedience. With regard to representation, I believe it is important to value *bilingual practices* (MIGNOLO, [2000] 2003) – to some extent, in the manner of the *anthropophagus* (ANDRADE, [1928] 1990) – and that overlap conventional techniques with other languages, increasing the possibilities of representing the unrepresentable (NAME; FREITEZ, 2019; FREITEZ, 2019; RUGERI, 2019; SPINDULA; NAME; MOASSAB, 2020). I think it is important to also value situated designs: spatial arrangements inclusive of the whole range of diversities (ESCOBAR, 2016), in addition to questioning the idea of a model – normative and prescriptive of an imposing and finished object – to project “*in the logic of example, which presupposes experience, sensitivity, inventive capacity*” (BALTAZAR, 2020, p. 125).

Finally, it is important to understand that one can “*design with a design that is not called that*” (GUTIÉRREZ, [2015] 2020). After all, there are cities regardless of urban planners, landscapes and landscaping without landscapers and architecture without architects and even without architecture (GUTIÉRREZ; NAME; CUNHA, 2020, p. 70-72). Regardless of what professionals prescribe or proscribe, different intellectuals and approaches inform that objects, architectures, cities and landscapes will continue to be created in the living practice of knowledge, techniques and processes – sometimes ancestral – conducted individually or collectively by common and convicted people of the city, in their ordinary daily life (RUDOLFSKY [1964] 1973; FATHY [1973] 2009; BOUFLEUR, 2013; VAN LENGEN, [1981] 2014; FREIRE-MEDEIROS; NAME, 2019; MARQUES; MASS, 2020).

However, characterizing as “decolonial” any results of design practices deemed insurgent, disruptive

or provocative can convert the colonial difference into added value to new architectural products (GUTIÉRREZ; NAME; CUNHA, 2020, p. 73-74) – for which, in fact, a certain greed may arise in post-pandemic markets. The task that this article proposes to its readers and readers is more complex: a historiographical and epistemological review that can lead, but not necessarily lead, to new spatial results; but that, in the process, makes it possible to alter spatial and design methods, processes and programs that promote coloniality – at the very least, because they naturalize and try to universalize white-bourgeois ways of life in any inhabited spaces. Only in this way will the projected be able to embrace the diversity of the experience and provide for other existences and other ways of living. In other words, it is not interesting that the term decolonial draws a new style, as is repeatedly noted in the history of architecture. Perhaps, for this reason, it is better, in place of *decolonial architecture*, to deal with a decolonial perspective in architecture (MOASSAB; RUGERI; FREITEZ; NAME, 2020, p. 21). Or that we can finally discuss structural (and particularly epistemic) racism in our field.

The debate is open!

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