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**FUNDAMENTAL
OUTLINES FOR A
CRITICAL THEORY
FROM THE AMERICAS**

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Abstract: Just one hundred years ago, Critical Theory had its origin in Frankfurt/Main. Today, however, the false expectation that something of special relevance could be contributed from this place, or the country to which it belongs, dilutes it rather than helping the attempt to resume the project of this philosophical current. In any case, only a criticism directed towards the philosophical errors of Habermas's favorite student, Honneth, could justify a certain concentration in this city. His proposal for a "fight for recognition" not only misunderstands G.W.F. Hegel, but prevents in theoretical reflection the necessary radicalism of the "critique of everything that exists".

Keywords: critical theory; eurocentrism; Bolivar Echeverria, Axel Honneth

The city of Frankfurt/Main, where Critical Theory was founded exactly one hundred years ago, within: *Institut für Sozialforschung*, lately it is losing not only the original documents of these authors, as happened with the *Walter Benjamin Archiv* which was transferred to Berlin, because the University and the Frankfurt government were not willing to offer it a decent space, but also in terms of theoretical reflection inspired by Critical Theory, both are denying their own history.

Frankfurt had a tradition of less subservience to central governments than most German cities. The Frankfurt bourgeoisie, and especially its Jewish part, generated the impulse that led to the founding of ``Universidad de Frankfurt``, more than a hundred years ago (in 1914), and it was Jews who later financed the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, independent of the University, but with certain institutional relations with it. Being a private academic institution, the anti-Semitic laws (written and unwritten) of the Weimar Republic did not apply and, consequently, it was possible for

Jewish teachers to teach and do research, which in practically no other scientific institution of Germany before National Socialism was possible – with a few rare exceptions.

This specific history of Frankfurt, of its University and especially of: *Institut für Sozialforschung*, it is generally mentioned as little as possible in speeches and writings about it. This is how an Aryan Frankfurt was rebuilt, where suddenly, today's capitalists, who are the heirs of those who expropriated this atypical Frankfurt bourgeoisie and sent their representatives to death (or sometimes exile), declare themselves as the true guardians of this Frankfurt tradition – which is not only a historical falsehood, but also an attempt to expropriate and disappear, a second time, the Jews of Frankfurt, the city, the university and the Institute for Social Research.

But it all started a little earlier, and in another place: in 1923, with the: *Erste marxistische Arbeitswoche* in the German state of Thüringen, the first scientific structures were established, which later gave rise to the foundation of: *Institut für Sozialforschung*. Today there are different ways of interpreting the relevance of this theoretical tradition. The easiest and most usual is to re-nationalize it into German culture and re-municipalize it into the cultural and scientific heritage of Frankfurt. However, it is still not possible to completely deny that Critical Theory could only be saved as a scientific and institutional project, just as its members could only save their lives, by leaving Frankfurt, Germany and Europe as soon as possible. The only one who delayed his departure from this continent, Walter Benjamin, paid for it with his detention in the Pyrenees, on the Spanish-French border and apparently "chose" suicide in the face of the threat of being deported to Germany, that is, headed for National Socialist death camps.

Nowadays, all this seems to be far away, since 78 years ago the National Socialist

popular project was ended militarily by the Red Army and its allies of that time. The re-nationalization of this theory expelled from Germany celebrates more and more great successes and even conservative thinkers consider that Critical Theory is sufficiently tamed, to erect a monument in homage to Theodor W. Adorno in the heart of the city of Frankfurt, as happened 20 years ago. years.

In this context, there are few voices within the German university, and especially within the ``Universidad de Frankfurt``, that keep alive the radicalism of the criticism of the Frankfurt School of the twenties, thirties and forties of the last century. For some authors, Axel Honneth would be a representative of the desire to fill the theoretical-scientific project of Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Löwenthal, Franz Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer and, last but not least, Walter Benjamin with life.

In intellectual circles, references to Honneth were frequent and they viewed his writings with good eyes. This theory was seen as a starting point for reflection on the possibilities and concrete forms of resistance to various forms of exclusion and domination.

For these reasons, Honneth seems to us the ideal author to begin a reflection on the current situation of Critical Theory. This reflection is based on a critical vision of the attempt to 'reintegrate' Critical Theory to the city from which it was expelled by the National Socialists from Frankfurt and from all of Germany –expulsion, as the last alternative to physical extermination–, carried out with the active approval or silent passive of the great majority of the inhabitants of the city and the country.

The desire of the following lines is to demonstrate that an author, Bolívar Echeverría, an Ecuadorian-Mexican philosopher (1941-2010) who was born and was affiliated with a university outside of Frankfurt, Germany,

Europe and the self-declared First World, can be considered more relevant than the known premises for the project of a Critical Theory today. This purpose, equally unusual within the discussions on Critical Theory as within the discussions on the so-called Third World in general, and the Americas in particular, will be organized from the conceptual confrontation of Walter Benjamin, Axel Honneth and the aforementioned Latin American author, Bolívar Echeverría.

The latter has taught for more than 35 years at `` Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México``, making Critical Theory of society accessible to many generations of students and has made important contributions to extend the validity of Critical Theory, not only beyond of the precise historical moment in which its central texts arose, but also beyond the geographical and civilizational limitations, in which this theory has sometimes been trapped. These limitations partly result directly from some contradictions in the original texts, which were developed in an ethnocentric context, which has never been able to be overcome by the authors of this group of intellectuals as decisively as it would have been necessary. Most of the aforementioned limitation, however, is the result of a process of interpreting these texts that removes their critical spine, and with it the ability to overcome the narrow-mindedness of European and American societies.

Echeverría has worked in the attempt to resume the Critical Theory project, taking it not only to other countries, but also to new horizons of discussion, which included a debate beyond the limitations given in many European and American universities -which also due to the limitations that are necessarily generated in countries that, for years, have been at war against other countries. For all these reasons, we find it justifiable and necessary to return to this important author

and compare his thoughts with the previous director of: *Institut für Sozialwissenschaften*.

The Hegelian theory of recognition in Honneth's interpretation is implicitly based on the idea that the recognition of the other is possible in the existing social form. He naively ignores the fact of competition in the prevailing economic system, in which anyone is by definition in competition with anyone.

There is in this vision a 'struggle for recognition' that can lead in specific cases to the recognition of oneself or of a group by another or others. Cases of non-recognition are considered basic rule violations that sometimes lead to resistance. The possibility that non-recognition is the rule and recognition the accidental or temporary exception is not considered in this theory.

The Hegelian theory of recognition, in Honneth's interpretation, has a very marked progressive trait. It starts, without material justification, from the premise that in history there is a continuous advance towards a society with full recognition of the other. Hegel, at least in certain parts of his theory, knows how dubious this belief in human progress as necessary and inevitable is. In certain sentences Hegel seems ironic with himself, as for example in his: *Filosofía del derecho*, when he talks about the monarch and the war.

In Honneth these self-critical moments of Hegel's theory are eliminated and replaced by a faith in the progress of morality. He affirms that "as we have seen, the legal relationship and the community of values are open for transformation processes in the direction of an increase in universality or equality" (Honneth, 1994: 280). He does not consider the possibility of an opening of the existing system of law and morality towards the opposite of an 'increase in universality and equality'. But the history after Hegel gave even more elements to doubt this belief in human progress, in which Honneth does not want

to stop trusting by "describing the history of social struggles as a process with a defined direction" (Honneth, 1994 :274).

This blindness in relation to the possibility of a 'progress' towards the absence of recognition, is even more problematic if we think that it occurs in Germany, at a shorter time distance than a human life can last, after the destruction of the Jews. Europeans by the German National Socialists.

Implicitly, Honneth makes us understand that less traditional societies are closer to the "purpose of human self-realization" (Honneth, 1994: 276), than traditional societies, when he insists throughout his text on the "idea of a post-traditional relationship of recognition" (Honneth, 1994: 275). This is not only questionable because National Socialism occurred in one of the least traditional societies in the world at that time: Germany; but also because it falls into the ideological trap of the Nazis that they share with all extreme right movements. They present themselves as the great saviors of lost or lost traditions, while in their real politics they support the most radical modernizations. At the same time they destroy a large part of the existing traditions, politically and ideologically building a so-called traditionalism.

This confusion of tradition with traditionalism is committed by Honneth, as if he had never understood the central idea of Walter Benjamin, according to which it is necessary, in each generation, "to try to wrest tradition from the hands of conformism, which is always on the verge of extinction." "subdue it" (Benjamin, 2008: 40).⁵ It is a question here not only of the "tradition of the oppressed" (Benjamin, 2008: 43) but of the tradition in its entirety. Throughout its history, the pro-government left has repeatedly made the mistake of identifying tradition with traditionalism. This error is directly related to the idea of progress in history, of which the left

would be a ‚natural‘ ally. Everything that is left behind is, according to this logic, what must be overcome, from which one must distance oneself. Benjamin criticizes this conception and also the idea of a linear time that advances, just as clocks that only stop when one forgets to wind them or change the battery make them believe. He does not accept this identification of tradition and traditionalism, in which the pro-government left and the right are more alike than they would be willing to admit.

The left in its positivist versions (the reformist and the Stalinist) starts, like the bourgeois tendencies, from the idea that tradition is always on the side of the conservatives and rightists. If certain groups on the left try to include aspects of the local tradition in their programs, they will do so not with the idea of radicalizing their political position, but as a tactical approach to positions of the right or conservatives.

It is unthinkable, within a progressive and economic ideology, that in the existing tradition there is always a rebellious and subversive heritage, not only in the "tradition of the oppressed", but also in the traditions that tried to guarantee a good life and develop the capacities and human needs, beyond immediate economic needs. It is unimaginable for the positivist left, as well as for the conservatives, that precisely what slows down technological, organizational and economic progress, could be in favor of a revolutionary project. For this reason, the pro-government left almost always had and still has serious problems when it comes to understanding or even supporting requests from minority groups, since they generally present an extra turn in the channel within which the river of progress flows. One only has to remember the problems that the Sandinistas had in Nicaragua in accepting the requests of the indigenous groups, several of which ended up then as allies of the contras, as well as the case

of Mexico, where before 1994 a decisive part of the left did not give much importance to the situation of social, linguistic and civilizing exclusion of indigenous societies and their struggles.

In Mexico, it was only after the appearance of the neo-Zapatistas that an awareness -still limited- arose within the left that the struggle for a less repressive and less exploitative society is necessarily both a struggle against marginalization and exclusion of traditions that cannot be subsumed under the classic concept of ‚Mexico‘ or ‚Mexican‘, just as it was established in a progressive desire (in the sense of a naive faith in progress) in the last two centuries.

This group is perhaps one of the first to openly try to unite these two aspects: on the one hand, the defense of tradition, which is in danger of being crushed by the tendency of the capitalist form of reproduction to destroy the differences that do not fit in his declaration of equality of all merchandise and, therefore, of all those who are willing to reduce themselves to mere producers of them. On the other hand, this group tries to resume the old emancipatory ideals of a fairer, more egalitarian society, etc.

Discussions on the question of whether to give preference to requests for equality or those for difference are only possible due to this false contradiction that is built in the dominant thought between tradition and emancipation. All the affirmations of being against progressivism and economism are in vain, if one does not reach the question of tradition as something that must be "ripped... out of the hands of conformism" (Benjamin, 2008: 40).

Retaking the tradition in a non-folklorist way could be what Walter Benjamin calls the "tiger's leap into the past" (Benjamin, 2008: 52), but this leap does not mean moving away from the possibility of a society

radically different from the existing one and its destructive and repressive structures, but “that dialectical leap (...) is the revolution, as Marx understood it” (Benjamin, 2008: 52). Being a revolutionary would then imply the ability to remember oneself, to see and learn from past generations, from their experiences and traditions. The simple fixation on the supposed ‘modernizations’ closes us, on the contrary, the path to this leap of the tiger. The recipes of the reformist and Stalinist left in the ex-colonies of first overcoming the remains of traditional societies, that is, resembling the societies of the center, as a prerequisite to be able to enter the project of a radically less repugnant society, are based on this false conception of the role of traditions. The neo-Zapatistas are perhaps the group that most clearly sees the need for this leap of the tiger into the past and it is no coincidence that they do so from the most remote corner of Mexico, apparently from the furthest political and civilizing “place” from this another less repressive society – further away for being, at first sight, traditionalists, defending several of their apparently ‘obsolete’ traditions in 21st century Mexico.

Bolívar Echeverría’s theory of the four *ethes* (plural of *ethos*) of capitalist modernity, and especially his analysis of the baroque *ethos* as a modern and not a pre-modern one, could be one of the few theoretical attempts that today managed to retake this analysis. of Walter Benjamin who is generally marginalized in the current socio-philosophical debate. The conception of the baroque *ethos* as the one that contains a “conflicting combination of conservatism and nonconformity” (Echeverría, 1994: 26), could be precisely one of the keys to understanding the type of modernity that exists in Mexico, not as backward, but different. and perhaps in certain aspects even more interesting for the project of a society less repressive, exploitative

and repugnant than the existing one, than the modernities of the First world that the partisan and ‘official’ left (what is left of it), as well as conservatives naively want to copy.

Bolívar Echeverría starts from the analysis that capitalist modernity is profoundly contradictory and irrational. One conclusion from this would be that the recognition of the other is systematically hindered and in the best of cases only possible in exceptional situations.

Here one can observe a great closeness between Bolívar Echeverría and Walter Benjamin, who is convinced that exception and rule exist in the prevailing social form in an inverse relationship to what is believed, including what Honneth thinks. Benjamin writes in his text “On the Concept of History”: “The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of exception’ in which we now live is truly the rule. The concept of history that we arrive at must be coherent with it.

To promote the true state of exception will then be presented to us as our task, which will improve our position in the fight against fascism. The opportunity that he has is, in part not insignificant, that his adversaries confront him in the name of progress as a historical norm. The astonishment at the fact that the things we experience are ‘still’ possible in the twentieth century has nothing philosophical about it. It is not at the beginning of any knowledge, except that the idea of history from which it comes can no longer be sustained. (Benjamin, 2008: 43.)⁶

Despite the fact that Honneth declares himself a member of the so-called third generation of the Frankfurt School, Bolívar Echeverría is much closer to his main ideas than Honneth. Echeverría’s theory would be a contribution to updating this theoretical tradition with much more reason than Honneth’s writings.

Echeverría distinguishes four basic

types of existing capitalist modernity, each corresponding to a version of the “ethos of capitalist modernity”. In one of them, the baroque ethos, there is more room for exceptions than there is in the others. In general, this greater space for exceptions is interpreted from the perspective of the other three ethe of capitalist modernity, as an expression of a lack of rationality, of an unfinished or incomplete modernity, or even of a pre-modern condition.

Honneth's theory falls within the framework of one of these other three non-baroque ethe. It starts affirmatively from the possibility of recognizing the other within the current societies with a capitalist economic model. At the same time, he considers the attitude that Echeverría describes as baroque as inferior to the other three described by the Ecuadorian-Mexican author, because it is one that does not even pretend to seek recognition (in the Hegelian sense of the term) from the other, but 'simply' let it live, let it pass, live together. In the style of the three non-baroque ethes, he despises the baroque ethos for an (apparently) chaotic mix of aesthetic, technical, tasteful, and organizing forms of daily life, including economic and political. This mixture makes the other (and also the self) difficult to define, with which the recognition process, as one that starts from a self and an other clearly defined in their difference, becomes not very functional, tends to be impossible, and ultimately comes to an end. superfluous. The Honnethian fixation on the self and the other is not only distant, but also opposed to the main ideas of Critical Theory. Horkheimer and Adorno propose in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* —inspired by Freud and also by the Hegelian critique of the naive concept of identity— how the “I” is the last and most radical link in the process of alienation in the enlightened world in the form of of capitalist reproduction. (Horkheimer and Adorno,

1994.)

The concept of the historical ethos, which Bolívar Echeverría introduces, replaces the critical concept of ideology and is closely linked to his concept of political culture. Each one of the different ethe of existing modernity implies a “peculiar way of living with Capitalism” (Echeverría, 1994: 20). More specifically, Echeverría explains that “the structural social behavior that we can call historical ethos can be seen as a whole principle of construction of the world of life. It is a behavior that tries to make the invivable liveable” (Echeverría, 1994: 19). There, as well as in his formulation of the ethe of capitalist modernity as a “way of naturalizing the capitalist” (Echeverría, 1995: 164) there is an obvious closeness of the ethe theory with the critique of ideology.

Bolívar Echeverría currently distinguishes four basic ways of living “the invivable” and he calls them: the realistic ethos, the romantic ethos, the classical ethos and the baroque ethos. “Thus, four would be, in principle, the different possibilities offered to live the world within the capitalist form of reproduction; each of them would imply a peculiar attitude - be it recognition or ignorance, distancing or participation - before the contradictory fact that constitutes capitalist reality” (Echeverría, 1994: 19). While the realist ethos predominates broadly and in vast spheres of north-central Europe and the US, the baroque ethos has a certain presence (along with the world-dominant realist ethos) in the Americas and especially in countries like Mexico. This baroque ethos, which from the perspective of the realist ethos, is pre-modern and outdated and only a remnant of ancient societies, is from the perspective of Bolívar Echeverría's theory a modern ethos among the four currently existing modern ethe.

The historical ethe or ethe of capitalist modernity are ways of living the unlivable,

they are basically distinguished from their way of doing it. The concept of the historical ethos is very broad and includes everything from cultural forms in the restricted sense of the word to everyday ways of eating, organizing work or, generally speaking, all forms of production and consumption of goods. It also includes forms of communication, which Echeverría conceives as forms of production and consumption of meanings.

The Ecuadorian-Mexican author is interested in an explanation of the process of production and consumption of use values that resorts to semiotics, but without thereby denying the primacy of nature, the primacy of the material as an inalienable foundation of the ideal. Here there is an essential difference compared to a series of contemporary approaches that are entangled in the concept of communication (or related conceptions, for example that of ‚articulation‘) and see in its most diverse forms, real or imagined, the explanation and, at the same time, the salvation of the world.

For this, he reinterprets, from a critical Marxism perspective, central theoretical elements of Ferdinand de Saussure, from whom he takes up important reflections to lay the foundations of his materialist theory of culture. In a relatively early text, which he considered one of his most important, 7 Echeverría makes an analysis that will be decisive for the rest of his later work, especially for the development of the historical ethos concept. Saussure subordinates linguistics to semiotics (sémiologie): “Linguistics is only a part of this general science. The laws that semiology discovers will be applicable to linguistics, and this is how linguistics will find itself linked to a well-defined domain in the set of human facts. (Saussure, 2001: 43.) In this context, he decides that knowledge of the “true nature of language“ is only possible if it fits correctly into the more general field of

“all other language systems“ (Saussure, 2001: 44). investigated by semiotics, Echeverría is interested in framing semiotics (understood by him as the production and consumption of signs) in the broader field of production and consumption in general. It is evident that Saussure and Echeverría differ significantly from each other, since the former considers semiotics embedded in social psychology and the latter, in turn, in psychology in general, while Echeverría has the critique of political economy as his system of reference: “It is possible, then, to conceive of a science that studies the life of signs within social life. Such a science would be part of social psychology, and therefore of general psychology. We will call it semiology (from the Greek semeion, ‚sign‘).“ (Saussure, 2001: 43.)⁸ In this there is a parallelism between the two, since, to investigate the most general object, necessary to understand the particulars, they start from the most complex of particular objects: “It can be said, then, that entirely arbitrary signs are the ones that best realize the ideal of the semiological procedure; for this reason language, the most complex and most widespread of expression systems, is also the most characteristic of all; in this sense linguistics can be set up as the general model of all semiology, even though language is only a particular system. (Saussure, 2001: 94.)

It is also important to be clear that the four modern ethe that Bolívar Echeverría analyzes are the ethe of capitalist modernity. None of them is outside of modernity or capitalist logic. They are just different ways of enduring the unbearable contradictions of the capitalist form of reproduction on a daily basis.

In the current system of reproduction there is a systematic contradiction between the logic of value and that of use value. While use value is what is actually needed to satisfy the needs of human beings, value is the economic category that starts from the amount (i.e., time)

of human labor that was used on average for the production of a product. true good. In the currently dominant system of reproduction, the logic of value tends to destroy that of use value more and more.

That is, everything is done to increase the production of values and with this surplus value and profits, but at the same time the goods that really improve the lives of human beings are tending to be destroyed (see for example ecological problems).

The existence of the contradiction between the logic of value and that of use value can be recognized or denied. In addition, more importance can be given to value or use value. The four possible combinations that result from these two distinctions are the conceptual basis of the four ethe.

The realist ethos denies the contradiction between value and use value and at the same time gives more importance to value. The romantic ethos also denies this contradiction but leans towards use value. The classical ethos recognizes the existence of this contradiction and sticks to the logic of value while the baroque ethos also recognizes it but trying to save – despite everything – the dynamics of use value.

The realist ethos is an “affirmative and militant attitude of identification, with the claim of creativity that capital accumulation has; with the claim of the latter not only to faithfully represent the interests of the ‘social-natural’ process of reproduction – interests that really represses and distorts – but to be at the service of its quantitative and qualitative potentiation” (Echeverría, 1994: 19 -22).

The romantic ethos is a “second way of naturalizing the capitalist, just as militant as the previous one, but completely opposed to it, it also implies the confusion of the two terms, but not within an affirmation of value but precisely of use value. In it, ‘valuation’ appears fully reducible to the ‘natural form’”

(Echeverría, 1994: 20). In this ethos, the tendency towards the destruction of use values is also denied, but not with a fixation on exchange values as in the realist ethos, but with the false idea that the current economic reproduction is organized according to the real needs of human beings, that is, according to the logic of use values.

The classical ethos differs from the first two because it does not deny the contradiction between the logic of the production of (exchange) values and use values, but it implies a generalized resignation to what exists, that is, the “tragic fulfillment of the march of things” (Echeverría, 1994: 20). This ethos is accompanied by the “distancing and equanimity of a stoic rationalism”, (Echeverría, 1995: 165) any “attitude for or against the established that is a militant attitude in its enthusiasm or its regret” appears here as “delusional and superfluous” (Echeverría, 1995: 165).

The baroque ethos, which in the Americas generally coexists with the dominant realist ethos, consists of a paradoxical combination of sensible modesty and a disobedient impulse. There is in it the absurd attempt – from the perspective of the other three ethe – to rescue use value through its own destruction. This way of enduring and perceiving the capitalist form of reproduction, the tireless attempt to jump over the existing barriers to human happiness persists after having clearly distinguished them as insurmountable under current conditions. This ethos shares with the classic the ability to perceive without hesitation the capitalist tendency towards the destruction of use values and with this of human happiness; with the romantic ethos, on the other hand, he shares the deep conviction that use values can be saved within the reigning society. The baroque ethos is for Bolívar Echeverría “a strategy that accepts the laws of mercantile circulation (...), but that it does so at the

same time that it disagrees with them and submits them to a game of transgressions that refunctionalizes them.” (Echeverría, 1994: 26-28.) There is here the aforementioned “conflicting combination of conservatism and nonconformity” (Echeverría, 1994: 26). It is conservative, because it does not openly rebel against the capitalist system and because it opposes the complete destruction of the possibilities of enjoyment that existed before in part because they are part of a traditional way of life. It is non-conforming because it does not completely submit to the logic of capital, that is, to the logic of sacrificing the quality of life of the majority of human beings for the sake of the profits obtained by the owners of the means of production.

The realistic ethos is the ethos of clarity. For him there are no insurmountable contradictions in the existing social system and the domain of use value is the most desirable for him. He is convinced that the logic of value also guarantees the development of use value.

The baroque ethos is the ethos of contradiction. He knows of the insurmountable contradiction within the existing social formation between the logic of value and that of use value. He also knows that use value tends to be destroyed by the blind logic of the unlimited production of values and with it surplus value and profits. But despite this, or even based on this contradiction, by using it, he tries to rescue the right to use value and with it the possibility of human jouissance. Knowing that the capitalist system makes human happiness impossible, he tries to achieve it, even for a few moments. He lives the invivable not from the denial that it is invivable but precisely from its recognition. Playing with the impossibility of jouissance, he tries to do it in hidden and spontaneous spaces.

While the clarity of the realist ethos, which

is based on the false denial of a basic aspect of our current existence, does not truly achieve the highest ideal of the Enlightenment, the recognition of the other as a condition *sine qua non* of the constitution of the own subjectivity, of one's own self, the baroque ethos achieves to a greater extent coexistence with those who really have different ways of living and thinking. Precisely his contradictory attitude, which includes speaking in double meanings, the almost non-existence of the word *no*, etc., makes him capable of tolerating the differences between human beings without requiring the other to become equal to himself in order to recognize him as the realistic ethos does.

The Baroque ethos takes its name from this similarity with Baroque art: the ability to combine and mix elements that from a “serious” point of view could not be together, combined or mixed. This mixture is chaotic and transgresses the established (aesthetic) rules, but at the same time it was the only art that could include indigenous aesthetic elements in New Spain. The elements do not “understand” but “let live” each other. They are not recognized in the Hegelian sense but neither are they annihilated or aggressively excluded. They “give the plane” to each other, I don't really understand each other, they can't even interact with full consciousness, but with this they don't question the other's right to exist. The lack of clarity that this implies, which for Western philosophers like Habermas causes precisely the lack of communication capacity and with this ultimately the lack of liberation capacity, is from Echeverría's perspective rather the ability to communicate despite the structural impossibility of really understanding each other in today's society – due to the omnipresent competition in which the other is always and above all a competitor to be overcome. In the baroque ethos it is about communicating with the other not only despite the structural impossibility of

understanding each other, but even using it, playing with the double meaning. It refunctionalizes misunderstandings precisely as a form of communication. While this attitude, from the perspective of Habermas, Honneth, et. al., would be an underdeveloped communication due to its lack of clarity, that is, a communication that would have to be modernized, for Bolívar Echeverría it would be rather an expression of another type of capitalist modernity that coincides with another form of modern ethos, namely: the baroque ethos, whose contradictory and paradoxical condition can allow certain spaces of exceptions and traditions.

They are spaces for the limited breaking of certain established social rules, and also include a space for other cultures, other forms of coexistence and even other forms of physical appearance. The 'other', the 'others' or the 'others' can live in these exceptional spaces without having to justify themselves to the majority for being different. They would remain as an exception to the rule, which is not the same as being excluded by definition, since in the baroque ethos the exception is in a certain way the rule. But from a realistic perception this is incomprehensible and there would be no other option than to prescribe to the entire world to follow the path of the struggle for recognition that so many times led to the bloodiest failures in European history, which of course includes the history of its action on its colonies, as well as the aforementioned history of its most accomplished ex-colony from the perspective of the royalist ethos, the United States ,of America'.

Honneth, with a progressive faith and a certain streak of First World ethnocentrism, cannot perceive the different forms of capitalist modernity, and assumes that the ethos of recognition, which he analyzes – the realist ethos with a certain romantic

influence – is the only one modern ethos, or at least the most advanced. Just in this denial of the existence of the other ethe as equally modern, which are by definition no further from the “purpose of human self-realization” (Honneth, 1994: 276), Honneth himself involuntarily repeats and demonstrates what in A consequence of Echeverría's theory can be analyzed: the inability of the realistic and romantic ethe - to which he belongs in everyday life and to which he theoretically defends - to really recognize the other, in this case, the other ethos of capitalist modernity the baroque ethos.

This inability to recognize the baroque ethos as the other ethos of capitalist modernity includes not only ignorance or lack of information about it as a social reality, but also the refusal to take into account the theories that have been developed about the baroque ethos in the last thirty years and which have been discussed not only in some of the intellectual and academic centers of the Americas, but also in various universities and publications in Europe. We mention this, not to presumably give these theories more validity, because they have been discussed in Europe, but to demonstrate the dogmatic aspect of the aforementioned refusal to take into account these theoretical discussions, which are easily accessible even by Honneth, Habermas and others. defenders of the recognition of the other. But its claim to universality ends within the limits established by the new iron curtains of the aforementioned First World.

Confronting theoretical developments in the Americas, in this case by Echeverría, with some of German university professors, such as Honneth, not only makes visible the limitations of the latter's interpretation of Critical Theory and the deficiencies of his reconstruction of Hegel's theory of recognition. In addition to this, we can see how philosophical contributions are developed from outside the

world's military and economic centers that help to better understand the current capitalist world, its contradictions and its inability to overcome its self-destructive tendency. This incapacity will continue, if it clings to the "own" contributions of the aforementioned centers, belittling and ignoring everything that historically and currently is being worked on in the discussions and texts, as well as what is being lived and carried out daily in societies

apparently peripherals. There is no doubt that a possible solution to the radical problems of current humanity cannot be expected from those countries that in the last five hundred years have dedicated themselves to subduing and destroying a large part of the planet, but that humanity can only survive, if you start to listen to the critical voices that come from outside the chorus of the car called First World.

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