

CADERNOS EBAPE.BR

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ISSN: 1679-3951

Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Escola Brasileira de
Administração Pública e de Empresas

Fróes Couto, Felipe; de Pádua Carrieri, Alexandre
Enrique Dussel e a Filosofia da Libertação nos Estudos Organizacionais
Cadernos EBAPE.BR, vol. 16, núm. 4, 2018, Outubro-Dezembro, pp. 631-641
Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas

DOI: 10.1590/1679-395169213

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Enrique Dussel and the Philosophy of Liberation in Organization Studies

FELIPE FRÓES COUTO¹

ALEXANDRE DE PÁDUA CARRIERI²

¹ UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE MONTES CLAROS (UNIMONTES), MONTES CLAROS – MG, BRAZIL

² UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE MINAS GERAIS (UFMG), BELO HORIZONTE – MG, BRAZIL

Abstract

The purpose of this theoretical essay is to revisit, in a didactic and non-exhaustive way, the main ideas of Enrique Dussel and his Philosophy of Liberation, exploring the main concepts and categories elaborated by the author. The positive basis of this philosophy puts the challenge of breaking with the silence of the voices of the oppressed, exploited or victims who were not considered relevant agents in the construction of modern society (women, indigenous population, slaves, peasants, etc.). The Philosophy of Liberation is based on the concepts of Totality, Exteriority, Alienation, Mediation, Proximity and Liberation. Totality, based on the conquering pretension of the colonizers, is obtained from an ontological dimension that reveals truth as what stems from those who consider themselves superior by their technological or economic domination. This discourse resulted in the exteriority of those who do not originally integrate this public, excluding them from the system and attributing to them the alienation, which is the denial of their subject status. We confirm the colonization of the Administration when we substitute critical consciousness of the administration for the reading of popular business media, for rhetoric of the consultants and for the belief of a free market where, *naturally*, there are resources only for those who are to prosper in a scenario of uncertainties. The classic theory of economy makes the competition and the exteriority natural, however, we can organize ourselves to meet popular needs in a more inclusive, democratic way, respecting the limits of the environment. Proximity and liberation are a fundamental thought for overcoming such vision.

Keywords: Decolonialism. Philosophy of Liberation. Enrique Dussel.

Enrique Dussel e a Filosofia da Libertação nos Estudos Organizacionais

Resumo

A proposta deste ensaio teórico é revisitar, de modo didático e não exaustivo, as principais ideias de Enrique Dussel e sua Filosofia da Libertação, passando pelos principais conceitos e pelas categorias elaboradas pelo autor. A base positiva dessa filosofia nos desafia a romper com o silêncio das vozes dos oprimidos, dos explorados ou das vítimas, que não foram considerados agentes relevantes na construção da sociedade moderna (mulheres, índios, escravos, sertanejos etc.). A Filosofia da Libertação se baseia nos conceitos de *totalidade*, *exterioridade*, *alienação*, *mediação*, *proximidade* e *libertação*. A totalidade, fundamentada pela pretensão conquistadora dos colonizadores, dá-se a partir de uma dimensão ontológica que revela a verdade como aquela decorrente dos que se julgam superiores por sua dominação tecnológica ou econômica. Esse discurso resultou na exterioridade daqueles que não integram originalmente esse público, excluindo-os do sistema e atribuindo a eles a alienação, que é a negação do seu *status* de sujeito. Afirmamos a colonização da Administração quando substituímos a consciência crítica da Administração pela leitura da mídia popular de negócios, pela retórica das consultorias e pela crença de um livre mercado em que, *naturalmente*, não haverá recursos para todos, mas apenas para aqueles que prosperarem em um cenário de incertezas. A teoria clássica da economia naturaliza a competição e a exterioridade, entretanto, podemos nos organizar para atender às necessidades populares de modo mais inclusivo, democrático e respeitando os limites da natureza. A proximidade e a libertação são a chave do pensamento teórico para a superação dessa visão.

Palavras-chave: Descolonialismo. Filosofia da libertação. Enrique Dussel.

Enrique Dussel y la filosofía de la liberación en los estudios organizacionales

Resumen

La propuesta de este ensayo teórico es revisar, de manera didáctica y no exhaustiva, las principales ideas de Enrique Dussel y su filosofía de la liberación, pasando por los principales conceptos y categorías elaborados por el autor. La base positiva de esta filosofía nos desafía a romper con el silencio de las voces de los oprimidos, de los explotados o de las víctimas que no fueron considerados agentes relevantes en la construcción de la sociedad moderna (mujeres, indios, esclavos, campesinos, etc.). La filosofía de la liberación se basa en los conceptos de totalidad, exterioridad, alienación, mediación, proximidad y liberación. La totalidad, fundamentada por la pretensión conquistadora de los colonizadores, se da a partir de una dimensión ontológica que revela la verdad como la que deriva de aquellos que se juzgan superiores por su dominio tecnológico o económico. Este discurso resultó en la exterioridad de aquellos que no integran originalmente ese público, excluyéndolos del sistema y atribuyéndoles la alienación, que es la negación de su *status* de sujeto. Afirmamos la colonización de la Administración cuando sustituimos la conciencia crítica de la administración por la lectura de medios populares de negocios, por la retórica de las consultorías y por la creencia de un libre mercado en el que, *naturalmente*, no habrá recursos para todos, sino solo para aquellos que prosperen en un escenario de incertidumbres. La teoría clásica de la economía naturaliza la competencia y la exterioridad, sin embargo, podemos organizarnos para atender a las necesidades populares de manera más inclusiva, democrática y respetando los límites de la naturaleza. La proximidad y la liberación son la clave del pensamiento teórico para la superación de esa visión.

Palabras clave: Decolonialismo. Filosofía de la liberación. Enrique Dussel.

Article submitted on June 04, 2017 and accepted for publication on March 05, 2018.

[Translated version] Note: All quotes in English translated by this article's translator.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1679-395169213>

INTRODUCTION

One of the several challenges of Social Sciences in the 21st century involves the renewal of Critical Theory and the possibility of humanizing knowledge and politics through the problematization of diversity and difference that permeates the multiple contexts existing in the global society. To a large extent, to renew Critical Theory means to recognize that each context and place has its own conditions of materiality and that genuine emancipation is only possible when there is no suppression of the subjects' voices, nor their submission. Departing from this premise, Enrique Dussel developed his "Philosophy of Liberation," which proposes to reexamine criticism based on negativity and materiality, and from the perspective of the Other. Or as the author affirms, the *victim*, who is therefore constituted as someone to whom a voice was denied or whose recognition of humanity was omitted in the historical process of the constitution of modern society – notably Latin America.

In other words, Critical Theory, according to the Dusselian perspective, cannot be solely based on the bourgeois and European views of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *positive basis* of his philosophy is to break with the silence of the oppressed, the exploited, or the victims who have been disregarded as relevant agents in the construction of modern society (women, indigenous peoples, slaves, backlanders, etc.). To break with this silence means to situate oneself at the *level of materiality* of practices, within the content of the actions that constitute objective reality – or in other words, to understand the mechanism that exclude subjects, as well as render their voices silent (DUSSEL, MENDIETA and DE FRUTOS, 2001; MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015). For Dussel, this positive and material theoretical approach implies to stand by the victims efficiently, not only to take the position of an observer-participant; it demands that researchers experience the reality of the victims to understand, in their program, the actual causes of negativity.

According to Oliveira (2014), the Philosophy of Liberation is interpreted as a form of philosophical reading that allows introducing Latin America into knowledge production, for its problematizations are focused on the field of local needs and solutions that may meet the demands of the continent agendas. Still according to the author, the genesis of the Philosophy of Liberation is the permanent criticism of the ontological concept of domination and the very myth of modernity, which lead to an apparent totality imposed by the views of the Northern countries, while disregarding the realities of the colonized countries. This is such a radical philosophical system because it is not content with the superficiality of data coming from the current system and proposes an intentional glance that orbits around Latin America itself (OLIVEIRA, 2014). To understand the Philosophy of Liberation, it is necessary, *a priori*, to assume that Latin America is the author's place of speech, with its inequalities, extreme poverty, violence and typical cultural traits. The totalizing idea of a universal man is rejected (for there is not only a single type of man or woman) and, instead, the victim category arises (DUSSEL, 2005; OLIVEIRA, 2014).

We understand that Dussel's proposal fosters a necessary discussion regarding critical theory in Brazil because it reveals the hegemony of knowledge production from the perspective of the colonizer countries, which have, historically, determined how different concepts and theoretical meanings must be interpreted in the most different fields of the social sciences. Whether in administration, law or economics, for instance, dominant constructions on the problems of modernity have been drawn from European or North American thinkers who hold different concerns from those who experience the reality of colonized countries. For the former nations, the advance of science and technology permeates contexts of prosperity and appeasement after industrial and technological revolutions; for the latter, the challenges concerning poverty and misery, corruption, colonialism ("*coronelismo*", traditional, rural form of patronage) among other factors, indicate that perhaps modernity has not yet reached its imagined fullness. And even worse, the colonized peoples are subjected to the totalizing construction of the ontological (what is) by those who hold a limited and partial view of the world. In this sense, in defining what is, the colonizer also determines what is not, and, therefore, all the originality of the local culture is placed as marginal. For instance, a local cultural practice may be regarded as wrong and rejected for not conforming to the European values. Gradually, whatever is local becomes inferior to what is hegemonic, before it is finally and systematically abandoned.

Dussel says that what motivated his writing was the increasing poverty of the Latin American populations, continuously subjected to a form of dependent capitalism that transfers value to central capitalism. The author defends the argument that victims are situated in a system in which they are exploited at the same pace at which they are tamed to be exploited. This, in turn, makes the consciousness of liberation impossible. For the author, only a philosophy of liberation (as opposed to that of oppression) can alert subjects about their condition, so as to reach emancipation (DUSSEL, 1977). The author,

of Argentine origin, has been strongly influenced by his Latin American experiences and his active militancy with popular movements¹ – which in turn have derived from his personal anguish to find out who the Latin Americans genuinely are, culturally speaking. Therefore, he set out to pursue a historical identity of Latin America (DUSSEL, 2012; MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015).

The focus of his thinking is clear. Dussel dedicates his *Philosophy of Liberation* (1977, p. 5) “to the peoples of the third world, who overcome the fratricide; the peasant and proletarian women, who resist against uxoricide; to the youth of the whole world who rebel against infanticide and to the elders buried alive in the asylums by the society of consumption”. Speaking from a place of resistance, the author aims to reconstruct theories from the Philosophy of Liberation, through the construction of local praxes and with a view to the emancipation from the hegemonic discourses that permeate the constrictions around Southern countries. Its political position allows us to glance at social groups that have been previously forgotten or silenced in the process of knowledge formation. Hence, the purpose of this theoretical essay is to revisit, didactically and non-exhaustively, the main ideas of Enrique Dussel and his Philosophy of Liberation, addressing the central concepts and categories elaborated by the author. To this end, this essay is divided into four sections. The first, this introduction, characterizes and contextualizes the philosophy mentioned above; the second section reconstructs concepts and categories as designed by Dussel; in the third section, we present the implications of his reflections for research agendas in the administration; finally, the fourth section presents the final remarks and comments on the ideas addressed in this paper.

PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION: AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF PROXIMITY

It is interesting to understand that by gaining the power to claim that something is, one also gains the power to affirm that its opposite is not. There is no more favorable political position than that which represents everyone, not just a given group. He who can speak for all can also establish his totality for others. Therefore, sometimes this is true for the relationship of hegemony between white men and the black men or men and women. The *totality* is the first category of Dussel (1977) and, according to the author, is the expression of the dominant power of those whose voices are made permanent in relation to what actually exists and how things should be in society. It is the voice that becomes mainstream and suppresses all others. It is the knowledge of the center, the ontological knowledge that establishes itself as the undisputed truth of those who regard themselves as superior.

Dussel turns radically against this totality, expressed by the theoretical construction of ontology. According to the ontological dimension, something is because it is, and this cannot be argued since it is the objective reality. The colonizers, justified by their “neutral” science, become the holders of power to affirm what is real and what is true; they appropriate this construction to justify their acts – this movement, called ontological apotheosis, justifies the conquering, imperial and bellicose conduct in colonial processes (DUSSEL, 1977; OLIVEIRA, 2014). Such apotheosis is based on the assumption that the European man is an *ego cogito*, that is, a belief that he is a superior being because of his rationality and technological and military superiority. The European contrasts their living conditions with that of other peoples, while treating them as inferior because of their “underdevelopment.” According to the European view, to be human is to live in better, more rational living conditions confirmed by the advancement of science, technology and the forms of production. Hence arises the *ego conquiro*, which is the idea of bringing the status of humanity (technology, European forms of life) to those who are not perceived as human, but as savages, barbarians, or bearers of bestial labor. To conquer in this sense is synonymous with to humanize – even if it is by force (DUSSEL, 1977). Therefore,

¹ According to Misoczky and Camara (2015), Dussel’s life had been marked by democracy-oriented activism in Latin America: “His father – ‘for whom he was honored to be a son’ – was a positivist and agnostic physician ‘worshiped by the people to whom he generously devoted himself’, having founded a ‘social clinic of the people’. His mother was a social activist from whom her three children inherited the ‘spirit of social, political and critical commitment.’ After a passage through Buenos Aires, where the family moved to during World War II, followed to his father’s dismissal from a railroad job due to his German origin, they returned to Mendoza, but to the provincial capital of the same name. Then begins a period of ‘deep youth experiences’, ‘a time of accelerated formation of a practical, social, political, and intellectual personality’: militancy in Catholic Action, ‘a profound experience of conversion to responsibility with the Other’ after the visits to hospitals of children with disabilities; participation in the foundation of the Western University Federation; the presidency of the Student Center of Philosophy and Letters; the strikes and the arrest for his participation in the student movements against Perón in 1954” (MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015, p. 288).

From the 'I conquer' applied to the Aztec and Inca world and all American, from the 'I enslave' applied to Africans sold for the gold and silver acquired at the cost of the death of Amerindians working in the depths of the earth, from the 'I vanquish' of the wars of India and China do the shameful 'opium war'; from this 'I' appears the Cartesian *ego cogito*. This ego will be the unique substance, divine in Spinoza. In Hegel the *ich denke* of Kant will recover perfect divinity in the *absolute Wissen*; absolute knowledge, which is the very act of totality as such: God on earth. If faith, the perfect cult of absolute religion in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, is the certitude that the representation of the understanding is the absolute Idea, such certitude is that which world dominators have: they are the manifestation on earth of the divinity. The empires of the center, England, and France as colonial powers, Nazi Germany, and later the United States with its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), thus once more possess an ontology that justifies them, a subtle ideology that gives them a good conscience (DUSSEL, 1977, p. 14).

I am superior; hence I must conquer. For Dussel (1977), some men stand as thinking gods while others are mere working men. Whether it is by the will of God, or by the domination and domestication of human bodies, something is because it is so. Therefore, there is no reason for those who are gods not to violate or dominate the bodies of those who work, for they are considered "non-beings," or merely beings outside the totality. The *exteriority* is Dussel's second category and concerns the subjects who do not fit the created totality or are excluded from it. In the condition of exteriority, humanity is not necessarily attributed to a body, and therefore there is no applicability of a universal moral foundation. For Oliveira (2014), the conquest of Latin America took place through this practice of conquering the non-human periphery, born of immorality. What Dussel aims at with the Philosophy of Liberation is not the inclusion of the subjects in the totality, but the disruption of that totality by those who are on the margins. For Dussel (1977, p. 21),

Philosophy of liberation tries to formulate a meta-physics – not an ontology – demanded by revolutionary praxis and technologico-design *poiesis* against the background of peripheral social formations. To do this it is necessary to deprive Being of its alleged eternal and divine; to negate fetishist religion in order to expose ontology as the ideology of ideologies; to unmask functionalisms whether structuralist, logico-scientific, or mathematical (claiming that reason cannot criticize the whole dialectically, they affirm it the more they analytically criticize or operationalize its parts); and to delineate the sense of liberation praxis. Post-Hegelian critics of the European left have explained it to some extent. Only the praxis of oppressed peoples of the periphery, of the woman violated by masculine ideology, of the subjugated child, can fully reveal it to us.

In addition to breaking with the mainstream, Dussel understands that a philosophy that can liberate peoples will not come from European thought or from totalizing theories coming from the center. For this reason, the author criticizes the German philosophy, especially in relation to the consensualism/proceduralism of Jürgen Habermas and Karl Otto Apel (CASELAS, 2009). This is because JHabermas's discursive reason presents consensus as a claim for moral validity, that is, as the right that every subject possesses to participate in communicative relations as if the subjects had as premises the freedom, equality, and dignity to jointly participate in the space of dialog. However, what Dussel observes is that in political terms Habermas's assumption of validity is not followed, since in that historical moment no free expression was allowed to the colonized subjects. In fact, Caselas (2009, p. 65-66) goes further:

How many politicians actually listen to those who will be affected by their decisions? And even if they do so, which of their arguments in decision-making jeopardize the future of those involved, since they are not recognized as equals? It is as though the principle of representativeness (the vote that people provided) were valid only during one's term – this political reason falls short of ethical validity. At the mere search for consensus, Dussel opposes an ethical-original reason, in which he argues that the formal intersubjectivity of those who argue is not enough: they need prior recognition as equals. This recognition of the Other as equal is not argumentative; it should be placed as a prior point for any discussion.

Philosophy of Liberation is precisely a theoretical and political effort aimed at the recognition of subjects as victims of an exclusion process; even more, not only the recognition of those who oppress them, but their own recognition or awareness of their condition of victims – which brings us to the analysis of the third category – the *alienation*. The suffering of the victims or their status as excluded from economic, social and political systems represents the negation of their corporeality; the

victim is “someone affected in their sensitivity, a vulnerable being, but above all, someone to whom life is denied” (CASELAS, 2009, p. 67). It is the one who is either oppressed for not being able to escape from his vulnerable status, excluded from the socioeconomic system or, in a broader sense, someone who is simply poor, marginal or a land expropriated peasant (CASELAS, 2009).

Victim domination is a historical process that happens through perpetual possession from generation to generation; departing from the property of geographical space, the domain extends to the possession of goods, animals, and people (slaves). Ownership, according to Oliveira (2014), is what attributes a status to the subject, rather than the characteristics of the individual himself. In this sense, being dedicated and disciplined is worth less than having great possessions; and this depicts a life project in which the system of properties creates castes – imposed on all – which constitutes an alienating totality that removes the victims from their history and culture and incorporates their body as instruments. This project not only creates victims but reproduces the existence of new colonizers as they acquire possessions that elevate them to such status. Thus, for Dussel (1977), the ethos of men has absorbed the logic of domination, of the individual empire, which is based on the myth of conquest as a virtue. Along these lines, owning an empire, accumulating wealth and having employees at one’s disposal becomes a great purpose for the man who pursues this condition as synonymous with value and prestige.

Over time, we have naturalized this project of life, establishing a social order in which the totality seems insurmountable and natural; is it natural that we are all running a “race for goods and possessions,” in which only those who own things are valued? The center continuously dominates and alienates the periphery, which is justified by the Philosophy of Modernity and legitimized by the rule of law (*ius dominativum*), which is constituted as the freedom to commit injustices and be protected by the system (DUSSEL, 1977). According to Oliveira (2014), this form of European modernity (which, we reiterate, does not apply to Latin American reality) is a foundation built on a historical process prior to the eras of revolutions and opens through the centrality of history in Europe, in that the other parts of the world are perceived as “the periphery”. Therefore, “it can be understood that although all cultures are ethnocentric, modern European ethnocentrism is the only one that can claim to be identified with universality-worldliness” (OLIVEIRA, 2014, p. 95-96).

Once Europe is the center or the representation of the “normal,” the representations of the “abnormal” emerge, that is, all those that do not fit in the European ideology: Asians, Americans, Africans, indigenous peoples, etc. Negated as subjects, the natives are presented as barbarians, devoid of identity and subject to civilization, which is regarded as an “act of God.” For Dussel, the conqueror is the first modern man, who will impose his individuality violently on other men. In fact, over the ages, this has justified genocide under the pretext of progress (DUSSEL, 1993; OLIVEIRA, 2014).

In short, modernity can also be regarded, in this sense, as an immoral movement of the European man who, perceiving himself as superior, natural and absolute, resorted to barbarism to justify and legitimize himself as an agent of death, domination, enslavement, and holocaust. He has done so on the grounds of the discourse of the civilizing hero, the one responsible for teaching the “good manners” and fostering progress that interested him. All the major global upheavals, whether in economic or legal terms have, over the course of history, been centered on the European political upheavals. Only the passive continuity of the center remained to the colonies, while its periphery status was harshly maintained. What was left to the colony was the status of underdeveloped place, unable to provide for itself, victimized by corruption, violence, and inferiority. Philosophy of Liberation is the counterpoint, that is, the demythologization of “Modernity.”

Therefore, Philosophy of Liberation must deal with the issue of acknowledging the Other, not only in regard to the oppressor but also recognizing those who are oppressed, since they are not aware of their status of victims. To answer this question, Dussel resorts to the Ethics of Levinas (1991) and the phenomenology of sociability, in which two hypotheses become central to the author’s thinking. The first is that a human being is sensitive to the other’s face and suffering; a priori, we are able to feel empathy in seeing others suffer. The second is that empathy between humans arises from the relations of proximity between individuals, that is, from the impulse to cultivate relationships of affection and responsibility for the good of others (CASELAS, 2009; MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015).

The next category is the *mediation* of human relationships with their counterparts. Man as an entity does not recognize the Other as human, but as an object spatially situated in the totality, with a specific purpose or use value (proxemics). According to Caselas (2009), the greatest problem of the social structure according to the Dusselian view is that we think of the economic and political systems without significant concerns with the various situations of social vulnerability. For Dussel (1977), the exteriority of the Latin American, Indian, Asian, and all other victims of wholeness cannot be overcome if not through the

establishment of different ways of relating socially. Therefore, while these agents are regarded as entities, but not as subjects, the relationship of exploitation and domination tends to perpetuate without the possibility of acknowledgment.

Influenced by Levinas, Dussel believes the solution lies in the category of *proximity*. Proximity is the appreciation of humans' relations to other humans; so, the relationship that interests the author is that we establish when we eliminate the distances that separate us from the Other at the affectional sphere – embracing, kissing, hurting, etc. According to Oliveira (2014), Dussel understands the human relationship as fraternal, as in the case of love between mother and child, sexual love between individuals, or the bonds of friendship we create, among others. Proxemics, on the other hand, is the opposite of proximity: it stems from the totality that establishes a duality of existence concerning subjects and their counterparts, so that the Other is not perceived as a subject, but as an object. In this sense, proxemics is to be close to an object that is not human: to buy it, to use it, to dominate it, etc. (DUSSEL, 1977; OLIVEIRA, 2014).

For Dussel, our forms of socially relating have been spoiled by institutions and by language itself, which distances us from the prelinguistic recognition of the Other. In other words, our ability to see others and recognize them as subjects comes before the configuration of social and communicational relations. It is language and its value system that misrepresents and destroys our capacities for recognition by creating hierarchies, social utilities, opportunism, selfishness, and so on. In this point, according to Caselas (2009), Dussel differs from the Spheres of Recognition proposed by Axel Honneth, for whom recognition arises from the communicative act, in the interactions between subjects. Dussel (1977), in the opposite direction, believes that communicative relations and institutions are the ones that misrepresent the human capacity to recognize the suffering of others since in their natural state humans tend to seek collective closeness in a broad sense of sociability.

The sixth and final category of Dussel is *liberation*. In liberation, we deal with the possibility of the subject's awareness of his external condition, the recognition of others as victims and the emancipation of the oppressed. We believe that organizations play an essential role in liberation, because the process of liberation, according to Dussel (1977), first demands a *scientific effort* to identify ontological knowledge; then a *dialectical effort* to counteract the condition of those who are silenced; soon after, an *analectic effort* so that we can stand by the victims; an *analysis of practices* through which exteriorities are perpetuated; and, finally, a *poiesis* (a technological capacity or organizational design) that may allow effective *liberation*.

According to Misoczky and Camara (2015), the analectical method differs from the ontological-dialectical method; while the latter seeks a totalizing vision of the subjective world of those who hold the status of colonizers, standing before the Other who has a distinct history, the former departs from the viewpoint of the oppressed Other. In other words, analectics is a form of expanded dialectic because it incorporates the possibility of constructing another version of the facts from subjects that had previously been rendered silent, based on the alterity of the distinct and the exteriority of the system (DUSSEL, 1977).

The analectics demands 'being together with the Other', with the oppressed, in their struggle against oppression and against the negation of their life by the Totality of the system. The solidarity with the Other and the experience of 'us' within the community of victims are what allow the third moment of the analectics, the superior realization of history, the novel in which the excluded and the oppressed create a community of which they are integrally part and in which they build new institutions [...] As for the researchers who are questioned by the community of victims, the analectics requires the openness to think, to listen, to see, to feel, to taste the world from the perspective of the other. It is conditioned by humbleness and solidarity. It allows one to recognize the existence of a politics of totality and the other. 'The politics of Totality is divided between the master and those he oppresses in this particular system'; the oppressed is the Other in that Totality. Therefore, the 'politics of the Other is an anti-politics, it is a politics of subversion and contestation.' It challenges established hierarchies and legal truths (MISOCZKY and CAMARA, p. 292).

In reality, analectics is the negation of the negation contained in exteriority. Exteriority, as the negation of the ontology of totality, will propose a formation of a new analogous totality that affirms the Other as a victim. A second totality that fights the first, but this time centered in the Other (DUSSEL, 1977). As a non-member of the totality, the Other will resist against any initiatives of instrumentalization of their bodies and subjectivities, and seeks to preserve their identity, which disturbs the existing systems, for not integrating a naturalized logic (as is the case of the homeless, the natives living in indigenous reserves, those who are not productive consumers, etc.). The Other is living proof that the existing totality is flawed and perverse. Their traces of suffering, their pain, and their scars show the cruelty of a system that dominates and silences people.

The voice of the Other, in this sense, is a severe criticism of the system that deprived them of their dignity and disrespected their existence by conditioning them to exclusion (DUSSEL, 1998).

For instance, the analysis of practices may concern the ways through which we deal with the environment in organizations (we treat it as an object of exploitation for the production of goods rather than as part of an ecosystem on which we depend to survive), and on the semiotics attributed to social relations within organizations, notoriously influenced by European thinking such as Weber's (Are hierarchies necessary? How are task divisions established? How can we redefine decision-making processes?) (DUSSEL, 1977).

Finally, the *poietics* is the organizational act through which mechanisms that can put an end to totality are created, opening doors to numerous possibilities of recreation of devices and systems that may give voice to the Other. In organizations, liberation would be the overcoming of the suppression of the voices of those outside the totalities: workers, women, homosexuals, the elderly, people with disabilities, blacks, native peoples, among several other groups to whom disparaging roles are relegated in organizations.

Transposing these ideas to the field of organizations, we can infer about the overcoming of relations of proxemics in organizations – those established with other subjects that are not so considered as such; now, if we could replace all employees with machines, we would be able to obtain better, more standardized results without the need for more interaction, would not we? According to this view, human beings are only necessary to the extent of their productivity. In capitalist relations, the hiring of new employees is commonly interpreted as the acquisition of new services or of labor itself; therefore, organizations are not interested in matters pertaining to the employees' personal lives. The exteriority of social relations of production is relegated to the individual behind the labor activity.

Likewise, we can think that relations of consumption (would it be possible to buy from a machine?), leadership (would it be possible to command a machine?), or even the rules of coexistence of an organization (can I not entangle my "personal" and "professional" lives?) are relations of proxemics, and concern the totality of a Western economy that advocates the exploitation of others while disregarding them as human beings. When dealing with objects, there is no need for the ethical rigor one must have when dealing with human beings. Therefore, when relations of proxemics are established in organizations, it is implied that there is no moral reason to inhibit bullying at work, or misleading advertising on television, for example. The economy dismantles subjects and disregards the social character of relations of exchange, negotiation, individual needs, etc.

Proximity, on the other hand, is about recognizing subjects as such; that is, their suffering and their condition concern me as much as I am a member of the society in which we live. Recognizing the other and creating proximity means that organizations will not accept working conditions in which the worker does not feel adequately contextualized; it involves the real concern that a human being has with others while producing a good or service (which has a social aspect of improving the living conditions of all people). In this sense, the organizations that can understand the real needs of the individuals who constitute them seek to become facilitators of a process of development and social responsibility. Far more than worrying about the worker well-being or moral values, it concerns an ethical commitment to social change and inclusion of those who have been excluded from the productive processes.

These steps constitute a process of change in the perception and attitude of the subjects departed from the recognition of exteriority; the realization that the fault stems from our social systems and that everyone is responsible for the welfare of others, inasmuch as he is responsible for his own fragility. Ethics, then, orders me to take some action, given my responsibility to the victim (CASELAS, 2009). For Misoczky and Camara, (2015), the original experience of the Philosophy of Liberation is, in fact, discovering the domination and negativity that subsist, in this sense, in various types of social relations, before assuming an ethic of responsibility to the Other. This occurs not only in the relationship between Europeans and Africans but also in the dynamic center-periphery relationship, in relations of gender, culture, race or ethnicity, religion, among others. The Other, in this view, precedes any of such questions simply because it constitutes itself as a human being to whom we owe solidarity – in an ethic of empathy to others.

Thus, liberation occurs through the transformation of society; Dussel's ideas lead us to a non-reciprocal ethical principle for our counterparts, based on the possibility of symmetrical familiarity among men who reciprocally acknowledge their demands. Insofar as a man is guided by liberating reason, the search for the means for emancipating from the totality is what conditions the victims. From the place of speech of the oppressed, this means resisting politically in relation to the system; as for the oppressors, it means to assume their share of responsibility in the construction of the Totality and in the myth of

modernity, so as, by giving a voice to the Other, to allow a dialog and the reconstruction of society. This, of course, will not happen without political struggles, but it is worth remembering the argument of Caselas (2009):

Thus, ethics becomes the last resort of humanity on the verge of self-extinction. Only joint co-responsibility with intersubjective validity, based on the criterion of life-death truth, can help us to successfully escape from the tortuous path or to conquer ourselves, although we falter as acrobats on the wire stretched over the abyss of ethical, cynical and irresponsible insensitivity towards the victims, and the fundamentalist, necrophilic paranoia that leads to the collective suicide of humanity (CASELAS, 2009, p. 79).

From this bias, the struggles for recognition and emancipation remind us of the influence of the Frankfurt School (CASELAS, 2009) and the writings of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci (MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015); the notion of victim poses a challenge ahead: how can we resignify the system structures and the institutions that legitimize them? Similarly, how can we create political mechanisms to assure a voice to the oppressed? In this sense, the agenda of social struggles end up turning against the institutions. This is because the formal or judicial spheres existing in the legal mechanisms of the State pose substantial limitations to the effective democratic representation of those whose voices have been silenced (DUSSEL, 2006).

It seems to us that the most significant possibility of articulation by the excluded becomes more accessible insofar as we understand that we are part of a single community of victims; the more segregated the agendas of struggles between organized social movements, the greater the difficulty of recognizing the constraints imposed by the totality. This problem is the same dilemma faced by various authors and philosophers: how to give voice to those who have been deprived of the political process? Perhaps the answer lies in the strong ideological adoption of the identity of the Other; thus, a form of Latin nationalism and sense of community may be an alternative for the Latin Americans; a keen awareness of race, gender and/or sexuality can be a great encouragement for those who fit into these groups. Finally, we credit Dussel with the argument that all these groups must empathize with each other because no one is free from ethical responsibility to others. True philosophy, in this sense, does not adopt the knowledge produced by the center or the totality but knows how to address the center as well as the periphery, considering that its reality is the entire existence, which includes the reality of the condemned (DUSSEL, 1997). This construction allows for greater articulation between those who share claims for better living conditions, especially regarding issues of historical compensation (DUSSEL, 2012).

LIBERATION AND ADMINISTRATION: POSSIBILITIES FOR RESEARCH

For Dussel (1998), the role of the researcher can never be to speak for the Other, for only the Other himself can understand his own point of view and thus express it; instead, scholars and researchers must listen to the community of victims in order to produce a research program that allows understanding the causes and reasons for the victims' negativity. In addition, it is up to the researcher to disseminate and universalize this knowledge so that the community of victims may develop their critical thinking. Only the Other can ponder about his own happiness; in this sense, it is the role of the theorist to question the bases of legitimation of the system that operates the negativity, in order to allow the Other to organize his own agenda of social struggles (CASELAS, 2009; MISOCZKY and CAMARA, 2015).

Therefore, a relationship of proximity between the academic community and the popular masses is a *sine qua non* for the emancipation of victims, because, although it is not the role of researchers to interpret reality, they have a great responsibility in advising the community on a more critical view of their own existence. Therefore, the community of victims is strengthened by the robust theoretical construction that supports and grounds it. In addition, this knowledge must be translated into a liberating praxis; and this can only be achieved through concrete projects and programs that will emerge from the new political agendas, strengthened by the unification of movements with the community of intellectuals committed to the democratic, equitable and plural evolution of society.

This, of course, involves organizational practices among agents. For Dussel (1998, 2001), the possibility of creating and transforming existing structures is only possible from a continuous political program capable of affecting the historical narrative of exclusion; in this sense, the author argues that any initiative should be historically situated and delimited according to perennial mechanisms that avoid opportunism or the fetishization of participation, since this is often devoid of content or incapable of grasping precisely the essence of oppression against which it is fighting. Thus, the Philosophy of Liberation is

not merely a way of empowering inexpressive groups politically, but a way to organize oneself so as to continually question certainties and replace them with doubts, hence allowing the constant revision of legitimacy of the directions taken in processes of social, political and economic development.

For Misoczky and Camara (2015), as well as for Barros (2014) and Bertero, Vasconcelos, Binder et al. (2013), the field of administration is colonized by neoliberal ideology and management, reinforcing the notion of a science created to naturalize the idea of profit as a logical and natural path to economics, as well as a legitimate means of crystallizing the idea that the world is a place of competition rather than cooperation, or that the concept of victory is the only result accepted by society. Applying the Philosophy of Liberation to administration says much more than thinking beyond techniques, but it is also a matter of pondering about which aspects of the theory constrain humans to such a level of behavior that they silence their voice in search of success. What totalities are created by administration? Who are those excluded or eliminated from totality by not conforming to the totality advocated by those who hold power?

Thus, we can understand the process of colonization in administration when we replace the reading of the Social Sciences content with the reading of popular business media, charged with the rhetoric of consulting firms, the belief in a free market in which, of course, there will not be enough resources for everyone, but only for those who thrive in a scenario of uncertainties. The Classical Theory of Economics is very clear when it states that human needs are limitless, and resources are scarce, but at no time does it posit the idea that we can organize ourselves to meet our needs in a more inclusive and democratic way while respecting nature's limits. Ethical thinking, on the other hand, can allow a critical reflection on what, in fact, human need is.

As Misoczky and Camara (2015) point out, the management discourse attributes to administration the interpretation of a technical and neutral action, provided with meanings that dehumanize organizations into political, cultural and violence-prone instances. In this sense, mismanagement becomes the lack of management itself, since it poses itself as the actual messianic technique that will allow real inclusion for all within an economic system, which, in its essence, is not inclusive. Depoliticizing organizations is an act of totalization and negation while externalizing this reality is an act of resistance.

It is interesting to note that man himself is treated as an entity that holds social, cultural, political and economic capital, as well as other forms (LÓPEZ-RUIZ, 2007). As much as each individual is treated as a venture (what about "investing" in knowledge?) and that the competitive format of the company and the entrepreneur is spread among the subjects (we compete among ourselves for resources rather than collaborate for our existence), we are increasingly immersed in relations of proxemics – which hinder the effective recognition of the Other.

Thus, we understand that Dussel's theory can provide useful clues of possible starting points to be taken for a decolonial analysis of organizational studies, mainly departing from the voices of those who formerly do not integrate the epic narrative tales that articulate great characters in management literature: we know many stories of executives who have overcome significant difficulties and, with Homeric abilities, have reached the top in the business world; yet we know very little about the workers who made such a turn possible. For the most part, the voice of workers and their perspective on organizational history is lost amid the books and papers in the administration literature. Allowing a new view of this reality can reveal a series of hidden issues in labor relations, in the workers' imaginary or even in their interpretation of history.

Another interesting point that can be addressed is proximity and proxemics in organizations. In an organizational environment, who is considered a subject? And who is regarded as an object? Understanding such interpretations or practices may allow new narratives on the issue of empathy and the treatment of human beings at the workplace. Various questions can be elaborated from this theoretical construction. For example, how do the dynamics of recognition of individuals within the organization occur? What are the effects of the relationship of proximity or proxemics in work relationships? How are the relations of consumption, exchange of favors, negotiation or even contracting in companies interpreted? How are acts of moral violence interpreted? These are issues that concern not only organizational behavior but also the very notion of ethics within the relations of exchange between subjects, which can allow new perspectives based on the critique of the capitalist totality that governs companies. After all, what are the effects of exteriority?

The issue of empathy also seems to be another critical point for the analysis of affectivity, reciprocity, and retaliation within organizations. The micro-dynamics of conflict and power is an excellent possibility for those interested in the issue of how coalitions and alliances are created within organizations, or even how affectional bonds between individuals are established. What are the conditions for the emergence of recognition in relation to others in the organizational dynamics? What are the

consequences of proximity or of assuming an ethic of responsibility for others? What practices or discourses pervade the issue of social responsibility targeted at the collectivity? What, in fact, is the level of engagement of organizations in social change?

As one can see, these are just some of the various contributions that can be interpretatively attributed to the Philosophy of Liberation. As previously stated, we believe that the most significant advancement brought about by this theory is to allow a broader and more democratic view of systemic practices, as well as to criticize the lack of concern for the improvement of living conditions in society. To think of an organization that is not solely concerned with profits but also with the well-being of individuals and the evolution of society is to allow the elaboration of a dialog genuinely aimed at a radical revolution in the way we interpret our productive, political, economic, legal and social systems. Way beyond a mere utopia, it is a visionary process of resignification of democracy and popular representativeness, in which it is permissible for those who feel disadvantaged or excluded not only to manifest themselves, but also to contribute to social transformation.

FINAL REMARKS

Especialy for those who feel the lack of a more representative theory of Latin American reality, the Philosophy of Liberation can be a way to resignify the theory departing from the knowledge of those who have been historically silenced in the very process of knowledge formation. In developing the theory, Enrique Dussel speaks from a place where his concern for the poor, the marginalized, the silenced, and especially those who have been victims of a historical process of violence is perceptible. Gazing at the world from Latin America, the author's view allows the rise of a line of resistance against hegemonic knowledge produced in Northern countries, which engenders the history and culture of Southern nations and tribes. In fact, it is not only a line of resistance but the possibility of reaffirming a local identity that seeks to confront the ideal of modern man brought about by the myths that to this date still serve as a reference to us.

Philosophy of Liberation is based on the concepts of Totality, Exteriority, Alienation, Mediation, Proximity, and Liberation. The totality is based on the ontological pretension of the dominator and departs from the ontological dimension established by an *ego cogito* and by an *ego conquiro* that, no more than immoralities, constitute themselves as a discourse of truth. This discourse resulted in the exteriority of those who did not initially integrate this public, excluding them from the system and assigning to them the alienation that is the negation of their status of subjects. Mediations are precisely the forms of social relations when subjects are treated as entities. The means of overcoming such negativity is the proximity, which allows the recognition of subjects and, therefore, the assumption of responsibility for their physical and social well-being. Liberation occurs insofar as a new project of society emerges from the collective concern for the welfare of all its members and the representativeness of a system targeted at the establishment of agendas that benefit all voices without distinction.

In organizations, this concerns the recognition of perspectives that until then were not interesting for supporting a neoliberal management ideal. Behind great happy stories of success, there can be sad stories of dedication without due compensation; there may be stories of subjects who have been omitted for defending a view that deprives of romanticism an ideal of capitalism adorned with stories of great victors capable of building their own material empire. Moreover, it can also allow the resignification of the organizational environment for subjects as they experience it, which, in turn, makes way for new representations of labor, social interaction, and politics.

The contributions of the Philosophy of Liberation go far beyond an ideal of inclusion; they are an expression of great ethical concern for others. It is not only a powerful source of critical thinking in the formation of theory from the perspective of the victim, but also a statement on our need to devote more attention to our own subsistence as social beings, because the foundations of capitalist and social relations have developed into a selfish, competitive path that tends to self-destruction. More than ever, concern for others and responsibility for our future on the planet depends on becoming aware that we depend on one another to survive in harmony with the natural resources. A philosophy based on empathy, reciprocity, and awareness of our roles in society is not only possible but perhaps a necessary path to a fair and sustainable future for all.

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Felipe Fróes Couto

PhD Student in Administration at Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG); Professor at State University of Montes Claros (UNIMONTES), Montes Claros – MG, Brazil. E-mail: felipe.couto@unimontes.br

Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri

PhD in Administration at Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG); Full Professor at Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil. E-mail: aguiar.paduacarrieri@terra.com.br