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Abstract:

The construction of the exterior by discourse and its mimetic aims

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In our times, the mimesis of appropriation no longer rests solely on the struggles of antagonistic groups to prevail over populations and territories through war and genocide, as it once did during the diverse forms of colonialism and dictatorships linked to modernity and to nation states.

The mimesis of appropriation now aims at two main conflictive questions. First, at the struggle between ecologically oriented value systems based on a respect for the earth and for the natural world, linked to the empowerment of aboriginal. Second, at a deterritorialization/reterritorialization process inventing the planet as a globalized space. In this dynamic, a class of individuals members of a new transnational network plugs into the networks of energetic, financial and cultural exchanges. They develop their multiple self-images in an intercultural milieu playing on the exchange of languages and self images. This new version of global dynamics is evoked by the franco-canadian writer Yann Martel in his novel *Life of Pi* (Booker Prize 2003) and by Pico Iyer in *The Global Soul*.

This impulse to deterritorialization connects with the discourse of economic liberalism, which contests the point of view based on the belief that life is a zero-sum game. This discourse of liberal economism validates the creation of wealth. Within the context of the multiplication of planetary trade relationships sets in an attempt to substitute to a conscience of limits and borders a new expansionist forms of creativity opening new frontiers. This new creativity does not see life as a zero-sum game, and reframes the concept of 'frontier' as an open space, open to the expansion of religious, cultural and scientific knowledge, rather than restricting it to territorialism.

This context provides the impetus to explore relationships between nature, body and territory. In this framework, the focus will remain primarily on the object of desire and on the belief that this object seen as external to discourse can be represented by a privileged discourse. This discourse then imposes itself as a model, and leads to societal choice (for example, a society based on religion or one which separates the secular and the religious). In a religious context, this external object of desire is the nature of the Verb of God, communicated through a discourse believed to say what God wants. In a secular discourse, the external object is the knowledge of the earthly environment through scientific and secular cultural discourses, leading to the discovery of new sources of wealth. This exterior is mastered by texts and even more by ways of reading and interpreting, opening on a reflexivity on the legitimization of semiotic processes that lead to consensus. This reflexivity, linked to aesthetic cultural processes (religious and secular arts), render the object desirable. Aesthetic and cultural processes invent iconic or textual representations leading to a national or religious consensus on the meaning of representation, a process which masks the underlying, ever-replicated appropriative mimetic gesture, one that leads to the struggle of all against all to master the external and to become the model.

This appropriative dynamic has been denied to colonized people and to the population by dictatorships. These regimes play on dominance (Laborit) patterns instead

of on mimetic ones. The mimesis of appropriation thus can potentially open on democratic dynamics if set in a context which allows for the multiplication of objects and of responsibilities. In this case, escaping from scarcity, from monosemy and from the belief in life seen as a zero sum game (such as in discourses influenced by a vulgarized Marxism), can lead to a taming of the worst consequences of the appropriative mimetic gesture and transform the genocidal and war-like conflicts of modernity and of Nation-states, into a cultural and economic competition contextualized with liberalism.