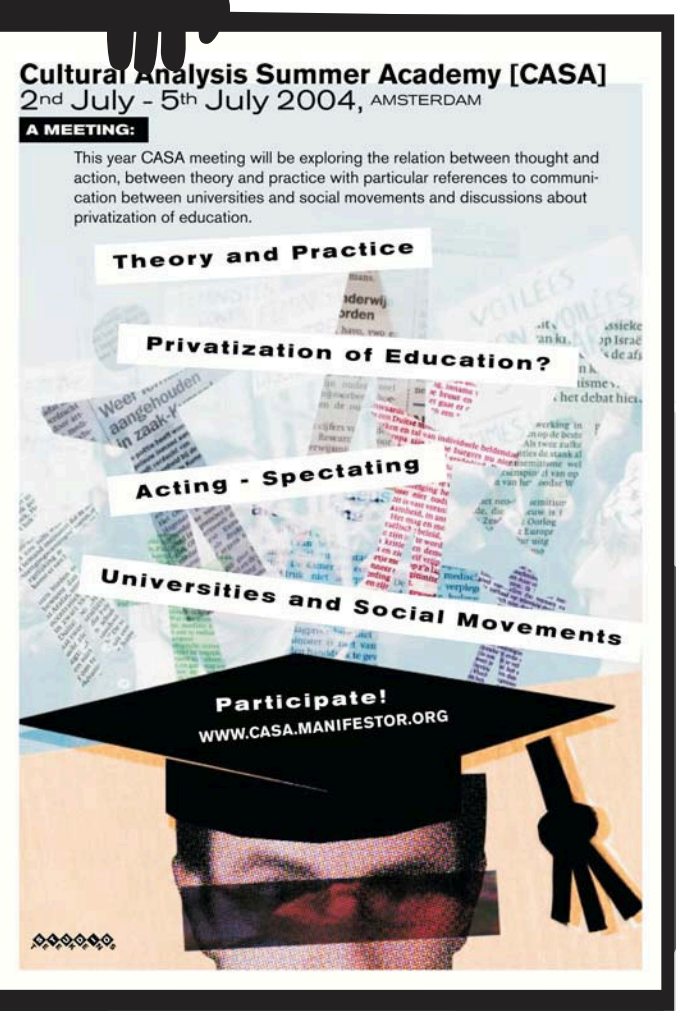


CASA

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Issue #1, 2005



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CASazine #1, February 2005

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Introducing...

What is CASA?

Our time is a time of crisis: our societies function in a discursive space largely limited by the dominant monologue of neoliberalism and new imperialism... Protests, arguments and cries of indignation fall upon deaf ears. Critical thought and logical investigation have lost almost all meaning in a present and past which is rewritten at will. We have been forced to realize that our reason and our evidence will not act for us, and that "the truth" alone will not set us free. Does this mean that we are forced to remain passive onlookers, or can critical thinking make an active contribution to emancipation?

With these sentences the invitation for the first CASA meeting started. CASA (Cultural Analysis Summer Academy) is a yearly meeting that is devoted to the discussion of contemporary socio-political and cultural issues. The first CASA meeting took place in Amsterdam from July 2-5 in 2004. It aimed to bring the so-called "polar sides" of academics and activists together to explore the relationship between theory and practice and investigate the effects of and strategies against privatisation of education under the heading of "Acting-Spectating". The meeting turned out to be a very productive one where 45 presentations, workshops or roundtable discussions took place with the participation of 150 people from 15 different countries. The CASA 2004 served as a forum where the participants shared their critical interventions and situated reflections on the relationship between social movements and academia breaking the traditional formula of "either/or". Continuing the idea of active participation and strategic investigation, the second CASA meeting will again take place in Amsterdam from 17th to 20th June 2005. The topic of the second meeting is "Borders, Markets, Movement/s" and the Call for Participation could be found in the **Calls** section on page 30. For more information about CASA and the upcoming meeting, check out www.casa.manifestor.org

"our reason and our evidence will not act for us, and 'the truth' alone will not set us free"

What is CASAZine, then?

The CASAZine is an online journal circulated twice a year: following the CASA meeting and before the CASA meeting in order to keep the interaction between the participants alive and to make the discussions publicly accessible. The CASAZine issue following the CASA meeting is devoted to participants' reflections on the discussions that took place so as to keep the issues raised during the meeting up to

date and provide further insights. The CASAZine issue before the meeting is a thematic one, which aims to bring an urgent topic into analysis and debate in order to highlight issues for further investigation during the following CASA meeting. Contributing to the CASAZine in any format is open to everyone. The call for contributions for the 2nd CASAZine can be found at the end of this issue. You can download the CASAZine from the CASA website: www.casa.manifestor.org

CASAZine, Issue # 1 is created by the CASA 2004 participants who replied to the call put out by the local organizing committee in Amsterdam. In the **Reflections** section, you can read two articles on two different workshops that took place during the CASA 2004 meeting: **Questioning the Political Implications of Feminist Activism and Research in Different Settings** by Alexandra Zavos, Barbara Biglia and Ingrid Hoofd, and **Retracing Debates around Situated Positions and Possibilities** by Alexandra Zavos and Barbara Biglia, in which they give a brief outline of the discussions and the questions raised during their workshop. In the same section, Ragni-Serina Zlotos gives a personal reflection on the CASA meeting in general.

In the section **On Education**, which is a continuation of the privatization of education theme of the CASA 2004 meeting, Gian Carlo Delgado-Ramos and John Saxe-Fernández provide an analysis of the process of privatization of public universities with an emphasis on the South American case and implementation of the policies of the World Bank during the process. The following articles on **European Federation of alternative trade unionism in Education (FESAL-E)** and **the second European Education Forum (EEF)** by Davide Rossi and Marry-Anne Karlsen respectively give an account of local organizations and networks working on strategies to sustain "other educations" against the privatization policies. The call for the second European Education Forum, which will take place in Bergen, Norway from the 20th to the 22nd of May in 2005, can be found in the **Calls** section on page 29.

Hugo Pezzini's article **The Actor's Method** is a critical analysis of the Argentinean writer Manuel Puig's novel *La Traición de Rita Hayworth* engaged with gender and performance theory. Pezzini's text is in Spanish; a short abstract of the article is provided in English. Last but not least, the call of the action research network for the ESF convergent process **Guide for social transformation in Europe: European Social Forum and surroundings** can be read in the **Calls** section.

Please feel free to print out CASAZine and distribute it widely in your community!

CASAZiners from the Amsterdam local organization group



'Questioning' the Political Implications of Feminist Activism and Research in Different Settings

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This piece consists of a brief description and analysis of, as well as some comments on the workshop Political Implications of Feminist Activism and Research in Different Settings, presented at the first CASA meeting in Amsterdam, 02-05/07/04. The three authors were the facilitators of this workshop.

WE WOULD LIKE TO present the workshop held at the first CASA meeting in 2004 as a framework for developing collective spaces and practices of knowledge production and critique, where we can map the tensions that emerge at the intersection between the different research and activist positions we occupy, both within explicitly feminist engagements, as well as at the borders between feminist and other political and institutional contexts we locate ourselves in. We will be drawing on our preparatory discussions for the workshop as well as on the issues and questions raised during the workshop, to outline some of the main theoretical and political preoccupations and dilemmas that feminist researchers and activists, from diverse backgrounds, currently face.

In trying to articulate the political implications of our research and activism explicitly from a feminist point of view, we started from our personal experiences of living in a borderline position between academic and activist spaces. We did this in order to situate these experiences within a political map, as well as to highlight self-reflexively the sites of tension, uncertainty, contradiction and empowerment between and within our feminist activist and academic practices. In this sense, moving between the personal and the political becomes a methodology for tracing the implications of our practices both in the context of current social conditions, institutions and social movements as well as for epistemological and theoretical conceptualizations.

To facilitate the workshop, we beforehand developed several guiding questions to get discussion and (dis)agreement going. These initial questions, framing the focus of the discussion on our and the participants' relationships to the institutions we are located in and the practices we engage with, were:

How do we understand and practice feminist research today?

What are some of the institutional academic and broader social constraints and how can we address them?

Are there feminist principles that we follow in our work and practice?

Where do/did we feel the chances and frustrations for feminist practice lie?

How do we explain these to ourselves, and what choices do/did we make?

Do we consider feminist research as a form of feminist activism, or do we think of it as 'just' an intellectual exercise?

How can we, from a feminist perspective, engage in a dialogue that does not obscure our differences but also allows some links and bridges to be built?

How do we imagine and practice a feminist intervention in the contexts - academic and social - we are participating in?

The three hour workshop was organized so as to allow for maximum active engagement by the participants. For this reason, having briefly introduced the above topic and its themes, each participant was asked to write down one or several questions that came up for her around the issue of feminism, in academic and/or activist contexts. All the questions were then gathered in a hat. Subsequently, small groups of four to five persons were formed and each member drew a random question from the hat, thus eventually collecting about five questions to be debated within each small group. In the end, and for lack of time that did not allow us to break up and reformulate new small groups for answering the remaining questions, the large group convened to listen to, share and comment on the issues discussed in the small groups.

In the following section we wish to put forward the questions that were written down by the participants, categorized by us into different themes; although, of course, this particular analysis could be rejected and re-configured. We want to present all these questions so as to illustrate both the variety and range of issues raised, as well as the commonalities and/or differences observed between us. Prioritizing questions over answers, we wish to invite the readers to consider the ongoing, open, critical spaces that are articulated in relation to feminist engagements which we believe need to be maintained as important contemporary concerns and dialogues.

Feminism's Call

Is there a feminist agenda today in the academy and in wider politics?

Is feminism about women's issues only?

Did feminism end up in just being 'gender mainstreaming'?

Is feminism's goal to deconstruct gender binaries and create a fluidity of gender?

Do you feel the need to convince others of the great importance of your feminist project? Of your being right?

What are your feminist desires and beliefs? What is for you feminist activism or research? Are there principles you follow?

Is striving for change/transformation the basis of feminism – and is this so for feminist research (necessarily)?

Looking at reality through feminist spectacles does sometimes provoke you a sense of not enjoying reality completely?

Tensions between feminisms

Is radical feminism the 'true' feminism?

Does the multitude of feminism(s) lead to the falling apart of feminism?

Do you have experiences of major clashes with (other) feminists in basic principles?

What does the East/West division mean?

Feminism also has to (must) make decisions to exclude / of exclusion?

How did/do you try to engage in a dialogue or alliance, while simultaneously trying not to obscure the differences between partners/allies?

How, in what way, can feminist research/activism make explicit their choices to include and exclude issues/persons/politics?

Do we (feminists) reinstall sexism?

Tensions between feminisms and activism

Is there solidarity between lesbianism and feminism?

Is feminism your 'main' emancipatory project? Why/how?

Is feminism a broad concept for social change? But why then feminism?

What are the goals of feminist movement? Is it going beyond building of an equal society for both sexes and replacing patriarchy with matriarchy?

How is your personal feminist project (activist or research) related to the concept of solidarity?

As the subject is research in the streets and I was homeless can feminism also have as a theme the deconstruction of (patriarchal) reality? Such as for instance criticizing mainstream types of buildings and homes?

Tensions between feminist theorizing, research and practice

A lot of our theorizing today has been strongly influenced by feminist scholarship. How do we understand this impact and how does it (or does it?) have implications for our practice in different contexts?

How does feminist theory reach/affect the everyday reality of women outside academia?

How is your personal feminist project (activist/research) related to your personal experiences?

From a feminist perspective what are the political implications of our research / activism?

Is practicing feminist research necessarily/automatically a political act/activism?

How to bring the 'personal is political' into daily practice? (inside and outside the university)

How do you imagine feminist interventions (academic, practical, theoretical) and how does this work in practice?

Where did/do you feel the chances and frustrations of feminist practice lie? What choices did/do you make in the face of these?

Feminism Obsolete?

Is it still necessary to base a movement/theory on sex/gender?

In a backlash of feminism where many young women and men of all genders do not embrace the term how do we do effective feminist work?

Is there an antifeminist backlash and do we have to start over again?

What could be the probable reasons for feminist movement not being able to expand its social base? I mean it still consists mostly of females and there has been little participation from males.

Because of the necessary impossibility of giving a coherent answer to all the questions in the short space of this article, and with only our few three voices present here, we nonetheless would like to remark on several points. We do this in order to articulate both our respective commonalities and differences, thus allowing for this ending to also serve as a potential beginning. For that reason we, the authors of this piece, have decided to each write a more personal conclusion/viewpoint as a reaction to the questions, although we realize this risks having three 'incoherent' endings to the piece, or appearing perhaps too self-absorbed. This is however in an attempt to show our internal contradictions, and to remain nonetheless clearly situated.

Barbara:

When I was a teenager in Italy in the late 80s it was really complex to talk about feminism within mixed social movements; if one tried to do so, a ghost seemed to be woken up, and it seemed that young women could only choose between being either in 'the movement' or going through the institutionalized feminist trajectory. Borderline positions were looked upon with suspicion or sufficiency, and a sort of generational gap seemed to be impossible to reduce.

In my opinion, things are fortunately changing in the panorama of feminist European networking. A sort of 'new generation' of feminists is going back to realizing the importance of mixing activism and grassroots politics with theoretical analysis. On the one hand we are trying to surpass the crisis that resulted in 'activism' having been obscured by the institutionalization of a large sector of feminist intellectuals of the (badly defined) second wave. On the other hand we are experimenting the production of collective knowledge and the importance of creating theory within non-institutionalized frameworks. We are trying to (re)construct the interconnection between generations just like between the sometimes split areas of action and theory.

In some degree we are daughters of postcolonial, cyborg and queer feminism; we are sisters of anti-systemic, anti-capitalist and grassroots movements; we are multiples, in contradiction between us (and within ourselves too) but we are looking for positive and powerful alliances to take our agencies. In that sense I believe that the questions suggested, are key points in these renewed debates and disclose important tensions to be developed for engaging in new hybrid, enduring and changing powerful alliances.

Ingrid:

I 'grew up', when I was in my teens, in Dutch environmental and gay and lesbian activism, and made my entry into academia and women's studies only in the second half of my twenties. The sophistication of thinking about the contradictions of different feminist and anti-racist standpoints that I took both from feminist theory as well as from repetitive clashes I encountered within feminist, gay and anti-racist activist projects, have both proven to be invaluable for my ongoing activism, whether in- or outside academia. So yes, feminist research and theory for me is inherently political. I feel that the tension between feminist *activism* and feminist *research* has in fact appeared and still appears to be a very productive one for me and a lot of my feminist European and Singaporean friends; although some seem to exacerbate this opposition, especially through depicting academia as some homogeneously elitist place, as a starting point for validating their feminist activism. But I think a certain amount of privilege is just as much apparent in feminist activism, and that feminist positions within academia are overall much more complex in relation to societal power structures than the anti-academia view pretends.

So I would neither see 'radical feminism' as the 'true' feminism, nor academic feminism as 'false' (nor as 'better'); both appropriate the limited rhetorical positions available in society at large, and both need to play into dominant perceptions somehow in order to be heard. Feminism is therefore, although being my main motivation for thinking and acting, also limited in terms of subversion for me, as there eventually appears to be no position of ultimate liberation, and because its production, also in Singapore, remains entangled in rather humanist European notions. It is paradoxically this 'modesty of action' and this strong sense of my situatedness that the acknowledgement of clashes in activist projects, together with sophisticated feminist theory, has given me.

Alexandra:

I would like to point out that there are significant differences in how the women's movement and feminism have developed in particular national or regional contexts that relate to the wider historical and social processes these settings have undergone. In this

sense, feminism in Greece, where I have grown up in, has a particular flavor and a distinct, turbulent trajectory which both reflects the broader concerns of feminism but also articulates and develops them in ways that intersect with the, historically and geopolitically, specific socio-economic and political conditions that we identify as 'modern Greece'.


This shapes to a large extent how we, *individually*, have experienced and engaged (or not) with the feminist movement, and what we expect or imagine today, at a point where different transnational spaces are growing. In this sense, I would mainly like to stress that we engage with each other, in our search for new connections and alliances, both as individuals, able to stand critically 'outside' particular identifications, and as 'products' of our particular, collective histories. Figuratively speaking, this to me illuminates that there are many, hidden or implied, voices within our personal 'voice', indicating the need to allow for and represent this complexity in the relational spaces we are trying to graft.

Even though the above may give the impression that we are not agreeing on many points, there are some analyses about the workshop and about feminism that we share.

"we attempt to show our internal contradictions and to remain clearly situated"

The first shared analysis is that we believe that the format of the workshop was powerful because it did not require simple conclusions in the end,

but overall left tensions hanging (which for some participants may have been frustrating as they were perhaps looking for an answer). So this format of organizing the workshop was a way of embodying an activist feminist practice, partially breaking down the power relation between organizers and participants, while providing spaces for debates in which the public-private dichotomy could be reduced. In this process the intervention of all participants was absolutely essential and we think we have been allowed to learn much from our differences and contrasts.

The second shared thought is that despite of our different analyses, or perhaps because of those differences, we think it very important to maintain open debates and collaboration because we consider it is possible to 'grow up' just from complexity and confrontation. Therefore, we did not present three different personal conclusions hoping that our reader will merely choose to take position for one of them, but in order for both us and our reader to try to better understand our diversity and similarity, and to hopefully learn about what can be seen from other locations. We believe that such a focus in feminist activism and research is crucial to keeping feminism aware of the specificity of its potentials as well as of its limits. 

Sommer, Sonne und Nachdenken – eine politisch-akademische Reise nach Amsterdam

Ragni-Serina Zlotos

WENN ES IM SOMMER 2005 ein zweites "CASA" über "Märkte. Grenzen. Bewegungen" gibt, dann kommen sicher viele Teilnehmer aus der Cultural Analysis Summer Academy 2004 gern wieder. CASA ist eine Konferenz mit dem Ziel, politische Aktivisten, Studenten und Akademiker sowie Kulturschaffende aus vielen Teilen der Welt zusammenzubringen, um kritisch und kulturanalytisch über gesellschaftliche Zustände zu reflektieren. Nebenbei lernt man viele Menschen und deren politische und analytische Ansätze kennen.

"immer noch ist es gar nicht so einfach zu erklären, was CASA eigentlich ist"

Gemeinsam mit zwei anderen politisierten Studenten aus Bergen in Norwegen machte ich mich im vergangenen Juli auf nach Amsterdam. Zu Beginn war uns nicht klar, was uns erwarten würde – und immer noch ist es gar nicht so einfach zu erklären, was CASA eigentlich war. Es war auf jeden Fall eine gute Mischung aus politischer und akademischer Reflexion verschiedener Themen, das Knüpfen von Kontakten mit etwa 100 politisch aktiven Studenten, Akademikern und forschenden Aktivisten in Europa und anderen Teilen der Welt. Viel Regen und ein bisschen Sonne – und, ja – Feste gab es auch.

Der Aufruf zu CASA geschah aufgrund der Situation in Wissenschaft und Lehre, die durch die Kommerzialisierungsprozesse für alle daran beteiligten immer schwieriger wird: "This year CASA meeting will be exploring the relation between thought and action, between theory and practice with particular references to communication between universities and social movements and discussions about privatization of education". Es gab also viele Diskussionen über die Situation in der akademischen Ausbildung und Forschung, über die von Studenten und anderen Betroffenen geführten Kämpfe um das Recht auf Bildung und freie und unabhängige Forschung.

Das Konzept von CASA war Offenheit und aktive Teilnahme. Die Konferenz sollte offen für alle sein, also für Leute aus den Niederlanden und dem Rest der Welt. Und alle wurden aufgefordert, mit Workshops, kurzen Vorträgen und Diskussionsrunden zur Konferenz beizutragen. Das führte dazu, dass es ein breites Spektrum an Themen und Methoden gab, selbst wenn einige häufiger waren als die anderen: Es gab hauptsächlich Vorträge, und oft blieb zu wenig Zeit für die Diskussion über die sehr spannenden Themen.

Einige Diskussionen waren allerdings sehr spannend: Es gab nicht nur Präsentationen von alternativer Forschung, die mit dem neoliberalen Konsens bricht. Gruppen von Aktivisten aus Amsterdam stellten ihre The-

Summer, sun and reflections – a political-academic journey to Amsterdam

Ragni-Serina Zlotos

MANY PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2004 meeting "Cultural Analysis Summer Academy" will surely love to return, as soon as the 2005 CASA meeting on "Markets. Borders. Movement/s" will begin. CASA is a meeting aiming to get together activists, students and academics as well as artists from around the world to critically reflect on crucial socio-political issues.

Together with two other students from Bergen I made my way to Amsterdam in July 2004. In the beginning it was not clear for us what CASA will be and whom we will meet there. In the end it became a good mixture of political and academic reflection of different topics, networking and making friends with roundabout 100 other politically-involved students, academics and activists from Europe and other parts of the world. A lot of rain, little sun, and of course parties as well.

For me, the call to join CASA was appealing, primarily because of the complexities and the urgency surrounding the issues of academy and its relationship to society; a relationship which is getting more and more difficult to people to relate to in the current context of commercialisation of educational institutions: "This year CASA meeting will be exploring the relation between thought and action, between theory and practice with particular references to communication between universities and social movements and discussions about privatization of education. (Quoted from CASA's Call for Participation to the 2004 meeting.)

During the CASA meeting, there was plenty of discussion on the current situation in academic education and about the fights for the right of free access to education and independent research.

The two main concepts which characterized the CASA meeting were openness and active participation. The meeting represented an open space for everyone. And every participant was asked to contribute to the meeting by making presentations, offering workshops or round tables for discussions. Such a structure facilitated the discussion of a broad spectrum of topics and methods.

Most of the discussions were very exciting. Moreover, groups of activists presented their topics and working methods. I met activists

"the meeting represented an open space for everyone"

from the *no border*-network and heard from the *easy city* project, wherein different activists created

an atmosphere to reflect on the changes in the public space and public sphere in a squatted place by using ad-busting techniques. Many other groups presented their researching methods and the fields of their action. While


men und Arbeitsweisen vor. So trafen wir unter anderen auf Aktivisten des "no border"-Netzwerkes oder hörten von dem "easy city"-Projekt, wo die verschiedenen Beteiligten durch die Besetzung eines Ladenlokals einen Raum schafften, in dem sie Installationen mit Adbuster-Taktiken zeigten. So wollten sie die Menschen dazu bringen, über die Veränderungen des öffentlichen Raums und des täglichen Lebens nachzudenken. Viele andere politische Gruppen stellten ihre Forschungsmethoden und -felder vor. Außerdem wurden Thesen oder Ergebnisse beispielsweise von feministischer oder Utopieforschung erklärt oder über die Rolle von internationalen Verträgen und Institutionen in der Kommerzialisierung von Bildung reflektiert.

Unterschiede zwischen Uni-Institutionen und CASA

Eine über Rassismus forschende Akademie-Teilnehmerin fuhr anschließend zu einer offiziellen Forschungskonferenz. Auf der Mailingliste von CASA kommentierte sie ihre Eindrücke von dort folgendermaßen: "Everyone sat in a large hall, in rows and were adressed by white, middle-aged men somewhere far away in the distance above them. They reproduced institutional racism for a while interspersed by some incredibly unfunny anecdotes." Aus ihrer Frustration über den Zustand in der akademischen Forschung zog sie den Schluss: "This is only one of the reasons why CASA is so necessary and why we mustn't let the energy generated by all of us at the meeting die out. Rather, we must evolve, regenerate ideas and create new energy, involve more people and communicate..."

Abends wurde gefeiert. Wir lernten zwei besetzte Amsterdamer Häuser von innen kennen, und wurden zum Beispiel besser bekannt mit politisch aktiven Studenten aus Irland, Ökonomen aus Mexiko, Feministinnen aus Spanien. Um nur ein paar zu nennen. Die meisten waren sich einig, das es sehr gut war, mit so vielen Menschen zusammen zu kommen, zu diskutieren und herauszufinden, dass es im Grunde die gleichen Probleme sind, mit denen die Menschen in vielen Teilen der Welt konfrontiert sind.


Jeden Tag traf man sich im offenen Plenum jeweils auf einem öffentlichen Platz in Amsterdam. Dort konnte man unterschiedliche Dinge thematisieren und gemeinsam diskutieren. Am letzten Tag wurde CASA selbst im Plenum diskutiert. Die meisten waren sich darin einig, dass die Veranstaltung sehr spannend war. Aber es gab auch viele Ideen zu Verbesserungen. Jetzt arbeitet eine lokale Gruppe an der Vorbereitung von der zweiten CASA-Akademie und Veröffentlichungen wie beispielsweise einem Buch über die Ergebnisse von der ersten.

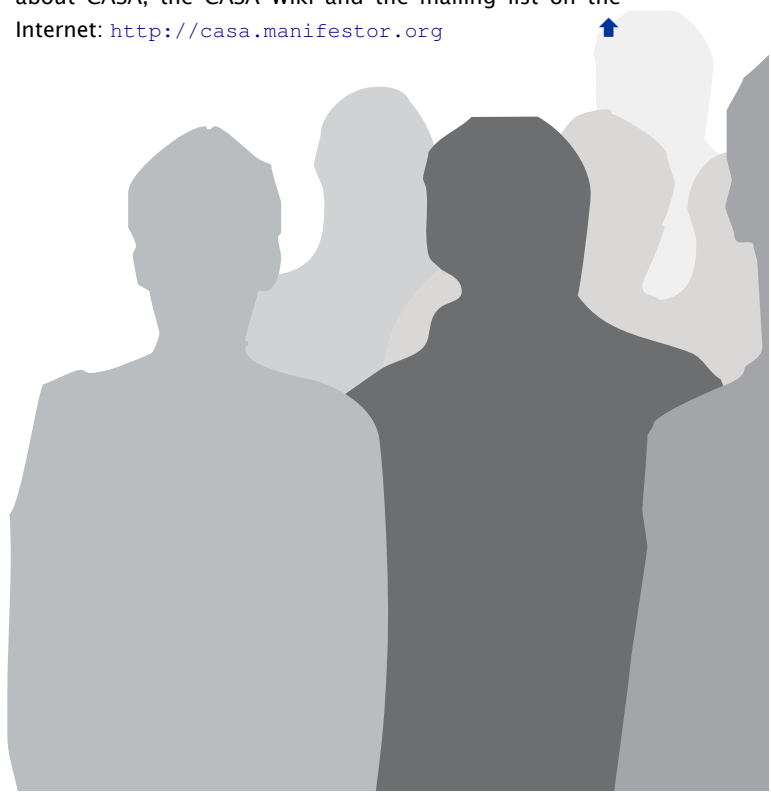
Wer interessiert ist, sich am Organisations- und Diskussionsprozess zu beteiligen, kann sich im Internet unter <http://casa.manifestor.org> informieren. Hier gibt es Kontaktmöglichkeiten, ein Wiki sowie eine Mailingliste, auf der man sich eintragen und beteiligen kann. 

some of the participants talked about their current work and research, others talked about the role of global institutions and agreements for the commercialisation of education.

A participant who is doing research on racism was on an official academic conference on her topic after CASA. On the CASA mailing list she wrote her impressions about this institutional conference as follows: "Everyone sat in a large hall, in rows and was addressed by white, middle-aged men somewhere far away in the distance above them. They reproduced institutional racism for a while interspersed by some incredibly un-funny anecdotes." From her frustration and anger about the state of academic research she came to the result: "This is only one of the reasons why CASA is so necessary and why we mustn't let the energy generated by all of us at the meeting die out. Rather, we must evolve, regenerate ideas and create new energy, involve more people and communicate..."

And, of course, there were parties. In the evenings we were invited to different squatted places in Amsterdam, and in this atmosphere we made friends, for example with a political active student from Ireland, an economist from Mexico, feminists from Spain. At the end of the meeting, most of the participant had the consensus that CASA provided a very good space where different people discussed crucial issues and attempted to find a way to act upon them. Moreover, every day there was a meeting on a public place in Amsterdam. These meetings served to make academia transparent to everybody and to discuss and reflect about CASA and things that happened there. On the last CASA day, most of the people called the CASA meeting "fruitful" and exciting. But there were also constructive ideas for making next CASA better.

Now, a local group works on the preparation of the next CASA meeting and publications like the CASAZine and a book-on-demand to make the outcomes of CASA accessible to everybody. Everyone who is interested in the next meeting or the organizational process can find out about CASA, the CASA Wiki and the mailing list on the Internet: <http://casa.manifestor.org> 



Retracing Debates around Situated Positions and Possibilities

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Being within, without or in the frontier. Considering the (im)possible relationships between academic and activist locations for 'critical research': Workshop on Social Activism and Critical Research 1st CASA Meeting, Amsterdam 2-5/07/04.

IN THIS ARTICLE, WE would like to draw on the experience of facilitating a workshop on social activism and critical research which took place at the 1st CASA meeting, in order to both outline a framework for considering the multiple, complex epistemological, methodological and political issues that emerge and converge at the intersection between social activism and critical research. We will also to report on the proceedings of the workshop, which we claim as a space and a process of critical debate and collective knowledge production.

This three hour workshop was intended to raise some questions regarding the intersections and contradictions between critical academic research and social activism and the challenges posed thereby, and facilitate a process of small group discussion among participants on these issues. Our aim was to investigate the conflictive relationship of being within and/or without the academy, and the (im)possibilities this creates for an activist analysis, given the influence of economic and power relations on our work as researchers, e.g. funding, control of research process, presentation and dissemination of findings. Our starting position was to posit the necessity of situating ourselves as researchers, who, by deconstructing our social-individual constructed identity, require our analysis to emerge from our subjectivities, rather than from an allegedly objective Science, and to articulate a self-critical and reflexive perspective, while looking for new possibilities of being collectively.

The questions framing the workshop discussion were originally developed for and during the "Conference/Meeting About Social Movements and Activist Research" which took place in Barcelona, 23 - 25/01/04, in a group process between the facilitators and members of the 'Fractalidades' research group (<http://seneca.uab.es/fic/>) from the Autonomia University, in collaboration with whom we conducted a workshop on this topic.¹ Drawing on the issues and debates that were raised during that workshop, the following problematics were then presented as an introduction to the CASA meeting workshop.

"how is it possible to do critical work when we belong to the institutions we criticize?"

General problematic:

How is it possible to do critical work (critical research and critical movement/action) when we belong to the institutions we criticize?

Sub-themes:

- *Being and Acting:* Starting from the acceptance that the personal is political, what contradictions or continuities can we trace between every-day life and activism, between individual and collective, in its many manifestations, between private and public spaces?
- *Truth = Knowledge(s) ? / Power:* How are dominant knowledge(s) constructed as truth discourses, and how can we challenge this power structure, breaking down the authority of knowledge marked by institutional positions and moving from an individual to a collective knowledge production?
- *Reflexivity and Critical Practice:* What do we understand as 'critical practice' and how does it function? Is it washing up guilt? Is it a marginalized position or can it represent a choice to be a-normalised? How can we subvert the multiple ways in which we are being constructed by and through our participation in institutional discourses and practices?
- *Effectiveness:* How effective and/or recuperable is our work? How do we understand and embody our responsibility and accountability, as both researchers and activists?
- *Positionings:* Taking into account the power relations and relative hierarchies between different groups, identities and positions, what are the possibilities and limitations in connections with others?

These questions were taken up and further unfolded in the group discussion that followed, which registered both the multiple common concerns as well as significant differences between the participating members. Here, we would like to sum up the main points on which the debate focused.

Occupying, claiming, using and deconstructing positions of power:

In addressing the issue of how we break down the authority of position, the possibility of both assuming and simultaneously criticizing "positioning" was raised. In this sense, as we cannot escape taking up a position, or being positioned, and as there can be no neutral, objective 'God's eye' position that we can occupy, being as we are always contingently situated, the question is how do we use our positions, resources and privileges, rather than

¹ For an account of that experience see Biglia, Barbara, and Zavos, Alexandra (2004), "Situarnos dins, for a o a la frontera. Quienes son les (im)possibles relacions entre l'activisme i l'academia en els afers de les 'investigacions critiques', *Investigaccio activista i moviments socials*. Barcelona: El viejo topo.

deny them. This implies an awareness of the power relations that we are always immersed and invested in.

Thus, being critical is in itself not a self-fulfilling position. Moreover, so far as 'criticality' reproduces power structures, it is the margin that defines the centre. In this sense, identity politics, for example, redistribute power, they do not change the game; whereas the point is how to use position and privilege to change the game, as well as ourselves in the process, not only change the positions of players. In the end the goal is to make the particular positions we occupy unnecessary. Engaging and acting is a contingency. Important in this is to understand the intention and motive behind the act. At the same time, it is important to move from our individual positions to a more collective way of engaging as well as recognize our own embodied complexity.

"there is no such thing like a 'common' language into which academic texts could be translated"

Academic and activist positions and the education system:

Contrary to the construction of theory and practice as opposite poles, we need to recognize that there is always a theory at the basis of our practice. Academic and activist positions need not be antagonistic, if we can connect them within ourselves. The researcher can feel insecurity when representing others, while at the same time wishing to validate them through his/her writings. Certainly research involves a process of objectification. The issue is how to turn reliable research into a good craftsmanship without avoiding objectification. While objectification of the topics we are working on is unavoidable, we do have to avoid objectification of the subjectivities involved in the research process.

In the teaching positions we occupy within the academy, there is also the possibility of activism. In fact teaching itself can be understood as activism. This notion, however, rests on an assumption that education is a neutral institution, whereas we need to acknowledge how education is both an institution of control and reproduction of the system, by its very status as an institution, and also regarded as a possibility to enter the world, to be empowered. In this sense, disagreeing with an institution such as education is also a privilege. Nevertheless in our critique of the educational system, we need to consider that changing the educational system does not necessarily mean that the people who embody this system also change; they can continue to be bearers of particular, oppressive ideologies.

Language and audience:

The issue of language occupied a large part of the debate. We mainly questioned the dominant exclusionary practices in the use of academic language in the sense that it

is often addressing an elite audience. Such linguistic dynamics, as a result, reproduce and legitimise the existing hierarchies in the production and validation of what constitutes knowledge and who has access to it. Academic and scientific language is represented as being more precise, however, it also serves to obscure and keep things 'floating'. The use of a different, more accessible, or 'common' language was considered – as a matter of political choice – a choice to write for an audience outside the academy. However, the notion of a 'common' or 'simple' language into which academic texts should be translated, needs to be problematized as well, since there is actually no such thing and there are hierarchies even within what is considered as 'common' language. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that complexity needs to be represented and that this cannot be done in simple terms. The point of writing for one's community and at the same time challenging dominant academic language structures was raised as an example of a practice that both diffuses knowledge outside the academy and subverts power relations within it. The use of language is a matter of negotiation and politics.

This is closely linked to issues raised by social movements regarding the process of accessibility, dissemination and diffusion of knowledge, particularly knowledge produced in and by the academy and the property rights which need to be challenged. Social movements introduce the subversive criticism of proprietary publications through public, common rights practices. For example, in the copy right vs. copy left lies the possibility of creative commons struggle.

The role of the academy and the individual:

Questions were raised about how academia can serve the community, and what kind of research choices we can make as engaged critical researchers, for example, engaging only with what is personally interesting to us, or starting from the needs of a community we consider ourselves accountable to. However, it is necessary to recognize that academia does not only explore or manage the problem, but also often constructs it as part of its

"the two imaginary opposites of being dominated by a structure and choosing freely"

function in maintaining social difference and dominant power relations. Individualizing research through notions of choice and practices of evaluation ('good' and 'bad' research) serves to obscure the systemic role of the institution of the academy and education. Caught between the two imaginary opposites of being dominated by structures, on the one hand, and choosing freely as individuals on the other, we cannot realize how to use the power and privilege of the actual positions we occupy. ↑

World Bank and the privatization of public university: a South-North analysis

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Abstract

The impact and consequences of privatizing the public university in the North and the South are of major importance because, 'the market' is already reconfiguring the quantity and type of eligible students, programs' structures, teaching procedures, as well as the kind of science and technology that should be carried out. The effects on the skill characteristics of labor, the 'marriage' between corporations and universities, the brain drain phenomena, and the level of technological (in)dependence of nations are some of the topics that will be discussed from the perspective of the World Bank's key role in such processes.

Key words: World Bank, higher education, privatization, public university

What is the World Bank?

AFTER WORLD WAR II, the architects of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "designed [them] not merely to implement disinterested principles but to reflect the United States' control of the majority of the world's monetary gold and its ability to provide a large part of its future capital. The IBRD [WB] was tailored to give a governmentally assured framework for future private investment, much of which would be American", Joyce and Gabriel Kolko correctly argue.

Today, it is therefore not surprising that the United States, the "winner" of the War, holds an important percentage of the voting power within the World Bank Group, particularly in the main divisions. The World Bank consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) – 1944, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – 1956, the International Development Association (IDA) – 1960, the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) – 1966, and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) – 1988.

The United States holds 16.39% of the voting power in the IBRD and a 23.68% in the IFC (the main division that is responsible for private investments worldwide). Considering that 80% of votes is needed to approve resolutions within the Bank, the United States has veto power. Similarly, in the IMF, where 85% of the voting power is needed to approve resolutions, the United States possesses a right of veto with 14.17% of the voting power.

Taking this into account, it becomes clear why the former president of the US Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, explained at the time that, under the WB stimulus, "...international trade and international investment can be carried out by businessmen on business principles." Of course, he was referring to US businessmen.

This is reflected within the organization of the IFC. The IFC is subdivided into different work clusters and sub-work clusters. At the end of the chain of the "BPD – Water & Sanitation Cluster" one finds some of the business partners of the WB such as Vivendi, Thames Water, Ondo (Suez), etc. The "BPD – Natural Resources Cluster" is connected to actors such as Conservation International, WTO,

USAID, Inter American Development Bank (IBD). The "BPD – Global Partnership for Youth Development" is linked to companies such as American Express, Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Kellogg Company, Nike Corporation, USAID. Also the other working clusters have relationships/connections with multinational corporations, most of them from the US.

The WB and the Commodification of Higher Education

In 1998, the WB published a report on *The Financing and Management of Higher Education* in which it presented an agenda for worldwide reformations in education systems. Aiming at adjusting the education system to "actual and future needs", the WB followed the 'suggestion' of Frans van Vught¹ – rector at University of Twente (Netherlands)². It stated: "...the reform agenda of the 90s, and almost certainly extending well into the next century, is oriented to the market rather than to public ownership or to governmental planning and regulation."³ As a result, WB contended that the fundamental concepts of the WB Agenda are privatization, deregulation and orientation to the market.

Disregarding the long historical tradition of conceiving of the European University as a public space that produces the vortex of humanism and scientific knowledge, the WB argues that education, science and technology (S&T) are commodities, and consequently manageable by 'market solutions'. This means that education is framed in economic terms in a context of limited supply that it is available for a price.

In addition, looking at the demand side, financing the university gains a peculiar meaning. According to the WB,

¹ Van Vught, Frans, "Autonomy and Accountability in Government/University Relationships." In: Salmi, Jamil, and Adriaan Verspoor, eds. (1994) *Revitalizing Higher Education*. London: Pergamon Press.

² The University describes itself as "an entrepreneurial research university".

³ Johnstone, D. Bruce. (1998). *The Financing and Management of Higher Education: a status report on worldwide reforms*. Buffalo: World Bank – State University of New York at Buffalo.

"...when the government shifts costs to the students, it must introduce a parallel system of financial assistance".⁴ Consequently, among the measures listed by the WB Report⁵ are:

- The introduction of, or substantial increases in, tuition and full-cost fees into the higher education sector.
- Charging the full cost fees for institutionally provided room and board.
- Introduction of tested grants and loans.
- Offering students loans based on market rates of interests
- Improving the students' loan payments by subcontracting private companies.
- Implementing a tax fee to all graduated students.
- Encouraging the philanthropy for endowment, for direct operations, and for scholarships to students.
- Improving the 'quality' of education by an entrepreneurial training.
- Selling the research, instructions and all services via grants or contracts.
- Incrementing the number of private institutions with a constant decrease of the public ones.

The implementations of these measures are justified by the WB as follows: "...much of what may look like the agenda of the neoliberal economist (sic) may also be more opportunistic than ideological. With taxes increasingly avoidable and otherwise difficult to collect and with competing public needs so compelling on all countries, an increasing reliance on tuition, fees and the unleashed entrepreneurship of the faculty may be the only alternative to a totally debilitating austerity."⁶

It is arguable whether reducing what seems to be assumed as a "non-productive" expenditure in order to save money for other needs (such as public health, public safety or public infrastructure) is really necessary. After all, the entire public sector is being privatized with similar excuses. One could wonder whether the privatization tendency, conventionally assumed as the only alternative for economic growth, is not a response to the private interest in looting the public sector (first by the public assets sales and then by milking the public treasury). In this process, particularly in the South, the tendency towards privatization has been far from stimulating the investment in public demands and productive processes. To the contrary, it has misused the public treasury (which now includes the money obtained by the privatization processes) with non-productive payments, such as external debt interests, or through the compensation of the expenses that financial and other privatization frauds have left behind. As a result, the periphery's strategic infrastructure and public treasury has been denationalized in favor of the multinational corporations of the North and its national governments.

⁴Ibid: 7.

⁵Ibid: 5, 7.

⁶Ibid: 5. Emphasis by the authors.

Moreover, the WB's reforms even more reduce the impact of the academic and scientific staff on defining the research and development (R&D) agenda by provoking "entrepreneurship". When it is the "market" that decides, the possible schism between the problems that affect our societies and the national R&D agendas is considered to be less important. In this context, it is important to point out that the WB uses a linguistic code that disguises the actors and their business interests behind the so-called "market forces": the "market" does not demand but rather the CEOs of multinational corporations do.

According to the WB, "...a greater reliance on market signals brings a shift in decision-making power not just *from government*, but also *from higher educational institutions* - and especially from the faculty - *to the consumer or client*, whether student, business, or the general public."⁷ This statement could be understood as the WB's campaign against the "traditional university" and the supposed "excessive power of the professorate" with the final goal of commercializing higher education in quest of "quality and efficiency". Such commercialization has already generated 365 billions of dollars on earnings worldwide by the auctioning of, for instance, the courses and the trainees. This 'education' business may become even juicier if the higher education is considered as a commodity under the *General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)*.⁸

In order to achieve such quality and efficiency in education systems, the WB assures that "a greater productivity" is required and that...the principal higher educational productivity problems lie not so much with excessive costs (sic), but with insufficient learning".⁹ Consequently, the next step for the WB is to compromise the universities' budgets to commercially verifiable evaluations of their performance. These evaluations would suppose standardized indicators that focus on diverse criteria and interests articulated by entrepreneurs and other businessmen.

Zooming in on the higher education system in Mexico, the WB sees the following process taking place:

...among Mexican universities there is an increasing realization that regular operating subsidies from the government will not grow. Hence, they must be entrepreneurial, earning extra income and involving faculty and students in this effort. Some of the departments are beginning to generate income on their own through the sale of services, specialized courses, etc. Even in disci-

⁷Ibid: 5.

⁸ Aviles, Karina. "Sería un grave error dejar la educación al libre comercio: De la Fuente." *La Jornada*. Mexico. June 29th, 2004.

⁹Ibid: 6.

plines where this was once unthinkable, it is happening by imitation.¹⁰

In a similar vein, the WB's *Country Assistance Strategy 2002–2006* (for Mexico) promotes a "new educative culture" in which "...supervisor and parent participation will have to focus less on process and more on actual results, as measured by published student scores in standardized national tests."¹¹ This overt emphasis on results displays that what is being taught has apparently become less important.

In the beginning of 2004, following the WB's instructions, the Mexican government announced its intention to determine extra budget to the application of standardized proficiency tests at universities. Such extra budget – said the Government – would come as a result of the interest of the private sector in financing the efficiency and quality of Mexican universities. In fact, there is no public extra budget for universities but instead a considerable reduction that is replaced by highly conditioned private loans, donations or other kind of agreements. In addition, the remaining public budget is refunctionalized because, as the WB says, "...the Mexican government is very keen to increase demand-side financing – that is, financing students rather than institutions, to improve access to higher education."¹²

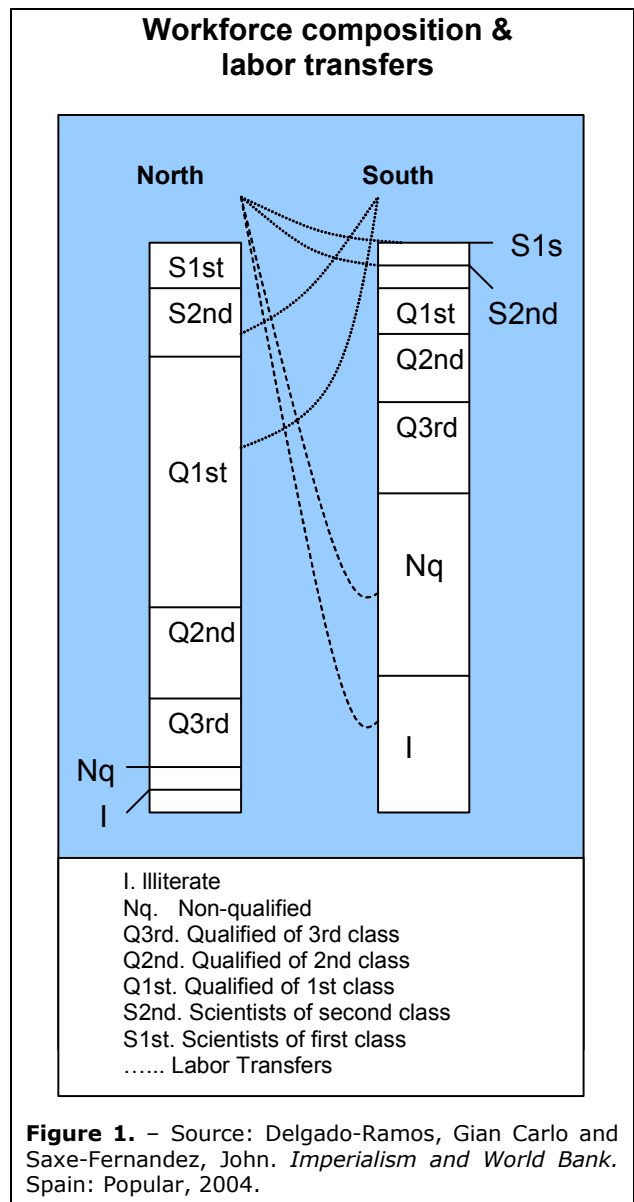
Ironically, while the economic crisis is getting worse and the salaries are shrinking to an unsustainable point, the tendency of privatizing higher education is dramatically reducing the number of enrollments because the public options are becoming limited. Thus, by promoting private institutions as the only remaining alternatives, higher education is being transformed into a commodity that only middle and high classes are able to purchase. In this scenario, the ranking system of higher education can be better understood as a response to the capitalist necessity of ranking workforce in relation to the amount of money that the client (student) is "willing" to pay.

The WB knows the "costs" indicated above when it recognizes that, in Latin America, "...the statistics indicate that the proportion of students attending private institutions has more than doubled over the last 15 years. But at the same time the proportion of people being educated nation-wide is dropping in a pre-occupancy rhythm."¹³

Such a tendency, as well as the recent technical nature of middle and higher education is better understood if we briefly analyze the worldwide composition of the workforce and the South-North / North-South transfers.

Educating the Worldwide Workforce

In figure 1, the left block corresponds to the North and the right one to the South. In some countries in the South the number of *illiterate persons (I)* can cover approximately half of the population, whereas in the North it is



just a small percentage. A similar relationship can be verified in the *non-qualified (Nq)* segment, which represents the number of people who had primary education.

The group of *qualified of 3rd class (Q3rd)* consists of those individuals with a technical training in middle school education. In the North this group covers a small proportion of the total workforce. In the South, by contrast, the group of Q3rd is the third biggest segment of the whole block of the worldwide workforce composition, but it is smaller than the *I* and *Nq* groups.

The *qualified of 2nd class (Q2nd)* with high school training, either humanistic, scientific or technical, are the most important segments of the worldwide "qualified" workforce in the North and the South. In the South, these type of workers are considered as technicians, whereas in the North they are included in the group of *qualified of first class (Q1st)*, who have a bachelor degree in technical areas and sometimes master degrees in technical specializations.

The group of *scientists of 2nd class (S2nd)*, those with master and doctoral training performing basic activities in

¹⁰ Ibid: 17.

¹¹ World Bank, *Country Assistance Strategy*. Report No. 23849-ME Washington. April 19th, 2002: 12.

¹² Johnstone, 1998. Op cit: 11.

¹³ Johnstone, 1998. Op cit: 14.

S&T research, is the most reduced segment of all. *Scientists of 1st class* (S1st) are involved in the development of advanced science and high-tech researches. It is important to point out here that the *S2nd* and *S1st* are considerably larger groups in the North than in the South. One reason why this is the case is that the North offers more (financial) support than the South.

The overall tendency in the North is towards an expansion of the group of *S1st* and *S2nd* and a reduction of the other groups (at least in the areas with major private investments). In the South, by contrast, the general tendency is to expand the group of *Q3rd* and, in less proportion, the *Q2nd* group. The aim is to have a sufficient amount of trained workers who are able to operate and maintain the machines used by a growing multinational *maquila* production in those nations. The other groups could be slightly reduced but this will depend on the stimulus generated by the demand of *Q3rd* and *Q2nd*.

The transfers of more *S2nd* and *S1st* from the South to the North is a likelihood because of the lack of budget and other kind of incentives in the periphery. For example, in Mexico the *National Council of Science and Technology* (Conacyt) canceled the regulations concerning the repatriation of scientists at the end of 2004 at a moment when the former president of the institution proudly announced that the so-called brain drain phenomenon should not be seen as such but rather as the natural exportation of "Mexican ambassadors". That statement could not be more precisely coming from a member of a presidency led by an ex-manager of Coca-Cola!

In contrast, the legal transfer of the rest of the working force from the South to the North will be strictly controlled in order to push down the salaries of the working class in the North as a result of the illegal labor market (mostly composed by *I* and *Nq* foreign workers) "willing" to do the worst jobs for less money).

All of this results from the expansion of the neoliberal policies promoted on a worldwide scale by the WB together with the active participation of the "country managers" of the WB in each nation (as the ex-president of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo, called them). For example, in Chile most of the education sector has been privatized since 1981; in Argentina, the *1995 Higher Education Law* has the universities decide whether or not they want to charge fees; and in Mexico, there has been a constant pressure for the privatization of public universities and their research, particularly in the UNAM, the largest university of Latin America that ranked 1st place in the region based on data of the *Academic Ranking of World Universities 2003*.¹⁴ The social movements opposing the privatization of the UNAM have been considered by the WB as a "fierce resistance". Hence one of the WB's latest moves was clearly expressed in the *Country Assistance Strategy 2002-2006*. This strategy comprised of the Mexican government committing to "...change the culture in Mexico's

¹⁴ UNAM ranked 180 of 500 universities worldwide and 92 in America. Not even one private institution figured in the list for Latin America. The Report is downloadable at: <http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/ranking.htm>

education system, a change that will take time but that can start during the current *sexenio*.¹⁵ In this manner, the WB is telling a nation State what "to do", or more precisely, what it must do, of course, if the State wants to keep the flow of WB loans open and their deadlines extended.

The Privatization of Science and Technology (S&T)

As mentioned before, most of the universities – and even middle education institutes – have made different types of arrangements with those of private enterprises seeking to finance information centers, libraries or other infrastructures from research laboratories to garbage management sites. The content of such arrangements is diverse and ranges from the participation of the private sector in the evaluation and actualization of study plans and the rights to patent innovations generated by public universities, to concessions to manage garbage directly.

The privatization of S&T is one of the most crucial issues, especially in the South (but also in the North as demonstrated by, for instance, the Berkeley–Novartis experience¹⁶). The WB's *Millennium Science Initiative (MSI)* is an attempt to promote the privatization of those activities by supporting and stimulating the operations of its corporations in what may be called Latin America's education business sector. The result is not only the privatization of S&T but also the denationalization of any scientific and technological advance achieved by the South.

Holm-Nielsen, a specialist in higher education from the WB, explains that the MSI "...is an umbrella for new lending, through which the Bank's client countries can borrow to improve their scientific and technological capacity. Projects under the MSI generally take the form of highly selective competitive funds to support research. These funds will differ according to a country's specific needs and circumstance, but they share a few essential characteristics. All MSI project would provide targeted support that focuses on (i) research excellence; (ii) human resources training; and (iii) is linked to partners in the international science community and in the private sector."¹⁷

This last point is the most important because research programs of "high excellence" are being linked to others of major size in the universities and/or industries of the North (thus the latter hold the exclusivity of the strategic

¹⁵ WB, April 19th, 2002. Op cit: 12. "Sexenio" is the 6-year period of the Mexican presidency.

¹⁶ One of the most quoted cases is the contract between the multinational corporation Novartis and the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology of the University of Berkeley. Signed in 1998 for a period of 5 years, it stated that for a payment of 25 millions US dollars, Novartis had the exclusive rights to negotiate the patents or licenses over any discover made by the Department (even if the funds did not come from those 25 millions).

¹⁷ Holm-Nielsen, Lauritz. "Promoting science and technology for development. The World Bank's Millennium Science Initiative." *First International Senior Fellows Meeting*. London, UK: The Wellcome Trust. 2002: 3.

areas). Even if the WB participates "only as a supervisor", its role is more than just that. In fact, the WB consolidates a subsidy on behalf of the private sector. After all, the WB's loans, under the figure of the MSI, are ultimately being paid by the WB's client countries. Simultaneously all the benefits are being privatized and mostly denationalized.

The tools used by the MSI, says Holm-Nielsen, are "...a variety of mechanisms to stimulate research commercialization, and to place students in private industry."¹⁸ In this manner, with the depletion of qualified workforce in favor of the private sector (national and foreign) that was trained with public money, the WB and its MSI indicates that national debts will only increase because the MSI does not allow them to finance any type of infrastructure. These costs would have to be covered with other funds (public? private? both?). This is because one of the MSI loans' conditions reads as follows: "...the MSI projects will fund the performance of the research itself where it is found, and not the construction of buildings or major infrastructure for new centers or institutes."¹⁹

One of the MSI programs, which originated from within the conformation of the *Science Institutes Group*, was dedicated to "promote development by closing the gaps in S&T between the developed and developing worlds". It is financed mainly by the WB and the Packard Foundation to "...garner support for revitalizing science research in the developing world."²⁰ Among such "efforts" is the first MSI project that was launched in Chile (1999), which included Microsoft as one of its enterprises. Similar projects were approved for implementation in Venezuela (April of 2000) and Brazil (2001).

Final Thoughts

In 1908 Torstein Veblen already warned about the commodification of higher education. For Veblen, the introduction of market principles is the main force that would convert teaching and researching "...merely into a commodity to be produced, evaluated, purchased and sold."²¹


The implications of this process are of major order: The public university veers away from public national interests and loses its critical capacity and the domestic production of knowledge. Meanwhile, the authority of multinational corporations increases considerably, as "the agents" that define what research is and how it should be carried out, as well as what should not be taught and researched.

In the case of the South, the involvement of foreign interests is increasing. This is as a result of the lack of initiative to encourage a high quality national S&T research body that has historically characterized most of the periphery's businessmen. Instead of placing the public university as an active actor in the re-production cycle of

their countries, a structure well known in the countries of the North, the power elites of the South (or the WB's country managers) are privatizing and denationalizing one of the most important pillars of development.

Cuba's education system – particularly the medical education – and its pharmaceutical/biotechnology industry is a good example of what the *power elite* in the South is not doing and should do, considering the domestic necessities, capacities and potentialities. As is well known, Cuba, even though it is a small island with limited resources and with an operating embargo, has been able to develop the strongest biotechnology industry in Latin America; a business that already registers important earnings for patent rights and international product and services sales (including to the US).²² That biotech sector, along with the island's highly qualified medical professionals, made it also possible to solve a lot of the main needs of the country's population like medical and sanitation measures against malaria or the development of a vaccine for meningitis B and the world's first-ever vaccine with a synthetic antigen. As a result of that type of policy that links education and scientific and technological development with the development of a national industry, among other measures, it is not a surprise that Cuba ranked higher than any other country of Latin America on the *2003 Human Development Index* of the United Nations Development Program.²³

Considering all that is mentioned above, the social movements (of parents, teachers and students, and other popular movements) which, until now, have been fighting in some degree or another against the consummation of the educative "reform", will have to force themselves to keep on track on the international news and on the diverse thoughts going around (from specialists and non-specialists), as well as to continue getting stronger because the tendency of privatization of public education can only be stopped by avoiding abstractions of reality. Therefore, the concrete identification of the responsible actors and their accomplices, as well as the implemented strategies and beneficiaries, are a key issue; particularly because, from the conventional neoliberal perspective, the public institutions of education and research are perceived as a juicy business that are more important than any social limitation or consideration that could be pointed out.

Therefore, it should be a priority to retake the instruments of political decision, increasingly alienated in favor of institutions as the WB through the high conditionality of all their credit lines; all in a context in which the re-articulation of the economic policy is necessary in order to put it at the service of the national interest, meaning the national interest of the majority. 

¹⁸ Ibid: 3-4.

¹⁹ Ibid: 4.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Veblen, T. *The Higher Learning in America*. Augustos M. Kelly, 1965.

²² Cuba's export of biotech products is a significant industry, rivaling sugar export and tourism. Cuba currently exports biotech products to more than 50 countries (See, "Biotech in the developing world". *Read Herring. The Business of Technology* on www.redherring.com, as by 6 December 2004).

²³ <http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/>

Other educations are possible: 2nd European Education Forum in Bergen, Norway

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE of academia and the education system in general? On which ideas and values should education be based? Does the education system in Europe have a problem, and is commercialization its solution? Are the universities to serve the needs and wishes of the commercial segment of society as a mere tool for the economy? Is education a product, and students its consumers, or does education have a different and deeper significance for our societies? What do we mean by quality education?

Over the past 3–4 years a profound reform has swept Norwegian higher education. It was called the "quality reform", meant to raise the "quality" of the education provided by universities. What was meant by quality in relation to education was never discussed, and quality seems to have become confused with quantity. The reform changed the grading system, the degree system, and has shortened the years of study by one year. A credit system has been implemented, and, instead of one year of in-depth study of a topic before exams, we are now shopping for small credit courses worth between 1/6 and 1/3 credits per semester. The frequency of exams and tests has risen dramatically, and instead of "responsibility for your own learning", obligatory lectures have been implemented. Instead of a mixture of the German system's formation ideal and the Anglo-American utility thinking that we have previously had, the latter has become dominant. As with the rest of society, economy and market thinking lays down the terms for the education system. It has all happened quite fast. Before students and professor had time to realize its implications, it was already implemented without any exceptions or transitional arrangements. Today you will find few people within the university-system that have anything good to say about this reform. What we failed to realize soon enough, was that this was a part of a wider European and international process of profound reformation of the education system in many



countries. Competitiveness, economic efficiency and commercialization are key words and common denominators applicable to educational institutions ranging from kindergarten to universities. These changes will have profound effects on the organization and content of education. It effects labor regulations, pedagogical strategies, research, institutional organization, budgets, to name but a few aspects. Even though some of the changes and reforms take place in national contexts, they are linked to international processes such as the Bologna process concerning higher education in Europe and the WTO regulations in the General Agreement on Trade in Services

(GATS), which pushes for the privatization of education worldwide.

There is therefore a need for the discussions and responses of the stakeholders in the education system to move beyond national borders. That is why the European Education Forum (EEF) will be held for the second time in Bergen, Norway 20th to 22nd of May 2005; to provide a

"few people within the university system have anything good to say about this reform"

space for the participants and stakeholders in the education system – pupils, students, teachers, professors – from

all over Europe, to come together to discuss questions referring to education policy, to develop alternatives and to prepare common actions. The second EEF will take place at the same time and in the same city as the European ministers of education hold their summit.

The aim of the EEF is to build up a European network including teachers, students, pupils, employees in the education sector, parents and different groups that are linked by a common call; and to serve as a platform for discussions of education policies, alternatives, and actions. The European Education Forum is an independent forum organized in reference to the social forum movement with its open character. Even though it is considered an autonomous forum, it will also serve as a bridge regarding time and content between the European Social Forums, and also include those who do not feel represented in the social forum movement and act outside of its framework. The perspective of the EEF is to take the European social dimensions of education into consideration (e.g. justice in education, access to education, fringe groups, establishment of elites, etc..) to a greater extent than is being done in current education policies, where economic consideration are at the center. The forum aims to be open and inclusive, and everyone who can support the call and the charter of principles is welcome to participate in the process, and invited to contribute to the program by arranging workshops, meetings, activities etc.

The organization of the forum consist of a local preparation committee handling a lot of the practical things, and an international steering committee consisting of representatives from various organizations and countries that have responded to the call. The international committee will meet next time in Barcelona from the 25th to the 27th of February, during the Catalan Education Forum. There are also national and local groups from several countries that participate by mobilizing response and contributing to the program. The first European Education Forum took place in Berlin from the 18th to the 20th of September 2003, countering the top-level meeting of 33 European ministers of education in Berlin that initiated the progress of the Bologna-process. It came about after Greek students challenged the Germans to arrange such a

forum. During three days, the topics of internationalization, possibilities of participation, society and education and access to education were debated by about 500 pupils, students, teachers and professors from 18 different countries, who discussed education policy questions, exchanged ideas about an alternative education system and demonstrated their protest against the current education policy in Europe by means of various activities and a final demonstration. Over 60 workshops and meetings of different sizes were organized on a variety of themes related to education. After the forum, there was a wish for this work to continue, and groups in Norway, principally ROSSO (Radical and Socialist Student Organisation), were challenged, and during the CASA meeting held in Amsterdam last summer, it was decided that the next forum would be in Bergen, Norway. Since then, the forum has grown both in Norway and in Europe, as new groups learn about it. Bergen, Norway, is maybe not the most centrally placed city in Europe. However, we still hope that as many respondents as possible will take the effort to make the trip. The local committee is working to provide free accommodation, cheap meals and some form of travel support. From Germany there are plans to organize bus transports. On the forum's web page (www.eef2005.org) you can find suggestions on how to get to Bergen.


The fact that the EEF and the next ministerial conference on education will take place in Norway is no accident. With its "quality reform", Norway has proven itself the "best of its kind" by being the first to implement the Bologna process. It is meant to be a showcase for other countries that are maybe more resistant to such reforms. The ministers participating in the Bologna process speak well of internationalization, student and teacher mobility, compatibility of the system, etc. Many of these things are not necessarily negative. The core of this process of internationalization, however, is competition guided by market principles, and this has much further-reaching negative consequences. In Norway, some of the side effects of implementing the Bologna standards are:

1) changing the organization of the university from a so-called "democracy-model" to a "corporate-model", leaving student and professors with even less to say in the decision-making process of the universities, and 2) making the obtaining of external funds one of the core tasks of the universities, which have, until now at least, all been public institutions. This is a first step in the privatization of universities in Norway, and the consequences of this step are already showing within the research conducted and the content of what is being taught at the universities. This is all to ensure that Norwegian universities will remain competitive within the "European Higher Education Area" which is being established by the Bologna-process.

The education system plays an important role in our society. The values it is based on is therefore of great importance. Do we want an education that serves the market, or a free, critical and emancipatory education? If we want to achieve the latter, we, the participants and stakeholders in the education system, must act. The internationally-driven changes are top-heavy, and do not take the people who are part of this system, either as students from bachelor to doctorate, teachers, professors, employees etc. into consideration.

"Do we want an education that serves the market or a free, critical and emancipatory education?"

It is therefore important that we voice our opinions, learn from each other, and participate in debates over the future of

education in Europe and in the rest of the world on an international level as well. The second EEF in Bergen, Norway, is a great opportunity to do this: to learn more, to develop alternatives, establish contacts and networks, and let the European Education Ministers that are simultaneously present in the same city know that we are not ignorant to their plans and their effects, and that we demand to be heard. 

For more information about EEF, check out www.eef2005.org or contact eef@uib.no

FESAL-E - por una escuela de futuro

Davide Rossi. Responsable de relaciones internacionales de la Altrascuola Unicobas e entre los fundadores de la FESAL-E. fesalscuola@libero.it

DE PARÍS A MILÁN, de Lisboa a Bellinzona, estudiantes y profesores europeos se preguntan impacientes por la libertad de pensamiento, la energía y la inteligencia.

La Escuela y la Universidad son lugares de cultura y no pueden ser reducidas a meras oficinas de una sociedad consumista. Nos estamos organizando por toda Europa para construir una alternativa por un mañana diferente. Por todo esto ha nacido en Septiembre del 2003 la FESAL-E, "Federación Europea del Sindicalismo Alternativo de la Educación". Estudiantes, profesores y padres de alumnos de diferentes países (Francia, Italia, Suiza, Portugal, Eslovenia y España) con contactos en Holanda y Alemania, unidos en el empeño de recuperar la esencia perdida de una escuela que sea patrimonio de toda la sociedad. De

hecho, en la escuela se debe impulsar la libertad de enseñanza de los profesores así como la libertad de aprendizaje de los alumnos, no mortificarlas. Al mismo tiempo se esta produciendo una creciente intromisión de sistemas externos de "evaluación cualitativa" que tienen como fin, impedir que estudiantes y profesores, en el confronto de la búsqueda diaria, construyan el saber indispensable, a partir de los saberes criticos, para afrontar la sociedad que acontece.


Esto sucede después del "Acuerdo General sobre el Mercado de Servicios" (AGCS - GATS) donde los gobiernos europeos pretenden transformar la escuela en un lugar al servicio de las reglas de mercado.

Reivindicamos una escuela en la cual el saber es patrimonio de jóvenes y profesores para construirse un futuro mejor. Solo la pasión por lo que se enseña y por lo que se estudia mantiene viva la escuela. Luchamos por una escuela por tanto, como institución, como esfera pública libre de la razón de estado.

La FESAL-E lucha además por el respeto de los derechos sindicales, elemento fundamental de democracia y de pluralidad. En una Europa unida donde nos imponen "la Ley del recorte" por exigencias de presupuesto y donde la escuela se reduce a un juego de preguntas y respuestas entre profesor - alumno, con l'acuerdo del sindicato europeo oficial CES (Confederación Europea del Sindicalismo) un sindicato único (anomalía de régimen!) que tiene a su interior diferentes sindicatos nacionales aunque no hagan creer que "discuten entre ellos" mostrándose en desacuerdo cuando en realidad no lo están.

La FESAL-E estará presente en el segundo Forum Europeo de la Educación que se organizara en Mayo del 2005 en Bergen, Noruega, y a mitad de Junio en Amsterdam para la segunda edición de la Academia de Análisis Cultural (CASA). Queriendo así formar parte de cada lucha democrática por la cultura.

El sentimiento de libertad que nos une, quiere devolver la sonrisa (no el dolor de barriga!) a los estudiantes y profesores que cada día con el corazón y la inteligencia hacen la escuela.

Juntos, con coraje, con determinación, con pasión, por la libertad e por la cultura. www.fesal.it 

Federazione Europea del Sindacalismo Alternativo dell'Educazione

Italia:

Unicobas l'Altrascuola - FESAL-E Studenti Italia - Si Può - Or.S.A. Università

Portogallo:

Collettivo in lotta per la costruzione di un sindacato libertario nel settore dell'educazione
coordinato da Manuel Baptista e Paulo Ambrosio

Spagna:

CGT Enseñanza

Francia:

SUD Education Paris - SUD Education Grenoble

Svizzera

SISA Sindacato Indipendente Studenti e Apprendisti - Associazione culturale e giovanile Altrascuola - Collettivo FESAL-E - docenti della Svizzera Italiana per la costituzione di un sindacato indipendente coordinato da José Domenech
(stabilita reciprocità con) **Bildungssyndikat Region Bern**

Slovenia:

Collettivo studenti-docenti FESAL-E Slovenia

FESAL-E - per una scuola capace di futuro

Davide Rossi. Responsabile delle relazioni internazionali per l'Altrascuola Unicobas e tra i fondatori della FESAL-E. fesalscuola@libero.it

DA PARIGI A MILANO, da Lisbona a Bellinzona, studenti e insegnanti europei chiedono spazi per liberare pensieri, energie, intelligenze.

Scuola ed università sono luoghi di cultura e non possono essere ridotti a succursali di una società consumista. Insieme ci stiamo organizzando in tutta Europa per costruire un'alternativa, per un diverso domani. Per questo è nata nel settembre 2003 la FESAL-E, la Federazione Europea del Sindacalismo Alternativo dell'Educazione. Studenti, insegnanti e genitori di ben sei paesi europei (Francia, Italia, Svizzera, Portogallo, Slovenia e Spagna), con contatti in Olanda e Germania, sono uniti nell'impegno per restituire centralità alla scuola, che deve tornare ad essere patrimonio dell'intera società. La scuola infatti deve valorizzare la libertà d'insegnamento dei docenti e la libertà d'apprendimento degli studenti, non mortificarle, assistiamo infatti ad una crescente intrusione di sistemi esterni di "valutazione qualitativa" che hanno in realtà come fine quello di impedire che studenti e insegnanti, nel confronto e nella ricerca quotidiana, costruiscano i saperi indispensabili, a partire da quelli critici, per affrontare la società avvenire.

Questo accade perché dopo l'Accordo Generale sul Commercio dei Servizi (AGCS - GATS) i governi europei vogliono ridurre la scuola ad un servizio mercificato secondo regole di produzione aziendale.

Solo una scuola in cui i saperi sono patrimonio di giovani e insegnanti è capace di futuro. Solo la passione per ciò che si insegna e ciò che si studia rende viva la scuola. Scuola quindi come istituzione, come sfera pubblica libera dalla ragion di stato. La FESAL-E si batte inoltre per il rispetto dei diritti sindacali, fondamentale elemento di democrazia e di pluralità in una Europa unita in cui rischiano di imporsi le logiche dei tagli "per esigenze di bilancio" e la riduzione della scuola "a quiz", sottoscritta dal sindacato "ufficiale" europeo CES (Confederazione Europea dei Sindacati) un sindacato unico (anomalia da regime!) che tiene insieme anche coloro che all'interno delle singole nazioni "litigano tra loro" mostrandosi in disaccordo, quando in realtà non lo sono.

Come FESAL-E saremo presenti al secondo Forum Europeo dell'Educazione che si svolgerà nel maggio 2005 a Bergen in Norvegia, saremo ad Amsterdam a metà giugno per la seconda edizione dell'Accademia Estiva di Analisi Culturali (CASA). Saremo parte di ogni lotta democratica per la cultura. Il sentimento di libertà che ci accomuna vuole restituire il sorriso (non il mal di pancia!) a studenti e docenti che ogni giorno con cuore e con intelligenza fanno vivere la scuola. Insieme, con coraggio, con determinazione, con passione, per la libertà e per la cultura. www.fesal.it 

FESAL-E – for a school system with a future

Davide Rossi. Responsible for international relations of Altrascuola Unicobas and one of the founders of FESAL-E. fesalscuola@libero.it

FROM PARIS TO MILAN, from Lisbon to Bellinzona, European students and professors are asking themselves impatiently about the freedom of thought, the energy and intelligence.


Schools and Universities are places of culture and cannot be reduced to offices of a consumerist society. We are getting organized everywhere in Europe to construct an alternative for a different tomorrow. For these reasons we funded "FESAL-E", "European Federation of alternative trade unionism in Education" in September 2003. Pupils, students, teachers and parents of pupils of different countries (France, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, and with contacts in Holland and Germany) united in the desire to recuperate the lost essence of a school that should be the home of all of society. While the school should encourage the liberty of teaching of the teachers as well as the liberty of learning of students, instead of limiting such liberties, we experience that increasingly, external systems of "qualitative evaluation" are inserted. These have the aim to stop the pupils and professors from constructing through daily analysis and confrontation the indispensable knowledge that allows them to confront the society they face daily. This is happening as a consequence of the "General Agreement of Trades and Services" (GATS) in which the European governments pretend to transform the school in a location at the service of the rules of the market. Only a school in which knowledge is the patrimony of youngsters and of teachers has a future. Only the passion for what is taught, and for what is studied, brings the school to life. Therefore, the school should be a free public space, liberated of reasons of state.

"school should encourage the liberty of teaching as well as the liberty of learning"

FESAL-E also struggles for the respect of the rights of organization in trade unions, a fundamental element of democracy and plurality. In a united Europe where the "law of cutting down" is imposed for budget reasons, school is reduced to a "quiz" game of questions and answers between teacher and pupil, a development which is signed by the official European trade union CES (European Confederacy of Trade Unions). This one single trade union (it being the only one is by itself an anomaly created by the system!) that incorporates trade unions from different countries, makes us believe that they are "discussing among themselves" and give space for different opinions, whereas in fact they are all of the same unified color and opinion.

FESAL-E is going to be present at the second European Education Forum that will be organized in May 2005 in Bergen, Norway, and in mid-June in Amsterdam for the second CASA Meeting. This way we want to form part of every democratic struggle for culture.

The feeling of freedom that unites us wants to return the smile (not the stomach pains!) to the students, pupils and teachers that every day make the school with their heart and their intelligence.

Together, with courage, with determination, with passion, for freedom and for culture. 

For more information, check out: www.fesal.it



European Federation of alternative trade unionism in Education

Italy:

Unicobas l'Altrascuola – FESAL-E Studenti Italia – Si Può – Or.S.A. Università

Portugal:

Collective fighting for the formation of a libertarian trade union in the education compartment

Coordinators: Manuel Baptista and Paulo Ambrosio

Spain:

CGT Enseñanza

France:

SUD Education Paris – SUD Education Grenoble

Switzerland:

SISA Independent Trade Union Students and Apprentices – Youth and Cultural Association Altrascuola – Collective FESAL-E – Teachers from Italian Switzerland for the formation of an independent trade union

Coordinator: Josè Domenech

(collaborating with:) **Bildungssyndikat Region Bern**

Slovenia:

Students-Teachers Collective FESAL-E Slovenia

The Actors Method

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Abstract:

Firmly anchored by gender and performance theory, "The Actors Method" is a critical analysis of the Argentinean writer Manuel Puig's novel La Traición de Rita Hayworth. Kiss of the Spider Woman is Puig's most renowned work. Notwithstanding, it is in La Traición where this novelist's insuperable ear and eye capture, hyperrealistically, a particular breed of performative speech and behavior. Alienated by 1940s Hollywood films and Argentine radio soap-operas, the inhabitants and their dusty town, lost in the Argentinean Pampas –the characters and setting of Puig's novel – are the "actors" and "stage" studied in this article. This mordacious Künstlerroman constitutes, by antonomasia, the "period-piece-cultural artifact", of the Latin American "post-Boom", thus priceless material for literary analysis.

[O]rdinary social intercourse is itself put together as a scene is put together, by the exchange of dramatically inflated actions, counteractions, and terminating replies. Scripts even in the hands of unpracticed players can come to life because life itself is a dramatically enacted thing.
Erving Goffman

La traición de Rita Hayworth ha sido comparada con *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. De hecho, la comparación no es disparatada: podría decirse que el argumento de la novela de Manuel Puig acompaña el desarrollo de – probablemente – un futuro artista desde su primera infancia hasta su adolescencia. En efecto; esta es una novela "de formación", la formación de Toto – desde su nacimiento hasta los quince años – quien podría ser considerado su protagonista.¹ Pero el modelo de esta obra no es otro texto, y menos aun uno fuera de la tradición literaria hispanoamericana, como lo es la novela de James Joyce.² El modelo inspirador – esto es característico y casi una constante en Manuel Puig – es el cine.³ *La traición de Rita Hayworth* no busca ensalzar el cine, no es un encomio de esta forma artística – si bien el amor por el cine es manifestado insistentemente por Toto. El cine en esta novela actúa como proveedor de un imaginario social.

En el párrafo anterior uso las palabras "actúa" e "imaginario"; estos vocablos, en un contexto diferente, van a adquirir importancia en mi monografía. Algunas definiciones se hacen necesarias. Victor Turner en *The Anthropology of Performance*, define "social dramas" como

"units of aharmonic or disharmonic social process, arising in conflict situations;" y describe "ritual" como "the performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts"; Turner cita a Ronald Grimes para extender su concepto de "ritual": "a transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes".⁴ La definición de Erving Goffman de "performance" es la siguiente: "the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers".⁵

En mi trabajo voy a analizar *La traición de Rita Hayworth* desde un punto de vista relacional entre las expresiones de Turner, Grimes, y Goffman arriba (y Judith Butler, a continuación), y las acciones – en este caso mejor definidas como "actos", y "rituales" "performáticos" de los personajes,⁶ con énfasis en las razones originales o causales de estos actos. Me concentraré exclusivamente en Toto, Berto, Choli, y sólo en forma referencial en Mita y Herminia (no en ese orden). Voy a observar esta novela desde el aspecto (inevitadamente, según Erving Goffman) performativo/ritual de su "realidad ficcional", y sondear el origen de algunos de los dramas personales y sociales que se describen.

La influencia del cine en los personajes en esta novela es formativo. Ellos no viven a través de otros la ficción cinematográfica, tampoco absorben pasivamente los datos culturales provistos por este medio artístico, sino que los incorporan activamente a sus "personalidades", obteniendo de esta forma un relativo autoconocimiento. Cuando hago esta afirmación estoy pensando principalmente en los "ojos de espectador(a) crítico-incorporador(a)" de Toto y Mita. En el caso de Choli, sus ojos de espectadora no parecen captar en la imagen cinematográfica nada que ella consiga utilizar como medio de autoconocimiento o re-conocimiento personal. Sus ojos, en su caso, parecen más actuar como

¹ El carácter tentativo de estas primeras frases es debido a la relevancia de los otros personajes en la novela; no obstante, Toto debe ser considerado como protagonista, ya que el "mundo novelístico" de *La traición de Rita Hayworth* gira en torno suyo. Pero debe siempre tenerse en consideración que Toto ni es el narrador (no hay narrador; esta es una novela "antiautoritaria") ni el personaje principal en un aspecto formal. Una de las singularidades estilística del trabajo de Puig es que otros personajes tienen una voz tan expresiva cuanto la de Toto – (o más) "Delia, at 21, is (with Héctor and Cobito) one of the novel's most verbally expressive character-narrators." Tittler: *Manuel Puig*. 1993: 16.

² Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1976.

³ Especialmente las producciones de Hollywood que los críticos llaman "películas de mujeres."

⁴ Turner: *The Anthropology of Performance*. 1975: 75.

⁵ Goffman: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. 1959: 22.

⁶ Es destacable que "persona" es uno vocablo latino que significa "máscara de un actor."

entes absorbentes de *script & décor* para uso ritual ulterior. Los personajes "cinéfilos" de la novela extraen de las películas ejemplos vivenciales por medio de los cuales desarrollan una forma alternativa de percibir. Las imágenes proyectadas a través del "vidrio oscuro"⁷ de la lente cinematográfica (que para Toto es de una brillante perfección) proveen elementos que permiten a estos espectadores activos poner la realidad cotidiana en un plano de análisis y enjuiciamiento, y ensayar comportamientos inspirados en ese mundo virtual.

En la contraposición literaria naturaleza / urbanidad, el campo / la ciudad, Coronel Vallejos es un término medio, es un lugar de realidad tibia (*Jukewarm*). Es un pueblo ficticio (inspirado en General Villegas) de la "pampa seca" de la Provincia de Buenos Aires. Su geografía no es exuberante como la de los pueblos de la "pampa húmeda". Coronel Vallejos no cuenta con los colores y la frescura de otros pueblos de la Provincia asentados en *humus*, más cercanos al río Paraná. Es simplemente un pueblo polvoriento y casi desprovisto de vegetación - ni ciudad ni campo: casas chatas, inelegantes o de una elegancia cursi, construida a maceta con plantas y baldosas trabajosamente enceradas. El campo se encuentra a pocas cuadras de distancia. En un país absolutamente *Bonaerocéntrico* como es Argentina, si se permite tamaña expresión esdrújula, La Ciudad, ese conjunto urbano mítico, en esta novela es La Plata... una ciudad "de segunda". "[E]s posible pensar en *La traición de Rita Hayworth* a partir de una economía narrativa de lujo y gasto, en donde las historias se disparan y se dispersan en el vacío de la pampa".⁸ La extensión de sus "dramas" es nunca lejana al cliché, y los modelos de comportamiento y habla sólo son extendidos en su limitación por los escasos medios de comunicación del lugar. La presencia del cine y la radio extiende los estrechos límites de la población hacia un mundo diferente. La oportunidad de experiencias sólo se acrecenta por el acceso a esas formas "ficticias" de existencia.

Sylvia Molloy ha criticado en clase la opinión de Emir Rodríguez Monegal, que identifica como tema central de la novela la total alienación del pueblo por los medios de comunicación. Molloy disputa que la alienación tenga como causa principal las *media*, pero advierte que el carácter alienado de esa sociedad no puede ser ignorado. Alan Pauls alinea esta disputada opinión a otras comparadas por los varios críticos de esta novela: "sucesiva y simultáneamente, la obra de Puig ha sido interpretada como una denuncia de la alienación impuesta por los medios masivos de comunicación, como una reflexión sobre las intervenciones del poder sobre la sexualidad, como la

reivindicación culta y paródica del kitsch y las estéticas del mal gusto"⁹ Jonathan Tittler parece compartir la opinión de Rodríguez Monegal, pero la califica o restringe:

[T]he Uruguayan critic Emir Rodríguez Monegal stated that "Betrayed by Rita Hayworth" is concerned at bottom with the alienation of language. By that he meant that the characters employ a stale, ill-fitting speech, borrowed from the world of film, advertisement, and other foreign and idealized realms. When they try to apply that imposed medium to their lives the results are predictably disastrous, for unrealistic expectations inevitably lead to crushing defeats. Although Rodríguez Monegal's claims are not uniformly valid throughout the novel (Toto, among others, eventually demonstrates a creative and incipiently critical use of language), the chapter dedicated to Choli is without a doubt a fine example of alienated language. But only when Choli's voice enters into dialogue with Mita's sober and tragic discourse (chapter 8) can we appreciate the full force of her pathetic mistaking of glamour for beauty.¹⁰

Tittler se refiere a la alienación del lenguaje; cuando Tittler dice "language" parece estar circunscribiéndose al estrictamente verbal ("*ill-fitting speech*"), pero yo entiendo que "alienación del lenguaje" implica el lenguaje verbal, gestual, corporal: una construcción total de la personalidad a partir de un modelo externo, existir por medio de una "performance". "*Unrealistic expectations inevitably lead to crushing defeats*": quien *actúa* usando un lenguaje mimético con la expectativa de resultados "ideales", ya que proviene de "*idealized realms*", está por supuesto probablemente condenada/o a "*crushing defeats*". No obstante, inmediatamente Tittler se refiere a Toto y su desarrollo (en su etapa mas "madura") de un "*creative and incipiently critical language*". Indudablemente Tittler establece una relación lenguaje alienado / vida alienada. ¿Es su calificación del discurso de Mita como "*sober and tragic*" y del discurso de Toto como "*creative and incipiently critic*" un signo de que Tittler considera a Mita y Toto como una dupla "rescatable"? ¿Como ejemplo de personajes que caminan hacia la des-alineación? ¿que se expresan con creciente "naturalidad" - en oposición a la alienada performance del resto?

⁹ Pauls: *Manuel Puig: La traición de Rita Hayworth*. 1986: 3-4.

¹⁰ Tittler, 13-4. Yo no creo que en el capítulo 8 se establezca ningún diálogo con Choli; es un monólogo interior, y solo muy esporádicamente, e indirectamente, Mita se refiere a Choli. Lucille Kerr también describe este capítulo simplemente como un "*interior monologue*." Adonde se aprecia "*the full force of (Choli's) pathetic mistaking of glamour for beauty*", es en el capítulo 4, el "*hidden dialogue*" - como lo llama Lucille Kerr, after Bakhtin - entre Mita y Choli. La única explicación es que Tittler se estaría refiriendo a un supuesto diálogo entre los dos capítulos, y en comparación con la voz sobria de Mita en 8 se agiganta la alienación de Choli en 4. Kerr: *Suspended Fictions: Reading Novels by Manuel Puig*. 1987: 73.

⁷ Estoy pensando en el film de Ingmar Bergman *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) que describe las interacciones opresivas de una familia recluida en una isla.

⁸ Goldchluk, Graciela: "Una Literatura Rara." In Lorenzano (ed.). *La literatura es una película: Revisiones sobre Manuel Puig*, 1997: 73.

En "*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution*", Judith Butler muestra su desacuerdo con la visión de Erving Goffman que "*posits a self which assumes and exchanges various 'roles' within the complex social expectations of the 'game' of modern life.*" La visión de Butler es "anti-esencialista" y, por eso mismo, tal vez "existencialista." "*I am suggesting that this self is not only irretrievably 'outside,' constituted in social discourse, but that the ascription of interiority is itself a publically regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication.*"¹¹ De acuerdo con la opinión de Goffman el "yo" (interior, esencial) asumiría roles,¹² para satisfacer expectativas sociales; la visión más radical de Butler es que el "yo" (que es "externo") estaría constituido o construido por medio de un "discurso social". Obviamente, estas son dos visiones separadas por una distancia abismal. De cualquier forma, se puede establecer un punto de coincidencia en lo que respecta a la construcción de la "personalidad alienada". Excite entonces la teoría de un yo intrínseco que ("desde adentro") incorpora roles para satisfacer demandas externas. La segunda teoría estima la existencia de un yo formado exteriormente por un "discurso social". Ambos estarían, en última instancia, "actuando" características perceptibles construidas y consistentes (lo que Goffman llama "*front*")¹³ como resultado de "influencias o presiones ajenas" (no quiero usar "externas" porque podría dar lugar a mal interpretaciones entre las diferentes concepciones de "*self*" que establecen Butler y Goffman. A pesar de las concepciones alternativas, ambos *selves* (intrínseco y fabricado) constituyen un objeto performático.

Usando estos conceptos, la alienación de los personajes de *La traición de Rita Hayworth* está fundada (o causada) por "el discurso social" y las "complejas expectativas sociales" provenientes del cine¹⁴ y del entorno social local. Estos estímulos o demandas son ajenas o externas a los personajes. La tensión o contradicción entre los mensajes ideales cinematográficos y los burdos mensajes emitidos por el medio social constituiría el ente formativo de la realidad sociológica singular del pueblo, y de la psicología particular de los habitantes.

Parecería existir un antagonismo entre los mensajes propalados por el cine y la realidad local. En este sentido, la formación cultural (o la alienación, si se quiere adoptar la posición de Rodríguez Monegal) producida por la intimidad con el cine incompatibilizaría, o al menos dificultaría, la convivencia del cinéfilo con el entorno social de Vallejos. Aparentemente, cuanto más estrecha fuere la

relación de uno de los personajes de la novela con el cine, se complicará proporcionalmente la relación de este mismo personaje con la sociedad local o el grupo familiar. No obstante, Toto encuentra en el mundo del cine un refugio contra la opresiva realidad familiar y social. Pero, como se verá más adelante, el crecimiento intelectual de Toto acabará por distanciarlo definitivamente del medio local. Más abajo detallaré la incompatibilidad entre la "insalubre" realidad local y el tipo idealizante de cine Hollywoodiano que es fundacional de la sensibilidad de Toto desde sus primeros años de vida.

Alan Pauls (tal vez exageradamente) atribuye a *La traición de Rita Hayworth* un carácter noventa y cinco por ciento autobiográfico. Es pertinente entonces transcribir las siguientes declaraciones de Manuel Puig: "Yo fui al cine y allí encontré una realidad que me gustó. Hubo un momento, no sé como sucedió, en que *yo decidí que la realidad era esa ficción – las películas de Hollywood – y que la realidad del pueblo era una película de 'clase B' que yo me había metido a ver por equivocación*" (el subrayado es nuestro).¹⁵ Si se puede establecer una coincidencia entre el autor y su personaje, es posible preguntarse ¿cuál es el rasgo más insatisfactorio de la realidad social de Coronel Vallejos; qué es lo que compele a Toto a preferir la "realidad glamorosa" de las películas de mujeres sobre "realidad" local? La respuesta se halla principalmente en la incongruencia entre la estética "pura" que rodea al idealizado "amor cinematográfico" y tres ámbitos escénicos locales adonde la sexualidad se manifiesta cotidianamente: 1) la escena sexual existente en casa, una "escena primal" – de exclusión y robo por parte del padre – que Toto debe soportar reactuada una y otra vez, a corta distancia, a cada "hora de la siesta". Mientras el matrimonio "se consume", Toto es obligado a "simular" su inexistencia por medio de mutismo e inmovilidad – Regularmente, ante esta situación, Toto recurrirá al paliativo que el medio cinematográfico le proporciona. 2) La retórica sexual: las desconcertantes pistas y sugerencias sexuales ofrecidas u ocultadas por las amistades y familiares de Toto. 3) La absurda y retorcida escena sexual local: Vallejos es simultáneamente reprimido e hipersexualizado. Estos escenarios causan el resquemor y la ambivalencia sexual de Toto. Toto es testigo atónito de la tergiversación de lo que no logra entender. ¿Cómo puede entender lo que desconoce y se le presenta de modo tergiversado? Justificadamente, Toto sospecha, teme y rechaza cualquier referencia sexual?¹⁶ Obviamente, en una sociedad cuya doxa es plagada de contradicciones, Toto lucha con todas sus fuerzas por encontrar una "verdad"

¹¹ Butler, Judith: "Performative Acts and Gender Construction." In Case (ed.). *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. 1990: 279.

¹² "Papeles", en el tradicional lenguaje teatral y cinematográfico.

¹³ "*It will be convenient to label as 'front' that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance.*" Goffman, 22.

¹⁴ Rodríguez Monegal habla de los medios de comunicación, pero yo me concentro en el cine, puesto que este es el medio que consistentemente se menciona en la novela.

¹⁵ Corbatta: *Mito personal y mitos colectivos en las novelas de Manuel Puig*. 1988: 26-7. Hay una nota al pie informando el origen de esta declaración: "Manuel Puig, 'La primera persona singular' conferencia en el Paraninfo de la Universidad de Antioquía, Medellín, octubre de 1979."

¹⁶ "Un enigma hegemoniza la infancia de *La traición*: es el enigma del sexo. En efecto, en Puig el sexo siempre aparece recubierto por una duda, una interrogación, una sospecha. El sexo rige un modo de enunciación casi obligatorio: el dubitativo: es un territorio de incertidumbre y de vacilación, nunca de certeza." Pauls, 24.

que haga sentido, y la "verdad" cinematográfica es la más coherente. El cine le propone alternativas estéticas y éticas aceptables. Además, en un plano psicoanalítico, el cine constituye el medio y el ámbito adonde se funda y estrecha la alianza materno-filial. Existe todavía una prolongación ritual y simbólica de esta alianza: el acto creativo artístico que la madre y el hijo comparten. Juntos, se abocan a re-construir imágenes cinematográficas tangibles. Ellos reproducen la experiencia privativa de madre e hijo (el film) con un objeto estético recreado en común: la repetida relación oral de lo visto en el cine, y las reproducción gráfica en cartón y lápices de colores de escenas de las películas.

Las opiniones de Judith Butler transcriptas arriba disputan las teorías fenomenológicas de "actos" o "acciones" de Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, y George Herbert Mead, quienes consideran que "agentes sociales" subjetivos *constituyen* la realidad social a través de lenguaje, gestos, y todo tipo de signos sociales. Butler señala que existe una teoría más radical que toma al agente como un objeto, en lugar de sujeto, de esos actos constitutivos.¹⁷ Butler utiliza estos conceptos para apoyar una teoría de identidad genérica: Su tesis general es que "*what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status.*" El cuerpo, al mismo tiempo generador (como objeto de realidad física perceptible) y depositario de calificaciones y atribuciones (externas) de género y sexo, es un tema predominante en la novela de Manuel Puig. Mucho de mi trabajo inevitablemente tiene que referirse a las cuestiones del cuerpo y los problemas derivados del mismo, como aparecen en *La traición de Rita Hayworth*. Afortunadamente, la teoría radical de Butler concede una salida (que talvez Toto halle en un futuro que no está incluido dentro de la novela).

Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds.¹⁸

Solamente por medio de una visión reduccionista sería posible atribuir a los mensajes difundidos por los medios de comunicación total responsabilidad por la alienación de los personajes de la novela. La alienación es en gran medida resultado del rígido, extremo y sofocante modelo binario de género y sexualidad, que la sociología local presenta en su forma más burda. Los modelos de "hombres" y "feminidad" disponibles en Coronel Vallejos cobran una cualidad estereotípica casi caricatural. La im-

posibilidad de ejercitar modelos alternativos resulta en personalidades que actúan frenéticamente (neuróticamente) para satisfacer las demandas impuestas por estos roles estereotipados, que existen en permanente conflicto con (y confunden) el deseo personal.

Lo que sigue a continuación se aplica específicamente a esas demandas de asunción de roles genéricos y sexuales. Para mantener la armonía social y evitar cualquier crisis debe existir una actitud cooperativa en la manutención de roles. Espontáneamente, se forman lo que Goffman llama "*performance teams*". El comportamiento individual debe coincidir con las expectativas del medio social, y este último cumplirá su misión por medio de su aprobación o condena. Transcribiré la definición de *performance team* ofrecida por Goffman, y a seguir, palabras de Butler sobre la coerción ejercida para la satisfacción de demandas de género y sexualidad. Estas dos opiniones entablan una conversación congruente.

Erving Goffman:

We commonly find that the definition of the situation projected by a particular participant is an integral part of the projection that is fostered and sustained by the intimate cooperation of more than one participant... I will use the term "performance team" or, in short, "team" to refer to any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine... Whether the members of a team stage similar individual performances or stage dissimilar performances which fit together into a whole, an emergent team impression arises which can conveniently be treated as a fact in its own right.¹⁹

Judith Butler:

[O]ne is compelled to live in a world in which genders constitute univocal signifiers, in which gender is stabilized, polarized, rendered discrete and intractable. In effect, gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control. Performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all.²⁰

Los personajes de *La traición de Rita Hayworth* son claramente presentados como víctimas involuntarias de ese sistema distributivo de géneros. Sometidos a la opresiva distribución de roles estereotipados, se debaten incesantemente, prisioneros de sus actitudes neuróticas. Puig critica así la vigencia hegemónica del modelo binario.²¹ El personaje ideal para ser ofrecido como ejem-

¹⁹ Goffman, 77-80.

²⁰ Butler, 279.

²¹ Si Puig se interesa por los pares, si *La traición* está salpicada de oposiciones binarias y de paradigmas, no es porque su escri-

¹⁷ Butler, 270. Énfasis de Butler.

¹⁸ Butler, 282.

plo, por su patetismo – el que lleva la representación de esa sumisión al rol genérico a un nivel extremo de "sostentación en su alienación" – es Choli. El *hidden dialogue* del capítulo 4 es un *crescendo* confesional por el cual Choli acaba por desventar todas sus (aterrorizantes) estrategias de (fantaseada) seducción. Sé que la intención del autor al revelar al lector solamente una voz del diálogo – la de Choli – no corresponde a la interpretación que voy a dar a seguir, pero es posible, para enfatizar el patetismo de Choli, imaginarla sentada sola en la cama de un hotel, con el tubo del teléfono a su oído, un tubo que emite el monótono y vacante tono de incomunicación, mienta ella parlotea incesantemente para una Mita que no existe del otro lado de la línea.

If we take the term 'setting' to refer to the scenic parts of expressive equipment, one may take the term 'personal front' to refer to the other items of expressive equipment, the items we most intimately identify with the performer himself (sic) and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he (sic) goes.²²

Por necesidad profesional, Choli lleva con ella todos los *apetrechos* teatrales para una representación que ella considera "creíble". Choli construye consciente y depuradamente una imagen cuyo resultado sea "misterioso;" el arte de Choli es un arte de escamoteo: " – Interesante, que haga pensar a la gente '¿quién será?'... Por los ojos sombreados, ¿no te parece? ... Con turbante. El turbante oscuro me hace muy rara... teniendo a mi disposición todos los cosméticos de inspectora de Hollywood Cosméticos... puedo probar lo que me queda mejor... Los anteojos ahumados de armazón blanca y el pelo aclarado color cobre y lacio... tengo tipo de norteamericana, para no darle importancia a nadie."²³ Choli no deja nada librado a la improvisación; su performance responde estrictamente a un libreto de su propio diseño, seguramente basado en fantasías inspiradas en el cine, el radioteatro, y las fotonovelas y folletines leídos en sus interminables viajes en tren. Meticulosamente, en las noches solitarias de su cuarto de hotel, Choli perfecciona su teatralidad:

En los hoteles una de las cosas que me encantan es probarme toda mi ropa y estudiarme en el espejo... primero los conjuntos de mañana, con el pañuelo en la cabeza, y después los de la tarde con el pelo recogido y una cinta o suelto. y me paso las horas con los cambios, es divertidísimo. Lástima que no me pueda fotografiar... me pruebo la ropa de noche, con peinado alto...

tura se encamine hacia algún maniqueísmo, ni porque la aliente una preocupación por la supuesta universalidad de ciertas categorías... La traición es una crítica de los usos; postula que todo uso de las categorías de la lengua es un uso a la vez sexual y político, y que la diferencia gramatical (la oposición masculino/femenino) es el soporte de una diferencia que se instaura en el campo de la sexualidad social." Pauls, 26.

²² Goffman, 23-4.

²³ Puig: *La traición de Rita Hayworth*. 1991: 51-3.

Con trajes de brim de sport, amplios, con un buen cinturón ajustado para lucir la cintura, y con el cabello bien cepillado hasta que parezca que la melena es de seda, que bailando en una boite tirás la cabeza para atrás y caería ese pelo en cascada provocativo sobre los hombros, y si hubiera una despedida en un aeropuerto el viento lo hace flotar y parecería emocionante.²⁴

Estos "rituales sartoriales" performados por Choli la inscriben dentro de la novela como la *posseuse*. Pero su forma de posar es diametralmente opuesta al "posar" que Sylvia Molloy describe en "*The Politics of Posing*". No es un posar subversivo, ni es un posar que "*shows indeed the identifying power of posing*."²⁵ Choli no posa para reforzar la imagen de su identidad personal, sino para esconder lo que ella oscuramente intuye que existe debajo de su elaborada fachada. Su construcción melodramática es talvez nacida de un sentimiento de inadecuación estética; su *mise-en-scène* tendría entonces como función ocultar una supuesta carencia de sex appeal. Pero su acto es extremadamente complicado, es paradójico. Choli se esfuerza para que su aspecto personal y actitud – su pose – sugieran que existe algo oculto diferente de lo que en realidad ella trata de ocultar. Como dije antes, su mecanismo es de "escamoteo": En su imaginación, el efecto de su construcción presenta a su fantaseado galán desconocido con una incógnita: ella es "rara", "exótica", "intrigante": "Qué interesante es esa mujer... quién sabe quién es..."; Choli imagina que su performance la hace atractiva más por lo que oculta que por lo que revela: "¡Que sea interesante! No hay que dejar de ponerse sombra en los ojos... atrae más, parece que oculta un pasado."²⁶ ¿Qué tipo de pasado? Algunas sugerencias indirectas surgen de su parloteo: "se han hecho ladronas de joyas, de las fronteras, las contrabandistas ¿y las espías?"²⁷

En su artículo, Molloy se refiere específicamente al posar subversivo del homosexual, pero es posible aplicar algunas de sus teorías a la performance de Choli: ésta confirma una parte del argumento de Molloy. "*Posing makes evident the elusiveness of all constructions of identity, their fundamental performative nature*." Pero no es verdad que el posar de Choli "*problematizes gender, its formulation and its divisions*", no "subvierte categorías, cuestiona modelos reproductivos o propone nuevos modos de identificación basados más en el reconocimiento del deseo que en pactos culturales",²⁸ ya que Choli fundamenta su construcción en un estereotipo kitsch del concepto de feminidad. Choli, en su "*manner (the uncontrollable gesturing of excess)*" – y a pesar de la aparente audacia de su escena – sumisamente se en-

²⁴ Puig, 53-4, 67.

²⁵ Molloy, Silvia: "The Politics of Posing." In Molloy and McKee Irwind (ed.s): *Hispanisms and Homosexualities*. 1998: 146.

²⁶ Puig, 68.

²⁷ Puig, 51.

²⁸ Molloy, 147. Mi traducción.

cuadra dentro de una postura tradicional y estrictamente atribuida a "su género".

A pesar de que ambos retiran "material" del mundo cinematográfico, Choli y Toto habitan mundos opuestos. No están ambos en la búsqueda de una "verdad identificatoria". La motivación de su performance aleja a Choli de todo nivel de confort personal. Su vida debe ser infernal. Antes de dejar definitivamente a Choli, sólo cabe recordar que es un personaje victimizado por sus circunstancias, y que Puig la ha creado no solamente con simultáneo humor y patetismo, pero también con una gran empatía hacia su existencia gris de viuda, madre, trabajadora ardua y solitaria; habitante de un pueblo en el que "no hay gente interesante con quien hablar."²⁹

Mucho se ha escrito sobre el significado del título *La traición de Rita Hayworth*, y de la dualidad de lectura que esta frase permite en castellano: Rita Hayworth puede ser alternativamente el sujeto y el objeto de una traición. Críticos que buscan el significado de este título saben que este no simplemente anuncia la fuerte relación entre la novela y el cine, ni que sólo se refiere a la "traición" protagonizada por el personaje de Rita Hayworth hacia el que personifica Tyrone Power en *Sangre y Arena*. El recurso utilizado por Puig del argumento cinematográfico dentro del argumento novelístico – como *The Mouse-trap* en *Hamlet* – encierra profundos significados y consecuencias que van mucho más allá de lo que se proyecta en la pantalla. Esta es la película que Berto finalmente accede a compartir con Mita y Toto. Durante la duración de la proyección, y por unos pocos minutos posteriores a la misma, existe un estado de "integración familiar".

La escena es parte del monólogo interior de Toto a los nueve años de edad, y describe un momento de "fractura" de la relación paterno-filial y de la pérdida de ilusiones por parte de Toto de atraer a su padre hacia su mundo. Cuando la función de cine ha terminado, Berto comenta su apreciación por Rita Hayworth e indica que se incluirá en futuras excursiones familiares al cine. El poder seductor de esta sugestión paterna es tal que hace tambalear la ética de Toto. Toto considera acertadamente que Rita Hayworth ha traicionado a Tyrone Power después de haberlo sometido a un trato cruel y humillante; pero está dispuesto a mudar de opinión y pasar a gustar de Rita Hayworth para secundar las preferencias de Berto: "...ahora si voy a venir siempre con ustedes al cine", que viendo la cinta se había olvidado de todas las cuentas del negocio, y salíamos del cine caminando y papá decía que le gustaba Rita Hayworth más que ninguna artista, y a mí me empieza a gustar más que ninguna también."³⁰ Reina la armonía familiar por unos minutos, y Toto espera que esto se torne una celebración. Pero, casualmente Berto se encuentra con algunos de sus empleados y las ilusiones de Toto se esfuman ante la decisión de Berto de abandonar el momento familiar para ir con los otros hombres a escuchar por radio – muy apropiadamente – *una pelea de boxeo*. Esta es la traición que destruye el tenue y corto

nexo que había parecido establecerse momentáneamente entre padre e hijo, y la breve coincidencia familiar.³¹

Este momento constituye el clímax de una tensa situación entre padre e hijo, que ha existido desde siempre debido a las demandas, frustradas, que Berto hace a Toto para que cumpla su rol masculino apropiadamente.³² Butler indicó la existencia de un sistema de recompensas y castigos para quien actúa su género apropiada o inapropiadamente. Berto mantiene a Toto bajo un continuo estado de "observación clínica" y vigilancia, y lo reprende o castiga por sus falencias "genéricas". Toto no debería interesarse tanto por el cine, no debería jugar con muñequitos, debería aprender a andar en bicicleta, debería enfrentar cualquier agresión de otros niños usando sus puños, debería jugar con varones. Es verdad que el crecimiento físico de Puig se detuvo por tres años después de un intento de violación que sufriera, por lo tanto es un dato autobiográfico, pero igualmente es transformado en ficción al ser trasladado a la novela. Se puede así interpretar el "enanismo" de Toto como el de Oskar de la novela de Günter Grass, *The Tin Drum*,³³ quien se rehúsa a crecer bajo la opresión Nazi. Toto vive bajo la opresión de un padre que no aprueba la actividad que Toto considera central en su vida, y demanda del último un comportamiento no compatible con su naturaleza sensible.³⁴ Berto le propone a su hijo integrarse a un juego que, pese a su corta edad, Toto – como su autor – no consigue jugar.

Puig cuenta una... situación de infancia cuya configuración estructural... constituye el "tema musical" de toda su obra... Se trata del ejercicio del poder, y el juego de explotación y sometimiento resultante, de los roles que la sociedad impone a sus miembros – básicamente al hombre y a la mujer, como macho seguro y señora sumisa – y de su rechazo de esa realidad, regida por el culto a la fuerza, la violencia y el machismo; realidad que él reemplaza por el mundo del cine, donde reinan la belleza, la bondad y la sensibilidad."³⁵

Berto es un hombre que vive atribulado por dificultades financieras, frustrado con la falta de hombría de su hijo, con una mujer que se dice dañada por el parto de ese hijo (otra culpa que Toto debe soportar), con la

³¹ Este momento, con su compleja exposición de los deseos mutuos de padre e hijo es ejemplarmente desarrollado por Kerr, 29-30. De hecho, toda mi línea interpretativa de las motivaciones de Berto son fundadas en la teoría de Kerr, expuesta desde página 26 hasta 42.

³² Puede ser también considerado uno de los "deaf climaxes" de la novela.

³³ Grass: *The Tin Drum*. 1990.

³⁴ Es imposible en una monografía de esta extensión tratar todos los posibles subtemas presentes, pero el terror homofóbico de Berto es epidémico en la novela y se extiende a la escena colegial y callejera – adonde Toto es víctima frecuente, que permanecerá ausente de mi trabajo. Es también con pena que dejo fuera a Héctor, un personaje rico y complejo, valioso material para otra monografía.

³⁵ Corbatta, 27.

²⁹ Puig, 51.

³⁰ Puig, 82.

muerte de otro hijo. Hay todavía otras razones que se revelarán en el momento apropiado. No obstante todos estos motivos, la máscara social de Berto es inescrutable. El hombre debe sufrir en silencio (al menos en público). Berto mantiene una fachada viril: es un hombre varonil (ha trompeado al director del hospital), honesto, esforzado y trabajador. Fachada es la forma castellana de referirme al "*personal front*" de Goffman. Goffman considera que existe también una "*front region*" en la cual una persona es compelida a mantener el *personal front*. Hay otra región adonde la fachada puede descartarse; la máscara puede ser momentáneamente retirada.

... I have called [it] a front region; it should be just as clear that there may be another region – a "back region" or "backstage" – where the suppressed facts make an appearance. A back region or backstage maybe defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course.³⁶

En primera instancia, el *backstage* de Berto es su casa: El refugio del hogar le permite ventilar su frustración y su continua irritación; probablemente su actitud general privada es compensatoria del esfuerzo demandado por su performance pública. Berto en la intimidad revela un comportamiento tiránico con Toto y posesivo con Mita. Las siestas proveen un buen ejemplo: es allí adonde Berto demanda atención, su cuota de sexo, y silencio e inmovilidad posterior. "El aburrimiento mas grande es a la siesta, y si pasa un avión papá se despierta, los gritos..."³⁷ Pero el hogar es un *backstage* engañoso. La actitud de Berto dentro de casa es otra fachada intermedia, otro rol que Berto se siente obligado a asumir frente a su mujer y su hijo. El verdadero *backstage* de Berto es dentro de su propia cabeza. Allí celosamente se preservan secretas frustraciones y resentimientos, humillaciones diarias y constantes que sólo aparecen en el capítulo que cierra *La traición de Rita Hayworth*.

Puig "abrocha" su novela volviendo en el último capítulo al año 1933 del inicio. En este finalmente se revela el contenido de la carta que Berto escribe a su hermano Jaime, y destruye en el capítulo dos, que es simultáneo cronológicamente al capítulo uno. Como la carta es destruida y existe tan brevemente cuanto el tiempo que lleva escribirla, las palabras que encierra no serán leídas por nadie – excepción hecha, por supuesto, del lector de la novela, observador privilegiado de un Berto finalmente despojado de su fachada.

La carta es confesional; comienza dulcemente pero inmediatamente se torna un lamento que crece hasta terminar en una explosión furiosa y breve; es un fuego de artificio que brilla rápido y se extingue – antes que Berto vaya con la niñera y Toto-bebé a buscar a Mita al hospital. El "señor Berto" también ha sido traicionado. La carta revela el tercer significado del título de la novela:

When we reach the novel's last chapter – "Carta de Berto, 1933" – we see that Berto presents himself in a radically different manner than do the other subjects who surround him in the fiction. He finally affirms, in a different way than does his son, his own connection to his favorite movie star. Formerly presented by those who know him as the domineering father and spouse, as the betrayer whose potential violence often governs the actions of others around him...Berto here portrays himself in the opposite role – as the object of betrayal by other subjects over whose actions he, as son, younger brother, and even husband, seems to have no control.³⁸

Berto siente haber sido traicionado por su hermano Jaime, figura al mismo tiempo fraternal y paternal, quien lo hizo interrumpir sus estudios a los quince años (Berto soñaba con ser abogado). Jaime mas tarde lo dejó desempleado, cuando cerró su fábrica: otra traición. Posteriormente, Jaime lo abandonó mudándose a Buenos Aires. Reciente al momento en que Berto escribe, Jaime se fue a España, dejando a su hijo Héctor al cuidado de Berto y Mita (colocando una carga más en la desnivelada balanza financiera de Berto). Esta vez Jaime ha abandonado no sólo a su hermano menor sino también a su propio hijo. Por la carta se sabe que quien realmente sustenta el hogar familiar es Mita. Su sueldo íntegro va a parar a las manos de Berto, y este oye una conversación entre Mita y su hermana en la que se discute la injusticia de esta situación. Esta "conspiración" hace que Berto también se sienta traicionado por Mita, el personaje estoico de la familia. Es ella quien enfrenta las obligaciones económicas familiares con su trabajo del hospital, sumisamente acepta el mandato de su marido siempre insatisfecho, sufre la muerte de un hijo, cría el que sería su tercero. Su creciente frustración a lo largo de la novela solamente se percibe por el continuo aumento de quejas e imprecaciones en su vocabulario, y por como su amor por Toto va tiñéndose de irritación. Esta es la realidad desnuda de Berto en 1933. No hay una sola razón valedera que justifique la imagen pública adusta que Berto mantiene a lo largo de toda la novela.

Coronel Vallejos presenta una realidad amarga y críticos de la novela han sugerido que sus personajes no evolucionan. Esto no es absolutamente correcto, ya que Toto a los quince años ha producido su primer rudimento literario, "La película que mas me gustó", que podría ser indicativo del hallazgo de su forma de expresión. Pese a su pedertería adolescente – que lo asemeja al Stephen Dedalus de los capítulos postreros de la novela de Joyce – Toto va rápidamente sofisticando sus gustos, transformándose. Herminia, una de las pocas personas que Toto visita (escuchan ópera juntos), escribe en su cuaderno de pensamientos: "Él no sale con nadie, no es amigo de nadie en Vallejos, dice, porque no tiene nada de que

³⁶ Goffman, 111-12.

³⁷ Puig, 69.

³⁸ Kerr, 33-4.

hablar con nadie."³⁹ Es realmente irónico que Toto y Choli digan las mismas palabras, después de haberles yo atribuido existencias en mundos opuestos. Pero esta coincidencia no invalida mi opinión, ya que, en la boca de cada uno de ellos, estas mismas palabras adquieren significados diferentes.

Después de haber pasado unos tiempos estudiando en Buenos Aires, Toto literalmente "está de vuelta" en Vallejos. Por años, Toto fue acosado por los "machitos" del pueblo. Ahora Toto, a fuerza de astucia y velocidad, acaba de escapar de ser sexualmente violado en Buenos Aires. Algunos aspectos de su personalidad muestran un resentimiento que se expresa en actos reprobables: chismes malévolos y potencialmente dañinos; Toto puede a veces ser peligroso. Si una vez el cine lo incompatibilizó con su entorno, su crecimiento intelectual lo ha transformado en un extraño en el pueblo, y parece finalmente haberse distanciado de su familia. El crecimiento de Toto es una "*schismogenesis*".⁴⁰ Toto lee a Chekhov y a Thomas Mann; le gustan los compositores musicales modernos; desprecia los románticos; critica la vaciedad intelectual del pueblo y su pequeñísima burguesía. Discute la existencia de Dios, y propone la posibilidad de uno infinitamente cruel, o el indiferente de los deístas. Toto quiere visitar el Tibet. Herminia lo encuentra "muy afeminado de modales". ¿Estará Toto ya ensayando su "pose subversiva?" Indudablemente, la novela deja a Toto a los quince años convertido en un joven de personalidad compleja y – como diría Choli – "interesante, parece que oculta un pasado". En su caso, esto es verdad. Como Stephen Dedalus al fin de *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Toto está decididamente lanzado hacia el futuro y hacia el mundo.

El orden cronológico de *La traición de Rita Hayworth* deja con la última palabra a Herminia, un personaje des- enmascarado; si alguna vez existió una fachada, Herminia la ha dejado olvidada en algún cajón polvoriento de su cuarto de soltera.⁴¹ En Viena, a miles de kilómetros de distancia literal y metafórica, Erika Kohut, la protagonista de la novela de Elfriede Jelinek, *The Piano Teacher*, comparte algunos rasgos patéticos con Herminia: Las dos son profesoras de piano, una "vocación" que adoptaron para satisfacer las expectativas de sus progenitores; ambas admiran a Schubert; ambas habitan un mundo de tremendo aislamiento psicológico, y la relación alienada que han mantenido de por vida con su sexualidad las ha damnificado a extremos incapacitantes. Detrás de una fachada robótica, Erika se empeña en una lucha por comprender y expresar su desesperado deseo. Este la lleva a actos de voyeurismo, humillación voluntaria, sadismo, masoquismo, automutilación. Eventualmente es víctima de una violación especialmente violenta.

³⁹ Puig, 274.

⁴⁰ "...[G]rowing by means of conflict and schism Bateson calls 'schismogenesis' (1958: 171-97). It is a major agency of human cultural growth." Schechner: *Performance Theory*. 1988: 167.


⁴¹ Herminia se define como "solterona." Tiene treinta y siete años; probablemente las posibilidades de matrimonio en Coronel Vallejos del año 1948 hacen que Herminia no esté equivocada.

Herminia congela sus impulsos sexuales hasta transformarlos en un misterio. Su vagina es una hermética ostra. "Lujuria... significa una cosa prometedora pero totalmente desconocida...veo que no puedo juzgar, no puedo hablar de algo que no conozco... Debe haber algo en la Lujuria que la hace irresistible a la gente de buena salud, yo ni sé el significado de la palabra Lujuria, debe ser algo que se siente cuando la sangre es rica..."⁴² Brevemente, Erika creyó vivir la Lujuria, pero descubrió en su lugar el horror. "*Her eyes alight on nothing, and, with no burst of rage, fury, or passion, Erika Kohut stabs a place on her shoulder, which instantly shoots out blood... The world, unwounded, does not stand still.*"⁴³

Cierro este trabajo con el *deseo* de Herminia:

Yo me conformaría con que la muerte fuera simplemente un descanso, como dormir. A veces en la oscuridad total es lindo abrir los ojos y descansar la vista, pero sólo por un rato, porque si no el descanso degenera en insomnio, que es la peor tortura. Cuando digo descanso me refiero a dormir. Sería una bendición que la muerte fuera como dormir eternamente, y no acordarme más que existió Herminia.⁴⁴

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⁴² Puig, 278-79.

⁴³ Jelinek: *The Piano Teacher*. 1999: 280.

⁴⁴ Puig, 291.

An experience of action research: Guide for social transformation in Europe: European Social Forum and surroundings

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THE ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK for the ESF convergent process, an open network of several action research groups and collectives internal to the social movements in different places in Europe, and is developing a *Guide for social transformation in Europe: European Social Forum and surroundings*.

What is the Guide? What is for?

- It is a project aimed at recovering and systematizing information and knowledge generated by the most recent cycle of converging social movements in Europe and by the European Social Forum process.
- It is a networking tool. Its core is a database of groups, organizations, and collectives that mobilize themselves around the ESF process, organized by type of organization, region, and theme of action.
- It is an experience of activist research, that is applying research in the service of the new cycle of mobilizations for social change inspired by traditions such as the participation in action-research and the con-research.
- It is a project finalized for the creation of a converging space for activist research within the social movements at a European level. For this reason, it will be carried out by a network of groups and centers of research; the Action Research Network of the ESF, which develops the research. The Guide will also contain a specific map/directory of groups that are producing research within and around the new movements in Europe.
- It is a tool in the service first of all of the ESF converging process: aiding the autonomous organization of the ESF themselves as well as the creation of European and transnational networks. It will produce awareness and greater self-consciousness among the protagonists of the ESF process; and more focused actions and strategies for the future.
- It is an experiment of archiving applied to the new phenomena of mobilization produced by the World Social Forum. As such, the experiment in Europe can be enlarged and reproduced in other regions. On the European continent it represents the first systematization of information that could inspire and make possible new research.
- It is a tool for reflection and debate: the Guide will also contain a web-bibliography and critical articles on the ESF and the new movements.

Basic Contents and Contact Information:

European directory of collectives and organizations organized by themes, type of organization and regions. The main information source for the European directory is the registration databases for the ESFs and the

parallel spaces

(E-mail: directory@euromovements.info)

Relation of thematic or regional databases of organizations already existing

(E-mail: directory@euromovements.info)

Directory of groups, centers, and activist research projects in Europe

(E-mail: directory@euromovements.info)

Map of the European networks developed within and around the ESF converging process

(E-mail: networks@euromovements.info)

Map of the Local Social Forum in Europe

(E-mail: lsf@euromovements.info)

Short presentations of particular experiences

(E-mail: info@euromovements.info)

Map of web-bibliographies on the European networking processes (E-mail: info@euromovements.info)

Chronology of European mobilizations

(E-mail: info@euromovements.info)

Reflective articles about the new social movements and the new converging spaces in Europe

(E-mail: ESFdebate@euromovements.info)

Articles on the data and new information generated by the Guide itself (E-mail: info@euromovements.info). Jointly with the recently initiated Eurotopia, we are producing an online newsletter on the European Social Forum and surroundings debating the challenges for its future, timed to appear in advance of a special meeting of the European Preparatory Assembly in Paris on 17-18 December 2005 to discuss the future of the ESF.

Conceptual dictionary

(E-mail: dictionary@euromovements.info)

Scope of the Project: The original scope of the Guide is limited to the organizations and collectives that have participated in the ESF process and the convergent spaces that have grown around it. Further development could entail a larger range of social movement networking activities within Europe.

Format and Language: The Guide will be published on the web on a multilingual web site built with the use of free software and available and freely reproducible on the base of copyleft principles. A partial version of the Guide will be published on paper in different languages.

PARTICIPATE !

To get involved, contact us via the e-mail addresses posted alongside the different content descriptions above, or via the general contact address:

Web site: <http://www.euromovements.info>

E-mail: info@euromovements.info

Tiki wiki: <http://www.europeanguide.tk>



Call for the second European Education Forum (20th - 22nd May 2005 at Bergen, Norway)

The organization committee for the second EEF/FEE hereby calls upon groups, organizations and individuals to join the **European Education Forum, 20th-22nd May 2005 in Bergen, Norway** which will take place at the same time as the conference of the European ministers of education. **The objective** is - by participating at debates or offering workshops - to advance discussions relating to the current European education policies and to develop individual and general alternatives. The European Education Forum is an independent forum organized in reference to the social forum movement with its open character, its width of political opinion and its diversity in kind and forms of argument.

Berlin 2003

Around 100 European student, pupil, and teacher-organizations and networks came together to hold the **first European Education Forum** in Berlin in September 2003. The forum countered a top-level education meeting of 33 European ministers in Berlin welcoming the progress of the Bologna-process concerning higher education.

The "Bologna-process" in Europe...

The main purpose was the creation of a **European Higher Education Area**, to which they committed in Lisbon in 2000 and Barcelona in 2002. This aims at making Europe *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world"*. This process has emerged and accelerated ever since. After Higher Education and Further Education, it is now the educational system of more than 40 European countries, which finds itself involved in a race for the strengthening of the competitiveness and commercialization of education.

... changes and commercializes education

A free, critical and emancipatory education is a basic resource for our society. But by following the WTO-declarations, the political leaders of the European governments are willing to turn it into a tool for the economy and accommodate it to the conditions of market principles. The world-wide standards, prescribed by GATS, are instruments for the planned commercialization of the European education sector. From kindergarten to university, **principles of competition and economic efficiency** are increasingly affecting every field: labor regulation, pedagogical strategies, institutional organization, budgets to name a few.

A forum to discuss about the European education policies

In view of these developments, what can we, students, pupils, teachers, parents and other stakeholders do in order to counter this development? What can we do in order to be actively engaged in the decision making pro-

cess of policies that affect us directly? Can we accept the progressing disengagement of the democratic process and in consequence the disengagement of the responsibility of the people of Europe? Which place will we have, what training access guarantees will we have for schools and universities transformed into competitive economic actors and which are submissive to corporate interests? What will happen with the universal and fundamental right of education in a system which is solely preoccupied with short employer-employee relationships at the service of profit-making?

... because another education is possible

Neither the defense of the status quo which maintains the reproduction of social inequalities, nor the big market of the "European Higher Education Area" imposed by the demands of a new economic world order are desirable. We believe that another education is possible with free access to knowledge and greater self-determination. Therefore, we suggest putting forward the needs of our societies and the demands of students and other involved. We are for an independent and critical education that allows individuals to emancipate him- or herself from social, economic and political constraints and obstacles. These values are indispensable in a democratic society.

Come and join us in Bergen in May 2005!

In order to make it possible for high-school students, university students and teachers, parents and citizens in Europe to have a say in these developments, to discuss current politics and to develop alternatives, we invite everybody to the second European Education Forum in Bergen.

Signatures:

scudag (Germany), www.scudag.de
 SISA / FESAL-E (Switzerland)
 L'Altrascuola Unicobas (Italia)
 Bhutan NATIONAL Students Organization (Nepal)
 Emancipation Intersyndicale (France)
 Radical and Socialist Students Organization - Rosso (Norway), rosso.uib.no
 Socialist Youth [solid] - Section Baden-Württemberg, solid-bw.de
 LandeschülerInnenvertretung NRW (Germany), www.lsvnrw.de
 Italian National Assembly of Movements for School as a Public Service
 L'Associació d'Estudiants Progressistes (AEP)
 AStA der Universität Kassel (Germany)
 CEPC - Coordinadora d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (Catalan Countries)
 LandeschülerInnenvertretung Rheinland-Pfalz (Germany)

Cf. article on page 16.



Borders, Markets, Movements

An Invitation to the CASA Meeting 17-20 June 2005, Amsterdam

CASA (Cultural Analysis Summer Academy) provides a space for activists and academics to debate and act upon social, cultural and political issues. This year the meeting focuses on issues surrounding borders, markets, and movement/s.

BORDERS

Borders are key instruments of power and exclusion, but they can also contribute to the formation of new identities and social movements. While becoming less visible, borders retain their significance in people's lives. For better understanding of the many and varied interactions with borders, we find it useful to raise questions such as:

- Can borders safeguard certain rights and liberties without necessarily entailing the exclusion and suppression of others?
- What are the "new" borders that are being created within the global community?
- Who controls the "new" borders and who transgresses them?

MARKETS

The basic definition of market is "a place for the exchange of goods". Today the language of markets has profoundly infiltrated diverse spaces to the extent that it is hard to talk from outside this discourse. From the supply of public services to the production of academic knowledge, all different facets of public life are being affected by the market economy. Debating this concept can enrich our knowledge of the politics of the market and enable us to act upon it. Some questions for discussion include:

- To what extent is the global market taking over local markets?
- How can markets function as places of exchange that serve people, instead of people serving the markets?
- What is the relationship of academia to the markets? How do social movements relate to markets?

MOVEMENT/S

The idea of a "global society" endorses notions of free movement and mobility. Yet the flow of people, goods, capital and ideas hasn't lived up to the hype of globalization and remains largely unidirectional. In a similar fashion, social movements that are supposed to provide a space for resistance and the mobility of identities, often prove to be highly institutionalized and centralized. 'Movement/s' can be explored in multiple ways, such as:

- What is the relation between movements and the institutional policies that direct and control them?
- How are social movements delimited? How do they interact with each other and with society?
- How is physical movement (migration, diaspora, travel etc.) related to borders and markets?

► Practicalities

Participants are welcome to organize activities around the different topics addressed in this meeting. They can vary from talks and papers, to performances or audio-visual presentations. The format of the meeting can also include discussions, roundtables, and workshops. Moreover, existing networks should feel free to use the CASA format to arrange meetings, discussions, calls for participation, and information-sharing events.

The CASA meeting will take place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, from 17th to 20th June 2005. Suggestions for participation and potential contributions should reach the organizing committee by **April 30th 2005**.

CASA will endeavour to provide free housing for active participants. A small amount of travel funding is also available.

To register and/or any further queries email us at: casacontributions@gmail.com.

More information, promotional materials, and (eventually) details of the program for the meeting will be forthcoming on our website: <http://casa.manifestor.org>.