

## Wittgenstein, Therapy and Decolonial School Education

Antonio Miguel<sup>1</sup>  
Carolina Tamayo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP), Campinas/SP – Brazil  
<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte/MG – Brazil

**ABSTRACT – Wittgenstein, Therapy and Decolonial School Education.** Founded on the conviction that Wittgenstein's oeuvre – which has as initial emblematic *de-colonial* landmark the *therapeutic-grammatical criticism* that he addresses to the monumental work of Scottish anthropologist James George Frazer, entitled *The golden bough* – can be seen not exactly as a philosophy or a new philosophy, but as a (self) therapeutic philosophizing about a set of problems that the *scholar tradition* called '*philosophical*' – among which, the *basic problem of language* that, to him, does not constitute a problem among others, but the condition for philosophizing and, by extension, for the *philosophical* or *verbalist deconstruction* of the other problems –, the purpose of this article is to characterize and describe therapeutically what we see as the *decolonial aspect of this* philosophizing. To this end, we will take to the *divan*, constituting it as a *disease* that can be treated by a therapeutic-grammatical attitude, the very problem of coloniality that has been guiding global school education since the constitution of national schooling systems, since the 19th century. From this perspective, we have assumed and practiced the belief that a (self) therapeutic writing must also be a (self) decolonial writing. Thus, we chose to write this article according to a polyphonic dialogic genre, which is also one of the characteristics of the therapeutic manner of philosophizing of LW. We specify the authorship of the voices participating in the dialogue by the initials of the first and last names of their authors, so Ludwig Wittgenstein will appear as LW. Our voices, in turn, will be referenced using HW and WH, which, intentionally, do not distinguish them.

Keywords: Decolonial school education. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Therapy.

**RESUMO – Wittgenstein, Terapia e Educação Escolar Decolonial.** Partindo-se da convicção de que o conjunto da obra de Wittgenstein – que tem como *marco decolonial* emblemático de partida a *crítica terapêutico-gramatical* que ele dirige à obra monumental do antropólogo escocês James George Frazer, intitulada *O ramo de ouro* – pode ser visto, não propriamente como uma filosofia ou uma nova filosofia, mas como um filosofar (auto)terapêutico acerca de um conjunto de problemas que a *tradição escolar* denominou '*filosóficos*' – dentre eles, o *problema básico da linguagem* que, para ele, não constitui um problema entre outros, mas a condição para o filosofar e, por extensão, para a *desconstrução filosófica* ou *verbalista* dos demais problemas –, o propósito deste artigo é caracterizar e descrever terapêuticamente o que vemos como o *aspecto decolonial desse* filosofar. Para isso, levaremos ao *divã*, constituindo-o como uma *doença* passível de ser tratada por uma atitude terapêutico-gramatical, o próprio problema da colonialidade que vem orientando

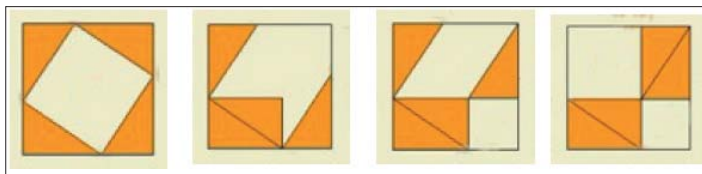
a educação escolar global desde a constituição dos sistemas nacionais de escolarização, a partir do século XIX. Sob esta perspectiva, temos assumido e praticado a crença de que uma escrita (auto)terapêutica deve ser também uma escrita (auto) decolonial. Assim, optamos por escrever este artigo segundo um gênero dialógico polifônico, que é também uma das características do modo terapêutico de LW filosofar. Especificamos as autorias das vozes que participam do diálogo pelas iniciais do nome e sobrenome de seus autores, de modo que Ludwig Wittgenstein aparecerá como LW. Já as nossas vozes serão referenciadas por HW e WH, o que, intencionalmente, não as distinguem.

Palavras-chave: **Educação escolar decolonial. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Terapia.**

**HW** – January 26, 1950. *LOOK AT THIS!* India is no longer called the British East India Company. It changed its name. It was renamed back to INDIA. Republic of INDIA.

**WH** – What do you mean by that?

**HW** – *LOOK AT THIS!* What do you see?



**WH** – I see triangles and squares. But what do you mean by that?

**LW** – What do I mean when I say “the pupil’s ability to learn may *come* to an end here”? Do I report this from my own experience? Of course not. (Even if I have had such experience). Then what am I doing with that remark? After all, I’d like you to say: “Yes, it’s true, one could imagine that too, that might happen too!” – But was I trying to draw someone’s attention to the fact that he is able to imagine that? — *I wanted to put that picture before him*, and his acceptance of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with this sequence of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*. (Indian mathematicians: “*Look at this!*”)<sup>1</sup>.

**HW** – Look! It is LW himself speaking about the purpose of grammatical therapy and also about the role that *picture production* and the *ability to imagine* play in it. The example of the sequence of pictures is illuminating because it can be seen as an *picture of the purpose* that guides every therapeutic attitude in the way that LW practiced it, based on his criticism of Frazer’s monumental work<sup>2</sup>, when he realized that he had invented a new investigative attitude that assumed different aspects according to the unique nature of the problem under investigation. It is a problematizing attitude strongly anchored in the visual, plastic-artistic appeal in which the picture that LW makes of human learning could be compared with the visual examination of a photograph or painting,

with something that occurs instantly, differently from a *grammatical way of learning*, in which the learner needs to be aware of the rules that guide the language game<sup>3</sup> and follow them to the letter, to observe the intended purpose.

WH – While you were talking, I went back to looking at the figures and remembered, *as if in a flash*, the Pythagorean theorem of the school days. And then, following more closely the transformations that occur from one figure to another, there is no doubt that the sequence is a *visual* proof of the Pythagorean theorem<sup>4</sup>. It is not haphazard, therefore, that LW refers to the phrase “*Look at this!*” to exemplify the teaching-learning picture that he triggers in his therapeutic attitude. That phrase was used to initiate mathematical problems for Hindu students in the Middle Ages. The problems of medieval Hindu mathematics were enunciated in the form of poems and, differently from the axiomatic-deductive Euclidean tradition, they were solved by an almost exclusive appeal to vision. The Hindus literally *designed* several *wordless proofs* of the theorems of Euclidean mathematics, and looking at the drawing would suffice so that, at a glance, one could not only translate the drawing into the rhetorical-verbal wording of the theorem corresponding to it, but also access, at a glance, a visual proof of the theorem.

JS – “I don’t think we have become blind, I think we are blind. Blind, but seeing. Blind who can see, but do not see. If you can look, you see. If you can see, you notice”<sup>5</sup>.

HW – Don’t you think that this aphorism expresses quite well that in which consists the *pedagogical purpose* of a *therapeutic-grammatical attitude* when it operates in the field of school education?

WH – As long as we see *only* the *blindness of those who can see, but do not see* – and we all can see, blind or not – as *the* disease, par excellence, to be taken to the Wittgensteinian therapeutic divan. This should be the guiding ethical-political purpose of all school education, of all research on it, and of all public policies related to it: deconstructing the *illusory pictures* that cloud our eyes and prevent us from seeing – *in the way that they effectively take place* – the *vital relationships* that we establish with other natural beings in the language games in different *forms of life*.

HW – I think it’s really to this *anti-illusionist language combat* that the following aphorism of LW seems to point:

LW - “A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn’t get outside it, for it *lay in our language*, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably”<sup>6</sup>.

WH – I also wonder if the therapeutic attitude, in the manner LW practices it, wouldn’t really be a *visual metaphor* aimed at deconstructing the *language illusionism*. That’s because, *illusionist pictures* of a prob-

lem can prevent politicians, public authorities, teachers, researchers, students and parents from *seeing it properly* and, consequently, from dealing with it in other ways, avoiding suffering, harm, misunderstandings, public spending and unnecessary stress. But, it seems that this aphorism goes beyond that. It seems to want to say something about the *power of illusory pictures to imprison our vision*, to blind us, to make us *blind who can see, but who do not see*. And that power seems to be a *power of language*.

WH – LOOK AT THIS!<sup>7</sup> What do you see?



HW – An old world map with which the artist purposefully interferes by opening a slit-wound that tears in black and blood red, in the direction of a meridian that passes through the African and European continents and that divides the globe in two equal parts. The black wound also affects an oceanic region where the waters of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans can no longer be distinguished. Blood-red stains also spread around the entire coast of the lands highlighted on the map, indicating possible maritime routes explored by the Europeans in the colonizing enterprise of the great navigations that occurred from the 14th century. But this last observation is already an *interpretation*<sup>8</sup>, a *supplement of meaning* of my *cultural look of colonized*, for the work of art does not show it, nor would it be legitimate to suppose that it was hiding it.

WH – Undoubtedly, it is our *cannibalized look of colonized people* that *wants and can see the black spots as wounds of the slavery* of African peoples brought to America, and the *red spots as maritime-commercial routes* or as the *blood of the exploitation of the toil* and of the natural riches of Amerindian lands, transformed into European colonial territories. You referred to this as a *supplement of meaning*. We could also say *supplement of perception* or *supplement of vision*, which constitutes neither an *invisible* that the eye cannot see, nor a *resignification* of that which the eye sees, nor a *clarification* or *translation* of what is shown in the plane of visibility, but a *supplement of meaning due to the very blindness of our vision*<sup>9</sup>.

HW – I think that consists precisely in this the distinction between *describing* and *explaining* that LW does in reference to the purpose of a therapeutic investigation, seeing the first action as legitimate and the second as illegitimate. I believe that thinking about such distinction can help us understand these distorted paradigms of knowledge that are still spreading throughout the world through the school as an institution that participates in the processes of *coloniality*. However, as you have clarified very well, *describing*, according to LW, is not a purely mechanical act of recording what the eye sees or clarifying what is seen to avoid confusion. The appeal that guides LW when he gives us the command to “*Look at this!*” is of an imaginative, inventive, creative nature and, therefore, an appeal of *supplementation of meaning*, of production of *new ways of seeing* understood as *new language games*.

WH – But, if for each problem a different therapy<sup>10</sup>, what therapeutic attitude are we practicing here in our conversation about the *decolonial aspect* that *we are wanting to see* in this attitude? I speak thusly because it is clear that we are aware that LW, in his sparse confidential writings such as, for example, those that were posthumously gathered in *Culture and Value*, although he was deeply concerned with political, ethical, aesthetic, moral and religious issues, to the point that many of his commentators see such issues as the real background against which the entire oeuvre of LW should be read, they are not properly investigated, nor even thematized in those that are generally considered to be his main works<sup>11</sup>. Wouldn't we, then, being at least reckless in wanting to see a *decolonial aspect* in his therapeutic attitude? Would LW be calling us to *epistemic disobedience*<sup>12</sup>?

WH – I think that we would be being imprudent even in qualifying it as *methodical, grammatical, deconstructionist, fictionalist* etc., as we ourselves have done in many of our research texts<sup>13</sup>. However, in doing so, we are simply trying to draw attention to the multiplicity of different *aspects* that manifest, depending on the problem that we propose to investigate therapeutically. Remember that we can see a duck, a rabbit or even an elephant with two trunks in a drawing on a sheet of paper<sup>14</sup>. What prevents us?

HW – Yeah... I think we really need to activate our sense of humor. In fact, it was LW himself who saw his attitude as a new method that, in *some aspects*, was similar to Freudian therapy<sup>15</sup>, while, in others *aspects*, it was similar to the observational and descriptive attitude of the evolution of a phenomenon practiced by the ‘scientist Goethe,’<sup>16</sup> among others. And it was he himself who said that the main characteristic of this attitude consisted in *aspect-seeing*, in *seeing-as*<sup>17</sup>.

WH – So that's it... *we are seeing* and wanting to explore here a *decolonial*<sup>18</sup> aspect in this attitude, not only because it is being practiced here

by us to deconstruct discourses and practices that the contemporary decolonial discourse *sees* as colonizing. But also because *we are seeing* its decolonizing aspect as being the purpose that guides our manner of practicing it, not only in considering the issue of the *structural coloniality of school education* that was imposed on us by the modern European discourse and practices, but of any other that we propose to take to the *divan*. Our singular way of practicing it will be to make it act in conjunction, especially, with the singular way in which LW practices it in the *deconstruction* of Frazer's work, but also in the *Philosophical investigations*. We will not refer here to texts that *addressed* LW's therapy, but only to the ways that LW himself practiced it in his texts.

HW – I agree with your proposal to stick to *different ways* for LW to practice this attitude, but I think it is pertinent to take the therapeutic criticism that LW addresses to Frazer as *a referential decolonial framework*. For, in a way, this conversation of ours started spontaneously trying to characterize for ourselves the way LW practices this attitude in the *Philosophical investigations*...

WH – We started, then, *doubly* on the contrary, which is always a good start... But, before we get to the criticism on Frazer, we would need to better clarify in what the *poetic-literary aspect* of LW's therapeutic philosophizing consists. Could it be his aphorisms? His visual metaphors? *Look at this!*

LW – “There is no outside. Outside you cannot breathe”<sup>19</sup>.

HW – I *see it as* a metaphor... I don't know if it's visual: if there was an outside, it would be *as if* the vital air were lacking there.

WH - Perhaps, to get rid of the empirical-psychological jargon, we could simply talk about *bodily metaphors* in this case, a *topological-pneumatic metaphor*. See the excerpt of the *Investigations* in which it participates:

LW – The ideal, as we conceive of it, is unshakable . You can't step outside it. You must always turn back. *There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe*. — How come? The idea is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off<sup>20</sup>.

WH – This dialogue is the closing of another one that takes place along the sequence PI-92-103. One of the voices that participate in it says that the rigid and clear rules of the grammar that guides the logical construction of a proposition would operate as mediators of the clarity, distinction and unambiguity of its signification, because, to this voice, an indeterminate meaning could not be seen as a meaning. When asked by another voice that if there is vagueness or lack of clarity in the rules of the grammar of a *language game*, it would stop being a game, the first voice answers by saying that it would not stop being a game; however, it

would be an *incomplete, idealized, imaginary, ineffective game*. Thus, an *ideal language game* is like a cloistering, asphyxiating game, which imprisons our thought in an *immutable picture*, locking it in itself, preventing it from leaving itself, which is why, for those who find themselves in this situation of inner imprisonment, there would not properly be a reality outside the thought itself in which one could breathe, since one only breathes the vitiated air of the very prison in which the thought is. I think, then, that this *ideal pair of glasses* through which we see reality, the “outside” of thought, would be so conditioning of what we see that we could barely realize that it would be possible to remove it and see in other manners what transpires “out there.”

HW – Your speaking reminded me of an aphorism by Nietzsche:

FN – “Parmenides said: “*one does not think what is not*” – we are at the other extreme and say: what can be thought must, surely, be a *fiction*.”<sup>21</sup>

HW – According to Nietzsche, a *fiction* is like a pair of language-figurative-illusionist glasses that mediates our processes of signification, *inevitably* and *irreparably deforming* what is going on “out there,” in case we could remove it. However, according to him, there is no such possibility. Although similar, Nietzsche’s pair of glasses is not identical to the *ideal pair of glasses* – equally illusionist and language of LW – that could be removed, even though we do not realize that it can be<sup>22</sup>.

WH – This comparison of yours is very ingenious and well founded. But the *ideal pair of glasses* of LW, because it is an incomplete language game that mediates signification, even if removed, it does not allow us to *directly* signify what is going on “out there,” *whether we are biologically blind or not*. Yes, we can – out of necessity, conviction, caprice, vanity, etc. – *replace it* with other pairs of glasses equally ideal that would allow us to see and signify in other ways what is going on “out there.” The pair of glasses of LW *inevitably conditions*, but *does not determine* the ways we signify the *complete or effective language games* in which we participate in different forms of life. And we can only signify an effective game through an incomplete game, because we cannot signify being “*outside*” a language game, because “*there is no outside*” of any game that can be played: outside the vital air is lacking. That is why LW identifies and describes how *ideal language games* lead us to produce *illusory pictures* about how things are going on “out there” and thus concludes the sequence of paragraphs we are referring to here: “– We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction, and so, in a certain sense, the conditions are ideal; but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!”<sup>23</sup>. So, the difference I see is that Nietzsche’s *fictional glasses* are *innate linguistic-figurative glasses* and, therefore, *non-removable*, which *determine* signification, whereas LW’s are *cultural language glasses* and, therefore, *replaceable, conditioners* of signification. For both, however, but for different reasons, *seeing* is always – and *inevitably* – a *seeing-as*,

an *as if*, a *verisimilitude*, a *family resemblance*. The Nietzschean *fictional as if* is an *innate seeing-as*, whereas LW's *fictional as if* – even when ideal or incomplete – is always a *cultural seeing-as*, *rectifiable and replaceable*.

**HW** – I tend to agree with this correction that you made to the way I signified the PI-92-103 sequence. Would we, with this, be building a fictionalist LW different, however, from Nietzsche, Veihinger or even from Kant?

**WH** – There are similarities, but also differences between the ways these thinkers signify the word *fiction* and similar ones: *imagination*, *imaginary*, *fantasy*, *ideation*, *ideology*, *conception*, etc. Perhaps, it was exactly to avoid confusion that LW did not use the word *fiction* or even *ideology*, but rather used *ideal*<sup>24</sup>. But it is good to clarify that, although not all *fictional seeing-as* is seen by LW as an *ideal seeing-as*, the latter is *always* seen as an *illusory*, *fanciful picture* or even a *fake view*, a *false vision*, which brings it closer to the *ideological seeing* in the way Marx conceived it, but not the Marxists who succeeded him. But in no way LW's *fictional seeing-as* could be seen – as historian Carlo Ginzburg sees it, in his work entitled *O fio e os rastros: o verdadeiro, o falso e o fictício*<sup>25</sup> [The thread and the tracks: the true, the false and the fictitious] – as a third alternative between *true* and *false*. But it is also possible to bring Nietzsche closer to Wittgenstein in terms of the therapeutic way of conceiving the role of philosophy itself, as defended Peters:

**MP** – If LW shares a similar notion of culture to Nietzsche, it is also the case that he, like Nietzsche, speaks of a new way of philosophizing — a new style of philosophy or of thinking — that is therapeutic and designed to resolve puzzles that arise in our language through grammatical investigations. Both emphasize the importance of language – its powers to mystify us – and philosophy as the means by which we can undertake grammatical investigations to demystify metaphysical problems<sup>26</sup>.

**HW** – Your comment helps us to distinguish the therapeutic attitude in relation to other methodical perspectives, especially those of an empirical-verificationist nature, of conducting academic research in the field of education. In a therapy, fictionalization games are quite different from those that establish causal relations of the “if... then” type, so common in the establishment of natural laws in modern science, even though they are also a specific type of establishing analogical links between two or more language games. *If A then B*, that is, if A is seen as the cause of occurrence of B, or B the effect or consequence of A having occurred, it is because the different manifestations of A and B, at different times, are seen as similar or as having similar aspects. In turn, the therapeutic *as if* are connections that just identify similarities without, however, establishing causal relations between the analog aspects of two or more language games. *Look at this!*



LW – We usually say: “IF he hadn’t done that, THEN harm would have been avoided”. But based on what justification? *Who knows the laws as per which society develops?* I am sure that even the smartest people have no idea of that. If you fight, fight. If you have hope, have hope. You can fight, have hope and even believe, *but without believing scientifically*<sup>27</sup>.

LW – The causal point of view is insidious because it leads us to say: “Of course, it had to happen that way”. Whereas we should think: “it could have happened that way and many other ways”<sup>28</sup>.

WH – Resorting to *non-causal analogies*, these aphorisms exemplify the non-causal nature of the therapeutic *as ifs*. Also, the assessment of the relevance of the analogies does not depend on empirical verifications, but on language normative agreements that are established between the beings interacting in a language game interwoven in a *form of life*.

HW – Correct! The *mediating fictional glasses* of LW – be they *ideal* or *incomplete*; *causal* or *deterministic*; or *non-causal* –, although they do not determine *the significant pictures* that we produce of other language games, they nevertheless constitute the *condition for the production of significant pictures*, which may become rigid, crystallized, illusory, inadequate or false, which does not mean, however, that they cannot be changed, replaced with others.

WH – In fact, this seems to be precisely the purpose of all therapy: on the one hand, to detect and deconstruct *unhealthy, rigid, crystallized, illusory, inadequate, unfounded, paradoxical, unproductive, false and other pictures* of an issue brought to the divan and, on the other hand, to panoramically show *other pictures* seen as appropriate of these issues. We should, therefore, identify and *deconstruct colonizing pictures* of school education, showing other pictures of schooling.

HW – Full agreement! We could *therapeutically show the adequacy of this picture* that we make of therapy through many examples that manage to clarify without causally connecting facts. That is why LW even rivaled his descriptive therapeutic attitude of panoramic presentation of an issue with the explanatory scientific attitude, of a causal nature<sup>29</sup>:

LW – “We feel as if we had to see right into phenomena: yet our investigation is directed not towards phenomena, but rather, as one might say, towards the ‘possibilities’ of *phenomena*. What that means is that we call to mind the kinds of statement that we make about phenomena. [...] Our inquiry is therefore a grammatical one. And this inquiry sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. *Misunderstandings* concerning the use of words, *brought about*, among other things, *by certain analogies* between the forms of expression in different regions of our language. – Some of them can be removed by *substituting one form of expression for another*; this may be called ‘analysing’ our forms of expression, for sometimes this procedure resembles taking a thing

apart”<sup>30</sup>. “Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about”<sup>31</sup>. “To repeat: don’t think, but look!”<sup>32</sup>.

LW – Someone reacts *AS IF* saying thusly: “No, I will not tolerate that!” – and resists. Perhaps that person will react in the same way in other equally intolerable situations and, perhaps, at that point their strength for any further revolt will be exhausted”<sup>33</sup>.

LW – There is nothing more stupid than the chatter about cause and effect in history books; nothing is more foolhardy, less well thought out. But who could put an end to it, just by saying it? (It would be *AS IF* intending to change, by speaking, the way women and men dress)<sup>34</sup>.

LW – The thinker is very similar to the draftsman whose goal is to *present all the interrelations between things*<sup>35</sup>.

LW – People who constantly ask “why?” ARE LIKE tourists who are in front of a building reading a guide and are so busy reading their construction history that it prevents them from seeing the building<sup>36</sup>.

WH – The latter is, without a doubt, a beautiful architectural analogy that alerts us to our blindness, our loss of visibility of what is manifestly stamped on the surface of the building and clearly exposed to our vision.

HW – Full agreement! A therapeutic attitude does not simply cover or invent a multiplicity of significant pictures of a problem. If it were to stop there, a therapy would be a relativistic, neutral and impartial attitude towards a problem that is investigated academically or that is problematized at school. It must also propose to identify and deconstruct illusory pictures and show adequate ways of dealing with a problem, without closing the issue or having the last word. It is not a rational or irrational, absolutist or relativistic attitude. It is an attitude that breaks with all the binary oppositions in which was entangled, trapped and asphyxiated the colonialist metaphysical discourse of modernity, a phantasmagoric and fundamentalist structure on which the architectural building of modern schooling was built.

WH – I think that we can now return to the *rough ground* of our problem. How do you *see* contemporary school education captured by the *picture* of *coloniality*?

HW – I think that the Brazilian post-colonial school education that started to be organized after the proclamation of the republic in 1889, even though it wanted to challenge the colonialist-racist project guided by a doctrinal humanist ethics, which prevailed throughout the colonial and

imperial periods, replaced its medieval dogmatic-religious faith in *the Christian god* with the equally dogmatic-religious post-Enlightenment faith in *the Comtean-science-god*. The historiographic-anthropological literature and, in particular, the most recent decolonial anthropological historiographies of Brazilian and Latin American education have repeatedly accused that this replacement was nothing more than the replacement of faith in *the Christian humanist ideological aspect* that characterized the colonialist-slavery project of European expansionism modern with faith in *the ideological humanistic aspect* of capitalist, mercantile, liberal and scientific character of that same project.

**WH** – A new colonialism with no more colonies... but that would persist in the smell and colors of the paints with which school walls are painted; in the flags that hang from the masts of school yards; in the languages and language games of the writing of school books; in the disciplines, curricula and school practices of all national and nationalist republican schools... Is that what you call *coloniality*?

**HW** – Yes, that's right, a new colonialism with no more colonies. But it is necessary to emphasize that "saying *coloniality* is not the same as saying *colonialism*. This is not a form that arose from or preceded modernity. *Coloniality* allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination, after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and by the structures of the modern/colonial capitalist system-world"<sup>37</sup>. This continuity of a pattern of power that developed after the discovery of the Americas in 1492, and remains today<sup>38</sup> developed into binary and hierarchical representations of construction of meaning, hence the *pictures of colonizing practices* are inextricably interwoven in the school life forms of the modern republican schooling systems of almost all nations of the contemporary world. It is a *structural picture of coloniality* and, therefore, a *remote structural picture of bellicose-imperialist slavery racism* that, from the European Modern Age onwards, reinvents, restructures, reinstates and starts to reproduce slavery racism, also bellicose and imperialist, based on skin color.

**WH** – Do you mean that the structural pictures of *coloniality* and racism may be older than we at first imagine? Older, certainly, than the European maritime expansionism that took place from the 14th century – which appropriated lands that, in pre-Columbian times, belonged to different Amerindian peoples –, and at least as old as the advent of Greek imperialism and expansionism in antiquity that led to the establishment of numerous Greek colonies in Italy and western Asia, which currently comprises the territory of Turkey? Even prior to the advent of school forms of life similar to ours?<sup>39</sup>

**HW** – The picture of slavery-colonialist-racist-bellicose-imperialist practices that constituted the defeated peoples and prisoners of war as slave-laborers in the countryside and in the cities was gradually constituted and transmitted before the advent of the school<sup>40</sup>. The picture of

these colonizing practices would have left their mark on the organization of all *forms of life* that it constituted and instituted in history, as well as in the different domains of knowledge and disciplinary fields of knowledge that were later instituted and differentiated between themselves in a unique primitive form of life called *school*. I usually characterize the uniqueness of this *form of life* based on the fact that it was created with the specific purpose of transmitting, to certain members of a community, *through the cultural practice of writing*, other *cultural practices and knowledge valued* by the community. Before the invention of *written or inscribed practices of transmission*, to future generations, of *the cultural memory* of other *intangible self-memorialistic cultural practices* that were directly and bodily enacted in different *forms of life*, but without the power to maintain, in time and space, the longevity of this memory, there could not have been any kind of school. Therefore, it was the perception of *the mediating memorialistic nature* of the cultural practices of *writing* and their power to translate and maintain, in a lasting and unequivocal way, through symbolic language games, the indirect visual memory of any other self-memorialistic cultural practice directly carried out that generated the need to establish a community of scribes-specialists-teachers to teach, to the new generations, the *secrets*, the *power* and the *magic* of this new, truly revolutionary cultural practice. School form of life persist to this day and, even though the name *school* is of Greek origin, school form of life could never be said to be *Western*, given that writing practices were invented by African and Asian peoples who lived in ancient Egypt and in the Mesopotamia valley, in territories that currently belong to Iran and Iraq. On the other hand, we must not disregard the fact that, as part of European *warlike-expansionist practices* in America, the practices of writing – unknown to the Amerindian peoples – were brought into the new world by the colonizers, which led them to see the knowledge produced by the indigenous peoples as irrelevant and inferior, since they were transmitted exclusively through their oral languages.

WH – So it would be possible to say that what you are calling the *picture of slavery-colonialist-racist-warlike-imperialist practices* would have participated in the constitution of the *picture of colonialist-racist school practices*, and both would be even older than the appearance of the word “school” to name a set of cultural transmission practices. In the same way that the word “mathematics” would have appeared later to name a set of cultural practices that were carried out in different *forms of life* and that, because they aim at addressing normative purposes, ended up being seen as maintaining *family resemblances*<sup>41</sup>. And so, if we admitted and allowed ourselves, for a moment, to see as “mathematic” such normatively regulated games of enactment of the human body in different times and cultural contexts, it would not be difficult to also admit how Euclidean centered, restricted, colonized and racist are not only our school mathematics curricula and our university curricula relating to teacher training, but also our academic practices in mathematics research and mathematics education. Furthermore, restricted and racist

is also, to a large extent, our own way of telling the cultural history of mathematics, since the high memorialistic longevity power of the writing practice, associated with the racist colonizing power of telling it in certain ways and not in others, chose to consider *human* only certain so-called “scientific-verbalist” forms of human life”<sup>42</sup>.

HW – This comment of yours could be extended to other domains of knowledge and school subjects, which is the way of knowledge being in school.

WH – Without a doubt! School forms of life were constituted and instituted by virtue of an overvaluation of the different *oral* and *written languages* due, above all, to their power to mediate the transmission of other valued community practices, which is why I call *rhetorical-verbalist* the colonialist school practices that have prevailed globally to date. And here I use the word “verbalist” in the sense of the primacy of the *verb*, of pure and autonomous ideas, as opposed to the primacy of *praxis* or *pragma*, that is, of the *practices* or effective bodily activities of production and mobilization of knowledge. It was this rhetorical-verbalist tradition that got us used to the picture of *mathematics* seen as a certain set of *individual mental activities* related to ways of dealing with graphic signs, such as, for example, *solving problems* that are exclusively adaptable or reducible to pencil-graphite or “mental pen,” which is supposed to be able to act independently of the community bodily practices and effective to be calculated, resorting to mediating artifacts such as stones, abacuses, etc. This tradition operates exclusively with the different phonemic or graphemic systems constituting articulated natural alphabetic languages or with the systems of signs constituting artificially created languages, such as the *inscribed* or *written* signs: with calamus, on clay tablets, papyrus or parchments, by the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and other peoples, in Antiquity; with quill pen, ink and paper, on sheets of paper, by medieval Byzantine Turks, Arabs and Europeans; or with our own fingers, in any other types of electronic graphic-visual supports of our day, such as electronic calculators, computers, tablet PCs, cell phones, etc.

HW – Does it mean that the distinctive mark of school forms of life in relation to the others would be of a *linguistic* nature, based on a *rhetorical-verbalist picture of language* that constituted it in opposition to the *effective community practices of knowledge production* that were carried out in other forms of life, that is, merely as a set of symbolic systems endowed with the power to memorize and transmit this knowledge?

WH<sup>43</sup> – The word *rhetoric*, like any other, can be signified in different manners. But it is possible to identify a philosophical tradition that understands it as *phonetically articulated language*, speech (*phoné*) in any native language – whether or not it involves the different systems of alphabetical writing – which does not establish, because it believes this is impossible, any kind of distinction between *logical-rational*

*narratives* or *discourses* (*logos*) and *imaginary narratives* or *literary discourses* (*poíesis*). There is also another philosophical tradition that not only believes that it can clearly establish this distinction, but also signifies *rhetoric* exclusively as *logos* or logical-rational discourse. I speak here of the word *rhetoric* in the first sense. But there is another way of speaking of language that participates in a *praxiological tradition* that understands that knowledge is produced and mobilized in different human activities, through different *practices* or *effective bodily practices*, which are reproduced mimetically, although they are always *regulated sets of actions* and effective bodily interactions that humans establish among themselves and with other natural beings, and that mobilize knowledge, values, affections, desires, memories and powers. I think that the notion of *language games* of LW participates in this praxiological tradition, since all symbolic systems of languages of any nature have their roots in that which LW calls *primitive language games*<sup>44</sup>, all based on bodily actions, and not on exclusively symbolic-verbal actions. And I speak here of *praxiological tradition* to differentiate it from the pragmatic aspects of Western philosophy, which are philosophical discourses about human praxiological activities.

**HW** – I am enjoying seeing how we are *bringing LW* into the constitution of a *colonialist school tradition* in history. I think that a unique aspect of this constitution is manifested in its resistance to qualify or characterize it using any geopolitically referenced criteria, using only *languagey criteria*.

**WH** – It's that "science, that is, knowledge and wisdom cannot be separated from language; languages are not just 'cultural' phenomena in which people find their 'identity'; they are also the place where knowledge is inscribed. Languages are not something that human beings have, but *something that human beings are*. That is why the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge engendered the coloniality of being"<sup>45</sup>. However, if I say *languagey*, it is simply to distinguish the *language games* from *strictly linguistic-verbalist pictures of language*, to highlight the *decolonizing picture of language* invented by LW, which neither reduces it to a set of national languages nor sees as unified with *the language*, but as an unlimited set of *scenic-bodily language games*, in order to make indistinct the line that often, even today, is drawn between *praxis* and *language* and, by extension, between *cultural practices* and *language games* interwoven in a form of life. I see this Wittgensteinian picture of language as *decolonially revolutionary*, as it delegitimizes or disallows the possibility of speaking about wisdom or knowledge independently from the *language games* that produce and mobilize them and, by extension, also disallows the possibility of speaking about autonomy or independence of epistemologies or epistemes in relation to language games, as still speak many thinkers affiliated to the decolonial paradigm and, surprisingly, many so-called Wittgensteinian thinkers<sup>46</sup>. But this picture of language is *decolonially revolutionary* for an even more

radical reason that escapes the zone of visibility of an *overly humanist colonialist look* – even when it *sees itself as* ‘Wittgensteinian’ – which believes that we, humans, would have independently produced our language games, without needing, for that, to resort to other natural being<sup>47</sup>. These are the so-called *social, cultural* and even *anthropological* readings of LW’s work, but which reduce ‘*the social*’ to *exclusively human* forms of life, that is, to an *ideal – because false – picture* of a *form of life*, something that has never existed or may exist.

HW – I think this observation is crucial for thinking about decolonial education in the contemporary world, as it shows how the “imposition of disciplinary school curricula – promoted by public policies that are closely related to the *coloniality* of knowledge<sup>48</sup> as a form of control – rules out the existence and viability of other *epistemic rationalities*<sup>49</sup> and of other knowledge that is not that of European or Europeanized white men”<sup>50</sup>. Knowledge and, especially, the so-called scientific knowledge, the different specific epistemes, in the colonizing school tradition, are still seen as synonyms of pure, autonomous and independent knowledge of *language games* and *forms of life*. Here, I am not disregarding the importance of different national languages as instruments for transmission of knowledge, but rather the absolutization and autonomization of knowledge. This *picture* of national languages as homogeneous, unified, stable and exclusive instruments for the constitution and transmission of knowledge and, by extension, for assessing the learning of the individual domain of a know-how, continues in modern schooling and, above all, with the Protestant reform that, guided by the purpose of mass dissemination of the Christian faith, saw in religious teaching conducted through reading and writing a means for such diffusion, for which the translation of the Bible into the different national languages proved to be essential. Thus, in the modern western world, the democratization of reading and writing practices in national languages occurred concurrently with the process of evangelization and transmission of Christian values and in connection with the European colonizer-mercantilist enterprise in *Abya Ayala’s* lands<sup>51</sup> and, therefore, with the spread of liberal values of free trade, of extortionate profit, of the practice of surplus value, and of the normative mathematical concepts and procedures that enable this diffusion. In the colonized countries, this ‘democratization’ of reading and writing practices meant, on the other hand, the erasure of the linguistic, ethnic-cultural and religious diversity of the different Amerindian communities colonized. Thus, the epistemic-curricular basis associated with the liberal-meritocratic organizational matrix of all the republican unified schooling systems that developed from the 19th century was established, in the colonized American countries and, in general, in almost all nations of the world.

WH – From this perspective, I think it could also be said that, from the 18th century onwards, the historiographical narratives of *themselves* – written or not literarily, and produced by this colonizing tradition

– invented the concept of *Western civilization* to celebrate their own conquests and, at the same time, hide their darker side, “coloniality”<sup>52</sup>. *Coloniality* seems to be a metaphorical extension of *colonialism*... But what is the nature of this extension?

HW – “Based on an analysis of the Latin American situation today, Aníbal Quijano developed the concept of *coloniality of power* to explore and question not only the experiences, identities and historical relations that are sustained in the imposition of an ethnic-racial classification of the colonized world population, but also the effects of capitalist domination present in South America. According to Quijano, the ‘capitalism’ category refers to a set of structural organization of all historically known forms of exploitation, slavery, servitude and control of the human body through the ‘work’ category, understood in the sense of economic productivity. Such forms of labor control were organized as a joint structure around the predominance of the salary form, called *capital*, to produce goods for the world market. Capital is a specific form of labor control that consists in the commodification of the workforce to be exploited”<sup>53</sup>. Quijano further argues that “in world capitalism, the issues of *work*, *race* and *gender* are the three central instances around which the relations of exploitation/domination/conflict are ordered. Therefore, the social classification processes will, necessarily, consist in processes in which these three instances associate or dissociate”<sup>54</sup>. “The population of the whole world was classified, first of all, into ‘racial’ identities and divided between the ‘European’ dominant/superiors and the ‘non-European’ dominated/inferiors. Phenotypic differences were used, defined, as external expression of ‘racial’ differences”<sup>55</sup>. I think, then, that the target of our criticism should be the modern European paradigm of rationality, “because it was the *instrumentalization of reason* by colonial power that produced this distorted paradigm of knowledge that failed in the liberating promises of modernity. Therefore, the alternative is clear: the destruction of the coloniality of the world power”<sup>56</sup>.

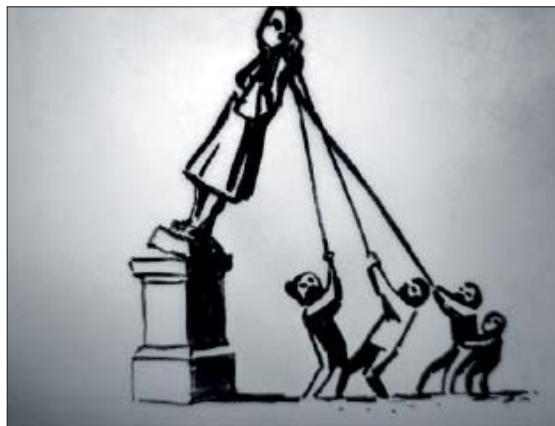
HW – Bearing in mind this way of seeing *coloniality*, *evolution*, *order* and *progress* are concepts structuring the meaning of European historiographical narratives developed from the end of the 18th century, which take their own culture as an exemplary civilizing model, seen as superior and more developed in relation to the other *forms of life* that come to be seen as barbaric, primitive, savage, inferior, irrational, pre-logical etc. On the other hand, from the middle of the 19th century, almost irreversibly, as a metaphorical-ideological extension that constitutes this project of “global modernities,” which implies “global colonialities,” the strength of this tradition is legitimized with the advent of the modern Western systems of schooling and disciplining of knowledge, of scientific theorization, and of the compartmentalizing academization of specializing and professionalizing knowledge.



**WH** – This picture of yours of coloniality structurally installed in Brazilian school education and in the educational systems of all Latin American republics leads me to think that it is not a problem *only* for the American nations formerly colonized by Europeans, but also for the nations of across the globe and also, of course, for the European nations themselves that got involved in the colonial enterprise. I say this because it didn't seem to exist until, suddenly, it exploded after the murder of George Floyd, the fatal victim of racism and police brutality, in the night of May 25, 2020, in Minnesota, United States. The protests spread for days not only in different cities in the United States, but also in major European cities. The Edward Colston statue<sup>57</sup>, which symbolizes the memory of British enslaving colonialist expansionism, was thrown into the river during *Black Lives Matter* demonstrations in the city of Bristol, England.



**WH** – See also what the famous anonymous street artist Banksy (AB) said about the graffiti he painted at the place from where the Colston statue was taken. *Look at this!*



**AB**<sup>58</sup> – Here is an idea that serves both those who miss Colston's statue and those who don't. We lifted him out of the water, put him back on

the pedestal, tied cables around his neck, and ordered life-size bronze statues of protesters in the act of pulling him down. Everybody happy. A famous day remembered.

**HW** – You are absolutely right. These recent reactions to racism and the European colonizing project almost everywhere in the world – and on the European continent itself – show us that “a decolonial project allows us to reflect beyond the modern Western context in which, in this case, the collective recovery of history, to warn that modernity in Latin America would be part of an experience of a character not only modern – in the terms traced by the Eurocentric interpretation – but also colonial. [...] Project that seeks to draw on indigenous and Afro-descendant memories”<sup>59</sup>.

**WH** – And why do you use the term *decolonial* – coined very recently in the academic world – to characterize LW’s criticism of Frazer?

**HW** – Seeing and clarifying the *decolonial aspect* in LW’s therapeutic criticism of Frazer is not so evident as some observations that, for example, Darcy Ribeiro makes in the preface he writes to the Brazilian translation, by Waltensir Dutra, in 1982, of this work by Frazer:

**DR**<sup>60</sup> – After all, let’s read, in Portuguese, the classic work of James G. Frazer, one of the most beautiful texts in anthropology. In no work can one see, as in this one, the human spirit unfold in such varied manifestations. They are drawn by Frazer both in the archaic forms that are read in the old biblical and classic texts and in the wild forms documented in the travel literature and in the ethnography texts. Compending these sources, Frazer shows us, through the infinite multiplicity of their manifestations, the essential unity of the human spirit, expressed in the amazing continuity of the same archetypes of thought that are repeated over millennia in peoples all over the Earth. Beyond the unity, variety and continuity of these ethnological expressions of the human mind, Frazer intends to show us, still, a constant progression from rude, bloody and perverse forms of conduct to more and more purified and spiritualized forms. For this very reason, a certain optimism is evident in the whole work, which is usually explained by the blindness in which the European intellectuals of his time lived. The unspeakable barbarities of that time, which occurred mainly in the colonial underworld, had no echo there. They were seen as things from other latitudes that concerned people who were not exactly human. Only Nazi bestiality awoke the European to the ferocity contained in themselves. Bruteness – we have all learned since – is not in the human past, defeated or in the throes as Frazer wanted. It is a threat permanently ready to leap over any society and conflagrate it in hideous carnages and the most perverse martyrdom.

**WH** – It is clear to me that this comment by Darcy Ribeiro is a necessary decolonial political criticism of Western historiographical meth-

ods that, like Frazer's, the academic world often imports uncritically for different fields of research.

WH – Yes, you are right. I think that LW would tend to agree with decolonizing methodological criticisms of that nature. However, I think that it is not, necessarily, by making criticisms of a political, sociological, psychological nature or, even, so-called critical discourse analyses, such as those developed in the field of linguistics, that a therapeutic attitude would tend to deconstruct colonizing historiographic methods. It tries to decolonize in another way. Speaking of *erroneous associations* in the field of Anthropology research, the critical presentation made by British sociologist Mary Douglas for the same Brazilian translation of Frazer's work, she ends up touching on an *aspect* of high relevance for investigations of a therapeutic nature, namely, that which concerns the assessments and negotiations of the legitimacy of analogical associations composing a panoramic presentation of the problem that is taken to the divan. I think, however, that it is not appropriate to speak of *individual and independent erroneous associations of language games*. According to LW, associative acts are not mimetic-mechanical acts that would mirror "external stimuli" and would imprint them on the *tabula rasa* of a "clone-mind" of the human brain, as believed by the old psychological theory of mental association of empiristic approach.

HW – You are right! Yes, we can form illusory pictures based on associations that we establish between aspects of two or more language games and evaluate certain associations as appropriate or not, but always in the light of language games guided by normative purposes, that is, communally agreed for functioning as a correction standard for other language games.

HW – Indeed... I think Douglas is also mistaken in stating that the turning point that would have led to the advent of scientific activity in history would have occurred from the moment when human beings would have made a break with being subjected to the perception of erroneous associations, that is, associations later assessed as incorrect. It would be better to say that the path that would have led to science would have been that of assessment of associations aiming at their adequacy in considering a certain problem. And, on that aspect, to provide it with reason, I think we should correct Frazer's empiricist claim that "*the primitive mind was randomly at the mercy of deceptive associations*", saying that humans of any age and context are not randomly makers of passive associations, regardless of language games that work as a correction standard. Both Frazer and Douglas were wrong in speaking of "primitive mind", as if associations were, in behaviorist terms, private mental activities, responses or internal mentalistic psychological *outputs* to external stimuli. They are also mistaken in speaking of "the path that would have led to science" because, speaking in these terms is already admitting an evolutionary, stage-based and empiricist thesis in the "explanation" of the advent of scientific activity, as if acting sci-

entifically – that is, testing, verifying, contrasting, refuting, abandoning or correcting, in short, evaluating ways of acting by association, by perception of similarities and differences – were not a way of acting as a community that has always been practiced in all fields of human activity. Therefore, acting scientifically, in this broad and vitally situated sense, does not characterize or identify specific types of community, that is, isolated and specialized scientific communities of today or of any time, but rather properly human ways of acting and co-acting with one another and with the other natural beings, in any field of activity, to achieve specifically community purposes.

**WH** – I think that's what LW was referring to when he criticizes Frazer for attributing to the “primitives”, and not also to the so-called “scientists” of all times, the mimetic practice of magic, equally based on the establishment of similarities and differences, as well as on modes of drawing conclusions of the “if p then q” type, since this is the fundamental metaphysical belief shared by both supposedly “primitive” humans of all times and by humans legitimated as “scientists” of all times. What LW criticizes, therefore, is the fact that Frazer does not also see scientists themselves as equally “primitive” or “savage” humans and, by extension, also for not seeing humans that he considers “primitive” or “savages” equally as scientists.

**HW** – *Look at this!* Did you notice the epigraph Frazer chose to open his work?

**TM**<sup>61</sup> – The still glassy lake that sleeps / Beneath Aricia's trees / Those trees in whose dim shadow / The ghastly priest does reign / The priest who slew the slayer / And shall himself / be slain.

**HW**<sup>62</sup> – These are verses by the British essayist and historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) that lead me to establish a connection between his work and that of Frazer, and to see, in both, a *whig* or *historicist orientation* in the way of conceiving, investigating and producing historiographical narratives. It is clear that Frazer did not choose such verses casually. As an opening epigraph of his work, they constitute a sort of analogue-metonymic key to access the methodological dogma that guides every whig historiographical narrative, of which Macaulay's work *The History of England*<sup>63</sup> is a paradigmatic example. Macaulay's *The History of England*, like Frazer's anthropological historiography, was written in literary style and was much acknowledged in its time, and even after the historicist orientation suffered severe criticism in the academic world. A *whig historiography* is a historiographical approach – often to the constitution of a national State in history – that presents the past as an inevitable progression towards a bright, happy and non-obscurantist future. They are historicist, scientificist, nationalist, political, progressive, evolutive, and teleological narratives that, in most cases, identify the nation to come as a liberal constitutional

democratic or monarchical-constitutional State. In the case of Macaulay's *History of England*, the whig perspective leads him to see Britain as the model teleological boundary of a civilized nation so that the global geopolitical field of nations is divided between, on the one hand, more or less civilized nations, depending on how close they are to the British model of social and political organization and, on the other hand, in nations seen as "barbaric" or "primitive." *Whig historiographies of sciences*, in turn, are approaches in which conflicts and failed experiences are intentionally ignored, which makes them rationalized, distilled approaches exclusively on successful scientific theories. *Look at this!* This is a statement by Macaulay regarding education in India, at the time, still a British colony:

TM<sup>64</sup> – I think it is not an exaggeration to say that all historical information collected from all books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than that found in the most insignificant abbreviation used in preparatory schools in England.

WH – It would be necessary, then, to radically question the historicist pictures of human forms of life, since all of them – whether they are said to be genetic, metaphysical, traditionalist, methodical or ethical historicist – were constituted as a product of European imperialist-colonizing expansionism and, therefore, in the name and for the glory and praise of this enterprise. First, because all historicist historiographical narratives produced totalizing, universal, teleological, progressive, linear, stage-oriented, rationalized, deterministic and civilizing pictures of history. And also – and above all – because historicist narratives turned out to be one-way historiographies, in which the picture of an imperialist, expansionist, predatory, competitive, scientific, patriarchal, traditionalist, racist, misogynist, homophobic civilization is teleologically projected as an ideal civilizing standard and, therefore, as a criterion for ethical-political judgment of all forms of life. They are historiographical narratives based on the warlike-civilizing grammar of meritocratic liberalism. Such narratives produced *Eurocentrism* – the Eurocentric version of modernity – as a hegemonic perspective of knowledge and its two foundational illusory pictures: the picture of the history of human civilization that culminates in Europe; the picture of the binary and Manichaeic division of the world between Europe and non-Europe, West and East, with all the differences transformed into unevenly resulting from this division, which have as their generating axis the ideological concept of race. These two pictures can be recognized, unequivocally, on the foundation of evolutionism and dualism, two of the core elements of Eurocentrism<sup>65</sup>. I think that any deconstruction of the colonialist historiographic discourse should necessarily entail the deconstruction of historicist pictures of history, given that the historicisms constituted history as a specialized domain of knowledge, scientific investigation and as a school discipline.

**HW** – I think it is also important to point out that whig historiographies and, more broadly, all historicist historiographies like Frazer's are guided by the scientificist belief of the *law of the three states of Comte*<sup>66</sup>. This law assumes that both a human being, in his individual history, and human societies, in their collective histories, tend to go through the same epistemic-methodological states in relation to the evolutionary and linear sequential mode of explaining and dealing with natural phenomena, namely: the theological state, the metaphysical state, and the positive or scientific state. In the theological state, explanations tend to be speculative, that is, explanations that tend to resort to supernatural deities, and are therefore not based on experimentation and empirical evidence; in the metaphysical state, explanations tend to be logical-argumentative, abstract and causal, but equally alien to experimentation; in the positive state, merely argumentative explanations tend to be confronted with observation, with experimentation with the purpose of inferring the laws that govern the phenomena<sup>67</sup>.

**WH**<sup>68</sup> – The common assumption underlying all historicist historiographical narratives has its expression in the so-called Haeckel biogenetic law. According to this law, all human or non-human forms of life, in a given temporal moment, could be seen as the result of their temporally antecedent configurations. Metaphorical extensions of this naturalistic belief produced on the basis of morphogenesis studies ended up stimulating the production of countless evolutive, evolutionary or developmental theories – linear, cyclical or dialectical – in all fields of scientific activity: in physics, in biology, in history, in anthropology, in linguistics, in psychology and also, of course, in the field of the so-called scientific pedagogies. “In the field of pedagogy, this colonizing evolutionary-stage-based fever transfigured the child into an infant, as well as, into childhood, not only the temporal period of biological immaturity to procreate and ensure the continuity of the species, but also, the corresponding cultural period, now transfigured into a period of generalized disability and/or preparation for the acquisition of skills to come”<sup>69</sup>. From the end of the 19th century, these illegitimate metaphorical extensions of Haeckel's equally controversial biogenetic law also ended up defining organizational and curricular policies for national school education systems almost everywhere in the world.

**WH**<sup>70</sup> – All historicist modes that produce infants and childhoods colonize either because they produce infant children who were originally corrupt or defective, but whose purity can be recovered by a rectifying colonizing education, or because they produce incomplete, partially pure infant children, but who tend to a purity to be hard-won through an equally colonizing education that, at the limit, aspires to the ideal of complementing that partially pure purity.

**HW** – Moreover, by choosing Macaulay's verses as an epigraph of his work, Frazer guides his historiographic-anthropological narrative

based on the *providentialist historicist* belief that the Protestant Christian god is the true protagonist of human history.

WH – Without a doubt!

HW – After all that we have said, I now can signify in another way the following excerpt from LW's therapeutic criticism of Frazer:

LW<sup>71</sup> – What a narrowness of mental life on the part of Frazer! And what an impossibility of conceiving a life that is different from the English life of his time! Frazer cannot think of any priest who is not, fundamentally, an English parish priest of our time, with all his stupidity and weakness. [...] Frazer's presentation of human beings' magical and religious conceptions is unsatisfactory: it makes these conceptions appear as errors. Was Augustine wrong, then, when he invoked God on every page of the *Confessions*? And if he was not wrong, then who was, it could be said, was the Buddhist saint – or any other – whose religion expresses completely different conceptions. But none of them were wrong. Except when stating a theory.

HW – I think that this criticism of LW falls on the scientificist assumption that guides Frazer's whig historiographic-anthropological narrative. This assumption leads him to build a false picture of the Nemi priesthood succession practice. According to LW, this false picture is produced through an illegitimate mechanism of 'scientificization' of a dogmatic-religious practice and, therefore, a practice of symbolic-ritualistic nature, in a scientific hypothesis open to empirical verification or refutation and rational explanations, given that, from the Comtean perspective, historiographical-anthropological explanations – like any others of a scientific nature – must participate in the final positive stage of an evolutive, linear and universal epistemological-explanatory process that sees observation, experimentation and the production of laws regulating natural or social facts as the ultimate and definitive criteria for validating scientific explanations. LW's objection to the Frazerian desire to scientifically explain a dogmatic-religious and, therefore, metaphysical practice is of the same nature as the objection to the inverse desire to explain dogmatically, that is, through metaphysical theories, a scientific hypothesis for which, therefore, it is possible to accumulate a set of empirical evidence that reinforces or refutes it. That is why, according to LW, there is nothing wrong with Augustine, the Buddha or any other dogmatic practice of a religious or magical character, except when manifesting and carrying out the desire to theorize them, to explain them scientifically, that is, when trying to found faith on reason, rationalize faith, or explain faith rationally, as did, for example, the countless 'scientific proofs' of the existence of God throughout the history of philosophy and religion. Or, when the scientist expresses the opposite desire to found reason on faith, that is, to transcendentalize reason, to explain the phenomenon or problem under empirical inves-

tigation based on metaphysical, transcendental theories, inaccessible, themselves, to observational or experimental-perceptual control. And this is where Frazer's error manifests, according to LW.

**WH** – On the one hand, a noteworthy feature of LW's therapeutic criticism is identifying and considering erroneous Frazer's attitude of wishing to scientifically explain what can not be explained scientifically, that is, Frazer's attitude of trying to rationalize the dogma. On the other hand, by accusing of erroneous the invisibility of Frazer's look to the symbolic nature of the magical and religious practices, LW also leads us to see as legitimate the therapeutic approach of explaining Frazer's desire to explain what can not be explained scientifically, when explaining the imperiousness of such desire by its invisibility in relation to the symbolic nature of magical and religious practices. The desire to explain a practice is explicitly condemned; however, the desire to explain that desire to explain is not. We would then be before two different types of explanation, that is, two different uses of the word "explanation" – one illegitimate and the other legitimate – used by LW in his criticism of Frazer, or, then, it would be more pertinent to say that it is equally criticizable LW's desire to show the reader what would have led Frazer to hold on to a distorted or false picture of the grammatical rules of magical and religious practices, seeing them not as beliefs guiding the conduct of symbolic practices, but rather as hypotheses about natural phenomena to be confronted with experience?

**HW** – We must bear in mind that LW's argument against Frazer is not of the same nature as Frazer's argument against magical and religious practices. Frazer's positivist-scientific argument against magical and religious practices and, strictly speaking, against all other dogmatic or metaphysical practices is that, because they are not based on scientificity standards, and because they cannot be empirically verifiable or refutable, they should be seen as primitive, barbaric, naive, childish, irrational, etc. and therefore ethically reprehensible. LW's argument against Frazer, on the other hand, is that Frazer's argument against magical and religious practices is self-reflective, that is, it applies to Frazer's own argument, deconstructing it, so that Frazer's anti-magical, anti-religious, and anti-metaphysical argument is, itself, magical, religious, and metaphysical. Thus, Frazer's error was not having seen that the whig grammatical assumption that guides his anthropological-historiographical investigation is also, itself, a belief or a dogma of a methodological nature that compromises the scientificity of his own investigation. And it is in order to avoid being seduced by the same enchantment that language prepared Frazer that LW begins his criticism of Frazer with the following self-therapeutic observation:

**LW<sup>72</sup>** – I now believe that it would be correct to start a book with observations on metaphysics as a kind of magic. In doing so, however, I could neither speak in favor of magic nor make fun of it. The depth of the magic would have to be maintained. – Yes, because the elimination



of magic would have here the very character of magic. [...] We must start with the mistake and convert it into the truth.

WH – I find your clarification convincing. Based on it, it would not be legitimate to say that LW “explains” – much less that he “explains scientifically” – Frazer’s scientist desire in the same sense that Frazer wishes to *explain* – and, more than that, *explain scientifically* – the magical and religious practices. LW does not transform the dogma that guides Frazer’s *whig* anthropological historiography into a hypothesis to be proved or refuted empirically. What he does is accuse a *paradox* and, therefore, a logical error in the positivist-scientificist assumption that guides Frazer’s investigation and, by extension, all historicist historiographical investigation. It is the *paradox of the liar*, whose most concise formulation is expressed in the proposition “I lie”. For, if I suppose this to be my true statement, then I am lying and, therefore, the statement that I lie is false; on the other hand, if I suppose it is false, then I am telling the truth and, therefore, the claim that I lie is true.

HW – That’s right! Hence, LW’s argument against Frazer is just a clarification of the language enchantment that leads us to the desire of transforming beliefs or dogmas that guide religious and magical practices into scientific hypotheses. Such enchantment is nothing more than the performative power of a scientist of the problems that are subjected to investigation, a picture that, being repeated picture so often in our language games, acquires a hegemonic power that ends up imprisoning our ways of seeing, speaking, interpreting and acting: power of discourse, Foucault would say.

WH – It is thus clarified – as well as illustrated through its application to the positivist assumption that guides Frazer’s *whig* historiography – LW’s PI-115 aphorism regarding the illusory pictures’ power to imprison us. It is such *iterative power mechanism* of our language games that, according to LW, would lead us to produce “false pictures” or “illusory pictures” of the problems we investigate or deal with, as well as to act or react dogmatically, irrationally, in a prejudiced manner, or even violently to everything that is strange to us, foreign, that causes strangeness and destabilizes us.

HW – Don’t you think it surprising to find that this therapeutic criticism that LW directs to Frazer ‘anticipated’ by almost 30 years the *anti-historicist*, *anti-whig* and, therefore, *anti-Frazer thesis*, in favor of which French anthropologist Claude Lévi- Strauss argued in his book *The elementary structures of kinship*<sup>73</sup>?

CLS<sup>74</sup> – Thinkers such as Freud, Blondel, Piaget and Jung, among others, let themselves be seduced by the *archaic illusionist picture* of wanting to see in primitive societies an approximate picture of a more or less metaphorical childhood of humanity, whose main stages would also be reproduced by their part in the individual plane, by the child’s intel-

lectual development. However, the most primitive culture is always an adult culture and, therefore, incompatible with the infantile manifestations that can be observed in the most evolved civilization.

**WH** – Despite the unprecedented technological advance, especially in the fields of Information and Communication, what still prevails and is accentuated is the social and economic inequality between different nations and within the same nation. Global school education in the 21st century still maintains, preserved, the ideology and structural and organizational characteristics inherited from the discussions, after the French revolution, about the organization of public national systems of modern schooling. The legal constitution of most modern national States was based on the political-ideological organizational matrix of meritocratic liberalism. Neoliberalism, even though it is an imperialist, fundamentalist, secular and warmongering religion, is supposed to be neutral, impartial, non-partisan, secular and irreligious, as British philosopher and political activist Rupert Read stated:

**RR<sup>75</sup>** – There is at least one religion that cannot be defended, namely, political liberalism itself. Indeed, by insisting on its own priority, political liberalism is a “secular” fundamentalism. Its pseudo-irreligious character hides its absolutely imperial reach, its comprehensive (re)conception of the totality of human life [...]. The liberalist claim to neutrality, which made liberal political philosophy seem like the only alternative available in the contemporary English-speaking academic world, is an ideological farce that hides its ambition, today fully globalized, for political and spiritual domination. Therefore, I reject – probably because of a matter of religious conviction – liberalism as something deeply dangerous and self-contradictory.

**WH** – It was this liberal positivist ideology, always renewed, taking on new guises, that guided the constitution of all national school education systems from the 19th century onwards. To date, the most dogmatic and enduring scientificist organizational matrix produced by Comtean positivism – and that globally sealed the fate of national public education systems – fascinates curriculum reformers oriented towards the conduct of overwhelming mass indoctrination. It became universal and managed to survive two world wars and underwent almost no changes even in so-called socialist or communist republican states. After World War II, school education came to be more emphatically seen as a condition for the social and economic development of a nation, for the full exercise of citizenship, and for the social and economic equalization of individuals belonging to the same nation. American countries that underwent the traumatic experience of colonization also uncritically adopted this model of schooling, even after the colonies conquered political independence.

**HW** – Just as the historiographical-literary-whig narrative structure of Frazer’s monumental work weaves its sense by orienting itself towards

the European civilizing compass of the warlike, imperialist, mercantilist, neocolonialist, enslaving, capitalist, classist and predatory caravel, the picture of school – disciplinary, scientificist, hierarchical, stage-based, progressive, neoliberal, market-oriented, competitive, selective, meritocratic, propaedeutic, patriarchal, racist, misogynistic, homophobic and, therefore, exclusionary and anti-democratic – that was globally imposed on us by the colonial order no longer is sustained in the contemporary world.

WH<sup>76</sup> – I try to reach you / with words / with words / know you / like someone who / with a flashlight and a map / believes to be undertaking the discovery of the world / I stand up / I am alone in the dark / with both feet on the cold cement / (where is it on what I wrote?).

HW – After the therapeutic demolition of Frazer's whig-colonizing civilizing narrative, LW soon realized and disapproved of the ethical basis of the picture of civilization that it promoted and, by extension, of the picture of school that proposed to prepare children and young people for such kind of way of life.

LW<sup>77</sup> – This book was written for people who have an affinity with their spirit. This spirit is very different from that which informs the vast current of European and American civilization of which we are all part. That spirit is expressed in a movement forward, in building ever wider and more complicated structures; the other consists in striving for clarity and perspicuity in any and all structures. The first tries to understand the world through its periphery – in its variety; the second, in its center – in its nature. And, therefore, the first adds one construction to the other, advancing forward and upwards, so to speak, from one stage to the next, whereas the other remains where it is and what it tries to understand is always the same thing.

AM<sup>78</sup> – Reflected in the puddle / of the patio / the skyscraper grows / downwards / the doves – four – / fly in the dry sky / until one of them lands / in the puddle / undoing the image / of its many floors / the skyscraper / now has half.

LW<sup>79</sup> – Each of the phrases I write tries to express everything, that is, the same thing over and over again; it is as if they were simply visions of a same object, obtained from different angles. I could say: if the place I intend to reach could only be reached by means of a staircase, I would quit trying to get there. For the place I really have to get to is a place where I must already be. Everything that can be reached with a staircase does not interest me.

HW – *Look at this!* It's just a picture of the decolonial school that will come...

WH – You’re kidding, aren’t you? I don’t see anything!

HW – Then... try again!

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## Notes

- 1 (LW, 2009, PI-144).
- 2 It is the work of Scottish anthropologist James George Frazer, entitled *The Golden Bough*, whose original English version was initially published in two volumes, in 1890, and its thirteenth volume, in 1935. It is considered one of the fundamental works of anthropology for gathering a huge diversity of myths, legends and reports of magic and religion from different peoples of the world, even though Frazer had never conducted field research and was seen as a cabinet anthropologist.
- 3 Breaking with the desire to apprehend the essence of language, LW (2009, PI-7) invents the expression *language games* to refer to the unlimited *praxiological-bodily uses* that we make of the signs of any type of language in the context of an activity that takes place in a *form of life*. A language game is then seen as human bodies in symbolic (inter) action with other humans or other natural beings.
- 4 The *so-called* theorem of Pythagoras – but which the Mozambican historian of mathematics Paulus Gerdes (1952–2014), in a creative and strongly visually appealing book titled *African Pythagoras* (Gerdes, 2011), claims to having been known by African and Asian peoples long before the Greeks and, therefore, Pythagoras – can be geometrically stated as follows: “In any right triangle, the area of the square built on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares built on the catheti”. The last proposition of Book I of *Euclid’s Elements* – a work written in the 3rd century B.C., in Alexandria, when Egypt had become a Greek colony – is a *logical-rhetorical demonstration* of this theorem that, intentionally, refuses to give credit to any visual appeal in proving a mathematical truth.

- 5 Aphorism by Portuguese writer José Saramago from his book *Ensaio sobre a cegueira* (Saramago, 1995).
- 6 (Wittgenstein, 2009, PI-115, our italics).
- 7 In: ENCICLOPÉDIA Itaú Cultural de Arte e Cultura Brasileiras. São Paulo: Itaú Cultural, 2020. Available at: <<http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/obra4123/mapa-de-lopo-homem-ii>>. Accessed on: Aug 3, 2020 Encyclopedia entry. ISBN: 978-85-7979-060-7. Oil painting on wood and suture line entitled “MAPA de Lopo Homem II” – belonging to the series *Terra incógnita*, started in 1992 – by Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão.
- 8 It is important to distinguish here at least three frequent uses of the word *interpretation* by the philosophical discourse to which Sontag (1966, p. 4-7) calls our attention condemning two of them: “What Sontag condemns in the hermeneutic-interpretative project is both the use she calls *modern* that such project makes of the term *interpretation* – by understanding it as a synonym of the *unveiling* of a *supposedly unique* (faithful, true, essential, inalienable, original) *meaning* that would be hidden in the private world of non-verbalized thought – and the use she calls *ancient* that such project makes of the term *interpretation*, by understanding it as a synonym of the production of *resignifications*, of *alternative significations*, or of *versions* for this supposed essential private meaning. Based on this distinction, it is important to note that both the modern and the ancient modes can be seen as *forms of explanation*, in the sense that LW mobilizes this last word in his *Observations on Frazer’s Golden Bough*, since they are seen as linguistic strategies of rhetorical-argumentative character triggered by the reader to infer meanings not manifested in a language game, but which are seen by him as hidden in that game, based on meanings actually manifested in that same game. LW says in PI-126: “[...] *For whatever may be hidden is of no interest to us*”. Thus, in both cases, the interpretation, according to Sontag, appears as a particular mode of explanation in the sense of Wittgenstein, since the interpreter in fact believes that the new meaning that he sees as hidden or not manifest in the interpreted work would be the true meaning – or an adequate translation of the true meaning – intentionally attributed to the work by its producer. In reality, however, this new meaning is but a *resignification*, an *inference* of the interpreter, an *explanation of the meanings manifested* in the work. In the sequence PI-201-206, LW mobilizes the word *interpretation* in a way analogous to that considered legitimate by Sontag, namely, as a *game of clarification of uses*, that is, a *game of translation of one language game to another*” (Miguel, 2016a, 318-320; 503-504): “For what we thereby show is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which, from case to case of application, is exhibited in what we call “following the rule” and “going against it”. That’s why there is an inclination to say: every action according to a rule is an interpretation. *But one should speak of interpretation only when one expression of a rule is substituted for another*. [...] Shared human behaviour is the system of reference by means of which *we interpret* an unknown language” (LW, 2009, PI-201-206).
- 9 This is the *point of view* that Jacques Derrida defends in his text *Memórias de Cego: o auto-retrato e outras ruínas* (2010): “According to the philosopher, there would be in every *point of view* (*point de vue*) a sort of *no view* (*point de vue*), a *invisible constituent of all vision*. The French expression used by Derrida *point de vue* already has, in itself, this *double possibility of reading*, *undecidable*, which can be understood both as a point of view, *a perspective*, and as a *lack of*

*vision, a nothing to see.* Thus, between drawings and words, Derrida presents his working hypotheses: according to him, a drawing has something to do with blindness, a hypothesis that he calls “abocular”, *without the eyes*. In it “we have to understand this: the blind person can be a seer, sometimes has the vocation of a visionary,” in other words, every draftsman would be a visionary blind insofar as he shows from what he does not see, from a lack of a model that is never fully present before his eyes. To complete this abocular hypothesis, Derrida launches a second one that he calls the drawing’s “self-portrait,” stating that “a *drawing of a blind person is a drawing of a blind person*’, that is, that a drawing that addresses blindness is always a drawing made by a blind person, thus revealing what would be the condition of every drawing. [...] Recognizing the *spectral character of vision*, every *inscription* seems to want to acknowledge this gift and at the same time its failure. *Writing, the register of the line* appears as if to acknowledge the possibility of the look, while recognizing its fragility. In this *blind spot, the impossibility of vision presents itself as the very possibility of writing, of the line, of the registry*. If things really appeared, fully present, there would be no need to represent them, register their memories. They would be their own registry, their own file, and would not allow their unfolding in the line. The line, then, denounces the *spectral character of every presence*, it is the registry of the *impropriety of every presence*, showing, therefore, that what leaves a mark, what inscribes, is never exactly the thing as such, but *a certain spectrum, neither presence nor absence*, which requires registration, memory and invention. [...] *The deconstruction of the fullness of the gaze is not intended to elect another more suitable sense to replace the eyes in the adventure of thought*, but rather to show the need for *supplementary senses* and the *lack of a precise, safe orientation in this path*” (Freire, p. 187-188; p. 189; p. 192, our italics).

- 10 HW is referring to the end of §133 of the PI: “There is not a single philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, different therapies, as it were” (LW, 2009, PI-133). Peters (2008, p. 103) sees in this diversity “a revelation, an education, and a kind of learning that teaches us to replace pseudo-problems with real problems, to focus on frames of reference and to deconstruct the picture that held us captive”.
- 11 This is the point of view that Pleasants (1999) defends, hence his criticism of contemporary thinkers such as Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar who, according to him, tried to establish social or political *theories* founded on LW, which would contrast with his own radically anti-theoretical attitude: “It is entirely in keeping with his philosophy that such matters [political, social, moral, etc.] should not be addressed philosophically—which is not to say that he did not think that deliberation on them could not be improved by overcoming certain deeply entrenched confusions on what philosophy is and what it can be expected to do. Wittgenstein’s philosophy, then, does not have any particular connection with social and political issues” (Pleasants, 1999, p. 1).
- 12 *Epistemic disobedience* is a concept coined by Walter D. Mignolo (2008) to express the struggle against enchantment by language, in a Wittgensteinian sense, as such struggle would reveal the nuances and configurations of power and coloniality interwoven in the pieces of knowledge often taken as neutral in hegemonically produced and naturalized discourses. According to both LW (2009) and Mignolo (2008), academic research must seek to dissolve the illusory pictures that enchant us. Although in different ways, they invite us to distrust our most indisputable certainties, forged by a certain aesthetic of thought, by a type of rationality, challenging us to stamp the colonialist wounds of *Abya*

*Yala*, with the purpose of creating pictures of other possible worlds in which different *forms of life* can coexist.

13 We are referring here to some researches developed by the *Education, Language and Cultural Practices* Non-disciplinary Research Group – PHALA –, headquartered at the School of Education of the State University of Campinas, and which can be accessed at: (<https://www.phala.fe.unicamp.br/>).

14 WH refers here, in a humorous tone, to an excerpt from Part II of *Philosophical Investigations* (2009, PI-118, Part II, p. 204<sup>e</sup>), in which LW seeks to illustrate what he calls *vision of aspects*.

15 According to Almeida (LW, 2007, p. 53), “The relationships that LW maintains with Freud’s thought, as several scholars have attested, are markedly ambiguous: there is, on the one hand, a criticism about the pseudoscientific character with which psychoanalysis presents supposed “empirical discoveries,” and the fascination exerted by this way of proceeding; however, there is, on the other hand, evidence of his admiration for the dissolving effect of the use of metaphors and interpretations, with LW even incorporating this strategy into his own method of logical investigation of philosophical concepts”.

16 HW refers to the meticulous manner that German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), in his book *Metamorphosis of plants*, describes the continuous process of transformation of plants (Miguel, 2015c, p. 227; Miguel, 2016a, p. 533).

17 In Note 130 to §420 of the PI, Almeida draws our attention to the *sociocultural aspect* of LW’s *seeing-as*, correctly dismissing any attempt at empirical-perceptual or psychological-cognitive interpretive reduction of the *aspect-seeing* that is characteristic of LW’s therapeutic attitude: “The excerpt [PI-420] apparently shows that this unusual situation [that of imagining that people are automatons] is also possible. Providing the conditions would be enough for such a mentality to become possible. Such *set of attitudes, beliefs, feelings, habits and moral dispositions* that we can call, in general, “mentality”, seems to be that which LW points out as a “seeing-as”. All of this is played out in terms of attitudes, of a way of proceeding, of a general orientation *within a social context, and not in the cognitive plane* where we can decide on the correctness of a sentence because of its truth alone. The mention of the swastika in 1944 [...] is, therefore, not a fluke at this point of the PI. The PI are, effectively and just like the TLP, a war book” (Almeida, in LW, n/d, p. 334).

18 Suppressing the “s” from the most usual Portuguese adjective *descolonial* is not to promote anglicism. On the contrary, according to Walsh (2009), it is to make a distinction with the meaning of the prefix *des*, in Spanish. It is not a matter of undoing or reversing colonialism, that is, moving from a colonial time to a non-colonial one. The intention is to provoke a positioning – a continuous posture and attitude – of transgression, intervention and impact on Latin American issues, in order to enable new political, ethical, economic and social horizons, in dialogue with the production of knowledge. The *decolonial*, then, denotes a path of struggle, of *deconstruction* in the Deridian sense, or of *break of the bewitching* in the Wittgensteinian sense.

19 (LW, 2009, PI-103).

20 (LW, 2009, PI-103, our italics).

21 (Nietzsche, 2008, § 539).

22 (Miguel, 2015b); (Miguel, 2018a).

23 (LW, 2009, PI-107).

24 We present below the comment made by the translator João J.R.L. Almeida on aphorism PI-103, to clarify his translation of the *idiom aufetwas kommen*, in German, into the word *ideal*, in Portuguese: “*aufetwas kommen*” (“having the idea of”), untranslatable literally, repeats, suggestively, the word “thought.” Literally [the statement “the ideal, in our thought, is fixed immutably”] would be: *we have not arrived at the thought of removing it*” (Almeida, in LW, n/d, Note 56, p. 320). Although we are not suggesting an alternative way of translating the expression “*aufetwas kommen*,” we believe that it is not arbitrary to signify it as *a type of “as if”* or of “*fiction*”, an *illusory* or *false fiction*: “The ideal [an *illusory or false fictional as if*] in our thought, is fixed immutably”. Our way of signifying this idiom, seeing it as an *inalienable* – albeit languag, cultural and rectifiable – *aspect* of our signification processes and, by extension, as a *characteristic* of LW’s therapeutic attitude, is also in line both with paragraph PI-104 and with Almeida’s comment on this paragraph: “But, above all, as the context says ‘what is in the presentation mode is predicated on the thing,’ the way Faraday presents the same and only water in different modes and places probably attracts LW’s attention because, to him, this is a clear example of a morphological, panoramic or physiognomic presentation mode” (Almeida, in LW, n/d, Note 57, p. 320). In fact, when LW says “One predicates of the thing what lies in the mode of presentation” (PI-104), we think that he says that the *appropriate pictures* – that is, the verisimilitudes, the *family resemblances*, the *non-idealized acts of fictionalization* – of whatever is taken to therapy must participate in its therapeutic mode of *panoramic presentation* – or *morphological*, or *physiognomic*, as Almeida prefers to call it. This consonance is also shown in Almeida’s clarifying comment on paragraph PI-568 about the relation that LW establishes between *physiognomy* and *meaning*: “In the case of the relation between meaning and “physiognomy,” a word that I tried to leave in the same formulation of an old form of study that tried to unveil a person’s character through their facial expressions, it refers to an interrelation, present throughout LW’s entire work, between *signification*, *aspect-seeing*, *physiognomy* and *expression*” (Almeida, in LW, n/d, Note 160, p. 338, our italics).

25 (Ginzburg, 2007).

26 (Peters, 1999, p. 44).

27 (LW, 2000, p. 92/1947, our italics).

28 (LW, 2000, p. 61/1940).

29 According to Glock (1998, p. 375).

30 (LW, 2009 PI-90).

31 (LW, 2009, PI-203).

32 (LW, 2009, PI-66).

33 (LW, 2000, p. 92/1947).

34 (LW, 2000, p. 94/1947).

35 (LW, 2000, p. 27/1931).

36 (LW, 2000, p. 65/1941).

37 (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 120-130).



- 38 Argentinian sociologist Enrique Dussel (1993) shows how, with the advent of *the modernity myth*, power coordinated itself with the knowledge and with the being through the exploratory experience of the so-called 'discovery' of America. This fact served for the European to legitimize their desire for "modernization" and to impose it on the non-European Others, exploiting them, colonizing them and subjugating them.
- 39 The monumental work in three volumes by the British historian Martin Bernal (1937–2013) – *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (Bernal, 1993) – constitutes, in this sense, the most well-founded and well-argued example of historiographical work that evidenced the nationalist-racist character of most of the historiographic-cultural literature about human forms of life until then available.
- 40 "With regard particularly to racism, according to Bernal (1993, p. 196), "it is evident that, around the 16th century, a clear association was established between the dark color of the skin and the evil and inferiority of the subject. [...] Despite the fact that this interest and antipathy for the "other" with brown skin reached an exceptional intensity in northern Europe, it is certain that almost everyone recognizes that, from 1650 onwards, clearly racist feelings were enhanced, and that these feelings intensified, to a great extent, under the colonization of North America, with the double policy of exterminating the native population, on the one hand, and the enslavement of Africans, on the other, which characterized it." In turn, according to Bernal, from the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, a period of flowering of the so-called *romantic Hellenism* – that is, of the "cult of the Greeks" or "Hellenomania" –, several racist historiographic theories would have combined to produce the so-called radical or moderate "Aryan models," which postulated and contributed significantly to disseminate the belief of the exclusively Indo-European origin of Greek civilization" (Miguel, 2016b, p. 359).
- 41 (Miguel, 2020b, in press).
- 42 (Miguel, 2016b, p. 358-359).
- 43 Discourse based on (Miguel, 2020, in press).
- 44 "Language – I would like to say – is an improvement, in the beginning it was action" (LW, 2000, p. 53); "... I will often speak of a *primitive language* as a language game" (LW, 2009, PI-7).
- 45 (Mignolo, 2003, p. 633); (Tamayo-Osorio, 2017, p. 177).
- 46 This is not the case, for example, of Michael Peters, who, being fully aware of the rupture established by LW with the Cartesian subject and with the individualistic, self-centered and privatistic pictures of subjectivity and of language that from them derived the European colonialist modernity, clearly perceived the nonsense of continuing to speak, from a Wittgensteinian perspective, of *autonomous epistemologies*: "[We defend here] a reading Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher that points to a non-foundational approach to traditional philosophical problems that does not proceed by trying to discover essences or eternal forms but rather progresses through commanding a clear view of our concepts and by raising interesting questions. It is therefore an approach that deviates from the foundations of modern philosophy in that it does not base itself on the cogito, in the individual thinking; insofar as it avoids this centered Cartesian figure of the subject and of subjectivity the approach adopts an *anti-foundationalist stance, an anti-epistemological standpoint* and

entertains a suspicion of transcendental arguments preferring instead to accept *a naturalism grounded in culture and social convention*—in what we do and what we say. [...] Wittgenstein's attempt to provide a break with the Cartesian worldview that is much more important for contemporary philosophy of education than reference to a method of conceptual analysis that views philosophy as a meta-discipline" (Peters, 2017, p. 29; p. 32).

47 This picture of language games – more properly *neovitalistic* than *naturalistic* – is defended by Miguel & Vianna: “How to signify a practice outside of language games? Even the ineffable, that which cannot be discursively expressed by a human, in order to become something significant to another human, needs to show itself in *the non-discursive aspects* of a language game. And the significations that are constituted and shown in each and every language game also do it by virtue of *performance aspects*, that is, by virtue not only of what is said or verbalized, but also – and, often, solely – by virtue of what is enacted by those who participate – in person, remotely, or imaginarily – in the *effective performance* of the language game. Performance is the *scenic aspects* of language games. No language game could be constituted *exclusively* by interactions between humans. Only by interacting with other *natural beings* – and, among them, also with *technological beings* – can humans, as natural beings, constitute their language games. Regardless of whether machines can think or not, they *effectively participate* in the lives of humans” (Miguel; Vianna, 2019, p. 39-40). “Think of a human weaving a shirt. That is only possible if he has *natural-technological beings* that enable weaving: threads and needles, but also an *algorithm or normative pattern* for knitting the threads, *negotiated* with needles, threads and with other humans. If followed strictly, the normative pattern will allow him to weave the desired blouse. Without other natural beings and agreements with them, humans would not have produced any language game. *Every language game is hybrid. Co-production of humans and other natural beings*. Without other natural beings, humans would not even speak. A child learns to speak his language by letting the air vibrate his vocal cords. Not according to laws of nature or of his sensitivity; but according to rules of composition of a finite number of phonemes that the community of speakers of his language, in remote times, standardized as significant, based on negotiations with other natural beings” (Miguel, 2018a, p. 315).

48 Imposition and maintenance of the European knowledge conception standard, seen as the “rational subject,” which had as effect a process of epistemological domination. Such *epistemic totalitarianism* denied and still denies other forms of knowledge different from those in conformity with such hegemonic conception of knowledge. The subordination and the erasure of the knowledge and experiences of the colonized reinforce the reproduction of relations of domination.

49 In the sense proposed by Walsh (2007; 2008) that there is a close relationship between politics, geography, culture and knowledge consolidated by the patterns of power that have maintained as permanent a hierarchical system that is reflected in the educational processes.

50 (Tamayo-Osorio, 2017, p. 146).

51 *Abya Yala* is a word from the indigenous language *Guna* – people whose territory is located in Colombia and Panama – which means *land of life, land in ripening*. *Abya Yala* emerges as an epistemic territory of enunciation to claim the right over political, economic and social projects aimed at the original peoples

that make up this territory. This is not a merely semantic casual change, but the result of a long-lasting process, of a systematic movement of resistance to the colonial condition.

52 (Mignolo, 2017, p. 2).

53 (Tamayo-Osorio, 2017, p. 68).

54 (Quijano, 2007, p. 104).

55 (Quijano, 2009, p. 107).

56 (Quijano, 1992, p. 288).

57 Protesters throw statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol harbor during *Black Lives Matter* demonstration in Bristol, England - Photo: Ben Birchall/PA via AP. (<https://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2020/06/11/estatua-de-escravocrata-britanico-derrubada-por-manifestantes-e-retirada-do-rio.ghtml>).

58 Banksy's graffiti and words from his Instagram page. (<https://www.instagram.com/banksy/?hl=pt-br>).

59 (Tamayo-Osorio, 2017, p. 177) based on (Walsh, 2013, p. 70).

60 (Ribeiro, 1982, p. 11-12). Darcy Ribeiro (1922–1997) was a Brazilian anthropologist, politician and writer, one of the creators and first rector of the University of Brasilia, as well as writer of the project to create the Xingu Indigenous Park in the early 1960s. He was Minister of Education in the Government of President João Goulart. Upon his return from political exile, which occurred during the military dictatorship, as deputy governor of the first administration of Leonel Brizola (1983–1987), he created and directed the implementation of the pedagogical project of full-time assistance to children called *Integrated Centers of Public Education* (CIEP). His ideas in the field of anthropological and sociological research were affiliated with the neo-evolutionist school. According to Ribeiro's anthropological-historiographical theory, all peoples underwent an evolutionarily ordered civilizing process, according to the different technological revolutions that took place in history: agricultural, urban, irrigatory, metallurgical, livestock, commercial, industrial and thermonuclear. ([https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darcy\\_Ribeiro](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darcy_Ribeiro)).

61 Verses chosen by Frazer (1982, p. 48) as an epigraph of his work in 13 volumes, entitled *The golden bough*.

62 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Babington\\_Macaulay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Babington_Macaulay)).

63 The full name of this work in 5 volumes and published in 1848 is *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*.

64 *Minute on Indian Education*, conference presented in February 1835. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Babington\\_Macaulay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Babington_Macaulay)).

65 (Quijano, 2005, p. 122).

66 (Comte, 1978).

67 (Comte, 1978).

68 (Miguel, 2015).

69 (Miguel, 2015a).

70 (Miguel, 2015a).

71 (LW, 2011, p. 192-193; p. 196).

- 72 (LW, 2011, p. 192).  
73 (Lévi-Strauss, 1982).  
74 (Lévi-Strauss, 1983, p. 126-127; p. 131).  
75 (Read, 2009, p. 55).  
76 Free translation into English of the poem titled *A descoberta do mundo* [The discovery of the world], by Ana Martins Marques (Marques, 2014, p. 34).  
77 Preface to the book that compiles notes made by LW at different times, post-humously published with the title *Philosophical Observations* (LW, 2005).  
78 Free translation into English of the poem titled *A imagem e a realidade* [The image and the reality], by Ana Martins Marques (Marques, 2016, p. 76).  
79 (LW, 2000, p. 21).

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**Antonio Miguel** is Professor, Department of Teaching and Cultural Practices, School of Education, State University of Campinas. Member of the Education, Language and Cultural Practices Non-disciplinary Research Group (PHALA) and of the History, Philosophy and Mathematics Education Group (HIFEM).

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7156-8291>

E-mail: miguel37.unicamp@gmail.com

**Carolina Tamayo** is Professor, School of Education, Federal University of Minas Gerais. Member of the Education, Language and Cultural Practices Non-disciplinary Research Group (PHALA) and of the InSURgir Study Group. Coordinator for South America of the International Network of Ethnomathematics. Collaborating professor at the College of Education of the Universidad de Antioquia (Medellín, Colombia).

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8478-7845>

E-mail: carolinatamayo@ufmg.br

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