

MODERNITY AND COLONIALISM: ON THE HISTORICAL- SOCIOLOGICAL BLINDNESS OF THE THEORIES OF MODERNITY¹

*MODERNIDADE E COLONIALISMO: SOBRE A CEGUEIRA HISTÓRICO-
SOCIOLÓGICA DAS TEORIAS DA MODERNIDADE*

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ABSTRACT: This paper is aimed at analysing, from a philosophical and sociological point of view, the process of Western modernization in terms of a critical social theory. In order to do that, I will criticize the historical-sociological blindness characterizing contemporary theories of modernity (as in those of Weber and Habermas). The historical-sociological blindness regarding the reconstruction of the process of Western modernization is basically characterized by the separation between European cultural modernity and European social-economic modernization, to the deletion of colonialism as basis and consequence of the process of Western modernization, which leads to the idea that European modernity is a self-referential, self-subsistent and endogenous process of development. The central argument of this paper is that the theories of modernity cannot provide a normative paradigm for critical social theory based on cultural modernity because of this historical-sociological blindness. Therefore, the elaboration of a normative concept for critical social theory should start by unveiling, denouncing and deconstructing this historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity.

KEYWORDS: Modernity. Modernization. Colonialism. Historical-sociological blindness. Decoloniality.

RESUMO: *Critica-se no artigo a cegueira histórico-sociológica assumida pelas teorias da modernidade contemporâneas (por exemplo, em Weber e Habermas), com o objetivo de tematizar filosófico-sociologicamente o processo de modernização ocidental em termos de uma teoria crítica da sociedade. A cegueira histórico-sociológica acerca da reconstrução do processo de*

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modernização ocidental é caracterizada basicamente pela separação entre modernidade cultural europeia e modernização socioeconômica europeia, bem como pelo apagamento do colonialismo como base e consequência do processo de modernização ocidental, o que conduz à ideia de que a modernidade europeia é um processo de desenvolvimento autorreferencial, auto-subsistente e endógeno. A partir disso, o argumento central do artigo consiste em que as teorias da modernidade não podem fundar um paradigma normativo para a teoria social crítica baseado na modernidade cultural por causa de sua cegueira histórico-sociológica. Assim, se nós queremos um conceito normativo para a teoria social crítica, nós devemos partir exatamente do desvelamento, da crítica e da desconstrução dessa cegueira histórico-sociológica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Modernidade. Modernização. Colonialismo. Cegueira histórico-sociológica. Decolonialidade.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that the European theories of modernity, such as those proposed by Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas, lack the normative ability or epistemological-political instruments to grasp the phenomenon of colonialism due to a basic historical-sociological blindness regarding the understanding and the foundation of the process of Western modernization. This blindness is characterized by four correlated methodological-normative options, or principles, which define the main dynamics of these theories in order to conceptualize and frame the process of Western modernization, namely: (a) European culture, society and consciousness is a very differentiated and singular process of rationalization of metaphysical-theological foundations when compared to traditional societies to a point that there seems to be a strict division between European modernity and the rest of the world—the rational and universal European modernity and the contextualist traditional societies worldwide (traditional as attached to specific contexts of emergence); (b) there is a separation between European cultural modernity and the *Realpolitik* of the social-economic modernization, that is, between a normative model of modern culture, associated with rationalism and universalism (communicative reason, lifeworld), and the institutional modernization (modern social systems, as bureaucratic-administrative State and capitalist market—instrumental reason); (c) Western modernization, or European modernization, is an endogenous, self-referential and self-subsisting process of societal, cultural and epistemological development, excluding colonialism from the theoretical-normative reconstruction offered by European theories of modernity; and (d) European modernity is associated with human development, modernization, rationalization and universalism as the basis of human evolution, which endows modernity with the epistemological, political and normative legitimacy to frame, judge and guide all particular contexts, practices, values and subjects; in other words, European modernity becomes the normative umbrella both within and without itself.

Therefore, the central argument of this paper in its criticism of the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity is that a normative concept for providing the groundwork for a sociological analysis and political *praxis* of a critical social theory cannot be based on European cultural modernity, as found in

theories of modernity such as those by Weber and, mainly, Habermas. This historical-sociological blindness—the separation between European cultural modernity, on the one hand, and, on the other, social-economic modernization and colonialism—allows European cultural modernity to affirm its self-reflexivity regarding social-economic modernization and colonialism. This process results in an ability for self-correction from within and sustains its pretension of a universal epistemological-moral normative paradigm that can serve as a normative umbrella both for a critical social theory of Western modernization and for an international politics that has as its philosophical, sociological, and historical basis the model of culture, society and institution constituted by Western modernization as the apex of human evolution.

Therefore, this article argues that European cultural modernity can only ascertain its epistemological and moral universalism as a model of institutional development *if the historical-sociological blindness remains the theoretical-political basis and methodological option* for the theories of modernity. In other words, only from an uncritical theoretical-political starting point can the process of Western modernization be assumed by theories of modernity as a philosophical-sociological basis from which the criticism, the framing and the emancipation of modernity itself and of international politics are legitimized and carried about. Now, an alternative theoretical-political position regarding Western modernization and its correlation with colonialism can start to be built exactly from unveiling, criticizing and deconstructing the historical-sociological blindness sustained by theories of modernity as the condition to their sociological understanding of the process of Western modernization and philosophical foundation for a normative notion of cultural modernity as the basis for social criticism and political *praxis*. This alternative theoretical-political understanding and *praxis* can (a) associate cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, rejecting their separation; (b) sustain that there is a very deep imbrication between Western modernization and colonialism legitimized by cultural modernity; and finally (c) affirm that cultural modernity cannot serve as a normative paradigm for a critical social theory and for international politics. From here, the concept of *reparation for colonialism* will be introduced as a normative option seen as more critical than that of cultural modernity, since it associates cultural modernity and social-economic modernization with colonialism, eschewing the historical-sociological blindness resulting from this separation between culture and material civilization made by contemporary theories of modernity.

I THE THEORIES OF MODERNITY AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF WESTERN MODERNIZATION

The reconstruction of European modernization is the key and the epistemological-political option for understanding the process of Western modernization proposed by the theories of modernity, as well as for their formulation of a concept of social normativity or epistemological-moral universalism for guiding both social analysis and political *praxis*. So, in this paper, European modernization is the theoretical-political platform for understanding the constitution and the sense of the theories

of modernity, including their contradictions. Now, how did we become modern? What is the process of Western modernization? We became modern *from an internal process of progressive rationalization* of the cultural images of the world—a process whose basic principle-*praxis* is rationalism, which has enabled the deconstruction and delegitimation of the metaphysical-theological essentialist and naturalized foundations of traditional worldviews (see WEBER, 1984, p. 11-24; HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 20-94). By this process of deconstruction and delegitimation, Europe has progressively denaturalized and politicized societal, cultural and institutional constitution, grounding and evolution, insofar as it instituted a strong notion of reflexive individuality as the epistemological, political and normative basis for the sense of the world and society (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 139-142). Such characteristics of modern Europe appear more clearly when it is compared to traditional societies—and it is not a coincidence that both Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas base their theories of modernity in the comparison and differentiation between these two models of society (see WEBER, 1984, p. 11-24; HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 94-109).

Traditional societies are marked by a strong imbrication between nature or objective world, culture or society and individuality, in the sense that nature is anthropomorphic, and society is naturalized. Accordingly, individuality is subsumed into anthropomorphic nature and naturalized society (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 94, p. 101). All natural dynamics and societal-cultural practices, relations and authorities are grounded on and streamlined by magic and religious beliefs and practices; as a consequence, there is an absence of social criticism and political *praxis* regarding the *status quo* and the foundations of institutions in the traditional societies, since society and culture are naturalized and there is no reflexive individuality which is autonomous in the same sense that modern individuality (Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum*; Kant's *transcendental subjectivity*) (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 109). In other words, traditional societies lack cultural-institutional secularism as well as a notion of reflexive individuality separated from nature and society. Therefore, there is no social criticism and mobility in the form of a political *praxis* fostered and streamlined by individuals and social groups that do not recognize such a naturalized and mythological dimension of social institutions, allowing them to question and even abolish institutions or at least demand their *political foundation*, not their metaphysical-theological grounding, as occurs in traditional societies. In this point, traditional societies are not rational, since they do not enable rational *praxis*—the reasons of societal, cultural and institutional constitution, legitimation and evolution are not required (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 106). Magic and religious beliefs and practices are sufficient means for the organization and evolution of traditional societies. And, since magic and religious beliefs and practices are dogmatic, they do not need to be discussed, they are vertically imposed by an absolute institutional authority.

At this point, both Weber and Habermas argue that modern Europe is a form of rational culture, society and consciousness which generates social rationalization and a rational way of directing life (see WEBER, 1984, p. 11; HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 94-95). Now, what is rational in modern European society?

And what does the fact that modern Europe leads to a rational form of life and practice mean? By the consolidation of cultural-institutional secularism and reflexive individuality, modern Europe has denaturalized and politicized societal constitution, legitimation and evolution, as said above. The modernization of society and culture means that those living within modernity no longer have a totalizing society whose parts are imbricated, as occurs in traditional societies. In modern societies, based on cultural-institutional secularism and reflexive individuality, nature, society and individuality are clearly separated. Now, by such a separation, nature basically becomes a material sphere with no magical principles, practices and beings; society, with its institutions and structures, becomes wholly profane; and reflexive individuality is the only epistemological, political and normative basis of foundation (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 140-141; HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 87). Modern society, its institutions and structures, as its subjects, become political, since its character, instead of magical or religious, is fundamentally profane, rational and political. Modern society, therefore, *is a political society*, without magical, religious or metaphysical basis, principles and subjects of constitution, legitimation and evolution. As a political society without an essentialist and naturalized foundation, it must constitute and streamline a political procedure of foundation of the binding social values and practices, which is the only normative condition for the legitimation of modern epistemological-political foundations. It is in this sense that European modern society, culture and consciousness becomes rational and generates a rational form of life.

As a political society and culture with no essentialist and naturalized foundations, in modern society the political abilities and agency of individuals and social groups become the condition for institutional and cultural regulations. Modern political subjects have to interact in order to reach a normative-political basis both for social institutions and culture and for the daily life of these individuals and political subjects themselves. How can they reach a fair and binding social agreement? First, by *interacting fairly* with each other, without authoritarian imposition of a particular worldwide to the society as a whole; second, by *talking and talking* based on reasons related to political legitimacy and institutional and cultural foundations; third, by *arguing and acting with impartial, neutral and formal procedures and points of view*, which means that modern individuals and social groups must learn to think, talk and act based on formal principles and practices in order to reach political agreement. An impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism basically implies that modern individuals and social groups cannot argue and act socially and politically based on a particular and comprehensive doctrine, to use Rawlsian terms (see RAWLS, 2002; HABERMAS, 1989; HABERMAS, 1991). They must use abstract principles which can subsume all particular forms of life into such formality and generality.

As a consequence, modern culture, through secularism and reflexive individuality, leads to the consolidation of a post-traditional and post-conventional consciousness, that is, a form of living, thinking and acting which is not marked by the imposition and maintenance of a particular form of life as the basis of institutional, societal and cultural constitution, legitimation and evolution; it is

actually characterized by an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which leads to a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric form of culture, society and consciousness based on communicative reason. Now, a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric culture, society and consciousness is a rational one; it is based on and streamlined by the rationalization of all practices, values and subjects, which also means that modern individuals and social groups must use reason—they must speak and argue and act based on rationalized codes and practices. Modern European society is rational and generates a rational culture and form of life because it basically requires the reasonable thinking and talking *praxis* as the fundamental basis for the foundation of social normativity and institutional structures (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 249).

Here, Habermas' concept of *linguistification of the sacred* means that modern culture, society and consciousness has politicized and denaturalized institutional foundations and daily life at large, which signifies that the notion of social normativity and political *praxis* regarding institutional foundations are defined and streamlined from both the politicization of social life and social dialog and interaction between individuals and social groups that must argue and act based on an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which is non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric in terms of the normative-political grounding of institutions and social life. Here, modern individuals and social cultural groups must think and act in the name of all humanity, from a post-conventional consciousness which is totally formal concerning particular forms of life (see Habermas, 2012b, p. 196). Here, modern society, culture and consciousness, by its impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism, its non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric dynamics and constitution, becomes *universalist*, differently from the traditional society, culture and consciousness, which is egocentric and ethnocentric. Indeed, that modern society, culture and consciousness entails a universal form of life is the conclusion resulting from the theories of modernity's reconstruction of modern Europe's internal cultural development.

Two important points arise from Weber's and Habermas' position regarding modernity. Throughout this paper, Habermas' theory of modernity will be used in order to discuss the correlation between modernization and colonialism, although many of what will be discussed applies to Weber's theory as well. The first point is that, *after this process of cultural rationalization of the religious or metaphysical-theological images of the world*, the modern institutions or social systems have emerged and developed (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 588; HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 275). European modern culture is revolutionary and explosive and it has deconstructed traditional societies' totalizing imbrication of all social spheres and subjects into one comprehensive worldview. Modern society, in opposition to traditional societies, has separated nature, society and individuality, politicizing and denaturalizing social foundations and political institutions. From this general normative context allowed by modern cultural rationalization, which constitutes the lifeworld as a normative sphere, the modern social systems or institutions—like the bureaucratic-administrative State and the capitalist market—have emerged and consolidated themselves as particular social spheres (see HABERMAS, 2012b,

p. 278). First of all, therefore, modern society is no longer a normative totality imbricated in its parts, as traditional societies (see HABERMAS, 2003a, p. 17-18). Second, modern society, from the process of cultural rationalization, becomes particularized and divided into different and closed institutions or social systems which are characterized by a technical-logical way of functioning and programming (see HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 365; HABERMAS, 2003a, p. 61; HABERMAS, 2003b, p. 23). Therefore, *cultural modernity*, cultural rationalization, which is normative, *is the ontogenetic condition for social-economic modernization, for instrumental reason*, and not the contrary (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 140-141, p. 384, p. 588-590; HABERMAS, 2003a, p. 44; HABERMAS, 2003b, p. 83). The only possible link between them is the ontogenetic place of cultural modernity in the emergence and development of the modern social systems.

Therefore, the process of Western modernization is understood as a *dual evolutionary process*: a cultural rationalization, or cultural modernity; and a social-economic modernization, or institutional modernity (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 09-11, p. 588-591; HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 278-280; HABERMAS, 1997, p. 140-153). In the first case, there is normative reason; in the second, there is instrumental reason. Such dual process signifies, first, that modern society emerged and developed from cultural rationalization and as cultural rationalization; after that, the societal differentiation into particular, closed and self-referential technical-logical social systems took place and defined the fact that modern society is constituted by particularized and opposed institutions with a technical-logical way of functioning and programming that is basically internal to institutions and streamlined by a technical-logical legal staff. As a consequence, side by side with cultural modernity, the theories of modernity include a process of Western social-economic modernization that could be defined as self-differentiation, self-referentiality and self-subsistence of technical-logical social systems or institutions. If the lifeworld is a normative sphere with normative principles, practices and subjects, the social systems are technical-logical spheres with non-political and non-normative principles, practices and subjects—that is, they are basically instrumental. A contradiction between a normative and a technical-logical sphere emerges and defines the sense and the form both of modern social pathologies and of modern political *praxis*. The lifeworld, cultural modernity and cultural rationalization constitute a social life based on normative principles and practices, as streamlined by normative subjects, which require both a political *praxis* based on social normativity and a normative organization of social systems (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 587-591). However, social systems are technical-logical, depoliticized spheres, which means that, on the one hand, they reject political-normative intervention and framing, as they, on the other hand, have the tendency to instrumentalize (the normative) lifeworld, colonizing it (see HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 331, p. 355).

In this case, the lifeworld as a purely normative sphere constituted basically by pure normative-political principles, practices and subjects, offers a normative paradigm; it is a normative paradigm from which Western modernization can be understood and framed, and from which social systems in particular can be measured and framed in terms of reification and instrumentalization of the

lifeworld itself. The important point here is that cultural modernity or lifeworld is a pure normative-political sphere with no direct link with and dependence on instrumental, technical-logical social systems, especially with social systems' instrumental reason and pathologies. Cultural modernization indeed has deconstructed traditional societies' totalizing constitution, particularizing the modern social spheres and differentiating them into individualized social systems or institutions. However, cultural modernity cannot ground or generate the pathologies of social systems based on instrumental reason, on technical-logical colonization of the lifeworld. The pathologies of social systems are caused by the social systems' technical-logical functioning and programming, so they are responsible for their own irrationality. The normative sphere constituted by the lifeworld allows a critical perspective on the functioning and programming of social systems exactly because it is separated from them, because it is non-dependent of their technical-logical structuration. But the contrary is not true: the social systems depend on the lifeworld's normative constitution, and that is the reason why the lifeworld as a normative sphere offers the critical frame from which a critical social theory can enable at the same time a theoretical analysis and a political *praxis* regarding Western social-economic modernization (see HABERMAS, 2012b, p. 355).

The second important point arising from a theory that conceives of cultural modernity as a universalist form of life and epistemological-moral paradigm is its association between modernization, rationalization, universalism and emancipation (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 142, p. 146, p. 683; HABERMAS, 2003a, p. 20, p. 34, p. 44; HABERMAS, 2002a, p. 01-24; HABERMAS, 2002b, p. 07-08; HABERMAS, 1990a, p. 99-100; HABERMAS, 1999, p. 41). Both Weber and Habermas are clearly based on this understanding that modern Europe treats all of its questions from a rationalized, historicized and universalist point of view and range, which requires rationalization and social dialog-interaction as a basis for the binding foundations, since modernity politicizes and historicizes all spheres of life and society, rendering all of them profane. In other words, by the consolidation of a modern culture, society and consciousness which is post-conventional, non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric regarding its epistemological-moral foundations, and finally which is based on an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism concerning its institutional-cultural groundwork, modern Europe has become a universal culture and form of life which offers for the first time a paradigm that is really universal and adequate to a post-metaphysical time—a universalism without essentialist and naturalized foundations (see HABERMAS, 1989; HABERMAS, 1990b; HABERMAS, 1991; HABERMAS, 2002a; HABERMAS, 2002b). How could that be achieved? First of all, Habermas is very emphatic in affirming that modern Europe is not a particular form of life like traditional societies. Indeed, Europe is a universal civilization and culture and form of life. Therefore, modern Europe becomes the apex of human evolution—an evolution that has started with traditionalism and has arrived at modernization, seen as the ending point of human evolution. It should, then, be stressed that modernization means the consolidation of both a post-conventional culture and consciousness and of the social systems or institutions. Does that mean that modern Europe is a cultural, societal and

epistemological evolutionary process that will eventually be arrived at by all peoples and cultures?

Habermas answers positively to this question. According to him, if all traditional cultures and societies had an epistemological-cultural context similar to that of modern Europe, they would certainly follow the path of modernization (see HABERMAS, 2012a 119-146, p. 326). This is the path of human evolution—overcoming traditionalism and consolidating a modern culture, society and consciousness, and Habermas—as Rawls, Giddens, Honneth and Forst—does not hesitate in using moral psychology in order to argue that a mature and emancipatory culture and consciousness is a post-conventional one, that is, a culture and consciousness which acts, works and thinks from an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism, from a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric dynamic (see HABERMAS, 1989; HABERMAS, 1990b; HABERMAS, 1991; HABERMAS, 2002a; RAWLS, 2003; HONNETH, 2003; HONNETH, 2007; FORST, 2010; GIDDENS, 2001). The result of the use of moral psychology in order to justify a concept of cultural modernity which is strongly linked to rationalism, universalism and human evolution is exactly the justification of modernity itself as a universalist form of life and culture, and the delegitimation of traditionalism as the basis for a universal epistemological-moral paradigm.

Similarly, Habermas uses both philosophy and sociology to prove that modern European culture is universal as is the form of life associated to it and not only a simple particularized culture and form of life, as traditionalism. In sociological terms, the reconstruction of the process of Western modernization has shown that human evolution has started with traditionalism in its strong imbrication and intersection of nature, society and individuality, an anthropomorphized nature and a naturalized society, having gradually consolidated a modern society as the *definitive* overcoming of traditionalism through the development of a culture, society and consciousness which, by acknowledging pluralism or multiculturalism and denaturalizing culture and society, has instituted rationalization as the basis of a societal and cultural constitution, legitimation and evolution and also for the *praxis* of individuals and social groups. Accordingly, human evolution starts as traditionalism and becomes modernization, tending to continue on the path of modernization, without a return to traditionalism. The development of modern Europe, philosophically and sociologically reconstructed, has proven and shown that human evolution starts as traditionalism and becomes modernization, leading to modern society, culture and consciousness, and Europe is an example of this (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 355). That is a definitive evolutionary condition of modernization, and Habermas insists, against post-modernists and traditionalists, that the only route for modernity, for the resolution of modern problems by modernity itself is more modernization, more reflexive modernity (see HABERMAS, 2002a, p. 122).

In philosophical terms, Habermas tries to show that all cultures and societies have a similar structure and dynamic of foundation of their internal values, that is, all of them need to impose objective values and practices as the condition for their normal daily evolution. In order for that to be ensured, they must institutionalize a

public process of justification which leads to permanent argumentation and education regarding the objectivity of socially binding values and practices in each culture. Thus, there is a tendency toward rationalization in all cultures, since they have at least a minimal inclination to universalism insofar as all societies need objective values that are inculcated from a public process of interaction. Therefore, they have objective values (they presuppose a soft and initial version of universalism) as they establish an institutional and public process of argumentation regarding such values (they have a soft and initial version of rationalization, of communicative reason). Now, the structure of the epistemological-moral foundation and its public process in traditional societies are similar to the universal sense and range of European modernity, although European cultural modernity is universalist, due to its impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which forms the basis of its post-conventional culture and consciousness (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 326). Similarly, sociological reconstruction of the process of European modernization has shown and proven that modern Europe, by overcoming traditionalism, instituted a universal and rational-rationalized form of life which at the same time, to use a Hegelian term, contains the moments that it has overcome, that is, contains traditionalism.

Therefore, human evolution in general, and the evolution-constitution of modern Europe in particular shows three basic characteristics: (a) all cultures and societies have a universal sense and range (the objectivity of the values and practices socially binding); (b) there is an institutionalization of a public process of argumentation and education to inculcate these objective values and practices; and (c) in the case of Europe, the post-conventional society, culture and consciousness is at the same time universal (an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism) and contains within itself traditionalism as a moment that has been surpassed. By these three characteristics, modern Europe can offer a normative basis for a universal epistemological-political paradigm—for both its internal foundation and for the world at large. As a consequence, it can become the normative umbrella, the judge and the guide of international politics as well. As a universal culture and form of life based on a post-conventional *praxis*, based on an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism, modern Europe enables social criticism to a critical-social theory in its study of the social-economic modernization, as it allows the universal epistemological-moral paradigm to guide and frame international politics.

Such philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the development of modern Europe shows a very interesting and problematic point of view which is shared both by Weber and Habermas—and also by Honneth and Forst—in their understanding of the correlation between modernity and universalism, namely the view that there is Europe and the rest of the world; there is the rational and universalist Europe *versus* all particular and closed traditionalisms. Human evolution leads to universalist Europe as a post-conventional society, culture, consciousness and paradigm. This radical separation between Europe and the rest of the world (associated with traditionalism) marks the development of the theories of modernity and their stylization of the process of Western modernization as the apex of human evolution, overcoming traditionalism in favor of a modern culture,

society and consciousness, which is universal and rational-rationalized. From here, the construction of both a sociological diagnosis of modernity-modernization and a philosophical foundation of a normative concept of cultural modernity as the basis of a critical social theory emerges. By such separation, by the association of human evolution, modernization, rationalization, criticism and universalism, the culture and consciousness of modern Europe allow not only the grounding of a universal epistemological-moral paradigm, but also—and as consequence of that—the legitimation of the idea that Europe, from its universal epistemological-moral paradigm and form of culture-life, is the normative basis for judging, framing and guiding the international political context. Furthermore, the division of the process of Western modernization, proposed by the theories of modernity, into pure and holy cultural modernity and evil social-economic modernization redeems cultural modernity of all sins committed by social-economic modernization, so that cultural modernity can develop a self-reflexive *praxis* regarding social-economic modernization and, as a consequence, it can continue as a pure and holy universal epistemological-political paradigm, maintaining its association of modernization, rationalization, criticism, universalism and emancipation, which is the basis of the normative-political understanding of modernity itself, as well as its practical application in current problems and subjects, within and beyond itself.

2 MODERNITY AND COLONIALISM: ON THE HISTORICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL BLINDNESS OF THE THEORIES OF MODERNITY

What is the place of colonialism in a theory of modernity? Habermas excludes it from his philosophical-sociological reconstruction of a normative-sociological concept of Western or European modernity-modernization. What could be the reasons for this and what does it mean to a theory of modernity? Is European modernity a colonialist culture, society, mindset and form of normativity? In order to answer these questions, a very problematic theoretical-political basis should be investigated from which Habermas' theory of modernity is constructed and streamlined both sociologically and philosophically. This basis is what we call the *historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity* and it exhibits some important features. Firstly, Western or European modernization is an evolutionary societal and cultural development process marked by the rationalization of the cultural images of the world and of the metaphysical-theological foundations which are proper to traditional societies, cultures and consciousness. In this sense, the evolutionary process of Western-European modernization implies an overcoming of traditionalism through the consolidation of modern society, culture and consciousness, which is rational and generates rational forms of living, thinking and acting. Secondly, and as a consequence, if traditional society, culture and consciousness is fundamentally attached to its own context of emergence and development, if traditional consciousness is, because of that, egocentric and ethnocentric in its epistemological-political foundations, European modern society, by its internal process of rationalization, is formalistic with regard to its material context of emergence. It is, therefore, universalist, since it, through the very process of rationalization of the cultural images of the world, has instituted a formalistic,

impartial and neutral procedure as the foundation of socially binding values and practices which is not dependent on or attached to its material context of emergence and development. Modern culture, society and consciousness appeals only to universalist values and practices, thinking and acting from impartial, neutral and formal procedures, codes and practices, and becoming non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric regarding epistemological-moral foundations and political *praxis* (see Habermas, 2012a, p. 148).

Thirdly, since this universalist culture and consciousness resulted from the cultural rationalization of the traditional world, the human evolution is modernization, it becomes cultural modernization, insofar as human evolutionary process leads to European cultural-societal rationalization, as to modern epistemological-moral consciousness as the final destination of human evolution. In this sense, human evolution is modernization as an overcoming of traditional society (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 119). Fourthly, there is association and dependence involving human evolution, modernization, rationalization, criticism and universalism, insofar as cultural modernity, as the apex of human evolution, serves also as a normative paradigm from which social-economic modernization and international politics can be measured, framed, criticized and even changed from the use of the normative paradigm of modernity *by modern epistemological-political subjects*. European cultural modernity allows a critical normative paradigm due to the fact that it is the ending point of human evolution as an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism, as a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric society, culture and consciousness. It is here that universalism takes its place. Fifthly, cultural rationalization of the traditional world is the normative basis of modern society, culture and consciousness, having enabled the process of consolidation of modern institutions or social systems (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 355). The development and the consolidation of modern social systems occur in the wake of the process of cultural rationalization, of cultural modernity, being caused and streamlined by it. As a consequence, cultural modernity is the general normative context from which modern technical-logical social systems have emerged and been consolidated. The process of Western modernization becomes, here, a complete sociological-philosophical framework characterized at the same time by the division and the correlation between cultural modernity (as a normative context) and social-economic modernization (the institutional context), and from here both modernity as a normative paradigm and social-economic modernization as an institutional structure acquire meaning, having defined their specific core and role in terms of a theory of modernity.

Indeed, from this division, it is possible to discuss both the epistemological, political and normative core-role of cultural modernity and the dynamics, functioning and programming of institutional modernization, as its social pathologies. From this division the viable normative correlations between them can be addressed as well. Now, in the first place, the core-role of cultural modernity is universalist, due to being constituted and streamlined based on rationalization, which has instituted a post-conventional culture, society and consciousness which is impartial, neutral and formal regarding particular forms of life—and that is the

present and future of human evolution, that is, to become post-conventional and rational-rationalized. In the same way, such a universalist core-role of cultural modernity is fostered by the fact that it is not directly linked to social-economic modernization, to modern social systems, in the sense that it does not legitimize the irrationalities of modern social systems and pathologies. On the contrary, it enables a critical and normative framework to measure, criticize and frame the programming and functioning of social systems, as its normative constitution allows a perspective based on *use values*—to use a Marxist term—from which the technical-logical structuration of social systems, as well as their functioning and programming are framed, changed and streamlined. These two conditions and characteristics of European cultural modernity—a post-conventional rationalized culture-society-consciousness and the lack of correlation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization—enable the universalist and critical core-role of cultural modernity, so it can serve as a normative paradigm for understanding, framing and changing of social and economic modernization, and as a normative paradigm for the international politics as well (see HABERMAS, 2002a, p. 227).

On the other hand, social-economic modernization is characterized by a process of self-differentiation, self-referentiality, self-subsistence and autonomy of particularized and closed social systems or institutions, as the modern State and the capitalist market. These social systems or institutions are technical-logical, non-political and non-normative structures which are streamlined from an internal instrumental programming and functioning assumed by institutional elites and technicians. Now, it is this technical-logical structuration, functioning and programming of the social systems, by the imposition of an instrumental rationality into the normative context represented by the lifeworld, that causes and originates social pathologies, by substituting social normativity for technical-logical dynamics. Here, cultural modernity as a normative paradigm offers the normative basis from which it is possible to measure, by the analysis of the normative constitution of the lifeworld, the intensity and the damages caused by the systemic imposition of an instrumental rationality over that normative context. In this process, cultural modernity allows, as a consequence, a political *praxis* from civil society or lifeworld that is directed to the framing and moderation of the technical-logical dynamics of social systems, correlating exchange values (the basis of programming and functioning of social systems) with use values (the lifeworld's basis of constitution and evolution). Such a separation also enables cultural modernity's self-reflexivity and internal critical capability of self-correction, in the sense that, by these separation and non-correlation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, cultural modernity can serve as a normative paradigm to social-economic modernization and to international politics, as it has epistemological-political power to impose normative values and practices to technical-logical social systems. Without such a separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, cultural modernity could not serve as a universal and critical normative paradigm, both for social-economic modernization and international politics.

It is here that the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity emerges as the basis of their philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the process of Western modernization as a whole, as a basis of their normative stylization of European societal-cultural development. Such a historical-sociological blindness is, firstly, the fundamental theoretical-political option of theories of modernity both to conceive of the specificity of European modernization in face of other societies and cultures (wherein Europe stands for modernity while the rest of the world represents traditionalism) and to establish a normative paradigm founded and rooted on cultural modernity as the basis for a critical and social theoretical diagnosis and political *praxis* and understanding of international politics. In other words, the epistemological, political and cultural stylized specificity of European modernization concerning traditionalism is what allows placing European modernity at the pinnacle of human evolution and establishing it as the normative paradigm of modernity and international politics. Secondly, the historical-sociological blindness found in the theories of modernity as the core of their philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the process of Western modernization presupposes the necessity to differentiate Western modernization from *all the other societies, cultures and epistemologies*, which leads to the notion that European modernization constitutes a new, universal stage when compared to traditional societies. Such a new and more developed universal stage of human evolution both subsumes and integrates traditional societies and, as a consequence, by its formalistic, impartial and neutral proceduralism regarding particular contexts and foundations, by its non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric epistemological-normative constitution and dynamics, it leads to the consolidation of a universal epistemological, political and normative basis from which all differences are promoted and inserted, as well as on which criticism, framing and changing are based and streamlined (because criticism, framing and change are possible only from a *universal epistemological-political-normative paradigm*—and here cultural modernity as the apex of human evolution takes a very fundamental core and role).

Thirdly, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity presupposes that the critical point of view is possible only from a normative paradigm with a universal core-role. Such a universal normative paradigm must be correlatively pure in normative and political terms and independent of particular material contexts. Particular material contexts, the moment they are closed worldviews streamlined by essentialist and naturalized foundations, cannot think and act on universal terms and from a non-egocentric and non-ethnocentric perspective which is purely formal. In other words, particular material contexts, by their essentialist and naturalized foundations, cannot develop and articulate an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism as the basis of their institutional, cultural, societal and epistemological constitution, legitimation and evolution, since these cannot be rationalized. The historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, the moment it separates cultural modernity from social-economic modernization, can correlatively purify cultural modernity of its material relations with social-economic modernization, rendering it universal by its association with modernization, rationalization and universalism from the idea that European cultural modernity constitutes itself as a post-conventional culture, society and

consciousness grounding an epistemological-political paradigm which is independent from contextual and material presuppositions and associations—a purely formalistic paradigm.

Such a separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization enables self-reflexivity regarding social-economic modernization, and correlatively leads to the fact that cultural modernity—its normative paradigm—is basically an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism that takes into account humankind as a whole as the basis of its dynamic and grounding—an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which can exist in all contexts, societies and cultures with reflexivity in order to frame, criticize and orientate these particular contexts, societies and cultures in relation to their internal epistemological-political constitution, legitimation and evolution (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 227). The reason for that was explained above, that is, the fact that European cultural modernity is the apex of human evolution insofar as it overcomes traditionalism with a modern worldview that is independent on particular material contexts, impartial, neutral, formal and procedural regarding epistemological-political foundations. In this sense, in overcoming traditionalism and its closed culture and consciousness based on essentialist and naturalized foundations, cultural modernity as a universal culture, society and consciousness preserves in itself the periods that have been overcome. Within such an understanding, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity can sustain cultural modernity as a universal epistemological-moral paradigm and societal-cultural form of life correlatively, overcoming traditionalism, as a process of modernization that has no return and, on the other hand, can guide and frame traditionalism, intermediating the legitimation of both social-economic modernization and particularized material contexts.

So, this historical-sociological blindness is the epistemological-political starting point of the theories of modernity for a strong and decisive reason, that is, to ground a normative paradigm which puts universalism as the condition of criticism, framing and orientation of particular material contexts, within and without modernity. This is the case of Habermas' theory of modernity, and it can be perceived also in the critical social theories of Axel Honneth and Rainer Forst (see HONNETH, 2003; FORST, 2010). In Habermas' case, the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization and the association of modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, as the meaning of European modern society, culture and consciousness as post-conventional, these points are important characteristics of modernization as the apex of human evolution, as a sociological-philosophical paradigm, and as a universal form of life, culture, society and consciousness. (a) Cultural modernity is a pure normative principle-*praxis* of current life, and it is very explosive epistemologically and politically, since it is purely and basically normative. (b) As a pure normative principle-*praxis*, it is not contaminated by social-economic modernization's instrumental, technical-logical reason, and that is the reason why it can serve as normative paradigm for framing, criticizing and orienting modern institutions or social systems. (c) Cultural modernity is independent of the social-economic

modernization, in the sense that a normative reason is not directed by or committed to technical-logical rationalization, since it is not committed to any material principle, so it becomes an abstract and formalistic principle-*praxis* that can be used epistemologically, politically, normatively by modernity itself in order to control its internal pathologies (internal pathologies caused by social-economic modernization!), as it can be used by cultural modernity and *from a modern point of view and by a modern epistemological-political subject* with the purpose of framing and guiding international politics and the dynamics of constitution, legitimation and evolution of particular contexts, *of all particular contexts*. It is important to remember that cultural modernity as a universalist normative paradigm serves to criticize, frame and change both social-economic modernization and international politics. This is the meaning of Jürgen Habermas's recovery and renewal of the concept of modernity-modernization as opposed to post-modern theories and conservatism as a whole: modernity-modernization is a philosophical-sociological concept which is very productive to a critical social theory, because it is correlatively the apex of human evolution in societal-cultural and epistemological, political and normative terms.

The historical-sociological blindness found in contemporary theories of modernity involves an ambiguity concerning the use of the concept of modernity-modernization which is used here with the same meaning, that is, the concept of modernity or modernization is understood as the correlative consolidation of European modernity as a cultural-institutional process of evolution, as a secular culture and individual freedom, and as an institutional framework—this is the Habermas's understanding of the process of Western modernization. Now, what is the fundamental ambiguity observed in the theories of modernity in order to justify the self-reflexive core and role of modernity regarding itself and in terms of international politics? The ambiguity lies exactly in the fact that Western modernization is not a totalizing and unidimensional process of cultural-institutional evolution totally linked in terms of cultural modernity and social-economic modernization. Indeed, cultural modernity is ambiguous because, on the one hand, it has enabled the emergence and the consolidation of technical-logical institutions or social systems; yet, on the other hand, it is basically a normative field (lifeworld) which has no direct association to and dependence on this social-economic modernization (see HABERMAS, 2012a, p. 290-291). So, if what is posited by Habermas is indeed true, then cultural modernity is a normative sphere that enables internal self-reflexivity, despite its constitution of modern social systems. As a consequence, in the moment that cultural modernity allows internal criticism and self-reflexivity by its separation and independence regarding social-economic modernization, it can streamline and ground an internal radical and critical *praxis* based on normative-political principles directed to framing and changing the pathologies caused by social-economic modernization. Such an ambiguity—to generate modern social systems and not to be directly linked and attached to them—leads to cultural modernity's capability of progressive and permanent diagnose and purification of the pathologies originated from social-economic modernization.

So, the possible accusation that modernity legitimizes social-economic modernization can be countered on the grounds that cultural modernity cannot be subsumed to social-economic modernization, since it cannot be directly linked to modern technical-logical social systems or institutions. If the pathologies and irrationalities observed in social systems can be attributed to modernity's normative paradigm, it can be argued that such pathologies are caused by modern technical-logical social systems, and not by cultural modernity as a pure normative sphere, principle and *praxis*. Actually, cultural modernity as a pure normative sphere, principle and *praxis* offers an epistemological-political framework to understanding, measuring, framing and changing the dynamics, the structuration, the social effects and the relationships of social systems. This is what allows the exercise of critical and political *praxis* concerning modern institutions or social systems, that is, the lifeworld as a basically normative sphere, in the moment that it is affected by the technical-logical colonization carried about by social systems, can serve as a normative platform and sociological framework both to analyze the intensity of social pathologies and to ground a correlative political *praxis* which aims to moderate and control the technical-logical colonization of the lifeworld by the modern social systems. As a conclusion, the process of Western modernization is ambiguous insofar as it is at the same time emancipatory and pathologic, purely normative and strongly technical-logical. But that can be explained by the division found in Western modernization between cultural modernization and social-economic modernization, and from this division we can understand, on the one hand, modernity's problems and pathologies, and, on the other, modernity's universalism, the explosive, emancipatory and rational-rationalized principle-*praxis* constituted by cultural modernity itself.

As Habermas said, we cannot throw away modernity as a whole; we cannot throw away the baby with the dirty water (see HABERMAS, 1997; HABERMAS, 2002a). In other words, this ambiguity of Western modernization—the division between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization—ensures cultural modernity's self-reflexivity and, as a consequence, its internal permanent self-criticism and self-correction, which also enables the maintenance of modernity's affirmation as a universal epistemological-political paradigm and as a cosmopolitan society and culture. However, criticism regarding modernity is not a question of “throwing away the baby with the dirty water,” but of a realistic analysis and political *praxis* concerning the process of Western modernization. Therefore, criticizing Western modernization involves first and foremost calling the correct comprehension, framing and changing of the Western modernization. What Habermas does not see, firstly, is that his argument that a criticism regarding modernity means throwing away modernity as a whole is false, since it presupposes that there is a part of Western modernization that is not affected by the problems caused by it—a part of modernity that is untouched by the pathologies of social systems and by social criticism. On the contrary, Habermas argues, it is a part of modernity—cultural modernity—that is the condition for criticizing, framing and changing social-economic modernization. Secondly, therefore, Habermas must assume the historical-sociological blindness regarding the comprehension and stylization of the process of Western modernization as if,

by the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, there was a fundamental theoretical-political sin with a radical criticism against modernity as a whole. According to Habermas, indeed there is a fundamental theoretical-political sin with a radical criticism against modernization, since it is the final stage of human evolution, which furnishes the universalist epistemological-moral paradigm—the fundamental condition for any kind of social criticism and political *praxis*. So, speaking against modernity means not recognizing the fact that the universal normative paradigm is the condition of social criticism and political *praxis* – to criticize modernity's constitution and movement implies in affirming modernity's normative paradigm (that is our only condition for social criticism and political *praxis* regarding Western modernization) (see HABERMAS, 1997; HABERMAS, 2002a).

Now, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity and its three main points developed throughout the paper—(a) the association of modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution; (b) the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization; and (c) modern universalism (based on the idea that European modernization is the apex of human evolution) as the only condition for social criticism and political *praxis*, both within and without modernity—leads to the failure of cultural modernity in pursuing a universalist and critical sense and remaining conservative and uncritical. Modern political elites can use its tenets to argue that cultural modernity as universal and as the apex of human evolution has a purely normative and political content directed to counteracting traditionalism. As was explained throughout the paper regarding Habermas's theory of modernity, (1) the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization and (2) the association between modernization, rationalization and universalism with the final stage of human evolution entail two fundamental points that legitimize modernity's normative paradigm and the modern epistemological-political subjects as basis and pathway of any social criticism, political *praxis*, and normative framing possible. The first point is that pure normative cultural modernity remains untouched by the pathologies caused by social-economic modernization, so that it cannot be associated with modern pathologies or colonialism. The second point is that, due to the fact that cultural modernity is itself universalist, and universalism is the only groundwork for social criticism and political *praxis*, then the criticism of modernization cannot counter cultural modernity. On the contrary, any social criticism regarding modernity *and international politics* must use cultural modernity as a normative paradigm; it must be based on modern epistemological, political, and normative conditions if it intends to be effectively critical and political. That is the reason why Habermas posits that any criticism regarding modernity can only be possible if based on modern universalism, modern normativism, because cultural modernity is universalism itself, the apex of human evolution, by the correlation of modernization, rationalization and universalism with human evolution. Therefore, the normative paradigm of modernity remains the only basis, condition and possibility of social criticism and political *praxis*. Modernity's normative paradigm becomes critical in relation to everything, *but not concerning*

itself, since it is pure normativity, pure universalism. It is the theoretical-political condition of all theoretical-political conditions.

Some questions asked above should be resumed: is there a link between Western modernization and colonialism? If there is, then which is the core-role of cultural modernity regarding colonialism? Which is the place of colonialism in a theory of modernity? Is Europe a colonialist society, culture and mindset? Is there a correlation between the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity and colonialism? Is colonialism an accident of Western modernization? First of all, the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, in separating cultural modernity from social-economic modernization, a pure normative concept of cultural modernity and a pure technical-logical concept of social systems, leads to the notion that there is no direct link between cultural modernity and colonialism, in the same sense that there is no link between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization. This can be proven by the fact that the term *colonialism* does not appear at all in Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* as a fundamental point of the process of Western modernization, neither in the reconstruction of the process of emergence and the development of modern Europe nor in the thematization of the consequences of the evolution of Western modernization—it does not appear as a pathology originated from the *instrumental colonization* of the lifeworld by modern social systems as well. Now, if the modern social systems are basically technical-logical structures, and if the modern lifeworld is fundamentally a normative sphere, and if there is no mediation between a purely normative and a purely technical-logical sphere, the same can be said about colonialism, that is, it is a ghost with no carnality and politicity, or even technicality, in the theory of modernity. What could be the reason for this? As we think, *colonialism is both a normative and a technical principle and practice* that requires epistemological-political foundations as the core from which a superior civilization is violently imposed. In other words, if colonialism is a consequence of the process of Western modernization, then it cannot be justified only from technical-logical explanations, as it occurs with the pathologies of social systems. Indeed, colonialism is first and foremost a normative phenomenon, as it presupposes from the beginning such a normative justification (see DUSSEL, 1993).

Therefore, if colonialism is a consequence of the process of Western modernization, it is also a consequence of *cultural modernity*, or at least it presupposes the *correlation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization*—a point that Habermas does not admit at any moment. That seems to be the reason why Habermas uses the term *colonization of the lifeworld* in a technical-logical or instrumental and not in a normative sense. Even here, in the thematization of the internal constitution, legitimation and dynamics of the process of Western modernization, the modern social pathologies have technical-logical or instrumental meaning, effects and range, but not a normative justification—modern social normativity is independent from the instrumental reason and its basic aim is to serve as a paradigmatic principle-practice for the measurement of the intensity of the impacts caused by social systems in the lifeworld. As said before, if such a

technical-logical explanation of modern social pathologies could *hardly* be accepted, it becomes impossible to accept that colonialism is a result of a technical-logical expansion of modernization into other societies and cultures, a technical-logical expansionist movement and practice with no normative or political basis and legitimation. On the contrary, colonization results from practical needs that require instrumental actions, but there is a normative justification which presupposes the superiority of a civilization and culture and its emancipatory and universalist core-role regarding the colonized people with its culture and consciousness (see FANON, 1968; BHABHA, 1998). Likewise, colonialism and political and cultural interventions are justified based on values of a superior order—values, codes and practices that are regarded by the so called superior culture and society as universal (see DUSSEL, 1993; SPIVAK, 2010). It is in this sense, for instance, that European colonization was justified based on the sword and the cross, that is, the correlation between violence and normative justifications. The war on terror and *against fundamentalism*, on its turn, was based on the defense of free peoples, human rights and civilizational values as a normative framework (see Danner, 2016). Even economic-political globalization is based on a normative justification and legitimation founded on the idea of fair, free and equal development for all (see PIKETTY, 2014). In other words, in colonialism there is no separation between normativity and technicality, cultural modernity and social-economic modernization. Colonialism actually includes a deep, mutual and indestructible link between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, between normativity and technicality. In colonialism, there is not a pure normative and a pure technical-logical sphere completely separated one from the other, but direct dependence, mutual support and mixture between them. This is why colonialism, as an imbrication between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, does not appear in the theories of modernity in general and in Habermas's in particular. Therein lies the historical-sociological blindness found in the theories of modernity in their reconstruction of a normative concept of cultural modernity which is directly associated and fused with rationalization, universalism and human evolution.

Indeed, if colonialism were to be seen by theories of modernity as a consequence of the development of Western modernization, if it were linked to cultural modernity and social-economic modernization as imbricated and interdependent moments of a *same societal-cultural totalizing process* of rationalization, then the renewal and the recovery of a normative *and universalist* pure concept of cultural modernity could not be used as the normative and critical framework to understanding, framing and changing the social-economic dynamics of modern social systems and international politics. Even when discussing modern social pathologies caused by modern social systems or institutions, Habermas uses the term *colonization of the lifeworld* in a technical-logical sense, in an instrumental sense, exactly with the aim of purifying the concept of cultural modernity of any kind of irrationality or direct imbrication with the concept of social system or social-economic modernization. The reason for that is very clear: to separate cultural modernity from social-economic modernization and render it autonomous; by doing that, cultural modernity can be conceived of as a pure and

universalist normative concept that offers the critical point of view to a social theory in terms of diagnosis both of the Western modernization's internal dynamics and of the global world's political-cultural dynamics. The critical concept of cultural modernity, in its purity and chastity, is used to critically frame modern social systems, the cultural-societal pathologies around the world, around other societies and cultures and colonialism. However, colonialism is completely denied as a fundamental part of the philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the process of Western modernization, insofar as it is erased from such philosophical-sociological reconstruction. It appears as a question which can be framed, criticized and changed by the use of the normative and universalist concept of cultural modernity, and only by that.

Now, if the theories of modernity saw colonialism as an intrinsic part and consequence of the evolutionary process of Western modernization, then the fundamental presupposition of these theories would be destroyed and they would lose their normative *and universalist* basis, which is correlatively (a) the separation between Europe and the rest of the world, (b) the separation between a pure normative and universalist concept of cultural modernity and a technical-logical or instrumental concept of social systems, and finally (c) the association between modernization, rationalization and universalism with human evolution. Colonialism undermines such an ingenuous idealization and selective stylization of the dual process of Western modernization since it associates cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, by intrinsically linking the normative understanding of Western modernization and the technical-logical structuration and functioning of social systems as dependent and mutually supported moments of one same totalizing societal, cultural and epistemological dynamics of colonial globalism, as can be seen since the 16th century and especially from the 20th century. So, the theories of modernity imply a historical-sociological blindness which divides Western modernization in cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, erasing the phenomenon of colonialism of the constitution and development of Western modernization as a whole. Similarly, they have to deny the emergence and the consolidation of European modernization regarding any relational perspective concerning other societies and cultures, as if such an evolutionary societal-cultural process was a fundamentally internal one, closed, self-referential and self-subsisting. The idea of European modernization as an internal, self-referential and self-subsisting process of evolution reinforces the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity by showing that Western modernization must be conceived of firstly and basically from its internal dynamic, from the emergence and development of cultural modernity *and after* from the emergence and development of modern social systems. Once more, colonialism *as an external phenomenon* regarding the self-referential, self-subsisting and internal movement of Western modernization is erased from any theoretical-political correlation with European modernization.

Of course, the theories of modernity do not deny the fact of colonialism, something they could not do realistically! But they can, by separating cultural modernity and social-economic modernization and sustaining this historical-sociological

blindness, regarding colonialism as an accident caused by the technical-logical social-economic modernization, or even as a problem external to cultural modernity, since it is not committed or directly linked to social-economic modernization, being primarily an internal and self-referential process of constitution and development. In other words, the historical-sociological blindness, which is the very theoretical-political starting point of the theories of modernity in their philosophical and sociological reconstruction of the process of Western modernization, separates these three moments which constitute the process of Western modernization as a whole and render them autonomous: cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism. By separating and rendering them autonomous, these theories can associate Western modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, so that Western modernization becomes the apex of human evolution both in societal-cultural and in epistemological, political and normative terms. As a consequence, Western modernization becomes the final point of human evolution, allowing it to assume the role of universal judge and guide as a whole. Likewise, by separating these three moments, the theories of modernity can purify—which is their intention—cultural modernity regarding social-economic modernization and colonialism, putting it as the pure and universal normative paradigm *par excellence*, the *only theoretical-political-normative condition* for a critical social theory and for an emancipatory political *praxis*. And this clearly and directly entails the very fundamental theoretical-political starting point: if we want to use critical concepts and to ground and perform an emancipatory political *praxis*, both within and without Western modernization, then we must use the modern theoretical-political normative concepts, practices and codes. In other words, if we want to build a critical and emancipatory social theory and political *praxis*, then we must use cultural modernity as a universalist normative paradigm, since there is no alternative. This is the result of the historical-sociological blindness implied in the theories of modernity: their separation of cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism entails the disjunction of the process of Western modernization as an interdependent cultural, institutional and normative-political process. Now, the independence and autonomy of these moments make cultural modernity uncritical with regard to itself, in relation to social-economic modernization and colonialism. There is, then, a pure and holy normative notion of cultural modernity, an evil notion of technical-logical social systems, and finally an external and accidental phenomenon of colonialism in relation to cultural modernity.

CONCLUSION

What is the meaning of colonialism for a theory of modernity, for our evaluation of a theory of modernity? As said above, it is very problematic for a theory of modernity to assume a dual, not necessarily a complementary, explanation about the process of Western modernization, a non-dependent explication of its emergence and development. In the same sense, it is very problematic for a theory of modernity that it does not thematize colonialism or thematizes it from the radical

separation of cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism itself, viewing cultural modernity as a pure normative concept and social-economic modernization as a pure technical-logical or instrumental concept, wherein colonialism is effaced, although there is the use of the concept of *colonization of the lifeworld* in a technical-logical or instrumental sense and dynamic, even if directed to Western modernization's internal pathologic dynamic and social pathologies. There is not, in this kind of theory of modernity characterized by this historical-sociological blindness, a correlation and dependence between normativity and institutionalism, between lifeworld and social systems, because normativity or cultural modernity is always independent in relation to social-economic modernization and vice-versa. Therefore, the theoretical explanation of and the political *praxis* related to both the pathologies of social systems and modern colonialism are reduced to technical-logical problems, without any normative legitimation or justification. How is it possible to explain and to frame *technical-logical pathologies* and *technical-logical colonialism* from *normative* presuppositions? If there is a barrier between them—and a very strong one—, political *praxis* cannot implement any change, as a *critical* social theory cannot provide any diagnoses, since social explanation and institutional action are solely technical-logical.

Now, the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization renders critical social theory uncritical insofar as it depoliticizes the pathologies of social systems, resulting in a number of basic consequences. First, a pure normative paradigm cannot frame a pure technical-logical concept of social systems, even if these social systems have emerged from cultural modernity. They have become technical-logical spheres characterized by self-differentiation, self-referentiality and self-subsistence, by their autonomy and delimitation regarding cultural modernity or the lifeworld. So, here, it is not possible to criticize, frame and change technical-logical social systems from a pure concept of social normativity as a basis of political *praxis*. Habermas, who is conscious of this problem, argues that it is only possible to provide an indirect political-normative intervention into the technical-logical social systems as the very basis of a radical democracy for contemporary Western modernization (see HABERMAS, 2003b, p. 147-148). But the truth is that only an *indirect theoretical diagnosis* based on normativity in relation to technical-logical social systems is possible, because they are non-political and non-normative instances which have basically an instrumental functioning and programming that is totally internal, self-referential, centralized and monopolized by institutional elites. As a consequence, social-economic modernization becomes *depoliticized by its technical-logical* constitution, legitimation and evolution. It remains untouched, uncontrolled and unchanged by a critical social theory that separates cultural modernity as a pure normative sphere and social-economic modernization as a pure technical-logical sphere. The correlation between them is based on, accomplished and streamlined by the social systems' own rules, by the strong institutionalism. Both politically and economically, the social systems' rules, procedures, elites and technicians provide the political dynamics, defining what politics can and cannot effectively do.

Finally, the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, which constitutes the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, leads to the fact that, by the inexistence of any correlation between them, cultural modernity is liberated from any criticism against its independence and position in relation to social-economic modernization. In other words, cultural modernity remains untouched by the pathologies of social-economic modernization, so it *always* preserves its self-reflexivity, its capability of self-criticism, of internal criticism, becoming purified and constantly purifying itself against the dangers of irrationality and unreasonableness. In truth, irrationality and unreasonableness belong to social-economic modernization and to technical-logical social systems, and not to cultural modernity. It is from here, from the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, that cultural modernity maintains its self-reflexivity and, then, its capability of self-change and self-criticism, sustaining, as a consequence, its claimed status as a universalist normative paradigm that serves both to the internal dynamic of Western modernization and to all the particular contexts, to the global order as a whole. However, this methodological-political separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization offered by theories of modernity renders cultural modernity highly uncritical regarding both its link with social-economic modernization and *the correlation between cultural modernity and colonialism*. Indeed, a colonial mind-paradigm permeates the philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the European or Western modernization, namely in some important aspects: the division between modern Europe—rational, post-conventional, universalist—and the rest of the world as traditionalist (traditionalism as a form of life, culture, thinking and acting attached to its own context of emergence and development); the fact that cultural modernity, in particular, and Western modernization, in general, is the apex of human evolution, so that human evolution becomes modernization; the fact that, by its post-conventional culture, consciousness and normativity, cultural modernity is the only theoretical, political and normative basis for social criticism and for a radical and emancipatory political *praxis*, within and without modernity. Cultural modernity is a soft colonial mind-paradigm exactly because any possible social criticism and emancipatory political *praxis* needs to assume the epistemological, political and normative principles, practices and subjects of cultural modernity, that is, they need to use the normative paradigm of modernity as a universal epistemological-political basis which allows social criticism and political *praxis* without any possible alternative.

Now, an uncritical cultural modernity becomes independent of social-economic modernization and regards colonialism as an accident or an external political, cultural and epistemological phenomenon. This is the basis of the historical-sociological blindness found in theories of modernity in order to ground a normative concept of cultural modernity that is universalist and can favor a critical social theory of the Western modernization and to an international political intervention. Here, the critical social theory cannot thematize colonialism and, more importantly, cannot offer a normative basis to think, frame and change the pathologies within and without modernity. By conceiving of colonialism as an accident or a phenomenon external to Western modernization in general and to

cultural modernity in particular, the theories of modernity must conclude that the only way to frame the question of colonialism is by modernity-modernization itself, that is, the only theoretical, political and normative possibility to face and solve the problem of colonialism is from the colonial-modern heritage, from the colonial-modern cultural, epistemological and political mindset and paradigm. As argued along the paper, the basic presupposition of the theories of modernity—their historical-sociological blindness—is that the process of Western modernization is the apex of human evolution, containing traditionalism. Modernity, here, becomes the normative paradigm for judging, framing and guiding all particular contexts. Likewise, the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, between a pure normative concept and process and a pure technical-logical concept and process leads to the absolution of cultural modernity regarding the sins of the technical-logical social-economic modernization (it leads also to a Manichean understanding of the dual Western modernization – a pure normative cultural modernity highly emancipatory and critical, and a pure technical-logical and instrumental social-economic modernization, highly pathological). Finally, colonialism does not appear in the philosophical-sociological reconstruction of the process of Western or European modernization, in the theories of modernity marked by the historical-sociological blindness discussed above. As a consequence of this approach, the theoretical, political and normative framework within which the social criticism and the emancipatory political *praxis* are possible—the only one—is cultural modernity itself. Now, what can be perceived here is exactly that the fundamental presupposition to thematize and frame colonialism is, we repeat again, cultural modernity, *which is uncritical regarding itself, regarding its link with both social-economic modernization and colonialism*.

If social-political problems in general and the phenomenon of colonialism in particular is to be criticized and changed, the epistemological-political presuppositions of cultural modernity have to be assumed. These presuppositions do not involve only the idea of a post-metaphysical foundation performed from an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism concerning the epistemological-moral grounding. More importantly, they involve the necessity to assume the historical-sociological blindness as the conceptual core from which it is possible to think and act regarding both social-economic modernization and colonialism, absolving cultural modernity of any relationship with them and placing it as universalism itself, as the only condition for social criticism and for a reflexive political *praxis*. In other words, the colonial culture, mindset and normativity is found both within and without Western modernization as the very epistemological-political basis in order to frame and change their internal pathologies and mutual interactions-tensions. The historical-sociological blindness found in theories of modernity erases the connections and mutual dependence between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, effacing the phenomenon of colonialism of Western modernization as a whole. So, in order to criticize Western modernization and colonialism, the presuppositions assumed by Western modernization as the basis of its self-comprehension, legitimation and evolution are to be used, namely: (a) its opposition in relation to the rest of the world as traditionalism (the

correlation between modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution); (b) its direct association with the apex, with the final stage of human evolution, which allows cultural modernity to assume the condition of epistemologically, politically and normatively guiding, framing and changing all particular contexts; (c) the radical separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, which absolves cultural modernity from the pathologies of social-economic modernization, maintaining cultural modernity's claim as a universal culture, society, consciousness and epistemology that is the condition of any possible social criticism and reflexive political *praxis*; and finally, (d) the argument that, by such separation and the correlation between modernization and the final stage of human evolution, cultural modernity is the only paradigmatic basis for the framing, criticism and changing of modernity itself and for international politics.

Here we have, as we think, the contemporary version of a colonial mind-paradigm which can at the same time (a) affirm its self-referentiality and self-subsistence (in the sense that the evolutionary process of Western modernization is an internal process of constitution and development), (b) associate itself with human evolution as a post-conventional and rationalized culture, society and consciousness, becoming the judge and guide of all particular contexts (there is the universal modernity and all the rest of particular contexts characterized by traditionalism), and (c) assume that the only normative basis for theoretical-political reflection is the colonial mind-paradigm itself, that is, a kind of thinking, acting and grounding from an impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which is independent regarding contextual and particularized epistemological-moral foundations, regarding traditionalism. Such a contemporary soft version of a colonial mind-paradigm that insists on recovering a universal epistemological-moral paradigm from the use of the notion of human evolution as a unitary and progressive process starting with traditionalism and arriving at modernization, such a colonial mind-paradigm argues again that the more developed stage of society, culture and consciousness contains in itself the moments that it has overcome, and, as consequence, that it is so embracing that it can at the same time take into account and judge-orientate the particular and less developed moments that it has overcome. Now, this kind of contemporary soft colonial mind-paradigm has no shame and no problem in speaking and acting thus, because, as was shown throughout the paper, the historical-sociological blindness found in theories of modernity, by separating cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, can stylize a normative concept of European modernity that can adapt to all epistemological-political matters, as it can escape from all forms of criticism regarding this association with social-economic modernization and colonialism, because it is a pure normative concept, a very impartial, neutral and formal proceduralism which is not compromised *a priori* with particular contents and, in our case, with social-economic modernization and colonialism. The soft colonial mind-paradigm conceives again of the association of modernization, rationalization and universalism both as the present and the future of human evolution and as the supreme normative basis for any type of social criticism and political *praxis* within and without modernity. In the same way, the evolutionary process of human

development as modernization, rationalization and universalism becomes the ending point of human constitution, so that it is a totalizing process which all peoples, cultures and societies will achieve, especially if they are guided by the normative paradigm of modernity, consequentially arriving at similar experiences (the rationalization of the cultural images of the world). The globalization guided by Western modernization is a fact, a consequence of the general process of development of Western modernization as a universal worldview of human evolution (see HABERMAS, 1997, p. 143-144). That is the reason why it is possible to use modernity's normative paradigm, despite its historical-sociological-blindness, as the main epistemological-political basis for international politics. Indeed, that is the reason why *it is necessary to affirm the historical-sociological blindness* as the core of a contemporary political theory, of a contemporary social criticism—it erases the intrinsic correlation of cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism, liberating cultural modernity from its link and placing it as the ending point of the human evolution. So, Western modernization is the only epistemological, political and normative ground and *praxis* for itself and for globalization as a whole (see MIGNOLO, 2007).

Can we use an alternative normative-sociological concept for understanding, framing and changing the process of Western modernization and streamlining international politics? Is there such an alternative normative-critical concept to cultural modernity in order to think, frame and act regarding both Western modernization *as a whole* and international politics? In the rest of the paper, the concept of *reparation for colonialism* will be presented as a more critical normative concept for grounding, framing and guiding both the process of Western modernization and international politics. It should be said that this work is in its initial stages and, thus, is not fully explained and clarified. First of all, the concept of reparation for colonialism intends to link cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism as interdependent and imbricated moments of a general and unitary evolutionary process. It aims to unveil, denounce, criticize and overcome the historical-sociological blindness found in the theories of modernity to construct their philosophical-sociological concept of Western modernization as a universalist societal, cultural, institutional and normative evolutionary process which becomes the ending point of human evolution and the supreme judge and guide of particular cultures by assuming a stylized notion of cultural modernity as a post-conventional society, culture and consciousness (and associating such a post-conventional society, culture and consciousness with the apex of human evolution). It rejects the separation between a pure normative concept of cultural modernity and a pure technical-logical concept of social-economic modernization proposed by the theories of modernity as much as it rejects the effacement of colonialism as a fact linked to the process of Western modernization.

Indeed, by beginning with the direct unveiling and denouncing of the historical-sociological blindness found in contemporary theories of modernity as the basis of their reconstruction of a normative concept of cultural modernity as a universalist culture, society and consciousness, as of an institutional notion of Western modernization as the object of sociological analysis, the normative-

sociological concept of reparation for colonialism points to the imbrication between cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism as the basic core from which a critical social theory, correlatively philosophical and sociological, can frame the constitutive and evolutionary process of Western modernization in particular and its correlations with international politics in general. In this sense, the critical social theory based on that normative-sociological notion of reparation for colonialism conceives of the process of Western modernization as a unitary and mutually dependent totalizing movement toward globalization in the sense that it, by conceiving of itself as the final stage of human evolution with conditions to unify and intermedicate humankind by cultural-epistemological rationalization, can assume the core-role of judge, guide and shepherd of all cultures, societies and epistemologies. Therefore, the concept of reparation for colonialism does not deny the two basic characteristics of the self-comprehension of the theories of modernity, namely the correlation between cultural modernity, rationalization, universalism and emancipation, and the association between Western modernization and human evolution as a universal standpoint from which it is possible to frame, criticize and guide all particular contexts from and by cultural modernity itself in the name of humankind. On the contrary, the concept of reparation for colonialism affirms that this is the real intention of the normative paradigm of modernity—modernization, rationalization, post-conventionalism, universalism and human nature-evolution. However, such a universal core and moment assumed by modernity itself is, in the concept of reparation for colonialism, *the real problem* that must be faced nowadays, because it takes a totalizing, uncritical and depoliticized role and action regarding modernity itself and in terms of international politics. Indeed, the great contemporary epistemological-political problems are caused by such a totalizing and colonialist imposition of an unpolitical normative paradigm of modernity as the basis of all kinds of epistemological, political and normative groundwork within and without modernity. As a consequence, the only alternative to modernity, as Habermas argues, is more and more *reflexive* modernity, a form of self-reflexive and critical modernity that can always purify itself and continue its totalizing movement toward universalism, by means of its epistemological, cultural, political, economic and military form of societal, cultural, institutional and normative instruments and subjects—in other words, by means of the affirmation of the historical-sociological blindness *of the* normative paradigm of modernity, from the affirmation of the historical-sociological blindness *by the* modernity's normative paradigm. By the separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, as by correlating modernization, rationalization, universalism and human evolution, the normative paradigm of modernity cannot be delegitimized or affected by any kind of suspicion. On the contrary, as Habermas says, if we want to act and think about modernity and international politics, we must assume the normative paradigm of modernity as a basis. There is no epistemological, political and normative alternative to cultural modernity.

Now, human evolution is not *a natural and therefore essential* process of evolution toward universalism, that is, toward Western modernization as a universal form of society, culture, life, consciousness and paradigm. It is a

construction, as is shown by the association among cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism. We question whether human evolution is indeed a universal evolutionary process. This is the theoretical-political presupposition assumed by the theories of modernity in general and by Habermas's in particular in order to posit cultural modernity as a universal epistemological, moral and normative paradigm, as a universal society, culture and consciousness. This theoretical-political presupposition, added to the division between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, which constitutes the historical-sociological blindness found in theories of modernity, correlatively puts Western modernization as a universal society, culture, consciousness and paradigm and purifies cultural modernity of any kind of contact with modern social systems and with the phenomenon of colonialism. It allows the unification of all cultures, societies and normative paradigms into one basic whole, which is the concept of cultural modernity. Such unification enables cultural modernity to assume the core-role of judge and guide of these particular cultures, societies and paradigms as a normative umbrella that can intermediate and ultimately frame all particular contextual dynamics, codes, practices and subjects. Now, the concept of reparation for colonialism denies, by unveiling, denouncing and criticizing the historical-sociological blindness of the theories of modernity, by unifying cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism as an interdependent process, that human evolution is a process toward modernization, as it denies that human evolution has a natural and essential process of evolution with Western modernization as its final stage, which ends in cultural modernity. As a consequence, it also denies that the correlation between modernization, rationalization, post-conventionalism, universalism and human evolution can put modernity as a final stage of human evolution and, therefore, as the only normative paradigm that can be used in order to conceive of modernity itself and international politics—universalism. From now on, if we want to think and act with regard to the process of Western modernization and its international or global moments and relations, then we must correlate cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism, as we must refuse the association between Western modernization and human evolution, human evolution as Western modernization, Western modernization as the apex of human evolution.

We must again correlate cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism in order to understand, frame and change the process of Western modernization and international politics: this is the first basic step taken by a critical social theory based on the normative-sociological concept of reparation for colonialism, contrarily to a critical social theory which is based on modernity's normative paradigm and on the correlation between modernity, rationalization, universalism and human evolution. If modernity's normative paradigm includes the historical-sociological blindness as the theoretical-political condition for grounding a normative and universal notion of cultural modernity that is the epistemological-political groundwork for both Western modernization and international politics, the concept of reparation for colonialism does not need to assume an uncritical point of view and a blind, uncritical and depoliticized starting point based on the separation and opposition between cultural modernity and social-economic

modernization. Indeed, if the theories of modernity proposed by Habermas, Giddens, Honneth and Forst must assume that (some or all of these points) (a) such a separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, (b) the construction of a pure normative notion of European cultural modernity and (c) the direct correlation between modernization, universalism and human evolution, the concept of reparation for colonialism can link from the beginning in a same theoretical-political analysis and *praxis* the normative justifications, the material and institutional constitution and the totalizing movement toward universalism (that is, toward colonialism) as the basis for constitution, legitimation and evolution of the process of Western modernization. In other words, the concept of reparation for colonialism does not understand and assumes this separation as possible or necessary in theoretical and political terms, because this separation between cultural modernity and social-economic modernization, due to the historical-sociological blindness, becomes uncritical regarding the process of Western modernization and takes a soft colonial mind regarding international politics. In this sense, modernity is always excused of its sins, of its colonial tendency; in this sense, modernity, as a universal form of culture, society, consciousness and epistemology, becomes the judge and guide of itself and of the rest of the world. Now, in substituting the concept of cultural modernity as normative basis for a critical social theory, the concept of reparation for colonialism seeks the frame and restraint of Western modernization as the fundamental core-role of our theoretical-political *praxis*, since our great challenge in the present days and in the future is the constitution, legitimation and evolution of Western modernization, within and without itself, *as a theoretical-political totality which does not separate cultural modernity, social-economic modernization and colonialism*.

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