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Anne Freeland

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Anne Freeland*

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One of the major tasks of the Latin American left, since the early twentieth century but especially over the past couple of decades, has been the negotiation or articulation of a political and intellectual tradition with Marxist roots and one of indigenous resistance. This post looks at the history and afterlife of a key term that has served to bridge this gap in the Bolivian context, René Zavaleta Mercado's concept of abigarramiento or sociedad abigarrada, "motley society." My interest in the concept is primarily as an antidote to the much-discussed slippage into a multiculturalism that is typically identified as (neo)liberal and that co-opts and neutralizes plurinational projects founded on a promise of indigenous autonomy but that can also serve a plurinationalism (and to my knowledge this connection has not received the same level of critical analysis) that operates as a discursive strategy of populist legitimation of the state.

From a very broad perspective, this can be situated within the profuse and varied tradition in Latin Americanist scholarship of production, borrowing, or refashioning of concepts that address the specificities of their objects in contrast to European or Eurocentric models with a focus on problems of identity and difference: transculturation (Fernando Ortiz, Ángel Rama), hybridity (Néstor García Canclini), heterogeneity (Antonio Cornejo Polar), subalternity (John

* Anne Freeland is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures and the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. Her translation of René Zavaleta's The National-Popular in Bolivia is forthcoming from Seagull Books.

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Beverley, Ileana Rodríguez, Alberto Moreiras, Gareth Williams, et al). If what the discourses constructed around these terms share is an interest in making Latin American societies and cultural production legible in their difference from but also in their relation to metropolitan (post)modernity, they have been distinguished from one another according to their ultimate assimilability into the prevailing logic of the nation. Bruno Bosteels, for example, identifies transculturation and hybridity as homogenizing categories (and on this extreme would be the discourse of mestizaje, which retains something of its continuity with one of radical heterogeneity, as its opposite pole), in the service first of a national-popular imaginary that initially replicates the modern nation form as best it can from a position of marginality and (post)coloniality and subsequently yields to the epistemic demands of neoliberal globalization; heterogeneity and subalternity are constructed against this, as an insistence on the visibilization of an unassimilable outside of the social body as organic unity. This is the mode in which abigarramiento operates: as difference, as incommensurability.

This brings us to the problem, often acknowledged but seldom adequately addressed, of the fetishization of difference or exteriority. Gayatri Spivak's definition of subalternity as a position without identity is instructive here. The subaltern is a useful category only insofar as it names a referent that can be desubalternized; a position that can be vacated, whose content is not fixed. It is useful, therefore, insofar as it is attended by a theory that proposes to form the basis of a practice of desubalternization, what Spivak has called "metonymizing oneself for making oneself a synecdoche, a part of a whole," and what Zavaleta calls intersubjectivization. Abigarramiento is, in the first place, an obstacle to or absence of metonymization or intersubjectification. Of course it is less specific than subalternity in that it does not refer to a position of inferior rank "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak 475), but to the simultaneous existence of multiple social worlds closed to one another. It is not necessarily or not only an undesirable condition, and can have the advantage of blocking the hegemonic operation of capitalism (I have discussed on this elsewhere, and will return to it below). As it is conceived in Zavaleta, abigarramiento is therefore not unequivocally a bad thing, but neither is it something to be celebrated, although it has almost always been read and used in a celebratory mode as a result of an identitarianism that privileges difference for its own sake. Rather than attempting to organize the categories of this discourse according to their susceptibility to slipping from difference into reconciliation or homogenization in terms of what they propose to describe, then, I want to focus on their utility in articulating a constructive critique of present.

While "development" does not appear in Zavaleta's lexicon by name, his work is engaged with critical alternatives to the progressive, Eurocentric, and economistic conception of history from which orthodox development thinking derives. The most obvious point of intersection between Zavaleta and Latin American discourses on development is his self-positioning in relation to dependency theory, and this is ultimately connected to abigarramiento and to his concept of intersubjectivity: against dependency theory's privileging of external constraints, Zavaleta affirms first the possibility of an intersubjective agency in the "periphery" and, on the other hand, the disruptive contingency of social and historical heterogeneity. Intersujectivity and abigarramiento, agency and contingency, together constitute the condition of possibility of politics itself. For Zavaleta, the opposition or succession here is epitomized in the opposition between a Marxian centrality of the mode of production and the Gramscian historical bloc (although he notes that it is an opposition that can also be found within Marx). Development, as a locally determined historical process, in this context, is thought in two ways: as the development of the nation-state as such, as a collectivity that recognizes itself in the state—representation as portrait and as proxy (to borrow again from Spivak), and as the development of self-determination, which, for Zavaleta, is the practical extension and realization of self-knowledge, the epistemic construction of the self and the collectivity as political subject. These two moments can be aligned with the binary structure of the constituted and the constituent.

Abigarramiento is entirely consistent in its initial formulation with a stageist model of accounting for the experience of the periphery in terms defined by the metropole: it refers to a disorganization of the linear teleology of the modes-of-production narrative, the overlapping of historical moments. It is a modification of the sequence of these moments, but not of their contents. The concept is enriched as Zavaleta puts it to work. First, it explains the need for a more historicist and less structural analysis of social relations in Bolivia and in "motley" societies in general, a category coterminous with peripheral, and even "backward" countries ("cualquier sociedad atrasada es más abigarrada que una sociedad capitalista" [50]), against the economism of dependency theory but still entirely within a logic of linear progress. As his particular style of historicism becomes focused on the twin concepts of the mediation—the mutual legibilization—between society and the state and crisis as a disruption of this mediation, the function of the category of abigarramiento as obstruction to a social-scientific analysis based on abstract principles and calculability is linked to the obstruction of the quantitative methods of liberal representative democracy and the production of hegemony. Motley societies are illegible and therefore unrepresentable, or rather, they are legible only through and

in crisis, an event that is always also a constitutive or constituent moment, an act of substitution. Every crisis in this sense is a crisis of representation that supplies the impetus for a new representation to emerge. It is as the ground of the general crisis that Zavaleta's concept of abigarramiento works against the reification of representation, against the ossification of the constituted order and in the service of collective constitutive action. It is the persistence of an incommensurability that precludes the total closure of the constituted and therefore guarantees the possibility of de- and re-constitution.

But, as Bosteels warns, such a concept is always at risk of being placed in the service of identity, of difference neutralized as "the barely disguised form of the of apparition of the law of generalized equivalence" (152), or of constituted power as the legitimation of a delimited, unified subject of national self-determination that can only constitute itself through an act of suppression or exclusion. This is what happens, for example, when Luis Tapia suggests that we regard abigarramiento as the social-scientific equivalent of Alejo Carpentier's aesthetic category of the baroque: "Considero que Zavaleta es el barroco en la ciencia social en Bolivia, o sea, la descripción, que aquí es un decir, adecuada o correspondiente al mundo que piensa y pretende explicar. En general, el pensamiento social en Bolivia ha sido siempre más simple que el tipo de realidad que se pensaba" (322). In both Carpentier's tropical Baroque aesthetic and Zavaleta's social theory, what is sought, for Tapia, is an art or a science that mimics its object in its local specificity, and that therefore serves less as an instrument of analysis or transformation than as a mirror or direct expression that validates as it affirms.

Álvaro García Linera makes an analogous argument in reference to the state-society relation, employing another major term of Zavaleta's—and one that plays an essential role in the present identitarian appropriation abigarramiento—that of the "apparent state." The apparent state is one that only nominally represents the societies that inhabit the territory over which it claims sovereignty. There is no effective relationship between the state and society, as in the case of "motley societies" that lack a totalizing intersubjectivity. This term has been picked up by Álvaro García Linera to designate the pre-Evista regime, in contrast to the present era of the Plurinational State, in which a full and transparent representation of a Bolivia's abigarramiento is supposedly achieved. Just as for Tapia in art and in social science what is privileged is accuracy of representation (as portrait more than as proxy)—realist fiction and metropolitan social theory fail to portray peripheral cultural and social realities—for García Linera the "apparent" state of the criollo oligarchy or mestizo-criollo nationalist elite is condemned on the basis of its

unlikeness to the society it presumes to represent. The state is imagined within an essentialist ontology and an ethical regime of fidelity that precludes the social innovation that is at the heart of democratic consciousness and practice.

In bringing these readings of Zavaleta by Tapia and García Linera together in the context of a discussion framed in terms of constituent and constituted power I mean to suggest a connection between an analytic distinction normally applied to the state or to the explicit power structure and modes of representation in a broader discursive sphere, in a discourse originating within the university or other areas of cultural production. The hypothesis behind such a connection is that these spheres have to do with the same epistemological ground or process of subject formation. In a context where indigenous movements have successfully reorganized the boundaries of the political sphere and occupied the state, this problem—that of (individual and collective) subject formation and self-representation—is crucial in sustaining the revolutionary impulse that produced this reorganization in the first place and opposing the internal anti-democratic reflex that Gramsci theorized in concrete, historical terms as the process of transformism.

The constituted in this sense names what must always occupy the position of the object of critique. This does not necessarily imply an anti-statist position and is of course thoroughly opposed to the idea of a direct democracy that would abolish the distinction between the constituent and the constituted, presence and representation, altogether; the distinction, however, in order to be maintained, must be methodological and not ontological since it is precisely through its reification as representable identity that the constituent is stripped of its creative force. Our critique must always target within the articulation of constituted forms the obfuscation of the constituent, of the contingent and conflictual relation to their foundings. The concept of abigarramiento, as the persistence of non-self-identity and of the unrepresentable within the constituent, is useful when it serves to elucidate this relation; it becomes unproductive and reactionary when it either assumes a constituted form in symmetrical opposition to the hegemonic power, or is claimed as perfectly identical to this power, through its transparent representation in the state.

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