UNIVERSITY: AUTONOMY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Luiz ANDRADE¹

ABSTRACT: Our main objective in this essay is to articulate three issues characteristic of that secular institution: autonomy, diversity and inclusion. The university, understood as an autonomous institution, but not sovereign, have emergent properties that came from the networks of conversations between its members. Given that these conversation networks are multidimensional, diverse and inclusive, the university, understood as an instituting procedurality and not as established reality, can always generate new approaches, new professional fields, new inter and transdisciplinary interventions and, above all, new historical subjects. This is the specificity of university efficiency that justifies all our efforts to preserve what is presented as a condition of survival and potentiality: autonomy.

KEYWORDS: University. Autonomy. Diversity. Inclusion.

RESUMO: O principal objetivo deste ensaio é articular três temas inerentes à universidade: autonomia, diversidade e inclusão. A universidade, enquanto instituição autônoma, mas não soberana, possui propriedades emergentes advindas dos nós conversacionais entre os membros que a integram. Tendo em vista que estas redes de conversações são multidimensionais, diversas e inclusivas, a universidade, entendida como processualidade instituinte e não como realidade instituída, pode sempre gerar novas abordagens, novas formações profissionais, novas intervenções inter e transdisciplinares e, sobretudo, novos sujeitos históricos. É essa especificidade da eficiência universitária que justifica todo nosso esforço em preservar isso que se apresenta como a sua condição de sobrevivência e potencialidade: sua autonomia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Universidade. Autonomia. Diversidade. Inclusão.

RESUMEN: El objetivo principal de este ensayo es articular tres temas inherentes a esta institución secular: autonomía, diversidad e inclusión. La universidad, como institución autónoma, tiene propiedades emergentes de los nodos conversacionales entre sus miembros. Dado que estas redes de conversaciones son multidimensionales, diversas e inclusivas, la universidad, entendida como procesalidad y pero no en una realidad establecida, siempre puede generar nuevos enfoques, nuevos antecedentes profesionales, nuevas intervenciones inter y transdisciplinarias y, sobre todo, nuevos agentes historicos. Es esta especificidad de la eficiencia universitaria lo que justifica todos nuestros esfuerzos para preservar esto que se presenta como su condición de supervivencia y potencialidad: su autonomía.

¹ Fluminense Federal University (UFF), Niterói – RJ – Brazil. Associate Professor IV. Department of Immunobiology. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3925-2953. E-mail: labauff@yahoo.com.br

PALABRAS CLAVE: Universidad. Autonomía Diversidad. Inclusión.

Introduction

The history of the university institution was continuous from the Middle Ages, considering as reference points of its appearance the Universities of Bologna (1190), Oxford (1214) and Paris (1215). Although the dates that accompany the names of these institutions often refer to the approval of their respective statutes, their simple announcement obscures the main historical legacy common to all of them - the long process of conflicts that marked the search, conquest and the maintenance of their respective autonomies (RENAUT, 1995).

Etymologically, autonomy means proper law (from Greek $\alpha\mu\pi$ 0 = proper; $\eta 0\mu\alpha$ = law). Its antonym, heteronomy, means external law or command, that is, the condition of a person or group that receives from an element that is external to it the law that must be obeyed. Within systems and institutions, the concepts of autonomy and heteronomy define different types of organization. The first defines self-referential, self-affirming systems, that is, systems that are determined from their own operating dynamics. The second defines systems whose identity is affirmed by the other, therefore, systems of definition from the outside (VARELA, 1989).

We have already had the opportunity to present the theoretical framework (MATURANA, 1997; 2001) in a broader and more in-depth way with which we define the university and its historical development with society (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2000; 2002a). Thus, in a succinct way, we proposed that the university defines itself as a network of academic-scientific conversations (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2000) and that, with this modus operandi, the university produces phenomena such as: the production of autonomy as an ontological frontier (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2000, 2002a), a solidary relation, of affirmation of identity in the construction of otherness, in the extension action (ANDRADE; SILVA, 2001), the dialectic of the same and the other in its historical co-drift with society (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2002a) and an unceasing creative production, called in its set of university *poiesis* (from Greek, creation) (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2002b).

Based on our model explained above, we understand the relation between the university and society as a dialectic between two domains that are distinguished, but that are not separate. Thus, at the same time that the university constitutes itself as society, insofar as it is financed by it and is an included part of its operation, on the other hand, it is also the other part of society, insofar as its strength The founding principle, its founding principle, is autonomy. In this way,

it is possible to deduce that it is in the dialectical tension between the same and the other that the university institutes the new and the transforming in society. Universities that deny the same of their instituting reality can be denied in their own way. In the same way, universities that abdicate their role of another, in the affirmation of their autonomy, disappear in total homogenization in relation to a medium that no longer recognizes it as an autonomous system. The university capable of sustaining the dialectic of the same and the other is the university necessary for its time and society and can thus contribute in an original way to the birth of a new world.

An important distinction must be made: although university members are political subjects, the university, as an institution, is not a political party. It feeds on dissent, fundamental to its operation, and values the best argument (FIORE, 1995).

Based on the theoretical framework explained above, with autonomy as a *sine qua non* condition for the definition and *modus operandi* of the university, we will start to problematize the other two concepts that appear in the title of this essay, namely, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity

Although the concept of diversity can be used as a quantitative distinction, when comparing two sets of very similar entities, or as a qualitative distinction, when comparing sets of different entities that cannot be substituted among themselves (ABBAGNANO, 2007), these two meanings help us to think about the diversity inherent in the university or the university system as a whole.

Thus, taking as an example a university the size of the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), we count, as an estimate, about 4,000 teachers, responsible for at least 3,000 subjects, about 50,000 students, distributed in a wide variety of knowledge areas and undergraduate and graduate courses, and about 4,000 administrative technicians. This numerical diversity is then expanded with the plurality arising from the life stories of its members, considering genders, ethnic ties, social class, age, places of birth, institutions for acquiring academic formation, beliefs, worldviews, political participation. It expands even further when taking into account the principle of academic freedom. Thus, different methods, techniques, styles, conceptions, values, interests, experiences and livings emerge, all affecting the way of thinking, teaching and imagining the university itself and what emerges from it - creativity (MOTA-SANTOS, 1999).

One of the greatest scholars of creativity and creative groups, historical and current - Domenico de Masi (2002a; 2002b) - highlighted some characteristics of creative groups and their respective environments conducive to the collective production of creativity, namely: balance between dream and concreteness, functional and welcoming physical environment, freedom of thought, respect for divergent points of view, flexible schedules, but also synchronism, punctuality and uninterrupted stay until the end of the task, interdisciplinarity, complementarity, availability of cultural and material means, stimuli and material and symbolic rewards, and leadership capable of creating a favorable psychosocial climate, oriented both to the mission and to the group (MASI, 2002a). The author demonstrated that the interpersonal dynamics of these groups does not respond to a linear and hierarchical logic but, above all, to a recursive logic in which each member reacts to a complex network of conductive, communicative and collaborative interactions (MASI, 2002b). Many of the characteristics highlighted by Masi (2002a; 2002b) are present in universities and, therefore, it is not by chance that, in Brazil, more than 90% of research is carried out in public universities.

With regard to the formation of qualified staff for the country, Brazilian public universities also stand out. Considering that the networks of academic-scientific conversations present in universities are multidimensional and are not enclosed in disciplines, the potential for diversity increases extraordinarily, always being able to generate new approaches, new professional formation, new inter and transdisciplinary interventions and, above all, new subjects historical, many of them coming from his student youth - an inexhaustible source of diversity since it is renewed every year.

In Brazil, the diversity brought by student youth has been increased in the last two decades by the quota system, student mobility and internationalization. Diversity in terms of regionalisms, different social classes, immigration, migration and inter-ethnic contacts. Added to this is the experience of masters and students in university extension programs (ANDRADE; SILVA, 2001) and reverse extension (SANTOS, 2019; TAKAHASHI, 2015), two ways of interacting with society and incorporating news.

Although some authors have understood the increase in the diversity and complexity of modern universities as "multiversity" (KERR, 2001) or pluriversity (SANTOS, 2019), we believe that renaming is not the best formulation to understand the structural changes that occurred of this almost millennial institution and, thus, contribute to its improvement. It should be noted, in the historical context in which the denomination of multiversity was proposed (KERR, 2001), that is, in the United States, that the American university grew as a combination of several previous models, incorporating, from the medieval model, the professional

formation, the Newman model (1996), liberal education, the German model, research, the Scottish model, applied science, and also the distinctive and characteristic elements of American society, including the State's strong investment in research and graduate education, justified by the importance that science had for the victory of that country and its allies, in the second world war (FALLIS, 2007). It was this diverse and conglomerate structure that the author referred to as multiversity, to signal the existence of several disparate and conflicting internal interests within the same institution (KERR, 2001). The author also pointed out the important role played by this institution in the production of knowledge and in the economic development of the United States. We corroborate with the aforementioned author about the importance of the university for economic growth, industrial innovation and international competitiveness, standing out from traditional values such as natural resources, manufacturing and the factory floor (DILL; VUGHT, 2010), but we do not support the need to rename the university for "multiversity". We affirm this from our understanding that the university was constituted, since its beginnings, with an intrinsic, creative diversity and that it always knew how to do, and to maintain itself, through structural changes, as a historical necessity of society and not a simple historical contingency (ANDRADE, 2002a). Thus, for its improvement, rather than renaming the institution, it would be to understand and guarantee financing and institutional autonomy in the face of the heteronomic forces of its circumstances, especially the market.

In Santos's (2019) view, criticizing the established order, the university should be even more diverse in terms of its entrants - excluded cultures and social classes - and in terms of methods and epistemologies, that is, it should be decolonized in relation to epistemology European. To account for this movement for the sake of increasing diversity, the aforementioned author suggests the name pluriversity, and to adjectivate the emancipatory institutional struggle on behalf of those who have been historically excluded, or who do not fit into the Eurocentric cultural model, he calls for a "subversity". In both directions, diversity and emancipation, it is expected that the incessant search for equality between different cultures (emancipatory multiculturalism) will provide a social redistribution from an economic point of view and, also, the epistemic rescue of values and ways of living and thinking. world from cultures of the south that, historically, has suffered a real epistemicide (SANTOS, 1999; 2019).

Although our ethical and political commitments are guided, in the social field, by a more just and egalitarian society and, within the university, by the creation of new scientific paradigms, redefinition of visions and practices and coexistence with different epistemologies arising from an emancipatory multiculturalism (ANDRADE; SILVA, 2005), we do not

corroborate the idea of renaming the institution, given that, according to our model, the structural changes of the university can happen in its historical co-drift with society, as a resignification from of its internal struggles, in the dialectic of the same and the other, understanding this other as a result of syntheses produced by the social contradictions of each era. For the model of historical co-drift, of the dialectic of the same and the other, there is no socialist university within the scope of a capitalist society and vice versa (ANDRADE et al., 2002). However, the university can change its structure as a result of major social changes or as a result of its internal struggles. One of these struggles in the social field - social inclusion and in the educational field - inclusive education - has been discussed in the National Education Conferences and in the National Education Plans and already have goals, strategies and legal guidelines, for which all the educational systems, including universities, try to improve themselves to give the best legal and ethical compliance.

Inclusion

While the concept of diversity refers to variety, to difference, using, for this purpose, criteria of distinctions and rational arguments, the concept of inclusion brings up conducts for accepting the legitimacy of the other in coexistence and, therefore, the references are more emotional than rational, marked by ethical conduct. If this is accepted, we would like to affirm the impossibility of addressing social inclusion, be it at any level, university, in our case, without taking into account ethical principles of conduct. Although many authors consider ethics as a study or science of judgments regarding human conduct that can be qualified from the point of view of good and evil, Maturana (1997), proposes another explanatory way when stating that emotions are more important than the rationalizations for understanding ethics. Although the author's argument is simple and simple, it is blunt. So, he says:

> Ethics has to do with a person's concern about the negative consequences of his action on other human beings. If the other has presence for a person and that person is concerned with what happens to the other, as a result of an effective or potential act, this concern is within the scope of ethics (MATURANA, 1997).²

If ethics is so understood, it should not be confused with investigation or appreciation,

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² A ética tem a ver com a preocupação que uma pessoa tem sobre as consequências negativas de seu atuar sobre outros seres humanos. Se o outro tem presença para uma pessoa e esta pessoa se preocupa com o que se passa com o outro, em decorrência de um ato efetivo ou potencial, esta preocupação está no âmbito da ética (MATURANA, 1997).

be it philosophical or scientific, since its reference is not external to the one or the one that cares about the other. It is true that we can rationalize and systematize the conduct to discriminate between good and evil, or to understand the behavior of a society in a certain time and place, but the main reference of ethics is the human being himself, that is, his emotional opening for the legitimacy of the presence of the other, in the difference (MATURANA, 1997).

It must be emphasized, however, that the acceptance of each other does not always occur like this, peacefully, without the manifestation of conflicts, therefore calling for mediations based on the rules of conviviality, on the domestic jurisprudence, on the Magna Carta and Democratic state. Considering that the Brazilian constitutional text is the result of different worldviews and ideological and political disputes, we must value the adjective "Citizen" of our 1988 Constitution, for its clear demonstration of ethical concerns regarding education, integral formation, qualification for work and full exercise of citizenship, for all.

It is with this ethical-political understanding and commitment that we bring up the discussion about inclusion, at the university level. In this context, the questions that arise are: which social groups are excluded from the university and what is the best way to include them. The answer to the first question is relatively easy to answer and has been the subject of several studies (SCHWARTZMAN, 2006; DINIZ; RANGEL, 2018).

Thus, in Brazil, the studies highlight all those who are in conditions of social vulnerability or who have been historically excluded - people of African descent, indigenous people and people with disabilities. The female gender left this group and is already the majority in Brazilian universities, however, women still suffer from an implicit bias that inferiorizes them in disputes for elective positions, positions of power and financing of research groups (GREENWALD; KRIEGER, 2006; STAATS *et al.*, 2015). The "implicit bias" refers to a variety of automatic and unconscious prejudices in which one group is favored, in this case men, over another group - women.

The second question, however, does not have a single and objective answer, as it is part of a long socio-political process - the struggle and conquest of rights, the creation of new rights and the incessant search for a more just and egalitarian society - and also of academic politics and administrative of the university - physical fitness, establishment of pedagogical strategies, use of assistive technologies, formation of human resources and search for an infrastructure that guarantees the reception of all, with universal accessibility (GALVÃO; DAMASCENO, 2002; MANZINI; DELIBERATO, 2007; DINIZ; RANGEL, 2018).

Although it is not our objective in this essay to address the second question in an exhaustive way, we would like to express some more general comments that can serve as a guideline for other studies and debates.

Social vulnerability and support programs

Statistics on student performance in tests for admission to Brazilian public universities - ENEM - when overlapped with the candidates ' socioeconomic profile, show that the biggest differences in student performance in solving tests are due to family income, parents' education, and other variables such as the type of school the young person attended (SCHWARTZMAN, 2006). If we consider that the education of parents and the type of school attended by the young person can also have family income as a determining factor, as well as cultural heritage is also often dependent on family income, we could say that the historical exclusion of a great part of the population in the social sphere and at the university is mainly due to the poor distribution of income in Brazil. In this sense, as long as this is not structurally changed, the only compensatory solution is for public policies put in place by governments and for student support and assistance programs promoted by universities. These programs include: subsidized food, student housing, work grants, academic development grants, tutoring, scientific initiation, university extension and others. We believe that the individual effort of the student, associated with student assistance programs, including the offer of scholarships, is more important for the good performance of the freshman coming from the popular classes than the leveling courses offered by the University.

People of African descent and the quota system

When asked in forms, questionnaires or demographic censuses about our status as a race, we respond with firmness and indignation - human. As biologists we must insist that there are no human races and it would be better if people were treated as equals, in difference. Even the monozygotic twins, depending on epigenesis and life stories, are different. The color of the skin is literally on the skin (PENA, 2007). The features of the face, type of hair and, especially, the color of the skin, depend only on a little more than a dozen genes, in a total of about 25 thousand, which constitute the human genome (PENA, 2007). In addition to this, several studies show that there are more genetic differences within the same human population, considering a country or a continent, than between populations from other continents and, therefore, the

concept of human race, for biology, is completely overcome. Likewise, there are no genetic determinants for intelligence or cognitive ability of different human groups. The biggest differences found among humans, with regard to what we call cognitive ability, are cultural, that is, it depends on environmental conditions (food and stimuli) and other factors, especially education. This is evident when comparing individuals from different human groups or ethnic groups who, when raised in culturally rich environments, do not present marked differences in their cognitive abilities, when compared to individuals from the society that welcomed them.

By stating that there are no human races and that all human beings are, in one way or another, cognitively capable, it does not mean that we are saying that there is no historically exclusive, sociologically harmful phenomenon, which is racism. Thus, we are not opposed to compensatory public policies such as quotas and programs for social inclusion and support for students at the university level. We know, however, that these public policies and those quotas will not last forever, especially when opportunities are equal and color is no longer a marker of poverty. Until this happens, excluded groups, be they Afro-descendants, immigrants, indigenous people, and even those marked by gender differences or sexual preference, should receive the same differential support from society and the university so that equal opportunities are minimally guaranteed. This was brilliantly explained by Boaventura Santos (2003) when he stated that:

We have the right to be equal when our difference makes us inferior; and we have the right to be different when our equality de-characterizes us. Hence the need for an equality that recognizes differences and a difference that does not produce, feed or reproduce inequalities (SANTOS, 2003, p. 56).³

People with disabilities, accessibility and Assistive Technologies

The more significant entry of people with disabilities has become a relatively new challenge for the university. Although the university once hosted people with various types of disabilities in its courses and staff, these events were rare. The entry of a more expressive contingent occurred from various social movements united by the agenda of inclusion and from an international and national context more sensitive to this great cause. No less important, the approval of inclusive education also stands out in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Brazilian Education and, by extension, within the university. This new reality made the university seek

³ Temos o direito de ser iguais quando a nossa diferença nos inferioriza; e temos o direito de ser diferentes quando a nossa igualdade nos descaracteriza. Daí a necessidade de uma igualdade que reconheça as diferenças e de uma diferença que não produza, alimente ou reproduza as desigualdades (SANTOS, 2003, p. 56).

to adapt, rethinking some of its paradigms, but, above all, developing new pedagogical strategies. In the wake of these movements, the university has also been trying to change its own physical infrastructure, especially with regard to the construction of a new paradigm of universal accessibility, with a view to better welcoming people with disabilities. Although the perspective that university institutions will, in the short and medium term, improve their situations in terms of accessibility and inclusion, a recent study shows that there is still a long way to reach the ideal of accessibility (DINIZ *et al.*, 2019). It should be noted, in this context, that accessibility can occur without inclusion, but the reverse is not viable.

Considering that all individuals are equally subject to rights and duties and need a dignified welcome for the full exercise of citizenship, the university has been seeking to build and adapt cognitive spaces with assistive technologies and specialized personnel - translators and interpreters. In this sense, the importance of observing the rules of accessibility and safe and autonomous mobility, total or assisted, for people with disabilities and for those with reduced mobility is emphasized (DINIZ; RANGEL, 2018). Although assistive technologies constitute a wide variety of resources (mechanical, electrical, electronic, computerized, etc.) designed to support people with disabilities (MANZINI; AUDI, 2006), two major problems hamper the full realization of this ethical goal at the university, namely: (a) prompt purchase, in quantity, of products derived from assistive technologies; (b) the hiring of specialized human resources to operate these products and technologies in the pedagogical spaces, with the appropriate mediation of the teacher (SKLIAR, 1998). Assistive technologies - smart gloves, which convert the movements of sign language into audio, sensory canes, DOS-VOX, are welcome, but they must be linked to the pedagogy of the Other, and not the other, as problematized by Skliar, 2003. In this same line of ethical concern with the Other, Merleau-Ponty calls us to reflection:

How to name, how to describe this experience of someone else, as I see it from my place, an experience that, however, is nothing to me, since I believe in someone else - and, incidentally, concerns myself, since it is there as a vision of another about me [...]. Certainly, the slightest resumption of attention convinces me that this other that invades me is entirely made up of my substance: his colors, his pain, his world, precisely while his own, how would I conceive if not in which I live? At least, my private world is no longer just mine; it is now, an instrument managed by the other, the dimension of a generalized life that has grafted onto mine (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2014, p. 21).⁴

⁴ Como nomear, como descrever esta vivência de outrem, tal como a vejo de meu lugar, vivência que, todavia, nada é pra mim, já que creio em outrem – e que, alias, concerne a mim mesmo, já que ai está como visão de outro sobre mim [...]. Por certo, a menor retomada da atenção me convence de que esse outro que me invade é todo feito de minha substância: suas cores, sua dor, seu mundo, precisamente enquanto seus, como conceberia eu senão em

Bearing in mind that in our model (ANDRADE et al., 2000; 2002) academic-scientific conversations between masters and students are central to the university's modus operandi, we will go a little deeper into the inclusion of deaf students, since in Brazil, (a) deafness occupies, in quantitative terms, the 4th place among the number of people with disabilities in the country, with an estimated population of five million Brazilians; and (b) the deaf communicate, primarily, through their own language - Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) - and preferentially interact with each other, with strong interpersonal bonds, as a true community. Bearing in mind that LIBRAS has all linguistic levels - phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic - found in any language (BRITO, 1995), and that the vast majority of university teachers do not master LIBRAS, it is essential to hire interpreters to assist in "mediation of mediation" between teachers and students. This is a delicate issue, since LIBRAS, being a more recent language, does not yet have many academic and scientific concepts used, for example, in Portuguese or English. Thus, these concepts need to be created incessantly, which requires research groups working with teachers and the deaf community. This question is amplified by Mendes and Novaes (2002) when the referred authors state that:

[...] many deaf readers have little knowledge of vocabulary, which requires more elaboration than the simple definition of the word; difficulties with the syntax of the reading material, which compromises understanding; little knowledge of figurative language, which may be related to little exposure to idioms and metaphorical language (NOVAES; MENDES, 2002, p. 134).⁵

As a conclusion of this topic, we would say that the university, as an institution, has to invest in assistive technologies, but the biggest obstacle continues to be the pedagogical mediation between the university teacher and the deaf students. It should be noted that indigenous populations attending different university courses are also exposed to this same mediation problem, albeit on a smaller scale and with intrinsic differences, depending on the region and the mastery of Portuguese as a second language.

que vivo? Pelo menos, meu mundo privado deixou de ser apenas meu; é agora, instrumento manejado pelo outro, dimensão de uma vida generalizada que se enxertou à minha (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2014, p. 21).

⁵ [...] muitos leitores surdos têm pouco conhecimento de vocabulário, o qual exige maior elaboração que a simples definição da palavra; dificuldades com a sintaxe do material de leitura, que compromete a compreensão; pouco conhecimento da linguagem figurada, que pode estar relacionado a pouca exposição a expressões idiomáticas e linguagem metafórica (NOVAES; MENDES, 2002, p. 134).

Final considerations

A major challenge for the Brazilian public university today is the maintenance of its autonomy in the face of heteronomic forces and government folly, which does not value science and technology and, based on an ultraliberal project, has been withdrawing socially won rights, implementing cuts in the funding of public universities, forcing them to "future-se" within the scope of a privatization project of the public sphere. The difficulty is not to reject this imposed "future-se", and imposter, but to face harsh needs that, if perpetuated for a few more years, can weaken the academic *ethos* and, thus, drastically threaten the founding principle of the university: its autonomy.

Thus, it is necessary to draw clear rules for attracting external resources, defining openings, establishing trenches, always reinforcing the institutional collective as opposed to individual or small group outlets that claim for themselves privileges based on certain scientific or technological competences of great importance. interest to the market, beyond the control of the institution and its legal status. In addition, as an ethical commitment, we must position ourselves and work for social inclusion and also at the university level, since this provides new dynamics that enrich the University itself, with the possibility of socializing knowledge produced from a non-appropriating or competitive perspective. Bearing in mind that ethical issues are inherent to human living, we highlight ethics, or ethical issues, as one of the topics to be dealt with permanently by the university. We highlight this because we believe that human development is not restricted to economic and/or technological development.

Therefore, we advocate that the pedagogical issues and the syllabus content of the disciplines should always be combined with ethical issues. The emphasis on ethics and solidarity prefigures a certain utopian hue of our analysis and of our propositions, particularly in this historic moment of retrogression of conquered rights and of the resurgence and authorization, by the government itself, of the culture of hatred.

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