

The Production of Life in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Relation to Design and other Related Fields: About Delinking, Disobeying, and Decolonizing

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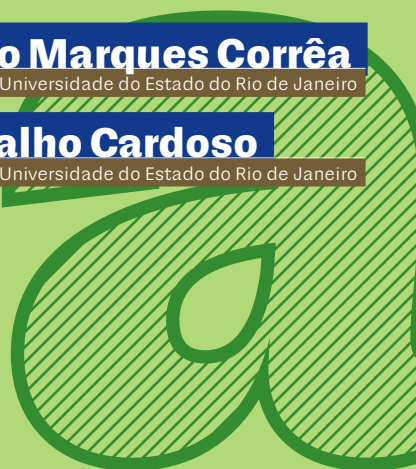
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Pamela Cordeiro Marques Corrêa

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

André Luiz Carvalho Cardoso

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro



When building a brief genealogy of Latin American social thought, it is noticeable that the search for delinking from the Western modernity imposed by the colonial project is at its essence. In this way, this article proposes, through Laó-Montes and Vásquez's *doble crítica* (double criticism), to initiate an immanent critique of the production of life in Latin America and the Caribbean, and its relation to Design and related areas, articulating the ideas of anthropologists Arturo Escobar and Tim Ingold. It also aims to develop a transcendent critique, a subaltern interpretation of this production based on the materiality found in the urban space of the capitalist periphery; specifically, peripheral spontaneous design or (re)existence design, as a device for an enchanted pedagogy: the Brazilian *gambiarra*, the Cuban technological disobedience, among others. As a result, it is pointed out that the knowledge of reality as well as the recognition both of humanity and the struggle for emancipation, all present in the production of life through subaltern history, constitute, together, a path to decolonization.

Keywords

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Pamela Cordeiro Marques Corrêa—Ph.D. student at the School of Industrial Design, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. She holds an MA in Design at Universidade de Brasília. She has a Bachelor's degree in Interior Design from Universidade Estácio de Sá, with specialization in Furniture Design at Universidade Veiga de Almeida. Her research is focused on peripheral spontaneous design, mainly Latin American, and its social and political issues. She is a co-author of 'O design espontâneo periférico de Brasil e Cuba na América Latina' (with M. C. Maass, *VIRUS*, Issue 23).

André Luiz Carvalho Cardoso—Ph.D. in Architecture, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. After graduating as an architect and urban planner at Bennett Methodist Institute, he earned a Master's degree in Architecture from Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture and Urbanism at the School of Industrial Design of Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, and at the Graduate Program in Design. He is currently Vice-Director of the School of Industrial Design of Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Specialist in Urban Sociology, he develops research on autochthonous architecture and the social function of the architect. He is the chief editor of *Arcos Design Journal*; he edited *Imersões Arte e Arquitetura* (V Artes, 2021); and is a co-author of *Leituras sobre políticas públicas: O PAC Favelas como mirante de observações* (with F. Pivetta, L. Zancan, M. Bastos da Cunha, and I. Silva; *ENSP-FIOCRUZ*, 2018).

The Production of Life in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Relation to Design and other Related Fields: About Delinking, Disobeying, and Decolonizing

Pamela Cordeiro Marques Corrêa

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
School of Industrial Design
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
correa.pamela@posgraduacao.uerj.br

André Luiz Carvalho Cardoso

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
School of Industrial Design
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
alcarvalho@esdi.uerj.br

DELINK

According to Walter D. Mignolo (2017), it was from the Bandung Conference in 1955, the Non-Aligned Countries conference in 1961 (attended by Latin American countries), and the publication of the book *The Damned of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon that same year, that the historical foundations of decoloniality were built. This decolonial process constitutes a “delinking from the main Western macro narratives” (Mignolo, 2017, p. 15) by the colonized countries that experience modernity/coloniality oppression to this day. This theoretical-historical framework announced by Mignolo (2017) stems from the refusal of the presented Eurocentric possibilities of futures: capitalism (based on Smith’s liberal proposals), or Marx and Engels’ communism. The perspective becomes the communal.

However, the intention of Latin American and Caribbean countries to *delink* from the West (from its various tentacles: economic, epistemological, ontological) can be previously connected to the region’s independence process. Most notably, to the Haitian Revolution (Laó-Montes & Vásquez, 2018) — with emphasis on Makandal, the inspiring revolutionary, and Toussaint L’Ouverture, the main leader of the uprising — but also to the emergence of Hispano-Americanism, the radical ideal of Simón Bolívar, and the initial moments of formation of Latin-Americanism by José Martí (Martins, 2021).

In the first decades of the 20th century, it is worth highlighting the political activism of Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui, considered by many to be the first Latin American Marxist thinker. Supported by critical tradition and the Marxist theory, he sought to understand Latin America’s place in

the capitalist world, based on its reality. Cuban historian and economist Ramiro Guerra had the same concern. Some years later, Caio Prado Jr. (Brazilian) and Sergio Bagú (Argentinian) also investigated the workings of the capitalist system in the Latin part of the 'Third World'. Since then, other attempts to understand the Latin American condition and that of countries in the capitalist periphery that have experienced colonialism and neocolonialism, and now experience U.S. imperialism — therefore helping us to understand what Galeano expressed with the concept 'open veins' — have been emerging through different lenses and in different territories (including the core countries): the (Weberian) Dependency Theory, the Marxist Theory of Dependency, the Liberation Theology, the Philosophy of Liberation, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the World-System Theory, Postcolonialism, Subaltern Studies (South Asian researchers), Cultural Studies, among others (Restrepo, 2015).

The debates in the field of Applied Social Sciences were aware of this movement and contributed to strengthen a critical, and to some extent decolonial, look at architecture, urbanism, and design. As reminded by Nilce Cristina Aravecchia Botas,¹ who correlates the Arts with the wider area of knowledge in the '60s (the decade when the Dependency Theory took shape, with the weight of Brazilian intellectuals such as Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotônio dos Santos, and Vânia Bambirra), it is possible to list the names of Enrique Browne, Jorge Enrique Hardoy, and Gui Bonsiepe (Botas, 2020). Furthermore, the Austrian-born American designer Víctor Papanek is an essential addition to this list, who, due to his pioneering critical position in design and his concern for 'developing' countries, suffered academic ostracism for some time. It is important to emphasize that the main discussion in the cited areas was mostly about the consequences of the predatory extractive system and the possibility for a sustainable future, and less about the structures of domination, oppression, and exploitation.

Towards the end of the 20th century, Latin America was inserted into the postcolonial debate with the publication of the '*Manifiesto inaugural del Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios Subalternos*' (Inaugural Manifesto of the Latin American Group for Subaltern Studies) (see Ballestrin, 2013, p. 94). However, still rooted in the Eurocentric production, the group fell into internal disagreements and disintegrates (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 96). At the end of the '90s, the decolonial thought gained new momentum, and the Modernity/Coloniality Group arose within it, engaged as an epistemological movement "for the critical and utopian renewal of social sciences in Latin America in the 21st century" (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 89), through the Decolonial Turn. The collective was formed by several American and Latin American thinkers, and headed by Mignolo, a former member of the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, who is regarded as one of the most essentialist intellectuals. Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar is also a

1 This is a quote from the call for papers regarding the thematic dossier 'Estudos decoloniais na arquitetura, no urbanismo, no design e na arte' announced in 2020 in the journal *PosFAUUSP*. However, while the dossier can be found at www.revistas.usp.br/posfau/issue/viu/11884, this call for papers is no longer available.

member, who investigates the potential of design towards social transformation for the construction and reconstruction of other worlds: the various worlds that make up the pluriverse.

It is necessary to highlight and recognize some significant contributions of the decolonial perspective: the rescue of the debate on Latin American thought and its radicalism against the modern, colonial, and capitalist project, which consequently exposes the current fragilities of the North American imperialist civilizing model in this region (Martins, 2021). In addition, it unravels historical social relations of power, bringing to light other societal pillars of domination — race/ethnicity and sex/gender (patriarchy) —, as well as highlighting and giving new meaning to the subjectivities that link these pillars from a subaltern perspective. Sometimes, such modes of domination have been shaded by the primacy of economic factors, of class struggle, in social theories such as Marxism (in some currents, as it is not a homogeneous school of thought). And finally, as Jórrissa Aguiar points out: “postulating the concept of coloniality as a key concept to understanding our reality also represents an advance in terms of concrete analysis” (2018, p. 62).

In the 21st century, as Latin American decolonial current conquers space and gains visibility, some pertinent questions are raised. One can notice a line of work of a particularistic/relativist nature that hinders, and even weakens, the possibility of contributing to the construction of a critical theory of the Global South (despite attributing itself the condition of contributor), since the connection with other social theories (especially European ones) is constantly rejected and the validation of its knowledge is impeded, demonstrating its limits as a critical reflection. It is also noticeable that economic issues, particularly within the relationship between coloniality and imperialism, are handled in little depth (Ballestrin, 2014, as cited in Aguiar, 2018, p. 65). This further exposes the essentialist character of this approach and its deficiency to deal with structural problems, beyond the production of new knowledge (Laó-Montes & Vásquez, 2018). Since decolonial thought in Latin America is comprised of a diversity of studies, often divergent from each other, it is worth mentioning that this generalization cannot be extended to every production that is close to or defines itself as decolonial.

In line with this critical framework, Carlos Eduardo Martins (2021) points out that “the capitalist project of civilization, in turn, presents itself not only in the openly conservative, colonial, and imperialist form, but also in the liberal, emancipatory, and multiculturalist one.” Therefore, it is necessary to understand the complex cogs that make up the system so that the *delinking* from West-imposed modes of production and reproduction can take place. It is also essential to be alert to the ease with which capitalism, in its current imperialist phase of neoliberal doctrine, can co-opt social demands and articulate a legiti-

mating narrative that blurs the root of issues, and even creates internal competition between particular identities.

Another point at issue is the lack of proposition of an analysis method in the segment of decolonial production that aims to collaborate with the Global South theory. Before building on this subject, it is important to point out that tracing the definition of the Global South back in history is a challenge. A possible explanation presented by Laó-Montes and Vásquez (2018) is the one suggested by Anne Garland Mahler in 2015: that this term arose from the Tricontinental Conference that took place in 1966 in Cuba. There, the *Organización de Solidaridad de los Pueblos de África, Asia y América Latina* (OSPAAAL) was formed: an alliance committed to fighting imperialism from a stance of collaboration and solidarity among peripheral peoples (Laó-Montes & Vásquez, 2018, pp. 311–314).

It is a consensus that this term succeeds the term ‘Third World’: the denomination for various societies in the world that have been made subaltern — as a consequence of the colonial and imperialist experience — especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and that face difficulties to achieve economic independence and social emancipation in the current neoliberal globalization. The term Global South is a more complex one, an interlacing of different fields of knowledge beyond the geopolitical, economic, and geographical matters; “a series of fields that intersect in different ways in the production of institutional forms, forms of everyday life, and subjectivities of their own” (Obarrio, 2013, as cited in Laó-Montes & Vásquez, 2018, p. 313).

Returning to the issue of the method of analysis in the decolonial production, Laó-Montes and Vásquez (2018, pp. 293–296) expose this failure to properly articulate critical proposals beyond regionalism that also work as milestones of meaning, explaining the factors that make it impossible to reproduce life anywhere in the world. To this end, they propose the path of the *doble crítica*: a possible method for Latin American critical thought that links critical social theory with the concrete experiences of emancipatory struggle in Latin American territories.

The *doble crítica* is developed from Enrique Dussel's *ana-dia-lectic*. It proposes to build taking into account the Other that was made subaltern, while also requiring an analysis of the totality in which this Other is inserted. That is, the simultaneous conjugation of immanent critique and transcendent critique, to reveal both the historical totality and alterity (Laó-Montes & Vásquez, 2018). This method is in line, in a way, with the proposal of decolonial Marxism from sociologist Jórisa Aguiar, which seeks to articulate the non-Eurocentric elements of Marxism with the studies of coloniality developed by the decolonial perspective (Aguiar, 2018).

Through Laó-Montes and Vásquez’s methodological proposal of *doble crítica*, and inspired by Jórissa Aguiar’s decolonial Marxism, this paper aims to modestly initiate a concrete analysis (prioritizing the philosophical aspect) of the production of life in Latin America and the Caribbean, and its relationship with Design and related areas. Furthermore, it presents a subaltern interpretation of said production, through the materiality found in the Latin American urban space. The intention is, therefore, to conjugate materiality and the symbolic for a real *delinking* and then, through this endeavor, which is grounded in the Latin American social thought (in its Marxist and decolonial currents), contribute to strengthening a critical theory of the Global South.

PRODUCTION OF LIFE/RESTORING TO LIFE/DISOBEDIENCE

As previously mentioned, an exponent of the Modernity/Coloniality group is Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar. He notices a political reorientation in design from the increasing number of practitioners and researchers concerned with the unfolding of the current system, with the crisis he describes as the “crisis of the heteropatriarchal, colonial, and capitalist occidental modes of dwelling that have eroded the systemic mode of living based on radical interdependence” (Escobar, 2019, p. 133). Another contributing factor to this reshaping of the field is the noticeable process of decolonization of design. As a result, a transnational critical design studies field has emerged (Escobar, 2018).

Escobar also points out three main obstacles that hinder a good performance of design when facing the imminent world crisis. Firstly, the matter of modernity, entailing the deconstruction of the idea that only one ‘civilizational’ model exists, and admitting the existence of several other ways of life besides the Western one. Secondly, comprising factors such as the location of the designer and the situated character of knowledge: the understanding that people’s worldview is influenced by their experience and their coordinates — there is no universal neutrality. Finally, the understanding of the communal, finding a way to ‘re-communalize’ life in society, in response to the excessive individualism of the socially damaging liberal doctrine. It should also be considered that each community is capable of collectively deciding on its best coexistence projects (Escobar, 2018).

Escobar also considers other secondary points of tension such as power disputes, reform policies versus radical alternatives, the addition of issues related to non-humans in the debate agenda (2018), and so on. Nevertheless, we suggest also highlighting, along with the three main ones, a fourth element that fundamentally organizes society: the gears of the capitalist system. Without a critical stance on the material conditions and the forms of regulation and legitimation of capitalism, there is a risk that any initiative will become just another adaptation and reinforcement of the structure that is being questioned.

Inspired by the Zapatista movement, Escobar (2018) proposes the concept of ‘autonomous design’ or ‘design for autonomy’: the area’s ability to support the struggles of subaltern communities, transforming practices from within and in a collective way, to build new communal-oriented worlds.

The basic insight of autonomous design is seemingly straightforward: that every community practices the design of itself. This was certainly the case with traditional communities (they produced the norms by which they lived their lives largely endogenously), as it is today with many communities, in both the Global South and the Global North, that are thrown into the need of designing themselves in the face of ever-deepening manifestations of the crises and the inescapable techno-economic mediation of their worlds (Escobar, 2018, p. 143).

In this way, the field currently directs its theory and practice towards the meaning and *production of life*. Arturo Escobar and British anthropologist Tim Ingold share this perspective on design: that it is committed to the production of life, that is, to man’s ability to intervene his environment in order to live. It is worth noting that Ingold understands design as the verb, *to design*, related to the act of designing and building: actions that are in opposition to his concept of skilled practice. However, both conceptions are, in a way, included in this condition.

Tim Ingold (2011) is recognized for bringing art, architecture, and design closer to anthropology through his research on humanity’s relationship with the environment. In his endeavor to restore anthropology to life, he identifies, along his journey, four non-discrete phases of this restoring process, the first of which is production. In this phase, he seeks to explain what it means for man to be the producer of his life, resorting to Marx and Engels to present his perspective. The discussion begins with the essential difference between the work of human beings and the activity of animals: the consciousness and capability of man to modify his environment. As stated by Engels (as cited in Ingold, 2011), animals only collect, while men need to alter nature to prepare their means of living. This viewpoint is shared by Marx, who deems consumption as the goal of production, and production itself as the starting point of this circuit. However, according to Ingold (2011), this premise ends up falling into a paradox: after all, where do the first objects that cause the production of other objects come from, since production precedes consumption, and it is precisely consumption what generates the images for the production of objects?

Aware of this impediment, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins points out that “the finalities of production are pre-specified in the symbolic forms of culture” (as cited in Ingold, 2011, p. 5). Yet, Ingold (2011) notes that, in fact, Sahlins

has merely chosen the other pole of the paradox: where do the first symbolic representations that generate the images to conceive an executive plan come from? He also verifies that in his book *Capital*, Marx suggests that there is an extra dimension to this relationship. Since, as the action is performed diligently and with an intentional will, not only the material is transformed, but also the worker, who is modified through the experience.

Ingold (2011) also states that this condition was already pointed out earlier in Marx and Engels' 1846 joint work *The German Ideology*: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce" (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 37). This statement leads the anthropologist to conceive that perhaps the heart of the matter lies more in the attention and responsiveness to the process and the way it transforms men, rather than in the generation of images to create things.

An important addition to Ingold's reasoning is what Marx and Engels put forward, in this same book, as the first premise of human existence and consequently also of history:

Men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing, and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed, this is a historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 47)

One should not, therefore, fall into the trap of prioritizing the experience of the process over the satisfaction of the basic needs for living (which correspond to the first images and products). These are coexisting layers in the production of life. However, there is a set of essential priorities that are still not fully met by a large part of the population of the capitalist periphery (or Global South).

One of the author's relevant conclusions, particularly to this study, is that the verb 'to produce' should be intransitive, that is, a verb that has a complete meaning by itself. In this way, one should not attribute a deterministic relationship between the plan (the prior representation) and the artifact. To produce, therefore, goes "alongside other intransitive verbs such as to hope, to grow and to dwell," and against transitive verbs that often accompany it: "to plan, to make and to build" (Ingold, 2011, p. 6). From this point of transformation, it becomes necessary to seek the existential primacy desired by Marx: to restore the act of producing to life (Ingold, 2011).

Based on the complexity and flexibility of the modes of existence and their binomials (concrete and abstract; material and immaterial; objective and subjective), it could be conceived that integration is more pertinent and fruitful than the oppositional exclusion of actions. Using the example of verb transitivity itself, it is well known that whether or not complements are required for a phrase's full meaning will often depend on the context. Therefore, the suggestion is to understand the confluences and deviations of these actions and, most importantly, to add to them the verb 'to care', which guides and allows the realization and reproduction of life. To produce is, through collective care, "to hope, to grow and to dwell," just as it is "to plan, to make and to build."

Aligning Ingold and Escobar's perspectives, one might argue in this moment of political reorientation of design, ever more committed to the production of life, that the field itself might be brought back to life. This means going beyond supporting the struggles of subaltern communities. It means epistemologically revolutionizing the field, while taking into account the structures of power to rethink material production and social reproduction, that is, the production and reproduction of life ontologically. Matching, therefore, Escobar's (2019, p. 133) proposal of an ontological redesign of design: a shift towards radical interdependence.

What's more, until the onto-epistemological turnaround takes place, the verb is *to disobey*. As proposed by Mignolo, "we, the Anthropos, who inhabit and think at the frontiers, are on the path and in the process of delinking, and to delink we must be epistemologically disobedient" (2017, p. 20). Epistemic disobedience, however, should not be understood solely as an authentic culture's nostalgic past in need of rescue. Neither is it about ignoring or rejecting any production and knowledge that originates from the core countries/Global North simply because of their provenance. It means being astutely anthropophagic (this paper, therefore, departs from any potential current of decolonial thought that is more intransigent).

Such an attitude is necessary above all when observing the production of life in Latin American countries that, since the European invasion, resist and re-exist. Marginalized groups are the direct heirs of the consequences of Black and Indigenous slavery, which threw their ancestors to their own fate. The practices of subversion, disobedience, and technological improvisation in situations of material and tool scarcity, particularly in urban spaces, are examples of their capacity to deal with the precarious and to humanize — to care, to feel, to be attentive. The latter, for Ingold (2011), means being alive to the world.

Thus, social manifestations recognized in the Latin American urban territory, such as the Brazilian *gambiarra*, the Cuban technological disobedience, the Colombian *cacharreo*, Chicanos' *rasquache*, and Mexicans' *rascuache*,

among others — which are defined academically as spontaneous peripheral design (Marques & Maass, 2020, p. 126) — can be understood as (re)existence, based on the concept of Colombian anthropologist Adolfo Albán Achinte:

I conceptualize re-existence as the devices communities create and develop to invent daily life and thus be able to face the reality that has been established by the hegemonic project from the colonies until today, which has belittled, silenced, and given negative visibility to the existence of the communities of African descent. Re-existence aims to decentralize the established logic to search in the depths of the cultures — in this case, the Indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures — the keys to the organizational, productive, feeding, ritualistic, and aesthetic forms that allow life to be dignified and reinvented to continue transforming itself. Moreover, re-existence points to what community, cooperative, and union leader Héctor Daniel Useche Berón ‘Pájaro’, murdered in 1986 in the town of Bugalagrande in central Valle del Cauca, Colombia, once put forth: “What are we going to invent today to continue living?”. (2013, p. 455)

² A more literal translation to the term would be something like ‘enchantments’.

They can also be understood as *encantarias*² (different religious manifestations within religions of Afro-Amerindian origins); or *esculhambação criativa* (creative shambles) from the perspective of Brazilian writer Luiz Antonio Simas, who wrote: “We need other voices, political because poetic, set to music; the wisdom of the academic masters, but also the one from the streets and the tricks of producers of ‘encantarias’ in precariousness” (2019, p. 42).

The ones made subalterns, in turn, daily invent ways to build within the troubles of their leisure, survival, and sociability spaces. They very often appropriate precisely the spaces disciplined by the logic of control and redefine, on the margins and in the gaps, their uses. The history of Rio de Janeiro and the history of Brazilian soccer have much of this subversion, which I call ‘creative shambles’: the ability to transform territories, spaces of control, into ‘terreiros’ (the places where participants from *encantaria*-related religions get together for their religious practices) — spaces of enchantment. (Simas, 2019, p. 61)

That is to say, one fights for the right to produce oneself and others collectively, claiming that which is continuously denied. One path to reverse this imposed condition is to approach the situation through a concrete analysis of the facts within the historical totality. However, it is also necessary to give new meaning to the constructed memory, to transcend the coloniality of thought through a reflection on the vernacular categories contained in the collective imaginary. We thus aspire

to take these spontaneous practices of subversion and (re)existence as devices for an enchanted pedagogy, for they enable us to critically read the material reality we share. By understanding the existential questions inherent to these social phenomena, these practices also enable us to build another history of humanity, from the point of view of the Latin American subaltern.

HISTORY/PARTICIPATION/DECOLONIZATION

Another of the phases that Ingold (2011) went through in his process of returning anthropology to life is related to the meaning of history. While discussing the relationship between this phase and the production of life,³ he brings French anthropologist Maurice Godelier to the debate, who invests in a Marxist approach. Ingold highlights a Marx-inspired statement by the intellectual regarding the condition of human beings, that “they produce society in order to live” (Godelier, 1986, as cited Ingold, 2011, p. 7). In practical terms: “the designs and purposes of human action upon the environment (...) have their source in the domain of social relations” (Ingold, 2011, p. 7). However, for the British anthropologist, Marx does not claim that humanity produces society, but the course of social life, and that human beings produce themselves and others, not society, as Godelier claims.

Resorting to the same book mentioned by Ingold, *The German Ideology*, it is possible to cogitate that there is a contradiction in Ingold’s interpretation. This is because Marx and Engels also state, when discussing the human consciousness and its relationship with the sensitive environment, that it has a layer beyond the perception of nature: “man’s consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him” constitutes “the beginning of the consciousness that he is living in society at all” (1998, p. 50). To live is to produce oneself and others — which makes life, therefore, a human production that relies on the social relations of society for its basic fulfillment. Suspending or obscuring social relations — which create dominations and other types of powers — and the direct action of men in the formation of society is removing the oppressions and relations of power in the production of life from the analysis.

Further in this discussion, Tim Ingold (2011) states that it is impossible to understand man’s creative interferences in the world without extracting him from it: once inside, he is subject to the determinations of an evolved human nature over which he has had no influence or action. And simultaneously, on the contrary, he is only able to master his destiny from a historical consciousness devoid of the material world. He, therefore, proposes that:

If production is not, as Godelier would have it, about transforming the material world, but rather about participating in the world’s transformation of itself, then could we not conclude that human beings produce

3 For this reflection, we will not delve into the issues surrounding humans and non-humans, so dear to Ingold and the current academic debate.

themselves and one another by establishing, through their actions, the conditions for their ongoing growth and development? (Ingold, 2011, p. 8)

One issue within this view, however, must be discussed. Participation in the world's transformation and in the transformation of others still takes place in materiality, because it is in it and from it, that man lives. In other words, the concept of participation must be tied to the material reality, which is essential for the production of human life.

In his talk at the Participatory Design Conference —PDC 2020— entitled 'Against Terricide', Arturo Escobar (2020) suggests an association between the concept of participation in design, the definition of relationality (or radical interdependence), and the understanding of communality that has emerged in Latin America. He further describes it as 'relational participatory design': a provisional category to understand this complexity.

Based on the conception of design as the production of life and worlds, Escobar (2020) affirms the ontological character of the field. However, the imposed modernity has condemned us to an individualistic, dichotomous market condition that drives us away from this potentiality of creating ways of being and existing. We must, therefore, appropriate this condition and reconnect what the modern project has drawn apart. The goal now is understanding the radical interdependence, that is, that we live in a network of relationships and that for the whole to exist, the remainder must also exist. One way to realize this relationality could be the Latin American proposal of the communal: the continuous and collective construction of life without ignoring the complexity of relationships inherent to any community. The relational participatory design then becomes a summons for us to be "conscious and effective weavers of the fabric of life (...) that is, we are all participating in making or unmaking or destroying life" (Escobar, 2020).

An impasse presented itself in this debate: if everyone is implicated and interrelated with the production of life and the construction of worlds, participation as a requirement for the productive process loses its meaning. On this topic, we assume there is a convergence between Ingold's intention to bring participation to center stage when defining the production of life, and the entanglement in the understanding of participation within Escobar's relational perspective presented at the conference. Both proposals suppressed at certain points, and in some way, the dialectical materiality of their analyses: the concrete reality that affects the actions and/or the relations that emerge through the material conditions.

We all participate in the production of life: our own and that of others collectively. It is a relational participation that transcends the actual deci-

sions of human beings; we are interdependent by natural conditions. And then, there is another dimension: the active and conscious participation, with decision-making power within the socio-spatial relations. A participation based on material issues. When separating these layers (considering the link between them), one understands the limitations of participation on account of power struggles.

In this critical moment of a global crisis that sharpens and highlights the inequalities in the Global South, it is necessary to intend, deepen, and disseminate an ethnographic investigation of the forms of domination within the production of life in Latin America and the Caribbean. Be it through the perspective of design, architecture, or related areas: a fundamental part of *decolonizing*. Furthermore, it is also necessary to consider those subaltern practices of life production that already exist, such as the Brazilian *gambiarra* and the Cuban technological disobedience, as practices that pedagogically reveal to us other forms of participation and other ways of life: a form of (re)existence design.

Catherine Walsh, also a member of the Modernity/Coloniality group, employs this concept of re-existence in her vision: “to think the decolonial pedagogically and the pedagogical decolonially” (2013, p. 56). In her approach, Walsh (2013) features the political-pedagogical essence of educator Paulo Freire (Brazil) and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (Martinique), both also philosophers. While Freire focuses substantially on the epistemological issue (knowing reality to transform it), Fanon advances the discussion by understanding that the existential problem constitutes the basis of oppression. However, it is also through this problem, through its recognition, that decolonization and the freedom of the subaltern ones is possible. That is an ontological issue. Decolonial pedagogies are deeply implicated in this process. In the words of Catherine Walsh, these are:

Pedagogies that outline ways to critically read the world and intervene in the reinvention of society, as Freire pointed out, but also pedagogies that at the same time intensify the absolute disorder of decolonization, contributing to a new humanity, as Frantz Fanon pointed out. Pedagogies thus conceived are not external to the realities, subjectivities, and lived histories of peoples and individuals; on the contrary, they are an integral part of their struggles and perseverance or persistence, of their fights for awareness, affirmation, and de-alienation, and their struggles — in the face of the denial of their humanity — for being and becoming human. It is in this sense and in the face of these conditions and experienced possibilities that I propose the link between the pedagogical and the decolonial. (2013, p. 31).

To this degree, one can perceive that those social phenomena of subversion and improvisation, such as the Brazilian *gambiarra*, can be political technologies that

catalyze social change:

because they have the search for emancipation in their essence. These are practices that take place in a situation of scarcity and social inequality (problems faced by peripheral countries due to extractive globalization), and bear the qualities of struggle, resistance, and collectivity. Understanding why certain social classes are driven to improvise in order to enjoy the functions of certain consumer goods (some are even essential to living), while other few even have the option to choose which products and functions best meet their desires and needs, is then a form of political education, since it allows the perception of some social injustices, especially the material one. (Marques & Maass, 2020, p. 129)

This perspective is in line with Freire's ideas. According to Catherine Walsh's study, though, it is also necessary to delve into the subjectivity of the collective imaginary to access the existential problem described by Fanon. To know and recognize the stories of daily materiality of the urban space (as Luiz Antonio Simas has already done,⁴ in a certain way and within a specific context) from the subaltern's point of view, is to re-enchant the production of life in Latin America, and thus drive an ontological revolution throughout the construction of an imaginary Other.

4 See Simas, 2019.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is possible to detect a parallel between the methodological plan of Laó-Montes and Vásquez's *doble crítica*, supported by Enrique Dussel's *ana-dia-lectic*, and Catherine Walsh's decolonial-pedagogical proposal based on Paulo Freire's and Frantz Fanon's theories. Both decolonial scholars understand that to advance towards another mode of production and reproduction of life, free from the imposed coloniality, it is necessary to invest in the knowledge of one's own reality from a critical perspective: taking into account its insertion in the global logic. Likewise, it is also crucial to deepen the recognition of colonial marks left in the subaltern subjectivity, which have become the foundations that allow oppressions to continue. To achieve, in this manner, a questioning stance towards the dominant structures of power, while having autonomy as a perspective.

Through this theoretical survey, it is possible to reaffirm that spontaneous peripheral design (*gambiarra, cacharreo, rascuache*)—(re)existence design—can function as a device for decolonial and participatory pedagogy. It can propel a kind of creativity that disobeys and confronts the industrial unity imposed by the technology of hegemonic countries, for the formation of a critical consciousness

of Latin American reality. Its study contributes to the composition of the theory of the Global South: A Latin American reflection on the material production of life, by design of the Global South.

Also worth noting is that just as decolonial studies rescue the radicalism of Latin American thought, some of its representatives like Arturo Escobar and Enrique Dussel, who brought design into their research (one could say that Escobar specifically places it at its core), are rekindling the questioning and revolutionary essence of the field that, due to its closeness to the neoliberal project from the late 20th century, has become both secondary and unknown. Additionally, they provide a basis for the debate over Eurocentrism in design, as well as over the lack of historical recognition of production from the Global South, mostly from Latin America.

Finally, revisiting a reflection by Ingold (2011), it is imperative to consider that anthropology shares with arts and architecture (and certainly also with design) the fact that these disciplines are all implicated with the observation, description, and proposition of new and other ways of living. That is, they are committed to the production of life. Since these disciplines are also inserted in this complex and hybrid dynamic of Latin American culture, their borders are constantly under negotiation within the territory; they are not indifferent to the issues of social constructions and their political disputes. Extending Ingold's suggestion (2011) — of considering it a field of study — it is indeed essential that an integrated 'counter-discipline' emerges in Latin America, which takes into account the specificities of each area — design, architecture, and urbanism, in the company of the arts and anthropology — and pivots from a central point: the revolutionary praxis. **D**

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