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DECOLONIZATION OF THE MIND IN THE WORKS OF ERNESTO CARDENAL, EDUARDO GALEANO AND AURORA LEVINS MORALES

The essay deals with the treatment of history in the works of three Latin American writers: Ernesto Cardenal, Eduardo Galeano and Aurora Levins Morales. As Silvia D. Ducach observes in the syllabus for her high school class on Latin American literature, the origin of this literature's uniqueness lies in its delicate sense of social injustice, rooted in the carefully observed history of the countries the artists come from (Ducach 2010). It is history presented as a collection of private stories, rather than the official version the dominant culture imposes and controls. In examining Galeano's and Morales' theories of history and artistic creativity this paper highlights the support their views have in the theoretical works of the French psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary born in Martinique, Frantz Fanon, Palestinian-American author and professor at Columbia University, Edward Said, and African author and academic, Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The comparative analysis of these authors is undertaken in order to encourage a more 'global' perspective on (and response to) the process of 'neo-colonization' that is taking place today. The essay will examine the interrelation between history, language, culture, literature and education, and the role of creativity in the 'decolonization of the mind' in all these fields.

Key words: history, decolonization, pluralism, identity, liberation theology

In his last lecture on *Orientalism*, delivered at Columbia University on April, 2003, only a few months before his untimely death, Edward Said spoke of the need for "opening up the fields of struggle against (…) the products of distorted knowledge [by being able to] open up one's mind rationally and historically for the purpose of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure" (Said 2003). Inspired by this call, this essay will attempt to set up an alternative to the Eurocentric understanding of culture and history by examining the approaches to these topics by the post-colonial critics and writers such as Said (1935-2003) himself, Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (born 1938), Ernesto Cardenal

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(1925-2010), Eduardo Galeano (born 1940) and Aurora Levins Morales (born 1954). For these authors creatively used language, literature and education, as culture's constants, are the most important tools which can be used for re-writing histories; consequently it is these constants that appear as the main fields of struggle in their works.

It is important to observe that the starting point of all these writers is the perception of history based entirely on the Eurocentric vision of it, but their common end is its negation: a conception of being that has all the opposite attributes. Thus, in his book *Black skin, white masks*, Frantz Fanon warns the black mind that it "…no longer exists; because [it] has forgotten that it exists in relation to the European"(Fanon 2008: 71). He speaks of "…the history that others have fabricated for [him]" (Fanon 2008: 100). Aware that while following an alien way of thinking he cannot overcome the colonization of his mind, Fanon decides to reverse it. In the spirit of his teacher, Martinican poet Aime Cesaire[1], who wrote surrealist poetry as protest against the white man's restrictive conceptions of the rational and the real, Fanon sets up a definition of himself contrary to everything that defines a white man:

"I had rationalized the world, and the world had rejected me in the name of color prejudice. Since there was no way we could agree on the basis of reason, I resorted to irrationality. (…) For the sake of the cause, I had adopted the process of regression, but the fact remained that it was an unfamiliar weapon; here I am at home; I am made of the irrational; I wade in the irrational. (…) And now let my voice ring out:

> Those who have invented neither gun powder nor compass
> Those who have never known how to subdue either steam or electricity
> Those who have explored neither the seas nor the sky
> But those who know all the nooks and crannies of the country suffering…"
> (Fanon 2008: 102-103)

1 In his poem "Barbarity", which begins with the line "This is the word that sustains me", Aime Cesaire stresses the need for negation of "the cowardly prowling beasts of the lie" (the terminology, the discourse imposed on Black people by the whites). In its place he invokes "Barbarity / of the rudimentary language / and our faces beautiful like the true surgical power / of negation…"
(Aime Cesaire, *The Collected Poetry*, translation Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith, available at:
http://books.google.com/books?id=qK_efjJd084C&pg=PA23&dq=aime+cesaire+out+of+alien+days&hl=en&ei=-35iTeLgK8aH4QbioqiuCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false, retrieved on: 21 February 2011, 213)
In the introduction to Cesaire's book *Discourse on Colonialism*, the point Robin D. G. Kelley is trying to convey is that by surrealism Cesaire endeavours to negate and resist white man's realism and ownership over history. Fanon stuggles against them by irrationality.

Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

In his last book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon pleads for Africa that will not imitate Europe: "Let us endeavor to invent a man in full, something which Europe has been incapable of achieving." (Fanon, 2005: 213) [2]This plea is a plea against the erosion of humanity that Fanon sees taking place in the European culture and the European way of thinking. He reiterates Cesaire's criticism of the European pseudo-humanists whose conception of human rights never embraced all of humanity but was biased and racist, and served only to preserve and protect the interests of the traditional holders of power. Throughout the book Fanon urges African people to be better than their former masters and turn nationalism (which Africans saw as a means of resistance) into humanism, by "integrat[ing] [local] histor[ies] of the village[s] and conflicts between the tribes and clans into people's struggle" (Fanon 2005: 68), by encouraging national consciousness that would question oppression in a more all-embracing way.

Since the main instrument the colonizers use in conquering others is language[3], people should turn to their own oral/traditional/national literature/culture (Fanon 2005: 157), for the conqueror is unfamiliar with these. Fanon sees that political as well as apolitical education of the

2 Fanon directly influenced many revolutionaries such as Maloclm X, Che Guevara, Paulo Freire and Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, while addressing cultural domination, speaks of dehumanization, humanization, and affirmation of men as well:
"Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human. This distortion occurs within history; but it is not an historical vocation. (…) The struggle for humanization, for the emancipation of labor, for the overcoming of alienation, for the affirmation of men and women as persons would be meaningless. This struggle is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is *not* a given desiny but the result of an unjust order that endangers violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanize the oppressed.
Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to stuggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressed, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.
This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well."
(Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Penguin Books, London, 1993, 26)

3 More recently Brian Friel's Translations (1980), and Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language* (1988) are plays written about this type of colonization and control. In an interview for The Listener, on 27 October 1988, while discussing *Mountain Language*, Pinter said: "…throughout history, many languages have been banned - the Irish have suffered, the Welsh have suffered and Urdu and the Estonians' language banned; the Basques' language was banned, you know, at various times."
(available at: http://www.haroldpinter.org/politics/politics_kurds.shtml, retrieved on: 21 February 2011)

masses is a necessity(Fanon 2005: 88, 138) and writes: "We have thus traced the increasingly essential fissuring of the old cultural strata, and on the eve of decisive struggle for national liberation, grasped the new forms of expression and the fight of imagination." (Fanon 20005: 177-178) He justifies the (re)turn to national culture in the following way: "Reclaiming the past does not only rehabilitate or justify the promise of a national culture. It triggers a change of fundamental importance in the colonized's psycho-affective equilibrium." (Fanon 2005: 148) Turning to the old heroes, and imaginatively incorporating the new struggles into the old stories, elevates self-esteem that has been restrained by the white system of thinking. Thus, for him struggle for liberation he envisages is a cultural phenomenon.[4]

Just as Aime Cesaire's thought can be traced in Fanon, we can find Fanon's ideas in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's work. Only wa Thiong'o's perception of the (neo)colonization of the mind goes deeper, because of his deeper awareness of the (neo)colonizers' improved mechanisms of obfuscation and disguise. In his book *Moving the centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom* (1993) he talks of history, culture, language, literature, and education as the chief fields of struggle where the challenge of decolonizing the imagination can be successfully met. Ngugi accepts Artaud's definition of culture as a system of values, but is also aware that culture is more conservative than economics and politics, which change faster (wa Thiong'o 1993: 15). It is this feature that makes culture such an important battlefield. Language, as an inseparable part of culture, becomes the main instrument in this struggle. Moving the centre for wa Thiong'o means "moving the centre from European languages to all other languages all over Africa and the world; a move, if you like, towards the pluralism of languages as legitimate vehicles of the human imagination" (wa Thiong'o 1993: 28). This idea can best be spread through education: "… [A student] should be exposed to all streams of human imagination following from all the centres of the world." (wa Thiong'o 1993: 29).

In order to grasp the importance of cherishing native languages and cultures, there must exist an awareness of the reasons why colonizers strive to suppress them and make them perish: "Our languages were suppressed so that we, the captives, would not have our own mirrors

4 In similar way Paulo Freire attaches cultural inauthenticity to domination:
"Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthencity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders."
(Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Penguin Books, London, 1993, 134)

in which to observe ourselves and our enemies; those elected to go to school were provided with new mirrors being removed from the worlds and the history carried by their original languages." (wa Thiong'o 1993: 50)[5]. With this pronouncement, by putting pluralism against racism, wa Thiong'o turns both history and literature, both education and language into subversive forces to be used in the (neo)colonial struggle.

In his book *Decolonizing the Mind* (1994), wa Thiong'o continues to discuss the strategies used for (neo)colonization in order to find the best way these can be resisted through appropriate use of culture, language, literature, education and history. Thus in the preface he sees writers as "surgeons of the heart and soul of a community" (wa Thiong'o 1994: ix) and continues by saying that: "…work, any work, even literary creative work, is not the result of individual genius but the result of a collective effort (…) The very words we use are a product of a collective history." (wa Thiong'o 1994: x). The same plea for the recovery of self-esteem through return to one's roots that appears in Fanon is evident here as well. Wa Thiong'o writes:

"The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. They [colonizers] make them see their past as one wasteland (…) It [colonization] even plants serious doubts about moral rightness of struggle (…) Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death wish." (wa Thiong'o 1994: 3).

Read in reverse it means that people, in order to resist the devastation caused by "cultural bombs", should have fate in their names, should not abandon their language and heritage (and ultimately themselves), and should reestablish their past/history, so that they could triumph over predatory usurpers.

Similar views can be found in Edward Said's books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. While discussing stereotypes white men impose on other (non Western) identities, Said, too, considers culture to be the force of resistance instrumental for the preservation of non-white identities. He sees stories as the means by which colonized people can assert their own identity and preserve the existence of their own history (Said 1993: xii). The power to narrate is the power to prevent appearance of other [hi] stories (Said 1993: xii). He moreover claims that authors /

5 Galeano's story on The Caribbean Sea bears the same meaning: distorted history celebrates Napoleon as patron of the people when instead he was an enemy who restored slavery, see: http://haitiforever.com/windowsonhaiti/1802.shtml, retrieved on 18 March 2011

tellers of these stories are "very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history…" (Said 1993: xxii), and gives to the novel the same place wa Thiong'o does: it is, for both, essential in the struggle for the appropriation of history. Having been displaced from their historical location by political and military force, people have a chance to rewrite their history (Said 1993: 78, 131-132) and to distance themselves from the historical determinism (Said 1993: 260) the colonial powers insist on.

Said and wa Thiong'o also share the belief that in the choice between nativism and universalism, pluralism should be chosen (Said 1993: 229-230). Said thinks that the answer to imperialism should be "liberationist anti-imperialism" and suggests three methods by which this can be achieved. The first one would be "a new integrative or contrapuntal orientation in history that sees Western and non-Western experiences as belonging together because they are connected by imperialism. The second - an imaginative, even utopian vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance. The third - an investment neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy." (Said: 1993: 278-279) Said's three methods, as well as the principles of cultural resistance perceived in Fanon's and wa Thiong'o's work, can be found in the works of Cardenal, Galeano and Morales, which the rest of this paper will demonstrate.

* * *

The afore mentioned theoretical works by Cesaire, Fanon, wa Thiong'o and Said consider decolonization to be a very complex struggle of various political, geographical, historical destinies within cultures which embody various identities. In Latin America of Cardenal, Galeano and Morales one of the most effective strategies of resistance has been developed by Liberation Theology, combination of Christianity and Marxism which has affected many Christian communities in other parts of the world as well.[6] Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Barak Obama's former pastor, explains it as an effort to have the horizons of the oppressed peoples lifted. According to him, Liberation Theology is liberation from

6 Some Liberation theologians worth knowing are Archbishop Oscar Romero from El Salvador, Paolo Freire of Brazil, Ernesto Cardenal himself, Aristide, first democratically elected president of Haiti.

Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

centuries of miseducation and misinterpretation of history. Explaining the plight of black people in America Wright says:

> "…because we're miseducated, you end up with the majority of the people not wanting to hear the truth. Because they would rather cling to what they are taught. James Washington, now a deceased church historian, says that after every revolution, the winners of that revolution write down what the revolution was about so that their children can learn it, whether it's true or not. (…) "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal while we're holding slaves." No, keep that part out. They learn that. And they cling to that. And when you start trying to show them you only got a piece of the story, and let me show you the rest of the story, you run into vitriolic hatred because you're desecrating our myth. You're desecrating what we hold sacred. And when you're holding sacred is a miseducational system that has not taught you the truth." (Wright 2008)

The works of the Nicaraguan poet Cardenal, Uruguayan Galeano and Puerto Rican-American Morales, can be seen as major artistic contributions to this effort to liberate minds enslaved by deliberate strategies of manipulation and oppression the white colonizers used all over the world.

Cardenal's poem "Parrots" is both an indirect comment on the realities of the "American Dream" and a manifesto of the core tenets of Liberation Theology. The poems is an anecdote reported by a friend about parrots who were to be smuggled to the US to learn to speak English, Instead of a better future across the US border, the parrots headed for the US encounter death: there were 186 of them, but 47 died in their cages before they were discovered and returned to their mountains to be set free. Cardenal didn't trust this metaphor, evocative of the slave trade and other genocides involving imprisonment and extermination in concentration camps. He ends the poem by openly speaking up:

> "The Revolution did the same for us I think –
> It freed us from the cages
> Where they trapped us to talk English
> It gave us back the country
> From which we were uprooted…" (Cardenal 2010)

In his poem "Zero Hour" he continues in the same vein, creating a sharp contrast between the blood thirsty saloons of the Presidential Places and the midnight arrests of people guilty because of a "told joke" or a "conversation in a bus". Yet the lines:

> "But the *hero is born when he dies*
> and green grass is *born* from the ashes."

are a wakeup call for people to revive their tradition and restore their freedom and human dignity. His "Three epigrams" maintain the same tone of chilling political awareness. Although often, as he says, "You think here comes the revolution, yet it's just another celebration of a tyrant", true resistance is possible and cannot be suppressed:

> "They thought they killed you by shouting "Fire!"
> They thought that they buried you,
> Yet they planted a seed." (Cardenal 1983: 46)

He stresses the importance of creativity and sees writers as opponents of the plundering of people's language and falsification of its words. He is sure that one day the names of the oppressors, addressed in the poems, will be forgotten, yet the poems will still be read (Cardenal 1983: 49). In "Like empty beer cans" he shows the effects of neo-colonization on a man's perception of life: colonized men feel empty, like empty junk. In his *Psalms* we encounter man honest and free of brainwashing mechanism, able to live up to his full potentials. We come across prayers for the liberation of the world from concentration camps, frenzied leaders, empty speeches, fake trials, prostitution of the mind, oppression, imperialism and various other isms, foreign commercials, TV programs, commercialized art, negative cultural impact, standardization, loss of independence of mind, self-destruction of man.

Cardenal's psalms are an overview of what is left of man and of humanity after prolonged historical exposure to exploitation and oppression. Man has become a caricature of himself. He has been reduced to a number, and deprived of any sign of true identity; he has been led naked into gas chambers and torture chambers; he has yelled in straitjackets and was contaminated by deadly diseases; he has been exposed to radioactivity, he has become a bundle of clothes, a pile of toys, a collection of shoes. Cardenal's "Murder INC." is a miniature version of Kafka's *The Trial* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Everything in the world of the poems is scheduled, man is 'adjusted', man is the gray suit he wears. Cardenal asks his reader the following question: could it be that you are the man, the murderer, the thief, the gangster the radio is talking about?

* * *

Another Latin American writer in whose books Paolo Freire's and Jeremiah Wright's tenets of Liberation Theology are omnipresent is Eduardo Galeano. His book *To be like them, Culture of Peace and Neocolo-*

Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

nialism[7], for example, starts with two typical Galeano tales. The stories concern a bewildered angel and a bewildered writer who discover that official histories and maps do not match the reality manifestly visible in space and time. Nowhere are the achievements of the neglected, oppressed, diminished, poor and humiliated observed or recorded. "Winners who have legitimized their privileges through inheritance laws, impose their own memory as the sole and obligatory" (Galeano 1996: 8) version of history. Such official history lies not only by what it records, but even more so by what it omits and fails to record. That is the reason why Galeano asks of the writer to be the hunter of true words that have been lost, *to imagine* the future, rather than become someone who merely accepts it (Galeano 1996: 8).

Galeano refuses to conform to the accepted classifications of literary theory and proposes that writers should be classified not according to the genres they write in but according to their attitude to history (Galeano 1996: 10). One whole chapter in this book is dedicated to the *theory of the end of history*. He asks: "End of history?" and states that such dictum is nothing new for Latin America. Native history ended when the conquerors reached the New World. Memory of native traditions and human dignity became crimes. To remember and create history was forbidden. Only submission was allowed. "Since then we have been allowed only to suffer history" (Galeano 1996: 108), says Galeano. International markets, laws of supply and demand, rules of globalized economy are constant subjects in Galeano's work because they are the roots of misery for most developing nations. The ruling idea of the so called developed countries, forced upon the rest of the world is: "The right to own is more important than the right to live." (Galeano 1996: 125).

Galeano's faith in literature keeps reasserting itself throughout his work. In the text "In defense of the word" from 1978, re-published in *Days and Nights of Love and War* in 1983, Galeano states that:

> "…to awaken consciousness, to reveal identity – can literature claim a better function in these times? ... in these lands? (…) In Latin America a literature is taking shape and acquiring strength, a literature …that does not propose to bury our dead, but to immortalize them, that refuses to stir the ashes but rather attempts to light the fire … perhaps it may help to preserve "for the generations to come…" the true name of all things." (Galeano 2000)

7 Eduardo Galeano, Ser como ellos y otros articulos, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Ma@xico, 1992. See also: Eduardo Galeano, "To be like them", May 5, 1991, Znet: A community of people committed to social change.

Galeano starts his famous book *Open Veins of Latin America* (1973) with a quotation from the Revolutionary Proclamation of the Junta Tuitiva, issued in La Paz on July 16, 1809: "We have maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity." In this book he addresses repression, torture, concentration camps, censorship, imprisonments without trial, all in common use in Latin America long before and long after the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Very much in the spirit of Aime Cesaire in the first part of the book he provides a list of famous European philosophers and writers (Voltaire, Hegel, Bacon, Montesquieu, Hume…) who used their authority and reputation to reinforce and encourage European prejudices against Indians (Galeano 1997: 75). He adds that: "In 20th century Potosi the Indians still chew coca to kill hunger and themselves, and still burn their guts with pure alcohol – sterile forms of revenge for the condemned. (…) for the Indian contact with white man continues to be contact with death." (Galeano 1997: 5).

Wishing to expose numerous paradoxes that plague standard operating procedures of contemporary (neo)colonial "democracies" Galeano uses his sharp tongue to call things by their true name. He notes that: "The more a product is desired by the world market the greater the misery it brings to the Latin American peoples whose sacrifice creates it" (Galeano 1997: 113), and observes the paradox Martin Luther King talked about before him, that: "Puerto Ricans are not good enough to live in the country of their own but are good enough to die in Vietnam for a country which is not theirs (…), represented in the US Congress, [but] without vote and virtually without voice." (Galeano 1997: 134). The widespread ignorance he exposes in his works is the result of the bureaucratic fear and control of knowledge and creative imagination.

In the 2010 interview about his book *Mirrors stories of almost everyone*, conducted by Amy Goodman for "Democracy now", Galeano says: "The discrimination has condemned so many people to be invisible. And this book, tries to recover their memories and to recover their presence." (Galeano 2010). Later in the interview he urges writers to propose a new model for the world (a new mirror wa Thiong'o called for) because under current conditions people are trained to accept a state of things as normal which is not normal at all. According to him what is required is the rediscovery of human history.

In *To be like them* Galeano updates and reformulates key assumptions offered in *Open Veins of Latin America*. He once more reshapes his thought on what myths are for: "Myths, collective metaphors, works of collective creation, offer responses to the challenges of nature, as well as to the mysteries and secrets of human experience. Thanks to them

memory survives, is understood, and lasts." (Galeano 1996: 11). So he sets himself to rewrite stories and myths from the perspective of those who are neglected or presented negatively in the well known versions. His story "Writing, no" states:

"Some five thousand years before Champollion, the god Thoth traveled to Thebes and offered King Thamus of Egypt the art of writing. He explained hieroglyphs and said that writing was the best remedy for poor memory and feeble knowledge.

The king refused the gift: "Memory? Knowledge? This invention will encourage forgetting. Knowledge resides in truth, not in its appearance. One cannot remember with the memory of another. Men will record, but they won't recall. They will repeat, but will not live. They will learn of many things, but they won't understand a thing." (Galeano 2009: 16-17)

Often he speaks in the name of those the male, patriarchal history overshadowed. The story "Aspasia" reports:

"In the time of Pericles, Aspasia was the most famous woman in all Athens.

This could be said otherwise: in the time of Asasia, Pericles was the most famous man in all Athens." (Galeano 2009: 54)

He also speaks of those the *white* man's history overshadowed. "What did the Chinese not Invent" declares:

"…but world history was the history of Europe and it remains so today. The rest of the world lay, and still lies in darkness. China, too. We know little or nothing of the past of the country that invented practically everything." (Galeano 2009: 96)

And of those the *free* white man's history overshadowed: "Another missing father" narrates:

"[Robert Carter] freed [fifty blacks he owned] seventy years before Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery, and he did so gradually, taking care that none was simply turned out or deserted.

Such folly condemned him to solitude and oblivion. (…)his acts were rewarded with collective amnesia." (Galeano 2009: 176)

"Word smugglers" is about the female secret language Nushu, a code that women barred from male language invented: "…symbols that masqueraded as decorations and was indecipherable to the eyes of their masters. Women sketched their words on garments and fans. The hands that embroidered were not free. The symbols were." (Galeano 2009: 30). Galeano records this as another example of the resistance of the human mind against oppression.

* * *

If Cardenal's poetic examples are examples of the revolutionary mind and its memory, and Galeano's cases are cases of the outlawed mind and its memory, then the creations of Aurora Levins Morales can be seen as patterns of the oppositional mind and its memory, since (unlike Cardenal who is Nicaraguan and Galeano who is Uruguayan) Morales is a Porto Rican and belongs to the so called oppositional culture not outside but within the US. On her blog, and yes, she uses modern "technology" as a way to fight for her cause, we can often find appeals for "stories that reflect the realities that we struggle with in our daily lives, that tell blunt truths, reveal what gets hidden from public view and is left out of classroom and production studios…". (Levins Morales: 2010). According to her, finding our own context by using our own imagination while telling our own personal stories, is a way to fight corrupted media, the educational system and popular culture.

With *Getting Home Alive*, a book she co-authored with her mother, Morales sets an example of how creative writing can be a means of self discovery. Here memories are narrated in a specific historical context and infuse with life the empty spaces within that history. There's no dominant voice, no authoritative voice in her poems: they are unconventional and provide an example of what an alternative literary creation can achieve. One of the points she makes is that, instead of being cherished in a multicultural society, her complex identity (Jewish and Puerto Rican) marks her out from the society and betrays her: "[wolf, my true self] is changing shape to protect itself from extinction, but I realize all the animals it changes to are also endangered." (Levins Morales 1986: 16). The others are indifferent, for they do not recognize her rainbow identity and the value of the story it carries. Thus in her poem "Child of the Americas" she stands up for her rights:

> "I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish.
> I was born at crossroads
> and I am whole." (Levins Morales 1986: 50)

Part of her rainbow are also the places she has visited and that she is going to visit:

"*Place. How I always begin with place: the most potent imagery for a wandering Jew, an immigrant Puerto Rican. "What will this place give me, do to me? What landscapes, what houses will it leave in my dreams? What*

Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

layers will it add to the collage of my identity, my skin, my permanent passport?" (Levins Morales 1986: 192)

Layer upon layer such historical consciousness settled. She inherited that deposit from her mother and explored ways in which the wealth of experience it carried could become her own. Thus, in the poem "1930" she tries to reclaim her ancestor's history that somebody found not worth remembering, and says: "This is a story I make up from the scraps my mother and grandmother have let fall, a story I tell myself over and over, embroidering it, filling in the missing details of wind and weather and smells (…) this is not my mother's story. It is my story of her, told to myself as I invent details of her history, the foundations of my own." (Levins Morales 1986: 43) In "A letter to companero" she bluntly articulates how much she despises official histories.

In *Getting home alive* Rosario, her mother, writes of her own experiences of dispossession:

> "And someone who did languages for a living stopped me in the subway because how I speak was a linguistic treat I mean there it was Yiddish and Spanish and fine refined college educated English and irish which I mainly keep in my prayers (…) it's all true and it's all me (Morales 1986: 138) […]
> But I'm sad, too. For the English language robbed of the beat your home talk could give it, the words you could lend, the accent, the music, the word-order reordering, the grammatical twist, I'm sad for you, too, for the shame with which you store away – hide – a whole treasure box of other, mother, language. It's too rough-mannered, you say, too strange, too exotic, too untutored, too low class.
> You're robbing us, robbing the young one saying her first sentence, reading her first book, writing her first poem. You're confirming her scorn of her cradle tongue. You're robbing her of a fine brew of language, a stew of words and ways that could inspire her to self-loving invention.
> And you're robbing yourself…no, we're robbing ourselves, of selfness, of wholeness, of the joys writing with *all* our words, of the sound of your Mama's voice, my Papa's voice, of the smell of the kitchen on the page." (Morales 1986: 145)

With the essay "The Historian as Curandera", in her *Medicine stories,* Morales touches not only upon the role of socially committed historian who "uses history not so much to document the past as to restore to the dehistorized sense of identity and possibility" (Levins Morales 1998: 23), but also upon the correlation between imperialism, education and language. She concentrates on the power of language, on how privileged language is used to silence other people's authentic histories, and on how colonialism interferes with the education of the young.

> "I am a historian of context and connection, looking at the world around me with an awareness of both its underground roots and global implications. But even more I am a poet, and metaphor is both my theoretical approach and my research methodology." (Levins Morales 2005)

Her stories, like Galeano's, highlight the bitter paradoxes of history:

> "And always in my awareness, everywhere I go, like a double exposure projected across the landscape, is the history of so called removals, the murder, expulsion and relocation of the people of this place to arid and unknown terrain in Kansas and Oklahoma, where after only a few years, they were once more attacked and massacred, the survivors driven into smaller and smaller corners of land. (…) I think of their descendants starving in Oklahoma in 1890s, vigilantes burning the corn and the green memory of the elders: where I stand is the place they dreamt of, told stories about, sometimes drank to forget, were haunted by. I think of the Choctaw nation, touched by the news of Irish famine, only a few years off their own hunger tail, sending $710 dollars, a fortune in those days, for famine relief, hunger speaking to hunger." (Levins Morales 2005)

For both of these writers memory, opposed to the official history, recreated in the writers' minds, or better imagination, is the key to successful resistance. Morales declares:

> "I consider memory, what a power thing it is, lying dormant in ravaged populations, ready to be ignited. […] My metaphors are making connections between the resourcefulness of relocated peoples and the genetic traditions and innovations of plants, between the strategies of water and locusts and maroons, between the ways that ferns and exiles remember absent rain. In science and art alike, our imaginations are constrained by who we are, who we work for, what we believed in before we began, where we draw the margins of what is relevant." (Levins Morales 2005)

She explains the divergence between the popular and alternative [hi] stoies in the following way:

> "As Europe reached out to dominate other places and peoples, both art and science artificially split nearly to the root, either served empire and its special interests, or survived in the undergrowth, , hidden, disregarded, rebellious. The popular sciences and arts were called superstitions and crafts. Real science (and the world "real" comes from "royal") found laws and formulas that helped to dominate nature and those people defined as naturish. Real art idealized this venture. Everywhere they went, colonizers wiped out indigenous science and scientists, collected and captured indigenous art and artists, and understood and respected neither. […] Art forged, carved, wove, stretched, inked typed, and twirled the matter of the world into living stories, which are the opposites of obedience." (Levins Morales 2005)

Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

In the works of Cardenal, Galeano and Morales there is a marked tendency to consider culture as "a collective expression of identity" (Galeano 2006). "Instead of repeating the old story about culture being the specialized work of artists and perhaps scientists…"(Galeano 2006) these writers try to let the silenced (neo)colonized people from the bottom of society, tell their own stories, their own versions of history, in their own language. As Galeano put it: "We are not the voice of those who have no voice – everybody has a voice. The problem is that they cannot be heard." (Galeano 2006). By making it possible for these voices to be heard through their works these writers open up alternative stories and alternative histories systematically concealed by dominant Eurocentric culture. Their works can be read as responses to Said's call for art which can "open up new fields of struggle against products of distorted knowledge" and provide "true reflective understanding and genuine disclosure". Today Europe needs to struggle against the devastating consequences of Eurocentrism even more than Latin America. Cardenal, Galeano and Morales clarify the issues and provide inspiring poetic arguments why it is imperative for all of us to join the struggle.

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Наслеђе 18 • 2011 • 299-315

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ДЕКОЛОНИЗАЦИЈА УМА У ДЕЛИМА ЕРНЕСТА КАРДЕНАЛА, ЕДУАРДА ГАЛЕАНА И АУРОРЕ ЛЕВИНС МОРАЛЕС

Овај есеј се бави схватањем историје у делима трију латино–америчких писаца: Ернеста Карденала, Едуарда Галеана и Ауроре Левинс Моралес. Како Силвија Д. Дуках у силабусу за свој течај о латино–америчкој књижевности примећује, оригиналност ове књижевности потиче од њеног истанчаног осећаја за друштвену неправду, укорењену у пажљиво проматраној историји земаља из којих потичу ови писци. Та историја је представљена као збир личних прича, пре него као официјална верзија коју доминантна култура намеће и контролише. Овај рад испитује Галеанове и Моралесове поставке теорије историје осветљене кроз виђења представљена у теоретским радовима француског психијатра, филозофа и револуционара рођеног на Мартинику, Франца Фанона, затим палестинско–америчког теоретичара и професора на Колумбија универзитету, Едварда Саида и афричког аутора и академика, Нгуги ва Тхионга. Компаративна анализа је спроведена да би се сагледала 'глобална' перспектива, као и одговор на процес 'нео-колонизације' која се данас одвија широм света. Есеј испитује међузависност историје, језика, културе, књижевности и образовања и улогу креативности у 'деколонизацији ума' у свим овим пољима.

Кључне речи: историја, деколонизација, плурализам, идентитет, теологија ослобођења