



Revista Científica General José María Córdova

ISSN 1900-6586 (impreso), 2500-7645 (en línea)

Volumen 16, Número 21, enero-marzo 2018, pp. 123-147

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21830/19006586.298>

Citation: Losada Cubillos, J. J. (2018, enero-marzo). Colonial implications of the Colombian national identity: between coloniality and genealogy. *Rev. Cient. Gen. José María Córdova, 16* (21), 123-147. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21830/19006586.298>

Colonial implications of the Colombian national identity: between coloniality and genealogy

Section: HISTORY

Scientific and technological research article

Jhon Jairo Losada Cubillos*

Université catholique de Louvain. Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgique

Implicaciones coloniales de la identidad nacional colombiana: entre la colonialidad y la genealogía

Implicações coloniais da identidade nacional colombiana: entre a colonialidade e a genealogia

Implications coloniales de l'identité nationale colombienne: entre la colonialité et la généalogie

Received: 21 May 2017 • Accepted: 28 October 2017

* <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8086-3516> - Contact: jhon.losada@uclouvain.be

Abstract. This article analyzes the concept of *Colombian national identity*, within the framework of postcolonial studies and, especially, through the work of Colombian philosopher, Santiago Castro-Gómez (1958), who approaches this phenomenon with a Foucauldian focus. This post-colonial perspective acknowledges the role of identity in the reproduction of colonial power — more so, when a nationalist imaginary such as Colombia's is constituted—and, to that extent, it becomes relevant to understanding current social and cultural issues in the country. Thus, this article highlights two analytical categories: coloniality and genealogy. On the one hand, the contribution by coloniality will provide the theoretical arsenal and the connection with the colonial case. On the other, genealogy will establish the relationship with the methodological proposal adopted by Castro-Gómez.

Keywords: difference; identity; nation; postcolonial studies; Santiago Castro-Gómez.

Resumen. En este artículo se presenta un análisis del concepto de *identidad nacional colombiana*, visto desde el marco de los estudios poscoloniales y, en especial, desde la obra del filósofo colombiano Santiago Castro-Gómez (1958-), quien realiza un acercamiento a este fenómeno desde un enfoque foucaultiano. Esta perspectiva poscolonial permite reconocer el papel de la identidad en la reproducción del poder colonial —más aún cuando se constituye un imaginario nacionalista como el de Colombia—, y en esa medida es relevante para la comprensión de problemas sociales y culturales de la actualidad del país. Así las cosas, en el artículo se destacan dos categorías analíticas: la colonialidad y la genealogía. De un lado, el aporte de la colonialidad proveerá el arsenal teórico y la conexión con el hecho colonial. De otro, la genealogía establecerá la relación con la propuesta metodológica adoptada por Castro-Gómez.

Palabras clave: diferencia; estudios poscoloniales; identidad; nación; Santiago Castro-Gómez.

Resumo. Este artigo apresenta-se uma análise do conceito de *identidade nacional colombiana*, visto desde o marco dos estudos pós-coloniais e, em especial, desde a obra do filósofo colombiano Santiago Castro-Gómez (1958-), quem realiza uma aproximação a este fenômeno desde um enfoque foucaultiano. Esta perspectiva pós-colonial permite reconhecer o papel da identidade na reprodução do poder colonial — mais ainda quando se constitui um imaginário nacionalista como o de Colômbia —, e nessa medida é relevante para a compreensão dos problemas sociais e culturais da atualidade do país. Assim, no artigo destacam-se duas categorias analíticas: a colonialidade e a genealogia. De um lado, o contributo da colonialidade providenciará o arsenal teórico e a conexão com o facto colonial. De outro lado, a genealogia estabelecerá a relação com a proposta metodológica adoptada por Castro-Gómez.

Palavras-chave: diferenças; estudos pós-coloniais; identidade; nação; Santiago Castro-Gómez.

Résumé. Cet article présente une analyse du concept *d'identité nationale colombienne*, vu dans le cadre des études postcoloniales et, en particulier, de l'oeuvre du philosophe colombien Santiago Castro-Gómez (1958), qui fait une approche foucaldienne de ce phénomène. Cette perspective postcoloniale permet de reconnaître le rôle de l'identité dans la reproduction du pouvoir colonial —d'autant plus lorsqu'il se constitue un imaginaire nationaliste comme c'est celui de la Colombie— et, dans cette mesure, il est pertinent pour la compréhension de problèmes sociaux et culturels de l'actualité du pays. Ceci étant, dans l'article, l'accent a été mis sur deux catégories analytiques: la colonialité et la généalogie. D'une part, l'apport de la colonialité fournira l'arsenal théorique et le rapport avec le fait colonial. D'autre part, la généalogie fera le lien avec l'approche méthodologique adoptée par Castro-Gómez.

Mots-clés: différence ; études postcoloniales ; identité ; nation ; Santiago Castro-Gómez.

Introduction

It was during the transitional period to the second decade of the 20th century when, from different spheres of understanding and knowledge, the escalation of poverty, as well as the conditions of oppressiveness and dependence in which Latin American societies were immersed began to feature. This situation, recognized by the academia, was denounced as not only belonging to this time but that these evils are intrinsic and fundamental in the history of Latin America, that is, in the colonial legacy.

The intolerance provoked by a dehumanizing and aberrant social, political, and economic situation led by an elite at the service of the dictates of the most powerful nations caused strong reactions in many individuals associated with the areas of research, education, and religion. The Dependency Theory, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Liberation Theology, Philosophy of Liberation, Liberation Sociology and, ultimately, the Postcolonial Theory are examples of 20th-century critical thinking that evidence this intolerance.

In Colombia, Antonio García Nossa, Orlando Fals Borda, and Arturo Escobar, among many others, are great exponents of 20th-century critical thinking concerning various areas of this theory. The recognition by these authors of the colonialist legacy, which permeates all areas of human life, has progressively intensified in their research so that over time, their work has been heightened by the very actions of the social sciences. This recognition has been thoroughly registered and detailed as of the last mentioned Latin American critical thinking, namely, the Postcolonial Theory, which emerges as a current of critical thinking inspired by the premise that the category schemes handled until now in the social sciences are human products guided by human interests. From this premise, we can assert that rather than continuing to amass new evidence, the social sciences must reflect on the conditions of production of the discourses, as well as the situation of the speaker.

Recently, the efforts of Colombian researchers to associate their work with this critique have been described. Among these, the two previously mentioned, Arturo Escobar and Santiago Castro-Gómez.

In this contextual frame, this work used the Postcolonial Theory and the work by Santiago Castro-Gómez to determine the role of *national identity* in the reproduction of colonial power and genealogy as analytical of *Colombianness*.

Conceptual positioning of postcolonial studies in Latin America: notes on coloniality

In the academia, *Postcolonial Studies* are recognized as a current of thought reflected upon during the 80s and 90s concerning the colonial legacies of the British Empire in regions such as India and the Middle East. These studies focused on the colonial discourse through which Europe produced and coded an understanding of the East. Associated with these studies are names such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Edward Said. These authors stressed the nexus between imperialism and human sciences, recapturing the ideas exposed by the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, years before. With this, a new field of academic research was introduced (Castro-Gómez, 1996, p. 145).

Considering and expanding on aspects of the Anglo-Saxon postcolonial literature (Postcolonial studies), the Modernity/Coloniality (M/C) research collective emerged in Latin America. The M/C collective of postcolonial studies, to which Santiago Castro-Gómez is concomitant, embraces some contributions from the critical theories of European and North American modernity, as well as from the Eurasian group of subaltern studies, the Chicano feminist theory, and the African philosophy. Many of its members have operated from the modified world-system perspective presented by researchers such as Immanuel Wallerstein. Its main guiding force, however, is a continuous reflection on the Latin American cultural and political reality, which includes the subaltern understanding of exploited and oppressed groups.

If the Dependence Theory, Liberation Theology, and participatory action research can be considered the most original Latin American contributions to 20th-century critical thinking—with all the conditions applicable to such originality—the M/C research program can be regarded as the emerging inheritor of this tradition (Escobar, 2003).

Hereupon, the ideas of thinkers such as Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Aníbal Quijano, Fernando Coronil, Edgardo Lander, Ramón Grosfoguel, Santiago Castro-Gómez, Catherine Walsh, and Arturo Escobar, among others, converge. Their works are directed towards finding alternatives to the colonial order, which they identify from three perspectives, that, in turn, complement each other: power, knowledge, and being.

The main argument of this critique is that more pressing than colonialism¹ is coloniality, which is the other face of modernity, its dark side. Coloniality alludes to patterns of power rooted in rationalization, Eurocentric knowledge, and ontological-identity-cosmological-spiritual-existential inferiorization that continue to guide social institutions, mental schemes, and everyday life. This category, then, refers to

1 Thinking that justifies the colonial fact; a punctual phenomenon reduced to the apparatus of colonial political and military domination to guarantee the exploitation of the work and riches of the colonies for the benefit of the colonizing material power.

thought schemes and structures erected by colonial minds using three forms of intervention (also known as the colonial triad): coloniality of power, knowledge (discursive field), and self (ontological field).

Coloniality is a complex and enduring phenomenon that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural, libidinal, and epistemic hierarchies that enable the reproduction of dominant relationships; ultimately, the *intangible power* (as it were) thanks to which the colonial enterprise was carried out and the *material power* (previously referred to as colonialism), which alludes mainly to political and economic power. Coloniality averts to or is part of the epistemological and ontological component of domination, different from the political and economic of the colonial fact. From the above, it is possible to state that the main objective of the postcolonial critique is to make visible the epistemological mechanisms that enabled the colonial discourse.

Postcolonial criticism allows us to return to the colonial discourse and revise it in a novel and critical way. Understood as a system of signs through which the colonial powers enforced particular knowledge, disciplines, values, and behaviors to the colonized groups, the colonial discourse is not only deemed legitimate by modern science, but it also plays an important role in shaping the scientific imagination of the Enlightenment (Castro-Gómez, 2005a, p. 64).

Returning to the colonial and reviewing it in a novel and critical way requires a dynamic that surpasses colonialism. It requires revisiting it and seeing it with eyes different from those of the hegemonic power that imposed this order, with the sole purpose of finding alternatives to the exclusionary order of modernity and introduce key categories of analysis to understand this colonizing process, such as *coloniality* and *postcoloniality*².

The discursive field (coloniality of power and knowledge) refers precisely to the colonial discourse; that is, from what was mentioned as cultural imaginaries, the cognitive and the symbolic. The ontological field (coloniality of being) refers to the modes of life and actions incorporated and naturalized in the *habitus* of social actors; that is, to the internalization of the colonial discourse and colonial structures in the lives of the colonized.

What is most compelling about the concept of national identity is that the two areas of coloniality (discursive and ontological) are articulated, insofar as, a series of imaginaries and symbolic representations (discursive) is constituted that is incarnated and naturalized in the practical life of the colonized subject (ontological), as will be shown later in this work.

² Postcoloniality, does not refer to an era that left behind coloniality, but rather to a reorganization or postmodern transformation of the principles with which the coloniality of being, power and knowledge operates today. In this sense, if coloniality is the hidden face of modernity, postcoloniality is of postmodernity. See Castro-Gómez (2005b).

Genealogy as analytical of *Colombianness*

In his work, Professor Castro-Gómez presents a methodological approach to analyze *genealogy*, from which a rereading of Colombian history is made, different from the traditional historicist stance. It is worth noting that the “Colombian genealogical project” begins enunciating from *La crítica de la razón latinoamericana* [Critique of Latin American reasoning] (published in 1996), and is sustained in later works such as *La hybris del punto cero* [The hybris of point zero] (2005) and *Tejidos orínicos* [Oneiric tissues] (2009).

The author implicitly uses categories of analysis of postcolonial studies and the M/C collective. A fundamental point of reference to understand the theorization of the Colombian author is the Foucauldian influence, especially regarding the analytical power and the genealogy developed by the French thinker. Thus, concepts such as *genealogies of Colombianness* and *representation regimes* or *regimes of Colombianness* emerge, conjugating elements of their theoretical influences.

Ensuing, some relevant aspects of genealogy are presented, to later analyze the application of this methodological perspective by the Colombian author concerning *Colombianness*.

For the purpose of this research, and recognizing the need and relevance of understanding the concept, this section outlines what is meant by genealogy from the work of the French thinker Michel Foucault.

We begin by recognizing a particular form of history, a divergent way of making history in the traditional and disciplinary sense. But, what does this new way of making history consist of, why is it so new, what are its origins? Below, we provide some elements to, at least, explain these questions.

In his famous text, *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History*, Foucault outlines his point of view on the subjects of genealogy and history; a topic that he also refers to in other works such as his *Genealogy of Racism*. These texts are part of what some scholars of Foucault have called the *period of the genealogy of power* while recognizing other such as the *archeology of knowledge*, and the *hermeneutics of the subject*.

Inspired by some of Nietzsche's concepts, the French thinker presents a radical way of conceiving history in this work, leading him to contemplate a concept of *effective history*. Thus, genealogy materializes as the method of assuming said history. Foucault makes this reflection from texts by the German thinker such as the *Genealogy of Morality*.

The undertaking of this method, according to Foucault, would be to perceive the singularity of the events, beyond any monotonic purpose; find them in unforeseen spaces and in what goes unnoticed for having no history (feelings, love, conscience,

instincts); capture their reappearance, not to trace the slow curve of an evolution, but to rediscover the different scenarios in which they have played different roles; determine even when they were absent, the moments in which they did not take place (Foucault, 1992, pp. 7-8).

Genealogy does not oppose history, as one might think from a cursory reading; it opposes the meta-historical unfolding of ideal meanings and indefinite theologies, as well as a continuous or global history that seeks the *origin* (*Ursprung*). Seeking the origin, in this sense, is finding the given, what is naturalized without question or discussion, and is in itself beyond history. Foucault's concern for origin strives to capture the exact essence of the thing, its purest possibility, and its identity carefully folded back on itself, its mobile form, prior to everything that is external, accidental, and successive (Foucault, 1992, p. 9). Ultimately, it is listening to history beyond nurturing metaphysics, disregarding the essentialities or identities of things, because, from this perspective, it is agents external to the things themselves that construct essences or identities.

Hereupon, genealogy clearly does not inquire about the origin (*Ursprung*) because this would require searching for essentialities, which, for this thinker, do not exist or are historical constructs. The origin is not the objective of genealogy. A genealogy of values, morals, asceticism, and knowledge will not, therefore, be based on the pursuit of their *origins*.

Meanwhile, there are terms used by Nietzsche such as *Entstehung* or *Herkunft*, which according to the French thinker would be more accurate to the implication and purpose of genealogy. *Herkunft* is the stock, the descent; it is the ancient belonging to a group —the lineage and tradition, which is established between those of the same stature or baseness—, frequently involving race and social type in its analysis. Nietzsche explains, that it does not refer to finding in an individual, feeling or idea, the generic characteristics that allow its assimilation to others to say: "this is Greek, or this is English", but to perceive all the subtle individual and sub-individual marks that might intersect forming a root system that is difficult to disentangle (Foucault, 1992, p. 12). This analysis of descent, as noted by the author, on the one hand, allows to dissociate the self and make thousands of events, lost until now, swarm in the spaces and areas of its empty synthesis. On the other, it gives rise to finding under the unique aspect of a character, or concept, the proliferation of events through which (thanks to which, against which) they have been formed:

Genealogy does not attempt to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of oblivion. Its objective is not to show that the past is still very much alive in the present, animating it in secret after having imposed a

predetermined form from the outset. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species or map the destiny of a people. To follow the complex filial of descent is, on the contrary, maintaining what occurred in the dispersion that is its own; perceiving the accidents, the smallest deviations or, contrastingly, the complete reappearances, errors, failures of appreciation, and incorrect calculations that have produced what exists and is valid to us; it is discovering that at the root of what we know and what we are, lies not the truth or the being at all, but the exteriority of the accident. (Foucault, 1992, p. 13)

In brief, the search for descent does not found, suppose or universalize. On the contrary, it removes what was perceived as immobile, it fragments what was thought to be united, and shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined according to itself.

The other mentioned term, which also reflects the object of genealogy, is *Entstehung*. This word refers to emergence, the moment of arising. It is the principle and the singular law of an appearance. However, this emergence is not subjugated to chance, continuity without interruption or destiny or a purpose that seeks to manifest itself from the outset, as contemplated in metaphysical works. In genealogy, emergence always occurs in a specific state of forces. Thus, the author states, "The analysis of the *Entstehung* must expose the game, how the forces fight against each other, how they combat against adverse circumstances, what is more, how they divide among themselves to escape degeneration and reinvigorate from their weakening" (Foucault, 1992, p. 15). To illustrate this, the French thinker uses the following example:

The emergence of a species (animal or human) and its fastness are assured 'by a protracted struggle against constantly and essentially unfavorable conditions.' In fact, 'the species needs the species as a species, as something that, thanks to its resistance, uniformity, and the simplicity of its form can impose itself and become durable in the perpetual struggle with its neighbors or, the oppressed in revolt. 'On the other hand, the individual variation of emergence occurs in another state of forces, when the species has triumphed, and the external danger is no longer a threat, the battle becomes 'of selfishness turning one against the other exploding in some way, and that they fight together for the sun and the light' (Foucault, 1992, pp. 15-16).

According to the previous, for this author, emergence is the appearance on the scene of the forces; it is their irruption, the sudden blow by which they jump from the wings to the theater stage, each with the vigor and youth that is their own (Foucault, 1992, p. 16).

To summarize the discussion around the two terms mentioned, *Entstehung* and *Herkunft*), which in turn express the work of the genealogy, it is necessary to say that while the stock (*Herkunft*) designates the quality of an instinct, its degree or weakness,

as well as the mark that it leaves in a body, emergence (*Entstehung*) designates a place of confrontation. However, according to Foucault, one must be careful not to imagine this dispute as a closed field and a struggle among equals, but as proved by the example of the good and the bad, a non-place, a pure distance, the fact that the adversaries belong to a non-common space. No one is then responsible for emergence; no one can boast; it always occurs in the interstice (Foucault, 1992, p. 16).

These approaches lead the author to consider that these confrontations are present in every moment of history in the form of power relations of the dominating-dominated. Obligations and rights are always imposed, from which the different procedures, social, political, clinical, among others, are carefully constituted. These procedures are protected by rules that are determined by the game of history. In turn, these rules are used, disguised or perverted, by those who are at the peak of power relations against those who are dominated and against themselves without realizing it.

It is at this very point where the utility of genealogy is established, because it highlights these uses, ideals, morals, concepts, and identities, as an emergence of different interpretations of the rules, without regarding the subject that enacts them, but the very fact of interpretation and signification.

To return to the topic of effective history and conjugate it with what has been evinced in the previous lines on genealogy, it would be pertinent to say that the meaning that is given by this perspective to history differs from the meaning attributed by historians in which it finds no foundations anywhere, or of any kind. Thus, for example, man as a foundation is relegated to the background. This foundation on which the historical sense would rise, is sought as a point of support outside of time, an objective, it is assumed as an eternal truth, and considering that there are no eternal truths in this history only historical constructions intersected by multiple relationships, there is no such *point of support*, there is no foundation.

The effective history proposed by genealogy encompasses nothing that has the tranquilizing stability of life or nature, it does not allow itself to be led by any mute obstinacy towards a millennial end (as traditional history does), it bores into anything it is placed on and resists its supposed continuity. It is necessary to smash that which allows the consensual game of recognition (Foucault, 1992, p. 19). In this measure, the historical sense escapes metaphysics to become the privileged instrument of genealogy.

Before concluding these annotations on Foucauldian thought concerning genealogy, we must distinguish, to better recognize the historical sense, the three uses that it entails. According to the French author, the three following uses correspondingly oppose the three Platonic modalities of history. The first in this sequence is the parodic (jester)

use, which opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; the second is the dissociative directed against identity, and opposed to history-continuity and tradition; the third is sacrificial, directed against the truth, and opposed to knowledge-history. The commonality of these three uses and their bearing on the historical sense is to make history a practice that will free it forever from a model of memory, both metaphysical and anthropological. The idea is to make history a counter-memory and to unfold in it, then, an entirely different form of time (Foucault, 1992, p. 25).

Because this research is on the subject of identity, emphasis will be placed on the second use. Therefore, only some generalities of the first and third will be mentioned, to allow a more in-depth discussion on the parodic and jester use, which concerns identity. In the parodic and jester use, the subjects do not make history they are historical. To that extent, it does not involve the history of subjects, but a history of subjectivation. Thus, what is revealed are the scenarios and the conditions of possibilities for the processes of subjectivation, not what a particular person said or did. It is, then, a history of relationships and not of elements.

The third use, unlike the first, refers to the processes of objectification. There are no absolute, eternal, and immutable truths, but historical constructions that become regimes of truth. Consequently, what must be historicized are not the *truths*, but the techniques of production and control of those truths, the processes of objectification and not the objects, that is, the history of practices or techniques from which an intervention field is generated.

To elucidate the second use, which entails the historical sense and concerns the issue of identity, explanation that will be fundamental to developing and understanding this conundrum in the work of Castro-Gómez, we must begin by establishing that history does not hide the secret of identity, therefore, what must be done is dissociate *identity*. Dissociate and destroy it because this identity has no foundation other than masks. Therefore, it is nothing more than a parody, as stated by the Frenchman: "The plural inhabits it, numerous souls fight in it; systems intersect and dominate each other [...]. And in each of these souls, always disposed to be reborn, history will not discover a forgotten identity, but a complex system of multiple, distinct elements not dominated by any power of synthesis." (Foucault, 1992, p. 26)

In this direction, the historical sense is not the search for a lost origin. It is not the history of a people, of a forgotten memory, of continuity without interruptions. In the words of Foucault, history, genealogically directed, is not intended to reconstruct the roots of our identity. On the contrary, it embodies itself in dissipating them; it does not seek to reconstruct the unique center from which we come, that first homeland to which metaphysicians promise us that we will return; it tries to summon all the discontinuities that cross us (Foucault, 1992, p. 27).

Man presents himself as the product of a crossing of lines of power, as a multiplicity. Revealing the scenarios where such crossings occur is the task of genealogy. That is, to evidence those techniques and practices of meaning, since a multiplicity can take different forms, for example, a workshop, a nation, an army, a school and the individual himself. This is because power, according to Foucault, operates at different levels.

For Foucault (1992), genealogy raises the issues of the land on which we were born, the language we speak, the laws that govern us, all to highlight the heterogeneous systems that, under the mask of our self, deprive us of all identity (p. 27).

In short, Foucault (1992, p. 29) concludes, “the veneration of monuments becomes a parody; the respect for ancient continuities becomes systematic dissociation; the critique of the injustices of the past by a truth held by men in the present becomes the systematic destruction of the man who maintains knowledge by the injustice proper to the will to knowledge.”

Discussion on the concept of Colombian national identity: about the genealogy of Colombianness

The genealogical exercise carried out by Santiago Castro-Gómez in his philosophical project does not intend to reconstruct the memory of what is Colombian through history; he does not intend to produce a *History of Colombia*. On the contrary, the fundamental task is to denaturalize, unmask what is Colombian. As the author notes, “The purpose of a genealogy of Colombianness is to denaturalize the concept of Colombia.”³

This project of genealogy as analytical of Colombianness originates or is guided by the text, *La crítica de la razón Latinoamericana*. From there, an examination of the epistemological orders, discursive practices, and disciplinary mechanisms that enabled the construction of a knowledge holder called *Colombia* and a series of cognitions on *what is Colombian* is tacit in this work. These cognitions, which in advance appear, *expert*, have a mission. As stated by Said (2002), their mission is to create an image about the other that is constituted as a field of power from which different entities-identities are defined, normalized, and answered, for example, the national imaginary, the purity of blood, among others.

Thus, such a concept develops as a regime of truth, a truth, which should not be used to create history, what should be used are the techniques of production and control of that truth (production scenarios⁴, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs).

3 Lecture notes on the Genealogy of *Colombianness* course offered as a seminar by the Universidad Santo Tomás in their Masters of Latin American Philosophy. March 3 to 5, 2010 sessions.

4 For example, in the text *Tejidos oníricos* [Oneiric Tissues] (Castro-Gómez, 2009) develops a genealogy of Colombian governmental power, denaturing and making visible the environment (*milieu*) through which said power operates, where said *milieu*, environment, scenario has a major importance.

Thus, the genealogical task by this thinker does not ask, what is Colombia or what is the Colombian identity? Instead, how is that object, or truth, called Colombia produced?

To answer this question, the manner in which this process is carried out must be observed, and this can only be done through the practices carried out in the scenario that produces such truth, Colombia. In this order of ideas, genealogy, thus, the work by Professor Castro-Gómez, proposes an analysis, not of objects in history, but of the practices or technologies from which their forming processes develop, that is, the processes of objectification (for example, practices of Latin Americanization, nationalization practices, practices of Colombianization, among others). Genealogy takes, as its analysis objectives the rationalization of power, rationality of power technologies, and rationality of practices. These technologies are not culturally determined; they emerge in a specific cultural context. As technology, they can be linked or applied in other contexts without regard to their place of origin, but of their *emergence* (for example, the mechanism of whiteness, widely studied by Castro-Gómez in his book *La *hybris* del punto cero*).

Genealogy does not contemplate ideological influences, it contemplates practices, because practices are valid unaided, not validated by the subjects that carry them out; they are technologies. Practices are not a reaction (reception or influence) of phenomena external to practices, they have inherent rationality, making them an adequate criterion to judge history, that is, through the very rationality of practices. In the practices, there is no *us*; there is no *identity*. Genealogy proposes an analysis of the type of practices carried out in a territory that transform the subjects that inhabit this space; in other words, Castro-Gómez proposes a history of the rationality generated by these practices, what Foucault called, *episteme*. Therefore, considering that what is fundamental in the genealogical analysis is the rationality of practices and technologies of power, the story-maker is irrelevant, regardless of what he or she does, what matters is how the subject does it, from what discursive ordering, from what *episteme*.

With this, reviewing these technologies or devices of power in terms of practices, in the construction of *Colombianness*, is a genealogical effort; hence, the title *Genealogías de la colombianidad*. The text reviews, but above all makes visible, the devices that are articulated in the formation of the national ideal. In the words of the Colombian author:

The notions, subjectivities, and practices of “Colombianness” are woven in different ways in what some students of the social sciences and many politicians call “national identity.” This supposed interpretative and experiential (the “Colombianness”) “com-

munity" must be explained in its historical articulations before being assumed as the starting point of our analyses. Thus, what appears as a nation and national identity are discourses that need to be historicized and denatured to demonstrate the multiple and changing attachments of meaning, sensations, power, and resistance. (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 11)

In this regard, finding the essence of *what is Colombian* as an a priori is not the course followed here. On the contrary, the genealogical approach problematizes the analyzes predicated on anthropological universals, such as that of a pre-existent, unified, autonomous, and sovereign subject:

Genealogy is an intervention towards the deanthropologization and eventualization of history that does not aspire to rest comfortably in the hierarchies of scientific knowledge and its natural effects on power. Such eventualization enables the distancing from what seems evident, from the tendency to subsume the event in horizons of intelligibility or predetermined units. (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 35)

Thus, the work done by Castro-Gómez is part of an effective history that deals with how we become what we are, through the processes of objectification and subjectivation, where the objects and subjects of knowledge are made possible in reciprocal determinism, concurrently configuring the games of truth. These games authorize the different ways of speaking framed in the contingent forms of true and false. In this genealogical exercise, the limits of what we are today, in a given present, are drawn to open the possibility of establishing a line of flight concerning those historical determinations (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, pp. 35-36).

How is such work to be carried out? According to this author, to begin the work on genealogies of Colombianness, we must start from five central premises that support its development:

1. Its contingency, positivity, and historical specificity within the periphery of the modern/colonial world-system.
2. Its non-reducibility with respect to other frameworks of social life.
3. Its immanent heterogeneity and polyphony in the filigree of the practices and imaginaries of dissimilar social actors.
4. Its intrinsic relationality and close imbrication with the different articulations of power, hegemony, and resistance.
5. Its specificity in limited spaces (not Colombianness but Colombianities, at different times and in different places) (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 36).

From the previous premises, according to the professor, we must distance ourselves from:

1. Concepts naturalized by some disciplinary practices that are imposed on documents even before their use. Hence, the rejection of formalistic explanations that synthesize difference in homogenizing and empty categories.
2. The perspectives seeking intention from what has been said and placing the desire of an individual or a political project above concrete social articulations.
3. Those that entail a given subject's articulation of the mode of being of the ways of saying something in a specific time and place (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 36).

The previous guidelines construe the Colombian author's purpose, a work in which postcolonial criticism and Foucauldian thought are combined with the genealogy of power. Although, as the author has said, he does not recognize himself as a postcolonial theorist, he merely uses some elements of this critical perspective. His visions of modernity/coloniality and the matrix of coloniality (being-knowledge-power), among other concepts, acquaint his work with postcolonial thought. What is essential is clarifying that the author makes use of these categories to move towards a genealogical reading of the history of Colombia. In this sense, Castro-Gómez speaks of identity not on behalf of *postcolonial theory*, but of its *use*.

According to the professor, *identity* is always constructed from the postulation of *the other*, although, he specifies that his query has not been for identity or otherness, but for the mechanisms that produce this polarity. He inquires on the regimes that produce *the other* by which identity is determined, whether national, racial, occupational, personal or sexual, among others, which in no case pre-exists to the produced other. Both identity and otherness are produced simultaneously. From this point of view, he prefers to speak of *multiplicity* and not *difference*, because the category of difference is inscribed, precisely, in the same mechanism that generates both identities and otherness. An *identity* occurs because of the *differences to the others*. Without difference, there would be no identity or otherness (Castro-Gómez, personal interview, April 30, 2010).

Accordingly, the author does not use categories such as identity, difference or diversity in his work, only because he does not refer to identity, but to the *production of identities*, better yet, to the *identification technologies*. He refers to the latter as the set of practices and knowledge from which a subject or multiple sets of subjects define themselves as forming a unit, as having an identity (Castro-Gómez, personal interview, April 30, 2010). Topics such as these are studied in his texts *La hybris del punto cero* and *Tejidos oníricos*.

The first, for example, probes into the techniques used by people to identify themselves as black, indigenous, mestizo, and others. The same question appears in the second, however, referring to the techniques by which subjects consider themselves *modern*. Both refer to technologies that generate *identification*.

Completing the methodological question of the author's *modus operandi*, as a philosopher, he considers that the task of philosophy is to wage war against unity and identity. The genealogies of *Colombianness* do not seek to protect a *Colombian identity*, but to disperse it. The best way to disperse the fiction of unity is by *tracing its genealogy* and exposing it. That which we have been presented as identity is nothing more than a historical (and violent) agency of different forces and configurations of forces. More than formulating categories on which a Colombian identity can be constructed, philosophy must address the *denaturing* of the various regimes of *Colombianness* that have emerged in our history. Philosophy, understood as a genealogical task, does not intend to reconstruct the memory of what is Colombian, nor does it seek to go to the past to discover the *roots* of our identity. On the contrary, it aims to denaturalize the mythology of these origins and show the contingency of the forces that produced it. It is not a matter of making a history of the truth about *Colombianness*, but a history of the production techniques of that truth (Castro-Gómez, personal interview, April 30, 2010).

In this respect, the author would say, that the Colombian national identity is a set of historically constituted statements and practices that have produced some definite *effects of truth* in the history of this country, and whose emergence and origin must be studied by genealogy. Before referring to national identity as a constituent domain of practices, beliefs, rites, and truths, the type of power relationships and regimes of truth that have produced that national identity or identities should be examined (Castro-Gómez, personal interview, April 30, 2010). Trying to show the generalities of these regimes will be the objective of the following section.

Representation regimes - *Colombianness* regime

The discussions proposed by postcolonial thought, regarding the analysis of the mechanisms that made the colonial enterprise possible, can be articulated effortlessly with the topic of Colombian identity since the postcolonial critique points precisely to the colonial legacy and discerns in the *Colombian* the mechanisms that made this discursive formation possible. From the works of Said, postcolonial theory has helped to show how representational discourses (*the Oriental, the Latin American*) are spaces in which an identity is constructed, and the other is established to exercise power. Thereof, the Latin American identity and, in this case, the Colombian identity, is a construction

of the colonial discourse with contentions of domination and acts in the same dynamic as all the other colonial discourses (civilization, development, to name a few). As has been pointed out throughout this article, Professor Santiago Castro-Gómez takes up some categories of postcolonial studies that are valuable in his research, such as the case of coloniality.

In this dynamic, the issue of Colombian national identity will be addressed. Guided by several questions that arise around the enunciated topic such as, how do the critical arguments of the postcolonial theory denounce the formation of a new mechanism of power, in the form of national identity, which has served the colonial enterprise to control the colonized? How does the Colombian national identity come to be understood as a control mechanism from the postcolonial assumptions?

The conceptual framework that sustains postcolonial criticism make visible the epistemological mechanisms that made the colonial fact possible; for example, the coloniality of power, a category of analysis that is coined from Latin American postcolonial studies. At this point, the ideas of researchers belonging to the M/C collective articulate and converge. This category, the coloniality of power, is a fundamental reference for understanding the postcolonial perspective concerning identity as it highlights the regimes of power through which discourses with contentions of domination and control such as national identity were formed. Thus, identity appears as a regime of power and representation, in this case, a regime of Colombianness.

Knowing what is conceived here when referring to a *regime of representation* (also understood as *power regime*) is apposite to the discussion. A regime of representation, broadly, refers to different discursive formations with pretensions of domination and control, which operate (are incarnated) in three levels: i) at the micro level of the body-minds; ii) at the meso management level of life and populations; and iii) at the macro level of geopolitics. From this, the colonial discourse can be recognized as a regime of representation, asserting the colonial discourse as a system of signs used by the colonial powers to impose specific knowledge, disciplines, values, and forms of behavior on the colonized groups (Castro-Gómez, 2005a, p. 64).

In turn, these discourses create imaginaries that allow them to circulate in minds, bodies, populations, and nations. In this sense, cultural imaginaries⁵ play an essential role

5 Although culture is not a central point of this analysis, it is very important in this study of Colombianness. Therefore, we briefly review how culture is perceived from this form of interpretation. As an imaginary, loaded with meaning, culture is perceived as a web of meanings that explain the formation of identities (regional, gender, race, class), forms of collective behavior, as well as the production of symbolic goods, ideas, and discourses. In this dynamic, Professor Castro-Gómez points out the following: "The project of building Colombian nationality in the 19th century involved the creation of a new cultural framework, a symbolic network to direct the modernity desired by the elites. The nation had to be imagined, this entailed forging the actors and the

in this task, since these, according to the author, are not only objectified in disciplinary apparatuses (laws, institutions, colonial bureaucracies) but also translate into *concrete forms of subjectivity*. Orientalism and Occidentalism are not merely ideologies (in the restricted sense of Marx), but lifestyles, structures of thought and action incorporated into the habitus of social actors (Castro-Gómez, 2005b, p. 57). To put it in other terms, the colonial discourse, conceived as a system of signs that hegemonically determines the subjects, is the discursive component of the coloniality to which reference was made. Imaginaries, such as culture, constitute the ontological sphere through which those discourses take shape.

For the Colombian context, the prominence of colonial power has left behind some control mechanisms or devices of power (Foucault), historically formed as imaginary to carry out the colonial enterprise. As previously mentioned, recognizing these devices supposes a genealogical exercise, which is a peculiar way of making history, that is to say, that genealogy can reveal the memory construction processes and how they served as a foundation on which the construction of subjectivities was cemented. This was the exercise carried out by the Colombian thinker to show different practices that are included in the universal, *Colombia* and more so in the Colombian national identity. In this sense, Santiago Castro-Gómez and Restrepo state the following:

Rather than speaking of “Colombianess,” we speak of regimens of Colombianess, understanding by it the historically placed and always heterogeneous devices that seek to unify and normalize the population as “national,” at the same time as they produce differences within it. These regimens generate different policies of unity, identities, and differences that must be understood from the particular forms taken by modernity/coloniality in Colombia. (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 11)

In agreement with the preceding and to continue with the analysis of *Colombianess* regimes, it can be argued that referring to Colombian regimes as different power technologies or regimes of power, allows us to observe the modalities in which they permeated society and colonial matters:

scenarios that served as the basis for the actual existence of the nation; the press, political discourses, science, and literature played an important role in the construction of this imaginary and in channeling new sensibilities. However, the role of representation was focused on those who knew how to culturally read the keys to ‘civilization’, the enlightened Creoles, whose habitus was formed in the ethnic and colonial imaginary of whiteness. Thereon, proclaiming the superiority of the Hispanic blood and white skin on the indigenous, black and mestizo groups. The civilizing aspiration became a matter of symbolic violence and presupposed ethnic, social, and gender hierarchies that often clashed with the principles of economic liberalism. ‘Coloniality’ seemed to reveal itself then as the other face of that desired modernity.” (Castro-Gómez, 2003, p. 2)

In this sense, we could say that anatomo-politics of bodies, noopolitics of desires, biopolitics of populations, and geopolitics of nations are the four power technologies that have operated articulately in the history of modern/colonial societies. We understand, then, the regimes of Colombianness, in their multiple and specific articulations, as modalities of control over the bodies and desires of individuals, as well as over the populations, territories, and wealth of nations. (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 23)

As explained above, these modalities, incarnate in the colonial discourse on *Colombianness* or Colombian identity, are part of what is called the *ontological dimension* of the ways of life and actions of social actors; that is, the incorporation of colonial discourse in the lives of the colonized. The creation of subjectivities from the different modes of control allowed the organization of society under the structure of colonial power. Thereupon, making the creation of the imaginary of a Colombian national identity useful when exercising control.

According to the previous, the reading of *Colombianness* regimes implies an understanding of the national, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Instead of considering a singular and homogeneous *Colombianness*, we must think of *regimes of Colombianness*, in the plural, as fields of contention between different positions located historically.
2. Each of these regimes is the result of a permanent and unstable process of political articulation.
3. At specific times, particular hegemonic articulations of the regimes that define the conditions of possibility for the subalternization of certain othernesses can be identified.
4. Such articulations have not stopped appealing, albeit differentially, to the symbolic-discursive universe deployed by modern/colonial capitalism, even in its most recent formation (post-Fordism), produced in the name of multiculturalism (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, pp. 11-12).

To recognize the fields of struggle from which the different regimes of *Colombianness* emerge, they could be drawn from their detailed description in the work of Castro-Gómez. However, first, it should be noted that these regimes are subsumed in the category of *coloniality of power* of postcolonial studies. In this order of ideas, we could refer to four scenarios from which exploration can be achieved: nation, modernity/coloniality, whiteness, and knowledge.

The concept of a nation as an *imagined community*, originated by Anderson Benedict in his text *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1993), has been used as a category of fundamental analysis to understand the different processes that characterize modernity. Foremost, this category refers to the emergence of a new *we*, tied to a politically delimited territory and a new relationship between that collective and individuals. This fiction of unity, as this author would say, only makes sense in the context of the formation of modern states, as a principal means of exercising dominion and sovereignty in a territory defined as its own. Therefore, the emphasis placed on the relationship between nation and unification. Cultural homogenization is the way to building nation by creating a community that shares specific features, distinguishing it from others (language, traditions, race, among others) (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 20).

To Castro-Gómez, national projects and speeches are not only aimed at the production of a political and cultural unit, but they also involve the assembly of techniques and hierarchical differentiation strategies among the population groups that are confronted by these technologies. Thus, the creation of what is national is constricted between unification and differentiation (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 12) conceiving two tasks for the nation.

In these terms, the configuration of what is national as an image of unity is presented. The dual task of the national imaginary is a fundamental part of the regimes of *Colombianness*. As a *regime*, what is national is constricted between unification and differentiation (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 12). Thereof, in the mentioned text, the regimes of *Colombianness* are understood as fields of definition and identity struggles in which different forms of collective identities are rearticulated and configured, under the framework or interlacing of the racial, regional, cultural or the ethnic:

Nation building was a narrative and political exercise that afforded the definition of power structures, articulating disparate relations between the incorporated peoples and regions, as well as between them and the power centers of the nation-state. Moreover, as part of the modern/colonial world-system, the nation-states were localized exercises of the coloniality of being, power, and knowledge, which organized the productive relations and control over the body and desire from taxonomies resulting from racism and discrimination. (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 22)

Understanding the discourses and projects of the concept of nation without bearing in mind that they are products of *modernity/coloniality* is unfeasible. Some elements, such as the delimitation of government exercise in geopolitical terms, the centrality of power in the State and biopolitics as a way of defining subjectivities, are articulated within government technologies implemented at a national level for the construction of subjectivities.

In this sense, the regimes of *Colombianness* are projects that must be examined in the framework of the world-system's struggle for geopolitical hegemony, the structured and structuring struggle of the order of modernity/coloniality (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 12).

The coloniality of power as a result of modernity/coloniality is inscribed in a structure of world power (modern/colonial world system) shaped by the colonial relationship between interiors and peripheries, resulting from the European expansion. On this, the thinker states the following:

Modernity is a “project” insofar as its disciplinary devices are anchored in a *double* legislative governability. The one exercised inward by the nation-states in their attempt to create homogeneous identities through policies of subjectivation, and the governability exerted *outwardly* by the hegemonic powers of the modern/colonial world-system, in its attempt to ensure the flow of raw materials from the periphery to the interior. Both processes are part of a single structural dynamic. (Castro-Gómez, 2000, p. 153)

Therefore, modernity cannot be thought without its correlate, coloniality. The expansion of modernity and the establishment of capitalism could not have been carried out without the discursive scaffolding (coloniality) that produced these projects (nation-state, capitalism, to name a few).

Whiteness, like the two previous imaginaries, also appears as a device of power that constitutes the Colombian regimes. The configuration of whiteness, as a discursive practice of identification-distinction, is another form of national unification and differentiation (for example, Creole elites are a clear example of this). The author indicates:

It is the identity based on *ethnic distinguishing from others*, which characterizes the first geo-culture of the modern/colonial world system; a distinction that established not only the superiority of one individual over another but also the superiority of some forms of knowledge over others. Therefore, the enlightened discourse of the Creole elite, with its emphasis on the objectivity of knowledge, does not contradict but rather reinforces the ethnic imaginary of whiteness [...] by conceiving a stance of neutral observation, the Creoles “erase” the fact that it is precisely their ethnic pre-eminence in the social space (the cleansing of blood) that allows them to think of themselves as *timeless inhabitants of point zero*, and the other social actors (indigenous, blacks and mestizos) as *inhabitants of the past*. (Castro-Gómez, 2005a, p. 59)

The imaginary of whiteness, produced by the discourse of the *cleansing of blood*, was an aspiration internalized by many sectors of colonial society and represented the axis around which the subjectivity of social actors was constructed. This colonial imaginary, which in turn is an explicit reference to the coloniality of power, exercised a continuous

fascination over the desires, aspirations, and will of the subalternized. Thus, being white did not have as much to do with the color of the skin as it did with the personal staging of a cultural imaginary woven by religious beliefs, clothing types, nobility certificates, and behavior modes, as well as ways of producing and transmitting knowledge. The ostentation of these cultural insignias of distinction associated with the imaginary of whiteness was a sign of social status, a form of acquisition, accumulation, and transmission of symbolic capital (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 64)

For Castro-Gómez, the blood cleansing discourse refers to a belittled aspect of the politics of difference, the configuration of whiteness. Firstly, as a discursive practice of distinction and definition of the Creole national elites, and secondly, as the point from which the forms of national unification (miscegenation, for example) and differentiation (ethnic minorities) articulate. The matter of the figures of difference or historiographical concepts that prefigure historical and political identities is also an important issue because of the configuration of whiteness as a cultural imaginary from which political hegemonies are constructed (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 12).

As a regime, the discourse of blood cleansing, incarnated by the imaginary of whiteness in the habitus of colonial society, enables the construction of hegemonies, hierarchies, and political organization forms. Hence, from the imaginary of whiteness, the regimes of *Colombianness* express historical dynamics that are integrated both in cultural forms of exclusion and in politicized concepts of expert knowledge. These regimes' attachment to the action field of the coloniality of power references a hegemonic production of knowledge, which is acknowledged in this author's work, *Hybris del punto cero*.

The abovementioned resonates on the imaginary of the *legitimacy of knowledge* as another form of colonial society control, another use of the coloniality of power. In this regard, one might think that the imaginary of knowledge would be part of the action of the coloniality of knowledge and not of power. In fact, the author does not make the distinction, since he considers that the *coloniality of power* and the *coloniality of knowledge* are located in the same genetic matrix (Castro-Gómez, 2000, p. 154). It is precisely here, where they find their place.

In this sense, if the imaginary of whiteness helped to forge a Creole elite, it would aid the formation of a technocratic elite. Fittingly, Castro-Gómez examines different measures by which creole elites consolidated their political and economic power from the ideology of ethnic or blood cleansing, creating a taxonomy of *races* and a hierarchy of *castes*. Expressly, the groups in which they classified people according to their degrees of miscegenation in which the castes with the most abundant white component were those that enjoyed the highest reputation and recognition.

Knowledge, which was configured as scientific, allowed not only the hegemonic relationship of science and state power over the population (biopolitics) but also allowed the relationship between knowledge and mastery of bodies and desires (noopolitics). With this, it produced, in the same sense as the mentioned regimes of *Colombianness*, the creation of subjectivities and the production of different subjects, stories, and problematizations that constitute a particular form of *Colombianness* (Castro-Gómez & Restrepo, 2008, p. 13).

In conclusion, problematizing the concept of Colombian identity from a critical perspective, such as the one presented here denaturalizes concepts of disciplinary practices and rejects the formalistic explanations that synthesize the difference into homogenizing and empty categories. A Colombian identity (let alone one's thought) cannot be established without understanding that it is a product built on spaces of colonial domination from which different regimes were established in the form of imaginaries and discourses. Its discourses of identity and discursive formations are generated from institutional practices of control and domination that narratively produce the other as a homogenous whole. The previous occurs owing to a process in which identity is built historically, in a way that condenses, decants, and recreates collective experiences and imaginaries, which provides identity or identities a dynamic state.

Identity, as a device of power to the colonial enterprise, is a dynamic discursive construction of practices and processes of subjectivation. Identities and discursive realities are composed of changing narratives through which a subject recognizes himself and attributes meaning to vital experience. The paradox is that the process by which the colonial subject recognizes himself and imputes meaning to his own life experience (identifies himself) is predetermined by the representation available to the control modalities (either in the form of corpo-, noo-, bio-, and geopolitics or the combinations between them), with which it controls the bodies and desires of individuals, over populations, territories, and the wealth of the nations.

Conclusion

It should be recognized that there are many pending issues in this investigation. *Colombian national identity* is a subject that generates enormous uncertainties, concerns, and questions that merit a more thorough exploration. Moreover, the use of theoretical sources is circumscribed by its magnitude.

Regarding the author selected for this research, it should be noted that examining a thinker who is alive and in full production of his work is challenging. One of the most challenging hurdles in understanding the postulates by Professor Castro-Gómez was that

this philosopher has recently reconsidered some of them. Therefore, the references to the author made in this text strictly avoid compromising his thinking.

This document focuses on the *modus operandi* of this Colombian philosopher, especially, regarding his genealogical exercise. It presents elements of postcolonial criticism, as well as Foucauldian presuppositions, which were articulated with a transdisciplinary methodology to analyze *what is Colombian*. Therefore, rather than generating a new concept to represent the Colombian culture and identity, it provides a novel way of approaching the study of such concepts. After reading this article, the reader should not expect the fulfillment of having attained a concept that accounts for a *supposed* Colombian identity. Through this text, the authors strived to create a sense of skepticism regarding the stances of identity, and is content if it denatures the formal and homogeneous visions that are perceived as stable or constant throughout the history of Colombia. In other words, if the unequal power relations that mark identity discourses were understood, which, in this case, is the colonial fact, this work is considered successful. Thus, it is maintained that the Colombian identity is a construct of the colonial discourse with contentions of domination and that, as such, acts in the same dynamic as all other colonial discourses (civilization, development, to name a few). One must bear in mind that the colonial enterprise was always a company of unification, unification of territories and races, among others.

The work of Castro-Gómez refers differently to the concepts of *regimes of Colombianness* and *Colombian identity*. In that, from the postcolonial perspective and the scope of *coloniality*, the different control forms that are contained in the universal *Colombia* are indicated, understanding that representational discourses (*the oriental, the Latin American*) are spaces in which an identity is constructed, and the other is constituted for exercising power, because all identity is established from difference; that is, in contrast to something else. Therefore, the author does not refer to categories such as *identity* or *difference*. Because *identity* is always constructed from the postulation of an *other*, the issue to the author is not identity or otherness, but the mechanisms that produce this polarity. The author favors questioning the regimes that produce an *other* before which an *identity* is defined whether national, racial, occupational, personal, and sexual, among others that in no case pre-exists the *other* produced. Both identity and otherness are produced simultaneously. From this point of view, Castro-Gómez prefers to speak of *multiplicity* and not of *difference*, because *difference* is inscribed in the same mechanism that generates both identities and otherness. One has an *identity* because of one's differences to *others*. Without difference, there would be no identity or otherness (Castro-Gómez, personal interview, April 30, 2010). *Multiplicity* does not speak on behalf of otherness or difference, but on

behalf of *singularity*. Therefore, what should be followed are not unity but multiplicity and the endeavors to organize and taxonomize that multiplicity, the attempts to erase the *singularity* and extremize resemblance. Identity assumed in the light of *generality* (which would be the category that attempts to erase the singularity and order multiplicity) implies a need to represent reality to make it manageable, susceptible to control. Multiplicity is not related to a unit, and it is not reducible to a unit.

According to this, it should be noted that from the genealogical work of this author the regimes of *Colombiannes* are visualized as the scenarios from which elements have articulated that form a field of forces where discourses of different types are defined, among them, identities. Thus, the query would not be about identity but *identification technologies*, meaning a set of practices and knowledge from which a subject or a multiple sets of subjects define themselves as part of a *unit*, as carriers of an *identity*⁶.

The task of philosophical thought in Colombia, instead of trying to formulate categories on which an identity is built, is fundamentally deconstructing, denaturalizing, and delegitimizing the discourses and imaginaries on which power and control devices were created such as the regimes of *Colombianness*, to encourage collective awareness of these forms of control, which, as was noted, are embodied in the ways of operating, the being, and in life experiences, without falling into the populist essentialisms of a *Latin Americanism* or a *Colombianism*. The task of philosophy, in this sense, is to wage war against unity, against identity. The genealogies of *Colombianness* seek to destroy *Colombianness*, instead, to disperse it.

Conflicts of interest

The author does not report any potential conflicts of interest. It is the product of the author's reflections, derived from his exercises and research interests initiated from undergraduate, the master and currently in his PhD research at the Catholic University of Louvain.

Financing

The author does not report sources of funding for this article.

⁶ This way of conceiving identity, as a way of exercising control and power is linked to the Foucauldian conception of power in which there is no subject that is a necessary condition to exercise it. From Foucault, power is understood multidirectionally, which always works as a network, as a chain, contrary to the conception of power understood as a solid and homogeneous phenomenon that operates in only one direction.

About the author

Jhon Jairo Losada Cubillos. PhD Candidate in Philosophy. Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. Master of Philosophy Contemporary, University of San Buenaventura. Bachelor of Philosophy, University of San Buenaventura, Bogotá.

References

Anderson, B. (1993). *Comunidades imaginadas: Reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo* [Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism]. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Castro-Gómez, S. (1996). *Crítica de la razón latinoamericana*. Barcelona: Puvill Libros.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2000). *Ciencias sociales, violencia epistémica y el problema de la ‘invención del otro’* [The Social Sciences, Epistemic Violence and the Problem of “Invention of the Other”]. En Edgardo Lander (Comp.), *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas* [Eurocentrism Modern Knowledges, and the “Natural Order of Global Capital] (pp. 145-161). Buenos Aires: Clacso.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2003). *Apogeo y decadencia de la teoría tradicional. Una visión desde los intersticios* [Apogee and Decadence of the Traditional Theory. A Vision from the Interstices]. Revista Iberoamericana, 69 (203), 343-353.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2005a). *La hybris del punto cero. Ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816)* [The Hybris of Point Zero. Science, Race and Enlightenment in the Nueva Granada (1750-1816)]. Bogotá: Centro Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana / Instituto Pensar.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2005b). *La poscolonialidad explicada a los niños* [Postcolonialism Explained to Children]. Popayán: Editorial Universidad del Cauca / Instituto Pensar.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2009). *Tejidos oníricos. Movilidad, capitalismo y biopolítica en Bogotá* [Oneiric Tissues. Mobility, Capitalism, and Biopolitics in Bogotá] (1910-1930). Bogotá: Centro Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana / Instituto Pensar.

Castro-Gómez, S. & Restrepo, E. (Ed.). (2008). *Genealogías de la colombianidad: Formaciones discursivas y tecnológicas de gobierno en los siglos XIX y XX* [Genealogies of Colombianness: Discursive Formations and Technologies of Goverments in the 19th and 20th Centuries]. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Instituto Pensar.

Escobar, A. (2003). *Mundos y conocimientos de otro modo* [Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise]. Tabula Rasa, 1, 51-86.

Foucault, M. (1992). *Microfísica del poder* [Microphysics of Power]. Madrid: La Piqueta.

Said, E. (2002). *Orientalismo* [Orientalism]. Madrid: Debate.