

Then endless colonization of the Amazon Forest

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The introduction of the modernity in the Amazon Forest have a long history marked by violence, exploitation, abuse, isolation, dead and blood. From the early sixteen century to the twenty-one century, the colonization of the Amazon Forest has not ended and the future of the Forest and the people who lives in this area of South America will have to face the consequences of a history where the central interest is the unlimited exploitation. In this order of ideas, the path created by this problematic relation between modernity and the Amazon through the time has normalized the invasion and devastation as a normal practice. In other words, the conception of modernity in his relation with the Amazon Forest supposes the development of a different habitudes (economic, political and cultural) according to which, the act of destruction, segregation and violence is the performance to repeat in the Amazon over the time. Again and again, the Amazon Forest is conceived by the modernity as a place of endless exploiting, (gold, oil, wood, human bodies, plants, minerals, rubber, poisons) or, to say it in other words, as a place of endless colonization.

Precisely, a contemporary vision of the Amazon Forest (The Amazon Forest of the twenty and twenty-one centuries) reveals how the forest and her people face a diversity of problems such as the expansion of the global extractivism, the megaprojects related to water, energy, mining or agriculture (with a global infrastructure of long scale) and the growth of the population in the Amazonian cities ruled by policies of development which not always understand the particularities

of the environment; all these problems in an constant tension for the recognition of the civil, private and human rights. One example of this is the particular case of El Putumayo, in the Colombian Amazon Forest, where the extraction of oil, which started in 1963, has impacted the zone in ways that have affected the indigenous population of the area. These effects have caused a high “social decomposition” (Ramirez, 132), extreme violence and a high rate of “urban settlement” (Ramirez, 132) around the areas of the extraction. Indigenous communities as the Sionas and the Kofanes, among others, have changed their ways of life: logging, the construction of industrial facilities, road construction, drilling machinery, etc. modified the environment in a way that most of the indigenous population did not have other possibility than emigrate. This presence of the oil companies in the amazon creates a high rate of eviction, conflicts for the possession of land, reduction of the forest, pollution in the rivers, social problems as extreme poorness, prostitution of the young indigenous women, rejection of cultural traditions, among others. These problems configure what German Palacio has called the “third conquest of the Amazon Forest” (159) which is a colonization of the Forest carried out by the global forces. In this global level two basic forces confront his perspectives and powers over the Forest. Global conservationist movements fight constantly against the new politics of global development. This new confrontation will define the present and the future of the Amazon Forest. Palacios posits a key question about this aspect “how the globalization will be installed in the Amazonia with his big macro projects?” (176). The answer is open.

As we said in the beginning of this essay, this destructive performance of the modernity in the Amazon Forest is normal and repeated through the time. Extractivism is not a new problem in the forest. Is well know the history of the extraction of rubber which caused massive extermination of the indigenous population, particularly at the end of the nineteen century and the beginning of the

twenty century (1850-1930). This second conquest of the Amazon was determined by the industrial power of Europe and United States which put his eyes in the Amazon Forest with one specific objective: to extract, to destroy and to exploit the population of the area. While in the high areas of the Andes the political elites, the military leaders and the population rejected the power of Spain in the early nineteenth century, in the Amazon Forest these wars of independency did not exist because Spain, simply, had not colonized the Amazon. The Hispanic empire and his first colonization of the Forest had failed to control this zone of America. His missions and towns in the time of independencies were in a complete state of desolation as we can read in the letters and descriptions of Francisco Requena -the responsible official for the demarcation of limits between Spain and Portugal-. It is in this way that the new powerful nations of the world looked for new sources of richness in a new colonization of the Amazon which, of course, produced “social dislocations, a big number of repercussions that we feel today and killings” (Palacios, 166).

The empires of the sixteen century (Spain, Portugal, France), as well as the leader nations of the world in the nineteenth century and the global consolidation of the capitalism in the twenty and twenty-one, all of them have raised a constant mode of being in the Amazon Forest. We can call this mode, the destructive mode of being of modernity, the unlimited way of destroy the Amazonian otherness.

References

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