

The Logic of the In-Visible: Decolonial Reflections on the Change of Epoch

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Theory, Culture & Society

0(0) 1–14

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DOI: 10.1177/0263276420957741

journals.sagepub.com/home/tcs



Abstract

I argue that the lived experience we, the human species, are going through in 2020 is no longer an epoch of changes but a change of epoch. Post-pandemic (and any other areas of experience you could post-) is becoming meaningless in a change of epoch. My argument is based on the history of the colonial matrix of power rather than in particular thematic histories which, in this case, will be the history of pandemics and the history of the economy. Both are working together, globally now, and entangled in the colonial matrix of power, which can not be found in the origin of the universe, in Babylon or in Greece. It did not exist until the 16th century in the Atlantic, the Black and the White, the North and the South. The logic of coloniality is the logic of the invisible and it is by understanding its historical foundation, its unfolding and the radical transformations in the past two decades, that the signs of the change of epoch can be perceived and understood.

Keywords

change of epoch, colonial matrix of power, coloniality, crisis, decoloniality, economy, pandemic

I

All of us on the planet now, and we can say ‘us’ meaning just that, are living and experiencing a change of epoch and no longer an epoch of changes.¹ This change cannot be captured with the fashionable prefix ‘post’. In a change of epoch terms like ‘post’ and ‘new’ are out of place. Both were relevant to account for epochs of change dominated by Western cosmology of newness and post-X. But they are out of joint, so to speak, when a change of epoch overwhelms the controllable and managed unilinear timeline of Western modernity. Westernization of the

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planet did not erase the multiplicity of local temporalities. It only disguised them for a while. Five hundred years was a short period and a circumstantial victory to pretend that the regional time of Western modernity was universal time. The Greenwich Meridian is only a reference to administrate temporality, far from absorbing and replacing lived temporalities of human experience and ancestral memory around the planet.

The pandemic, its financial turmoil, and the global economic slowdown exceed the 'now' of Western temporality. The 'now' we are all experiencing is an extended and intense planetary 'now' whose seed was planted simultaneously with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the triumphal celebration of the 'end of history'. The seed was already prepared and ready to go, waiting for the collapse. It was, indeed, the end of a History, that of Western modernity and its global design to Westernize the world (Latouche, 1989), and the seed of the multiplicity of histories, including Western local history. The collapse of the Soviet Union was, at once, an ending and a beginning.

The 'now' we are living in has no precedence. Pandemics have their own histories and so do economic-financial crises. What is unprecedented is the simultaneity of both. Whether the first provoked the second or the second provoked the first is a question that cannot be answered within Western logic (e.g. the retroactive trajectory in which Western civilization built itself capitalizing on Greek legacies).

Aristotle believed that events, either of human action or cosmic energies, can be explained by identifying the four causes: material, formal, efficient and final. Looking for the four causes, Aristotle could explain a wide variety of phenomena ranging from the creation of the world to life in general, as well as to human actions. Although not evident, thinking in terms of causes pervades Western thinking, both theological (Thomas Aquinas) and secular (Francis Bacon).

For Frantz Fanon (1961: 45) causation was somehow different. Living and thinking in the heart of decolonization in Africa and Asia, he sensed and observed that the effect is the cause: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. Following the decolonial logic introduced by Fanon (effect as cause) rather than that of Aristotle, it is not clear whether the pandemic caused the economic-financial crisis or if economic and financial abuses caused the pandemic.

Be that as it may, the conjunction of two sicknesses, both those of human organisms and their socio-political-economic structure, put the entire planet in an unbearable situation. It is not a question of being at war with the pandemic but, rather, of the sickness of a civilization that cannot imagine any other way to deal with the nightmare than being at war, a blindness their leaders caused (Freud, 1930). The solutions proposed by the speakers of (a barbaric) civilization (Hobsbawm, 1994) then produce more weapons or more vaccines to combat the 'enemy', keeping the corporations and the stock market going. How should this

predicament be understood? I submit the following: the logic of causality worked well within the narrow confines of European thought built on the foundations of Greek philosophy and Christian theology. But it doesn't work in the colonies: being white is the cause of being rich because being rich is the cause of being white. The pandemic caused the economic crisis of an economy that created the conditions for the pandemic. Where the pandemic originated is a moot point, only useful for political purposes.

The most empowering and enduring consequence of negating causality is that though the negation is not a question for the colonized, it is mainly valid for Europe (and the North Atlantic). It is hidden because the success of European civilization prevented us from thinking critically about the experiential logic of coloniality, and to accept that coloniality is constitutive and not derivative of modernity (modernity is the cause of coloniality). Fanon sensed and understood it because coloniality was engraved in his body and his mind, and he responded to that embodiment by displaying the inversion of causality in front of him.

II

It would seem that the economic-financial crisis and the pandemic drove the planet's population into an unbearable situation. But not quite the whole planet's population. There is a minor global sector *of the few*, not always easy to identify, who seem to be taking advantage – by design or happenstance – of the unbearable situation of the many. In the past two months the stock market has consistently moved up. The technological sector has increased its wealth enormously, too – Amazon and Tesla chief within it.

This information is available on the Web, but I surmise that it is only of interest to the few in a position to save and increase their holdings in the stock market and the wealthy (banks, corporations, individuals) that never miss any opportunity to accumulate more wealth; whatever desires drive their rationalizations justify their will. The majority of the population with technological access to information are too busy Tweeting and FaceBooking, surfing the bottomless screens of tablets and iPods. That is but one reason why the technological sector is increasing its wealth, not only because of the use of technological gadgets but because entertainment shutters thinking itself.

What we (on the planet) are witnessing (from different experiences, walks of life, geo-political economic locations) was already well underway. The pandemic only accelerated its unfolding: We are living in and witnessing a massive displacement of wealth from the industrial to the technological sector, and finances benefiting from it.² Physical distance created an unprecedented use of technology by default. Online purchases have increased, ranging from food and health products to ordering take-out meals. The lockdown forced people to be digitally connected for

mundane needs as well as employment and education. Online workshops, lectures, meetings, and teaching have increased exponentially. Colleges, high schools, and universities are transforming teaching *in presentia* by online and hybrid instruction.

The massive unhappiness in the population of industrialized and technologized societies suggests that the promise of happiness for us all is falling apart. The population with sufficient acquisitive power to purchase iPods, cellular phones, computers, tablets and the like are invaded by all imaginable advertisements to use credit cards more often, borrow money at low interest for vacations, buy the newer model or the newer brand or the newer version of what they already have and do not need, exposed to a myriad of smiling faces and people running and jumping on the beaches, or elderly couples enjoying their retirement in a *locus amoenus*: whatever images entice people to spend money. Add to that the 800 channels on your TV and the colorful screens where the anchors of breaking news and entertainment programs exhibit their polished figures, reporting in calm voices the bombing of Syria and Palestine. No single image of happiness and well-groomed TV anchors can hide and cover the fear, isolation, despair, broken relationships, and anger lurking behind the scenes, the visible patina of happiness constructed by the rhetoric of modernity, development and growth. The commodification of miseries that TV takes pleasure in exposing to audiences captivated by bombs, destroying buildings in the Middle East and killing civilians, or to the line of refugees and African migrants sinking in the Mediterranean, are intermingled with commercial breaks promoting the happiness of purchases and dreams of escape.

For the time being and perhaps for months to come, this irrational exuberance – Alan Greenspan’s famous dictum in the ’90s – accounts for the technology stock market moving to fantasy islands of never-ending gains, a trend repeating itself under pandemic conditions. But this time the displacement of wealth to the technological sector could result in irrational exuberance turning into the aberration of planned and expected in-visibility for the changing configurations of the capitalist economy.

Beyond the despair of many and the exuberance of the few, there is the dignified anger of people confronting, domestically, state violence and abuse. Sixty years after Frantz Fanon lived in Algeria in the middle of decolonialism, this anger is exploding and disrupting the US, disorienting the state, the corporations and the official mass media machine. It is a change of epoch that can no longer be accounted for with the categories, sensibilities and emotions of the previous era. Fanon puts it this way: the violence of the state, the corporations and the media ‘is naked violence and only gives when it is confronted with violence’ (Fanon, 1961: 23). Neither the health system nor the economy matter when minimal human ethics and decency are violated. Health and wealth cannot be attained at

the expense of human lives (and all living organisms on the planet too, not forgetting climate change). Or, in extremis, economic growth can only be obtained at the expense of the numerical majority of the planetary population.

The uprising in the US after the killing of George Floyd opened up two routes: one of demand and the other of negotiation. The first was the demand to abolish police departments and channel their budgets of legitimized violence to health and education instead, efforts long deprived under the most neoliberal designs by globalists or nationalists making America great again. The next demand targeted offensive statues showing the glorious past of a nation built on slavery, exploitation of labor and racial prejudice (see Ortiz and O'Boyle, 2020). But a route of negotiation emerged in the request and removal of statues as well, and along its way, two significant arguments have been made. One underscores that such removal is necessary but no longer sufficient: while on the one hand removing statues legitimizes writing the histories that statues stilled by their sheer presence, removals alone do not question history itself. The second is equally eloquent: removing the statues of the Founding Fathers is well within the logic of symbolic equality. However, the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution and, therefore, removing their statues is necessary but insufficient. The Constitution has to be questioned, not just the statues. The bottom line of the second route evinces that the change of epoch requires change to the *terms* of the conversation. Changing the *content* is important but not enough (see Kimberley, 2020; Lazare, 2020).

III

There is no lack of explanations of what is happening to us on the planet, caught in the conjunction of a pandemic and economic turmoil. Nevertheless, I would like to put another one on the table: the signs of the epoch change. Before doing so, I want to remind the reader of the meaning of the word 'crisis', used and abused to the point of meaninglessness. The word entered the Western vernacular in the 15th century, meaning a 'decisive point in the progress of a disease'. Our decisive point is the pandemic itself.

'Crisis' means also a 'decisive state of things, a point at which change must come for better or worse'. In financial domains, the 'decisive state of things' could mean the system of belief that sustained the idea that more is better, that development and growth bring happiness, and that killing life (including the life of the people) is necessary to support innovation: to advance AI that will take us, human beings, to paradise at the expense of the very lives on the planet that made AI possible. The question is not the 'crisis of capitalism' (as if capitalism was a sentient being), but of the system of beliefs that created, legitimized and maintains the

economy called capitalism. Change must come for better or worse, and it is coming in the change of epoch.³

Western genealogies of words and concepts are not the only ones to consider. Any non-Western language carries the weight of older civilizations. These genealogies, built since the European Renaissance, appropriated the meanings of human and non-human histories. Recent efforts to bypass or supersede anthropocentrism run into a trap. Setting up the post-human are discursive attempts made by human beings. The trap is this: anthropocentrism refers, generally, to the content of the topic of conversations that have given to humans the centrality of the creation. Thus, the efforts to reach the post-human are efforts to change the content of the conversation. However, changing the content of a conversation remains a task performed by human beings. Or are human beings that talk about the post-human post human themselves? The problem is that the post-human can only change the content, not the terms, of the conversations which remain enclosed in the vocabulary of post-modernity.

The last glacial age, for example, dated about 12,000 to 11,500 years ago, was not provoked by the 'Anthropos'. Before the ethnocentric and Eurocentric narratives of the Anthropocene, life on the planet was following its own course. It is good to recognize that human beings are and were 'human doings', particularly since 1500, and more so after the industrial and recent technological revolutions, but it should not be forgotten that it is a minority of Anthropos (human beings as managers of coloniality of power changing the virtues of Western modernity) that are responsible for the 'cene' (entirely now): the extended now of the Anthropos life on the planet. Curiously enough, the overwhelming anthropocentrism of the Anthropos+cene has obscured the fact that we all on the planet are still living in the epoch that North Atlantic scientists defined as the Holo (whole)+cene (entirely now, perhaps contemporaneity). Do not forget: we, the era of the Anthropos, co-existed and co-exist with the entirely now of the Holocene.

If that co-existence is acknowledged and embodied, I would surmise that in the Holocene planet earth unfolds itself in its own autopoiesis, independently of the Anthropos. The era of the Anthropos could only affect the surface but never its cosmic materiality and energy imbued in the universe by the originating energy – unless the Anthropos is taken to be the Western Ego (Schirrmacher, 2015). The originating Ur-energy that all storytelling of origins (cosmogonies) recounts – be it The Makers of the Popol Vuh, who committed several errors before creating the human being that satisfied them, the efficient Christian God, who without error created the universe in seven days, the secular Big-Bang storytelling that all emerged from the initial *ab ovum* explosion, and many others – predates any single story. No single cosmogony has the true vis-à-vis to what happened in the origin (or void) of the universe,

planet earth, primordial life, and the late, very late appearance of the *Anthropos*. All of them are true to the community of believers that believe them. The awareness of pluri-versality is ending the epoch of one universal cosmogony, and the change of epoch comes from every corner.

I mention these examples to recall that life and intelligence on the planet is of a magnitude beyond the limited scope of human consciousness. Intelligence and consciousness are words created by human beings, and by languages in particular, as if intelligence and consciousness were the sole birthright of the human species and not a human stewardship of the cosmic intelligence and the consciousness that created them. We can find this last type of storytelling around the planet, except in the three religions of the book in which one entity called God created the universe, all existing organisms and human beings. In general, the storytelling of the Americas, ranging from that of the Mapuche in Chile to the Iroquois in today's US, and on through the Incas, Mayas and Aztecs, is missing such narratives as told by human beings; in contrast, theirs are stories in which neither human beings nor a transcendental God is the center of the universe (Sproul, 1979).

Biblical and Big-Bang narratives became hegemonic in and for Western civilization and believers around the planet as received from theological and scientific missionaries. The ancient Greeks had their own origin stories. However, they are lesser known than Greek philosophy, tragedy, epic narratives, ethics, or metaphysics. However, one key characteristic of biblical narratives was a 'humanization' of the cosmic event: 'In the beginning there was Chaos, a yawning nothingness. Out of the void emerged Gaia (the Earth) and other divine beings – Eros (love), the Abyss (part of the underworld), and the Erebus (the unknowable place where death dwells). Without male assistance, Gaia gave birth to Uranus (the Sky), who then fertilized her.'⁴

Greek stories of origin had a remarkable resemblance with all known origin narratives. Which is not surprising: our human ancestors in China, Greece, Abya Yala, Africa and Oceania were all living and experiencing basic, fundamental, cosmic presences. Christian narratives introduced two significant transformations in the structure and meaning of the Greek story of origin: a) the complexity of energies from where Gaia, Eros, the Abyss and Erebus (the unknowable) were reduced to a single entity, a noun called God. In the biblical narrative, God created the universe in seven days and He created 'men' (human beings) in His image and likeness.⁵ The enunciated disguised the enunciation: it was Men (literally masculine human beings) who created God in their image and likeness. The second modification b) was that the single God created the original couple, male and female, while in the Greek narrative Gaia created Uranus (the Sky, the Sun) that fertilized her, and six females and six males were born of that union.

IV

The fact that the pandemic originated in China could be taken as just a fact of life. In a world order in which modern (Western European and American), modern-colonial (former colonies) and civilizational states (China, Russia, Turkey) (Weiwei, 2012; Coker, 2019) could be working together for the well-being of life on the planet, including human life, the disaster could have been taken care of with the peace of working together to eradicate the encumbrances of pandemic disruption. Unfortunately, we on the planet were already living under catastrophic conditions (wars, refugees, climate change, increasing inequality, racism, feminicides, and hatred) created by the massive concentration of wealth in a minority that, in spite of all of the above, may be enjoying themselves regardless, becoming richer and destroying life, balance, and harmony, replacing love with hate. The effect is the cause. What I mean by the inversion of causal relations is this: if the underpass is flooded it's not because we had seven inches of rain in three hours, but because we did nothing to anticipate the consequences of seven inches of rain in three hours. We were too busy 'developing' the area to increase wealth for the companies doing the development and for the state official backing them for points toward the next election.

The truth of whether the virus that emerged in Wuhan was a Chinese fault or intention, as the Western perspective maintains, or was planted by Western actors in Wuhan, as the Chinese at some point stated, is inconsequential beyond the fact that China and the US are at the zenith of their political and economic and technological competition. In a world order of cooperation among states, the very idea that the virus could have been implanted either by the US or China would have been a moot point. If the virus emerged by accident, inter-state cooperation with the World Health Organization could have worked together to prevent the spread of the pandemic as much as possible. In a world order of competition in which the economy is more important than life, including that of the human species, all efforts – mediatic, economic, financial, political, medical – are on one hand oriented by the US's designs to 'defeat' or contain China. On the other, China has to orient all its effort to continue its work to prevent being contained and dominated by the US with the submissive support of the EU and collaborationist UK.

What is the 'now' in the planet we are experiencing in the crossing of pandemic and economic-financial turmoil is a matter of interpretation, and there are many. I offer one more. Pandemics and financial crises have their own history. Global pandemics before 1500 were impossible: there was no contact, as far as it is known, between the 'Old World' and the 'New' (a partition drawn by a European perspective, not African, Asian or even of the New World itself). The first pandemic of the

modern/colonial world order, according to several accounts, was provoked, intentionally or not, by European voluntary migrants to the New World.

It is important to underline that this was a self-serving partition in which Western Christians, becoming Europeans, had the privilege of being part of the classification (located in the Old World) and being the only ones imposing hemispheric lines. From then on, the control of knowledge remained managed by Western vernacular languages and its cartography, warranted by Greek and Latin languages, and Strabo's and Ptolemy's maps. Other languages and territorial maps were destituted and replaced by the universal map of the globe (Mignolo, 2003 [1995]: ch. 5). The control of knowledge was designed by Western languages and institutions (universities, followed by museums, theological institutions, and schools) and the educated.

The point is relevant, however, because global partitions installed a ranked 'geographic reality'. The power differential embedded classification as well as the privilege that knowledge management implanted through Western vernacular languages beyond technological means of spreading information. Huawei has established, for sure, a challenge (not a threat) to Western techno-hegemony. Nevertheless, English overwhelms Mandarin. Of the world's 1.5 billion English speakers, a minority of 360 million speak it with a native tongue. The majority of non-native speakers can enjoy and appropriate English while dwelling in the community of language in which they were born. In sharp contrast, 1.129 billion Mandarin speakers are native speakers. Hindi also has more native speakers than English, around 637 million, and Spanish follows close behind with 538 million speakers in a mother tongue, adding up to more than all English native speakers combined (Ethnologue, n.d.; see also Mignolo, 2012: ch. 7).

V

Let's return to the leitmotif: never in the history of the human species, nor in the past 500 years of modern/colonial world (dis)order, has a pandemic and economic-financial crisis occurred simultaneously and globally. Both were foreseen. But both were set aside with the confidence, I suspect, that there was no alternative to capitalism and nothing could disrupt it or the planetary march of Western civilization. The fervent belief that only medical and pharmaceutical sciences and know-how could overcome disease prevents destituted non-Western healing knowledge and praxes, e.g. Chinese and Indigenous medicines, to be called to participate. The faith that only the economy of accumulation and exploitation has no rival to provide happiness for all prevents the call for communal economies of reciprocity and administration of scarcity to come to the rescue. Both the pandemic and economic-financial turmoil

were predicted. Ignoring them could have been by design or by blind arrogance. The logic of the in-visible came to the surface nevertheless, either by will or imprudence.

Both pandemics and financial crises since 1500 are quite different from those that occurred before that date when the planet was not yet interconnected, and they never occurred simultaneously and globally. In a quick look at these two stories of pandemics and economic-financial turmoil, we find the following. The 16th century marks a very special milestone in the records of pandemic phenomena in different places and times. It is the first pandemic caused by the incipient maritime, trans-oceanic globalization. From the 16th century to the present, several pandemics have been registered that affected more than one continent. The most devastating were those that occurred during the colonization of the Americas and the so-called 'Spanish flu'.

Still debated today is whether it actually started in Spain or was part of the Black Legend — British propaganda against Spain in the dispute over imperial controls, similar to what is happening in the trade conflict between the United States and China, magnified by the mass media which was absent at the time of the Spanish flu. At that point and since the late 16th century, the United Kingdom and Spain were in conflict. But Spain was a monarchy in decline while the UK's monarchy was on the rise. Contrary to what is happening today in the US-China conflict, both contenders were monarchic states, Catholic and Protestant respectively, and both European. It was a Western imperial family feud. The conflict between the US and China is a different ball game. In the first case, the imperial differences between the UK and Spain were intramural (within Christian Europe and Western civilization) while the conflict between the US and China is extramural (beyond Western civilization). Whether the 'Spanish flu' pandemic, which was ingrained in the Black Legend, was overdetermined by the already overwhelming global power of the British Empire is an issue to be explored.⁶ At that point the English language already overwhelmed the Spanish language in the control of knowledge and information, and the UK superseded Spain in global domination. The logic, however, is the same; only the content is different, as are the two poles of the imperial difference, one intramural and the other extramural.

Regarding financial crises from the 16th century onwards, we found that the first occurred in the 17th century, the second in the 18th and the third in the 19th. Five crises have occurred in the 20th century and three so far in the 21st century. That's a total of eight in a century compared to three over 300 years. All of them are crises of the modern/colonial world's increasing disorder. Since 1500, the printing press in Europe and the overwhelming dominance of European vernacular languages that missionaries, merchants and officers of the states carried with them to Africa and Asia (the Americas had been already been dominated

by Spanish, Portuguese and English) technically controlled the narrative over local non-Western languages (Ethnologue, n.d.). But regarding the circulation of information and narratives shaping the information, European vernacular languages float like constant gray or white clouds (depending on who is under the weather) over the dozens of highly spoken languages destituted from global knowledge. For some reason, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in Gujarati and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in Gikuyu. Both were, among others, writing in their native language with the explicit consciousness of imperial languaging (speaking and writing) and its power to dominate.

If worldwide concern (including that of the WHO) would have been clearly communicated, opening cooperation not only between states but diverse knowledges too, ancestral wisdom would have been invited to the conversation. But the destitution has been such that ancestral knowledge has been limited to communities taking care of themselves, left on their own with no one else looking after them.


Communal healing praxes were destituted by the emergence of Western medicine. The rhetoric of modernity served this purpose well by describing communal groups as primitive and dangerous. Healing praxes in China, Central Asia, India, Africa, and all the First Nations in the Americas, which solved health problems based on the knowledge of medicinal plants and cosmic energies (e.g. the four seasons, positions of the moon, rain and drought, etc., preceding the emergence of Western medicine by many centuries), were destituted in the name of God, progress, civilization and development as demonic, barbaric, primitive and underdeveloped. It would be difficult to argue that the crossing of a pandemic and economic/financial turmoil are the effect of that cause. But it makes sense to think seriously and argue the need to engage in epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution that, on the one hand, restitutes the concept of gnoseology (the generation and dissemination of all knowing and knowledge to live) to reduce epistemology (the principles of knowing and knowledge to control, dominate and destitute) to its own size.

The logic of the in-visible is the history of destitution. In decolonial terms it is the logic of coloniality. Modernity, in our sensing and understanding after Aníbal Quijano's seminal work (Quijano, forthcoming), is not an entity but a set of discourses and conversations that created and maintained the image of a historical period called modernity. Not everyone participated in the conversations, generating and disseminating concepts, narratives, theories, diaries, literary fictions as well as visual images. I describe all of that as the rhetoric of modernity. The rhetoric of modernity is a rhetoric of salvation by conversion, by progress and civilization, by modernization and development and by market democracy. The rhetoric of modernity rationalizes, legitimizes and naturalizes all actions, projects, and innovations that constitute the rhetoric of

salvation. Simultaneously, the constitution of modernity enacts the destitution of all that doesn't fit the desired designs.

The logic of destitution is the logic of coloniality; the in-visible logic of destitution covered by the rhetoric of modernity highlighting happiness, development and growth. Two destituted domains relevant to the current convergence of a pandemic and economic/financial crisis are communal economies and healing praxes. Once again, Fanon's point on the effect being the cause appears. Communal economies of reciprocity and cooperation are mounted on the principles that working is necessary to live and private property is an alien concept. Karl Marx perceived and described it as 'living labor'. In contrast, the economy of exploitation operates on the principles of living to work, from forced Atlantic slavery to the seductive promotion of individual success, innovation, and the acquisition of the top of the line of whatever you would like to buy, along with constant encouragement to want more, requiring your body, mind and time to work more to get and consume more.

VI

I close these reflections reflecting (pleonasm on purpose) on the future. Better yet, on the many speculations about the future 'after' the pandemic and the 'new' normal. I have run away from any 'post' and of all 'newness'. Both convey the perception (sensing and thinking) of one cosmology, a Western one, either in the North Atlantic and its believers or among the rest of the non-native speakers in the world, or among the rest of the non-native speakers of the world setting their compasses westward to a lone truth (Trouillot, 2002). The future cannot be seen, it is behind us: First Nations' thinking has been saying this for centuries. The future is at our back; we do not see it. The present is in front: we can 'see' it but above all, sense it. It is inscribed in  body of, at least, every existing organism of the human species. 'After' the pandemics are many and their temporalities are pluriversal. It would be an aberration to think that the 'post' pandemic will be a simultaneous event in Germany, China, the US, Zimbabwe, Bolivia and Uzbekistan. Consequently, it would be the same arrogant and universal aberration of Western modernity to believe that the 'new' normal for the US or Germany will be the same for China, Russia or Nigeria. A single lesson that the pandemic and the economic-financial turmoil advanced in our understanding is that the present cannot be understood in the old frame of an 'epoch of change'. We on the planet are experiencing the 'change of epoch' no longer reducible to the hegemony of one universal and one unipolar world. The change of epoch is a change grounded in bringing gnoseological pluriversality and multipolar world order to the surface in the present, and it is in this present that the future is unfolding. The change of epoch can no longer be the outcome of global designs.

Notes

1. At the beginning of this century, I heard this argument from Brazilian scholar, activist and intellectual José de Souza Silva (2001). What he perceived then is accelerating and becoming more evident now.
2. The move was already in the making. COVID-19 simply accelerated it. See Hayes (2019).
3. This definition of ‘crisis’ comes from the Online Etymologic Dictionary (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/crisis>).
4. See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/big-history-project/what-is-big-history/origin-stories/a/origin-story-greek>.
5. I am telling this story from my experience of growing up. I was raised and educated in a Catholic family in a Catholic small town (about 10,000 people when I was a teen) and was an altar boy.
6. See UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/courier/aout-septembre-1977/debunking-black-legend>).

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This article is part of the *Theory, Culture & Society* special section on 'Global Culture Revisited' (TCS 37(7–8), December 2020), edited by Mike Featherstone.