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More than an economist: Maria da Conceição Tavares (1930-2024)

Thinking about Latin America and the Caribbean necessitates constantly examining the various historical periods and realities of the nations in this region, which do not strictly conform to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks developed in the Global North. Substantial criticism of what has been called the *coloniality of knowledge* has been widely developed by decolonial theories and research. However, it is important to highlight that the roots of these criticisms are firmly based on the long tradition of Latin American and Caribbean thought. We can highlight, for example, the *Pan-Americanism* from the Peruvian intellectual Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (2010 [1935]), which opposed the *Europeanizing* Marxism defended by Latin American intellectuals and politicians who, at the time, were aligned with the Communist International. The trinitarian Lloyd Best (1971) sought the *independent thinking* in the Caribbean, while in Brazil, Lélia Gonzalez (2020 [1979]) dedicated her writings to denouncing cultural neocolonialism,

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scientific distancing, and the mechanical transposition of interpretations about Latin America and the Caribbean, and in turn, proposed the concept of *América Ladina*. Similarly, Indigenous women, like the Bolivian Juliet Paredes (2015), reject the theoretical bases of Western feminism, proposing, in its place, the thought of Abya Yala's community feminism. This is just a sample of very diverse authors, who, from their respective fields of knowledge, were uncomfortable with the limitations of knowledge produced in the West and widely reproduced in the Global South.

Maria da Conceição Tavares, our Brazilian born in Portugal, had the same discomfort. Upon reflecting on the necessary development process of the region, Tavares had a profound dissatisfaction with the economic growth formulas imposed by Modernization Theories, of North American origin, which contradictory produced underdevelopment: “if you don’t tackle income distribution, employment, natural resources, the autonomy of the State concerning hegemonic powers, it is not promoting development; it is doing the opposite. It is being dependent, unequal, and predatory[...]” (TAVARES, 2010, p. 17).

First and foremost, thinking about Latin America and the Caribbean necessitates situated thinking, which means taking into account the colonial legacy's configuration of the region and its position within capitalism and the international division of labor. It is a permanent search for new analytical categories and local patterns capable of explaining regional complexity and providing alternatives for its transformation.

This is what the professor, mathematician, and economist Maria da Conceição de Almeida Tavares, who left us on June 8, 2024, dedicated herself to. Born in Portugal, she fled the Salazar dictatorship and arrived in Brazil in the 1950s, where she helped the Juscelino Kubitschek government develop the Target Plan. She then worked at the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) and at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Chile. She was

also a federal representative for the Workers' Party between 1995 and 1999, besides being a university professor.

Maria Conceição Tavares' reflections emerged mainly during her time at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP). At the latter, she was a full professor at the Institute of Economics (IE), an institution that she helped to found. Throughout her fruitful intellectual production trajectory, Conceição Tavares addressed the issue of developmentalism, having the import substitution issue as the starting point. Her analysis of economic cycles and crises, capitalist accumulation through oligopolies combined with the dominance of financial capital, and the ensuing issues, along with their effects on income distribution and wealth disparities, highlighted the need for an urgent review of the Brazilian economy. Conceição Tavares also examined the field of international political economy, highlighting the dynamics of global capitalism's influence on the national economy, geography, and international geopolitics.

Her works, extensively reviewed by intellectuals from economics, political science, sociology, and other areas, go through different periodization. Here, we emphasize the classification that UNICAMP Institute of Economics Professor Fernando Nogueira da Costa developed. Costa (2019) points out that Conceição Tavares' works can be organized into four major themes: "Center-periphery relationship revealed in the balance of foreign trade; Cycle and crisis: movement limited by the level of the Brazilian industrialization; The financing problem of non-financial companies; and the Geoeconomics and international geopolitics." (Ibidem, p. 18). In chronological order, "Center-periphery relationship revealed in the balance of foreign trade" reflects the ECLAC phase marked by the publication in 1963 of one of its main works, "*Rise and decline of the import substitution process in Brazil*" where, among other topics, Conceição Tavares reflected

on the dynamics of center-periphery relations within the global capitalist system based on the historical-structural method, observing the structural conditions of the region's national economies when exposed to the foreign economy. This first phase progressed until the mid-1970s, when still in 1970 she presented the essay “Beyond Stagnation”, co-authored with José Serra, in which they reflected on the accumulation of capital, especially financial capital, and the social exclusion arising from what was called the Brazilian economic miracle era.

Next, the phase “Cycle and crisis: movement limited by the level of the Brazilian industrialization” brings reflections on the different patterns of industrialization that Tavares observes, focusing on the formation of oligopolies in the context of a late industrialization process and the difficulty of investments that would feed back into it and expand this process. This situation inaugurates a subsequent phase in Conceição Tavares analytical production: “The financing Problem of non-financial companies” in which the economist points out the bottlenecks of national private financing and the role of the State as a driving agent in providing credit to private companies and discusses the process of valuing financial capital compared to productive capital, highlighting how Brazilian companies opted for the rent-seeker—patrimonialist model to secure family capital. Finally, in the “International Geoeconomics and Geopolitics” field, Conceição Tavares focused her analysis on a systemic view of the United States hegemony resumption in the economic sphere and the process of implementing neoliberalism. National states started to advocate for the interests of multinational corporations under neoliberalism, which is characterized as a wealth-concentrating economic system. At the same time, these States, particularly underdeveloped and/or developing economies, became hostages of international capital, which at the time dictated the flow of capital and international loans.

Conceição Tavares' legacy beyond academia is her political activism inside and outside institutionalized politics, her contributions to the Cruzado Plan, her activism around policies to rectify structural inequality, and her commitment to the need for political-social transformations in Brazil, which will continue to be useful learning resources and inspire socioeconomic reality critical thinkers in the Global South, especially in Latin America. With that said, the ***Brazilian Journal of Latin American Studies*** issue 50 pays homage to this great intellectual who contributed so much to science and to the Brazilian. Therefore, we start this issue with the article ***Economics, a social science: Maria da Conceição Tavares***, by Onofre Alves Portella Junior, professor of economics at the Faculty of Technology of São Paulo. Portella presents the Tavares by highlighting central moments of her long intellectual trajectory: her developmental phase during her time at ECLAC, and her systemic vision of regional geopolitics.

The second article also addresses the importance of thinking about Latin America from within the region itself. Dorival Bonfá Neto from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and Júlio César Suzuki, professor at the Department of Geography at the University of São Paulo, present the ***Latin American social thought in three foundational moments of its history: Bolívar, Mariátegui and decolonial theorists***. The authors reflect on how European standards and values — whether in culture, politics, economics, or society — modified and violated centuries-old traditions of native Latin American peoples. They point out three moments of Latin American social thought that were counter-hegemonic in the region's intellectual and political production: the pioneering propositions of Simón Bolívar and his liberation utopias; the critical thought of José Carlos Mariátegui, which was based on an unorthodox reading of Marxism, and the political and epistemic proposal of decolonial theorists from the Modernity/Coloniality group.

In the same field of decolonial knowledge, the third manuscript entitled ***Ethnicity, agency and politics in the Colombian multicultural state*** by Oscar Jehiny Larrahondo Ramos, a doctoral candidate at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, discusses the places of enunciation, languages, and semantics of Afro-descendant ethnic communities, as places of tension with the hegemonic discourses from the academic canons that are still in force in state institutions and also in the orthodox academia. Ramos observes that they constitute a space for the development of the imaginary of the multicultural State in Colombia, established in recent decades, but which took unique contours under the administration of Petro and Márquez, which began in 2022. The author proposes the construction of a new key social agreement for the inclusion of the diversity of black and indigenous peoples in the national project, which aims to develop an unprecedented dimension of human beings in Colombian society.

With a focus on biodiversity but still in the same broader field of decolonial knowledge, Marina von Harbach Ferenczy and Alfredo Alietti from Università Degli Studi di Ferrara discuss environmental destruction, the pandemic crisis and threats to agroecology and traditional knowledge in the article ***Political ecology of pandemics in Latin America - intersectionality between their causes, the socio-biodiversity, and the current agri-food system***. Based on the precautionary principle given the uncertainties of human action in the environment and the concept of organized irresponsibility (Ulrich Beck) that criticizes governments and large corporations, the article also presents perspectives from the Global South and the ecology of knowledge in its analyses, as it proposes a necessary dialogue between studies on biodiversity and traditional knowledge associated with indigenous communities.

Next, Virginia (Gina) Vargas from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú reflects on ***The construction of the Latin American feminist horizon in the 21st century: a new geopolitics of knowledge***. The article analyzes the struggles and reflections of feminists in Latin America and the

Caribbean over the last three decades of the 20th century (1970-2000), and the secondary role imposed by society and the State on women's struggle, generating in return an important and profound feminist-oriented epistemic disobedience against the “single thought”, the hierarchy of knowledge and the denial of female subjectivities. The author points out how such epistemic disobedience, now in the 21st century, resulted in a new geopolitics of knowledge, with new struggles, feelings, subjectivities, and memories, accounting for the existence of plural and diverse feminisms that feed theory and action extended to multiple spaces.

The sixth article in this issue of **BJLAS**, titled ***Approach to evangelical activism Chiapaneco*** by the researcher Nayive Castellanos Villamil from the University of São Paulo, analyzes some of the disputes arising from the evangelical mobilization in Chiapas politics and the life of local communities that used to be confessionally Catholic. By rescuing a long memory that begins in the 19th century, the author focuses mainly on the 2000 to 2020 period, when she observes that the type of political alternation with limited community participation favored the narrowing of political-religious ties in local indigenous communities with conservative Pentecostalism of North American origin.

The next text inaugurates the literature and art section of this issue. In ***Virtues of penance, rewards for love: female conventual literature in 18th-century Mexico***, Alfredo Cordiviola, professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco, presents the genera of women's convent literature — which acquired considerable momentum starting in the 17th century in New Spain and South America. The author rescues the story of two nuns who in the 18th century lived and wrote cloistered in the Convent of San Juan de la Penitencia in Mexico City. The letters alluded to strict penances, convulsive illuminations, periods of solitude and waiting, and the dilemmas of intimate experiences with the divine that could not be described (although they should be described) with ordinary language.

In the field of photography, *Luan Erick Lima Sanches* from Federal University of Paraíba addresses states of exception and authoritarianism of Latin American governments in the second half of the century XX, with a special focus on Chile and Brazil. In ***Sharing memories: k.: relatos de uma busca, by Bernardo Kucinski; Gólgota: caravana de la muerte, by Mauricio Toro Goya and resistance to states of exception***, Sanches seeks to explore the connections and permanence in representations of the governments of the military dictatorship period to understand how artistic manifestations revealed the complex interactions between the memory of the past, State violence and the pain of bodies during modern authoritarian regimes in Latin America.

With different concerns, but still in the field of photography, the article ***The photographic collections of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires*** written by *Vanesa Magonetto, P.h.D* by the Universidad Nacional de las Artes, Argentina, explores the emergence and development of the photography collections of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) and the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (MAMBA.) Based on field research of 1990s photographic art in the city of Buenos Aires, the researcher interprets the characteristics of each collection and the curatorial discourses that promoted them. The different profiles of the collections are also analyzed according to the origins of the artists who produced the artworks.

Last but not least, Thaddeus Gregory Blanchett, professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, in ***Gringaidas: Notes on the Etymology of 'Gringo'***, describes the etymology of the term *gringo* from its origin in the Iberian Peninsula to its common use today. Diving into bibliographic, ethnographic, and linguistic research, the author unveils the meanings of the term in the Brazilian context, while at the same time highlighting its potential as an emic or analytical category, capable of adequately

describing an increasingly numerous segment of people in the globalized world of today.

Finally, two book reviews close this issue of **BJLAS**. **“Dying for ideas”: radical tradition, indigenism, and marxism in Peru** by Pedro L. San Miguel reviews the book *“TLa nación radical: De la utopía indigenista a la tragedia senderista”* by Peruvian historian José Luis Rénique. In a detailed analysis, Miguel points out different intellectuals and politicians, highlighting the secular origins and aspects of Peruvian indigenism, with a focus on Marxist contributions. Therefore, the politicization of the indigenous issue in revolutionary nation-building projects is an aspect that will be highlighted by authors such as Mariátegui or in the Shining Path armed struggle.

The last book review by Lucilene Cury, professor at the University of São Paulo. **The final scene of García Márquez and other love stories** analyzes the book *“Em Agosto Nos Vemos”* written by the Colombian writer. The book reviewed tells the story of a married woman, who every year, on August 16th, travels to a Caribbean island to visit her mother's grave. During these trips, she always accidentally meets a man with whom she has a short relationship, but these different intimate adventures gradually transform her into another woman, due to the questions she starts to ask about family life and marriage, mainly. Thus, in a nostalgic and reflective environment, the review portrays love in García Márquez, a powerful force, often marked by excessive passion, suffering, and irrationality.

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DOI:[10.11606/jssn.1676-6288.prolam.2024.231618](https://doi.org/10.11606/jssn.1676-6288.prolam.2024.231618)

*Recebido em: 24/11/2024
Aprovado em: 24/11/2024
Publicado em: 25/11/2024*