From Emergence and Transformation: Aligning Points, Opening Channels

Entre a Emergência e a Transformação: Unindo Pontos, Tecendo Laços

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In the last 3 years, particularly, thinking about contemporary societies necessarily includes resorting to the various sensory experiences: what we observe, hear, feel, and do. We live in times of social crisis and emergency contexts due to the global COVID-19 pandemic situation. This phenomenon extended to all continents and populations and uncovered the strengths and fragilities of globalisation and the geographical, economic, and social interdependence of continents, countries, institutions, and people. Moreover, we have witnessed in shock the outbreak of war and the steep escalation of aggression in distant countries and on other continents, but close enough to think about the reliable defence of European values and freedom. In light of the visible manifestations of confrontation, deaths and verbal and physical war, as well as of the east-west dichotomy, it is important to recognise the importance of dialogue and mediation to promote world peace.

We have all been affected by the situation to different levels and degrees of intensity. We are more aware of the experience of fragility. Relationships are being reanalysed to reveal gaps of social distancing, loneliness, and processes of reinvention. The most vulnerable populations (at social, economic, demographic, and cultural levels) have become more exposed to risks. That is particularly the case for the elderly who live alone, the migrants and refugees, the children, and precarious workers. Multicultural contexts have undoubtedly become more visible. They have triggered intense questioning of the notion and experience of citizenship; they have continued to put pressure on social life and community as we know them. Some references have probably lost meaning, and some have progressively invaded our realities and imaginaries. The "state of emergency" we live in is complex at various levels. It includes prophylactic isolation, the physical distancing of people, psychic, physical and social violence, and increased vulnerabilities and inequalities of more fragile and marginalised populations.

It makes sense to evoke the metaphor "between totality and infinity", which Martins (2019) uses to think and analyse the "refugee crisis" in Europe. In his argument, he turns to Euclid to resume the geometric object "point" by stating

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> for me, this geometric figure, an alignment of discontinuous, intermittent points, is a metaphor of contemporary life, which rather than being a line indicating a sure foundation, a known territory and a stable identity, is above all an alignment of inconstant points, across space. But by drawing the lines and aligning the points, we can trace physical and tactile strings. Lines, such as points aligned in a straight line, can thus be taut strings, shelters against abandonment, impersonality and isolation. (Martins, 2019, p. 31)

Interestingly, or perhaps not, we perceive this metaphor as increasingly up to date and pertinent. It is present in the density of the days that pass and in our simultaneously perplexed, expectant imaginary, which is confident in the alignment of points and in the straight lines that can weave taut and strong strings. It is with this perplexity and confidence, we dare to speak of the requisites of mediation and citizenship deemed fundamental to social and human development. Daring and perseverance are essential to permanently (re)building the broken bridges and (re)aligning scattered points.

Mediation is the constructive communication procedure for the prevention and positive management of conflicts, producing transformative dialogues, and strengthening social ties (Silva, 2018). To convene and to generate transformative intercultural dialogues are two essential actions that deconstruct borders (Silva et al., 2019) and uncover unexpected, creative, and innovative exits in times of change like the ones we describe. Another fundamental aspiration is to stimulate the analysis of plural and multifaceted objectives in contexts of great social transformation. That can be achieved by using practices of intercultural mediation that support multicultural citizenship and the positive development of society. They are transformative and "regenerative" in a humanist logic of care for the other and building possibilities for the reinterpretation of society in crisis contexts. Defining preconditions for successful transfer and possible ways of overcoming potential barriers can guarantee the effectiveness of the whole transformative process.

Technological, cultural and social transformations introduced profound changes in social structures and in the organisation of human communities. They opened up room for questioning the notion of citizenship and its further exploration of recognition at various levels, such as sexual, racial, ethnic, diasporic, ecological, technological and cosmopolitan diversity and difference (Martins et al., 2017, p. 7).

Several questions can be asked in the face of the challenges raised by societies transformed by social, cultural and identity crises:

- What is the impact felt on social and territorial cohesion and on how each individual, group or community thinks about citizenship and their activity as citizens?

- How are emerging spaces of security and interculturality created? Where do they emerge?

- Which cultural and social interventions make the most sense?

- How do emerging (emotional, physical, digital, etc.) mediation spaces, both conventional and unconventional (i.e., ethical, aesthetic, pedagogical, social), appear and how are they nurtured?

- How have plural identities and multicultural and intercultural communities been restructured? How did people reimagine the sense of belonging to a plural and diverse social space during and after the pandemic?

- How does the social crisis and health emergency pandemic affect the work of intercultural mediators in their various spheres of social, cultural and educational activity?

This issue of the *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies* brings together contributions to these themes. Several issues are discussed, and real and potential weaknesses are identified and debated. They inventory the possibilities and creative deviations to social and human disturbance situations experienced in recent years in various geographical, social and human territories. Under the theme of "intercultural mediation, citizenship and social development", the seven articles included in the thematic section of this issue are expected to broaden readers' horizons and challenge them to imagine healthier, more intercultural and more inclusive forms of living. They offer reflections on the possibilities of cultural and social interventions in pandemic and post-pandemic times, dialogue and intercultural mediation, and citizenship and social development in diverse contexts and from multiple perspectives.

Patricio Dugnani, in "Extended Body Versus Intercultural Body: Reflections on the Use of the Media and Interculturality", enquires into the following: can the digital media expand the reach of the nervous system? How can the theories of perception be extended, and what is the new organisation of intercultural society? What is the new intercultural paradigm, and what communication strategies are necessary to develop in the globalising world? These topics are reflected and analysed, hypotheses are given, and arguments are presented to open up possible ways to rescue otherness and modern society from its disappearance. The author also summarises three key skills that need to be strongly developed to enable harmonious relationships among individuals and the effective democratic functioning of future intercultural societies and institutions.

Gamification as a motivating tool in teaching and learning has been widely discussed. The article "The Plurilingual *Kamishibai*: Its Potential in Education for Cultural Diversity", by Francisco Rocha and Rosa Maria Faneca, focuses on the opening of school culture to different cultures, lifestyles, as well as formats and techniques in order to understand others, thought patterns, values and norms other than those we are used to. It discusses the potential of storytelling through handmade picture dramas that originally date back to the Japanese Buddhist temples of the 12th century and may bring educators fresh inspiration, cultural richness, and new instruments that facilitate dialogue and inclusion at schools. In addition, it considers the limitations, resources and the overall contribution of the plurilingual *kamishibai* to the development of intercultural competence in primary school education. The implementation of practical steps and their effectiveness is described, and the impact on children's self-development, communication and thinking skills is analysed.

In "The Film *Ilha da Cova da Moura*, the Media and the Permanence of Racism in Society", Isabel Macedo exposes the role of the media in shaping young people's minds and in encouraging either stereotypical representation or their deconstruction. Through the analysis of the film *Ilha da Cova da Moura* (Island of Cova da Moura), directed by Rui Simões, the author analyses and discusses the message of the film, namely the role of

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associations, the idea of belonging and agency to/in the community and the social stereotypes and racial discrimination experienced by inhabitants of a peripheral neighbourhood of Lisbon.

In the following text, "The Accidental 'Age-Friendly City': Public Expectation and Subjective Experience in São Paulo", authors Marília Duque and Adriana Lima de Oliveira present an experience in São Paulo, which they call "accidental age-friendly city". Based on the demographic characterisation of contemporary societies, their ageing patterns and public policies oriented towards active ageing, they address the movement between public expectations of innovative measures, such as those related to smart cities and age-friendly cities, with the subjective and objective experiences of the elderly given what is available and how they can access it. The experience they describe discusses what the digital and social inclusion of the elderly amounts to and highlights the interaction and support networks created accidentally by groups of elderly through the use of WhatsApp.

In "Changing Perspectives: The Role of Creative Industries in Social Innovation Projects to Empower Local Communities", Ana Margarida Cruz Silva and Clara Maria Laranjeira Sarmento e Santos approach the changing perspectives through social innovation projects focusing on new opportunities for the cultural development of rural areas in central Portugal that appeared after the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors wish to demonstrate the role of the local communities that often need empowerment to be able to interact in the global environments with local cultures, thus creating an intercultural space which plays an inevitable role in our globalised world. A brief literature review also points out some social innovation concepts and sustainable strategies available and "glocal" trends affecting the development of creative industries and their impact on the local communities' functioning.

In the text "'Where's the Museum?' Reflections on the Impact of the Pandemic on Cultural Spaces and Deaf Museum Educators", Maria Izabel dos Santos Garcia, Rebeca Garcia Cabral and Bruno Ramos da Silva discuss the inclusion of deaf people and their access to culture. The authors reflect on the importance of being granted access to culture, particularly museums, affected and suspended by the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. This context was particularly hurtful for deaf people. Therefore concrete proposals are put forward to reinvent museums to provide deaf people with conditions of inclusion and access to culture, namely by giving relevance to the presence of deaf culture mediators to facilitate communication and inclusion.

Finally, "Risk Tourism Within Viral Society: A Study Using Hybrid Discourse Analysis" by Pedro de Andrade brings up new insights into emerging hybrid social processes and the notions of viral society, viral risk tourism and the alphabet of inter-conceptual relations, including a valuable glossary of the recently established terminology from the areas of urban tourism and hybrid discourse analysis. Primarily, it focuses on transforming our social formations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, then it interprets and evaluates the information published through the digital social network Wikipedia and lastly it analyses the supportive arguments in theoretical and practical contexts.

The Varia section includes four important contributions. Berta García-Orosa presents us with an analysis of the digital political communication strategies of 25 political parties from five Lusophone countries. The author verifies existing trends from previous studies, such as innovation in digital narratives, the use of various platforms and the involvement in communicative interaction. New trends are also identified, among them the use of instant messaging, the podcast and the implication of neutralising fake news.

Carlos Alberto de Carvalho then brings us a conceptual and methodological reflection on communication, journalism and gender relations, highlighting how potentially disruptive the social dynamics of gender relations are. To this end, he explores research on the news coverage of physical and symbolic violence against women, events involving homophobia and its consequences, and reflects on the first public pieces of news on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

The Varia section also incorporates a comparative study that analyses the media debates on the agrarian reform undertaken in Spain from 1932 to 1936 and in 1964 in Brazil. Camila Garcia Kieling and José Manuel Peláez Ropero analyse newspaper excerpts published by the monarchical newspaper *ABC* (Spain) and the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* (Brazil). They explore the press's discourse on two important events that marked the 20th century: the attempted coup d'état, which started the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and the 1964 civil-military coup in Brazil.

Finally, Carlos Henrique Pinheiro and Elton Antunes offer us an analysis of two reportage books on recent disasters in Brazil: *Tragédia em Mariana* (Tragedy in Mariana), by Cristina Serra (2018); and *Brumadinho: A Engenharia de um Crime* (Brumadinho: The Engineering of a Crime), by Lucas Ragazzi and Murilo Rocha (2019). The authors explore the media approaches to these events from three analytical dimensions — indicators of listening and authorial presence; characters with(out) plot and design; and paratexts — to attempt to analyse how each author-reporter positions him/herself in the face of catastrophe and what kind of journalistic record is built.

The book *Rockonomics: A Backstage Tour of What the Music Industry Can Teach Us About Economics and Life*, by Alan B. Krueger, in which the author uses the music industry to explain the principles of economics and the forces that shape our economic life, is the subject of a review by Daniel Morgado Sampaio. This review closes this issue of the *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies*.

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