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“Sur les Tabous Intellectuels”: Bourdieu and Academic Dependence

by Fernanda Beigel

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In March, 1998, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant published “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste.” Because of its *engagement* and style, this article could be catalogued as a manifest, honoring the genre by standing on the hinge between academic literature and political denunciation. It appeared for the first time in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*; it was translated immediately to Portuguese and German, and a year later to Spanish and English.¹ While some scholars considered this article scarcely relevant, others recognized it as one of those texts that “make history.” Moreover, these latter stated that “Sur les ruses” had the effect of a “bomb” in the academic field. However, the data collected shows that its circulation was marginal in the US and it had minimum reception in Latin America. It was not included in the books that extended world widely the diffusion of Bourdieu’s critical work on Neo-liberal doxa and Americanism – namely *Contre-feux*. Mainly, it was discussed through the British *Theory, Culture and Society*. This paper intends to revisit the debate over the “Imperialism of the Universal” in order to decipher the conditions under which it was read in Latin America.

Asked about the way an intellectual could contribute, politically, to change the state of things that social research reveals, Bourdieu declared that it was “in the intellectual field where intellectuals must combat, not only because it is in this terrain where his weapons are more efficient, but also because, most of the times it is in the

¹ Cfr. original version *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* [1998]

name of an intellectual authority – particularly scientific – how new technocracies are imposed" [Bourdieu [1992] 1999b, 270].² To carry out this enterprise, intellectuals should dote with autonomous means of expression, free from public and private demands, and organize themselves collectively to put forward their tools in favor of progressive struggles. He was not claiming the existence of academic neutrality nor purity, but a reflexive effort of distancing from the field of power. Consequently with this project, "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" takes part of this trench that Bourdieu built-up since mid 1990s in order to reveal the mechanisms of the New-liberal "Global Vulgate."³

It seems logical to find out that in Latin America "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" was translated and published very early, as long as to observe the sympathy that Bourdieu gained in those years as a "militant sociologist" in this region – within the media and the academia. But in this article, Brazilian racial studies are considered as the object of a conceptual imposition from the US. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant, the category of "race" was imposed by Afro-American and radical scholars, reinforcing the Americanization – while in the attempt to present themselves as critical to this historical trend. Even though "intellectual dependence" has been a constant concern for Latin Americans since mid Nineteenth century and given its polemic nature, such affirmation did not provoke much criticism or applauses. The information gathered pointed out two different questions: was it that the state of the academic field did not allow the revival of an issue that seemed long time buried after military dictatorships and Neo-liberal governments? Was it that that the article failed to recognize the endogenous state of affairs in Brazil and this was the reason why it received scarce attention? I intend to show that both questions are pertinent and the explanation is in the carrefour between them. But let's first recall which were the "imperialist cunningings," according to Bourdieu y Wacquant.

Imperialism of the Universal and "McDonaldization" of Thought

"Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" aims at analyzing a set of social mechanisms created in dominant cultures which operate imposing a particular view to the rest of the planet, or at least a good part of it. One of these mechanisms is the diffusion

² Translation is ours.

³ This article is the traslation of a modified version of « Sur les ruses... » that appeared later as "La nouvelle vulgate planétaire," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 554, Mai 2000, pp. 6-7. It was translated to Portuges, Spanish, Italian, Rumanian, and German during 2000 and published in many national editions of the Journal. In 2001, it was published in *Radical Philosophy*, under the title "New LiberalSpeak. Note on the new planetary vulgate".

of topics by endless media repetition as legitimate “universal truths” by de-historizing them from their social conditions of production. To Bourdieu and Wacquant, the most insidious are not systematic arguments like “globalization” or “end of history,” rather, the most successful are those isolated terms with technical appearance, like “flexibility” or “employability,” “underclass,” “race,” or vague debates as multiculturalism, that normally migrate from one continent to another with a neutralizing effect over the comprehension of domination processes. “Sur les ruses” focuses in certain of these “operations”, coming from US academy, in order to describe their effect of an illusion of “purity,” tending to convert this particular context in “standard measure” for other realities. The internationalization of academic publishing and private foundations has contributed, specially, to the diffusion of the American thought in the social sciences. “Yet, all of these factors taken together cannot completely explain the hegemony that US production exercises over the intellectual world market. This is where we must take into account the role of some of those in charge of conceptual ‘import-export,’ those mystified mystifiers who can transport unknowingly the hidden – and often accursed – portion of the cultural products which they put into circulation” [Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999, 47]. Moreover, the article starts stating that “Cultural imperialism (American or otherwise) never imposes itself better than when it is served by progressive intellectuals (or by ‘intellectuals of color’ in the case of racial inequality) who would appear to be above suspicion of promoting the hegemonic interests of a country against which they wield the weapons of social criticism” [*ibidem*, 51].

As we said before, an important part of the article is dedicated to a particular case of universalization/Americanization: the politics of affirmative action and the imposition of the concept of “race” onto the Brazilian racial studies. According to the authors, these “exports” would have been stimulated by American Foundations in order to replace the myth of “racial democracy” prevalent in the Brazilian society. Among the “mystified mystifiers” contributing to this conceptual “export,” the authors of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” point out Michael Hanchard, whose work would have impuled this sort of mundialization of US racial perspective. As a result sprung up the generalization of the itinerary of the civil rights movement into a universal pattern. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant, while this pattern propitiates a notion of race that separates strictly between white and black, racial identity is normally defined in Brazil as a “color continuum”. The proof would be that segregation indices are strikingly lower than in the US [*ibidem*, 45].

Surely, these arguments surprised many specialized readers that had followed Bourdieu’s work in the previous decade – striking as it was for many to observe his militant public interventions at the beginning of 1990. Although, as Derek Robbins [2003] has noted, “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” is the diachronic result

of a reflection that was originated in the crossroad of two concerns: the function of intellectuals in Neo-liberal dominion and the international circulation of ideas. Synchronically, it matches the context of number 121-122 of the journal *ARSS*, the institutionalized collective he founded, entitled "Les ruses de la raison impérialiste." The articles on the United States and Brazil are complementary and mutually reinforcing in providing examples of the social processes by which economic world-views prevail. According to Robbins, there may be disputes about the accuracy of its analysis, but it cannot be denied that "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" was an article which was founded on a passionate conviction – that universalist claims are the products of particular circumstances and that international violence – not just "symbolic" violence – might be averted by analyzing sociologically the economy of international exchanges [Robbins 2003, 74-76].

In effect, "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" appears to be part of a research project on international circulation of ideas that began around 1990 in the Centre de Sociologie Européenne, when Bourdieu proposed a "program for a science on cultural international relations." He stated back then that research on intellectual exchanges could make visible imperialisms, nationalisms, as well as strong representations built by simple accidents or incomprehension. The main source of conflicts within international intellectual exchanges would reside in the fact that texts do not circulate along with the field of production in which they are forged. They are normally read and interpreted in a new context, as a result of a set of transferences, selections made by publishers, translations, prefaces, readings from the state of arts within receptive field. Bourdieu [2000a, 161-162] considered this situation was not an object of conscious reflection and should be indagated. This concern came along with an interest in the social history of the social sciences and the ambiguities of its process of internationalization when it comes to measure their capacity to expand scientific autonomy. At that time, Bourdieu was revisiting the issues of universalism and symbolic domination at a global scale. He proposed the existence of "two imperialism of the universal" [Bourdieu 2000], which had serious consequences in the scientific pretention of reaching "universality." Without criticism, this particular type of "internationalism" became the absolutization of a historical culture. In this way, symbolic capital rose in the US or France could reconvert in political resources. Recognition of diverse cultural traditions in this context seemed like an "anti-imperialist project" to Bourdieu [*ibidem*, 158]. All of which indicates that this research program in progress was deeply crossed by an *engagement* to the disarmament of symbolic domination in an international scale.

However, it is noteworthy that Bourdieu did not address the issue of race in his *oeuvre*,⁴ while “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” argued that the struggle against racial discrimination in Brazil could have served itself from anti-racist politics other than “affirmative action” [*ibidem*, 46]. In an interview made in 2002, Bourdieu commented: “I wrote, with Loïc Wacquant, an article entitled ‘Les ruses de la raison impérialiste,’ in which we tried to show that a vision worldwide dominant (a form of symbolic violence) is imposed through the imposition of topics and categories of thought. There is a passage, written by Loïc Wacquant, over the way in which the approach of American ethnical or racial division tends to impose itself, through categories of thought into the joint of South-American countries, and in particular, to Brazil”⁵ [Loyola 2002, 52]. Therefore, two different approaches should be distinguished, when analyzing the *écriture* of this article. While international circulation of ideas is a very Bourdieusian topic, race and US academy are more Wacquant’s concerns – he actually lives in the US and has been actively involved in the critique of American cultural hegemony. All of which is related with the dynamics inside Bourdieusian school – an issue that exceeds the limits of this paper.

The Reception of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in the Anglo-Saxon Academic World

To analyze the international circulation of an article written originally in French (or any language different than English) is, in general, a difficult task, because of the limited scale of information for academic publishing, translation and citation – available mainly for English. Firstly, we searched in an updated data base for translations that has been built by UNESCO: the *Index Translationum*, but it offers information uniquely for books. Of the existent 278 entries for Bourdieu (as unique author and/or co-author), just one of these entries matches the title of “Sur les ruses...,” – a book in Spanish.⁶ A minority are translations to English. As has been stated by Johan Heilbron [2008], dominant languages and core language groups tend to have low translation ratios as compared to less dominant languages and peripheral language groups.

A recent study analyzes the transnational circulation of Bourdieu’s books in translation, surpassing the academic reception and moving further to a larger public and the publishing market – precisely the public that the French sociologist intended to reach while he published “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in 1998.

⁴ For recent studies on the relation between class and race in Bourdieu’s work see Bonet [2006] and Lentin [2008].

⁵ Original in Portuguese. Translation is ours

⁶ See a complete list of translations in Appendix 1.

According with Sapiro and Bustamante, until 1996, Bourdieu achieved international scientific recognition, first as a specialist in certain research domains (education, culture), afterwards as a social theorist. By the mid 1990s, he engaged in a fight against neo-liberalism as a public intellectual, and he acceded to the position of a "global thinker." This second phase marked a significant increase of his work's circulation – two thirds of the translations were done in the last period [Sapiro and Bustamante 2009].

Given that Bourdieu's work has been published often in the form of collection of articles, it is difficult to pursue the circulation of a single article within book translations data. The article under examination circulated mostly as a paper in academic journals or as a part of compilations translated to peripheral languages. It was not included in compiled books published in English.⁷ So, we searched secondly in the *Social Science Citation Index*, a data base that could enable us to follow and measure its reception through scientific journals, proceedings and other forms of academic communication. The results of the search indicate a pretty minor impact of "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" and related versions published in English, with a total amount of 112 citations over a decade. The most renowned translation to English, entitled "On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason" [Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999] shows 83 citations. A comparison with the citations found for another version of the article that circulated more in the media, "The New Global Vulgate" [Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999] shows that the latter had a secondary impact in the academic field, with 29 apparitions – 24 coming from the English translation by D. Macey published in Chicago and 5 from the French version by *Le Monde Diplomatique* in 2000. While the citations of "The New Global Vulgate" are situated mainly around 2001-2002, citations for "On the Cunning..." rise after 2002 and maintain levels of citations until 2008, as can be seen in the graph below.

⁷ The compilation in English where the article was included was edited by Loïc Wacquant [2005].

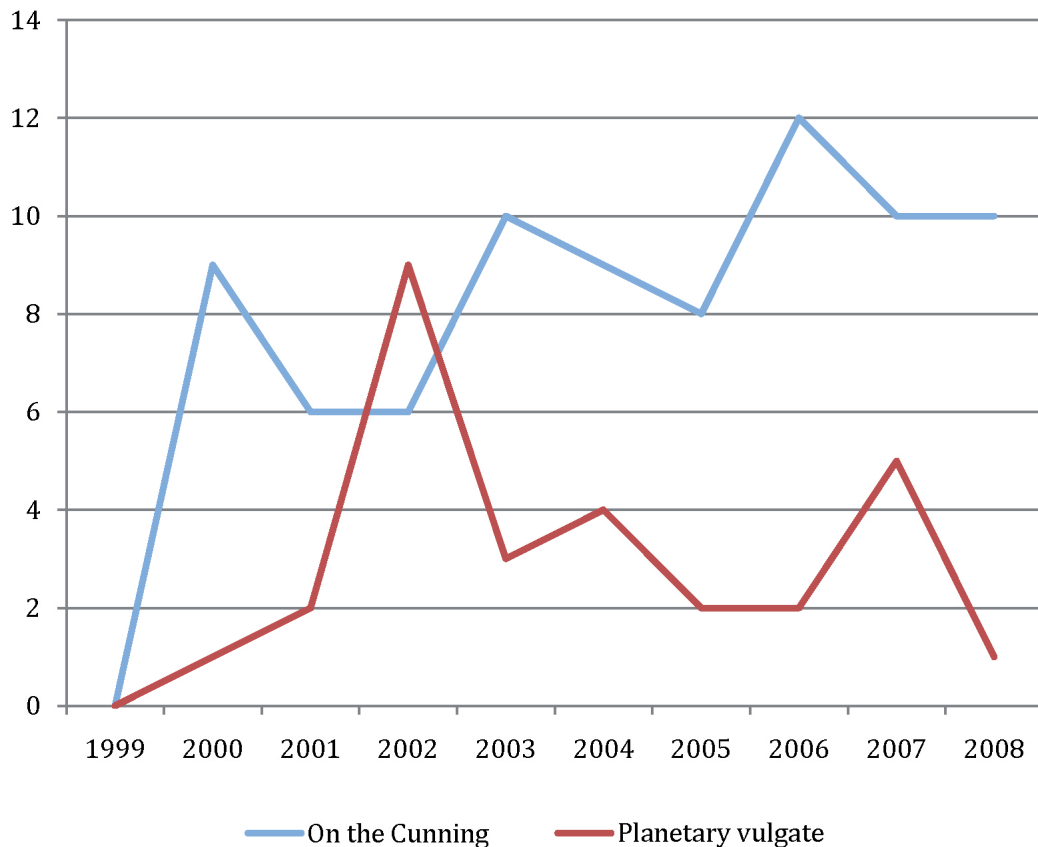


FIG. 1. Citations for the two versions of Bourdieu's and Wacquant's article.

Source: Social Science Citation Index.

It appears that the article was not amply read in the Anglo-Saxon academic environment. Its impact in US universities was almost null, restricted to a few anthropological journals and small groups like Duke University's *Nepantla*. If we analyze the 83 citations of "On the Cunnings...", we will see that its general circulation was, moreover, concentrated within European reviews: 15% of these citations correspond to *Theory Culture and Society*, which had published the article in English and promoted a debate. Only a total of 5 citations were found within the four US sociological reviews with major impact in the SSCI – according to Zavisca and Sallaz [2008]. 3 in the *American Journal of Sociology*, 1 in *American Sociological Review* (1999), 1 in *Social Forces*, and none in *Social Problems*. Just 3 citations were found in *International Sociology*, edited by the International Sociological Association (ISA).

However, an issue has to be made clear from the beginning. The *Social Science Citation Index* is not only limited by its restriction to scientific production in English but also because of the criteria used to build the base – mostly publications from the

US and formatted in the scientometrics created by Eugene Garfield to select "high impact" journals. Besides the hierarchies imposed by the citation system on the institutional evaluation and university's library acquisition, many other problems around veracity have been pointed out [Ortiz 2009]. Which means that the *SSCI* allows us to evaluate circulation in mainstream journals and selected internationalized academic "enclaves" situated in the periphery. Out of scope here lay relevant scientific publications in dominated languages edited in Europe, Asia, Africa, or Latin America, an issue we will address further on.⁸

Meanwhile, a completely different path was followed by Bourdieu's general circulation and reception in an international level – whose influence grew very fast precisely since 1990s. Santoro shows that in the last two decades Bourdieu has become a "truly dominant social scientist, probably the most influential single sociologist in the world in these first years of the new millennium" – as can be seen by the number of references to the French sociologist, compared with those to Giddens, Goffman, and Habermas registered in the ISI Web of science⁹ [Santoro 2008, 4]. Other studies have demonstrated the strength of the integration reached by Bourdieu's work within US sociology – a somewhat odd phenomena, given the difficulty of his writing, as well as the general insularity and the empiricism that characterizes this discipline in that country [Zavisca and Sallaz 2008]. A data base recently built with the articles published in most influent sociological reviews in the US (source: *SSCI*) shows that citations of Bourdieu grew from 2% in the period of 1980-1984 up to 11% in 2000-2004. However, half of these citations are ceremonious and in general very few citations are discussing Bourdieu's arguments [Zavisca and Sallaz 2008, 8-9]. This tendency could explain, partially, the scarce repercussion of our polemical article and the impression that "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" was discussed mainly in marginal circles.

More complex was the reception in the United Kingdom., although located in a particular trace of academic debates marked by *Theory, Culture and Society*. "On the cunning..." was translated and discussed from number 16, 1999, until number 20, 2003.¹⁰ In the first issue of the debate, Jonathan Friedman argued that the "imperialistic reason" was not an importation from the US, but the emergence of globalized elite. While Charles Lemert sustained that "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" was a "slip" from Bourdieu's brilliant sociological vision, Michel Wieviorka was less

⁸ Of course there are many other data bases for articles, like Pascal, but most of these only include natural sciences.

⁹ The *Institute for Science Information* (ISI) produces *Science Citation Index*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *Arts and Humanities Citation Index* and *Science Citation Index Expanded*, among other catalogues.

¹⁰ Couze Venn – a member of the editorial board – called for a debate on Bourdieu and Wacquant's article and towards the new conditions of intellectual work. See Couze Venn [1999]

diplomatic and said the article appeared to him as an exemplar of “sociological terrorism.”¹¹ John French’s intervention drives attention to the Brazilian case denounced by Bourdieu and Wacquant, and argues that this article broke-up a contemporary “taboo” that had disabled scholars to speak of American imperialism. He recognizes that certain categories emerging in the US academy tend to banish the issue of domination. However, he affirms that Brazilian racial studies cannot be considered as an importation from American academy and that the transnational dialogue within the African Diaspora has given dynamics to the indigenous black movement. In this sense, instead of fighting Americanism, “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” would promote a false division between politics against racism and politics against imperialism [French 2000]. Silence followed these interventions in *Theory, Culture and Society*, and only by 2003 Michael Hanchard and Edward Telles would publish their critical answers. In the same year, *Nepantla* republished or translated some of the critical responses that appeared in 2000 in other academic spaces. Thus, polemics surrounding “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in the Anglo-Saxon academies were restricted to a limited range, particularly headed by *Theory, Culture and Society*.

The Reception of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in Latin America: The Case of Argentina

In order to follow the circulation of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in two language groups such as Spanish and Portuguese, it is necessary not only to go beyond the limitations of the SSCI – other limitations are to be considered here concerning the historical structures of domination within the international academic system. The data bases for Spanish and Portuguese academic publications are in construction and include a very small number of reviews, given the difficulties of adaptation to registration formats and technological requirements. Very few social sciences journals have had regularity for a long period in Latin America.¹² Particularly in South America, this fact is related to dictatorships that interrupted repeatedly the institutional development of social sciences. However, these limited electronic sources provide a sample of mainstream scientific publications in the region.

Firstly, there is SCIELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), a regional network created in Brazil that includes scientific reviews in complete text. The project precisely tended to make the academic production from this marginal region more visible and “elevate” it to dominant “international” standards of regularity. But of

¹¹ Cfr. *Theory, Culture and Society* [2000, 17].

¹² The *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* (1939-2009) is a rare and major exception in the region.

course, the success of the project was dependent on structural conditions that determine the periodicity of a scientific journal. Currently SCIELO includes 623 collections, published since 1997, edited in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, España, Portugal, and Venezuela, with contributions written in Spanish, Portuguese or English. Our search for references of "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" only matched four entries, all of them corresponding to the dossier published in 2002 by *Estudios Afro-Asiáticos*. Secondly, we analyzed LATINDEX, the Latin American Index of Serial Journals that includes 9839 scientific publications. This data base arose in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) by mid 1990s, but has expanded to reach a regional coverage. No entries were found for "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" in any language. Thirdly, we searched in JSTOR, which has very few Latin American journals in its collections. Only one citation was found (included already in SSCI).

There are few studies on the circulation of Bourdieu's work within Latin America. The first efforts in this direction were precisely published in the previous and current edition of this symposium by *Sociologica*. Regarding translations, we now acknowledge that Brazil has been a pioneer and major importer of Bourdieu's work (25 translations between 1958-2008) [Sapiro and Bustamante 2009]. According to Denis Baranger [2008], Bourdieu never traveled to Latin America, and the place accorded to this region in his *Actes de la recherche en Sciences Sociales* has been considerable – the outstanding role is performed by Brazil, with 16 of the 25 articles on Latin America and a considerable participation of Brazilian scholars from 1975 until 1998. His public interventions were mainly through cultural supplements in newspapers and two teleconferences organized in Mexico D.F. and Cordoba-Argentina, where he spoke in Spanish. However, many Latin American students – namely Brazilians – were formed by Bourdieu in Paris from the beginning of 1970s [Pinheiro 2009].

In Argentina, Bourdieu was translated and widely read during the last three decades within the academic environment, although cited mainly for his theoretical contributions.¹³ The first systematic reception of Bourdieu's work can be located in Beatriz Sarlo and Carlos Altamirano's reading of his concept of literary field and the

¹³ We have found many Argentinian translations – mainly articles, but also collections and books – between 1969 and 1995. According with Denis Baranger, the first Argentinian translation was "Condición de clase y posición de clase" in the compilation *Estructuralismo y sociología*, Nueva Visión, Buenos Aires, 1969. A curious data is the collection of essays *Sociología del arte*, translated in 1972 in Buenos Aires also by Nueva Visión. In 1975 Fernando Hugo Azcurra and José Szabón translated "El oficio del sociólogo" for Siglo XXI Argentina. In 1983, the articles "Campo del poder y campo intelectual" and "La ontología política de M. Heidegger" were translated by Jorge Dotti for the publishing house Folios. The most extended reading in Argentinian universities has been "El oficio del sociólogo".

cultural review *Punto de Vista*, published during the military dictatorship. In the next decade he was in contact with a few Argentinean researchers at the EHESS. From mid-1990s, he was recognized also as a “militant sociologist” in the larger public of intellectual field [Baranger 2008].

The reception of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in this country seems to be part of this latter path, even though it was published in academic journals. It was first translated by *Apuntes de Investigación*,¹⁴ edited by the Centro de Estudios en Cultura y Política, and a few months later within a compilation entitled “Intellectuals, politics, and power,” published by the University of Buenos Aires (EUDEBA). Alicia Gutiérrez, informed us that the articles for the book were selected by Bourdieu himself and the ordering was discussed with Franck Poupeau.¹⁵ Considering that the article was translated in two different means and only a year afterwards its publication in *Actes*, we expected to find a considerable debate in Argentina’s academic field. But not much of this happened in written paper – only one critical response published in *Apuntes* in 2000, as we will see below. More relevant was the public debate occurred in the series of conferences given by Loïc Wacquant in Buenos Aires and Córdoba, as a part of the presentations of the Spanish version of his book *Prisons of Poverty*, published by Manantiales. One of these lectures was entitled “Las astucias de la razón imperialista: hegemonía y reduccionismos en las ciencias sociales norteamericanas” which took place at the University of Buenos Aires, on April 26, 2000.¹⁶ Afterwards, Wacquant published a related article in Argentina “El pensamiento crítico como disolvente de la doxa” – a sort of companion piece to “On the Cunning” that was reproduced in many cultural journals as an interview.¹⁷

Apuntes de Investigación is an independent, regular and prestigious journal. It includes former collaborators of Bourdieu in its external council, such as Monique de Saint-Martin, Franck Poupeau, and Loïc Wacquant. According with Lucas Rubinich, Wacquant had a fluid contact with members of the *Apuntes* editorial board and this fact originated the Spanish translation of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste.”¹⁸ The central aim of the 1999 dossier was to think over the function of intellectuals from a peripheral cultural space, given the fact that knowledge production had been severely damaged by Neo-liberal policies – international agencies had become “di-

¹⁴ See Bourdieu and Wacquant [1999d] and Pierre Bourdieu [2000].

¹⁵ Communication with Alicia Gutiérrez on June, 2009.

¹⁶ Wacquant gave seven conferences in Buenos Aires and Córdoba, between april 24 and may 1st, 2000. The conference held at UBA was organized by the Sociology Department and the journal *Apuntes de Investigación del CECYP*. Information kindly given by Loïc Wacquant and Lucas Rubinich.

¹⁷ Communication with Loïc Wacquant on June, 2009. See Wacquant [2001].

¹⁸ Communication with Lucas Rubinich on September, 2009.

rect producers" and no longer "financial assistants." The submittment to foreign aid had ended up diminishing the autonomy of the scientific system drastically [*Apuntes de Investigación* 1999, 5]. None of the other two articles included in the dossier dialogued with "Sur les ruses...", even though both seemed complementary with Bourdieu and Wacquant's arguments.

The next year, *Apuntes* published a dossier on "Cultural relativism" with a text by Bourdieu and Wacquant on Algerian migrations. In a section called "Workshop," an article by Mark Alan Healey [2000] was included, with a plain clarification that it was a "critical piece" on Bourdieu and Wacquant's text published in the last issue. Healey recognizes that the US production usually represents the world in a superficial and false form, and also that this auto-representation is often imposed to other parts of the world. But in the case of racial studies in Brazil, he argues that Bourdieu and Wacquant simplified Hanchard's arguments and performed the same mechanism of symbolic domination they were denouncing. This mechanism consisted in the transposition of the idea of a "national autonomy" of the intellectual field, which is "almost inexistent out of France and certainly not existent in Brazil, where social sciences have been introduced by French and Americans; if afterwards they became a key instrument to define a Brazilian field, that was always conditioned and possibilited by imported references" [Healey 2000, 101]. Healey's argument in reference to the "ethnocentric intrusion" performed through the category of "autonomy" addressed the core problem that the journal proposed in 1999. However, as a whole, the 2000 issue of *Apuntes* did not argue at all with the subject of academic dependence. Healey's article remained isolated and the debate was not continued.¹⁹ Let's now rebuild the conditions for the reception of "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" in Latin America, by the time this brief "debate" occurred and review the conditions of possibility to discuss the issue of academic dependence.

1990s was a particularly regressive decade in terms of the development of social research and academic activity in Argentina. The massive Neo-liberal adjustments weakened this academic field because public (Federal) universities were under severe budgetary restrictions. Private research centers grew independently from the universities but dependant on foreign aid – scientific research was almost banished from public universities. As stated by *Apuntes* staff, intellectual autonomy was harassed

¹⁹ In 2003, his article was published in English, by the Duke University's journal *Nepantla*, a quite exceptional itinerary, because most of the critical responses emerged first in central academies and only afterwards were translated to dominated languages. Healey was raised in Argentina and he had previous links with this academic field – he speaks a fluent Spanish and his PhD reserch was based in the province of San Juan. The explanation to this itinerary may be related with the fact that at the time he published his critical response in *Apuntes* he was a graduate student. Communication with Mark A. Healey in may, 2009.

by the “neutral knowledge” of economists and the devastation of higher education and social research [*Apuntes* 1999, 4-5]. This lack of resources and decadence of public universities was escorted by a general consensus over the need for a retraction of the State, the “irreversible” globalization and the obsolescence of the main analytical categories of the past (class and nation). A postmodern shift had reached Argentinean social sciences and an extended theoreticism was only counteracted by empirist research focused on private funding’s agenda.

However, this fact does not mean that this weakened academic field is not suitable for an analysis in terms of national autonomy.²⁰ As Santoro has recently recalled, national boundaries are relevant not only for economic and political issues, but for intellectual ones too. While crossed and complicated by growing transnational flows of persons, ideas and financial resources, national fields are still crucial spaces for the practice of a discipline like sociology – a discipline whose very subject matters make its autonomy from the economic and political fields more problematic and usually weaker than others less involved in the social game (like mathematics or chemistry). Being sensitive to the practices and the ideas of transnationalism does not mean forgetting that sociology – like other social sciences – was institutionalized in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth century according to different national fields, with all the implications in terms of disciplinary organization and even concept-building that this has generated (i.e. the nationalist and/or statist assumptions that have molded grounding concepts like “society,” “culture,” “government,” etc.). It is this national historical underpinning of the social sciences (like literature) that gives meaning to the issue – so important to Bourdieu – of an international circulation of ideas [Santoro 2008, 14].

“Intellectual dependence” has been a recurrent topic in Latin America, at least since mid Nineteenth century, starting with the movement of Mental Emancipation, followed by the idea of Second Independence and the writings of José Martí. During the 1920s emerged a social essayism in the voice of José Carlos Mariátegui and Caio Prado Junior. By 1960s, a Latin American current of radical sociology emerged, along with the approaches of Dependency Analysis, Marginality and Colonial Studies. Social sciences had reached by that time high standards of institutional development and intellectual liberty. A vigorous sub-regional circuit was created since 1950s and huge university systems were consolidated – in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay

²⁰ In Latin America, “autonomy” has been used to refer to different empirical situations that should be distinguished for a better approach. In other works I have discussed a three-folded concept of autonomy: intellectual liberty (from foreign traditions or conceptual models), institutional autonomy (from the universities in relation to the State) and academic dependence (from foreign aid) [Beigel 2009].

and Brazil. In this phase of the history of the social sciences, knowledge production reduced significantly foreign references and established endogenous concepts and methodological approaches. Unfortunately, social sciences were deadly wounded by military regimes in the 1970s – undergraduate programs were closed and many academic were forced to exile. Afterwards, they were reopened but finally suffocated by the Neo-liberal policies. These national constraints damaged severely the process of knowledge production in public universities and dismantled the sub-regional circuit created in the past.

The differences between subaltern fields and central academies are not precisely in the lack of national boundaries or endogenous thinking, but in a historical instability that has extended or contracted institutional autonomy and/or academic dependence, according to a set of factors: principally, the changing role of the State and the relation between research and teaching in the higher education system. This contradictory process of professionalization, distinguished by the “elasticity” of institutional autonomy, indeed, reduced by 1990s the spaces of possibilities to counteract academic dependence, or even to discuss it – even if proposed by a renowned thinker like Pierre Bourdieu. This topic is now returning to the endogenous agenda, after the recent institutional recovery of the public scientific organism (CONICET) and the federal universities.

The Autonomy of Brazilian Academia and the Internationalization of the Social Sciences

In spite of the different points of view discussed by *Apuntes*, there was some consensus in considering peripheral social sciences – such as Argentinean or Brazilian – as lacking of intellectual or institutional autonomy. Given that “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*” focuses in a process of unequal symbolic exchanges and the fact they are described as “import-export,” the place accorded to the Brazilian field is passive and dependent. The transportation of the category of “race” or others is seen as a vertical movement, even though mediated by radical intellectuals. In other works, however, Bourdieu recognized other types of international exchanges and declared that his “economic” vocabulary was intended to produce a “rupture effect” [Bourdieu 2000, 159]. In an interview made in 1999, Bourdieu undertakes the issue of Brazilian intellectual autonomy that was put into question in “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*”. He states that Brazil is a country in which a very solid sociology and anthropology was developed, with scarce financial resources but plenty of historical resources [academic traditions]. We had people like Bastide, Braudel,

Lévi-Strauss, Foucault and so many others that went to Brazil. All this capital gives Brazil a “considerable autonomy from international forces” [Bourdieu, interviewed in Loyola 2002, 52].²¹ A glimpse on the process of consolidation of Latin American social sciences will show that they reached high levels of academic freedom and institutionalization, even though this autonomization did not evolve in progressive ascent – as it arises from the image that has been built for France or the US.

Between 1950 and 1970, social sciences were institutionalized in the main cities of the region, along with the modernization of the higher education system and the arising of public agencies for scientific research. Four countries were heading the development of the social sciences: Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. The first two had democratically elected governments until 1970s and this fact impulse intellectual autonomy and the institutionalization of research and teaching. The latter’s were interrupted by military coups in 1964 and 1966. Santiago de Chile became receptive to academic exiles, experts and postgraduate students that were recruited by regional centers such as CEPAL, ILPES, FLACSO, CELADE, ILADES, DESAL. Different projects of professionalization struggled to conduct the process. The most internationalized were those academic institutions possessing a particular social capital, acquired through the international circulation of its scholars or the links with the diplomatic sphere, particularly in United Nations and UNESCO. By mid 1960, Chile became a *peripheral center* for the regionalization of social sciences and a new Latin American thought aroused with particular dynamics [Beigel 2009a].

Even though Argentina and Brazil share similar academic features in the 1950s and were both marked by military regimes in the 1960s-1980s, the two cases are very different. Several studies reveal that the institutionalization of Brazilian social sciences evolved as early as 1930s, along with the creation of the main Faculties of Humanities, graduate schools in sociology/political sciences and research centers at the Universidade de Sao Paulo (1934) and the Universidade do Distrito Federal (UDF) in Rio de Janeiro (1935). Afterwards were shifted the Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisas Sociais, the Foundation “Getulio Vargas,” the ISEB, CLAPCS, CEBRAP, among others. Postgraduate studies were developed more consistently and earlier in Brazil than in any other Latin American country. Master and Doctoral programs existed, since 1945. From 1953 the USP offered postgraduate degrees in anthropology, sociology, and political sciences [Trindade 2005a, 301]. Research institutions, academic journals and publishing houses show the “great effervescence that this segment of the Brazilian intellectual elite was living,” also concerned for understanding enigmas of development and to promote the modernization of political institutions [Miceli

²¹ Translation is ours.

1995]. Foreign scientific missions (France and the US) arriving to Brazilian social sciences during this early period have been recently revised [Peixoto 2001; Trindade 2005b], in order to distinguish their particularities and impact within this academic field in formation.²²

The French scholars that arrived are worldly renown: Fernand Braudel, Roger Bastide, Claude Lévi-Strauss, among others. But back then, they were young *agregés*, teachers from French secondary schools (*lycées*) with no experience in higher education [Peixoto 2001]. They did not have much institutional support from France. They mainly traveled individually, impelled by intellectual networks such as the "France-America Comitees" and the *Groupement des Universités et Grandes Écoles de France pour la Rélation avec l'Amérique Latine* (1908). They were contracted by the Universidade de Sao Paulo and their careers went through different phases concerning institutional support in Brazil and links in France. According with Peixoto, a crucial shift went on under the *Estado Novo* – during these years they were subject to contract pressures and forced to give classes in Portuguese. These French intellectuals processed intellectually the occupation from Brazil, and the academic experience had an impact in their careers as long as in the development of French currents, such as *Annales* or Levi-Strauss' anthropology [Peixoto 2001, 504]. The "Sao Paulo School" of Sociology was actually consolidated in 1955, when Florestan Fernandes took over Sociology courses and a process of "nationalization" occurred in the academic exchanges between Brazil and the French missions. What started as an inter-personal exchange was replaced by inter-institutional cooperation based on the recognition of mutual academic traditions [Trindade 2005a]. Whereas the American missions had an important external support by the University of origin or the *Social Science Research Council*. These scholars normally took part in an inter-university agreement, tending to impulse the creation of research and teaching centers, mostly dedicated to anthropology and education. In the case of sociology, the American missions were basically concentrated in the *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de Sao Paulo* [Limongi 2001]. However, if an empirical research tradition was imposed in these years at EL-SP it was not because of the amount of scholars that arrived but because of the weight of a particular scholar, Donald Pierson, in the school project [Peixoto 2001, 505].

After the Second World War, the scientific missions evolved and diversified, along with the development of cooperation agencies and private foundations. Foreign aid was aimed to university institutions and bilateral agreements among gov-

²² The French missions in social sciences reached 30 professors (history, ethnography, sociology, philosophy, and economics), arriving between 1934 and 1952. See complete list and academic profile in Peixoto [2001, 486-490].

ernments were stimulated [Trindade 2005b]. New scientific missions arrived to the region, this time stimulated by UNESCO. The role played by Latin American diplomacy in this organization was particularly favorable for the regionalization of social sciences and the endogenous development of teaching and scientific research [Beigel 2009b]. Particularly relevant was the UNESCO project headed by Alfred Métraux²³ for the Racial Studies Division, between 1951-1952, for which Roger Bastide, Florestan Fernández, and a group of USP students were called (among them Octavio Ianni and Fernando H. Cardoso). The survey revealed that Brazil was not an “inter-racial paradise,” as was the image impudged by the government. This study was probably the reason why Métraux’s was moved apart from UNESCO [Maio 2007, 194].

Unlike the dismantling that took place in other South American countries after the coup d’états, during the military government (1964-1985), Brazilian social sciences were consolidated with increasing federal budget and foreign aid. The professionalization was also reinforced and a meritocratic culture based on peer systems gained legitimacy [Ortiz 2004; Trindade 2005a]. The contradiction between the government policy for higher education and the political repression of selected academic sectors promoted the migration of targeted professors to Catholic universities or private independent research centers with a left-wing orientation, such as the Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP, Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning) and the Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea (CEDEC, Center for Contemporary Culture Studies). The foreign support for Brazilian universities in this period mainly came from American public agencies (US-AID) and the sponsoring of social sciences’ private centers relied in private foreign aid – namely Ford Foundation.

Particularly regarding the Ford Foundation, Miceli [1995] has revealed that its action in Brazil changed a lot since the 1950s. After the assassination of J.F. Kennedy and during the Viet-Nam war, Ford’s officials residing in Latin America advocated increasing autonomy from the US foreign policy. Furthermore, the persecution of social scientists and the military coup of 1964 engaged these officers against the dictatorship and they went through a sort of “Brazilianization”: they learned Portuguese and were involved in conflicts with the US diplomacy [*ibidem*, 354-355]. According to Miceli, by that time, the local system of intellectual production in the social sciences showed consistent elements of institutionalization that had engendered already scientific, intellectual and organizing leaderships with a great influence in the new

²³ Alfred Métraux (1902-1963) was born in Switzerland but lived his childhood in Argentina, after his father was destined to the province of Mendoza. He finished his postgraduate studies in La Sorbonne and returned to Argentina where he founded the Institute of Ethnology (Universidad Nacional de Tucumán) and the Journal of Ethnology.

generation of Brazilian social scientists. During the late 1970s, there was an important diminishment of the latter's support for Latin America – due to the impact of the OPEP crisis in 1973. These funds started to shift from the previous type of institutional funding to selective aid for certain projects, thus, their action was not homogeneous for every academic space [ibidem, 362].

Concerning thematic selections, from 1970 to 1980, race and ethnicity were increasingly chosen in Brazilian anthropology. Schwarcz [1999], analyzed 2700 studies: 10.9 percent were on “race relations and inequalities,” 47 percent on “slavery and abolition,” 18.4 percent on “political participation, culture and identity” and 16.7 percent on “religion.” Since 1975, ANPOCS introduced research groups on “themes and problems of the black population in Brazil,” “race relations in contemporary Brazil,” “race and miscegenation in Brazilian social thinking,” and “race relations and ethnicity.” Besides, an extended reflection on racism and anti-racism developed since 1980s in different parts of Latin America, not only related with the African Diaspora but also aboriginal groups. One of the most important contributions was Aníbal Quijano's theory of “coloniality of power” which postulates a historical bond between class and racial domination since the colonization of America [Quijano 2000].

According with Trindade, with the return of democracy emerged a major Brazilian paradox: during the military regime the academic field was expanded and consolidated, but the “New Republic” marked the beginning of a reversal of this process. On the one hand, due to the regular decrease in resources allocated to public universities by the ministry of education. On the other, because of the reduction of funding agencies targeted for research, especially from the CNPQ and FINEP. The only agency that maintained an important percentage of its resources was CAPES, for graduate programs [Trindade 2005a, 342]. With democratically elected governments academic dependence increased along with the impact of private funding within the local market of positions. During the presidency of Fernando Collor de Melo (1990-1992), the public budget diminished drastically and the Ford Foundation became again a relevant agent for the funding of the social sciences. A renewed and elevated budget for Brazil was now directed to two fronts: the private research centers and the Universities, particularly benefited among these disciplines was Anthropology, and within higher education, the most benefited were the Catholic Universities [Miceli 1995, 383]. This change in the conditions of the Brazilian academic field was reinforced by a new philanthropic strategy by the Ford Foundation. While it had started as an institutional funding to promote university development, now it shifted to an aggressive policy of programmed scientific research. This intervention promoted the link of funding decisions with practical objectives and “social utility”. The meetings organized by the Ford Foundation in the 1970s can be considered as the first

movements towards this direction – not without the opposition of Brazilian social scientists that considered “applicability” as a Latin American matter to discuss and decide [*ibidem*, 372].

The Reception of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” in Brazil and the Silent “Bomb Effect”

Fernando Pinheiro [2008] has recently traced Bourdieu’s first contact with Brazilian culture – a review of Roger Bastide’s *Les religions africaines au Brésil*, published in 1961. He also offers a detailed description of the translations into Portuguese since 1968, along with the trajectory of two groups that pioneered the spreading of Bourdieu’s concepts and tools into Brazilian public: the group of intellectuals associated with the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, and the team formed by Sergio Miceli in São Paulo [*ibidem*, 5]. According to Sapiro and Bustamante [2009], Bourdieu’s academic recognition in Brazil is well-extended, to an extent this country is “central” in the structure of his work’s international reception.

Accordingly with this path, our polemical article was published in Portuguese first than any other language – immediately after the original in *Actes*, as a preface to *Escritos de Educação* [Petrópolis and Vozes 1998]. Considering that the social sciences had a consistent expansion and vigorous professionalization in the last decades, it was natural to expect that the article would impulse a strong discussion of “as artimanhas da razão imperialista” that had been performed supposedly in Brazilian terrain. But, our searches in academic publications in Portuguese did not show traces of a significant citation. It was necessary, therefore, to make a survey of the opinions of Bourdieusian disciples and experts on racial studies in Brazil, which we did, in the University of Sao Paulo.

The effect of “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” as a “bomb,” as it was described by Livio Sansone, seemed to have been pretty silent in Brazil, mainly limited to the special 2002 issue of *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* (Universidade Candido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro). This dossier was published precisely by the institution that was denounced in “Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste” as a vehicle for the importation of “affirmative action” and dichotomic race categories. It included the translation to Portuguese of critical responses published in *Theory, Culture and Society* and three papers written by Brazilian researchers. According to Livio Sansone, Brazilians need financial aid and he considers that those sources some times are more flexible than the bureaucratic support offered by the State. The idea of Brazil as a reverse mirror

of US racism has been changing, but this does not mean it is transforming into its reflex [Sansone 2002, 11].

The defense of independence and pluralism in the Ford Foundation was assumed by Edward Telles, an American that was the representative of this agency in Brazil. According to him, the staff is generally composed by radical intellectuals who are very cautious in interfere with domestic affairs because Brazilians have a strong national identity and activists of the black movement do not accept external impositions [Telles 2002, 161]. Michael Hanchard's intervention in the dossier is aimed to discuss the national scope underlying "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" and Bourdieu and Wacquant's "incomprehension" of black transnational politics due to their French colonial past. For Hanchard, crossed filiations through and over territorial boundaries problematize any characterization of international relations in terms of "national cultures" or sovereign entities [Hanchard 2002, 89]. Ângela Figueiredo and Osmundo de Araújo Pinho [2002, 204] state that Brazilian racial studies were marked by a "cronichal malaise," an alienating dissociation that has nothing to do with the import of ideas or lack of originality, but with the Brazilian social structure itself – what Roberto Schwarz called "ideas out of place." According to them, there are two processes of peripheralization working at the same time: the Brazilian society within capitalist nations and the colonial subjects that are peripheralized by "national intellectual conscience" when blackness becomes an allegoric category for social sciences. As a result, black people would end up representing backwardness and barbarism.

Sérgio Costa [2002, 54] agrees with Bourdieu and Wacquant on the American tendency to universalize a dichotomic notion of race, but argues that "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste" contributed to polarize even more those who defend the existence of a racial democracy in Brazil and those who are sensible to the existent racial oppression. To him, the category of "race" is a methodological resource to identify racial inequality, not a general category to explain Brazilian social dynamics, which would, indeed reinforce racism. According to Costa the concept of imperialism, in any of its connotations in the past, is not suitable for the current relations between social scientists and social movements from the North and the South. Even if they are not symmetrical, these relations extrapolate the type of unilateral domination expressed by the concept of imperialism [*ibidem*, 38].

The dossier published by *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* polarized the debate deepening the divorce between national and ethnical perspective, in a period in which "national" analysis was in serious reversal. After 2002, this state of affairs changed, due to the sprout of national identities in Latin America and particularly after the recent articulations between national movements and indigenous projects occurred in the Andean region. On the other hand, this debate overlapped two different empiri-

cal phenomena that should be distinguished and discussed separately. Firstly, the “transnationalization” of social movements, particularly in the African Diaspora, and secondly, the internationalization of the academic field – two events that have contact points but are ruled by diverse logics.

Finally, our inquiries among Brazilian scholars linked to Bourdieu’s legacy – and mainly responsible for Bourdieu’s translations to Portuguese – indicated that “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*” was scarcely discussed, because of its weak argument over race and lack of relation with the endogenous state of affairs. According with Renato Ortiz, the text was contradictory in many aspects, and the argument was fragile. However, it presented an “interesting dimension, hidden in the heat of controversy: the issue of false universalization. This is, the capacity that certain subjects and a certain way to understand society have to diffuse and legitimate itself without critical reflection” [Ortiz 2009, 200].

Final Words

When “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*” was published, racial studies had already been developed in Brazil and Latin American social sciences had participated actively in a general theoretical shift towards race and ethnicity. Therefore, the use of the category of race cannot be ascribed merely to a submission to the US Academy. In this sense, its distance with the endogenous *state of affairs* did play a role in its scarce reception in Brazil. However, the case of Argentina made clear that the Neo-liberal doxa that Bourdieu criticized and was extended to cultural life had a direct impact in the *state of the field*. The contraction of the institutional autonomy of the universities and academic dependence on foreign aid surely restrained the discussion on the “imperialism of the Universal.” The hostile environment built by Neo-liberal policies, along with the philanthropic strategies, contributed during the 1990s to the imposition of new limits to what was considered “radical” and progressive in the Academy. Particularly, a new style of professionalization was reinforced, increasingly dis-engaged with political commitment, with detriment to critical traditions forged in the previous decades – namely the national studies, the “theories of liberation” and Dependency Analysis. The crisis of Neo-liberal governments and the recent recovery of the system of public universities and social research has reopened the discussion of Dependency and national identities, all of which also impulses the revision of the endogenous agenda and the process of career-building in the academic field.

Revisiting the international circulation of “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*” enabled us to discuss the structural determinants of the international academic sys-

tem which force symbolic goods produced in peripheral spaces to have a low rate of "exports," while those created within the mainstream spaces have a significant level of international circulation. However, we have said that circulation of ideas is not a vertical bond that ties active producers and passive reproducers – as Santoro [2008] has stated, every act of reading could potentially be productive. It is truth that the unequal structure and the predominance of English reduce the "exports" of knowledge produced in the periphery, but there is not necessarily an inverse counterpart with the "import" of mainstream concepts and theories. These particular "terms of trade" have not been carefully revised yet, a pending task that we assume in order to analyze the bond between peripheral and central academies in a historical perspective.

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Appendix 1: Translations of "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste"

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- 1998 "Die List der imperialistischen Vernunft," transl. Daniela Böhmeler. Pp 3-20 in *Eingrenzungen, Ausgrenzungen, Entgrenzungen*. Konstanz: UVK-Universitätsverlag.
- 1999 "On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason," transl. Derek Robbins and Löic Wacquant. *Theory, Culture and Society* 16: 31-58.
- 1999 "Sobre las astucias de la razón imperialista," transl. Vanina Lescziner and M. Luna Faure Albanese. *Apuntes de Investigación* 4: 9-22.
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- 2000 "Nueva vulgata planetaria." *Le Monde Diplomatique México* 34.
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“*Sur les Tabous Intellectuels*”: Bourdieu and Academic Dependence

Abstract: In March, 1998, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant published “*Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste*”. Because of its *engagement* and style, this article could be catalogued as a manifest, honoring the genre by standing on the hinge between academic literature and political denunciation. It appeared for the first time in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*; it was translated immediately to Portuguese and German, and a year later to Spanish and English. While some scholars considered this article scarcely relevant, others recognized it as one of those texts that “make history”. However, the data collected shows that its circulation was marginal in the US and it had minimum reception in Latin America. Besides, it wasn’t included in the books that extended world widely the diffusion of Bourdieu’s critical work on Neo-liberal doxa and Americanism –namely *Contre-feux*.

This somewhat odd reception pointed out two different questions: was it that the state of the academic field didn’t allow the revival of the issue of “cultural imperialism” that seemed long time buried after military dictatorships and Neo-liberal governments? Was it that the article failed to recognize the endogenous state of affairs and this was the reason why it received scarce attention in Brazil? This paper intends to show that both questions are pertinent and the explanation is in the carrefour between them. We revisit the international circulation of this article as long as the debate over academic dependence, in order to decipher the conditions under which it was read in Latin America.

Keywords: Bourdieu, cunnings, academic dependence, Brazil, international circulation.

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