

Subjects, Nationalism, and Citizenship in Spivak, Butler, and Balibar's dialogue

Didier Alessio Contadini, University of Naples –L'Orientale, Italy

The European Conference on Cultural Studies 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The present political situation shows the fresh wave of nationalisms, of speeches and practices headed for reaffirm closing off identities (cf. Weitekamp, E.G.M.; Kerner, H.-J. 2012). Barriers ready to be radically rethought until some years ago, nowadays they are again sought and contended instruments. This situation produced some relevant theoretical reactions. Some searchers returned to think about the phenomenon of national identitarian claims. The aim of this paper is to articulate the explicit and implicit debate that Spivak, Butler and Balibar develop about the matters of nation and citizenship.

All three, according to different points of view, face the complex theme starting from the problem of the relation between the subject's constitution and the institutional question. Starting from here, they question reciprocally. Spivak and Butler talk about belonging and nation (*Who sings the nation-state?*). Butler criticizes Balibar's theoretical position when he try to articulate together translation and transnational forms of citizenship (*Parting Ways*). Spivak come back on Balibar's theoretical position too (*What is Gender, Where is Europe?...*). She criticize his citizenship's idea too tied with the European background. On the other hand, the open and "elastic" notion of citizenship is needed by Balibar's thought to formulate a subject's conception that would be a third solution compared to Spivak and Butler's ones (*Citoyen Sujet et Autres Essais...*).

It's a matter of a comparison that accepts the present's challenge, allows to face again the relationship among *borders*, *belongings* and *citizenship* and, lastly, to offer us, in their reciprocal questioning, some useful instruments.

Keywords: citizenship, nation, nationalism, Butler, Spivak, Balibar, subject, border

iafor

The International Academic Forum

www.iafor.org

In the last decades many theoretical studies, which interpret politics just to govern and manage, tend to directly superimpose the economic level with the political one. In this way they catch the same trend for those levels: the always thicker global weave, overfilled with production and exchanges, correspond to an unavoidable political decline of nation- states and to a progressive dismantling of borders.

We will here have a different point of view, which considers the two levels as correlated but autonomous, where the political level is the social organization functional to the production and where the trend towards the full internationalization of markets and capitals (Marx 1973) has its necessary correspondent in the borders' conservation and their specific role (Poulantzas 2000, 97). In their rigidity/mobility and impenetrability/porosity they reproduce separations, distinctions, identities and hierarchies which are functional to defend a certain economic, social and political structure (for instance the range of defences introduced by the state of *denizenship*, affirmed in relation to the penetrable presence of borders).

The European Union represents a paradigmatic example of the complexity of the dynamics involved. Here, although the official efforts to produce a stronger integration, both the foundation project and the more recent treaties reveal a deep fluctuation concerning the way to intend the inner borders that go through the European Union (Rumford 2006, 138). On the other side, the external borders keep a specific role continuously claimed in front of the critical tension caused by migrations (Pullano 2009). So, the will of institutional apparatuses to control the circulation of that complex whole composed by the movement of capitals, persons, goods and services. Secondly, the need to mediate an alterity defined from safety and security criteria and from an uneven stiffening of borders with Frontex emerges. Moreover, the necessity to not completely disavow the right to welcome, one of the basic features of the European Community's identity. Lastly, an internal game among the member states to create a hierarchy develops; a game that is linked to the lack of correspondence between citizenship and political community and between citizenship and territory.

The matters of subjectivity, national identity and citizenship insert their selves these interwoven dynamics. How does the always greater circulation of people create tension in territorial delimitation based on national identity and the function of the idea of nation? How should we intend the actual subjectivizing relations and which relations do they establish? Which role does the citizenship play and which transformations is it undergoing? In this case the cultural, ethical and political level interpenetrate. For this reason we think that it is interesting, firstly, to explore the reflections that three authors, Spivak, Butler, and Balibar, committed to these topics and, secondly, to compare some aspects that emerge from a mutual direct and indirect dialog.

1. Spivak and the deconstruction of the ontological unities

1. Nationalism and nation: belonging and difference

In its main study on postcolonial discourse (Spivak 2009, 79), Gayatri Ch. Spivak recalls the setting proposed by Eric J. Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 2000); according to it nationalism comes before nations, or better it creates states and nations and, in this construction, it establishes that in the nation everybody's political duty towards the

government prevails on any other obligation. In this sense the nation is an artifact, an invention and a social construction. This means, firstly, that cultural matter becomes the main focus (Spivak 2006b), since it displaces problems in play on a planetary level. This also means that where state borders are crossed, an event that happens for instance in the cultural area with comparative literature studies, it is necessary to pay attention and avoid the formation of disguised nationalist perspectives. It shows, then, that several topics, which the dominant western tradition connects to the couple nationalism- nation, can be re-elaborated in other and different contexts in the literary expressions coming from the “third world” (Spivak 2003, 66). It means, at last, that the production of a subject (*subjectus*) which is constituted *ab origine par différance* (Derrida 1969, 9) and that has to recognize its diasporic vocation (Spivak 2009, 80) is partly shown by an *a posteriori* identification of the nation.

Through these clarifications, the essentialist trend which characterized the dominant thought (Spivak 2010) and which concerns the image of the subjected, dominated, oppressed subject is reduced. Images and dynamics have to be dismantled, deconstructed in order to catch their historical and contingent genesis. The Indian thinker presents, therein, a meaningful example. In the struggle for independence from the British Empire, Indian identity takes shape from several different elements: religious difference fuelled and crystallized by a specific colonial policy, the exemplarity of the Japanese army that was struggling against the English- in this way the European polarization good ones-bad ones is reversed (Spivak 2009, 77)- a contradictory national identity sense which is accentuated by the institutional enlistment among the Allies. According to Spivak, in this point the establishment of a community emerges; a community that, referring to Derrida who quotes Bataille, is “the community of those without community” (Spivak 2003, 31; cf. Derrida 1997). Belonging is already *in-itself* “self-divided” and it deals with “self- identity [...] that claims power and property” (Spivak 2003, 83-84) in the establishing intervention of the other in the self: “What is identity, this concept of which the transparent identity to itself is always dogmatically presupposed by so many debates on monoculturalism or multiculturalism, nationality, citizenship, and, in general, belonging? And before the identity of the subject, what is *ipseity*? The latter is not reducible to an abstract capacity to say ‘I,’ which it will always have preceded. Perhaps it signifies, in the first place, the power of an ‘I can,’ which is more originary than the ‘I’ in a chain where the ‘*pse*’ of *ipse* no longer allows itself to be dissociated from power, from the mastery and sovereignty of the *hospes* (here, I am referring to the semantic chain that works on the body of hospitality as well as hostility [...])” (Derrida 1998, 14).

II. Subject dispersion and lingual processes

We will later consider the opportunity for a concrete action that Spivak identifies in this readiness. Let’s focus before on the impossibilities of the “subaltern”. The example proposed by the Indian thinker is the ritual of widows’ self-sacrifice. Deconstructing the complex frame built on the ritual, whose English name (*suttee*) does not *essentially* coincide with the Sanskrit *sati* (Spivak 1999), shows how the cultural form, which is linked to specific social, ethical and juridical norms, inflects in different ways according to the point of view it meets and which translates it. This other view does not fail after decolonization: it lasts both as a presence of an absence (no longer being) and as a presence of an “other” which distanced itself and from which the applicable heteronomy comes.

The subaltern *subject* (females par excellence), in this double bond “can only be spoken for and spoken of by the transition narrative, which will always ultimately privilege the modern (that is, ‘Europe’)” (Chakrabarty 2008, 41). Explanation and narrative established as norms won. In these conditions, “the oppressed, if given the chance [...], and on the way to solidarity through alliance politics (a Marxist thematic is at work here), *can speak and know their conditions?*” (Spivak 1988, 78). Spivak answers with the example of Gulari Bhubaneswari (Spivak 1988, 103-104; 1999, 306-311), a young independentist activist who, after failing to kill a politician, postpones her suicide waiting for menstruation. The issue is complicated. On the one hand, “Gulari cannot speak to us because the indigenous patriarchal ‘history’ only kept a record of her funeral and colonial history only needed her as an incidental instrument” (Spivak 1999, 308). Nevertheless, the action that claims at the same time its political cause (suicide does not concern a transgression of chastity) and the refusal of the traditional interdict (the prohibition for widows to practice *sati* during menstruation) causes distress to Gulari’s double subalternity condition (Spivak 2010). There is the opportunity to read, between the tendencies of official narrations, inside the *différance* that takes shape between the word and the material concreteness and which can be traced through researches and adopted in new doctrines. In this way Bhubaneswari really speaks and continues speaking, after she “attempted to ‘speak’ by turning her body into a text of woman/writing”.

So, it is true that subalterns can only speak in that prearranged linguistic system and that, in this way, they enter again the symbolic circuit which defines them as subaltern and, at the same time, it mobilizes them, according to a negotiation model, towards hegemony (Medovoi, 1990); on the other hand, though, there is also a way out that goes through the understanding that there is no subject in an individual sense and not even in a collective sense; we are all implicated with in hierarchical and vertical relations: “the colonized subaltern *subject*” is “irretrievably heterogeneous” (Spivak 1999, 270).

This dynamic is based on a linguistic game. Language teaches every human to negotiate the public and the private sphere beyond the public-private discrepancy as it has been inherited by the historical legacy of the European model. Everybody brings a new feature which comes from its own displaced view. Over and above, as it happens in India, the plurality of languages spoken tend to impose on each other, intertwine and dispute for their own room. Translation at this point has to intervene as a practice and as an expression of education. Translation, therefore, as the possibility of impossibility but on which, as a task, being human and human beings are based. There is, in this theoretic passage of Spivak, a positive re-elaboration of Derrida’s deconstruction: “Translation is to transfer from one to the other. In Bangla [...] it is *anu-vada* – speaking after, *translatio as imitatio*. This relating to the other as the source of one’s utterance *is* the ethical as being-for. [...] *Translatio* is thus not only necessary but unavoidable. And yet, as the text guards its secret, it is impossible. The ethical task is never quite performed” (Spivak 2000, 21; cf. Chakrabarty 2008, 90-96).

In this continuous nomadic movement, which floors any type of hypostatization of the subject as well as the national identity and crosses the state’s inner and external borders, Spivak presents her own proposal of an active human action in common sense: “An imagination trained in the play of language(s) may undo the truth-claims of national identity, thus unmooring the cultural nationalism that disguises the

workings of the state –disguises the loss of civil liberties, for example, in the name of the American “nation” threatened by terror” (Spivak 2009, 88). In this way it is possible to produce the enduring attempt to reverse and displace globalization into “planetary”, which refers to “*teleopoiesis*” (Spivak 2003) instead of bringing back to the historical narration.

2. Butler and the opening of power’s governmental weave

1. On Nation and belonging

In 2006, Spivak and Judith Butler debate about the illegal aliens who crossed the entire California, in the previous year, in massive demonstrations where they sang the American National anthem in Spanish, in order to claim their own identity as well as the right to become citizens of the State where they live and work. If it is true, as Spivak underlines, that multinational states always existed, on the other side Butler recognizes in these events an opportunity since this plurality became a lever to dismantle the nationalist dynamics that power uses as an enduring governmental instrument on people. The power that enlivens the relation between state and nation in operational terms (Butler 2007, 12) produces distinctions and functional hierarchizations where there is no room for a “bare life” (Agamben 1998) since belonging is sanctioned and bound according to the simultaneous and paradoxical dynamic of the “juridical belonging” and “non-belonging as a quasi-permanent state” (Butler 2007, 3-4) when we deal with it in the increasingly rigidity of external borders and in a sort of internal porosity. Nobody is excluded from this mechanism. It binds people locating them and wedging them in an antinomy that produces a governmental control: this starts from the physical position of the body, and reintroduces sovereignty “in the very acts by which state suspends law, or contorts law to its own use” (Butler 2004, 55).

In front of this mechanism, the political debate cannot be reduced to a formal citizenship problem (Butler 2007, 39-41). Since it is individualized, citizenship application weakens the action itself of claiming, it atomizes and brings it into a dynamic of subordination and subjection. Therefore, as Spivak clarifies in the discussion, in these demonstrations a “desire for citizenship” (Butler 2007, 74), which we have to deal with, is shown. Indeed, if the desire for citizenship is a wrong and unreflected claim, it is also true that it contains productive sources, it represents the opportunity that the members of the same territory live together and act “with whom there is no necessary sense of common belonging” (Butler 2007, 25).

In some way, citizenship is the complement of the condition of state-less: through juridical procedures, citizenship acts as a turning point through which persons are both constituted and foreclosed (Butler 2007, 22). Disqualification (in its political and economic meaning: Carchedi 1991, 133) makes sure that the Other is necessary for the Self without giving the identification of this limit function. In another way citizenship, as a claim, allows to disturb the governmental weave of power. It is necessary to actively preserve and affirm the not chosen character of inclusive and plural living together that it states, the sole action from which political norms and ethical prescriptions can originate. At this point the right to have rights returns, which “invariably emerges in different forms and through different vernaculars” (Butler 2012, 128). A “‘federating’ of the self” that constitutes “the relational subject” (Butler 2013, 122) exists.

II. On dispersed agency's dialectic

Singing the American anthem in Spanish by who has no rights produces deterritorialization. The claim of “illegal aliens” is paradoxical and for this reason it acts: “Although they have no right under the law to assemble peaceably, because that’s one of the rights they’d like to have as citizens, they still do so” and although “they have no right of free speech under the law although they’re speaking freely, precisely in order to demand the right to speak freely” (Butler 2007, 64).

This “performative contradiction” (Butler 2007, 66) is the only way to exercise freedom and to assert equality in confrontation of the governmental dispositif. According to Butler, the critique of the linguistic majority realizes here and, in its formulation, it also represents the dominant model, in terms that make an active multiculturalism. Even more this *agency* – when someone “speaks, it is not simply that a subject performs a speech act; rather, a set of relations and practices are constantly renewed, and agency traverses human and non-human domains” (Butler 2010, 150)- criticizes the same position of the subject as someone who speaks, who is appointed to speak, delegated or recognized in doing it: the “‘sovereign’ speaker is lost” and the “agency is itself dispersed” (Butler 2010, 151). The subject is always and repeatedly shown in the insurgency of new alternative positions to the dominant dynamics (Butler 2009b, 3) and, moreover, never alone: “It seems at once to be a dimension of conviviality or cohabitation, resistance, and action. This does not mean that everyone acts together or in unison, but that enough actions are interweaving that a collective effect is registered. The ‘I’ is not dissolved in such a collectivity, but its own situation is presented or ‘demonstrated’ as linked to a patterned social condition” (Butler 2013, 180).

This action of claiming is a right to the rights that is worth by itself and that, ethically, implies bodies, declining them in different, in- common, public shapes (Butler 2003, 15). The agency that deploys at this point referring to these coordinates follows “principles of social justice” (Butler 2012, 121) and it moves on the basis of the political and ethical ideal of living “in a socially plural world under conditions of equality” (Butler 2012, 117). In this point it becomes possible to make a further step in assuming the duty to “universalize the interdiction against destruction” as a safeguard of the “‘Other’” (Butler 2012, 119).

3. Balibar and the radicalization of institutional mechanisms

I. Borders and deterritorialization

According to Zygmunt Bauman, Etienne Balibar affirms that borders do not deal only with the birth of nation- states; different types of borders existed, existed and will always exist (Bauman 1997). If it is true, the matter is not only about demolishing borders (Balibar 2007, 51), as much as understanding the plurality of the levels involved, among which the identity that takes shape with the exclusion of the other; and this is just one aspect. Referring to Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis (Deleuze 1980, 17), Balibar remembers that there are two simultaneous but opposite processes that concern borders, those of territorialization and those of deterritorialization (Balibar 1994). Only when power structures “impose on traditions, signs, work organization and productive activities” (Balibar 2005, 100), assigning identities that have to classify and individualize in order to define the single member of the group as

a *subject (subjectus)*, only then anti- political or counter political conditions factually form.

It is therefore firstly necessary to catch the historical root of the border (Balibar 2007, 31-32), through which its institutional function arises: the mechanism for whom separation and distinction, which border produces, joint the routine horizon of *subjects* making them constitutively subjects. Nationalist reasoning on borders hide the real economic- political- social process that is here concealed (Balibar 2004, 62; 2005, 131; 2007, 70): sanctioning risky and permanently insecure situations, producing an “industrial reserve army” (Marx 1982, 781), moving the real division in other places.

II. Citizenship perversion

The physical border can be moved inside or outside the institutional one (Balibar 2005, 133-136). Through this movement an anthropological modification is made among the members of a state’s community: there are some citizens that are more citizens than others. The discrimination that Balibar tracked in the original moment of bourgeois citizenship, with the French Revolution, is represented. The revolution detracted citizens from the *subjectus* bond (Balibar 2011, 471-472) producing a difference between the material “man”, the empirical one and “the man of rights”. Citizenship’s formal universality sends back to a separation of the citizen from the real community in which there is a perverse mechanism and on which governmental dispositifs are based (Foucault 1980). Here, formal rights conceal the effective non right (Rancière 1995, 120): classifications based on differences increase and this taxonomy actually becomes the means to disenfranchise certain individuals, even though ideology affirms that it is required so that each difference may not be a barrier but allows everybody to choose *their own opportunity of fulfilment* and the corresponding power *differential*.

And when citizenship is absent, since “human and political [...] are coextensive ‘for right’”, so it is the same “human being” that “is cut out of humanity” so that it is “sent back to an under- humanity or a defective humanity”(Balibar 2011, 467), since only in this missed recognition its access to citizenship can be denied.

III. Democratize democracy

Against this idea, Balibar proposes a model of “evolving borders” (Balibar 2005, 124-125) which are able to express a creative power beginning from the historically built identities and a democratic potentiality produced by frictions and *mélanges*. Coherently, citizenship has to be rethought as a “citizenship of borders” (Balibar 2004, 6), a citizenship founded on its own limits, boundaries and not from the center. And, on the borderline, citizenship substantially is “a condensation of impossibility and potentials that we must try to activate”. It is the “ motive force” (Balibar 2012, 165) from which it founds again and continuously a community basic dimension that, in order to survive, has to broaden “the freedom and equality spaces” (Balibar 2012, 167; Balibar 2000).

The process of “democratization” of democracy starts again in relation with these ideas of borders and citizenship. Balibar’s interpretation of the expression “democratising democracy” (Balibar 2012, 160-161) is radically different from the one proposed by Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1998) who defines democracy as “a

system involving effective competition between political parties for positions of power” (Giddens 2000, 86) and so it only arises the matter of broadening participation to the decision-making moment making it less authoritarian (Giddens 1994, 15). Balibar recalls the insurrectional origin of the citizenship (Balibar 2012, 155) to underline how the expression “democratizing democracy” has to deal with the radical value that it has been able to express when it appeared. It brings on a revolutionary request that can be resumed in the following two points:

- Democratizing democracy means that it is necessary that the distance between the current condition of the state’s democratic organization and the opportunities that its limits send back are always clear. For this reason “the limits and the acknowledged institutional forms” must be continuously broken to deconstruct the separations and exclusions that are stated in each institutionalization;

- Citizens have to do a continuous work on their selves (Balibar 2012, 168) so that the movements they have established and directed to contest the different domination relations, can really reveal as constituent. To be so they have to show their selves arising, since the insurrection “is the active mode of citizenship: the one that is written in records”, “it means conquering democracy or the right to have rights, but its contents is always the research (and the risk) of collective emancipation and of the power that this gives to its participants, in opposition to the given order which tends to repress this power” (Balibar 2012, 170).

IV. Translating processes

The founding democratic process can only come from the base and it requires the awareness of a co-belonging capable to pass the obedience that people reiterate (Balibar 2011, 45-50). An important moment of this *for-itself* transformation is the plurality of languages and their mutual translations. European populations are, in fact, “all *postcolonial* communities or, if you will, projections of global diversity within the European sphere” (Balibar 2004, 8). In the European area, already signed by a constitutional undefinedness and renegotiated of its own limits, the identity reformulation beyond the institutional definitions is at work with the translation of languages and cultures. Nation- states policies, which are directed to matching political and administrative borders with the lingual ones, let us remember the importance of the matter. Because of the translating moment, languages can be transformed from imaginary boundaries into *trait d’union* that associate them. Referring to the considerations of Zygmunt Bauman and Rosi Braidotti – translation as a *social practice* (Bauman 1999) and from the idea of the nomad as a polyglot and the polyglot as a nomad of the language (Braidotti 2002)- Balibar brings on the pretension that “a universal regime of translations can and must develop” because only in this way a “*virtual deterritorialization*, which consents to anticipate political transformations and to conquest these ones, where the borders move and where their own meaning changes” (Balibar 2005, 142-149; Balibar 2007, 72-75).

4. On the dialogue between Spivak, Butler and Balibar

Spivak, Butler and Balibar directly discussed in several occasions among them and they often reflect on their mutual positions in their studies. Here we will stop only on some of their reciprocal reflections of this rich weave.

I. About cosmopolitanism and translation

Deconstructing the subject, Spivak rebuilds its possibility to speak through a work of cultural alternative elaboration which is realized by educational processes in which “the epistemic- epistemological difference between the subaltern and the élite is recognized”, “object of a work” and “of an elaboration” (Spivak 2010). From here she starts her critique to Balibar’s idea of cosmopolitanism (Spivak 2000, 25; 2010; Eagleton 2005, 162) and to the possibility to create a sort of common dimension using the direct translation between languages (Spivak 1999, 31; 2010). The subaltern is in a silent place from which he cannot enter the abstract institutions that should be in his responsibility as a citizen. So the “cosmopolitheia” (Butler 2007, 97) and translation do not transform the exclusion and untranslatability view inside discursive realms and cultural codes on which the hegemonic discourse is built. So “we have to pursue what, in our tradition, is shifty” (Spivak 2010). Butler too begins from the cultural/governmental opacity of languages (and of bodies) and from the necessity to consider the devices of power that shape, contextualize and read again both of them, underlining that “the task of cultural translation is one that is necessitated precisely by that performative contradiction that takes place when [...] one who is excluded from the universal, and yet belongs to it nevertheless, speaks from a split situation of being at once authorized and deauthorized (so much for delineating a neat ‘site of enunciation’)” (Butler 1997, 91). But its translation formulation, thought again several times by Balibar, establishes instead a halfway mark between the other two. Butler points out that some possible paths begin towards non- subjects’ citizenship (Zoletto 2009), namely of people that form an in- common and define the democratic dynamics “on popular decision and majority rule” (Butler 2009a, 36). Therefore, unlike Spivak and with Balibar, subaltern have, according to Butler, the opportunity to speak, by opening the tangles of governmental power (Butler 2007, 64).

II. About the subject

The three reflections present, even if with some differences, the passing of the idea which states the supremacy of the individual/individualist atomized dimension founded on the modern model of the *subjectus* (Cassin 2014). Butler expresses the necessity to claim different subjectivities. Spivak works to recover a subjectivity even for the without-part subalterns. Balibar proposes the alternative form of citizenship. If it is true that, as Spivak and Butler critically observe (Spivak 1999, 66; 2006, 5-6), Balibar’s answer based on the *trait d’union* of the languages shows its Eurocentric feature, it is also true that his elaboration makes the reflection on the subject more complex. Spivak’s answer to the question ““who comes after the subject?”- as Balibar asserts (Spivak 2010) – shuttles in a movement of bustle between dominant essentialism and the one of Third World’s woman, between an organization that is bridled inside the postcolonial dynamic of the couple nationalism/nation- the example that we recalled is on the struggle for independence- and the singularity of the demand which wants to be “saved”- Gulari Bhubaneswari’ suicide. The subject that comes after the subject that Butler theorizes, namely the different one that realizes the opportunity to become subject for who is not seen yet as a subject, “who do not sufficiently conform to the norms that confer recognizability on subjects” (Butler 2009, 3) tends to a democratization of the governmental process through ethical requests but without radically reformulating the process itself. Balibar’s answer with the return to citizens (Balibar 2011, 52) tries to rebuild a generative process of his arising organization which is alternative to the established power. It seems that, here, Balibar’s hypothesis, on the one side, gives a more structured shape to the demand

that Butler too proposes and, on the other hand, it gets closer to the development of Spivak's theory proposed by Medovoi, Roman and Robinson. Analyzing the electoral dynamic which was at the basis of the Sandinist defeat in the presidential elections in 1990, the authors show how the impossibility to speak for those without-part has in the incongruity of dominant systems (Medovoi 1990, 141) the way for a confrontation with all types of failures; starting from this, ideologizations can be passed and the contradiction can be acted by an articulated form and which preserves experiences in an alternative memory (Medovoi 1990, 148).

III. About nationalism, state and citizenship

Spivak, Butler and Balibar have their own idea on nationalism as an ideology that fulfils and justifies the double function of borders- which we have dealt with in the introduction- that is its function to create imbalances and unequal developments as well as to produce conflicts in the same group of subjected people (which can be called class, subaltern, without-part, marginalized alterity...). According to this, Spivak and Butler affirm the existence of the unavoidable tendency and already in progress of a complete passing of nation- states, in accordance with the global dimension of free market capitals. Butler thinks of, in ethical terms, the spontaneous gathering of people who organize and hybridize their selves in a here and now of demands in which, with no social identity, they share the critique to the effective model and the demand for a different world. Spivak believes that the idea of belonging always goes together with the violent inscription in a system of power that puts down and in a heteronomous way defines the person and, at the same time, that sharing is possible only from an idea of being shared that comes from interpellation. Therefore, she seems to be able to think the passing of the global level of capitalism supremacy only in a singular behaviour of local education given according to a "planet-thought" (Spivak 2006a, 107-108). Balibar believes that the state dimension is not passed and not passable but that borders should be thought as a continuous transition where belonging, sharing and identity are always in movement because of a common practice.

In this frame, Spivak conceives citizenship as a dead- end path, an institutional form to which subalterns are not able to access. Butler, instead, thinks that the shape of citizenship can be played as a place of demands that act on a critical point of the state structure and of its identity ideology. Balibar, lastly, sees in citizenship a more purposeful feature. Rethought according to his arising formulation it is the common dimension capable to undo and replay state dynamics. The three of them, finally, believe that national identity is in an extremely critical period. They converge thinking that to pass this impasse without falling in global- capitalistic dynamics, it is necessary to articulate alterity spaces where new ethical- political relations can be developed.

References

- Agamben, Giorgio (1998), *Homo sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Balibar, Etienne (1994), *Qu'est-ce qu'une "frontière" ?*. In Caloz-Tschopp, Marie Claire; Clevenot, Adrian (Eds.), *Asile, Violence, Exclusion en Europe. Histoire, analyse, prospective*. Genève: Cahiers de la Section des Sciences de l'Éducation.
- Balibar, Etienne (2000), *What makes a People a People? Rousseau and Kant*. In Hill, Mike; Montag, Warren, *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*. London: Verso.
- Balibar, Etienne (2004), *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Balibar, Etienne (2005), *Europe Constitution Frontière*. Paris: Editions du Passant.
- Balibar, Etienne (2007), *Très loin et tout près*. Paris: Bayard.
- Balibar, Etienne (2011), *Citoyen Sujet et autres essais d'anthropologie philosophiques*. Paris: Presse Universitaire de France.
- Balibar, Etienne (2012), *Cittadinanza*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1997), *Postmodernity and its Discontents*. New York: New York university Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1999), *In Search of Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Braidotti, Rosi (2002), *Nuovi soggetti nomadi*, Roma: Luca Sossella Ed.
- Butler, Judith (1997), *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (2000); Guillory, John; Thomas, Kendall, *What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (2003), *Violence, Mourning, Politics*. In *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 4 (1): 9-37.
- Butler, Judith (2004), *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso.
- Butler, Judith (2007); Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Who sings the nation-state?*. London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull.
- Butler, Judith (2009a), *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable*. London: Verso.
- Butler, Judith (2009b), *Performativity, Precarity and sexual Politics*. In *Revista de Antropologia iberoamericana*, 4 (3): i-xiii.

- Butler, Judith (2010), *Performative Agency*. In *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 3 (2): 147-161.
- Butler, Judith (2012), *Parting Ways. Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Butler, Judith (2013); Athanasiou, Athena, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Carchedi, Guglielmo (1991), *Frontiers of Political Economy*. London: Verso.
- Cassin Barbara (Eds.) (2014), *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chacrabarty, Dipesh (2008), *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1980); Guattari, Félix, *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Minuit.
- Derrida, Jacques (1969), *La différance*. In Id., *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Derrida, Jacques (1997), *Politics of Friendship*. New York: Verso.
- Derrida, Jacques (1998), *Monolingualism of the Other or, The Prosthesis of Origin*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Eagleton, Terry (2005), *Figures of Dissent. Critical Essays on Fish, Spivak, Zizek and Others*. London: Verso.
- Giddens, Anthony (1994), *Beyond Left and Right*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Giddens, Anthony (1998), *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, Anthony (2000), *Runaway World. How Globalisation Is Reshaping our Lives*. New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel (1980), *The confession of the Flesh*, in Id., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Vintage books.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. (2000), *Nation and Nationalism since 1780. Programm, myth and reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, Karl (1973), *Grundrisse. Foundations of the critique of political economy*. New York: Random House.
- Marx, Karl (1982), *Capital. A critique of political economy, vol. 1*. New York: Penguin.

Medovoi, Leerom (1990); Raman, Shankar; Robinson, Benjamin, *Can the Subaltern Vote?*. In *Socialist Review*, 20 (3): 133-149.

Poulantzas, Nicos (2000), *State, Power, Socialism*. London: Verso.

Pullano, Teresa (2009), *The Evolving Category of Territory : From the Modern State to the European Union*. In Garnet Working Paper series: 64/09.

Rancière, Jacques (1995), *La mésentente*. Paris: Galilée.

Rumford, Chris (2006), *Rethinking European Spaces: Territory, Spaces, Governance*. In *Comparative European Politics*, 4: 127-140.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988), *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. In Nelson, C.;

Grossberg, L. (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 66-111.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1999), *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Cambridge (Ma): Harvard University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2000), *Translation as Culture*. In *Parallax*, 6 (1): 13-24.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2003), *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2006a), *World Systems & the Creole*. In *Narrative*, 14 (1): 102-112.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2006b), *What is Gender? Where is Europe? Walking with Balibar*. Firenze: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2009), *Nationalism and the Imagination*. In *Lectora*, 15: 75-98.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2010); Balibar, Etienne, *Un entretien sur la subalternité*. On http://transeuropeennes.eu/en/articles/223/Un_entretien_sur_la_subalternite.

Zoletto, Davide (2009), *Le pantano della violenza. Il linguaggio dello Statp-nazione e le "seconde generazioni"*. In *aut aut*, 344: 148-159.

Contact email: didierales@gmail.com