

Otros Saberes emergentes

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The theme of *emergencias* in the context of *precariedades* and *exclusiones* provokes us to consider emergent proposals for a new world, a new way of being, and new social relations. Emergencias call us to think about agency and resurgence within academic research processes at a time of crushing violence, exclusion, and hopelessness. Otros Saberes is a project of collective rethinking of older colonial models of research that objectify and ossify research subjects, upholding unequal relations of power. In the mid-2000s, Otros Saberes began as a LASA initiative created by scholars Charles Hale and Lynn Stephen, who recognized both the vibrancy of social movements and civil society mobilizations and the fact that these social actors are significant knowledge producers. The goal of the project was to connect these civil society knowledge producers with university-based researchers who had similar areas of expertise, allowing both groups to reap the benefits of collaboration. They issued the first call for proposals in 2006, which sought projects with Afro-descendant and indigenous organizations and academics. The innovative, successful research and relationships of these working groups later led to a second call for proposals and round of research, this time led by Rachel Sieder and focusing on legal pluralism.

These collaborations challenge the ways indigenous subjects are cast as relics of the past rather than contemporary people with living, changing cultures, and how Afro-descendant people are represented as primitive roadblocks to modernity who exist outside of the narrative of national progress. The Otros Saberes initiative has included women, LGBT individuals, and others marginalized by research processes who have organized to challenge limiting representations within scholarly literatures and society at large.

This year, for the first time, LASA has initiated a program track dedicated to Otros Saberes' decolonizing methodologies (Smith 1999; Rivera Cusicanqui 2010), activist scholarship (Hale 2008), and subjugated knowledge practices of marginalized communities. The track received more proposals than could be accepted, and in addition to the wide array of collaborative scholarly practices featured by the track, we have organized two special panels dedicated to reflections on collaborative research projects emerging from the LASA initiative. The Otros Saberes track features new forms of scholarship produced through an interrogation of traditional methodologies or the elaboration of alternative ones. Further, the track welcomes conversations about the new epistemological registers produced by bottom-up knowledge and research practices. Topics may include decolonizing methodologies; collaborative research; activist or engaged scholarship; indigenous and Afro-descendant epistemologies and thought; and LGBT, queer, and feminist critiques of heteronormative knowledge projects.

The purpose of establishing the track for Otros Saberes is to continue the conversation about decolonizing methodologies, activist scholarship, and/or subjugated knowledge practices of marginalized communities and the creation of new models of producing knowledge. We want to explore the possibilities and challenges of collaborative or *decolonizing* methodologies from the points of view of community participants as well as academics. We hope to explore how indigenous, Afro-descendant, women's, or LGBT social movements have included research in their agenda of social change and if collaborative research projects have been productive for movements.

In the LASA2015 Congress, the Otros Saberes program track will have two invited sessions entitled "Collaborative Indigenous and Afro-descendant Knowledge Production." This double session is structured as a conversation among participants rather than a formal presentation of research findings. Part 1, on Thursday, May 28, 4:00–5:45 p.m., features participants Keisha-Khan Perry, María Socorro Granda, Maylei Blackwell, and Genner Llanes Ortiz, with Irma Velásquez Nimatuj as discussant. Part 2, on Thursday, May 28, 6:00–7:45 p.m., features participants Jocelyn Géliga Vargas, Margo Tamez, Christopher Loperena, and Marilyn Machado, with Lynn Stephen as discussant.

Through these conversations, we are interested in knowing if new epistemological registers produced by bottom-up knowledge and research practices are transforming knowledge validation procedures (Collins 1990). Furthermore, a key question for us is how alternative knowledge projects transform dominant ways of knowing and challenge the institutionalized way knowledge is produced. To answer this type of question is certainly a critical challenge for dialogues about Otros Saberes that will take place at the upcoming LASA Congress and hopefully continue beyond it.

Memoria de Jano: La memoria de la modernización populista en Puerto Rico

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“El pasado no puede proveernos de lo que el futuro no logra brindar.”
—Andreas Huyssen

Podría parecer que armar la memoria pública es oficio de los historiadores que, como yo, les apasiona revisitar el pasado, *ese otro país*, como dijera uno de los grandes historiadores de nuestro tiempo, Eric Hobsbawm (2003). Sin embargo, en ese empeño, y quizás como secuela de nuestro nacimiento positivista como ciencia, a menudo tendemos un velo de sospecha sobre las memorias de vida, particulares y aficionadas, por considerarlas muy atravesadas por los acomodos del recuerdo y la inestabilidad de los sentimientos. Ello, a pesar de que cuando nosotros los historiadores examinamos viejos documentos y artefactos o visitamos lugares de larga edad nos reframamos a menudo, con léxico personalizado y sentimental, a sus *texturas*, o a las *voces* que reverberan con cada folio de archivo o curva de la vasija o al *eco* de la piedra caída de la muralla. La memoria nos toca, nos habla, a veces nos saca la lengua. Es, aunque no lo queramos, íntima, sensorial; no por ello menos pública y social.

Por fortuna, desde hace algunos años trabajo en un lugar de fronteras difuminadas: donde la historia y la comunicación —entendida como lugar franco de transacciones de significado en clave mediática o no— comparten narrativas y representaciones; donde hincan tienda las estructuras duras pero donde irrumpen los sujetos para desmontarlas o al menos sacudirlas; donde se dirimen, sin resultado concluyente, las disputas entre lo público, lo privado y lo íntimo, incluyendo la memoria.

Pública o íntima; más filtrada por los métodos o más anarquista, la memoria nos hace habitantes de un mundo o de varios

—presenciales o inducidos tecnológicamente—, parte de una familia, compañeros de escuela o de Facebook, esa fe virtual que nos provee de identidad y de comunidad en red. Sin la línea de transmisión —aunque maltrecha— que la memoria nos provee, quedaríamos descarnados, sin piel o desalmados, sin alma, seamos historiadores protegidos por el método o audiencias viendo un episodio de la iluminadora serie mexicana *El Chavo del Ocho*, por enésima vez, antes de que la clase media puertorriqueña perdiera su inocencia.

Algunas de las dislocaciones de la memoria aquejan con particular agudeza y costos culturales a las sociedades contemporáneas. A nadie se le escapa que desde hace algún tiempo se han debilitado o devaluado los mecanismos tradicionales de recuperación de la memoria, como lo son los saberes que se transmiten oralmente en el seno familiar y en los tejidos comunitarios o el reconocimiento espontáneo, museográfico o patrimonial de hitos históricos, artísticos y urbanos. El reconocimiento de nuevas y no tan nuevas generaciones de muchos nombres, eventos y referentes es cada vez más frágil. Sin embargo, lo que parecería ser signo de los tiempos, requiere, en el caso de Puerto Rico, segundas y terceras miradas.

Al inicio de la segunda posguerra, el último gobernador estadounidense de Puerto Rico, Rexford G. Tugwell, escribía en su ácida memoria de sus años en la isla, que la característica más perturbadora de los puertorriqueños era su “impermanencia [*impermanence*]” (Tugwell 2010). Pocos dictámenes sobre la condición puertorriqueña me conmovieron tanto cuando leí las palabras de Rex, el rojo, como le llamaron alguna vez. Ni siquiera aquél —vivito y coleando hasta hoy día— de que Puerto Rico es “una nave al