

INHABITING THE STRAIT. TOWARDS A EURO-AFRICAN SUBJECTIVITY IN PREMODERN ARABIC TEXTS*

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En el presente trabajo se sientan las bases de un corpus de textos árabes en el marco del contexto de crisis del siglo XIV sobre el estrecho de Gibraltar para el estudio de una subjetividad euroafricana. El trabajo se divide en dos partes. En la primera parte, se describe la situación socio-política y cultural en la que tiene lugar esta crisis de transición hacia la modernidad europea, con especial hincapié en la brecha que se abrió entre las dos orillas del Occidente Islámico y en la élite intelectual árabe-islámica que la habitó. En la segunda parte, se plantean las líneas generales del proyecto de innovación epistemológica que esta élite llevó a cabo para definir una versión de modernidad acorde con su propia cultura. Asimismo, se defiende la necesidad de un estudio empírico de la subjetividad premoderna a través del lenguaje, entendida esta en términos astronómicos, con el fin de perfilar la conceptualización de dicho proyecto.

Palabras claves: Árabe, Europa, Subjetividad, Epistemología, Lenguaje

The present work sets the basis of a corpus of Arabic texts in the context of the 14th century crisis over the strait of Gibraltar, for the study of a Euro-African subjectivity. It has two parts: the first one describes the socio-political and cultural situation in which this transitional crisis towards European modernity took place, with particular emphasis on the resulting division between the two shores of the Islamic West and the intellectual Arab-Muslim elite that inhabited it. The second part approaches the general lines of a project of epistemological innovation carried out by said elite, to define a version of modernity according to their own culture. This work also defends the need for an empirical study of premodern subjectivity through language, understanding this subjectivity in astronomical terms, to outline the conceptualization of the project.

Key Words: Arabic, Europe, Subjectivity, Epistemology, Language

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*It is self-contradictory either to praise or to condemn
modernity. But, remembering its origin as a weapon of the
weak, one may, with perfect consistency, propose a modified
modernity as an alternative to desolation—and write its
history.*
William M. Reddy¹

History is often separated from subjectivity, based on an alleged scientific objectivity. However, this pretension contributes to exclusion, as it maintains that the narratives built upon a shared past, even those that are “merely” informative, can be detached from subjectivity after passing through an imposed methodological filter, hence denying the legitimacy of academic interpretation. It also creates dissatisfaction among those who, by avatars of history itself, need to free themselves from the yoke of the “truth” of previous subjectivities; and it keeps those who stand up for these subjectivities from the healthy exercise of the scientific debate, which allows us to continually reexamine the legitimacy of our postures when new ideologies come into play. This takes on greater significance in the current, globalized and interconnected world, where the forging of truths has become an authoritative practice. We thus move within a fluid and vulnerable intellectual space, in which the greatest danger is the false sense of

¹ Reddy, W. M., «The paradox of modernity: current debates and their implications for the seventeenth century», *Modern Intellectual History*, 14:1, 2017 (pp. 217 – 256), p. 256.

protection provided by the constitution of lands of exclusion for those who do not know, nor want to learn, how to float.

If the interest on historical memory is decreasing, it is because not only we have not endowed the humanist discipline with an adequate method of research, but also because we have not recognized the literary fact that resides in it², which is more open to the reader's interpretation than an official or sacred narrative. This means understanding the literary event in history, accepting that any historical narrative obeys the subjectivity of an author or current of thought, the ideology of an intellectual and political elite, the identitarian approach for the transmission of cultural legacy, among other factors. Acknowledging this subjectivity does not abandon us to the emptiness of the most atrocious relativism, but introduces, for the moment, a conductive element in the alloy of our foundations: one that allows multiple historical narrations about the same human group living in certain territory, while also allowing its inhabitants to be part of virtual groups, blurring regional borders. It would be important, then, to individuals of multiple national identities, who are present, in a greater or lesser proportion, across every nation; within the context of multinational companies; or in the new social trends generated by Blockchain technology.

Denying this subjectivity is contradictory with our current times, where data control has become an obsession for every company and institution; the scientific branch that deals with these parameters tries fervently to endow its object of study with a neutral formal framework, in search of a way of calculating the subjectivity of its content. Although its purpose might be sometimes questionable, depending on the ethical context of departure, Data Science strives to process natural language through formal mathematical-based languages, aiming to reveal the individual and collective intimacy of the human beings who produce this data. In this scenario, this study presents a corpus of data located in a socio-cultural context of crisis, which belongs to our near past, as a field of exploration of a certain subjectivity that continues to be present today in a sort of virtual superposition.

² See the «New Historicism» trend in: Parker, R. D., *How to Interpret Literature. Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008.

The Context

The 14th century crisis over the Euro-African strait

Europe in the 14th century was marked by a general crisis that started the process of transition toward modernity, which eventually reached the papacy. In the Euro-African territory of the Strait of Gibraltar, this crisis resulted in wars between Christian and Muslim states for the control of maritime communication between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, as well as in dynastic struggles, social conflicts, hunger, and plague³.

By the end of the 13th century, after the fall of the Almohad empire –where African Amazigh tribes held political dominion over this territory–, the European Christian kingdoms, mainly the Iberians of Aragon and Castile, had manifested their colonial aspirations in the north of the African continent, especially in the Maghrebian commercial ports that dispensed gold, slaves, and wool. However, conflicts emerged between them, and they had to postpone their conquering aspirations until the 15th century⁴. Meanwhile, the Aragonese kingdom focused its expansion to the Western Mediterranean, leaving the Castilian to fight the Muslim sultanates for the peninsular hegemony⁵. The last significant confrontation between the two parties took place at the end of the first half of the 14th century, in the Battle of the River Salado (Batalla del Río Salado, 1340), which resulted in the defeat of the Muslims. On one side was the Castilian King Alfonso XI, with Portuguese support; on the other, the North African Merinid sultan Abū l-Ḥasan, with Ḥafṣid –present-day Tunisia– and Naṣrid –southeastern Iberia– support. This confrontation would put an end to the African conquest of European territory and give way to a precarious balance of power in the second half of the century.

As Pedro I succeeded his father Alfonso XI, the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon began the war known as «La Guerra de los Pedros» (The War of the Pedros). This war was a reflection of the «Hundred Years War» between England and France, projecting the conflict on the weakened Muslim kingdoms in an elaborated game of forces⁶.

As for the Muslims, after losing Algeciras to the Christians, Abū l-Ḥasan continued to force his expansion into the Western Maghreb territories until he is

³ Vid. Viguera, M^a J. (ed.), *Ibn Jaldún. El Mediterráneo en el siglo XIV. Auge y declive de los Imperios. Exposición en el Real Alcázar de Sevilla. Mayo-Septiembre 2006*, Fundación El Legado Andalusi - Fundación José Manuel Lara, Granada - Sevilla, 2006; translated into Arabic under the title: *Ibn Khaldūn. Al-baḥr al-mutawassiṭ fī l-qarn al-rābi‘ ‘ashar. Qiyām wa-suqūṭ imbrāṭūriyyāt*, Maktabat al-Iskandariyya, 2007.

⁴ Dufourcq, C. E., «Les relations de la Péninsule Ibérique et l’Afrique du Nord au XIV^e siècle», *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 7, 1970/1971 (pp. 39 – 65).

⁵ Furió, A., «La corona de Aragón en la crisis del siglo XIV», eds. Belenguer, E. and Garín, F. V., *La Corona de Aragón siglos XII-XVIII*, Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia, 2006 (pp. 79 – 98).

⁶ Valdeón, J., «La Corona de Castilla», eds. Carrasco, Juan et al., *Historia de las Españas Medievales*, Crítica, Barcelona, 2002 (pp. 267 – 304).

overthrown by Abū 'Inān –one of his sons–, whose premature death puts an end to the apogee stage of the Merind kingdom. These events would go hand in hand with the overthrow of Sultan Muḥammad V in Granada, resulting in the thwarting of an alliance between the Muslim kingdoms and that of Aragon; thus begins a succession of dynastic struggles in Granada and Fez, with severe repercussions on commercial activity in the area. Muḥammad V returned to the Naṣrid throne with Castilian support, and the two Muslim kingdoms remained strictly dependent on Castile. In the Iberian Peninsula, the clash between the Christian kingdoms would end in a dynastic change in Castile, supported by France, recovering the Iberian Christian front its goal to move southwards.

In the Maghreb, power depended on the alliances between the different tribes that occupied the territory, which were mainly Amazigh. The administrative divisions of the state within the territories occupied by these tribes were overlapped, a situation that could destabilize the governmental centralization and hierarchy. In this regard, the notion of territorial unity under the government of a single state was much more present in al-Andalus than it was in North Africa; the Almohad Empire became an exception, as it was the last political entity to unify the two shores under its government, marked by its strong and agglutinating religious ideology.⁷

In his well-known *Muqaddima*, the Tunisian historian and thinker Ibn Khaldūn (d.1406) compares the splendor of the Andalusian civilization with the “barbarism” and tribalism of the Maghreb and Ifriqiya. According to him, civilization in these lands had always been in the hands of the Amazighs, while the Arabs had been a minority; only at the hands of the Almohads, the Andalusian civilization moved to this territory. However, after the end of their empire, the Maghreb returned to its tribal crudity.⁸

Ibn Khaldūn and his contemporaries of the Islamic West were aware that the sovereignty over the Islamic world of their time was no longer held by Arabs, but by “foreigners”: Persians, Turks, and Amazighs. In the case of the Andalusian Arabs, the feeling of tribal cohesion, which for Ibn Khaldūn is the basis of the rise of any state, was gradually lost, giving way to the advance of the Amazigh tribes⁹.

This cohesion re-emerges among the Arabs at crucial moments in the history of al-Andalus, as it happened in Seville during the time of the first taifas after the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba; or in Granada, after the fall of the Almohad empire. However, they were a small minority compared to the Amazigh military power and presence on both shores.

⁷ Vid. Kably, M., *Société, pouvoir et religion au Maroc à la fin du ‘Moyen-Age’ (XIVe- XVe siècle)*, Éditions Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, 1986; and Buresi P. and Ghouirgate, M., *Histoire du Maghreb médiéval (XIe-XVe siècle)*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2013.

⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, ‘A., *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Khalīl Shaḥāda, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 461 – 464.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 193 – 194.

Although the ostentation or forge of Arab genealogies –dating back to the time of the Prophet in the Arabian Peninsula– offered political and cultural legitimacy, it was not enough to go against the Christian advance on one shore, nor to exercise a centralizing power on the other. The Arab tribes in the Maghreb, which never came to hold power in the area, were always used by the central authority to counteract the power of some Amazigh tribes, and were a destabilizing element in the face of the weakness of the North African states.¹⁰

In the cultural sphere, al-Andalus was considered the cultural center of the Islamic West. In the times of the Naṣrids and the Merinids, there was a regular exchange of intellectuals between the courts on both sides¹¹. Nonetheless, the Andalusians maintained their supremacy over the Maghreb on the field of the Arabic language and its literature, as it was different from that spoken by the Native Amazigh population of North Africa¹²; the Maghreb, being less Arabized, stood out above al-Andalus for their significant interest in religious studies¹³.

This lack of North African Arabization, in addition to the Christian advance, heralded the gradual loss of power of Arab culture in the Islamic West. The imperial language of the Arab-Islamic civilization, of the sacred text and the literary canon, was stagnant, and was used as an identitarian weapon in memory of the radiant past. On the other hand, Islamic thought gave way to the most rigorous orthodoxy, and spirituality developed in popular Sufism as an escape route from institutional rigidity¹⁴.

The gap of the Islamic West and its intellectual elite

After the fall of the Almohad empire, the two most prominent Muslim kingdoms of the Islamic West –until the advent of modernity– were that of Fez, ruled by the Merinid Amazigh dynasty, and that of the Naṣrid Arabs in Granada. During the 13th and the first half of the 14th century, up until the defeat at the Salado, the Merinids had had a robust military presence in important enclaves south of the Iberian Peninsula, thus supplying the Naṣrid's weakness in this regard and supporting their resistance to Christians. From the second half of the 14th century – and especially after the recovery of the Granadian throne by Muḥammad V through Castilian intervention–, this presence gradually weakened to such an extent, that

¹⁰ Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas: El viaje de exilio de Ibn al-Jaṭīb a través de su obra *Nuḫāḍat al-ġirāb fī 'ulālat al-igtirāb*», PhD. dissertation, Universidad de Granada, 2016, pp. 60 – 62.

¹¹ Mannūnī, M. al-, «Namādhij min al-takāmul al-thaqāfi bayna al-Magrib wa-l-Andalus 'abr 'aṣr Garnāṭa», *Actas del II Coloquio Hispano-Marroquí de Ciencias Históricas. "Historia, Ciencia y Sociedad"*(Granada, 6-10 noviembre de 1989), AECID-IMCA, Madrid, 1992 (pp. 143 – 161).

¹² Ibn Khaldūn, 'A., *op. cit.*, pp. 779 – 780.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 740 – 743.

¹⁴ *Vid.* Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 68 – 77.

the Fez throne itself was subjected to peninsular political maneuvers, with the consequent decline and extinction of the last European Muslim state.¹⁵

The «reflow of scholasticism» in science came to the Islamic West without great significance¹⁶; the Islamic orthodoxy of the mid-14th century had banished the rational sciences from the intellectual production, while they were reborn in Europe and still cultivated in the Asian Islamic East¹⁷.

In this context, a group of intellectuals from both shores moved between the central courts playing an active political role and, according to the preserved correspondence they exchanged, sharing a common Euro-African project that perished in the face of the dynastic weakness of the rulers. Although they supported each other in times of crisis, their longings for reform, in response to the new winds of change, met with absolutist powers and a practically frozen culture, resulting in many of them being imprisoned, exiled to the East, or executed.

These intellectuals were the representatives of an Arab-Islamic urban culture mainly focused in Granada and Fez, along with secondary cities such as Malaga, Mekinez and Tlemcen. The rest of the Maghreb was predominantly tribal; this tension between the urban and the tribal marked their social context and is present in the thoughts and works of their greatest exponents¹⁸.

The main figures of this intellectual elite were: the Granadian Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374), and the Tunisian of Andalusian origin Abū Zayd Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406). Others, although having less impact, were the Tazian¹⁹ Abū l-‘Abbās al-Jaznā’ī (d. 1348/9), the Tlemecenian Muḥammad Ibn Marzūq (d. 1379), and the Almerians Abū l-Barakāt al-Balafīqī (d. 1370), Abū Ja‘far Ibn Khātima (d. 1369), and Abū ‘Uthmān Ibn Luyūn (d. 1349).

Ibn al-Khaṭīb was a link between the two shores²⁰. He was an ambassador of the Nasrid court in Fez, and he exiled himself twice to North Africa. His second exile

¹⁵ Vid. Arié, R., *L’Occident Musulman au Bas Moyen Age*, De Boccard, Paris, 1992; and Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 41 – 53.

¹⁶ Vázquez de Benito, M. C., «La obra médica de Ibn al-Jaṭīb: el reflujo de la escolástica», eds. Rodríguez M. D. et al., *Saber y poder en al-Andalus. Ibn al- Jaṭīb (s. XIV)*, Ediciones El Almendro, Córdoba, 2014 (pp. 103 – 115).

¹⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, ‘A., *op. cit.*, p. 663.

¹⁸ Vid. Melo, D., «Una aproximación al mundo de Ibn Jaldún: Precursor medieval de la Historia de las civilizaciones», eds. Garrot, J. L. and Martos, J., *Miradas españolas sobre Ibn Jaldún*, Ibersaf, Madrid, 2008 (pp. 135 – 146).

¹⁹ Originally from the city of Taza in present-day Morocco.

²⁰ Molina, E., «Ibn al-Jaṭīb, vínculo vital, político e intelectual entre al-Andalus y el Magreb», eds. Beneito, P. and Roldán, F. (eds.), *Al-Andalus y el Norte de África: relaciones e influencias*, Fundación El Monte, Sevilla, 2004 (pp. 153 – 188).

ended in his conviction and later murder, accused of heresy and attempting an Islamic West reunion²¹. He was a great innovator in multiple disciplines²².

Ibn Khaldūn is known as the father of modern sociology. He dedicated his great work *Tārīkh* to the Merinid Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the last sultan in claiming an Islamic West reunion and under whose protection Ibn al-Khaṭīb carried out his second exile. Both Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn al-Khaṭīb shared a feeling of unrest regarding the declining world they lived on. Ibn Khaldūn later went into exile in Egypt, losing his family along the way²³.

Ibn Marzūq was at the service of Sultan Abū l-Ḥasan, to whom he dedicated his work *al-Musnad*; he reached the position of vizier reserved until then to the Amazigh tribal chiefs. He taught Sufism in Granada and cultivated a great friendship with Ibn al-Khaṭīb. They both knew the risks involved in their collaboration with the absolutist powers of their time. He ended up imprisoned and, afterwards, exiled to Egypt²⁴.

Al-Jaznā’ī dealt with several branches of the rational sciences, including alchemy and philosophy, and endured rejection for it –according to Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself–, eventually dying due to the plague. Meanwhile, al-Balafīqī, one of Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s masters²⁵, remained disinterested in power despite his prestige in many branches of knowledge, including mysticism; in his work, he conveys a pessimistic view of his time. As for Ibn Khātima, he stood out for his experimental poetry and his medical work on the plague, being one of the first to raise the theory of contagion; he maintained a friendship with Ibn al-Khaṭīb²⁶. Finally, Ibn Luyūn, one

²¹ Two centuries later, the Tlemecenian al-Maqqarī (d. 1630) wrote during his exile in Egypt his work *Nafh al-ṭīb*, the vast compendium of Andalusian literature dedicated precisely to the memory of Ibn al-Khaṭīb as a symbol of what his figure represented in the last days of pre-modern Iberian Islam. Vid. Moral, C., «Un monumento literario a la memoria de Ibn al-Jaṭīb: el *Nafh al-ṭīb* de al-Maqqarī», eds. Rodríguez, M. D. et al., *Saber y poder en al-Andalus. Ibn al- Jaṭīb* (s. XIV), Ediciones El Almendro, Córdoba, 2014 (pp. 206 – 225).

²² In my doctoral thesis, I study and translate partially into Spanish the memoirs that he wrote about his first exile, concluding on what I called «La Innovación Jaṭībiana» (The Khaṭībiana Innovation): Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.* I have also published a study on the mystical work upon which his enemies accused him of heresy: «La jaula de la realidad. Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb en el jardín del amor», *eHumanista, Journal of Iberian Studies*, 39, 2018 (pp. 339 – 353).

²³ Vid. Melo, D., «Una aproximación al mundo de Ibn Jaldūn...», *op. cit.*; Fromherz, A. J., *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2010; and Moral, C., «Luces y sombras en las relaciones entre Ibn al-Jaṭīb e Ibn Jaldūn a través de su correspondencia personal», eds. Moral, C. and Velázquez, F., *Ibn al-Jaṭīb y su tiempo*, Editorial Universidad de Granada, Granada, 2012 (pp. 205 - 221).

²⁴ Vid. Ibn Marzūq, A. ‘A. A. M., *Al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥasan fī ma’āthir wa-maḥāsīn mawlānā Abī l-Ḥasan*, ed. Viguera, María Jesús, al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, Algiers, 1981; Shatzmiller, M., *L’historiographie Mérinide. Ibn Khaldūn et ses contemporains*, Brill, Leiden, 1982; and Viguera, M. J., «Ibn Marzūq según Ibn al-Jaṭīb: Análisis de una biografía», *Revue de la Faculté des Lettres Tetouan / Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb bi-Tiṭwān* (Número Spécial sur le colloque d’IBN AL KHATIB), 2, 1987 (pp. 33 – 41).

²⁵ Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 176 – 177; and Balafīqī, Abū l-Barakāt al-, *Shi’r Abī l-Barakāt Ibn al-Ḥāj al-Balafīqī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ‘Abd Allāh al-Harāma, Markaz Jam‘at al-Mājid li-l-Thaqāfa wa-l-Turāth, Dubai, 1996.

²⁶ Ibn Khātima, A. J., *El dīwān de Ibn Jātima de Almería (Poesía arabigoandaluza del siglo XIV)*, trans. Gibert, Soledad, Publicaciones del Departamento de Árabe e Islam, Barcelona, 1975.; Molina, E., «La obra histórica

of Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Khātima's teachers, wrote an empirical verse-treatise on agriculture, which became influential during the Renaissance. He also succumbed to the plague²⁷.

According to Shatzmiller, the 14th was the first century of a Muslim revival – similar to the European–, rather than the continuation of a long decline²⁸. For Goody, the cultural activity that culminates in the Alhambra constitutes one of the many renaissances that took place throughout history, which takes away from the Italian and European one its pretension of singularity and originality. In doing so, he makes the entire Eurasian culture part of the advent of modernity and capitalism²⁹; at the same time, in my opinion, it also makes us all responsible for its evils.

The members of this Euro-African elite of intellectuals shared a common Arabic-speaking culture at a time of crisis before the Renaissance, and stood with one foot on each shore while the gap became increasingly insurmountable. There were glances to the past and nostalgia towards idealized political leaders and primitive social organizations, in search of the ancient spiritual enlightening and critical thought that were the height of the Islamic civilization. At the same time, there was a vision projected towards a future of dialogue, founded in concepts such as individualism and empiricism, that would define European modernity. However, this modernity continues to this day, despite all attempts at dialogue, violently colonizing and conquering many cultures. This violence comes precisely from not acknowledging the influence of the past and the ebb of the future, in a kind of continuum contrary to the ideas of power, ambition, and expansion.

It is very significant in this sense, applicable also to the period of transition this study addresses, what Fierro says about what is called the «revolución almohade» (Almohad revolution):

The heresy of the Almoravids served to demonstrate the Almohad truth; though the Almohads attacked the Almoravids so significantly, it was not so much because they were thoroughly distant from them, but because their predecessors had, in fact, begun to travel along some of the paths that the new owners of the Islamic West would go through later. Nevertheless, the revolutionary message could not –and has never been able to– present that complex

de Ibn Jātima de Almería. Los datos geográfico-históricos», *al-Qanṭara*, 10:1, 1989 (pp. 151 – 174); and Arvide, L. M., *El tratado de la peste de Ibn Jatima (I)*. Cuestiones I-VI, Logos Verlag Berlin, Berlin, 2014, and *El tratado de la peste de Ibn Jatima (II)*. Cuestiones VII-X, Logos Verlag Berlin, Berlin, 2017.

²⁷ Ibn Luyūn, A. 'U., *Ibn Luyūn: Tratado de Agricultura*, ed. and trans. Eguaras Ibáñez, Joaquina, Universidad de Almería, Almería, 2014 (2nd edition).

²⁸ Shatzmiller, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 88 – 89.

²⁹ Goody, J., *Renaissances. The one or the many?*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 6 – 7.

*relationship with the preceding dynasty with all its nuances because, as revolutionary propaganda, it had to be that, propaganda.*³⁰

The Subjectivity

A project of epistemological innovation

In my doctoral thesis, I studied the intellectual context of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's production between the two shores, connecting it to the crisis that marked this Euro-African Arabic-speaking elite. I concluded, then, that one of the problems around his figure –among his contemporaries and ours– resides in an attempt on his part to combine two seemingly opposed poles³¹. This attempt is a project of global renovation, which I called «La Innovación Khaṭībiana» (The Khaṭībiana Innovation), and goes along the lines –as I have seen after– of what Taha Abderrahmane calls «*istiqlāl mubdi'*» (creative autonomy)³². This project would be going across almost all levels: political, social, spiritual, artistic and scientific³³, highlighting connections with other contemporary intellectuals, both in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa.

The texts points to a boom of individualism and quasi-modern subjectivity between Muslims and Christians, driven by the unsteadiness of each's value system within the context of the dispute over the hegemony of the Strait³⁴. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's individualism is present in all his work –sprinkled with intimate expressions of his emotional states and autobiographical narratives–, in his historical works, biographical dictionaries, medical writings, travel accounts, and correspondence. This individualism began to develop in al-Andalus from the 11th century, appearing a century later in the Maghrebian production from Almohad times, and then giving its first signs in the Castilian and Aragonese texts from the 14th century. Thus, the

³⁰ «La herejía de los almorávides servía para demostrar la verdad almohade, aunque los almohades atacaron de manera tan radical a los almorávides no tanto porque se apartaran totalmente de ellos, sino porque sus predecesores ya habían empezado de hecho a transitar por algunas de las sendas que iban a recorrer luego los nuevos dueños del Occidente islámico. Pero el mensaje revolucionario no podía –no lo ha hecho nunca– presentar con sus matices esa compleja relación con la dinastía precedente, pues en tanto que propaganda revolucionaria tenía que ser eso, propaganda.» (the translation into English is mine). Fierro, M., «La revolución almohade», eds. Cressier, P. and Salvatierra, V., *Las Navas de Tolosa 1212-2012. Miradas cruzadas*, Universidad de Jaén, Jaén, 2014, p. 3.

³¹ Jreis, L. M., «Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Jaṭīb. Un conciliador entre las dos orillas», ed. El Amri, K., *Fez y Granada en la época de los Meriníes y Nasrís (Siglos XIII y XIV)*, Círculo de Amistad Marroquí-Español, Rabat, 2018 (pp. 43 – 56).

³² Hashas, M., «Taha Abderrahmane's Trusteeship Paradigm. Spiritual Modernity and the Islamic contribution to the formation of a renewed universal civilization of ethos», *Oriente Moderno*, 95, 2015 (pp. 67 – 105), p. 88.

³³ Vid. Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 299 – 310.

³⁴ Jreis, L. M., «Contextos de autoexpresión. Voces andalusíes en el exilio de la convención», *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 9:1, 2017 (pp. 130 – 147). This study appears with additional information in: Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 16 – 21, 152 – 182.

expression of Euro-African subjectivity that took place in this century of crisis, which has been recorded in the texts, produced alterations in conventional genres to give rise to this new phenomenon.

Simultaneously, a rebuttal of occult sciences –such as astrology and alchemy– took place in the Islamic West³⁵, along with a tendency towards empirical thinking in certain areas of knowledge, such as political theory, history, medicine and agriculture, where human experience began to gain strength as a source of knowledge, displacing the divine will. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's and Ibn Khaldūn's political theories share the same basic ideas with that of Macchiavello which are in the foundation of the Italian Renaissance³⁶. The preserved writings of Ibn al-Khaṭīb on political thought, in both Arabic and Castilian, are well known for being an adaptation of Plato's works on the subject to the Arab-Islamic context, noting the presence of his personal experience, and the insistence on the pragmatic side³⁷. In the works of these two authors, there is also an introduction to a change in the historical method, addressing the historical facts related to social and economic factors, supported by documentary evidence, oral testimonies, and self-reflection on their particular interventions as active agents³⁸. In medicine, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Khātima posed the hypothesis of contagion as a means of spreading the plague, at the risk of contradicting the official discourse of orthodoxy³⁹; in agriculture, the treatise of Ibn Luyūn, mentioned previously on this paper, defends the need to accompany the theoretical expositions with experiential knowledge.

While Ibn Khaldūn lays the foundations of modern sociology, Ibn al-Khaṭīb proposes a comprehensive reform of the Naṣrid state that addresses the internal coordination of government, foreign security, tax system, the use of peaceful means to resolve conflicts, social reform, the strengthening of the educational system, and the consolidation of religious values⁴⁰. He also describes a feeling of solidarity

³⁵ Asatrian, M., «Ibn Khaldūn on Magic and the Occult», *Iran & the Caucasus*, 7:1/2, 2003 (pp. 73 – 123).

³⁶ Hoenerbach, W., «El historiador Ibn al-Jaṭīb: Pueblo – Gobierno – Estado», *Andalucía Islámica. Textos y Estudios*, 1, 1980, p. 61; and Melo, D., «Ibn Al-Jaṭīb y la utilidad de la historia, con especial referencia a su obra *Kitāb A'māl al -A'lām*», eds. Corti, P. et al., *La utilidad de la historia*, Ediciones Trea, Santiago de Chile, 2019 (pp. 83 – 94).

³⁷ Qāḍī, W., «Jawānib min al-fikr al-siyāsī li-Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb», *Majallat al-Fikr al-'Arabī* (Ma'had al-Inmā' al-'Arabī fī Bayrūt), 31, 1983 (pp. 173 – 207).

³⁸ Zanbīr, M., «Ibn al-Khaṭīb wa-l-tajdīd fī l-minhāj al-tārīkhī», *Majallat Kulliyyat al-Ādāb wa-l-'Ulūm al-Insāniyya. Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Khāmis*, 2, 1977 (pp. 79 – 126); and Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 278 – 282.

³⁹ *Idem*. According to Dols, the medical work of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Muqni'a al-sā'il*, is a clear example of innovation in a time of crisis within a traditional and authoritative body of thought, suggesting that these medical theories probably added to others as a pretext for his conviction and murder: Dols, M. W., *The Black Death in the Middle East*, Princeton University Press, Princeton - New Jersey, 1979, pp. 92 – 94.

⁴⁰ Damaj, A. C., «El concepto de Estado de Ibn al-Jaṭīb: ¿un reformador?», eds. Alonso, J. y Akalay, M., *Actas del 1er Coloquio Internacional sobre Ibn al-Jatib* (Loja, 28 y 29 de octubre de 2005), Fundación Ibn al-Jatib de Estudios y Cooperación Cultural, Granada, 2007 (pp. 75 – 99).

around the capital of the state, similar to the tribal cohesion on which Ibn Khaldūn argues in his theories about the formation of states⁴¹.

Both thinkers –preceded by other intellectuals from the two shores such as Abū l-Barakāt al-Balafīqī⁴²–, came together in a collective impulse to renew and simplify the Arabic language through free prose, where the content takes precedence over the preciousness of the hollow form. This impulse is also present in poetry; for instance, in the plain mnemonic verse of Ibn Luyūn. Along with the experimental poetry of Ibn Khātima, Ibn al-Khaṭīb seeks with his prosaic arts to revive the decadent literary discourse of the Islamic West of his time, facing and even overcoming the East⁴³, setting the trend in the region with his style. In his language, there is an innovative use of words, meanings, nominal and verbal paradigms, and dialecticism⁴⁴; it is a renewed and deep language, typical of cultural development.

Ibn al-Khaṭīb mystical work, which led to his violent death after being accused of heresy, was unique in the Islamic West, due to the risky treatment of issues barely addressed by his Andalusian and Maghrebian contemporaries, with the depth of a systematized mystical thought that continued to emerge in the Islamic East. Both Ibn al-Khaṭīb and al-Jaznā'ī dealt with concepts aligned with philosophical rationalism, and were not well received by their contemporaries. In his *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn approaches these issues in a less risky way⁴⁵, citing fragments of Ibn al-Khaṭīb work when dealing with controversial issues and, although he makes a moderate defense of Sufism against the faqihs as representatives of Orthodoxy, he puts limits to the mystical experience⁴⁶. He concurs, however, with Ibn al-Khaṭīb in his defense of a moderate mysticism following al-Ghazālī, moving away –without separation– from the Western philosophical rationalism defended by Averroes towards the constitution of original Islamic thought for a spiritual modernity⁴⁷.

This conflict between philosophy, mysticism, and Islamic orthodoxy had its turning point three centuries before, with the approach of the Persian theologian and mystic Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.1111), who had a significant influence on the

⁴¹ Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, p. 252.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 295.

⁴³ Jubrān, M. M., *Funūn al-nathr al-adabī fī āthār Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (al-maḍāmin wa-l-khaṣā'is)*, Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, Beirut, 2004, vol. 1, pp. 15 – 22; and Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 285 – 296.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 291 – 292, 294.

⁴⁵ Ben Shaqrūn, M., *Mazāhir al-thaqāfa al-magribiyya. Dirāsa fī l-adab al-magribī fī l-'aṣr al-marīnī*, Dār al-Thaqāfa, Casablanca, 1985, p. 215; and Ahmad, Z., *The Epistemology of Ibn Khaldūn*, Routledge, London and New York, 2003.

⁴⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, 'A., *op. cit.*, pp. 622 – 624.

⁴⁷ Hashas, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 104; and Reddy, W. M., «The Eurasian origins of empty time and space: Modernity as temporality reconsidered», *History and Theory*, 55, October, 2016 (pp. 325 – 356), p. 335.

Almohad doctrine⁴⁸ of which this post-Almohad intellectual elite is heir to some extent⁴⁹. The mystical and philosophical thinking that advocates for an individual approach to knowledge is a danger to orthodoxy, and is difficult to understand for the average person, even among the most educated strata of society. Although the Almohad leaders were initially open to these approaches without intermediaries, the dispute between revelation and rational science, that had its echoes during the crisis of the 14th century, had previously led to the persecution and exile of many Andalusian intellectuals. The philosopher Averroes (d. 1198), great commentator of Aristotle, fell into disfavor; the Jewish thinker Maimonides (d.1204) and Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī (d.1240), one of the highest representatives of philosophical Sufism, were exiled to the East, while Ibn Ṭufayl in his work *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān* put limits to the pursuits philosophers could undertake⁵⁰.

Despite the differences, the exceptional mystical work of Ibn al-Khaṭīb ends in a conciliatory note, taking into consideration the ways different beliefs, religions, and sects aim to achieve the same goal⁵¹, from Greek philosophy, to the popular and orthodox Sufism that spread in the Islamic West at the time. Nevertheless, he expressed the need to return to the pillars of Eastern wisdom⁵²; hence, individual subjectivity, scientific empiricism, and Eastern spirituality went hand in hand⁵³ during the brief period propitiated by an ephemeral balance of forces over the Strait of Gibraltar, before the Eurocentric wall of modernity was lifted.

Towards a Euro-African subjectivity

In a previous work⁵⁴, I addressed the issue of the refusal of some Western scholars to recognize subjectivity in premodern Arab writings, as they alleged their textual tradition lacks a specific genre in which to display the characteristics of an

⁴⁸ Fierro, M., «El Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía ‘oficial’», eds. Manzano, M. A. and El Hour, R., *Política, Sociedad e Identidades en el Occidente Islámico (siglos XI-XIV)*, Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, Salamanca, 2016 (pp. 73 – 98).

⁴⁹ Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 68 – 70.

⁵⁰ Fierro, M., «Ibn Rushd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’ and his Relation with the Almohads», ed. Ghouz, A. Al, *Islamic Philosophy from the 12th to the 14th Century*, Bonn University Press, Göttingen, 2018 (pp. 73 – 116).

⁵¹ Or as Reddy put it recently concluding one of his studies: «One can insist that each temporality’s orbit has its own separate, incommensurable epicycle. Or one can recognize that the same movements can be more simply explained if each temporality is seen as orbiting—not within the time and space of Western modernity—but within an empty background of time and space that has been noticed in various ways by all human communities». Reddy, W. M., «The Eurasian origins of empty time and space...», *op. cit.*, p. 356.

⁵² Jreis, L. M., «La jaula de la realidad...», *op. cit.*

⁵³ They walk together towards the constitution of what Taha defined as a «spiritually rational being». Hashas, M., *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵⁴ Jreis, L. M., «Contextos de autoexpresión...», *op. cit.*

individualism associated exclusively with European modernity. A conception, fortunately, many specialists have moved past from⁵⁵, acknowledging the value of narrative structures and discursive strategies in transmitting subjectivity, which vary depending on the historical and cultural contexts in which they take place. Accordingly, I defended the presence of textual self-expression of the pre-modern author/subject, beyond the formal characteristics of the modern autobiographical literary genre. I identified two contextual levels: on the one hand, the spatiotemporal and socio-cultural location of the text and its relationship with the rest of its author's production, within the tradition in which is immersed, and with other contemporary texts, as well as its transmission. On the other hand, that of its readers, from its author contemporaries to the present day.

Within the text itself, I distinguished between direct and indirect modes of expression of subjectivity. The direct modes are first-person expressions that are familiar to the modern reader, and are located on the margins of the convention, producing, in some cases, innovations in its formal characteristics; this, I observed, occurs in connection with the wobble of the value system in situations of collective and/or individual crisis. Indirect modes are present in the mold of the text's literary convention, through the arrangement of its content and specific discursive strategies that, although moving away from the modern reader, do have their codes of interpretation within the culture in which the production of the text takes place. Recently, a technology-based humanistic research on intertextuality⁵⁶ in Arabic sources is paving the way to explore yet another, and highly interesting, form of self-expression⁵⁷.

Generally speaking, premodern direct subjectivity in Arabic texts is peppered in biographies intellectuals wrote about themselves, within biographical dictionaries, or as independent works, such as travel accounts, poetry, correspondence, literary epistles, and prefaces; also, for instance, in fragments in historical, anthological or miscellaneous works, mystical and philosophical treatises, personal annotations, fictional narratives, among others. Identifying these cases of premodern direct subjectivity does not mean gaining entry to the author's fundamental intentionality. Positivism and essentialism in language were overwhelmed with post-structuralist approaches since Barthes declared the death of the author and the birth of the reader, and Foucault dispossessed the subject of his creative role by converting him into an ideological product. The world, according to these thinkers, is defined by language and,

⁵⁵ Vid. Reynolds, D. F. (ed.), *Interpreting the Self. Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2001; Hirschler, K., *Medieval Arabic Historiography. Authors as actors*, Routledge, London-New York, 2006; Fromherz, A. J., *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times*, op. cit.; and Aurell, J., *Authoring the Past. History, Authobiography, and Politics in Medieval Catalonia*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London, 2012.

⁵⁶ Allen, Graham, *Intertextuality*, Routledge, London and New York, 2006 (first edition, 2000).

⁵⁷ <http://kitab-project.org/2018/09/07/kitab-data-a-first-look/> (consulted on 15/12/18).

therefore, we can't achieve any authorial or historical truth. Faced with this uncertainty, some specialists like Spiegel, try to defend a redoubt of agency in the contextual or situated use of language through what she calls «the social logic of the text»⁵⁸. This concept implies approaching the linguistic realities of the texts within a specific social and intellectual context; that is, the analysis of the influence of contextual circumstances on the production of particular uses of language, both in and outside conventions. In doing so, subjectivity moves away from the individual essence of a finite subject, tending toward the particular linguistic manifestation within a collective convention.

Tracing subjectivity in language –a topic which caused heated debates at the beginning of our digital era– became complex in the culture of the manuscript, where the textual product went through numerous reeditions and copies, in a process that shares similarities with the one developed nowadays around the digital text. There are few manuscripts signed by their authors; additionally, the process of transmission alters the text overtime –to a greater or lesser extent– through the conscious or unconscious interventions of the copyists⁵⁹. Speaking of premodern subjectivity is, therefore, not so much about understanding the fundamental essence of the author, but about identifying the linguistic characteristics of its codification in language.

Take Aristotle, for instance. When we say this ancient thinker claimed so and so, what we are actually referring to is a collective subjectivity –a product of the long chain of transmission, translation and interpretation that continues to this day– and not the fundamental essence of the philosopher's ideas that has remained unchanged for more than twenty-three centuries. Thus, to look for the original subjectivity of manuscripts is –from my point of view– like looking at the integrated light of galaxies: «Not even the largest telescopes are capable of taking images of the individual stars in the farthest galaxies, but only allow access to their integrated light. On the contrary, within our own Galaxy, we can identify and study individual stars in detail, which perhaps began to shine at the same time the galaxy itself was formed»⁶⁰. I see premodern Euro-African subjectivity as an expanding spiral galaxy, relatively close to us, with a black hole in the center; its nucleus is a group of individuals who inhabited a moment of the past, while the spiral arms are their

⁵⁸ Spiegel, G. M., *The past as text. The theory and practice of medieval historiography*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997, p. xviii, 27-28, 35.

⁵⁹ Fisher, M., *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England*, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 2012.

⁶⁰ «Ni siquiera los grandes telescopios son capaces de tomar imágenes de las estrellas individuales de las galaxias más lejanas, sino que solo permiten acceder a la luz integrada de las mismas. Por el contrario, en nuestra propia Galaxia podemos identificar y estudiar en detalle estrellas individuales que quizá empezaron a brillar en la misma época en que la propia galaxia se formó» (the translation into English is mine). Pérez Montero, Enrique, «Dos maneras de mirar al pasado» <http://revista.iaa.es/content/dos-maneras-de-mirar-al-pasado> (consulted on 15/12/18).

projections through time, connecting with a present from which we can observe the center in a shared space⁶¹.

The subjectivity I refer to in this study, is one in which a group of authors, who participated in a socio-cultural project and context at a given moment, expressed their epistemic position –or way of understanding the world–, which I believe is achievable to some extent, employing an empirical method of analysis. This analysis could address, for example, the lexical choice of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives through discursive strategies, or grammatical structures such as voice and person⁶². In this regard, Spearing states that he accepts subjectivity as a human characteristic present throughout history, without the need for a specific starting point, whether this be in modern or premodern times. His interest resides in its codification in the text through a linguistic phenomenon such as the deixis, without the need to believe that it will form a unified pattern that designates the text as the product of a particular consciousness⁶³.

Once we accept that subjectivity in pre-modern Arabic texts is present in the very use of language, and encoded in certain linguistic phenomena, we must bear in mind an epistemological difference. This difference refers to the connections we establish today between mind, language, and reality; in other words, between ideas, words, and things, which differ from those developed in traditional Arabic linguistics. We accept in advance –as Western readers/interpreters of the 21st century– that subjectivity depends on our cognition of the world we perceive, and that this cognition maintains a dynamic relationship of reciprocal influence with language, especially in its sociocultural dimension⁶⁴. However, we should also have in mind that during the 11th century, when the theories about language in Arab culture were still seething –especially with the contribution of Avicenna (d.1037) to logic–, the discussion revolved around the «mental contents», the most correct way to communicate them through language, and their relationship with the physical world⁶⁵. All this is an essential epistemic gap marked by the distinction between a

⁶¹ In a previous work, I pose, in a complementary sense, the kaleidoscope metaphor: Jreis, L. M., «Contextos de autoexpresión...», *op. cit.*

⁶² Glynn, D., «Quality and quantity. Object and method in the study of subjectivity and epistemic stance», eds. Glynn, D. and Sjölin, M., *Subjectivity and Epistemicity. Corpus, discourse, and literary approaches to stance*, Lund University, 2014 (pp. 3 – 21). See also (same author and volume): «Subjectivity and epistemicity. An annotated bibliography», (pp. 349 – 410).

⁶³ Spearing, A. C., *Textual Subjectivity. The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 33.

⁶⁴ Vid. Slunecko, T. and Hengl, S., «Language, Cognition, Subjectivity», eds. Valsiner, J. and Rosa, Alberto, *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007 (pp. 40 – 61).

⁶⁵ Key, A., *Language between God and the Poets. Ma'nā in the Eleventh Century*, University of California Press, California, 2018, pp. 42 – 50.

horizontal or a vertical relationship⁶⁶ between abstraction and materiality with language as an intermediary.

Written language is not, however, the only way to explore the relationship between subjectivity and epistemology in the socio-cultural and intellectual context of this study. We also have the artistic expressions incorporated into the Aulic and religious architecture⁶⁷, in which the Euro-African Arab-Muslim elite moved, reflecting their aesthetic thought both materially and abstractly. There is, for instance, a whole philosophy of life in the art of the arabesque, extendable to music and poetry, which has to do with the universal rhythm that underlies everything, the symmetry in the abstraction of forms, the presence of variety in the unity, and the infinity of the linked repetition⁶⁸. In this case, the artistic expression reflects a world that is both profoundly spiritual and fundamentally mathematical. Also in these expressions, the greatest exponents of classical Arabic language – the Koran and the poetry – materialize in rich epigraphic inscriptions.

There is a practical example of the traces of premodern subjectivity through language, reflecting an epistemic framework typical of this pre-Renaissance elite in the transitional crisis that I refer to. It can be found in the discursive analyzes that I conducted on Ibn al-Khaṭīb's travel accounts, inserted in the memories of his first exile in the Maghreb⁶⁹, as well as his controversial mystical work⁷⁰. In these texts, a series of semantic fields of great relevance emerges in the context that pertains us, around which there are subjective expressions that shed light on a particular position concerning events. The discord (*fitna*) stands out, involving topics such as decentralization of the State, tribal despotism, violation of the ethical system, friction between ethnic and cultural identities, rupture of social networks; restriction of the critical faculty and meritocracy, creativity, destruction, ostentation, isolation, war, disease, hunger, exile, and death. Along with the field of discord, the one of spirituality is also outlined, around which revolve the concepts of emotion, exaltation, virtue, imagination, devotion, introspection, superstition, recklessness, messianism, sectarianism and popularization. These semantic fields are accompanied by expressions of feelings such as the nostalgia of the idealized past, the fear of helplessness and uncertainty, the sadness of loss, empathy, hope, despair, disappointment, distrust of others, rejection of the innovation, hatred,

⁶⁶ Hashas, M., *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁶⁷ Emparán, Ma. A., «Elementos para una interpretación de los zillij de la madrasa merinida al-Attarin de Fez», *Intus-Legere Historia*, 9:1, 2015 (pp. 25 – 46).

⁶⁸ Yūnis, S., *Falsafat al-fann wa-l-jamāl fī l-fikr al-islāmī. Naḥwa istāṭiqiyya islāmiyyat al-hawā ‘arabiyyat al-huwiyya*, ‘Ālam al-kutub, Cairo, 2014; Puerta, J. M., *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe. Al-Andalus y la estética árabe clásica*, Editorial Universidad de Granada, Granada, 2018 (1st edition Ediciones Akal, 1997), pp. 56 – 66, 74 – 75.

⁶⁹ Jreis, L. M., «Entre las dos orillas...», *op. cit.*, pp. 249 – 296.

⁷⁰ Jreis, L. M., «La jaula de la realidad...», *op. cit.*

worldly and divine love, anguish, loneliness, solidarity, fatigue, joy before the sublime, the awe of the unknown, and so on.

The language of pre-modern self-expressive texts contains a conceptual framework that projects a specific subjectivity, one of similar complexity to those found today in any virtual social network. This subjectivity moves within a spatiotemporal and cultural framework, such as that of the crisis around the Strait of Gibraltar at the beginning of the Renaissance period, and in the full constitution of European modernity. The Euro-African subjectivity presented here in a succinct way –and in which I will continue to deepen– is just one of the many that shaped the European modernity, and were eventually denied, silenced or submitted to a unique epistemological position with pretensions of universality, a position that will bring splendor and renewal but also expulsion and colonization.

This is, in conclusion, about moving towards a Euro-African epistemology without a separation from modernity –since it is part of many of the concepts that define it–, along the lines of decolonial thinking⁷¹, though with less reactionism, and the approaches on multiple modernities⁷² or the paradox of modernity⁷³. The aim is to find a space for dialogue and to redefine the rules of negotiation between “the center” and “the margins” of a restrictive and immutable version of modernity, in order to displace the antagonistic concepts and incorporate new ones⁷⁴ from the various, and often silenced, ways in which we experience our shared world. We can agree on the importance of language as a field of approximation among the cultures that we address, but the ways of doing so and the values to be determined in the process must comply with the rules of a truce between equals. That is, recognizing mutual benefits, respecting differences without the need for cession or assimilation, and accepting that the latter happens organically given the former.

⁷¹ Grosfoguel, R., «Racismo/sexismo epistémico, universidades occidentalizadas y los cuatro genocidios/epistemicidios del largo siglo XVI», *Tabula Rasa*, 19, 2013 (pp. 31 – 58).

⁷² Hashas, M., *op. cit.*

⁷³ Reddy, W. M., «The paradox of modernity...», *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 239, 252.

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