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The Nature of the Eponym

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We agree in general with the comments made by G. Vélez-Cuartas (2018), on our paper published recently in *Social Epistemology* (Collazo-Reyes, et al, 2018). He accepts the use of our methodology in the analysis of the eponym of Jerzy Plebanski and at the same time, suggests applying this methodology to search for the formation of invisible colleges or scientific networks associated with the emergence of epistemic communities.

This was not a direct goal of our work but we included some related aspects in the revised version of our manuscript that may seem somewhat distant from the ambit of the eponym: namely, intertextuality, obliteration by incorporation, scientometrics networks, invisible colleges, epistemic communities, Jerzy Plebanski and “plebanski”. All these topics are keywords to access our paper in the indexes of scientific literature. These aspects distinguish our methodology from other approaches used in almost a thousand papers that addressed the issue of eponyms, according to a recent search for this topic in Web of Science database.

Within this framework, we appreciate the author’s suggestion to extend our analysis to other subject areas since "eponym as a scientometric tool sounds good as a promising methodology". In particular, "to induce an analysis on other areas of sociology of science and social epistemology" in order “to reach a symbolic status in a semantic community that is organized in a network of meaning” and could show “a geographical penetration of scientific institutions and global dynamics of scientific systems" (Vélez-Cuartas, 2018).

Traditionally, published work on eponymy has studied the contribution or influence of certain authors in their respective scientific disciplines through biographies, tributes, eulogies or life histories and narratives. Some of these have been published as a series of studies like "Marathon of eponyms" (Scully et al., 2012) or "The man behind the eponym" (Steffen, 2004). The post-structuralism movement mentioned in our paper (Collazo-Reyes, et al, 2018) has criticized this approach.

In scientific texts, the use of the term “plebanski”, as an eponym of the proper name of Jerzy Plebanski, corroborates the recognition given by various authors to the work developed by the Polish scientist. Acknowledgement is apparent in cognitive texts on different aspects of plebanski’s contributions and in this context; the “plebanski” term is cited as a cognitive entity macro-referenced in the framework of scientific communication (Pang, 2010).

We would like to mention two points related to future applications of our findings on the use of eponym in the Latin American scientific literature:

- 1) The process involved in the construction of an eponym inherently generates a macro-referential scheme that is not considered in the cognitive structure of the databases of the bibliographical indices. The operational strength of the intertextuality associated with the referential process helps to generate socio-cognitive relations and space-time flows of scientific information.

This scheme requires characterization through a relatively exhaustive search in the different variants of the bibliographical indices: references, abstracts, citations, key words, views, twitters, blogs, Facebook, etc. (WoS, Scopus, arXiv, INSPIRE, ADS/NASA, Google citation, altmetric platforms). Most of these have arisen within the domain of the traditional bibliographical databases. Therefore, there is a clear possibility to generate an eponym index to characterize the intertextual structures not associated with the known bibliographical indices.

2) We coincide with the author on the need to take a new approach to carrying out an exhaustive search of eponyms as related to the Latin American scientific community. We are interested in characterizing the geography of collaboration at different levels: local, national, regional, and international (Livingstone, 2003; Naylor, 2005). This approach has been followed in the study of the geographical origin of eponyms in relation to the dominant system of scientific communication (Shapin, 1998; Livingstone, 1995, 2003; Geographies of Science, 2010).

We made a first attempt in this direction in our study of the “plebanski” eponym in the area of mathematical physics. In this paper, we made use of the methodology involved in “geographies of science” (Livingstone, 2010; Geographies of Science, 2010; Knowledge and Space, 2016) with theoretical tools that enhance the projections made in the framework of the sociology of science, bibliometrics and science communication.

In particular, the “spatial turn” movement (Finnegan, 2008; Gunn, 2001; Frenken, 2009; Fa-ti, 2012) offers a new dimension in the development of information systems, maps and networks using an innovative methodology such as “spatial scientometrics” (Frenken et al., 2009; Flores-Vargas, et al, 2018).

The new proposal considers, in each application of an eponym, the original source of authors, institutions, journals and subject matters. Each source includes the position in the geographical distribution of scientific knowledge associated with a given discipline. This information is then referred to as “geo-reference” and the eponyms as “macro-georeferenced” entities.

In this scheme, the generation of eponyms involves the combination of the different sources for authors, institutions, journals and subject areas. The resulting network may develop new aspects of the distribution mechanism of the asymmetrical power associated with the geographies of knowledge (Geographies of Knowledge and Power, 2010).

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