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DELINKING: THE RHETORIC OF MODERNITY, THE LOGIC OF COLONIALITY AND THE GRAMMAR OF DE-COLONIALITY. ¹

By: Walter D. Mignolo

...colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverse

¹ Although this essay owes to all the participants in the modernity/coloniality project, its last stretch owes much to many conversations and exchanges of material with Anibal Quijano and Enrique Dussel as the leading figures of the project; with Ramón Grosfoguel and his contribution to shift the perspective of world-system analysis from its original disciplinary top-down orientation to the perspective of Puerto Rico and the Latino/as in the US in the modern/colonial world system; with José Saldívar, and his continuing contribution to walk in the border, to extend his original vision of the “dialectics of our America” in the late eighties to the changing landscape of the beginning of the twenty first century; With Javier Sanjinés, Catherine Walsh, Freya Schiwy and Nelson Maldonado-Torres who are driving the project to new dimensions with unforeseen consequences. Javier Sanjinés opened up a door to the complex history and current situation in Bolivia. His work on “mestizaje up-side down” has been instrumental to rethink a long legacy of “mestizaje” as the oxymoronic figure to imagine the nation-state across the colonial difference. Catherine Walsh with her work with Indigenous and Afro communities in the Andes, and her reflection around the concept of “inter-culturalidad” (introduced by Indigenous intellectuals), “ancestralidad” (introduced by Afro-Andean intellectuals) and “an-other thinking” that she takes from Abdelkhebir Khatibi in order to underline the de-colonial dimension of inter-culturalidad and ancestralidad. Freya Schiwy has brought to the project the problematic of gender and patriarchy and has theorized the role of “indigenous subaltern intellectuals” using video instead of alphabetic writing to overcome the forces of coloniality that cast them as barbarian for their lack of writing. And to Nelson Maldonado-Torres for his groundbreaking reflections on the philosophical and political dimension of the category of *damnés*. The *damnés* confront us, on the one hand, with the coloniality of being (the *damnés IS* a product and a consequence of coloniality) and at the same time has an enormous de-colonizing potential. In this regard, the *damnés* opens up a new space and a new social actor, next to the subaltern and the multitude. Last but not least, three consecutive visits to Minsk (Belarus) and Moscow, between 2001 and 2004 opened up my vistas and prompted questions about the place of Russia/Soviet empire in relation to Western Christian, liberal and capitalist empires. I owe much in this arena to Madina Tlostanova for her work on trans-cultural aesthetics from the perspective of Russian/Soviet ex-colonies and for her analysis of Russia/Soviet Union as a “Janus Faced Empire” (with one eye toward its inferior colonies and the other to its superior West). And during the past three years, I have been working and in close conversations with Arturo Escobar and graduate students, at Duke and UNC, gathered around a working group under the label of “Globalization, Modernity/Coloniality and the Geopolitics of Knowledge. Last but not least, several conversations and collaborations with Boaventura de Sousa Santos—in the past four/five years—brought to the foreground his notion of “an epistemology of the South” that he advanced in the mid nineties and that materialized recently in his prominent work in and for the World Social Forum.

logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts it, disfigures and destroys it (Franz Fanon, The Wretched...1961).

Introduction

In May of 2004, Arturo Escobar and I organized one of the meetings of the modernity/coloniality project at Duke and UNC. Each meeting of the group—since 1998—has been devoted to the exploration of issues that emerged as interesting and/or problematic in previous meetings or during conversations, among its members, in between meetings. The guiding statement for the May 30-June 1, 2004 meeting was the following:

*How does Horkheimer's "critical theory" project look to us today, when global and pluri-versal "revolutions" are taking place, out of the di-versity and pluri-versity of the many local histories that in the past 500 hundred years (some in the past 250 or perhaps only fifty years) couldn't avoid the contact, conflict, and complicity with the West (e.g., Western Christianity, its secularization and relation to/with capitalism and its obverse, Socialism/ Marxism)? What should "critical theory" aim to be when the **damnés de la terre** are brought into the picture, next to Horkheimer's proletarians or today's translation of the proletariat, such as the multitudes? What transformations are needed in the "critical theory" project if gender, race, and nature were to be fully incorporated into its conceptual and political framework? Finally, how can "critical theory" be subsumed into the project of modernity/coloniality and decolonization? Or would this subsumption perhaps suggest the need to abandon the twentieth century formulations of a critical theory project? Or, would it suggest the exhaustion of the project of modernity?*

The questions formulated in the statement were not intended to drive the debate toward a "manifesto of consensus", which would have killed the questions instead of leaving them as signposts for thought. I am sure that each of the participants in the three days workshop came out with their own answers, with reformulated questions or with other, related questions. The argument that follows started before the meeting but in its last

version it carries the indelible mark of three days of intense, creative and productive dialogues.²

I. Epistemic de-linking.

Under the spell of neo-liberalism and the magic of the media promoting it, modernity and modernization, together with democracy, are being sold as a package trip to the promised land of happiness, a paradise where, for example, when you can no longer buy land because land itself is limited and not producible or monopolized by those who control the concentration of wealth, you can buy virtual land!!³ Yet, when people do not buy the package willingly or have other ideas of how economy and society should be organized, they become subject to all kinds of direct and indirect violence. It is not a spiritual claim, or merely a spiritual claim that I am making. The crooked rhetoric that naturalizes “modernity” as a universal global process and point of arrival hides its darker side, the constant reproduction of “coloniality.” In order to uncover the *perverse logic*—that Fanon pointed out--underlying the philosophical conundrum of modernity/coloniality and the political and economic structure of imperialism/colonialism, we must consider how to decolonize the “mind” (Thiongo) and the “imaginary” (Gruzinski)--that is, knowledge and being.

Since the mid seventies, the idea that knowledge is also colonized and, therefore, it needs to be de-colonized was expressed in several ways and in different disciplinary domains.⁴ However, the groundbreaking formulation came from the thought and the

² The participant-members of the research project were Anibal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Catherine Walsh, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Freya Schiwy, José Saldívar, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Fernando Coronil, Javier Sanjinés, Margarita Cervantes-Salazar, Libia Grueso, Marcelo Fernández Osco, Edgardo Lander, Arturo Escobar and myself. The participant-invited guests from the Duke faculty, whose works and interests are related, were Miriam Cooke, Ebrahim Moosa, Roberto Dainotto, Ralph Litzinger and Leo Ching.

³ http://www.usatoday.com/tech/webguide/internetlife/2004-06-03-virtual-realty_x.htm

⁴ The idea of that knowledge is part of the colonizing processes, has already a history in Latin American scholarship and intellectual debates. Brazilian “anthropologist” Darcy Ribeiro in the early seventies clearly stated that the imperial march toward the colonies goes with arms, books, concepts and pre-concepts. In philosophy and sociology, Enrique Dussel and Orlando Fals Borda claim the de-colonization of the social sciences and of philosophy (which of course presupposed that social sciences and philosophy, that is knowledge, has been colonized. In colonial studies, French scholar Robert Ricard spoke of the “spiritual conquest of Mexico” and a few years later, French scholar Serge Gruzinski followed suit with a book on “la colonización de l’imaginaire.” In her classic book on Waman Puma de Ayala, published in 1986, Rolena Adorno opened her argument by stating that her book was an act of decolonization of scholarship. I myself followed the path of my predecessor and in my book on the darker side of the renaissance cast colonization of knowledge in the domains of

pen of Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano. Quijano's intellectual experience was shaped in his early years of involvement in the heated debates ignited by dependency theory, in the seventies. Dependency theory, however, maintained the debate in the political (e.g., state, military control and intervention) and economy, analyzing the relationships of dependency, in those spheres, between center and periphery.⁵ That knowledge could be cast also in those terms was an idea to which Enrique Dussel, in 1977, hinted at in the first chapter of his *Philosophy of Liberation* titled "Geo-politics and Philosophy." In a complementary way, in the late eighties and early seventies, Anibal Quijano introduced the disturbing concept of "coloniality" (the invisible and constitutive side of "modernity"). In an article published in 1989 and reprinted in 1992, titled "Colonialidad y modernidad-racionalidad" Quijano explicitly linked coloniality of power in the political and economic spheres with the coloniality of knowledge; and ended the argument with the natural consequence: if knowledge is colonized one of the task ahead is to de-colonize knowledge.⁶ In the past three or four years, the work and conversations among the members of the modernity/coloniality research project,⁷ de-coloniality became the common expression paired with the concept of coloniality and the extension of coloniality of power (economic and political) to coloniality of knowledge and of being (gender, sexuality, subjectivity and knowledge), were incorporated into the basic vocabulary among members of the research project.⁸ One of

language, memory and space. It was clear by then that in the politics of scholarship we were not trying to take assault the state and to take power when thinking de-colonization but to assault knowledge and to take over epistemic power.

⁵ For an update on the pros and cons of dependency theory see Ramon Grosfoguel, "Developmentalism, Modernity and Dependency in Latin America". *Nepantla: Views from South*, I/2, 2000.

⁶ Anibal Quijano, "Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad" (1989), reprinted in *Los conquistados. 1492 y la población indígena de las Américas*, Heraclio Bonilla, compilador. Ecuador: Libri Mundi, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1992, 437-448. A more extended version of the ideas that Quijano explored in the nineties, in "Modernidad, colonialidad y América Latina" *Nepantla. Views from South*, I/3, 2000, 533-580; see also, in the same issue the article by Edgardo Lander, "Eurocentrism and Colonialism in Latin American Social Thought". *Nepantla. Views from South*, I/3, 2000. 519-532.

⁷ For a summary and contextualization, see Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality, and Anti-Globalization Social Movements." *Third World Quarterly* 25 (1), 2004, 207-230.

⁸ The bibliography generated by different members of the project around the question of knowledge (coloniality and de-coloniality of) is quite significant. And the elaboration of coloniality of and de-coloniality of being is already being debated. Among the many publications of coloniality and de-coloniality of knowledge, see Edgardo Lander (comp), *La colonialidad del saber. Eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2000; Catherine Walsh, Freya Schiwuy and Santiago Cástro Gómez, editors, *Indisciplinar las ciencias sociales. Geopolíticas del conocimiento y colonialidad del poder. Perspectivas desde lo Andino*. Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar y Abya-Yala, 2002; *Utopian Thinking*. Special issue of *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center), Ramón Grosfoguel, Editor, XXV/3, 2002; "Knowledge and the Known: Andean Perspectives on Capitalism and Epistemology", Special Dossier edited by Freya Schiwuy and Michael Ennis, *Nepantla. Views from South*, 2002, 3/1, 1-98.

the central points of Quijano's critique to the complicity between modernity/rationality, is the exclusionary and totalitarian notion of Totality (I am aware of the pleonasm); that is a Totality that negates, exclude, occlude the difference and the possibilities of other totalities. Modern rationality is an engulfing and at the same time defensive and exclusionary. It is not the case, Quijano added, that in non-European imperial languages and epistemologies (Mandarin, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Aymara, etc.), the notion of Totality doesn't exist or is unthinkable. But it is the case that, particularly since the 1500 and the growing dominance of Western epistemology (from Theo-logy to secular Ego-logy (e.g., Descartes, "I think, therefore I am")), non-Western concepts of Totality had to be confronted with a growing imperial concept of Totality. The cases of the Ottoman and Inca Empires are often quoted as examples of respect for the difference. I am not of course offering the examples of the Ottoman and the Inca Empires as idea for the future but just in order to show the regionalism of the Western notion of Totality. I am observing that from 1500 on, Ottomans, Incas, Russians, Chinese, etc., moved toward and inverted "recognition": they had to "recognize" that Western languages and categories of thoughts, and therefore, political philosophy and political economy, were marching and expanding without "recognizing" them as equal players in the game.

Quijano's project articulated around the notion of "coloniality of power" moves in two simultaneous directions. One is the *analytic*. The concept of coloniality has opened up, the re-construction and the restitution of silenced histories, repressed subjectivities, subalternized knowledges and languages performed by the Totality depicted under the names of modernity and rationality. Quijano acknowledges that postmodern thinkers already criticized the modern concept of Totality; but this critique is limited and internal to European history and the history of European ideas. That is why it is of the essence the critique of Totality from the perspective of coloniality and not only from the critique of post-modernity. Now, and this is important, the critique of the modern notion of Totality doesn't lead necessarily to post-coloniality, but to de-coloniality. Thus, the second direction we can call the *programmatic* that is manifested in Quijano as a project of "desprendimiento", of de-linking. At this junction, the analytic of coloniality and the programmatic of de-coloniality moves away and beyond the post-colonial.

Coloniality and de-coloniality introduces a fracture with both, the Eurocentered project of post-modernity and a project of post-coloniality, heavily dependent on post-structuralism as far as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida have been acknowledged as the grounding of the post-colonial canon: Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Hommi Bhabha. De-coloniality starts from other sources. From the de-colonial shift already implicit in *Nueva corónica and buen gobierno* by Waman Puma de Ayala; in the de-colonial critique and activism of Mahatma Gandhi; in the fracture of Marxism in its encounter with colonial legacies in the Andes, articulated by José Carlos Mariátegui; in the radical political and epistemological shifts enacted by Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Rigoberta Menchú, Gloria Anzaldúa, among others. The de-colonial shift, in other words, is a project of de-linking while post-colonial criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy. Quijano thus summarizes the de-colonial shift starting from the de-colonization of knowledge:

La crítica del paradigma europeo de la racionalidad/modernidad es indispensable. Más aún, urgente. Pero es dudoso que el camino consista en la negación simple de todas sus categorías; en la disolución de la realidad en el discurso; en la pura negación de la idea y de la perspectiva de totalidad en el conocimiento. Lejos de esto, es necesario *desprenderse de las vinculaciones de la racionalidad-modernidad con la colonialidad, en primer término, y en definitiva con todo poder no constituido en la decisión libre de gentes libres*. Es la instrumentalización de la razón por el poder colonial, en primer lugar, lo que produjo paradigmas distorsionados de conocimiento y malogró las promesas liberadoras de la modernidad. La alternativa en consecuencia es clara: la destrucción de la colonialidad del poder mundial (italics mine).⁹

The last statement may sound somewhat messianic but it is, nonetheless, an orientation that in the first decade of the 21st century has shown its potential and its viability. Such

⁹ Anibal Quijano, "Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad". En *Los conquistados. 1492 y la población indígena de las Américas*. In Heraclio Bonilla, compilador. Quito: Tercer Mundo-Libri Mundi editors, 1992, 447.

“destruction” shall not be imagined as a global revolution lead by one concept of Totality that would be different from the modern one, but equally totalitarian. The Soviet Union was already an experiment whose results is not an exemplar to follow. The statement shall be read in parallel to Quijano’s observations about none-totalitarian concepts of totality; to his own concept of heterogeneous structural-histories (I will come back below to this concept), and to what (I will develop below) *pluriversity as a universal project*. And, above all, it shall be read in complementarity with Quijano’s idea of “*desprenderse*” (de-linking).¹⁰ In this regard, Quijano proposes a de-colonial epistemic shift when he clarifies that:

En primer término, *la descolonización epistemológica, para dar paso luego a una nueva comunicación inter-cultural*, a un intercambio de experiencias y de significaciones, *como la base de otra racionalidad* que pueda pretender, con legitimidad, *a alguna universalidad*. Pues nada menos racional, finalmente, que la pretension de que *la específica cosmovisión de una etnia particular* sea impuesta como la racionalidad universal, aunque tal etnia se llama Europa occidental. Porque eso, en verdad, es pretender para un provincianismo el título de universalidad (italics mine)¹¹

The argument that follows is, in a nutshell, contained in this paragraph. First, epistemic de-colonization runs parallel to Amin’s de-linking. A de-linking that leads to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economies, other politics, other ethics. “New inter-cultural communication” should be interpreted as new inter-epistemic communication (as we will see bellow, is the case of the concept of inter-culturality among Indigenous intellectuals in Ecuador). Furthermore, de-linking presupposes to move toward a geo- and bio-politics of knowledge that on the one hand

¹⁰ The concept of “delinking” (in French, “la desconexión”) was introduced by Egyptian sociologist Samir Amin (*Delinking. Towards a Polycentric World*. Translated by Michael Wolfers. London: Zed Books, 1985. Specially, “The problematic of delinking”, 44-84). The concept is a crucial one, although in Samir Amin’s version it’s formulated at the level of economic and political (state) delinking. Without an epistemic delinking it is difficult to really delink from the modern notion of Totality. In the case of Amin, he was still caught in the mirage of Marxism and, therefore, of modernity. Thus, his delinking was proposed at the level of the *content* rather than *at the epistemic level that sustain the logic of coloniality*. I will bring together, in complementary fashion; Amin’s “delinking” with Quijano’s “desprendimiento.”

¹¹ Quijano, *op.cit.*, 447

denounces the pretended universality of a particular ethnicity (bio-politics), located in a specific part of the planet (geo-politics), that is, Europe where capitalism accumulated as a consequence of colonialism. De-linking then shall be understood as a de-colonial epistemic shift leading to other-universality, that is, to pluri-versality as a universal project. I'll come back to this point in section IV ("The grammar of de-coloniality").

II. The rhetoric of modernity

Enrique Dussel provides a good point of entry in his Frankfurt Lectures¹². He argues:

Modernity is, for many (for Jurgen Habermas or Charles Taylor) an essentially or exclusively European phenomenon. In these lectures, I will argue that modernity is, in fact, *a European phenomenon but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity that is its ultimate content*. Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the "center" of a *World History* that it inaugurates: the "periphery" that surrounds this center is consequently part of its self-definition. The occlusion of this periphery (and of the role of Spain and Portugal in the formation of the modern world system from the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries) leads the major contemporary thinkers of the "center" into a Eurocentric fallacy in their understanding of modernity. *If their understanding of the genealogy of modernity is thus partial and provincial, their attempts at a critique or defense of it are likewise unilateral and, in part, false.*

It is a question of uncovering the origin of what I call "the myth of modernity" itself. *Modernity includes a rational "concept" of emancipation that we affirm and subsume. But, at the same time, it develops an irrational myth, a justification for genocidal*

¹² From his initial formulation, "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)" (*The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*, John Beverley, José Oviedo and Michael Aronna, editors. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995, 65-77), Dussel has been revising the central idea. In this respect see also, "Europe, Modernity and Eurocentrism". *Nepantla. Views from South*, 1/3, 2000:465-478. This two previous article are the background for the introduction of the concept of "Trans" modernity. See "World-System and "Trans" Modernity". *Nepantla. Views from South*, 2/3, 2002, 221-245.

violence. The postmodernists criticize modern reason as a reason of terror; we criticize modern reason because of the irrational myth that it conceals.

There are several important issues packed together in these two dense paragraphs. My own argument, below, attempts to unfold and unravel some of the radical consequences of Dussel's statement for de-colonization (rather than emancipation) of knowledge and of being.¹³ Let us begin, then, by seeking to understand how *de-colonization* and *liberation* subsume the "rational concept of emancipation," as Dussel states it, and shift the geopolitical location of discourse; and from here walk our way toward the de-colonial shift.

The concept of "emancipation," as Dussel implies, belongs to the discourse of the European enlightenment and it is used today within that same tradition. It is a common word in liberal and Marxist discourses. Thus, beginning with his foundational book *Philosophy of Liberation* (1977), Dussel makes the geopolitical choice to use the keyword "liberation" instead of "emancipation" in consonance with the social movements of "national liberation" in Africa and Asia, as well as in Latin America¹⁴ Attaching the word "liberation" to "philosophy" complemented the meaning that the word had on all revolutionary fronts of political decolonization, in Asia and Africa and their struggles for "decolonization." "Liberation" referred to two different and interrelated struggles: the political and economic decolonization and the epistemological decolonization (e.g., philosophy in the case of Dussel; the social

¹³ I am using here "de-colonization" and "de-coloniality" as exchangeable in certain context, but always keeping in mind the historical distinction between a) political de-colonization and liberation between 1947 and 1970, approximately, in Africa and Asia and b) epistemic de-colonization. Ramon Grosfóguel described as "second decolonization" and Catherine Walsh and Nelson Maldonado-Torres refers to as "de-coloniality." The pedagogical advantage of de-coloniality over de-colonization is twofold. On the one hand, it names the task of unveiling and undoing "the logic of coloniality" and, on the other, it names a project and a process that should be distinguished from the diverse meanings attributed to "post-coloniality."

¹⁴ In Argentina, for example, the influential work of critical intellectual Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Nacionalismo y liberación*. Buenos Aires: Peña Lillo Editor, 1969. Hernández Arregui clearly and forcefully argues for the distinction between "nationalism" in Europe and "nationalism" in the Third World, and in the colonial history of Latin America and Argentina. He is one of the few critical intellectual to take colonization in Argentina seriously, and to avoid the trap of starting with the French Revolution and Argentinean independence from Spain in 1810. Hernandez Arregui shows clearly how the political independence from Spain meant the economic dependence from England and the British Empire, even if Argentina—and Latin America—were not "colonized" as India. This is, on the other hand, a good example to avoid confusion between "colonialism" and "coloniality."

sciences in the case of Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda¹⁵. Thus, “liberation” emerged in the process of de-centering the universal emancipating claims in the projects grounded in the liberal and socialist traditions of the European enlightenment. Seen in reverse, the fact that Ernesto Laclau¹⁶, for example, opts for “emancipation” instead of “liberation” might reveal that the two distinct projects are actually located on different geo-political terrains. The point here is less to determine “which one is right;” but, rather, to understand what each offers and for whom. We must ask: Who needs them? Who benefits from them? Who are the agents and the intended targets of emancipating or libratory projects? What subjectivities are activated in these projects? Does the distinction even matter when emancipation has a universal ring that seems to cover the interests of all oppressed people in the world?

The concept and the idea of “emancipation” in the eighteenth century, was based on three “major” historical experiences: the Glorious Revolution of 1668 in England, the independence of the colonists in America from the emerging British Empire in 1776; and the French Revolution in 1789. *In every historical account, the three initial historical moments were successful in achieving the meaning of emancipation.* Yet, the Glorious Revolution was led by the ascent of the British bourgeoisie and supported by the earlier uprising of the *levelers* in 1648. Likewise, the main actors of the U.S. Revolution of 1776 were the Anglo-descendent colonizers just as the “people” that ended up in the control of the French bourgeoisie in the French Revolution pertained also to that social stratum. While the Russian Revolution (1917) was, at least theoretically, the obverse of the Glorious, U.S. and French revolutions, it responded to the same logic of modernity, although with a socialist/Marxist content instead of a Liberal one. While “emancipation” was the concept used to argue for the freedom of a new social class, the bourgeoisie (translated into the universal term of “humanity” and setting the stage to export emancipation all over the world, although Haiti presented the initial difficulties to emancipating universal claims) and was recovered in the twentieth

¹⁵ See one of his initial statements, “Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual: los nuevos rumbos” Bogotá: C Valencia Editors, 1971; and more recently, “Research for Social Justice: Some South-North Convergences”, 1995, <http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/si/falsborda.htm#plenary>;

¹⁶ *Emancipation(s)*. London: Verso, 1996

century in Marxist discourse to argue for the “emancipation of the working class” or still more recently, for the emancipating forces of the *multitude*,¹⁷ “liberation” provides a larger frame that includes the racialized class that the European bourgeoisie (directly or indirectly) colonized beyond Europe (or beyond the heart of Europe, as it was the colonization of Ireland) and, thus, subsumes “emancipation.”). What remains still unsaid and un-theorized is the fact that the concept of “emancipation”—in the discourses of the European enlightenment-- proposes and presupposes changes within the system that doesn’t question the logic of coloniality—the emerging nation-states in Europe were, simultaneously, new imperial configurations (in relation to previous monarchic empires, like Spain and Portugal). I am arguing here that both “liberation” and “decolonization” points toward conceptual (and therefore epistemic) projects of *de-linking* from the colonial matrix of power. Because of the global reach of European modernity, de-linking cannot be understood as a new conceptual system coming, literally, out of the blue. De-linking in my argument presupposes border thinking or border epistemology in the precise sense that the Western foundation of modernity and of knowledge is on the one hand unavoidable and on the other highly limited and dangerous. The danger of what Ignacio Ramonet (*Le Monde Diplomatique*) labeled *la pensée unique* and that before him Herbert Marcuse labeled the “one dimensional man.” “La pensée” however, is not just neo-liberalism, as Ramonet implies. *La pensée unique* is Western in *toto*, that is, liberal and neo-liberal but also Christian and neo-Christian, as well as Marxist and neo-Marxist. *La pensée unique* is the totality of the three major macro-narratives of Western civilization with its imperial languages (English, German, French, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese) and their Greco and Roman foundations.

¹⁷ A new working class under neo-liberal economic re-structuration as Hardt and Negri argued, (**Michael Hard and Anthony Negri, *Empire*, 2000**). However, the “crowd” and the “multitude” at least two stories and two genealogy of thoughts. In the 1960’s and early 1970’s Zavaleta Mercado, in Bolivia, was trying to make sense of a society in which “Indians” and “paisants”; “Indians” and “mine workers”, mestizos, cholos formed a crowd difficult to distinguish clear in class formation. Zavaleta Mercado was admirer of Gramsci, but clever enough to understand that Bolivian society was quite different from Italian society, even from the South of Italy!! He then introduced the crucial concept, of difficult translation, “sociedad abigarrada”. The “crowd” and the “multitude” were different also from the clear-cut notion of “people” in European nation-State, where people were also identified by their citizenship. For both, Hernandez Arregui in Argentina and Zavaleta Mercado in Bolivia, the fact that the same terms (nationalism, people, multitude) meant quite different things in Europe and in their ex-direct colonies and current dependent nation-states, was simply explainable because European nation-states were imperial while South American nation-states were colonial. How can abstract universals such as nationalism or multitude, could be the same when you look at the world from Argentina, Bolivia, from Italy or from the U.S.? When you look at them from the perspective and the subjectivity of imperial or of colonial local histories?

To de-link from the colonial matrix of power and the logic of coloniality embedded in la pensee unique, it is necessary to engage in border epistemology and in alternatives TO modernity or in a the global and diverse project of transmodernity. Why global and diverse? -- because there are many “beginnings” beyond Adam and Eve and Greek civilization and many other foundational languages beyond Greek and Latin. With and in each language come different concepts of economy that of course Adam Smith was unable to think, and other political theories beyond Niccolo Machiavelli or Thomas Hobbes; and different conceptions of life which leads to philosophical practices that cannot be dependent from Greek canonical dictums in matters of thoughts!!! etc.etc. Conceptual (and theoretical) de-linking is, in the argument I am advancing the necessary direction of liberation and decolonization, while transformation within the colonial matrix of power is the splendor and limitations of any project of emancipation(s).¹⁸ De-linking is not a problem for “emancipating” projects because they are all presented as transformation within the linear trajectory of Western history and Western thoughts (once again, from Greek and Latin categories of thought, to German’s, English’s and French’s)¹⁹.

The distinctions I just established between emancipation on the one hand and liberation and decolonization (as de-linking projects) on the other, invites to rethink the concept of “revolution”. Yet, not every “revolution” since the end of the eighteenth century to the second half of the 20th century, then, belongs to the same universal and ascending order of “modernity and the emancipation of Man.” The Túpac Amaru uprising in Peru (1781), the Haitian revolution (1804), and the decolonization of Africa and Asia in the 20th century, introduced a different dimension, which was not entirely subsumed under and into the picture of Liberalism and socialism/Marxism. Tupac Amaru uprising as well as the Haitian revolution carried in them the de-linking seed. Contrary to any of the Spanish America or Anglo America independences, which were all independences within the system (and therefore, some kind of emancipation), Tupac Amaru and the Haitian Revolution introduced an-other cosmologies into the dominance and hegemony

¹⁸ See Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*. London: Routledge, 2000.

¹⁹ The splendors and miseries of Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* lies precisely in being caught within the limits of Western history and categories of thoughts.

of Western cosmological variations within the same rhetoric of modernity and logic of coloniality. These struggles for decolonization were led by a mixture of native elite and the *damnés* (the racially defamed and politically, economically and “spiritually”—in religion and knowledges—dispossessed).²⁰ Tupac Amaru uprising and the Haitian Revolution are part of the system of liberating and decolonizing movements that ended the modern structure linking empires to colonies (Spain, England, France, Portugal). Decolonization in Africa and Asia had in common with Tupac Amaru and the Haitian revolution, to “liberate” from the ties to imperial power, although it was not clear that the “liberation” from categories of thoughts was also at stake. In this case it is appropriate to say that while de-colonization was clearly the goal, de-coloniality was not clearly seen or stated during the processes of cutting the Gordian knot with the empire. De-coloniality was clearly formulated, in the sixties and seventies, by radical Arabo-Islamic thinkers (Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Komeini); by philosophy of liberation in Latin America and by Indigenous intellectuals and activist in Latin America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.²¹

Emancipation and liberation are indeed two sides of the same coin, the coin of modernity/coloniality. While liberation framed the struggle of the oppressed in the “Third World” and the history of modern coloniality that underline its history, decoloniality is an even larger project that encompasses both, as Fanon puts it, the colonized and the colonizer—and therefore, emancipation and liberation. De-coloniality turns the plate around and shifts the ethics and politics of knowledge. Critical theories emerge from the ruins of languages, categories of thoughts and subjectivities (Arab,

²⁰ See Nelson Maldonado Torres “The Topology of Being and the Geopolitics of Knowledge”, *City*, Vol. 8, 1, 29-56. 2004) for the philosophical notion of *damnés* and its political implications and for a follow up on Maldonado-Torres ground breaking thesis, see my “A topology of political agencies: the people, the subaltern, the *damnés* and the multitude” at the workshop on “The Popular and the Subaltern” (University of Santa Barbara, March of 2004, forthcoming in the workshop proceedings). I have also brought into the discussion, in my argument, the ground-breaking categories of “form mass”, “form class” “multitude” and “sociedad abigarrada” introduced by Bolivian sociologist and radical intellectual René Zavaleta-Mercado, in the seventies (see, among other works, *Clases sociales y conocimiento*. La Paz-Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro, 1988.

²¹ The World Social Forum, with all its limitations, is offers without a doubt a new articulation of de-linking projects after decolonization in Africa and Asia during the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The First Social Forum of the Americas that took place in Quito in July of 2004 is, with all its limitations, a point of none return and where de-linking arguments and practices are already well undersay. The II Cumbre de las Nacionalidades Indigenas, with all its limitations, that took place in Quito also the week before the Social Forum of the Americas, offers still another unmistakable example.

Aymara, Hindi, French and English Creole in the Caribbean, Affrikaan, etc.) that had been consistently negated by the rhetoric of modernity and in the imperial implementation of the logic of coloniality. Conceiving emancipation as the profile of the revolutionary processes led by the European bourgeoisie and the White (Protestant and Catholic) Creoles from European descent in the Americas—as well by some “native” elites in decolonized Asian and African countries--and conceiving liberation as the profile of the revolutionary processes in the colonies led by “natives” (e.g., people of non-Christian faith and of non-White colors) against both the European colonizer and the local native elites that used the nation state to *link* with the political and economic projects of Western Europeans (and in the twentieth century U.S.) states and private corporations--is another way to understand that “modernity is not an exclusively European phenomenon but constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity.”

If modernity is understood essentially as a European phenomenon, then the “emancipation” of people in the non-European world has to be planned, dictated and executed from Europe or the U.S. itself only. “Spreading democracy in the Middle East”, President Bush’s repeated dictum is a case in point and an illustration of what Habermas’s project on the completion of the incomplete project of modernity. It is not sure that Islamic or Indigenous progressive intellectuals, like Habermas himself, would like to go along with German ideals. In such a scenario, there is no possibility of another political economies and political theories. Religions would be tolerated as long as they do not interfere with THE political economy and THE political theory that rules the world. Everything shall be dictated by and from that original point, in space and time, where power concentrates. The rest of the world would have to wait and see, to listen and follow the leaders like in the war in Iraq.²²

Fortunately the World Social Forum, the Social Forum of the Americas and countless delinking social movements (not NGO’s!). In an Habermasian type of scenario,

²² There is an argument that has been advanced by the European left that sees the Europe as a model for the world. The argument is an anti-US argument and it sounds like a new global design, from the left, to replace the long gone dreams of a planetary revolution of the proletariat (see Susan George *Another world is possible if...* London: Verso, 2004).

liberation would be subservient to emancipation; and, decolonization, likewise, would still be covered over and managed by the emancipating rhetoric of modernity, either liberal or Marxist. In other words, if “emancipation” is the image used by honest liberals and honest Marxists from the internal and historical perspectives of Europe or the U.S., then looking at the world history from *outside* of those locations (either from a country geo-historically located beyond both or from the perspective of immigrants from those countries to Europe and the U.S.) means coming to terms with the fact that there is a still further need for “liberation/de-coloniality” from the people and institutions raising the flag of “emancipation.”²³ Thus, in this precise sense, emancipation cannot be the guiding light for liberation/de-coloniality but the other way round: liberation/de-coloniality includes and re-maps the “rational concept of emancipation.” *In this complexity, we need a relentless critical exercise of awareness of the moments when the guiding principle at work is liberation/de-coloniality and when, on the other hand, the irrational myth directs social actors in their projects for political, economic and spiritual (epistemic, philosophical, religious) decolonization.*

Nobody has access to an ultimate truth, and, consequently, no one person (or collective, church or government) from the right or from left, can offer a solution for the entire population of the planet. That is why *abstract universals* (Christianity, Liberalism, Marxism, and Islamism) run out of fashion and become different content of the same fundamentalist and imperial logic. For this reason, de-coloniality, as ethically oriented, epistemically geared, politically motivated and economically necessary processes, has the damnés as its central philosophical and political figure. As Fanon stated, decolonization is a double operation that includes both colonized and colonizer,²⁴

²³ Let me specify, for the critical and inquisitive reader that may be thinking “but what is Europe, Europe is no homogeneous!!)” that when I say Europe I am referring to Hegel’s conceptualization in his lesson in the philosophy of history. That is, the heart of the Greco-Roman legacy—Italy, Spain and Portugal in the South; France, England and Germany in the North; Greek and Latin language foundation; Italian, Spanish and Portuguese as the languages of the Renaissance; French, English and German, as the languages of the Enlightenment.

²⁴ I am aware that colonized/colonizer composite has fallen into desuetude. I am just using it as a short cut for the continuous re-production of the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. Certainly, Europeans are not one homogeneous group (neither Christians, nor Marxists). In the same vein, Indians or Afro in the Americas are not an homogeneous group either. However, European diversity is grounded in Greek and Latin languages and Christianity. Indians and Afro are not. Aymara and Quechua on the one hand or Bantu and Wolof on the other, provide an epistemology

although enacted from the perspective and interests of the *damnés*. Otherwise, the *damnés* would be deprived of their “right” to liberate and de-colonize and will have to wait for the generous gifts of the colonizer “given them freedom.” In other words, if the colonizer needs to be decolonized, the colonizer may not be the proper agent of decolonization without the intellectual guidance of the *damnés*. There are two kinds of individuals at work in the colonizer’s society: those that enact the “irrational myth that justifies genocidal violence” and those that, within that society, oppose and denounce it. But denunciation within the colonizer’s society, while important, is not sufficient in itself. It is necessary for dissenting actors belonging (e.g., having citizenship, not necessarily the right blood or skin color) to a colonizing society (e.g., the U.S. today) to join projects of decolonization (political and epistemic) that are, at once, *articulated by the colonized* and yet *not the project of a colonized elite*, who use decolonization as a tool for personal benefit while reproducing, in the “decolonized” country, the same “irrational myth that justifies genocidal violence.” There are several cases in Africa and South America that followed this path after “decolonization” and likewise in the United States vis-à-vis Native Americans and people from African descent.

The colonized do not have epistemic privileges, of course: The only epistemic privilege is in the side of the colonizer, even when the case in point are emancipating projects, liberal or Marxist.²⁵ “Colonizer side” here means Eurocentric categories of thought which carries both the seed of emancipation and the seed of regulation and oppression. Still, now are the histories and memories of coloniality; the wounds and histories of humiliation that offer the point of reference for de-colonial epistemic and political projects and of de-colonial ethics. De-coloniality, then, means working toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ, which is what modernity/coloniality does and,

(or if you wish a cosmology) that is very different to the cosmology (or epistemology if you wish) provided by Greek and Latin as has been framed in the dominant history of European imperial/colonial modernity.

²⁵ On the epistemic imperial privileges see Walter D. Mignolo, “The Enduring Enchantment (or the Epistemic Privilege of Modernity and where to go from Here)”. In *Enduring Enchantments, South Atlantic Quarterly* special issue, edited by Saurabh Dube. Durham: Duke University Press, 101/4, 2002, 927-954.

hence, where decolonization of the mind should begin. The struggle is for changing the terms in addition to the content of the conversation.

De-linking means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation--the content has been changed, in the modern/colonial world by Christianity (e.g. theology of liberation), by liberalism (e.g., the U.S. support to de-colonization in Africa and Asia during the Cold War) and by Marxism (also supporting de-colonization in Africa and Asia during the Cold War). De-linking requires that economic, political, philosophical, ethical, etc., conceptualization based on principles that makes the Bible, Adam Smith and Karl Marx necessary (because Western categories of thoughts have been globalized through the logic of coloniality and the rhetoric of modernity) but highly insufficient. In this section, then, I would like to explore further the different politics of knowledge organizing the darker side of modernity, the irrational myth that justifies genocidal violence within the layered historical frame established by processes of emancipation, liberation and decolonization. I will proceed by following Dussel's distinction of the critique of modernity from the perspective of liberation and decolonization.

If de-linking means to change the terms of the conversation, and above all, of the hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are and, consequently, what economy and politics, ethics and philosophy, technology and the organization of society are and should be, it is necessary to fracture the hegemony of knowledge and understanding that have been ruled, since the fifteenth century and through the modern/colonial world by what I conceive here as the theo-logical and the ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding.²⁶ We (I am referring to you and me, patient reader) are entering here in the unavoidable terrain of terminological de-naturalization. That is, one strategy of de-linking is to de-naturalize concepts and conceptual fields that totalize A reality. I take Theo-logy as the historical and dominant frame of knowledge

²⁶ To simplify matters I will not explore the new stage, Organo-logy (e.g., the organization of knowledge and the knowledge of organization) within the chronological paradigmatic changes within Western epistemology. Organo-logy is displacing the centrality of the Ego in favor of the Organization: the individual is part of a team, of a corporation, of an organization and no longer the "hero" that overcomes the importance of the "team." The basketball final, in 2004, between Detroit Piston and Los Angeles Lakers is a good example of the displacement from ego-logy to organo-logy: there were no "stars" in Detroit Piston's team, they won as a "team" not as the effort of individual figures.

in the modern/colonial world from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century. Theology was, as people like to say, not homogeneous. There were Catholics and Protestants, and also Eastern Orthodox. Catholics and Protestants were mainly linked to Latin Christianity while Eastern Christian to Greek Orthodoxy and to Slavic languages, etc. etc. The hegemony in the Western world (Western Europe and the Americas) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the common ground on which Catholics and Protestants played out their differences. The Theological politics of knowledge and understanding was, then, the platform for the control of knowledge and subjectivity in Europe and the Americas, but not yet in China, India or the Arabic-Islamic world. When Western politics of knowledge began to be imposed in Asia and Africa, in the nineteenth century, Europe has already gone through an internal transformation. The sovereignty of the subject began to be felt at the beginning of the seventeenth century (Cervantes, Bacon, Shakespeare, Descartes) and the questioning of Theology open up the doors for a displacement, within Europe, from the Theological to the Ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding.

But in the colonies, between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, the concerns were quite different. Creoles from Spanish descent were concerned with the sovereignty of the colonial subject, that is, in asserting their sovereignty vis-à-vis the European modern subject as well as vis-à-vis the authority of the Church. At the end of the seventeenth century, the idea of science and of secular philosophy served very well the need of autonomy of the American Creoles from Spanish descent. A similar orientation could be traced within American Creoles from British descent in the British colonies of the North East. In all these cases, a displacement from the theo- and ego-logical hegemony toward a (de-colonizing) geopolitics of knowledge and understanding began to emerge. By geo-graphic (and body-graphic, as I will develop below)²⁷ I mean historical imperial/colonial location of new

²⁷ Delinking and changing the terms of the conversation means, among other things, to fracture the naturalized assumption that links words and things, as Foucault taught us. Geo-logy as sciences of the earth places the accent on the object of investigation, while geo-politics of knowledge and understanding put the enunciation at the center, an enunciation that could shape, describe and frame any possible “object”. Thus, geo-politics of knowledge and understanding could articulate either emancipating projects (as the Creoles from Spanish and British descent did) or liberating and decolonizing projects,

subjects of knowledge and understanding that had been negated, ignored and made invisible, precisely, by the imperial by the theo- and ego-logical politics of knowledge enacted agents and agencies of knowledge and understanding located in the domain of the empire rather than in the sphere of the colonies. Epistemic geo-politics implies a de-colonial shift and acquires its meaning, here, not in relation to an object (the earth), but in the frame of epistemic embodiments (geo-historical and body-graphical)²⁸ in the spatial organization of the modern/colonial world: the geo-politics of knowledge names the historical location (space and time, the historical marks and configuration of a space and a place, etc.) and authority of loci of enunciations that had been negated by the dominance and hegemony of both the theo-logical and ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding.

But much before the Creoles from European descent, Latins or Anglos, Indigenous intellectuals expressed and articulated the need to de-link. Chief example among them is Waman Puma de Ayala in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. For several reasons, Waman Puma's argument and positionality both confronting the Spaniards and critiquing the Inca administration (Waman Puma belonged to a

as we will see below in the early example of Waman Puma de Ayala, the Haitian revolution already mentioned, and more recent and consistent projects carried out by intellectuals in the academy and social movements.

²⁸) What calls for thinking for example in Hanna Arendt, Jacques Derrida or Frantz Fanon? It is not just or only the floating spirit of abstract categories that come from heaven to the mind; they make you think, and then you realize that you exist. It is the other way round: you feel the embodiment geo-historically and biographically and it is from that embodiment that you realize that you exist, and you exist in a modern/colonial world that has distributed the population of the planet racially, sexually and by gender that you think. The geo- and ego-political revolution of our time lies precisely in (a) the affirmation of the reversal and (b) the unveiling of the geo- and bio- political embodiment that has been concealed in modern epistemology from the Renaissance, under the name of God (Theo-logy), the Reason of the emancipated individual (Ego-logy), and the supremacy of the Organization (e.g., in the sense of cybernetics, *kubernetes*, knowledge of the organization and the organization of knowledge) over the individual (Organo-logy). Cybernetic researchers quickly realized that "the science of observed systems" cannot be divorced from "the science of observing systems because it is we who observe. The cybernetic approach is centrally concerned with this unavoidable limit of what we can know: our own subjectivity. In this way cybernetics is aptly called "applied epistemology". At minimum, its utility is the production of useful descriptions, and, specifically, descriptions that include the observer in the description. Cybernetic descriptions of psychology, language, arts, performance, or intelligence (to name a few) may be quite different from more conventional, hard "scientific" views --- although cybernetics can be rigorous too. Implemented in conjunction with imperial/global designs, the emancipating possibilities offered by *cybernetics* were used and applied "instrumentally" in software and/or hardware, in the design of social and managerial of interpersonal systems. Last but not least, it is interesting to point out that in the mid- nineties, Sage Publications started a news journal: *Organization. The Interdisciplinary Journal of Theory and Society*. In the mid-nineties too, in Argentina, the monthly publication *Gestion* (Management) was started. Addressed to the executive world (and with an annual cost of \$250), the journal was entirely devoted to the organization of corporation, business, offices, etc. in order to gain efficiency minimizing costs. If we look the administration of the universities in the U.S., from the late 80s on, we will see the same train. Thus, the corporate values and orientation of the university corresponds to the growing dominance of Organo-logy as overarching imperial metaphor.

community under Inca's administration)) is certainly very complex and I do not have room here to honor that complexity. For the purpose of my argument, Waman Puma's *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno* was a crucial moment whose relevance not only have been scholarly recognized and understood in his delinking argument²⁹, but also his original move has been also understood by social movements like the Zapatista's in their relentless process of de-linking, from their theoretical revolution to their political and economic implementation in the Caracoles.³⁰ The basic structure of Waman Puma's arguments is that it is necessary, in the first place, a "nueva corónica", that is, a chronicle of Andean civilization before the arrival of the Spaniards that complements the partial and very often crooked narratives of missionaries and men of letters who appointed themselves to write the chronicles that, according to them, indigenous people did not have. The missionary arguments were simple: this people do not have alphabetic writing, therefore they cannot have history because for a Renaissance man of the sixteenth century, history was irretrievably linked to alphabetic writing in the Greco-Latin tradition (not Hebrew or Arabic or even Cyrillic, of course). Thus, Waman Puma de Ayala's "nueva corónica" not only contradicts Spanish ones, but uses their one language in order to show that the Spanish histories were never told in full³¹. The "nueva corónica" furthermore is not a correction of Spanish mistake within the same Spanish epistemic logic, but it is above all the introduction of a new logic to tell the story. It is, indeed, a truly epistemic delinking in history writing. Consequently, from a "nueva corónica" that has delinked from the historiographic precepts of European historiography of the time, comes the proposal of "buen gobierno." Obviously, the

²⁹ Rolena Adorno *Guaman. Writing and Resistance in Colonial Perú*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1986, 2000

³⁰ Rolena Adorno's seminal work on Waman Puma de Ayala opens with a statement that can hardly be misunderstood, although it has been conveniently forgotten by most of the critics that praised the book. It is clear and loud, though: "In the pages that follow I have attempted to perform an act of decolonization in the forum of historical literary scholarship" (1986, 3). We could of course debate whether Adorno was successful or not, but we cannot ignore what will remain as a turning point of her contribution to literary and historical scholarship. The Zapatistas have performed in a different terrain (that of the social movement) a theoretical revolution that clearly brings together decolonization with delinking (e.g., that is, decolonization without delinking it is just a different name for emancipation within the system, as the American or the French revolutions were). For the Zapatistas theoretical revolution, see Mignolo 2000 and for the history of the movement to the creation of Los Caracoles, see Munoz Ramirez 2003, Ornelas 2003, and above all the Zapatistas documents on www.ezln.org. Another radical example of epistemic and social delinking is the organization Via Campesina and above all the concept of "soberanía alimentaria" (www.ecoloxistesasturies.org/Temas/Asturies/Campo/ViaCampesinaSoberaniaAlimentaria.doc), Las but not list, similar processes are taking place in the World Social Forum (de Souza Santos, 2003).

³¹ Rolena Adorno, op.cit, 1986, 12-35

“buen gobierno” that Waman Puma proposes it is not based on Machiavelli but on the practices and histories of Andean social organization, but this time taking into account that—contrary to ancient times—the Spaniards were there to stay and the region was no longer what it was. The radical de-linking performed by Waman Puma put him at odds of course with Spanish authority and he paid with four centuries of silence. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, instead, enjoy quick fame because he remains within the system and his proposal was closer to emancipation than to de-linking, that is, as radical liberation and epistemic de-colonization.

De-linking cannot be performed, obviously, within the frame of the theo- and the ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding. For, how can you de-link within the epistemic frame from where you want to de-link? De-linking is the reverse of “assimilation”: to assimilate means that you do not belong yet to what you are assimilating. It doesn’t make sense to conceive assimilation within the frame one wants to assimilate!! For that reason, early de-linking projects (such as the one advanced by Samir Amin³² were not radical de-linking but rather radical emancipation within the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. In other words, de-linking could hardly be thought out from a Marxist perspective, because Marxism offers a different content but not a different logic³³. The epistemic locations for de-linking comes from the emergence of the geo- and body-politics of knowledge³⁴, of which Waman Puma shall become the reference point of all subsequent projects.³⁵

If the theo- and ego- politics of knowledge and understanding are the hegemonic frame of Western modernity in its *internal diversity*, they are also the constraints of the “pensée unique” (i.e., monotopic thinking), the process of delinking needs a different

³² Samir Amin, *Delinking. Towards a Polycentric World*, op.cit., 41-84).

³³ I developed this argument in the conclusion to *Local Histories/Global Designs* (“An other language, an other logic, an other thinking”).

³⁴ I have been using the expression bio-politics to describe the complementary dimension of the geo-politic of knowledge in the de-colonial shift. Ramon Grosfóguel suggested “body-politics” instead which, on the one hand, avoid the confusion with the same expression used by Michel Foucault to mean a different social phenomena. On the other hand, it is more appropriate to make visible the color, gender and sexuality of the “thinking body”; and making visible the white, male and heterosexual body-politics that lies, invisible, behind the hegemonic politics of knowledge of imperial European modernity.

³⁵ I do not think that the reference to “Juntas de Buen Gobierno” in the Zapatista’s political theory and political economy are of recent invention without reference to the past.

epistemic grounding that I describe here as the geo- and body- politics of knowledge and understanding.³⁶ These are epistemologies of the *exteriority* and of the *borders*. If there is no *outside* of capitalism and western modernity today, there are many instances of *exteriority*: that is, the outside created by the rhetoric of modernity (Arabic language, Islamic religion, Aymara language, Indigenous concepts of social and economic organization, etc.). The outside of modernity is precisely that what has to be conquered, colonized, superseded and converted to the principles of progress and modernity. Epistemic *geo-politics* as conceived by Dussel in his seminal *Philosophy of Liberation* (1977) can and should be read today as a de-linking manifesto. Dussel produced a fracture in the terrain on which theo- and ego-politics fought for the right to a “new paradigm” (Khun) or a new “episteme” (Foucault). The very historical foundation of the modern/colonial world in America (and I am using foundation here with careful awareness and not endorsing fundamentalisms), is characterized by the “pulling out (extirpation) or removal of idolatry” which tells the story of the genocidal and epistemic violence of theology (e.g., “extirpation” of knowledges and beliefs among the Indigenous population that Spanish missionaries believed, or at least said, were the work of the Devil). The continued disqualification and simultaneous appropriation of “indigenous” knowledges to produce “modern” pharmaceutical drugs is a contemporary example in which the rhetoric of modernity justifies not only the appropriation of land and labor forces but, lately and more intensively, the knowledge of “Others.” Geo-politics of knowledge is one instance in which the mirage is broken up and denounced. (The other is the *bio-politics* of knowledge to which I will return later.)

Geo-politics of knowledge (e.g., emerging from different historical locations of the world that endured the effects and consequences of Western imperial and capitalist expansion) are necessary to break up the illusion that all knowledges are and have to

³⁶ Please in mind that epistemic theo-politics is not just a question of the past, buried in the history of the European Renaissance and the New World colonies. It remained well and alive next to the dominance of epistemic ego-politics and it is resurfacing now with vengeance in the brilliant theo-political critique of the ego-political foundation of the social sciences. See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory. Beyond Secular Reason*. London: Blackwell, 1990. It is useful to think de-colonization of knowledge and of being as beyond Theology and Secular Reason (ego-logy and organo-logy), as far as de-coloniality comes from an spatial epistemological break, called *Pachakuti*, the turn around seen from the perspective of the inhabitants of Tawantinsuyu when the Spanish arrived with the intention of taking over gold, government and souls.

originate in the imperial form of consciousness (e.g., the right, the left and the center). The geography of reason shifts. That is to say, the assumption that everything is thought out within the heart of the empire: repression, control, oppression as well as emancipation, liberation and decolonization. Whoever is not in the heart of the empire, but in its direct or indirect colonies, has to wait for *imperial emancipations*. One of the reasons the Haitian revolution was an unthinkable historical phenomenon, as Trouillot³⁷ has shown, was precisely because of such assumptions. The geo-politic of knowledge is twice relevant, then. First, it is the affirmation of what has been denied by the agents that created, enacted and expanded the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge. Secondly, once geo-politics of knowledge is affirmed as the re-emergence of the reason that has been denied as reason, it makes visible what the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge occluded and still occludes, namely their own geo-political *location*, which is cloaked in the rhetoric of universality. Decolonization of knowledge shall be understood in the constant double movement of unveiling the geo-political location of theology, secular philosophy and scientific reason and simultaneously affirming the modes and principles of knowledge that have been denied by the rhetoric of Christianization, civilization, progress, development, market democracy.

III. Coloniality: the Darker Side of Modernity

III. 1. De-linking presupposes to know from where one should delink, as I suggested before. De-linking means “desprenderse” from the coloniality of knowledge controlled and managed by the theo-, ego- and organo-logical principles of knowledge and its consequences. De-linking goes together with the de-colonial shift and the geo- and body-politics of knowledge providing both the analytics for a critique and the vision toward a world in which many worlds can co-exist. As a critique, the geo- and body-politics of knowledge reveals the totalitarian bent of theo-, ego- and organo- politics of knowledge, even when good intentions could be found in their content. As a vision, the geo- and body- politics of knowledge lead the way toward a “pluri-versal world as a uni-versal project”. This vision differs, quite radically, from the “polycentric world”

³⁷ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

that Samir Amin proposed as the path after de-linking. In its early version, de-linking was conceived as an economic and political de-linking from the Imperial States (e.g., Western European capitalists countries plus the U.S.)³⁸. De-linking today shall be thought out and projected as a de-linking from the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. But in order to proceed in that direction (part **IV** below), we need to spell out both the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality.

The rhetoric of modernity works through the imposition of ‘salvation,’ whether as Christianity, civilization, modernization and development after WWII or market democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union. Thus, the geo-political--rather than postmodern--of modernity focuses not only on reason as the reason of terror (as Dussel pointed out) but also, and mainly, on “the irrational myth that it conceals,” which I understand here as the logic of coloniality. If coloniality is constitutive of modernity, in the sense that there cannot be modernity without coloniality, then the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality are also two sides of the same coin. How are the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality entangled together? Let’s explore the question, first, through the *concept* of modernity and then explore its relationship to the “rational concept of emancipation.” For the purposes at hand, a general definition of modernity as proposed by Anthony Giddens about ten years ago should suffice:

‘Modernity’ refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. This associates modernity with a time period and with an initial geographical location, but for the moment leaves its major characteristics safely stowed away in a block box³⁹.

What would those “modes of social life” be? Niall Ferguson helps by offering a snapshot:

³⁸ Amin’s de-linking proposal did not contemplate the need of Soviet colonies to delink from the Soviet union, neither the situation of Japan’s colonies. Delinking was thought out within the frame of liberal and capitalists empires, that is, in the history of Western expansion since 1500.

³⁹ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*. Palo Alto: Stanford U.Press, 1993, 1.

While in the 1620s only gentlemen had taken tobacco, by the 1690 it was a custom, the fashion, all the mode—so that every plow man had his pipe... What people like most about these new drugs (tobacco among men, tea among ladies) was that they offered a very different kind of stimulus from the traditional European drug, alcohol. Alcohol is technically a depressant. Glucose, caffeine and nicotine, by contrast, were the eighteenth century equivalent of uppers. Taken together the new drugs gave English society an almighty high; the Empire, it might be said, was built on huge sugar, caffeine and nicotine rush—a rush nearly everyone could experience⁴⁰.

In the 1940s, Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz made a similar, although sardonic, observation of the same phenomenon. Ortiz's is not an observation from inside the memories and sensibilities of the empire but, rather, from within the memories and sensibilities of the colonies. While Ferguson tells the story available within the ideological frame of the ego-politics of knowledge, Ortiz belongs to "an-other history," literally, to the colonial history of the Caribbean looking East and somewhat up North. There is no guarantee of being "better" and being "good" because of the simple fact of belonging to the memories of the colonies. It simply means that it is *an-other* frame of consciousness that perceives and senses the world that cannot be subsumed by and under the consciousness and sensibilities that have been produced in the social forms of life and institutions within the empire. The vision that emerges from the memories, wounds, humiliations, disavowal of Caribbean consciousness (e.g., Fanon 1952; Cesaire 1956; Wynter 2003, etc.), where brutal exploitation of labor and massive slave trades took place, involving, of course, British merchants, is less glorifying and celebratory of modernity than Giddens or Ferguson. But, above all, it is an-other way of knowing and not simply a critique of historical content that is argued within the same logic that underlies the narratives of Giddens and Ferguson. What is at stake, briefly, is the conflictive coexistence of the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge on the one hand and

⁴⁰ Niall Ferguson. *Empire. The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, 16

the geo (and bio-) on the other. From the “underside” of modernity⁴¹, from, that is, the forms of consciousness shaped in and by the history of coloniality, Ortiz observed:

Tobacco reached the Christian world along with the revolutions of the Renaissance and the Reformation, when the Middle Ages were crumbling and the modern epoch, with its *rationalism*, was beginning. One may say that *reason* starved and benumbed by theology, to revive and free itself, needed the help of some harmless stimulant that should not intoxicate it with enthusiasm and then stupefy it with illusions and bestiality, as happens with the old alcoholic drinks that lead to drunkenness [..].

The coincidental appearance of these four exotic products in the Old World, all of them stimulants of the senses as well as of the spirit, is not without interests. *It is as though they had been sent to Europe from the four corners of the earth by the devil to revive Europe when “the time came”, when that continent was ready to save the spirituality of reason from burning itself out and give the senses their due once more*⁴².

Contrary to alcohol, which incites violence, the stimulants in question create feelings of joy and celebration, on the one hand reported by Ferguson, but at the same time, as Ortiz notes, oblivion, forgetfulness and egotistic individualism as well as disregard in Europeans for other individuals in the colonies, particularly Blacks and Indians.

To further bring to light the silence of the colonies buried under the veil tended in and by the celebratory descriptions offered by Giddens and Ferguson (both of whom are British, I should remember), I turn to Afro-Antiguan Eric Williams. His characterization may offend enthusiastic supporters of Alain Badiou’s critique of identity politics and his search for the singular universal. Another way to read into identity politics, although limited in its bend toward apartheid, is as the expression of *human interests* that have

⁴¹ Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity. Apel, Ricour, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation*. Translated and edited by Eduardo Mendieta. New Jersey: Humanities Press International Inc., 1996.

⁴² Fernando Ortiz, *Counterpoint of Sugar and Tobacco* (1940). Durham: Duke University Press, 1995, 206. Also very revealing on the same point, looking at modernity from the perspective of coloniality (in the epistemological sense) or looking at the empires from the point of view of the colonies (in the historical sense), is Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. London: Pinguin Books, 1986.

been historically denied because Blacks or Indians have not been considered humans and, therefore, could not have interests. Eric Williams reveals one aspect of modernity that is overlooked by both Giddens and Ferguson and perhaps taken for granted in the way of life of empire-building that characterized England in the second half of the seventeenth century:

One of the most important consequences of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the expulsion of the Stuarts was the impetus *it gave to the principle of free trade*. In the same year the Merchant Adventurers of London were deprived of their monopoly of the export trade in cloth, and a year later the monopoly of the Muscovy Company was abrogated and trade to Russia made free. *Only in one particular did the freedom accorded in the slave trade differ from the freedom accorded in other trades—the commodity involved was man*⁴³.

From Giddens to Williams, through Ferguson and Ortiz, we have the spectrum of the partial stories of modernity (e.g., the events as seen and narrated from the British perspective) and modernity/coloniality (e.g., the events seen and narrated from the Caribbean perspective). From the Caribbean, you see that modernity not only needed coloniality but that coloniality was and continues to be *constitutive* of modernity. There is no modernity without coloniality. From England, you see only modernity and, in the shadow, the “bad things” like slavery, exploitation, appropriation of land, all of which will supposedly be “corrected” with the “advance of modernity” and democracy (e.g., today’s U.S. policy in Iraq) when all arrive at the stage in which justice and equality will be for all. Giddens and Ferguson offer a view of modernity and of empire from the consciousness of the ego-politics of knowledge while Williams and Ortiz see it from the consciousness of the geo-politics of knowledge. A lake looks different when you are sailing on it than when you are look at it from the top of the mountains surrounding it. Different perspectives on modernity are not only a question of the eyes, then, but also of *consciousness* and of physical location and power differential--those who look from the

⁴³ Eric Williams. *Capitalism and Slavery*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, [1944], 1994.

peak of the mountain see the horizon and the lake, while those inhabiting the lake see the water, the fish and the waves surrounded by mountains but not the horizon.

Alternatives to modernity, as these four brief examples show, cannot come (or cannot come only and perhaps mainly) from the theo- and the ego-politics of knowledge inhabited by those like Giddens and Ferguson, insofar as their perspective is restricted to a particular discourse. *Alternative modernities* are thinkable within the Ego politics of knowledge and understanding in the precise sense that it is the same principle of knowledge that is enacted in different locations (e.g., India, South Africa or Brazil). Alternatives to modernity, instead, presupposes delinking and building on the geo- and bio- politics of knowledges and understanding. In order to fully understand this point, let's return to the rationality that has linked modernity with emancipation since rationality and emancipation are two elements of modernity that most progressive intellectuals would like to "salvage" from the horror of modernity, from the complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. It is in philosophy and in "philosophical idealism" that the "rational concept of emancipation" (to use Dussel's formulation) and the idea of modernity came together. Jurgen Habermas attributes the conceptualization of modernization and modernity to Hegel who distinguishes the historical from the philosophical dimensions of modernity⁴⁴. The disjunction between historical and philosophical modernity might explain why some theorists place modernity in the Renaissance and others in the Enlightenment. Historical modernity has, for Hegel, three landmarks events: the Renaissance, the Reformation and the discovery of the New World. Philosophical modernity has a (different) three-part configuration of events that consists of the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It is indeed interesting to note that for Hegel (as well as for Carl Schmitt (1952)), historical modernity is conceived as a radical turn of events that begins around 1500 with the Renaissance and the discovery of the New World as the signposts for the moment in which the pre-global began to be re-articulated by the global. Schmitt prefers, as could be expected within the modern concept of time, to see a "transition"

⁴⁴ Jurgen Habermas "Modernity's Consciousness of Time and Its Need for Self-Reassurance" and "Hegel's Concept of Modernity." In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures*. Translated by Frederick Lawrence. Boston: MIT, 1987, 1-45.

from the pre-global to the global. The problem with the idea of “transition” is that, once the new appears, the old vanishes out of the present, which is precisely the problem with the rhetoric of modernity for those who are not lucky enough to be in the *space* where *time* and *history* move forward.

The concept of emancipation belongs to the universe of discourse framed by the philosophical and historical concepts of modernity, which becomes apparent if we look at the particular intersection of Theo- and Ego-politics that later, in the eighteenth century, gave rise to the idea of emancipation-- the Reformation. In terms of philosophical modernity, the Reformation was a crucial break-through for the emergence of critical self-reflexivity and it is easy to see how—and why--the concept of emancipation emerged from the ‘transition’ to “freedom of subjectivity” and “critical self-reflexivity” from lack thereof that began with the Reformation. The individual freedom sought to some degree within the Church by Luther became more and more autonomous through secularization until its detachment in Descartes dictum, “I think, therefore I am,” in Kant’s transcendental subject and in Hegel’s freedom of subjectivity and critical self-reflexivity.

Habermas underscores four connotations associated with Hegel’s idea that “the principle of the modern world is freedom of subjectivity”: individualism, the right to criticism, autonomy or action (e.g., responsibility of what we do) and idealistic philosophy itself (e.g., Hegel’s argument that in modern times philosophy grasps the self-conscious (or self-knowing) idea⁴⁵). Habermas explains the importance of the Reformation in Hegel’s concept of philosophical modernity:

With Luther, religious faith became reflective: the world of the divine was changed in the solitude of subjectivity into something posited by ourselves. Against faith in the authority of preaching and tradition, Protestantism asserted the authority of the subject relying upon his own insight: the host was simply dough, the relics of the Saints mere bones. Then, too, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Napoleonic Code

⁴⁵ Habermas, *op.cit.*, 17

validated the principle of freedom of will against historically preexisting law as the substantive basis of the state [...]

Furthermore, the principle of subjectivity determines the forms of modern culture. This holds true first of all for objectifying science, which *disenchants nature at the same time that it liberates the knowing subject*. “Thus [writes Hegel], all miracles were disallowed: for nature was a now system of known and recognized laws; man is at home in it, and only that remains standing in which he is at home; he is free through the acquaintance he has gained with nature.”⁴⁶

These two paragraphs contain most of the elements necessary to reveal the rhetoric behind what Dussel called “the rational concept of emancipation.” Habermas’ celebratory view of Hegel’s concept of modernity allows me make visible its underside: (a) the limits of the concept of emancipation once it is detached from the historical experience and the social class that made it necessary, (b) the blindness to the other side of modernity, that is, coloniality. In spite of the fact that Hegel (and the enlightenment philosophers and economists) were reflecting on the particular experience of an ascending bourgeoisie that wanted “freedom of subjectivity” from the Monarchic and Christian Catholic coercion, their exportation of “freedom of subjectivity” and “critical self-reflexivity” around the planet for the good of everyone repeated the same restrictive mechanisms. Certainly, Aymara, Quechuas, Nahuatls, African slaves in Haiti, etc., in the New World (and during the sixteenth century) also experienced coercion by Monarchic and Christian Catholic powers. But, was Hegel “speaking” for all of them in the sense that Indians and people of African descent could or should identify with Hegel’s freedom of spirit and disenchantment of nature? Individuals who have been enslaved or forced into a position of serfdom may not need philosophical “freedom.” And Hegel’s celebration of science and the disenchantment of nature may not have been enthusiastically acclaimed by Indigenous people and African-brought slaves. Nature was, precisely, one of the spheres of social life in which Africans; Afro-descendants and Indigenous people could maintain “their freedom of subjectivity” and their “critical

⁴⁶ Habermas, op.cit, 17

self-reflexivity” as oppressed slaves or serfs of European powers administered by a Creole/Mestizo elite from European descent. It was, in fact, that sector of the population, the Creoles and Mestizo elite who led the way of independence from Spain and hooked themselves to the new economic, politic and epistemic imperial configuration imported from France, Germany and England, for whom Hegel made sense. At least in the Spanish colonies, the leaders of the independence and of the emerging nation-states opted for what seemed “natural”-- the “application” of the principles of political theory and political economy that were emerging in France, England and the U.S.⁴⁷. For the Creole/Mestizo elite, the term “emancipation” applied, although only partially since emancipation from Spain put them in the economic hands of England, the political web of France and the philosophical net of Germany.

Although modernity is not simply a European phenomenon and is inextricably entangled with the colonies, as Dussel has noted, *the rhetoric of modernity has been predominantly put forward by European men of letters, philosophers, intellectuals, officers of the state*. The modern/colonial power differential was, of course, structured at all levels (economic, political, epistemological, militarily), but it was at the epistemological level that the rhetoric of modernity gained currency.⁴⁸ If we had time to go into the biography of the main voices that conceived “modernity” as the series of historical events taking place from Italy to Spain and Portugal and from there to Germany, France and England, all of them would originate in one of the six European countries leading the Renaissance, the colonial expansion and capitalist formation, and the European Enlightenment. Dissenting voices from the colonies were not concerned about conceiving modernity and expanding it West. Dissenting voices, like that of Waman Puma de Ayala in the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru in the early seventeenth century and of Quobna Ottobah Cugoano in British Ghana, were silenced or ignored. In the name of what or on what grounds? --Of theo-politics of knowledge the first and the

⁴⁷ Natalio R. Botana. *La tradición republicana. Alberdi, Sarmiento y las ideas políticas de su tiempo*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1997.

⁴⁸ Why Judaism was not hegemonic instead of Christianity, it is another story that shall be linked with the consolidation of a Jews state after 1948; and the role that Jews play in complicity with existing structure of power (e.g., in Russia as well as in the U.S., see Amy Chua, *The World in Fire. How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. New York: Double Day, 2003.).

ego-politics of knowledge the second. Voices like Waman Puma and Quobna Ottobah anchored both the geo and body-politics of knowledge and they shall become—for the de-colonial shift--what Plato and Aristotle were for the foundation of the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge. Epistemic decolonization is still of the essence since we are still living under the set of beliefs inherited from Theology and secularized by Philosophy and Science as well as the belief that “capitalism” (and above all in its neo-liberal rhetoric and practice) and “economy” are one and the same phenomenon. De-colonization (of the mind) must unveil the totalitarian complicity of the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality in order to open up space for the possibility, following the rhetoric of the World Social Forum as well as the Zapatistas, of “another world” in which many worlds will co-exist.⁴⁹ Thus, Dussel’s philosophy of liberation, via the geo-politics of knowledge, calls for “liberation” from the ties and complicities maintained by earlier “emancipation.” While modernity extolled emancipation, the indigenous population and people from African descent were waiting for their time, which has arrived, the time of liberation and decolonization (e.g., Frantz Fanon and Fausto Reynaga, as two clear examples). By opening up the question of the geo-politics of knowledge Dussel took a crucial step toward the grammar of decolonization. If we put the emancipating ideals of modernity in the perspective of coloniality, the historical frame here will not be constituted by events meaningful to Hegel but, rather, to the philosophy of liberation, to indigenous and Afro social movements, to critical thought in the Caribbean, to the modernity/coloniality scholarly and political project, the Social Forum of the Americas (as well as the World Social Forum), etc. Within that frame, we

⁴⁹ We should keep in mind that there the logic of coloniality and the rhetoric of modernity has been expanded all over the world. The question that needs attention to bring the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality at a world scale, and beyond the limited scope of the Christian and Liberal capitalist colonialism of Western Europe (Spain, Portugal, Holland, England and France), is the need to bring the Soviet revolution, role of Japan and China in the global order, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalisms. How can we account for this complex configuration based on the principle that modernity combines the rhetoric of salvation, emancipation and progress with the logic of coloniality—of genocide, oppression, exploitation, expendability of human lives)—that it conceals? For reason of space I will leave China and Japan out of my consideration, and focus on the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia and on the rise of Islamic fundamentalisms. To account for the historical complexity in terms of the narratives based on the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality, we need the concepts of *colonial and imperial differences* as has been created and conceptualized by the rhetoric of modernity (Madina Tlostanova *A Janus Faced Empire. Notes on the Russian Empire in Modernity, Written from the Border*. Moscow: Block, 2003, Walter D. Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, “The logic of coloniality and the limits of postcoloniality”, forthcoming in *Globalization and the Postcolonial*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

can place the Tupac Amaru insurgency, the Haitian Revolution as well as the ambiguous and “dependent independence” of the Mestizo/Creole elite in South America and the Caribbean Islands. While the latter was subservient to European imperial power, it still gave rise to dissident factions that would be voiced, for example, by José Carlos Mariátegui as well as in the contemporary modernity/coloniality project. (In order to preempt unnecessary questions, let me quickly clarify that the Creole/Mestizo perspective and consciousness (either pro-imperial or dissident like the philosophy of liberation or modernity/coloniality as a scholarly and political project) are the same as the perspective and consciousness of critical Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean or Andean projects. They are, however, compatible and complementary in that the memories are grounded in some shared “ancestry,” as Afro-Andean activist and intellectual, Juan Garcia, would have it.) From the inscription of these events in the memories and bodies, the “experience,” of people whose “freedom of subjectivity” has been formed as a need from their experience of oppression, coloniality comes to the fore as the darker side of modernity.

III.2.

The conception of modernity as the pinnacle of a progressive transition relied on the *colonization of space and time* to create a narrative of difference that placed contemporary languages “vernacular” (indeed, imperial) languages and categories of thought, Christian religion and Greco-Latin foundations in the most elevated position. Hence, men of letters in the European Renaissance invented the idea of the Middle Ages in order to locate themselves in the present of a history that they could trace back to Greece and the Roman Empire and, after the dark centuries, re-emerged in the radiant light of Antiquity. The idea of Western civilization that emerged at that juncture was based on pure and simple identity politics.⁵⁰ The colonization of time and the institution

⁵⁰ Take for example Alain Badiou. *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme* (Paris: Collège International de Philosophie/Press Universitaires de France, 1997) and Slavoj Žižek “Á leftist plea for ‘Eurocentrism’”. *Critical Inquiry* 24, 1998, 988-1007(St Paul) and Žižek (Eurocentrism, book on god). In both cases, a critique of “minorities identity politics” in pro of universalism, hides the fact that they are both inscribed in a “hegemonic identity politics” that, because hegemonic, makes invisible the geo- and bio-historical inscriptions of the bodies from and with they think. It is a “privilege position” to be able to criticize others for openly doing what they themselves are doing and hiding. For a critique of the imperial underpinnings of both Badiou’s and Žižek’s arguments see Walter D. Mignolo, “Geopolitics of Knowledge and the

of the temporal colonial difference were crucial for the narratives of modernity as salvation, emancipation and progress. As Johannes Fabian shows in his classical book on *Time and the Other* (1982), the temporal colonial difference became apparent toward the end of the eighteenth century in the idea of *primitives* (which would replace the previous notion of *barbarians*) and in what Fabian calls the *denial of co-evalness*. Yet, to truly grasp the power of the denial of co-evalness in the narrative of modernity, it is necessary to step back to the Renaissance and understand first the colonization of space and the construction of *the spatial colonial difference*.

If the temporal difference was expressed through the notion of ‘primitives,’ the spatial colonial difference worked through the concept of *barbarians*, an idea taken from the Greek language and historical experience, but modified in the sixteenth century to refer to those who were located in an inferior space. The reconceived idea of barbarians arose as Western Christians in Latin and vernacular Western languages began to construct a narrative of themselves. Of course, Western Christians were not the only ones who, in the sixteenth century, were attempting to define their own identity and build a uni-versal identity politics based on the believed superiority of their religion over others. Jews and Moors (Arabs and Islamic) also believed with equally good reasons that their systems of belief were superior to Christianity. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Christianity, however, affirmed its complicity with capitalism. Christian Theology (theo-politics) and secular philosophy (ego-politics) took over the concept and the rhetoric of modernity. As they became hegemonic, Theology and Secular Philosophy grounded by Christianity formed the Master Voice through which the people, regions of the world and other religions would be classified, described and ranked. Jews, Moors, Chinese Buddhists, Japanese Sintoists, Aymaras and Quechua Pachaists (if I can invent a parallel term)⁵¹ were placed in subservient levels in those hierarchies. The re-conceptualization of the “barbarians” in the sixteenth century gave to the spatial colonial difference its evil actor.

Colonial Difference”, in *Vicissitudes of Theory*, edited by Kenneth Surin. Special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101/1, 2002, 57-96.

⁵¹ “Pacha” is a word of complex meaning, space/time but also life and energy that encompass life in all its forms of living organisms of which “humans” are only a small part. See Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne and Olivia Harris, “Pacha: en torno al pensamiento aymara.” In *Tres relexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*. Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne et al editors. La Paz: hisbol, 1987, 11-60.

The later translation of the “barbarians” into “primitives” in the eighteenth century would incorporate the temporal dimension in the pre-existing spatial colonial difference. Both underlying ideas continue to work in contemporary discourse.

The basic frame for the sixteenth century iteration of the “barbarians” can be found in the writings of the Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas. In the final section of his *Apologética Historia Sumaria* (circa 1552), Las Casas identified four types of barbarians. What the four types had in common, for Las Casas, was what he understood as “barbarie negativa” (negative barbarism). That is, “barbarians” were those who “lacked” something in the area of government, knowledge of Latin and alphabetic writing because they lived in state of nature (that Hobbes and Locke would take as a starting point later on), had the wrong religion (like Jews, Moors, Chinese) or had no “religion” at all (like Indigenous people in the Americas and Black Africans). Clearly, the *spatial colonial difference* was constructed not on the bases of *previous European history* (e.g., the European Middle Age), but from *non-European histories, or better yet, from people without history*. People without history were located in space, the non-European alterity in Dussel’s terms. There was, however, a fifth type of barbarian that Las Casas distinguished from the previous four and described as *barbarie contraria* (oppositional barbarism). Las Casas identified oppositional barbarians as enemies of Christianity, those who envied it and wanted to destroy it. Oppositional barbarism is clearly defined as anti-Christianity, and as such resembles the conception terrorists today.

In the eighteenth century, the concept of “primitive” was introduced in the narrative of modernity and translated the “barbarians” into “primitives” by incorporating a temporal dimension of the former spatial colonial difference. “Modernity” was defined no longer in simple contradistinction to the Middle Ages or against the spatially bound barbarians, but against “tradition”⁵². By the end of the seventeenth century, when the ego-politics

⁵² Of course that “tradition” was invented, but was invented by those who re-articulated during the Enlightenment the narratives of the Renaissance and needed “tradition” instead of Middle Age and barbarians. But “tradition” encompasses both space and time, and that is the power of the denial of co-evalness in eighteenth and nineteenth century narratives from

of knowledge was affirming itself and modernity/coloniality was entering the “new age” of Enlightenment, in the linear history of Christian Europe, the exploitation of the reaches of the New World (mines and plantations) was in full bloom and with it the slave trade from Africa. Holland and England were beginning to extend their commercial tentacles through South Asia. And in both the Americas and Asia, there were people too. In the process of a growing “modern-time consciousness,” the “behind” societies that did not respond to the styles and exigencies of European modes of life (per Giddens), were being translated from “barbarians” (per the first stage of modernity/coloniality) into “primitives.” “Barbarians” coexisted in space, but primitives began to lag behind in time. The concept of “primitives” as applied to people went hand in hand with the idea of traditions that applied to a whole set of beliefs and organization of society beyond Western Europe. Thus, “primitives” and “traditions” appeared as “objects” outside Europe and outside modernity. Ironically, Constructivists were later celebrated when they “discovered” that “traditions” do not exist by themselves but have to been invented. Of course, they were invented! They were constructed precisely by the rhetoric of modernity. “Tradition” is not outside modernity but in its *exteriority*: It is *an outside* invented by the rhetoric of modernity in the process of creating *the inside*. The outside of “tradition” is invented in order to insure the inside as the locus of enunciation of knowledge. “Tradition” is not a way of life that pre-dated “modernity” but an invention of the rhetoric of modernity.

The spatial and temporal colonial differences joined forces to expel out of “modernity” both non-Europeans and historical Europeans alike⁵³. It was precisely at this junction that Karl Marx, working on the history of capital, invented the concept of “original accumulation”⁵⁴ and looked at both accumulation within the history of Europe and in and from the colonies. By then, Marx had placed the Industrial Revolution at the very center of space and time and built on the already existing *temporal and spatial colonial*

European perspectives. Such perspectives, fully geo-politically grounded, hid its geo-political bases and presented themselves as universal narratives.

⁵³ See my “Coloniality at Large: Time and the Colonial Difference”. In Candido Mendez and Enrique Larreta, eds., *Time in the Making*. Rio de Janeiro: UNESCO/Universidad Candido Mendes, 2000.

⁵⁴ Interestingly enough translated as “*primitive* accumulation” in English, while Spanish translations retained the biblical meaning in Marx’s own language: “original” as in the original sin.

differences. As an added twist in the history of Europe, the “discovery and conquest of America” were located closer to the Middle Ages in order to boost France, England and Germany to the triumphal present of modernity (as in Hegel’s lesson in the philosophy of history).

It would be easy to follow this narrative up to the re-articulation of the *spatial* and *temporal* colonial differences after WWII, when the U.S. entered as the new leader in the history of Western imperial powers. The concepts of development and underdevelopment are new versions of the rhetoric of modernity insofar as both concepts were invented to re-organize the temporal and spatial colonial differences. By categorizing the underdeveloped world both as *behind* in time and *far* in space, the underdeveloped and the Third World became indistinguishable. Although the very idea of development and underdevelopment carries the weight of economy, it also incorporates the rest of human experience. “Underdeveloped” in a highly industrialized world, also implies being “behind” in spirit and knowledge. For that very reason, the underdeveloped world did not produce science or philosophy but culture, as Carl Pletsch convincingly argued many years ago (Pletsch 1982). But in the Cold War the rhetoric of modernity reached a crucial point of bifurcation: the re-distribution of the spatial and temporal colonial differences that started a quarter of century before, with the break through of the Russian Revolution and the *translation* of the Russian into the Soviet Empire and the rhetoric of time (developed and underdeveloped) as complemented by the rhetoric of ranking of geo-historical locations: First, Second and Third Worlds. The Russian Revolution was a family feud, a struggle within modernity, liberals vs. socialists: it was a consequence of the enlightenment, although socialist instead of liberal, pro-State instead of pro-private enterprises. Consequently, it was and it wasn’t in the same paradigm than the Glorious, the U.S. and the French Revolutions. And of course, even less within the same paradigm of the Haitian Revolution. What was the location of the Russian Revolution in the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality? We can only understand its location if we make note that another construction of difference was at work as early as the sixteenth century.

Take as evidence the fact that when Las Casas described the four types of “negative barbarism,” he did not place the inhabitants of the Ottoman and the Islamic empires in the same hierarchy as the people in the Inca and Aztec Empires, even though all co-existed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. A different difference must be at play. If we make an effort to put ourselves in Las Casas time and place (he lived in Spain and also in what are today Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Southern Mexico), we can assume he may have been aware that Suleyman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, was on equal footing with, if not above, Charles the V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. And, because of the still vivid presence in the middle of the sixteenth century of signs of the sophistication of the Islamic Empire in Cordoba, Granada and Seville, he must have been aware of the accomplishments of that society. The Ottomans, then, posed a real threat to the superiority of Western Christians in mid-sixteenth century. The Aztecs and Incas, in contrast, had no history of fighting against Christianity like Islam had and as the Ottomans learned to have from the second half of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And, above all, the society and economy of the Aztecs and Incas had already been dismantled and Spanish Christians were in their territory building European institutions and creating a Spanish/Christian like society. Thus, despite the many pages Las Casas devoted to argue that “Indians” are human beings who are in a position to learn and adopt the Christian doctrine, he couldn’t avoid seeing in them the innocence of children who need guidance by “conversion” and not physical punishment as in the just war defended by Sepulveda. Those inhabitants of regions East and South of Europe were not considered naïve or unequal but, merely, mistaken.

Thus, I would say that spatial/temporal differences must be seen simultaneously as both *imperial and colonial*. It was imperial in the way the agents of the Spanish crown and Church defined their relations and differences with Islam and the Ottomans; and, it was colonial in the way Spanish missionaries and men of letters defined themselves in relation to the Indians and the African slaves. Spain expelled the “Moors” from their territory, but never colonized them, and recognized that they were among equals, although the Moors had the “wrong” god from the point of view of the Christians. On

the contrary, it was never considered, even by Las Casas, that the Aztecs and Incas ruling elites (with whom he did not have direct contact, like Cortés or Pizarro) were not *just* human beings but *equal* human beings. The Arabic and Islamic worlds of North Africa and the Middle East would be subjected to the *colonial difference* later on in the nineteenth century when France and England began the second wave of colonial expansion in Asia and Africa; but, from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world remained in the frame of *imperial difference*. We can likewise locate Russia within the imperial difference. It would have been difficult for Las Casas to pay attention to the rising Russian Empire. The ending domination of the Golden Horde coincided, chronologically, with the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula. Both what would become Spanish and Russian was at their beginning. But events in Russia did not count on the life and interests of Christian Renaissance men of letters who were telling the stories that later on became canonical and hegemonic. Russia may have been out of Las Casas' radar even though Orthodox Christianity may have been among those threatening Christianity and wanting to destroy it. The emerging Russian Empire may have been peripheral to Las Casas' "contrarian barbarism," but he may have known that during the first half of the sixteenth century, Moscow was redefined as "The Third Rome" and as the center of an emerging empire, but Orthodox Christian.

The *imperial difference* works by using some of the features of the colonial difference and applying them to regions, languages, people, states, etc., that cannot be colonized. A degree of inferiority is attributed to the "imperial other" that has not been colonized in that it is considered (because of language, religion, history, etc.) somewhat *behind* (time) in history or, if its present is being considered, *marginal* (space)⁵⁵. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the idea of "time" measured in terms of progress and the march of Western civilization, was gaining ground. George W. F. Hegel rewrote Las Casas and defined the new system of classification: "History in general is therefore the development of Spirit in *Time*, as Nature is the development of the Idea in *Space*"⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Tlostanova, op.cit, 47

⁵⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* [1822], translated by J. Sebree. New York: Dover Publications, 72

In his re-ordering of time/space and his effort to locate Germany (in space) as the first nation (in time), Hegel placed France and England next to Germany, as the “heart” of Europe (similar to Kant’s geo-political classification of the planet according to proximity to Reason, the Beautiful and the Sublime), with all the heavy implications that the word “heart” has in his lessons in the philosophy of history. Latin countries occupied the margins to the South. The northeastern states of Europe—Poland, Russia and the Slavonic Kingdoms--came “late into the series of historical States, and form and perpetuate the connection with Asia⁵⁷”, which as we know *is in the past*. Furthermore, Hegel underscored the time-space distribution and the role of places in universal history when he added, for example, that “the Poles even liberated beleaguered Vienna from the Turks; and the Slavonic have to some extent been drawn within the sphere of Occidental Reason. Yet this entire body of peoples remains excluded from our considerations, because hitherto it has not appeared as an independent element in the series of phases that Reason has assumed in the World⁵⁸.” They *were* and simultaneously they *were not*; now you see it, now you don’t. Such is the mechanism of the imperial difference. Imagine the other side, what Poles and Russians felt and thought: The Hegelian heart of Europe was the object of desire; the desire to inhabit that present in time and that location in space, to be “modern,” precisely, as Giddens defined it in both time and space (e.g. seventeenth century and Europe).

I do not have time here to explore one of the latest stages of this same rhetoric of modernity in the twentieth century, but I would invite the reader to think of Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilization* (1995) and *Who are we* (2004) as Huntington re-articulation the imperial/colonial difference with the Islamic world after the fall of the Soviet Union.⁵⁹ There is, in Huntington’s description of “Islamic civilization” the recognition of imperial glories, but, at the same time he voices the growing Western

⁵⁷ Hegel, op.cit., 102

⁵⁸ Hegel, op.cit. 350

⁵⁹ I have confronted Huntington’s position in two separate essays. One, “Huntington’s Fears: ‘Latinidad’ in the Horizon of the Modern/Colonial world” was presented first orally in the conference “Latino/as in the World System”, Berkeley, April 2004. To appear in the conference proceedings, edited by Ramón Grosfóguel et al. The second, “Imperial/Colonial Metamorphosis: From the Ottoman and Spanish Empires to the US and the European Union”, paper read in the conference *Islam, Latinité, Transmodernité* (Istanbul, April 2005), published in the conference proceedings, edited by Candido Mendes (Rio de Janeiro: UNESCO and Universidad Candido Mendes, 91-145, 2005)

conceptualization—since Orientalism— of Arab inferiority based on their language, religions and ways of life. Add the fact that the invention of the idea of the Middle East, at the turn of the twentieth century, when oil became for industrialized countries what gold was in the sixteenth century for mercantile capitalism. Ten years after *The Clash of Civilization*, Huntington went on to re-map and refresh the colonial difference with Latin America (as he is hesitant to whether give to Latin America a place in the West). You can begin to see how refreshing of the imperial difference (Middle East) works in tandem with the re-drawing of the colonial difference (Latin America). Huntington remaps the ethno-racial pentagon (Hollinger, 1995). Ten years ago, Hollinger was interested in asking who the Hispanics were and how they emerged as the fifth leg of the ethno-racial pentagon. Huntington is no longer interested in describing *who* Hispanics/Latino/as *are*, but in demonstrating that *they are a threat* and why they are so. If *The Clash of Civilization* re-inscribed Western hegemonic identity politics, *Who are we?* does the same with Anglo-Saxon hegemonic identity politics⁶⁰.

III.3. The spatial/temporal and imperial/colonial differences are organized and interwoven through what Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano has articulated as the colonial matrix of power, which was instituted at the inception of the “modern” world (according to the narratives told by European men of letters, intellectuals and historians) or the modern/colonial world (if we define it through the critical consciousness of dissidents Creoles and mestizos, as well as from oppressed, exploited and marginalized history of Indians and Blacks in the Americas). The rhetoric of modernity with its various distinctions, I have been arguing here, goes hand in hand with the logic of coloniality, which allows me to make the strong claim that coloniality is constitutive of modernity; that there is no modernity without coloniality. Giddens (and Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor as quoted earlier by Dussel) tells half of the story, the imperial half that we also find in Las Casas, Hegel and Huntington. But what is the

⁶⁰ It is curious and interesting that Zizek virulent attack of minority identity politics left the hegemonic identity politics intact. The reason may be that, as in the case of the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge their practitioners have been blind to their own geo-politics, as Bambach has shown in the case of Martin Heidegger (Charles Bambach. *Heidegger's Roots. Nietzsche, National Socialism and the Greeks*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003. Nelson Maldonado-Torres in a powerful critique from the perspective of coloniality, reframes Bambach's critique an extended it to continental philosophy, including Levinas, Derrida and Zizek. See, his “The Topology of Being and the Geopolitics of Knowledge. Modernity, Empire, Coloniality.”*City* 8/1, 2004, 29-56.

logic of coloniality and how does it work? A terminological question emerges here? Is “the modern world” the same as “modernity”? Is the “colonial matrix of power” the same than “coloniality”? As with any question of language, the answers are up for grab. The point should be to avoid the “modern expectation” that *there is a word that carries the true meaning of the thing* instead of the form of consciousness and the universe of meaning in which the word *means*. Meaning is not a “true value” but a reflection of cognitive (epistemic and hermeneutic) force and import within particular geo-political designs. As in Jorge Luis Borges’ *The Garden of Forking Path*, once you select one of three courses of action, the second or the third un-chosen paths become real as *possible worlds*.

Thus, I choose to understand the “modern/colonial world” and “colonial matrix of power” as part of the same historical complex, but not as synonyms. The “colonial matrix of power” is the specification of what the term “colonial world” means both in its logical structure and in its historical transformation. From the perspective of modernity, “newness” is a motor of history and a constant celebration of “modernity’s progressive” power for the good of humankind. The “discovery” introduced the idea of the “new”. As a matter of fact, “America” as a name took a while to be recognized. For at least two hundred and fifty years, “Indias Occidentales” was the administrative name for the Spanish Crown while non-Spanish men of letters and intellectuals, from Américo Vespucci to Pietro Martir d’ Anghiera in the sixteenth century, and from Buffon to Kant in the eighteenth century, and to Hegel, preferred the term “*New World*”. It is in this narrative that the idea of “revolution” has a strong appeal as it indicates radical changes *forward toward newness*, which is precisely the rhetoric of modernity. The problem is that the celebration of newness and change shadows the consequences of such changes. We are not here once again in Borges’ garden. By choosing path 1, for example, that of modernity, we would have left as mere possibility paths 2 and 3, which might include the path of coloniality, for example. Unfortunately, history does not follow the logic of possible worlds; and modernity/coloniality being constitutive go together no matter which path you choose.

Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein⁶¹ closed a long debate, in the seventies, as to whether there was a transition from feudalism to capitalism in America (a nonsense question that only could have been imagined by a model of history that takes European history as a model). The spatial epistemic break was invisible and unimaginable to the Latin American left. And in this case was the concept of coloniality, rather than Wallerstein history of capitalism that illuminated the structural moment in which the expansion of the West goes sidewise and not up. Quijano and Wallerstein stated that it was not the “discovery” that integrated the Americas into an already existing capitalist economy. On the contrary, a capitalist economy, as we know it today, couldn’t have existed without the “discovery and conquest of Americas.” The massive appropriation of lands, massive exploitation of labor, and production of commodities on a new scale for a global market was possible with the emergence of the “Americas” in the European horizon. The very idea of “modernity” was invented in the narratives in which the emergence of Europe was articulated on a double front: separated from the Middle Ages, in the temporal axis and of the Americas, where the barbarians were located, in the spatial axis.

It was not the discovery, per se, that mattered, but its consequences--the transference of economic power from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and the qualitative changes in the production of commodities and the transformation of the commercial circuits. While the European Renaissance was taking place in Italy within Western Christianity, sustained by three strong commercial centers (Venice, Florence and Genoa)⁶², the simultaneous imperial foundation of Spain and the colonization of the Americas changed the course of Europe’s own internal history. The European Renaissance and New World were two fundamental anchors of the modern/colonial world held together by the complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. From the sixteenth century on, they co-exist and co-depend as well on the formation of

⁶¹ “Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System”, in ISSAI, 134, 549-557.

⁶² For the commercial circuits circa the thirteen century, from Beijing to Fez and Venice, see Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System, AD 1250-1350*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. For the emergence of the Atlantic in its consequences in the previous commercial circuit, and the foundation of the colonial matrix of power, see Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2000.

“capitalism” as we know it today. As a matter of fact, the modern/colonial world cannot be conceived except as *simultaneously capitalist*. *The logic of coloniality is, indeed, the implementation of capitalist appropriation of land, exploitation of labor and accumulation of wealth in fewer and fewer hands.*

How does “capitalism” relate to and interact with the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality? Quijano (1990, 1995, 2000) has been exploring the formation of the colonial matrix of power in four different and mutually articulated domains:

- 1) The appropriation of land and the exploitation of labor
- 2) The control of authority (vicerealty, colonial states, military structures)
- 3) The control of gender and sexuality (the Christian family, gender and sexual values and conduct)
- 4) The control of subjectivity (the Christian faith, secular idea of subject and citizen) and knowledge (the principles of Theology structuring all forms of knowledge encompasses in the Trivium and the Quadrivium; secular philosophy and concept of Reason structuring the human and natural sciences and the practical knowledge of professional schools; e.g., Law and Medicine, in Kant’s contest of the faculties).

How are these four spheres of human experience interrelated? They are interrelated through *knowledge and racism and capital*.

The scheme might also be read in the reverse direction: the four domains are the particular structure that the conjunction of knowledge and capital assumed in the sixteenth century and beyond. How? *The control of knowledge in Western Christendom belonged to Western Christian men, which meant the world would be conceived only from the perspective of Western Christian Men*. There was “diversity” within Christianity, of course, not only among Catholics and Protestants but also among Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Evangelists, etc. Yet, all recognized themselves as Christians and, better yet, as Western Christians (that is, those without much interaction with the Orthodox Church, hair of Byzantium and of Eastern Christians). There were, of

course, numerous and prominent nuns, in Spain and in the New World, who like Sor Juana, were intellectuals interested in the principles of knowledge. Sor Juana, though, is a good example of a woman who was chastised for entering the house of knowledge that “belonged” to Men (the direct guardians on earth of God’s knowledge). As her rejection demonstrates, for women in Europe as well as for Creoles or Mestizas in the New World, there was no space in the house of Western knowledge. Likewise, when the Moors were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, Islamic knowledge was barred from the house of Christian knowledge. I have shown one telling instance in the case of Jose de Acosta’s *Historia Moral y Natural de las Indias*⁶³. By 1590, when he published the book, all knowledge that reached Western Christians (in and through Italy and Spain since the 8th century) was banned from the house of knowledge and not read. Only Greek or Latin and the languages of their Western Christian children (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French; and German and English as the Anglo-Saxon heir through the Holy Roman Empire inherited by Germany) could speak knowledge, meaning Hebrew, along with the Jews who were expelled from Spain and compared to Indians, and Arabic lost their residency in the house of knowledge.

The Western Christian men in control of knowledge were also White. Thus, in the sixteenth century a concept of *race* emerged at the intersection of faith, knowledge and skin color. In Spain, the emerging concept of religious racism justified the expulsion of Moors and Jews. In the New World, the surfacing of the “Indians” (people speaking myriad languages among them Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní, Nahuatl, various dialects of Maya roots, as dissected and classified since the nineteenth century by Western linguists), created a crisis in Christian knowledge as to what kind of “being” the “Indians” would have in the Christian chain of beings? Since Indians did not fit the standard model set by White Christian Men and did not themselves have the legitimacy to classify people around the world, they were declared inferior by those who had the authority to determine who was who. There were defenders of the ‘humanity’ of the Indians among the Spaniards, as we noted above; but, generally, the recognition of their

⁶³ José de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*. Translated by Frances López-Morilla; edited by Jane E. Mangan, with introduction and commentary by Walter D. Mignolo. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

inferiority was shared. The conclusion was justified by the fact that, among other things, the Indians did not have “religions” and whatever they believed was considered to be the work of the Devil. Also, they did not have alphabetic writing and so were considered people without history⁶⁴. “Superficial” traits became the visible markers of inferiority, the most apparent of which was a skin color that contrasted with the pale skin of most Spaniards, mostly missionaries and red haired soldiers as Hernán Cortés.

In the New World, then, racism was an epistemic operation that institutionalized the inferiority of the Indians and, subsequently, justified genocidal violence, as Dussel pointed out, and exploitation of labor, as Quijano underlined. Race was, in the colonies and before the industrial revolution, what class became after the industrial revolution in Europe. The implantation of the *encomienda* (an economic institution Spaniards had in place while pushing the Moors toward the south, and expropriating their lands) was one of the initial structure of both appropriation of land and exploitation of labor: the *encomendero* received in “donation” from the King a substantial piece of land and a significant number of Indians workers as serf and slaves. The second fundamental economic structure more prominent among British, French and Dutch, was the *plantation* in the extended Caribbean (from today San Salvador de Bahia, in Brazil, to today Charlestown in South Carolina, including of course all the Caribbean islands). The genocidal violence that caused the death of millions of Indigenous people and created the need of renewed labor force generated, as we know, the massive slave trade of Black African, many of them Moors, but darker skinned in comparison with the Indians and the North African Muslims that were expelled from Spain. Thus, knowledge articulated the four spheres of social life in two ways, in terms of faith and physical complexion. Whatever did not fit the religious and moral standards set by Christianity, in terms of faith and physique, was cast out of the standard of humanity. Once people were classified, they were located in a genealogy of beings, a caste, which is the term used in the fifteenth century and that became slowly translated into race⁶⁵.

⁶⁴ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, op.cit, chapters 3 and 4.

⁶⁵ See the after-word to the second edition of *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Thus, racism and the coloniality of being are one and the same cognitive operation entrenched at the philosophical level in the colonial matrix of power. The colonial matrix of power gives a historical depth and a logical consistency to Frantz Fanon's notion of the "damnés" as a theoretical concept grounded in the history of the colonial matrix of power. The racial classification that constitutes the modern/colonial world (through the imperial and colonial differences) had in theology and the theo-politics of knowledge its historical and epistemic foundation. The secular version of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century was simply a translation, as I've tried to show, from theo-politics into secular ego-politics of knowledge as the final horizon of knowledge. One may wonder, for instance, what people in the Islamic world or in China or India thought about racial classification in the West as it was being elaborated since the sixteenth century. Most likely, they were not aware that they were *being classified and what consequential role they would have in the order of thing that was being articulated in Western structures, principles and institutions of knowledge*. By the end of the 20th century, however, the entire globe is responding in one-way or another to Western racial classification.⁶⁶

Let's leave knowledge there for the time being and explore the second fundamental element of the "glue" holding together the four spheres of the colonial matrix of power: capital. I mentioned above Quijano and Wallerstein's thesis that capitalism as we know it today surfaced and materialized with the "discovery and conquest" of America. Let me expand. The vocabulary of "conquest" in the language in the rhetoric of modernity becomes the vocabulary of "appropriation of land and exploitation of labor" in the logic of coloniality. There are two key nouns used in this paragraph: capital and capitalism. Capital refers to the resources (possession of land, buildings, tools, money) necessary for the production and distribution of commodities as well as for political interventions in the control of authority (as is again clear today). Capitalism, instead, refers to a philosophy that is based on a particular type of economic structure. It may not be redundant to insist in that economy (Greek *oikos*) is a word used to refer to the structure

⁶⁶ The interesting anecdote of Bolivian candidate to Miss Universe, from Santa Cruz (El Nacional, The Economist), is revealing of the fact that the racism and the colonial matrix of power persist in Bolivia after 500 years, now integrated to new forms of racial violence generated by market economy (Amy Chua, *The World...op cit*)

of production and distribution of foods, objects, commodities, etc. while “capitalist economy” refers to a specific type of economic structure that today, under neo-liberalism, has spread all over the world. *Capital*, paradoxically enough, shall not be confused with capitalist economy in the sense that other economic structures could be envisioned in which “capital” (a component of an economic structure) would not be the center piece, the object of desire and transcendent point of reference. In this view, Karl Marx’s magnum opus, *Das Kapital*, is about capitalism rather than capital.

Making clear the distinction between capital and capitalism will help us get out of the modernity trap in which Marx himself was caught (e.g., the idea of progress and the need of the bourgeois revolution to move to the next stage of progress, the socialist revolution). The rhetoric of modernity allowed for the colonial matrix of power to be kept secret (a shameful secret that aristocratic families sent to the attics). All the literature about the “transition from feudalism to capitalism” in the history of Europe that was, in the sixties, transplanted in order to understand the transition from feudalism to capitalism in South America supported the myth of modernity as progress. The application to Latin America was absurd, of course, and did not work for the simple fact that there was no “European feudalism” in Tawantinsuyu and Anahuac when the Spaniards arrived!

Let’s imagine what “world history” looked like in the second half of the fifteenth century. In Europe, Venice, Florence and Genoa constituted strong market centers in the Mediterranean and maintained commerce with Fez, Egypt and Timbuktu in North Africa, Baghdad in what is today the Middle East and with India and China in Asia. The Portuguese, on the other hand, were busy establishing commercial contacts on the coasts of Africa and on the Indian Ocean, not to speak of their presence in the Mediterranean. Heavy commercial activities were transforming, from within, the structure of Western Christendom post-Roman Empire into what would become self-fashioned as “modern Europe.” Enter now, “the discovery and conquest of the America.” Think about how, as we have mentioned, it changed the already existing commercial circuits led by Florence, Venice and Lisbon. In a matter of a few decades, a

massive extension of land and the possibility of massive exploitation of labor to produce commodities for an already globalizing market were offered to the Europeans of the Atlantic coast, Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. Capital was necessary to organize labor, production and distribution; and, the appropriation of land *enormously increased the size and power of capital*. It was land, rather than money, that made possible the qualitative jump of mercantile economy into mercantile capitalist economy. Capitalist here means that a theory of capitalism began to emerge out of the change in the scale of economic practices, which would later be articulated in the eighteenth century—with the Physiocrats in France and with Adam Smith in England. Thus, the story of “the transition from feudalism” to capitalism will depend on whether you tell the story from the perspective of Europe alone or whether you believe that in the period of time between the 12th to the 18th century there was also “a world” beyond the European portion of the Roman Empire. That is, it depends on whether you believe that the story of Europe is the story of the world or that the history of Europe is about one fifth of the story of the world. What was going on across the planet, I ask again, between the 12th and the 18th century of the Christian era (allow me, for simplicity, to use the Christian calendar)? We must choose between Story One and Story Two to decide whether we accept the narrative of the “transition from feudalism to capitalism” or unveil it as a mirage:

Story One: The Renaissance begins in 1453, the date of the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, a defeat for the Christian world that had much to do with propelling the “renaissance.” Columbus needed to look for a new route to the East with the “road blocked” by the Turks after the conquest of Constantinople and instead opened up the New World for exploration and conquest. Hence, from a political and economic point of view, the northwest and western ends of the Mediterranean began to see a flourishing in commerce and political transformations. As we mentioned, the Italian city-states in the Mediterranean as well as the Portuguese were important trade centers and a new class of merchants was gaining force over the power of the landlord and the Church who ruled the “dark, middle ages” (from the fall of Rome in 426 to the fall of Constantinople in 1453). According to Story One, the renaissance was, politically, a period of emerging

nation-states that rivaled one another to acquire stocks of gold (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Holland, France, England were among those nations) whether by exploratory expeditions to the New World, conquest, or by pursuing export trade. The mercantile interests of merchants became aligned with the sovereign to pursue policies that promised success in the acquisition of national treasure and the era of mercantilism and of statecraft was the product of their symbiosis. It is this story that traces the shift from feudalism to the “big-bang” of human history, the industrial revolution.

Story Two: Western Christendom was, in the fifteenth century, one of the seven or eight major commercial circuits that existed at the time and was, relatively, marginal in the world-trade economy, as Abu-Lughod (1982) demonstrated in his discussion of the historical moment that preceded European hegemony. The emergence of a “New World” coupled with the protestant reformation facilitated the translation of Western Christendom into Europe, one of the four continents. The sudden growth of European economy had as its counterpart, the formation of new societies in which the massive appropriation of land created the conditions for European émigrés, for the destruction of existing civilizations, and for the transportation of African slaves to replace the labor force lost by the massive death of Indigenous people. Out of the genocidal violence of European merchants and the Church, which sometimes contributed to genocide and other times fought against it, and out of the intervention of the emerging European states, a new type of society emerged out of the ruins of the first wave of colonial expansion in the Americas. Story Two hints toward the colonial matrix of power and toward missing pieces of the story that disappear when the European renaissance is described as the internal history of Europe and not part of a larger global narrative which would include the disruptions of pre-existing societies in Africa and the Americas as well as concurrent events in the Arab world.

What prevailed was a partial history celebrating the discovery and conquest as European triumphs. Francisco de Gomara followed by Adam Smith and Karl Marx coincided in underscoring the discovery of America as a one of the greatest events in the history of humankind. Although the event was the same, De Gómara had religious

motives for celebration while Smith and Marx had economic ones. Gomara cast the discovery in the frame of the theo-politics of knowledge while Smith and Marx framed it in the ego-politics of knowledge. According to Smith, who was looking retrospectively from the perspective of the eighteenth century, “capital” and “knowledge” joined forces to allow for the conceptualization of “capitalism.” As such, the colonial matrix of power described above became the *foundation of capitalism* (e.g., the confluence of economic organization, social and institutional structures and social values) and capitalism, as the engine of the system that bears the name of “neo-liberalism,” a conservative and violent narrative advancing war and free trade to expand the Western world, continues to reproduce the colonial matrix of power, as we have seen in the military occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq and in Latin America through the enforcing the free trade of the Americas. Although “against” capitalism (and indirectly empire), Marx also remains within the macro-imperial narrative because he misses the colonial mechanisms of power underlying the system he critiques. The unfolding the colonial matrix of power creates a fracture in the hegemonic imperial macro-narratives.

Frantz Fanon, on the contrary, introduced an-other consciousness and directed the evaluation of the “discovery” toward the history African slavery that tied European imperial and capitalist powers to Africa and the colonies in the making of the modern/colonial world. To do so, he re-inscribed into the knowing process the “secondary qualities” that both the theo- and ego- politics of knowledge suppressed when they divided body and soul (theo) or body and mind (ego). Fanon’s was not just a general or universal inscription of the subjectivity of the modern subject. Rather, he brought back into the house of knowledge the subjectivity of the *damnés*, the denied and defamed subject that had been a subject beyond the possibilities of knowing. Likewise, the oppositional macro-narrative of Mestizos, like Mariátegui who was critically aware in the 1920s of the consequences Spanish imperial formation of colonies in *Indias Occidentales* and of the dangers of the emerging imperial history of the U.S., and its politics toward Latin America (whose consequences are we witnessing today), brought to the surface that which festered beneath the rhetoric of modernity.

Thus, while Gomara celebrated the triumph of Christianity, Adam Smith of free trade (which is being recast today by neo-liberalism) and Marx saw original accumulation as *a condition of capitalism*, that for him was coming into existence with the industrial revolution⁶⁷, Fanon and Mariátegui (like Eric Williams above) made coloniality (although they did not use the word) the center of their critique. By so doing, Fanon and Mariátegui abandoned the eurocentered geography of knowledge framed by the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge, in which Gómara, Smith and Marx were dwelling and founded (in the sense of historical foundation, in the sense of run-into something and run-something) an epistemology located in the place (where local histories intersects with global designs) and the body the geo- and bio-politics of knowledge which would make possible a decolonized world not dominated by the theo- and ego-politics principles that still today guide the way of thinking of both the right (e.g., Samuel Huntington, and Frances Fukuyama) and the left (e.g. David Harvey, Michael Hardt and Anthony Negri).

I would like to advance the thesis that *the emergence of the geo- and body-politics of knowledge introduced a fracture in the hegemony of the theo- and the ego-politics of knowledge, the two standard frames for the colonization of the souls and the minds since the Renaissance* that comprises the right, the left and the center (e.g., Christianity in its various forms and secular Conservatism; Liberalism in its various forms; and socialism-Marxism in its various forms). Since I have already defined geo-politics, let me explain what I mean by bio-politics. The monarchic state of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century operated within the general theological frame. With the disentanglement of “church and the state” following the bourgeois revolutions, as I have tried to explain, the nation-state entered the frame of the ego-politics of knowledge. In both the theo- and the ego-politics, the “body-graphical” inscription of the knowing subject was cast out, made invisible, parallel to the invisibility of its the geo-political location in the modern imperial/colonial world. Thus, the body-politics of knowledge includes the re-inscription, per Fanon for example, of the history inscribed in the black

⁶⁷ I develop this idea in more detail in the afterword to the second edition of *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, op.cit..

body in a cosmology dominated by the white body underneath the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge.

IV. The Grammar of De-coloniality: Prolegómena to the De-colonial Shift

IV.1- The thesis advanced in the last paragraph lead us, directly to, the grammar of de-coloniality. The time has come, and the process is already in motion, for the re-writing of global history from the perspective and critical consciousness of coloniality and from within geo and body-political knowledge. Part of the project of de-linking is, as Waman Puma clearly saw it at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the need to write “nuevas corónicas.” That is, we must formulate a critical theory that goes beyond the point to which Max Horkheimer carried the meaning of critique in Kant. Horkheimer was still working within the frame of the ego-politic of knowledge and the radicalism of his position must be understood within that frame, and his critical concept of theory could offer no more than a project of “emancipation” (epistemic, political, ethical, economic) within the conceptual frame of the modern/colonial world. Traditional theory was, to summarize Horkheimer’s position in a nutshell, constructed on the basis of givens, on the empirical acceptance, for instance, of laws in nature that science has only to dis-cover. Critical theory, on the other hand, would interrogate the very assumptions that Nature is governed by “laws”; and will also open the question on the consequences of such assumptions in and for a capitalist society. Critical theory should now be taken further, to the point and project of de-linking and of being complementary with decolonization. That is, as the foundations of the non-Eurocentered diversity of an-other-paradigm⁶⁸. The Eurocentered paradigms of knowledge (its theo- and ego-political versions) has reached a point in which its own premises should be applied to itself from the repository of concepts, energies and visions that have been reduced to silences or absences by the triumphal march of Western conceptual apparatus.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁸ I introduce and develop the idea of “an-other paradigm” in the preface to the Spanish edition of *Historias Locales/Diseños Globales...* Madrid: Editorial Akal, 2003.

⁶⁹ Let me repeat so the reader cannot be confused by old habit of thinking taking for granted that the West is a geography and not a language-memory-conceptual apparatus than penetrated directly or indirectly billions of consciousness all over the world): in Greek, Latin and the six imperial modern/colonial European languages.

hegemonic modern/colonial and Eurocentered paradigm⁷⁰ needs to be *decolonized*. But how does epistemic decolonization works? . What is its grammar (that is, its vocabulary, syntax and semantics)? There are at least two procedures here. One would be to show the partiality and limitations of the theo and ego politics of knowledge and understanding. The other is offered by growth and expansion of the geo and bio politics of knowledge and understanding. Both are de-linking procedures. It will not suffice to denounce its content while maintaining the logic of coloniality, and the colonization of knowledge, intact. The target of epistemic de-colonization is the hidden complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. For critical theory to correspond with decolonization, we need to shift the geography of knowledge and recast it (critical theory) within the frame of geo- and bio-politics of knowledge. Thus, the first step in the grammar of decolonization could be cast, using an expression coming from the documents of the Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos Indígenas del Ecuador, *learning to unlearn*⁷¹. Dussel and Fanon give us two solid starting points to do so—the first connected with epistemic geopolitics and the second with epistemic bio-politics.

When *critical theory* becomes de-colonial critique it has of necessity to be *critical border thinking* and, by so doing, the de-colonial shift (decolonization of knowledge and of being) marks the Eurocentered limits of critical theory as we know it today, from

⁷⁰ I use “Eurocentered” as a **descriptive** term, very much in the sense that Carl Schmitt describes as “Eurocentered international law” that legalized massive appropriation of land since the sixteenth century, that is, in what he calls the “transition” from the pre-global to the global era . For example, Carl Schmitt, *Le nomos de la terre*. Traduit de l’allemand par Lilyane Deroche-Gurcel. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001. Schmitt analysis clearly states that appropriation of land gave rise to a system of international law totally Euro-centered. His honesty is laudable, but his view remains limited to the perspective from modernity and German interests. The perspective from coloniality (and independently from Schmitt’s concerns in the Germany after Hitler), and interests in de-coloniality, is provided by Siba N’Zatioula Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns and Africans*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Schmitt and Grovogui would agree that massive land appropriation and the system of international law are a powerful combination of Imperial Europe, and then taken up by the U.S. The difference is that they are booth looking at the same phenomenon from different side of the fence: Schmitt from Germany and European History, Grovogui from Africa and African history. That is how de-coloniality begins to work, not through different interpretations from the same perspective of paradigm but from an-other paradigm.

⁷¹ Luis Macas and Jorge García in an oral presentation of the goal and curriculum of the Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos y Naciones Indígenas del Ecuador, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, July 2002. For a general view see, <http://icci.nativeweb.org/boletin/19/macas.html>. The Universidad Intercultural is not an isolated phenomenon as it is already connected to the network of the Indigenous People in the Americas (http://www.aulaintercultural.org/breve.php?id_breve=184).

early version of the Frankfurt School, to later post-structuralists (e.g. Derrida) and post-modernists (e.g. Jameson). Let's see how the de-colonial shift operates and why it cannot be subsumed as epistemic break (Foucault) or paradigmatic change (Kuhn). The de-colonial shift belongs literally to a different space, to the epistemic energy and the lack of archive that has been supplanted by the rumor of the dis-inherited or the *damnés* in Fanon's conceptualization.

Dussel identified in Marx's "scientific program" a shift within the ego-politics of knowledge to unveil, contrary to Smith whose theory of political economy was framed within the perspective and consciousness of the bourgeoisie, the logic of capital from the perspective of the labor force, that is, the proletariat⁷². By so doing, Marx embraced the perspective of the proletariat, although not necessarily its consciousness. However, as a German Jew (his early writings were devoted to the Jewish question), Marx may have felt the racial differential inscribed in his body and his persona. He translated the *racial differential* that made the Jews the *damnés* within Europe into the subaltern position of the proletariat in *class differential*. Marx's analysis resulted in a scientific explanation of the logic of oppression. It is perhaps the internal (to Europe) colonial wound that gave Marx (and also Spinoza and Freud) that critical edge, that discomfort and that anger that pushed them to reveal what the Christian bourgeoisie and its direct and indirect ideologues were either not seeing or covering up. Internal de-coloniality is really taking place among those thinkers, except that all of them very entrenched in European memories and subjectivities were unable to see the parallel between their situation and the external colonial wound (e.g., Indians, Africans, Arabs, Muslims, etc.). In that very specific domain, knowledge meant not so much related to seeking another

⁷² Enrique Dussel "El pensamiento crítico de Marx" In *Hacia una filosofía política crítica*. Seville: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001, 279-303. Dussel's point is that Marx's used the conceptual apparatus of science to unveil the logic linking plus-valued labor and capital-accumulation. In my argument, that is equivalent to saying that Marx unveiled the logic of coloniality in Europe, when capitalism was re-articulated by the emergence of the industrial revolution and of a new social class, the proletariat, that replaced massive slavery and serfdom during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Dussel's insight comes from looking at the history of Europe from the perspective of the colonies and, in that sense, supersedes Louis Althusser's "coupure épistémologique". For Althusser, Marx's break was to translate the ideological discourse of political economy into a scientific discourse (See Etienne Balibar, "De Bachelard a Althusser: El concepto de corte epistemológico." In *La filosofía y las revoluciones científicas. Teoría y Praxis*. Proceedings of Mexican Second National Congress of Philosophy. Mexico: Editorial Grijalbo, 1979, 9-48 Although Althusser is not wrong in point that out, what I underlying is that Dussel's take on Marx belongs to a difference epistemic space: the space of de-coloniality rather than of post-structuralism.

abstract (and hegemonic) truth but a true that was hidden by the classical (beginning with Smith's) theories of political economy. Within the ego-politics of knowledge, Marx contributed to the emancipation of the proletariat through the exposure of the logic of capital. Up to this point, Marx continues to be a fundamental contributor to critical theory. However, emancipation in the Marxian sense must be subsumed under liberation and de-colonization insofar as the emancipation of the proletariat in Europe (and the U.S.) cannot be taken as a model-for-export. A similar observation might be made with respect to the *multitude*, understanding multitude not as a new proletariat but as a new working class (Paul Virno, Michael Hardt and Anthony Negri). In other words, the new and extended working class is not just oppressed because it is a working class but because the majority of the most exploited workers belong to the "wrong" racial group. In spite of the fact that today whites are also subjected to similar exploitative rules, they are the quantitative minority of those laboring, for example, under reprehensible conditions in the multinational factories throughout the Third World. Although the structure of capitalism is different today, we should not forget that the colonial matrix of power organizing the exploitation of labor and underlying capitalism was based initially on the appropriation of lands with serfdom and slavery as the primary form of labor and *racism* as the fundamental argument justifying exploitation. The colonial matrix of power made possible the industrial revolution. True, in Northern Europe, when the industrial revolution took place, race was not a visible issue. The appropriation of land in the colonies was invisible, and the primary form of labor was waged. Thus, *class* became the dominant form of social classification. Isolated from the presence of the Moors, slightly tainted by Black-African slaves, and totally distant from the Indigenous population of the America, the class differential was established among a population of White Anglo Protestant. Today, however, as immigration changes the demographics of industrial countries and industries move beyond previous borders to Mexico, China and the Philippines, racism, the foundation of the colonial matrix of power, is back with a vengeance and no longer eclipsed, as it was for a short while, by class differential as the ultimate form for the understanding of exploitation of labor. What is at stake, in the last analysis, is the correspondence of race and class. While class refers mainly to economic relations among social groups and is, thus, strictly

related to the control of labor in the spheres of the colonial matrix of power, race refers mainly to subjective relations among social groups and is related to the control of knowledge and subjectivity. Thus, liberation and decolonization projects in the Americas today must have the colonial matrix of power, and not the industrial revolution, as a key point of reference.

Now, Fanon and Anzaldúa can provide another departure point for taking Horkheimer's original critical theory to the terrain of de-linking and to the de-colonial shift. That is, for taking critical theory to the negated side of the epistemic colonial difference: to the geo- and bio-logical negated locations of knowledge and understanding. Fanon brings both the geo- and bio-politics of knowledge and indirectly shows us the need to re-make Horkheimer's critical theory; to move critical theory from its emancipating to its liberating and de-colonizing dimension. Anzaldúa, articulates around the concept of borderland, brings together a geo- and bio-politics of knowledge that reveals both the racial and gender foundation of white foundation of hegemonic epistemology. Both Anzaldúa and Fanon move epistemology to the terrain where de-linking projects began to be articulated. Fanon points, as in the epigraph at the beginning of this discussion, toward the necessary diagnosis of the epistemic colonization (of souls, of minds, of spirits, of beings) and to the perverse logic of coloniality that, in his own words, distorts, disfigures and destroys (or tends to marginalize) every past that is not the past of the Eurocentered version of history. Let us start with Fanon's description of a colonized town in Algeria in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, people by men of evil repute. They were born there, it matters little where or how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes of coal, of light [...]

The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality, and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. When you

examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. *The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.* This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to deal with the *colonial problem*⁷³.

And, that colonial problem is *not a minor one*. Quantitatively, there are far more people affected by *colonial* than by the *modern* problems. That is, the industrial revolution is caught and subsumed in the colonial problem and, thereby, moves to the periphery. Without questioning the relevance of Marx and Horkheimer contribution to emancipation, their insights do not cover the full story, in the same way that the Bible and the Q'uran are relevant for the believers but not necessarily for none believers. To replace sacred text by secular texts do take us to de-coloniality, but to new forms of abstract and imperially geared universals. One of the benefits of secularization was, precisely, the “emancipation” from the sacred insofar as the sacred became an obstacle for the emancipation of certain social groups. To turn into sacred figures the authors and texts that so brilliantly fought for the secularization of the sacred and for the emancipation of people held hostage to sacred truths, would be contradictory. Secularization is not by itself a safe place. Uncoupling the State from the Church is not a global way to go, necessarily in the sense that such uncoupling, as we have been witnessing since 9/11 doesn't promise or warranty justice, democracy and equality. At the same time, it would also be incongruous with the emancipating principles of “modernity” to take secularization as *the* sacred truth and impose, by military force if necessary, the secular on societies who do *not necessarily have a problem* with giving priority to the sacred or with weaving together the sacred and the secular, the Mesquite and the State. Once we bring geo- and bio-politics into the realm of knowledge and understanding, we realize that secular modernity has its own politics, which do not necessarily coincide with the needs, visions and desires of everyone on the planet, and that new projects (ethical, political, epistemic) are emerging in which secular modernity

⁷³ *The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la terre)*, 1961, 30, 40

is being transcended by multiple projects of epistemic decolonization grounded in the geo-and bio-politics of knowledge.

IV.2. - It is precisely at this point that Gloria Anzaldúa's conceptualization of "the conciencia mestiza" (in terms of gender and race), becomes the platform of another de-colonial project emanating from the local histories of Chicano/as in the U.S.; a project that continues and complements previous ones (e.g., Waman Puma, Mahatma Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, Rigoberta Menchú). Both the body- (Chicana, lesbiana) and the geo-politics (la frontera as subaltern epistemic perspective) of knowledge are at work here deepening and enlarging the de-colonial shift.

It is often mentioned that one of the many problems in Anzaldúa's position, is that she quotes or, other will say, "follows", Mexican's pro-Nazi philosopher Jose Vasconcelos. And of course, critics pointed out, it is a wrong path to follow, to go Vasconcelos' way. Indeed, Anzaldúa opens her crucial chapter on 'La Conciencia *de la* Mestiza. Towards a New Consciousness" quoting Vasconcelos. The chapter begins with an epigraph: "Por la mujer de mi raza / hablará el espíritu", which is a twist on Vasconcelos famous dictum, a national dictum in Mexico, "Por mi raza hablara el espíritu." She quotes Vasconcelos after this epigraph by mentioning that he "envisaged a *raza mestiza, una mezcla de razas afines, una raza de color—la primera raza sintesis del globo*. He called it a cosmic race, la raza cósmica, a fifth race embracing the four major races of the world. Curiously enough, Vasconcelos was proposing the formation of the fifth leg of the ethno-racial pentagon as an amalgamation and transcending of the previous four (White, African-Black, Asian-Yellow, Indian-Red). For Vasconcelos, this was a cosmic race, a super-human race that reminds Zarathustra. However, Vasconcelos's idea suffered two drawbacks. About forty years after his proposed ideal, in Mexico, the U.S. government under Nixon's presidency proposed another version of the fifth leg of the ethno-racial pentagon: Hispanics. And Hispanics, far from being (or part of) the cosmic-race, fell at the bottom of the scale. Samuel Huntington has recently contributed to underscore the ranking of Hispanics that appeared under Richard Nixon⁷⁴. The second mortal coup to

⁷⁴ Samuel Huntington, *The Hispanic Challenge*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.

the cosmic race was, from inside Latin/a/o history, from Anzaldúa. After quoting Vasconcelos, preceded by the epigraph just mentioned, Anzaldúa goes on to specify that: “From this racial (referring to Vasconcelos), ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollenization, an ‘alien’ consciousness is presently in the making: a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands”⁷⁵. The title of the chapter, let’s remember, is “La conciencia *de la* Mestiza” and not for instance “la conciencia mestiza.”

This second expression respond to the same logic that, for instance, the study of French anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle on “mestizo logics”, which is an “study” of identity in Africa and elsewhere. The same could be said of French ethno-historian, Serge Gruzinski, in his study of “la pensée metisse” (mestizo thoughts), based on sixteenth century Mexico, but moving beyond to find other expression of such hybrid manifestations.⁷⁶ Both Amselle’s and Gruzinski’s are important disciplinary studies that remain within the ego-politics of knowledge that grounds the foundation of the social sciences in nineteenth century Europe. Like in Vasconcelos, mestizaje and hybridity are celebrated, “out there”, but neither of them let their epistemic frame get infected and mixed, like the blood and the mind of the bodies they are analyzing. The differences between Vasconcelos on the one hand and Amselle and Gruzinski on the other is that the former celebrates “mestizaje” to maintain the purity of the Creole national discourse; while the latter, make of mestizaje an object of study maintaining intact the disciplinary purity of anthropological discourse. Anzaldúa, instead, proposes some thing else. Amselle and Gruzinski observe and describe a social phenomenon, but their “consciousness” remains within the homogeneity of the disciplines. They do not question the disciplines but describe a phenomenon outside, so to speak. Anzaldúa turns the plate around and by underlining “La conciencia *de la* mestiza”, she radically shift gears and introduces a fracture in the *ego-politics of knowledge*. As a matter of fact, hers is a radical contribution to the *Bio-politics of knowledge* that, like the geo-politics

⁷⁵ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderland/La Frontera. The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt –Lute, 1987, 7

⁷⁶ Jean-Loup Amselle. *Mestizo Logics. Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere*. Translated by Claudia Royal. Palo Alto: Stanford U.P., 1998; Serge Gruzinski, *La Pensée Métisse*. Paris: Fayard, 1999.

of knowledge we saw in Dussel, is shifting the attention from the enunciated to the very act of enunciation.

How does the *body-politics of knowledge* in transforming the locus of enunciation and in changing the terms of the conversation? And how it complements the *geo-politics of knowledge* in fracturing the epistemic hegemony of Western *theo and ego-politics of knowledge*? Let's me elaborate on some of the "problematic" statements made by Anzaldúa:

I think we need to allow whites to be our allies. Through our literature, arte, *corridos*, and folktales we must share our history with them so when they set up committees to help Big Mountain, Navajos or the Chicano farm-workers or *los Nicaraguenses* they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorance. *They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead.*

Individually, but also as a racial entity, we need to voice our needs. We need to say to white society: We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. *We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect.* We need you to make public restitution: to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, *you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty—you rather forget your brutish acts*⁷⁷.

First of all, there is an insisting "us" vs. "you" and "them" that may bother those who see in it a manifestation of identity politics. One, in this case, would prefer a more subtle appeal to ideas and passing over who is white, or brown, or heterosexual or homosexual. Just to take an example of this more encompassing position, let's take Alain Baidiou *Manifesto for Philosophy* ([1989], 1992), and contrast with Anzaldúa's statement and with Dussel's "geopolitics and philosophy." The contrast or comparison is justified here on the fact that the three of them address the very principles of

⁷⁷ Anzaldúa, op.cit, 108.

knowledge as philosophy (Dussel and Badiou) as “conciencia de la mestiza” (Anzaldúa), and we all know that “consciousness” has been a hot philosophical topic from Descartes to Husserl; from Freud to Merleau-Ponty. Thus, disheartened because of the crisis of philosophy, Badiou wrote a “manifesto” in defense of it. Let’s look at the first paragraph:

The dominant philosophical traditions of the century agree that philosophy, as a discipline, is no longer really what it used to be. It must be said that Carnap’s critique of metaphysics as nonsense is very different from Heidegger’s announcement of the supersession of metaphysics. It is also very different from the Marxist dream of a concrete realization of philosophy. Very different as well from what Freud ferrets out as illusion, indeed paranoia, from speculative systematicity. But the fact remains that German hermeneutics like Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy, revolutionary Marxism and psychoanalytical interpretation concur to declare the ‘end’ of a millennial regime of thought. No further question of imagining a *philosophia perennis* perpetuating itself⁷⁸.

In the following paragraph Badiou goes on to comment on Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, etc. and to bring the “Jews question” into consideration to conclude that if philosophy “is incapable of conceptualizing the extermination of European Jews, it is the fact that it is neither its duty nor within its power to conceptualize it. It is up to an *other order of thought* to render *this* thinking actual (1992, 30).” Fair enough: we shouldn’t ask to philosophy what philosophy can’t deliver. Badiou mentions Emmanuel Levinas once, in passing, on page 67. But in comparison to Anzaldúa, Badiou’s is a restful paragraph. There is no division between “us” and “them;” the list of philosopher Badiou mentions are all European men, some are Jews some are not. He is not making distinctions between Freud and Marx, on the one hand, and Heidegger and Carnap, on the other, beyond their different philosophical projects. And he takes as a natural given the fact that analytical philosophy is “identified” with Anglo-Saxon tradition and hermeneutics with German

⁷⁸ Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*. Translated and edited by Norman Madarasz. New York: State University of New York, 1992, 97

tradition. There is no “us” vs. “them”, apparently, because there is no “them”—only “us.” Dussel, for example, cannot avoid situating his own philosophical project in relation to “them” (the European philosophers) and Anzaldúa in relation to “them” the white Anglo-Saxon. But for Badiou, such is not a problem.

This scenario should help in understanding Anzaldúa’s claim, in the first paragraph quoted above: “*They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead.*” And she adds in the following paragraph “*We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different.*” There is no need for “white Anglo-Saxon”, in Anzaldúa’s conceptualization, or European men philosophers (with the exception of Levinas) to state that “you, people of color and of the Third world, we (the European male philosophers) need you to accept the fact that European male philosophers are different.” If there is no need to make that assertion it is because an illegitimate universality of thought is assumed by male European philosophers, with the exception of Levinas. Thus, Anzaldúa’s clear-cut, “they are not helping us but following our lead”, is the basic claim that established the foundation of the geo-politics (e.g., Third World perspective) and the body-politics (e.g., post-civil rights consciousness in USA: women and men of color, gay and lesbians) from where an *identity based on politics* (and not a *politics based on identity*) emerged.⁷⁹

IV.3. The grammar of de-coloniality (e.g., de-colonization of knowledge and of being—and consequently of political theory and political economy) begins at the moment that languages and subjectivities that have denied the possibility of participating in the production, distribution, and organization of knowledge. The colonization of knowledge and of being worked from top down and that is the way it is still working today: looking from economy and politics, corporations and the state down. That is the way social sciences and financial and political think tanks work. On the other hand, the creative work on knowledge and subjectivity comes from the

⁷⁹ The unavoidable links between identity and epistemology (that is normally denied from the perspective of “white epistemologies”, male and female), has been clearly and forcefully argued by analytic and Latina philosopher Linda Alcoff. See “Identity Politics: North and South”, paper debated at the workshop “Shifting the Geo-graphy and the Bio-graphy of Knowledge”, Center for Global Studies and the Humanities, Duke University, Feb., 2005.

political society, from the institutionally and economically dis-enfranchised (that is to say, intellectual work not at the service of the corporation or the state but geared toward the empowerment of the des-enfranchised, the des-inherited). In that sense, the grammar of de-coloniality is working, has to work, from bottom up.

That is, the practice of liberation and de-colonization is initiated with the recognition, in first place, that the colonialization of knowledge and being consisted of using imperial knowledge to repress colonized subjectivities and the process moves from there to build structures of knowledge that emerge from the experience of humiliation and marginalization that have been and continue to be enacted by the implementation of the colonial matrix of power. Theo- and ego-politics of knowledge are exhausted and cannot generate an alternative to modernity because they rely on imposition of one perspective and one type of consciousness over others. To contribute to a world in which many worlds can co-exist, they must be decolonized and refashioned through the geo and bio-politics of knowledge. For decolonization to be fully operative, we must create *alternatives to modernity and neo-liberal civilization*. We must begin to imagine such alternatives from the perspectives and consciousnesses unlocked in the epistemic, ethical and political domain of the geo- and the bio-political loci of enunciation and of action.

Such alternatives are not mere fantasies or the imagining of another utopia. Liberation and decolonization are currently being enunciated (in writing, orally, by social movements and intellectuals, by artists and activists) from nodes in space-time (local histories) that have been marginalized by the temporal and spatial colonial differences. Although silenced in mainstream media, multiple fractures are creating a larger spatial epistemic breaks (e.g. geopolitics of knowledge) in the overarching totality of Western global and universal history that from Hegel to Huntington was successful in negating subjectivities from non-Western, non-capitalist, non-Christian nations. Indeed, it is comfortable for those who dwell in the dominant subjectivity to expect that the rest of the world be like “us.” Thus, liberation and decolonization shall be thought out in the same process and movement of de-linking. De-linking from what? From the Totality of

Western epistemology, grounded in Latin and Greek and expanded around the globe by means of the six imperial and vernacular European languages of modernity. The geo- and bio-political shift in epistemology presupposes “border thinking” (which as a de-colonial project is always already “critical” but beyond Horkheimer’s and post-modern uses of the term) and “border thinking” is the connector between the diversity of locals that were subjected as colonies of the modern empires (Spain, England, the U.S.) or that as empires had to respond to Western expansion (e.g., China, Russia, the Ottoman Empire until 1922). Border thinking is grounded not in Greek thinkers but in the colonial wounds and imperial subordination and, as such, it should become the connector between the diversity of subaltern histories (colonial and imperial—like Russia and the Ottoman empires) and corresponding subjectivities. That is, border thinking is one way to describe what the spatial epistemic breaks emerging all over the planet have in common and I will return to this idea later. We are not, of course, looking to retrieve an authentic knowledge from Chinese, Arabic or Aymara; but, rather, we want to include the perspective and in the foundation of knowledge subjectivities that have been subjected in and by the colonial matrix of power. The diversity of actual manifestations and practices of border thinking make up what I have described as an-other paradigm.

IV.4.- It is time to go back to Quijano’s initial paragraph that set in motion this argument: the analysis of the continuing rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality and the projects of decolonization of knowledge and of being and of de-linking. As the passage quoted above (see section I) re-iterates, a specific group of individuals, the majority of whom were, as we know, white, Christian, European men, put into place the basic principles of knowledge (e.g. subject-object), which were complicit with the variegated concept of totality. There is, of course, nothing wrong in the fact that a given group of people put forward its own cosmovision. The problem arises when a limited number of people feel they are appointed by God to bring (their) good to the rest of humanity. That is, as Quijano puts it, “the provincial pretense to universality.” Thus, the already accepted claim that one of the directions for the decolonization of knowledge is to provincialize Europe is clearly implied in last

sentence. The critique of the Eurocentered paradigm of knowledge, Quijano writes in the first of the three paragraphs, cannot be a total rejection of the concept of totality or of the European concept of subject. To make such move would be to use the same logic and pretend that a different universalism will be better than the one that is today hegemonic and dominant (and I mean both). Such is the problem and limitation, for example, of Islamic fundamentalism.

How can we proceed? Quijano suggests de-linking modernity/rationality from coloniality. First, as our discussion has indicated, we de-link the rhetoric of modernity from the logic of coloniality. Then, the doors open to all forms and principles of knowledge that have been colonized, silenced, repressed, and denigrated by the totalitarian march of the genocidal dimension of modernity. That move takes us in the direction Dussel calls trans-modernity. An objection might be that this move by itself guarantees nothing and could be taken as a new version of the Neo-liberal project insofar as nothing escapes the market and there is no outside to the “global neo-liberal, capitalist totality,” “no outside of capital(ism)” and so on and so forth.

We can counter this postmodern objection, which, of course, is still *within* modernity itself, by explaining that we have not been claiming an *outside* but an *exteriority* where the difference between “the space of experience” and the “horizon of expectations”⁸⁰ becomes apparent. The difference between the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectations” is not the same for Koselleck, soaked to the skin in the memories and traces of European history, as for Lewis Gordon, flooded in the memories and traces of slavery in the Caribbean with all its past and current consequences and for Jacqueline Martinez, drenched with the memories and traces of Mexican-Americans and the meaning of homosexuality in that particular “space of experience” and “horizon of expectations.” Thus, that exteriority is a basic assumption in the modernity/coloniality scholarly and political project. Let me explain.

Habermas has relied on Koselleck to bring out one of the dimension of modernity, related to time. In his investigation in conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck has

⁸⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantic of Historical Time* Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1985, 270-280

identified and characterized “modern time-consciousness” in terms of the increasing difference between the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectation.”

My thesis, said Koselleck, is that in modern times the difference between experience and expectation has increasingly expanded: more precisely, that modernity is first understood as a new age from the time that expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experiences”⁸¹.

Commenting on this passage, Jürgen Habermas adds that:

Modernity’s specific orientation toward the future is shaped precisely to the extent that societal modernization tears apart the old European experiential space of the peasant’s and craftsman’s life-worlds, mobilizes it, and devalues it into directives guiding expectations. *These traditional experiences of previous generations are then replaced by the kind of experience of progress that lends to our horizon of expectation (till then anchored fixedly in the past) a ‘historically new quality, constantly subject to being overlaid with utopian conceptions’*”⁸².

If you read and think about both statements from the feeling, experiences, existence, history of Bolivia for example, and Latin America, instead of from Germany and Europe, I suspect that first you may not come up with these issues and problems as central and, secondly, if you pay attention to the fact that these issues have been put on the table by prominent German thinkers, then you have to accept that modernity goes together with the coloniality of knowledge: people in Bolivia, Nigeria, Argentina or India *have to think from the German experience from where Koselleck and Habermas are thinking.*

We have to recognize, however, that “time has accelerated:” cars are speedier, aircraft flight at an incredible amount of miles per hour, internet have made the world shrinking

⁸¹ *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge: Harvard U.Press, 1985, 276

⁸² Habermas, op.cit., 12

and post-modernity has been characterized by that time-space contraction of the life-world. However, one should ask whether people in La Paz, Bolivia are living the life world in an experiential space that gets further away from the “horizon of expectations” that people in Munich, Germany. “Further away” is indeed the conceptual trap in the sense that “modernity” has been conceived as such precisely to produce the illusion that people living in the contemporary world are “further away in time” and not “living in a different socio-historical dimension.”

In Munich, you do not see or feel coloniality. In La Paz, Bolivia, you feel it all the way, all the time, in your bones: modernity is constantly reproducing coloniality. Which means that the rhetoric of progress, of salvation, of technology, of democracy goes hand in hand with the logic and practice of oppression, racial discrimination, political concentration of power in the hand of a Creole/Mestizo/a elite. As a consequence, the growing social movements lead by leaders like Evo Morales (the cocaleros) and Felipe Quispe (the Aymara communities) has been giving the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectations” a radical new twist, and the “life world” of Bolivian has been transformed from the social roots, with the events of October of 2003. Take another example. Pope John Paul II grew up in communist Poland. When he became a Pope, in 1980, he worked hard to dethrone communism. The explicit reason was the totalitarian bent of Soviet communism. The less explicit reason was that communism was an enemy of the Church and, in consequence, the manifestation of Evil. However, the interesting twist is that Pope John Paul II was short sighted and couldn’t understand why Liberation Theology in Brazil was fighting against totalitarian regimes that were not communist. As a matter of fact, Pope John Paul II was against Theology of Liberation for being too close to Marxism! The space of experience and the horizon of expectations had to be reframed within the geo- and bio-politics of knowledge and understanding; through the imperial and colonial differences and, above all, at the junction of the visible rhetoric of modernity and the invisible logic of coloniality.

These examples confront us with a few decisions regarding the creation, transformation and use of concepts. That is, confront us with the very issue of de-coloniality of

knowledge and of being and in the ways in which the spaces of experience and the horizon of expectations of the modern world was confused with the march of history and civilization itself. One would be to say that indeed Koselleck's and Habermas's concepts and conceptualization of the life world of modernity is not really German or European but global as fast as the entire population of the globe, today, has been touched by modernity by "societal, and I would add global, modernization that tears apart the old European experiential space of the peasant's life-world." If we follow that route, we will have to use the experience of European peasants and from there we will *conceptualize and understand* the experience and life world of a peasant in China two thousands miles West of Beijing or of Aymara Indians (they are not peasants, they are Indians. Aymara intellectual and activist repeated in the sixties and seventies: I am not a peasant, dam it, I am an Indian!!). And at this point it may be a little bit difficult to make a Bolivian Indian, whose "space of experience" is filled with five hundred years of oppression, racialization, de-humanization with the experience of a peasant in the Black Forest or in the wonderland of Norway. I am not saying that it is not important to think of the peasant of southern Germany or central Norway; or even on the life-world of the modernized elite in Munich that is replacing the imperial memories and life style for a fast speed and technological way of making money. I am just saying that we cannot take for granted that what happens in Munich, and it is felt and thought by German, happens more or less similarly in other places and people will think more or less similarly. There is however reasons to think that, and one is the uses, for example, of Koselleck and Habermas, in Latin America or in China. Western expansion includes the good, the bad and the ugly, although the "good" in its various forms, it is a consequence of the bad and the ugly, as we are witnessing today in Iraq: first you destroy a country, then you provide help and promote reconstruction, third you promote freedom and democracy, and four you crash Islamic thinkers who would like to reconstruct Iraq and write the constitution on the bases of *sharia* and the Q'uran and not on the bases of the *democracy* and the Bible.

Two important observations are here necessary. I am not making deterministic assumptions here but thinking in terms of choices, options and responsibilities; that is, of the ethics of any project, political and/or scholarly and intellectual. Not every German, Black Jamaican or lesbian Chicana will follow the paths outlined by Marx, Fanon or Anzaldúa. Still, their choices and directions could not but be shaped by the cosmovision and the experiences that formed their intellectual and political projects. The second clarification is that I am not suggesting that Gordon and Martinez are preferable to Koselleck. I am simply saying that Koselleck's experience and formulation of the space of experience cannot be taken as the "universal" frame to interpret and conceptualize all other spaces of experiences. By the same token, the same criteria apply to Gordon and Martinez. To universalize the Black or the Lesbian/Chicana experience would be to fall back into the same logic that caught Islamic fundamentalism and believe that "my" space of experience and "horizon of expectations" are beneficial for all.

Then, am I proposing a sort of "cultural relativism" with its rhetoric of "let me alone in my place"? Well, not exactly. To understand what I am suggesting it is necessary to take another step in the grammar of decolonization and enter into the *border space*, which is the *exteriority* of the modern and the postmodern. That border lies where, as Dussel has underlined, Western knowledge and subjectivity, control of land and labor, of authority, and ways of living gender and sexuality have been "contacting" other languages, memories, principles of knowledge and belief, forms of government and economic organization since 1500 (often in relations of domination, exploitation and conflict). That "contact" did not occur all at once with only one Western leading imperial power bringing every body under its telematic embrace. Still, the universalization of the regional is one consequence of Western imperial/colonial expansion. As a result, each local history of the planet, today, has to deal with the modern/colonial world, the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. Each local history has its own language, memory, ethics, political theory, and political economy (as we have been witnessing daily in Iraq since March of 2003 when the "mission accomplished" statement was proffered in Washington), all of which are also marked by

traces of the local in the relations of domination and exploitation within Western knowledge. The “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectations” are di-verse, or rather, pluri-verse—what each diverse local history has in common with others is the fact that they all have to deal with the unavoidable presence of the modern/colonial world and its power differentials, which start with racial classification and end up ranking the planet (e.g., First, Second and Third World was a racialization of politics, economy, cultures and knowledge). Thus, the pluri-versality of each local history and its narrative of decolonization can *connect* through that common experience and use it as the basis for a new common logic of knowing: border thinking. That is, the fact of having to imagine a future that is not the future that those in Washington, or London, or Paris, or Berlin would like the people of the world to have can bring together all those who have been contacted in various ways by them.

Critical border thinking provides one method to enact the de-colonial shift and it operates as a connector between different experiences of exploitation can now be thought out and explored in the sphere of the colonial and imperial differences. Thus, critical border thinking is the method that connects pluri-versality (different colonial histories entangled with imperial modernity) into a uni-versal project of delinking from modern rationality and building other possible worlds. Critical border thinking involves and implies both, the imperial and colonial differences.

Let’s quickly look at some examples. Decolonizing knowledge and being from the perspective of Japanese or Russian’s colonies will be quite different from the perspective of England’s colonies. In the first two cases, de-colonization from the epistemic and existential conditions imposed by Japanese and Russian languages leaves still another layer to deal with, which is the epistemic and epistemic conditions growingly imposed world wide by Greco-Latin and the six vernacular imperial languages of Western empires. That is, Japanese and Russian languages and categories of thought became subordinated to the hegemony of Western epistemology and its imperial and global reach. Any project of decolonization must operate in full awareness of its location within the complex relations structured by imperial and colonial

differences. At the same time, because the “West is all over the rest” in a outward expansion and the “rest is all over the west” in an in-war mobilization lead by migrations, border thinking becomes crucial in any de-colonial project that will start from the weaker end of the imperial and colonial differences. When the languages and categories began to be activated in order to build a world in which many world will co-exist, by social actors aiming at de-colonization of knowledge and being and of de-linking from the imperial modernity, the splendors of human imagination and creative will open up. Certainly, there is no safe place an any language can be used, by social actors, to surrender to the languages and categories of thought of Western capitalism as it is the case also with the “adaptation” of corporate values in the power sector of China, Japan, the Arabic world and Russia. De-linking requires analysis of the making and re-making of the imperial and colonial differences and it requires visions and strategies for the implementation of border thinking leading to de-colonization of knowledge and of being; from here, new concepts of economy and social organization (politics) will be derived. Solutions from the political theories of the West, from Aristotle and Plato to Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke; to Marx and Gramsci and to Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss have been exhausted and without border thinking any exercise in this arena could only lead to spinning the spin within the bubble of imperial modernity. De-linking means to remove the anchor in which the “normalcy effect” has been produced as to hide the fact that the anchor can be removed and the edifice crumbled. Trans-modernity would be the overall orientation of de-colonizing and of delinking projects, an orientation toward pluri-versality as universal project leading toward a world in which many worlds will co-exist. Border thinking, once again, is one of the methods that can help us move to sustain a vision—a plur-versal and not a uni-versal vision--and to implement a set of strategies to accomplish it. The future could no longer be owned by one way of life (*la pensée unique* of Ramonet), can not be dictated by one project of liberation and de-colonization, and cannot be a polycentric world within Western categories of thoughts. A world in which many worlds could co-exist can only be made by the shared work and common goals of those who inhabit, dwell in one of the many worlds co-existing in one world and where differences are not cast in terms of values of plus and minus degree of humanness.

And that is how I understand Quijano's assertion, quoted above, that "epistemic decolonization is necessary to make possible and move toward a truly intercultural communication; to an exchange of experiences and significations as the foundation of an-other rationality." The exchange works as an alternative to Koselleck's "space of experience," and an-other rationality replaces the "horizon of expectations." In fact, I submit that the horizon of expectations here will be precisely "pluri-versality as a uni-versal project." That is, the uni-versality of the project has to be based on the assumption that the project cannot be designed and implemented "by one ethnic group," but has to be inter-epistemic and dialogical, pluri-versal. Thus, border thinking becomes the necessary critical *method* for the political and ethical project of filling in the gaps and revealing the imperial complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality.

Emancipating projects, as devised in Europe in the eighteenth century (Dussel's rational concept of emancipation), can be kept alive, but they must be "extracted" from their appropriation by the rhetoric of modernity to justify the logic of coloniality (their use as irrational justification of ethnocidal violence). And, as I have tried to show here, they are far from being meaningful for every one on earth and should never again become "an abstract universal of human emancipation." We have come full circle back to the geo- and bio-politics of knowledge as alternatives to the hegemony and dominance of the theo- and ego-politics organizing the modern/colonial world (that is, as we have discussed, Europe and the US in their relations of conflict and domination framed by colonial and imperial differences). Liberation projects that have emerged and are emerging in the Third World and decolonizing projects arising from the critical consciousness of the *damnés* of their racialization and the ways they have been dispossessed of their humanity (mind and soul) (Fanon, C.R.L. James, Winter, Gordon, Maldonado Torres) will naturally subsume European projects of emancipation and open the possibility of entering into a pluri-versal dialogue of equals in a common march toward a world in which "Free Life" will be the horizon instead of "Free Trade".

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The struggle for epistemic de-colonization lies, precisely, here. The next step, the work we have to do next, is to link analysis from the perspective of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality (its ethical, political and theoretical consequences), with strategies, strategic plans toward the future. Such strategies will and are already taking place in different locals and histories (from the Zapatistas to the World Social Forum to progressive Muslims intellectuals and Southern European critical voices). Will and are taking place in diverse geo- and bio political genealogies of thought and action. Crucial to the strategies toward the future, toward a pluri-versal world linked to the assumption of the universality of the pluri-versal, is to avoid the modern and *imperial* temptation of the good and best uni-versal. Christianity, (neo) Liberalism, Marxism, Islamic fundamentalism, have given enough proofs that not every body in the planet would submit to any one of the abstract universal at hand. De-coloniality is a planetary critical consciousness that emerged and unfolded, precisely out of the limits of abstract universal of its current manifestations and out of the dangers that, in the future, a “new” abstract universal will attempt to replace the existing ones; or that the existing ones will renew themselves as “new” (neo-liberalism, neo-Marxism, neo-Christianism, neo-Islamism, neo-Slavism, neo-Africanism, neo-Judaism, neo-Eurocentrism, neo-Confucianism, neo-Hinduism, etc.).⁸³ Pluri-versality as a universal project is quite demanding. It demands, basically, that we cannot have it all our own way. The struggle for epistemic de-coloniality lies, precisely, here: de-linking from the most fundamental belief of modernity: the belief in abstract universals through the entire spectrum from the extreme right to the extreme left. For this reason, to imagine a new global left means falling back into the old house while just changing the carpet.

⁸³ We shall keep in mind the distinction here between *jihad* as a de-colonial project, as *jihad* as enacted by Islamic fundamentalists (See Faisal Dvji. *Landscapes of the Jihad. Militancy, Morality, Modernity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). The distinction is also valid for Christianity, Liberalism and Marxism with the difference that the three later ideologies are on the side of current dominant imperial forces.

