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# The Idea of Latin America

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B L A C K W E L L M A N I F E S T O S

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## “Latin” America and the First Reordering of the Modern/Colonial World

I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out . . . I am talking about millions of [women and] men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life – from life, from the dance, from wisdom.

I am talking about millions of [women and] men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkies . . .

I am talking about natural *economies* that have been destroyed – harmonious and viable *economies* – adapted to the indigenous population – about food crops destroyed, malnutrition permanently introduced, agricultural development oriented solely toward the benefit of the metropolitan countries; about the looting of products, the looting of raw material.

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 1955

The “vital breath” of Western thought is reason; reason of “rectilinear time.” From Socrates to Kant and from Hegel to Marx, reason marches in a straight line. This thought organizes Occident. And Occident arrives at the atomic bomb . . . Thought in the New World is not “genocidal reason”; it is

"cosmic reason," vital reason. . . . Thought in the New World is Maya-Inka, that is to say, is Indian thought.

Fausto Reinaga, *La América India y Occidente*, 1974

### **The Point of No Return: From *Pachakuti* to Revolution**

A series of unprecedented events occurred in the Atlantic world between 1776 and 1830 that would decide the future of world history – unprecedented because before the sixteenth century the modern/colonial structure that they would shake did not even exist. Thus, the transformations sought by the "revolutions" for "independence" that took place over that span of fewer than sixty years were responding to a historically invisible revolution, a drastic reversal that has been conceptualized among Kechua/Kichua and Aymara speakers, then and now, as *Pachakuti*.

In chapter 1, I introduced the concept of *Pachakuti*. It is time now to return to it and to enter "Latin" America from the shadow of its negated specter. One of the meanings of *Pacha*, as I registered in chapter 1, is close to "mother earth" (like "Gaia" in the recent Gaia science); but it can also mean "world," since the very conception of the world was grounded on the assumption that "life" is the thread that links "earth" (as "nature" in European languages and the source of life) with all living organisms. *Kuti* means a sudden and dramatic change in the order of things, an extreme turnaround, like what happens when you lose control of your car and it flips upside down several times until it stops with the wheels toward the sky and the roof on the road. That was the experience (still being felt today) of *Pachakuti* for the people of the Americas in the long process of the Spanish conquest and reorganization of life and social fabric.

The conquest and colonization of America have not traditionally been seen as "revolution." From the European perspective, the process was, and continues to be, simply the "foundation" upon which future revolutions would take place. However, if you put yourself in the perspective of people in Tawantinsuyu after the arrival of the conquistador Francisco Pizarro, or in Cemenahuac

(today's valley of Mexico) after the arrival of the conquistador Hernán Cortés, or, even earlier, in the place of the Taino population in the Caribbean islands after the arrival of Christopher Columbus, you will witness the arrival of a group of unknown people and, soon after that, see your population dying, killed, raped, and exploited, all of which will be experienced as a massive revolution of disruption and destruction. Thus, the "foundation" that allowed European entrepreneurs, monarchs, and bourgeois to fulfill their supposed destiny was, for people in Tawantinsuyu and Anáhuac, a *Pachakuti*: violent destruction, relentless invasion, and disregard for their way of life – a convulsion of all levels of existence and the moment of the founding colonial wound of the modern/colonial world. Indigenous peoples in the Americas have not stopped struggling with that initial wound and are making their presence felt today.

History – official and canonical narratives of chronological successions of events in particular locations in time and space – places a gulf between the history of Europe and that of its colonies, as if they were independent entities with Europe always in front and the colonies trailing. Unlike Hegel, who wrote of universal history as it arrived at his feet in Germany, those of us speaking from the history of the ex-colonies see simultaneous occurrences in time, though not necessarily space, which are interconnected by the structuring power differential. By power differential, as we saw in chapter 1, I mean not only in the accumulation of riches and military technologies of death but in the control of the very conception of life, of economy, of human being and labor. There is no time to dispute Hegel (though we cannot ignore him). The time has indeed arrived to play a different game than the one that makes it possible to believe that the collapse of the Soviet Union hailed the end of history.

In the scale (magnitude and range) of modernity's imaginary, the order of importance of revolutions would begin after the Glorious Revolution, with the French Revolution as the key historical event in the linear unfolding of History. It would be followed by the American Revolution, Spanish-Portuguese independence, and, finally, the Haitian Revolution (with the latter being seen as peripheral events lagging behind in time and following the lead of the

locomotive of History). Yet, in the nodes constituted simultaneously by imperial/colonial expansion, by the rhetoric of modernity, and by the logic of coloniality in which those expansions are conceived and justified, there are no ranking priorities of events, since each event has a similar range and magnitude in the historico-structural heterogeneity linking imperial centers with peripheral colonies. After all, the imperial center cannot exist as such without the colonies. The French Revolution can be understood as a phenomenon internal to the history of Europe only if it is read from the perspective of modernity and of empire; that is, as part of the historical narrative that is linear, progressive, limited, and Eurocentric. But, really, how could the Glorious and the French Revolutions be understood independently from the accumulation of wealth in England and France from their plantations in the colonies? Both the Glorious and the French Revolutions "depended" on the colonies.

When "history" is conceived of in the simultaneity of events in the metropolis and the colonies, not only through the national history of the metropolis or the colonial history of the colonies alone (as told by metropolitan historians), we can see the heterogeneous historico-structural links (which are spatially temporal rather than temporally spatial) between the two sides of each event and, consequently, the two sides of modernity/coloniality. Independence in the colonies was, in fact, a consequence of the changing economic and political structures in Europe. The "revolutions" for independence by the Spanish, Portuguese, British, and French colonies in the Americas that took place between 1776 and 1830 should be understood, in their singularities, as part of a socio-economic structure of the Atlantic world with its global implications, in relation with and distinction from European revolutions. For example, the Glorious Revolution brought about the victory of free trade over mercantile monopoly. The Glorious Revolution has been described from the Caribbean perspective by Eric Williams:

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 1698 the Royal African Company lost its monopoly and the right of a

free trade in slaves was recognized as a fundamental and natural right of Englishmen. 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 slave trade differ from the freedom accorded in other trades — the commodity involved was man.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, English merchants and government were not solely responsible for the transformation of certain human lives into commodities. In different periods of intensity, the Spaniards, Portuguese, French, and Dutch also worked from that same template. In fact, the entire Atlantic economy, from the sixteenth century until the dawn of the twenty-first, was founded on the increasing devaluation of whatever did not sustain capital accumulation. Military defense and political institutions were based on the assumption that human life was expendable in the set of global designs. British and French exploitation of the Caribbean was as greedy as the attitude that those same countries attributed to Spanish conquistadores. The “Black Legend” of Spanish corruption, which the British initiated to demonize the Spanish Empire in a ploy to get a grip on the Atlantic economy during the seventeenth century, was part of a European family feud over the economic, political, and intellectual (in the general sense of accumulation and control of knowledge, including science and technology, of course) riches of the “New World.” Therein originates the *imperial difference* that would become widespread in the eighteenth century and shape the conception of “Latin” America.

The French Revolution introduced a radical change in the legal and political system of Western Europe that complemented the economic and financial changes that took place in England with the Glorious Revolution. Concepts of rights and of the citizens in France shaped ideas of personal and collective independence, autonomy, emancipation, freedom, etc. which bore directly on the understanding of the “revolutions” in the Americas. Immanuel Kant’s conception of Enlightenment as emancipation expresses one such formative idea. In his piece “What is Enlightenment?” Kant explained that:



Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. Dare to know (*Sapere aude*): "Have the courage to use your own understanding" is therefore the motto of the enlightenment.<sup>2</sup>

You can hear the echoes of Kant's statement today in daily conversations about freedom and democracy and even in the very concept of the "free" market. Insofar as the statement has become a given and crucial part of the rhetoric of modernity, it elides the critique of its self-contradiction. That is, to follow Kant's recommendation to the limit would require the questioning of Kant's own authority to "establish guides" that promote "understanding without guidance." In other words, understanding without guidance requires an acceptance of Kant's guidance. When I talk about decolonizing knowledge, then, I am doing it *with* and *against* Kant, which is what *critical border thinking as decolonization of knowledge* is all about.

As wars of independence spread all over the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in South America beginning in 1810 (six years after the Haitian Revolution), republican ideas being discussed and implemented in France occupied the minds and bodies of Iberian Creoles as well as African Creoles in Haiti and what later became the Dominican Republic. However, African Creoles had an extra burden upon them. It was easier for Creoles of Spanish and Portuguese descent to be "recognized" as having a right to independence; but it was not so easy or clear, at the time, to accept that Black people could take their destiny into their own hands. It was expected that freedom for the Blacks and Mulattos/as, slaves and ex-slaves, would be "given" by the White man. Kant's dictum apparently only applied selectively. Yet the "revolutions" for "independence" that took place in the Americas demonstrate that Blacks fighting for freedom didn't need Kant's dictum. In fact, it worked to the Haitians' disadvantage to rely on it insofar as it pre-empted their own creativity and originality and replaced it with the legitimacy and authority of White European philosophers.



Emancipation belonged to the rise of a new social class (the bourgeoisie) whose members were mostly White, educated in Christian cosmology and in the curriculum of the Renaissance university, soon to be transformed with the advent of the Kantian-Humboldtian university of the Enlightenment. One of the consequences of such ideas of "emancipation" was that while celebrating the economic and political emancipation of a secular bourgeoisie from the tutelage both of the monarchy and of the church (particularly in France, where the separation of the church and the state was greater than in Germany and England), that same bourgeoisie and its intelligentsia appointed themselves to take into their hands the "emancipation" of non-European people in the rest of the world. In general, these new directions worked in two different manners: colonialism and imperialism, direct or indirect. The emergence of "Latinidad" and of "Latin" America, then, is to be understood in relation to a European history of growing imperialism grounded in a capitalist economy and the desire to determine the shape of "emancipation" in the non-European world.

**"Latinidad": From the "Colonial Creole  
Baroque Ethos" to the "National Creole  
Latin American Ethos"**

Latin America is actually a hyphenated concept with the hyphen hidden under the magic effect of the ontology of a subcontinent. By the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of America as a whole began to be divided, not so much in accordance with the emergent nation-states as, rather, according to their imperial histories, which placed an Anglo America in the North and a Latin America in the South in the new configuration of the Western Hemisphere. At that moment, "Latin" America was the name adopted to identify the restoration of European Meridional, Catholic, and Latin "civilization" in South America and, simultaneously, to reproduce absences (Indians and Afros) that had already begun during the early colonial period. The history of "Latin" America after independence is the variegated history of the local elite, willingly or not, embracing "modernity" while Indigenous, Afro, and poor Mestizo/a peoples get

poorer and more marginalized. The "idea" of Latin America is that sad one of the elites celebrating their dreams of becoming modern while they slide deeper and deeper into the logic of coloniality.

The idea of "Latin" America that came into view in the second half of the nineteenth century depended in varying degrees on an idea of "Latinidad" – "Latinity," "Latinité" – that was being advanced by France. "Latinidad" was precisely the ideology under which the identity of the ex-Spanish and ex-Portuguese colonies was located (by natives as well as by Europeans) in the new global, modern/colonial world order. When the idea of "Latinidad" was launched it had a particular purpose within European imperial conflicts and a particular function in redrawing the imperial difference. In the sixteenth century, Las Casas contributed to drawing the imperial difference by distinguishing Christians from the Ottoman Empire. By the nineteenth century the imperial difference had moved north, to distinguish between states that were all Christian and capitalist. In the Iberian ex-colonies, the "idea" of Latin America emerged as a consequence of conflicts between imperial nations; it was needed by France to justify its civilizing mission in the South and its overt conflict with the US for influence in that area. France, as a country that joined the Reformation, could count itself in the same camp as England and Germany; but it was, at the same time, predominantly Latin and, hence, in historical contradistinction to the Anglo-Saxon.

In the late nineteenth century, France faced a British Empire that had just colonized India and parts of Africa and was in the process of strengthening its control over the commercial and financial markets in South America. Evidence of the competition posed from Britain can still be seen today in the presence of remnants of its railroad system in Latin American countries. The position officially assumed in France at that moment has endured and it is still present in the conflicts, tensions, and complicities within the European Union and in the European Parliament today. The concept of "Latinidad" was used in France by intellectuals and state officers to take the lead in Europe among the configuration of Latin countries involved in the Americas (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France itself), and allowed it also to confront the United States' continuing expansion toward the South – its purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon

and its appropriation of vast swaths of territory from Mexico. White Creole and Mestizo/a elites, in South America and the Spanish Caribbean islands, after independence from Spain adopted "Latinidad" to create their own postcolonial identity. Consequently, I am arguing here, "*Latin*" America is not so much a subcontinent as it is the political project of Creole-Mestizo/a elites. However, it ended up by being a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it created the idea of a new (and the fifth) continental unit (a fifth side to the continental tetragon that had been in place in the sixteenth century). On the other hand, it lifted up the population of European descent and erased the Indian and the Afro populations. *Latin* America was not – therefore – a pre-existing entity where modernity arrived and identity questions emerged. Rather, it was one of the consequences of the remapping of the modern/colonial world prompted by the double and interrelated processes of decolonization in the Americas and emancipation in Europe.)

Nineteenth-century Colombian intellectual Torres Caicedo was a key figure in justifying and pushing forward the idea of "*Latin*" America. In Caicedo's opinion, "There is Anglo-Saxon America, Danish America, Dutch America, etc.; there is also Spanish America, French America and Portuguese America; and therefore to this second group what other scientific name applies but *Latin*?"<sup>3</sup> Caicedo was a Francophile, spent much time in France, and maintained good relations with governmental and official spheres in that country. If his is one of the names that readily come to mind when "*Latin*" America is mentioned, the implication is clear. He was not the only one with such interests and he defended a very common geo-political position along the lines of French imperial interests. Of course, he does not "represent" everything that was being thought at the time, but he certainly "represents" a sector of the intelligentsia for whom, until recently, France "represented" the ideal in politics and literary culture. "*Latinidad*" came to refer to a Spanish and Portuguese government and an educated civil society in America that turned its face to France and its back to Spain and Portugal. In the same way as John Locke and other British thinkers, like David Hume and Thomas Hobbes, are associated with the political culture of the US, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire are associated with the political culture of "*Latin*" America.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, after several nation-states originated as a consequence of gaining independence from Spain, the idea of them was not of "Latin" but of "Spanish" America. If "Latinité-Latinidad" was simply a global design imagined and implemented from France, how did it come to displace and replace Simón Bolívar's "Confederation of Spanish American Nations"? One interpretation, advanced several years ago by eminent Uruguayan intellectual Arturo Ardao, held that the idea of "Latin" America materialized in a triangular complicity between French, Spanish, and Spanish American Creole intellectuals. In his opinion, Latin America came into being as part of the orientation of the Creole elites toward the intellectual leadership of France after Spain missed the train of modernity in the eighteenth century, and France became the model even for Spanish intelligentsia.<sup>4</sup> What has been insinuated but not explored in detail is that the subjective foundation for a "Latin" American identity among the post-independence Creoles of Spanish descent was already being articulated in the colonies in the late seventeenth century. That moment was the *colonial* Baroque in the Spanish colonial possessions, and was different, for sure, from the *continental* Baroque in Spain as well as in France, Italy, and Germany. The idea of a "Spanish American Confederation" was a political and administrative identification, while "Latin" America touched different cords. It touched upon the subjectivity and it became the *ethos* of the emerging Creoles elites: it was the colonial *Baroque ethos* translated into a national *Latin American ethos*.

The Baroque period, in European arts and ideas, is known as a moment of seventeenth-century splendor between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. If the Renaissance has been characterized by symmetry of forms in the visual arts and humanism in letters and ideas, while the Enlightenment is known for secularism, for the celebration of Reason, for the emergence of a new social class and a new form of government (the nation-state) together with that of the political economy associated with free trade and overcoming mercantilism, the Baroque was a period of the celebration of exuberance. In the history of ideas, it is associated with a consolidation of the autonomy of the subject in relation to the legitimacy of classical authors (Greek and Latin) as well as the church and God. In this sphere, the Baroque was a "rest area" before the era of



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"revolution" and the call for emancipation launched by Immanuel Kant's paragraph quoted above. In Spain, Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is associated with the Baroque. The questioning of authority from the past is debated in the prologue as well as in the second part when Don Quixote reads his own adventure in a narrative recently published. That mirror effect, noted by Michel Foucault, singles out the moment of an epistemic break, in the history of Western thought and culture, in which the relation between the word and its reference is placed in question. For some, the Baroque is also associated with the "birth" of modernity. Economically, Europe in the sixteenth century (and particularly Spain, Portugal, France, and England) was enjoying the enormous wealth generated in its colonies, in the "Indias Occidentales" and the "West Indies" (as England named its Caribbean possessions), and in "les Antilles" (as France named its own). The splendor in arts and ideas in Europe and in the European colonies goes hand in hand with the wealth generated in gold and silver mines, in the plantations of sugar, coffee, tobacco, cotton, in the appropriation of land and the exploitation of Indian and African labor. While the sixteenth century was one in which only Spain and Portugal were the imperial powers in the newly "discovered lands" and wealth was mainly generated by the extraction of gold and silver, the seventeenth was the century in which the slave trade and Caribbean plantations peaked and European Atlantic countries enjoyed fully the benefits of colonial labor.

Above and beyond the colonial exploitation of labor, there was also a Baroque in the colonies, mainly in the viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru. Baroque architecture can be found in other places like Guatemala, or Quito in Ecuador, as well as Salvador de Bahia and Ouro Preto in Brazil. At the surface level, the *colonial* Baroque in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies responded to the general tendencies of the *continental* Baroque in Spain. But there were "two Baroques," really, in the colonies. The state version was basically a "transplantation" of the Spanish and Portuguese elites in power, enjoying for themselves the wealth generated by the colonial economy. The Baroque of the state was also a lifestyle of consumption by the elite in power, from the Iberian peninsula. Spanish and Portuguese dominions in America had created, by the mid-seventeenth century, important urban centers with complex

demography. Mexico City was built over the ruins of Tenochtitlan; the colonial city of Cuzco in Peru was built over the ruins of the Inca Empire. Beyond the spaces controlled by the colonial administration and the peninsular elites in power, however, something else was burgeoning in the streets, in the plazas, in the market as well as in the peripheries of centers of intellectual production like monasteries, seminars, and, in the case of Lima and Mexico, universities. A marginal society of displaced Creoles existed alongside Indians and Mestizos/as, Blacks, and Mulattos/as (see the graphic below, p. 73). In the colonies, the Baroque was the expression of protest, complaint, rebellion, and critical consciousness by socially and economically displaced Creoles of Spanish descent.<sup>5</sup> It was indeed the cry of the White Creoles feeling the pain of the colonial wound.

The Baroques of the Indies – at the level of the state and of civil society – cannot therefore be placed together as one more chapter of the European Baroque. They formed a Baroque that emerged out of the *colonial difference* of a displaced Spanish elite in power and of a wounded Creole population. It was a Baroque pretending-to-be for the Spanish elite in the colonies and of anger and decolonial impulses for the White Creoles and some Mestizos/as. It was, properly, a “Baroque Other,” a heterogeneous historico-structural moment in the complex structure of the modern/colonial world. It was the moment in which, after the final defeat of the Indigenous elites at the beginning of the seventeenth century,<sup>6</sup> the emerging Creole population felt the colonial wound and took over the conflict of the difference, the colonial difference, racial, political, social, and economic. Of course, and as always, there were Creoles who did their best to assimilate and gain a position among the Iberian elite in power. Assimilation has been and still is a response to the colonial difference, since “you are not one of them” but you want to “become one of them.” Dissension is the other type of response to the *colonial wound*. In the first case, the colonial wound is repressed, while in the second case, it offers the starting point not only for acts of rebellion but for thinking-otherwise. The “Barroco de Indias” (“Baroque of the Indies”) was precisely the angered expression, in art and ideas (e.g., philosophy), built upon the colonial difference and the colonial wound. It was the sprouting of the Creole critical consciousness.

Ecuadorian philosopher and essayist Bolívar Echeverría explained in detail the appearance of the Creole identity, an identity that was no longer Spanish or Portuguese but properly Spanish American and Luso American. Echeverría observed that:

There were the Creoles from low social levels, the Indian and Afro-Mestizos, those whom, without knowing it, would end up doing what Bernini did with the classical canon of painting: these mixed groups of lower social strata *endeavored to re-establish the most viable civilization, which was the dominant one, the European*. They intended to wake it up and then to restore its original vitality. In doing so, in invigorating the European code over the ruins of the pre-Spanish code (and with the remainders of the African slaves' codes brought by force into the picture), they would find themselves building something different from their original intention; they would find themselves raising up a Europe that never existed before them, a different Europe, a "Latin American" Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the fact that "Latin American" here is an anachronism (there was no such a thing as "Latin" America in the colonies, but vice-royalties united in the concept of the "Indias Occidentales"), it must also be noted that this political project in practice as well as in consciousness was still defined by the Spanish and Portuguese Creole elites, who kept their backs to the Indian and African populations co-existing among them. The mixed group of the lower strata, whom Echeverría identified as the main actors of a variegated political project throughout Spanish America and to a certain extent in Brazil, was a demographic reality clearly managed and repressed by Whites/Creoles. Creole consciousness was indeed a singular case of double-consciousness: the consciousness of not being who they were supposed to be (Europeans). That being as not-being is the mark of the coloniality of being. Afro-Creoles and Indians do not have the same problem. Their critical consciousness emerged from not even being considered *human*, not from not being considered *Europeans*.

In the twentieth century the situation got more complicated with the increasing influence of the US. The "Latino/a" identification in the US, as we will see in chapter 3, brings this to the fore: while

"Latin" American Creoles and Mestizos/as do not want or cannot pretend to be "Creoles of US (American) descent," Latinos/as in the US have cut the Gordian knot with Europe. *This is one of the lines cutting across Latinos/as in the US and Latins in South America;* while the first are of European descent, the second are not. Latinos/as in the US cut the umbilical cord that still connects Latins, in South America, to Europe. This tension was reconfigured when, after 1970, "Hispanics" and "Latinos/as" were recognized as a minority (that is, an inferior social group) in the US. Thus, *for the imperial imaginary*, "Latin" Americans are second-class Europeans while Latinos/as in the US are second-class Americans. In short, "Latinidad," from its very inception in the nineteenth century, was an ideology for the colonization of being that Latinos/as in the US are now clearly turning into a decolonizing project (see chapter 3).

But let's not get derailed, and instead return to the formation of the Creole subaltern identity. Bolívar Echeverría's argument, thus, explains how the idea of Latin America became entrenched in Creole/Mestizo/a ideology and subjectivity and, consequently, alien to the Indigenous people and Afros, as well as to the European populations. The diverse communities of Creoles/Mestizos/as (Catholics of different persuasions, liberals of different convictions, socialists of diverse faiths, in different strata of society and of different gender and sexual engagement) were in the position of having to invent themselves after "independence," and they did so by engaging in the restoration of the most viable civilization (said Echeverría) – the European, and not the Indigenous or African. Indian civilizations became ruins, and Afro-creations in the New World took on their own identities. The Afro-based "religions" of Candomblé in Brazil, Santería in the Spanish Caribbean, Voodoo in the French colonies, and, lately, Rastafarianism in the British colonies all reach toward a dense, potent civilizational energy that was tragically erased by the surfacing of the critical Creole consciousness.

The movements for independence took place roughly over one hundred and fifty years after the emergence of the Creole Baroque critical consciousness. After independence, Creoles found themselves in power and no longer subalterns of the Spanish colonial elites. They became, indeed, the postcolonial elite. While theology was the overall framework in which the Baroque ethos materialized, it was



already receding in the nineteenth century, and the individual, the ego in Descartes's terminology, was taking center stage along with secular political theories. The "idea" of Latin America came into sight in the process of the transformation of the colonial Creole Baroque ethos into the postcolonial Creole "Latin" ethos. In that transformation, Spain receded and France and England gained ground in the minds and the pockets of postcolonial Creoles. Republicanism and liberalism displaced the colonial ideology under which the Spanish Empire organized, controlled, and sustained its colonies. The "Latin" American ethos was a product and a consequence of the transformation from the dominance of theology and religious spiritualism to the dominance of egology and secular materialism, as much as it was the transformation of the critical and subaltern consciousness of the Baroque ethos into the assenting consciousness of the postcolonial Creole elites. "Postcolonial" here refers to the period following the shift from the colonial regime ruled from the metropolis to a national regime ruled by the Creoles. In that shift, internal colonialism was born. And "Latin" America as a political and ethical project was the ethos of internal colonialism.

When the Creoles moved from being a subaltern group to become a dominant elite, the only anchor they had was the "Baroque ethos" which, at that point, was more a blurred memory than a source of political energy. Closer to their memory was the so-called "debate on the New World" in the course of which the Jesuits had been expelled from South American countries in the second half of the eighteenth century. If the Baroque moment created the conditions for the Creoles to come out of their shell, the expulsion of the Jesuits (all of them Creoles, certainly) inflamed their hatred not only against the Spanish colonial authority but also against the imperial coalition between the Spanish crown and the Catholic church. When military action for independence was followed by the need to put their house in order, the Creole elite put their past in the closet and joyfully looked for political ideals toward France, where they found the republican emphasis on the "res publica" (the state) and the important role of the state in the coordination of a just and peaceful society (with a long history going back to Plato, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes). And they also found liberalism, a newer

doctrine or ideology, propagated by Locke and the Glorious Revolution in England and theorized by Adam Smith, that pushed the freedom of the individual and free trade rather than state management.<sup>8</sup> However, for the Creole elite of Spanish and Portuguese descent, France was closer than England, and Montesquieu became the central figure from whom republicans and liberals would draw their ideas.<sup>9</sup>

I am telling these stories for two reasons, mainly. The first is to show the struggle to identify the historical grounding of the Creole consciousness, since Creoles could not claim the past that belonged to the Spaniards, to the Indians, or to the Africans. Creoles of Spanish and Portuguese descent were, indeed, closer than they imagined to African slaves and Creoles of African descent – they were all cut off from their pasts and they were living in a present without history. However, while Blacks invented “religions,” Creoles of Spanish and Portuguese descent lived under the illusion that they were Europeans too, although they felt their second-class status. The “Baroque ethos” and the expulsion of the Jesuits from the New World were receding from their consciousness. By the mid-nineteenth century, the British railroad made it clear that a new economic era was dawning. The historical foundation of Creole identity under colonial rules was quickly stored away, and the Creole elite alienated itself in its effort to adopt and adapt republican and liberal projects. Republicanism and liberalism, in Europe, emerged as bourgeois projects against the monarchy and a despotic form of government; they were also against the Christian church, which was curtailing the sovereignty of the individual; and, finally, they were against monarchic control of the mercantile economy, which was holding back the benefits that free trade was promising to the emerging social-economic class, the bourgeoisie. None of these conditions obtained in the ex-Spanish and ex-Portuguese colonies. The Creole elite really missed the point. And instead of devoting themselves to the critical analysis of colonialism (in the same way as European intellectuals devoted themselves to the critical analysis of the monarchy, the despotism, and the church that preceded and surrounded them), the Creole elites of the newly independent and emerging countries devoted themselves to *emulating* European intellectuals and imagining that their local histories could be redressed

by following the example of France and England and hiding colonialism – in which France and England were becoming more and more implicated – under the carpet. Republican and liberal ideas and ideals took the place of what did not happen: the critique of colonialism and the building of a decolonial project that would be neither republican nor liberal. This failure lasted almost one hundred and fifty years and shaped the socio-economic as well as intellectual history of “Latin” America, until dissenting social movements, particularly those led by Indigenous and Afro descendants – not impregnated with the republican, liberal, and socialist traditions – began to find the way that Creoles and then Latin Americans did not find after independence.

The second reason to tell this story is to dispel an illusion that you find today everywhere, among scholars and intellectuals based in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, in South America, and in the Caribbean, as well as among area studies scholars in the US and “Americanists” in Europe – the assumption that “Latin America” is a geographical entity where all these things “happened.” My point here is, on the contrary, that the “idea of Latin” America twisted the past, on the one hand, and made it possible to frame the imperial/colonial period as proto-national histories, and, on the other, made it possible to “make” into “Latin America” historical events that occurred after the idea was invented and adapted. In this way, the Creole elite responsible for building nation-states according to the new dictates of the European idea of modernity needed to refashion their identity. As I have said, I am not writing here “about” Latin America in an “area studies” framework, but on how Latin America came about. As a result, the debates among republicans and liberals (the parties took many names, such as federalists and unitarians, federalists and centralists, conservatives and liberals) worked together with the search for a subcontinental identity. The “idea of Latin” America allowed the Creole elites to detach themselves from their Spanish and Portuguese past, embrace the ideology of France, and forget the legacies of their own critical consciousness. As a consequence, “Latin” American Creoles turned their backs on Indians and Blacks and their faces to France and England.

As is always the case, there were dissidents among Creole Latin Americans. Among these was the Chilean Francisco Bilbao. Dissidents

like Bilbao were restricted by the need to work within the secular political framework defined by republicans and liberals. Karl Marx was unknown, and the ideas that Saint-Simon, the founder of French socialism, advanced at the beginning of the nineteenth century were not widely known. Bilbao, like the rest of his contemporaries, did not necessarily want to imitate France or England in his actions, but, rather, in his ways of thinking. Therein lies the underlying cause of one of the most radical mistakes made by post-colonial scholars and intellectuals – the attention given to the “thinking” rather than the “doing” and consequently to the local historical connection between doing and thinking. This is one of the main differences between the attitudes of Anglo Creoles in the US and Latin Creoles in the South. Latin Creoles set themselves in dependent relations (political, economic, and intellectual) with France, England, and Germany. Instead, early on in the US Thomas Jefferson concocted the idea of “the Western Hemisphere,” precisely to establish the American difference with Europe. Creoles and Latin Americans could not or did not want to cut their subjective dependency on Europe; they needed Europe as Indians needed their past and Blacks needed Africa and the memories of suffering under slavery. For that reason, in defining their own terms and identities, Indians, Afro descendents in South America and the Caribbean, and Latinos/as in the US are doing what Creoles of European descent should have done two hundred years ago.

Bilbao was pointing in that direction, and he did succeed in bringing about a new epistemic perspective and making visible the geo-politics of knowledge grounded in local histories. He argued that colonial legacies in the New World needed analysis and solutions different from monarchic and despotic legacies in Europe. Of course, the local histories – that of the ex-colonies and that of post-Enlightenment Europe – were not independent of each other. They were linked by a clear structure of power, and the “idea” of Latin America was a consequence precisely of this imperial/colonial structure, which did not vanish after new nation-states came in sight. Independence, in all the Americas including the US, ended external colonialism and replaced it with internal colonialism. The Creole elite, in America and also in Haiti, sat in the driving seat from



which Spaniards, Portuguese, French, and British were removed. "Dependency" did not vanish; it was simply restructured. This explains the distinction between "colonialism" and "coloniality." Colonialism has different historical and geographical locations. Coloniality is the underlying matrix of colonial power that was maintained, in the US and in South America and the Caribbean, after independence. The colonial matrix of power remained in place; it only changed hands.

The idea of "Latin" America belongs to a sphere of the colonial matrix of power that touches the question of knowledge and subjectivity — *knowledge* in the sense that a new world map was being drawn, and *subjectivity* because a new identity was emerging. At the crossroads of a dissenting new subjectivity and the remapping of the world order, Bilbao was critical of European, US, and Russian imperial ambitions and particularly focused on French advances in Mexico and France's efforts to control "Latin" America, since Spain was already out of the picture and England was concentrating on Asia and Africa. In 1856, in his *Iniciativa de la América*, Bilbao states:

Today we are witnessing empires that are trying to renew the old idea of global domination. The Russian Empire and the US are both entities located at geographic extremes, just as they are located at the political fringe. One aims at expanding Russian serfdom under the mask of pan-Slavism, and the other — the US — at expanding its dominion under the banner of Yankee individualism. Russia draws in its claws, waiting in ambush, but the US extends them more every day in that hunt that it has initiated against the South. We are already witnessing fragments of America falling into the Saxon jaws of the magnetizing boa constrictor that is unrolling its tortuous coils. Yesterday it was Texas, then the north of Mexico, and then the Pacific that offered their submission to a new master.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly enough, in 1856 Bilbao felt that a second independence was needed — this time by "la raza latinoamericana" ("the Latin American race"), or by South America as a unit. In *La América en Peligro*, published in 1863, Bilbao confronted the imperial and

global designs of the French civilizing mission, as well as its local version being trumpeted by "natives" such as the Argentinian Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Bilbao understood, by then, that the civilizing ideals and the idea of progress as a march toward civilization were really sophisms hiding the fact that, in its triumphal march, civilization eliminated people from the surface of the earth and pushed backward the "dignity, prosperity and fraternity of independent nations." He underscored the civilizational fallacy behind France's invasion of Mexico, and he denounced its promoters in South America, like Sarmiento and the Argentinian jurist and politician Juan Bautista Alberdi. Bilbao already understood something that is still at work today: "Conservatives call themselves progressives . . . and make civilized calls for the extermination of the indigenous people."<sup>11</sup>

Bilbao was necessarily working and thinking within the liberal ideology that engendered the civilizing mission as a way to justify colonial expansion. But he was located at the receiving end and not at the giving end of the equation. Modern liberalism, in France and in Europe, emerged as a solution to the problems of Europe's own history, which was not, of course, a history of decolonization. As a critical liberal from the margins, Bilbao had to come up with his critique of the legacies of Spanish colonialism and the imperial moves of France and the US from the very same liberal ideology as was implemented by France and the US in their global designs. In his struggle, he revealed a discontinuity in the emerging colonial-liberal political philosophy, a disruption that came from the sheer fact that he had no choice but to engage in a version of liberalism without grounding, a liberalism out of place. Bilbao's discontinuity opens up a critical perspective with the potential to uncover the pervasive rearticulation of the colonality of power in the nineteenth century through "Latinidad."

Reading Bilbao today reminds us that, for nineteenth-century intellectuals, statesmen, and politicians, "modernity" was cast in terms of civilization and progress. Some saw civilization and progress as the final destination for nation-builders who had liberated themselves from the Spanish and Portuguese Empires and whose literate culture was still cast in the Spanish and Portuguese languages. In the eighteenth century, Spanish and Portuguese were falling behind

in the triumphal march of Western European civilization led by the French, German, and English languages. A major obstacle to reaching that goal was that civilization and progress radiated from the countries whose official languages were not Spanish and Portuguese. Decolonization in the US was indeed a continuation of what England had already begun, and the English language was a support rather than an encumbrance. In Haiti, the language issue resulted in the adoption of Creole as the national language. Spanish and Portuguese were degraded from imperial hegemonic languages to subaltern imperial languages and superseded by French, German, and English. No one knew that the racialization of languages and knowledges was at stake (racialization, as we know, operates at many levels and not just in the color of your skin). Languages, and the instantiation of the hierarchy among them, were never outside the project of the civilizing mission and the idea of progress. As a matter of fact, languages were at the center of Christianization, the civilizing mission, and technology and development. Kichua/Kechua and Aymara speakers in South America, for example, would be twice removed and erased in the hierarchy of knowledge conceived in the Enlightenment. Language would be a constant barrier to "Latin" American intellectuals confronting the dilemma of wanting to be modern and, at the same time, realizing that they were consigned to the fringes of modernity, as the Mexican philosopher of history Leopoldo Zea clearly analyzed it in his classic book *The Role of America in History*.<sup>12</sup>

Bilbao, observing these changes in capitalist and liberal history from the margins of its margins, denounced not only French and US imperial designs, but the absolutism of Orthodox Russia as well. In other words, he was denouncing the imperial differences in global designs (France, US, Russia) while inhabiting the colonial difference: the historical location of South American countries gaining independence from Spain at the moment in which Spain was falling out of "modernity" and South America was experiencing the consequences. Bilbao also made visible what would be described in the late 1960s as "internal colonialism"<sup>13</sup> when he denounced Sarmiento as a defender of the civilizing mission and called the civilizing mission a new instrument of imperial expansion. He could already see the destructive complicity of the native elites (in this

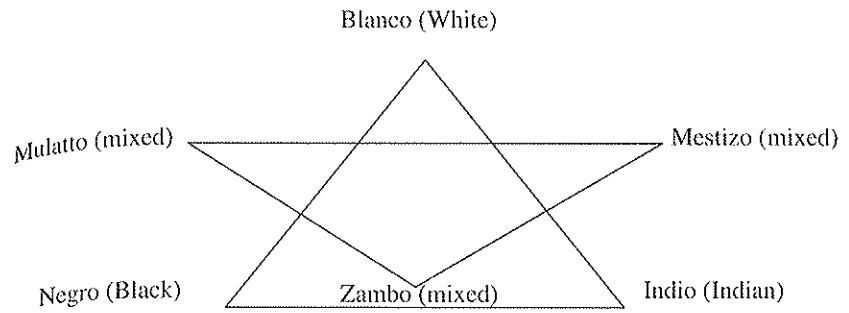
case Creoles of Spanish descent) in promoting imperial expansion and, thereby, enacting self-colonization.

**The Fifth Side of the Ethno-Racial Pentagon:  
“Latins” in Southern Europe and in  
South America and the Caribbean**

In South America and the Caribbean, “Latinidad” was a transnational identity uniting ex-Spanish and ex-Portuguese colonies that considered themselves the heirs of France. The French Caribbean was always marginal to “Latin” America, for several and different reasons. In Europe, “Latinidad” was a transnational identity uniting Southern countries that considered themselves the direct heirs of the Roman Empire, with a “Latin” ethos embedded in the Latin language and its vernacular offspring (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese). But in South America, “Latinidad” became curiously enough the fifth side of the global ethno-racial pentagon, far removed – indeed – from the Roman Empire. “Latin” America was certainly closer to a Roman colony than to Rome itself – “Latins” in the Americas were far removed from the Roman legacy that “Latins” in Europe rightly claimed for themselves. However, “Latins” in America bought into the illusion that Rome was their legacy and overlooked the three hundred years of colonialism that they were reproducing by doing so. It was not clear at that point that “Latinidad” in South America and the Caribbean would become the fifth side of the global ethno-racial pentagon, which Kant set up by linking people to continents and attributing to each continent a given color of its people. Kant suggested, in his anthropological views of human races, that Yellow people were in Asia, Black in Africa, Red in America, and White in Europe; and of course he attributed to Europeans – mainly French, English, and Germans – the superiority of reason, and the sense of the beautiful and the sublime.<sup>14</sup>

“Latins” in South America came in several colors and, for that reason, did not fit the racial mold of the nineteenth century. That legacy was carried over to the US when “Latinos/as” entered into its national ethno-racial pentagon (which I will address in chapter





Although the racial classification by blood-mixture in seventeenth-century South America reached a numerical level that defied common sense, the basic categories are contained in this diagram. "Whites" in South America were Roman Catholics and spoke Latin (or Romance) languages; this classification was already being superseded by a "Whiteness" based on Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon languages. In the US the diagram was much simpler, reduced to White and Black. (adapted from Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and Diego Quiroga, "Ecuador," in Minority Rights Group, ed., *No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today*. London: Minority Rights Publications, 1995, 287-318)

3). "Latin" America, all of a sudden, became a new "racial" category defined not by blood or skin color but by marginal status (determined by a myriad of markers such as geographical location and language) in relation to Southern Europeans, and in the shadow of the fifth side of the ethno-racial pentagon. Being White "Latin" American (instead of Latin French, for instance) was not being White enough, as is made clear today when "White" Latin Americans migrate to the US. "Latinidad" associated with Whiteness, in South America, slightly remapped the colonial racial landscape. Whitten and Quiroga<sup>15</sup> draw a useful diagram (reproduced below) of the emergent racial spectrum in Ecuador that, mutatis mutandis, is valid at least for all the Spanish colonies.

In the nineteenth century, Whites were mainly Creoles, and so "Latins" of European descent. Racial formation in the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, for example, between 1750 and 1810, had maintained the principles of "purity of blood" and introduced the color distinction instead of the strong religious configurations of Jews and Moors in Spain.<sup>16</sup> The key issue here was that while Jews and Moors

had the wrong religion, in the prevalent Christian conception, Indians (and Africans) had no religion.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, peninsular Spanish and Creoles were both considered White but ranked according to their imperial or colonial belonging. Thus, mixture of blood was translated from belief to skin color. When Kant distributed people by color and continents, he was deriving the principle not from pure reason but well and truly from the Spanish colonial experience in the New World. While the Inquisition in Spain had "purity of blood" as a legal principle to control and separate Christians from Moors and Jews, and in the New World pursued the same goals, the local Creole elite translated the principle into a de facto social differentiation between Spanish Creoles on top, Mestizos/as and Mulattos/as in the next social group down, and Indios, Zambos, and Negroes at the bottom of the pyramid. *The colonial wound* is precisely the consequence of racial discourse. Frantz Fanon expressed the experience as "suffocation" and Gloria Anzaldúa called it an "open wound" ("la frontera es una herida abierta" – I will return to these issues in chapter 3).<sup>18</sup> The colonial wound in both appeared as a new location of knowledge, the shift toward the geo-politics and body politics of knowledge. (Latin) America has not yet healed the colonial wound and has not yet freed itself from "internal colonialism" and "imperial dependency."

The division of America into North and South also mirrored similar divisions within Europe, and France's articulation of "Latinidad" should be understood through its assumed position with regard to those divisions. Up to the time of Hegel's philosophy of history, Europe was basically the land of the "two races" (instead of "three religions," as it became known after the French Revolution): the "race" of the Gallo-Romans and the "race" of the Franks. More simply put, the tension was between Roman and Germanic cultures. But it was France that took the lead, to its own advantage, of course, in bridging the gap caused by "racial tension" between the Roman and the German "races" of Europe. In 1831, the French historian Jules Michelet stated that "Rome included in itself the opposing rights of two strange races, that is, the Etruscan and the Latin. France has been in its ancient legislation Germanic up to La Loire and Roman toward the South of this river. The French Revolution married together both elements in our Civil Society."<sup>19</sup>

Of course, we (you and I, dear reader) know that this is not necessarily a view most French intellectuals would promote today. But I would like to stay a little bit longer with this topic and see how remnants of the distinctions survive in discourses around European identity. Rémi Brague recently published a successful book that put forth a direct, and sometimes indirect, attempt to justify and solidify the place of France in the European Union.<sup>20</sup> Brague argues and defends the thesis that Europe is essentially Roman and that the borders (*alterités*) by which Europe defines itself can be summarized around the very concept of "Latinité." Brague's thesis is the following: "Europe is not Greek only, and not only Hebrew, and not even Greco-Hebrew, but it is above all Roman. 'Athens and Jerusalem,' true, but also Rome . . . Three ingredients are necessary to come up with Europe: Rome, Greece, and Christianity."<sup>21</sup> Brague goes so far as to claim that there is indeed a "general Roman attitude" (remember what I was saying about the meaning of the "Baroque ethos" for Creoles claiming their own identity) that defines Europe's borders. Pursuing this argument, he attempts to show that Europe's connections with the Old Testament are a "Roman" link; that is, Christian and "Latin." By the same token, Europe can distinguish itself from the Muslim world. Brague makes a huge effort to convince his reader that Europe in its link with ancient Greece is also Roman/Latin and, therefore, different not only from Islam but also from the Byzantine world.

There is a temporal dimension to the Europe defined as "Romanité/Latinité," and it is what Brague calls the "Roman attitude." He believes that what Europe received from the Greeks and the Romans is the Greek and Roman attitude of improving upon what they took from the barbarians. He states:

The same dynamic nourishes European history. And this is what I define as the "Roman attitude" . . . The European colonial adventure, after the age of great discovery in Africa, for example, has been felt as a repetition of Roman colonization. There is a rich French historiography that draws a parallel between the colonization of the Maghrib by the ancient Romans and the more recent, French colonization . . . Colonization and European humanism after the Italian Renaissance:

will they not be linked as compensation for the sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the Greeks and the Jews? One could risk the following hypothesis. The European impulse toward conquest and colonization, since the Renaissance, perhaps has its strong motivation in the desire and the need to compensate, through the domination of people considered inferior, for [modern Europeans'] own inferiority complex in relation to antiquity, which humanists in the Renaissance were eager to rehearse . . . And, at the other end of the spectrum, the ending of the dominant role enjoyed by classical studies after World War II was simultaneous with the planetary movements of decolonization.<sup>22</sup>

While thinking about the meaning of the "Roman attitude," we should keep in mind the "colonial wound" among Indians and African slaves, among Latinos/as in the US, and among Creoles under Spanish colonial rule, as well as among leading "independent" nations under the intellectual and economic management of France and England. We have here a blueprint, a cognitive map, of Europe as Roman and Latin from the Renaissance to the end of World War II. Yet we can find an earlier version of the very same map as Brague uses in place and activated by the Creole elite who worked with the French to assert "Latinidad" in the Americas. In 1852, Juan Bautista Alberdi began his classic treatise *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización nacional* with the following statement:

America has been discovered, conquered and populated by the civilized European races, who were carried forward by the same law as moved Egyptian people from their primitive land to bring them to Greece; later on, the same law moved the inhabitants of Greece to civilize the Italian peninsula; and finally the same law motivated the Greeks to civilize the barbarous inhabitants of Germany who were changed by the remains of the Roman world, the virility of its blood illuminated by Christianity.<sup>23</sup>

Alberdi, an intellectual leader of the Argentinian history of post-colonial nation-building, offers here a clear example of the

reproduction – in the ex-colonies – of a genealogy of thought and subject formation that was “natural” to European history. European history and subject formation should not be confused with Eurocentrism, in the same way as race, in the sense of ethnicity, should not be confused with racism. Eurocentrism only arises when the particular history of Europe (and, in the second half of the twentieth century, of the US) and its concomitant subject formation are promoted and enforced as a universal model, and are accepted and promoted by colonial subjects embracing a model of being what they are not. The coloniality of being operates by conversion (to the ideals of Christianity, to civilization and progress, to modernization and development, to Western democracy and the market) or by adaptation and assimilation (the willingness of the native elites in the colonies to embrace imperial designs and values leading to colonial subject formation). That is, it means accepting dwelling in the coloniality of being by narcotizing the colonial wound, ignoring it with all sorts of painkillers. Let’s suspend this scenario for a moment, and go back to the first half of the nineteenth century when such an idea of “Latin” America became thinkable.

It was, in fact, a little-known French intellectual, Michel Chevalier, a follower of Michelet, who contributed to the imprinting of “Latinidad” on the Spanish Americas. Chevalier, who was born in Limoges in 1806, went to the US in 1833 and remained there until 1835. He ended his trip by visiting Mexico and Cuba. In 1836, Chevalier published two volumes of letters he had written during his period in the US, titled *Lettres sur l’Amérique du Nord*. There is a lot to be said about how Chevalier foretells the future, one or two centuries after his own day; but I will limit myself to his observations and prognostications about the Americas. For Chevalier, as for Michelet, “our Europe” had a double origin as Latin (Roman) Europe and Teutonic (German) Europe, with the former being comprised of the countries and people of the Midi and the second made up of the continental countries and people of the North, including England. Latin Europe is Catholic, Teutonic Europe is Protestant. In mapping that distinction onto America, Chevalier stated: “The two branches, Latin and German, reproduced themselves in the New World. South America is, like Meridian Europe, Catholic and Latin. North America belongs to a population that is

Protestant and Anglo-Saxon."<sup>24</sup> It's not surprising that Chevalier talks about Anglo Americans and Spanish Americans, given that both Bolívar's vision of a "Confederation of Spanish American Nations" and Jefferson's idea of a Western Hemisphere had been advanced by that time. But Chevalier's vision for Spanish America is not very encouraging:

The republican principle has produced the US, although the same principle has generated also those miserable republics of Spanish America. . . . Apparently the Anglo Americans will be appointed to continue, directly and without foreign intervention, the progress that the civilization to which we belong has accomplished since it [the civilization] abandoned the Orient, its cradle. . . . meanwhile, the Spanish American seems to be nothing other than an impotent race without future, unless it receives a wave of rich and new blood coming from the North, or from the East.<sup>25</sup>

There is a very interesting geo-political imaginary unfolding here, since "East" in the last line does not refer to the Orient. Let's follow up a little bit further. Chevalier was one of the ideologues of the ascending bourgeoisie and the new European political economy. He taught an introductory course on political economy at the Collège de France between 1842 and 1850. His geo-political concerns were not romantic imaginations of the New World order. The Roman and German division of Europe was no longer a question. The problem he saw in front of him, instead, was how the nineteenth century would be marked by the confrontation between the two greatest civilizations in history, the Orient and the Occident. And in that confrontation, he was particularly concerned with the role that France and countries of "Latin seed" would play. He was also aware of the emergence of the "Slav Race" as a third group that was beginning to encroach on "our Europe," meaning the Europe of Latin and Anglo-Saxon peoples. He knew the Anglo-Saxon and Slavic countries were dealing with the Orient, with Asia, and he worried that Latin countries were losing that contest. Chevalier foresaw, then, that the bridge between the East and the West would be America. He said:

Mexico and South America are filled with new branches growing up from the roots of Western civilization on both sides, the side that looks toward Asia and the side that looks toward ourselves. The US will soon extend itself from one ocean to the other . . . Thus it is clear from this point of view that America is located between the two civilizations and therefore it has a privileged destiny.<sup>26</sup>

France's articulation of "Latinidad" and cultural imperialism takes on the clear function of maintaining a presence in this area of "privileged destiny." Chevalier made this clear when he wrote: "France is the trustee of the destinies of all of the Latin nations on the two continents. It alone can prevent the swallowing of this entire family of peoples by the twin encroachment of the Germans or Saxons or by the Slavs."<sup>27</sup>

If France was responsible for "Latinidad" on both continents it was because Spain had been completely marginalized. As Leopoldo Zea observed,<sup>28</sup> after the eighteenth century Spain and Russia came to occupy, for different reasons, positions at the margins of the West, geographically and geo-politically. Spain (and the Iberian peninsula) was the territory of Catholic Christians, and Russia was Orthodox, while Protestant Christians were in the process of taking leadership in this particular stage of global coloniality.

It has been recently argued<sup>29</sup> that at the "origin" of the idea of "Latinidad" was the result of another, related historical event in South America: the incidents, tensions, and conflicts surrounding Panama in 1850. Rather than a frontier dispute, the problem was about controlling the place of encounter and crossing between the Atlantic and the Pacific, as an advance announcement of the 1898 Spanish-American War. The incidents and conflicts in Panama illuminated tensions between two opposing forces that, in the terminology of the time, were named "the Anglo-Saxon race" and the "Latin race." The Colombian writer and diplomat José María Torres Caicedo, living in Paris, was not alien to the Panama incidents and made his voice heard on several occasions. This crucial moment, the continental conflicts around 1850, was the moment in which Bolívar's dream of the "Confederation of Spanish American Nations" began to be translated into "Latin America" in the sense of the domain of



the "Latin race." Aims McGuinness revisits the reproduction, in the Americas, of the division in Europe between the North and the South, and states:

Torres Caicedo's articulation of the antagonism between "America del Norte" and "America del Sud" also relied on the opposition between the "Saxon race" and the "Latin race" that owed more to theories of race circulating in the 1850's than to Bolivar and included notions of pan-Latin racial unity similar to those advanced in France by Saint-Simonians such as Michel Chevalier. By the mid-1850s . . . Chevalier had developed a vision of pan-Latin diplomacy that pitted the Latin nations of Europe (including Belgium, Spain and Portugal, and led of course by France) against the Germanic or Anglo-Saxon peoples of northern Europe and the Slavic nations of Eastern Europe. A similar opposition between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon "races" found its expression in Torres Caicedo's 1856 poem "Las dos Américas" . . .

The race of Latin America  
finds itself confronted by the Saxon Race  
Mortal enemy who now threatens  
To destroy its liberty and its banner<sup>30</sup>

McGuinness's conclusion allows for a summary of my argument on the reorganization of the logic of coloniality and the redistribution of the world among changes of imperial leadership. The distinctions between the North and South of Europe and the North and South of America were not simply "cultural" differences. They masked the colonial power differential that was translated from its construction in Europe and imposed on the Americas. It is precisely the differential of power that permits us to see that what are more generally understood as "cultural differences" are indeed "imperial" and "colonial" differences that have been dictated by leading imperial designers. It was in France, Germany, and England that the distinction between the South and North of Europe was imagined (imperial difference). And it was in Spain and Portugal, first, and in England, France, and Germany, later, that the differences between

Europe and the two Americas were defined, described, and implemented (colonial difference). Imperial and colonial differences work under the same logic: the devaluation of the human conditions of those targeted to be dominated, exploited, controlled – the *objects of the differences*. On the other hand, the differences are established by the *subject of the differences* – the authority of the imperial voice over lesser imperial voices and, above all, over colonial voices.

The differentiation between Europe and the Americas, on the one hand, and between North and South America, on the other, was not only spatial but temporal as well. The French Enlightenment promoted the idea of a young and immature New World that would have been totally alien to Spanish missionaries and men of letters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The “barbarians” who in the sixteenth century were located in space became the “primitives” in time. From here to the idea of Latin America as an underdeveloped subcontinent, there is just one step and a change of global designs: from British civilizing to the US developing and marketing mission. Hegel is, once again, behind such assumptions. He had a tantalizing capacity to convert what borders on nonsense into a serious proposition:

The World is divided into Old and New; the name of New having originated in the fact that America and Australia have only lately become known to us. But these parts of the world are not only relatively new, but intrinsically so in respect of their entire physical and psychical constitution . . . I will not deny the New World the honor of having emerged from the sea at the world's formation contemporaneously with the old: yet the Archipelago between South America and Asia shows *a physical immaturity* . . . New Holland shows a not less immature geographical character; for in penetrating from the settlements of the English farther into the country, we discover immense streams, which have not yet developed themselves to such a degree as to dig a channel for themselves; but lose themselves in marshes.<sup>31</sup>

I have the impression that if one speaks from the perspective of the empire, even to criticize it, one can demonstrate that nature in

certain parts of the world is younger than others or that there are weapons of mass destruction even if one cannot find them. The changes in the idea of "nature" paralleled the changes in the ideas of continental divides and world order. When development replaced the civilizing mission as a project of the developed countries, the Third World was (and still is) equated with "nature"; that is, not with the "industries" and "sciences" of progress that put the First World ahead in the temporal imagination. If, in the sixteenth century, "nature" was conceived in terms of lands and territories to be mapped or as the spectacle of the world through which its Maker could be known, from the beginning of the nineteenth century "nature" became the fuel, the raw material, for the Industrial Revolution and the forward-moving engine of progress and capital accumulation. This transformation put a premium on the already-existing continental division, and "nature" became increasingly associated with South America, Africa, and Asia. Thus, the idea of "Latin" America was coetaneous with the increasing value of South America as "nature" and the increasing value of Europe's new imperial countries as the sources of "culture" (the university, the state, philosophy, science, industry, and technology).

**Colonialism, The Missing Ideology of Modernity,  
and "Latin" America: The Reconfiguring of  
the Logic of Coloniality**

To understand the intricate web in which differences are transformed into values, and the colonial matrix of power naturalized and disguised under the triumphal project of modernity, let's look more closely at the rhetoric of modernity and its darker side. Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein has suggested that the "modern world system" did not have its own imaginary (i.e., a series of ideas giving it conceptual coherence) until after the French Revolution. He describes that imaginary as relying on the emergent configuration of three competing, and at the same time complementary, ideologies: conservatism, liberalism, and socialism. Looking from the empire to the colonies, or from the march of modernity toward the rest of the world, the three ideologies seem adequate.<sup>32</sup> Looking from

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Colonialism is the shameful member of the family – it's always there, people know about it, but they prefer not to mention it, like talking about money with an aristocratic family. As such, colonialism is not a project of which imperial leaders and global designers could be proud – and they openly declared themselves against it. The explicit projects are described in positive terms, like civilization, development, or democracy, but not as colonization, even if colonization is the necessary step to “bring” Good to deserving and wanting people. “Civilization,” “development,” “modernization,” and “socialism,” for instance, are all projects that conservatives, liberals, and Marxists are eager to promote and carry to distant places – but not colonialism! (Recent situations such as the post-9/11 period, when even good liberals accepted colonialism as a necessity of US foreign policy, may be exceptions to that observation.) Colonization, in that view, is something that cannot be avoided if you want to “bring” prosperity, democracy, and freedom to the world. Eurocentrism could be defined precisely in those terms – a view of history in which modernity is there to supersede traditions and colonialism is a means to a better end.

Second, in that forward movement of modernity, colonialism works to cover up its own ideological trail by erasing and displacing that which differs from the ideal or opposes the march of modernity. Thus, modernity can be defined and conceived, in terms of “reason, progress, political democracy, science, commodity production, new conceptions of time and space and rapid changes,”<sup>34</sup> without acknowledging the erasure of both what preceded a given moment within the logic of modernity (that is, the colonization of time – Middle Ages, early modern period, modern period, postmodern period, etc.) and what differed from a given moment outside the logic of modernity. Fanon in the 1960s said it very clearly in a way that is still valid today for the new form of neo-liberal colonialism:

*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 logic*, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.<sup>35</sup>

The Aztec and Inca Empires, before the *Indias Occidentales* and co-existing with them for a short period, came under the erasure of the imperial, noble mission. Colonialism – the hidden ideology of Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the fourth secular ideology – allows us to conceive of modernity in terms of its irrationality, its disruption and fractures of other forms of life (e.g., look at the current situation in sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America), and its totalitarian tendencies based on the myth of rationality and on the time/space/nature configuration that modernity dismembered and destroyed (and continues to destroy) in the name of industrialism and technology. Of course, Indians in the Americas, slaves from Africa, and later on people in Africa and Asia met the “arrival” of modernity with a wide spectrum of reactions that went all the way from the opportunity to jump on the bandwagon of modernization to the painful process of decolonization. For either of those perspectives, “modernization” was something “coming from” elsewhere and not something that “was” in their own past. The simple difference was how global designs were received – not conceived – by people imbued with other histories and speaking different languages.

It was to colonialism as ideology and practice and to the underlying logic of coloniality that the first wave of decolonization in the Americas responded. All the “revolutions” of this wave were in the paradigm of co-existence rather than in the paradigm of newness (as I explained in the preface). US independence (called the American Revolution) in 1776, the rebellions in what was then part of Peru (now in Bolivia) led by Tomas Katari and Túpac Amaru (1780–1), the Haitian Revolution in 1804, and the first set of Hispano and Luso American independences between 1810 and 1830 were all responses to “colonialism,” as the imperial ideology projected toward the colonies. Decolonization at this point, as well as in the second wave post-World War II, meant political and, in a less clear way, economic decolonization – but not epistemic. The theological and secular frames of mind in which political theory and political economy had been historically grounded were never questioned. This is precisely the crucial difference between older forms of decolonization and the struggles since Césaire and Fanon and more explicitly since the 1990s. Now decolonization of knowledge and

subjectivity, through the imagination of alternatives to capitalism and alternatives to the modern state and its reliance on military power, and through the creation of new ideologies other than the four mentioned, is taking place. Yet all the "successful" movements of decolonization in the Americas were in the hands of Creoles of Spanish, Portuguese, English, and African descent, and it was not on their horizon to imagine ways of thinking beyond what the European tradition offered them. Colonialism should have been the key ideology targeted by decolonial projects. However, in the first wave of so-called decolonization, colonialism as ideology was not dismantled, as the goal was to gain ostensible independence from the empire. There was a change of hands as Creoles became the state and economic elite, but *the logic of coloniality* remained in place.

The only social movement initiated by the natives (the Indians) "failed" in terms of pushing the colonizer out of the territory. As a matter of fact, Indians in the viceroyalty of Peru had a double force to fight against: the Creoles and the Spanish imperial administration, which, although decadent, was still in place. In the hypothetical case that Túpac Amaru had come to power, most likely there wouldn't be a "Latin" America today. The Haitian Revolution offered also the possibility of an epistemic delinking but instead was reduced to silence, as Michel Rolph-Trouillot has convincingly argued.<sup>36</sup> When Chevalier was writing that France was responsible for all the nations of the Latin group in both continents, Haiti was not in his mind. Haiti belonged to "Africanidad," not to "Latinidad"! Strangely (or not), Haiti never clearly counted as part of "Latin" America. "Latins" were supposed to be not Black but White Creoles or, at most, Mestizos/as or perhaps Mulattos/as in blood but Europeans in mind.

To conceive of themselves as a "Latin" race (as Torres Caicedo put it), Creoles in "Latin" America had to rearticulate the colonial difference in a new format: to become the internal colonizers vis-à-vis the Indians and Blacks while living an illusion of independence from the logic of coloniality. Internal colonialism was indeed a trademark of the Americas after independence and was directly linked to nation-state building. Nation-states in the colonies were not a manifestation of modernity leaving colonialism behind. The roads of (and not toward) modernity/coloniality in the Americas,



followed in one instance by US independence and in another by the former Spanish/Portuguese colonies, differ both among themselves and also, considerably, from the road of modernity/coloniality that brought about the Haitian Revolution. In all three cases, however, coloniality was reinscribed almost immediately in the internal colonialism enacted by nation-states emerging from decolonization. While US independence also led to internal colonialism, the novelty here is that the US became at once a postcolonial country, a country with imperial ambitions, and a country anchored in internal colonialism. The imperial ambitions, inherited from the mother country, mark one specific difference between the US and South America and the Caribbean in the subsequent reorganization of the global order during the nineteenth century.

In Europe, racial differences did not function as internal colonialism. Modern nation-states in Europe, after all, did not arise with imperial independence and political decolonization as a goal. Their point of origin was, instead, a struggle for the emancipation of a new social class, the bourgeoisie, and not a colonial second-class population. In Europe, internal colonialism could be used as a metaphor for class exploitation linked to the Industrial Revolution, but the historical conditions of inequality were quite distinct from the ones in the Americas: the European bourgeoisie did not decolonize itself by its emancipation from monarchic and despotic regimes, similar to the decolonizing struggles by Blacks in Haiti. The rise of the bourgeoisie paralleled the broadening reach of the Industrial Revolution and the constitution and control of the state. The control of the economy and the state by a new social class had generated a new oppressed stratum of the population (the proletariat); but racism was not part of the problem. Class differences, not racial ones, shaped the European political scene. The proletariat as the identity of a social class was defined by conditions of labor and capital rather than by racial classification, which came into its full force as a consequence of the transformation of the exploitation of labor in the colonies. There is no doubt that a class distinction is embedded in racial classification and internal colonialism in the Americas, but the principle of classification is not based on a social class formed out of a group of workers employed in the industries emerging from the Industrial Revolution. It hinges, instead, on a social stratification

that emerged from colonialism. Of course, the social classification was not "naturally embedded" in the group of differentiated people; it was – rather – an epistemic classification foundational for the establishment of the modern/colonial world.<sup>37</sup> This is precisely how the colonial matrix of power is "glued" together by racism, by the discourse that demonizes entire populations by portraying them as inferior human beings, if human at all.

Jamaican philosopher Lewis Gordon summarized the divergence between the historical logic of modernity/coloniality as experienced in Europe and that of modernity/coloniality in the Americas. For Gordon, class is so *indigenous* to Europe that it emerges even in European efforts toward socialism. One can "feel" class in Europe as the air that one breathes, observes Gordon, looking at Europe from his subjective understanding and personal location in a Caribbean history rooted in slavery, racism, and European colonialism. In the Americas, Gordon continues, race became an endemic motif of New World consciousness, and that is why one can "feel" race here in the same way as in Europe one can "feel" class.<sup>38</sup> However, the issue is not to dwell on that distinction, but to be attentive to the consequences of it. These are crucial to understanding that, today, the "idea" of Latin America is being refurbished against the very backdrop of the modern/colonial world. Gordon observes that:

The agony experienced globally, then, is not simply one of intensified class division but also one of an asserted New World consciousness on those not indigenous to it . . .

Something new is being formed. Just as a new oppressive relation emerged when Europe expanded westward (and subsequently, eastward), so, too, are new oppressive relations emerging as the New West goes global. Is it racism? Classism? Sexism? In my view, it is none of these uniquely, but instead *a pervasive ethos against humanistic solutions* to any of them. In short, it is the ethos of counter-revolution and anti-utopia.<sup>39</sup>

The quotation encapsulates the predominant ethos of the modern/colonial world, from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries. The "idea" of Latin America, in the nineteenth century, was forged in the movement of imperial institutions for the control of meaning

and of money, supported by a Creole elite eager to cut the umbilical cord to Spain and Portugal, and join the club of emerging empires. However, while class division was shaping the life and institutions of Europeans, racism continued to shape the life and institutions in the colonies – and not only the new colonies of France and England but also the new, apparently independent nations in the process of identifying themselves as “Latin” American nation-states.

### **The Many Faces of “Latinidad”**

In summary, “Latinidad” is the consequence of imperial and colonial conflicts in the nineteenth century and the way in which the imperial and colonial differences have been constructed. While in Europe “Latinidad” allowed French politicians and intellectuals to establish the imperial difference with the competing forces of the Anglo-Saxon world in Europe (England and Germany), in South America the idea of “Latinidad” was useful to Spanish Creole intellectuals and politicians defining themselves in confrontation with the competing force of the Anglo-Saxon world in the Americas – the US. However, “Latin” America came into the new world order as a subaltern historico-political and cultural configuration. In other words, the colonial difference that ideologues of the Spanish Empire constructed to justify the colonization of America (e.g., the inferiority of the Indians and the non-humanity of the African slaves) was maintained and intensified by the ideologues of the new, independent republics. Thus, the colonial difference was reproduced, after the independent republics’ formation, in the “internal” colonial difference. “Latinidad” contributed to disguise the internal colonial difference under a historical and cultural identity that apparently included all while, in reality, producing an effect of totality that silenced the excluded. “Latinidad” produced a new type of invisibility for Indians and for people of African descent in “Latin” America.

“Latinidad” worked to define the identity of a community of Creole/Mestizo/a elites and, later on, the people descended from the European immigrants who began to arrive in South America in the second half of the nineteenth century. The ethos of

"Latinidad" encouraged European immigration. It was one of the measures to promote progress and civilization and, indirectly, Whiten the nation-states. New economies developed in the South as the need for crops and meat complemented the exploitation of the tropical plantations that, no longer in the hands of Dutch, British, or French colonizers, were now in the hands of a Creole elite, who transformed "colonial exploitation" into "modern exportation." Since the second half of the nineteenth century, "Latin" American countries have continued a consistent descent in the world economy in relation to Europe and the United States.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a turning point for world history even though the events of this decade took place in the "periphery" (Spain, Latin America, the US, and Japan), and remain still on the margins of the triumphal history of modernity from the French to the Russian Revolutions and to the different manifestations of totalitarianism in Europe. During that decade, Spain lost its last colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific (the Philippines) and the US started its imperial march after the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, while Japan also initiated imperial control of China in 1895. "Latin" America slid down one more step, in relation to the world order around 1900, not only economically but in the North Atlantic imaginary. That is, "Latin" America became darker and darker in relation to the increasing discourse of White supremacy that was implemented during the last decade of the nineteenth century in the US by the ideologues of the Spanish-American War. In parallel fashion to the way Spaniards were seen by Northern Europeans (as darker skinned and mixed with Moorish blood), "Latin" America began to be perceived more and more as "Mestizo/a"; that is, darker skinned. And although "Latin" American Creoles and elite Mestizos/as considered themselves White, particularly in relation to the Indian and Afro population as well as to the Mulattos/as and Cholos/as (Mestizos/as perceived, by ethnicity or class, as closer to the Indians), from the perspective of Northern Europe and the US, to be "Latin" American was still to be not White enough. This was the waiting room for the next step, to come after World War II: "Latin" America became part of the Third World, and the Indian and the Afro population remained invisible.

However, also in the last decade of the nineteenth century, José Martí, a Cuban writer, activist, and ideologue who lived a significant portion of his life in New York, launched a new and more open version of "Latinidad" with his famous political proclamation "Nuestra América." Martí's program turned its back on Caicedo's and Alberdi's project and on France and Greece as the emblems of European historical foundation, and turned toward Mesoamerican civilizations (Maya, Inca, Aztec) as the emblems of "Nuestra América"'s historical foundations. After Martí, and after the Peruvian intellectual and political leader José Carlos Mariátegui in the 1920s, the idea of Latin America underwent a radical change in the 1960s through both the philosophy of liberation and dependency theory as elaborated by philosopher Enrique Dussel. Also in the 1960s, Fanon's description of colonialism, quoted above, changed the terms of the conversations in which French imperial designs had shaped the idea of "Latinidad." The idea of "Latin" America that emerged during the Cold War and from the historical perspective of coloniality radically unlinked itself from the French idea of "Latinidad."

Today, "Latin America is in effervescence," as *Manière de voir/Le Monde diplomatique* proudly announced in Paris in the summer of 2003. And indeed it is. In the last decade, major transformations have taken place. Aymara activist and intellectual Victor Hugo Cárdenas was appointed vice-president of Bolivia in August 1993. Though they do not completely share Cárdenas's politics, Felipe Quispe Huanca and Evo Morales, as intellectuals and leaders of Indigenous social movements, have climbed through the institutional aperture that the vice-presidency opened. "All of them Aymaras, but so different" is the title of Xavier Albó's political analysis of the parts played by Cárdenas, Morales, and Quispe Huanca in the transformation of the Bolivian state and society in recent decades. The leading role and the perspective on the future that we see in the Indian social movements in Bolivia is mirrored in Ecuador. The intellectual and activist leadership of Nina Pacari (currently the minister of foreign relations) and Luis Alberto Macas (recently reappointed president of the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador, and ex-minister of agriculture and president of the newly formed Amawtay Wasi, or Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas), plus the significant number of Indian members in the

Congress and the presence of Indian administrations in more than thirty cities in Ecuador, all clearly show that although formal government is in the hands of pro-neo-liberals, the state is no longer the indisputable domain of the "White/Mestizo/a" elite.

No less significant have been the emergence of Afro social movements, and their presence is giving new meaning to something that we (in Latin America, the US, or Europe) always knew was part of Latin America. From the Andes to Mexico, and from Argentina to the Caribbean, Afro rhythms have always been beating and continue to beat (and they have come to be known all over the world as 'Latin American music'). We (the same as above) also always knew that from the north of Brazil and the northeast of Colombia and in all the Caribbean Islands, "exotic" religious practices (Candomblé, Santería, Voodoo, Rastafarianism) were practiced and disrupted the application of Christianity. Afro religious practices that "absorbed" Christianity and turned it into something that Christians could not recognize, and often reject or fear, have not, like music, been subsumed under "Latinidad" since, as we have seen, Christianity and "Latinidad" are two sides of the same coin. How then could one (in "Latin" America or Europe or the US) not take seriously the fact that Afro religious practices are key elements both for resistance to oppression and for creative survival? Not every Christian speaks Latin, but the foundation of Christianity in the modern world is "Latin." As Derrida reminded us, "We all speak Latin," and he claimed a "global Latinization." While many in Europe and in South America will look at such a claim with enthusiasm, I suspect that it will awaken less enthusiasm among Indigenous, Afro-Andean, and Afro-Caribbean critical consciousnesses. After all, it was global Latinization from the sixteenth century on that repressed the contribution that Indians and Afros were making to the globalization of the Atlantic economy. Felipe Quispe Huanca, Rigoberta Menchú, and Bob Marley – to give some examples – may not agree with Jacques Derrida on this point.

As if the examples in the previous paragraphs were not enough to show the *point of no return*, epistemic as well as political, being enacted by the Indians and Afros, the democratic victory of Ignacio Lula da Silva in Brazil adds to the radical scope of current transformations. He is leading the way and showing the possibility of a

new path toward the future conduct of the state. And this case is indeed quite important in the history of "Latin" America, since Brazil has been, since the time of Simón Bolívar and the wars of independence, a stepchild in a "Latin" America whose image was more "Spanish" than "Portuguese." Furthermore, Lula da Silva is not only showing his "Spanish" American partners the possible paths toward the future; he is doing the same with the European and Latin American "Marxists" who have enormous difficulties articulating race and class in the history of ex-colonial countries. He is on his way to making obsolete any postmodern debate, in Europe, about making Lenin useful again for the future of the humanity. Nestor Kirchner in Argentina has also taken a significant dissenting step forward to show, with Lula da Silva, that there are avenues of social organization and politics that are not necessarily those dictated by the IMF, the World Bank, or the European states of the G8 that claim the rights of their imperial pasts. Lula da Silva seems to be thinking from the very colonial history of Brazil and of the Americas, rather than from manuals based on the modern history of Europe and the Industrial Revolution. As the Indian and Afro intellectuals and leaders have shown, it makes more sense to think from the fractures of colonial history and the colonial differential of power than from the history that sociological and economic manuals telling the "truth" about the world promote. And if Lula da Silva is not enough supporting "data" for a radical transformation, the World Social Forum, whose past three meetings took place in Porto Alegre (a city controlled by the PT, Lula's Working Party), has contributed to seeing "Latin" America not by reflecting on its underbelly and its position as the victim under Uncle's Tom cabin, but as the location of a shared world leadership working "toward an-other globalization."<sup>40</sup> Lula da Silva's preliminary conversations about constituting a G3 economic bloc (Brazil, South Africa, and India) will move these countries toward a proactive role in "an-other globalization" instead of the subaltern role that about a hundred and ninety countries in the world seem ready to accept.

While "Latin" America remains a comfortable name that functions at the level of the control of land, of labor, and of authority, in the spheres of the colonial matrix of power, at the level of subjectivity and knowledge, the legacies of European colonialism in



South America are being challenged and displaced by Indian and Afro legacies disputing languages, knowledges, religions, memories. In the US, the parallel struggle is being delivered by Latinos/as in both theoretical and artistic production. While at the level of the state – in South America and the Caribbean – economic and political control remain in the hands of Creoles, the possibility of transforming the state by an open dialogue with the sectors of society that have been marginalized because of race, gender, and sexuality is today opening up in new ways. Ecuador is a case in point. Other changes, however, are also revealing that “Latin” political projects (liberal, neo-liberal, and socialist) are not in a one-to-one relationship with the ontology of the subcontinent, as we will see in the next chapter. When the relation between the name and the subcontinent is called into question, the political projects that brought “Latin” America into being have to co-exist with political projects originating among the silenced population, who do not see themselves as they have been constructed and do not care to belong to the “Latin” ethos.