

Of Don Quixote and windmills in Latin America *

ANÍBAL QUIJANO

Foto Alejandra Brun/Agência France Presse 25.10.2004



Women from the Huancavelic region protest in Lima against armed conflict in Peru

WHAT WE REFER TO TODAY AS Latin America was constituted together with and as part of the current pattern of power that prevails on a worldwide scale. It is here that “coloniality” and “globality” were configured and established¹ as the basis and constitutive modes for a new pattern of power. Such was the point of departure of the historical process that came to define Latin America’s historical and structural dependence and that gave birth, in that same movement, to the constitution of Western Europe as the world center for the control of that power. And it was in this very same movement that defined the new material and subjective elements at the root of the social existence we now call “modernity”.

Put in other terms, Latin America was both the original space and inaugural time of the historical period and world in which we now live. In

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this specific sense, it was the first entity/historical identity of the current colonial/modern world system and of the entire period we refer to as modernity. Nonetheless, this originating place and time of an historical period, this rich source that produced the basal elements of new world society, was robbed of its centrality, as well as of the attributes and fruits of modernity. Thus, not all of the new historical potential could be fulfilled in Latin America; nor was the historical period and its new social place in the world able to become completely modern. In other words, both were defined at that point and continue to reproduce themselves today as colonial/modern.² Why is this so?

Of Don Quixote and windmills in Latin America

Comparing the history of Europe and Japan, Junichiro Tanizaki³ tells us that the Europeans were fortunate enough to have their history unfold through stages, each deriving from the internal transformation of the last. Yet with regard to Japan, particularly since the Second World War, the course of history was altered from without by the military and technological superiority of “the West”. This type of reflection validates a Eurocentric perspective and the characteristic evolutionary gaze that accompanies it. It can thus be seen as providing testimony of the world hegemony of Eurocentrism as a mode of producing and controlling subjectivity and knowledge. Yet in regard to Western Europe itself, this perspective becomes more of an indication of the late intellectual hegemony of its central-northern regions, and thus can be considered alien and contrary to the legacy of Don Quixote. On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of this foundational masterpiece, we recognize that it is time to return to its legacy.

The marvelous scene in Cervantes’ masterpiece in which Don Quixote throws himself against a giant and is knocked over by a windmill is, most certainly, the most powerful historical image of the entire period of early modernity. It is the (non)encounter between, on the one hand, an aristocratic ideology - that which marks Don Quixote’s own perception - to which social practice now only corresponds in a very fragmented and inconsistent manner and, on the other hand, new social practices - represented by the wind mill - which are en route to generalization, but to which a consistent and legitimating ideology do not yet correspond. And as this familiar image suggests, it is a moment in which the new has not yet been completely ushered in, while the old has not yet truly passed away.

In reality, this (non)encounter shoots through the entire book: the new common sense that emerges with the new pattern of power produced [through] America, with its mercantile pragmatism and its respect for “the powerful Lord Money” (Quevedo *dixit*) has not yet become hegemonic, nor has it been constituted consistently, although it nonetheless occupies a growing place in the population’s mentality. That is, it is already engaged in a dispute over hegemony with the old aristocratic sense of social existence. And the latter, although beginning to yield, is still active, in different forms and shapes - depending on whom we are talking about and where they are located. It continues to inhabit people’s subjectivity and resists the surrender of its age-old dominance.

What must be noted, in the specific context of what at that time was the future of Spain, is that neither of these perspectives or meanings can exist, nor take shape, separately or in the absence of the other. This inter-subjectivity could be none other than a combination – impossible in theory but inevitable in practice – of mercantile pragmatism and chivalrous views.

We are talking about a moment in history in which different times and stories do not come together in any dualistic way or converge on any linear or one-directional evolutionary path, as Eurocentrist doctrines had been preaching since the end of the 17th century. Rather, these are complex, contradictory and discontinuous associations between fragmented and changing structures of relationships, senses and meanings, of multiple geo-historical origins and simultaneous and intersecting actions – all of which are, nonetheless, part and parcel of one singular new world that was in the process of constituting itself. It is no coincidence that the windmill itself was a technology that had been inherited from Bagdad, integrated through an Islamic and Judaic world in the southern part of the Iberian peninsula when the former was still a part of Arab hegemony in the Mediterranean; a rich, productive, cultivated and sophisticatedly developed society, center of the world trade in goods, ideas, and scientific, philosophical and technological knowledge. “Chivalry” however was the societal model that the militarily dominant but socially and culturally backwards nobility from the northern part of the Peninsula still attempted to impose – without complete success - upon the remains of the defeated Islamo-Judaic society, subjugating and colonizing the autonomous communities of the peninsula, albeit not with complete success.

This aristocratic regime, dominated as it was by the Counter Reformation and its Inquisition, did not take long to decree the expulsion of “Moors” and “Jews” and to impose upon them the infamous “certificate of pure blood” - the first “ethnic cleansing” of the entire colonial/modern period. This same archaic aristocratic and feudal model of social existence was also to induce the Crown to centralizing its political domination. More than seeking to produce a common (that is, national) identity, it was interested in imposing a regime of internal colonialism upon the rest of the region - one that in fact continues to this day. This was how those in power were able to impede the process of nationalization that unfolded later in North Central Europe, following along the same course and movement of societal *embourgeoisement*.

After America, during a time of rapid capitalist expansion when a growing part of the new peninsular society had fallen under the new pattern of power, even this aristocratic regime could no longer avoid placing its own two feet on mercantilist soil. Yet it continued to hold its head in the archaic sky of chivalry which, in its own imagination, still offered equal riches.

Without this infamous (non) encounter that converged with all the disastrous effects that expelling Moors and Jews had on material and cultural production, we would not be able to explain how, with the commercial benefits wrought from the precious minerals and vegetables of the Americas through the non-paid work of servant “Indians” and “Black” slaves, Spain had embarked

(despite appearances to the contrary) on a prolonged historical course that would lead it from its position as the center of the greatest imperial power to persisting peripheral backwardness within the new colonial/modern world system.

The above-described trajectory renders it evident that aristocratic power, the dominant and immediate beneficiary of the first period of colonial power and modernity, was already too archaic to ride this new, young and spirited horse, guiding it along a route that would benefit its country and the world. Such a power had already demonstrated its inability to turn fully and completely into a bourgeoisie capable of riding the crest of the democratizing wave and the conflicts characteristic of this new pattern of power and of shaping the heterogeneous population into a nation, as its rivals and successors in north central Europe were able to do. On the contrary, this archaic dominion had been rotting away over the centuries, caught in an ambiguous feudal-mercantile labyrinth, in an unviable attempt to preserve its power on the basis of an internal colonialism that had been imposed upon the diverse identities of the population, precisely at the outset of world capitalism and in spite of the truly exceptional resources of the coloniality of power.

Where is the difference rooted? The difference, most certainly, is America. The “Crown”, that is, the Hapsburgs, colonial proprietors of the colossal riches that America produced and of the endless supply of free labor from “Black” slaves and “Indian” serfs, believed that by having control over these riches they would be able to banish “Moors” and “Jews” at no great loss, and in fact, with real gain in terms of control and power. This led the Hapsburgs to use violence to de-democratize the social life of independent communities and foist an internal colonialism and aristocratic rule originating in the Central European feudal



View of windmills at Campo de Criptana, in the Spanish Province of Cidade Real

model upon other national identities (Catalunyans, Basks, Andalusians, Galicians, Navarrese and Valencians). The well-known result was, on the one hand, the destruction of domestic production and the internal market that it fed, and, on the other hand, the backwards steps taken in relation to secularization and the stagnation of the processes of democratization and enlightenment that colonial modernity had brought – and that, among other things, had given birth to Don Quixote.



El Quijote, by Spanish painter Pablo Picasso/Museum of the city of St. Denis, France

What impoverished and enslaved the future Spain, and also turned it into the central seat of political and cultural obscurantism in the West over the next four centuries, was precisely that which permitted the emergent central northern part of western Europe to become rich and secular, and later favored the development of a pattern of conflict that led to the democratization of the regions and countries that made up the latter. And it was just this, the historic hegemony that this mode made possible, which enabled these countries to elaborate their own version of modernity and rationality, and to make their exclusive appropriation of the historical-cultural identity of the “West”, of the Greco-roman historical heritage which, nonetheless, had previously and over a long period of time been preserved and worked on as part of the Islamo-Judaic Mediterranean.

All of this took place – and the following point must not be neglected, for it is vital for our understanding of history – at a time when the coloniality of power was still exclusively a pattern of power relations in America and between America and the emergent “Western Europe”. In other words; at precisely the moment this “Western Europe” was being produced, linked as it was to America. It is absolutely necessary to recognize such historical implications of the establishment of this new pattern of power and the reciprocal historical production of America and Western Europe as, respectively, a nexus of historico-structural dependence and hub of control from which this new power was wielded.

It is true that today, capitalism has finally been consolidated in Spain, with the resources and support of the new European Community, under the auspices of the new financial capital. But all trace of the old forms of social order has not yet disappeared. And the current conflicts over autonomy, as well as ETA terrorism, seeking national independence for the Basque country, include the realization that such vestiges remain, notwithstanding the scope of the changes that have taken place. No one has had a clearer perception of this historical (non)encounter than Cervantes – no one, that is, but his very own Cide Hamete Benengeli.

The following represents for us, present day Latin Americans, the greatest epistemological and theoretical lesson to be taken from Don Quixote: that the historico-structural heterogeneity, co-presence of historical times and structural fragments of forms of social existence, of varying historical and geo-cultural origins, are the primary modes of existence and movement of all society and all history. Not as in the Eurocentric vision, with its radical dualism paradoxically associated with homogeneity, continuity, unilinearity and one directional evolution; in a word: “progress”. Because it is power - and thereby power struggles and their shifting balances- that articulates the heterogeneous forms of social existence produced at different historical moments and in distant spaces, brings them together and structures them within one and the same world, in a concrete society, into historically specific patterns of power.

This is also precisely the issue regarding the specific space/time that today we refer to as Latin America. Due to its historical and structural

constitution as dependent on the current pattern of power, it has been constrained all this time as the privileged space where the coloniality of power plays itself out. And since in this pattern of power the hegemonic mode of production and control of knowledge is Eurocentrism, it is a history replete with combinations, contradictions and (non)encounters that are analogous to those that Cide Hamete Benengeli could identify in his own space/time.

By its very nature, the Eurocentric perspective distorts (when it does not block altogether) perception of our social and historical experience, all the while taking its own time to admit that the latter is real⁴. It operates in today's world, and particularly in Latin America, in the same way that the chivalrous life did in Don Quixote's view of things. As a consequence, our problems cannot be perceived in any other way but through this distorted form, nor can they be confronted and resolved in any way that is not partial or deformed. Thus, the coloniality of power has turned Latin America into a scenario of (non)encounters between our experience, our knowledge and our historical memory.

Within this context, it is not surprising that our history has been unable to enjoy an autonomous and coherent movement but has, rather, been configured as a long and tortuous labyrinth where our unsolved problems haunt us like ghosts from our past. And this labyrinth cannot be recognized and understood. In other words, we cannot debate and identify our problems if we are not first able to recognize, summon up and engage with our ghosts.

The ghosts from our past, however – like the creature that inhabits the darkness of Elsinore, or those of which Marx and Engels wrote in 1948, have a dark, heavy and matted density. And when they walk onto the stage of history, they tend to bring violent turbulence and often irreversible mutations. In Elsinore, the doubt-ridden Hamlet is in the end transformed into an exasperated hero whose unflinching sword strikes many down, in the most direct attempt to resolve conflicts. In our other example, the furtive ghost that haunted Europe during the mid 19th Century later emerges as a central protagonist in the next, with its two world wars, violent revolutions and counterrevolutions, powerful though often dashed hopes, frustrations and defeats, and the lives and deaths of millions that have still not left us. Today, it has the world besieged.

Thus, the ghosts of history cannot be convoked without a cost. Those that belong to Latin America have given ample proof of their ability to provoke conflict and violence, precisely because they represent the product of violent crises and seismic historical mutations whose outcomes remain our unresolved problems. These phantoms still inhabit our social existence, keeping their hold on our memory, upsetting each historical project, erupting frequently in our lives, leaving dead, wounded and beaten in their wake; the historical mutations that could at last put them to rest are still beyond our reach. Nonetheless, it is not only important that we find a way to do so. It is absolutely imperative. For as these patterns of power reach the apex of their development, at the precise moment in which their worst tendencies are

exacerbated through their worldwide dominion, Latin America remains not only prisoner of the “coloniality of power” and dependency, but, for this very reason, exposed to the risk of never arriving at the new world the current crisis has prefigured – the deepest and most global crisis of the whole period of colonial/modernity.

In order to deal with such ghosts and perhaps find some way to have them shed light on our path before they disappear forever, we must free our historical retina from its Eurocentric blindness and re-apprehend our historical experience. Therefore, it is not only desirable but truly necessary that Don Quixote ride forth again, so that he may aid us in undoing the tangled point of departure of our history: the epistemic trap of Eurocentrism that for the past 500 years has left us in the darkness of the coloniality of power, where we are only able to discern the figure of giants – while those who dominate us are able to maintain control and exclusive use of our windmills.

The historical production of Latin America and the destruction and redefinition of the past

The historical production of Latin America begins with the destruction of an entire historical world, probably the greatest socio-cultural and demographic siege of all known history. This is of course old knowledge to us. Yet it is still rarely taken into account as an active element in the formulation of the perspectives that compete and converge in the Latin American debate on the production of a sense of a history of our own. And I suspect that even today it would be a difficult argument to bring in, were it not for the presence of current “indigenous” movements and the emergence of the new “Afro-Latin” movements.⁵

Since on this occasion it would not be pertinent to go further or deeper into this specific issue, let me limit myself to providing the reminder that we are dealing, in the first place, with the disintegration of patterns of power and civilization of some of the most advanced historical experiences of the species. Second, the physical extermination, over little more than three decades (the first three decades of the 16th Century) of more than half of the population of these societies, which had totaled over 100 million prior to their decimation. In the third place, of the elimination of many of the most important producers, as opposed to simply the “bearers” of these experiences: leaders, intellectuals, engineers, scientists, artists. Fourth, of the centuries-long material and subjective repression of the survivors, who were battered into subjugation as illiterate, acculturated, exploited and dependent peasants. That is, until the disappearance of the last free and autonomous patterns for the objectivation of lingering ideas, images and symbols: alphabet, writing, and the visual, musical and audiovisual arts.

One of the richest intellectual and artistic legacies of the human species was not only destroyed, but its most elaborate, developed and advanced elements were rendered inaccessible to survivors. From there on in, and until only very recently, the latter were not allowed to produce signs and symbols of their own in any other form than the distortions produced by their clandestine status, or

through that peculiar dialectic of imitation and subversion that is characteristic of cultural conflict, mainly in the Andean, Amazonian, Central and even North American regions⁶.

The production of a new pattern of power: race and global social domination

The construction of this labyrinth, however, had only just begun. From the ashes of this prodigious but vanquished world, and through its survivors, in one and the same historical movement, a new system of social domination and a new system of social exploitation were produced; and along with these, a new pattern of conflict, ultimately a new and historically specific pattern of power.

The idea of race was a founding element of this new system of social domination. *Race* was the first social category of modernity.⁷ Given that it did not exist prior to this historical moment – there is no convincing evidence of the latter – we may then sustain that it did not then (nor does it today) have a basis in the materiality of the known universe. It was, rather, a specific social and mental product of the process in which one historical world was destroyed and a new social order established; a new pattern of power. It emerged as a mode for the naturalization of the new power relations that were imposed on those who had survived such destruction, in service of the idea that the dominated are what they are, not as victims of social power struggles, but because they are materially inferior and thus also less well-endowed for historical and cultural production. This notion of race was so deeply and continuously imposed over the following centuries and over the whole species that for many – unfortunately for way too many – it has become associated not only with the materiality of social relations but with the materiality of people themselves.

The vast and plural history of identities and memories (the most famous names are known to all of us – Maya, Aztec, Inca) of the conquered world was deliberately annihilated and a singular colonial and derogatory racial identity – the “Indians” – was imposed upon all of its peoples. Thus, in addition to the destruction of their previous historical and cultural world, the notion of race and a homogeneous racial identity were also forced on them, as an emblem of their new place in the world of power. And what is worse, for over 500 years they have been taught to see themselves through the eyes of their colonizer.

In a very different but no less efficient and enduring way, this historical and cultural destruction and the production of racialized identities also created victims of the people of that hijacked and betrayed land we call Africa, first as slaves and later as racialized “Blacks”. They were also people who had their origins in complex and sophisticated experiences of power and civilization (Ashantis, Bacongós, Congos, Yorubas, Zulus, etc.) And although the destruction of these societies began much later, and had the same scope and depth as in (“Latin”) America, for those who were kidnapped and dragged off to America, the violent and traumatic uprooting, the experience and the violence of racializing and

slavery, obviously represented a no less massive and radical destruction of their subjectivity, social experience, power, universe and networks of primary and societal relationships. And in terms of individuals and specific groups, it is very probable that the experience of uprooting, of racialization and of slavery could have been perhaps even more atrocious and perverse than it was for the survivors of “indigenous communities.

Although today the ideas of “color” and “race” are virtually interchangeable, the relationship between them is a fairly recent one: it dates back to the 18th Century, leaving us with the range of material, social and subjective struggles we have today. Originally, from the initial moments of the Conquest, the idea of *race* was produced in order to provide meaning for the new power relations between “Indians” and Iberians. The original and primordial victims of these relationships and the idea behind them were, quite evidently, Indians. “Blacks” – as the future “Africans” were called -, were of a “color” the Europeans had been familiar with for thousands of years, from the days of ancient Rome, yet this had not previously implied any notion of “race”. The “Black” slaves would not be included in this idea of race until much later in colonial America, particularly when the civil wars between the *encomenderos* and the forces of the Crown began, around the middle of the 16th century.⁸ Yet “color” as an emblematic sign of race would not come to be imposed until well into the 18th Century, in the British-American colonial sphere, where the idea of “white” was produced and established in response to the main population to be racialized and colonially integrated (read: dominated, discriminated and exploited) within British-American colonial society: the “Blacks”.

However, the “Indians” of the region were not considered to be part of the society and were thus neither racialized nor colonized until much later. As is well known, during the 19th Century and by way of the massive extermination of their population, the destruction of their societies and the conquest of their territories, the “Indian” survivors were to be pushed onto “reservations” within this newly independent country, the United States, as a colonized, racialized and segregated population.⁹

All the previous forms and sites of domination were redefined and reconfigured around this new notion of race. Relations between the sexes were the first of them. Thus, in the vertical, authoritarian patriarchal model of the social order which was brought by the Iberian conquerors, males were by definition superior to females. But through the imposition and legitimization of the idea of race, any woman of a “superior race” became by definition automatically superior to any male of an “inferior race”. This was how the colonial nature of relations between the sexes was reconfigured in connection to the colonial character of race relations. The production of new historical and geo-cultural political identities – “Black”, “white”, “Indian” and “mixed race”- derived from the new pattern of power were a part of this scheme.

This was how the first system of basic and universal social classification of individuals in human history came to pass. To use current terminology, we would say this was the first global social classification system. Produced in America, it

was imposed on the entire world population, through the expansion of European colonialism throughout the rest of the world. From then on, the idea of race, an original and specific mental product of the conquest and colonization of America, was imposed as the criteria and as the fundamental social mechanism for the basic social and universal classification of all members of the human species. In effect, throughout the expansion of European colonialism, new historical, social and geocultural identities were to be produced, on these same bases. On the one hand, “yellow” and “olive-skinned” colors would be added to “Indians”, “Blacks”, whites and “mestizos”. On the other, a new geography of power began to emerge, with a new nomenclature: Europe, Western Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Oceania, or the West, East, Middle East, Far East and their respective “cultures”, “nationalities” and “ethnicities”.

Racial classification, given the fact that it was based on a raw mental construct wholly divorced from the material universe, is not imaginable without the violence of colonial domination. Colonialism is a very old experience. Nonetheless, it was only with the conquest and Ibero-Christian colonization of the population of the Americas during the passage from the 15th to the 16th Centuries that the mental construct of “race” appeared. This reveals that it was not just any type of colonialism, but one that was very particular and specific: it took place within the context of the military, political, religious and cultural victory of the Christians of the Counter Reformation movement over the Muslims and Jews of southern Europe and Iberia. And it was this context that produced the idea of “race”.

In effect, at the same time that America was subjected to conquest and colonization, the Crown of Castile and Aragon, already the nucleus of the central state of the future Spain, imposed a requisite “certificate of pure blood” on the Muslims and Jews of the Iberian peninsula so that they could be admitted as Christians and authorized to live on the Peninsula or to make the journey to America. This “certificate” – in addition to representing the first “ethnic cleansing” of the colonial/modern period – can be considered the most immediate predecessor of the idea of race, since it contains the ideological implication that religious ideas, or more generally speaking, culture itself, are transmitted by “blood”¹⁰.

The continuously reproduced experience of the new relationships and their premises and meanings, as well as their institutions of control and conflict, necessarily implied an authentic reconstitution of the universe of subjectivity and of inter-subjective relations as a fundamental dimension of the new pattern of power, of the new world and of the new world order that was thus taking shape and developing. This was how an entire new system of social domination emerged. Specifically, the control of sexuality, subjectivity, authority and their respective resources and products, would henceforth not only be associated with racial classification, but become entirely dependent on it as the framework providing the forum, roles and conducts of social relations, not to mention the images, stereotypes and symbols whereby individuals and groups would be categorized in every facet of social life.

The new system of social exploitation

Closely articulated with this new system of social domination and in step with its constitution, a new system of social exploitation also emerged. More specifically, this refers to forms of control of labor, its resources and its products: all of the historically known modes for the control of labor or of exploitation – slavery, servitude, independent and small scale commodity production, reciprocity and capital – were associated, articulated in a single joint system of commodity production for the world market. Due to the dominant role of capital in the basic tendencies of this new system, from its very point of departure the latter took on a capitalist character.

In this new structure for the exploitation of labor and the distribution of its products, each one of the component parts was redefined and reconfigured. Consequently, sociologically and historically, each of them was new, rather than a mere extension or geographic prolongation of previous forms in other lands. This single system of commodity production for the world market was clearly an unprecedented historical experience, an entirely new system for the control of labor and social exploitation.

These historically unprecedented systems of domination and social exploitation were in mutual need of one another. Neither could have been consolidated and universally reproduced over such a long period of time without the other. In America, for these very reasons (that is, given the magnitude of the violence against, and the destruction of, the previously established social order), the relations between the new systems of domination and exploitation came to be virtually symmetrical and the social division of labor was for a long time a clear expression of the racial classification of the population. As of the middle of the 16th Century, this association between the two systems was already clearly structured. It was to be reproduced over the course of nearly 500 years: “Blacks” were by definition slaves; “Indians” by definition servants. Those who were neither Black nor Indian became masters, bosses, administrators or public authorities, owners of commercial establishments and men of power. And of course, particularly as of the mid 18th Century and among those of mixed race, “color” became fundamental, that is, the element that defined each person and each group’s place in the social division of labor.

Coloniality and globality in the new pattern of power

Given the fact that the category of race became a basic and universal social classification of the population, redefining around its core previous forms of domination – in particular, those regarding sex, “ethnicity”, “nationalities” and “cultures”, this system of social classification affected each and every member of the human species. It became the axis for the distribution of roles and the relationships associated with them, in labor, sexual relations, authority, production and the control of subjectivity. And it was according to these criteria of classification established by those who were in power that all sorts of historical and social identities were ascribed. Ultimately, geocultural identities were also

established around this axis. This was how the first historically known global system of domination emerged. Nobody, in any part of the globe, could escape it.

Furthermore, given a social division of labor (control over and exploitation of labor) that consisted in bringing together all historically known forms of production under a single system of commodity production for the world market and for the exclusive benefit of those who were at the helm of power, no one could any longer live outside the system. People could change places within the system but never be totally outside it. Thus the first global system of exploitation – world capitalism – came about.

On the other hand, this new pattern of power that was based on the articulation of new systems of social domination and exploitation of labor was constituted and configured as a central product of the colonial relations that were imposed in America. Without these relations of coloniality and violence, the integration between these new systems would not have been possible; much less their enduring reproduction. Thus coloniality became – and continues to be – a central, inescapable trait of the new pattern of power that was produced in America, the basis of its foundation and its global character.

The Euro-centering of a new pattern of power: capital and modernity

The colonial domination of America, exercised through physical and subjective violence, enabled the conquerors/colonizers to control the production of precious minerals (gold and silver, in particular) and of valuable produce (in the early days, this meant tobacco, cocoa, and potatoes, primarily) through the unpaid labor of “Black” slaves, “Indian” servants and respective “mestizos”.

It may not be necessary to insist here on the historical process that enabled the dominant groups among the colonizers to produce a monetarized and regionally articulated market that stretched out over the Atlantic basin as a new center of commercial traffic. But on the other hand, it is probably not useful to speak of one prior to the “industrial revolution” of the 18th Century, since before then these regions (of Western Europe) did not produce anything of importance for the world market. In consequence, it was exclusively the colonial control of America and the free labor of “Blacks” and “Indians” producing precious vegetable and mineral substances that enabled dominant groups among the colonizers not only to begin to occupy an important position in the world market but also to hoard colossal commercial benefits, and consequently centralize the commodification of the local work force within their own countries.

All of this implied the rapid expansion of capitalist accumulation in these regions and went on to allow Europe to take advantage of the technological innovations produced by “Black” slaves in the Antilles to drive the development of the “Industrial Revolution” in the northern part of what was to become Western Europe.¹¹ It was only on this basis that the emerging Western Europe could later go on to colonize the rest of the world and dominate the world market

This was how Capital as a social relation of production and exploitation could be concentrated in these regions and become their virtually exclusive

trademark over a long period of time, while in America, as was later the case in the rest of the colonized world, non-wage relations of exploitation, slavery, servitude and reciprocity/taxation were patterns maintained by colonial violence. It was impossible not to admit that, contrary to the theoretical precepts of Eurocentrism, Capital unfolded in Europe on the back of the most varied forms of labor exploitation and particularly “Black” slavery, used to cultivate valuable vegetable produce, and “Indian” servitude, employed in the production of precious metals.

In Europe, these processes were associated with the production of a new local power structure, social reclassification of the inhabitants of these regions, power conflicts among the dominant groups over domains, and that included the Church, with conflicts of hegemony between them, religious and cultural struggles, the pall of religious and cultural obscurantism in Iberia and the secularization of intersubjective relations in central northern Europe. In these latter regions, they led to the emergence of what since the 18th Century has been presented to the whole world as modernity and as the exclusive trademark of a new historical entity and identity, Western Europe

With roots that can be traced back to the 15th-century utopias, but above all to the philosophical, theoretical and social debates of the 17th Century, and in clearer fashion in the 18th Century, the new entity/identity that is constituted as Western Europe, now under the increasing predominance of its central northern zones, assumes and identifies itself as modern, that is, as the newest and most advanced civilization in human history, with its specific rationality for a hallmark.

Without the coloniality of power founded in America, that is, without America, all of this would be inexplicable. Nonetheless, the Eurocentric version of modernity hides or distorts this history. It is through the historical experience that leads to the production of America that in Europe the idea and the experience of change as a normal, necessary and desirable mode of history takes hold. On the other hand, this also meant relinquishing an imaginary repertoire that cherished the golden age of a mythical past, in favor of one that was based on notions of future and “progress”; And without America, without contact and knowledge of forms of social existence founded on social equality, reciprocity, community, and social solidarity as they prevailed within certain pre-colonial indigenous society, (particularly in the Andean region) the European utopias of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries cannot be explained. The latter re-imagined these indigenous experiences, magnifying and idealizing them in order to contrast them with feudal inequalities in central northern Europe, and thus founding the mental repertoire of a society based on social equality, individual freedom and social solidarity as a central project of modernity and as evidence and compendium of its specific rationality.¹²

In other terms, just as was the case regarding the centralization of capitalist development, the central role that Western Europe played in the production of modernity was an expression of the coloniality of power. This is to say that coloniality and modernity/rationality were from the very beginning two

sides of the same coin, as they have continued to be until today: two inseparable dimensions of the same historical process¹³.

For America and in particular for contemporary Latin America, within the context of the coloniality of power, this process has meant that colonial domination, racialization and geocultural re-identification as well as the exploitation of unpaid labor were superimposed on the emergence of Western Europe as a center of control of power, as the center of the development of capital and of modernity/rationality, as the very seat of the historical model of advanced civilization. An entire privileged world that imagined itself, as it continues to imagine itself, self-produced and self-designed by beings of a *race* that is superior *par excellence*, by definition the only beings that are seen as truly endowed with the ability to reach such heights. Thus, from here on in the historical and structural dependence of Latin America would no longer be considered just a result of the materiality of social relations but, above all, of the new subjective and intersubjective relations of the new entity/identity called Western Europe and of its descendents and bearers, wherever they were to be or go.

Latin America's ghosts

At this point in the debate it should not be difficult to understand why and how the coloniality of power produced this (non)encounter between our historical experience and our main perspective on knowledge, leading to the consequent frustration of attempts to provide effective solutions to our major problems.

The unresolved character of Latin America's fundamental problems has left it shaded by very specific historical ghosts. It is not my goal here to identify or examine all of them, but rather try to make some of them – the densest among them – visible. These specters have their own place in history, and their own history. From independence to the end of the 19th Century, the most gnarled and enduring of these ghosts were most certainly those of identity and modernity. Since the end of that century, many Latin Americans began to realize that it was not possible to chase these phantoms out of our non-democratic world – that is, a world configured in the absence of a modern nation-state. And although the separation and prolonged hostility between Latin American countries had almost been put to rest during the 19th Century, it is only today that the Bolivarian proposal for unity and integration seems to be reappearing with considerable force. First, with the United States' conquest and colonization of the northern half of Mexico, but particularly since the Spanish defeat, as the United States went on to colonize Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam, the imperialist and expansionist policy of that country has again planted the issue of unity and integration in the soil of the Latin American imaginary. Since the Second World War, the problem of development was added to our long list of unresolved issues. Despite its apparent exit from the site of current debate, the issue of development has not disappeared from our mindset; on the contrary, it haunts the present day scenario as one of premises that has provided legitimacy to the neo-liberalization of Latin American countries.

Given all the arguments we have developed thus far, we can identify modernity, democracy, unity and development as the ghosts that haunt the Latin American imaginary today. Along with them, since the end of the last millennium – since our 500th anniversary – a new and perhaps more somber, more frightening specter has appeared: that of the continuity or survival¹⁴ of the very processes of production of a Latin American id-ENTITY.

As the debate implies, the solution to any one of these problems requires the solution to all. This condition has left these ills invulnerable, until today, to all the attempts that have been made to eradicate them from our daily social existence. In fact, the hegemony of the Eurocentrist perspective on knowledge has led most people to on the one hand, think of these problems as separate from one another, and on the other, to attempt to solve them gradually and sequentially. And for these very reasons, to perceive of proposals and alternative attempts to solve them as mere “utopias” – in the devalued sense of the term, that is, not as proposals for social transformation or for the production of new historical directions.

For all of these reasons, these ghosts haunt us in ways that are inextricably linked. And they seem to have become permanent. They have become quite familiar to us, as if they were our intimates, and have come to make up a part of our experience and our imagery. Thus, we could say that they are today virtually inherent to the materiality and the imaginary of our historical experience. In this regard, they make up the specific historical knot of Latin America.¹⁵

Coloniality, modernity, identity¹⁶

It comes as no surprise that America accepted the Eurocentric ideology of modernity as a universal truth, particularly until the early 20th Century, if we take into account that those who gave themselves exclusive rights to thinking of and representing themselves as representatives of this America were precisely those who exercised colonial domination, that is, “Europeans”. And since the 18th Century, they came to be considered “white” and identified with the “West”; that is, with a more extended image of “Europe”, as is still the case today – even after new “national” post-colonial identities have been taken up.¹⁷

In other words, the “coloniality” of power has since implied (continuing, for the most part, to do so today) the sociological invisibility of non-European, “Indian”, “Black” and mestizo others, in other words, the overwhelming majority of the population of the Americas and of Latin America in particular, insofar as the production of subjectivity, historical memory, the image constructs, and “rational knowledge” are concerned. In other word, in terms of identity.

And, in effect, how would they have been able to attain visibility, beyond their position as subjugated workers, if non-Europeans, given their ascribed condition of inferior and “culturally” primitive races – archaic, as we say today – were not and could never have been considered (as they are still not today) subjects, much less rational subjects?¹⁸

With the defeat of the revolution led by Tupac Amaru in the Peruvian Viceroyship in 1790, the isolation, mutilation and final defeat (in 1803) of the initially triumphant Haitian revolution, the non-Europeans of Latin America

were mentally and intellectually rendered even more invisible in the world of those who were dominant or were beneficiaries of the “colonialness” of power.¹⁹

Nonetheless, in the world of power, what is pushed out the door tends to come back through a window. Thus, those who were made invisible were in fact the overwhelming majority of the Latin American population, with their subjective world and ways of relating to the universe, much too dense and active to be simply ignored. And even while the promiscuity and sexual permissiveness of Christian Catholics was incessantly producing and reproducing a growing population of “mestizos” – a very significant portion of which came to join, as of the late 18th century, the ranks of the dominant groups – (“cultural”) intersubjective relationships between dominating and dominated led to the production of a new intersubjective universe that was considered equally “mestizo” and thus ambiguous and indecisive except, of course, insofar as it were to appear at either extreme on the spectrum of power relations.

It was at this point that Latin American identity became a battlefield that has not ceased to grow wider and rockier, separating the European and the non-European. But even when cast in these terms we are not dealing with a linear or simple history; rather, with the most enduring elements of the coloniality of power.

In the first place, “racial” relations are enveloped in, or disguised as “color”. This is obviously a relationship of social hierarchy, of “superiority” and “inferiority” between “whites”, “Blacks”, “Indians” and mixed race “mestizos”, which during the second half of the 19th Century also came to include “Asians”, the “yellow” and the “olive-skinned”. Since the 18th Century, the increase of “mixed race” people led to a more complex and difficult hierarchy of “colors” and tones, to discrimination among the castes it generated. This social scale remained in place until well into the 19th Century.²⁰

A later increase of “mestizos” has rendered the attempts at social classification founded on “race” even more complex, all the more so because “color” has superimposed itself on the biological and the structural, due primarily to struggles against racism and racial discrimination. Furthermore, this same effect has also accrued from the modern formal ideology of the equality of people of all “colors” in which anti-racist struggles have sought support.

In the second place, we are dealing here with relations between the “European/Western” – and in consequence, with modernity, or more accurately, with the Eurocentric version of modernity – and the non-European. This is a crucial relationship, insofar as this Eurocentric and overwhelmingly hegemonic perspective in Latin America, and not only among those belonging to dominant groups, the place and condition of the original historical and cultural experiences of the pre-colonial (ergo: pre-“Western and European”) can be classified as “pre-modern” and therefore “pre-rational” or “primitive”, just like the populations that were kidnapped in Africa and enslaved and racialized as “Blacks” in America. Few would resist admitting that in the dominant discourse – thus, the discourse originating in dominant groups – the proposed modernization has continued to be synonymous with “Westernization”, all the intense post World War II debate notwithstanding.²¹

In the third place, there are the results of the resistance that has been put up by the victims of the coloniality of power and that has been present over the course of these five centuries. During early modernity, under Iberian domination, the first “mestizo” intellectuals initiated the defense of the aboriginal legacy. (In the extensive Peruvian Viceroyship, the larger part of today’s South America, almost everyone is familiar with the most famous of them, Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca, Huaman Poma de Ayala, Santa Cruz Pachacuti Salcamayhua, Blas Valera). In broad terms, two different currents can be discerned. One originates in the celebrated Royal Commentaries (*Comentarios Reales*), by Garcilaso de la Vega, the Inca, a work which insists on the peaceful, civilizing and solidary nature of the Inca, and another more critical one which emphasizes power and its implications, originating in the work *Nueva Corónica y buen gobierno* by Huaman Poma de Ayala. Today, it can be said that both of them converge in their call – against the increasingly predatory nature of contemporary capitalism – for the restoration of a “*tawantinsuyana*”²² society.

In the fourth place, there is the shifting history of the relations between the different versions of the European in these countries. The most interesting part of this history began early in the 19th Century, with the political conflict between Hispanophile conservatives and liberal modernists, in light of the hegemony-seeking expansionism of the United States, allied as it was to England. The “white” liberals of these countries were stimulated by France, under Napoleon the Third, to propose that their European identity not exhaust itself in the Iberian (Spanish and Portuguese), but that it could be traced further back to a much broader cultural kinship: latin-ness. And toward the end of that same century, in the face of the open colonialist and imperialist expansionism of the United States after its victory over Spain in 1898, an opposition between the Anglo-Saxon materialism and pragmatism of the North Americans and the Latin “spiritualism” of South Americans – codified primarily by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó in his book *Ariel*, found wide dissemination and acceptance among “white” and “mestizo” intellectuals.²³ This history has not yet come to an end. Given the fact that US hegemony has been able to expand and assert itself particularly since the Second World War, it is no coincidence that the name Latin America has been favored over a series of others that have been proposed at different points, especially since the Second World War.

Finally, recent political and cultural movements of the “indigenous” and of “Afro-Latin Americans” have led to the definitive questioning of the European version of modernity/rationality and the proposal of an alternative rationality. They deny the social and theoretical legitimacy of “racial” and “ethnic” classification and have proposed anew the idea of social equality. They deny belonging to, and the legitimacy of, the Nation-State founded on the coloniality of power. In essence, although perhaps less clearly and explicitly, they propose the assertion and reproduction of reciprocity and the ethics of social solidarity as an alternative to the predatory tendencies of today’s capitalism.

It is worth pointing out that, against this whole historical and social backdrop, the question of Latin American identity is, more than ever before, a

historic, open and heterogeneous project, and not only – or perhaps not very much – loyalty to a memory and a past. This history has enabled us to see that in reality we are dealing with many different memories and many different pasts, still without a common and shared course. From this perspective and in this sense, the production of a Latin American identity implies, from the outset, a trajectory of unavoidable destruction of the coloniality of power, and a very specific form of de-colonization and liberation: the non/coloniality of power.

Notes

- 1 For more on these categories, see Anibal Quijano: “Colonialidad del Poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina”. Originally, in Edgardo Lander, comp. *Colonialidad del Saber, Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, CLACSO-UNESCO, 2000. Buenos Aires, pp. 201 ss. Also by the same author, see “Colonialidad del Poder, Globalización y Democracia”. Originally published in *Tendencias Básicas de Nuestra Epoca*, Caracas, Instituto de Altos Estudios Internacionales Pedro Gual, pp. 21-65, 2000. and “Colonialidad y Modernidad/Racionalidad”. Originally appearing in *Revista del Instituto Indigenista Peruano*, vol. 13, No. 29, Lima, pp. 11-20.
- 2 Immanuel Wallerstein coined the concept of the Modern World-System in the first volume of his book *The Modern World-System* (Academic Press, 1974, 1980, 1989) as a system of states and regions associated with the expansion of European capitalism. In 1991, Anibal Quijano introduced the concept of the “Coloniality of Power” in “Colonialidad y Modernidad/Racionalidad”, *op.cit.* Both theoretical proposals finally found a common course in the joint publication of both authors, of the text “Americanity as a Concept or the Americas in the Modern World-System”, in *International Journal of Social Sciences*, No. 134, Paris, UNESCO-ERES, November 1992, pp. 617-627. Since then there has been growing use of the concept of the Colonial/Modern World System. See, among others, Walter Mignolo: *Local Histories, Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000. And Ramón Grosfoguel’s *Colonial Subjects*, Los Angeles, University of California Press. 2003.
- 3 In *Praise of Shadows*, New York, Leete’s Island Books, 1977.
- 4 This issue is discussed in “Colonialidad del Poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina”. Originally in Edgardo Lander’s compilation *Colonialidad del Saber, Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, Buenos Aires, CLACSO UNESCO 2000. Also dealt with in “Colonialidad del Poder y Clasificación Social”, originally in *Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein*. In *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol. VI, No. 2, Colorado, Institute of Research on World –Systems, Summer/Fall, 2000, Special Issue, Edited by Giovanni Arrighi and Walter Goldfrank, Part I. (Document available only on PDF).
- 5 I have discussed the implications of the current cultural and political movement of “indigenous” Latin Americans in “O ‘movimento indígena’ e as questões pendentes na América Latina”, in *Política Externa*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Sao Paulo, Instituto de Estudos Economicos e Internacionais, Universidad de Sao Paulo, 2004, pp.77-97.
- 6 This theoretical proposal is articulated in Anibal Quijano: “Colonialidad del Poder, Cultura y Conocimiento en América Latina”. Originally published in *Anuario Mariateguiano*, Vol. IX, Lima, No. 9, 1998, pp. 113-122. Reproduced several times, for example in Walter

Mignolo, org. *Capitalismo y Geopolítica del Conocimiento*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Signo-Duke University, 2001, pp. 117-133.

- 7 On this issue see Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, *op.cit.*
- 8 During the wars in the Peruvian Viceroyship, many “Black” slaves rose through the ranks to occupy positions of leadership, such as Captaincy – a position usually reserved for the *hidalgos*, members of the nobility from peninsular provinces. Furthermore, they were usually emancipated from slavery by the rebel *encomenderos*. When the latter were defeated, the so called Peacemaker Pedro de la Gasca promulgated the most draconian of colonial legislations against “Blacks”, as the definitive racial punishment. (Documents from the Lima Municipal Historical Archives).
- 9 On the production of the ideas of “black” and “white” as “racial” nomenclature for the British-American colonial area, see Theodore Allen: *The Invention of the White Race*. VERSO, London 1994, 2 vols. Also, Matthew Frye Jacobson: *Whiteness of a Different Color. European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, London, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1998. On the complexities and contradictions of the process of racializing “Blacks” in the British American colonial world, see Steve Martinot’s suggestive study: *The Rule of Racialization. Class, Identity, Governance*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2003.
- 10 On this issue, see Aníbal Quijano: “Raza, Etnia y Nación en José Carlos Mariátegui: Cuestiones Abiertas”, in Roland Forgues, ed. José Carlos Mariátegui. And in regard to Europe, see: *El otro Descubrimiento*, Lima, Ed. Amauta, 1993, pp. 166-187.
- 11 See Dale Tomich: *Through the Prism of Slavery. Labor, Capital and World Economy*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford, 2004.
- 12 On this debate see Anibal Quijano: *Modernidad, Identidad y Utopía en América Latina*, Lima, Ediciones Sociedad y Política, 1988.
- 13 For more on this issue see Anibal Quijano: “Colonialidad y Modernidad/Racionalidad”, in Heraclio Bonilla (org.), *Los Conquistados*, Tercer Mundo Ediciones-FLACSO, 1992, pp. 437-449.
- 14 A vigorous debate has finally commenced within Latin America on the meaning of the expansion of US military bases and establishments within Latin American territory, beyond the habitual and long standing articulations between the armed forces of that country and those of Latin American nations. This debate is linked to the obvious tendencies of re-neocolonization of the world, initiated with the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Several predictions that I made in this regard, and became reality within an unfortunately short span of time, can be found in a talk that I gave at the University of Gainesville, Florida, in 1992, under the title *Will Latin America Survive?*. It was published in Portuguese in 1993, as “Sobrevivera América Latina?”, in *Sao Paulo Em Perspectiva*, Vol. VII, No. 2, Sao Paulo, SEADE, 1993, pp. 60-67. Also in *Carta*, No. 1, Rio de Janeiro, 1993. I have returned to this topic in “El Laberinto de América Latina: ¿Hay otras salidas?”, first published in *Revista Venezolana de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales*, Caracas, VOL. 6, No. 2, 2004, pp. 73-90. Portuguese language translations can also be found in: Theotonio dos Sant (org), *Globalização. Dimensoes e Alternativas*, Sao Paulo, Puc-Ediciones Loyola-Reggen, 2004, pp. 142-174.
- 15 The intersection of questions of identity, modernity and democracy has proven to be an inextricable part of Latin American history. In this regard it has come to be an authentic

historical, nuclear and decisive knot; its solution depends no doubt on future horizons and trajectories. Nonetheless, this knot is, given its nature and origin, completely different from the legendary Gordian knot that was awaiting Alexander's sword to be undone. The historical knot of Latin America cannot be dealt with in any other way besides a continuous, radical and global democratization of material and intersubjective relations that leads to the production of a society of free and equal beings. And since there is probably no other Latin American for whom this has so intensely meant his very life and death than the Peruvian José María Arguedas, I believe it is pertinent to call it the **Arguedian knot**.

- 16 On this occasion I will limit myself to discussing the question of identity and its relations to modernity/rationality. My proposals on the issues of democracy and the modern nation-state and on development and integration can be found, respectively, in the following texts: "Colonialité du Pouvoir e Democratie en Amerique Latine", in *Amerique Latine, Democratie et Exclusion*, Paris, Revue Future Anterieur, L'Harmattan, 1994, pp.93-101; "Estado-Nación, Ciudadanía y Democracia: Cuestiones Abiertas", en Helena Gonzáles/Heidulf Schmidt (orgs.), *Democracia para una nueva Sociedad*, Caracas, Nueva Sociedad, 1997, pp. 139-158; "Colonialidad del Poder, Globalización y Democracia". Originally in: Instituto de Altos Estudios Internacionales (ed), *Tendencias Básicas de Nuestro Tiempo*, Caracas, 2000. There is also a Portuguese translation in *Novos Rumos*, Año 17, No. 37, Sao Paulo, pp. 04-29; "Populismo y Fujimorismo", in Felipe Burbano de Lara (ed.), *El Fantasma Del Populismo*. Flacso-Nueva Sociedad, 1998, pp. 171-207; "América Latina en la Economía Mundial", in *Problemas del Desarrollo*, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas de la UNAM, Vol. XXIV, No. 95, Oct-Dic. 1993; "El Fantasma del Desarrollo". Originally published in the *Revista venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales*, Caracas, No 2, 2000.
- 17 Not only a part of the intelligentsia, such as the important Argentine writer and intellectual Héctor Murena, (1923-1975), well into the 20th Century felt the despair of being one of the "Europeans exiled in these savage pampas" but many of our most powerful political leaders have not hesitated in asserting themselves as defenders of "Western and Christian civilization" as is the case for the cruel Argentine military dictatorship of the 1970s and the no less cruel Bush dictatorship of the 21st Century.
- 18 This way of perceiving non-Europeans is constant and explicit even in Hegel, whose opinions on the inevitable destruction of primitive societies (*Lessons on the Philosophy of History*) are well-known and repeatedly cited (referring specifically to the Aztecs and the Incas) . For Hegel, this is a consequence of contact with the Spirit, which is naturally European. Another example in Heidegger, for whom the only viable language for philosophizing is German.
- 19 Tupac Amaru's revolution was, in the Peruvian Viceroyship, the first attempt to produce a new nation, that is, a new power structure, and perhaps a new nationality, that is, a new identity, based on elements of Hispanic origin and nature that had been historically redefined by and through America, within a pattern of power under "indigenous" hegemony. His defeat gave way to the situation in which the region's Independence would occur under the complete control of the ruling colonial powers, and *coloniales*, thus permitting the lasting maintenance of the coloniality of power. Similarly, the Haitian revolution was the first major decolonialization movement of the entire colonial/modern period, in which "Blacks" defeated "whites", slaves triumphed over masters, colonized over colonizers, Haitians over French, non-Europeans over Europeans. The entire colonial/modern pattern of power was subverted and destroyed. Both revolutions produced a tremendous commotion

and spread panic among the holders of colonial/modern power. Thus, the repression that was unleashed against the Tupac Amaru revolutions was of the cruelest kind, just as the continued colonialist intervention first of the French and later of the United States (or United Statesians, as proposed by José Buscaglia-Salgado in *Undoing Empire. Race and Nation in the Mulatto Caribbean*, Minneapolis-London, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, pp. 4.) has been over the centuries, crushing the revolution and arresting Haiti within a horrific history that they have not allowed to end.

- 20 In South American colonial archives more than 30 “castes” can be identified, under names that have not all fallen into disuse. In Peru, for example, there is the term “zambo” which originally referred to the “blackened” “mestizo” offspring of a “Black “man and an “Indian woman”, and “sacalagua”, used to designate a place on a scale of different “mulatto” positions. Today “moreno” is a term that is used to reduce the effects of “Black” or “zambo”, testimony that the cultural production of the idea of “race” has since the beginning been rooted in social hierarchies imposed in Iberia on the dominated “Moors” and their descendents under the domination of the lords of the North. The arrival of “Asiatic” populations since the mid 19th Century and of the Chinese in particular has generated new matrixes and new discriminatory terms.
- 21 During the days that followed the lynching of the mayor of Ilave (Puno, Peru) by a furious population identified basically as Aymara, the Peruvian press and in particular several television programs attributed the episode to the non-“Western” and therefore non-modern, non-rational condition of the Aymara “indigenous” population. On one television program, an influential journalist did not hesitate to exclaim that the “West” should be forcefully imposed on such populations. It is noteworthy that the lynching was one of several that had occurred during that period in Peru, but in regions and involving populations that were different and distant from one another. But those that had involved “mestizo” populations were not represented in the same racist/ethnicist terms. However, in Ilave the events involved Aymaras and this therefore led directly to their explanation in these terms. What is particularly pathetic about the opinion of journalists from Lima is that they were not even able to imagine that these acts could have anything to do with the “Westernization” of the Aymara: active legal trade and contraband, drug traffic, dispute for control over municipal resources, political relation with urban political parties, with central headquarters in Lima that fight over control of power and resources, etc. All of this, of course, within the context of the serious social, political and socio-psychic crisis that has characterized life in Peru for over a century.
- 22 From Lima, Carlos Aranibar has published a version of *Los Comentarios Reales* using modern Spanish (Fondo de Cultura Económica, Lima-México, 1991) and followed by a volume of scholarly notes that are of great use for those interested in mapping the historical course of such a significant book. The same Peruvian historian edited a text by Yamque Juan Santa Cruz Pachacuti Salcamayhua, also published by the FCE, Lima-México 1995. Franklin Pease, another Peruvian historian, edited the most recent edition of *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, by Huaman Poma de Ayala, (Fondo de Cultura Económica, Lima- México, 1993.) During the 20th Century, Luís Eduardo Valcárcel was the most influential advocate of the Garcilaso version of Tawantinsuyo. Beginning with *Tempestad en los Andes*, Lima 1926, his works include *Historia del Perú Antiguo*, Lima 1964, and *Ruta Cultural del Perú*. Lima 1981. More recently, Alberto Flores Galindo, in *Buscando un Inca. Identidad y Utopía en los Andes*, Lima 1988, has become an extremely influential writer who represents a variation on the same current of thought.

23 In 1853, the Colombian Torres Caicedo published a text containing these proposals in the Parisian *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Napoleón III's expansionist pretensions were quick to use these proposals to provide support for the invasion of Mexico and the imposition of Maximilian of Habsburg as Emperor. As is known, the invaders were defeated and expelled and the Emperor was executed under the leadership of the liberal Benito Juárez. *El Ariel*, written by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó (1872-1917) generated a whole intellectual and political current that came to be known as "Arielista", which seems to have run out of steam during the early decades of the 20th Century, as democratic and nationalist revolts across all the countries south of the Río Bravo followed in the wake of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1927), during the period 1925 -1935, and ending with the defeat of the revolutions and the imposition of bloody dictatorships everywhere except for Uruguay and Chile.

ABSTRACT - This text examines the formation of Latin America, the place it has occupied and the role it has played in configuring the coloniality of power as the pattern of power that became dominant worldwide, and the emergence of Western Europe as the center from which this pattern of power was controlled. It also discusses Eurocentrism and its hegemonic mode of producing and controlling knowledge, so distant and distinct from Don Quixote's legacy.

KEYWORDS: Coloniality; race; social domination; capitalism; social exploitation; Latin America; Western Europe and Eurocentrism.

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