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THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND WORLD DIS/ORDER

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The “Global South” is a fashionable expression. It appears in academic journals, in the title of university academic centers, among activists around the world. I argue that from the perspective of capitalism and expansion of Western values, the “Global South” is the location to be developed economically and liberated from non-democratic regimes. From the perspective of the emerging political society, the “Global South” is where liberation from Western democratic rhetoric to justify economic takeover and cultural management is taking place. I show how the very concept of “Global South” came about, replacing that of the “Third World” after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I end the article by mapping five trajectories, discernible in the present, that are orienting global futures and I further argue that they cannot be understood properly without understanding the economic, political, and epistemic conflict that make the “Global South” a current location of global conflicts.

WHAT IS THE “GLOBAL SOUTH”?

THE “GLOBAL SOUTH” IS A FASHIONABLE EXPRESSION NOWADAYS. It appears in academic journals, in the title of university academic centers, among activists around the world. Google registers about two million entries for the expression. What is in a name, as the expression goes? Certainly, the use of the expression today doesn’t have much to do with the geographical South. We are certainly not talking about the southern half of the globe as depicted on a world map (Figure 1).

Although I did not check all of Google’s entries, I have concluded that the Global South is a metaphor that works at two complementary levels: (1) On one hand the Global South is the sector of the planet where underdeveloped and emerging nations exist, and therefore, the Global South is the provider of natural resources for the Global North. (2) On the other hand, the Global South is where the global political society is emerging, precisely to do something to save us all, including the elite of the G7 nations, who apparently are too busy competing with one another in terms of production, consumption, and wealth that not much time is left for thinking about life in general, let alone about the lives of the nearly seven billion people on the planet and the planet itself. I do not expect that the one million or so people (let’s be generous) who lead the governments and corporations that rule the world will be concerned about the other 6.8 or so billion. (Why would they, as long as they themselves are fine? Well, some of them might commit suicide because of financial losses in an economic crisis

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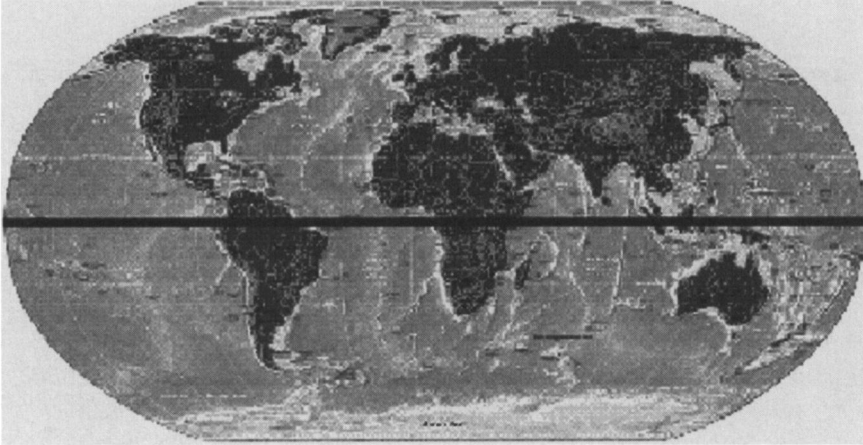


Figure 1. The “Global South” is not simply the land below the equator. It is an ideological concept highlighting the economic, political, and epistemic dependency and unequal relations in the global world order, from a subaltern perspective.

or because their criminal activities were exposed, but those are rare cases.) But their own “well being” and the well-being of their family make them oblivious to the fact that they are driving their own family and their own socioeconomic class to extinction. I can understand that someone would prefer to die than to live enslaved or humiliated, as we know from the history of many enslaved people who killed themselves, as well as the suicidal actions of some terrorists. But for me, it is more difficult to understand how someone could be blind to a way of life (increasing production, increasing wealth, and undermining or destroying life on earth to produce material objects) that is a sure road to death.

So then I began to understand that the Global South is both a fuzzily delimited sector of the planet and, above all, the place where another way of life is burgeoning. What do all of these observations have to do with anthropology and archaeology, the two major disciplinary domains of the *Journal of Anthropological Research*? A lot indeed, as you can imagine, and you can further see from the argument that follows. From the time of Bartolomé de Las Casas to the early nineteenth century, when anthropology was formed as a discipline, the non-European world has been the delight of missionaries, travelers, and, finally, anthropologists. Archaeologists in Peru and Mexico are still daily uncovering remains of ancient civilizations topped by Castilian institutional buildings. Thus the archaeological investigations related to my argument are those that uncover the remains of civilizations that already existed around the world by 1500, and that were subsequently and literally overlain by the spread of Western Civilization.

The first question I am addressing is, how did we get to this point?

THERE WAS NO WESTERN CIVILIZATION UNTIL 1500

Greece and Rome are not the foundation of Western Civilization. They only became the historical foundation of the “West” as a result of the Renaissance.

Imagine the world around 1500. There were several highly structured and complex civilizations and many dispersed communities that, for pedagogical purposes, we can call cultures. Some of those cultures were integrated into broader groups that are recognized as civilizations; others were not and maintained their sovereignty, as we would say today. In the visual cartographic imagery of today, the ecumene as of 1500 (defined in the original sense: Europe, Africa, and Asia) looked more or less like what is shown in Figure 2.

To people in that part of the world, three major civilizations in what was just beginning to be called the New World, or the Americas—Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas—were unknown. And vice versa. Around 1500 and through the sixteenth century, however, both parts of the world began to be connected by European travelers and in the European imagination and structure of knowledge. This is crucial: no other civilization was in the position of generating the structure and amount of knowledge created by Europeans. That knowledge was linked to the economy and exploitation of labor (Indians, enslaved Africans). By 1500, Western Civilization, the newcomer, initiated in earnest a process of growth and control of economy, of authority, of knowledge and understanding, of subjectivity (e.g., the image of the modern subject), and of gender and sexuality that formed and transformed the world we are living in today. It is in this context that the expression “Global South” can and should be understood.

I begin in 1500 with three of the great civilizations in the Old World. From the first Qin Dynasty around 221 BC and the formation of the Huángdi (with Qin designating himself the first Huángdi) until AD 1500, China was one of the most established civilizations of the world. (Persia, named an empire in Western scholarship and media, flourished in 500 BC, earlier than China, but between AD 651 and 1500 it was under the growing influence of the Islamic expansion.) The Roman Empire came somewhat later; its official dates extend from 27 BC to AD 476, when it collapsed. Many years later it was revived as the Holy Roman Empire; Otto the Great, the first Holy Roman Emperor, was crowned in 962. And the last abdicated in 1806, when the empire was dissolved during the Napoleonic Wars. In 1512—and this is the date that interests us here—the name was officially changed to the Holy Roman Empire *of the German Nation*. Shortly thereafter, Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation would rule over the empire’s central and southern European territories and also be known as Charles I of Spain. The third great civilization around 1500 was the legacy of the Islamic Caliphate reincarnated in 1454—as the Ottoman Sultanate.

And of course there were the Incanate in the Andes, the Tlatoanate in Anahuac (both flourishing between the twelfth and early sixteenth centuries AD), and the Maya civilization, which reached its peak around AD 900.

By 1500 the global world order began to change. Several events occurred nearly simultaneously in different spaces, emerging from their local histories. Contrary to what has happened since 1500, at that time no single civilization was impinging upon all the others. In the Islamic world, three sultanates emerged. One has been mentioned, the Ottoman Sultanate. By the early 1500s the Safavid Sultanate based in Baku (in modern Azerbaijan) materialized, and the Mughal Sultanate was formed in what is today India. I will come back to these three



Figure 2. "The Old World" before 1500 (re baptized the "Eastern Hemisphere" by the end of the seventeenth century) is here shown in a contemporary mapping of the earth. People who lived before 1500 did not have such a visualization at their disposal. (Map by Thomas Lessman, www.WorldHistoryMaps.info)

sultanates shortly. And by 1520, when Cortes entered Tenochtitlan in Mexico, Moscow was declared the Third Rome and the Russian Czarate was formed. It lasted through Peter and then Catherine the Great, who declared themselves “emperors,” not czars. You see now what is in a name.

And then something unexpected happened: Columbus arrived at what he thought was Asia. But regardless of his mistake, he opened up the trans-Atlantic commercial circuits. At that moment, one of the existing *nomos* of the Earth was expressed in the medieval T-and-O map (Figure 3), which represented a joining of the forces of Renaissance humanists and cartographers. From being *one* of the *nomos*, the T-and-O map became *the* *nomos* that is embedded in the modern mappamundi. It is only because of the Christian T-and-O map that we “see” four continents in Abraham Ortelius’s *Typus Orbis Terrarum* (1570) (the Americas combined, plus Europe, Asia, and Africa: Figure 4).

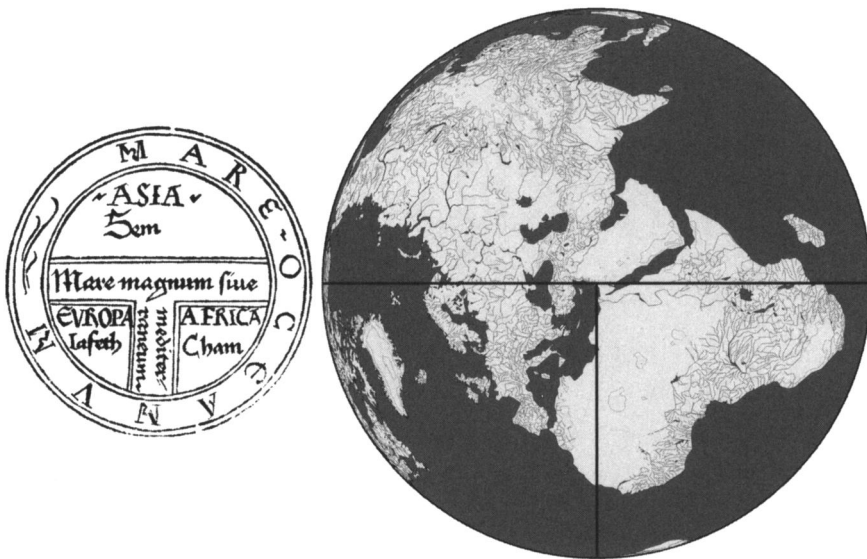


Figure 3. The “T” in the medieval T-and-O map projected over a modern map of the globe. The Americas were not on any maps of the ecumene.

Today, through visiting monuments as tourists, through archaeological and anthropological work, by researching contemporary codices and reports by European conquistadores and missionaries, and by observing modern international relations and the inequality of world order, we can imagine how the world was before 1500. And above all, the living memories of non-Western people who have begun to assert that their own histories, civilizations, ways of life, and structures of thought are not as bad, demonic, traditional, mythic, false, or strange as the non-European world appears in Western narratives. We have to unlearn what is taught from canonized narratives, sacred or secular. Exploring the meaning, today, of “Global South” is part of this process.

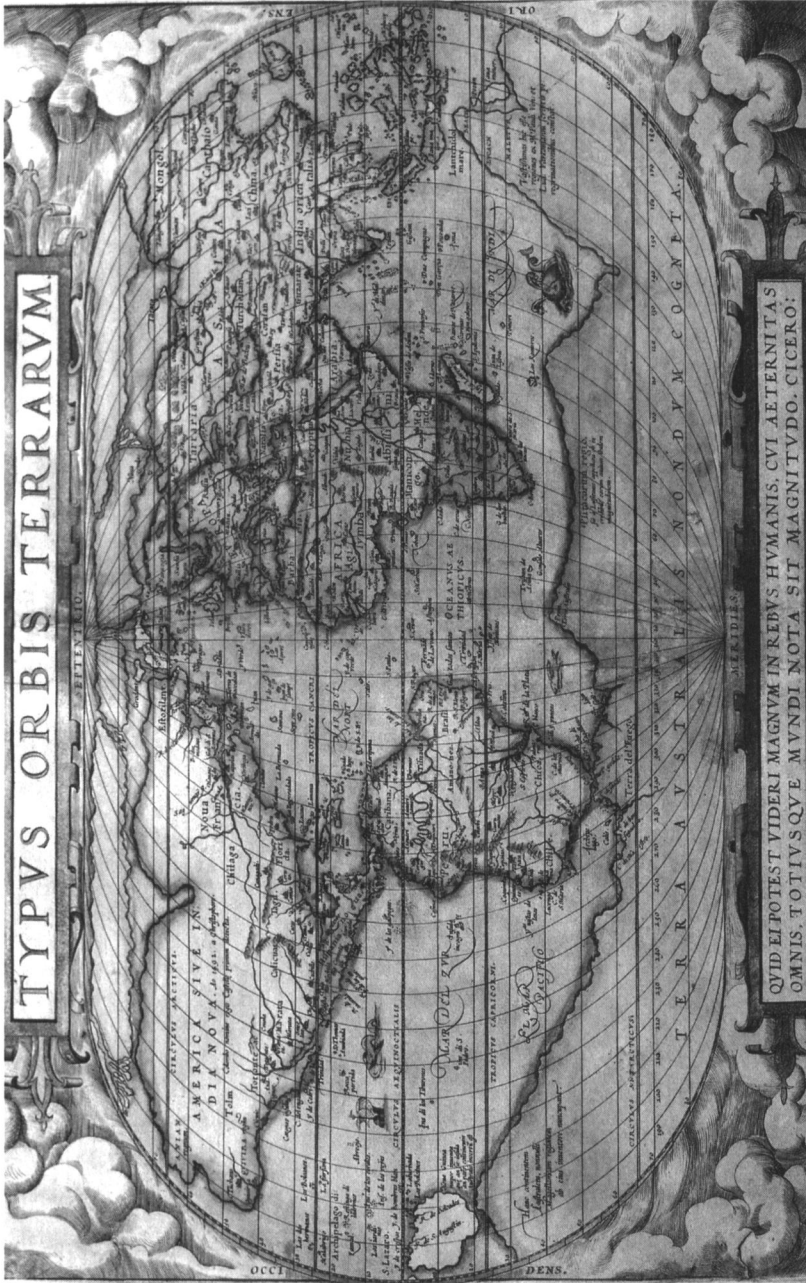


Figure 4. By the time Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) drew his 1572 *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, the T-in-O map was already embedded in the minds of European cartographers.

**WESTERN CIVILIZATION, INTERNATIONAL LAW,
CARTOGRAPHY, AND THE SECOND NOMOS OF THE EARTH**

Now we are in a position to review Carl Schmitt's crucial concept of *nomos of the earth*. Schmitt takes the concept of *nomos* from the ancient Greek. We shall not be concerned about the specificities of the meaning but rather with how Schmitt uses it and why this concept is relevant to his argument. We also pay attention to how his use of the concept consolidates the very idea of Western Civilization, the most recent of all the world civilizations. For, once Western Civilization began to be built and expanded, the existing civilizations did not vanish. And this fact is important for understanding the global dis/order today. In an expanded edition of his classic book *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (1950), Schmitt describes his uses of *nomos*.

I speak of a new *nomos* of the earth. That means that I consider the earth, the planet on which we live, as a whole, as a globe, and seek to understand its global division and order. . . . First, *nomos* means *Nahme* [appropriation]; second, it also means division and distribution of what is taken; and third, utilization, management, and usage of what has been obtained as a result of the division, i.e., production and consumption. Appropriation, distribution, and production are the primal processes of human history, three acts of the primal drama. Each of these three acts has its own structure and process. Division, for example, precedes the measuring, registering, and weighing of distribution. The prophetic words numbered, weighed, divided—MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN in the fifth chapter of the Old Testament book of Daniel [the writing on the wall]—relate to this second act of the tripartite original drama: the *nomos* of the earth (Schmitt 2003:351).

There are a couple of problems here—assumptions taken for granted, assumptions that underlie totalitarian and imperial thinking or, as Schmitt describes it, global linear thinking. Schmitt assumes that the planet is one, a whole, and he takes it for granted that the Greek concept of *nomos* allows for a description of that totality—a description that *equals* the totality. Recall the parody “On Exactitude in Science” by Jorge Luis Borges (1999:325):

. . . In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitiableness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

I would guess that we are indeed living in a period in which Schmitt's linear thinking and the global map is crumbling. But let's take one step at a time and try to understand where the fault line in Schmitt's global linear thinking lies. After defining the word and its intended uses, he proceeds to distinguish *two* nomos of the earth:

There always has been some kind of *nomos* of the earth. In all the ages of making, the earth has been appropriated, divided, and cultivated. But *before the age of the great discoveries, before the 16th century of our system of dating, men had no global concept of the planet on which they lived.* Certainly, they had a mythical image of heaven and earth, and of land and sea, but the earth still was not measured as a globe, and men still had not ventured onto the great oceans. Their world was purely terrestrial. *Every powerful people considered themselves to be the center of the earth and their dominion to be the domicile of freedom, beyond which war, barbarism and chaos ruled* (Schmitt 2003:351–52; emphasis added).

The problem here is not one of factual information. It is true that there was no global concept of the planet that included the Atlantic and the so-called New World until the sixteenth century—that is, based on experiences and measurement. But this fact doesn't mean that history is moving unidirectionally. It is true that great coexisting civilizations considered themselves the center of the world, although that is not necessarily bad or a "myth" when it is considered in relation to a metaphysical expectation of the movement of history. It is also true that the earth has been appropriated, divided, and cultivated. But that doesn't mean that land was considered the property of the papacy, the monarch, or private individuals. The problem lies in the assumptions and interpretations rather than the facts. And the problem is that Schmitt (and he is not alone) doesn't make clear the distinction between what he sees as "facts before interpretation" and "facts constructed in his interpretation."

Schmitt is assuming a teleological direction of history. So let's begin to disentangle the assumptions guiding Schmitt's depiction of *nomoi*. It will be helpful to look at what he calls the "second *nomos* of the earth":

The first *nomos* of the earth was destroyed about 500 years ago, when the great oceans of the world were opened up. The earth was circumnavigated; America, a completely new, unknown, not even suspected continent was discovered. A second *nomos* of the earth arose from such discoveries of land and sea. *The discoveries were not invited. They were made without visas issued by the discovered peoples. The discoverers were Europeans, who appropriated, divided, and utilized the planet.* Thus the second *nomos* of the earth became Eurocentric. The newly discovered continent of America first was utilized in the form of colonies. The Asian landmasses could not be appropriated in the same way. The Eurocentric structure of *nomos* extended only partially, as open land-appropriation, and otherwise in the form of protectorates, leases, trade agreements, and spheres of interest; in

short, in more elastic forms of utilization. Only in the 19th century did the land-appropriating European power divide up Africa (Schmitt 2003:352; emphasis added).

You may be getting the picture when you read about the emergence of the “second *nomos*.” Schmitt’s trick is the following: First he tells us that there were many *nomoi* of the earth. That is what I was talking about above, in the examples of “mapping territories,” in which Ptolemy and Ortelius used one kind of “mapping” that is very different than the one practiced by Incas, Aztecs, Chinese, or Western Christians.

With regard to the notion that “The first *nomos* of the earth was destroyed”: First, one can contend today that no *nomos* of the earth was destroyed, as we can see for instance in the resurgence of Indigenous cosmologies contravening the dictates of the legacy of Western Christian cosmology. The resurgence of Islam is one example, and Chinese “nationalism” overcoming and absorbing Western Marxism and Western neoliberalism is another. No doubt, the impact of what Schmitt calls the “second *nomos*,” and what I will render instead in terms of the Western Christian *nomos*, was not the second but was just one of many—but it was the one that began to consolidate, expand, and become successful (for a while at least) in convincing people worldwide that the world was indeed as the Western scholars, politicians, geographers, scientists, social scientists, and so on (and Schmitt) were telling us it was.

Second, we know that by the time Schmitt published his book in 1950, a Mexican philosopher and historian of Irish descent, Edmundo O’Gorman, was arguing that America had not been “discovered,” since there was no such entity as America to be discovered. America indeed was a European invention. Here we not only have two interpretations of “the same set of events,” we have two sets of interpretive rules by which to understand “historical evidence.” Schmitt was following the rules of reasoning of the European legacies and tradition. That is, he was following the “tradition of modernity.” O’Gorman (1957) was delinking from that tradition. He was saying, indeed, those rules are not convenient for me. Let’s use something else.

Which one is true? Both. Accepting that both are true points us toward the enunciation rather than the enunciated. Which one is the true one is a question that more or less asks which one corresponds better to the “facts or the evidence.” That is, it is a question that assumes the principles of the correspondence theory of truth. Or, we can use the coherence theory of truth and ask which one is more coherent. Both are in my understanding extremely coherent. The problem is not coherence or correspondence, but the assumptions and the premises each one starts from.

You should notice, in passing, that Schmitt is thinking from the very heart of imperial Europe—a superb thinker no doubt, and someone who is aware of what Eurocentrism means. His body and mind are embedded in both the cultural and familiar history and the intellectual history. However, his awareness does not guarantee that his interpretation is not reproducing that recognized Eurocentrism, and that doesn’t seem to bother him.

What is Schmitt's trick? I comment here on his quotations to make them more transparent and understandable. Schmitt subsumes the pluri-versality of the first nomos into one, the universal. Then he can explain that the "second" nomos overcame the first, when in reality the "first" nomoi were many, not one.

GLOBAL LINEAR THINKING AND THE BIO-, CHRONO-, AND GEOGRAPHIC FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL DIFFERENCES

Now I present the story from the other side of the line, so to speak. One of the unintended consequences of global linear thinking was the emergence of decolonial thinking. And decolonial thinking came up with a different story.

What are the consequences of this move for the Global South and world dis/order? Enormous, as you can imagine. From the perspective of the receiving end (e.g., the non-Western world), Western Civilization was built on three major conceptual pillars:

1. The chronological construction of the Middle Ages in the internal history of Europe (colonization of time). The Renaissance was precisely the moment in which, coming out of the "Dark Ages," Europeans were reborn in the cradle of Greece and Rome;
2. The spatial construction of the "barbarians," new and old. The "new" barbarians were a compound of Moors and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, and Indians and enslaved blacks (the sons of Ham transported to the New World). Those were the "external barbarians." The "internal barbarians," as defined by the Catholic South, were the Lutherans and Calvinists in the north. The Indians and blacks were the external colonial others; Jews, the internal colonial others; Moors, the external imperial others; and Lutherans and Calvinists, the internal imperial others. The seeds of Orientalism were already planted, as well as those of the south of Europe, once discourse and knowledge control came into the hands of the northern nations (especially England, Germany, and France).
3. The racialization of the planet compounded the racialization of people. Global linear thinking partitioned the world according to European needs and, by the same token, reinforced the distinction between Western and non-Western civilizations and cultures.

Global linear thinking, as Schmitt himself makes clear, was the way in which Europe divided and appropriated the planet and established a hierarchy of people. International treaties and laws took care of the legal aspect of the appropriation in two ways: legality among European imperial powers and legality of European imperial nations vis-à-vis the land expropriated in non-European territories.

Schmitt mentioned that Asia couldn't be appropriated in the same way that America and Africa were. China was never colonized, and even India

was colonized primarily in terms of controlling authority and commerce, and introducing Western education and the English language, but unlike Africa, Asia was not partitioned. And the massive expanse of Russia was never appropriated during the reign of the Russian czars/emperors, and even less so during the period of the Soviet Union.

But Asia was “epistemically” appropriated: Europeans built knowledge about Asia and Asians, whereas Asians did not care much about Europe, at least not until the Dutch and British began to invade it commercially toward the end of the seventeenth and through the eighteenth centuries, and until the wake-up call that England (with the assistance of the United States) gave to China in 1848 with the Opium War. However, the incorporation and epistemic appropriation (appropriation by knowing and telling how Asia and Asians are) of Asia into the European imaginary and sensibilities started with the arrival of the Jesuits in 1582 and continued with the narratives and engravings of Theodore de Bry (1590–1594), “mapping” (literally and metaphorically) America (the portion that was known by the British as Virginia, and South and North Carolina), Indias Occidentales (South America, including Mexico, and the Caribbean), and Indias Orientales (the Moluccas and the Philippines) (de Bry 1590–1634).¹

A west-east division, not north-south, has been the foundation of the modern/colonial world, or Western Civilization, since 1500. Global linear thinking began with the Tordesilla Treaty (1494) when the Pope divided the earth and gave the trans-Atlantic sphere to the Spanish and Portuguese, and it was compounded by the Sargasso Treaty (1542), which established the same division in the Pacific: the Indias Orientales were born (Figure 5). When the west-east division matured, it became “Orientalism.” In other words, the invention of Indias Orientales marked the theological division of the modern/colonial world, while Orientalism is the secular and philological eighteenth-century version, developed after the cartographic lines of possessions had already been drawn.

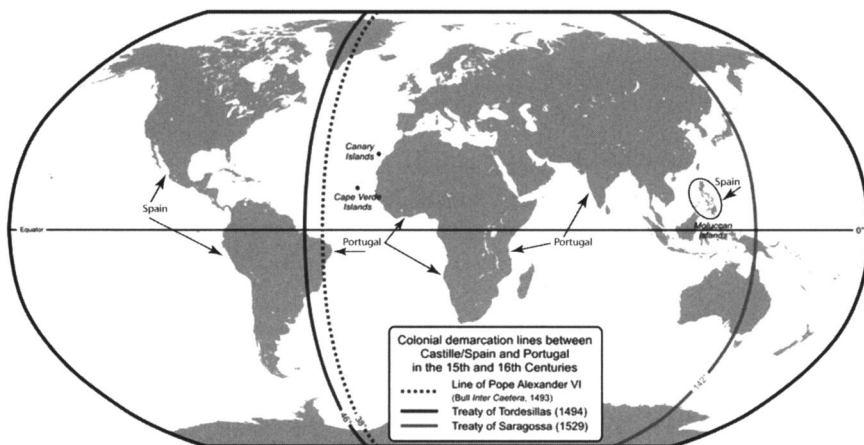


Figure 5. Map showing the division of the world after the Treaties of Tordesillas and Saragossa.

JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH
**POSSIBLE FUTURES AFTER THE COLLAPSE
OF THE “SECOND” NOMOS**

My initial question was, “How did we get here?”—since the emergence of the youngest civilization on the planet, Western Civilization. My next question is, How do we get out of here? My answer to this question is: I do not know.

But first let’s talk more about the collapse of the “second nomos.” The Eurocentric nomos, as Schmitt properly calls it, lasted from 1500 to 1945, although according to Schmitt it was “destroyed” during WWI. The interwar period was the period of agony, so to speak. Here is Schmitt:

As a result of World War I, this Eurocentric *nomos* of the earth was destroyed. Today [1974], the world in which we live is divided into two parts, East and West, which confront each other in a cold war and, occasionally, also in hot wars. That is the present division of the earth. Above all, East and West are geographical concepts. In terms of the planet, they are also fluid and indeterminate concepts. The earth has two poles—North and South; it has no East or West poles. In relation to Europe, America is the West; in relation to America, China and Russia are the West. In relation to China and Russia, Europe is again the West. In purely geographical terms, it is impossible to find either an established border or a declaration of mutual enmity. But behind the geographical antithesis, a deeper and more elemental antithesis is visible. It is enough to look at a globe to see that what today we call the East is an enormous land mass. By contrast, the reaches of the western half of the earth are covered by the world’s oceans—the Atlantic and the Pacific. Consequently, behind the antithesis of East and West is the deeper antithesis of a continental and a maritime world—the antithesis of land and sea (Schmitt 2003:353).

Several interesting observations are apparent here, resulting from the self-narcotizing of histories told from a Western perspective. The first is that before the magnetic compass (a Chinese invention ca. 221–201 BC) was used for Western navigation, only two geographic extremes existed: where the sun rises (the “orient,” because it guides your own “orientation”) and where it sets. These cardinal directions were later established as East and West, once the use of the magnetic compass remapped the “orientation” points and placed the North on top and the South at the bottom. That reorientation was not followed by Islamic navigators; if it had been, the South would not appear on top, as it does in the famous Moroccan cartographer Al-Idrisi’s map (1154) (Figure 6).

The second evidence of self-induced obliviousness comes from the lack of recognition of his locus of enunciation. Although Schmitt acknowledges that the second nomos of the earth is Eurocentered, he fails to recognize that he is himself speaking from a locus of enunciation whose conditions have been created by the very nomos he is describing. And it is only from his locus of enunciation, where knowledge is being created, that the identity of what is West and what is East can be established. If we step back, delink from his game, and disobey the epistemic



Figure 6. Al-Idrisi's world map. The Arabian Peninsula is in the middle, with the Red Sea to the right and the Persian Gulf to the left of Arabia. Africa is on top, the Iberian Peninsula is on the lower right, and the rest of Europe and Asia are on the left.

rules Schmitt takes as a matter of fact, we can unveil the arbitrariness of what is being delivered to us as the way the world is. This ambiguity as seen in Schmitt's work is common to the history of European thought, at least between 1500 and 2000. And it may be difficult for the new generation of European thinkers to overcome that legacy.

With these basic blind spots, let's review how the future, based on the history of the nomos, may look:

1. The first of possible futures and the simplest one, in Schmitt's opinion, would be that one of the two partners in the present global confrontation would be victorious (Schmitt 2003). And indeed it almost looked like that around 1990, when Fukuyama (e.g., 1992) chanted the end-of-history anthem.

2. The second possibility was to maintain the balance set by the previous nomos—that is, the “second” nomos, the one set up and transformed from 1500 to 1945. If this is possible, Schmitt observed, “that would mean that England’s former domination of the oceans [would] be expanded to a joint domination of sea and air, which only the United States is capable of doing. America is, so to speak, the greater island that could administer and guarantee the balance of the rest of the World” (Schmitt 2003). And indeed that was the case until 2001, as the US had taken up the torch and kept Westernization ongoing.
3. The third possibility for Schmitt was based on the concept of balance—no longer a balance controlled by a hegemonic power, but a “hegemonic” combination of several independent Grossräume or blocs could constitute a balance, and thereby could precipitate a new order of the earth (Schmitt 2003:353).

I think we are closer to scenario 3, but some radical changes began to take place at the end of the twentieth century. To address those changes I will change the historical framework. Instead of focusing on global linear thinking and the making and transformation of the second nomos of the Earth, the Eurocentered one, I will focus on the historical scenario of decolonial thinking and the making and transformations of the colonial matrix of power.

THE COLONIAL MATRIX OF POWER: A DECOLONIAL HISTORY OF HOW THE WORLD LOOKS FROM THE RECEIVING END

In a very simplified version, from the other side of global boundaries traced by European powers and described by Schmitt, the world since 1500 looks like the emergence of the colonial matrix of power (Figure 7).

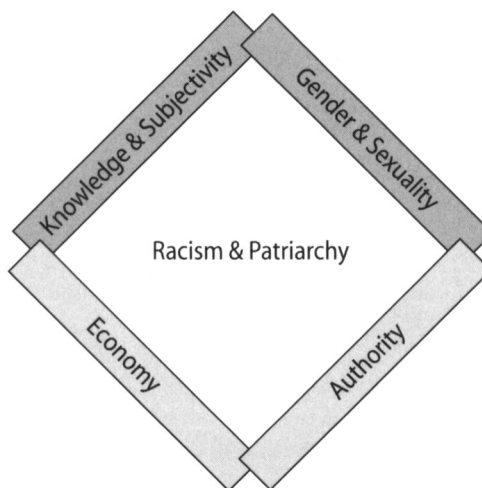


Figure 7. The colonial matrix of power (reproduced from Gržinić 2009 by permission).

Two levels are under consideration here. One is the level of the enunciation. Christian theology and secular philosophy and sciences constitute one of the pillars of the enunciation in establishing the principles and criteria of knowing (what shall be known, how it shall be known, why it shall be known) and in devaluing and ruling out principles and criteria of knowing that do not match Western ones. Christianity and “purity of blood,” secular “whiteness,” and both theological and secular “patriarchy” were established as the point of reference to rank both the population of the planet and the different criteria for knowing and understanding. “Where is nature and the environment?” is a common question at this point. It is in the control of economy and authority (e.g., the refusal of the G7 + Russia to agree to reduce the devastating effects resulting from their competition to produce more commodities at the expense of all life on the planet, including those who are refusing to stop at the edge of the precipice). The question of “nature and the environment” is basically an epistemic question prompted by Western separation between “human and culture” and “animals and nature.”²² Neither Judaism nor Islamism make that distinction with such emphasis, nor do the world “religions” (classified as such by Western knowers) that are not “religions of the book.”

The second level is of the enunciated. Although the colonial matrix of power is a complex structure in which any single element (say, racism or economy) impinges on and at the same time is overdetermined by all the rest (authority, knowledge, subjectivity, gender and sexuality), what matters in this simplified version is to identify the major spheres in which the colonial power was established (economy, authority, knowledge and subjectivity, and gender and sexuality). It is important to keep in mind that all these levels are interrelated, and any action on or understanding of one of them (whether to maintain coloniality or to act decolonially) encroaches on all the others. Another way of understanding the enunciation is to place, at the center, “theology/secular philosophy,” which are the disciplines upon which racism has been founded, and “man/patriarchy,” in the sense not only that “racism” has been predicated on the basis of an ideal Man that equals Humanity and implies masculinity as the norm, but also that Man is the model of Humanity as distinguished from Nature. That encroachment is perhaps the main factor that gives its force to the colonial matrix of power. As with the unconscious in the writings of Freud or surplus value in those of Marx, coloniality (or the colonial matrix of power) is invisible. What we “see” and “hear” is the rhetoric of modernity, which is, basically, the history of the “progress of history.”

What I am proposing here is the “unseen history”—the history of coloniality hidden under or behind the history of modernity (e.g., the history of the second *nomos*).

Our understanding of the present and forecast for the future would differ according to whether we see the past through the lenses of global linear thinking or through those of the colonial matrix of power. I briefly describe these four secular trajectories and a fifth one that attempts to overcome the divide between theology and secularism. I call this “the spiritual option.”

1. Re-Westernization
2. De-Westernization
3. The reorientation of the left
4. The decolonial option
5. The spiritual option

Of course, nothing is singular. Each trajectory is diversified. But, as with Christianity or Islam, also very diverse, something keeps each identity together and, at the same time, is necessary to maintain the difference.

From the perspective of decolonial thinking (and the history of modernity/coloniality), instead of global linear thinking (and the imperial history of the nomos of the earth), the global order is moving in five simultaneous mainstream trajectories, although some of course are more mainstream than others. The five trajectories could be characterized by the hegemonic struggle for the control of the colonial matrix of power. This is the first time in the history of the West that the colonial matrix, which was created by and transformed and maintained by the West, is slipping out of Western hands. The struggle is no longer between East and West but between two major projects: re-Westernization (which is Obama's mission and the concern of those in the United States who feel that they are losing their grasp on world leadership—that is, that the control of the colonial matrix is getting out of hand) and de-Westernization (the trajectory mainly being led by East Asia [China, Japan] and seconded by Southeast Asia—Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia). Western Christians are engaged in continuing Christian Westernization, running parallel to the secular efforts in the domain of the secular control of authority (e.g., international relations).

The most visible aspects of these two trajectories (re- and de-Westernization) spring from the negotiations and friendly tensions between China and the United States. Political analysts and journalists tend to make an analogy with the Cold War, but there are two aspects to keep in mind when comparing current Sino-US relations with the Cold War scenario. Re-Westernization and de-Westernization are both supported by the “capitalist economy.” The difference is that re-Westernization promotes free enterprise and competition, whereas de-Westernization typically uses state regulation in the competition with the West. Both have their pros and cons. The point here, however, is not to evaluate them, but to stress that the disputes are actually *over control of the colonial matrix of power at the level of authority and knowledge*. This is the first time in five hundred years that the colonial matrix of power has begun to escape Western control and management. Where would you place the “Global South” in this scenario?

Re-Westernization is one of the goals or missions, if not of Obama's administration, at least certainly of Obama himself. The Bush administration brought an end to half a century of US success in taking up the torch and carrying on a process of Westernization that started in the sixteenth century: the spread of Christianity in Indias Occidentales was just that. After the decline of Spain and Portugal, primarily England and France took over, and Germany contributed with its strong world of ideas and literature. After World War II the torch was taken up by the United States, which started with a project of development and

modernization and building an image of America through film and television that incited the envy of the world. The Bush administration successfully ended that trajectory and managed to turn most of the world against the United States. Obama's mission in foreign policy is to rebuild that image and—a more difficult task—to regain the global leadership that obviously has weakened in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

But times have changed. Re-Westernization no longer has an unrestricted playing field. Not only has China become an economic power, but also in East and Southeast Asia, de-Westernization is on the move. (Southeast Asia, however, may or may not be part of the Global South.) China has taken a strong position confronting the United States on many issues, such as monetary valuation, trade imbalance, and the Dalai Lama's visit to Washington DC in February 2010. Those who only read Western newspapers or watch the mainstream TV channels are likely to be missing the meaning of this confrontation, the conflict of two very different missions, re-Westernization and de-Westernization.

What does de-Westernization consist of? First, it is not anti-Occidentalism. That stage has been passed, which doesn't mean that anti-Western manifestations will stop. It means that that impulse has given rise to a different kind of mission. Furthermore, both trajectories accept capitalist economics and development as a road toward the future, but they are far apart in terms of their vision of the future. Although the Cold War is over, the stage is still set in terms of East versus West. But during the Cold War one team was socialist/communist and the other was liberal/capitalist. Now both teams are capitalist, although formed in and from different local histories. The United States and Europe share a common history. Early on, and for a short time, the United States experienced colonialism, contrary to the European imperial past; nevertheless, Western Europe (the G3: England, Germany, France) and the US have become the heart of the West. The East (China, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia) have different memories inscribed in their archives and on the skin of their people; ancient Greece and Rome are not as meaningful to them as they are to the British, French, German, and US Americans, notwithstanding the geographic distance of the last from the cradle of Western Civilization.

To understand what is at stake in de-Westernization, compare Kishore Mahbubani (e.g., 2008) with Carl Schmitt. And keep in mind that Mahbubani is not a Maoist or any equivalent version of the ex-Third World left, but a former diplomat for Singapore and Dean and Professor in the Practice of Policy at the Lee Kwan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore's National University. Let's listen to what the situation is for Mahbubani:

At the height of Western power, when Western influence extended into virtually every corner of the world, the West essentially wrapped the globe with several layers of Western influence. The enormity of Western power made the world believe that there was only one way forward. . . .

The unraveling of Western influence is a complex process. It has many different strands. The West has to understand that this is the major historical trend of our time, that it defines our era. . . .

The rest of the world has moved on. A steady de-legitimization of Western power and influence is underway. . . .

The process of de-Westernization is much deeper than the story of anti-Americanism. . . . Many in the West want to believe that this bout of anti-Americanism is just a passing phase caused by the hash and insensitive policies of one administration. When the Bush administration leaves, all will change, and the world will go back to loving America. The West will be revered again.

This is a mirage. The mindsets of the largest population within Asia—Chinese, the Muslims and the Indians—have been changed irrevocably. Where once they may have happily borrowed Western lenses and Western cultural perspectives to look at the world, now, with growing cultural self-confidence, their perceptions are growing further and further apart (Mahbubani 2008:131).

It was not the Russian Revolution but de-Westernization that put an end to Western hegemony (“put an end to” in the sense that once consciousness is raised, there is no return). De-Westernization brings together in a coherent and powerful discourse a reinscription of Confucianism managing (so to speak) of both neoliberalism and neomarxism (Bell 2009). Confucianism is being articulated in a nationalist ideology. This should not come as a surprise, for that is precisely what the United States (what is “national defense” if not an ideological discourse?) and the European Union (involving tensions between the former nation-state nationalism and the new “EU nationalism”) are doing: refurbishing nationalist ideologies after the end of the Cold War. China’s confidence in international affairs, which the Western press has not failed to notice, is not just bravado based on their economic success, but a careful management of their de-Westernizing mission. De-Westernizing arguments are clear in their assertions that violations of human rights are not confined to China but also occur in Western democracy. And that confusing democracy with allowing people to vote and enabling Wall Street bankers’ imaginations and computer models to run free, solely to increase wealth and without anticipating the consequences, is no better than a centralized, single-party government and a state-run economy.

In the West, and in areas of Western influence in the ex-Third World, a process of reorientation of the left has occurred after the fall of the Soviet Union. I see several major trajectories of these reorientations:

Chronologically, the first trajectory of this reorientation of the left has two sub-trajectories, both prompted by significant events of the early twenty-first century. The first event, 9/11, awakened an interest among the diverse Marxist left: the need to establish dialogue with the Islamic world (Buck-Morss 2003). The second event was the creation of the World Social Forum, which was conceived as a new way of making politics. It opened up to a new constituency—no longer the proletariat mutated into the multitude, but to the political society at large, or

what are called global social movements confronting every aspect of the colonial matrix of power (Santos 2004).

The second reorientation of the left is taking place in the ex-Third World, now also called the Global South. The most relevant manifestation at this point is taking place in Bolivia, although much talk has been evolving on the Latin American “turn to the left” (e.g., Mignolo and Escobar 2009). In the Andean region of South America, the reorientation of the left entered into conflict with “Indianismo.” Indianismo and Marxism are seen as two “revolutionary rationales,” albeit in tension.³ One of the distinctive features of the reorientation of the left here is its goodwill toward Indianismo and the failure to overcome the coloniality of knowledge and of being that has established the enduring colonial difference between the “white” population (of all persuasions) and the “brown” population.

The next trajectory I call decoloniality, which is different from the process of decolonization that took place during the Cold War. Decolonization at that time was a Third World phenomenon, mainly in Asia and Africa. The main goal of decolonization was “Third World nationalism”: to send imperial institutions and agents back home and to build sovereign nation-states. The main goals of today’s decolonial projects are not the same. The mission of decoloniality since the end of the Cold War, amidst the changing trajectories of the world order (re-Westernization, de-Westernization, reorientation of the left), emphasizes the decolonization of knowledge and of being and assumes that the way out is to unlink from the colonial matrix of power. In this sense, delinking from it means to change the terms of the conversation, not just the content. By this I mean building future paths in which life will be primary and institutions at its service rather than the other way around. Re-Westernization and de-Westernization have this in common: both maintain a type of economy in which life is subservient to economic growth and political power. Decoloniality operates instead at the level of content.

And the final orientation, “the spiritual option,” is coming not from established and institutional religions but from what I describe as “the decolonization of religions and the liberation of spirituality.”⁵ Expressions of these orientations are found among the so-called religious formations in the New World of enslaved Africans and runaway slaves. Voodoo in the French colonies, Santería in the Spanish colonies, Candomblé in the Portuguese colonies, and Rastafarians in the British colonies are potent expressions of decolonizing religions and liberating spirituality. Today, similar efforts are found in artistic installations and performances by Chicana artists and among black and Latino/a hip-hop artists (Perez 2007; Tinker 2004).

WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND THE DECOLONIAL

The Global South has two sets of meaning, depending on where the enunciation is located. But neither of the two meanings has much to do with the equator. If you consider the Global South to be constituted of countries south of the equator, and that means a set of underdeveloped and emerging economies, then most likely you are buying into the enunciation of the Global North and into believing in

“objectivity without parenthesis”: what is said (and it is said by institutions and media in the North) corresponds to reality. But if the enunciation is located in the Global South, then the term “Global South” refers to epistemic places where global futures are being forged by delinking from the colonial matrix of power. These are processes; there is no decolonial architectural plan that will be passed onto the builders so the blueprint will materialize into a brick and stone building. The decolonial is an option, not a mission.

Furthermore, the Global South is not a geographic location; rather it is a metaphor that indicates regions of the world at the receiving end of globalization and suffering the consequences. Thus, the Global South can include portions of the United States and Russia (e.g., the Caucasus), two countries located in the Global North, with Russia even hanging around the G7 occasionally to form the G8. And conversely, the Global North can be in the south. Southern Arabia, for example, and the Arab Emirates are part of both the Global South (emerging economies) and the Global North (political alliances with imperial countries).

For Samuel Huntington, of *Clash of Civilizations* fame (1996), after the end of the Soviet Union, Russia became part of the West, and being part of the West takes you out of the Global South, even if you are as far south as Chile or Argentina. And, of course, Australia and New Zealand.

We can go on and on playing this game. The point is this: Global futures are being fought in the dispute over the colonial matrix of power in the Global North and the Global South, in the East and the West, and the emphasis varies in each of the five trajectories. While re-Westernization is attempting to maintain its control, de-Westernization disputes the control of authority and knowledge and, consequently, the emancipation from Western racism and from Western totalitarian control of knowledge. The various reorientations of the left are focusing basically on the control of authority in order to change economic principles from liberalism (and neoliberalism) to socialism and communism (in the sense of the commons, not in the sense of Stalinism). The decolonial option’s main target is the dispute of the control of the enunciation, for it is from there that the colonial matrix can be eroded and that another world would be made possible. The spiritual option focuses mainly at the level of subjectivity and the decoloniality of being by means of the politics or religious and aesthetics *altarities* (the fusion of altar and alter), as Laura Pérez (2007) has it.

In sum, re-Westernization means that those who created the colonial matrix of power want to keep on controlling and managing it. De-Westernization means that, for new players in the game (China, Japan, India, Singapore, Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, and some Middle Eastern countries that have not yet pronounced their goals clearly), the colonial matrix is under dispute. What put these countries and civilizations in a condition to dispute the management of the colonial matrix was the way they played according to the rules established by the West and “developed” their economies to the point of taking their destiny into their own hands.

The reorientation of the left means on the one hand that the left, which lost its Jerusalem (i.e., the Soviet Union), doesn’t have a sacred text to follow and, therefore, is unfolding in different directions, three of which I mentioned above.

The left will continue to generate illuminating critiques of capitalist economy, and most likely—as long as it continues to have socialism/communism and the commons in the European genealogy of thought—will fall short of establishing fruitful cooperation with progressive forces of the non-Western world (as we see today in Bolivia and as is explicit in García Linera's article on Indianismo and Marxism).

The Global South, whether north or south of the equator, has been appropriated by builders of decolonial worlds.⁶ Decoloniality is a trajectory that has existed since the sixteenth century. One of the unintended consequences of global linear thinking was to engender decolonial thinking. Decolonial thinking has something in common with both de-Westernization and the various reorientations of the left, although it differs from both of them as well. With de-Westernization it shares the detachment from Western hegemony and its implicit racism. The Chinese and Japanese know they are “yellow,” and Muslims know that they are religious, and in the case of the Arab Middle East their “Arabian” ethnicity has been racialized in terms of their language and their nationality, not only their religion. However, the main difference lies in the acceptance of the principle that legitimizes capitalist economy in one case (development) and the critique and movement to delink, in the other.

The spiritual option means that “religions” as we know them today are an option (or a type of option), and not the “truth without parenthesis” that everyone must endorse at the risk of losing their salvation. As well, the spiritual option as argued by Native Americans makes us rethink the relationships between land and spirituality and, consequently, opens up to decolonization the capitalist belief that land is most importantly related to profit and not to life (Charleson 1998; Tinker 2004). And it means also that “spirituality” cannot be contained without the institutional molds of religious institutions and creeds or with the secular aesthetics molds. In the eighteenth century, when Christian theology lost the battle against the secularists and, by the same token, the primacy of the control of subjectivity, the secularists invented “world religions” as an object of study and “aesthetics” as the new norm for the control of subjectivities. Art and literature since then have walked the thin line between the official and the dissident artists and writers. However, aesthetics became the secular creed for the formation of the modern subject.

The decolonial and the spiritual options are, in the last analysis, the manifestations of subjects and loci of enunciations in/of the Global South. The “Global South” is not a geographic part of the planet, but the places on the planet that endured the experience of coloniality—that suffered, and still suffer, the consequences of the colonial wound (e.g., humiliation, racism, genderism, in brief, the indignity of being considered lesser humans), and from that experience the spiritual and decolonial options are contributing to build a non-imperialist and non-capitalist world. The struggle for global justice is the claim and contribution from the Global South, open of course to all those who would like to adhere to the options from the Global North. That is the scenario of the future world dis/order: it has to be unlearned in order to relearn how to turn the dominant civilization of death toward a civilization of life.

NOTES

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1. In relation to this argument, see my forthcoming (2011) article on “Crossing Gazes and the Silence of the Indians: Theodore de Bry and Guaman Poma de Ayala.”

2. One example among many is provided by Rodolfo Kusch’s analysis of Andean (Quechua/Aymara) knowing/knowledge—*knowledge* refers to the enunciated; *knowing* refers to the enunciation. After a careful exploration of the Aymara’s way of knowing, Kusch concludes that

Indigenous knowledge is not therefore a “why” knowledge, or a knowledge of causes, but rather a “how” knowledge, or a knowledge of modalities. It is also not knowledge on call that can be closed up or filed away, and even less knowledge alienated from a subject. Rather, it demands the commitment of the subject who handles or manipulates it. In indigenous thinking knowledge is closely related to ritual (2010:32).

Kusch’s understanding of the Aymara’s thinking coincides with Humberto Maturana’s (1997) unveiling of the totalitarian bent in Western epistemology. Maturana convincingly shows that “objectivity” is an “epistemology without parenthesis” that established, as the rules of “truth,” correspondence with a supposed reality independent of the knower. Thus, in this epistemology the controller of the epistemic rules coerces those who do not have control to comply with the rules. In contrast, in an “epistemology in parenthesis,” “truth” is established within the scientific or academic community that at the same time disputes the truth establishing the rules of the game. Consequently, there are as many truths as there are coded rules and, therefore, knowing and knowledge. Epistemology in parenthesis predicates that knowledge is always “how” knowledge rather than “why” (causes) or “what” (reality or phenomena independent of the subject).

3. The expression belongs to the vice president of Bolivia, the creole Alvaro García Linera (2008: in the original Spanish, “Indianismo y Marxismo: El desencuentro de dos razones revolucionarias” [Indians and Marxism: The mismatch of two revolutionary rationales]). There is general agreement among Aymara and Quechua intellectuals about “el desencuentro,” although Indianismo is not necessarily “una razón revolucionaria” (see note 4). Although Fausto Reinaga announced “la revolución India” in 1969, that vision has changed among the subsequent generations of Indigenous intellectuals. From their point of view, Marxism is still part of Western Civilization and therefore unable to fully endorse (Marxism is supporting not endorsing) Indigenous ways of thinking and doing.

4. Alvaro García Linera (2008). The first mismatch is indicated in the title itself: Why one would assume, except for those who believe that what is true for me is true for all, that Indianismo’s main goal is “revolution” and that “revolution” is understood in the same terms as it is understood in the Marxist genealogy of thought? All current debates around *sumak kawsay* (good living, or the good life) indicate that the goal of Indianismo is something that is not yet understood by the left of the Global South.

5. A recent panel at Duke University (March 19, 2010, Program in Latino/a Studies in the Global South, with the participation of Rosa Clemente, Mark Anthony Neal, and Raquel Z. Rivera) on “Los sueños de los fantasmas que marchan” (The liberation dreams of an unseen army) brought together the decolonization of religion and the liberation of spirituality. In an article titled “The Politics of God,” Mark Lilla (2007) said: “After

centuries of strife the West has learned to separate religion and politics—to establish the legitimacy of its leaders without referring to divine command. There is little reason to expect that the rest of the world—the Islamic world in particular—will follow.” Lilla is right: the separation of religion and politics is a Western problem, not one for the rest of the world. And not only Islam; China is bringing Confucianism back into the sphere of the state, and youngsters around the world are decolonizing religion and liberating the politics of spirituality. This is also part of the Global South and the world (re)ordering.

6. A case in point, among many, is the recent edited volume *Asking, We Walk: The South as New Political Imaginary* (Kumar 2007). What I am saying here is already incorporated in the title of the book, one that neither most US university presses nor many European presses would be enthusiastic about publishing (except perhaps for dissenters, nationals, and migrants who identify with “the South” of Europe).

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