

Part Two

CHAPTER TWO

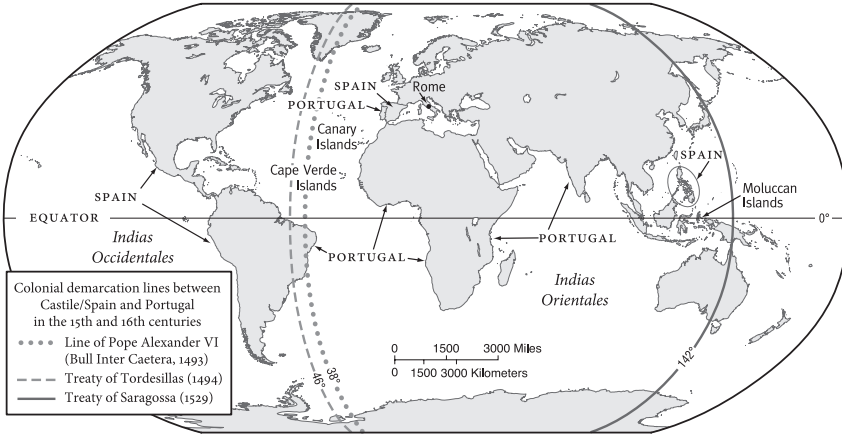
I Am Where I Do

Remapping the Order of Knowing

Colonialism is the very base and structure of the West Indian's cultural awareness. . . . I am not so much interested in what the West Indian writer has brought to the English language; for English is no longer the exclusive language of the men who live in England. That stopped a long time ago; and it is today, among other things, a West Indian language. What the West Indians do with it is their own business. . . . A more important consideration is what the West Indian novelist has brought to the West Indies. That is the real question; and its answer can be the beginning of an attempt to grapple with that colonial structure of awareness which has determined West Indian values (emphasis added).

GEORGE LAMMING, "The Occasion for Speaking"

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER ended with a description of possible future scenarios described in five trajectories, building on Carl Schmitt's predictions—during the Cold War—on the future world order. His predictions were derived from his story—in his words—of the second nomos of the earth. The second nomos is, from a decolonial perspective, the nomos of modernity or better yet of modernity/coloniality. This chapter takes Schmitt's story in a different direction: on the one hand, it looks at the type of decolonial responses that global linear thinking elicited and, on the other, it insists on both the geo-historical and bio-graphical foundations of knowledge in the spectrum of modernity/coloniality. By the spectrum of modernity/coloniality I mean, for instance, that *there is no* ontological reality such as modernity or tradition. Modernity



Map 2 The Treaties of Tordesillas and Saragossa by simply dividing and appropriating the globe by the Pope's dictate, set the historical foundations of global linear thinking, the pillars of Western civilization, and the imperial march of modernity and coloniality. After W. Mignolo, published with permission of the *Journal of Anthropological Research* 67, no. 2 (2011): 175.

and tradition are *both Western and modern concepts* by means of which “West” and “modernity” became the very definition of the enunciation that invented “tradition” and the “Orient.” This chapter sets up the scenario through Schmitt’s narratives and then invites decolonial characters who are dealing with the consequences of global linear thinking to sit at the table and enter in dialogue.

Global Linear Thinking and Global Decolonial Thinking

An unintended consequence of global linear thinking was the coming into being of decolonial thinking. Global linear thinking (one of the basic historical foundations of international law and Westernization) describes—in Carl Schmitt’s conceptualization of history—the imperial partition of the world since the sixteenth century.¹ From the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), by which Pope Alexander VI created an imaginary line that divided the Atlantic from north to south and settled the dispute between Spain and Portugal for the possessions of the New World and the Treaty of Saragossa (1529) that divided Indias Orientales among the same emerging empires, until the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, when the scramble for Africa among Western European states led toward the First

World War, global linear thinking mapped not only the land and waters of the planet, but also the minds.

Schmitt's analytical narrative of global linear thinking and international law has several important consequences for the imperial foundations of the (modern/colonial) world order and the imperial foundation of knowledge. The authority of the pope to divide the planet and to offer it to Spanish and Portuguese monarchs was indeed an act of sovereign authority, not only political but epistemic. For the act of tracing a line dividing the Atlantic means that there is an epistemic sovereign: God has the knowledge backing up the legality of the decision, and He is also in control of the rules and acts of knowing. Although by the mid-sixteenth century the authority of the pope and the monarchs began to be disputed by a group of legal theologians in Salamanca, who called into question the limits of divine and natural law (and of course of divine and natural knowing) in favor of human law (which opened up the doors toward the secular move we encounter in the eighteenth century), the fact remains that global linear thinking, as Schmitt himself specifies in the subtitle of his book, goes hand in hand with the origin of international law. I underline this point: the origin of international law lies in the constitution of the modern/colonial world and of Western civilization.

The new *nomos* of the earth, in Schmitt's own formulation, was based, therefore, in the pontifical partition of the earth and international law as the necessary consequence: who has the right indeed, and what are those rights that Europeans may have over non-European lands and people? A second consequence after the partition and the origin of international law was the depiction of the planet on the world map of which Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) remains the paradigmatic example²—never before Ortelius had the planet Earth been seen from “above,” and the sea and landmasses seen at a glance. But above all, the main issue is not that the observer observes the planet from above, but that the observer is “above” the earth and can map the world with the Atlantic, not the Pacific, at its center. The *new nomos* of the earth comes with a *new observer and a new epistemic foundation*. This sense of “newness” will become one of the anchors of all rhetoric of modernity, from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first. The Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez described it as the hubris of the zero point.³ This second consequence sets the stage for the imperial control and colonization of knowledge and of being.

The co-existence of diverse ways of producing and transmitting knowledge is eliminated because now all forms of human knowledge are ordered on an epistemological scale from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilization, from the community to the individual, from the orient to occident. . . . By way of this strategy, scientific thought positions itself as the only valid form of producing knowledge, and Europe acquires an epistemological hegemony over all the other cultures of the world.⁴

Basically, zero point epistemology is the ultimate grounding of knowledge, which paradoxically is ungrounded, or grounded neither in geo-historical location nor in bio-graphical configurations of the bodies. The geopolitical and bio-graphic politics (e.g., body-politics, not bio-politics) of knowledge is hidden in the transparency and the universality of the zero point. It is grounding without grounding; it is in the mind and not in the brain and in the heart. Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time and/or in the order of myth, legend, folklore, local knowledge, and the like. Since the zero point is always in the present of time and the center of space, it hides its own local knowledge universally projected. Its imperialism consists precisely in hiding its locality, its geo-historical body location, and in assuming to be universal and thus managing the universality to which everyone has to submit.

The zero point is the site of observation from which the epistemic colonial differences and the epistemic imperial differences are mapped out. Latin absorbed and recast knowledges that were either translated from Greek to Arabic or that were cast in the Arabo-Islamic tradition. While of course Arabic remained crucial locally, it lost its global influence once that modern/European language—derived from Greek and Latin—became the language of sustainable knowledge, disavowing the epistemic insights of non-European languages. Being where one thinks has become since then a fundamental concern of those who have been mapped out by the colonial and imperial differences and, therefore, relegated to a second or third place in the global epistemic order. “I am where I think” sets the stage for epistemic affirmations that have been disavowed. At the same time, it creates a shift in the geography of reason for the affirmation “I am where I think.” From the perspective of the epistemically disavowed colonial subjects (now

migrants in Western Europe and the United States), the affirmation implies “And you too,” addressed to believers in the epistemology of the zero point. In other words, “we all are where we think,” but only the European system of knowledge was built on the basic premise “I think, therefore I am,” which was a translation of the theological foundation of knowledge, in which the privilege of the soul over the body was translated into the secular mind over the body and on the premise that love should be global currency, and that every one in the world should believe (after Descartes) that they think and therefore exist.

“By way of this strategy,” Castro-Gómez observes, “scientific thought positions itself as the only valid form of producing knowledge, and Europe acquires *an epistemological hegemony* over all the other cultures of the world.”²⁵ From the fact that Western epistemology—that is, the epistemology of the zero point—became hegemonic, it doesn’t follow that whoever was and is not thinking in those terms is not thinking. There is ample evidence to the contrary, evidence that is kept silenced both in the academic world and in mainstream media. The democratization of epistemology is under way (my argument intends to contribute to it), and “I am where I think” is one basic epistemic principle that legitimizes all ways of thinking and de-legitimizes the pretense of a singular and particular epistemology, geo-historical and bio-graphically located, to be universal.

Humanitas and *Anthropos*, Modernity and Tradition: Two Western Civilizational Concepts to Rule the World⁶

Schmitt’s *The Nomos of the Earth* is more than a scholarly book concerned with the discipline of international law. On the contrary, it is through the history and the discipline of international law that Schmitt reflects on the situation of Europe after the Second World War and forecasts the future. He was not a Nigerian scholar looking at how international law and the nomos of the earth affected Africa; nor was he an Aymara scholar in Bolivia reflecting on the origin of international law and the Spanish justification for appropriating their land. By spatializing the sites of knowledge and linking them through the colonial epistemic power differential, the process of decolonizing knowledge and being is underway. While zero point epistemology is and shall be recognized in its splendors, it shall also be recognized in its miseries and arrogance.

Decolonizing Western epistemology means to strip it out of the pretense that it is the point of arrival and the guiding light of all kinds of knowledges. In other words, decolonizing knowledge is not rejecting Western epistemic contributions to the world. On the contrary, it implies appropriating its contributions in order to then de-chain from their imperial designs. “Humanitas” and “modernity” are concepts that do not emerge from an ontology wherein entities carry with them the essential being of humans and modernity; instead, they are concepts allowing those who manage categories of thought and knowledge production to use that managerial authority to assert themselves by disqualifying those who (“anthropos” who at once are barbarians and traditional) are classified as deficient, rationally and ontologically. Once you realize that true values and objectivity without parenthesis are only true values and objectivity for those who believe in them (as in the case of religion or any other ideology that holds to truth and objectivity without parenthesis), you are ready to delink, to free yourself from the imperial magic of “modernity” sustained by the epistemology of the zero point. Humanitas and modernity, then, are two companion concepts and central concepts of Western civilization. Such an epistemic style of thinking hides coloniality and prevents pluriversal, dialogic, and epistemically democratic systems of thought from unfolding. Two choices are given to the anthropos: to assimilate or to be cast out. In other words, universal options are options based on truth without parenthesis and cannot admit the difference. As a matter of fact, differences are created in order to eliminate other options.

This argument is being structured from anthropos’s perspectives. That means that it builds and is built on an enunciation grounded on geo- and body-politics of knowledge, while humanitas’s arguments build and are built on theo- and ego-politics of knowledge,⁷ that is, on zero point epistemology.

In a scenario composed of options working toward the communal world order and the hegemony of truth in parenthesis, Ancient Greece and Christian Paradise lose their privileges as the secular and sacred origin; they become just options among others, and other-beginnings are becoming more visible and gaining in legitimacy. The same considerations shall be made chiefly about economy. Capitalist economy is only one option, but an option that is posited by the believers to be the only possible option. People

dwelling in legacies alien to the Greco-Christian and suffering the consequences of capitalist economy are gaining confidence in their own narratives and feeling positive in *their* dwelling, rather than feeling ashamed by believing the narratives of modernity that put them outside of history and behind modernity—that made them *anthropos*. The scenario I am proposing here begins neither in Ancient Greece nor in the Biblical Paradise but in the sixteenth century, in the Atlantic; and, it connects three continents and many civilizations.

The Atlantic in the sixteenth century marks a discontinuity with the classical tradition on which Western Europe built itself.⁸ Accepting that “we are where we think” and that the place we are follows from the place we occupy in the new *nomos* of the earth (that is of the modern/colonial world), then several epistemic trajectories emerge that escape the control of global linear thinking. I understand these trajectories, loosely, as decolonial.

Rational classification meant racial classification. And rational classifications do not derive from “natural reason,” but from “human concepts” of natural reason. Who establishes criteria of classification and who classifies? Those who inhabited the epistemic zero point (*humanitas*) and were the architects of global linear thinking. And who are classified without participating in the classification? People who inhabit the *exteriority* (the outside invented in the process of defining the inside) created from the perspective of the zero point of observation (*anthropos*). To manage, and to be in a position to do so, means to be in control of knowledge—to be in the zero point. That is precisely what global linear thinking was. Global linear thinking since the sixteenth century has been imperial; it is imperial thinking that I described elsewhere as the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality.⁹

While global linear thinking is imperial, the consequences of tracing lines to divide and control the world are not the same everywhere. I see at least three dimensions of global linear thinking that prompted, non-intentionally, the emergence of decolonial thinking.

First, “nodes” in global linear thinking have the particularity of breaking up “linear time,” dividing space “by means of lines.” Thus, the imperialism of time in linear historical narratives is undermined and its control of time is shaken up by the emergence of coexisting options, decolonial options being among them, that put forward coexisting time lines (see chapter 5). The

building of narratives which incorporate “nodes” that have been silenced by imperial narratives invites us to see the past and the present as “heterogeneous historic-structural nodes” of imperial/colonial space—that is, the exteriority where the anthropos dwells and where decolonial thinking emerges. This book is a case in point. This book is intended as a contribution to building decolonial nodes, the nodes of “other histories,” which will allow us also to make educated guesses about the future other than those predicted by Schmitt, as outlined at the end of the previous chapter. For example, the partition of India (decolonization) and the creation of the State of Israel (nation-state building) took place in 1947 and 1948. In China Mao Zedong dethroned Chiang Kai Shek (revolution). How do you connect and make sense of these three simultaneous events in a linear global chronology? By simultaneous, I do not mean the same day, the same month, and the same hour. However, you cannot deny that these three events are strictly co-related in global linear thinking—linear not in the chronological sense, but by horizontally coexisting in space. To see the interconnections between these spatially located events, we need to look at the changes in the colonial matrix, drawing lines and creating nodes: by interconnecting these three events in the colonial matrix of power, decolonial thinking marks indeed the final limits of global linear thinking and doing.

Second, global linear thinking from its beginning in the late fifteenth century (Tordesillas and Saragossa Treaties) played two simultaneous roles. On the one hand, the *raya* divided the operational space or imperial formations and conflicts between themselves (e.g., Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century); between the former and France, England, and Holland in the seventeenth century; between the former and the United States, since the nineteenth century, when the idea of a Western Hemisphere affirmed the United States as an imperial contender—none of the South American and Caribbean countries having any say in the line that divided the Western Hemisphere from Europe. On the other hand, the *raya* divided imperial states (monarchic or secular nation-states) from their colonies. The first introduced the internal imperial differences within Western civilization, the second the colonial differences between Western modern/imperial subjects and their colonial subjects. When colonies became “independent states” (in South America and the Caribbean, for example, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), or overseas departments of France,

or “estado libre asociado” of the United States (like Puerto Rico), the *raya* was redrawn, allowing certain former colonies to cross the line and to get “inside”; however, it also reinforced the fact that, say, South America, although in the Western Hemisphere, became a region of the Third World. This is why today, for example, Samuel Huntington puts Australia and New Zealand in the First World and South America in the Third World¹⁰—who is in and who is out of the *raya* of Western civilization is a constant process of remapping *exteriority* and the *anthropos*.

Third, the geopolitical consequences of the line in the reconfiguration of the *nomos* of the earth went beyond geography proper. Space went hand-in-hand with people inhabiting it. Land and people became “packaged” by imperial global linear thinking and the invention of the *humanitas* and *anthropos*. *Anthropos* doesn’t refer literally to the native barbarians of the sixteenth century or the naked primitives of the eighteenth, but to every instance in which people, institutions, and disciplines where knowledge is managed and controlled, defines *humanitas* and uses the definition to describe the place they inhabit. Since *humanitas* is defined through the epistemic privilege of hegemonic knowledge, *anthropos* was stated as the difference—more specifically, the epistemic colonial difference. In other words, the idea was that humans and humanity were all “human beings” minus the *anthropos*. *Anthropos*, then, is as much the barbarian or the primitive as the communist, the terrorist, all those who can be placed in the axis of evil, and those who are friends of the Devil. Illegal immigrants and homosexuals are today within the realm of the *anthropos*. The domain of *humanitas* is con-substantial with the management of knowledge and of global linear thinking—the lines have been traced from the perspective of *humanitas*, and it is in the humanities where the control of knowledge resides.

Before continuing, and in order to clarify my point, I would like to remind you that I am talking within (enunciation) and about (enunciated) a complex unit of three dimensions: the rhetoric of modernity telling the triumphal narratives of Western civilization; the logic of coloniality, which is the hidden and darker side of the rhetoric of modernity and constitutive of it; and the grammar of decoloniality, which is the task in the present toward the future. Put more simply, there is no modernity without coloniality, and because of it, modernity/coloniality engenders responses

that have taken the form of the grammar of decoloniality.¹¹ The rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality embodied global designs thought out and implemented in and by actors in the metropole and dispersed over the colonies. Decoloniality, instead, in the colonies and ex-colonies, and because of immigration, disperses and is becoming a matter of daily life in Europe and the United States.¹² Parallel phenomena are being witnessed all over the world, including in the former Soviet Union, where migrants from the ex-Soviet colonies are descending on Moscow, provoking (in December 2010) riots and violent persecutions of non-Slavic and non-Orthodox people.

Colonial and Imperial Differences: The Dwelling of Decolonial Thinking

My goal here is not to redraw the map traced by Schmitt, but to decolonize and make understandable two crucial functions of global linear thinking. The first was to establish the criteria for the making and remaking of *imperial differences*; the second for the making and remaking of *colonial differences*. They are both crucial to understanding the world order of the past five hundred years (1500–2000) and the radical transformations we (all us living) have been witnessing since 2000, of which 9/11, the collapse of Wall Street, and the Israeli massacre in Gaza are telling signs (I will come back below to these issues).

We can locate the founding moment of both imperial and colonial differences in the canonical work by the legal theologian Francisco de Vitoria, alluded to in the introduction and the starting point of Schmidt's argument. We have already noticed that de Vitoria had to solve two sides of one problem. On the one hand, he needed to debunk the sovereignty of the pope and the monarch and their privileges in appropriating lands inhabited by non-Christians and to deal with the question of jurisdiction. To cut off the authority of the pope and the monarch, he stated that all nations on the planet (but in this case, the Spanish nation and the Indian nations in the New World) were endowed with *ius gentium*, the rights of nations. Since Indians belong to the human community and were endowed with *ius gentium*, neither the pope nor the monarch could have *dominium* over them. Now the second step was to deal with the Spaniards and the Indians, face-to-face in the New World. Since Spaniards and Indians were equal ac-

ording to the principle of *ius gentium*, how could Spaniards justify their interventions in the life and habitat of the New World (from the perspective of Europe) people? Francisco de Vitoria ended up, after recognizing that Indians had the rights of nations, demonstrating their deficiencies in rationality (although they possessed reason) and maturity (although they were human). Once de Vitoria determined Indians to be somehow inferior (although people with rights), he built up his argument on racial epistemic hierarchies, placing himself at the zero point of observation—the epistemic colonial difference was established. The idea of “private property” emerged from this confrontation between, on the one hand, “cancellation” of divine law and the rights of the pope and the monarch to possess and dispossess the natives and, on the other, the “limitations” of the natives with regard to their right to benefit from the land over which they had entire disposition before the arrival of Europeans. This idea appears in Francisco de Vitoria, re-emerges in Hugo Grotius, and is fully developed by John Locke.¹³

Once Indians were endowed with “rights,” rights which were meaningful in the European world, but not in Tawantinsuyu and Anáhuac (and there was nothing wrong at that point when rights were not needed), the question became what to do with them, since they have rights but at the same time are rationally deficient. Remember that this was a problem for the Spaniards, not for the New World people, who were not participating in the conversation. Francisco de Vitoria and the Spaniards—and, in the twentieth century, the French, the British, and the Americans—attributed to themselves the right to be where they think and to think that other people are uncivilized, underdeveloped, or that they are becoming, just emerging. However, from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first, many who were and are considered anthropos from the perspective of the *humanitas* (be it de Vitoria and the Church, scientific disciplines, or the World Bank that appropriates the language of the anthropos to remain itself as savior and not to allow self-determination) took and are taking their epistemic destinies in their own hands: anthropos becomes *humanitas* not by conversion, civilization, or developments by *humanitas*, but by assuming their humanity *and being where they think*—humanity is appropriated by the anthropos rather than being endowed by *humanitas* to the anthropos. When that happens we become all anthropos or *humanitas*, since the privilege of zero point epistemology that built such distinctions is erased and displaced by the geo- and

body-politics of knowledge, that is, the epistemology of dewesternizing and decolonial anthropos.

A few decades after these debates in Spain, the Quechua Guaman Poma de Ayala was living in Tawantinsuyu, the territory of the Incas being replaced by the Viceroyalty of Peru. Guaman Poma was experiencing a radical transformation of his civilization. He was (existed) where he was doing and thinking through his doing; and what he was thinking responded to needs, desires, and visions grounded in the history of the Tawantinsuyu, not in the history of Western Christians, as it was the case for de Vitoria.¹⁴ While de Vitoria participated in a discussion among Spaniards about the Indians, Guaman Poma addressed Philip III from the perspective of Tawantinsuyu. He did not represent all Indians, as de Vitoria did not represent all Spaniards. Undeniably, however, de Vitoria was speaking in the middle of heated debates and issues affecting Spanish society and life. He was more concerned about Spain than about Tawantinsuyu. Guaman Poma's concern was instead Tawantinsuyu. However, de Vitoria has been recognized, praised, critiqued, and enthroned, whereas Guaman Poma was despised, ignored, and silenced until recently, and his work is still recognized only as a document, not as political treatise at the same level as de Vitoria's. You see here at work the epistemic colonial difference supported by the ontological colonial difference: Indians do not think, therefore they are ontological inferior human beings, and whatever they do is assumed to be doing without thinking, or at best, of doing and thinking wrongly or deficiently. The very names "Indian" and "Indias Occidentales" denied them the possibility of being where they were (Tawantinsuyu, Anáhuac, Abya-Yala). That long history of racial epistemic prejudice is at work today in Bolivia, both nationally and internationally.¹⁵ Decolonial thinking and decolonial option(s) work toward redressing not only a long history, but also the intractable logic on which modern imperial epistemology was founded and is maintained.

That was yesterday, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Today decolonial thinking confronting global linear thinking is alive and well, although generally silenced or marginalized by the institutional coloniality of knowledge as well as the hegemonic priorities of modern Western idea knowledge in practices and education. *Global* is appropriated by decolonial thinkers and twisted, for it is not used to defend a new "imperial globalism," but on the contrary to confront global modernity with

global decolonialities. In spite of differences we can identify and analyze in the rhetoric and narrative of modernity, both spatially and chronologically, from the sixteenth century to today, between the European Union and the United States, or between England and France, those internal imperial differences are not of the same kind as the differences that modernity created by expanding and extending to the non-European world, either by manipulating external colonial and imperial differences (e.g., the classical difference between the West and Islam). Because of the similarities in the internal imperial differences among Atlantic European imperial countries, it was possible to maintain Western imperial dominance. However, the differences at the borders of Euro-American modernity (e.g., the borders between Europe and Africa; or between the United States and South/Central America and the Caribbean; or between the European Union/United States and East Asia) created the conditions for the emergence of decolonial thinking, both as epistemic and political projects. Thus, there cannot be a monotopic history of decolonial options. They emerge in diverse local histories and have in common the experience of being interfered by the colonial matrix of power and therefore Western civilization. You may be thinking that Euro/America epistemology is also diverse. But it is not the same as the diversity of decolonial thinking. The diversity of European thinking is contained within cohesive narratives of Western civilizations.¹⁶ Decolonial thinking cannot be contained in cohesive macro-narratives because it emerges in diverse local histories entangled with Western civilization. The first are grounded on theo- and ego-politics of knowledge, that is, in zero point epistemology while the second are calling for geo- and body-political epistemic foundations and political orientations. Pluriversal global futures are born from the common experience the non-Western world had with the expansion of the West. Sure, there were local agents who facilitated the expansion. But that is not a solution; it is part of the problem itself. Pluriversal global futures require epistemic democratization, which is to say the decolonization of democracy.

A system of sorts has been outlined in the previous paragraphs, an underlying structure that connects global linear thinking with cartography and the world map, the idea of human and humanitas, and a zero point of observation (the invisible knower, God, or the transcendental secular subject), that not only observes but also divides the land and organizes the

known. Carl Schmitt's *The Nomos of the Earth* has been written from that point of observation and with the concern of imperial countries, particularly after the humble crisis of the Second World War and the Holocaust. The line of colonial differences traced the separation between "humanitas" and "anthropos," and therefore was the necessary condition for inventing the epistemic and ontological differences and then making the lines appear neutral and objective¹⁷—objectivity without parenthesis at its best. Thus the "/" between modernity/(de)coloniality is the site, as I said and will repeat, where modernity/coloniality unite and divide, where imperial and colonial differences dwell, where decoloniality and dewesternization emerge, where spiritual options flourish. Who introduced decolonial thinking was the anthropos not the humanitas; humanitas can think decolonially by joining the body politics of the anthropos, for you can not think decolonially and remain within the value frame of humanitas. That will mean that you appropriate the anthropos contributions and reproduce coloniality.

What does the anthropos do? He or she can surrender, assuming his or her inferior epistemic and ontological status vis-à-vis the model of humanitas. The anthropos can fight back and show that he or she is also human, claiming recognition. This is the path of assimilation, of being happy to be accepted in the palace of humanitas. By following this path, he or she admits defeat, represses what he or she was, and embraces something that he or she was not by the fact of belonging, by birth, education, language, sensibility, to the anthropos. The third possibility, and the most rewarding and hopeful, is for the anthropos to unveil the pretentious sense of superiority of those who inhabit the humanitas—not to claim recognition, but to show how insane the inhabitants of the house of humanitas are, that they still believe that Humanity is divided between humanitas and anthropos, and to show that the control of knowledge gives them the privilege of seeing themselves as humanitas and not as anthropos. In other words, the task of the anthropos is to claim and assert, through argumentation, his and her epistemic rights, to engage in barbarian theorizing in order to decolonize humanitas and in knowledge-building to show that the distinction between anthropos and humanitas is a fiction controlled by the humanitas. Engaging in decolonial thinking means confronting the imperial privileges of imperial/global linear thinking, not to resist but to re-exist in building decolonial futures. This is the beginning from which decolonial subjects engage in the

process of decolonizing authority (e.g., the modern state, and the modern/colonial states in the anthropos side of the linear divide) and decolonizing economy—that is, imagining global futures in which the complicities between the state, market, and epistemic imperial hubris (e.g., global linear thinking, hubris of the zero) will be accepted as a historical moment in the life of the planet and of the species, the right of Western civilizations to exist among others, but not longer to posit itself as the savior of the other. That belief that lasted five hundred years is no longer sustainable.

The first step in decolonial thinking is to accept the interconnection between geo-history and epistemology, and between bio-graphy and epistemology that has been kept hidden by linear global thinking and the hubris of the zero point in their making of colonial and imperial differences. That is, the first step is to assume the legitimacy of “I am where I think” and not be afraid of inquisitorial corporate and/or postmodern thinkers. By revealing geo-history and bio-graphy configurations and heterogenous historico-structural nodes in the historical frame created by global linear thinking, decolonial thinking and doing performs two operations at once: it anchors new epistemic and ontological sites; and it contextualizes Descartes’s claim, which by requiring the awareness of thinking in order to be aware of its existence, narcotized the historical geo- and body-political motivations of his own thinking. Descartes was unaware or did not pay attention to his awareness in the last analysis that his philosophy contributed to secularizing the zero point of observation and to anchoring his thought in the imperial domain secured by global linear thinking. While we cannot consider Descartes guilty for doing what he felt he was supposed to do, we should not take for granted that 80 percent of the population of the world, beyond Europe, shall be jumping for joy because Descartes discovered that “one thinks, therefore one is.”

My purpose here is to articulate a discourse, the discourse of the anthropos in the process of appropriating humanitas in order to become something other than humanitas—the humanitas of the anthropos that enveils the anthropos in the humanitas. In the process of so doing I attempt to show the illogic rationality of the hubris of the zero point and of the humanitas placing itself in a position of domination through the partition of the earth and the classification of its people. Border thinking is of the essence as we switch from imperial and territorial epistemology (e.g., global

linear thinking) to an epistemology emerging from the places and bodies left out of the line (e.g., the anthropos, the Orientals, the Third World, etc.). And I take “I am where I think” as the basic proposition of such reasoning, both epistemically and politically.

Decolonizing Knowledge and Being: Thinking Decolonially during the Cold War and After (Bennabi, Kusch, Wynter)

In the first two sections I mapped the imperial/colonial scenarios in which zero point epistemology emerged and was consolidated. “Imperial/colonial” doesn’t refer only to conservative or right-wing ways of thinking. Let’s take theology, for example, Christian theology. While there is a history of theology obviously linked to imperial designs and interests, the papacy being an obvious example, there are theologies of liberation in South America, North America, and Africa, as well as a Jewish theology of liberation. My claim is that, as in the disputes between (neo)liberalism and (neo) Marxism, both sides of the coin belong to the same bank: the disputes are entrenched within the same rules of the game, where the contenders defend different positions but do not question the terms of the conversation. In this section I will argue that shifting from “I think, therefore I am” to “I am where I do and think” (meaning that thinking derives from doing in the same proportion that doing is guided by thinking) is a shift in the geo- and body-politics of knowledge that focuses on changing the rules of the game rather than its content. We can call it decolonizing epistemology or, if you wish, working toward epistemic decolonial democratization. Decolonizing is nothing more and nothing less than taking democracy seriously instead of using it to advance imperial designs or personal interests. We cannot leave the word *democracy* only in liberal and neo-liberal hands. If used, it will belong to all of us, to the anthropos and the humanitas, as that is precisely what democracy means. “We” (members of the political society, who are not in the sphere of the state or the corporations and that were cast in the scale of the anthropos) are claiming democracy beyond its Greek origins and its imperial appropriation in eighteenth-century Europe; we (the anthropos) are working toward decolonizing knowledge and therefore decolonizing Western interpretations of democracy.

In what follows I explore and explain what decolonizing knowledge and being may mean not in definitional terms (since once the definition is read,

it is forgotten), but as the seed from where collective decolonial reasoning and options grow, unfold, spread, and transform our (those involved in it) thinking and doing decolonially toward global decolonial futures.

My aim is to work out genealogies of thought across national and regional histories; non-national genealogies that are connected through the common experience of the colonial wound—of sensing that, in one way or another, one belongs to the world of the *anthropos*. The awareness of being on the side of *anthropos* leaves a bad taste in the mouth. However, if those of us who have been seen and classified as *anthropos* want to join *humanitas*, the bad taste in the mouth persists, although it is a different taste. Someone who has been classified as *anthropos* will choose which of the two bad tastes he or she prefers, and then decide what to do. And if you do not feel that you are on the side of *anthropos*—either because you belong to *humanitas* or because you prefer to ignore your situation and to fool yourself, pretending that you belong to *humanitas*—that is of course your responsibility. Ethics comes into the picture at this point; that is where responses to historical realities are unavoidable. What are the possible responses, what are the options? One option is to ignore it, thus lying to oneself and living in a state of bad faith. Another option is to assimilate, to do the best we can to be accepted. The third is the decolonial option: to fight the inhumanity of the *humanitas*, the irrationality of the rational, the despotic residues of modernity. The three thinkers I comment on in the following pages dwelled in exteriority. Their thinking assumed that experience, and as a consequence they built on the decolonial option, being where they did and thought, not looking for assimilation in or recognition by the *humanitas*. One of them is an Algerian, the other an Argentine, and the third an Afro-Caribbean thinker; through them I further explore the interconnections between geo- and body-politics of knowledge. Malik Bennabi (the Algerian) and Rodolfo Kusch (the Argentine) share in different places the common experience of colonial legacies of the Cold War. Sylvia Wynter (the Afro-Caribbean) lived through the Cold War, but her most recent works were written after the end of it. She shares with Bennabi and Kusch knowing through bodies marked by colonial legacies, by knowing and sensing the gaze of the Master: being through the gaze of *humanitas*. Sociogenesis was Fanon's response, and Wynter capitalized on it.

“Being” (in the sense of “I am where I do and think”) here doesn't mean that I am now at my house in North Carolina, or that you are in a café in

Paris, but where we are, each of us, located in the house of modernity/coloniality: that means that we have been born and raised, and therefore seen and classified, from the perspective of the zero point among the *humanitas* or the *anthropos* (and of course all the intermediate cases that the categories allow us to make). Are we *anthropos* or *humanitas*, black or Indian, developed or underdeveloped, Jews or Muslims, Christians or Israelites? I am not saying either that there is modern/colonial determinism, for I am talking about built-in constructions of modern epistemology. I am saying that it just is, and it is our ethical responsibility to know and understand the house of modernity/coloniality (the colonial matrix of power) we all inhabit. My task here is to help in cleaning up and restoring the house of knowledge that has been knocked down by the global storm blowing from the paradise of linear thinking.

That is precisely the point of bringing Algerian, Argentinean, and Afro-Caribbean thinkers into the conversation. Algeria, to make a long story short, was conquered by the Ottomans, shortly after the completion of the Spanish Reconquista (in 1492); Ottoman rule lasted until approximately 1830, when Algeria fell into French hands. That period ended with the decolonial liberation of Algeria, in 1961. Quite simply, if your body came to this world before 1961 and lived through the war of decolonization in Algeria during the Cold War, your feelings and intellectual, ethical, and political concerns would have been very different from someone whose body came to this world at the beginning of the twentieth century in Germany, that is, in Europe, who went through the First and Second World Wars, and through Hitler. Thus, there is no reason to take for granted that thinking in the German language and dwelling in German history has epistemic privileges over thinking in a Francophone language and dwelling in colonial history; or, yet, has epistemic privileges over thinking in Arabic at the crossroad of Islamo-Arab history, Western interventions, and the Three Worlds configuration (as Algeria was classified, from the perspective of zero point epistemology, which of course was located in the First World, but pretended not to be located and just to reflect an objective state of things). Being where you think means, first and foremost, to delink from the epistemic mirage that you can only be if you think as someone else (who is precisely where he or she thinks) told you (and get rewards by funding institutions whose funds come from unequal distributions of wealth), directly or indirectly,

that you should think and therefore what you should be: do not remain as anthropos and therefore deficient in your being; you have to abandon that state of immaturity (as Kant defined *enlightenment*) and be like me as I am already inhabiting the house of humanitas. If you do not follow the instructions, you do not get rewarded. Your reward shall be instead the decolonial process itself, which by definition will not be rewarded by today's existing hegemonic institutions reproducing the coloniality of knowledge and of being.

A similar argument can be made in the case of the Argentine thinker of German descent Rodolfo Kusch. After independence from Spain (1810), and indirectly ruled by England (economy) and France (ideology), Argentina was controlled by the Creole elite of Spanish descent, who implemented ideas and public policies that originated in England. Notice that toward 1830, when Algeria was invaded and colonized by France, Argentina was at the inception of building a modern/colonial state. I said "modern/colonial" because the independence from Spain meant the continuation of indirect imperial ruling by England and France. This situation called for the concept of "internal colonialism" introduced in the late sixties and early seventies. From 1860 on, Argentina's wealth increased due to its commerce with England. The installation of railroads through the second half of the nineteenth century and the exportation of corned beef generated the golden years of the economy. The cycle of increasing wealth and prosperity lasted until 1930, when Argentina suffered the consequences of the stock-market collapse. The crisis opened up the doors for a radical transformation that created the conditions for the ascent of Juan Domingo Perón, in 1945. Rodolfo Kusch's first book (*La seducción de la barbarie* [*The Seduction of Barbarism*]) was published in 1953. The book's title is indicative of the shift in the geography of reasoning: "civilización y barbarie" was the enduring opposition on which the process of nation building—which ensued independence from Spain in 1810—unfolded. It is not necessary to go into elaborated arguments and overwhelming evidence to argue that "civilización y barbarie" is the colonial-state formula, in Argentina, of the overarching distinction between humanitas and anthropos. Peronism brought the masses (anthropos) into the picture, and Kusch picked up on that shift, on the potential of popular and indigenous thinking confronting the privilege of civilized (e.g., progress, development) thinking. The anthropos not only took the streets,

but also took the word. And Kusch's sensitivity picked up from there: it was enactment of the anthropos (from the perspective of Argentine white elite of European descent) that was bringing forward their being and their thinking. As we will see, another of Kusch's books was titled *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América (Indigenous and Popular Thinking in America)*,¹⁸ a book in which he explores the commonalities between these two types of thinking, not in opposition but complementing each other. In so doing Kusch removes himself from the role as observer (the *humanitas*); his thinking then becomes complicit with popular and indigenous thinking. A shift in the geography of reasoning has begun to take place and shape.

Sylvia Wynter's dwelling place (Jamaica colonial history and then through England and the United States) in the modern/colonial world has been framed by the history of slavery in the Caribbean and by the confluence of racism and patriarchy. There is a pervasive concern among black Caribbean thinkers—from the Haitian Anténor Firmin to the Trinidadian C. L. R. James—and that is the question of humanity, of being human. The fact that this concern is crucial among Afro-Caribbeans more than among African intellectuals (and, of course, even more than among Europeans) has its reason: if Africans were cast as descendents of Ham (the derailed Noah's son), black Africans since the sixteenth century came to be equated with slavery and slaves' lives became also expendable, both as commodities and as labor force. *Humanitas* was the point of reference, and those who fell into the domain of anthropos suffered the consequences. Wynter confronts this issue through Frantz Fanon, and thus appropriates the humanity of being, dwelling, and thinking in the location of the anthropos.¹⁹ In the process, the anthropos of the *humanitas* is being unveiled at the same time as its epistemic limitations: while *humanitas* attributes to itself epistemic privileges, anthropos operates in the epistemic potential that comes from knowing both the reason of *humanitas* and the reason of those who in the eyes of *humanitas* are anthropos. Now, let me insist that anthropos is assumed as such, not as an ontological category, but as an epistemic one: I know that from the perspective of the *humanitas* *I am an anthropos*—which doesn't mean of course that I am, but it means that once I acknowledge it, my thinking is no longer located in the zero point, but in the geo- and body-politics of knowing and being. It means that I know that you classified

me among the anthropos and as such, I will respond by questioning and delegitimizing your claims to the universality of your classification. Being where one thinks implies, first and foremost, recognizing and confronting both imperial categorizations of being and universal principles of knowing; it means engaging in epistemic disobedience, in independent thoughts, in decolonial thinking (see chapter 3).

Malik Bennabi's Dead and Deadly Ideas and the Quest for Independent Thought

Malik Bennabi (1905–73), in Algeria, and Rodolfo Kusch (1920–79), in Argentina, did not know each other, although they were both living, writing, and thinking during the trying years of the Cold War.²⁰ Their works are two monumental examples, taking on subjects parallel to crucial issues in the imperial world to which Darwin and Freud devoted their lives and intellectual energy. Bennabi went through the hard years of Algerian decolonization (1954–62). Kusch went through the trying years of the rise and fall of Juan Domingo Perón (1946–55). They were one generation apart. However, both were mature persons and intellectuals during the demanding and frustrating decades from 1945 to 1970, from the end of the Second World War (1945) until the end of the period of the welfare state and the global commotion from Beijing to Prague, from Paris to Mexico (late 1960s). As far apart as they seem, Bennabi and Kusch had a similar concern sprouting from their awareness of being where they were thinking, thrown as they were into their respective imperial/colonial countries (Algeria; Argentina) and regions (Maghreb and the Middle Eastern Islamic world; South America—or América, as Kusch preferred to say).

Both historical processes were points of non-return; processes in which no one in the societies affected by the turmoil could remain the same during his or her life; processes that would also remain in the memory of the community for years to come and will imprint the subjectivity of the generations born after the fact. Both sets of processes affected people differently in different places, although they are connected through the colonial wound. In the case of the decolonization of Algeria, French citizens were no doubt distressed, surprised, and taken aback. Beyond the human tragedy, French national spirit suffered the consequences of a loss of a colony. The imperial pride, however, is different from the colonial wound and therefore

the responses are of a different nature. Postcolonialism in Algeria is not the same as postcolonialism in France. Christians, Marxists, and liberals all have their view and their frames within which to account for the events. Influential intellectuals in France like the Algerian-born Albert Camus and the French native Jean-Paul Sartre, had conflicting views of the events. Bennabi's reflections before, during, and after the eight years of the Algerian War transcended the events and brought the discussion back home to Algeria, rather than letting it remain in Paris, counting in France's history. Bennabi's frame of thought is not fashioned from Western philosophical thinking, as was Sartre's; instead, his thought existed in tense relation with Western humanism. Bennabi was, like Camus, a secular colonial subject. Bennabi asked questions and developed arguments that were very different from those of the French intellectuals. Their thinking was limited simply because the meaning of the Algerian War in France was embedded in the history of France and of European imperialism, while the meaning of the Algerian War in Algeria was embedded in the history of North Africa and the enduring histories of colonialism. The same event had different meanings for different thinkers and depended on their cultural background: their geo-historical and bio-graphic configurations crossed by colonial and imperial differences.

Bennabi asks and addresses a set of well-qualified questions, all dealing with knowledge and subjectivity in the history of Algeria and North Africa, in the density of layers from Islamization before the Ottomans ruled the area and then after the French displaced the Ottomans. In that displacement a radical change took place: Algeria entered, through French imperialism, the imperial domains of Western capitalism (e.g., it was enmeshed in the spreading tentacles of the colonial matrix)—which of course the Ottoman Sultanate had not been. In other words, what happened in 1830 was not just a change of rulers and sultans by modern presidents or prime ministers of imperial states. It was not similar to what happened in France after the revolution, when the bourgeoisie displaced the monarchy, but all belong to the same cosmology, albeit to different social strata. In this case those who disputed political and economic control were mostly of Gallic descent; they became French citizens, and they were all white and all Christians. In Algeria they were not: they were Arabs and Berbers, Jews and Muslim, black and brown, and had been ruled by the Ottoman Sultanate for several centu-

ries. Dwelling in that history, during the challenging years between wars in Europe and through the critical years of decolonization in Asia and Africa (between 1947 and 1971 approximately), Bennabi wrote two short and crucial pieces that are particularly germane to my argument: *The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World*, conceived in late 1960 and 1961, but finished and published a decade later; and *The Question of Culture*, originally published in 1954.²¹ Both pieces respond to a common concern among “Third World” intellectuals: gaining independence from a long history of coloniality of knowledge and of being, that is, decolonizing being and knowledge by being where one thinks and does. Bennabi describes the state of Islamic civilization at the moment of writing, comparing it with a rider losing control:

Like a rider who has lost control over the stirrup and failed to recapture it, it has been struggling to attain its new equilibrium. Its secular decadence, condemning it to inertia, apathy, impotence and *colonizability*, has nonetheless preserved its traditional values in a more or less fossilized condition. It has emerged under such conditions at the time when the twentieth century reaches the peak of its material power but when all the moral forces have started disintegrating since the First World War.²²

We shall focus on the enunciation, rather than in the enunciated, of these observations and we will understand that “I am where I do and think” relocates thinking and knowledge at the intersection of the geo- and body-political imperial classification of places and racialization of people, languages, and ideas. But of course, it relocates not only “Third World” thinking, but “First World” as well. If Descartes arrived at the conclusion “I think, therefore I am,” it was precisely because he was where he was doing, although he suppressed the materiality of the enunciation; he just took for granted this: if you feel and know that you are *humanitas*, you most likely will not be concerned about *where* you do and think—you would assume that you inhabit the universal house of knowledge, the epistemic zero point. “I am where I do” flatly rejects the assumptions that rational and universal truths are independent of who presents them, to whom are they addressed, and why they have been advanced in the first place; and that the problems philosophers and thinkers address in Europe shall have “applicability” beyond Europe, so you have to look for problems that more or less fit the theory.

The reader may think at this point, “Oh, I see, you are talking about situated knowledge.” Certainly I am, but not about “universal situatedness”; rather, I am talking about situatedness within the colonial matrix of power, and where you are located within the epistemic and ontological racial coordinates of imperial knowledge. To say that knowledge is situated in and of itself doesn’t take us too far. It amounts to saying that “reality is constructed.” Sure. But once we have beaten the essentialist claim that reality exists, the next step and the most important one is to ask how is it constructed, by whom, why, what for, and whose interest does it serve if we construct reality in A or B manner? And what are these constructions saying to those who are affected by the construction of reality without having the opportunity to participate in such construction?

Thus, three hundred years after Descartes’s death (in 1650, in Stockholm), someone like Malik Bennabi, in Algeria, had to deal with the consequences of Descartes’s contribution to the foundation of modern philosophy and knowledge. Bennabi now is confronted with a problem similar to the one Descartes had, although it is of quite dissimilar configuration. In fact, while Descartes was dealing with a past framed by theology and Renaissance humanism, both were within their own tradition. While Bennabi dwells in memories embedded in Arabic language and Muslim philosophy (Al Gazhali, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rush), Descartes was dwelling in memories embedded in Latin and French: he wrote *Discourse on Method* in French and *Meditations on First Philosophy* in Latin.²³ In both traditions, Bennabi’s and Descartes’s, algebra and geometry were a common ground: Muslim and Christian philosophers around 1200 were drinking from the same Greek fountains. Bennabi, like Descartes, *is where he does and thinks*; his being is formed in a double movement. Understanding, on the one hand, the local history of Algeria at the intersection of the Ottoman Sultanate’s rules and French imperial rules, living at the intersection of Arab and French languages and of Islam and Christianity means being in a dense memory in which French, contrary to Descartes’s assumption, is a marginal language, experience, and subjectivity. Descartes, in sum, inhabits the epistemology of the zero point and of linear thinking, Bennabi that of border thinking and geo/body politics of knowledge. The first is territorial and the second decolonial thinking.

On the other hand (as with many others in similar human conditions and historical intersections, as I will deal with below), “discourse on method”

doesn't begin by looking at the basic, indubitable, simple truth upon which the whole edifice can be built—the whole edifice of truth without parenthesis. Quite the opposite: for Bennabi (and for many decolonial thinkers and artists around the world), the problem is how to disengage from the trap, how to elide the entrapment. The problem is, in other words, how to decolonize knowledge and being by affirming the geopolitical legitimacy of knowledge for “decolonization,” rather than knowledge to “control the world” by “knowing” its laws. Paradoxically, Descartes's brilliant move to depart from theology and humanism ended up trapping other knowledges and subjectivities totally alien to the personal and regional forces that motivated his relentless search for “truth.” The bottom line: theirs are two different subjectivities, modes of being in the world tilted by coloniality of knowledge and of power. There is no reason, other than the colonial differential of power, to assume that Descartes's thinking is more relevant for the well-being of Humanity than is Bennabi's. Since we are where we think, there is no reason (other than epistemic racism) to believe that, among all forms of creative thinking (not destructive thinking), one mode of being where one thinks is better or preferable to the other. Transcendental truths (God, Reason, Rights, and Knowledge) that are attainable and controlled by one ethno-class result in asserting one mode of being and one mode of thinking—that is, the imperial mode of being where one thinks.

Unlike for Descartes, the problem to solve for Bennabi was not that of the overarching presence of theology and the soft arguments of tolerant humanists (in the middle of religious war and the assassination, in 1610, of Henri of Navarre, founder of the College La Fleche, where Descartes studied), but that of the power of ideas in relation to bilingualism. Remember that one of Bennabi's concerns (which is that of many Arabo-Muslim intellectuals) is, as Moroccan philosopher Mohammed Al-Jabri put it: why, if Ibn-Rushd (1126–1190), sharing his life between Córdoba (today Spain) and Marrakech (today Morocco), reached a level of rational thinking, Arabo-Muslim philosophy “stopped” there and re-emerged, five centuries later, in France and Holland, in the body of Descartes, at the time when Western Greco-Latin Christianity had already silenced Arabo-Islamic philosophy and sciences forever? That is the context in which Bennabi is concerned with the question of *ideas* in the Muslim world.

Bennabi's distinction between “dead ideas” and “deadly ideas” illustrates quite well the type of situation motivating independent thoughts and the

need to shift the geography of reasoning and to be where one does and thinks: “A dead idea is an idea whose origins have been betrayed, one that has deviated from its archetype and thus no longer has any roots in its original cultural plasma. In contrast, a deadly idea is an idea that has lost both its identity and cultural value after having been cut of its roots that are left in their original cultural universe.”²⁴ Although in Bennabi’s essays there is a larger horizon of humanity and human history, it is the closer horizon that generates his concern: being a Muslim and at the same time a Third World intellectual means to be in two subaltern positions, in relation to imperial Christianity and Western secularism and in relation to the First World. What does someone dwelling in *exteriority* do? There are several possibilities indeed. One would recognize that history is of the winners and to accept and embrace the First World, Western modernity, and secularism. Which of course, ruling elites not only in Arabo-Islamic countries, but also in South America and the Caribbean also did. Let me give you a parallel example (during the Cold War) to get a better sense of the point I am making in reading Bennabi. Would Marxism be of any help here? Perhaps not much.

Instead, we could ask a similar question: what does a Third World and black intellectual dwelling in exteriority do? And we can respond to the question by looking over the shoulder of Lloyd Best (1934–2007).²⁵ He starts one of his key essays, titled “Independence and Responsibility: Self Knowledge as an Imperative,” drawing l’état de la question.

Since 1962, two visions of the future have been offered to Caribbean peoples. Both have been aborted. The first proved to be an illusion; the second turned into a nightmare. . . . They [the agents of the first vision] . . . urged to produce what we consume and consume what we produce. This strategy involved a sharp increase in government ownership and operation of economic enterprise and hastened the emergence of the omni-competent state.

The second vision was that of the socialist state, with the means of production predominantly owned and controlled by a paramount Leninist party.²⁶

What I am driving at is that beyond the significant difference between a Muslim in Algeria and a black in the Caribbean, they are responding to the global entanglements driven by the expansion of the colonial matrix. In many and different local histories, Muslims and Africans were entangled with a myriad of different Western European local histories (mainly that of

the Atlantic countries from the Iberian Peninsula to England, going through France and Holland). Best's major concern was "independent thought and Caribbean freedom," as he extensively argued in his essay of this title. The first version of the essay was presented, in 1966, at the Second Conference of West Indian Affairs, in Montreal. The scenario drawn by Best and the description of local elites in their dependency on Western education, technology, and science (which if they are not necessarily deadly by nature, can become deadly—e.g., the idea of development) are similar to the one drawn by Bennabi. Similarly, where Bennabi saw dead ideas in the Muslim world, Best saw not dead ideas of a historical civilization, but disqualified ideas of black communities—no longer in Africa, but in South America and the Caribbean: the communities and emerging civilization formed in the encounter among Africans from different kingdoms, languages, religions, and ways of life. At that crossroads, Lloyd Best claims at the end of his article,

I have argued that we need independent thought. One of the most blatant manifestations of the colonial condition in the Caribbean—of the plantation mind—is the refuge, which our intellectual classes take in a sterile scientism on the one hand, or in a cheap populism on the other. . . . One half of our intellectual classes are a-political. They are engrossed in technical exercises or they are busy dissipating their energies in administration and public relations—running the public service, running the Universities, running this, running that, running in effect, away from the issues.

It is being proposed here, that being who we are, what we are and where, the kind of action to which we must be committed is determinate. . . . To acknowledge this is to set ourselves three tasks. The first is to fashion theory on which may be based the clear intellectual leadership for which the nation calls and which it has never had. The second is to conduct the inquiry on which theory can be soundly based. This is what may be called, in the jargon of my original trade, the creation of intellectual capital goods. Thirdly, we are to establish media by which these goods may be transmitted to the rest of us who are otherwise engaged. . . . We may wish to create a media of direct democratic expression suitable to the native Caribbean imagination.²⁷

Where Best saw the failure and the nightmare of solutions for the Caribbean proposed by the national elite in complicity with external-imperial institutions and ideas (mostly Western liberalism and capitalism, rather than

Western and/or Slavic Marxism or Chinese Maoism), Bennabi saw Muslim societies saturated by dead ideas that created the conditions for the advent of deadly Western ideas.

It is under such circumstances, Bennabi concludes, that the present Muslim society borrows modern and “progressive” ideas from Western civilization! This is a natural outcome of a process determined by the dialectic of things, human beings and ideas that has shaped Muslim history. Nevertheless what is unnatural is its inertia and apathy in this stage, as if it wished to stay there forever. Starting from the same point, other societies such as Japan and China have, on the contrary, succeeded to pull themselves out of their state of inertia by rigorously subjecting themselves to the conditions of new dynamics and new historical dialectics.²⁸

Here we have two Third World intellectuals—one Muslim in North Africa, the other black in the Caribbean—looking at the global conditions, being where they think, dwelling in the *exteriorities* of the modern colonial world. These views have not been accounted for in the analysis of globalization and modernity. Certainly Anthony Giddens and Niall Ferguson are where they think: dwelling in the *interiority* of British and imperial European histories.²⁹ Although they, too, are where they think, their thinking (propelled by the book market and the coloniality of knowledge) generates the effect that in reality they just think, being nowhere, as if instead of inhabiting the interiority of self-fashioned imperial histories, they were standing at the top of the hill looking down and dominating the valley.

The dialectic between dead and deadly ideas tells the story of imperial and colonial differences in the modern/colonial world, for the dialectic is operative not only in the sphere of the liberal state and capitalist economies looking for new surrogate states opening new markets, but also in the internal contestation: Marxism. Bennabi is clear in analyzing the consistency of Marx’s ideas within his own cultural sphere, in which industrial capitalism unfolded: “If Marx had analyzed such situations he would certainly have done so based on the logic of a dialectic whose constituent elements were all part and parcel of one and the same cultural universe that was his own universe.”³⁰ In contrast, Bennabi continues, in the colonized and formerly colonized countries, such situations are the complex result of “a

dialectic obtaining in an original cultural universe as well as of the dialectical relationship between the latter and the alien cultural universe, that of colonialism.”³¹

In my view, Bennabi’s *The Questions of Ideas in the Muslim World* is nothing less than an agonistic quest for independent thought. The need and anxiety has not gone away yet, today, among Muslim intellectuals (as well as among intellectuals of the former Third World around the globe). Let’s listen to the Iranian scholar Amr G. E. Sabet. In introducing his argument, Sabet makes clear that in the investigation he presents he is not making any claim in favor of the “Islamization of knowledge,” or for its secularization. His argument aims, he stresses, at the integration of knowledge, “whether secular or religious, through a measure of *intersubjectivity*.”³² Furthermore, and this is crucial for my argument, Sabet notes that beyond looking for an integration of Islamic thought and social theory, “this study seeks to link the former (e.g., Islamic thought) with *decolonization* in order to underscore Islam’s liberating commitment not only toward Muslims but toward humanity at large. The decolonization process that had taken place during the post–World War II era remains, unfortunately, an unfinished, and even a regressing, project.”³³

Decoloniality refers to a set of projects that, based on border identifications (dwelling in the border between dead ideas and deadly ideas), are open to humanity at large, in the same way that Christian theology, secular liberals, and postmodern thinkers (Marxists or not) are. However, the latter do not recognize their projects emanating from an *identity*. They *identify* their project as universal. Here lies the conundrum by which postmodern thinkers chastise identity claims and retain the convenience store of universality. For that reason, Sabet stresses, “in addition to political, as well as economic, independence there is *the essential need for the independence of thought, of the mental, the psychological, and the spiritual*; for the exorcising and liberating of souls.”³⁴ That means that the decolonization of the economy and of the state needs a change of terrain. While Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, and Karl Marx were where they thought, their thoughts acquired a universal profile that seemed independent of their geo-historical and bio-graphical locations and therefore of global import. Geo- and bio-graphic politics of knowledge materializes the change of terrain, undoing and moving away from the imperial political theology and its translation

into secular ecology. Bennabi's decolonial thinking was enacting this change of terrain.

Rodolfo Kusch: Epistemic Synergy of Immigrant Consciousness

Gunter Rodolfo Kusch was born in Argentina in 1922, and he died in 1979. He was the only child of Ricardo Carlos Kusch and Elsa María Dorothea Tschunke de Kusch, a German couple who moved to Argentina, from Germany, shortly after the First World War ended. He was four years old when his father passed away. At the end of his teen years, Kusch found himself in the middle of an exciting decade in Buenos Aires, from 1940 to 1950, witnessing the end of the Second World War, the Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón years, and a very intense intellectual and cultural life. A “native” intelligentsia that was largely of European descent (mainly from Spain, Italy, and Germany) was struggling to found its own ways of thinking and delink from the Argentine intellectual elite reproducing in the country the debates taking place in Europe. The “mestizo consciousness” that Kusch explored in the beginning of his book *La seducción de la barbarie* was a reflection built on the experience of a community of displaced Europeans (immigrants *from* Europe) who coexisted with the dense and strong presence of the indigenous population, which Kusch experienced in northwest Argentina and in Bolivia. By the time of Kusch, the Afro-population had practically vanished from Argentina's imaginary, although he was aware of their presence in America—the consistent name he uses in all his writing; he rarely mentioned “Latin” America. A telling statement that is consistent with the philosophical explorations he conducted throughout his life.

In his second book *América profunda*, published in 1962, Kusch intensified his philosophical reflections anchored in “an-other history.” He described that “other history,” distinctive in its profile and coexisting with European history, with metaphors such as “seducción de la barbarie,” as “América profunda,” as “América vegetal,” and many others. Crucial to the understanding of Kusch's sustained meditations from *La seducción de la barbarie* to *Geocultura del hombre Americano* (1976) and *Esbozo de una antropología filosófica Americana* (1978) is the coexistence of a European history transplanted and framing the conflicts in/of “América profunda,” the legacies of “poblaciones originarias” through the history of conquest and

colonization. On the one hand, Kusch felt that Indian memories throughout the Americas needed to be re-inscribed in conflictive dialogue and tension with the existence of people of European descent and institutions (economic, political, and family) modeled on European social organization. He was not Indian, but he was not alien to the fact that Indian legacies are embedded in the history of América. This history could no longer be the narrative of internal transformation, as was the case for the history of Europe. Engaging indigenous thoughts meant to engage an-other epistemology.

It takes several readings to recondition reading habits. One must practice before fully understanding the radical shift in the geography of reasoning that Kusch was engaged in and to grasp his concept of “mestizo consciousness.” For, “mestizo” for Kusch doesn’t have anything to do with biology, with mixed bloods, with the color of your skin, or the form of your nose. “Mestizo” is for Kusch a matter of “consciousness,” not of blood, but of geo-history and bio-graphy—as becomes clear in the last two books he published.

“Mestizo consciousness” is a paradoxical concept in an argument enunciated by Kusch, the son of German immigrants, father and mother. He was clearly not a mestizo by blood but in consciousness, a conceptualization that emerges from a body that experiences *existentia Americana*, similar to what the Jamaican philosopher Lewis Gordon has termed and explored as *existentia Africana*.³⁵ About fifty years before Kusch’s first book, W. E. B. Du Bois introduced the concept of “double consciousness” to articulate his experience and translate it into a term familiar in the human and social sciences.³⁶ But his “consciousness,” that is, the way he was experiencing “consciousness,” was different, although from the same source, from the colonial wound: a person of African descent, in the Americas, experiences life and his or her own existence differently from a person of European descent. Both, however, share a common experience, the experience of the displaced in relation to a dominant order of the world to which they do not belong. The consciousness of being-such and the awareness of not-being-such (in the case of Kusch, neither European nor Indian) or sensing a tension between being-such and such (in the case of Du Bois, being black and American, when American was assumed to be white) points toward the sphere of experience that in Gloria Anzaldúa was articulated as “the mestiza consciousness/la conciencia de la mestiza.”³⁷ It is worthwhile to

underline the grammatical twist in Anzaldúa. She is talking not about “mestiza consciousness,” but about “the consciousness of the mestiza,” which is how I would translate the Spanish title she inscribed in the last chapter of her book: “la conciencia de la mestiza.” We should also remember at this point that the title of Rigoberta Menchú’s narrative, in Spanish, is *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchu y así me nació la conciencia* (1982), dubiously translated into English as *I, Rigoberta Menchú, an Indian Woman from Guatemala*.³⁸ The English translator (or the editor at the publishing house) preferred exoticism to philosophical and political meaning, and trumpeted Benjamin Franklin’s exultation of the first person: “I, Rigoberta Menchú.” Last but not least, the Afro-Colombian Zapata Olivella (self-identified as mulatto) conceived a “mestizo consciousness” (notice that “mestizo” acquires, like in Kusch, a meaning that goes beyond the biological) to capture the *historical essence* of the basic three types (Indigenous, European descent, and Afro descent) of languages, religions, cultures, ways of life, sensibilities, and subjectivities that transformed Anáhuac, Abya-Yala, and Tawantinsuyu in what Kusch calls “America.”³⁹

In retrospect, and in the more recent spectrum in which “consciousness” has been articulated decolonially (Du Bois, Anzaldúa, Menchú), it would be more adequate to rename Kusch’s “mestizo consciousness” as “immigrant consciousness,” the consciousness of the immigrant of European descent who arrived in the Americas around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and who, instead of assimilating, reacts critically to the displaced conditions of European immigrants in a country that, by that time, is already in the hands of Creoles of Spanish descent and Mestizos with mixed blood and a European soul and mentality. I found in Kusch a particularly apt response to my long-lasting discomfort as an Argentine of European descent. For that experiential reason I am “appropriating” Kusch and following his thoughts rather than “studying” him from the distance of continental philosophy. Appropriation means that I make his thinking mine and continue what he started, in the same way that, say, Martin Heidegger “appropriated” (and not studied) Friedrich Nietzsche to unfold his own thoughts. Here I am imitating what Heidegger did, not what he said. I am not comparing myself with Heidegger here: I am just following the model provided by great European thinkers, a model of what to do, and not of what to think. Regarding what to think I am following Bennabi, Kusch, and Wynter. Decolonial thinking needs to build its own genealogy

of thought; otherwise it would fall prey to genealogies of thought already established and would, in the process, disregard and devalue all other possibilities. Decolonization of knowledge and of being requires one to engage in rebuilding what was destroyed and to build what doesn't yet exist.

"Immigrant consciousness," in other words, is the assumed condition of existence, an existence out of place: for people of European descent, for being in a place whose history is not the history of their ancestors; for indigenous or "pueblos originarios," who built their history in the land they inhabited, then found themselves out of place when their form of life and their institutions, education, and economy were displaced, destroyed, and replaced with ways of life and the institutions of migrants from European countries; for Africans coming from several parts of Africa, with their own different languages and beliefs, forms of life, and institutions, who found themselves in a land whose histories did not belong to their ancestors and, in contrast to the Europeans, in a land whose social structures placed them at the very bottom of the social scale. "Immigrant consciousness," double consciousness, mestiza consciousness, mulatto consciousness, inter-cultural consciousness (as indigenous people in Ecuador maintain today), maroon consciousness (as it has been established among Afro-Andeans in Ecuador), all are diverse expressions and experiences of the same condition of existence: the *awareness of coloniality of being*, of being out of place in the set of regulations (e.g., cosmology) of "modernity." Briefly stated, there are different modes of experiencing the colonial wound and of engaging the decolonial option. It is interesting to note that "critical" intellectuals came up with ideas such as peripheral and alternative modernities: a complaisant position that pretends to be dissenting, but ends up reproducing the standards with superficial variations. "Immigrant consciousness" (double, mestiza, indigenous, maroon consciousness) encompasses diverse manifestations of an-other paradigm: the paradigm constituted by forms of colonial consciousness whose horizon is no longer that of peripheral or alternative modernities but a pluriversal horizon conceived as transmodernity that begins by assuming "our own modernity"⁴⁰ (see chapter 3).

Sylvia Wynter: What Does It Mean to Be Human?

Frantz Fanon made a passing observation in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) that has become a fundamental proposition being explored in Afro-Caribbean philosophy: "Reacting against the constitutionalist tendency

of the late nineteenth century, Freud insisted that the individual factor be taken into account through psychoanalysis. Fanon substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Besides phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny.⁴¹

The sociogenic principle is one aspect of languaging and knowing.⁴² It is therefore crossed by the differential of power embedded in the modern/colonial world order, through the ranking of languages: "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization."⁴³ The problem that we confront in this chapter is this: the Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will be closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio with his mastery of the French language. *I am not unaware that this is one of man's attitudes face to face with Being.* A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied in that language. What we are getting at becomes plain: mastery of language affords remarkable power.⁴⁴

Sylvia Wynter took Fanon's sociogenic principle to the next step. What is the next step? It is clear after Fanon that we cannot expect Western sciences and political theory to solve the problems created by five centuries of insertion of Western designs into the world beyond imperial Western Europe, and into colonial Europe itself: Ireland and Southern Italy, for example, as well as the Soviet Republics (e.g., colonies) of former Central and Eastern Europe. Briefly, and once more, by imperial Europe and Eurocentrism I mean three aspects, framed spatially, chronologically, and subjectively. They are all three relevant to understand Wynter's decolonization of being.

Spatially, Eurocentrism refers to the Atlantic imperial monarchies, the nation-states (Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, and England), and the supporting cast (Italy and Germany) whose imperial dominions were lesser than the former, although they were not out of the game. It has been pointed out, several times, that the interconnections between marginal-capitalist countries in relation to central-capitalist countries went through a dictatorial political period: Italy and Germany never enjoyed extensive imperial domination; Spain and Portugal did, but had lost it by the nineteenth century, when France and England were in ascendance and "helping" Spanish and Portuguese colonies to "gain" their independence.

Chronologically, Eurocentrism refers to a potent matrix of categories of thoughts that connect and unify all areas of knowledge (what today we describe as natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, and the professional schools [medicine, law, engineer, business, computing]). That colonial matrix of power is legitimized on Greek and Latin categories of thoughts and their translation and unfolding in six modern European imperial languages: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and English. Cast, defended, and promoted in the rhetoric of modernity, progress, salvation, development, and so on, that matrix generated the image of its own totality, which authorized its promoter and defender to disregard, marginalize, ignore, deprecate, reprove, rebuke, attack all knowledge that didn't obey the rules and principles of the (post)modern matrix of knowledge. At that point, the modern matrix (Eurocentrism) became also colonial.

Subjectively, the modern/colonial matrix of knowledge (e.g., coloniality of knowledge) has been created, perfected, transformed, expanded, exported/imported by a particular kind of social agent: in general (and we can go through the biography of the great thinkers and scientists in the Western canon), they were male, they were Christians, they were white, and, as we said, they lived in Western Christendom, which, after the sixteenth century, was translated into Europe. That is to say: the modern/colonial matrix of knowledge has been linked to a kind of subjectivity emerging from the lived experience of white and Christian males who lived and studied in the six countries and languages above mentioned. Although someone like Kepler who was born in Cracovia and started his studies at the university in the city he was born, had the chance nevertheless to pursue his learning and lived experience at the University of Bologna. Being one of the first medieval/renaissance universities, Bologna provided Kepler with the institutional push to his personal genius and intellectual impetus. Today the "Plan Bologna" in Europe is closing the cycle that the University of Bologna started.

These three parameters map the hubris of the zero point. Wynter's "next step" is to envision a *scientia* (and I write it in the Renaissance style to distinguish it from the concept of *science* that unfolded from Galileo to Newton and from Newton to Einstein, as well as from Buffon and Linnaeus to Darwin) that disobeys the hubris of the zero point. I see this move as *decolonial scientia* based on Fanon's sociogenic principle. Fanon's hypothesis, Wynter

argues, is first of all a hypothesis derived from his awareness of reporting in the third person his own experience in the first person (“Look Mom, a Negro”!). The experience, in other words, of Being through the eyes of the imperial Other; the experience of knowing that “I am being perceived, in the eyes of the imperial Other, as not quite human.” Thus, decolonial scientia is the scientia needed not for progress or development, but for liberating the actual and future victims of knowledge upon which progress and development are predicated. It is not the case, most certainly, of studying the Negro problem from the perspective of any of the already established social sciences or humanities. For, if that were the case, sociogenesis would become an object of study rather than being the historical foundation and constitution of future and global epistemic loci of enunciations, geo- and body-politically constituted. This scientia, built on the sociogenic principle (in this case the lived experience of the black man, although this is not the only colonial experience—colonial wound—that would sustain the emerging scientia), makes clear from the start that the mind/body problem (or the soul/body if we take a step back from secularism to Christian theology) only makes sense in the domain of ontogenesis; it is only there that the mind/body problem makes sense.⁴⁵ That the sociogenic principle is not an object of knowledge but rather the signpost of a locus of enunciation and the energy that links knowledge with decolonial subjective formations is a conclusion that derived from Wynter’s argument.

Unlike the “common reality” of a wave phenomenon, however, the sociogenic principle is not a natural scientific object of knowledge. In that if, in the case of humans, this transcultural constant is that of the sociogenic principle as a culturally programmed rather than genetically articulated “sense of self,” with the “property” of the mind or human consciousness being located only in the dynamic processes of symbiotic interaction between the opioid reward and punishment system of the brain and the culture-specific governing code or sociogenic principle (as the semantic activating agent) specific to each of our hybrid nature-culture modes of being, and thereby, of experiencing ourselves as human, then the identification of the hybrid property of consciousness, which such a principle makes possible, would call for another form of scientific knowledge beyond the limits of the natural sciences—including beyond that of neurobiology whose natural-scientific approach to the phe-

nomenon of consciousness is paradoxically based on our present culture's purely biocentric and adaptive conception of what it is to be human.⁴⁶

Long sentences in Wynter's prose are manifestations of her struggle to shift the geography of reasoning. Thus, if modern/imperial epistemology (in its diversity, but always imperial diversity) was spatially, chronologically, and subjectively located, *scientia* (starting from the sociogenic principle) becomes the project of decolonial *scientia* setting up new places or nodes of space, time, and subjectivity. That is, while modern/colonial epistemology was based on theology and secular philosophy and the affirmation of Descartes's "I think, therefore I am," geo- and body-politics start by the negation of such propositions by the *anthropos*. The negation is simultaneously the *anthropos*'s affirmation: the affirmation of being when one thinks and does.

Spatially, decolonial *scientia* is located at the borders (territorial as well as linguistic, subjective, epistemic, ontological) created by the consolidation and expansion of the modern/colonial epistemic matrix described above. This matrix, which emerged in the sixteenth century, was then folded and unfolded in the hands of England and France and projected itself into Asia and Africa, from the late seventeenth to the mid-twentieth century. The leadership was then taken up by the United States and the basic principle and structure of knowledge were expanded by the use of the English language and the meteoric expansion of scientific knowledge and technology. Consequently, decolonial *scientia* responding and delinking from coloniality of knowledge is literally all over the globe (in the same way that modern/imperial science is), and it moves constantly from the "third" to the "first" world, and from the latest Western imperial countries to the "emerging empires" (China, Russia, and perhaps in the near future, India and the Islamic Middle East; further in the future, one can see that in the Andes, under the leadership of Bolivia, the model of Tawantinsuyu will interact with the model of the liberal/colonial state).

Chronologically, decolonial *scientia* denounces—on the one hand—the chronological timeline of the colonial matrix of power and the coloniality of knowledge. And it calls—on the other hand—for rebuilding chronologies of local histories: while in imperial *scientia* connections through time, including epistemic breaks and paradigmatic changes, followed one

another in time, decolonial scientia links nodes in space—the space of colonial histories and decolonial struggles around the world—to which follows today the massive migrations of the “barbarians” to the “civilized regions.” If *double consciousness* and *mestiza consciousness* (Du Bois and Anzaldúa) are two key concepts that give substance to the sociogenic principle (for what are double consciousness and mestiza consciousness if not concepts capturing the fact that people who fall on the side of the racially inferior and sexually abnormal—that is, the anthropos—are seeing themselves through the imperial Other?), then the imperial/modern subject holding and controlling knowledge and, therefore, determining who is authorized to know and what knowledge is useful (for whom?) to have loses the magic effect of its universal legitimacy.

Subjectively, decolonial scientia is embraced by people who either suffer the consequence of the colonial wound or by those who, not having had that experience, have experienced the violence of science and embrace the decolonial option not to become a new savior but to twist the politics of knowledge in which they were educated as modern subjects and modern subjectivities. Contrary to the male, Christian, and Eurocentered subjects and subjectivities that dominated the philosophy of modern/imperial knowledge, the decolonial subject is at the border of non-European languages, religions, epistemologies; subjects that have been racialized and/or categorized as sexually abnormal by imperial knowledge. That is, by subjects whose consciousness of the self is reflected on the perception of the imperial Other; subjects that embrace, in other words, the sociogenic principle as a historical foundation of knowledge as well as by imperial subjects who instead of “saving the colonial Other” without questioning the hubris of the zero point join instead and accept the guidance of the decolonial thinkers. It requires an act of humility to realize that there is no longer room for abstract universals and truth without parenthesis. And it takes a moment of rage and of losing fear to move from the colonial wound to decolonial scientia.

Now, decolonial scientia has three types of tasks ahead. One is to show that the hubris of the zero point enacted a geo- and body-politics of knowledge that consisted in denying that geo-historical locations and racial-sexual body configurations were relevant to knowledge. It denied, in other words, the links between geo-history and knowledge and between biography and epistemology. The second task is to explore the consequences

that Western expansion (today called “globalization”) had for the environment (e.g., natural resources needed by imperial economy) and for the population who were targeted for conversion to Christianity, for civilization, for development, and now for human rights and democracy. That is, to explore global responses, through time (500 years) to globalization, for it is necessary to look at responses globally and avoid the imperial trap that looks at local responses to global designs. The third task is to generate knowledge to build communities in which life (in general, not only human life) has priority over economic gains, economic growth, and economic development, to cultivate knowledge that will subject economic growth to human needs, rather than submit human needs to economic growth and development.

Redrawing the House of Knowledge at the Intersection of Global Linear and Decolonial Thinking

In the twenty-first century, the four spheres of the colonial matrix of power (“coloniality” for short) on which Western civilization built itself as such, and its imperial/colonial legacies all over the non-European world of being, are being disputed, appropriated, and thwarted in two directions: dewesternization and decoloniality. I mean dewesternization in its mainstream discourse (Mahbubani) and its critical dewesternizing one (Shari’ati, Qutb, Komeni), although both types of projects move in quite different directions.⁴⁷ What is being claimed is not the end of Western civilization, but its crisis in the process of becoming one among many and not the one that leads the other toward growth, development, modernization, and happiness. Dewesternization, the spiritual option, and decoloniality are three options that are contributing to delegitimize the global designs of rewesternization (from the left or the right, in politics and economy) cast in the language of democracy and development.⁴⁸ Needless to say, the trajectories I outlined in chapter 1 are not the equivalent of the architect’s plan to build an edifice. They are tendencies that you can hardly find in pure form in any place. However, the trajectories allow us to make distinctions, to understand political and economic orientations in the inter-state system, and to branch into the complexities of always moving borders of colonial and imperial differences, the increasing force and presence of the decolonial political society.

I see two directions in which decoloniality would contribute to eroding and rebuilding the rules of the game and the edifice of Western epistemology. “Disengaging” is not the same as “ignoring.” We cannot disengage from something that is in all of us, today, around the world, including, of course, Bennabi, Kusch, and Wynter. By “disengage/delink/epistemic disobedience” I mean and understand a double movement: unveiling the regional foundations of universal claim to truth as well as the categories of thought and the logic that sustain all branches of Western knowledge, from theology to philosophy, from psychology and psychoanalysis to natural science, from political theory to political economy. The problems are places in front of the disciplines rather than the disciplines in front of the problems.

What is the place of decolonial thinking at the time when global linear thinking has been displaced by—on the one hand—global disputes over managing authority and economy that do not depend any more on partition and division of land, but on control of natural resources, military bases, nuclear weapons, and financial transactions and trades and—on the other—by the international conflicts over the control of the colonial matrix of power in a polycentric world united in dispute by capitalist economy? The concentration of decision power in the sphere of authority and economy is more overwhelming today than twenty years ago because, precisely, of the polycentricity of capital accumulation and the devastating consequences for the life of the planet when political and financial leaders and the media are in a blind and wild race toward death, motivated by the belief in economic growth, global development, and happiness.

There are hundreds of cases, examples, every day. I offer just one, from the *New York Times* front page on 17 February 2008, written by Sara Rimer.⁴⁹ *The Great Gatsby* is a great piece of literature that deserves to be taught; while there are many ways to teach it, the one celebrated by the *New York Times* and the teacher involves the identification of young students (in their late teen years) with the American Dream and the “fantastic” life that Gatsby made for himself. Other possibilities, some of them hinted at by F. Scott Fitzgerald himself, are the individual and social costs of Gatsby’s achievements, costs of which Gatsby himself is well aware. Other readings, still, would be decolonial, helping students to understand what Gatsby means in America and America in the world at the turn of the twentieth century, what America means today at the beginning of the twenty-first century when the enormous costs of a lifestyle based on success are more

obvious, success in personal achievements and personal achievements related to the success of one country at the cost of many others. The young Chinese student featured in the article has as her goal to attend Harvard, receive a degree, and return to China to help the country to “have a faster development.”

That, too, is being where one thinks. The “where” is not just a geographical location, but geopolitical in the sense of how imperially made regions, beyond “natural environment,” shape and conform people dwelling in that region. It is not, of course, the physical space of the region that counts, but the place that the region and its inhabitants occupy in a global order of coloniality. That regions are no longer there to be known, but are engendering knowledge necessary to their survival in building global futures and in delinking from the needs of other regions (e.g., the developed world), for which it is not convenient the people they need to disengage. There are different agendas confronting each other, one type of agenda aiming at subsuming, managing, and controlling (modernity/coloniality), the other not wanting to be managed and controlled or to be included (decoloniality). Thus, “I am where I think.” The “where” is marked in the map of desires and aspirations of a civilization driven by economic and social success, paying enormous costs in wars, refugees, unemployed, new forms of slavery, rather than a civilization driven by the collective desire for well-being and the celebration of life in general, not human life as a singular privilege. Celebrating only the life of a sector we take as “humanitas” at the cost of other sectors of life is already embedded in the civilization of death we are immersed in today: firing eight hundred employees to reduce costs and reward the CEO of a given company is a common procedure of our time. If nothing else, decolonial thinking and the decolonial option can contribute in the large sphere of education to understanding the logic of coloniality driving all of us toward a collective death dressed under the triumphal growth of a global economy.

In this chapter I showed the complementary and conflictive faces of global linear and decolonial thinking and how the latter presupposes a displacement of the very principles of knowledge and understanding on which the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality were constructed, transformed, and maintained. In the next chapter I examine the pursuit of freedom and the correlated search for independent thought or, in other words, for decolonial thinking.