

María Iñigo Clavo

Modernity vs. Epistemodiversity

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1. Facing History: Modernity as Prefix

It is a hallmark of postcolonial theory to question selective, self-flattering accounts of European modernity. Postcolonial theorists from both Europe and the rest of the world have illustrated how ideals of emancipation, equality, freedom, and scientific and industrial development were only possible through their opposites: colonial exploitation, inequality, slavery, torture, and suffering in the Global South.¹ That's why, during the 1990s, theorists felt it was necessary to insist that coloniality was the other face of modernity, the "dark side of the renaissance," as Walter Mignolo famously put it.²

While European theorists such as Habermas have claimed that modernity began in Northern Europe with the Enlightenment in the late seventeenth century, Latin American theorists such as Enrique Dussel see this as a sign of contempt for Spain and Portugal's historic contribution to modern thought, and as yet another indicator of Europe's colonial mentality with regard to Latin American intellectual production.³ Latin American postcolonial theorists have thus situated the birth of Western modernity in 1492 with the "discovery of America," which marks the beginning of the history of international capitalism, globalization, and its intellectual production.

Given that the ultimate goal is to question modernity, does it not seem contradictory to dispute which side holds the patent to it? If Euro-American and Latin American postcolonial thinkers agree that modernity was the origin of all colonial evils, why should we insist on being acknowledged as part of it?

For many theorists, regardless of how postcolonial their work may be, rejecting the genealogy of the modern would involve denying any merit at all to what is still considered by many to be the West's most precious and enduring legacy. The key question then becomes: Must modernity remain a mark of the West? Why do we still feel the need to define ourselves in terms of all those prefixes that locate modernity (anti-, pre-, post-, anti-, counter-) in order to remain in the orbit of Western history, the planetary system that shapes our understanding of the world and generates our frameworks of knowledge?

What are the prefixes retained by modernity used for? In the following I will chart the use over time of the different prefixes attached to modernity in the Latin American context, with a special focus on Brazil. In this way, I hope to demonstrate the contemporary persistence of epistemological symptoms associated with the imperialist conception of the South as a faulty version of the North. These prefixes are the result of a need on the part of the South to

contest, resist, and free itself from the idea of an “Imperial South.”

This insistence on attaching prefixes to modernity seems to show the inability of the West to let go of the notion of modernity as a reference point in historical accounts. But why this inability? Boaventura de Sousa Santos believes we still live amidst modern values – freedom, equality, solidarity, development, empowerment, etc. – and therefore he proposes reconceptualizing these values from a Southern perspective. In this text I will follow Santos’s use of “the South,” signifying not a geographical location but the place of utterance of the oppressed.⁴ Similarly, the term “North” will represent here the economic and intellectual hegemony of Euro-America.

2. Without Modernity There Is No History (of Emancipation): A-Modern, Antimodern

In her classic book *Hegel and Haiti*, Susan Buck-Morss argues that Hegel’s interest in the Haitian Revolution inspired his early masterpiece *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).⁵ However, although Hegel was a contemporary of the Haitian declaration of independence from France, there is little evidence that the master-slave dialectic was understood in colonial terms. Like the French Revolution, the Haitian Revolution was based on the tenets of equality, liberty, and fraternity – only it extended these rights to slaves.

In the years following Haiti’s independence in 1804, European governments began to undermine the political agency of former slaves by refusing to recognize the sovereignty of the new nation. Before long, Hegel had discarded his admiration for the Haitian general Toussaint Louverture, and by 1820 the philosopher considered Haiti to be in a state that Kant termed “guilty immaturity.”⁶ Hegel advocated the recolonization of former colonies: “Against the absolute right of that dominant people who are the present carriers of the degree of development of the world Spirit ... the spirit of other peoples has no right.”⁷

This was consistent with Hegel’s affection for Napoleon, whom he understood to be a “world-historical” personage. It was Napoleon who turned against Louverture, forcing the latter’s resignation, deportation, and the imprisonment which led to his death. Hegel’s version of modernity bears, in this respect, the scars of its German origins, a heritage marked, in the words of Rebecca Comay, by a kind of “mourning sickness” regarding the legacy of the French Revolution. Which is more “modern,” the French Revolution or the reaction that brought Napoleon to power? In the conflict between Napoleon and Louverture – contrary to Hegel’s

understanding – it is Napoleon, and the Europe that empowered him, that would seem to be the representatives of the “antimodern,” insofar as we allow “modern” to signify what the revolutionaries of France and Haiti thought it did.

But of course this is not how the French empire saw things. The newly created Haitian Republic became the most delegitimized state in Latin America, and Napoleon presented Haiti with a bill for its own freedom, in the amount of 150 million francs. Haiti only finished paying it in 1947. Such was the price for Haiti daring to self-abolish slavery and declare itself an agent of its own history.

Also contributing to Europe’s denial of Latin American historical agency was Karl Marx, who saw in Simón Bolívar just another example of “Bonapartism,” or military-led, aristocratic reaction. Lacking a theory of imperialism, Marx was unable to distinguish between counterrevolution and national liberation. Although Marx and Hegel disagreed about the details of the “correct” historical sequence, for both “Latin America was still ‘outside history’ for not having developed political institutions and philosophical thought that would allow it to insert itself in the progressive movement towards freedom characteristic of ‘Universal History.’”⁸ In both cases, the South appears in the narrative of modernity as its opposite, the antimodern. This soon gave way to seeing the South less as opposed to modernity than simply behind it.

But perhaps the question can be phrased differently: Was there really no modernity in Latin America? Or is it that modernity has to be explained in different terms?

3. Southern Modernity behind and under Western History: Copycat Modernity or a Different Modernity?

In the 1990s, Néstor García Canclini spearheaded a debate on Latin American modernity from a cultural studies perspective. Although many countries in Latin America produced their own forms of intellectual modernism in the 1920s – and in many places this was a very splendid moment – even protagonists of Brazilian modernism such as Oswald de Andrade and Mário de Andrade (no relation) admitted that these movements constituted only tiny minorities within illiterate populations living outside any process of modernization. Canclini’s question was, can there be modernism without modernization?⁹

In his “Anthropophagy Manifesto” of 1928, Oswald de Andrade explains how the Latin American “swallowing” of intellectual theories from Europe is an example of anthropophagy, the ritual that frightened Europeans the most. De

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Clara Ianni, *Abaporu*, 2016. Image courtesy of the artist.

Andrade argues that the ability to merge multiple cultures and histories is a peculiarly Brazilian intellectual strength. The manifesto also satirized Latin American thinkers who owe too much to nineteenth-century European writers; de Andrade confronts these thinkers with Western myths concerning “the savage,” and cultural misunderstandings of colonization and anthropophagy. As is well known, from the 1920s onwards the concept of the anthropophagus become one of the richest categories associated with Brazilian identity.

After years of neglect, this category was revived in the 1960s and '70s under the pressure of military dictatorships and debates around “dependency theory,” which sought to understand Latin America’s economic underdevelopment and its dependency on the United States. In the arts, debates raged across the continent: If our economy and culture has been imported from Europe, how can the South overcome this position of being a bastard copy of the North? How can we know what is or is not properly ours? What can be considered a truly Latin American art and philosophy?¹⁰ Or as Marta Traba would ask: Can Pop art occur in Latin America without the existence of a truly accessible mass culture? In the midst of this debate, the category of the anthropophagus reemerged as a way to reclaim the mestizo and anthropophagous nature of the South’s intellectual production, and offered a means for reworking Euro-America concepts without any need to “be authentic,” and without being predestined to represent “cactus, parrots, and palm trees.”¹¹

In his classic text “Nacional por subtração”(1987), Roberto Schwarz seeks to understand the origins, in Brazil, of the neurosis surrounding the category of the imported copy, which he traces back to the previous century. For Schwarz, imported copies presented a false problem that began with the coexistence of contradictory economic systems and values during the early-nineteenth-century era of independence. The “new” values contrasted in every way with old formulas, engendering the feeling of inhabiting a backward country that would never catch up with “true” modernity:

For a few, the colonial heritage seemed a waste that would be overcome with progress. Others saw in it a real country, which should be preserved against absurd imitations. Some even wanted to bring progress and slave labor together, so as not to let either escape, and some others felt that such harmonization already existed and was demoralizing.¹²

This vision of a late-arriving modernity, or a modernity that contradicts itself in its supposed purity, is very similar to the critique, internal to the West, that led to postmodernism in Euro-America. The difference might be that in postcolonial contexts these contradictions were more visible, or even – and this was the demoralizing part – impossible to hide.

4. Postcolonial Modernity on top of Western History: Precocious Postmodernity or Dehistoricization?

Homi Bhabha, who spoke of a colonial “countermodernity” when discussing India, used to say that the postcolonial contexts that shaped the “enlightened subject” in the colonies posed a threat to Western postmodern theory. This is because these contexts were *already* multicultural, mestizo, and chronologically fragmented, and involved subjects in crisis.¹³ Postcolonial encounters prompted continuous negotiations with insurrections of “subjugated knowledges,” as Foucault termed it. All the conditions that Latin America had historically tried to rationalize, escape from, and overcome as the aporia of the continent were now being celebrated in the late-capitalist West.

One of the main banners of Latin American postmodernism was the defense of magical realism, a movement in literature and art influenced by the “irrational” magical beliefs of postcolonial archaic societies. At the same time, several Latin America critics and authors characterized Latin American art and culture as “baroque”: Alejo Carpentier, José Lezama Lima, Nicolás Guillén, Carlos Fuentes, and Octavio Paz, among others, identified the baroque as nothing less than Latin America’s ontological style. But Jorge Luis Marzo suggests that the baroque has been used as a pretext to point out the postmodern – as well as premodern or antimodern – character of Latin America in accordance with the political interests of a particular moment:

To what extent has the baroque responded as an allegory of helplessness, and yet at the same time of the liberation from the modern? How much about this celebration of rhetoric veils an attempt at glorifying an alleged failure and how much about it has been used to generate a powerful political resource?¹⁴

5. History *through* the Modern World-System: (Colonial) Modern World-System and Transmodernity

Inmanuel Wallerstein coined the term “modern world-system,” which reconceptualized

modernity in economic terms to defend the idea that it is not a project whose authorship belongs to Europe, but rather a phenomenon that would have been impossible to carry out without the colonies and a global system of commercial networks. Aníbal Quijano has added that the Latin American contribution was not restricted to the economic, but was ideological as well:

I suggest, then, that the discovery of Latin America generates a profound revolution in the European imaginary and from there in the imaginary of the Europeanized world through domination: there is a shift from the past, as a center of a forever lost golden age, towards the future as the golden age to be conquered or built.¹⁵

To Wallerstein's coinage, Walter Mignolo adds the word "colonial": talking about the "colonial modern world-system" is a way of unearthing the darkest part of the Western-led project. Another formulation comes from Enrique Dussel's essay "Transmodernity and Interculturality." Like Wallerstein and Mignolo, Dussel denies the existence of a unidirectional project that extends from Northern Europe towards the Southern Hemisphere. He explains modernity as a shared project that goes beyond dualist models and can be described as an *incorporative solidarity*: between the first and third worlds, women and men, races and classes. This amounts to saying that the story of modernity has not yet been fully told.¹⁶

Dussel would agree with Boaventura de Sousa Santos that this reconstruction/reparation can only be done on the basis of the experiences of the victims. As W. J. T. Mitchell points out, when Marx wondered about what would happen if commodities could speak, he might as well have asked slaves, or the Haitian revolutionaries.¹⁷ Although speculating about speaking commodities might appear to be an animist notion or a poetic exercise, as we shall see this actually carries a real political import in that it assumes an object to have a soul. When this thinking is applied to slaves, it transforms them into persons with agency, and by extension, transforms how Western subjects understood their relationship with slaves.

6. Modernity and History versus Animism, or the Dissolution of Boundaries: Countermodern

Jürgen Habermas, Bruno Latour, and de Sousa Santos have all focused their efforts on understanding one of the major features of colonial modernity: the separation between the natural and human sciences. Habermas claims that modernity is an unfinished project because

the separation and specialization of scientific knowledge has failed to fulfill one of modernity's major promises, namely, the introduction of scientific knowledge into everyday practices. From an anthropological perspective, Latour proclaims that "we have never been modern"; this is because, although the definitive condition of modernity was the constant mixing of genres, the intellectual basis of modernity was nonetheless constituted on the separation of humans and nonhumans. Without dwelling on this matter, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Latour bases this compelling observation on the theories of anthropologist Philippe Descola, who studied animism and Amerindian cosmologies, in which the separation of nature and society does not exist. These indigenous epistemologies provide us with a platform for questioning the disciplinary boundaries imposed by modern sciences – boundaries that still order our thinking today.

In this regard one can understand why many Western thinkers have in recent years turned to the work of Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who has suggested that animism and perspectivism can be decolonizing forces. In his studies of Amerindian perspectivism, Viveiros de Castro explores the social aspect of relationships between humans and nonhumans. According to his perspectivist theory, many Amerindian cosmologies endow objects with a soul because what constitutes them is the relationships that exist among them. Nothing can be left out of relational processes, since these influence what we are and shape subjectivity. In Amerindian perspectivism, if something has a soul – and Amerindians believe that not only nature, but also inanimate objects have a soul – then that something must also be seen as a person.

If we accept the animist notion that everything is at the same time a person and a part of nature, we can do away with the division between the natural and social sciences. We can also do away with the notion of human nature, according to de Sousa Santos: "There will be no human nature because all nature is human."¹⁸ From the standpoint of Amazonian perspectivism, and contrary to our sciences, to know is not to objectivize but rather the opposite: it consists of embodying, i.e. subjectivizing, because it implies taking on the point of view of that thing which is it necessary to know. Consequently, the object of study becomes an enunciating subject, which implies granting it the status of interlocutor and therefore giving it agency. Amerindian perspectivism has been seen as a way to destabilize Western frameworks of thought, eliminate the disciplinary boundaries that

separate us from “our objects of study,” and open up new frameworks.

This may be why curator Anselm Franke said that his traveling exhibition *Animism: Modernity Through the Looking Glass* was not really about animism. It was instead a reflection on the making of borders. If animism is a limit of the rational imaginary,

what this project suggests is that the limit where the “merely” imaginary begins (which is a border of some significance to art, too) is also operating the political distinction constitutive of any societal order, namely between what has and what hasn’t rightful claims to make on reality – the border of political recognition.¹⁹

7. Beyond Modernity and its Others: Epistemodiversity

With this tour through the prefixes of modernity in Latin America, I hope to have shown how the concept of modernity varies according to time and political need. Another longstanding Western tendency is to treat alterity as a political field. One of the figures that inspired the French Revolution was Rousseau’s noble savage, which itself drew inspiration from a three-volume travelogue written by Baron de Lahontan and published in 1703, after de Lahontan’s travels throughout Latin America.²⁰ Oswald de Andrade’s “Anthropophagy Manifesto” – which he wrote shortly before joining the Communist Party – suggested that Pindorama (the original Tupi name for Brazil in precolonial, matriarchal times) was a model for how community could be built in the modern world. The counterculture of the 1970s, with its proposals for alternative lifestyles outside of capital, also placed great importance on indigenous cosmologies. Current theories of the commons likewise invoke indigenous experiences.

As Hal Foster showed in his classic “The Artist as Ethnographer,” there have always been recurring political claims on spaces of alterity, first by proletarians, then by cultural others. But while these other epistemologies have been a source of inspiration for new forms of self-definition and identification, such movements have engaged in very little historical and political dialogue with indigenous people.

That is why a fear haunts us when we realize that Viveiros de Castro’s Amerindian perspectivism comes from anthropology: historically, anthropology in Brazil hasn’t facilitated the “incorporation” of indigenous and African texts into the country’s heritage, as they have been seen as objects of study rather than producers of knowledge.²¹ Instead, these

indigenous and Afro-Brazilian texts have mainly been used for poetic inspiration by artists and intellectuals looking for reference points of national identity. In “Anthropophagy Manifesto,” de Andrade makes use of European ethnographic literature to explore fantasies of Pindorama’s matriarchal society and its lack of a concept of ownership. Ultimately, de Andrade’s aim is (national) self-definition; he was uninterested in the indigenous political processes taking place in close proximity to him. That’s why the manifesto employs the strategy of “incorporating the Other”: this Other is replaced by its representations, thus negating its real political presence and agency.²² This is what Fernando Coronil calls the “destabilization of the self by the Other,” in which the latter is used as a source of inspiration for projects of change. Coronil argues that this strategy only reinforces polarization, obliterates historical ties, and homogenizes differences.²³

And this strategy has reappeared: in 2015, the exhibition “Variações do Corpo Selvagem” at SESC Ipiranga in São Paulo showed the life and customs of indigenous peoples through photographs taken by Viveiros de Castro. The exhibition focused on Viveiros de Castro himself, comparing his anthropological photographic perspective to his participation in the Brazilian underground scene of the 1970s. It also compared indigenous shamans depicted in the photographs to the *Parangolês* made by Hélio Oiticica for Carnival. The idea of transforming the object of study into an interlocutor, a subject of knowledge and utterance, was not mentioned or used as a curatorial strategy. This was an exhibition about Viveiros de Castro rather than indigenous cosmologies.

It is unclear whether getting an answer about modernity would require a better definition of the concept, or if having such a definition would help us overcome the Western obsession with instrumentalizing, inventing, and dominating the Other. I agree with Frederick Cooper that the concept of modernity is not clear enough to allow for a definition.²⁴ This is why John D. Kelly “hope[s] not for alternative modernities but alternatives to ‘modernity’ as a chronotope necessary for social theory.”²⁵

In his “A Discourse About Science” written in 1988, de Sousa Santos showed how the sciences have been in crisis since the 1970s, when it was accepted that the intentions of scientists influence the results of their experiments.²⁶ This called into question the foundation of empiricism – which assumes that the event being studied is isolated from its context – and in turn undermined science’s universalist aspirations. De Sousa Santos insists that distinctions between subject/object and

human/nature perpetuate colonialism, since these divisions separate those who have rights from those who do not. This includes indigenous peoples who live in a “natural state,” but also rivers, mountains, and forms of memory that can’t be found in human rights discourse. Throughout modernity, Nature (with a capital N) was turned into an object of study so that it could be exploited.

Our aim, then, should be to find things that will help us break the duality of the human and natural sciences (subject/object). This in turn will enable us to rethink the way we organize disciplinary boundaries. If it has been acknowledged that the organization of scientific objectivity and reason depends on capitalist exploitation, why do we continue to uncritically uphold the modern ways in which knowledge is organized?

To advance this aim, it is essential to search through forms of knowledge that were ignored by modernity. This is one of the beliefs underlying the work being undertaken at the Federal University of Southern Bahia, which has abolished the distinctions between disciplines for first-year undergraduate students. The university also includes local knowledge in its curricula by employing local and traditional *mestres* to work with students, and by teaching indigenous cosmologies in class. This is a crucial step towards wider recognition of these traditions, which are often undervalued in the region, and whose practitioners generally lead marginal and precarious lives. Rather than preserving these traditions in an academic encyclopedia of knowledge, the Federal University of Southern Bahia is attempting to preserve their modes of production, which now coexist with a globalized economy. This is a first step in promoting the epistemodiversity that modernity – regardless of the prefix used – was unable to construct.

What is the role of art in this process of transformation? Art, which is also a subalternized form of knowledge, has long made room for the nomadic way of thinking in which different disciplines dialogue with each other, heedless of borders. That’s why art often precedes theory. It is startling how much de Sousa Santos’s “A Discourse About Science” echoes artistic rhetoric and practice:

It will not be long before particle physics shall speak of particles playing, or biology of the molecular theatre, or astrophysics of the heavenly text, or chemistry of the biography of chemical reactions. Each of these analogies unveils a corner of the world ... We might wonder whether it is possible, for example, to do a philological

analysis of an urban project, to interview a bird, or to perform participant observation among computers.²⁷

Art has always been able to gather critical tools of action from different contexts of knowledge in order to intervene in institutions, politics, and social problems. This makes it a privileged place to find new strategies for epistemodiversity. At the same time, art has always maintained a strict border between itself and popular culture, to ensure that art is on the same level as the Western sciences. What if this border disappeared? How do we construct a new language that uses popular knowledge not as a theme for contemporary art, but as a spark for creating new regimes of representation and new structures of thought? How can contemporary art contribute to the learning of epistemodiversity?

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- 1
Likewise, subaltern insurgencies, whether indigenous or African American, were crucial to our history, even though national narratives still don't recognize them in their scope. See Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina," *Anuario Mariateguiano* 9, no. 9 (1997).
- 2
Walter Dignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- 3
Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity," *boundary 2* 20, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 65–76.
- 4
Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
- 5
Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and University History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).
- 6
Kant used the term "verschuldeten," which Enrique Dussel interprets as "guilty immaturity." See Dussel "Eurocentrism and Modernity."
- 7
G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sections 246 and 247 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957). Translation from Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity."
- 8
Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La poscolonialidad explicada a los niños* (Bogotá: Editorial Universidad del Cauca, Instituto Pensar, Universidad Javeriana, 2005), 15. Translation mine.
- 9
Canclini concluded that it was precisely the constant questioning of Latin American identities and contradictions that was the very condition of Latin American modernism, and which defined the relationship between writers and their audiences. Ernesto Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
- 10
See Leopoldo Zea, *The Latin American Mind*, trans. James H. Abbott and Lowell Dunham (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); and Zea, *Latin America and the World*, trans. Beatrice Berler and Frances Kellam Hendricks (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969).
- 11
Jorge Luis Marzo, *La memoria administrada. El barroco y lo hispano* (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2010).
- 12
Roberto Schwarz, "Nacional por subtração," in *Que horas São?* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987), 43. Translation mine.
- 13
"If acknowledged, [this countermodernity] would question the historicism that analogically links, in a linear narrative, late capitalism and the fragmentary, simulacral, pastiche symptoms of postmodernity. This linking does not account for the historical traditions of cultural contingency and textual indeterminacy (as forces of social discourse) generated in the attempt to produce an 'enlightened' colonial or postcolonial subject, and it transforms, in the process, our understanding of the narrative of modernity and the 'values' of progress." Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 248.
- 14
Marzo, *La memoria administrada*, 202.
- 15
Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder," 12.
- 16
Enrique Dussel, "Transmodernity and Interculturality: An Interpretation from the Perspective of Philosophy of Liberation," *Transmodernity* 1, no. 3 (2012).
- 17
W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays of Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 196.
- 18
De Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*, 46.
- 19
In Maurizio Lazzarato, Sabine Folie, Anselm Franke, and Jimmie Durham, *Animism: Modernity through the Looking Glass* (Cologne: Walther König, 2012).
- 20
"Contemporaries have the need for a country and people upon whom they are able to project their dreams of golden age." The three volumes of de Lahontan's travelogue are *Nouveaux voyages, Mémoires de l'Amérique septentrionale*, and *Dialogues curieux entre l'anteur et un sauvage*. See Tzvetan Todorov, *Nosotros y los otros* (Madrid: Siglo XXI Editores, 1991).
- 21
See Antonio Riserio, *Testos e Tribos: Poéticas Extraocidentais nos trópicos brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1993).

22

Barthes also describes two ways of incorporating the Other: "Inoculation, in which the other is absorbed only to the extent necessary to make it innocuous; and incorporation, where the other becomes incorporeal by means of its representation." In the latter case, "representation works as a substitute for the active presence – naming it is equivalent to not knowing it." Hal Foster, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (New York: The New Press 1998).

23

Fernando Coronil, "Más allá del occidentalismo: hacia categorías geohistóricas no-imperiales," in *Teorías sin disciplinas: Latinoamericanismo, Poscolonialidad y Globalización en Debate*, eds. Santiago Castro-Gómez and Eduardo Mendieta (México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1998), 139.

24

"Scholars should not try for a slightly better definition so that they can talk about modernity more clearly. They should instead listen to what is being said in the world. If modernity is what they hear, they should ask how it is being used and why." Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 115.

25

John D. Kelly, "Alternative Modernities or an Alternative to 'Modernity': Getting out of the Modernity Sublime," in *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies*, ed. Bruce M. Knauft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 261.

26

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "A Discourse on the Sciences," *Review* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 39.

27

Ibid.

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