

# Coloniality at Large

## The Western Hemisphere in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity

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(Translated by Michael Ennis)

BEFORE THE COLD WAR, THE CLOSEST THE UNITED STATES HAD EVER COME to a permanent foreign policy was in our relationship with the nations of the Western Hemisphere. In 1823 the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed our determination to insulate the Western Hemisphere from the contests over the European balance of power, by force if necessary. And for nearly a century afterward, the causes of America's wars were to be found in the Western Hemisphere: in the wars against Mexico and Spain, and in threats to use force to end Napoleon III's effort to install a European dynasty in Mexico (Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 1999: 703).

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ON THE IMAGINARY OF THE  
MODERN / COLONIAL WORLD

The thesis that I propose and defend here is that the emergence of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” gave way to a radical change in the imaginary and power structures of the modern/colonial world (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992). This change not only had an enormous impact in restructuring the modern/colonial world, but it also had and continues to have important repercussions for South-North relations in the Americas, for the current configuration of “Latinidad” in the United States, as well as for the diverse Afro-American communities in the North, South, and Caribbean.

I use the concept of “imaginary” in the sense in which the Martinican intellectual and writer Eduardo Glissant uses it (1996). For Glissant “the imaginary” is the symbolic world through which a community (racial, national, imperial, sexual, etc.) defines itself. In Glissant, the term has neither the common meaning of a mental image, nor the more technical meaning that it has in contemporary psychoanalytic discourses, in which the imaginary forms a structure of differentiation between the symbolic and the real. Departing from Glissant, I give the term a geo-political meaning and use it in terms of the foundation and formation of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world-system. The image of Western civilization that we have today is the result of the long process of constructing the “interior” of that imaginary, from the transition of the Mediterranean as center to the formation of the Atlantic commercial circuit, just as it constructed its “exteriority.” In the West, men and women of letters, travelers, statesmen of every kind, ecclesiastical functionaries, and Christian thinkers have constructed the “interior” image. The interior image was always accompanied by an “internal exterior,” which is to say, by an “exteriority” but not by an “exterior.” European Christianity, until the end of the fifteenth century, was on the margins of the world system, and had identified itself with Japhet and the West, distinguishing itself from Asia and Africa. This Occident of Japhet was also the Europe of Greek mythology. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the triple concurrence of the defeat of the Moors, the expulsion of the Jews, and European expansion across the Atlantic, Moors, Jews, and Amerindians (and, with time, African slaves as well) all became configured,

in the Western, Christian imaginary, as the difference (exteriority) in the interior of the imaginary. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuit missions in China added a new dimension of “exteriority”—the outside that is within precisely because it contributed to the definition of itself. The Jesuits contributed, in the extremes (Asia and America), to constructing the imaginary of the Atlantic commercial circuit that, with various historical versions, came to shape the contemporary image of Western civilization, which I will return to in section iv. However, the imaginary about which I am speaking is not only constituted in and by colonial discourse, including colonial discourse’s own internal differences (e.g., Las Casas and Sepúlveda; or the discourse from northern Europe, which from the end of the seventeenth century drew a border between itself and southern Europe, thus establishing the imperial difference), but it is also constituted by the responses (or in certain moments, the lack of responses) of the communities (empires, religions, civilizations) that the Western imaginary involved in its own self-description. Although these features are planetary, in this article I will limit myself to examining the responses from the Americas to the discourse and integrated politics that in different moments differentiated Europe first, then the Western Hemisphere, and, finally, the North Atlantic.

One might ask, “What do I mean by modern/colonial world or modern/colonial world system?” I take as my point of departure the metaphor of the modern world system proposed by Wallerstein (1974). The metaphor has the advantage of marking an historical and relational framework for reflections that escape the national ideologies under which continental and sub-continental imaginaries were forged, as much in Europe as in the Americas, over the last two hundred years. I am not interested in determining how old the world system is, whether it is five hundred or five thousand years old (Gunder, Frank, and Gills 1993). I am even less interested in knowing the age of modernity or capitalism (Arrighi 1994). What interests me is the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit in the sixteenth century, which I consider fundamental to the history of capitalism and modernity/coloniality. I am not interested in arguing about whether or not there was commerce prior to the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit, before the sixteenth century. Rather, I am interested in the impact that the

emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit had on the formation of the modern/colonial world in which we are living and bearing witness and on the global transformations that accompanied that moment. Although I take the idea of the world system as my point of departure, I stray from it to introduce the concept of “coloniality” as the other side (the darker side?) of modernity. By using “coloniality” I do not mean to say that the metaphor of the world system has not considered colonialism. On the contrary, what I assert is that the metaphor of the modern world system leaves in darkness the coloniality of power (Quijano 1997) and the colonial difference (Mignolo 1999, 2000). Consequently, the modern world system is only conceived from its own imaginary, and not from the conflictive imaginary that rises up with and from the colonial difference. Indigenous rebellions and Amerindian intellectual production from the sixteenth century on, just like the Haitian Revolution at the beginning of the nineteenth century, are constitutive moments of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world and not mere occurrences in a world constructed from Hispanic discourses (for example, the Sepúlveda/Las Casas debate about the “nature” of the Amerindian, in which the Amerindian had no place to give his or her opinion; or the French Revolution, which is considered by Wallerstein the foundational moment of the geo-culture of the modern world system) (Wallerstein 1991a, 1991b, 1995). In this sense, the contribution of Anibal Quijano, in an article co-written with Wallerstein (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992) is a fundamental theoretical turn in outlining the conditions under which the coloniality of power (Quijano 1997; 1998) was and is a strategy of “modernity,” from the moment of the expansion of Christianity beyond the Mediterranean (America, Asia), which contributed to the self-definition of Europe, and has been indissociable from capitalism since the sixteenth century. This moment in the construction of the colonial imaginary, that later will be taken up and transformed by England and France in the project of the “civilizing mission,” does not appear in the history of capitalism given by Arrighi (1994). In Arrighi’s reconstruction, the history of capitalism is seen from “within” (in Europe), or from within toward the outside (from Europe toward the colonies). Therefore, from Arrighi’s perspective, the coloniality of power is invisible. Consequently, capitalism, like modernity, appears as a European

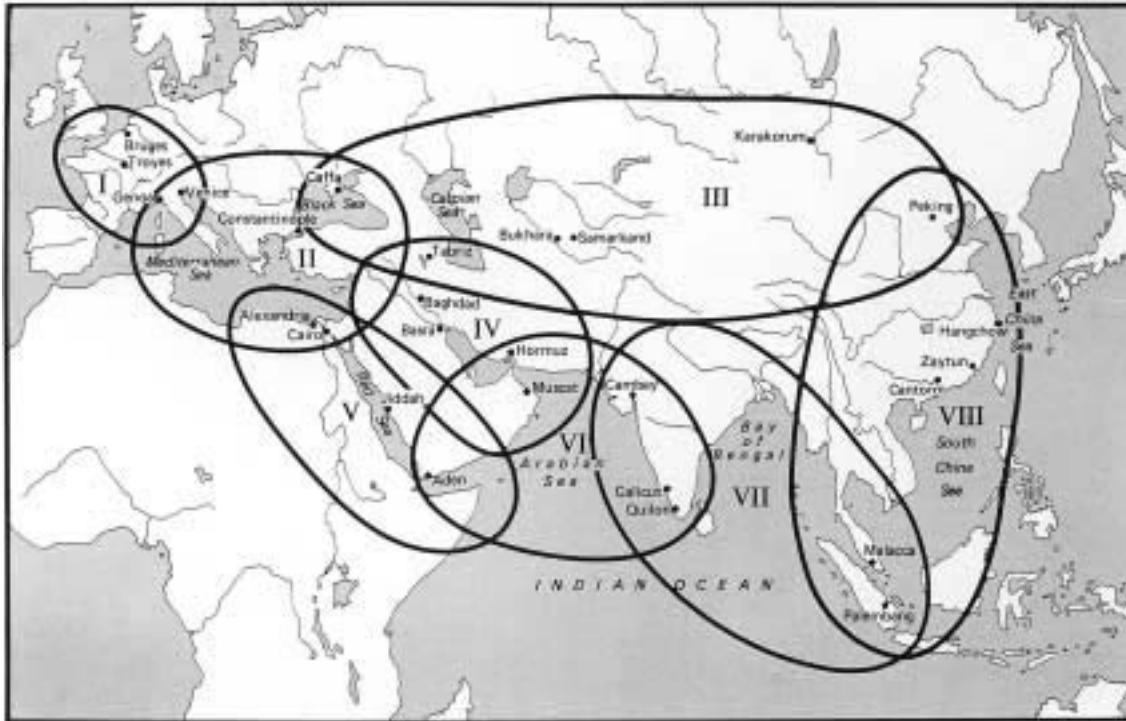


Figure 1. Some of the commercial circuits existent between 1300 and 1550, according to Abu-Lughod (1989). Up to this date, there were also circuits in North Africa that connected Cairo, Fez, and Timbuktu. *From Before European Hegemony by Janet L. Abu-Lughod. Copyright 1989, Oxford University Press, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.*

phenomenon and not a global one, in which all the world participates, albeit with distinct positions of power. That is, the coloniality of power is the axis that organized and organizes the colonial difference, the periphery as nature.

Under this general panorama, I am interested in recalling a paragraph by Quijano and Wallerstein that offers a framework through which to understand the importance of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” in the imaginary of the modern/colonial world since the beginning of the nineteenth century:

The modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century. The Americas as a geo-social construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of the geo-social entity, the Americas, was the constitutive act of the modern world system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas (1992: 449).

Leaving aside the particularistic and triumphalistic connotations that the paragraph could invoke, as well as a discussion of whether or not there would have been a global capitalist economy without the riches of American mines and plantations, the fact is that the capitalist economy changed course and accelerated with the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit. The transformation of the Aristotelian conception of slavery was required as much by the new historical conditions as by the human type (e.g., Negro, African) that was identified from the beginning of that moment with slavery and established new relations between race and labor. Starting from this moment, from the moment of the emergence and consolidation of the Atlantic commercial circuit, it was already impossible to conceive modernity without coloniality, the side silenced by the reflexive image that modernity (e.g., the intellectuals, official state discourses) constructed of itself and that postmodern discourse critiques, from the interiority of modernity, as a self-image of power. Postmodernism, self-conceived in the unilateral line of the history of the modern world, continues to obscure coloniality and maintains a universal and monotopical logic—from the left as well as the right—from Europe (or the North Atlantic) toward the outside. The colonial difference (imagined in the pagan, the barbarian, the underdeveloped) is a passive

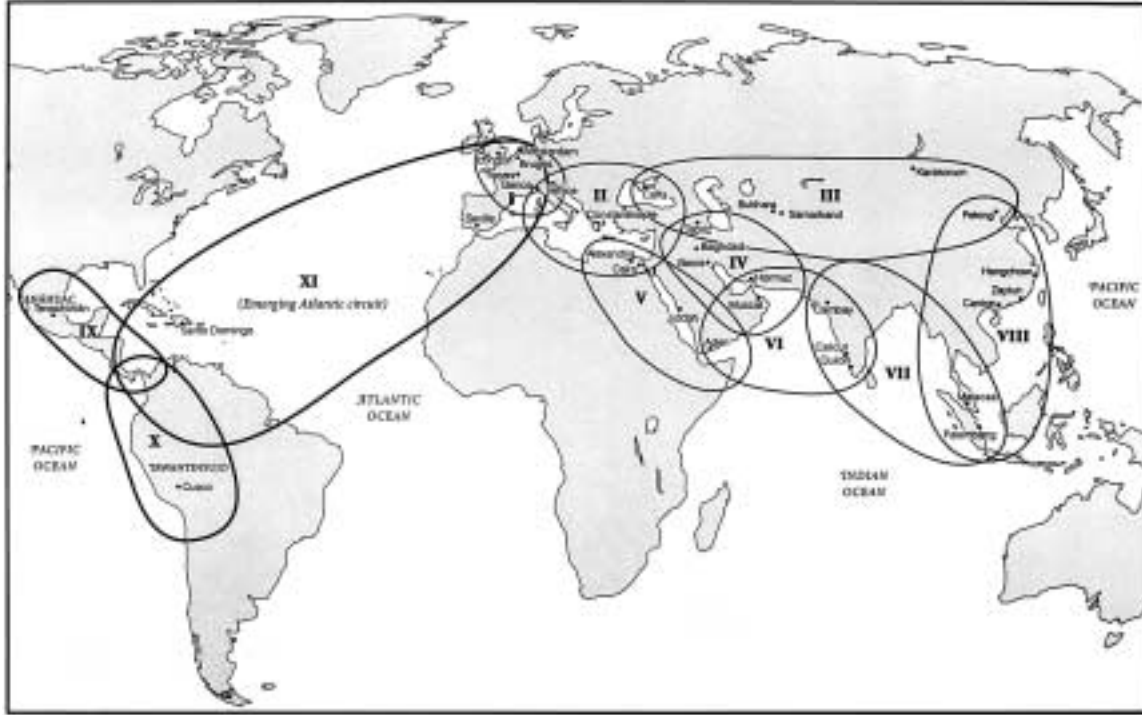


Figure 2. The emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit connected the circuits shown in Fig.1 with at least two circuits that had been disconnected until then: the commercial circuit whose center was Tenochtitlan and extended through Anahuac, and the circuit whose center was Cuzco and extended through Tawantinsuyu. Map by Walter Mignolo, based on the map in Fig. 1.

place in postmodern discourses. What postmodernism does not want to say is that it is in reality a passive place in modernity and in capitalism. The visibility of the colonial difference in the modern world began to be noted with the decolonization (or independence) movements from the end of the eighteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. The emergence of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” was one of those movements.

However, we should remember that the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit had the particularity (and this aspect is important for the idea of the “Western Hemisphere”) of connecting the commercial circuits already existent in Asia, Africa, and Europe (the commercial network in which Europe was the most marginal space to the center—China [Abud-Lughod 1989; Wolf 1982]) with Anahuac and Tawantinsuyu, the two great circuits, disconnected until then from the aforementioned circuits, as much by the Pacific as by the Atlantic (Mignolo 2000).

The imaginary of the modern/colonial world is not the same when viewed from the history of ideas of Europe as when looked at from the perspective of colonial difference: the histories forged by the coloniality of power in the Americas, Asia, or Africa. These are the histories of the cosmologies prior to contact with Europe since the sixteenth century, just as in the constitution of the modern colonial world the states and societies of Africa, Asia, and the Americas had to respond and responded in different ways and at different historical moments. Europe, from Spain, took the sword to North Africa and Islam in the sixteenth century; China and Japan were never under Western imperial control, although they could not avoid responding to its expansionary efforts, above all since the nineteenth century, when Islam renewed its relations with Europe (Lewis 1997). South Asia, India, and several Sub-Saharan African nations were the objective of emergent colonial powers—England, France, Belgium, and Germany. The configuration of modernity in Europe and coloniality in the rest of the world (with exceptions, to be sure, as is the case in Ireland) was the hegemonic image sustained in the coloniality of power that makes it difficult to think that modernity could have existed without coloniality. Indeed, coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and not derivative of it.



The Americas, above all in the early experiences of the Caribbean, Mesoamerica, and the Andes, established the model for the imaginary of the Atlantic circuit. Beginning with this moment, we find transformations and adaptations of the model of colonization and of the religious-epistemological principles that were imposed from then on. There are numerous examples that can be invoked here, beginning in the sixteenth century, and fundamentally in the Andes and Mesoamerica (Adorno 1986; Gruzinski 1988; Florescano 1994; McCormack 1991). I prefer, however, to summon more recent examples, in which modernity/coloniality persists in its dual aspect. Indeed, the imaginary persists as much in its hegemonic imaginary, despite its transformations, as in the constant adaptations from the planetary colonial exteriority. This is an exteriority that is not necessarily outside of the West (which would mean a total lack of contact), but which is an interior exteriority and exterior exteriority (the forms of resistance and opposition trace the interior exteriority of the system). This duality fits very well, for example, the way in which the Spanish state, as well as different American states, celebrated the 500-year anniversary of the discovery of America in the face of indigenous movements and intellectuals that protested the celebration, attempting to re-inscribe the history of the conquest. The Laguna novelist, Leslie Marmon Silko, included a “map of the five hundred years” in her novel *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), published one year before the quincentennial.

The first declaration from the Lacandon Forest, in 1994, began by saying, “We are the product of 500 years of struggle.” Rigoberta Menchú, in a report read at the conference organized by sociologist Pablo González Cassanova on democracy and the multi-ethnic state in Latin America, also evoked the marker of 500 years of oppression:

The history of the Guatemalan people can be interpreted as a concentration of the diversity of America, of the chosen fight, forged from the bases and in many parts of America, still maintained in forgetfulness. Forgetfulness not because it is wanted, but because a tradition in a culture of oppression has returned. Forgetfulness that requires a fight and a resistance by our peoples that has a 500-year history. (Menchú 1996: 125)

Thus, this frame of 500 years is the frame of the modern/colonial world from distinct perspectives of its imaginary, which does not reduce the confrontation between the Spanish and Amerindians, but extends it to Creoles (white, black, and mestizo) springing from the importation of African slaves, whom the white European population transplanted in their own interest, in the majority of cases to the Americas. That ethno-raciality is the point of articulation of the imaginary, constructed in and beginning with the Atlantic commercial circuit, does not exclude aspects of class, which were given entrance in the distributions and transformations that slavery suffered, as was known in the Mediterranean beginning in 1517, when the first fifteen thousand slaves were transported from Africa. Nor does it deny the aspects of gender and sexuality that Tressler analyzed recently (1995). I mean to say only that the ethno-raciality became the machinery of colonial difference. Beginning with the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews, it was configured from the debates over the place of the Amerindians in the economy of Christianity, and, finally, by the exploitation and silencing of African slaves. It was with and from the Atlantic commercial circuit that slavery became synonymous with blackness.

This view is not a description of colonialism, but of coloniality, of the construction of the modern world in the exercise of the coloniality of power. It is also a description of the responses from the colonial difference to the programmed coercion that the coloniality of power exercises. The imaginary of the modern/colonial world arose from the complex articulation of forces, of voices heard or silenced, of memories compact or fractured, of histories told from only one side that suppress other memories, and of histories that were and are told from the double consciousness that generates the colonial difference. In the sixteenth century, Sepúlveda and Las Casas contributed, in different ways and from different political positions, to the construction of colonial difference. Guaman Poma or Ixtlixochitl thought and wrote from the colonial difference in what was situated by the coloniality of power. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the sociologist and black intellectual, W. E. B. Du Bois, introduced the concept of “double consciousness,” which captures the dilemma of subjectivities formed within the colonial difference: that is, the experiences of anyone who lived and lives modernity

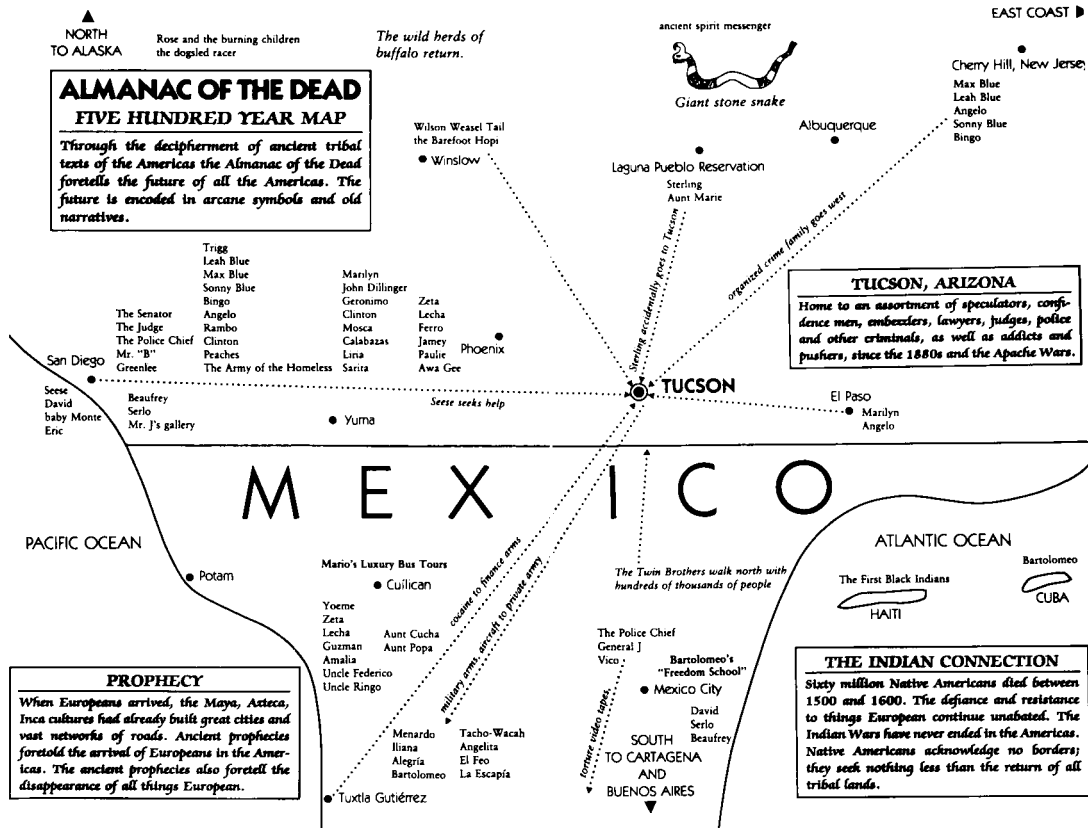


Figure 3. The Americas in the space of five hundred years, according to the Laguna novelist Leslie Marmon Silko. From *Almanac of the Dead* by Leslie Marmon Silko. Copyright 1991, Simon and Schuster, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Simon and Schuster.

from coloniality. This is a strange sensation in this America, says Du Bois (1904), for anyone who does not have a true self-consciousness but whose consciousness must form itself and define itself with relation to the “other world.” That is, the consciousness lived from the colonial difference is double because it is subaltern. Colonial subalternity generates diverse double consciousnesses, not only African American, which is Du Bois’s experience, but also the “consciousness that gave birth to Rigoberta Menchú” (1982) or “the consciousness of the new mestiza” in Gloria Anzaldúa (1987). Let us cite Du Bois:

It is a particular sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of the others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body. . . . The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. (1904: 8-9)

The beginning of double consciousness is, in my argument, the characteristic of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world from the margins of the empires (from the Americas, Southeast Asia, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania). Double consciousness, in sum, is the consequence of the coloniality of power and the manifestation of subjectivities forged in the colonial difference. The local histories vary because the history of Europe was changing in the process of forming itself in the expansive movement of the West. In the continental and sub-continental divisions established by Christian symbolic cartography (e.g., the continental trilogy of the known world at that time, Europe, Africa, and Asia), the colonial horizon of the Americas is foundational to the imaginary of the modern world. The emergence of the “Western Hemisphere,” as an idea, was a moment of the imaginary arising in and with the Atlantic commercial circuit. The particularity of the image of the “Western Hemisphere” marked the insertion of the Creole descendents of Europeans, in both Americas, into the modern/colonial world.

This insertion was, at the same time, the consolidation of the Creole double consciousness that was forging itself in the same process of colonization.

CREOLE DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS  
AND THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

The idea of the “Western Hemisphere” (which only appears as such in cartography at the end of the eighteenth century) establishes an ambiguous position. America simultaneously constitutes difference and sameness. It is the other hemisphere, but it is Western. It is distinct from Europe (of course, it is not the Orient), but it is bound to Europe. It is different, however, from Asia and Africa, continents and cultures that do not form part of the Western Hemisphere. But who defines such a hemisphere? For whom is it important and necessary to define a place of possession and difference? Who experienced the colonial difference as Creoles of Hispanic (Bolívar) and Anglo-Saxon (Jefferson) descent?

As we might expect, what each one understood by “Western Hemisphere” (although the expression originated in the English part of the Americas) differs, and does so in a manner that is far from trivial. In the “Carta de Jamaica,” which Bolívar wrote in 1815 and sent to Henry Cullen, “a gentleman of this island,” the enemy was Spain. Bolívar’s references to “Europe” (the north of Spain) were not references to an enemy but the expression of a certain surprise before the fact that “Europe” (which supposedly Bolívar would locate at that time in France, England, and Germany) would show itself to be indifferent to the struggles for independence that were occurring during those years in Hispanic America. Considering that England was already a developing empire with several decades of colonization experience in India and the enemy of Spain, it is possible that Mr. Cullen received Bolívar’s diatribes against the Spanish with interest and pleasure. The “black legend” remained a trademark in the imaginary of the modern/colonial world.

On the other hand, Jefferson’s enemy was England, although, contrary to Bolívar, Jefferson did not reflect on the fact that Spain was not incensed by the independence of the United States of North America. With this I wish to

say that the crossed references, of Jefferson toward the south and Bolívar toward the north, really were crossed references. While Bolívar imagined, in his letter to Cullen, the possible political organization of America (which in his imaginary was Hispanic America) and speculated starting from the suggestions of a dubious writer of dubious stock, Abe de Pradt (Bornholdt 1944: 201-21), Jefferson looked with enthusiasm on the independence movements in the South, although he was suspicious of the path of their political future. In a letter to Baron Alexander von Humboldt, dated December 1813, Jefferson thanked him for sending astronomical observations after the journey that Humboldt had made through South America and emphasized the opportunity of the trip in the moment when “those countries” were in the process of “becoming actors on their stage,” adding:

That they will throw off their European dependence I have no doubt; but in what kind of government their revolution will end I am not so certain. History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free, civil government . . . but in whatever governments they end they will be “American” governments, no longer to be involved in the never-ceasing broils of Europe. (1813: 22)

For his part, Bolívar expressed vehemently:

I want more than anything to see the formation in America of the greatest nation in the world, less for its extension and riches than for its liberty and glory. Although I aspire to the perfection of the government of my homeland, I cannot persuade myself that the New World is for the moment governed by a great republic. (1815: 25)

While Bolívar writes of the “hemisphere of Columbus,” Jefferson spoke of the hemisphere that “America has for itself.” In reality, Bolívar and Jefferson thought about two Americas. And they were different geographically too. The Iberian America extended to what are today California and Colorado, while Anglo-Saxon America did not go further west than Pennsylvania, Washington, and Atlanta.



Figure 4. The Hispanic and Portuguese possessions in the Americas until the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to Eric R. Wolf. *From Europe and the People without History* by Eric R. Wolf. Copyright 1982, The Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with permission of University of California Press.

Where they met was in the way they referred to their respective metropol, Spain and England. Referring to the conquest, Bolívar underscored the “barbarities of the Spanish” as “barbarities that the present age has rejected as fabulous, because they seem beyond human perversity” (1815:17). Jefferson refers to the English as exterminators of the Native Americans (“extermination of this race in *our* America,” emphasis added, WM), as another chapter “in the English history of the same colored man in Asia, and of the brethren of their own color in Ireland, and wherever else Anglo-mercantile cupidity can find a two-penny interest in deluging the earth in human blood” (1813: 24). Even though the references were crossed, there was this in common between Bolívar and Jefferson: the idea of the Western Hemisphere was linked to the rising of Anglo and Hispanic Creole consciousness. The emergence of black Creole consciousness in Haiti was different because it was limited to French colonialism and the African heritage. French colonialism, like English colonialism in the Caribbean, did not have the force of English immigration that was the foundation of the United States. Nor did French colonialism have the legacies of the strong Hispanic colonialism. Black Creole consciousness, contrary to white Creole consciousness, was not inherited from colonizers and emigrants. Rather, it was inherited from slavery: the idea of a “Western Hemisphere” or, as Martí would say later, “our America,” was not common among black Creoles. In sum, “Western Hemisphere” and “our America” are fundamental figures of the Creole imaginary, Saxon and Iberian, but not of the Amerindian imaginary (in the North and in the South) or the Afro-American imaginary (as much in Latin America as in the Caribbean and North America). We know, for example, what Jefferson thought of the Haitian revolution and “that race of men” (Jefferson 1984). Creole consciousness in relation to Europe was forged as a geo-political consciousness more than a racial one. However, Creole consciousness as a racial consciousness was forged internally in the difference with Amerindian and Afro-American populations. The colonial difference was transformed and reproduced during the national period, and it is that transformation that has been termed “internal colonialism.” Internal colonialism is, then, the colonial difference exercised by the leaders of national construction. This aspect of the formation of white Creole



consciousness is what transformed the imaginary of the modern/colonial world system and established the basis for internal colonialism that crosses every period of national formation, as much in Iberian America as in Anglo-Saxon America (Nelson 1998). The ideas of “America” and the “Western Hemisphere” (not the “West Indies,” which was a Hispanic designation for colonial territories) were imagined as places of possession and the right to self-determination. Although Bolívar thought of his nation as belonging in the rest of America (Hispanic), Jefferson thought about something more indeterminate, although what he thought was the memory of Saxon colonial territoriality and a territory that had not been configured by the idea of “the West Indies.” “The West Indies” was the distinct mark of Hispanic colonialism that differentiated its possessions in America from those in Asia (e.g., the Philippines), which were identified as the “East Indies.” In the formation of New England, on the other hand, “West Indies” was a foreign concept. When the expression was introduced into English, “West Indies” was fundamentally used to designate the English Caribbean. What was clear for both Bolívar and Jefferson was the geo-political separation from Europe, from a Europe that in one case had its center in Spain, and in the other case, in England. Since the previous designations (West Indies, America) were formulated in the Spanish and European consciousness, “Western Hemisphere” was the necessary, distinctive sign for the imaginary of post-independence white Creole consciousness. The Creole consciousness was not, to be sure, a new event, since there would not have been independence, in the North or South, without it. What was new and important in Jefferson and Bolívar was the moment of transformation of the colonial Creole consciousness into a postcolonial and national Creole consciousness, and the emergence of internal colonialism against the Amerindian and Afro-American populations.

From the perspective of black Creole consciousness, as Du Bois describes, we can say that the white Creole consciousness is a double consciousness that was not recognized as such. The denial of Europe was not, either in Hispanic America or in Anglo-Saxon America, the denial of Europeaness, since both cases, and in every impulse of white Creole consciousness, they tried to be American without ceasing to be European, by being Americans who were still different from Amerindians and Afro-Americans.

If Creole consciousness was defined with respect to Europe in geo-political terms, in racial terms its relation to black Creoles and Amerindian peoples defined it. Creole consciousness lived (and still lives) as double, although it did not and does not recognize itself as such. It was recognized instead in the homogeneity of the national imaginary and, from the beginning of the twentieth century, in *mestizaje* as the contradictory expression of homogeneity. The celebration of the pure *mestizaje* by blood says it all. The formation of the nation-state required homogeneity more than dissolution; therefore, the celebration of heterogeneity was unthinkable, or, better, heterogeneity had to be hidden. If it had not been thus, if the white Creole consciousness had recognized itself as double, we would not have the problems of identity, multiculturalism, and pluriculturalism that we have in the United States, Hispanic America, and the Caribbean. Jefferson wrote:

The European nations constitute a separate division of the globe; their localities make them part of a distinct system; they have a set of interests of their own in which it is our business to never engage ourselves. America has a hemisphere to itself (1813: 12).

Jefferson denies Europe, not Europeaness. The Haitian revolutionaries Toussaint l'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, on the other hand, deny Europe and Europeaness (Dayan 1998: 19-25). Directly or indirectly, it was the African Diaspora and not the Western Hemisphere that fed the imaginary of the Haitian revolutionaries. On the other hand, the vehemence with which Bolívar and Jefferson proposed the separation from Europe was motivated by knowing themselves and feeling themselves to be, in the last instance, Europeans on the margin, Europeans that were not Europeans, but who wanted to be so at their very core. This white Creole double consciousness, of different intensity in the colonial and national periods, was the sign and the legacy of the independent intellectuality of nineteenth-century national consciousness. I repeat that the characteristic of this double consciousness was not racial but geo-political and defined itself in relation to Europe. The double consciousness was not manifested, to be sure, in relation to Amerindian or Afro-American components of the population. From

the Creole point of view, how to be Creole and Indian or black at the same time, was not a problem that had to be resolved. In this context—in relation to Amerindian and Afro-American communities—white Creole consciousness defined itself as homogeneous and different. If the white Creoles did not realize what their double consciousness was due to, I suggest that one of the traits of the conceptualization of the Western Hemisphere was the integration of America into the West, which was not possible for black Creole consciousness: Africa, because of its geographic localization, never was part of the Western geo-political imaginary. Du Bois was not permitted, like Guaman Poma de Ayala or Garcilaso de la Vega in the sixteenth century, to feel himself part of Europe or as some form of European on the margin. Varied forms of double consciousness, finally, were the consequences and are the legacies of the modern/colonial world.

THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THE  
GEO-CULTURE OF THE MODERN / COLONIAL  
WORLD SYSTEM

One of the traits that distinguishes the processes of decolonization in the Americas in the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century is, as has been noted by Klor de Alva (1992), the fact that decolonization was in the hands of “Creoles” rather than “natives,” as happened in twentieth-century Africa and Asia. There is, however, another important element to keep in mind: the first wave of decolonization was accompanied by the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” and the transformation of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world, which boils down to this geo-political image.

If the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” found its moment of emergence in the independence of Creoles in both Americas, its moment of consolidation can be found almost a century later, after the Spanish-American War and during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, at the dawn of the twentieth century. If histories need a beginning, then the history of the strong re-articulation of the idea of the Western Hemisphere in the twentieth century had its beginning in Venezuela when armed forces from Germany and England

initiated a blockade to pressure for the payment of foreign debts. The Spanish-American War (1898) had been a war for the control of the seas and the Panama Canal against the threats of the well-established imperial nations of Western Europe, a danger that was repeated with the blockade against Venezuela. The intervention of Germany and England was a good moment to revive the call for autonomy for the “Western Hemisphere,” which had lost strength in the years prior to and during the American Civil War. The fact that the blockade was against Venezuela created the conditions for the idea and ideology of the “Western Hemisphere” to be revived as not only a question of U.S. jurisdiction, but also of the jurisdiction of Latin American countries. The Argentinean Luís María Drago, Minister of Foreign Affairs, made the first step in that direction in December of 1902 (Whitaker 1954: 87-100).

Whitaker proposes, in a broad outline, an interpretation of these years of international politics that helps us to understand the radical change in the imaginary of the modern/colonial world system that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century with the Rooseveltian reinterpretation of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere.” According to Whitaker, Luís María Drago’s proposed resolution to the embargo on Venezuela (now known as the “Drago Doctrine”) was in reality a sort of “corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine from a multilateral perspective that involved, of course, all of the states of the Americas. Whitaker suggests that Drago’s position was not well received in Washington because, among other things, the United States considered the Monroe Doctrine a doctrine of national politics and, indirectly, unilateral when applied to international relations. Contrary to U.S. views on the Monroe Doctrine, Drago interpreted it as a multilateral principle valid for the whole Western Hemisphere that could be executed in and from any part of the Americas. The second reason that Washington shunned the Drago Doctrine, according to Whitaker, was a consequence of the first: if, in fact, a corollary had been necessary to extend the effectivity of the Monroe Doctrine to international relations, this “corollary” should have come from Washington and not Argentina, or any part of Latin America, for that matter. This was, according to Whitaker, the road Washington followed when, in December of 1904, Roosevelt proposed his own “corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine. Although similar to Drago’s proposal, Roosevelt’s had important

differences. Whitaker enumerates the following points of similarity: (a) both “corollaries” were designed to solve the same problem (European intervention in the Americas) and were based on the same premises (the Monroe Doctrine and the idea of the Western Hemisphere); (b) both “corollaries” proposed to solve the problem through an exception to international law in favor of promoting the Western Hemisphere; and (c) both proposed to achieve this solution through an “American policy pronouncement, not through a universally agreed amendment to international law” (Whitaker 1954: 100). The differences, however, were what reoriented the configuration of the new world order: the “ascent” of one neocolonial or postcolonial country to the group of imperial nation-states—a change of no small measure in the imaginary and structure of the modern/colonial world. The differences between Roosevelt and Drago, according to Whitaker, are found in the manner of implementing the new international politics. Roosevelt proposed to do it unilaterally, from the United States, while Drago proposed a multilateral action, which would be democratic and inter-American. The results of Roosevelt’s “corollary” are very different from what could be imagined to have happened if the Drago Doctrine had been implemented. However, Roosevelt claimed for America the monopoly of rights of the administration of autonomy and democracy in the Western Hemisphere (Whitaker 1954: 100). The Monroe Doctrine, rearticulated with the idea of the “Western Hemisphere,” introduced a fundamental change in the configuration of the modern/colonial world and the imaginary of modernity/coloniality. Whitaker’s conclusion on this chapter of the modern/colonial world is apt: “As a result [of the implementation of the “Roosevelt corollary” instead of the “Drago corollary”] the leader in Washington and those in Western Europe came to understand each other better and better as time went on. The same development, however, widened the already considerable gap between Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America” (Whitaker 1954: 107).

The moment I have just narrated, based on Whitaker’s work, suggesting the connections between international politics and the imaginary of the modern colonial world, appears in the history of Latin American Literature as *La Oda a Roosevelt* by the Nicaraguan poet and cosmopolitan, Rubén Darío, as well as in the essay “Ariel” by the Uruguayan intellectual Enrique

Rodó. I am interested here in returning to the period that extends from the Spanish-American War (1898) until the “triumph” of the “Roosevelt corollary,” in order to reflect on geo-culture and the imaginary of the modern/colonial world, and the impact the idea of the Western Hemisphere had on that imaginary.

Responding to criticisms directed at the strong economic aspect of the concept of the modern world system, Immanuel Wallerstein introduced the concept of geo-culture (1991). Wallerstein constructs the concept, historically, from the French Revolution until the crisis of 1968 in France, and, logically, as the cultural structure that geo-culturally binds to the world system. The “geo-culture” of the modern world system should be understood as the ideological (and hegemonic) image sustained and expanded by the dominant class after the French Revolution. The hegemonic image is not equivalent to social structure, but rather the manner in which one group, which imposes the image, conceives social structure. The “imaginary of the modern/colonial world” should be understood as the various and conflicting economic, political, social, and religious perspectives through which social structure is actualized and transformed. But Wallerstein conceives geo-culture only in its monotopic and hegemonic aspect, localized in the second modernity, which saw the ascent of France, England, and Germany as leaders of the modern/colonial world (Wallerstein 1991a; 1991b; 1995). Without doubt, what Wallerstein calls geo-culture is the component of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world that universalizes itself, and does so not only in the name of the civilizing mission to the non-European world, but which relegates the sixteenth century to the past, and with it, Southern Europe. The imaginary that emerges with the Atlantic commercial circuit, which puts Iberians, Amerindians, and African slaves into conflictive relations, is not a component of geo-culture for Wallerstein. That is to say, Wallerstein describes only the hegemonic imaginary of the modern world system as geo-culture, leaving to one side as many contributions from the colonial difference as from the imperial difference (i.e., the emergence of the Western Hemisphere in the colonial horizon of modernity). Wallerstein’s geo-culture is, then, the hegemonic imaginary of the second phase of modernity; consequently, it is eurocentric in the strict sense of the word,



Figure 5. Latin America in 1976, according to Henry Kissinger (1999). Map by Paul J. Pugliese. Reprinted with permission of Paul J. Pugliese. First published in Kissinger's *Years of Renewal*, 1999.

centered in France, Germany, and England from the perspective of history (from the French national imaginary). The French Revolution takes place precisely at the moment of “inter-imperium” in which the Europe of nations was consolidated by the colonial question. The independence of the United States, which not only anticipated but also contributed to making the French Revolution possible, is other or marginal to Wallerstein’s concept of geo-culture because, in my interpretation, his concept of the modern world system is blind to colonial difference. This is crucial because independence in the Americas, the first anti-systematic movements, were movements from the colonial difference. These movements were generated by and in the colonial difference, although colonial difference is reproduced through them in different ways, as I mentioned above. In the concept of “geo-culture,” Wallerstein underlines the hegemonic component of the modern world that accompanied the bourgeois revolution in the consolidation of the Europe of nations and that, at the same time, relegated as “peripheral” events that represent the first decolonization movements of a modern, but also colonial, world. Such blindness was notable in the case of the Haitian Revolution, as Trouillot (1995) demonstrates. Trouillot explains why a revolution of black Creoles, supported by black slaves, did not have a place in the liberal discourses about the rights of man and citizen, which had been thought in a world where the “invisible matrix” was white, that is, composed fundamentally of white citizens and not Indians or Negroes. In this scheme, the differences of gender and sexuality were subsumed by racial classifications. It was not, nor is it, the same to be a white woman as it is to be a woman of color. Coloniality is constitutive of modernity. Asymmetric relations of power at the same time as the active participation from the colonial difference in the expansion of the Atlantic commercial circuit across the centuries are what justify and make necessary the concepts of “coloniality of power” (Quijano 1997) and “colonial difference” (Mignolo 2000) in order to correct the historico-geographic limitations at the same time as the logics of the concept of geo-culture in its formulation by Wallerstein:

In the case of the modern world system, it seems to me that its geo-culture emerged with the French Revolution and then began to lose its widespread



acceptance with world revolution of 1968. The capitalist world-economy had been operating since the long sixteenth century. *It functioned for three centuries, however, without any firmly established geo-culture.* That is to say, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, no one set of values and basic rules prevailed within the capitalist world-economy, actively endorsed by the majority of the cadres and passively accepted by the majority of the ordinary people. The French Revolution, *lato senso*, changed that. It established two principles: (1) the normality of political change and (2) the sovereignty of people . . . The key point to note about these two principles is that they were, in and of themselves, quite revolutionary in their implications for the world system. Far from ensuring the legitimacy of the capitalist world-economy, they threatened to delegitimize it in the long run. It is in this sense that I have argued elsewhere that the “French Revolution” represented the first of the anti-systemic revolutions of the capitalist world-economy—in a small part a success, in larger part a failure. (Wallerstein 1995: 1166)

Wallerstein’s difficulty in recognizing the constitution of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world without the participation of France or England, and therefore, denying the contribution of three centuries of Spanish and Portuguese power, is, without doubt, a consequence of how he conceives geo-culture. The Northern European imaginary, beginning with the French Revolution, is the imaginary that was constructed parallel to the triumph of England and France over Spain and Portugal as new imperial powers. The emergence of the concept of the “Western Hemisphere” did not allow foreseeing that it marked, from the beginning, the limits of what Wallerstein calls geo-culture. And it marked it in two ways: by articulating the colonial difference and by absorbing, for the length of its history, the concept of the “civilizing mission.” Wallerstein places the concept of the “civilizing mission” as central to geo-culture; however, the civilizing mission remains a translation of the “christianizing mission,” dominant from the sixteenth until the eighteenth century, which Wallerstein does not recognize as geo-culture.

FROM WESTERN HEMISPHERE  
TO NORTH ATLANTIC

Samuel Huntington described the new world order, after the end of the cold war, in nine civilizations: the West, Latin America, Africa (more specifically, Sub-Saharan Africa), Islam, China, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese. Leaving aside the fact that Huntington's classificatory logic seems like the famous Chinese emperor mentioned by Jorge Luis Borges and adopted by Michel Foucault at the beginning of *The Order of Things*, I am interested in reflecting on the fact that Latin America is, for Huntington, a civilization in itself and not part of the Western Hemisphere. For Huntington, Latin America has an identity that differentiates it from the West:

Although the offspring of European civilization, Latin America has evolved down a very different path from Europe and North America. It has a corporatist, authoritarian culture, which Europe has to a much lesser degree and North America not at all. (1996: 46)

Apparently Huntington does not see fascism and Nazism as authoritarian. Nor does he perceive the fact that U.S. authoritarianism, since 1945, has projected control of international relations through a new form of colonialism: colonialism without territoriality. However, Huntington invokes even more traits to mark Latin American difference:

Europe and North America both felt the effects of the Reformation and have combined Catholic and Protestant cultures. Historically, although this may be changing, Latin America has been only Catholic. (1996: 46)

At this point in the argument, the difference invoked is the imperial difference that the Reformation initiated and subsequently took form beginning in the eighteenth century with the development of science and philosophy, and especially in the concept of Reason that brought coherence to the discourse of the second modernity. Moreover, the third important component of Latin America is, in Huntington's view, "the indigenous cultures, which

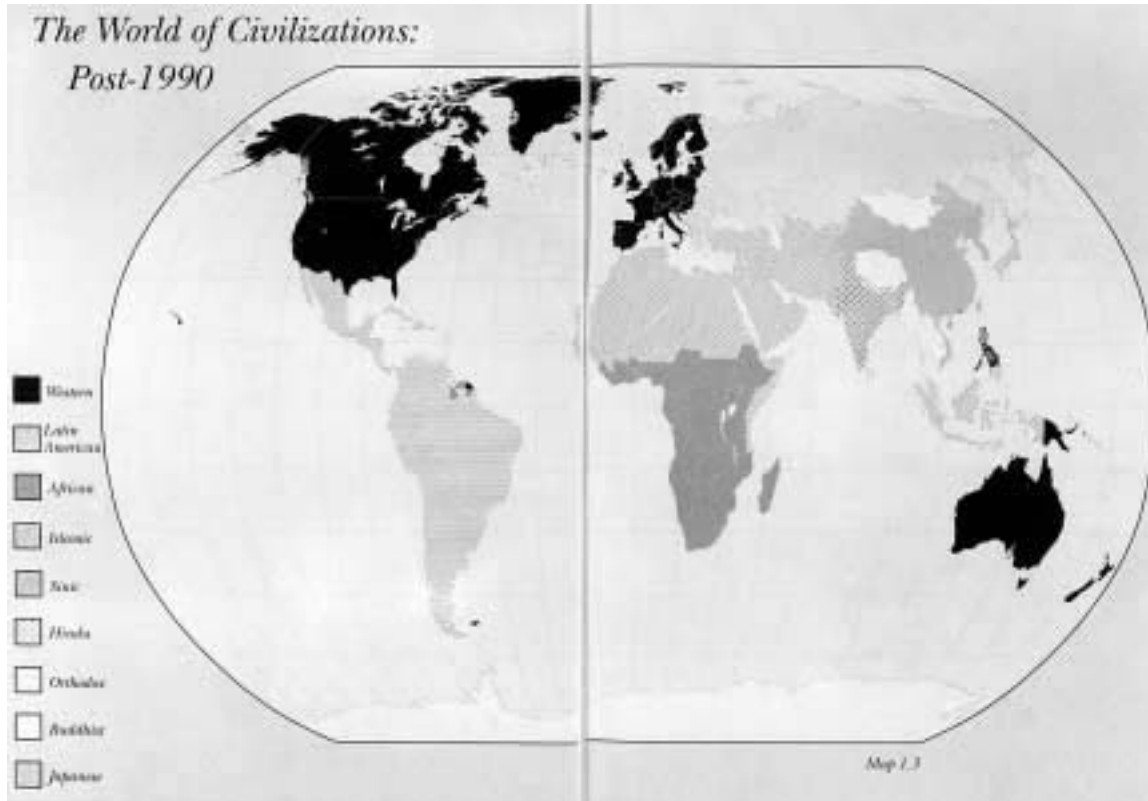


Figure 6. The nine civilizations of Samuel Huntington and their territorialities after the end of the Cold War (1996). From *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* by Samuel P. Huntington. Copyright Samuel P. Huntington. Base map: Copyright Hammond World Atlas Company. Reprinted with permission of Simon and Schuster.

did not exist in Europe, were effectively wiped out in North America, and which vary in importance from Mexico, Central America, Peru and Bolivia, on the one hand, to Argentina and Chile on the other” (1996: 46). Here, Huntington’s argument passes from the imperial difference to the colonial difference, as much in its originary form in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries as during the nation building period, which is precisely where the difference between Bolivia and Argentina, for example, becomes evident—when the national model is imposed from Northern Europe on to the former Hispanic empire. In conclusion to these observations, Huntington maintains:

Latin America could be considered either a subcivilization within Western civilization or a separate civilization closely affiliated with the West. For an analysis focused on the international political implications of civilizations, including the relations between Latin America, on the one hand, and North America and Europe, on the other, the latter is the more appropriate and useful designation. . . . The West, then, includes Europe, North America, plus the other European settler countries such as Australia and New Zealand. (1996: 47)

About what is Huntington thinking when he speaks of “other European settler countries such as Australia and New Zealand”? Obviously he is thinking about English colonialism in the second modernity, in the imperial difference (the English colonialism that “surpassed” Iberian colonialism) mounted over the colonial difference (certain colonial heritages belong to the West, others do not). In the colonial heritages that belong to the West, the indigenous component is ignored, and, for Huntington, the strength that indigenous movements are acquiring in New Zealand and Australia does not appear to be a problem. Nevertheless, the panorama is clear: the West is the new designation, after the cold war, for the “first world.” The “West” has become the locus of enunciation that produced and produces imperial and colonial difference, the two axes around which the production and reproduction of the modern/colonial world turn. Although the emergence of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” offered the promise of an inscription of the colonial difference from colonial difference itself, the “Roosevelt corollary” instead

reestablished the colonial difference from the north and through the definitive defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War. The fact is that Latin America today, in the new world order, is a product of the originary colonial difference and its re-articulation over the imperial difference that gestated from the seventeenth century in Northern Europe and was constituted in the emergence of a neo-colonial country like the United States.

What importance can these geo-political abstractions have in the reorganization of the global order in a hierarchical order of civilizations like the one Huntington proposes? Let us point out at least two. On the one hand, international relations and the economic order of the future. On the other hand, the migratory movements and public politics of the countries see themselves as “invaded” by habitants of “non-Western civilizations.” In the first case, the question is that to maintain, in Huntington’s terms, a unity like Latin America means conferring to it a place in international alliances and the concentration of economic power. In the second place, it directly affects growing Latin American immigration toward the United States, which will have some 30 million “Hispanics” by the year 2000. Let us look at these two aspects in more detail, although in a somewhat brief form.

The end of the cold war and the fall of the socialist world brought about new theories that predicted a future world order, as much in the economic realm as in the arena of civilization. Huntington’s need to establish a world order based on civilizations answered his fundamental thesis that the wars of the future would be wars between civilizations more than ideological wars (such as the Cold War) or economic wars (such as the Gulf War). Immanuel Wallerstein predicted that the new world order would coalesce between 1990 and 2025/2050 (Wallerstein 1995: 32-35). In Wallerstein’s scenario, there are several reasons for a coalition between the United States and Japan. In such a situation, the European Union would be a second powerful group, yet different from the first. In this scenario, two countries of enormous human and natural resources remain in an uncertain position: Russia and China. Wallerstein predicts that China would come to form part of the U.S.–Japanese coalition, while Russia would ally itself with the European Union. The possibility that this scenario would come to pass offers interesting possibilities to reflect on the re-articulation of the imaginary of the modern/

colonial world, that is to say, the re-articulation of the coloniality of power and the new global colonialism. The possible alliance between the United States, on one side, and China and Japan, on the other, would mean a 180-degree turn over the last six hundred years: the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit was, in the sixteenth century, one of the consequences of the strong attraction that China offered (as a function of the commercial marginality of Europe). At the end of the economic, cultural, and ideological consolidation of the Atlantic, there would be a re-meeting of the colonial difference, in one of its geo-historical locations (e.g., the Jesuits in China: Spence 1999). The reorganization and expansion of global capitalism would produce a meeting between Chinese civilization (in Huntington's broad meaning, from 1500 B.C. until the current communities and countries of the Asian southeast, such as Korea and Vietnam: Huntington 1996: 15) and Western civilization, or at least part of it. In reality, one of the interests of Wallerstein's scenario was to suppose that Western civilization would be divided: part of it would establish alliances with the Chinese and Japanese civilizations (or two aspects of the same civilization) and the other (the European Union) with one of the margins of the West, or what Huntington calls "the Russian orthodox civilization," which differs from its close relatives, the Byzantine and Western civilizations (1996: 45). A fascinating scenario, in truth, since the imaginary of the modern/colonial world that accompanied and justified the history of capitalism was a point of radical transformations. That is to say, capitalism would enter a phase in which the initial imaginary would disintegrate into other imaginaries, or better, that capitalism *is* the imaginary and, consequently, that Huntington's different civilizations would be destined to be pulverized by the intransigent march of the exploitation of labor at the national and transnational levels.

Six years after Wallerstein's predictions, the magazine *Business Week* (February 8, 1999) asked, in a boldfaced headline, "Will it be the Atlantic Century?" In smaller red letters, in the same headline, they suggested an answer: "The 21st Century was supposed to belong to Asia. Now the U.S. and Europe are steadily converging to form a new Atlantic economy, with vast impact on global growth and business." This scenario should come as no surprise. The colonial difference is redefined in the global forms of colonialism

motivated by finance and the market, more than by Christianization, the civilizing mission, manifest destiny, or progress and development. What is surprising is Wallerstein's scenario. However, the only problem that attracts attention is the question, "Will it be the Atlantic century?" referring to the twenty-first century, of course. The question attracts attention for the following reason: Was it not the case that the last five centuries have been the Atlantic centuries? But the emphasis here is not on the Atlantic, but the North Atlantic, the new geo-political designation in an imaginary that replaces the differences between Europe and the Western Hemisphere with the emergence of the North Atlantic. Certainly, this scenario did not escape Huntington when, while redefining the West, he affirmed, "Historically, Western Civilization is European civilization. In the modern era, Western civilization is Euroamerican or North Atlantic civilization. Europe, America [and I would say North America] and the North Atlantic can be found on a map, the West cannot" (1996: 47). With the disappearance of the West, the Western Hemisphere also disappears. As Kissinger foresaw in the paragraph cited at the beginning of this article, the Western Hemisphere only remains as a question "internal" to North America in the re-articulation of the colonial difference in the period of global colonialism.

The second consequence mentioned above is the status of the south-to-north migrations that are producing the "Latin Americanization" of the United States. If the "Roosevelt corollary" was a triumph of the consciousness and power of the Anglo-American over the consciousness and power of the Latin American, the massive migrations from south to north are evincing a new dimension, which is reinforced in social movements. The migrations not only include white Latinos and mestizos, but also numerous indigenous persons (Varese 1990) who have more in common with Native Americans in the United States than with whites or mestizos in Latin America. On the one hand, due to the politics of the United States in the Caribbean in its moment of expansion before World War II, Afro-American immigration from Jamaica and Haiti complicates the scenario at the same time as it throws into relief the silenced dimension of the white Creole and mestizo controlled north-south relations established with the idea of the Western Hemisphere. For indigenous and Afro-American populations, the image of the Western

Hemisphere was not nor is significant. This is one of the aspects to which Huntington refers when he says:

Subjectively, Latin Americans themselves are divided in their self-identification. Some say, "Yes, we are part of the West." Others claim, "No, we have our own unique culture." (1996: 47)

Both positions can be sustained from the perspective of Creole double consciousness in Latin America. It would be more difficult to find evidence that these opinions have their origin in indigenous or Afro-American double consciousness. And this distinction is not only valid for Latin America, but for the United States as well. Huntington attributes to Latin America a "reality" that is valid for the United States, but perhaps is not perceptible from Harvard, since from there, and from the connections political and social scientists have with Washington D.C., the gaze is directed more eastward (London, Berlin, Paris) than toward the Southeast and Pacific, which are residual spaces, spaces of the colonial difference. However, while at Harvard, W. E. B. Du Bois could see the South and understand that for those who are historically and emotionally linked to the history of slavery, the question of being Western or not is not put forth (DuBois 1904). And if the problem is introduced, as in the recent book by the Caribbean-British intellectual, Paul Gilroy (1993), it appears in an argument in which the "Black Atlantic" emerges as the forgotten memory, buried under Huntington's "North Atlantic." On the other hand, the reading of the eminent Native American intellectual and lawyer from the Osage community, Vine Deloria Jr. (1972; 1993), demonstrates that indigenous communities in the United States were not totally eliminated, as Huntington asserts. Furthermore, Deloria shows that the colonial difference that emerged with the imaginary of the Atlantic commercial circuit persists in the United States and that it was necessary for the historical foundation of Western civilization and its internal fracture with the emergence of the Western Hemisphere. There is much more to Deloria's argument than the simple difference between Protestantism and Catholicism that preoccupied Huntington. Deloria reminds those who have a bad memory of the persistence of the forms of knowledge that not only



offer alternative religions, but more important still, alternatives to the concept of religion that is fundamental to the architecture of the imaginary of Western civilization. The transformation of the “Western Hemisphere” into the “North Atlantic” secures, on the one hand, the persistence of Western civilization. On the other hand, it definitively marginalizes Latin America from Western civilization, and creates the conditions for the emergence of forces that remain hidden in the Creole (Latin and Anglo) of the “Western Hemisphere”—that is, the rearticulation of Amerindian and Afro-American forces fed by the growing migrations and techno-globalism. The Zapatista uprising, the force of the indigenous imaginary, and the dissemination of its discourses have made us think about possible futures beyond the Western Hemisphere and North Atlantic. At the same time, beyond all civilizatory fundamentalism (ideological or religious), whose current forms are the historical product of the “interior exteriority” to which they were relegated (e.g., subalternized) by the self definition of Western civilization and the Western Hemisphere, the problem of the “Westernization” of the planet is that the whole planet, without exception and in the last 500 years, has had to respond in some way to Western expansion. Therefore, “beyond the Western Hemisphere and North Atlantic” I don’t want to say that there exists some “ideal place” that must be defended, but merely that there necessarily is something “beyond” global organization based on the interior exteriority implied in the imaginary of Western civilization, the Western Hemisphere, and the North Atlantic.



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